The Arabian Mission

OF THE

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(Continued on page 15)
The annual meeting of the Arabian Mission in Kuwait, October 7 to 18, 1958, was one of inspiration and enjoyment, of sober and serious deliberation, and was marked by a spirit of faith, courage and determination. There was at least the usual amount of laughter and amusement, but underneath was a more fundamental sense of concern with the serious problems confronting the Mission in the wake of nationalistic revolution and ferment. The issues arising from the current situation were continually faced in what I felt to be realistic terms, steering in balanced fashion between the dangers of panic on one hand or complacency on the other.”

So wrote Dr. R. Park Johnson, Field Representative of the Board, after having joined with the Arabian Mission for its annual meeting. All personnel attended which is possible once every three years only, because of the expense of traveling the long distances which separate us. We felt keenly, however, the absence of some who were prevented from attending by unsettled events following the overthrow of the monarchy and the setting up of the people’s republic in Baghdad on July 14.

From Muscat and Bahrain we came, from Amarah and Basrah, gathering in Kuwait for the cherished privilege of united consideration of matters of far-reaching scope and import. The invaluable wealth of fellowship, the sharing of the past and present, the forward look for the future of His work which is dear to all our hearts, were highlights of our gathering.

Work Reports Presented

Work reports for the year completed were presented and as each unfolded before the group, prayers of praise and thanksgiving ascended to the Throne of Grace in intercession and supplication. The greatest concern of all was for the Church, that small but very precious portion of the Body of Christ which has its existence not only in the five areas of the Arabian Mission, but throughout the Arab world.

“Merciful God, who hast made all men for love, and wiltest that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of thy truth; have mercy upon those that know thee not; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy Son who was lifted up to draw all men unto him, that they may be numbered among thy faithful servants, and be made one flock under one shepherd.” (Source unknown)

“Set free, O Lord, the souls of thy servants from all restlessness and anxiety: give us that peace and power which flow from Thee: and keep us in all perplexities and distresses from any fear or faithlessness: that so, upheld by thy strength and stayed on the rock of thy faithfulness, through storm and stress we may abide in thee.” (Source unknown)
MUSCAT-MATRAH

Looking back on their first year in charge of evangelistic efforts in Muscat, on the southeastern tip of the Arabian peninsula, the Rev. and Mrs. Garrett De Jong, from a background of many years' experience in other stations, share some of their impressions. "Some one wrote us not long ago that the Muscat situation was in the nature of an answer to every missionary's prayer," she writes. "Truly the church is the center, the whole set-up, including hospitals and school meaning security, diversion, opportunity, livelihood, health insurance to the members, as well as to those clinging to the edges. Whatever are the objections to a system which savors of paternalism, we do have a church here, a live church to the honor of our Lord and Saviour. It is a growing church, too, with most of the helpers coming regularly to services and other meetings. Nor do the members merely sit—they read: they lead: they pray: they witness. The leaven of the Gospel is definitely working. Jesus said it would."

Mr. De Jong expressed deep concern in relation to the need for a method of church discipline which would be effective throughout the Mission and church of the area. The heartaches and sorrows of dealing with several of our fine Christian young people joining with Muslim marriage partners gave impetus to our own feelings that for the health and growth of the church there must be discipline. So, as the months passed, the little body of believers was indoctrinated with the ideas of having its own governing body to assume responsibility for the affairs of the Church of Christ in Muscat. Previously the men of the church had met for discussions with the missionary evangelist on a congregational type of procedure. Now they expressed their desire that the women of the church share in the responsibility. The concept of consistory needed to be taught: election had to be explained and demonstrated, for what do the subjects of an absolute authority know of elections. Patience and prayer wrought their desire in the establishment of a majlis (sitting group) of six members, four men and two women who were ordained and installed in an impressive and deeply joyful service.

A trip into the interior of Oman, over awful roads, gave to Mr. De Jong the overpowering awareness of the effect of no regular evangelism and medical attention in that vast area. "I was haunted by the call and challenge of it and still am. We have made good progress in rehabilitating Birka Center and I am much taken with the place as a means of serving a large area."

Quoting from a foreign missionary society paper, "It seems impossible that an indigenous church could be established among illiterates. They can be Christians, yes, but not a self-governing church." Realizing this handicap of many of our Christians, the literacy campaign goes on and we hear Mrs. De Jong saying, "Oh, the throes of learning to read! Nine women, all at different levels. They keep on trying, though, so I do too."

Across the mountains in Matrah, Mrs. Wells Thoms reports, "Repetition seems not to bore semi-literates but rather to give them confidence and self-assurance in preparation for participation in leadership even on a limited scale." The mission school with a full time principal for the first time in its history in the person of Miss Rachel Jackson, had an enrollment
of 62 this past year, from the families of local Christians and other employees and also some local children, mostly girls belonging to families who want them to have a wider education than they can get in a Koran school. The government school in Muscat is for boys only. With a limited budget and virtually untrained teachers, this little school nevertheless provides the means of daily Christian instruction for a group of impressionable youngsters.

Miss Cornelia Dalenberg reports the maternity center as a happy place. “Most of the patients have had pre-natal care and the majority of them have normal deliveries and enjoy the full ten days of their stay in the hospital when all their relatives and friends come to see them. There are critically ill patients sometimes, women coming in from distant villages, sometimes by camel, after suffering for days at home.” With a part time lady doctor from India and two Indian nurse-midwives the local staff was assisted in caring for an increased number of patients under the supervision of Miss Dalenberg who continues. “Ten years ago Mrs. Dykstra wrote in her report that Nurse Mary had had 120 obstetrical cases that year in the 8-bed ward and that this number would be tripled if we had a woman doctor. As a matter of fact that number was more than tripled by Miss Boersma and we had four times that number in 1957. A full time woman doctor is still our most urgent need.”

From Matrah come reports from the medical staff there, this past year comprising Dr. Wells Thoms, Dr. and Mrs. Maurice Heusinkveld and Miss Allene Schmalzriedt, working in the general, tuberculosis and leper hospitals there. The general hospital reports nearly 30,000 clinic patients, over 1,400 inpatients, hundreds of outcalls and hundreds of operations performed, a work load impossible to limit when there is no other place for people to go. The sick continue to come in. Are they sick so they might come to hear the Gospel? For hear it they do, in clinic prayers and personal witness. Does it reach their hearts? We rarely know. This summer when inpatients were at a minimum, it was suggested that the Sunday afternoon hospital service be discontinued, but our Christian compundar would not hear of it, considering it one of the main reasons for the hospital’s existence. Many gather each week as the message is brought and an offering taken, giving opportunity for the poor to help the poorer.

The tuberculosis and leprosy patients have a program all their own. Many of the missionaries and local Christians have taken part. “The quiet consistent and persistent witness,” says Mrs. Thoms, “is that of Moosa, the practical nurse in charge. He is unable to read and write but he has given his heart to Christ who maketh wise the simple. By his sincerity so tangible in his prayers, by his sympathy and genuine interest in each patient, he has built up a morale in that poorest of all communities until it is rich with fellowship.”

Though scarcely able to cope with the demands upon their services, the medical staff look also to the inland villages, up the fertile Baatina coast where several hundred thousand people live, without a single physician. The realization that touring has received little time this past year lies heavily on the conscience. Again it must be said that Oman is a mission field in itself. The medical staff agrees that we must continue to show the
great need and opportunity to the church until the time comes when Christian witnesses are working and preaching throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Dr. and Mrs. Thoms took advantage of a unique opportunity in visiting and witnessing this summer to the ruler of Abu Thabi of the Golden Bubble renown, a man who was quick to recognize the literary beauty of the Scriptures, desiring a copy for himself.

An innovation for Muscat was the functioning of the Municipal Council with one of our doctors as a member, attacking such problems as road building, fire fighting, anti-malaria measures all directly needed.

In all the medical work of Muscat and Matrah our dearest and staunchest co-workers are those who are His, being continuing examples to us of selflessness and dedication. Of these Mrs. De Jong writes: “To have a part in leading this brave group has been a matter of deep heart searching and soul stretching for my faith has never cost me what theirs cost them. They have led me too.” The Lord, bless, keep and increase His own chosen children in Muscat and Oman.

“We pray thee today for thine own strong courage. Give us courage to combat thy enemies and to suffer in thy cause. Spur us this day to challenge the grim realities of pain, disease, injustice and sin, and by gallant service to conquer these thy foes.”

From The Foursfold Sacrament
by John Hoyland

BAHRAIN

The primary emphasis in the evangelistic work in Bahrain during the past year, as reported by the Rev. James Dunham, has been placed upon the participation of the local community in the church program in which the people have demonstrated a real willingness. Growth and a developing sense of responsibility have been happily observed in Ameen, a graduate of the House of Happiness. Although not yet a baptized Christian, he shows signs of one day becoming a lay leader in the church in Bahrain. Abood Haider continues to be the mainstay of the Arab Christian community, serving on the church committee along with several others. In an effort to provide opportunities for those whose employment prevents their attendance on Sunday morning, a Saturday evening Arabic language church service has been held “in the hope of encouraging the people to come to church as families and developing a sense of identity as a Christian community in their own right.” The evangelist in Bahrain finds himself surrounded by many more souls requiring pastoral care than he can begin to serve and faces continually the often conflicting demands not only of the Arab groups but of the Indians and other English-speaking people as well. Work with the Indian staff members of the hospital has resulted in their catching the spark of real concern for their countrymen and their efforts to minister as a group to several outlying communities. Village work this year grew out of invitations to visit former hospital patients, with repeated visits helping to develop closer relations and freer communication. The visit of the Rev. Bernard Hakken from Baghdad provided the Arab Christian community with an intensive study in Christian doctrines. Mrs. Dunham cooperated in the women’s evangelistic work.

Miss Ruth Jackson reports a normal year in the girls’ school, with a
slight drop in enrollment to 138 pupils, of whom eight were Christians and seventeen Jewish. Six girls were graduated and five sat for the government exams to enter the government secondary school. School curriculum has had to be altered somewhat in order to prepare the girls for these necessary exams. Government inspection through the new Ministry of Education would seem to be increasing, this among other things prompting Miss Jackson to anticipate eagerly the arrival of a second missionary teacher in the school. "We will work together to make our mission school a Christian school with standards as high as possible in all branches of the work, striving to help our girls to grow in the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus."

Reports from Beit Said can always be counted on to provide the human interest we all enjoy so much. The House of Happiness has its moments of sadness, too, as any house with growing children, whether these moments be in the hearts of those who want so much to see the finished products to His glory or in the equally real heartaches of the children themselves. They sense their differentness and seek by means at times socially unacceptable to find the security and love they crave. The little ones keep themselves and everyone else happy while the older ones are gradually assuming their own places of responsibility. Several are still in school, the girls in Bahrain and the boys in a boarding school in Lebanon. The oldest resident girl seems to have found her place in the hospital where she is doing very commendable work as a nurses' aid. Two of the older boys are now self-supporting and living outside of the orphanage while enrolled in a training school at the oil company. One is doing exceptionally well even though he was formerly considered a problem too difficult to solve. The best wishes of all go to our nursing student who will soon finish her training course in Tripoli, Lebanon. Another graduate fills a real job in the Bahrain hospital, giving a good witness in his work despite the nagging of his fellow workers. Two of the girls were much disappointed when the Iraqi revolution prevented their attendance at a summer conference scheduled for that time. One of the earliest members of the orphanage, a humpback since childhood, left a real vacancy when after months of patient suffering she went to be with the Lord to whom she had borne consistent witness. The funeral service with its note of rejoicing and even greater significance with very old and nearly blind Medina sitting close by the graveside listening carefully to the glorious promises which are already her portion. Miss Madeline Holmes lived in Beit Said until her furlough in April at which time Miss Rachel Jackson arrived. An answer to prayer and urgent need came in May when a Palestinian Christian couple moved into Beit Said to take over the running of the household, a job not without its difficulties due to loyalties necessarily divided with the original Arab house mother.

The medical program in Bahrain this year has been characterized by the discontent without which it has been said there is no progress. The reference is to the very antiquated and inadequate buildings of the men's section in particular, about which so much thought, prayer and planning continue to be expended in the direction of securing new facilities. "Delays have dampened the interest of the local people" in the area of their expected contributions, but all agree that the standard of medical service in Bahrain has reached a stage that the Mission must provide better facilities.
Miss Marilyn Tanis finished her term of service in September, having done a commendable service. Her presence is missed. Dr. Nykerk gave valuable assistance during the time when Dr. and Mrs. Storm were away for medical reasons. The Board of Managers functioned well with Miss Jackson and Mr. Dunham serving effectively.

Staff training was carried on by Miss Jeannette Veldman with the assistance of Miss Tanis and Miss Anne De Young who served in the women's division until her furlough. Miss Schmalzriedt was detained by the Iraq revolt, enroute from Muscat and helped in the nursing department during the summer months. Mrs. Storm lent assistance with the accounts despite her serious illness. On the success of the hospital service kitchens which are now supplying all men patients and will soon include the women Dr. Storm says, "No longer do we make rounds to find the patients' friends cooking rice and fish at the bedside with occasionally a chicken tied to the foot of the bed." Three cheers for Bahrain! Some day we may be able to say the same for Muscat!

A very full schedule of surgical cases of many kinds, heavy clinics and impressive inpatient census figures, with an increase in hospital deliveries despite the very fine and extensive services now available, completes the report. Says Dr. Storm, "We are only discontented because we want something better, something of which we are not ashamed and something which will truly glorify the Great Physician."

"Teach us, O God, to look upon each of our fellow-men with the eyes of Christ, to recognize in each the uniqueness of his individuality and of the contribution which he may make to thy kingdom, and to think of him as the object of thy fatherly regard and of thy redeeming love."

(Source unknown)

KUWAIT

Further up the Gulf in Kuwait seven missionaries labored this past year to spread the news of the Gospel of Christ, of His power and Presence, and to illustrate by word and action the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. "For the Gospel is proclaimed—through hospital evangelists: through colporteurs in the shops and streets of the town: through the ministry of Christian doctors and nurses in their acts of compassion and skill: through the total witness of church fellowship, speaking through individual Christians of varied languages and customs yet bound in the oneness of Christ . . . in these and many other ways, His name is made known and people are drawn to the cross of the Saviour, there to find meaning for their lives." So writes the Rev. Donald MacNeill who has directed the evangelistic program for the past year. He tells of the wonderful achievement of the various congregations of the church in response to the challenge of an outgrown building for worship. The need for an extension to the church and the construction of a parish hall was recognized by all, and there was no holding back of time, talents or tithes as the work was undertaken. A fund drive by the members of the church gathered approximately $45,000 of which about $10,000 came through mission accounts. Members of all groups lent their assistance as the project developed—architects, engineers, electricians, builders, decorators—all joining together to build a church where they could worship together and with the One whose love transcends all earthly differences.
The new sanctuary is dominated by a plain wooden cross reaching almost from floor to ceiling against a backdrop of what appears to be a gracefully hanging curtain of light brick. The parish hall is a large and well-equipped building which will enhance the entire program of the church. All the missionaries thrilled and rejoiced with the Church of Christ in Kuwait in the service of dedication held on Sunday, October 12.

Mr. MacNeill reports keen disappointment regarding a young man who was baptized during the year but who has been overcome by “the constant pressures and skeptical questioning in the bazaar, hospital and living quarters” until his state of tension caused him to leave Kuwait. One can only commend him to Almighty God and pray that he will retain the faith he professes and that all of us may be more like our Lord in our associations with such as he. Mr. MacNeill reports plenty of inquirers until the Lebanese and Iraqi crises when they suddenly slipped away, except for a few old faithfuls. Key contacts in this program of keeping His name before all men were the two mission colporteurs. The Bible shop has been quite busy in the volume of sales throughout the year. Religious and devotional books in both English and Arabic have been stocked and sold in greater quantities.

Extra emphasis on youth work is a well recognized need which it is hoped can be improved this next year. Mrs. MacNeill has expended much effort, along with an Arabic Sunday school committee, in leading the lessons and worship of these young people, as well as in gatherings with the women and with Christian nurses employed both in government institutions and our own.

Dr. Alfred Pennings reviews the operation of all departments of the hospital for the year, noting the unfortunate lack of continuity of leadership precipitated by furloughs and vacations. He and Mrs. Pennings shared much in all of the mission activities while studying Arabic until the departure of Dr. and Mrs. Scudder at which time they took on the responsibilities of the hospital.

Dr. Pennings notes, “There has been no major change in patient volume or income this past year. There is a certain sense of satisfaction in knowing that there was no major change, whereas in actuality there were many times we wished for fewer patients and a chance to do a better job with them. If a mission hospital is to be a place for the careful practice of medicine and a place for unhurried and potentially deep contacts with the whole of the patient, then we must seriously seek ways to decrease our patient volume by means that will be honorable and acceptable to the community and we must be able to rejoice sincerely when we see our statistics showing the decreased patient volume and the diminished income that would necessarily follow.” Leadership in nursing and administrative matters in the women’s division was provided by Miss Te Bina Boomgaard and Miss Jeannette Veldman, the latter spending several months cooperating in the medical work during this past summer.

The hospital Board of Managers met frequently and gave great assistance in sharing responsibilities and offering advice and direction, and this group “certainly shares in the credit for the success of the year’s work.” Dr. Pennings concludes his report by saying, “We cannot other than thank God for the stability of the local political and economic situation which we have
enjoyed thus far and for the solid background of friendship and respect earned in the past which have permitted the hospital to have a prosperous and healthy year. We thank God for the opportunity of witnessing for Jesus Christ by word and action within the framework of this institution.”

And a final word from Mr. MacNeill, “For Kuwait is a strange admixture of East and West. It is a modern store with neon lighting and it is a single blanket shop where people may spend hours bargaining for a simple need. It is also the world into which Christ has called us, a world of people with problems and needs, a world of people hungering in which Christ continues to reach out in compassion and love through you and through us.”

“O God of unchangeable power and eternal light, look favourably on thy whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery: and by the tranquil operation of thy perpetual providence carry out the work of man’s salvation: and let the whole world feel and see that things which were cast down are being raised up; that those which had grown old are being made new; and that all things are returning to perfection, through him from whom they took their origin, even our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Source unknown)

BASRAH

From Basrah, at the southern end of the “land between the rivers,” the Rev. G. J. Holler writes, “The two main objectives of the mission enterprise today are to preach Christ to those who are poor because they do not know Him, and to share in the building and strengthening of the Church. An evangelist in Basrah possesses a fine opportunity to meet these two objectives.” The future of the evangelist’s task in Basrah, however, would seem to be doubtful with “the cherished relationship with the local church curtailed since the local Christians may be embarrassed by their association with American missionaries.” The Christian Church in Iraq needs the undergirding of prayer and concern by the Church everywhere. Sharing as usual in the Bible teaching in the Boys’ School. Mr. Holler talks of those students who though unreceptive have been exposed to the Gospel, and of those who are receptive and who have obviously been moved by the Gospel’s appeal.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Holler associated themselves with the educational program of the local church in the Sunday school, the Young People’s Group and also the Men’s Group. The Young Married Couple’s Group continues to flourish, primarily as a social group, but affording some measure of spirituality for those who otherwise would experience none. Concern is felt for the young people who no longer attend Sunday school but who are not yet “young marrieds,” and plans to work more with them have been discussed.

Mr. Holler continues, “The evangelist’s association with Isqof Garabed Abdul Ahid of the Evangelical Church is always a delightful one. One can learn a great deal in his relationship with this salty old character. Isqof Garabed is less hearty at his task because of his advanced age. Recent events in the country have taken their toll of his energies. The local church people are aware of the urgent need for someone to take his place in what may be the near future.” Attempts are being made to maintain contact with a former schoolboy who has expressed an interest in studying for the ministry.
The Bible Society colporteur, though not under mission jurisdiction, has continued to work in Basrah and has shown growth and development in the Christian life and mission.

Mr. Holler has also contributed to the spiritual life of the oil community by preaching in their little church every other week throughout the year. During the summer he also carried the preaching duties of the Anglican church when the local Canon was on leave, this cooperation continuing due to the Canon's inability to re-enter the country.

Against a background of years of a prevailing fine spirit among students and teachers in the Boys' School despite political unrest and local demonstrations, the Rev. George Gosselink notes that this past year brought considerable distress through a small group of troublesome students who, perhaps in the spirit of the times, deprived not only themselves but others of the usual benefits of school attendance. In spite of these disturbances it has been a fairly good year. In the final examinations our students had a much higher proportion of passes than usual, with higher average marks. Those of our graduates who went on to the higher training schools were reported to be among the best students in their classes. Mr. Gosselink pays tribute to the work of Mr. Donald Maxam who has just finished his short term as a teacher in the Boys' School. "In the classroom, on the playground and in his personal contacts he has left not only his own but also the mark of our Master on many of the boys. As he continues his training for Christian service now we wish him God's blessing, and we hope he may some day return to us."

Events of the summer interrupted the possibility of any implementation of major plans for a new school for the time being but the Basrah School Committee, which has already expended considerable effort, intends to continue its study of future possibilities for the educational program. Its facilities and staff. Mr. Gosselink concludes. "There has so far been no indication of any major changes (governmental) that would particularly affect us. There will without doubt be a tightening up in certain aspects, but otherwise we continue hoping and praying and working as normally as possible. We have not been too pleased with the response elicited in the Bible classes recently. No doubt, a new day demands new approaches, and this most important aspect of our service too is taking much of our time in thought and prayer."

The Girls' School, with a fine local Christian woman as its government recognized principal, and Miss Lavina Hoogeveen as its supervisor, had a year of rejoicing with 150 pupils and a brand new fifth grade, bringing it one step closer to full primary school status. Inspection by the government brought a list of required improvements early in the year and the efforts to comply were later well rewarded by a note of thanks and appreciation, and a commendation for the general appearance and character of the school. Miss Hoogeveen tells of the purchase of new desks and chapel chairs, two items which added considerably to the efficiency of the general program. "At Christmastime," she says, "the government gave us 1.D.100 ($280) for the poor girls. The money was used to buy material for the new school uniforms, grey coat style with red belts and collars, with the remainder of the money used to buy shoes for the first through fifth
grades. Point Four Health Service came and gave smallpox shots and scheduled further immunizations."

Through the office of the Director of Education the school was placed on the list of those to receive help from UNICEF, following which the girls received daily powdered milk and cod liver oil capsules regularly. The annual Christmas program was held in the Arab Evangelical Church for a second year due to the lack of facilities at the school. The church was packed to overflowing as the story of the first Christmas was told in song, Scripture, poetry and by means of a short play. A sewing exhibit, a school picnic under the ethyl trees, chapel exercises, Bible classes and clubs rounded out Miss Hoogeveen's busy schedule.

Mrs. Gosselink tells of her associations with the Women's Society of the Arabic Evangelical Church which, in accordance with new ordinances, will hold its meetings in the church instead of in various homes. "Our Christian Community has been really shaken by the events of the summer. They need our prayers and the prayers of the church at home that they be not overcome by fear. House visitation, which has been so rewarding in the past has had to be discontinued for the time being."

Girls' club work is reported on by Mrs. Holler who says, "In spite of the increasing number of girls attending day schools each year as Iraq attempts to lower its illiteracy, there are hundreds of girls who for one reason or another do not attend school. Many of these girls find their way to the Mission . . . Our study and work program has been much the same as in previous years. The Bible study was centered around the Old Testament lessons, with appropriate New Testament lessons interjected in season. Audiovisual aids such as flannelgraph, film strips and tapes have been very valuable in helping to fix the stories in the minds of our young friends. It is our hope that the girls relate these lessons to their families at home and more than that, that the lessons learned will become a part of their behavior pattern and everyday living. We have continued our health lessons for the older girls and our organized play for the intermediate group. The youngest class remains our favorite group as well as the one that requires the most work."

"O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise, that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may there be fixed, where true joys are to be found." From The Book of Common Prayer

AMARAH

One hundred and twenty miles up the Tigris River from Basrah, the Rev. Harvey Staal continued as evangelist in Amarah with Mrs. Staal participating in the women's work. Regular scheduled meetings of the church group continued as formerly. One young man showed promise after making an open statement of his desire to be a Christian, but in the face of difficulties he fell away and has since married a Muslim girl. "We have also suffered a rather severe loss to the church in these last weeks when our strongest and most evangelistic member was transferred to another city to a government job there. Another member and his family have also left seeking employment elsewhere. However, we press on, confident that it is
His Kingdom that we are seeking, and that He will add His blessing."

The present colporteur will soon go on pension due to failing health and arrangements are in progress for securing a young man from Jordan to assume these responsibilities. Mr. Staal concludes. "While the immediate future does still seem somewhat dark and uncertain, we feel that each new day brings more light and hope. We pray that He may also continue to shed new light upon us and upon the people with whom we are working so that all together we may continue to seek Him and His righteousness first of all, and that He will continue to add His blessing."

Mrs. Nykerk tells of the response of the women to the evangelistic work during the past months especially. "We know that the Spirit of the Lord is working in the hearts of these women and that many of them are very close to the Kingdom of Heaven, some having expressed a very true and vital faith. The women have been faithful in coming to the church services and the Tuesday afternoon meetings even when all others have stayed away. Their response to the messages has been warm and real in these days of crisis. Many of them are in desperate need for physical necessities, but their faith has deepened under the strain.

When they faced the possibility of our imminent departure, they felt as sheep that were scattered and helpless. However, as the days have passed, a new strength has become apparent. All lessons are based on the value of true salvation from sin through Jesus Christ only, as Saviour, and that none can ever take from them the spiritual riches that are theirs. They are being taught again that the Lord will never forsake His own, that He is the true shepherd and is with them always, and that spiritual bonds will always unite us also though separated by time and space. They are now calling themselves Christians publicly for the first time and continue their contacts with the mission even though their names are noted and reported each time they come for church services and meetings. We thank God constantly for the apparent growth in faith in the lives of these women, and pray that this crisis may be turned into great good in the final growth of the small group of Christians which comprise the Christian Church in Amarah. Let us admit that just at present our hopes are a bit dim for a very active witness among them. They have noticed that Christians of long standing have cut off their association with us completely; they have seen the one who was to have led morning prayer service leave suddenly when shouting and tensions increased in the streets outside the gate; they have mentioned the lack of courage of some of those who are baptized Christians, but let us also admit that they personally have little to lose, while the others have a great deal. For most of the others it means their jobs and their lifelong pensions, but for these poor women only public scorn constitutes their burden.

The medical work in Amarah during the past year showed change and progress, with an increase in income sufficient to bring the hospital considerably closer to its goal of being self-supporting. While Dr. and Mrs. Nykerk were away for two months in Bahrain and then three months in India, Dr. and Mrs. Draper set aside the language books and with Miss Christine Voss carried the medical work, with valuable assistance from Dr. and Mrs. Kennedy of the Evangelical Alliance Mission who shared in the life of the station while studying Arabic. Dr. Nykerk reports a con-
siderable increase in the eye work, with cataract surgery flourishing, even during the period of rain and bad roads which usually brings on the winter slump. Such was the background of the tumultuous events of this past summer. “In the midst of a busy year of activity, with our hospital filled with patients, both men and women; in the midst of amazing optimism toward the future, we saw crowds of people continue to come to us though anti-Western, anti-American propaganda was rife on radio and street corner. We began to hope that in all truth our witness here had been separate from political influences and could survive the adjustments of this country to its revolutionary government, with the resulting adjustments and upheavals throughout the nation.”

He then tells of the increased awareness that friendship with the missionaries had become a burden to their associates, that church members who were government employees could no longer be seen with them, that employees were being taunted on the streets for working with them, that they themselves were objects of vehement derision and threat. It was then that the order was received that the medical work must cease and residences be evacuated. Negotiations followed in an attempt to adequately convey the idea that the hospital represented the philanthropic interests of countless American Christians and therefore could not be relinquished. Further talks forestalled the expropriation and permitted the missionaries to maintain residence even though it was felt wise for all but a remnant to leave the area temporarily. Dr. Nykerk goes on. “Even as we write the Lord’s Will has not as yet been fully revealed and we continue to pray earnestly that it may be in His will and plan that our witness in Amarah may continue, and that this may be just one of a long series of work reports to be written. And if His will should be otherwise, then let it still be a report of praise and thankfulness for past blessings, for constant strength and guidance, and for the knowledge ‘that the things which cannot be shaken will remain.’”

“O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light riseth up in darkness for the godly; grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what thou wouldst have us to do; that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in thy light we may see light, and in thy straight path may not stumble.”

by William Bright
From Great Souls at Prayer
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