The Arabian Mission

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*Members of the United Mission in Iraq in which we cooperate with the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Presbyterian Church, U.S.

(Continued on Inside Back Cover)
"And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

The Arabian Mission met for a delegate meeting in Bahrain October 16 to 24. The executive Committee in March decided that because of the events which had transpired in Iraq since the last mission meeting, one half of each station should be represented. Six delegates from Muscat and five from Kuwait arrived by plane to join those at Bahrain. Others present were the non-delegate members from Bahrain. Dr. R. Park Johnson, Field Representative, and the Rev. Jay R. Kapenga, secretary. Rev. and Mrs. George Gosselin, the only members of the Mission left in Iraq, unable to leave the country, sent letters and reports: we were deeply conscious of their presence with us in thought and prayer.

We began some of the organizational work of the meeting without the six from Muscat as their plane was 24 hours late. By Saturday night all had arrived and we met after the Arabic church service for roll call and the actual beginning of the meeting. A devotional service directed our thoughts to Him in whose Name we were met.

We had the quiet hours between the Sunday services for the reading of the work reports, the story of the year, given by the missionaries in charge of each department of the field program. These reports are always thrilling! They are to us the best part of every annual meeting. This synthesized report is an effort to share with you something of what we heard and felt as we sat and listened to this rehearsal "of all that God had done with them."

Muscat

The first of the three outstanding events in Muscat this year was the Gulf Church Conference which met in Muscat-Matrarah in March. The theme of this small but not insignificant conference was Jesus Christ the Rock of Ages. In daily sessions the purpose of the conference and the meaning of The Church were discussed.
Abood Sees the Muscat Church

The two delegates from Kuwait and the two from Bahrain participated in the daily morning prayers, prayers at hospitals and school and at Wednesday prayer meeting and Sunday services. For years blind Abood and Nasif Seffo of Bahrain, and Yaqub and Sulaiman of Kuwait had been hearing about Muscat and had been praying for the small church there. At last they had an opportunity to see it and to feel themselves a part of it. Abood of course could not see it, but he came back more enthusiastic about Muscat than many visitors who go there with seeing eyes. They stayed in the homes of missionaries but ate with the Muscat and Matrah Arab Christian families. It was an unforgettable experience for the Muscat Christians to see Abood reading his Braille Bible, and as Mr. De Jong writes, “How gladly and gratefully those Muscat Christians felt themselves to be accepted by their brethren of Bahrain and Kuwait into the one fellowship of the Church of Christ in the Gulf area!” The closing communion service was a fitting bond of union and oneness in Christ.

A delegate made the suggestion that a day of prayer, the second Sunday in March, be determined as a day of prayer of remembrance of this first (Arab) church conference in Muscat.

The second outstanding event was the Easter baptism of one of the young lads who was a faithful participant in the young people’s Bible class in which Mr. De Jong led in a study of the Heidelberg catechism. A son of converts, he is working in the Matrah hospital where his father has worked for years.

The third event of note was the return of Khudarasoon, one of the Christian leaders of Muscat from the Asmara Conference. Never having traveled anywhere outside the Gulf he had the thrilling experience of his first plane ride, the first view of Arabia outside the Gulf and his first view of a foreign country. Mrs. De Jong writes about his return: “Khudarasoon spoke to the congregation last Sunday. His eyes glowed as he said, ‘We stopped at Aden. The church there is small: they are just like us, and they are praying for us even as we are praying for them. We got to Asmara and there we met five from Iran. They are just like us: their churches are small like ours, and they are praying for us as we are for them. Then we got to Kuwait. Their church is large and they have much, but they are praying for us and we for them, and that is true of Bahrain, too.’ His face shone as he tried to share this tremendous realization and ideal, this picture of all of us holding hands across the miles, the barren deserts and mountain peaks and rolling waves; enabled to hold tight because all are raising hearts in prayer for each other to our crucified, risen Lord.”

There is another event of note. Matrah had a church in the house as the first home of the church at worship. It was a large room in the missionary residence that was set aside for chapel uses and was so used for many years. With the increase of personnel in Muscat-Matrah, this residence has had to be converted into a two-family house, the large chapel-mejlis becoming a living-dining room for one family. Of a new chapel Jay Kapenga has this to say: “The Arab consistory has decided to go on its own in the building of a new place of worship for Matrah. There is a certain amount of money in the church treasury . . . an enthusiasm and a pride that this
mejlis must be of the Church of Muscat-Matrah, by the Church of Muscat-Matrah.” It may take them ten years to complete it, using a date-palm hut as long as they have to, and building bit by bit on a pay-as-you-go policy, but in the end it will be theirs.

The School in the House

In Muscat-Matrah we also find a school-in-the-house which began in 1942 for converts' children. “We could not let the children of our Christian group drift along or be placed under other influences,” wrote the Dykstras, “and we hope that in the future the children may be used in our school or hospitals. This small group is the nucleus of an indigenous force for the evangelization of the land and no labor spent on them is in vain.” In 1942 there was an earnest appeal for a full time missionary for this important work. With the arrival of Miss Rachel Jackson in 1957 the school at long last has a Mudira (principal), the only one in all Southeast Arabia! Boys now attend this school in which the enrollment this past year was 69 pupils, 37 girls and 32 boys. More of the town children are accepted as the school is becoming known.

Interest is centered in the pupils, striving to give them the knowledge of Jesus Christ that their lives may be changed by Him. This is the training ground for future leaders of the Church of Christ in Muscat. Someone is needed to replace Miss Jackson who retires in 1960.

This part of Arabia now has more missionaries than ever before, including three doctors. “I can sit and write my report in peace.” writes Wells Thoms. “While Don Bosch and Bern Draper handle the crowds. It’s
a new experience and I like it." He tells about the cessation of hostilities in Oman, resulting in the opening of roads that have been closed for two years, and the increased number of patients this has brought. The Sultan has set up dispensaries in Sur and Sumail, Nizwa and Dhufar and other places which never had medical care before except what the Mission could give them. The camel caravans, however, continue to bring them in or they come in cars or trucks. Multitudes are seen every day.

"Christ looked on the multitude with compassion. May we look with the eyes of Christ on the multitudes who come to us and give them compassionate care as well as antibiotics. Some of our local fellow workers such as Mubarak, Khudarasoon and Meeroker with the in-and-out patients, and Musa among the leprosy and tuberculosis patients, do treat those who come under their care with patience and concern. It is Christ-like concern as well as surgical, medical and obstetrical care that the people want from the staff of our mission hospitals. God help us to be compassionate."

Mr. Wilbur Dekker took a month out of his busy schedule to improve the laboratory setup in Muscat-Matrakh hospitals and to train some of the young people in laboratory work.

A Lady Doctor

For 20 years Muscat has asked for a lady doctor and now they have one. The Board tried hard to recruit one from the home church but was unsuccessful. The suggestion to try to recruit one from Great Britain or the Netherlands was followed up and as a result we have Dr. Alice vander Zwaag from Middleberg, Vriesland. She had served for two and a half years with the Mennonites in the Church Missionary Society Mission Hospital at Nablus, Jordan, where she gained some knowledge of Arabic and some experience.

A mother and her baby in Muscat.
as a practicing obstetrician and pediatrician. With the huge clinics and heavy load that Miss Boersma had been carrying practically alone, the need of a resident lady doctor was urgent, and God sent her just in time.

In the Muscat clinic 22,310 treatments were given, and 611 babies were delivered last year. Prenatal work is increasing as is the Baby Welfare Clinic work. "The greatest joy in the world," says Miss Boersma, "is to see the way the two Christian Arab girls are taking hold of the work and carrying increased responsibility." The great concern in this hospital is not to increase the volume of work but to make possible a greater evangelistic impact.

The medical work in Muscat should not be limited as there is no other hospital in Oman. The Trucial Coast which stretches along the northern boundary of Oman on the Arabian Gulf from Qatar to Muscat is calling. It may be that the Lord will open new doors to Southeast Arabia, now that part of Iraq is closed to missionary work.

**Bahrain**

Bahrain has a lively group of Arab, Indian, British, Jordanian and American young people. One sees them on the tennis courts, in the mejlis and in the missionary homes. A minister with such a group at home would need a large church basement or a parish hall. Bahrain has neither, but does have the mejlis for play, study, worship and prayer. It is a most useful room, but part of it is very old and the lower walls are disintegrating from the moisture creeping up through the foundation and the crumbling floor. The young people began the digging out of the old floor for subsequent tiling, working evenings with the help of missionary children and the orphans, but it proved to be too large an undertaking and a contractor was hired to complete the job. It is now a fine large assembly hall with chairs and benches, a small committee room and an equipped kitchen. Everything was in time for the mission meeting.

There is a lively group of 40 children, too! On Sunday mornings after the Arabic service Mrs. Dekker makes the rounds in the Austin station wagon to pick them up for Arabic and English Sunday school classes. All of them meet together for the opening services, singing hymns in Arabic and in English. Mrs. Dekker was assisted during the year by Miss Nienhuis, Miss Teumer and Miss Diem, and by Sally, Saeed and Ajeeba who taught the Arabic classes.

The mejlis is used for women, too, following the old custom of a Thursday sitting for a Bible lesson and Arab coffee. Medina hobbled to church and to the mejlis every time there was a meeting as long as she could. Indeed until two weeks before she died. Her chair is still there, and as the Arabs say, "Her place shows." During the winter before the work of alterations began, a small group of women called el Khairea, a Christian ladies' aid society, met every Monday in the mejlis and some of their sewing was sold at the hospital benefit sale given by the girls' school club.

The memorial school and chapel, erected in 1906 for $2064.40 in memory of those who laid down their lives for Arabia, still stands and is in constant use. The Sunday evening congregation has reached its maximum
Miss Ruth Jackson, presenting her last report of the Bahrain Girls' School, writes, "My heart turns to God in praise and gratitude for having given me the privilege of serving Him in this work so close to my heart. It is full of opportunities to witness to our Saviour and to impart a knowledge of His life and teaching and His surpassing love. It has been a service rich in reward as I have watched our girls grow and develop, bringing now their daughters to follow in their steps. My mind turns back to my language study days when Mrs. Dame with great difficulty persuaded the first few parents to allow their daughters to attend the first school in Bahrain. Under her care the school grew and exerted a great influence. All our teachers are still our own graduates, except for the two upper classes for whom we have to get secondary school graduates, which is our most difficult problem. Of the usual enrollment of about 140 pupils, we graduate between seven and ten a year. These take government examinations to enter the government secondary school. Five of our seven graduates entered this fall; one is working in our hospital; one is married.

Some of the activities of the young people center in Beit Saeed, or The House of Happiness. The little ones are in the home and others are working or off at school elsewhere.
The brothers Daud (14) and Muneer (16) are at school in Lebanon and doing well. Daud was the top student in his class and Muneer fifth in his class in the top quarter in his school. Saeed (23), a hospital dresser taking more and more responsibility, was baptized on Easter of this year.

Ruth Saeed, raised in the House of Happiness, is now studying nursing in Tripoli. She is familiar to the readers of Arabia Calling.

Ruth (28) is in her last year of nurses' training in the Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Tripoli, Lebanon, and hopes to return to Bahrain in the summer of 1960 to join the staff of the women's hospital. Fareeda (12) has been sent by her uncles Abood and Yusuf Haider to a Christian girls' school in Beit Jala, Jordan. Ajeebra (17) has gone to Muscat to join the hospital staff training program under Miss Veldman, and Sally (19) is in her third year as nurses' aide and is doing well. She is much interested in surgery and scrubs for major operations. The other five range in age from two to twenty. There are many problems with these growing children, and marriage involves finding Christian mates for them which is extremely difficult. Beit Saeed, which has a Christian family from Jordan living in the orphanage and caring for the children as if they were their own, continues to need your prayers and interest.

Arab Response to New Hospital

Dr. Nykerk writes in the Bahrain medical report, "All of us appreciate the increased personnel now working in the Bahrain hospitals, but for those of us who had to evacuate Iraq there are regrets that we are no longer able to continue our witness through the means of our Amarah hospital. But there are plenty of opportunities for useful service in Bahrain and we pray that the work may be blessed through the increased efforts here."

Over a 1,000 outcalls were made this year by the two doctors. Both the men's and women's hospitals are full most of the time although the government has two excellent large hospitals and an extensive health program. The dilapidated, disreputable and decaying Mason Memorial Hospital is to be replaced at last. We rejoiced when the Board finally gave us per-
mission to initiate a fund-raising campaign locally. To arouse the enthusiasm of the people and to keep them informed, a large piece of masonite was procured and on it a huge thermometer was painted. This was hoisted to a prominent place on the roof of the school where all could see it. With the incoming gifts the mercury went up until it showed the goal nearly reached. Then the sign was discreetly removed as all of the pledges had not yet been redeemed. The ruling Sheikh, the government, Arab, Indian, Jewish and Persian merchants, British firms, all contributed generously. Even the women of the ruling families expressed a desire to participate in giving, so a tea was arranged for them on the tennis court—a social occasion which they enjoyed. Their contributions that day amounted to over 16,000 rupees.

"It gives a warm feeling of satisfaction and gratitude to have the people of Bahrain show this high degree of confidence in the mission work in Bahrain," writes Dr. Storm, "and it has been most encouraging to see such a response from Muslims when the whole Middle East is in such a state of turmoil with special emphasis placed on a nationalism that is anti-Western."

Kuwait

The Church of Christ in Kuwait is moving forward and have called their own pastor. "The decision was a sobering one to many," writes Mr. MacNeill. "It makes the church responsible for a monthly budget for salary, housing and allowances."
To meet the budget and maintain benevolent giving, the Church Council is initiating planned giving, an entirely new idea.

"The new pastor, Yusuf Abdul Noor, is 26 years of age, unmarried, and the top number of this year’s seminary graduating class. In the course of his divinity training he spent one year in a village church in Upper Egypt, and nine months in a Cairo church. He is short in stature, but great in faith. His sermons are excellently prepared and presented, based and centered on the Gospel of Jesus Christ alone. He has exhibited a spirit of reconciliation and understanding, essential in Kuwait, a zeal in contacting members of his parish, and all Christians, and a missionary fervor and love that reaches out to all men. He is a fine forerunner for the ordained Arab minister of the Gulf.”

The Bible shop reports increased distribution and sales under the guidance of Yaqub Shemmas. A monthly average amounted to 800 portions and 24 Bibles and Testaments. The influence of this shop is far-reaching.

The Arabic Christian Literature Committee, headed by the Rev. Don MacNeill, is busy preparing a correspondence course. An accompanying picture shows one of the first lessons. These lessons will be suitable for Christians and non-Christians, the educated and barely literate, the child and the adult. Mr. MacNeill is assisted in this project by the new pastor who is deeply interested in this type of work, “and has cooperated no end in writing in original Arabic lessons based on the aim of the course which is to lead the reader into a careful and comprehensive reading of the Bible.”

The women evangelists comment that Paul’s statement about we being many are one is easily understood within the church in Kuwait. So many different countries, church backgrounds and gifts are represented. “We are
That you Might Have Life—the correspondence course, with its only text, the Bible.

growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ; this has been apparent to us during the past year." They visit the hospital patients where they share their own personal experiences of joy in Christ, or give words of reassurance and calming, perhaps offering a prayer before an operation.

Unable to get a re-entry permit into Iraq, Miss Hoogeveen was available for Christian education work for which there was a great need in Kuwait. A Junior Christian Endeavor was organized, young people's societies and Bible classes, two daily vacation Bible schools and a Mr. and Mrs. club which met for a devotional period followed by a social hour. The church was truly the center of activity for the young people. Miss Hoogeveen concludes her report: "It has been a full and busy year. Much has been accomplished, much also has been left undone. I am reminded that after the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus commanded that the fragments be gathered, that nothing be lost. Every morsel of what He had blessed was worth gathering up for use. And so I would give to Him these fragments of things done and wait on Him that nothing be lost."

A Mission of Compassion

Dr. Allison, Miss Veldman and Dr. Bosch tell of the problems of trying to keep the volume of work of the hospital within bounds, of maintaining the physical plant, of hospital unification, and of coping with the crowds. "The burden of the work load on the woman's side is carried mostly by a loyal staff of South Indian Christians. There are two lady doctors and ten Indian girl nurses who are also midwives. These keep the hospital running day and night all week. The hospital owes them a debt of gratitude for their faithful loving services. One with special training has been made nursing supervisor."

The medical missionary in Kuwait asks himself if the hospital is really necessary and if time, money and energy are wasted in work beyond the
scope of preaching the Word. There are 206,000 people in Kuwait, mostly muslims, who do not hear the Gospel except as it is proclaimed through the church and hospital. “Before we can present our message we must make contact. Then too we must carry on a mission of compassion and mercy to those in need, not just as souls to be saved, but as persons to be loved. Christ placed tremendous stress on service, in a practical and realistic manner. Hospital figures show that there is such a need even here in rich Kuwait. The door is still open, and while it is we stand to serve the Muslim with penitence in our hearts for the Christian Church which has for so many centuries neglected her duty.”

An intelligent Muslim said, “The people come to the Christian hospital because they believe that the doctors and nurses are bound by their faith in Christ to do the best thing for their patients.” This reveals the designs of the patients but also their convictions that Christ influences the life and action of people in a way which is lacking in Islam. Often the Muslim patient says, “I want you to take care of me; your hands are blessed.” These may be idle words, nervous hopes of people entering critical periods of their lives, but at times, surely, they represent a deep inner conviction that the hand of God does touch His creation through the medium of another’s hand. “Bless Thou the work of our hands.” Some believe the prayer is answered, although their concept of the Divine Healer is limited or misunderstood. “O God of health and reconciliation, make us worthy.”

Iraq

In the secretary’s report this year is found the sentence, “We regretfully report that we took action at this meeting to consider Amarah a closed
station, and reconstituted and re-allocated all accounts from the Amarah work.”

Is this retreat? NO! Let the Iraq missionaries speak: “Oh, that Ishmael might live before Thee! was the fervent but troubled prayer of Abraham many centuries ago. He could not understand that God was apparently rejecting this son whom he, Abraham, loved so much. Yet following God’s leading through faith, we found ourselves in a somewhat similar position during this past year when we were forced to leave the work in Amarah. Surely it must be of His leading and will carry with it His richest blessing.”

So wrote Rev. Harvey Staal when he was forced to leave Amarah. He continues. “A few months after the revolution the Amarah municipality began requesting the Mission to relinquish the property and buildings in Amarah. When this request was not heeded, they began official proceedings of expropriation of the immovable property of the Mission. Every effort was made to stop these proceedings, including several talks with the highest government officials in Baghdad, but all to no avail. The property was taken over on March 16, 1959, and the missionaries were requested to leave. Having been prepared for this eventuality, they had already moved all the furnishings and equipment of the church, hospital and missionary homes down to Basrah.

“The thoughts and prayers of all of us, but especially of those who lived and worked there, are with the small group of Christians who are left. First their church was taken from them. Then their pastor was ordered to leave. We pray that God may strengthen them that they may continue true to their faith, and may His Spirit continue to work in the hearts of all who have heard His Word proclaimed throughout these past years of service. We all thank God for the opportunities for service and witness which He has given us in Amarah. Surely these have not been in vain. May it be His will that once again in Amarah may be a place where the sons of Ishmael may live before Him.”

Mr. Holler, forced to leave Basrah in March, writes: “When the affairs
of men suddenly change for the worse, one's immediate reaction is to feel insecure, exposed and helpless. On second thought, however, one reflects on the nature of his own faith. There, in the realm of deeper reflection, is the truth for all to see, that one's true and durable support is, after all, not in the intentions and works of perishable men, but with the Father of Lights, with whom there is never the slightest variation of shadow or inconsistency. (James 1:17, Phillips). When the monarchy of Iraq fell in the summer of 1958, one felt insecure, exposed and helpless. The strongest country in the whole Middle East had suddenly been cast into revolution, brutal and swift. The faith that one had in the monarchy was suddenly not there. What was left was the God who has been and always will be consistent and durable, the God of whom people must be reminded and to whom people must be called anew if balance is to be kept in human affairs."

No one who has not experienced it can know how it feels to be told to leave the country, one's work, one's home on 48 hours notice. "The abiding spirit of God was experienced in two incidents which occurred at the time of the expulsion from Iraq. The boys of the intermediate school were not told of my involuntary departure until I was actually leaving the mission compound. To a man, the student body crowded around the car, eager to shake hands: very few said a word. The farewells were silent ones.

"Despite the new government line in Iraq which speaks so harshly against imperalists and missionaries alike, the boys seemed to speak eloquently, howbeit silently, of another point of view which came not from their lips but from their hearts.

"The second incident that same morning concerned the farewells given by Isqof Garabet and Fareed Toma aboard the ship that was taking me away. These two men represented to me the lasting hope and purpose of the Church in Iraq. They are men devoted and committed to the Light of the World
and to the Kingdom that wears well. The Isqof’s farewell especially will always be remembered; it was as a father to a son.”

The Future of Iraq

It would seem to be the will of the Lord that the missionaries continue as best they can. Dr. R. Park Johnson, the Board’s Field Representative, who stopped and saw the missionaries in Basrah and Baghdad soon after the mission meeting, wrote: “It is impossible to make any predictions about the course of future events. I found the life of the people progressing busily and normally on the surface and I was able to move about freely and as usual, except for the 9:30 curfew now in force. However, there is an undercurrent of uncertainty in the atmosphere. No one knows what will happen, or if it does in what direction it will go.”

In the meantime the Gosselinks, who have been permitted to remain in the country, last summer the only Protestant missionaries, are busy in Basrah. Five missionaries of the United Mission in Iraq were permitted to return to Baghdad in the autumn and all are working in the American School for Girls there. The boys’ school and the girls’ school are continuing in Basrah. These are the only Protestant missionaries in Iraq at this time.

Can you read this report and not hear Arabia Calling? The Mission lists its personnel needs every year and sends this list to the Board. The candidate secretary then goes out in search of God-chosen recruits.

In the pioneer days of the Mission, when the band was very, very small, one of the members wrote, “Our King can do without any of us, and He will devise means whereby His Kingdom shall be extended, in spite of the apathy of the people at home. But woe to that soldier of the Cross who hangs back and is unwilling to serve when the King’s call for volunteers from the front comes to his ears! We dare to think that it is a noble thing when a man or woman leaves home comforts and worldly prospects to follow the King on foreign service. Should we not rather think it a deadly disgrace that the King should have to call twice for men to fill posts of difficulty and danger or of loneliness and drudgery in the outposts of His empire?”
Gerrit Pennings was for forty years an active member of the Arabian Mission. In retirement his vital interest in the Mission and its missionaries never flagged. He was always in correspondence with one or the other of us, sending us news or articles which were of special interest to the missionaries. All of this correspondence was typically written on a typewriter which, as he used to say, never learned to show any regard for the conventional rules of spelling and punctuation. His letters, however, were always intensely alive and vitally interesting because, whatever the topic, he could write on it with verve and intelligence. No person of my acquaintance has ever boasted of so much accurate information on such a wide range of subjects. Whether it was the latest miracle drug—much to the confusion of the doctors—, the latest and best ideas on a centrifugal water pump or the most up-to-date means for the propagation of the Gospel among Muslims, he was equally at home on any topic.

He was gifted with what many call a green thumb. A part of his legacy to each of the stations in which he worked, other than the lasting impression of a Christ-like personality, has been the green vines and trees he has planted. Many of these trees are now quite large and verdantly perpetuate his memory in a parched and barren land.

Gerrit Pennings was also intensely interested in the welfare and comfort of his fellow missionaries. He installed sanitary equipment here in Kuwait when such things were still considered somewhat of a luxury in this area. In Amarah he improved our very haphazard water system and spent much time and energy improving our desert coolers. Among the more permanent material monuments to his memory in Arabia is the Kate V. S. Olcott Memorial Hospital in Kuwait which he was instrumental in planning and constructing.

Whatever may have been the extent of his contribution to the physical aspect or well-being of the Arabian Mission, he was primarily and most single-mindedly a minister of the Gospel and a missionary whose life's blood was Christ and Him crucified. In the course of his missionary activities he always made himself so very much a part of the life of the hospital that the patients expected and looked forward to his daily visits. He seldom disappointed them. He would come armed with his Bible and an Arabic newspaper or, with his old victrola under his arm (the carrying handle had long since broken off) he would trudge off to the hospital to entertain his friends with both religious and secular records.

In Arabic he had an exceptionally wide vocabulary. His sermons showed fine versatility and he read easily and rapidly from modern newspapers and periodicals. He was also conversant with the writings of the great Arab scholar Al Ghazali. In the last year of his career he began the translation into English of a part of the Arabic hymnal and completed it in retirement.

One of the many interesting facets of his character was his fine sense of humor. It is told of him early in his missionary career while he was touring in Muscat, that camp was made in a typically rocky wadi. When he arose next morning, rubbing ruefully at places where stones had left indentations
in his body, he looked over at his seemingly more comfortable neighbor, Dr. Harrison, and said, “Truly, Arabia is a hard field, Paul.”

Once during his courtship of Miss Schafheitlin he bought a two-pound box of candy in Basrah intending to present it as a lover’s offering to his fiance, then a language student in Bahrain. He had even written telling of his rare find. But alas, such was the temptation presented by this delicious candy to voracious young Gerrit that it arrived in Bahrain occupying a very central position in the anatomy of the suitor. Unabashed, he presented himself to his love with the remark, “You’ve got both me and the candy in one package!” The combination must have pleased Miss Schafheitlin very much because not long thereafter she married it.

Mr. Pennings loved to amuse small children with clumsy acts of leger-de-main done in such a way that the child would eventually discover how it was done. He would then smile happily at the child’s boisterous delight and make a great show of being completely fooled by its attempt to play the trick on him.

The severest test of his Christian love and loyalty came at the end of his missionary career. His wife was stricken with a paralysis that eventually left her completely helpless. Their retirement came due the following year and then for five long years in America he was her everything. He read to her, talked to her, tried to get her to discuss missionary topics in an attempt to keep alive the fading spark of intelligence in her tortured mind. Never once did he abandon hope even until the very day in the spring of 1954 when she was mercifully taken from him into the waiting arms of her Saviour. Greater love has no man.

Gerrit J. Pennings for 44 years missionary in the Arab world died in Orange City, Iowa, on November 2, 1959 at the age of 79 years.
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