

# PRAYER BELL



## INDIA



*Neil and Ruth Wescombe arrive in Mukti*



### RAMABAI MUKTI MISSION

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# He is Faithful

*By Ruth Wescombe*

November the 28th, 1962, found us waving farewell to loved ones and friends in Melbourne. As the ship pulled away from the wharf, tears came to my eyes at the thought of leaving them all behind. But at the same moment, into my heart came a peace and assurance that we were going forth at God's command, constrained by His love.

"Faithful is he which calleth you, who also will do it." This I have proved true over and over again, and the future is assured in Him because when God calls He enables.

The first glimpses of India gave me quite a thrill, and as we travelled the 150 miles from Bombay to Kedgaon by train, there was a note of expectation in the air. A number of the missionaries met us at the station, and then came the inevitable ride in the bullock tonga to Mukti. As we bumped along the dusty road, we tried to take in all we saw—the tiny shops stacked to the doors with wares, the skinny dogs, curious adults, and the barefooted children eyeing our cart.

As we neared Mukti, we could see the rest of the missionary staff at the front gate and a big WELCOME sign. Introductions followed with handshakes, kisses, clicking of cameras and the whirring of a movie. Two little girls came forward to put garlands of flowers around our necks and bouquets in our hands. So, bedecked with flowers and led by Miss Fletcher, we walked between the lines of singing children, whose faces were clean and shining—such a contrast to the dirty, ragged children we had seen loitering around the stations. One felt rather overwhelmed at such a spontaneous welcome. But there was a real sense of God's presence and the certainty that He had led thus far.

Arriving on the 21st of December meant coming into the midst of busy Christmas preparations. Many impressions have been stamped upon my memory during these first days at Mukti—the cleanliness of the grounds; the large stone buildings surrounded with trees and shrubs, and the organization of all the activities; the joy and appreciation of missionaries as parcels from Australia containing gifts for the children and themselves were unpacked; the happy faces of the children as they received presents on Christmas day; the excitement and fun enjoyed at the Christmas parties, and trying to understand strange words; listening to them pray and sing and recognising Christmas tunes; joining in services of worship; the Christmas thanksgiving service when quietly and reverently, row by row, the congregation came forward with their gifts—a variety of offerings—money, grain, food, fowls, and even a baby goat, these representing their thankfulness to God for all His blessings to them and for sending the gift of His Son.

So we look forward to this coming year, knowing that God will continue to go before and prepare the way, "for he is faithful."

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## He shall direct thy Paths

*By Neil Wescombe*

Looking back over the last three years of one's life, there is a sense of joy as we see the Lord's workings. It is just three years since I was asked to come to Mukti. In the space of these three years there has been Bible training, the school of experience, and deputation work. How we thank God for these experiences as we look back.

During our deputation tours, telling of the work God had drawn us to, there was the yearning to get up and get going. Then came the day of departure from home and loved ones. Even through the sadness of leaving them, there came the assurance of God's peace and joy in our ways. How reassuring is Proverbs 3:6 "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

So the day came of our arrival and welcome here at Mukti. One was a little fearful at first, but soon was at ease in the Christian warmth that was extended.

For months gone by, we had told many of the work, and now here we were. As we were introduced, we felt we knew each one, for we had seen them many times on the screen. Thus our arrival was as if we were returning from a furlough as we experienced the warmth of fellowship here. Also to know the assurance of God, that this is His place of appointment at this time.

Amongst the impressions of Mukti, I think the greatest was to see the impact of God's work on these people—people so different in contrast to those at home, in their simple ways and customs, devoted to the same God that we know. One's heart was moved when on Christmas thanksgiving day they brought their goats, fowls, grain and money as a token of their thanks to God for His blessing upon them.

Then in contrast, we had the opportunity to visit several villages as we went out with the group to look for a site to set up a camp for the evangelistic group going out next week to launch a 6-weeks' evangelistic effort. What a difference from what we had seen in Mukti! In these dirty, smelly, ramshackled villages lived their fellow-citizens. In these villages there is no permanent witness of the gospel, and one could not help noticing the difference in their appearance as we compared them with those back in Mukti. People ask us why we do not leave the people in their old customs and traditions. But when one sees the actual change in their countenance that is imparted by the light of the gospel, one is challenged afresh with the need of these village people still in darkness.

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# *It must be felt*

*By Mrs. E. Harrington*

"For unto us a child is born".... "and thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins." The beauty of Christmas at Mukti cannot be described in words, *it must be felt*. It is truly the birthday of the Babe of Bethlehem who is the Saviour of the world.

For weeks the air has vibrated with the sounds of carols and hymns of praise as programmes have been practised, and worship services planned. Anticipation has run high amongst the children—some little hearts have been lonely for their favourite dolls, missing only to be dressed in a new set of clothes. Scripture portions, hymns and poems have been memorized until the true story of Christmas has been firmly implanted in the hearts of our Mukti family. Even the stars seemed to shine more brightly during the nights just preceding Christmas day, as if the very Lord of glory was adding His approval to the preparations.

Christmas day dawned about 6:30, for the nights are long at this time of the year. The sound of singing reached our ears as one family group after the other stood before the door of their missionary's room. Doors were opened, and a loving greeting touched off the key-note of this happy day. Each room had been attractively, but simply decorated and in many the light was soft and warm as candles gleamed. Simple but gaily wrapped parcels awaited eager hearts and hands.

A short and sincere worship service preceeded the moment when packages were opened. Beautiful dolls appeared, pull toys for the youngest, practical school bags with slates, simple toys and articles of clothing, books, crayons, pencils, rulers, and many other gifts were unwrapped. Joy shining on these faces was something wonderful to see. All of you who have had a share in sending money to make such a happy time possible must have been with us in spirit. We trust that some of this spirit of Christmas, with its adoration, joy and blessing, reached you as you celebrated in your homes so far away.

Joy was also the portion of the older women and girls in their compounds as they filed in, one at a time, and came forward when their names were called to receive their gift—just a bucket (pail) or a cooking pot or brass plate or drinking glass; a length of material for a petticoat for a warm piece of blouse material; a tiffin (food carrier) or a teakettle; a towel with a comb and spool of thread—simple gifts, but so necessary to everyday living. Each bowed low and expressed gratitude for the gift and for the love that had provided it.

At 10 o'clock the ringing of the bell assembled everyone in the church for the worship service. A great spirit of reverence seemed to be upon everyone. Presents were forgotten in anticipation of great spiritual blessing. A hush broken only by the chirping of the many sparrows which dwell within the church, was over every heart. As all were seated on the floor, the new Christmas dress or sari, with matching hair ribbon made the

congregation resemble a lovely flower garden. The choir girls, some blind, were dressed in white saris over green blouses and looked a bit like angels. The smaller children were seated on the platform behind them and Pastor Hiwale stood at one side. The rear of the church was filled with the "Bethel" Christian families, those employed as farm workers, and friends from near and far, many of whom were Hindus. The entire programme honoured and magnified the Lord both in spoken word and song. The consciousness of the presence of the Holy Spirit brought our hearts low before the Babe of Bethlehem in humble adoration and worship. All too soon the service was ended.

There followed a joyous time of giving as the visitors departed, each receiving a simple gift and a package of Indian sweets. How grateful we were that your gifts made possible this pleasure for our workers and our Christian families.

There remains so much to be told — of carolling on Christmas eve, of the "family" lunches on Christmas day, of the wonderful time when thirty-one members of the staff sat down to a happy Christmas dinner, of the fellowship around the improvised fireplace in the sitting room afterwards, of the parties in each family group during the following week, of the happy laughter and willing feet, swift to do their service—oh, just so many things to tell, for my heart is full, but space prohibits. Truly Christmas at Mukti is a feast of good things that stirs the heart to its very depth, that brings a sparkle to the eye that must be seen to be understood, and a smile to the lips that comes from a genuine love within for the Babe of Bethlehem and for those around them. I shall always cherish the memory of Christmas at Mukti.

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**A**nd—to God's care there  
surely is no ending !  
He who gave Christ can  
not withhold His care :  
And we may know the joy  
of his attending,—  
And in the hour of need  
shall find Him there !

—J. DANSON SMITH.



*One of our little ones with Mrs. Harrington admiring a new dress*

## ***Thank You for a Happy Christmas***

There was a holy quiet in our large church Christmas morning as about 1200 people gathered together to hear the message of a Saviour, manger born. The reverence manifested during the service and the quiet way all left the church at the close revealed that hearts had not only been to Bethlehem but also to Calvary. We thank you for your prayers that helped make the sense of His presence so real.

Throughout the day the children's faces reflected the joy of it all. There were new, gay dresses made by willing, friendly fingers in several different countries, colourful ribbons on black braids, the happy claspings of a doll or, similar gift made possible by your thoughtfulness and generosity, balloons to blow and send sailing into the air, Christmas cards to treasure.

It is not by our words but by the lights shining in the children's eyes that we would thank all of you for a reverent and happy Christmas, and we know the Lord is saying unto you His "Inasmuch...."

## Praise and Prayer Notes

### *Visitors*

**PRAISE -** It has been a joy to welcome Mrs. E. Harrington, who is the vice president of our Mukti board of the American Council, and Mr. Harrington together with their niece Pat Wilson into our Mukti family for a two-month's visit. We were glad that they were able to enjoy the happy Christmas season with us, and appreciated their help and fellowship during this busy time. We praise God for bringing them, and trust that their stay with us has enriched their lives and their loving ministry for Mukti.

### *Arrival of New Missionaries*

**PRAISE -** Neil and Ruth Wescombe were welcomed into our Mukti family with great joy just a few days before Christmas. Neil was busy getting loud speakers and other electrical equipment in order the very first day they arrived, and has been kept busy ever since.

**PRAYER -** They need your prayers as they study the Marathi language and face many new challenges and adjustments in their new home in India.

### *Evangelistic*

**PRAISE -** We have prayed much for guidance in the selection of a camping site for our evangelistic campaign during the next few months. There are needs all around, but an area where there has been no witness since we had a camp there several years ago, seems to be the place of God's appointment again this year. A site has been procured, another tent has been purchased, and preparations are underway to go out with evangelistic teams, each one composed of twelve members, beginning on the 5th of January.

**PRAYER -** There is "much land to be possessed" for Christ in that region and we covet your prayers that God may do a great work of salvation through His servants. Pray that each one who goes forth during this 6-week period may be anointed of God and that the Holy Spirit may cause His Word to bring forth fruit unto salvation in many lives.

### *Health of our Missionaries*

**PRAYER -** We would like to place a request upon your hearts for the health of each one on the staff here. Some are in need of your special prayers at this time. Adrienne Mocatta has not been too well for several weeks and we request prayer that she may be given the strength and health needed for her ministry here. Sonubai Anda suffers much from a bronchial irritation which is constantly aggravated by her ministry in the smoke and dust of the kitchens and store-rooms. The busy Christmas season has been a strain for her as well as others. She needs a touch from the heavenly Physician. Colds and attacks of flu tax the strength of many these days, especially when responsibilities have to be carried on in spite of physical weakness.

## *Language Examinations*

**PRAYER** - Remember to pray for Laura MacFarland and Heather Johnstone as they prepare for their Marathi language examinations in February.

## *Other Examinations*

**PRAYER** - Pray for some of our girls who will be writing their final examinations upon completing their nurses', Bible, and teachers' training in the coming months. May the Lord help them to do well for His glory and lead them clearly into the avenues of service He has chosen for them.

## *Supa*

**PRAYER** - Miss Elda Amstutz who has laboured faithfully for many years in our out-station at Supa, is preparing for furlough and retiral in the next few weeks. How difficult it is to leave the work into which so many years, tears and prayers have been poured, can only be understood by those who have received and answered the call of God to a hard and lonely place like Supa. We wonder who will be ready to hear and answer the call of God to this ministry when Miss Amstutz leaves. We share this burden with you for prayer and also ask you to uphold Miss Amstutz as she leaves for America.

## *The Boys' Home in Dhond*

**PRAISE** - We praise the Lord for all that Miss Elizabeth Morris's loving ministry means to the orphan boys in Dhond. They have had a wonderful Christmas, and her personal interest in the lives of each one of them from the little 3-year-old shepherd boy David, to the oldest high school boy home for the Christmas holidays, is evidenced in the happiness and contentment seen in all.

**PRAYER** - She would value your prayers for the responsible task of a ministry with about 150 boys.

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