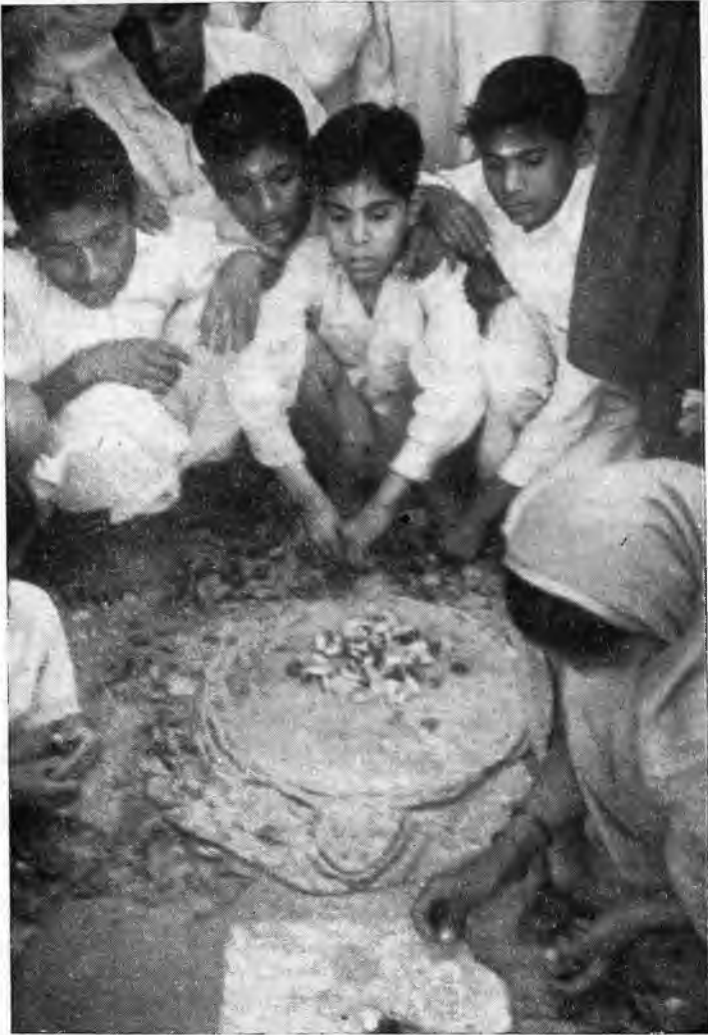


PRAYER BELL



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INDIA



A woman burning offerings before brass turtle-god, stopped to listen to the gospel.

RAMABAI MUKTI MISSION

April – May – June, 1963

Yale University Library
New Haven, Conn.

A Farewell Prayer

BY ELDA AMSTUTZ

“Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” Ex. 3:5. These were the words sounding in my ears as Miss Steed and I arrived at Mukti’s gate the morning of October 17, 1927. Ah yes, it was holy ground, as it is even now. Ramabai prayed for every foot of these 122 acres of ground to be hallowed. Then came the hearty greetings from all of the big family here, and it has been the same each time when I have returned from furlough. One time there was a lapse of nearly 7 years when Carol Terry and I had been interned in Manilla. How sweet to hear the girls say then, “Moushie, we prayed for you each day, and then we said ‘Hallelujah!’ when we heard you were at last delivered.” This was precious.

Now on the eve of my departure from this land, which I have grown to love so dearly, I feel the ground here in Mukti is still holy. Yes, it seems the same in our out-station at Supa, too, where I have laboured for the Lord these many years. It is so hard to leave the place where so many victories have been won. Only the other night when we looked into the face of our glorious Lord in a time of difficulty, we were assured that God would undertake. Then when Gangabai, the nurse was able to help a young woman in desperate need and her twin premature babies were born alive, we praised the Lord together. The parents were so grateful they nearly fell at our feet. Though they did not know our Saviour who died for them, they had sensed His presence.

Last week for the 25th time, I went to Mukti’s evangelistic camp with Miss Callan. It was situated 22 miles beyond us and it was a joy to present Christ to the many never-dying souls in that area. Often my heart had been bent with such a burden, and so sad because so few responded to the claims of Christ. At the camp this year many gospels, books and some Bibles were sold and many, many tracts were given out. Pray for the Word, that it may spring up in their hearts and bring forth fruit. One man said in a sad voice, “Auntie, how can I get deliverance from the demons of Vithoba that trouble me so? Only yesterday I spent 100 rupees to try to appease their wrath.” The temple with all its darkness was right there. We were able to assure him that there was deliverance for him in Christ. If he would take His name ONLY, he could be freed.

It is music in one’s ears to hear the children here in Supa singing “Jesus saves, He saves me, Jesus saves, He saves me now.” If only all would believe this truth here in this darkened village, then the many ugly-looking idols from every corner of this town of 3,000 would be removed. This is my deepest prayer.

Pray earnestly that the ones appointed to come to take over the work here may be able to reap a harvest that will satisfy the heart of the Master. Pray too, that God’s precious promise for me may be fulfilled as I leave this dear land. The future is uncertain but He has promised in Psalm 121:8 “The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in.” Blessed be the name of the Lord for He will go before as I return to America.

The Plight of a Heathen Mother

BY GLADYS FLETCHER

The cold winter morning had given way to bright sunshine by nine o'clock. Already our evangelistic band of six Bible women, a nurse and I had preached to people by the roadside and in a village square. Now three of us were standing in a millet field where a number of men were making ready a threshing floor, preparatory to threshing and winnowing the grain in the centuries-old way. They stopped work and listened to the gospel message of redeeming love. Becoming very interested, one man bought a gospel and a "Path of Life" book, saying that he would read it carefully.

I enquired if there were any villages in the nearby mountains.

"Yes, certainly," he said, "see that road? It will take you to one village, and you can walk to six more. The road is steep, but your jeep will do it easily."

Gathering the other Biblewomen together, we climbed into the jeep, and started what proved to be a hair-raising ride. The road became narrower and steeper and more rocky. At the first hairpin bend we decided that it would be easier for the jeep to turn without us in it. We climbed the half mile to the top of the first ridge. A little down the other side, three weary people stopped our jeep.

"What do you want?" We asked. The older woman, pointing to the young women said, "My daughter is about to have a baby. Will you take us to the nearest village hospital? Her first baby was born dead in a big city hospital."

The young mother was never to see a bed or a hospital, for her baby was born right there behind the jeep on the dusty, stony and sun-drenched road, assisted by our Indian nurse, an older Biblewoman and myself. It proved to be a difficult case. Finally a seemingly pulseless baby girl started to breathe. A tiny cry rewarded our efforts, and told the straining ears of the young husband that his baby was alive. God had heard the cry of our hearts, and saved two lives.

My last view of them was that of the mother on her husband's back, being carried back up a steep hill back to their mountain hut, with the grandmother trailing behind, carrying the baby wrapped in a dirty, torn piece of sari. What does the future hold for that poor little family?

In the suffering of that young mother I saw as it were the suffering of thousands of India's mothers, their hearts filled with fear and ignorance, surrounded by poverty and distress. My heart ached for them as I saw the need of physical, and above all, spiritual help.

How tender and gentle our Lord and Saviour was to the women when He met them in the home, by the well, or along the dusty road. To them He revealed Himself as the Resurrection and the Life. When the mothers came to Jesus He gathered the children in His arms and blessed them.

Women of the homelands! Down through the ages Christ has called to women like you and me to take up the burden of our less fortunate sisters in other lands. As you read this article have you caught the vision? Has the Lord spoken to you? We have so much compared to them. Have you not felt the need that there is all around us right here in our district? Has not your heart been challenged as you have read the story? Does it not call from you a practical, spiritual and prayerful response?

A Heathen Woman's Face

BY MRS. W. M. TURNBULL

Have you ever read the sorrow in a heathen woman's face,
As you met her eye to eye among the throng ?
She who is by sex your sister, though of different race,
Have you ever wondered why she has no song ?

It will take no occult power to fathom all her secrets deep,
And it needs no cruel probing just to know;
If you're filled with Christ's compassion and can weep with those who weep,
All her inmost soul will then to you outflow.

If you let Christ's love flow through you with a power she can feel,
She will follow close behind you as you go;
And if you but turn a moment, you will meet her mute appeal
For a blessing that your shadow might bestow.

Yes, she feels you bear the comfort she has sought for years to find,
In the temple where her gods sit row on row,
And somehow your very presence breathes a balm for troubled mind,
For she feels that you must understand and know.

She's a prisoner that beats against the very bars of life,
And she longs for death, yet dares not, must not die.
She is cursed with cruel curses should she be a sonless wife,
And a baby daughter answers cry with cry.

She's the daughter of her mother who before her trod the road,
She's the mother of a daughter who will know
All the depths of her own anguish, all the heavy, weary load.
All the bitterness- a heathen woman's woe !

No! 'tis not a heathen woman-'tis a piteous captive throng,
In the deserts, jungles, paddyfields and marts,
In the lands that know not Jesus, lands of cruelty and wrong,
Where there is no balm for wounded aching hearts.

Shall we let this stream flow downward in its widening deathward way ?
Shall we let this flood of misery hold its throng ?
We can stem the deadly current if we go and give and pray,
They must join us in the glad redemption song ?

By My Spirit

BY JANET CALLAN

"Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" Zech. 4:6

At the outset of our task of giving out the word of God in the villages, the Lord reminded us that by His Spirit He would work for His glory. As we waited before the Lord on the first Sunday in camp, we were shown again how Jacob, the usurper became Israel, a prince with God. We needed that promise from the Word to strengthen us to witness boldly for the Lord.

The religious zeal of the people was vividly brought before us again as we witnessed a big religious fair in the town of Jezuri. Some had travelled in crowded trains for days and nights to reach the temple. Others had come by bullock cart over dusty, bumpy roads, the men taking turns carrying the long, saffron-flagged bamboo poles in front of the group, and some even carrying their village god in a special carriage. As they neared the temple, drums and cymbals increased their tempo. They rose to a grand crescendo and the men danced and balanced their flag poles.

Anxious as they were to know what we had to say, many of them would not be diverted as they bathed and proceeded to their worship in the temple at the top of the hill. However, in the evening, for several hours large crowds listened intently as we gave out the gospel message in word and song. There were continuous crowds of over a hundred people. Many gospel portions were sold.

The Lord gave opportunities for medical ministries at the camp and also in several villages where we gave out the Word. One day we set out for a place called "Black Valley." Several people said, "The jeep will not be able to go there." However, we pressed on over bad roads to the village of Mandhre. The people were surprised to see us and said that no one had come there before with the gospel. When they saw the medicines, they crowded around the car all wanting to be examined at once. Our stock was soon finished. There were injections, teeth extractions, and medical examinations right there by the roadside.

Gangabai, a Brahmin woman said, "Come every week. I will give you a room for a dispensary. I will even cook a meal for you. It will be even better if someone would stay here to help our women in child-birth and to care for our babies. We need medical help so badly." One other woman brought her only son, a year old. She said, "He is often sick. I have taken him many miles to different doctors and have spent all I have, but he doesn't improve. You must give him health." The next day she made her way to our camp saying, "I have relatives near

here, and I am staying right here until you make my son well." After a few days of treatment and prayer, we rejoiced to see some improvement. He was sleeping well, was playing, and his cough was almost gone. He was much brighter as she left with him, shortly before we broke up camp.



Fresh medical supplies came at the end of the week and we were able to return to Mandhre and some more distant villages, eventually reaching our goal "Black Valley." The road was bad. Several times the Biblewomen wanted to get out and walk, and I confess I would have been happy to do so also, but as we committed ourselves to the Lord, He took us in safety.

Here also we found a desperate need for medical help. Some of the folks in "Black Valley" pleaded for a dispensary there, and we were sorry to have to tell them that because we were short-staffed and had to work without a doctor, we could not possibly help them.

As we looked over that valley with its villages scattered here and there, inaccessible by car, the thought came. "What a place for a consecrated Christian flying doctor! A helicopter would reach them all!"

Please pray that the Spirit of God will continue to do His work in these villages through the written Word left behind. In the hearts of His children may He show the need and call out His appointed ones to meet the needs for His glory and the extension of His Kingdom.

Publishing Good Tidings

BY KAMALBAI DESHPANDE

"The Lord giveth the word: The women that publish the tidings are a great host. And she that tarrieth at home divideth the spoil." Psalm 68 ; 11, 12. R. S. V.

Shortly after Christmas it was our privilege to publish the tidings to those who sit in darkness during our camping season. When I sought the Lord for a promise at the outset of our ministry, He give me John 16:8 "When he (the Holy Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement." Through these words the Lord showed me afresh how important it is that our hearts be washed clean and purified so the Holy Spirit can freely dwell within our hearts and that He can reprove the world through His word.

Ours was the second group at camp. Upon arrival, several women recognized me from the time we had visited the area three years ago. As the day was dying in the west, our milkwoman came and she together with the other women, sat down near the tent to listen as we played the Indian instruments and sang for them. They listened gladly as we gave them the gospel that first night. That is how it was every night, and as we took the message to the villages, too.



We prayed that the Lord would show us His message for the group that gathered at the tent each night, and He gave Miss Fletcher the plan of a simple series of lessons on the life of Christ. Every night the women returning from working in the fields all day, did their cooking quickly and hurried over to our tent. Besides them, there were around 30 boys and girls and young people, who came to hear the stories. They seemed to realize

that these times were solemn as we continued the story of the birth of Christ through to His second coming. The boys, especially 10-year-old Sampat could tell the stories and repeat the verses that went with them, almost word perfect. The women, being elderly and illiterate, could not tell the stories, but they would try to learn the Bible verses. How encouraging it was to see their interest!

Every morning at dawn we left for the villages and always had a good reception as we gave out the gospel before the people went off to work in the fields. Then we visited small groups of houses by the roadside. People working in the fields nearby would stop to listen, too. They listened so eagerly, for it seemed more ever before, the people have lost faith in their stone gods. We remember one woman who was so earnest and who requested us to stay and keep on telling her the story of Christ the Saviour.

When we heard that there was a big religious fair at a big temple town not far away, we took the message of our living Saviour there. Seeing the pilgrims, I could not thank God enough for having saved my life from such darkness. The power of darkness was so evident that one could feel it pressing in on all sides. Truly it seemed the domain of the Evil one. I saw once more the stranglehold that the head man of the village has on the people who have to blindly follow him in everything he does. And what an example to follow he was! He seemed to be demon-possessed as they followed the palanquin containing their goddess, dancing and swaying to the beat of the big drums. We noticed how deeply devoted the women were and how eagerly they followed to get a "darshan" or vision of their goddess. The whole mob followed the palanquin and the drums into the temple where lambs and roosters were offered to the gods. I spoke to some of the women who told me the meaning of their festival to their goddess. Oh, it nearly broke my heart to see such sincerity and yet such foolish blindness as these people worshiped their gods. We spoke to them of the living Way — of a Saviour who was alive forever more and could hear and answer their heart's cry. Will you join with me in prayer for the spoken and written Word as it went forth, that God in love and mercy will bring deliverance to these captives?

IF

By JEAN MCGREGOR

It was the second last day of camp. A faint glow tinged the sky. There had already been a hum of activity in our tents for two hours. Now as the glow turned to light, we were off again, jogging over a bumpy, dusty road in the jeep. Our destination was to be the villages of Kurdit Koo and Kurdit Boo. In our dawn prayer meeting we had asked that the Lord would take us safely and especially lead us to folk whose hearts He Himself had prepared.

Our jeep chugged along merrily with its load of five Biblewomen the driver and myself. On top of us and sandwiched in between us were gospels, posters, tracts, New Testaments, books, Bibles, drinking water and our lunches.

As we rounded a bend, the road looked like a rock-pile that had suddenly been demolished, scattering the rocks here, there and everywhere. After tipping up and down and sideways, too, over the rocks, our way

dwindled down to the two ruts made by the huge wheels of bullock carts. We followed the cart tracks for some distance and then stopped to ask directions of a young Indian man. He assured us that we would see Kurdit Koo after a mile or so. Six miles further on we could see women with water pots on their heads. We knew then that the village and its well must be near. We parked the jeep under a big mango tree and the bowed our heads again to pray.



Kurdit Koo and Kurdit Boo were separated only by a river. We decided to make two teams. Three of our Bible women stayed at Kurdit Koo. The two others and I went across the river to Kurdit Boo. For some time we were followed by a man on a bicycle everywhere we went. He did not look friendly. We asked the Lord to send him off. A few minutes later, our bicycle man was gone and we did not see him again the rest of the day.

Children seemed to appear from just nowhere. We had many opportunities with them. Often we used the gospel story from the wordless book. They listened eagerly. We longed that they might have the same opportunity as our Mukti children to hear of the Lord Jesus every day.

As we walked down a narrow lane between rows of mud-brick huts we came to the area of town where the folk of the merchant caste live. A man was just stepping from the door of his home. We wondered whether he might be one of the ones whose heart the Lord had especially prepared.

“ Would you like to buy a gospel ? ” we asked.

“ No, I don't want your Christian literature. I do not want to hear of your Jesus either. You may go in my house though. Tell the women and children there. ”

We walked through a small courtyard to the inner door of the house. Inside the door was a long porch. It was occupied by a number of women and children plus goats, young cows and chickens. A very dirty quilt was spread out for us to sit on. We took off our chappals (Indian sandals) and sat down.

As we began singing, I could feel something wet and warm on my ankle. Turning, I found a baby goat had backed up and was standing just above my left foot. During the course of the same song, some of the children with scabbies-infected feet began slipping in and out of my chappals to see if they would fit. At first I was determined to retrieve the chappals in some way. Then I thought, “ No, the Lord has promised to protect, and if I snatch the chappals away, the people will not understand. ”

At the close of the song one of the Biblewomen began telling the gospel story very simple and clearly. Among those who sat and listened was an older woman called Tanubai. She was a visitor in the household. Her eyes were fixed on the speaker and she drank in every word. As the story ended, she said, “ Don't stop now. Tell me more! ”

We stayed on to tell her more of the Saviour. At last she said “ If you could only come every day and stay all day long to tell me of Jesus, I would leave my cooking and all my housework and just sit and listen. ”

Of all that we met that day, Tanubai stands out as one whose heart the Lord had indeed opened. She reminded us somehow of Mary of old, who wanted only to sit at Jesus' feet and hear His words.

We gave her a gospel, but Tanubai cannot read. We had to leave with her "if" ringing in our hearts. Yes, if only we *could* come *each* day.

Will you take her, with us, upon your heart? Pray that as she goes back to her own village, the Holy Spirit Himself may teach her and lead her to the feet of the saviour.

THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

BY LILLIAN DOERKSEN

The narrow street of the temple town was seething with an eager, jostling throng. Crowds of pilgrims were moving up the incline towards the gate at the foot of the steps leading up to the temple on the hill. Cymbals clanged and hoarse songs to their gods rose from the frenzied crowd. Some men, holding huge, long bamboo poles decorated with brightly coloured pennants danced madly, perspiration pouring down their brown backs as they called out the names of their gods.

No one listened when we asked what it was all about, so we ran through the dirty alleys to get ahead of the crowds. There we were told that these people represented many villages. They were hurrying to the top of the hill up the steep steps to the temple, where the priests would bless their poles. The one who got his bamboo pole up first seemed to be eligible for some special merit, and all who touched the poles after they had been "blessed" seemed to be qualified for some special blessing too. This accounted for the mad shoving, jostling and excitement.

We were breathless as we tried to follow them up the steps to see what would happen. Near the top we stopped, caught our breath and got out our gospels and tracts. We looked down upon the mass of people still struggling up the steps. Hands clasping bits of cocoanut, tumeric, scented grass and flowers to place before the idols; blank, sad, earnest faces reflecting the empty hunger of their hearts, passed before us towards the door of the temple filled with idol-gods.

Above the crowds we caught sight of the bamboo poles again, that the men were carrying. We shuddered as we saw one with a dart tied to the top, making it look like the devil's clever imitation of a cross, decorated with banners, pennants and garlands. What a picture of hopeless helpless darkness!

In memory, our minds turned back to Calvary and the rugged hill the Saviour climbed, bearing, not a decorated pole to be blessed, but a rugged cross on which He bore away the sins and sorrows of the world.

It was the glorious memory of the blessed Saviour's cross that quickly roused us to action. With new courage born of the cross, we met the pilgrim throng and poured out our message of the living Saviour who died to give them light and life. Young men listened and urged us to stay and explain and answer their earnest questions. Older women, men and children followed us down the steps and listened to the gospel as we slowly descended. Some bought gospels and other literature. They had left their offerings at the shrines of their gods but their hearts had been left empty and hungry. Even the women at the foot of the steps

looked up and forgot the offering she was burning to the brass turtle god in the middle of the passage-way, as she listened to the wonderful story of the living Saviour Jesus Christ who had died upon the cross to pay the penalty of her sin.

The evening sun went down behind the temple hill bathing the woman and the thousands of other pilgrims in its darkening shadow. The vivid memory of their sad and earnest faces lingered with us as we went on our homeward way.

Another memory – that of our blessed Saviour, climbing the hill of Calvary where His love and life were poured out for us, kept flooding my soul, too.

Memory, memory, blessed memory that leads me back to Calvary;
When I was lost, my Saviour found me, placed His loving arms
around me.

That's a memory that never dies.

Why should I be so blessed, when so many as I had just witnessed again, were still in darkness? Over and over the question came. The shadow of the cross seemed to fall across my soul as I thought of another term of service here in India coming to a close. Why were there still so many who did not know Him—the One so precious to me, but who had died on Calvary's cross to redeem them, too? Had I prayed enough? Had I loved enough? Had I allowed Him to do ALL He desired through me that others might know Him? And should He ask, I wonder, have you?

Pray for me as I return to the homelands that the shadow of His cross may be upon my heart, revealing His love to a dying world in each message, and all that I do in order that many more in this land, too, may be led to the Saviour who died upon that cross for them.

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