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# TIDINGS



**Nekursini Christian Hospital (See p. 3)**

**SECOND QUARTER**

**1965**

**AMERICAN BAPTIST BENGAL-ORISSA MISSION**



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## A DREAM COME TRUE

By NORMA LARSEN

Through the leaf-covered, bamboo welcoming arch, by rickshaw, car, bicycle, motorcycle, on foot; in Western dress and Indian; distinguished official and illiterate worker, Christian and Hindu . . . all gathered at the entrance to Nekursini Christian Hospital for the formal opening of the new institution. It was January 24th and more than 250 squeezed a seat on borrowed school benches to witness the ceremony, and to give thanks, each in his own way, for this long-awaited event.

On a colorfully-decorated temporary platform sat the participants, shaded from the warm 10 a.m., sun by a tapestry "ceiling". Following their introduction by Dr. Robert R. Larsen, Medical Superintendent, Rev. C. C. Roadarmel gave the invocation prayer and two talented members of the hospital staff, nurse Aroti Biswas and maintenance man Amalesh Das sang a stirring patriotic song. Greetings from visiting American Baptist, Dr. Carrol Morong, were translated into Bengali by Rev. Sushil Bepari, Executive Secretary of the Christian Service Society.

On behalf of the C.S.S., the executive body of the Bengal-Orissa-Bihar Baptist Convention, Mr. Bepari expressed gratitude to the Indian and American Baptists whose combined efforts and gifts had made possible this long-dreamed-of medical facility. American missionary, Louis Kau, responsible for overseeing much of the construction, and new Chairman of the Hospital Board of Managers, reviewed the history of the Hospital's development and stressed that the Hospital does not intend to compete with, but to supplement, existing medical services.

As chief guest, Midnapore District Chief Medical Officer, Dr. S. K. Uphadhyay spoke briefly on the idea that a hospital's greatness lies, not in the fact that it is Christian, Hindu, or Moslem, but in the spirit of the institution and its workers, and their compassion toward those they serve.

Following the singing of the joyful Indian National Anthem, Dr. Uphadhyay ceremoniously cut the red ribbon and was joined by Dr. Larsen and all the guests for a grand tour of the building.

As the tour ended tea was served to special guests on the lawn of the Larsen bungalow and to the other guests on the Hospital veranda. An idea conceived some thirty years ago, the first American Baptist hospital in this part of India, and third mission hospital to be erected in all of W. Bengal, Nekursini Christian Hospital, is indeed a dream come true.

*Editor's Note:* The picture on the cover page was taken on the day of the Hospital's opening. The Bengali words above the gate read in translation: *Nekursini Christian Hospital, Welcome.* Under the outdoor canopy some of the visitors can be seen. Those are not gravestones in front of the Hospital, but white-washed bricks outlining the paths!

## “LIFT UP YOUR EYES”

By C. LOUIS KAU

The disturbing challenge that confronts the church in Bengal is how to win people to faith in Jesus Christ. The scope for evangelism is unlimited. There are tools with which to witness and the people who can give the witness of the new life in Christ, but there are few who respond. Over the past century in Midnapore district no appreciable number of people have come to Christ.

In a population of 4.5 million in this district only about ten thousand are counted in the Christian community including Catholics. The population is rapidly increasing while church growth remains stagnant. Although people are won, there is also about an equal loss. Among some groups of people, seven

language groups in our area, there is almost no response and not even a regular direct ministry to such peoples as Moslems, Sikhs and some rural tribal peoples. The phenomenal growth of cities, and creation of new industrial towns has complicated the work of evangelism by bringing together a variety of people of different language, cultural, social and religious backgrounds. No longer is the church confronted with one or two languages and cultural groups in an area, but an increasing variety lies at her doorstep.

How to meet these people, how to reach their hearts is the question we are asking today and the answer seems so elusive. In India the pressure of culture or society is the greatest impeding factor to people coming to Christ. Repeatedly, serious inquirers have turned away when the tension from caste and family begins to build up. They are not prepared to accept Christ's road of sacrifice and persecution for this faith. To be forsaken by family and friends and to be cast out of community is the common lot of those who will dare to admit faith in Jesus.

In this stagnant atmosphere of unresponsiveness some Christians have become lethargic in their witness. The spirit of expectancy is lacking in many churches. There is little hope that their prayers and witness will find a responsive ear. Some pastors are more inclined to minister to the Christian community, unmindful of their mission to those outside. This is not a too pessimistic or unrealistic point of view. The continual repetition of the Hindu's magnanimous view that all religions are the same, and we are all headed in the same direction on different paths, is a veil to dim the Christian's conviction to the truth of Christ's exclusive claim of one way to God through Him.

The church needs to hear afresh the urgent plea to "lift up your eyes and see how the fields are already white for harvest," to heed the call to "go, for lo I am with you". We need to expand our understanding of how to search out these people and follow the avenues which will lead to their decision. Many

leaders in the churches of India are convinced that a deep, moving spirit of revival is urgent and necessary, if we are to see any impact of the Gospel on this land. Unless the church expands its spirit of concern for people out of Christ and renews its conviction that Jesus' way is life for *all* people there will be no response.

This past year a few people have responded. A few have humbly found the Saviour. When they wholeheartedly accept Jesus, their whole life glows with a radiance that says Christ is real and present with them.

A few years ago *Hopon Kisku* met the Lord and had to choose between family and his new faith. His parents would not accept him as a Christian. He studied as far as he could in high school. A year ago several Santal families invited him to teach their children for a rather small remuneration of food and shelter and \$3.00 per month. He taught a class of 30 children. In the evenings he began to tell the village men the stories of Jesus and taught the children Christian hymns. In his quiet loving way he radiated the conviction that he knew the Saviour. By the end of the year three families were ready for baptism. Wherever Hopon goes someone becomes a Christian. He is now beginning his second year of Bible School. Next year he will minister in a church as part of his training program. Already one church has asked for him because as they said, "There is no one with such zeal for winning their people to Christ".

Evangelism is a costly venture in terms of men and money. It demands the best we can give. It demands a tremendous amount of time and patience. Unless we are prepared to invest the time and money upon men who have a deep sense of call we cannot expect to see the response. Just because we open the door of life to these tribal people, they do not necessarily walk in. There are a multitude of adversaries.



Three men who have been a part of the Kora field ministry will retire in 1965. One is pastor *Kalachand Soren* who has pastored the Ulda and Tillaboni churches for more than 20 years. These churches have one fifth of the Christians in the Kora field, all of whom are Santals. This area is also showing the most response. Recently, Bible women reported that there were families in six new villages preparing for baptism.

*Ruben Giri* is also retiring after serving the whole area as educational supervisor. The care of the primary schools and development of the adult literacy program have been his responsibilities. He has enthusiastically worked among these illiterates encouraging them to make the effort to learn to read. He has worked under rather adverse conditions.

We doubt if another person will be available to carry on his work. We are also somewhat doubtful if the literacy program can be continued because of the lack of leadership and finance. There will be an attempt to organize it on some other basis.

The third person to retire is our Indian evangelist and church supervisor *Rev. Bon Singh Hembrom*. In recent years he has given considerable time to helping churches understand their responsibilities in stewardship, the need for keeping accurate accounts and checking to see that they are right. Developing a sense of responsibility in the handling of church money has taken a long time. In order to encourage increased giving it is necessary to instill confidence in the church constituency that this money will be properly handled. This is a matter which takes time to demonstrate.

We have several men in training who will help fill the gap left by these retirements. In the Ulda area a new pastor is fulfilling his two years of in-training ministry before completing his Bible School study. When he returns to school next year another young man will take his place. For this large area we need at least two pastors and the help of Bible women to reach the

people in about 60 villages to which this church should minister.

This past year four men from the Kora and Santal fields have been in Bible school and seminary and three more entered in January. Part of the needs for pastors will be met. We are now in need of men who will be evangelists to untouched areas and also particularly to the Bengali village people. They are the majority community and unreached by the Gospel. These opportunities for witness are the disturbing challenge to the church. How to meet them and bring the Gospel into focus for these people is a matter for urgent study, prayer and action.

## LEAVING FEARS BEHIND FOR SANTAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

By A. MAUREEN BRIANS

Even one suspicious character coming up to my screened front veranda at night to see whether or not I am asleep is enough to keep me awake most of the night, but I know that these thieves work in gangs. Only one came to the veranda, and I called out to the young man who works for me. He and our jeep driver-mechanic came running and the would-be intruders drew back out of sight. The men's assurance didn't calm me immediately, when I heard police whistles all around the area. I've learned, though, that police blow their whistles to let people know they are in the vicinity. This should be sufficient to send thieves to other areas! The next morning, Boren Tudu who drives the Mission jeep, confessed that in spite of his brave assurances to me, he, too, was afraid, and that he hadn't slept all night. We were all glad to leave our fears behind as we set out rather sleepily for the Annual Dompara Women's Conference at Behera. Parul Tudu, supervisor of Bible-Women's work in the Dompara

and Belda areas, Mrs. B. E. Weidman (Pat) from Bhimpore village, Salomi Soren, a young girl who helps me in my home, and myself, with Boren at the wheel, made up the group travelling together. This was Pat's first visit to Dompara and a new experience for her to attend a conference for Santal women.

On our way we stopped to visit "Aunt Jean", a friendly Scots business woman who owns a quarry. She is an earnest Christian and her home is an oasis for weary Christian travellers. Her home and heart are open to all Christians at any time of day or night. Refreshed by the tea she served, we came on the remaining miles through scrub forest until we reached our destination, the village of Behera, where the Conference was to be held. It was nearly sun-down, so we, and the other delegates, found places to make up our beds on the floor of the church, or in the pastor's house.

Everyone was tired the first night as most of the women had walked at least four miles and some more than fifteen miles in order to attend. The effort is well worth-while for this Conference is the highlight of the year for the women of this area. It is their one chance to get away from home for inspiration and Christian fellowship. Not many of these village Santal women can afford to go the distance required and meet the cost of food at our Bengal-Orissa-Bihar Women's Conference held annually in October or November. Also for them there is more security in being in a village with only Santali-speaking women present rather than among a multi-lingual group.

Our daily program included early morning group devotions after which we had tea and a cupful of puffed rice topped with dried molasses. Following this little breakfast we listened to a message on the chosen Scripture. This year, for the first time, I gave one of the morning messages in Santali. I also had a story to tell and a play to direct based on the story, at one afternoon session. The experience was good for me; I needed the practice in speaking Santali in public, and the need continues!

As I write, it is the last night of the Conference. I am sitting on my bedding on the floor, writing by lantern light. On one side I hear the voices of our approximately one hundred delegates learning new Christian songs, and in the distance, I hear the drums of non-Christians, ever reminding us of people unreached for Christ.

At the afternoon church service, a young layman was asked to give the sermon. He brought a powerful message. This young man is a convert of recent years and he bears three scars on his left arm. It is the Santal custom to burn 1, 3, 5, or 7 marks on men, and to tattoo women so that they will not be embraced by a huge insect after death, when they cross over into the other world. The marks on his arm reminded us of the animistic religion he has left behind, and his glowing face and testimony told of his deep faith.

Tonight I must make notes of requests as varied as writing a letter to our Dr. Larsen at Nekursini Christian Hospital regarding an operation for a man in a nearby village, to agreeing to try to find two books of Shakespeare's works for a 9th grade boy who needs them for his school work, and has not been able to get them.

Tomorrow after our noon rice meal, we will be off for eight more days of visiting in the area before returning home to Jhargram. I am not one of those people who is often described as working "tirelessly", but I find the joy of serving Him and working with these Santal village people an abundantly rewarding experience.

## NOT EVEN TWO MONTHS YET

By DR. ROBERT R. LARSEN

Friday is always a busy day, and on this Friday evening there was sign of fatigue in my steps as I walked over to the Hospital for evening rounds. I kept saying to myself "*it isn't even two months yet* since the Hospital opening ceremony, so I mustn't start feeling tired already". Yet I couldn't help reflecting upon the Hospital's unbelievable busy schedule, established in *less than two months*. These have been exciting months, but if the present pace continues, it becomes fearful to think about the future. The little problems of staff and administration are gradually working themselves out, but it is the patient load that is constantly on my mind.

The first week after opening was one I'll never forget. We had about 20 patients the first day, then 40 the next, and thereafter we have never had a day in which we have been able to see all the patients who come to the clinic. Right now I'd give anything for some of those first days again. Daily we have patients crowding all over the grounds and verandas waiting to be seen, and the most difficult problem is handling those we have to send away to come back some other day. Over and over I hear the plea—"Doctor Sahib, I've brought my wife here three days now, and still haven't been able to get a ticket to be seen. Please won't you see her today?"

Then, the first of March I thought we had a solution. Doctor Sulata Garnaik a young lady doctor from Orissa, whose special field is eye diseases, came to work on our staff. I thought to myself, "Now we'll be able to see all of them most of the time." But the numbers steadily increase. We see about 125-150 patients daily in the out-patient clinic and still turn away 25 to 75 patients to come another day. At the same time our in-patient work is steadily increasing. Already we have had to use our north veranda for the patients we couldn't get into ward beds.

We are doing surgery twice a week, and there always seems to be a woman in labor, or on the delivery table. *And it's not even two months yet since we opened.*

Evening rounds are always a pleasure, even if I'm tired, for this is my chance to get to know my patients a little better. There is nothing formal about these rounds. I simply walk from bed to bed and stop here and there for a brief chat with patients or family. The lady in bed six will be going home tomorrow, and we were afraid she would never be able to go home. I used the jeep as an ambulance one Sunday afternoon to bring her to the hospital after the family came to tell me she had been convulsing steadily for over 24 hours. She was nearing the end of her pregnancy when suddenly the dreaded swelling, headaches, and convulsions came. Yet, being 15 miles from the hospital, the family first consulted the local "kobyraj" (untrained village medicine man) who made burn scars on her body in a few places and collected his fee. Then the seizures began. Shortly after arriving at the Hospital we delivered her baby boy, who, miraculously, was alive, but she was a battle all the way, with much hemorrhage after delivery. She's not going home with any abundance of blood in her, but she's going home, and that's enough to give thanks for. She is well aware of her closeness to death, and can sincerely share in the prayer the nurse offers to God in thanksgiving for saving her life, even though she is a Hindu.

Proceeding to other bedsides, I see the woman whose life was saved by a blood transfusion before delivery (her blood was like pink water, and we couldn't measure her hemoglobin), and the boy who has been convulsing for three days following some root medicine he has eaten. Then there's the young man who was injured in an accident and has a skull fracture which we are watching closely. Finally, I check on the patient who had surgery this morning and, picking up my hurricane lamp, head home.

Emerging from the door, I see some motion under a tree to the south of the out-patient clinic. We had an attempted robbery recently, so I run over to see what it is. There, under the tree, wrapped up in his big shawl is a middle-aged Santal man—just sitting. I ask him what he wants and what he is doing here. His answer is that he has come nearly 20 miles on foot, and is going to sleep right here so that he will be sure to get a ticket in the clinic in the morning. I lower the hurricane lamp close to his face, and, in spite of his dark, dark skin, his marked anemia is obvious. "There'll be no reason to get a hemoglobin test on him", I think to myself, "for his is going to be another so low we can't measure it". As he talks I look closely at his tongue and see the black marks characteristic of hookworm disease. I bid goodnight and head to the house.

It tears my heart that people have to wait all day to be seen by one of us, only to be told that it is now too dark to see any more, and they'll have to come the next day. I feel guilty that this man in his anemic state has walked so far to sit and sleep under the tree tonight just so that he will have a better chance of getting a ticket in the morning.

But there are times of joy too. A woman came into the examining room crying today. After getting down on hands and knees, touching my feet and then her head (an Indian custom I don't think I'll ever get used to), she said that she has been trying various doctors and medicines (mostly roots and herbs) for nine years, and now, for the first time, has no pain in her stomach. Probably the best part of her treatment was stopping the roots and herbs, but she won't believe that.

Well, these are exciting days, and a little exhausting too. It sometimes seems we spend more time handling the crowds than actually treating patients. It's a problem of patients and patience—too many of the former and not enough of the latter! We must take each day as it comes and not worry about what lies ahead. But, *it's not ever two months yet!*

## GOD'S SPIRIT AT WORK

By SUSANNE POWERS

### *Balasore District Half-Yearly Convention*

The testimony meeting in the village of Panchkahania, Orissa, was one that brought joy to all of our hearts. For a number of years a Christian pastor had served in that completely non-Christian jungle area, inhabited mostly by Santals, a backward tribe known for its all night drinking-dancing parties. Then, about ten years ago, a young man named Monoranjan, who owns a bicycle repairs shop, accepted Christ and became a witnessing Christian.

It was in this village from March 10th to 14th that the Balasore District Half-Yearly Convention was held, with about fifty delegates in attendance. The testimony meeting began on the last morning before 10 o'clock and lasted more than two hours. "If ever there was a sinner, I am he", began a man from one village. As God wonderfully answered his prayers, he realized how far he had strayed from Him. His older son came down with a high fever. He and his wife prayed and the boy recovered. Then his younger son became critically ill with dysentery. The doctor gave up hopes of his being able to live. The parents prayed intensely. A little later, Ruth Filmer our Australian nurse, was able to go to see the boy. She gave an injection and medicine. She, too, felt his life was in danger and said he could only live by God's power and healing. She told them they would know by midnight. Just after midnight the boy asked for food.

Before this young father sat down, another young man walked to the front to give his testimony. He spoke in Santali, which was translated into Bengali so that all could understand. This man is a recent convert, who had not known what a Christian was until his uncle became a Christian and explained what it meant. There was danger in becoming a Christian, but God



was always there. Monoranjan, the first one in the area to become a Christian, spoke to him in the market place. He decided that Christianity was right. God was there, but Satan also came, he said. As God answered his prayers during his brother's illness, he has become stronger in his Christian faith.

As he was closing his testimony, Samai, another Santal, stood before the group. What a joy it was for us to see these uneducated, new Christians stand to tell what Jesus means to them. Truly their standing there was nothing short of a miracle of God. Samai told how his brother had wanted them both to become Christians, but Samai was not willing. At times his brother urged him, but Samai always said, no. Finally, having no peace of mind, Samai went to the jungle with a rope in his hand. He had decided he would hang himself. But Monoranjan had followed him and pleaded with him to come to Christ. The miracle happened. Now Samai is a radiant Christian.

Any one who knows the way the majority of girls are brought up in India would realize how difficult it is for a girl to stand before others to talk. Yet Suballa, a new Christian, stood with her sari covering her head, to tell how she and her mother had come to Christ. She mentioned how formerly before Christ had come into their lives, there had been much drinking in their home, but now all that was changed.

The spirit of the whole four days of meetings was like that of the testimony meeting. It was a time of joy, of sharing, of thankfulness to God.

After my school classes were finished on March 10th, with the green station wagon full of delegates, I started off for Panchkahnania. After the first 26 miles we had stopped at a little mud-walled, thatched tea shop for refreshment when Dr. Bill Osgood came along with his car full of delegates. They waited so that we could follow them the last 25 miles on the roads and through the rice fields. It was worth "eating all their dust" to

know I was driving in the right direction. On arrival we were greeted with cheers and welcomes by the "Panchkahaniates" and those who had come by oxcart and bicycle ahead of us.

I thought I was rather clever finding a "private spot" on the open veranda for my canvas cot until the talk turned to the tigers and snakes, and other animals in the surrounding jungles. As none had eaten any villagers near there, I felt that American meat also wouldn't be a delicacy for the wild animals. However, Joba slept on a rope bed nearby to keep me company. Joba is the nurse who is completely supported by the Love Gifts presented by the women of all of our churches at the Annual Women's Convention.

While in this lovely jungle area my thoughts often went to Lillian Brueckmann, as I remembered her concern for this place. In the car someone had said, "Miss Brueckmann's spirit is all over this area." (Lillian passed away at Kansas City, Mo. Oct. 23, 1964.) I had not realized before that there were no Christians when the work began in comparatively recent years. Lillian had seen the possibilities and as a memorial for her mother had had a dispensary built at Panchkahania. Besides a nurse and three Bible women, a pastor and his family are also working in this field which is "white unto harvest."

In the last months these new Christians and the workers there have given themselves to erecting their church building. During the fullmoon nights they put up the walls of this rather large church. Our Christian Service Society provided the cost of the asbestos roof.

"This is the happiest and most joyous meeting we've ever had", many told Miss Satyaboti Behera, the president of the Convention. The theme verse was Hebrews 12:1-3. Each morning at 7 o'clock our Bible study and classes began. In the afternoons we listened to biographies of great Christians, evenings we heard devotional messages.

On the second morning at 9 o'clock we all stood before the new church building for prayer, singing and Scripture reading. Then we marched around the new Church several times after which the dedication of the Church took place. The ribbons in front of the door were cut by our Executive Secretary, Rev. S. K. Bepari. Following the dedication service, we all went by car or bicycle to two villages to witness baptismal services. Again I followed Bill Osgood over roads that were challenging to my "city" station wagon, the body of which is much lower than the ox carts whose tracks we followed through some of the fields. In one place I thought the car could straddle the deep ruts, but found it didn't make it. A "toot" on the horn brought the men from the first car to lift our jeep bodily onto the top of the ruts again. I smothered a smile when I was asked why I hadn't stayed on top of the ruts as Osgood's car had done. I *had* tried, but that sort of skill needs developing.

It was after 12 noon when we arrived at the village where a man and his wife, and a boy, who is studying in our Mission Technical School, were awaiting baptism. The boy's father, who recently died of T.B., and his mother became Christians when Lillian Brueckmann was working in this village. We thank God for these two Christian families in this non-Christian area. After Dr. Osgood had baptized the candidates, we drove through other fields to another village where a man, his wife, and mother were ready for baptism. They had wanted to be baptized earlier, but because of persecution had waited. Now they were baptized in their own village where non-Christian neighbors could witness their public confession of faith, and could also see that the Christian group was not just a few people, but many. It was 2 p.m. when we arrived back at Panchkahania for our noon rice and curry. How we thank God for the work He has been doing and is doing in this area!

Another cause for thanksgiving at the Half-Yearly Convention was that a member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, whose property is adjacent to ours in Panchkahania, attended some of the evening meetings, Sunday School, and other services. Formerly he had discouraged people from accepting Christ. How happy we were when he accepted Satyaboti Behera's invitation to our meetings and when, after Satyaboti prayed especially for his conversion, he stated that someday perhaps he would come to Christ! How we thank God for the working of His Spirit in this very able man's heart! On the afternoon of the 13th, as we went in procession through the village singing Christian songs in Santali, we stopped at this man's home to sing and at the homes of the two Christian families.

This is an area for which we need to pray. Most of those coming to Christ are illiterate and need help in learning to read, so that they can read their Bibles and grow in their Christian lives. Lillian and other faithful Christians have sowed the seed with tears and now God is giving the harvest.

## AN UNUSUAL EMERGENCY

By ETHEL N. ROADARMEL

"Oh, no, not the Bhimpore car!" But it was the old jeep and trailer with Burt Weidman at the wheel. Usually I give a warm welcome to Burt whenever he has to come to Midnapore on business of one sort or another. But my husband had just returned home the afternoon of the previous day after three days of strenuous work at the Christian Service Society Executive Meeting which had been dealing with the Asking Budget for 1966. Work had piled up on his desk for, including travel time, he had been gone four days. So many things needed his attention. What now was on Burt's mind? He looked so perturbed.

"Here's an S.O.S. from Pat", he said. "Can you go out to Bhimpore right now?" What emergency had arisen that the Field Secretary, or Mission Treasurer, or Christian Service Society Treasurer, or Mission Attorney (for Roady is all of these) was needed? But, it was not in any of these capacities that he could help. All that was needed was an ordained clergyman with a license from the State of W. Bengal to solemnize marriages. Pat's appeal brought an immediate response, "Yes, I'll go". Burt said his car was about to fall apart and he must get it to the local garage, so Roady would need to make the 22 mile trip in the Midnapore station wagon. What is 22 miles—just an hour's journey over dusty roads".

I have read stories of the groom failing to turn up on the wedding day, but never have I heard of the minister failing to appear. But that's what happened. The bride, an orphan girl, to whom Mrs. Weidman was "mother", was all dressed in her beautiful wedding sari, which had been draped by her schoolmates who lived in the Hostel with her. Her veil was in place. The oxcart to take her to the church was standing by. Then it came—a letter to the church secretary from the minister 32 miles away, who had agreed weeks before that he would come to officiate, saying that he could not be there. The dismay of all in the wedding party was indescribable. It was nearly 4 o'clock and no way that a licensed minister could be found and reach Bhimpore before sundown. (The Indian Christian Marriage Act prohibits weddings before sunrise or after sunset). The news spread like wildfire. Groups gathered at the tea shop, along the road, near the church, discussing this turn of events.

As in all things, Pat took it in her stride, despite the disappointment and her concern for the bride. The groom and his party, with a missionary of the Churches of God, had come the day before. It was good Miss Helwig was there to help smooth things out with the men folks. "We'll ask Mr. Roadarmel to come and we'll have the wedding at 10 o'clock in the morning", said Pat,

as she tried to cheer the prospective bride. The wedding feast that night, coming before instead of after the wedding, was rather sad, but the food was wonderful. It could not be postponed when all the preparations had been made, and the goat meat for the curry must be cooked.

The next day before 10 a.m., the missionary sahib was on hand. Again the bride was adorned in her beautiful sari and veil, wearing her gold necklace and bracelets.

Looking demure and sad, as a bride is supposed to look in this land, she was helped into the oxcart by her friends, and with her chosen "maid of honor" beside her, she bumped along as the oxen ran pell mell the short distance to the Bhimpore Baptist Church. We knew of one bride who got seasick on this gay ride although it took not longer than five minutes to make it. But not Dhira. She made her way slowly to the chair arranged for her at the front of the church facing the minister. To her right sat her future husband. The vows were made, the pronouncement given by the missionary, and two young folks walked out of the church hand in hand for the first time. Now both bride and groom could smile as the young people tried to block their exit through the gate, asking for a donation.

The emergency minister sat down to the noon meal at the Girls' Boarding or Hostel with the bridal party and a few Bhimpore guests. Delicious rice and curry, served on leaf plates, and eaten, as always, by using the fingers of the right hand.

At 1.30 p.m., my husband was home, having delivered the bride with one of her girl friends, the groom and his party with Miss Helwig, at the Midnapore Railway station in time to get a train for Uluberia which would reach there at 5.30 p.m. The husband is employed by the Mission and lives on the Mission compound. Our new Bhimpore bride begins another Christian home.

## A TIME OF SHARING

By PAT WEIDMAN

It was ten minutes after two as I raced across the compound to the front of the Church which was the agreed meeting place.

It had taken longer than usual to put my sari on that Sunday afternoon. This was the long awaited day when the village girls' Christian Endeavor group was to go out and hold a meeting in a Hindu village. Miss Dhira Sinha, the newly appointed secretary of the Junior High School and evangelistic worker in Bhimpur had helped the girls plan the program. As I rushed along, I wondered if I was keeping the girls waiting. When I got to the front of the Church, a sinking feeling came in my stomach. No one was there. Had they gone off and left me? Then remembering I was in village India, I took heart and looked around. Across the road drawing water from the well were two girls. They informed me that no one had come yet. The pastor's wife, who is a co-adviser with me for the C.E., was still dressing, so there was nothing to do but sit down and wait. Eventually, fourteen of us started out on the two mile walk to Dhansola.

That morning word had been sent to Dhansola saying we would arrive about 3.00. But it was 4.00 by the time we got there. Upon arrival, we learned that the men had just left for a hunt in the nearby forest. They had waited and then decided we would come on a different day. Fortunately, we had several people with us who were fluent in Santali, a language neither Miss Sinha nor I could speak or understand. We had expected the men to come to the meeting who would be able to understand Bengali. Seeing the women who knew only Santali, we made a quick switch in the program and asked Mary Marndy to tell

the story of the "Good Shepherd" in Santali. Miss Sinha had taken three 12×14 pictures enabling Mary to tell the story with the use of the pictures.

We sat on mats in an open space at the back of a house. Two or three rope beds were brought out for the villagers to sit upon, but most of those who came just stood and watched. As Mary was thinking about the story, we sang songs in Bengali, Hindi, and Santali. Right in the middle of a song, a man came stomping in swinging a stick and holloing at a teenage girl standing close by. She had left their house unguarded and anyone could have gone in and stolen their meagre possessions. Would this unfortunate incident break up the meeting? We could all feel the tension in the air. It was with relief we saw the man take a place on one of the rope beds in the back after he had sent his daughter home to watch their house.

How would these people accept this presentation of the Gospel in song and story? This is the question that always comes into the minds of those who go out to share their knowledge of God revealed in Christ. These villagers listened very attentively and seemed eager for us to return another time. The man whom we feared might break up the meeting as he scolded his daughter was one of the first to invite us back the following Sunday.

Any who have not recently had the joy of sharing the message of salvation with someone are urged to have this experience soon. Many like these uneducated villagers are waiting to hear from each of us what it means to be a follower of Christ. This message is relevant to all people in every walk of life. Christ expects us to tell others so that they too may have the fellowship of His Spirit at work in their hearts.



## AROMATIC APPRAISAL

By REV. H. C. LONG (*retired*)

Oh, ancient land of Ind, how sweet thy breath  
When frangipani, temple flower, sheds fragrance on the air,  
Or bursting buds of rubber trees freight evenings of spring  
With cloying sweetness, come not near!

The autumn fills the nostrils with pungent scent of burning  
leaves;  
The threshing floor yields gentle odors of fresh beaten straw,  
With faintest hint of sweat and curried fish.

Yet not the country-side alone, but crowded marts of city  
streets  
Though sometimes marred by odors foul, yield also aromatic  
scents  
Triumphant, nostalgic, a summons to return.

When sinks the blazing sun behind the trees,  
The furnace heat of noon is quenched by shadows long.  
The doors, fast shut 'gainst midday's fiery heat, are open now  
And welcome purchasers of fine spun silks, and brooches—  
brides' attire,  
Of plates of brass, coarse cloth, and curried sweets.

At hubble bubble shops, tobacco merged with gur,  
The sap of sugar cane, boiled low and thick  
Whose pungent smell, near takes your breath away.

Next come we to a sweetmeat shop whose scent of boiling  
ghee brings water to the mouth.  
And as we pass, a thousand odors mingle to makes us recollect  
Our childhood's country store.

The merchants light their tiny lamps.  
We pass a little printing shop, and then there bursts upon the ear  
The harsh melodious clang of temple gong.

'Tis evening, when the god or goddess there is present  
And the worshippers may come with gifts,  
Or fall before him prone, make known their heart's wild cry  
or prayer.

We bend our curious steps to watch the rhythmic beat  
Of wooden mallet, swung by shaven priest;  
Another weaves a censer back and forth  
Whence comes a cloud of smoke; 'tis incense for the god  
And people, too, may share the sweet aroma—  
pungent, penetrating.

The gong ceases. Night falls.  
And as we turn our steps toward our home,  
Far down the street the fragrance of the incense follows on;  
Far down the corridors of time the mingled odors and the scent  
of incense

Stirs sweet memories.

*Editors' Note.* We are happy to publish the nostalgic remembrance of the variety of India's scents written by one who served in this land from 1916 until 1957 with an interval from 1938 to 1952 for Mabel in the U.S.A. and for Herbert from 1947 to 1952, when they both returned, even though close to retiring age, because they felt there was a special work for them to do. Adella, a twin daughter, at 14 years of age, had become seriously ill and so Mabel courageously left her husband and one son

in India to go to the U.S.A. with the twins. There was no cure for her rare tropical disease and in January of 1952 she left her weak body and entered into that better life beyond. Herbert and Mabel are active in the 1st Baptist Church of Pomona, California, and in community life. Mabel does not allow her handicap, as a result of a fall in 1955 when she broke her left femur, interfere with her activities and both she and her husband continue to be an inspiration to all who knew them in India. Mr. Long makes no claim that these lines of his are poetry, but only that they reveal how even little details of Indian life are fresh in his memory.

### ITEMS OF INTEREST

From *The Statesman*, a daily English newspaper

*Large Areas in W. Bengal Freed of Malaria.* "The recent appraisal by experts of the seven-year Malaria Eradication Project has revealed that work has been completed in a stretch of W. Bengal inhabited by about 14 million people.

"In respect of another area, with a population of 10.5 million, the work has reached an 'advanced stage'. Operations such as spraying of insecticides inside houses and search for malaria carriers will continue in a third area in the State inhabited by 7.5 million people.

"The all-India appraisal has shown that the eradication work has been completed or is in an 'advanced stage' in about 80 per cent of the country's total area. In zones freed of malaria, vigilance organizations are being set up to prevent 're-establishment of the disease'."

There was a time when malaria was the No. 1 killer in India. That position has now been taken by T.B.

Mr. J. Kolay, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, said in the W. Bengal State Assembly "that for the estimated 600,000 T.B. patients in the State there are 4,596 hospital beds. Financial assistance was not generally provided to patients".

Our Mission makes an annual contribution to the Madar Union Sanatorium in Rajasthan, a union mission institution. This entitles us to two beds. Since there is a waiting list for all T.B. hospitals, whether private or Government, this is a help. But the cost of travel to such a distant place in the northwest, in addition to costs of operations, X-ray, etc., means that a patient must have some available money besides the financial help which our Christian Service Society gives for members of our Christian community.

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"There is a serious shortage of doctors in hospitals all over W. Bengal. About 400 posts have not been filled because doctors are not attracted by Government hospitals. The State Government, however, is happy that its position is not as bad as that of other States where many rural health centers cannot function for want of doctors. In West Bengal, all such centers, over 600, have doctors, even if not in adequate number."

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The Government of India is considering steps that might be taken to reduce the large scale exodus of doctors to foreign countries: "It has been estimated that there are about 3,500 Indian doctors in New York hospitals and out of approximately 1,700 foreign doctors migrating to America every year, the number of Indians is estimated around 1,500.

Up to June 1964, the number of Indian doctors in the British National Health Service scheme was over 1,600. There are many who have general practice in Britain.

The overall shortage is estimated at 3,000 doctors in dispensaries and hospitals. Between 600 and 700 primary health

centers are without doctors. About 30 per cent of the junior posts in the public health services and about 25 per cent of the general medical cadre of the State services are reported vacant."

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"Mr. Chester Bowles, the U.S. Ambassador to India, has said that America would be giving 7 million tons of wheat to India this year under P.L. 480. He added that about 20 per cent of foodgrains produced in America was supplied to India."

### OUR PRAYER CORNER

"Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ toward you." 1 Thess. 5:17-18.

**Sunday:** Thanksgiving for answered prayer in the appointment of Mrs. Medley as Assistant to the Mission Treasurer. (See News Items).

**Monday:** Thanksgiving that so soon after the opening of our new Hospital a license to practice was granted to Dr. Bob Larsen by Central Government. Continued prayer is needed that this Hospital may be granted Government recognition. When this is done it will be possible to receive needed supplies through Church World Service.

**Tuesday:** Pray for those who have recently accepted Christ that by their lives, as well as by word of mouth, they may witness to their village neighbors of the joy they have found in Him. (See "God's Spirit at Work.")

**Wednesday:** Pray for those who bear the name of Christian, but are not co-operating with the work of the Church in Midnapore, especially that young men remaining outside the fellowship of the Church may let Christ into their lives to control and direct them.

**Thursday:** Pray for young men to be found who will serve as evangelists to untouched areas, particularly to the Bengali village people—a majority community unreached by the Gospel. (See “Lift Up Your Eyes.”)

**Friday:** Pray that a person may be found to take over the work of Ruben Giri who is retiring, and that the adult literacy program may have both the leadership and finance to be re-opened among Koreas and Santals.

**Saturday:** Pray for your missionaries on this field individually that they may have daily wisdom and strength for their varied responsibilities, and always rise above discouraging circumstances, knowing that God’s purposes for them in their work cannot fail.

## NEWS ITEMS

*Wedding Bells!* By the time this issue of *Tidings* reaches subscribers in the U.S.A. *Miss Clara Dorn* will have become Mrs. Verlon Carlson. Shortly after Clara had announced her engagement on March 19th, the word reached us. The wedding would be on May 15th at her home church, the 1st Baptist of Torrance, California. Clara left for furlough, after five years of service in Bengal and Orissa, in November 1964. She was so sure she would be returning that she simply walked out from her home with Miss Suddha Mookerji, leaving there most of her personal possessions. However, the romance is not quite as rapid as it sounds, for Verlon kept in touch with Clara by correspondence and some of us were not very surprised that he was at the airport to meet her when she arrived at Los Angeles.

We regret, of course, that this means Clara will not be returning to missionary service, but we rejoice in her new found happiness and pray that she and Verlon may have many years of deep joy in their life together. Clara has been doing a great deal of deputation work in the churches of southern California and we know her first-hand knowledge of the opportunities and needs in India will help her always to promote interest in Christian work in this land.

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The appointment of *Mrs. Evelyn Medley* as a Special Worker for two years to be Assistant to the Mission Treasurer is a cause for much thanksgiving. She has worked in the Treasury Department of our Baptist Foreign Mission Societies in N.Y. and Valley

Forge since 1961 and therefore comes to us with the experience needed to be of the greatest service in the variety of responsibilities that devolve upon a Mission Treasurer. Mr. Roadarmel anticipates that she will also be of real help in the treasury work of the Christian Service Society, since he is the Acting Treasurer and both offices are in his home.

Mrs. Medley is a widow and has a daughter in England. She has British citizenship and so does not require a visa for entry into India. This makes it possible for her to sail from New York on June 15th and from Naples June 26th, arriving in Bombay July 8th. She will live across the road from the Roadarmels where Clara Dorn formerly lived, sharing the house with Miss Suddha Mookerji, Headmistress and Secretary of the Mission Girls' School. Temporarily, at least, she will board with the Roadarmels. We would like to think that she will be so happy here that she will want her period of service extended, especially in view of the fact that the Roadarmels retire in the spring of 1967.

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*Dr. and Mrs. W. C. Osgood* announce the arrival of another *grand-daughter*, Karin Jane, on March 27th, making three sons and two daughters for Janet and Clay Erickson. Our congratulations to the parents and grandparents.

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A son was born to Rev. and Mrs. Archie Shear at the Dufferin Hospital, Calcutta on March 27th. Mr. Shear is the pastor of the Union Baptist Church, Kharagpur. This means the parsonage will be enlivened by two sons and <sup>1</sup>a daughter. We pray God's blessing upon this family.



*Vacation plans.* Missionaries in Bengal generally prefer to flee from the burning heat of the plains in May-June, but this year *Dr. Bob and Norma Larsen* with their three little girls hope they can endure the weather since it is impossible for Dr. Larsen to leave the Hospital at that time. We hope the weather will be as unusual as March with showers and so some coolness. They will take their vacation in August-September.

*Maureen Brians* also remains on the plains, but with Indian colleagues will be at Gopalpur by the sea from late May. *Sue Powers*, with her co-worker *Tarulata Garnaik*, and possibly others, will be at Dr. Stanley Jones' ashram at Sat Tal, No. India. Our three Baptist apartments at Landour, Mussoorie, will be occupied by *Louis and Wilma Kau* and their four children, *Pat and Burt Weidman* and their three, and *Ed and Jan Skillman* and their two. The Skillmans may not consider it a vacation since they will be continuing their study of the Oriya language with a tutor. Wilma and Pat may not think it vacation either with the responsibility of housekeeping, but it is a change of climate, and the husbands will be with their school age children for five weeks. Wilma Kau was escort for some of the Woodstock School students on the train journey from Calcutta in late February. We hear reports of snow at Landour. *Bill and Jane Osgood* will be at Shillong, Assam, and the *Roadarmels* at Kodaikanal, S. India.

## VISITORS

*Dr. George Milton Berg*, son of the late Rev. August A. Berg, and Ruth Berg, paid a brief visit to scenes of his childhood at Jhargram and Midnapore, and also visited the Hospital at Nekursini in mid-February. He had completed an assignment with a team sent to India to evaluate the Malaria Eradication program. Milton, as he is known to us, is in Public Health work with headquarters at Columbus, Georgia.

*Mr. Harris Erickson*, father-in-law to Janet Osgood Erickson of Burma, had a short visit with Jane and Bill Osgood at Jaleswar in March. They also had guests from Seattle, Washington. *Dr. and Mrs. Paul Sturges* of Milton, Mass. were touring India in March-April. Dr. Sturges is Baptist State Convention Secretary for Massachusetts. They were met in Calcutta on March 30th by Ethel Roadarmel, having arrived from S. India. In 5½ days they saw something of Christian work in Orissa and Bengal and had part of one day at the Lay Training Conference, at Jaleswar where they met Indian Christian leaders, missionaries, and church laymen. On April 4th they shared in the worship and communion service at our Baptist Church, Kharagpur where English is used.

