



NEWS SHEET
REPLACING PRO TEM

A THIRSTY LAND

The Quarterly Magazine
of the
ALGIERS MISSION BAND

Secretary : The Rev. Harold W. Stalley.

Home Office : Campfield, Great Barton,
Bury St. Edmunds,
Suffolk.

Headquarters : Dar Naama, El Biar,
Algiers.

No. 71.

WINTER, 1944-45.

EDITOR :
MILLCENT H. ROCHE.

“Mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.”

II COR. 10. 4.

*“Guide us, O Thou great Redeemer,
Pilgrims through this barren land ;
We are weak, but Thou art mighty ;
Hold us with Thy powerful Hand.”*

As the year 1944 closes letters from Algiers bring news that is joyful, and the assurance that with good heart our friends there are pressing forward “holding forth the Word of Life.” But in these war days difficulties are great, and they need prayer that day by day they may be guided, upheld and sent forth by the tender and mighty hand of our strong Redeemer.

Monsieur and Madame Nicoud (Dar Naama) had a cable at the end of October, from Switzerland, telling them that their

eldest son, Georges, was very ill, and this was quickly followed by the news that he had passed away. Though not in good health Georges had been much better and had written very cheerfully of future plans—he was just twenty-one! It has been a great grief to his parents that letters so rarely got through, either way, during these last years of the war, and our loving sympathy goes out to them. That our Heavenly Father may comfort M. and Mme Nicoud and their two younger sons, in their deep sorrow will be the prayer of all our friends at this time.

Miss Perkin has written from Algiers of good Sunday meetings at **Dar Naama** mostly men of the R.A.F. She says, "The men who come to the Sunday meeting always come up to tea with us first, instead of having it in the canteen, and they enjoy this extremely. Mr. Bryan (Army Scripture Reader) takes the meeting. Miss Perkin says that Mr. Bryan, who has a "prophet's chamber" at Dar Naama, has been such a good friend to them in many ways. Miss P. had had a visit from Kheera, the worldly wife of "Boualem," who long ago professed to be a Christian but has not openly gone forward in the way of Christ. His wife said that he was giving Christian teaching to her little adopted daughter, who was with her and seemed very interested. She promised to bring her husband very soon to Dar Naama.

A French Bible, placed in the French canteen, is read, Miss Perkin says, by quite a number of men, and for some it is their first time of reading it. This gives an opportunity to give New Testaments to Corsicans, Spaniards, and Jews, as well as to the French.

The winter in Algiers has not so far been bad, and fruit and vegetables seem promising, but it appears that the bread ration is not large and does not suffice for those natives who live mainly upon "the staff of life," and they are many. This means that our workers are constantly asked for bread, and while they would love to give to all hungry people, and do so as far as possible, they cannot give what they have not got. Clothing is still an acute problem and can hardly be bought. It has been possible to send out some worn clothing by one means or another, but many Arabs are in great need and our workers also find things difficult in this way.

Mme Lull, writing to Miss Perkin, tells her that it has taken her three weeks, applying day after day, to obtain a permit to have a winter dress made! But she says, "Since 1940 I have been unable to buy anything for myself . . . however, I am happy to have all that is necessary for the children and M. Lull, and now, for myself too. God Who clothes the grass also takes care of His children, Alleluia!" Mme

Lull was delayed at Setif because some of the children had bad colds, but was looking forward to getting back to Tolga in a few days (early November).

Monsieur and Mme Millon were recommencing work among the Students in **Algiers**. There is a tremendous need for such work both among Moslem and European students. Spiritual approach will doubtless be even harder owing to the turmoil in men's minds at this time.

Miss Farmer (Dar Naama) has written of a visit that she and Mlle Buttica had paid to a native soldier in hospital in Algiers. He was wounded in Italy, had lost a leg and was still very ill from other serious wounds. This man was well known from childhood, to Miss Farmer, and also his mother, a professing Christian. She is a widow who was caretaker long ago at the little A.M.B. slum-post in Algiers. Her son, R., was brought up at the American Methodist Orphanage in El Biar. Since leaving there he fell in with evil companions, was led astray, and has suffered for his sin. Miss Farmer writes that he asked them to pray for him. May this needy and suffering "lost sheep" be found by the Good Shepherd Who is seeking him!

Mr. Buckenham has written from time to time of the working of God's Spirit among members of the Forces, coming to the **Blida Mission Station**, on Sundays and other days. Many have now moved on, and letters testify to blessing received and continuing. Now that their numbers are greatly diminished, the Arab work is coming to the fore again. Mrs. Buckenham was hoping to be able to begin Classes for children and girls on Thursdays and Sundays, a meeting for women on Fridays, and also visiting in the Arab houses. There will be much rejoicing in many homes, specially among the children!

Miss Nash, who had been seriously ill in Algiers wrote that she had arrived safely in **Tougourt**, a large desert town in the far south, and was already better from the sunshine and the quiet. She writes, "The doctors told me that I should need some time yet to regain normal health, but, nevertheless, as all is on the flat here, I hope

to do a little in a quiet way (i.e., visiting the people and giving them the Gospel Message) even before the New Year." Touggourt has a large native population and no missionary at all except Miss Nash.

Miss Wood is valiantly working on alone in **Tlemcen** and has written giving some news of those whom she knows there. The young Arab Christian, Andrew, works steadily and well, but Miss Wood does not see him very often. She writes, "His wife is pleased to be visited and is friendly, but more I can't say at present." Here is a very definite call for prayer—that this girl may become a true Christian and so be a helpmeet to her husband, and that their home may witness to Christ. Miss Wood also wrote about a girl for whom prayer has been made. She was born to a childless couple in answer to prayer, as both Miss Butler and the mother herself testified. The baby has now grown up into a big jolly girl, very friendly and pleased to be taught about Christ from time to time, but not, so far, a Christian. Her father has died, and her uncles lately planned a marriage for their niece with a worthless young fellow, more given to drink than to work. Her mother was helpless in the matter, but the proposed marriage has, thank God, for some reason, been broken off. Miss Wood says that Y. (a Christian girl) is very faithful, but has been suffering so much this autumn that she has been kept away a good deal. Classes for girls continue though they are small, but the regular attenders seem to be learning something. There are a number of women and girls who like to hear, but it is not easy, Miss Wood says, to get all the visiting done that she would wish.

A.M.B. RALLY

In spite of a downpour of rain a very good number of friends of the A.M.B. gathered at the Alliance Hall, Westminster, for an afternoon meeting on Wednesday, November 8th.

Mr. Verner was in the Chair, and after prayer, led by Mr. Carnegie of the N.A.M., he brought us into a very real sense of Christ's presence. He reminded us of our

deep and constant need, whether witnessing at home or on the Field, to experience the power and presence of the Holy Spirit working in and through us.

Miss Roche—the retiring secretary—told of some of the "lovely things" (Phil. 4. 8) which had been a joy to her as Secretary during these war years. She mentioned unexpected financial help, loving letters and encouragement that our Father sent in many lovely ways. The opportunity given to her of giving the Gospel Message to Algerian Arab soldiers in England after Dunkirk was a great and unforgettable joy. Miss Roche said that though she was very sorry to have to give up the secretarial work, she felt it was a lovely bit of God's timing that Mr. and Mrs. Stalley were at home to take it on for a while, and she handed it on with great confidence.

Mr. Harold Stalley, in his address, said that this meeting was being held on the second anniversary of the landing of the Allies in North Africa. He recalled that prior to this, under increasing German pressure, the order had gone out for men missionaries to be put into a concentration camp. By God's overruling the order was not put into force. At Tlemcen, in spite of police activity and much else that was difficult, including lack of adequate food and clothing, they were kept in peace and in health. God sent his "ravens," who even brought milk for their baby girl. In spite of the black-out of the work in general, Christ triumphed in the baptism of a young Arab man and in the coming forward of other young men also desiring baptism. Mr. Stalley said that the door is wider open and possibilities are greater than ever before. Help at home is needed, that, through prayer these opportunities may be realized.

The next speaker was Miss M. D. Grautoff whom we were thankful to see so far recovered after her serious illness. She spoke specially of Miliana where she has worked for so many years. Recent letters had brought love and news from Arab friends, and Miss G. reminded us, that while two have been in full work at this Station, only one—Miss Phyllis Russell—will be returning, and she asked special prayer for her. Miss Grautoff went on to

say that in their absence God had put it into the heart of the busy Protestant Pastor to keep the pages of the Bible turned, in a window of the Mission Station, so that passers-by might read. A loving French woman was visiting and praying with a blind Arab mother—a baptised Christian—who is in great need of help and counsel. As she pictured this woman with her backsliding difficult husband, and little children, witnessing to Christ, in spite of failure, and trusting in Him sincerely, Miss Grautoff spoke of our duty to stand beside her and others whom she mentioned, in understanding and believing prayer. Informed and persevering prayer is needed if the power of the Enemy who fights for these souls is to be broken down.

Miss P. Russell said that in thinking of the work of the A.M.B. and of its future, God had given her the verse, "Be strong and work for I am with you saith the Lord of Hosts." They had proved God's help in the days before the Allied occupation in many ways and specially in the kindness of French and Jewish friends. And after the Allies came, many fresh opportunities of service offered. Miss Russell stressed the need for new workers in view of all the new possibilities before us. Bou Saada, a large desert town, and the city of Tlemcen, have each one woman worker only, and openings are many. In colportage work Monsieur Lull reports that he has never sold so many Gospels as he has done lately. For those at home and those on the Field, alike, God's word comes to us afresh, "Be strong and work for I am with you."

The Rev. Gordon Thomas gave the closing address. He spoke of "our warfare" in Algeria, which is not a carnal warfare but a spiritual one. There is need for us to take our place in it as partners to help to pull down strongholds. The weapon of deliverance is prayer. Mr. Gordon Thomas illustrated this from the story of Abraham and Lot. It is passionate persistent prayer that is needed.

Mr. Verner and Mr. Collinson led in prayer during the meeting, and we felt God's hand in blessing upon us throughout.

From Our New Secretary

Dear Friends of the A.M.B.,

Samuel Chadwick once said, "A vision without a task makes a visionary; a task without a vision is drudgery; but a task with a vision makes a missionary."

What of the vision of A.M.B. in North Africa, the "Land of the Vanished Church"? That Church truly "risen again" with Him and glorifying her Lord. To some onlookers this would seem more like a mirage than a vision, and as impossible of realisation as that "the desert should rejoice and blossom as a rose." But—

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries 'It shall be done.'"

What of our task? "The evangelization of the Arabic-speaking Moslems of Algeria and Tunisia." There is no need to enlarge upon the unyielding nature of this task, our readers and prayer-partners know what has been the apparent reward for over a half century of such labour. Some might well think of the word "drudgery."

The missionary however, is one to whom the vision is as real as the task, the latter becoming to him an altar and the former the consuming flame.

The measure of success given to those who have laboured before us has been in as much as they shirked not the one, nor lost the other. Today we need a host of such. Humanly speaking our Band is weaker and fewer in numbers than it has been for a long time in its past history. But God is enlarging our vision, and He wants us to ask Him to raise up men and women of vision to take up the task of evangelizing North Africa.

Will you catch that "vision," and make it your "task" to pray without ceasing in obedience to our Lord's words in Matt. 9. 38? Then, you too, will be a missionary.

HAROLD W. STALLEY.