
forward

MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH AFRICA MISSION

Antidote to Unbelief

BERNARD COLLINSON

ARE you ever tempted “to give up”? If not, then you belong to a rare, minority class. Joshua and Caleb were tempted to give up—but didn’t.

Amid scenes of open revolt and expressed unbelief, the children of Israel had fallen into God-dishonouring habits. There was complaint against the spiritual leadership, discontent with what God had allowed, an utter lack of confidence in the plan of campaign with fear concerning the future. Some were even canvassing for planned retreat. What a distressing picture! Chapter 13 of Numbers shows us that such despondency was the result of believing “an evil report” concerning the assigned task. The report was evil in that it was a half-truth. It was true that the land investigated was inhospitable and that the spies who brought back their report had been dwarfed by the giants of Anak. All this was true, but it was only the human aspect. It did not represent the whole truth. The report was biased to the exclusion of the Divine aspect. Unbelief always harms us, it blinds our eyes to the promises of God and cuts us off from the victory offered to faith.

Just two of the chosen spies resisted this floodtide of pessimism. Joshua and Caleb witnessed the same dangers, were dwarfed by the same giants and doubtless experienced the same sense of impotence in a humanly hopeless situation. But, they saw beyond these factors to the firm promise of Jehovah to give the land to His people.

na|m

NOVEMBER 1968

Hence their declared assurance: "If the Lord delight in us, He will"

As the day of the Lord approaches, every branch of the church of Christ will be assailed by the mounting pressures of popular unbelief—that sin which so easily besets us. We need not be swept along with the nominal Christian masses who, alas, regard Muslim mission fields with despondency and doubt. The masses are the victim of "evil reports". If the Lord delight in us, He will work on our behalf and to His eternal glory in North Africa. The condition is clear, IF the Lord delight in us. Does He? Can He?—as a Mission family?—as corporate teams?—as individuals? HIS delight is dependent upon **our** trust in His promises. Without faith it is still impossible to please Him. God will do what He says—let us pledge ourselves to trust Him together to complete for His church in North Africa what He has so wonderfully begun. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12: 1-2) That is the New Testament prescription for threatened unbelief

NEWS

MOVEMENTS OF MISSIONARIES

After a short furlough, Mr. and Mrs. John Thompson have returned to their bookshop ministry in Fez.

Miss Monique Van De Velde, who has been recently helping at the Radio School of the Bible, has been assigned to Algiers where she is to continue her Arabic studies.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Will friends please note that should they wish to send personal monetary gifts to individual missionaries as Christmas presents, such gifts should reach the office before the end of November. Transmissions to the Field for December are calculated on the first day of the month.

GUIDED GIVING

We give thanks to God that it was possible to send full allowances for the month of September. We regret that only two-thirds allowances could be sent for October.

Continued from following page

Christians. After last year's opposition there are visible signs of church growth. Just before leaving Morocco, it was a very moving experience for me to attend a baptismal and communion service organised by leading Moroccan Christians.

I am grateful for the years spent in Morocco and for all the lessons learned there, and not least for the prayers and help of the Lord's people which made this possible.

REMOVAL TO FRANCE

GLADYS FOX

ON the 15th of May this year I left Morocco with the Field Treasurer, and the office materials, on board a ship bound for France. This was the first part of the Field Headquarters of the NAM to leave North Africa. As long ago as August 1965 the mission organisation had ceased to function legally and increasing difficulties over the past 18 months in Morocco with the government pointed the way to Europe. We arrived on the 18th of May right at the commencement of the general strike which paralysed France for three weeks. Little did we realise we would arrive in the middle of a revolution! We will not quickly forget living through those tense days, when many people feared a civil war. It will take the country a long time to recover from this crisis. We lacked nothing during this period when there were food shortages and no communications.

With some frustrations at the beginning because of the events in France, a new office was found and set up in an 11-storey block of flats in Aubagne, south of France, about 12 miles from Marseilles. I returned from three weeks' holiday in England to start work with a newly-appointed Field Treasurer, Mr. Clarence Adams. Until the rest of FHQ arrive from North Africa in September, the Adams family who live three miles away, are my nearest English-speaking neighbours. Aubagne is small,

about 36,000 inhabitants and is nominally Catholic. It is surrounded by lovely hills and beautiful scenery. Soon after arrival I found a studio flat to rent and hope to furnish it and move in soon. Accommodation is not easy to find so am very thankful for this provision.

Today I worshipped with a local Christian assembly and have already been accepted by them and adopted into the pastor's family. They have been interested in and praying for North Africa for many years and regard our coming as an answer to their prayers for the work of the Gospel in Aubagne. Their daughter Blanche just said to me, "While I was sweeping the floor, I often prayed for someone to come and help us." She is my own age and we have had precious fellowship together as though we had known each other for years. Surely the Lord was going before and preparing some wonderful surprises! They want us to help with the Sunday School and evangelistic efforts in Aubagne. I have seen many North Africans in this area.

It does not mean withdrawal because the FHQ is pulling out of North Africa. The Great Commission still stands and there are many opportunities for missionaries in North Africa. The students of Bible correspondence courses need following up and there is much we can do to help and encourage the national

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Am I Accepted ?

SALAMEEYA, a city in central Syria, is the centre of a region inhabited largely by people of the Ismaili sect of Islam. This sect is best known because of its leader, the Aga Khan, whom members revere as a living god. Through the radio voice of the RSB, the Gospel message has reached into this Ismaili strong-hold to transform the life of at least one young Muslim.

We first heard from Ali in October of 1967 when he wrote in response to one of our broadcasts. Since that time, he has continued to listen faithfully to the broadcasts and also to correspond with us, completing four of our correspondence courses totalling 48 lessons.

After all this study, he recently wrote a long letter in which he shared with us the effects of the Gospel on his life.

“My first contact with you was by letter. At that time, I knew nothing about the person with whom I was corresponding, that is to say, I did not know whether this was a Christian radio station or something else. But when I received your speedy reply with the Book of Psalms and the lessons, which are the light of my life, my desire to know all the truths about the Bible grew. Time has passed and my life has changed. As I began to meditate on these things, I experienced physical weakness. I was asking myself how I could change to another religion. However, when I understood the truths and the proofs, I knew who Jesus was, what the Bible was, and who the apostles were. I was not a Christian, but I gave my life to the Saviour, Whom it is best to follow. In that moment, I was born again. I loved Jesus. **AM I ACCEPTED ?** Does Jesus allow those of another religion to follow Him ? I love him even if He does not accept me because I was a prodigal, but I found the Guide. I believed with all my heart that Jesus bore my sin and that He took my place and died on my behalf and that He was raised from the dead for my justification. I accepted Him as my Saviour, and I shall be His faithful servant.”

He went on to say that his father, who cannot read nor write, does not realise that he is studying the Scriptures, but that if he did learn what he was doing, he would react in violent opposition.

Our responsibility to Ali is great. He does not have the opportunity of fellowship in person with other believers, and he looks to us for not only teaching on the Scriptures but for counsel on the Christian life. We covet your prayer support for him and for ourselves in our ministry to him.

Cherchell Camps

MURIEL BUTCHER

THE second evening meeting of the senior girls' camp had just finished. The hush which meant that the Lord had spoken was now being followed by the inevitable reaction. Boisterous, pyjama-clad teenagers were being chased into their respective dormitories by counsellors anxious to get this "settling-down" stage over as quickly as possible so that they could get to bed. But two of the older girls were missing.

Tracked down at last to a corner of the garden, they were found to be deep in conversation, one of them in tears. "It's a problem of conscience," explained the oldest, "religious conscience. You see we have been brought up to believe that Christ was not the Son of God and that He didn't die, and now we hear such convincing teaching—and we feel pulled in opposite directions." Was this genuine perplexity or merely delaying tactics? This was the same girl who had wanted to leave the previous evening because of her Muslim convictions. But she seemed open and eager to talk. "Nadia, ask God to show you the truth. We are not trying to change your religion, but we must share the life and love that we have found in Christ. He is the Truth. Why don't you go on seeking, listening and reading the Bible and be ready for Him to show you His way." "I think that is the best solution," she said as she went off to bed. And indeed it

proved to be so, for before the two weeks of camp were over, a changed Nadia had yielded to the claims of Christ. I wish you could have seen her face light up with joy at the parting gift of a New Testament. She is one who returns to very difficult family circumstances. She badly needs the love and guidance of the Lord.

These teenage girls were a very outspoken group this year and discussed spiritual things with an unusual freedom. They were particularly impressed by the testimony of an Algerian Christian woman who contrasted her fruitless search for satisfaction in Islam with her present joy and faith in Christ. Crowding around her, full of questions, they wanted to know if it were not possible to follow both ways. This was the problem that held many of them back from committal to Christ. Though strongly drawn to Him, they hesitated because it would cost too much to break with Islam. Others rejected our message from the first and remained opposed to Jesus Christ. Two weeks is long enough to plant quite a lot of seed, but not long enough to see the harvest. Please water this Seed with your prayers—Christ longs to fill and satisfy these lovely young lives.

We had lots of fun together, playing at the beach, climbing up the hills, eating shich-kababs cooked over charcoal and dressing up as elephants for the dramatic game. There were anxious moments too, when two girls got

lost in the woods, and when another fainted in the sea; but we thankfully record the loving care and protection of our God in answer, perhaps, to your prayers. Altogether 83 children have spent two weeks at Cherchell this summer. They, like us, will have lots of happy memories, but will there be any lasting change in their lives? Much depends now on our prayers and the follow-up.

We look forward to seeing the two girls from Oran again when we recommence our Bible studies and other activities in October. For the first time, one of the B.C.C. girls from Al Asnam was at camp, and she is already asking about our next meeting there. We are conscious of our need to be directed by the Holy Spirit as we plan another year's work.

Tran Thuyen at work in the RSB, Marseilles. As was announced in our previous issue, our brother will be available for deputation in England in March, 1969.



A PRAYER

THIS has been my first summer in charge of Hope House. I trust that it will not be my last, as it has been one of the best I have known. There has been such a good family spirit. When I look at the assorted bookings, I often wonder how the Lord is going to fit in all these ill-assorted people! But we have been one very happy family all summer.

Appreciated Help

I have had 2 wonderful helpers—they were worth waiting for! In May, Gillian came for 2 weeks. She had been converted 2 or 3 months previously through visiting us, and through Azeeza's testimony. Returning to work in Spain with a rich Catholic family, she had become dissatisfied with their superficial life. She worked very hard and cheerfully. Each day we had a time of reading and prayer as she was desperately ignorant of Christian principles. We continued this for another month while Gillian worked in Dar Scott. She is now finishing her job in Spain and has been accepted for Capernwray Bible School.

Then we had Penny's help and support. Penny is a nurse and a midwife, waiting to train as a

LETTER YOU MUST READ

Inside Hope House

LOIS MORRISS

health visitor in September. She has co-operated very closely in our work, our fun and games and the fellowship. She asked to pray daily with me about the Hope House problems and joys, so I am sure this has been the secret of our happy family. She has been a real comfort to me, and a number of things said here have challenged her.

Dar Scott

Azeeza, the Christian Moroccan laboratory technician is the youngest in my family. She has matured in many ways; and we have had some interesting talks on subjects varying from old maids to advanced maths! She loves the mixed company of Hope House. While Patricia St. John has been away, I have taken turns with leading prayers in Dar Scott for the Moroccan trainee nurses. I got to know them well; and we had some good times. One evening one of the English students gave his testimony. They were impressed and helped by the opposition in his home in England and how the Lord had helped and answered his prayers.

We have had a couple doing language study here these past 3 months. It has fallen to me to help in the organising of their study programme, mind the 15 month old baby, and keep the

wife company while her husband was at French camps. She has made us some American dishes and we taught her Yorkshire pudding and fruit cake. (sic)

Visitors from England

A number of friends have visited us from England, and I have conducted them round the various places of interest. We have visited Tetuan, Chauen and Tangier; the tourist spots, and off the beaten tracks! We have toured the Casbah by day and by night, until I nearly (but not quite!) know my way blindfold. (On one of these trips I had a wonderful answer to prayer. For 3 months I had searched for a young mother Rahamo, and had not found the right street. Then this day as we passed through a small street, one of my friends called my attention to Rahamo sweeping her doorstep and calling after me! I was thrilled how the Lord had timed our passing, her chores, and made the Englishman understand that she was calling me in Arabic as I had already passed. Since then I have visited her every week as before to read and pray!) Another visitor made an unusual request to visit an ancient graveyard. So we climbed in and out, up and down looking in vain for her father's grave of 60 years ago. We have ridden

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A BOOK FOR CHRISTMAS

FROM THE FOREWORD BY

PATRICIA M. ST. JOHN

“ . . . the real purpose of this book is this: Layla, Rashid, and the others are recent, modern converts, and Miloud may still be doing his correspondence course. Muriel Butcher has told you of a few, who, up to the time of writing, are following Christ faithfully; we could write of far more, who started as they did, and found the odds overwhelming, and turned back and denied Christ. Muriel has written the beginning of the story; the end partly depends on you. As you finish each little account, will you lay down the booklet and pray for the boy or girl concerned?”

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by faith



**Character Cameos
from North Africa**

By Muriel Butcher

CHANGED INTO BEAUTY

JENNIE WILBERFORCE

ONLY eighteen, and once a beautiful girl, Rukeya was a Berber from the Riff mountains who had come down to the coast, like so many others, in time of famine. She now lived with her mother and two sisters in a little wooden shack in the nearby shanty town. Misfortune had struck Rukeya at sixteen-years-old, when she lost her arm in a machine while working at a local factory. However, she got compensation for this and kept her mother and younger sister in food and clothes. Then, fresh tragedy struck, for a growth on the skull bones began to distort her face, pushing up one ear so that it was almost on the crown of her head. There was not much pain but the ugliness made her miserable.

On admission to hospital, the offending ear was removed, as it had already ceased to function, and some of the diseased bone was taken away. We tried to persuade her to go to a large city many miles away where she could have X-ray therapy free, but she did not want to go so far from home.

One day, a visitor came who knew Rukeya's own language and she spoke about the beauty of the Lord Jesus, the Rose of Sharon, and how He was ready to give us His beauty and how God would look not on our sinfulness but only on the loveliness of His Son. As she spoke, she held a rose, which she left with Rukeya to remind her of that beauty which could be hers by faith. Next day, the same visitor talked to her again and showed her pictures of the lost sheep being found by the Good Shepherd. As she concluded the story from St. Luke, chapter fifteen, she asked Rukeya, "Would you not like Him to find you?" "Yes!" replied the girl, with a sigh.

After her discharge from hospital, I often went to sit with her in their little shack, taking with me fresh dressings and even, some-

times, a gramophone. There was a bed at one end of the hut but the family slept around the floor on mattresses. Under the bed served as a store place for tins of rice, flour and other commodities. On the bed were suitcases and boxes of personal possessions. How pathetic it was to see Rukeya open one and get out some of her compensation money to buy a dress length for her little sister!

One day, as we were sitting on the floor, I put a record on the gramophone. At the first sounds issuing from it, a large, black hairy face, with two white horns and gleaming eye-balls, emerged from under the bed. My first thought was that it must be an emissary of the evil one come to object to the message! When the whole body followed the head, though, it proved to be a poor old black goat, which was being kept under the bed for safety. It was the annual sheep feast and as the family had not been able to afford a sheep, a goat was the next best thing. Thieving was rife, so goat was under the bed until the day of the feast. Soon he got used to the noise, while the message brought comfort and hope to Rukeya and her friends. For hours one sat there. Each time I got up to go, they pulled me down again, saying that it was still early. Naturally, visits had to be limited to off-duty days or half-days, when there was plenty of time. Often relatives would come in; each, it seemed, with some ointment which needed advice. I prayed that while imparting medical knowledge, opportunities would come to help them spiritually. Some of the boys could read and would take away portions of the Scripture.

Gradually poor Rukeya got worse. It was a grievous situation and sometimes the smell from the head wound was dreadful but I was able to advise the mother how to make her last days as comfortable as possible. She longed to hear the truths about which she had learned in hospital, especially about the Good Shepherd. We put the picture on the wall of the hut to remind her that He was always present.

The last time I saw Rukeya, she was lying on her mattress with her poor bandaged head lifted to see me. She was too ill to talk but I left fresh dressings and said a few words of comfort in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

Next day her mother came to tell us that Rukeya had passed away at eleven o'clock the previous night. The mother had wanted to send for the Koranic readers but Rukeya asked her to send for the people from the hospital, which she did not do. We can be thankful, though, that although we could not be there, the Good Shepherd was present and ready to take this weary lamb into His arms and bear her to the Heavenly fold. Gone are the days of misery through physical deformity and mutilation. Rukeya is beautiful again—but with that eternal loveliness which shall never change.

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camels, scrumped prickly pears, eaten couscous and drunk tea in Moroccan homes, we have got up early to watch sfinges being made, and the goats being milked, we have visited the carpet school, and tried to show these friends Morocco as it really is.

Missionary Visitors

We have had the usual (or unusual) missionaries on holiday this summer. There have been the older ones like Miss Dew, who tells of the many changes. There was Miss Rice who told us hair-raising stories of the troubles before Independence, and the Lord's protection. Then we had a young missionary nurse only 3 months in the country trying to study Arabic in the hospital clinics. The seniors have enjoyed the juniors, and made us a lovely Persian meal of chicken, rice, almonds and raisins. The younger ones have amused the older ones—one evening we had a fancy dress supper. The missionaries from lonely stations said how much they appreciated the fellowship.

Just now we have a Moroccan girl visiting us. She was brought up by a lady missionary, but now lives with her own family. She made a profession years ago; but now she has a well paid job, many socially important friends, and she feels the opposition to Christianity very strongly. She is fitting in very well with the younger missionaries and we pray that this time will help her here. Another group in our family was our temporary hospital helpers from Britain. Four

were medical students who helped in the clinics, assisted in building another room on Dar Scott, led Bible studies at English camp, and generally aided and abetted in our fun and games. Saturday nights they took it in turns to go 'fishing' for folk to invite into the Sunday evening fellowships. We have had a number of folk come as a result.

Students

We also had 2 students from missionary training college who arrived after hitch-hiking for 10 days from England. One was an agricultural graduate, so he was set to work remodelling the hospital garden, and putting a new window in the maternity ward. He also helped 2 Moroccan children with their English holiday work, and helped in the English camp. The other was a male nurse who worked in the men's ward, in Out-patients, mending, painting; he did Hope House accounts, and even baked for Sunday evening refreshments. We learnt several new methods when these two took the Sunday evening fellowship. Then there were a number of Moroccan children unable to go to English camp, so these students ran a holiday club. They played games, held quizzes, made scrap books, told Bible stories in a modern way, and I was roped in for the accompaniment of enthusiastic singing.

Missionary Work ?

Perhaps you think some of this has little bearing on traditional missionary work. Well one bright

spark suggested that this would make an ideal missionary training college! Another told me that he has found out this summer what it really means to be a missionary. So if these visitors and helpers go home to pray intelligently, and become challenged by God's call to Christian work it has been worthwhile. We too have been helped in many ways. The family spirit has produced many willing helpers in the kitchen, at meal tables, when the gas cylinder runs out, when the electricity short circuited, or when I needed help with family prayers. I too have been entertained by the strangest requests from a Union Jack to a cactus leaf (for the fancy dress supper), to allow the family to hold a concert (which we did with the aid of some old clothes given to charity!), the nurses asked for an end-of-the-year-party which began in Moroccan dress and ended in a ghost hunt! There were calls to translate patients' requests into English, to defend an innocent Englishman dispensing medicine from impatient Moroccan ladies waiting for an interpreter, for interesting stamps for letters homes, keys to the beach hut, sandwiches for picnics, or just another cup of tea!

I began this season very nervously and often wishing I was 10 or 20 years older; but the Lord has really helped. I was especially challenged and encouraged by Jeremiah 1: 6-9, "I am a child—say not, I am a child for thou shalt go—and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord."

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TANGIER**

Details from Headquarters

EARLY EXPERIENCES

Learning and Using the Language

THERE are as many parts to learning a language as there are colours in a rainbow, and in order to receive a balanced picture of the language it is essential to tackle it from every direction. Attending university lectures; reading books; writing letters and essays; listening to the radio; watching television (sometimes); practising phonetic drills; speaking with the local people; all play their part.

Since the last prayer letter I have had much more experience in the latter, and probably the most important, method, that is conversation with French people.

The first half of July saw me 3,000 feet up in the French Alps at Flumet. This was for the G.B.U. (French I.V.F.) work camp, preparing their chalet for later camps. It was a useful time for me on two counts, speaking lots of French and meeting French Christian students and leaders of the G.B.U. This was a good opportunity to tell them of the work of N.A.M. in North Africa, because many evangelical Christians in France know very little of this work in an area which was and is strongly influenced by the French. I also urged them to seize opportunities to witness to some of the thousands of Arab students in France.

We exchanged ideas for evangelizing university students and this was helpful. There are far fewer evangelical Christians in France than in Britain and hence the Christian Unions have a much tougher job, but I feel that a willingness to try different ideas for their meetings and a change of meeting times might be a real help.

During the whole of August I worked as a "moniteur" (helper) at an evangelistic camp for children at Chambon sur Lignon, towards the centre of France. At first I had seven boys aged nine to look after, but when John Gray (also of N.A.M.) had to go back to Montpellier to have his tonsils removed I had thirteen boys.

The French temperament and my limited knowledge of French meant that I found it hard to keep discipline. In some ways this was one of my most difficult Christian experiences, and I lost my patience and temper more times in that month than in the rest of my Christian life. However, this is an inevitable part of language study and it is impossible to "get it on the cheap". The Lord taught me a lot about patience and love, and sometimes the boys asked searching spiritual questions, so it was not wasted time!

I will be starting my Arabic studies in October as well as continuing with French, and I look forward to renewing contacts with

my Arab friends. Three of them (Syrians) have shown real interest in the N.A.M. Bible correspondence courses, and I am thrilled at the way the Lord is answering our prayers.

Michael Paton

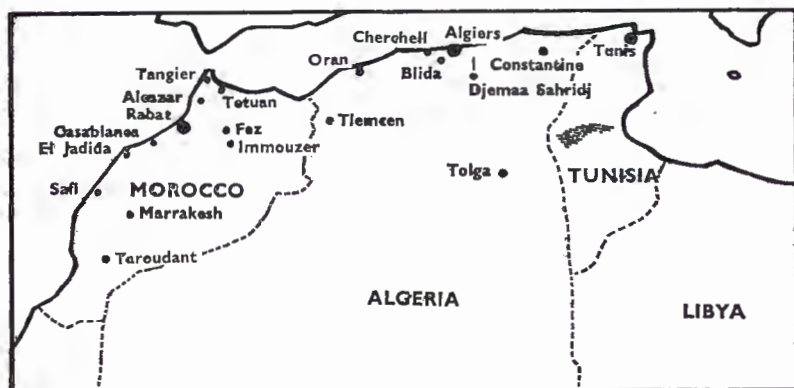
TLEMCCEN, cradled between green and fertile hills, boats, according to a Ministry of Tourism brochure, an excellent climate, and its 90,000 inhabitants, which now include only 100 or so French, are "Muslims faithful to their traditions who have known how to adapt themselves to the modern world". This is the impression one receives as one walks through the town. There are many beautiful and well kept buildings of both Arab and French origin. The open-air cafes, often pleasantly situated in large tree-shaded public squares, are well filled with European dressed men. The women are still generally veiled and keep to their homes. One can buy almost anything in town and business is transacted in French. All former French commerce and local government departments are now of course run entirely by Algerians at Tlemccen. There are several cinemas, a lending library and a government-run youth and sports club and modern sports stadium.

I live in a spacious house with Bernard and Vivian Leat. We have an enclosed garden in which grow lemon, orange and other fruit trees. Bernard is adapting two of the large rooms for me to use which will include a small kitchen, toilet and shower.

Our work here involves firstly the visiting of our Bible Correspondence Course students who live in or around Tlemccen. These are mostly young men who applied for the course after listening to our radio broadcasts from Marseilles. They are invited to visit us at the house, which they do at all times. At present there is a group of small boys who come regularly every Wednesday after school, and an older age group, 13-19 years, who come three times a week to a Bible Study! These youngsters, Muslims, come of course entirely of their own free will and are not always the same ones. I had the joy of leading my first Bible Study in French with 10 boys the other evening on "Prayer". Please pray for me as I lead two studies a week of this nature, and as I continue my studies in French and Arabic.

We have in mind two projects for future evangelistic outreach. One is the monthly showing of film strips and the kind of parabolic slide programmes that I used to show to Children's Church at Camrose. Bernard assures me that this will bring crowds. The other is the opening of a reading room/library, with books which will have to be bought in French and Arabic. It might also include a window display for which permission would be needed, and it would mean one of us being on duty every evening; young fellows love dropping in to chat!

Peter Thorne



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