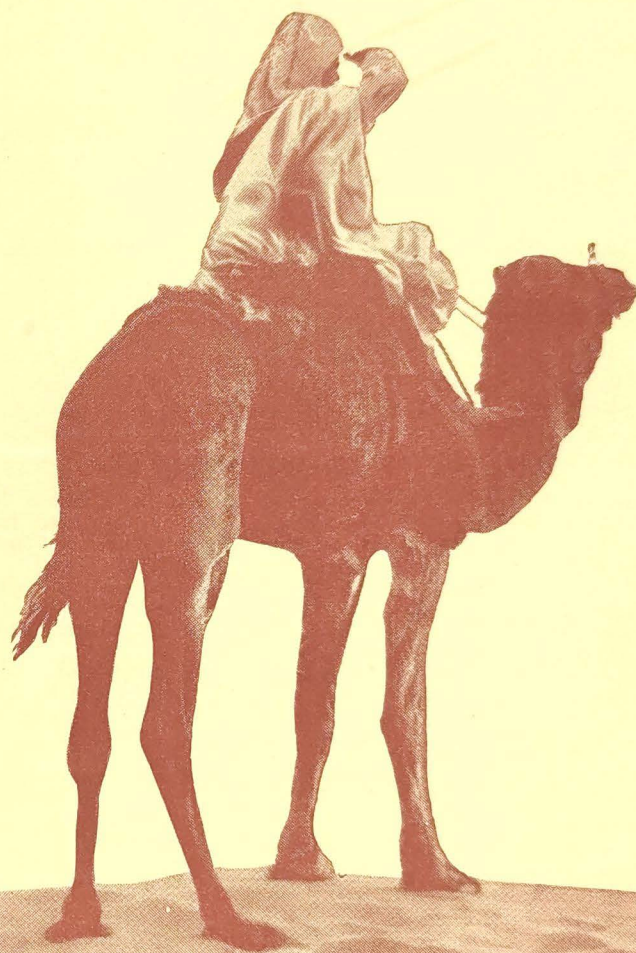


A Thirsty Land



Algiers Mission Band

No. 135.

SEPTEMBER, 1961.

ALGIERS MISSION BAND

Founded in 1888 by Miss I. Lilius Trotter

HEADQUARTERS:

DAR NAAMA, 45 AV. CLEMENCEAU, EL BIAR, ALGIERS.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

General Secretary: MR. H. W. BUCKENHAM.
(Ixworth, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk).

Chairman: REV. R. J. WAINE

Treasurer and Acting-Secretary in Algeria: MR. P. G. LONGLEY
Miss M. D. Grautoff Miss I. K. Nash Miss P. M. Russell
Miss E. Clark Miss V. Wood (*Editor of Magazine*)

GREAT BRITAIN

London Centre: Algiers House, 92 Gordon Road, Ealing, London, W.13.
(Telephone: PERivale 1765)

Secretary-Treasurer: Miss D. B. Edge.

Home Advisory Council:

Mr. Horace F. Berry (Chairman).

Miss O. M. Botham.	Mrs. O. Gilbert-Smith.	Rev. H. R. Smart.
Mr. H. W. Buckenham.	Mr. John L. Oliver.	Mrs. M. E. Waine.
Mr. L. R. S. Clarke.	Mr. E. Pearson.	Mr. R. W. Withers.

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES:

London: Mr. H. F. Berry, 12, Briston Grove, Crouch End, London, N.8.
Essex: Mr. R. W. Withers, Valentine Lodge, 146, Cranbrook Road, Ilford.
Bedfordshire: Mrs. R. Green, Red Cow Farm, Bidwell, Dunstable, Beds.
Lancashire: Mr. W. Lister, 25, Burnside Avenue, Blackpool, Lancs.
Yorkshire (Leeds District): Mr. W. S. Ramsden, 37 Marshall St., Crossgates, Leeds 15, Yorks.
Scotland (Edinburgh District): Mrs. Duncan Campbell, 38, Coates Gardens, Edinburgh, 12.
" (*Dundee District*): Mr. A. Miller, 25, Perth Road, Dundee, Angus.
" (*Glasgow District*) Mrs. Jean Y. Wilson, 8 Gardenrose Path, Maybole, Ayrshire.

U.S.A. Honorary Corresponding Secretary:

Mrs. Myrtle Hare, 609 California Boulevard, Toledo, 12. Ohio, U.S.A.

REFEREES.

M. le Pasteur Chatoney, 31 Rue Clauzel, Algiers.
M. le Missionnaire Rolland, Tizi-Ouzou, Algeria.
M. Leutenegger, Hennaya, Tlemcen, Algeria.
Mlle. L. Saillens, L'Institut Biblique, Nogent-sur-Marne, (Seine), France.
Dr. René Pache, L'Institut Emmaus, Vennes-sur-Lausanne, Switzerland.
Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Westminster Chapel, London, S.W.1, England.
Rev. Geoffrey R. King, West Croydon Baptist Church, Surrey, England.
Rev. Percy Hassam, 69 Salford Road, Aspley Guise, Bletchley, Bucks., England.
Rev. Duncan Campbell, 38 Coates Gardens, Edinburgh, 12, Scotland.
Rev. Dr. J. G. S. S. Thomson, 38 Coates Gardens, Edinburgh, 12, Scotland.
Mr. G. E. M. Govan, 2 Monastery Road, Clondalkin, Co. Dublin, Ireland.
Dr. Philip E. Howard, Jr., Sunday School Times, 325 North Thirteenth Street, Philadelphia, 5, Pa., U.S.A.
Dr. J. Edwin Orr, 11451 Berwick Avenue, Los Angeles 49, California, U.S.A.
Mrs. Northcote Deck, South Drive, Toronto 5, Ontario, Canada.
Rt. Rev. G. F. B. Morris, South Africa.

A THIRSTY LAND

The Quarterly Magazine of the Algiers Mission Band

Annual Subscription, including postage:

Three shillings (Great Britain)

50 cents (U.S.A.)

No. 135

September, 1961

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

IT was still the early days of summer when the Whitsuntide Conference took place this year, and a good number of people of various races gathered for a time of fellowship and spiritual instruction and encouragement at "La Palmeraie." Not many came from far, but at least one Arab woman who was brought there from Kabylia and had not seen so large a gathering of Christians for many years was overjoyed to have this opportunity of joining us. She met some old friends, and made new ones, and was deeply grateful to those who made it possible for her to come.

The subjects chosen for Bible Studies were taken from the first Epistle of John, and were mostly given in Arabic (with a French translation when necessary) so were readily understood by the majority. One women's meeting in Arabic was especially noticeable for the interest and understanding shown by the women, and the open way in which some of them spoke out about their faith and what it meant to them. At another, the Arab evangelist spoke about the work of the Holy Ghost in the heart of the believer in an address which was very clearly expressed and helpful in thought. Intercourse at meals and during strolls in the garden between meetings helped to give the feeling of pleasure and good fellowship; and few of those who said good-bye at the close of the third day, did not wish and hope to be present "next year, if God wills."

* * *

Camps and holiday schools for children seem more and more being used as a means of attracting and helping girls and boys in the summer holiday months, and only two days ago I heard from a mother whose girl and little boy had been attending one. How glad she was she had

been able to send them, and that she thought they learnt a lot of good and had been very happy. Earlier in the year,—March 27-30—Mlle. Chollet had had a very happy little camp for girls at Sétif. Miss Mee and Mlle. Daniel came to help her and the seven children (4 from Bordj-bou-Arreidj and 3 from Sétif) proved very attentive listeners and learners, and also enjoyed the times of relaxation when they did embroidery and were taken for an outing to the little pine woods, where they could play.

* * *

Making use of the French national holiday week-end (July 14) a small gathering of Arab men and women assembled at Dar Naama for Bible readings and study in Arabic. It was good to have the ones and twos connected with different missions joining with us. Saturday was set apart for personal talks with various inquirers or believers: Friday and Sunday for Bible studies—primarily for men, but open also to women. Mr. Marsh, who was the leader, has chosen for one of his addresses the subject given in 1 Cor. 12: 3—“No man can say that Jesus is the LORD, but by the Holy Ghost.” JESUS IS THE LORD. It is a hard saying to Muslims always at first: but in complete silence and with deep attention his hearers listened as he emphasised and dwelt on the importance and deep meaning in the words. Were they sufficiently free from their Muslim background to accept this message? We could see and feel that it made a deep impression. Indeed, it would not have been surprising if one or two who heard it then had arrived in that hour at the whole-hearted conviction of Thomas after the Resurrection—“My Lord and my God.” Whether this was so or not, there can be no doubt that they understood the message, and it gave them much to think about. We look forward to another series of Arabic Bible Studies at the end of October, when we hope Mr. Marsh will be able to be with us again.

* * *

Another important event took place about this time, the baptism of a young man (Arab) who had for some time been asking that he might be baptised, and professing earnestly his belief in Christ as the Saviour. Having a senior man missionary with us at the time, it was possible to ask him to talk with the young man to judge whether he was ready for baptism, with a sincere faith in the Saviour and a sufficient understanding of what it meant to take this step. The judgment of the missionary being favourable, the baptism took place in the presence of a small gathering of friends. It was a solemn but happy occasion: and all present were moved to pray that the one who was testifying thus to his

faith in Christ, and resolution to follow Him to the end, might be kept by the power of God. Jesus said—"I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

It seemed very fitting that the address given at this service to the newly baptised was given by one of his own race, an Arab Christian worker, who could speak feelingly from his own experience of the difficulties and temptations that beset a convert. His warning that it is *hard* to be a Christian was openly expressed: but then he dwelt tenderly on the help Jesus gives to His disciples, on His constant Presence with them, and the gift of His Peace—"not as the world giveth," but so that they may have peace of heart even in times of trial. This, more or less, was the gist of the message, given with the quiet assurance of one who has known trial and temptation, and whose faith is firm.

* * *

Visiting the hospital regularly has been carried on by Mrs. Longley through the summer. (The hours for visiting being in the very hottest part of the day may be trying, but it is very well worth while. There is generally a special patient to look out for among the women—perhaps one of whom we have heard through other missionaries, for sick people needing special treatment are often sent from far to the big hospital in Algiers. But there are opportunities for speaking to others also, and they seem glad to be spoken to. Just now the special patient for the weekly visit is a young woman who has been there for months, and who comes from a distance, so that she has no family near to visit her. She had had a bad accident; a balcony with iron supports on which she was standing fell—and she with it. She was terribly injured. Her feet especially were so hurt that toes had to be removed and there is a small bone in the ankle broken and in plaster now. She is told that some day she will be able to learn to walk again, but it must be hard to believe, and it is a sad time for her. But she brightens up when she sees her visitor, and is so happy to be able to talk in her Arab tongue. She is very responsive too to talk of higher things, listening gladly to Bible reading or story. When spoken to of how Jesus taught those who believe to pray for one another, and how their prayers are answered, she said so sweetly "I'm a believer" and then "Will you pray for me?"

CHANGE and PROGRESS

WHEN we speak of *progress* we certainly imply change; and normally understand progress to be *change for the better*. But change does not necessarily mean progress; and even when there is some sign of progress in the change, it is often rather like the reluctant child on the way to school in the old nursery rhyme:—"One step forward and two steps back, To count the puddles that lie in the track." = change, but not progress.

The first half of the present century has certainly seen much change in Algeria in many directions and in some directions there has been undoubted progress: but from the missionary point of view the question which formed the title of a N.M.P. tract thirty years or more ago still remains a question which needs to be seriously considered—"Is there any progress?"

Coming out as a new missionary forty years ago, bewildering first impressions combined with the knowledge imparted by the talk of experienced missionaries to form a picture in the mind of the general conditions of land and people, to be added to by personal observation as further experience helped to give better understanding. Now, looking back to those early days, the changes made in almost every department of life are amazing and still continuing.

But are these changes all for the better? Are they bringing in improvements all round? Or, are they not sometimes just a work of destruction—pulling down old customs and institutions and the beliefs of generations, without setting up new and better constructions? Progress is in some respects like the stirring of the dead bones in the prophet's vision, movement that is a sign of life: but progress should be betterment, and that is where the Christian missionary pauses to ask again—"Is there any progress?" Of all the restless movements and changes everywhere, is there a movement in the right direction?

Judged by the standards of fifty years ago, the greater number of Arab women with whom the missionaries were in contact were entirely illiterate. And most of them were quite ready to explain their state of ignorance by saying—"You see we are only like donkeys—we don't know anything." (They had been told this often enough). Some of the boys went to the French schools; and were considered by their proud mothers (and by themselves probably) very superior when they could stumble through a page of a French primer, without, one would think, knowing what it was all about. Schooling for girls was not considered necessary, or even advisable. If they know how to write, they might be having secret correspondence with young men was one reason given. Now, in less than half a century, what astonishing changes have taken

place. Multitudes of girls as well as boys, crowd the State schools, many carrying on their schooling to the bachelauréat stage, with a view to future employment. Even young girls take advantage of special facilities given for learning typewriting and shorthand, and technical training of various sorts is offered to boys, so that the number of those who grow up to seek work with no qualifications at all for any kind of work, is much diminished. All this may be called progress; and much of it has had practical results in many ways beneficial to young people. Young girls, well able to earn their own livings, are not so easily forced into a too early or unsuitable marriage: and the young man who has had the advantage of training for a trade or profession, can sooner afford to settle down to a respectable and comfortable married life.

There is another side to the picture, however, which needs to be seriously considered. In all this increased instruction there is training and food for the body, and food for the mind, but what about food for the soul? Religious teaching could not come into the school programme, which is entirely secular: and if some of the scholars may get Muslim instruction in the mosque schools in addition to their other schooling, that is all there is for them. What might be called the more spiritual side of Islam, resting on a belief in an Almighty, over-ruling God, which was so strong and evident fifty years ago, seems to be disappearing in a confused medley of nationalistic ambition, materialism and politics being important above all things.

Even some of the women now, though still much shut in to the life of their own homes, begin to hear and repeat some of the free talk of the younger generation, with its tendency to atheism and lawless living—lacking faith in the future life and in consciousness of sin, losing little by little their awe of a Holy God, Judge of all men. They are advancing into the civilisation of modern times. They become used to social intercourse with “évolués” whose ambition is of the earthy, and whose religion is only nominal (forms without life). Through this intercourse any ideas of righteousness and godliness they may have had are weakened, and they have neither intellectual powers or spiritual insight to recognise the evil and choose the good. They are being drawn away towards the hopeless creed of NO GOD and NO HEREAFTER.

This is only a one-sided view of this first half of the 20th century — and only a faint and partial view at best, with much unseen and possibly misjudged. But, seeing some truth in it, we may perhaps illustrate its application to our question: “Is there any Progress?” by an incident of forty years ago:—

Two missionaries were travelling together to their desert mission station. It was the first time for one of them, so many unaccustomed details were noted by memory the more indelibly. One stage of the

journey had to be hours spent in a small shabby motor bus, jolting along a half-made road, through almost uninhabited country. The two missionaries got two seats together, and soon the other seats were filled with Arabs, mostly men. In the end, one Arab woman was squeezed into a seat opposite the new missionary. She looked old and toil-worn, and her weary look around as she settled into her place seemed to speak of fear as well as fatigue in this strange new experience. Probably she had never travelled before so far—certainly not in a motor—and never had to sit for so long, in strange company, on a bench instead of the floor.

As the bus jugged on its way, the old woman fumbled in her loose garments and brought out a string of wooden beads—her “rosary.” Slowly she began to pass the beads through her fingers, one by one, with each bead repeating the same words again and again, so often that even a new missionary could make out nearly all the words, and guess at the meaning. This is what it seemed to be:—

“GOD IS—and His Kingdom is everlasting.”

“It is HE who directs—and HE is Patient.” (Or, as the second part varied a little, and the new missionary was not quite sure of it) it seemed to be addressed to God, and to say “You, O God, direct and You give patience to endure.”

Little by little the soothing rhythm seemed to take from her face something of the anxious, worried look, and finally as she became drowsy her head dropped forward, making itself a pillow of a small case lying on the new missionary’s knees, and she slept quietly till the journey ended.

Did these often repeated words represent what her religion gave this poor soul to help her through the long journey of life? It may be so: but there is room for betterment, for progress. Yet all the progress in the modern world, whether you call it evolution, civilisation, development, education or advance in science can do no better for the human soul, if it takes away the first great statement of the old woman’s saying—GOD IS. And that is why we must tremble for our Muslim friends when we hear modern teachers seem to be leading men back to the condition of the old days when God’s prophet said so plainly—“The fool has said in his heart ‘There is no God.’” *No God,—No Hereafter* is the creed some of their teachers are bringing now to young Muslim students as a substitute for their old beliefs; but can we call that progress? The poor ignorant old woman with her beads and her faith in the existence of an Almighty and over-ruling God, the Patient and Everlasting One, is she not though so needy still, better off in her belief than those whose creed of “no God—no hereafter” is the negation of all good.

How barren must be the heart that says "there is no Good:" how rich the soul that learns to say not only "God is — " but "GOD IS LOVE."

"God is—" "What is God?" childlike ignorance might answer, and again be answered "God is LOVE." And to come to that knowledge is progress indeed. God is Love, the source of all good, the Giver of every grace,—with joy, peace and holiness perfecting His work of love for the Hereafter He promises to His Loved ones. And this is the Gospel that is more than ever needed in the world where so many are turning in their hearts to that old fool's saying "there is no God." God calls them fools; yet His love has a word for them:—He tells them that His Way—the Way of Holiness—is open to them, and though fools they need not err, for God, Who is Love, has ransomed them that He may bring them safely to the end, to the "unspeakable joys" of His Hereafter.

V. WOOD.

PESSIMISM AND CHRISTIANITY - - -

LEST any part of the article "Change and Progress" should be thought pessimistic, let it be counteracted by this quotation:—

"In a recent discussion of men who have made fortunes it has been pointed out that they had a faculty to detect possibilities of advancement in circumstances of defeat. This is a mark also of the artist for whom the limitations of his material provide means for transcending limitations. It is a mark above all of the Christian, at the heart of whose Gospel is victory snatched from defeat and sorrow turned into joy. In a disturbed world he can be secure. For he knows that God is not defeated. (*Times Weekly Review*, August 3, 1961).

Read also in the Prayer-book version Psalm 99 :1—"THE LORD IS KING, be the people never so impatient: HE SITTETH BETWEEN THE CHERUBIMS, be the earth never so unquiet." It has been pointed out that "He sitteth" indicates the unshakable position of the King on the Throne of an everlasting Kingdom.

*“The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,
as the waters cover the sea.”*

GOD is working His purpose out as year succeeds to year,
God is working His purpose out and the time is drawing near;
Nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover
the sea.

March we forth in the strength of God with the banner of Christ
unfurled,
That the light of the glorious Gospel of truth may shine throughout the
world.

Fight we the fight with sorrow and sin to set their captives free,
That the earth may be fill'd with the glory of God as the waters cover
the sea.

HOME OFFICE NOTES

The ANNUAL MEETINGS, 1961, will be held in the Tudor Room,
Caxton Hall, Westminster, London, S.W.1, on Wednesday, 4th October
next.

Friends and Subscribers are cordially invited to attend and to bring
their own friends.

The programme of the Meetings is as follows:—

AFTERNOON MEETING, 3 p.m.

Missionary Speakers: Rev. & Mrs. R. J. WAINE, Tlemcen, Algeria.

Guest Speaker: Dr. J. G. S. S. THOMSON

Chairman: Rev. A. C. ROBINSON

TEA INTERVAL at 4.30 p.m. in the Tudor Room

EVENING MEETING, 6.30 p.m.

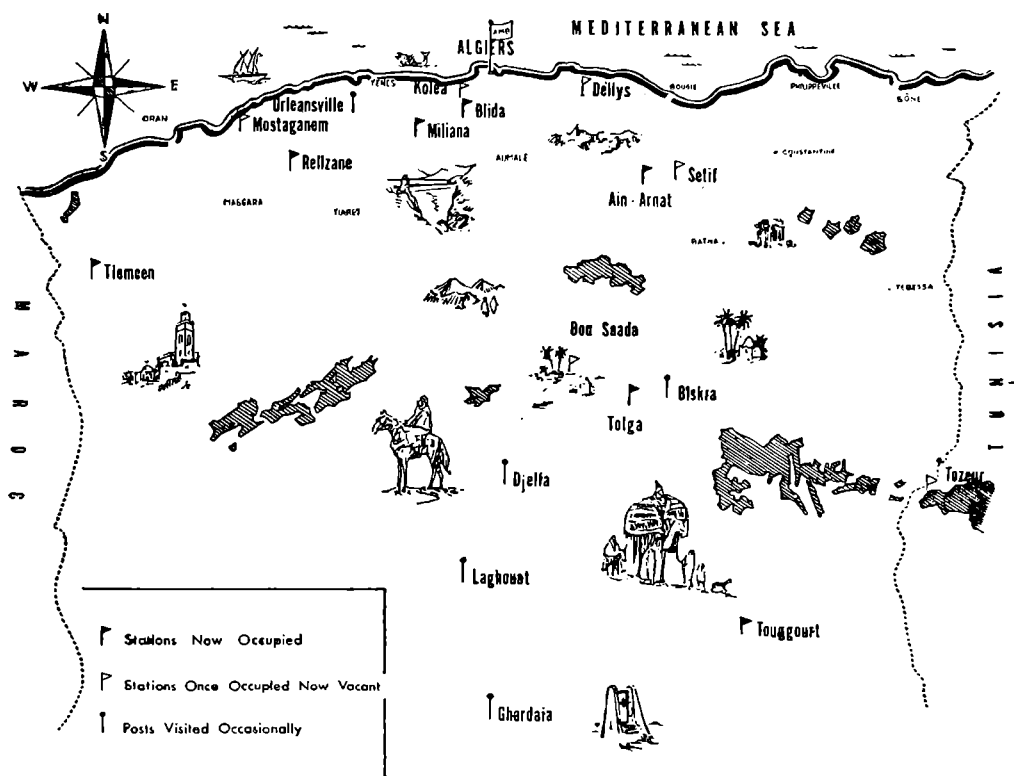
Missionary Speakers: Rev. & Mrs. R. J. WAINE

Guest Speaker: Mr. ELLIS GOVAN

Chairman: Mr. R. W. WITHERS

Special Features: Question Time : Colour Slides.

REMEMBER TO VISIT THE GIFT STALL AND THE BOOKSTALL.



STATIONS AND WORKERS

ALGIERS (DAR NAAMA, EL BIAR)

1920 Miss V. Wood
 1956 Mr. & Mrs. P. G. Longley
 1959 Miss I. B. Gow

BLIDA

1929 Miss P. M. Russell
 1948 Mlle. J. Guibé

MILIANA

1907 Miss M. D. Grautoff
 1956 Miss E. Collins (*on leave*).

RELIZANE (MOSTAGANEM)

1947 Miss E. Clark
 1951 Miss A. E. Powell

TLEMCCEN

1949 Rev. and Mrs. R. J. Waine
 (*on furlough*).

TOLGA

1937 Madame Lull

TOUGGOURT

1930 Miss I. K. Nash

SETIF

1946 Mlle. G. Chollet