

Form
No. 1 B.

1854

**ON THIS
WE BUILD IN
THE NEAR EAST**



By **W. N. WYSHAM**

ON THIS

WE BUILD IN

THE NEAR EAST

By
W. N. Wysham

Price Ten Cents

THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America
156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

THE AIM OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

"The supreme and controlling aim of foreign missions is to make the Lord Jesus Christ known to all men as their Divine Saviour and to persuade them to become His disciples; to gather these disciples into Christian churches which shall be self-propagating, self-supporting and self-governing; to co-operate, so long as necessary, with these churches in the evangelizing of their countrymen, and in bringing to bear on all human life the spirit and principles of Christ."

Quoted from the MANUAL of The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.



THE NEAR EAST



P R O L O G U E

SOPHIE WAKIM

THE SYRIANS are fundamentally religious. They see the hand of God in every event of life. They believe that almost everything comes from God. Poverty, in their opinion, is a punishment for sin, and prosperity is a reward for righteous living. Hence the more prosperous they are the stronger their belief in the Almighty becomes.

The majority of the Syrians and Lebanese are poor and ignorant. This is not their fault, but the result of unfortunate circumstances. The rate of illiteracy is very high in spite of the fact that those Near Easterners are eager to get an education. The writer hopes that within the next decade Christianity in Syria and Lebanon is going to take an entirely different and more active course. The present prosperity regarding the monetary measures in that country may be a beginning to a higher and more desirable standard of living. The promised independence, when obtained, is going to necessitate a good education which is essential for any self-governing nation. Well trained and consecrated Christian Leaders will be greatly needed. The result of this would be the production of more open-minded Syrians and Lebanese citizens who would probably forget their sectarianism and conservatism in religious matters and thus become anxious to work together for the general welfare of their country as a whole rather than as individuals who work for their particular religious groups. A

proof for this co-operative religious living is the spirit expressed by the educated Syrian and Lebanese youth. About ten years ago the students and faculty of the American Junior College for Women of the city of Beirut became conscious of the need for service among the people in the backward parts of the country. Hence they volunteered to work on a village welfare project the main purpose of which was service for humanity. The project is still carried on and the volunteers of all religious groups are getting more numerous and enthusiastic all the time. This is an evidence that those young people are not satisfied with the mere preaching of the theories of Christianity, but are eager to put to practice their religious principles for the welfare of their countrymen, forgetting the differences in their religious affiliations, but thinking only of the good they can do for those who are in need of their valuable service.

In conclusion one would say that any aid offered to help provide the necessities of life for the needy and to promote Christian education among Near Easterners would undoubtedly go a long way in promoting the spreading of Christ's teachings in that part of the world.



ON THIS WE BUILD IN THE NEAR EAST

W . N . W Y S H A M

SYRIA

THE SYRIA MISSION, founded in 1823 and one of the oldest of all the missions of the Board, is finding these war years among the most productive in its history and is certain of enlarged opportunities when peace comes.

After decades as part of the Turkish Empire, Syria experienced some rather stormy years as a mandate assigned to France by the League of Nations. When France fell, Vichy officials remained in control. It was very evident that the little country would be an easy prey for the Nazis if the Germans pushed eastward from Greece and Crete, and to forestall this, Free French and British forces moved in in May, 1941. There was considerable bombing and some bloodshed during the brief resistance of Vichy troops, then the Free French took over the government. The mission, foreseeing trouble, sent a few families to Jerusalem temporarily. Some property was damaged by bombs, but no one was hurt and by fall the mission was functioning normally.

The chief provinces of mandated Syria were Lebanon, with Beirut as capital, and Syria proper, with its capital at Damascus. The occupying forces announced their independence subject to the limitations imposed by war. But in 1943 a reactionary French official arrested some nationalist leaders, including Premier Solh of Lebanon. Immediately the country was aswirl with political tension and there were riots in Beirut. Through British and American pressure a more liberal French administration came in and the republics of Syria and Lebanon began to enjoy an autonomy which is new in their history.

The Syria Mission has stations in both Lebanon and Syria. It has never been a large mission and deaths, retirements, and resignations in recent years have cut down its enrollment severely. Now there are but twenty-five missionaries actually on the field and war restrictions have made it very difficult for some on furlough to return to their work. Moreover, the mission is severely handicapped by the huge increase in living costs, since Syria has been one of the countries most affected by this almost world-wide by-product of the war. Nevertheless the missionaries are carrying on with more encouragement in their work than for many years.

As they have for decades, the schools of the mission continue to be a vital form of service to the country. Never were they more crowded, since the youth of Syria have developed a new eagerness to learn English rather than French, and their parents are almost storming the doors of our schools to gain admission for their children. The Rev. Douglas H. Decherd writes that it seems as if all the students in North Lebanon were determined to enter the Tripoli Boys' School: "What? No more beds? Never mind; we'll bring our own." "No chairs? We'll bring a chair. Put him in the corner." This school is an example of the present popularity of all. In 1942-43 registration reached 311 and the boarding department, built for 100, was bulging with 130. Mr. and Mrs. Decherd, because of the shortage of missionary personnel, are carrying the responsibility for both the Boys' and Girls' Schools in Tripoli. They are aided by a fine staff of national teachers and have notable success in the development of music in the curriculum of both schools, culminating in a music festival.

Sidon, a claimant to being the oldest city in the world and a mission station since 1851, also has schools for both boys and girls. The Girard Institute for Boys now has entirely national leadership and Miss Irene Teagarden, principal of the Girls' School, recently was the only missionary in Sidon, when formerly there was a goodly

company. At the beginning of 1944 Miss Lois C. Wilson returned safely to the field, and so doubled the missionary staff. Here, too, enrollments are unprecedented. The emphasis is on homemaking education, with experimental cottages as part of the plan. Miss Teagarden is now busy on an Arabic textbook in home economics for the seventh and eighth grades.

Beirut is the center for important educational work of the mission. The American School for Girls has an enrollment of nearly 400. It has a strong Syrian Christian faculty with Mrs. Henry W. Glockler as acting principal and Miss Margaret Wilson as the other American on the staff at present. The American Junior College for Women has its separate plant closer to the American University of Beirut and in 1942-43 enrolled 118 young women of 14 different nationalities. A comparatively new institution (its first class was graduated in 1926) it has had extraordinary success in its growth and influence. Its beautiful site overlooks the Mediterranean and it already boasts a main building given by the Presbyterian women's societies, a residence hall, and a home for its president. Its next great need is for a combined library and auditorium. Besides scores who are wives and mothers, its graduates have become doctors, dentists, pharmacists, teachers, stenographers, nurses, and research workers all over the Near East, an eloquent testimony to the new freedom of women in that part of the world. The Rev. W. A. Stoltzfus is now president and Miss Helen H. Naundorf dean, with Miss Esther E. Johnson as the other American faculty member, plus an able corps of Syrian Christian teachers.

A third Beirut institution in which the Syria Mission has a special interest is the interdenominational Near East School of Theology. The Rev. W. G. Greenslade is principal and the Rev. James H. Nicol is also on the faculty. War has caused a temporary drop in enrollment in this institution but it continues to train the native ministry for Syria and for other lands.

Another educational institution in which the mission shares through the participation of the Rev. and Mrs. Harry G. Dorman, Jr., is the interdenominational Aleppo College for boys, of which Mr. Dorman is dean. The college is still a young one and growing vigorously. In the past four years the enrollment has nearly doubled and there are now more than five hundred in the three departments: elementary, high school, and college, with the great preponderance in the high school. Approximately two-thirds of all the pupils are Christian and the other third Moslem. There are thirty-two full-time teachers including nationals and Americans and nearly one hundred in the crowded boarding department.

As a whole, these educational institutions are exerting a mighty influence on both Syria and Lebanon, especially the latter. They bring Christian ideals and truth to bear on students of every religious background. In one school, for example, there are both Sunni and Shiah Moslems, Druzes, Jews, Greek Orthodox and Maronite and Protestant Christians, with non-Christians only slightly in the minority. The schools and college for girls are playing a unique part in the future life of Syria, for womanhood is just finding her own there and our schools are in the forefront in giving a training to mold future homes. Moslem girlhood is at last beginning to come out of a seclusion which has lasted for centuries, and all that these girls need to appreciate the joys and avoid the dangers of this new freedom is available in these Christian schools. All of these schools have non-Christians only slightly in the minority. They have even less than a "skeleton" American staff in wartime, but this is less serious than it might be because of the large number of well-trained, devoted Syrian Christian teachers available, most of them graduates of these very schools. In fact, the quality of these teachers has created a demand for their services beyond the borders of Syria and they alone represent a great missionary achievement.

The medical work of the mission is less extensive than the

schools but also is thriving. The Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Tripoli, with Dr. and Mrs. Henry R. Boyes in charge, is rendering notable service in wartime. Patients come from every direction. Because of the difficulties of transportation, they often arrive in a critical condition and yet have to wait for admittance to the crowded hospital. Adequate food and drugs are hard to find, but the hospital carries on with an average of almost one hundred bed occupancy and more than one thousand operations a year. Only the skilled service of a large staff of Syrian workers makes this healing ministry possible.

Another medical institution of the mission is at Deir-ez-Zore on the frontiers of Syria. Its only American doctor is in service in the U. S. Army and the strong national staff greatly misses his leadership but it functions as best it can under the circumstances. The Rev. and Mrs. W. A. Freidinger are stationed there. Mrs. Freidinger, as a nurse, is invaluable in the medical work and Mr. Freidinger is serving as general director.

The Hamlin Memorial Sanatorium is an old and honorable institution of the mission. Located close to Beirut at Hammana, it became a tuberculosis sanatorium in 1908, the first in the Turkish Empire. Ever since, it has been a leader in the fight against the white plague and has influenced the Syrian people to organize an Anti-Tuberculosis Association, with its own sanatorium. Today Hamlin Memorial is entirely self-supporting, is directed by a national doctor, and in 1943 had a record capacity of 125 patients.

One of the oldest and most important enterprises of the mission is the famous American Press in Beirut. Continuing the work begun in 1822, it prints the Scriptures, school books, periodicals, and many other types of literature for the Arabic world. Since the retirement of the Rev. Paul Erdman in 1943, Mr. Henry W. Glockler, business manager, remains the sole mission representative on its staff of workers.

The evangelistic department of the mission, of which the Rev. R. C. Byerly is executive secretary, has sub-committees doing rural work, work for women, and work for non-Christians. The Rev. W. A. Freidinger and the Rev. S. Neale Alter are prominent in evangelistic work and there is close co-operation with the strong Syrian Protestant Church, an outgrowth of evangelism in the mission's long history. The committee is constantly watching for opportunities to evangelize Moslems, who have a social and political solidarity in Syria making open confession and baptism extraordinarily difficult. For some years Mr. and Mrs. Alter have lived in Hama, a strong center for Moslems, and have devoted their efforts to them but, before and during the occupation, the atmosphere became strongly unfriendly, their best friends turned against them, and they were practically isolated. It seemed wise for them to retire temporarily to India but they have since returned to Syria with new ideas for service. Though the barrier of Moslem fanaticism may seem as strong as ever, the decades of service to Moslems through schools and hospitals and the witness of Christian living by missionaries are exerting a great penetrative influence. One might quote an impartial tribute to this from a recent letter from the American Consul-general in Beirut: "I want to tell you how much I admire the splendid work you and your collaborators have been doing in this country. All Americans may well feel proud of the unselfish and effective devotion which you people have put so lavishly at the disposal of its inhabitants. Your example of clean living and straight thinking must, I am sure, bear rich fruit where otherwise such an example would have been totally lacking." Even Moslem fanaticism cannot always resist such influences and the political and other changes of the second World War will also tend to remove ancient inhibitions. Thus the time will surely come when Moslems as well as Oriental Christians are responsive to the Evangelical gospel in Syria and Lebanon.

The Syrian Protestant Church is a monument to the more than a century of missionary effort. Today it has forty churches with twenty other groups of believers, fifty-five Sunday schools, and nearly three hundred Christian leaders in all parts of the country. The church is organized as an independent synod and is entirely separate from the mission, the secretaries of the evangelistic and educational committees of the mission acting as liaison officers between mission and church. These men arrange for the decreasing subsidies to the church for its own evangelistic work and primary schools. Though the membership of the Protestant church is still small compared to the total population of the country, its members have a standing and exert an influence in community and national affairs far in excess of their numbers.

The war has brought to the mission a unique opportunity for service to the soldiers of the Allies, both American and British, but mainly the latter. The Rev. and Mrs. George H. Scherer have devoted themselves to this work, especially through the Church of Scotland Canteen. Mr. Scherer has served also as pastor of the Anglo-American church in Beirut, which army men have attended in large numbers. In other stations also, notably in remote Deir- ez-Zore, missionaries have been able to render outstanding hospitality to service men.

One serious dislocation of the war is the enormous rise in the cost of living. Both missionaries and national leaders have endured real hardship as a result, and the difficulty of balancing both personal and institutional budgets is a factor in all mission plans. Yet the mission looks forward in confidence and has directed its committees to work out a program "Preparing for Tomorrow." Already this plan visualizes an increase in the preparation and distribution of religious literature and wide expansion of missionary and national personnel in the work of evangelism.

The Rev. James H. Nicol (who with Mrs. Nicol has lived in

Syria since 1905) was recently recalling that he has been the administrative secretary of the Syria Mission ever since the first World War, except for three furlough absences. His recollections form a fitting summary of this sketch of missionary work carried on within a few miles of where our Lord completed his own earthly ministry:

"Sometimes when I visit a large part of our field within a short time, I am overwhelmed with the far-reaching influences put in motion: little children in village schools, their older brothers and sisters in higher classes, favored and abler ones going even further into high school and college; the sick and needy gathered in our three clinics and hospitals; the worshipers in churches, and the itinerant evangelists going to isolated places and to prisons; the presses owned by our mission and church sending out leaves of spiritual healing to all parts of the Near East.

"Here it is my privilege to serve Moslems, Druzes, Jews, Baha'is, Christians of every hue and name; and to be in the midst of these restless lands that clamor for a new day of self-respect and independence. Is it a little thing to be doing something, at least, to prepare their sons and daughters to bring to the solution of their problems a character built on the one foundation which is Christ Jesus our Lord?"

IRAQ

The present work in Iraq was begun as a united mission in 1925, a joint project of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the Reformed Church in America, and the Reformed Church in the U.S. The Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions has provided somewhat more of the financial support than the other Boards and at the beginning had a larger number of missionary representatives, but all the Boards have loyally and generously shared in the joint project through the years and the harmonious administration of the mission has been a demonstration of united missionary work at its best.

Islam anywhere considers itself a later and better religion than Christianity, is proud of its theology and history, and is contemptuous of other faiths. Its very nature breeds bigotry and intolerance. Iraq, next door to Arabia, cradle of Islam, is one of the most unyielding of all Moslem lands. Yet from the beginning the aim of the United Mission has been the evangelization of the Moslems of Iraq, composing most of the perhaps five million inhabitants of the country. To this end stations were first opened in Baghdad and Mosul, and later in Kirkuk and Hillah. Schools have been used as the chief means to reach the people, notably the Girls' School in Baghdad, which has a great record. Direct evangelism, due to Moslem fanaticism, has been difficult, but Christian literature has exerted its penetrative influence in many centers.

The staff of the mission was never large and dwindled greatly even before the present war. Fanaticism, with political complications, led to the martyrdom of the Rev. Roger Cumberland in June, 1938. A peculiarly virulent type of nationalism, perhaps fomented by Nazi propagandists, led to the withdrawal of another Presbyterian missionary couple, and the brief "war" in 1941 made conditions so uncertain in Mosul that the Rev. and Mrs. J. W. Willoughby, the sole remaining Presbyterian members of the mission, withdrew temporarily to India and worked there. For part of 1943 there was only one missionary on the field, but Mr. Willoughby returned in the fall of that year and resumed work in Mosul.

Iraq is a Moslem land which, though small, is certain to play an important part in the postwar world. It is itself rich in oil and adjacent to other fabulous oil-producing areas. Baghdad, moreover, is destined to be a center for air highways. Circumstances have militated against the United Mission in its brief history, but the devoted service of the missionaries has built up a great asset of good will among the people. If there is any measure of religious freedom

in independent Iraq when peace comes, the mission will face wide opportunities to reach Moslems for Christ. The great need will be for reinforcements from all the co-operating Boards, and Presbyterian young people of the finest type are needed to prove that Roger Cumberland did not die in vain when he gave his life for Moslems, and to build up the work in Iraq into a vital part of the ecumenical church.

IRAN

Few lands are more strategically located than Iran, which for centuries was known as Persia. A high plateau country, criss-crossed by bare mountain ranges and with extensive desert areas, it has always been a bridge between the main part of Asia and the west. Recently it has been a buffer state between Russia and India, with the British nervously aware of Russia's need for a warm water outlet to the south. The perhaps fifteen million people of the land have been widely scattered in an area the size of the United States east of the Mississippi River. Most of them are peasants and villagers and some are nomads, but historic cities and world-famous ruins testify to a culture which extends back for milleniums into the dim ages of the past.

Iran is a striking example of the fact that modern warfare has no respect for small and neutral countries. In the first World War, Iran was overrun by Turkish, Russian, German, and British troops. In some sections marauding Kurds pillaged and massacred at will and famine was rife before peace came. The missionary forces were sadly depleted by death and disease, and by war's end only a skeleton force remained to keep the work going. Yet this little group played a large part in administering relief, and in the postwar period reinforcements poured in and the number of missionaries reached a new high level.

The first World War blasted Persia out of medievalism into the modern world. The next twenty years saw this old country trans-

form its social and economic life, asking the world to use its own age-old name of Iran instead of Persia, used first by the ancient Greeks, and even becoming ultra-modern with a streamlined dictatorship under Shah Reza Pahlevi. In this same twenty years missionary work flourished. The two major mission bodies continued to be our Presbyterian Church in the north, known everywhere as the "American Mission," and the Church Missionary Society of England in the south. Their missionaries worked in full co-operation, both groups enlarging their school and hospital work and assisting each other in evangelism. An inter-Mission literature committee produced a wide range of Christian books and tracts which were read extensively by Moslems, Zoroastrians, Jews, and Baha'is, as well as by the Christian constituency. The "modern spirit" in Iran helped to break down the age-old fanaticism, and the development of Western education through the government multiplied those who were literate and receptive to new ideas. Nationalism, almost as a religion, tended to replace Islam.

In the years immediately preceding the second World War, Shah Reza became more and more apprehensive of British and Russian influence, especially of communistic penetration. He issued severe decrees against political and religious propaganda and, fearing an increase in the number of Russian schools, ordered that all foreign educational institutions should be taken over and operated by the Ministry of Education. These laws were a severe blow to missionary work. Those against propaganda handicapped evangelism, especially itineration, and also the distribution of literature to some extent. Since the American Mission was conducting thriving schools in four important cities, as well as Alborz College for men and Sage College for women in Teheran, the capital, the educational situation was even more serious. After long negotiations the only solution seemed to lie in the sale of school properties to the government and this was done in the summer of 1940. The government paid a

fair price for the land and buildings, and all the installments have been faithfully remitted to the full amount of the promised payment. A number of missionaries in educational work found other outlets of service but some, particularly those who were specialists, returned to work in the United States.

The outbreak of the second World War again proved that no nation today lives to itself alone. Shah Reza, reacting against Britain and Russia, seemed distinctly pro-German, though Iran proclaimed her neutrality. Foreseeing a German coup and finding the Shah adamant in his position, British and Russian forces occupied the country in late August, 1941. There were brief hostilities but fortunately little bloodshed, then the Shah was deposed and deported, his young son, Mohammad Reza was made Shah in his stead, Parliament was revived, and the Iranians began to enjoy extraordinary freedom of speech and action. After the United States entered the war, the Americans undertook to deliver war supplies to Russia through the "back door," greatly improving the inadequate Iranian harbor, railroad, and road facilities in order to do so. American engineering, transport, and labor battalions were stationed in Iran so that the chief Allied armies were represented there.

In the fall of 1943 Iran declared war on Germany. This was soon followed by perhaps the most extraordinary event even in Iran's colorful history. In December the three most important men in the world dropped out of the sky into Teheran and this supposedly remote capital witnessed the momentous meeting of Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt. Their joint statement as to Iran itself seemed to insure independence and boundless opportunity for progress in the postwar world.

As the tide of war rolled closer to Iran in 1941 and 1942, after the Allied occupation and it was evident that the fall of Stalingrad would result in the German Army driving across the country to the gates of India, the mission was faced with the problem of whether

to evacuate part or all of its personnel. Its historic action was as follows:

"The Mission in Iran believes in the light of the facts now before it that the evacuation or abandonment of any of our stations as a unit would result in serious, if not irreparable damage to the work and the standing that we have built up through the past years. Once we leave any station, we surrender what it will take us years to repossess in influence and standing among the people. No one can say what the future situation in Iran will turn out to be, but should a counter invasion take place, we can prove the sincerity of our professions to have come to Iran to serve the people here in no better way than by standing by them in such a time. It is even possible that a far brighter future for our work may open as a result of sticking to our posts, as it has for missionaries in China. But it should be understood once and for all that all those who do not immediately ask for government transportation facilities have decided to remain in Iran for the duration, bring what it may in famine, suffering, persecution, and even death. Let those who remain be ready to buckle down to the job ahead and let the Mission be able to readjust its work to the force at its disposal."

A few women and children started out on the dangerous journey to America, the other missionaries, sadly diminished in number, kept all six stations open. In 1944 there were only about forty-five on the field as compared with more than one hundred a few years before. The missionaries saw the conditions of the first World War largely repeating themselves. The cost of living rose fantastically. The poor and hungry were in evidence everywhere. Typhus and other diseases became rampant. Thousands of refugees, mainly Polish, came into the country, passed along by the Russians as part of the flotsam of war currents in Europe. While these were usually placed in camps and efforts to care for them were carried on by both

Allied and Iranian agencies, they greatly increased the disease menace and the general misery, and missionaries found rich opportunities of service among them. In certain respects missionary work was only a "holding operation" until the end of the war, but new doors were opened so that one missionary could sum up the situation as follows: "Never has the field been so ripe, never has there been so much freedom, and not for many years has our force been so small."

Such a statement can be appreciated only against the background of Iran as a Moslem land. It does not mean that thousands are asking for baptism or that the Christian church is as yet a powerful element in the life of the country. Actually, when it is realized that Iran is one of the original Moslem countries and that in all other such lands fanaticism and the Islamic social fabric still make a hearing for the gospel extremely difficult and the lot of occasional converts almost impossible, the situation in Iran is practically unique and seems a miracle of God. One might sum up by saying that in no other ancient Moslem land has Christianity become "respectable." In Iran today a Moslem can become a Christian and be publicly baptized, yet retain the esteem of his friends. Usually he can continue his former occupation with no more than petty persecution. Iran is unique also in having churches largely composed of Moslem converts and with much of the lay leadership in their hands. When one considers the enormous indirect influence of Christianity on the people, especially the educated classes, after decades of service through schools, hospitals, and Christian literature, the fact that the annual total of baptisms is as yet small and the church weak compared to some other younger churches, becomes relatively unimportant. The glorious truth is that, in one Moslem land at least, the incredibly difficult preparatory period has ended and the era of the indigenous Christian church has begun.

With the exception of small groups of Christians of the ancient Armenian and Nestorian churches, practically all others belong

either to the Presbyterian-type church in the north or the Episcopal-type in the south. Both these groups are thoroughly evangelical and are tending steadily towards organic union. For some years committees, largely Iranian, have conferred regularly on the subject. The South India scheme was studied and adapted to Iranian needs, and the Anglican Church in the south, with the consent of the Archbishop of Canterbury, has approved the principles of union. In 1942 representatives from the churches of the Evangelical Synod in the north met in Teheran and also gave their approval, though there is still some question as to episcopacy in the new church. When the United Church of Christ in Iran becomes a reality, it will be truly the church of Iran, for Roman Catholics have made no Moslem converts.

Meanwhile, the Evangelical Synod, resulting from Presbyterian missionary endeavor, has mapped out a year-by-year program of advance, under the guidance of the Council of Synod. This is composed of both Iranians and Americans and at present has as its chairman the Rev. C. H. Allen of Hamadan. In 1941 and 1942 there was a year of emphasis on the deepening of the spiritual life, followed by a year of special evangelism. Many missionaries and nationals participated in this, but the Rev. William McE. Miller, D.D., who served as an evangelist at large, had such unusual experiences that the story of his tours should be told in some detail.

Dr. Miller was on the road six months of the year and visited twenty-nine cities and towns, in some of which there were churches and in others not even one baptized Christian. As his technique he used the circulation of Christian literature and public lectures on the life of Christ with colored slides. The Moslem communities were amazingly receptive to both. Books and tracts were sold in the streets and distributed to all who attended the meetings. During a two-week period in Teheran eight workers went into the streets every day and sold a record number of seven thousand books and

tracts. In one city where only a few months before while anti-propaganda laws were still in force, several people had been arrested after talking with Dr. Miller in the bazaar, two hundred of the leading people filled the government high school auditorium to hear him. The governor was an alumnus of the Teheran American School and his secretary typed fifty invitations to a similar meeting which were delivered by the government messenger and again two hundred, including the governor and all the city officials, came and listened attentively. In still another city where little work had been done in previous years because of fanaticism, a vast crowd of perhaps two thousand stood in the center square of the city, where Dr. Miller showed his pictures, standing on a chair and "shouting with all his might the old, old story," as he writes.

There were similar experiences in city after city, so that tens of thousands all over Iran either read or heard the gospel story for the first time. Immediate conversions were not numerous, though Dr. Miller baptized people in several places, including a father, mother, and two children in one city, but the long-term results of these tours are incalculable.

Christmas Day, 1942, was a special evangelistic opportunity for the Teheran church. According to custom, a meeting was arranged particularly for Moslems. Cards were sent to all members of the Cabinet, to many members of Parliament, and to most of the important people of the capital. The chapel was packed, the audience including the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Chief of Police. Here again Dr. Miller showed his pictures.

Other missionaries report the same openness to the gospel message throughout the country. The Rev. Robert Y. Bucher of Hamadan Station writes of having a Moslem religious leader stop him in the bazaar and ask how Christians pray, of an army officer coming to say that he is hungering for something he has not found and asking help, of the head of the Department of Justice unburdening

his distressed heart. Everywhere, Mr. Bucher goes he finds complete freedom to preach Christ and an excellent reception.

In the churches generally during the year of evangelism, the subject was discussed in sermons and among church organizations. In one church there was a series on great evangelists, in another on famous missionaries. Young people's conferences were held in two centers, one of these resulting in a personal workers' group. In one church seventy-two people pledged themselves to pray for non-Christian friends daily, in another a group arranged a special week of breakfast and prayer together. Seven churches held a series of special evangelistic services. Everywhere the distribution of literature was combined with preaching. More than 70,000 pieces of Christian literature were distributed during the year, in addition to 50,000 Scripture portions sold by colporteurs of the Bible Society.

Other channels of service in Iran, though curtailed in recent years, are more than ever contributing to the major evangelistic task of the mission. The closing of practically all of the schools has undoubtedly blocked some unique outlets of service but the educational missionaries remaining on the field have been fertile in ways of making new contacts and retaining old ones, especially among former pupils. Dr. and Mrs. A. C. Boyce in Teheran arrange meetings for Alborz College alumni and visit in many of their homes. Dr. Boyce is asked to recommend many young graduates as assistants to American advisers and army officers in Iran, to whom they are invaluable. He also advised many students who plan study abroad and the Ministry of Education turns often to him for help and advice. Miss Jane E. Doolittle is in close touch with young women who were formerly students and has interested many of them in a center she has organized for under-privileged children. In Tabriz, Miss Mary C. Johnson is also continuing work with an alumnae association and a fine club for girls, and Miss Grace E.

Wilder in Resht maintains similar contacts and teaches also in a government school. These new methods of reaching women and girls supplement the steady, quiet work of Miss Leree S. Chase in Teheran, Miss Georgia L. McKinney in Tabriz, Miss Edith D. Lamme in Kermanshah, Miss Judith H. McComb in Meshed, and several missionary wives, who are helping to lay the foundations of the Iran of the future by bringing thousands of the newly emancipated women and children of Iran into close contact with Jesus Christ.

The Community School in Teheran, with its teaching only in English, was not affected by the closing order and though first opened to serve missionary children, now has 201 children enrolled from eighteen nationalities, representing five religions. Mr. and Mrs. Commodore B. Fisher and a corps of teachers conduct both a day school and dormitory and find the school a rich evangelistic opportunity through Bible classes and personal contacts.

When the schools were closed in 1940, missionaries were disappointed at the apparent apathy of the public to this ruthless order of Shah Reza. After he was deposed, however, the real feeling of the people was expressed in an outburst of praise of the schools and the missionaries, and in indignation at the closing orders. There were articles in the newspapers and speeches in Parliament urging that they be reopened, and the government took up the question with the mission. Both the Iran Mission and the Board, however, feel that war conditions preclude any action now, though the funds received for the sale of school properties are being held intact until a decision is made.

The mission hospitals in Iran have suffered severely from a loss in personnel. The number of available American doctors and nurses shrank so rapidly that it became imperative to close at least one hospital. The American Army at that time needed a hospital in Teheran so that the mission hospital was turned over to the army

and is now temporarily a military institution. Many improvements have been made which will make it a much more efficient hospital when the army returns it to the mission after American troops no longer need it.

The hospitals in Meshed, Tabriz, Resht, Hamadan, and Kermanshah are open and serve as centers for much of our work in those stations, but the American staff is entirely inadequate to meet the needs. In Resht and Hamadan Dr. Adelaide Frame and Dr. Mary Zoekler are carrying on with no American male physician to help. Dr. Charles W. Lamme in Tabriz, Dr. Russell D. Bussdicker in Kermanshah, and Dr. Rolla E. Hoffman in Meshed are alone.

The Board finds it practically impossible to secure new doctors and nurses while the pressure is so great for them to enter government service, and it is possible that the need for furloughs for the over-worked missionaries now manning these institutions will compel the temporary closing of at least one other hospital before the war ends. Meanwhile, the hospitals are continuing a notable healing ministry to the Iranian people, with a shortage of drugs and a terrific increase in costs, due to war conditions. One tribute to the tenacity of these institutions is that, in the face of almost impossible obstacles, Miss Frances T. Wooding in Tabriz, Miss Janet S. Fulton in Kermanshah, and Miss Ellen D. Nicholson in Resht are still carrying on schools to train nurses for future service to their country.

The production and distribution of Christian literature is one of the major evangelistic techniques in Iran. The Rev. John Elder is chairman of the inter-Mission committee which serves all of Iran and under his leadership a wide range of books and tracts continues to appear. The year of evangelism resulted in a new high-water mark in circulation. Missionaries and national Christians use this literature in every conceivable type of contact. For example, the

Rev. John A. Watson in Kermanshah uses literature constantly in his hospital visitation and through a lending library and considers it indispensable to his work. In another station this literature finds its way to men in jail. As Iran rapidly becomes more literate, evangelism through the printed page is constantly taking on more importance.

The war has brought many contacts for the Iran Mission with British and American soldiers stationed in the country. All services of worship in the English language are attended by army men and there is a cordial welcome for them in missionary homes. A group of the first American Negroes ever to visit Iran made a fine impression on the Iranian Christians in Teheran with a rendition of their spirituals. The soldiers themselves are evaluating both the missionaries and their work and are sending reports to the homeland about them. One soldier writes about a new missionary friend: "I feel that those who are supporting him should know of the things this man is doing. As a practical school-teaching missionary he is the most able and energetic man I have ever seen. He is doing a wonderful piece of work and has the love and respect of people of all nationalities. As a former school teacher I consider his school a model." And another writes of his visits to the mission as "a sure cure for soldiers' blues" and adds: "I shall probably not return to Iran but I am most thankful for the opportunity to see at first-hand the marvelous work of those people over there."

Thus the Iran Mission carries on, working more and more with and through the Evangelical church, doing the special tasks which war emergencies demand, keeping its great evangelistic purpose always first. Though personnel is sadly depleted, living costs high, and the hope for reinforcements dim while war lasts, the missionaries keep untarnished a glorious reputation for friendship and service built up through a century. Their relationship to Iran was summed up in an address by the Prime Minister to Parliament as reported in the Teheran newspaper in May, 1942:

“The educational and medical service which altruistic Americans have rendered in this country, and their assistance to the physical and intellectual development of our youth, are never to be forgotten. These manifestations of love, free from any taint or design, have caused the people of Iran to have a feeling of attachment and love towards the U.S.A. and its people.”

In a sense, as a new spirit has come over Iran with the Allied occupation, that country may be thought of as “the first fruits of the Four Freedoms,” in spite of serious wartime dislocations in Iran’s economy. There is a great wave of democracy across the country. When the promises of the Teheran Declaration are made permanent and the incubus of fear of being swallowed up by either Russia or Britain is finally removed from government and people, every good influence, including Christianity, should find an open door among this hospitable and intelligent people. Iran counts on being one of a family of nations and will welcome America’s sharing our best with her. Many of her people are ready to admit now that America’s best has been what our missionaries have brought to Iran in the past and, when peace comes, they must be greatly reinforced to help the infant church grow strong in Iran’s new life.

