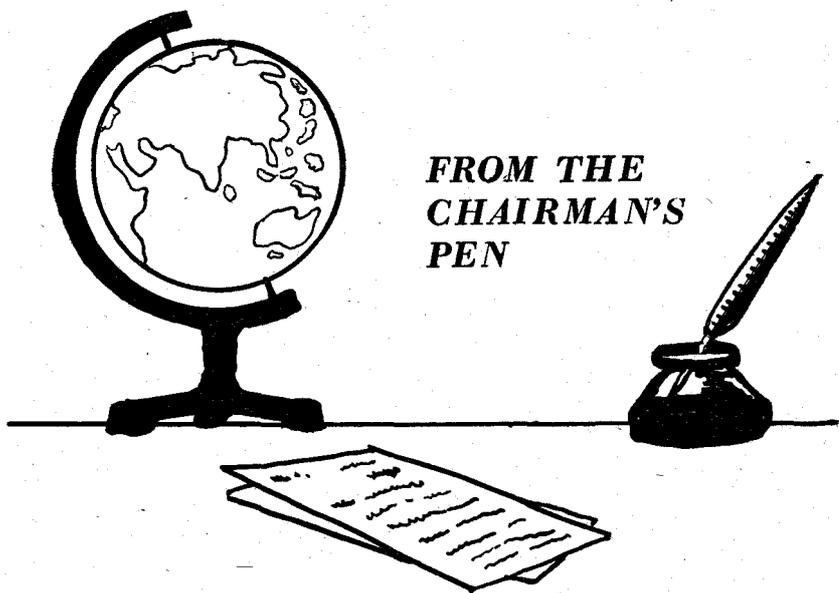


The India Alliance

MARATHI FIELD

Summer, 1961



**FROM THE
CHAIRMAN'S
PEN**

'God is faithful, by whom ye were called' (1 Cor. 1:9)

As the spontaneous expression of our hearts, unitedly to thank our Lord for all His goodness, at each Annual Conference we sing 'Great is thy Faithfulness'. Not only for the past months but through the many years since the mission was founded He has been faithful.

PROGRESS IN THE CHURCH

Pastor Chavan, President of our Marathi Synod, gave a comprehensive report at the Katepurna Mela to the annual session of the Synod. This report, while it did not minimize the difficulties in the path to self-support in the church, did show that steady gains have been made in both urban and rural congregations. Permit me to quote from his report: 'The Lord has blessed us and there is slow but steady growth in the work. From our present churches, new churches must be born as in apostolic days. The number of those who believe must increase and many new churches be formed in cities, towns and villages. Unless every one of our churches becomes a center for Gospel witness, new churches will never be born. To accomplish this, revival is the greatest need. First of all comes prayer, then power, then a witness born of spiritual courage, and finally will come new-born churches. Whether a church can give its pastor full pay or not it should give at least one offering a month for evangelistic-missionary effort. In doing this, the Lord will give us many new evangelists. We have taken up an offering here in Katepurna Camp Meeting for missionary effort in the Philippines, and we ought to. This is the way of blessing'.

Last year there were 56 national workers accounted for on the Synod President's statistical table. This year there are 83. The difference in these figures is largely in the number of lay leaders and elders appointed over unorganized rural groups. It is prayerfully hoped that through these men becoming awakened to their spiritual opportunities and responsibilities the rural churches will be revitalized.

A missionary in rural evangelism reports, 'The leader of the Christian group in the village where we were camped, had just completed a year's course at the Lay Workers' Institute in Chikalda. He approached me and asked if he might go along with us from village to village. You can imagine the joy that came over me! This leader had only been a Christian for approximately three years, but it rejoiced my heart to see how he had progressed in his daily Christian witness and living. This village had a

Christian singing band who also asked to go along to help in the evening meetings. The village leader helped to preach the Word as we visited in the surrounding villages and it meant a lot to him and to his acquaintances in the villages when they realized he was sincere and that he was doing this service because of his zeal and love for the Lord. They knew he was not being paid to do it. It came from his heart.

Here, we feel, is the only workable plan for the indigenous church in the rural areas.

BIBLE TRAINING

The Bible schools in both Nargaon and Khamgaon have been celebrating these past two years. A year ago Nargaon observed its Golden Jubilee and this year Khamgaon also had the joyous opportunity to recount God's wonderful faithfulness for the fifty years since it was founded.

Concerning the outreach of the Bible school students, except for the first year students there are workshops in practical work where they may use what they have learned in classes. In December we sent out the entire student body divided into four bhajan tolis (singing bands) each in charge of a teacher, working with a missionary. They had meetings in 54 different towns at night beside witnessing in the day time, selling gospels and giving away thousands of tracts. Three first year students went to Chikalda during the hot season to help in the Lay Workers' Institute.

TRAINING LAY LEADERS

Since the self-support programme went into effect, more and more attention has been concentrated on training laymen to be Christian leaders. There has been increasing effort in Short Term Bible Schools, and the more recently founded Berar-Khandesh-Christian-Conference Lay Workers' Institute at Chikalda. At the hot season term sixteen couples were in attendance. Eight of these were from the C. & M.A. In the 3-months term ending October, 1960 there have been 10 couples: 5 of these were Alliance. We are greatly indebted to Rev. and Mrs. E. S. Root of the Free Methodist Mission for their excellent leadership of this inter-mission sponsored institute. In these ministries, C. & M.A. personnel have taken an increasing share of the burden. Rev. and Mrs. C. H. Dyke were teaching during most of the monsoon term and two Alliance Bible Women together with some students from Khamgaon W.B.T.S. have had much-appreciated

ministries. Now, Rev. and Mrs. E. F. Eicher, just back from furlough, are busy in Chikalda getting all in readiness for the next term of lay worker training.

SHORT TERM BIBLE SCHOOLS

In the past year three short term schools for villagers have been held on a Church Council wise basis. The North Berar school ended with 29 baptisms. The East Berar school had 79 students present for a record year. On the final day 8 followed the Lord in Baptism. Quoting from reports concerning the Central Berar school: 'Among the 14 adults and the children who accompanied them, the Lord did a wonderful work. Many of the children received Christ as their Saviour. Five of the adults brokenly repented, resulting in an immediate change in their lives. Two back-slidden young men confessed their sins and returned to the Lord. Two of the Hindu young women who found the Lord were the wives of these two men. This resulted in these two couples being united in Christ Jesus. The Patil (village headman of farmer caste) who attended our adult literacy class in his village, came and brought his wife. He has become definitely convinced that Christ is *the Way*. After six or seven days of the School had passed, I found out that this patil was arising between three and four every morning, walking to his village five miles away, milking his buffalow and returning before his class time at eight o'clock! Such was his hunger for God!

'With great foreboding I admitted a young man whom I was told was the leader of the New-Buddhist movement in his village. I did not know anything else about him. He came with his wife, and from the first day, in every spare moment he had he was reading the Bible I lent to him. On the second day he said to one of the teachers, 'I did not come here to become a Christian but to find out more about this Jesus about whom you speak'. Hearing this, I must confess that I was disappointed, but still felt that the Lord was going to work in his heart. It was about the fifth day while in the women's class during the time our Bible-woman was teaching, this man's wife suddenly began to weep and cry out to the Lord for forgiveness and salvation. On the second-last day of our school, her young Buddhist husband called one of the teachers into his room and asked him to show him the way to Christ. Praise His Name! The final day of the school witnessed seven of the 14 adults going under the waters of baptism. The patil stood on one side of the pool and his wife on the other side watching every move that was made.

After the service the patil turned to his wife and our pastor heard him say, 'Did you see what just happened? We are going to do that very shortly'. Later, we found out that someone had told the wife of the patil that when people are baptized they are first forced to eat beef. She was surprised when we did not pass any beef-steaks around!

ADULT LITERACY

This year has been gratifying both in statistics and also in spiritual results of adult literacy classes held. Since March 1st, 1960, Bro. V. V. Hiwarale, the newly appointed Synod Adult Education Organizer, has been spending a good share of his time, especially during the hot season, working in co-operation with Mr. Dyke in these ministries. Mr. Dyke, Chairman of the Mission Adult Education Sub-committee has submitted the following encouraging summary of the past hot season efforts:

'Twenty-two classes were held in 19 villages with 24 teachers and 340 students on the rolls. Of these 210 sat for the carefully-prepared examinations, and 134 passed. Each Church Council had an appointed adult education supervisor. To them and the teachers we owe a debt of gratitude for their faithful work over the very hot weather. A goodly number of those who have been baptized this year first became interested in the Gospel through adult literacy classes.

LITERATURE

Miss Gerrie reports, 'While sales in the Book Shop have not been spectacular, yet there has been a very encouraging interest in the sale of Bibles. Hardly a day goes by without some person—non-Christian, coming into the shop and buying a Gospel portion in any of the five or six languages which we keep in stock. This year our sales have almost tripled over those of last year. As of October 1st, 1960 Yohan (John) Aghamkar has come to work as full-time colporteur. This has been made possible through the Moody Colportage programme which works through ELFI of which we are a member. Recently, while Yohan was putting his books out on the ground along the New Plaza Road with other roadside hawkers, an orthodox Brahmin came by and in an arrogant manner rebuked him for trying to sell Christian books in a Hindu country. Somewhat taken aback by the tirade, Yohan was at a loss to know what to say. However, other hawkers nearby immediately came to his rescue and quickly put the Brahmin gentleman straight. As a result, Yohan sold five

rupees worth of books in a few minutes to the curious onlookers who wanted to know what was so bad about Christian books to call forth such a demonstration!

A further phase of the new book shop is the library it houses. Akola's citizens have quickly realized its value Miss Gerrie writes, 'Attendance has averaged from the beginning 3,600 per month. During August it rose to 3,800 and in September soared to 4,400. In October 5,250—largely due to the commencement of our lending library. Total number of readers who have entered the library since March 19 to the end of October, 1960 is 27,850. Readers are about 98 per cent non-Christian. Hindi is the most popular language'.

An educated Indian gentleman summed it up beautifully when he visited the library and exclaimed, 'This is not only a place to read; here is a place to find God'.

CAMPS AND INSTITUTES

After the 1959 Conference closed, a Boys' Camp at Malkapur and a Girls' Camp at Akot were held. The response of boys and girls was enthusiastic. The number of Bible verses required of prospective campers this year was considerably raised and yet, when all applications were in for this year's camps, 86 boys went to Chikalda and 92 girls to Amravati. Rev. E. H. Lewellen, who, together with Pastor Aghamkar, was in charge of the Boys' Camp writes, 'Instead of the 40 boys we had planned for, 86 arrived. On the second day of the camp we began to see the evidences of the Lord's working in the morning class periods; especially in the class on "Christ our Saviour", to bring conviction to the hearts of the boys. As closely as we can judge, between 35 and 40 boys either came back to the Lord or received Him as Saviour.

What could have been a tragedy was turned into a marvellous victory as the boys and counsellors prayed. Vishwas had a wound on his foot before leaving for camp. We did not know it, but the wound was developing a tetanus infection. Shortly after Camp started, he began having convulsions. We rushed him to Ellichpur, 32 miles away, but before we reached the bottom of the hill he had had four violent convulsions. From what several doctors later told me, as far as the medical standpoint was concerned the lad had very little change, but again GOD!' Vishwas is well today.

Perhaps more eloquent than any other report on the girls

camp is this card of thanks to Miss Ransom written by a little nine-year old girl, 'I am writing to tell you how much I enjoyed the camp. It was my first time to go to camp. The Lord blessed me there. Once I was blind but now I see. I am very happy, and I want you to know that since coming home I am reading my Bible every day and praying. You please pray for me'.

BANJARA WORK

In the last conference the R. F. Perrets were set apart for work among the Banjaras. Their time has been shared with many other projects, but their touring efforts have been almost entirely among this tribal people. The help of Rev. M. Rathod, loaned by the Free Methodist Mission for a few months has been particularly appreciated. Brother Rathod is a Banjara convert and of course is fluent in his mother-tongue. Mr. Perret writes, 'We have visited about 40 Banjara tandas (settlements). In some places as many as 10 meetings were held in one tanda. In every place the people were delighted to hear Rev. Rathod preach the Gospel in their own language, and in almost every tanda we were invited back. While on tour, over 1,000 Marathi gospel portions were sold and some 10,000 tracts were distributed. But many times we were asked, "Have you got something in Banjari?" I am happy to report that we now have two Banjari tracts ready. Several hymns have been translated but we have delayed the printing of a song leaflet until we know more about their weird music. A tanda headman of my acquaintance, has a son now in his second year of college in Akola. This young man has proved to be a very apt translator for us. The first tracts ever printed, as far as we know, in the Banjara language, are now being distributed and received with much appreciation in the tandas.

THE FAMILY

We had in our 1960 Conference as senior missionaries, Rev. and Mrs. T. M. Amstutz. In the spring of 1961 they left for furlough, and since it is 41½ years from the time Bro. Amstutz first landed in India, and a little over 40 years for Mrs. Amstutz, they expect to retire from active foreign service after furlough. Out of their five sons and daughters, three are on foreign fields. May God bless their ministries in the Homeland!

Almost immediately after our 1960 conference we received the cable informing us of the promotion to Higher Service of our

brother Rev. K. D. Garrison. He had been granted to spend the strongest years of his life in India. He arrived here November 24, 1910, and in 1913 was married to Miss Adeline DeLaney. They had served the Lord and India together for more than 36 years when they sailed on furlough in January 1947. Since that time he had been teaching in Nyack Missionary Training College until his retirement shortly before his call to his reward. His Bible teaching in the Nargaon Bible Training School, his many years as field chairman and particularly his organization of the C. & M.A. Church in India, including the drafting of its Constitution, are towering contributions which he made to our field. His spirit was Christlike and deeply humble, but he had a keen eye for detecting hypocrisy. An Indian brother once said of him to me, 'I always feel that before Bro. Garrison starts preaching to us, he first takes his place on the front bench'. Our very heart-felt sympathy and prayer go to Mrs. Garrison and to all the Garrison family—a truly missionary family.

Conclusion

In concluding this report it seems entirely fitting here to quote from the report given in 1924 by Brother K. D. Garrison after the first year of his Chairmanship of the Mission: 'From the time that Miss Jennie Frow (Fuller) came to North Berar as the pioneer of all of us who have followed, 227 missionaries (and since 1924 add 71 to the list—a total of 298) have been connected with the Alliance Mission in India. Some of these have remained only a short time, others have laid down their lives in the work, and still others have lived long useful lives (like Brother K. D. Garrison himself). Those early pioneer days in which missionaries often went without food to save money for buildings which we now occupy; toured hundreds of miles on foot while we have, or hope to have, cars; were stoned or driven out of villages which now give us a respectful hearing; invested their entire stock of money in Scriptures to take on tour, depending upon its proceeds of sales for daily food—those days I say are past. And yet down through all those years God has heard the prayers and seen the tears of those who trusted Him. Some of these prayers are answered, some await fulfilment. . . .' But God remains faithful, by Whom we are called.

A. C. EICHER
Field Chairman