

CAROL GISH



# Mediterranean Missions

RES

MISSIONARY STUDY BOOK, 1965-66

Northwest Nazarene University  
Nampa, Idaho

## Mediterranean Missions

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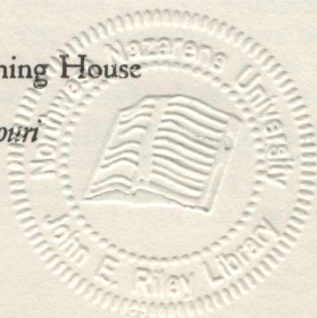
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# MEDITERRANEAN MISSIONS

*A study of the missionary work  
of the Church of the Nazarene in  
Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon,  
Italy, and the Cape Verde Islands*

By CAROL GISH

Nazarene Publishing House  
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## *Introduction and Acknowledgments*

The area of missionary study for the Church of the Nazarene in 1965-66 includes the Middle East countries of Israel, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon; the European country of Italy; and the Cape Verde Islands in the Atlantic. Since Italy and three of the Middle East countries border on the Mediterranean Sea (and Jordan is only a short twelve miles inland at its nearest point), the book has been called *Mediterranean Missions* with apologies to the Cape Verde Islands.

In the summer of 1963 my husband and I visited four of the six countries to be studied this year. It was a wonderful experience to walk along the old Appian Way, upon which the Apostle Paul trudged as a prisoner en route to Rome. It was a sad and moving experience to follow the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem and to sit in the Garden Tomb for a moment of prayer and meditation. But it was a joyful experience to worship with Nazarenes in Florence, Jerusalem, Amman, and Zerka, and to see our churches in Nazareth, Haifa, and Beirut.

My brief visit to these lands, however, did not increase my feeling of competency to write about them. In fact quite the opposite has been true. After seeing a part of each country I am almost overwhelmed by the realization that I have missed much more than I have seen.

Consequently I have had to lean heavily upon others who have enjoyed a more intimate acquaintance with these areas. The missionaries have been most helpful. Friends who have travelled in these countries have been kind. I am much indebted also to writers who have lived for years among these peoples and who have written of them with brilliance and deep understanding.

In spite of language, racial, and cultural differences, I have been acutely struck with the similarities of people



wherever I have gone. In spite of everything, we are more alike than different. Especially among Nazarenes of other countries, the feeling of brotherhood was strong and real.

It is my prayer that as we study about the peoples of these other lands we may feel drawn to them in sympathy and understanding, and that we may face squarely the responsibilities of brotherhood around the world.

I wish to acknowledge my debt to the following:

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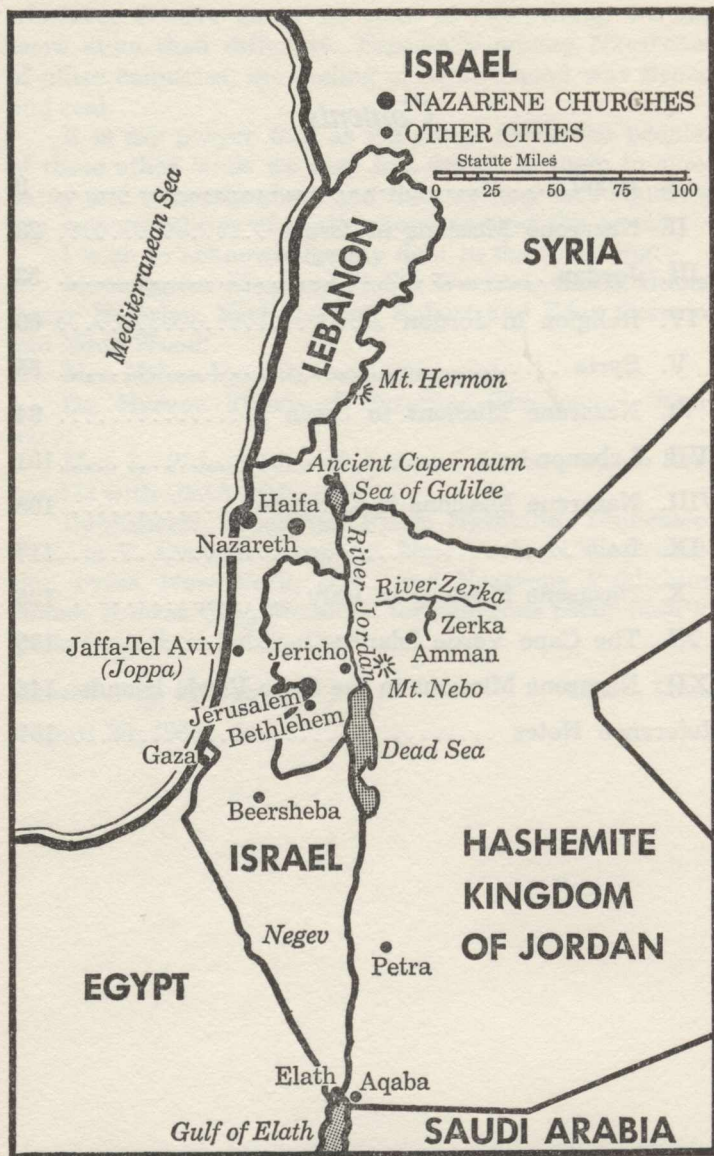
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CAROL GISH

*August 20, 1964*

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## CHAPTER ONE

# *Israel*

### THE MIDDLE EAST

The Middle East has received increasing attention from the rest of the world in recent years. R. Park Johnson in *Middle East Pilgrimage* suggests four main reasons for this renewed interest: geographical position at the hub of three continents, discovery of an immense wealth in oil, political concerns, and religious considerations. "Geography, geology, politics, and religion are bound together to make the Middle East an area that the rest of the world cannot safely ignore, an area that is destined to play an important part in the future as it has in the past ages of human history."<sup>1</sup>

This area has been the battleground of many forces through many centuries, but in the twentieth century the dominant force has become the phenomenal upsurge of the spirit of nationalism.

The designation "Middle East" has largely replaced the old term "Near East," but both terms are applied to this strategic area which may be roughly described as the place where Europe and Asia and Africa meet. It includes the area that was ancient Palestine, Syria, Babylonia, Assyria, and Egypt.

During the twentieth century many new nations have evolved in the Middle East as in other parts of



the world. Four of these to be included in this study are Israel, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. They are all under twenty years of age as completely independent nations, with problems and struggles that have always vexed young nations. But they are attacking these problems with vigor and dedication.

The first to be considered is Israel, but first a brief look at the area for centuries known as Palestine.

### PALESTINE

In 1948, the area known as Palestine was divided into two countries—Israel and Jordan. But through the centuries Palestine had been known by various names such as Canaan and the Land of Israel.

Palestine was formerly a “land bridge” or “halting place” in the line of communication along the “fertile crescent” between Africa and Asia, the oldest highway in the world. It also became a meeting place for many peoples of varying race, civilization, and religion.

This narrow strip of land on the eastern shore of the beautiful blue Mediterranean Sea has also been a battleground from the earliest times. It was dominated by the Egyptians for over two hundred years about 1600 B.C. Its height of power as an independent nation was under King David, who set up his capital in Jerusalem about 1000 B.C. Assyrians, Babylonians, and Greeks (under Alexander the Great) conquered this territory in turn, and Pompey took Jerusalem for Rome in 63 B.C.

### THE CRUSADES

Palestine was overrun by Moslems from A.D. 636 until they were driven back by the Crusaders in 1099. The Crusades, originating in Europe, were organized to deliver the Holy City, Jerusalem, from the Moslems and were carried out over a period of two hundred years. Although at times victorious, “in the end there remained

only many, many graves, ruined castles, and Crusader blood flowing in the veins of the inhabitants of the land.”<sup>2</sup>

Palestine was conquered by the Moslem Turks in 1517, and their rule ended only in 1917 when the British General Allenby marched into Jerusalem during World War I.

### THE JEWS RETURN

At the close of the war Britain was given a mandate over Palestine, which at this time had many more Arabs than Jews. For nearly two thousand years the Jews had been scattered over the world in what has been known as the Diaspora. This dispersion of the Jews came about as a result of wars, distressing economic conditions, and religious persecution.

During these long centuries the scattered faithful thought of their homeland and remembered the prophetic words of Ezekiel: “Thus saith the Lord God; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel” (Ezek. 11:17).

Toward the close of the nineteenth century small groups of Jews began immigrating into Palestine, where they settled and began the struggle to wrest a living from the stony hills.

The Balfour Declaration in 1917 put the British government on record as favoring the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. This gave immediate encouragement to Jewish immigration and the trickle gradually became a flood.

Although the Balfour Declaration expressly promised that “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine,” the Arabs were deeply fearful as to the ultimate results for their race. So the stage was set for many years of hatred and suspicion between



Arabs and Jews, breaking out periodically in actual fighting.

In 1929 there was a murderous outbreak of Arabs against Jews, inspired by the Arab Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, political and spiritual leader of all Palestinian Arabs. But in spite of everything, Jewish immigration increased as a result of closed doors to Jewish immigration in Australia and the Western Hemisphere as well as increased persecution of Jews in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia.

Finally, in 1936, a full-scale Arab revolt against the British broke out with a general Arab strike. There followed ten years of worsening relations between the British and their Palestine protectorate. In a desperate effort to protect British interests in Arab countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, Jewish immigration to Palestine was restricted. But the increased pressure of persecution of Jews in Europe caused thousands to seek illegal entry into Palestine. This climaxed in the tragic odyssey of the "Exodus 1947," a ship carrying over 4,000 Jews from displaced-person camps in Europe to Palestine. The British authorities refused to let the ship land at the port of Haifa, and after more than a month of incredible suffering under subhuman conditions, its passengers were returned to D.P. camps in Germany. It was thought that this would be a lesson to Jews seeking illegal entry into Palestine.

#### PARTITION OF PALESTINE

In 1947, upon Britain's request for help, the General Assembly of the United Nations voted to partition Palestine, giving a national home to the Jews.

Britain officially pulled out of Palestine on May 14, 1948, but according to Robert St. John,<sup>3</sup> during the last four months of their stay the British authorities who could have maintained order turned their backs while Arab bands took the law into their own hands and ruth-

lessly tried to drive the Jews from the country before partition could be effected.

### MANY ARABS FLEE

Haifa's 70,000 Arabs and 80,000 Jews had four months of sporadic warfare ending in a truce with an attempt on the part of the Jews to persuade the Arabs to remain in their homes. But the Grand Mufti had already issued orders for them to leave, and they were the first of the thousands of Arab refugees who fled across the borders into Arab countries, where many of them still exist in dismal refugee camps.

This exodus of Arabs from Israel was brought about, according to one writer, largely because of fear aroused by the atrocity propaganda campaign of the hostile Arab radio stations. The Palestine Arabs believed these reports and fled for their lives. The Arab town of Nazareth in Israel was an exception. Here local Arab leaders advised against leaving and the people stayed in their homes.

### SOME ARABS REMAIN

Today the Arabs who remained in Israel have representatives in the national government and now enjoy all of the privileges of Jewish citizens, according to Alex Wachtel, who has recently completed ten years as a missionary in Israel. Because of the still hostile situation between Israel and her Arab neighbors, Arabs are not required to serve in the Israeli army. They wouldn't want to fight their Arab neighbors across the border. However the Druzes, who broke with Islam in the eleventh century, have volunteered to serve in the Israeli army and now proudly wear the uniform. In general, the Arabs in Israel seem to be contented, and their economic condition is certainly improved over their conditions under the former government.



## ISRAEL IS BORN

On the afternoon of the day the British left Palestine, 200 Palestinian Jews were gathered by secret invitation in Tel Aviv's municipal museum. Here Ben-Gurion read a proclamation of independence and the new state of Israel was born—the first by order of the United Nations, and the first Jewish state in 2,000 years. The proclamation, which took only 17 minutes to read, traced briefly the history and gave the ideals of the new country: "It will rest upon foundations of liberty, justice and peace as envisioned by the Prophets of Israel. It will maintain complete equality of social and political rights for all its citizens without distinction of creed, race or sex. It will guarantee freedom of religion and conscience, of language, education and culture. It will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions. It will be loyal to the principles of the United Nations Charter."<sup>4</sup>

Within a few hours President Truman had recognized the new government. But before a day had passed military contingents from five Arab states with a combined population of forty million were marching against the new state of Israel, whose population was only six hundred fifty thousand. And the Secretary-General of the Arab League declared that this was to be a war of extermination. Israel's closest neighbors, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt, were soon joined by Iraq, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia in a determined effort to annihilate the new Jewish nation before it could get started.

## TRUCE ENDS FIGHTING

They, however, had underestimated the spirit of the new nation. Within twenty-seven days after the fighting began a truce was arranged. Fighting soon broke out again, but after ten days of Israeli victories, both sides agreed to a second truce. This was followed a few months later by an armistice which has since that time kept an

uneasy peace, except for the Sinai Campaign and sporadic minor outbreaks.

### AN UNEASY PEACE

The Arab neighbors insist that they are still in a state of war with Israel. No Israeli would dare risk his life by entering an Arab country. Even American or European tourists are not allowed free crossing back and forth across the hostile border. There are still border incidents and occasional retaliatory raids by both sides.

Such is a brief history of the beginnings of the modern state of Israel and her durable difficulties with Jordan, her neighbor. Jordan shares Israel's longest border, but there is no formal communication between the two countries. Armed soldiers jealously guard the narrow no-man's-land bristling with barbed wire.

### THE NEW NATION

At this writing (1964) Israel is almost sixteen years old, a mere child among nations. With an area of barely 8,000 square miles, about the size of New Jersey, Israel has only about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 1 percent of the land area occupied by her several Arab neighbors. Israel is 265 miles long and from 12 to 70 miles wide.

The population of Israel now numbers over two million, a quarter-million of whom are Arabs, concentrated mainly north of Tel Aviv in the Plain of Sharon, and in Haifa, Nazareth, and in surrounding Galilee. The Jews of Israel have come from about eighty countries around the world, but the majority are from Africa and the Orient. Hebrew is the official language, but seventy other languages are spoken.

### THE JEWISH PROBLEM

In 1896 a book was published in Vienna called *The Jewish State; An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, by Theodor Herzl, a Budapest-born



lawyer and journalist. This book gave tremendous impetus to Zionism, as the movement of Jews to Palestine came to be called.

The Jewish question or problem has existed for two thousand years. Thirty-four hundred years ago the ancestors of modern Jews under their leader, Joshua, entered this land after long exile in Egypt and settled there. They were twice conquered and dispersed, and the Temple in the holy city of Jerusalem was destroyed. But two thousand years before Christ, God had promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed. This they never forgot during the years of travail in Egypt and later oppression under the Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, and Romans.

#### THE FIRST RETURN

The "first return" of the Jews to Palestine was under King Cyrus of Persia, who conquered Babylon in 538 B.C. Cyrus issued a decree permitting peoples deported by the Babylonians to return to their lands. Under this decree the first group of Jews returned to Judea in 536 B.C., other groups following later. Under the leadership of the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah, Ezra, and others, the Jews overcame the hindering effects of problems from within and without. They rebuilt their temple, repaired their city wall, and reestablished their community.

#### PALESTINE OVERRUN AGAIN

In 333 B.C., Syria and Palestine were invaded and conquered by Alexander the Great. After Alexander's untimely death in 323 B.C., there was a period of rivalry and dispute until several of his leading generals emerged as rulers over various parts of the vast empire he had built.

Palestine came under the control of Ptolemy and his successors and remained under Ptolemaic control for

almost all of the third century B.C. Near the beginning of the second century, actually 198 B.C., Palestine became a Seleucid country. (Seleucids were rulers of the line of Seleucus, an important general of Alexander's forces.) It was due to the tyranny of Seleucid rulers that the Jews revolted, their revolt being remembered as the famous Maccabean rebellion. Their successes in revolt gave them the impetus to press for independence. This was gained and later terminated when Jerusalem fell to the Romans in 63 B.C., not long before the birth of Jesus.

In A.D. 66 the Jews revolted against Rome. Four years later Titus overpowered Jerusalem and burned the rebuilt temple to the ground. For the next sixty years Jewish worship was forbidden. After a second revolt of the Jews against Rome in A.D. 132 was finally smashed, the Romans scattered most of the remaining Jews over the empire and obliterated the name Judea from all their maps, calling it Syria Palestine after the Philistines, the Jews' most detested ancient enemies.

#### JEWISH PERSECUTION

During the Middle Ages there was increased persecution of the Jews in Europe, a by-product of the Crusades. France and England expelled their Jews; later Portugal and Spain did the same. In other places they were forced to dwell only in "ghettos" and were discriminated against and deprived of normal civil rights. Some were massacred or forcibly baptized.

But three times a day at prayer the faithful remnant in exile repeated the words: "Sound forth the great horn for our freedom, lift up the banner to gather our exiles and gather us from the four corners of the earth to our land."

In the twentieth century the plight of the Jews reached a desperately low point. Worst of all, six million Jews were murdered by the Nazis in the hideous concentration camps such as at Dachau, Bergen-Belzen, and



Auschwitz. Thousands fled to other lands—many to Palestine.

### THE SECOND RETURN

After the new state of Israel was proclaimed in 1948, thousands of Jews came from all over the world. One hundred thousand came the first seven months with virtually no restrictions except that they must be Jews. By the end of the first three years the population of the new state had doubled.

Fifty-five thousand Yemenite Jews came from the primitive mountainous tip of the Arabian Peninsula. They were the oldest Jewish community in the world, having descended from the Jews who had fled from Jerusalem in 586 B.C. when the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed that city. Through the centuries they had preserved their Jewishness, still singing their psalms in ancient Hebrew and Aramaic.

They lived in abject serfdom to the Moslem rulers. They were not allowed to ride animals and their houses must not be higher than the lowest Moslem dwellings. Nor were they allowed to repeat their ancient prayers aloud. They were a simple, gentle people who were persuaded to accept the proffered airlift to Israel only after the ancient prophecy was pointed out to them: "They shall mount up with wings as eagles" (Isa. 40:31). In the new land of Israel many of them were settled in the Valley of Elah, where David slew Goliath.

Nearly 135,000 Jews came to Israel from Iraq; 20,000 from Czechoslovakia; 30,000 from Turkey; 36,000 from Bulgaria; 90,000 from North Africa; 75,000 from displaced-person camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy; and 50,000 by "illegal entry ships."

### PROBLEMS OF THE YOUNG NATION

It will be readily seen that one of the gigantic problems facing the young country was the absorption of these

thousands of newcomers from many lands and of many languages. Their Jewishness has brought them to Israel, but an almost infinite variety of beliefs and customs makes the problem of their integration very difficult.

There is also a wide variety of religious belief and practice, from the Jew whose chief interest in Israel is political, to the ultra-Orthodox bearded Jew in a long black coat, whose side curls swing beneath a broad-brimmed hat. He will cover his face as the tourist approaches for fear he may be photographed, for did not the law of Moses forbid the making of graven images?

There is also a wide variety in education, culture, and ability among the immigrants to Israel. Among them may be found some of the best creative minds in the world: artists, musicians, philosophers, and teachers. There have also come thousands from the ghettos of ancient cities in Eastern countries. Many of these had never slept in a bed, seen a toothbrush, or learned the simplest matters of hygiene, sanitation, or education.

#### CREATIVE APPROACH TO PROBLEMS

One might well ask how this small country could hope to absorb this flood of newcomers and provide a means of livelihood. (Israel welcomed its millionth immigrant in 1961—thirteen years after statehood.)

For centuries Palestine has been largely a desolate, eroded wilderness. Over 60 percent of Israel is complete desert according to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion in a radio address in 1963. Coal and most minerals are lacking. There were almost no industries in this area prior to the First World War. But, to quote Ben-Gurion again, "Real wealth is the human creative spirit." In this precious ingredient Israel is particularly fortunate. The impact of these creative minds is evident everywhere in Israel today.

Millions of trees have been planted on the eroded hills. The Martyr's Forest of six million trees was



planted in memory of the Jews killed in Hitler's Germany. Fifty million trees had been planted by 1961 and a program set up that calls for twenty million each year until 1971. The Dead Sea (the southern half of the west side borders on Israel) is yielding and will continue to yield untold wealth in minerals such as potassium, bromide, and magnesium. Solomon's copper mines in the southern tip of the Negev are producing once again, providing Israel's chief export.

Several thousand plants and factories have been established in recent years besides many small home workshops. These combined industries produce goods worth hundreds of thousands of dollars each year.

### AGRICULTURE

And what of the development of agriculture in this land of sand and rocks? There is an Arab legend that accounts for the rocks in Palestine. It is said that God sent an angel with two large bags of rocks to scatter over the world. But as he flew over Palestine one of the bags broke, spilling the rocks over this bit of land.

Isa. 34:11 describes the land as it has been for many centuries: "But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness."

In the next chapter the prophet pictured the land as it is becoming today: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly . . . for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons . . . shall be grass with reeds and rushes" (Isa. 35:1-7).

For the once brown, parched Judean hills are now green with young trees, grape vineyards, and small



farms. In one area south of Jericho on the Dead Sea shore the soil was literally washed inch by inch to remove the salt. It now boasts flourishing crops.

A huge pipeline, large enough to drive a car through, has been laid from the Jordan River in the north to the arid Negev in the south for irrigation. This 108-inch pipeline is the largest in the world. Many smaller pipelines have been laid which help to distribute water economically.

### THE KIBBUTZIM

Perhaps the most dramatic change in Israel may be seen in the great Negev desert south of Beersheba, comprising over half the total land area. Here, as in other areas of Israel, communal farms called *kibbutzim* (kib-BOOTZ-eem) have been set up. Everyone works for the common good. David Ben-Gurion lived on a *kibbutz* when he left the prime minister's office temporarily in 1953, working in the vineyards, shearing sheep, and taking his turn as watchman against Arab attack. Here his wife, Paula, worked as a nurse. (In 1963 Ben-Gurion retired permanently.)

A member of a *kibbutz* may withdraw at any time, but while he remains he must cooperate fully with his fellow *kibbutzniks*. Rooms are provided, children are looked after during the day, education is provided, and meals are eaten in a community dining room. Children spend the evenings with their parents, but in many places they return to the children's quarters at bedtime. Work is assigned to each man and woman according to the need and individual capability. No money is owned by individuals, but needs are taken care of by the community as they arise. Books and radios may be owned by individuals. By 1962 there were about two hundred thirty *kibbutzim* in Israel, housing a population of about seventy-eight thousand.

## OTHER COOPERATIVES

There are also cooperative farms called *Moshavs* (mow-SHAVS), where each family has its own home and livestock, but social services such as health, welfare, and education are provided from funds earned cooperatively.

Besides the socialistically organized farms, which include half the agriculture of Israel, there are cooperatives embracing producers and consumers, for marketing, transportation, credit and savings, and other areas of industry and life.

## CITIES OF ISRAEL

Several flourishing cities have sprung into life in recent decades in Israel. In the southern tip of the Negev is Elath on the Gulf of Elath, an arm of the Red Sea. It was near Elath that the ships of the Queen of Sheba anchored bringing rich gifts to King Solomon. Elath is now a tourist mecca with splendid hotels, glass-bottom boats for exploring the exotic marine life of the area, and a large plant for removing salt from seawater.

Beersheba, where Abraham planted a tamarisk tree, is now the bustling capital of the Negev with factories, hotels, and hospitals, and a population of about sixty thousand.

Ancient Jaffa (Joppa), from whose harbor Jonah sailed on his ill-fated retreat from God's will, is now a part of Tel Aviv, the brash new city which was Israel's first capital. (The capital is now Jerusalem.) It is said that Tel Aviv, with a population of nearly half a million, has more art galleries, espresso shops and cafes, theaters, libraries, and bookshops than any other Middle East city, and probably more than any other city of its size in the world. The Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra has a ten-month season. Twenty-five Israeli daily newspapers in 10 languages are published here. There are



225 weekly, fortnightly, monthly, and quarterly Israeli magazines which are produced here and nearly 2,000 new books annually. On the Allenby Road there are more than 100 bookstalls and shops. Tel Aviv boasts a national opera company and several air-conditioned luxury hotels with private beaches on the lovely Mediterranean.

Haifa, the main seaport of Israel, has been compared to Naples or San Francisco. It is sixty miles up the coast from Tel Aviv, built around a sweeping bay and up the sides of Mount Carmel (Vineyard of God), where Elijah called down fire from heaven in his contest with the prophets of Baal. Haifa is a fine example of industrial progress and excellent city planning.

### JERUSALEM

But Jerusalem is the real soul of Israel. Canaanites, Amorites, Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Syrians, Romans, Crusaders, Saracens, Frenchmen, Germans, Austrians, Turks, British—all have fought over the Holy City, so-called by Christians, Jews, and Moslems. This was the city of David and of Solomon, and the place where Jesus was crucified. Moslem tradition tells us that it is the place from which Mohammed ascended to heaven.

The United Nations partition plan called for Jerusalem to become an international city, but neither the Jews nor Arabs would agree to this. At the end of the Arab-Israeli War, after the withdrawal of the British in 1948, Jerusalem became a divided city. The "Old City," in which are most of the Christian shrines, is on the Arab side, while the "New City" is in Israel.

The New City of Jerusalem has grown phenomenally in the ensuing years. There are now four hundred synagogues there, and Mea Shearem (May-a-SHAR-eem)—the ultra-Orthodox religious quarter—is the world center of the Orthodox tradition today.



## EDUCATION

The Hebrew University was opened in 1925 on Mount Scopus (now on the Arab or Jordan side). In 1948, after the partition, the university had to move into the New City, where for a time it functioned in rented premises in various parts of the city. Ten years ago the building of a new campus west of the city was begun. It is now an impressive center of education with schools of medicine, dentistry, agriculture, education, library, and social work. There were 8,000 students and 1,200 teachers at the university in 1962-63. The school has graduated 7,144 students thus far.

An impressive Medical Center is nearing completion at Ein Karem (birthplace of John the Baptist), west of Jerusalem, where the Hebrew University School of Medicine is located. The University Agricultural School and the Weizmann Graduate School are located in Rehovet between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. The Technion, the MIT of Israel, is at Haifa.

To quote a brochure put out by the Hebrew University: "The University serves Israel—and the Jewish people everywhere. Public health is promoted by extensive studies carried out in the University's medical laboratories. Physicians, scientists, agronomists, teachers, jurists, economists, sociologists, administrators and other urgently needed personnel are trained at the University. The Hebrew language and Hebrew culture generally are fostered at the University by a band of distinguished scholars. Topflight scientists and scholars head government institutes and fill other responsible posts while continuing teaching and researches at the University. The Jewish National and University Library serves as the central library of world Jewry." The Hebrew University has indeed been an impressive factor in practically every sphere of activity in the new state of Israel. It is first in the world in Semitics.

## PROBLEM OF SECURITY

Understandably there are many problems facing the young nation of Israel. Prime Minister Ben-Gurion named three in a television broadcast in May, 1963. They are first, *security* (threatened by Arab neighbors on all borders); second, *absorption of immigrants*; and third, *reclaiming the desert* in order to care for the people.

An experienced American Army officer described Israel as an "armed people" though not a militant people. There is universal military training of men and also of unmarried and childless women. Even illiterates and those of low I.Q. are drafted and trained in Hebrew, knowledge of the country, hygiene (including how to take a bath and make a bed), and community life. They are also taught new skills or trades.

## PROBLEM OF ABSORPTION

The absorption of thousands of immigrants each year has been achieved with remarkable success. The moment a Jew (recently defined by the government as one having at least a Jewish mother and who has not left the faith) steps on the sod of Israel he is accepted as a first-class citizen. Permanent housing is provided within a few months as well as job opportunities. Education for the young is compulsory with the study of Hebrew and the Old Testament along with training in liberal arts and the practical arts, such as spinning, weaving, sewing, welding, and sheep raising.

## PROBLEM OF THE DESERT

The third great problem cited by Ben-Gurion, reclamation of the desert, was attacked with great vigor in the southern half of Israel in what is known as the Negev. Results there have already been phenomenal, and it is hoped that this miracle of the rebirth of a desert may serve as a pilot operation for sun-baked desert areas in other Middle East countries.



In fact, in answer to requests for help from such countries as Burma, Iran, Cyprus, the Ivory Coast, Thailand, and Nigeria, Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs set up a special department for international cooperation—a point-four program, Middle East style. During 1960 and 1961 thirty-five countries requested help from Israel, and engineers and agronomists were involved in supervising projects from Singapore to western Africa and training local men to take over when they leave. Today Israel's worldwide influence reaches far beyond its geographical boundaries.

### THE PAST AND PRESENT

There are many things in Israel today to remind one of the past. Fishing on the lovely Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberias) is still the same as when Jesus found Peter and Andrew "casting a net into the sea" and called them to become fishers of men. Men can still be seen along the shore mending their nets, as James and John were doing when Jesus asked them to follow Him. It was upon this sea that Jesus walked and whose stormy waters He calmed.

Near Massada on the Dead Sea—where the Jews made their final stand against the Romans in A.D. 135—stands a modern youth hostel.

In the valley of Aijalon, where Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, a dam has been built to collect water from the Judean hills in the rainy season.

Near Caesarea by the Mediterranean—the location of Israel's first golf course—archeologists are now unearthing the ancient city which King Herod made a showplace and are searching the harbor for buried treasure. It was here that Peter baptized the centurion Cornelius. Paul was imprisoned here, and it was from this port that he sailed for Rome.

The city of Nazareth in northern Israel is probably little changed since the time of Jesus. The Well of Mary



in all probability is the same one to which Jesus' mother went to draw water. Churches have been built over the traditional sites of the Annunciation and the carpenter shop where Jesus worked with Joseph.

Twenty miles northeast of Nazareth on the shore of the Lake of Galilee are the ruins of Capernaum, the second home of Jesus after He was driven from Nazareth by the townspeople. Here today the visitor is shown the excavated site of a second- or third-century temple which many believe shows what the Temple was like in which Jesus preached and healed.

### CHRISTIANITY IN ISRAEL

The visitor to Israel may well be disappointed in the small impact that evangelical Christianity apparently has made in two thousand years on the land where Jesus was born and where He ministered. The Christian religion has been represented in the Holy Land chiefly by the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox churches. It was only in 1823 that the first Protestant missionaries settled in Jerusalem. And not until 1921 did the Church of the Nazarene have a representative in the Holy Land. The next chapter will attempt to trace the story of the Nazarene mission in that part of Palestine that we call Israel today.

## CHAPTER TWO

# *Nazarene Missions in Israel*

### EARLY DAYS

Our first missionary to Palestine was Samuel Krikorian, who went to Jerusalem in 1921. (See *The Nations and the Isles*, by Olive G. Tracy, for background information including the story of Samuel Krikorian's aunt, Miss Rebecca Krikorian, p. 51). The Krikorians were refugees from the Turkish Armenian massacres about the turn of the century. When Samuel arrived in Jerusalem he found many of his countrymen who also had fled the cruelty of the Turks. He ministered to many of these. Miss Alice Spangenberg in *Jerusalem and Beyond* describes these early days. "He comforted them, read the Word, prayed, or only listened to the story of the young man who had lost thirty-two relatives in the massacres, or of the minister whose twenty ministerial brethren had been exterminated. Among his exiled countrymen both in Palestine and Syria he found groups of holiness people, the lasting fruits of early revivals in his own land. These folk were not embittered by the things which they had suffered. In their darkest hour God had sent them one of their own countrymen as His ambassador."<sup>1</sup>

Samuel Krikorian struggled and prayed for months for government permission to open a mission. The prospects were dark indeed. Then came that historic all-night prayer meeting which General Superintendent H. F.



Reynolds and Samuel Krikorian held on old Mount Olivet in December, 1921. Prayer was answered, permission was given, and one year later, on December 17, 1922, our mission was opened on Mount Zion not far from the Upper Room of Pentecost. Present on this historic occasion was a new missionary couple, Rev. and Mrs. A. H. Kauffman, who had come to assist in the work. In April, 1924, First Church was organized with twenty-one charter members.

The work steadily progressed and the need for a permanent location became pressing. In 1929 a piece of property was purchased in the rapidly developing new area west of the Old City. On this property a two-story stone building was erected with an auditorium for services and living quarters for the two missionary families. On adjacent corners to our location, a Y.M.C.A., a large oil company office building, and the fabulous King David Hotel were erected, enormously enhancing the value of our property. By 1948 there was a membership of about one hundred fifty and a Sunday school of two hundred fifty.

With the partition of Palestine in 1948 and the Arab-Israeli War, which followed on its heels, this flourishing mission disintegrated. The large majority of its members fled to the Old City, leaving the excellent church property on the Israeli side. For almost five years we had no missionary in Israel, but the church property was cared for by Armenian families—the Halibians and later the Dadians.

Two churches were subsequently established in the Old City of Jerusalem by those who had fled from Israel, one Armenian and one Arab. Here they worship in rented buildings only a few blocks from the fine church property across the border, which is as inaccessible to them as if it were a continent away. (See chapter 3 of Miss Tracy's book *The Nations and the Isles* for details of this early period.)



## THE WACHTELS

However God had not forgotten the once flourishing church in Jerusalem. For several years He had been talking to a young man in the eastern part of the United States about his responsibility to his own people.

Alexander Wachtel was born of Orthodox Jewish parents on November 9, 1921, in Kingston, New York. His mother died when he was only a month old, and he lived in Jewish orphanages until his father's remarriage several years later.

At the age of sixteen Alex, as he is known to his friends, was converted in a Nazarene tent meeting in Kingston. In spite of the disapproval of his family, who felt that he had disgraced them, Alex remained true. Only a few months after his conversion he felt that God was speaking to him about preaching the gospel to his own people.

After struggling for some months, Alex accepted the call of God and enrolled in Eastern Nazarene College, where he later received the A.B. and Th.B. degrees.

Following his graduation Alex pastored the Atlantic City, New Jersey, Church of the Nazarene for two years. From there he went to Kansas City, where he enrolled in Nazarene Theological Seminary. It was there that God led him to see that his call was not only to the Jewish people but to the Jewish people in their home country, Israel.

It was while in Kansas City that Alex met and married Hallie Roberts, an employee in the Nazarene Publishing House, where Alex also worked part time while in seminary.

After receiving the B.D. degree, Alex enrolled in Central Baptist Seminary of Kansas City, where he virtually completed the residence requirements for the Th.D degree before sailing for Israel in 1952.

Hallie Irene Roberts was born March 19, 1927, in Hominy, Oklahoma, where she was brought up in the

Church of the Nazarene. She became a Christian at the age of twelve. After graduating from high school she went to Kansas City, where she became an order clerk at the Nazarene Publishing House.

It was while living in Kansas City that Hallie made two momentous decisions which were to change the course of her life. First, she consecrated her life completely to God and received His sanctifying grace. And second, she decided to marry Alex Wachtel.

Since that time Hallie has been a cheerful, efficient helpmeet for her missionary husband, and eventually the devoted mother of Norman, born August 21, 1953; Janice, born February 24, 1955; and Andrew, born December 7, 1962—all in Jerusalem, Israel.

#### PROBLEMS OF THE NEW MISSIONARIES

Problems are the common lot of all missionaries, and surely missionaries to the Middle East need feel no sense of inferiority because of the number and nature of the problems peculiar to this part of the world.

The first which the Wachtels had to meet head on was in the matter of living quarters. The property was adequate but somewhat run-down as a result of the war and the absence of missionaries. There were such details to be cared for as a leaky roof and a corroded hot-water tank. Wardrobes and cupboards had to be built (apparently the builders had not heard of built-ins!), adequate stoves secured, the sewage system replaced, interior and exterior painted, and a crumbling boundary wall rebuilt—to mention a few of the items.

The problem of food was a daily worry in the early years. Rationing made it possible to secure a minimum of the essential foods such as meat, but in insufficient quantities. In January, 1953, Alex wrote friends that the food situation was their biggest problem. "Chicken recently went off controls. The price went to \$3.00 a pound. Pork sells for \$5.00 a kilo (2.2 pounds). Green



peas are selling for \$1.20 a kilo. Meat is severely rationed. We got our half pound this month. Potatoes are hard to get. We got our kilo this month." They got tired of cauliflower every day, but learned to like fish, of necessity. They were delighted with an occasional food package from the States with cake mixes, which they especially appreciated—in spite of exorbitant duty which they had to pay.

The matter of visa extension was a problem that arose regularly every six months for several years. They were often informed that this would be the last extension. But they held on doggedly and the extension always came through until the residence visa was finally granted in 1955.

It soon became evident that the study of Hebrew was imperative. The Wachtels attacked this problem with vigor—hours every day, six days a week, for six-month periods. It was discouraging and slow, but the use of a tape recorder was most helpful, and eventually they were able to understand and be understood in the difficult Hebrew language.

Illness is a universal problem, particularly amoebic dysentery, a most debilitating and stubborn disease prevalent in the Middle East countries. Alex suffered intermittently for two years with this disease before it was recognized. He insists that the cure was worse than the disease! They suffered from the cold, damp winters and from the blistering summer sun. But good medical care is available in Israel and they have not let the problem of illness keep them down for long.

The missionary must be prepared to tackle all of these problems, and many more, as they arise. Alex Wachtel has been blessed with a saving sense of humor, which has helped him to meet the problems of life in Israel without cracking up. In 1955 he wrote:

"I never realized that missionary work was so complicated. I am tourist director for the Nazarenes as



they come through the Middle East—and they do come. Then I am the treasurer, unfortunately. Many letters come through and so I must be the secretary, and unless I average two letters a day I never can keep caught up. I am also the maintenance man here and I have learned more about chimneys, boilers, heaters, sewers, painting, and roof-repairing since I came here than I ever knew before. Also, I am the gardener. I have been embarrassed about how shaggy the property has looked and so I am trying to keep it beautified.

"I am supposed to know all about the country, problems, and opportunities for the church. Which means something in Nazareth where I am now trying to locate a flat for the Sarians which will be reasonable and yet usable. I am the pastor of this church, which means study. I should speak the languages of the country which include Hebrew, English, Arabic, German, Yugoslavian, Yiddish, French, Bulgarian, and Armenian. Further, we must show a spirit of benevolence, which concerns us in distributing used clothing. Oh, yes, there is another problem here that few realize. In Israel, no church has its own area. So we must be careful to refrain from any proselytizing or any activity that will grieve the brotherly spirit."<sup>2</sup>

When the Wachtels arrived in Jerusalem, there was a family of 5 Armenians who were left from the church of 150 members that were scattered when Arab-Jewish fighting broke out in 1948. For a time they held Sunday evening services and a Friday night time for Bible study and fellowship. But in time even this family moved out of the country and there was no congregation left.

#### NAZARETH

However, in Nazareth, a strongly Arab center, lived a Mr. Missak Sarian, who was interested in having the Church of the Nazarene come to his town. After a six-

month period of study and prayer and conferences with Alex Wachtel, Mr. Sarian started a Sunday school in Nazareth. Uncertain about Mr. Sarian's attitude toward the doctrine of holiness, however, Mr. Wachtel asked him to spend three more months in study and prayer concerning his affiliating with the Church of the Nazarene.

About three months later the missionary received a glowing letter from Mr. Sarian:

"With great satisfaction and pleasure I would like to let you know that the Lord has graciously made known the bounty of His Great Grace, in a way that I have never experienced before. In the night of November 28 at 11:00, while earnestly seeking by faith complete deliverance from and total victory over sin, I made a solemn laying of everything on the altar (family, time, energy, money and any material belonging) with all sincerity; having the Old Self completely crucified; this thing done, it pleased the Lord to fill my whole being with such peace and calm I never knew before. Now I know by His grace, in an experiential way, what it means to have one's heart entirely cleansed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! it thrills my heart with the deepest joy, having done away with the sin question once for all."<sup>3</sup>

This was the most encouraging event in the Wachtels' early years in Israel. "Just to read this letter," Brother Wachtel wrote, "makes me feel like shouting, too. This means that we can begin work in Nazareth with a bona fide possessor of the experience of entire sanctification, who has been called to preach and who in God's providence has a Bible School education . . . Mr. Sarian's sanctification brings the light of day on this difficult Israel field."

It so happened that Mr. Sarian had been a Nazarene more than twenty years before. At that time the Rev.



A. H. Kauffman and a Mrs. Behar had seen promise in him and had helped him attend the Christian and Missionary Alliance Bible School in Bethlehem, from which he graduated. Later because of financial difficulties he had left the church, missing God's best for his life for those twenty years, he now feels. But the seed sown by Missionary Kauffman and others in those early years is bearing fruit today.

In 1961, Dr. Hardy C. Powers dedicated the new Church of the Nazarene in Nazareth—the first Protestant church to be dedicated in Israel since it became a state in 1948. There were over one hundred persons in the church for this service. Some had come from other cities in Israel. There were special guests from the government as well as the Vice-mayor of Nazareth.

The church is a beautiful stone structure on Nazareth's main street. It is a building of which any Nazarene would be justly proud. The large lot is entirely surrounded by a wall—much needed in this area. There is a spacious and attractive modern apartment at the back of the building, reached by a flight of broad steps from the backyard. Here the pastor and family live.

### THE HOLLISES

Allen and Gloria Hollis and their children came to Nazareth to pastor the young church in the fall of 1962. Allen and Gloria both grew up in the Church of the Nazarene, Allen in Alabama and Gloria in West Virginia. They met at Trevecca Nazarene College, where Allen had gone to prepare to answer a definite call from God to missionary service. They were married in 1954.

After Allen's graduation from college in 1957, they moved to Kansas City, where Allen attended Nazarene Theological Seminary. While in Kansas City, Gloria worked as a secretary in the Department of Church Schools and also blended her beautiful soprano voice with the "Showers of Blessing" radio choir.

Allen received the B.D. degree in 1960, and assumed the pastorate in Marmet, West Virginia. The following January he and Gloria applied for missionary appointment, meeting the Department of Foreign Missions and the Board of General Superintendents. They were approved at this time for missionary service but were not definitely assigned until June of that year.

During these months of waiting Gloria had had some fears concerning her little daughters should they be sent to some isolated, primitive station. "But one night while all the family were asleep, she prayed alone and God came and so filled the room that all her fears were swept away, and she was reassured that 'he that calleth you . . . also will do it,' and the grace that was needed for any situation would be supplied."<sup>4</sup>

Their appointment was to the young and vigorous country of Israel and to the ancient city of Nazareth, famous the world over as the boyhood home of Jesus.

Gloria and Allen have three daughters: Teresa, seven; Tamara, five; and Tonya, three. These little girls with ash-blond hair attract attention wherever they go in Nazareth, where dark hair and eyes are the rule. They have made quick adjustment to their new home, Teresa making top grades in the first grade at school (in Arabic!) and all three having many friends among the Arabs of Nazareth.

Nazareth is an Arab town with a population of twenty-five thousand, mostly Christian (Catholic) and Moslems. Since statehood, a Jewish "upper town" has been built to house eight thousand Jewish immigrants. "Spreading in all directions from Nazareth are hundreds of villages," according to Mr. Wachtel, "open and hospitable to the gospel."

This brief story of the beginning of Nazarene work in Nazareth would not be complete without at least mentioning some of the struggles of the missionary during the period from 1955, when Mr. Sarian was asked to



organize a Nazarene Sunday school, to 1961, when the church was dedicated. The struggle to buy property for a church location was prolonged and frustrating. It was seventeen months from the time of the first negotiations for the lot to the conclusion of the deal—due principally to the Sinai campaign, to illness, and to the fact that travel to Nazareth was dangerous for a period of several weeks. One time two people driving on the highway were killed by Arab snipers only twenty minutes after Mr. Wachtel had passed that way.

But today a lovely new church of native stone stands as a monument to the missionaries, present and past, who exerted their will, initiative, devotion, and energy that it might be established. The property is now valued at one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars, although the actual cost to the church was far less. The city of Nazareth as well as the government of Israel have given their blessing to the church of the Nazarene in Nazareth. The Allen Hollises arrived in 1962 and they have already won the hearts of many in the town of Jesus' boyhood.

In early 1963 attendance at the services averaged between thirty-five and fifty, and when Allen Hollis preached his first message in Arabic at Christmas, 1963, there were seventy-five present.

### HAIFA

Haifa, the port city north of Tel Aviv, next beckoned to Mr. Wachtel. This is the only Jewish city in Israel that does not hinder the preaching of the gospel to Jews. Late in 1962 the church gained full possession of a large house in Haifa—only eighteen months after the signing of the original contract. Business—as most everything else—moves slowly in the Middle East.

Mr. Wachtel described the problem of the securing of the property in a letter to friends:

"In Haifa we had a great struggle. It was impossible to find a lot upon which we could build that was within

our means. To buy a good building that we could enter without paying an exorbitant price (called key-money) almost seemed a hopeless task. However, after six months of searching we found one that seemed ideal. The negotiations were thorny but finally they were settled. Then began the great task of clearing up the legal difficulties which proved to be the most agonizing of all. However, God helped us mightily and the Israeli government was most kind. We are now happy to report that the property is registered in the name of the Church of the Nazarene."<sup>5</sup>

The house has been renovated and painted, some walls removed and some floors relaid, and all plumbing and electric wiring replaced. The Missak Sarians have moved to Haifa to pastor the new work, where they are making contacts among the 4,000 Arabs and 400 Armenians who live within easy walking distance of the church. They have an attractive living apartment on the second floor, an ample hall for services on the first floor, as well as three large rooms for church school, a kitchen, bath, and basement room. The property is now worth three times what the church paid for it. Already real-estate agents are offering more than double what was paid for it.

While renovating work was still in progress on the Haifa property, Mr. Wachtel arrived one morning to find two court orders nailed to the walls, ordering work to stop. Upon investigation he discovered that the city of Haifa requires certain construction permits not required in either Jerusalem or Nazareth. At the city hall he met helpful courtesy. He was sent to the office of the one in charge of permits, where he explained the problems and offered apologies. The city official listened carefully and checked all the facts, then asked the missionary to write a letter incorporating all the essential information. Then on the spot he gave the necessary permission to finish the work. When Mr. Wachtel at-



tempted to review the problems, the official begged him to desist, saying that he much preferred to discuss the Talmud with him. "What an interesting thirty minutes we had," said Mr. Wachtel, "as he reviewed insights in the Talmud he had gathered years ago in a *yeshiva* in Lithuania. The Talmud is a Jewish commentary on the Old Testament and Jewish law which developed through the centuries. It is revered by the Orthodox as on a par with the Old Testament. As we discussed we saw how much common ground we had. We separated cordially and we promised each other that we would find additional opportunities for further conversations. Foreboding court orders nailed to our walls—God turned into pleasant, promising friendships."<sup>6</sup>

Shortly before leaving Israel in 1963 for their second furlough, Mr. Wachtel wrote of the work as follows: "Last Sunday I spoke to around thirty-five persons in Nazareth and to twenty-six in Haifa. Then of course we have our own service in Jerusalem. So seventy persons out for Nazarene services is a lot better than seven which we had when we first came in 1952."<sup>7</sup>

### LOOKING AHEAD

Speaking of the future, Mr. Wachtel has some ambitious ideas. Among them is providing housing for future Nazarene students to Israel's famous Technion (technological school) in Haifa and to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Another possibility is the development of a vocational school to train plumbers, stonemasons, electricians, carpenters, etc., a project in which the government itself would be interested. Churches also must be established soon in Ramla and Jaffa-Tel Aviv.

"The secret is to keep at it," he says. "Not to get discouraged. Never to become wearied. To keep on believing although it seems foolish to dream. Not to become despondent over yearly statistics—although I do.

"Some time ago in prayer over new locations (Ramla, Jaffa-Tel Aviv) God encouraged me to seize on the words of Jesus: 'Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?' The God who guided us in Nazareth and in Haifa can surely see us through in these places, expensive and difficult as they may be!"<sup>8</sup>

The church's lawyer congratulated Mr. Wachtel on their remarkably good luck in Nazareth and Haifa. Wrote Mr. Wachtel to the membership of the Church of the Nazarene at home: "He erred in attributing the success to luck. The so-called strokes of luck were due to God's mighty acts which came forth because of you who prayed. May God bless you for your goodness! We plead for your continuing prayer!

"I wish that I could put down the names of these faithful friends as Paul did in the last chapter of Romans. Faithful, heroic, generous, little-known laymen made possible Paul's stirring and well-known missionary achievements. Laymen like those have also changed the face of our church here from one of despair to one of confidence. We and the church are grateful to you.

"Our future is before us. Ramla, the town of Joseph of Arimathea, beckons us. Recently visitors from Ramla urged us to open work there. And then Jaffa-Tel Aviv, that great metropolis of 400,000 persons, challenges us. We draw strength from the past ten years. The God who led us through so many difficulties with a mighty hand is inexhaustible!"<sup>9</sup>

#### ISRAEL'S DESTINY?

What is the attitude of the modern Israeli to religion? Alice Spangenberg, in her book *Jerusalem and Beyond* writes: "Not every returning Jew shares the ecstatic awareness of a certain little black-bearded Jew of seventy-four, flying in on a DC-3 from Ireland. After



his escape from Lithuania ten years previous, the Nazis had burned his wife and thirteen relatives at Dachau. As the thin line of Palestinian shore came into view, he dropped to his knees and prayed, then through his tears told a fellow passenger: "The prophecy has come true. God said to Isaiah: "I will bring you home to Jerusalem with the wings of an eagle." Look at us! From South Africa, from Belgium, from Ireland, and all over the world we are coming back to Israel!"<sup>9</sup>

Miss Spangenberg also cites Dr. Chaim Weizmann, first president of Israel, as sharing a strong belief in the destiny of the Jewish people. Before a committee of the U.N. in 1947 he testified in favor of partition as follows: "Why should a practical, shrewd people like the Jews sink their effort, their sweat and blood, their substance into the sands, rocks, and marshes of Palestine? . . .

"Well, if I wished to be facetious I could say it is not the responsibility of the Jews who sit here, but the responsibility of Moses, who acted from divine inspiration. He might have brought us to the United States, and instead of the Jordan we might have had the Mississippi. It would have been an easier task. But he chose to stop here."<sup>10</sup>

Although many Israelis share this sense of destiny, perhaps the majority were drawn to Israel by the desire for a national home. Their interest is chiefly social, not religious. Although a minority may be classed as Orthodox, practicing all the laws of the Old Testament and awaiting the coming of the Messiah, yet the majority do not place the same stress on keeping the Old Testament laws, nor on the importance of the Talmud in directing their lives, nor on the personal appearance of a Messiah.

Persons of either extreme are very hard to reach with the gospel of Christ. The persecution of Jews by nominal Christians the world over has made the door to their acceptance of Christianity very difficult to open. And, moreover, the bickering of Christian leaders in

Christendom's oldest churches in Bethlehem at the Church of the Nativity, and at Jerusalem over the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, has embarrassed the gospel, the central tenet of which is love.

The young nation of Israel has many pressing needs, but Israel does not need medical missions. Life expectancy in Israel is 72.1 years compared with 69.6 in the United States. Israel does not need our help in education, for they have "one of the most modern and comprehensive school systems in the world: the great Hebrew University . . . , technical schools, all types of education for children, youths, adults."<sup>11</sup>

Israel does not need our technical help in agriculture when "one of the greatest irrigation and soil reclamation projects in history is making even the Negev inferno to bloom."<sup>12</sup>

Neither does Israel need a new sense of universal brotherhood according to Miss Spangenberg, who quotes Honorable Abba Eban, now minister of education and former Israeli representative to the United Nations: "As for universal brotherhood, we dare not be forgetful of the grim and awful holocaust to which the doctrines of racial and religious discrimination led our people who were consigned by the millions to cold-blooded slaughter."<sup>13</sup>

#### CHRIST—THE ANSWER FOR ISRAEL

The way to reach the Israelis today is well delineated by Olive Tracy in *The Nations and the Isles*.

"The Israeli of today is an aggressive, successful businessman, or farmer, or industrial worker. He has filled marshes into tillable soil; he has taken desert land so poor that no plant could grow, no animal could survive; he has found water, dug wells, washed the soil, watered it, and planted a luxurious garden, an oasis in the howling wilderness. And yet, under the centuries of law and ritual, under the modern industry and suc-



cess, is the same hungry heart and searching soul to whom Jesus himself ministered. There is a way to reach the Jews of Israel. It is the same way every human being is reached—Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”<sup>14</sup>

## NOTES FROM NAZARETH

*By Gloria Hollis*

“*Marhaba* [Hello].” “*Marhabetin* [Hello to you].” “*Ahlan wasahlan* [You are welcome].” *Itfaddalee* [Please come in].” “*Mamnoun* [Thank you].” “*Keif Halik* [How are you]?” “*Mabsuta* [I am well], *el hamdela* [thanks be to God].” Now we are inside an Arab home. These are the usual beginning greetings. What do we see? Well, first let’s visit the home of the architect who designed our church in Nazareth.

In Acts 12:13 we read, “And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.” This phrase “at the door of the gate” always puzzled me until I visited the home of Mr. Chamieh. As we came to his house, we too entered “at the door of the gate.” There is a very large iron gate with a small wooden door (which I have to stoop to get through, since I’m so tall). Inside are several houses, all enclosed within a tall stone wall.

Up a few steps to your right is the Chamieh home. Flat-roofed—stone exterior. Immediately I was ushered into the salon (living room). The wife greeted me and suddenly disappeared. A few minutes later she came in with a huge bowl of fresh fruit, a napkin, a small table, a knife, and a plate, and I ate my fill of fruit. She scurried away with peelings, fruit, etc.

I talked with the girls and a few neighbors who had drifted in to see this American and in a few moments she returned with sweets—all sorts of bakery goodies.

We all had our second helping of this, and again she disappeared and returned a few minutes later with a tiny, toylike cup of coffee. This is the symbol of a visit—unless you have this coffee, according to an Arab, your visit is not complete.

The coffee is very, very strong and sweet and made of a special Turkish blend. I have learned really to appreciate its different flavor, but at first I'll admit it nearly took the top of my head off. After the coffee I said, "*Daimey*" (May your hands always be able to prepare this delicious coffee), and immediately was free to leave. This coffee is a signal that you may leave their home in peace. "*Itfaddalee zurena*" (Please visit us), I say, and go out of "the door of the gate" and make my way down a very steep Nazareth hill toward home. The people are very warm and hospitable and always make you feel welcome in their homes.

Their homes are mostly of natural stone exteriors, and flat-roofed, with a huge tank on the top of the roof in which to store water. Water enters there from the main city water supply. All ground-floor windows have iron bars, as break-ins and theft are common. The rooms are usually quite small, and there are only three or four rooms per family. Most of the ceilings are very high and thick. The floors are all cement tile, and Arab women sweep and mop the floors constantly. Their homes are neat and the use of doilies is still much in vogue here.

Furniture is much as ours, except that in most homes, because of the lack of space and the large families, the couch in the living room usually doubles as a bed. The use of lovely Persian rugs is quite common for those who can afford it. You will often see their rugs hanging over a banister receiving a furious beating, as they have no vacuum sweepers. They have delightful little stack tables they keep handy for all the lavish serving they do. Their rooms always have an assortment of colors, usually two or three different colors in a room.



The man who actually supervised the construction of our church building, Joseph Daniel, lives near the top of a very steep hill in a lovely, California-type bungalow with a veranda decorated with wrought iron. His home is as modern as any in America and is surrounded by a lovely flower garden.

Houses are going up everywhere and almost on top of each other. Land is very expensive and so a father will buy a piece of land and as each child gets married a new home will be added on some portion of it. If he has many children, they will literally build on top of one another if no more land is available. I can look from my kitchen window and see dozens of new housing projects going up on the hill opposite us.

And now to the interesting subject of marriage. The Arabs are still quite strict on this matter. There is no dating. If a young man sees a girl who strikes his fancy, he inquires who she is and goes to see her father. If the father approves, they may see each other a few times, always in the presence of the parents. If they like each other they may become engaged—still all done in the presence of the parents. If a boy or girl breaks an engagement, it is considered a disgrace to both families; and if the girl breaks the engagement, she will likely not have another chance to marry. A large engagement party is held (depending on the status and wealth of the family) when the decision about the couple is final. After this the couple may see each other frequently in her home. The engagement may go on for months or a year or two.

A few days before the wedding the girl has a party inviting all her girl friends. They bring gifts, but usually the gifts are not opened until the guests leave. The party consists of all sorts of dancing, between girls only, of course—everything from Oriental dancing to the twist. It is their custom for the bride-to-be to try on all the new clothes in her trousseau for her friends to see. They

buy the very best they can afford, with matching accessories. Cake, coffee, ice cream, etc., are served.

Now, with regard to the groom. The night before the wedding all his family are invited to a banquet (also depending on the wealth of the family). Usually they have a small group of musicians to provide the music and they dance only the Oriental dance. The Arab music all has very deep meaning and beautiful words but not much attention is paid to the music. A song might be sung for five or ten minutes until the story is unfolded, and the singer can make up his own music if he wishes. Also during this evening the ladies call out chants and wishes, and when they finish everyone shouts a very high *lu-lu-lu-lu* and they clap their hands. This is also done all the way to and from the actual wedding.

At the close of this evening, which might be two or three o'clock in the morning, they give the groom his final shave as a single man. They put soap over his face and use a razor with no blade to signify he was shaven very clean before his wedding. This ceremony is very vital to them.

Now for the wedding proper—I would say that 99 percent of the people who get an invitation to a wedding actually attend. The groom bears most of the expense unless he marries a very wealthy girl, then she helps; but everyone assembles at his home. Then the ladies are taken to the home of the bride. She is presented in her beautiful dress and again we have the chants and *lu-lu*'s and everyone cries. Cake is served and all get into the taxis again and go to the church. All the way the ladies continue the chants and clapping of hands—a very festive affair. Everyone on the street watches the wedding procession—usually two or three busloads or as many as twenty taxis.

The group go directly into the church, bride and groom included; everyone crowds behind them. You



usually have to remain standing for the entire ceremony if you wish to see the wedding. There is no wedding processional or recessional—just the vows and prayers and blessings. Only a priest or rabbi or a Moslem sheik can perform marriages. There are no civil ceremonies in Israel.

Afterward the wedding party and families receive the guests in another room and everyone is given sweets wrapped in little dishes which can be kept. The new couple go for a honeymoon much the same as we do, and when they return they come either to a completely furnished apartment or a room in the father's house—also depending on the wealth and status of the family.

The Moslem wedding is unique. They tell me times are changing, and some of the more modern Moslems don't do exactly like this, but this is the custom. Ten years ago at the ceremony the man would strike his wife-to-be in front of the whole company to show his superiority. Now most of them don't do this. All the vows are exchanged at the engagement party months before the actual wedding day. At this time they are as good as married, but the boy has to prepare the house and pay a certain amount of money for the girl. On the wedding day the bride is brought to the groom's home.

We were invited to the home of our Arabic teacher who is also a lawyer and a Moslem. His wife is a Christian, so it's an interesting combination. Their home was very small—a living room, a small bedroom (odd—they give the children, usually four or five, the smallest room and the parents take the larger one), a larger bedroom, a very small dining area, a kitchen the size of a closet, and a tiny bathroom. Their furnishings were quite nice. A large oil painting of his father, a prominent Arab judge when he was living, graced the living room. These Arab women sew well and curtains, bedspreads, and such are made by hand, usually copied from something.

My Sears catalogs are very popular—these women can look at a picture and then copy it.

Their kitchens are so cramped we wonder how they manage, but they prepare very delicious food. We were served soup, salad, turkey, rice, *koubi* (made from a special grain here—very delicious, sometimes cooked in yogurt), and stuffed carrots. These Arab women stuff everything. Meat is very scarce and expensive, so they cook a lot without meat. They cook potatoes in the skins and hollow out the inside, stuff a little lamb meat and some parsley and rice inside, and it is very delicious. The same with carrots. Popular dishes here are *kebob* (lamb meat cooked over a charcoal fire), **French fries**, and *humus* (a nutty-tasting dip, eaten with their special Arab bread called *petta*).

We were invited to a home one evening for something really special—"silly salad" it is called by some, but it really is *taboli*, a mixture of parsley, onions, herbs, oil, and lemon juice, eaten on a piece of lettuce or cabbage or grape leaves. The Arabs have no hamburgers or hot dogs but in their place they have a *filawful*—half slice of Arab bread stuffed with slaw, peppers, dressings, and a tiny round mixture that looks much like a hush puppy—very delicious.

Back to our visit with our Moslem friends. They were fasting for Ramadan, which is a holy month for them, during which they eat only one meal a day, exactly at sundown. Before the meal my girls and I went across the road to see a flock of sheep. The days here are very warm, even in winter, but as soon as the sun goes down, it becomes quite cold. The hillside was beautiful with spring flowers as far as you could see. They must have been the "lilies of the field" Jesus talked about. As we watched the sheep, a little shepherd boy came over to us. He spoke no English but was friendly and brought us a tiny lamb to hold. I noticed the boy's coat was torn, which left him open to the biting wind, but he



stayed right with his charges until the various owners came after them. The lambs whimpered as it grew darker and the song, "Listen to the lambs, all a-crying," went through my mind as I looked out over the rocky hillside where they grazed.

The children here are most amazing, and our girls are finding they have a lot of homework to do to equal them. It is not in the least unusual to see a ten-year-old boy taking his tiny brother or sister for a walk after school and tending to the child until suppertime. You rarely see an eight- to ten-year-old girl without a baby sister on each hand. They all have jobs to do and Teresa (my seven-year-old) says they don't get whippings because they mind their mothers. I hope my girls learn their lessons well from their little Arab friends.

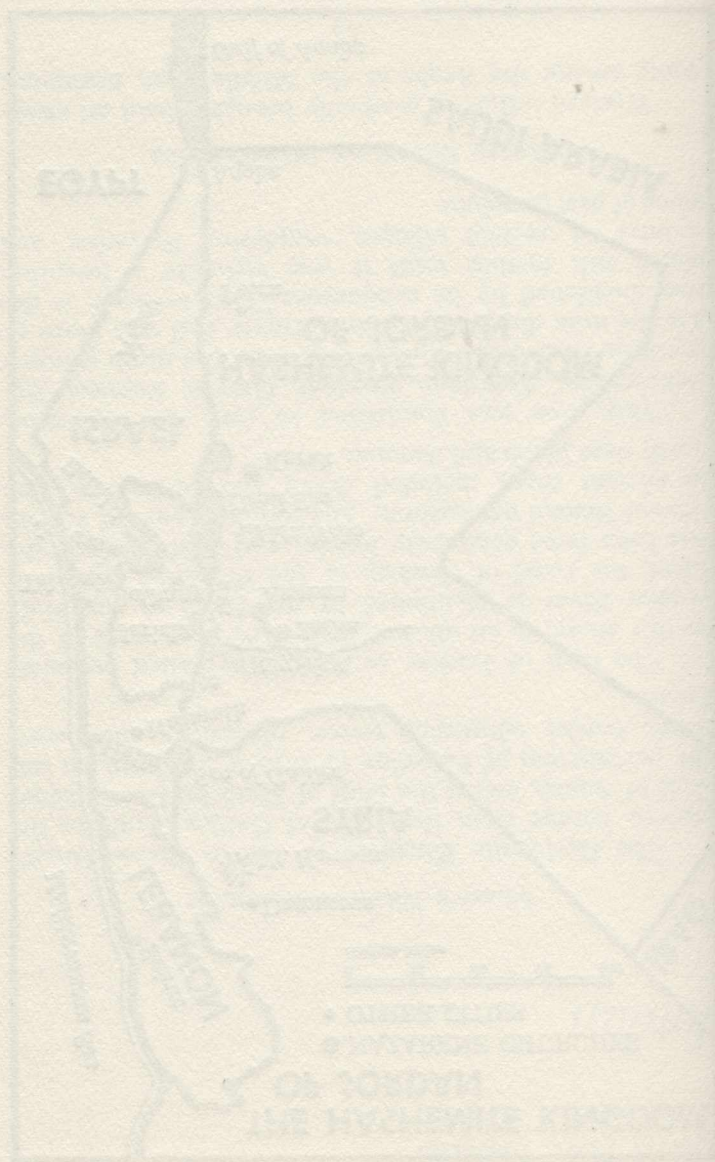
There is no central heating in the homes and in the winter they are very cold. We heat with a large kerosene heater, but everyone here says we keep our house too hot. The people think if your house is warm and you go out into the cold you will get a cold. Most don't heat at all except maybe with a tiny kerosene stove.

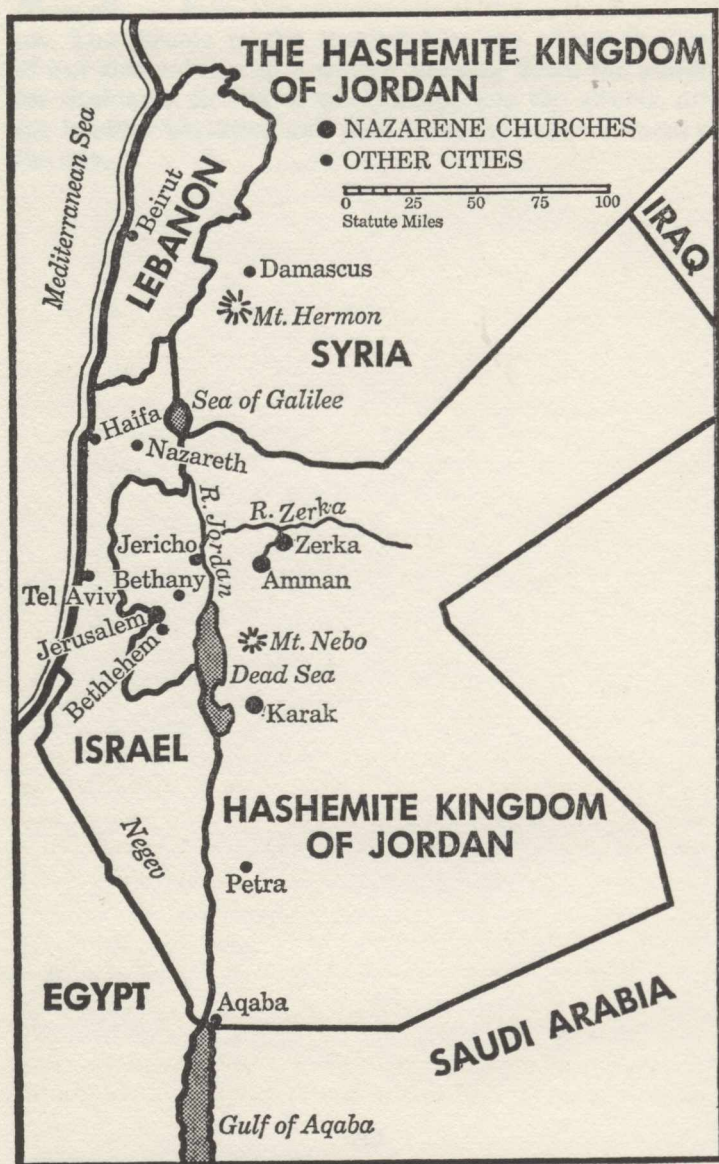
One experience which struck the girls and me two or three days after we moved into our apartment goes like this. We were sitting on the front porch and heard loud screeching—"EE-HAW-EE-HAW." We peered around the corner to see a heavily laden donkey carrying a load of goods to market. Atop this a sleepy-looking Arab was comfortably jostling to and fro, one bare foot perched on the donkey's head. He was leading a camel, also heavily laden on his way to the market. None of them seemed the least bit perturbed that impatient cars, trucks, and buses were clamoring and honking to get by. They went slowly on their way down the streets of Nazareth, as I suppose they have been doing for centuries.

This scene depicted the vast extremes of this area of Israel—the most primitive modes of transportation and the most modern. In the larger cities this isn't so, but in

Nazareth we have the uniqueness of the past all around us. The streets in the marketplace are about the size of our sidewalks with a trough running down the middle for drainage. Scores of small shops line the streets, and the familiar bartering still goes on as the entertainment of the day.









## CHAPTER THREE

# *Jordan*

### ISRAEL'S NEAREST NEIGHBOR

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan shares Israel's eastern border from the Lake of Galilee south to the Gulf of Aqaba, called the Gulf of Elath by Israel. Since the partitioning of Palestine in 1948 it has been an unhappy border witnessing terror, bloodshed, and heart-break.

The land of Jordan, as it shall be called hereafter in this study, is an ancient land. The area west of the Jordan River is mentioned in the Bible as the Holy Land, the Land of Canaan, or the Promised Land. It has been most commonly known as Palestine since the time of Roman domination. The southern part of Jordan in ancient times included Edom and Midian; to the north were Moab and Ammon.

This area was dominated in turn by Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, and Turks. But from the ninth century A.D. the area diminished in importance and was more or less abandoned by its conquerors. Left to itself, it declined still further until it was virtually a forgotten country of squalid villages, wandering Bedouins, and ruins of past grandeur.

### ARABS DREAM OF INDEPENDENCE

Western influence gradually brought about an awakening among the Arabs of the Middle East, beginning,

according to one historian, in 1798 when Napoleon first stepped upon Egyptian soil. This growing Arab nationalism was fostered at first by small groups meeting for discussion, especially in tiny Lebanon. These enlarged and spread through Arab territory as secret political movements fostering the dream of independence.

At the time of World War I, Arab nationalism was given encouragement by the Allies and especially the British, who promised to help the Arabs throw off the Turkish domination of the past four hundred years in return for help against Turkey and the other Central Powers. The Arabs rose to the challenge and were a determining factor in the defeat of Turkey and the release of the Middle East from Turkish control. The story of the British Colonel T. E. Lawrence and his 200,000 raiding Bedouins forms an exciting chapter in the story of World War I.

#### THE SYKES-PICOT PACT

But the promise of independence for the Middle East Arabs was temporarily pushed aside when, in 1916, the British and French agreed to a secret pact which was later ratified by czarist Russia, known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement. This pact gave France and Britain mandates over Palestine, Lebanon, and most of Syria, promising independence to a limited area including a stretch of desert in eastern Syria, Transjordan, western Iraq, and Arabia. This resolution of the Arab quest for independence had little to recommend it over colonialism, according to the Arabs.

#### THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

The following year (1917) the British brought out the Balfour Declaration, promising a "national home" for the Jewish people in Palestine. At this time the Arabs outnumbered the Jews ten to one in this area. The Arabs were unable to reconcile the promises of an



independent Arab federation (given by the British in the early days of the war) with the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration.

### THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

Nazi persecution of Jews before and during World War II gave tremendous impetus to the Zionist movement (to establish a national home for the Jews), which had been gathering momentum since the late eighteen hundreds. As thousands of homeless Jews swarmed into Palestine, the Arabs became increasingly alarmed. The decision of the United Nations to partition Palestine, giving the western area to the Jews, only further complicated the distress of the Arabs. The final blow was the creation of the state of Israel. The Arabs were convinced that no sovereign nation like themselves should allow immigrants to set up an independent state in the country which had given them asylum. Under such circumstances the Arab-Israeli War was almost inevitable. It is also easy to understand the deep-seated suspicion and distrust of the Western world which persists to this day among the Arabs.

### JORDAN EMERGES

During the British mandate period, in 1921, Emir Abdullah was made ruler of Transjordan (the area east of the Jordan River) under the British high commissioner for Palestine.

Complete independence was gained in 1946 with Abdullah as the first king. He chose to call the new country the Hashemite Kingdom of Trans-Jordan, making use of his family name. King Hussein I, born in 1935, became king in 1952 after a period of unrest following the assassination of his grandfather King Abdullah in 1951.

In 1949, at the end of open hostilities of the Arab-Israeli War, the area west of the Jordan River that was

in Arab control was annexed and the combined area was called the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan—or Jordan for short. The New Jordan includes the Old City of Jerusalem as well as Bethlehem, Bethany, and the Mount of Olives—all sacred to Christians around the world.

#### ARABS FLEE ISRAEL

During the Arab-Israeli War following partition, one million non-Jewish Palestinians, largely Arabs and Armenians, fled (more than half of them east into what is now Jordan), hoping to be able to return to their homes as soon as the Arab armies were victorious. Most of them are still east of the border, hoping and praying for the day that they may return to the homes they fled sixteen years ago.

At the beginning of 1964 there were close to 800,000 Arab refugees in Jordan, constituting almost one-third of the entire population. Most of them escaped with only the clothes they were wearing and what they could carry in their hands. They settled largely in the Jordan Valley in camps provided by the Jordanian government.

#### THE ARAB REFUGEE PROBLEM

The problem of the Arab refugee is one of the great threats to world peace today. The Arabs refuse to recognize Israel or sign a peace treaty until Israel agrees to allow some of the refugees to return to their homes by giving up at least some of the territory taken during the fighting—or make restitution for the losses. Naturally Israel refuses to do this so long as the Arabs continue the threat of war against her.

The Arab nations also fear a continuation of the “open door” policy, which allows unlimited immigration to the desperately small area that is Israel.

This unfinished business of the United Nations cries for attention; but if it is to be peacefully settled, great



tolerance and sympathetic understanding will be necessary from both Jews and Arabs as well as the rest of the world.

### HELP FOR THE REFUGEES

It has been impossible for Jordan to assimilate immediately so many newcomers, all of whom were given national citizenship at once. For Jordan is not an industrial country, and lack of water has made agriculture extremely difficult.

The government, however, along with the United Nations, the Church, and other international agencies, is attempting to alleviate the suffering from hunger and disease, to educate the young, and to help adults to regain a sense of well being and independence by finding work to do. Some cooperatives have begun to function, irrigation projects are showing results, and many of the refugee tents have been replaced by stone huts, mostly constructed by the refugees themselves.

In 1963 there were more than eighty-nine thousand children and young people attending schools or otherwise aided by UNRWA—a United Nations agency for the relief of Palestine refugees in the Near East.

### WHAT IS JORDAN LIKE?

This old-new country embraces about 37,500 square miles—a little larger in area than Indiana. Its neighbors, besides Israel on the west, are Syria to the north, Iraq to the northeast, and Saudi Arabia on the east and south. Its population is estimated to be about 2,000,000, most of whom are Arabs. Of these about 90 percent are Moslems; the rest, except for a tiny minority of Protestants, are mostly Roman Catholics or Greek Orthodox. There are about 4,000 Armenians still in Jordan, most of whom came from Israel. It was among these that our early mission work in Jordan was begun. Today most of our work is among the Arabs.

## EASTERN JORDAN

A railroad line running north and south divides Jordan into two principal parts. To the east lies a flat plateau—by far the larger part of the country. It contains no large towns or villages and few roads. This area has been peopled for centuries by wandering Bedouin tribes who have eked a scanty living from the barren, sandy wastes by raising sheep, goats, camels, and sometimes horses.

## WESTERN JORDAN

The western part of Jordan is very small but contains all of the large villages and towns including the capital city, Amman, with over 300,000 population. This part of the country is rocky, hilly and eroded, but it contains the fertile Jordan River valley, which is ten miles wide in places. Here most of the country's agriculture is carried on, which is Jordan's main source of livelihood. The amount of arable land, however, is seriously inadequate since the influx of thousands of refugees in 1948. A "multiphase" irrigation project is now under way in the Jordan Valley which will eventually open thousands of acres for cultivation. It is known as the East Ghor Canal.

## THE FLORA

Much of Jordan presents a monotonous brown landscape in summer with dusty green patches where springs or irrigation are found. The winter rains, however, bring the hills and valleys to life with many varieties of wild flowers which one<sup>1</sup> who had spent twenty years in Jordan said must be "seen to be believed." He spoke of the black iris (very deep purple), red anemones, tulips, cyclamen, hollyhocks, and blue lupine, gorse in the mountains, and white broom everywhere.



## WILDLIFE

Jordan supports a variety of wildlife, which, however, may be rarely seen. There are jackals, foxes, wolves, hyenas, martens, mongooses, and hares (but no rabbits). There have been some gazelles, but they have been retreating to the east as cars become more common in the west. In the hills around the Dead Sea there are still a few ibex, leopards, coneys, and wildcats. There may be found in season game birds such as duck, snipe, goose, teal, etc., in certain eastern areas where there is permanent water. However, wherever development projects have been started the birds are diminishing. In spring there are migrating birds to be seen, including the golden oriole and great flocks of storks which sometimes number into the hundreds. In the Petra area to the south the lovely rose finch may be seen and the bright rock thrush. Here also are sky-blue lizards and others which sport red or blue heads. Up to recent years ostriches could be found in the southeast desert.

## CLIMATE

Most of Jordan enjoys a Mediterranean climate with a trace of snow each winter in the hills and an average summer temperature in the eighties. The Jordan Valley, however, becomes very hot during the summer, as does the southern desert area toward the Gulf of Aqaba. Rainfall is fair in the north but negligible in the desert areas.

## THE DEAD SEA

Jordan is poor in natural resources as well as arable land. She lacks metals for heavy industries, but there is a wealth of minerals in the Dead Sea which has only begun to be tapped. About three-fourths of the Dead Sea shore is bordered by Jordan, the other fourth by Israel.

The Dead Sea, 1,300 feet below sea level—the lowest

spot on the globe—is a beautiful lake, light turquoise in color, with brown hills rising about it. The Jordan River flows from the north into the Dead Sea, but there is no outlet nor life within it.

The sea is diminishing in size, perhaps because more and more of Jordan's water is being used for irrigation. In recent years an island has appeared offshore near the new modern hotel in the northwest not far from the mouth of the Jordan River. Vacationers under beach umbrellas or floating in the salty water are common there now.

### THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

A few miles to the south of the hotel, headlands rise from the sea, and here in one of the Qumran Caves, in 1947, Bedouin shepherds found the first of what we have come to know as the Dead Sea Scrolls. These scrolls are copies of all the Old Testament books except Esther and of many non-biblical works as well, written mainly on leather. These were carefully wrapped and stored in large pottery jars and hidden centuries ago in remote caves.

They are thought by some authorities to have been the work of the Essenes, an ascetic religious community the ruins of whose settlement have been discovered in the area. Their community was destroyed by the Romans about A.D. 68 or 69. Apparently they were warned of the approach of the Roman legion, for they had time to hide their library; over four hundred different scrolls have been identified to date.

### TREASURES OF ANTIQUITY

Many treasures of antiquity such as scrolls, pottery, implements, etc., have been collected and preserved in two museums in Jordan. The official Jordan Archeological Museum is located in Citadel Hill (undoubtedly the



site of Rabbath Ammon of the Old Testament), in Amman. This small government museum has a well-arranged collection of objects showing the life of this area from the earliest times to A.D. 1700, the date at which objects are no longer considered antiquities.

The Palestine Archeological Museum in Jerusalem, Jordan, was endowed by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The government of Jordan, well aware of the need for protecting the treasures of the past in this cradle of civilization, forbids unauthorized excavation or digs, but promises adequate compensation for casual finds that are reported to the proper authority. The government has a few authentic antiquities such as coins and lamps for sale at the Amman museum for those who wish to acquire them.

## MONUMENTS TO ANTIQUITY

### *Petra*

Other treasures of antiquity in which Jordan abounds are the monuments to ancient cultures such as Petra and Jerash, unique cities of the past. Petra, in the south, is approached by a great narrow cleft in the rock which rises to great height in vertical walls on either side. This cleft, called the Syk, is so narrow and rocky that it must be negotiated by foot or horseback. One writer describes this approach to the old city:

"Just when it begins to seem there can be no way out of this narrow, winding canyon, one is pulled up short by a glimpse straight ahead of part of a magnificent facade adorned with columns and statues. The best time to arrive here is between ten and eleven in the morning, for then one emerges from the gloom of the Syk into brilliant sunshine which lights up the facade of one of the most impressive of all Petra's monuments, El Khaznah. This is a sight which will never be forgotten for the rock here is really 'rose red' and in the sunlight it glows as though it was giving off radiance . . . "2

Every monument in Petra, except one, has been carved out of solid rock. Recent excavations indicate that Petra was occupied many centuries before Christ. Pottery is perhaps the most notable achievement of the early inhabitants of this fantastic city—pottery as thin and delicate as porcelain, decorated with great artistry.

### *Jerash*

Another ancient city, Jerash, north of Amman, is considered to be the best preserved typically Roman town in the Middle East. It may be reached by a new road from Amman in only about an hour and a quarter by car. The ruins include a forum, a Zeus temple, a street lined with Corinthian columns and paved with large blocks of hard limestone, a Temple of Artemis, a theater, a cathedral, and the remains of at least thirteen early Christian churches. Since Jerash was discovered by the West in 1806, the number of visitors and scholars has steadily increased. The ruins are in relatively good condition owing to the fact that the site was apparently abandoned for centuries. There is now a modern village in the area.

### *Azraq*

Another interesting relic of antiquity in Jordan is at Azraq, a typical oasis having a Roman fort which the legendary Colonel T. E. Lawrence used as his headquarters during the latter part of his historic desert campaign against the Turks in World War I. Here in recent years an American Point 4 team has been at work draining the swamps and building canals to use the water for irrigating hitherto nonproductive land.

In the course of their digging, one of the most intriguing ancient sites yet discovered in Jordan was brought to light. Four hundred fine hand axes and other implements were discovered belonging, according to archaeologists, to a period of many thousands of years ago.



## THE PEOPLE

### *The East*

One authority on the Middle East says the inhabitants of Jordan as well as the topography may be divided roughly along the north-south railroad. To the east are chiefly Bedouins—the true Arabs. They were originally nomadic, going from place to place with their flocks of goats, sheep, or camels. The vegetation is so meagre in summer that the herds appear to be nibbling stones, according to one writer. At present the tendency of the Bedouins, however, is to settle down, and consequently many are moving to the west for better living conditions.

The Bedouins have been called "nature's gentlemen." They are hospitable and kind. Berge Najarian, Nazarene missionary in charge in Jordan, says that Jordan has the reputation of being the friendliest of all the Arab countries. Everywhere you go, he says, you are greeted with a hearty "*Ahlan wa Sahlan*," which means "Welcome" in Arabic.

The Bedouins are fiercely independent and individualistic. Bedouin raids used to be common, but in recent years they have been abolished. The last one was in 1927. The Bedouins as a whole have been illiterate and underprivileged, but there are recent indications of an awakening among them and a growing desire for a better life. To quote Olive Tracy: "Literacy is spreading. Sons of modern desert sheiks have cars and radios and travel with the Arab Legion, and the people are learning 'modern' ways."<sup>3</sup> Most of the modern Jordanian army comes from the Bedouin tribe. The young king himself is a Bedouin.

### *The West*

The western inhabitants of Jordan constitute a mixture. They are in the main the native *fellahin* (plural)—farmers and peasants—descended from the Edomites,

Moabites, Amorites, and Ammonites of the Old Testament, and still living much as their ancestors. The city dwellers are largely Syrians or Palestinians—the shopkeepers, mechanics, and clerks. There are highly educated professional people also in the cities, where for many the standard of living is high.

#### INDUSTRIES

Agriculture is the chief industry of Jordan. Where water is available, especially in the Jordan River valley, excellent crops of wheat, barley, and lentils are raised. Jordan also produces olives, almonds, and fruits: citrus, figs, bananas, plums, and peaches. Mutton and wool are important products along with cheese, and goat milk. The farmers of Jordan have taken eagerly to modern machinery and other aids to agriculture.

Potash and phosphate mines have been developed of late and petroleum deposits surveyed. Although manufacturing is relatively new in Jordan, already the people are processing flour, tobacco, olive oil, soap, textiles, mother-of-pearl, and building materials.<sup>4</sup> For the tourist trade they produce pottery, glass, olive-wood objects, lambskin rugs, tablecloths, and beautifully carved wood, brass, and copper pieces.

#### SHRINES AND RELIGION

Tourism is becoming an important industry in Jordan. Especially during the Christmas and Easter seasons, Christians come by the thousands to visit the places sacred because of their association with the life of Jesus. At the end of the Arab-Israeli War, Jordan was in possession of almost all of these famous places dear to the Christian heart.

##### *The Old City*

The Old City of Jerusalem is particularly rich in such holy places. Here is the famous Church of the Holy



Sepulchre, which many believe to be the site of the Crucifixion as well as the tomb where Jesus was laid. Not far away is the Garden Tomb or Gordon's Tomb (from the discoverer) with the hill believed to be Golgotha close by. This quiet garden with its tomb cut out of solid rock into which the visitor may go to pray and meditate seems more authentic to many than the elaborate church site.

### *The Temple Area*

Also in the Old City is the large Temple area on Mount Moriah, where it is certain the beautiful Temple of Solomon stood. Nothing is left of the Jewish temples themselves, but certain huge blocks of stone in the Wailing Wall outside the Temple area are believed to date from the time of Jesus.

### *The Dome of the Rock*

The Dome of the Rock, a Moslem mosque located in the Temple area, is said to be the second most beautiful building in the world—the first being the Taj Mahal in India. The mosque was built over an outcropping rock believed to have been the place where Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac. It is revered by Moslems as the spot from which Mohammed is said to have ascended to heaven. During the early days of the Crusades, pieces of the rock were chipped away as souvenirs; later the priests sold pieces of the rock to pilgrims for their weight in gold. This practice was stopped eventually lest the entire rock be removed. To preserve the remaining rock, crusader kings covered it with marble and built a beautiful grille around it, which remains to this day. The present Dome of the Rock, built almost thirteen centuries ago, is the earliest example of Arabic architecture existing today according to a recent guidebook to the Temple area. The mosque is octagonal in shape, each side being approximately sixty-nine feet long, with four doors facing the points of the compass.

The exterior is covered with grey-veined white marble and "fine porcelain Kashan tiles inscribed in arabesques, and verses from the Qur'an [Koran] written in interwoven characters of blue and white."<sup>5</sup> Inside, beautiful columns rise from marble floors, covered with Persian carpets, supporting a "massive dome richly decorated in gold and mosaics in many colours." Magnificent stained-glass windows diffuse soft light creating "an atmosphere of reverence."<sup>6</sup>

The mosque was damaged during the Arab-Israeli War, necessitating extensive architectural and decorative repair and restoration including foundations, walls, arches, and domes as well as marble, tiles, and mosaics. On the dome the outer layer of lead has been replaced by a dome of gold-plated aluminum, and the mosaics inside the dome have been completely renewed. The renovation begun in 1958 was to have been completed by 1962, but in the summer of 1963 the beautiful mosque was still incrustated in a network of scaffolding and visitors were not allowed to enter.

Although there are now two Moslem mosques in the Temple area, it is not hard for the Christian visitor to recall that Jesus once preached here in the portico of the Temple. It was also here that He drove out the money changers and uttered those precious words: "My house shall be called an house of prayer."

### *Via Dolorosa*

It is a moving experience to follow the stations of the Cross along the Via Dolorosa, which Christians have believed for centuries to be the route taken by Jesus to Calvary.

### *Pool of Bethesda*

Recent excavations have brought the old Pool of Bethesda to light, many feet below the present street level in the Old City. Here Jesus healed the man who



had waited by the pool for many years, commanding: "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."

### *Mount of Olives*

A short distance from the Temple area east across the Kidron Valley, the Mount of Olives rises with the Garden of Gethsemane on its lower slopes. Here are venerable olive trees estimated to be a thousand years old that conceivably could have grown from shoots of the trees under which Jesus prayed, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

### *Bethany*

Close by also is the village of Bethany, where Matthew reports that Jesus took up lodging. This is where Mary and Martha and Lazarus lived. Visitors are given candles and allowed to descend into an underground sepulchre here which, if it is not the one in which Lazarus was buried and from which he came forth at Jesus' command, is certainly similar to the tomb in which he was buried. It was here in Bethany also, as Jesus was eating in the house of Simon the leper, that the woman came and anointed His head with costly ointment of spikenard.

### *Bethlehem*

About eleven miles south of Jerusalem, by the longer route that must be taken since the partition in 1948, is the little town of Bethlehem. Here you may visit the Church of the Nativity, reputed to be the oldest Christian church in existence. The first church on this spot was built in the time of Constantine, about A.D. 326. After being destroyed it was rebuilt in the sixth century. The entrance is so low that a visitor must stoop to enter. It is said that this was done to prevent the entrance of riders on horseback. Nearby are the fields of Ruth and Boaz as well as the fields and caves that might well

have sheltered the shepherds and their flocks the night that Jesus was born.

### *Jericho*

Modern Jericho is twenty-four miles northeast of Jerusalem. A mile and a half from the modern city is the site of ancient Jericho of Joshua's time, which has been extensively excavated in recent years. It was in Jericho that Zacchaeus climbed the sycamore tree to see Jesus. Near Jericho is the spring of Elisha, still sweet and flowing today. Nearby is the Mount of Temptation crowned with a shrine to commemorate Jesus' forty-day ordeal.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# *Religion in Jordan*

### ISLAM

Religion is a very important part of life in the Middle East. About 90 percent of the population of the Middle East, and of Jordan, are followers of Islam. R. Park Johnson in *Middle East Pilgrimage*<sup>1</sup> says that the modern Moslem objects to the term Mohammedanism, for he believes that Mohammed was merely a human channel through whom Allah, the only true God, revealed himself to humanity. Islam, an Arabic word translated "submission," is the proper term for this religion. The Moslem is "one who submits." The Moslem believes he is the true follower of Allah, or God. The Christian, according to him, has departed from the worship of the one and only true God, for does not the Christian have three gods—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? To the Moslem the Christian is the "infidel."

The Koran of the Moslems contains the laws of Allah, which, they believe, were transmitted by the Angel Gabriel to Mohammed, who then recited them for humankind to follow.

Mohammed believed that man is too weak to follow God's laws, so he must be forced to obey. Hence came the practice of making converts at the point of the sword. Mohammedanism is, traditionally, a warlike religion.

Mr. Johnson describes several levels of faith among modern Moslems. The first and most primitive level he

calls "folk Islam," which he describes as "simple, devout, unquestioning, but often superficial and superstitious . . . shared by the vast body of illiterate country people and slightly educated townfolk."<sup>2</sup> For example, these simple people use blue beads on their donkeys or children as a protection against the "evil eye." They follow blindly what they have been taught.

Conservative Islam "comprises a diminishing number of more or less educated people . . . professional leaders, lawyers, and scholars who are pillars of the traditional faith and practice of Islam."<sup>3</sup> Many, he says, are "utterly sincere, and deeply spiritual in their devotion to the best they know of God's truth."<sup>4</sup> These conservative Moslems pray five times daily at the call to prayer wherever they may be.

There is a third level of faith which Mr. Johnson calls modern reform in Islam. This group is deeply concerned about the wide gulf between traditional Islam and the complex civilization of today. They deplore the ancient formalities of their religion and "believe that ultimately Islam must reformulate its truth in up-to-date terms or perish."<sup>5</sup>

Many educated Jordanians still call themselves Moslems, but they are like "what Dr. John A. Mackay has referred to as the 'alumni' of the church."<sup>6</sup> Islam to them is more a political and social institution than a religion.

There is an increasing body of Jordanians, according to Park Johnson, who no longer give even lip service to Islam. Some are scornfully anti-Islamic, but more are merely indifferent. Many of these look to Communism or secular Westernization for the future of their society.

#### CHRISTIAN BRANCHES

Besides the followers of Islam, there are remnants of the ancient Christian Church in the Middle East. The Greek Orthodox church, the strongest non-Moslem group in Jordan today, was the national church of the Eastern



Roman or Byzantine Empire with headquarters in Constantinople. The break with the Roman Catholic church was final by 1054. For centuries there was no meeting of the leaders of these branches of the Church until the historic meeting of Pope Paul of Rome and Athenagoras of Constantinople, in Jerusalem, Jordan, early in January, 1964.

The Roman Catholic church ranks third in size in Jordan today. Although most of their adherents are immigrants or recent converts, churches giving loyalty to the Roman church have existed since the time of the Crusades according to Park Johnson. Roman Catholic missionary activity in the Middle East has concentrated mainly on bringing the straying Eastern members back into the Roman fold. Through the centuries segments of the Eastern Orthodox branches have broken with the mother churches and become affiliated with Rome.

Another Christian branch with adherents in Jordan today is the Armenian Orthodox or Armenian Gregorian church, which ranks fourth in size. There are about four thousand Armenians in Jordan today, most of them refugees from Israel. Many of them had fled to Palestine during the Turkish massacres early in this century.

The Church of the Nazarene in Jordan has two Armenian congregations, one in Jerusalem, Jordan, and the other in the capital city of Amman. Rev. Samuel Krikorian, our first missionary to the Middle East, is an Armenian, as are several of our present preachers. Rev. Berge Najarian, missionary in charge of our work in Jordan, is also of Armenian parentage.

The Protestant community in Jordan, according to Berge Najarian, is led by the Anglican church (Church of England), with a native Arab bishop and a British archbishop who oversees the work of the church in the Middle East. The Lutheran church (German), the Church of the Nazarene, the Southern Baptist, the Bible

Presbyterian, and other independent evangelical groups complete the list with about two hundred forty thousand adherents in all, about 12 percent of the entire population of two million in Jordan today.

#### PROBLEMS OF THE PROTESTANT MISSIONARY

The task of the Protestant missionary in the Middle East today has not been made easier by the presence of the Eastern branches of the Christian Church. According to Mr. Johnson, the Moslem associates Christianity with the Orthodox church and thus sees only "elaborate rituals in ancient languages,"<sup>7</sup> often not understood by the worshipers; the use of figures or icons, which seem to him like idols; common use of wine and pork, forbidden to him; priestly hierarchies with pomp and power; and lack of high ethical standards among the people.

When the Middle East follower of Islam looks at the Western branch of modern Christian missions today he is impressed by its humanitarian emphasis in hospitals, schools, and welfare centers. But he is apt to think of it as Western rather than Christian, and he is wary of what he thinks of as an "invasion of the Middle East by Western life."<sup>8</sup>

This is indeed one of the major problems that faces the missionary in Jordan today. Another and, according to Berge Najarian, one of the most important and difficult problems, is the mastery of the Arabic language. This is considered one of the important hard languages, being classed with Hindi, Thai, and Vietnamese. To quote Mr. Najarian: "I have been informed by people that have lived and traveled all over the Arab world that there are only about twenty foreign missionaries who are able to preach in the Arabic language. The literary (or classical as it is sometimes called) Arabic is used in all public speaking and any kind of writing. The colloquial Arabic is used in ordinary conversation. In a way it is like two different languages."<sup>9</sup>



Berge Najarian lists other problems facing the Protestant missionary in Jordan today: Understanding the Arab mind and way of thinking; opposition of the Eastern and Catholic churches; confrontation with Islam; the rising tide of a strong nationalistic spirit, which poses still another serious and explosive situation. Finally, in recent years it has been next to impossible for new foreign missionary organizations to get permission to operate in Jordan except insofar as they are willing to limit their work to welfare and philanthropic work. Fortunately for our church, Missionaries Samuel Krikorian and William Russell were able to register the Church of the Nazarene in 1951, which gave official permission to operate as a church in Jordan.

#### NAZARENE MISSIONS IN JORDAN—BEGINNINGS

Nazarene missionary work in Jordan is relatively new, having been started as late as 1948. Before that time our mission work in that area was concentrated in the Jewish section of Jerusalem that is now in Israel.

During 1947 and 1948 the trouble between Jews and Arabs made life in Jerusalem increasingly precarious. As conditions grew worse the Nazarene Christians, most of them Armenians, prepared to flee from the Jewish sector of Jerusalem, convinced that this was their only alternative.

At our last service held in Jerusalem in January, 1948, Rev. Samuel Krikorian uttered a prayer that was long to be remembered by many who heard him: ". . . Make them a light, O Lord, wherever they go, sparkling, radiant, charged to the full, outshining all other lights, proclaiming Thy love to the hungry ones . . ." <sup>10</sup>

#### THE CHURCH IS SCATTERED

And as the early Christians in the first century were scattered by persecution to become witnesses in the far

places of the earth, these Nazarene Christians carried their testimony to other lands—many settling in Jordan. Here for the first time it became possible for the Church of the Nazarene to reach the Arab.

A group of these Nazarenes went no farther than the Old City of Jerusalem on the Jordan side. Here they were given a room in which to hold worship services through the kindness of the Christ Church Hostel. Rev. and Mrs. Vartkes Keshishian, who had been active in the former Jerusalem church, gathered the scattered and destitute remnant together. Today there are three congregations of Nazarenes in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Other Nazarene refugees went to Amman, Zerka, and other towns in Jordan. Samuel Krikorian was able to locate some of his former members in the capital city of Amman. These were gathered together and services resumed. Mr. and Mrs. Jemil Chamichian became leaders of this congregation. Mr. Chamichian had been Sunday school superintendent in Jerusalem for thirteen years. That first year in Amman there was an average attendance of thirty-six in the Sunday school. By 1952 a church building had been erected.

#### THE RUSSELLS IN JORDAN

In 1947 Rev. and Mrs. William Russell, from Dublin, Ireland, went as Nazarene missionaries to Jerusalem, where they studied Arabic in preparation for ministry among the Arabs. When war broke out in Jerusalem they went with some of the fleeing Nazarenes to Zerka, Jordan, where they opened a mission in May, 1948.

The people of Zerka showed interest from the first. On the opening Sunday there were 31 children in Sunday school and 18 adults for worship service. The work continued to grow until there were 130 in Sunday school by the end of the first year, and the church attendance had doubled.



## DAY SCHOOLS

The need to organize a day school in Zerka was soon felt. After long negotiations with government officials, William Russell received permission to open such a school. By the second year an enrollment of 130 had been reached. This was increased as soon as larger space for the school was available.

By 1951, Amman also had a Nazarene day school. Children in these schools are from varied backgrounds and religions and include Moslems, Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Armenians, and Protestants. Nazarene day schools provide a haven for children of Christians and often serve as a means of reaching non-Christians whose children attend. By 1963 our day schools in Amman and Zerka had a total of 19 national teachers and an enrollment of 345.

## THE RUSSELLS MUST LEAVE

In 1956 the Russells, who are British citizens, were forced to leave Jordan because of increasing political tension between Jordan and Britain. For five years the mission work was left in the hands of national pastors under the supervision of the Rev. Don DePasquale from Syria. In 1961, Rev. and Mrs. Berge Najarian were sent to Jordan.

## THE NAJARIANS COME TO JORDAN

In the February, 1961, issue of the *Other Sheep* Berge and Doris Najarian were introduced under the caption "Meet Your Missionaries." Berge tells briefly the story of his life:

"As the result of the massacres of the Armenians by the Turks, my parents were refugees in Cairo, Egypt, when I was born on Christmas Eve, 1924.

"A few years later we moved to Jerusalem, Palestine, where we first came in contact with the Church of the Nazarene. Upon graduation from our Nazarene day school

in Jerusalem, I enrolled in high school. Two years later, during the spring revival of 1940, I accepted Christ as my personal Saviour, and was baptized in the Jordan River. About eight months later, one morning during my devotions, I was led to make a complete and unconditional surrender to God. Immediately the Holy Spirit came in His fullness and sanctified me wholly. Soon after I felt definitely called to preach. I praise God for His wonderful presence, miraculous protection, and enabling power in my life.

"In 1950 I graduated from Eastern Nazarene College and did graduate work there the following year. On August 31, 1951, Doris and I were married and moved to Kansas City to attend Nazarene Theological Seminary, from which I graduated in 1954.

"During a missionary service in our first pastorate, while I was giving the invitation to the young people to present themselves for missionary service, God spoke to my own heart. While the young people were responding to the invitation I felt God calling me for missionary service. I wanted to be sure, so I asked God to burden me for missionary service if that was His will. As the burden settled on my heart and kept on increasing in the weeks and months that followed, I knew I should make formal application to the Department of Foreign Missions. As a result, we were placed upon appointment while serving our sixth year in the pastorate on the Florida District."

Doris also speaks: "I was born in Twillingate, Newfoundland, on October 23, 1923. I was fortunate to be one of ten children to be raised around a family altar in a Methodist home.

"On June 4, 1946, during a revival at the St. Clair Church of the Nazarene, Toronto, Canada, I accepted Christ as my personal Saviour. Sunday morning of that same week Evangelist Sammy Sparks preached on sanctification. One thing that struck home from the message



was that this was an experience for all of God's children. I knew I was a child of God, and wanted everything God had for me. That morning I gave my all to God and the Holy Spirit came in sanctifying power. Since that time it has been a real joy to serve my wonderful Lord.

"Shortly after my conversion, Miss Mary Cooper from Africa came to our church. During the service she asked God to give her at least one young person for missionary service. That night God definitely called me to be a missionary. Soon after, the Lord led me to Eastern Nazarene College, where I met my husband.

"God has blessed our home with two healthy children: David, six; and Donna, four.

"The Lord has given me a real burden for missionary work, and I know that the God who so definitely called will never leave nor forsake me. Praise the Lord!"

So we see that seed sown in the Church of the Nazarene and the Nazarene day school in Jerusalem many years ago has borne rich fruit in the life of Missionary Najarian, who has returned to the Middle East to carry on the work of spreading the gospel of Christ.

#### THE CHURCH IN JORDAN TODAY

Today there are nine Nazarene congregations in Jordan including four organized churches, two outstations, and three preaching points. Amman has an Arab church, an Armenian church, an outstation, and a preaching point for Arabs. Jerusalem has an organized Armenian church and two Arab preaching points. Zerka has an organized Arab church, and Karak a preaching point for Arabs.

The 1963 statistical report from Jordan reports sixty-four full members and thirty-eight probationary members received during the past year. This is a phenomenal gain in a country that is 90 percent Moslem. So

closely is every phase of the life of a Moslem tied to his religion that one who becomes a Christian might just about as well have torn up his birth certificate, according to one authority on the Middle East.

The Sunday school enrollment for Jordan in 1963 was 437 with an average attendance of 321. The 2 elementary schools reported an enrollment of 345. There were 35 national workers reported for 1963, 9 of them being full-time pastors.

### KARAK

The newest Nazarene congregation in Jordan is at Karak, the capital of Moab in Old Testament times. Karak is seventy-five miles south of Amman, "imposingly situated on a hill and commands a magnificent view in all directions, especially towards the Dead Sea. [In ancient times this city] dominated the main caravan route linking Syria to Egypt and Arabia. It was held by the crusaders during the twelfth century. (There is a crusader castle still standing.) It is interesting to note that in Byzantine times it had a much venerated 'Church of Nazareth.' As in the past, Karak is still the administrative center of a large and fertile district with about sixty thousand population living in some twenty-five villages. Of the eight thousand people who live in Karak about one-third are nominal Christians (largely Catholic and Greek Orthodox) and two-thirds are Moslems."<sup>11</sup>

Let Berge Najarian continue the story of the church at Karak:

"I made my fifteenth trip to Karak on the first Sunday in December [1962]. Usually Doris accompanies me on these trips and sometimes David and Donna come along too. We left Jerusalem about 5:30 a.m. and arrived in Karak in time for the 9:30 a.m. service after driving over all kinds of roads. . . . We could feel the Lord's presence in a special way both in the morning



service and the following communion service which the Lord helped us to conduct in Arabic.

"Last September we transferred Brother Jacob Ammari, our Arab pastor in Jerusalem, to our newest work in Karak. Satan did his best to prevent us having a full-time pastor in this key city in South Central Jordan. He used some hostile religious leaders in Karak, but God overruled through the Moslem governor, who has two sons in our day school in Amman. We give God the glory for this wonderful victory.

"For some time the believers of our church in Karak have been meeting to fast and pray every Friday at 6:00 a.m. During November we have had thirty seekers, and of these we have had seventeen definite conversions among the grownups, who are staying true. There have been conversions in regular Sunday services, prayer meeting, and in the homes. Glory be to God!

"The Church of the Nazarene is the only Protestant group working in this entire area. God has opened this new door and . . . we have no doubt that the prayers of folk back home for us and the work in Jordan have much to do concerning these and other victories which we have witnessed in recent months. . . .

"We believe that, under God, there are great days ahead for the Church of the Nazarene in Jordan, to the glory of our wonderful Lord. This is our day to 'proclaim now while peace permits.' We thank God for this, and by the grace of God we mean to do our utmost for His highest in serving God and these precious people whom we have come to love as our own."<sup>12</sup>

#### A SUNDAY WITH JORDAN NAZARENES

One beautiful Sunday in the summer of 1963 my husband and I had the rare privilege of attending four church services with our Nazarenes in Jordan. Joe Walton, just graduated from Nazarene Theological Seminary, and his wife, Shaaron, were our companions. Joe

preached and sang a solo at each service and the rest of us gave our personal testimonies. It was a rich experience for each of us.

The first service was at 8:45 a.m. with our Armenian congregation in the Old City of Jerusalem, where Rev. Yeghia Hajian is the pastor. After four or five congregational songs (which *we* sang in English), Joe preached while Berge Najarian interpreted with spirit and fervor.

The little congregation of fifteen or twenty was most attentive. The women sat on one side and the men on the other. We sat with the men. After the service we were greeted by the congregation in a timid but warm-hearted fashion.

At ten o'clock we met with the Arab congregation, where Rev. Hashem Sweis, a Bible school graduate, is pastor. Brother Sweis pumped the little organ for the congregational singing and translated Joe's sermon into Arabic. Here again the people were timid but friendly. We felt the warmth of Christian brotherhood in spite of the language barrier. There were about twenty in this service also.

Our next service was to be at Amman, the capital city of Jordan. Amman is about fifty-five miles northeast of Jerusalem by way of a new modern highway, considered the best in the Middle East according to Berge Najarian. This road was built with the help of the United States at a cost of about two and a half million dollars. As we drove along the beautiful new highway we saw parts of the old winding and dangerous Jericho road traveled innumerable times by our missionaries before the opening of the new road in 1963. We passed the traditional site of the Inn of the Good Samaritan, from which may still be seen a part of the old Roman road in use in the time of Jesus.

We drove through modern Jericho and past the site of ancient Jericho, which has been extensively excavated under Dr. Kathleen Kenyon. Nearby we saw the drab



huts of thousands of Arab refugees from Israel. From Jericho the Mount of Temptation was pointed out and the sweet spring of Elisha.

We stopped at the Dead Sea—more beautiful than I had dreamed. I dipped my hand into the water and touched my tongue. It was bitter salty and clung to my hand almost with the tenacity of oil. I picked up a tiny shell and wondered how it came to be in this spot where no natural life exists.

Across the sea to the northeast we saw Mount Nebo, where Moses stood and view the Promised Land that he was never to reach. On the western shore was pointed out the location of the Qumran Caves, famous for the Dead Sea Scrolls.

A few miles farther on we reached the sacred Jordan River at the spot where tradition says that Jesus was baptized. Here we had a baptismal service for Shaaron with Berge Najarian officiating.

Along the highway to Amman we saw signs of the old and the new. A truckload of green bananas and dilapidated "Cutex" and "Parker Pen" signs represented the new. We saw flocks of black goats grazing on the brown hillsides and a herd of camels with their young nibbling stubble. Then there were lush green areas near the Jordan River where irrigation has made the desert blossom.

The beautiful city of Amman climbing the rounded hills could almost have been in southern California. Much of the colorful city has been built since 1948 and there is evidence of continuing construction.

We had a wonderful "American" dinner with Wilson and Marie Rice, Nazarenes from the United States who are with USAID in Jordan. The Rices have been a great help in the churches in Amman and a real comfort to our missionaries. Many traveling Nazarenes as well have felt the warmth of their genuine hospitality.

Our next service was at five o'clock with Brother David Nazha at the Jebel Amman church in Amman. There was a good crowd of friendly people. Joe preached again while Brother David translated into Arabic.

After the service we were invited to the parsonage in the back part of the church building for lemonade and cake served by the lovely wife of the pastor. Brother David, as he is known to all, is a big, fine-looking man, friendly, warmhearted, and winning. He and his wife made us feel that we were doing them a favor to visit their home, but we knew very well that it was we who were favored.

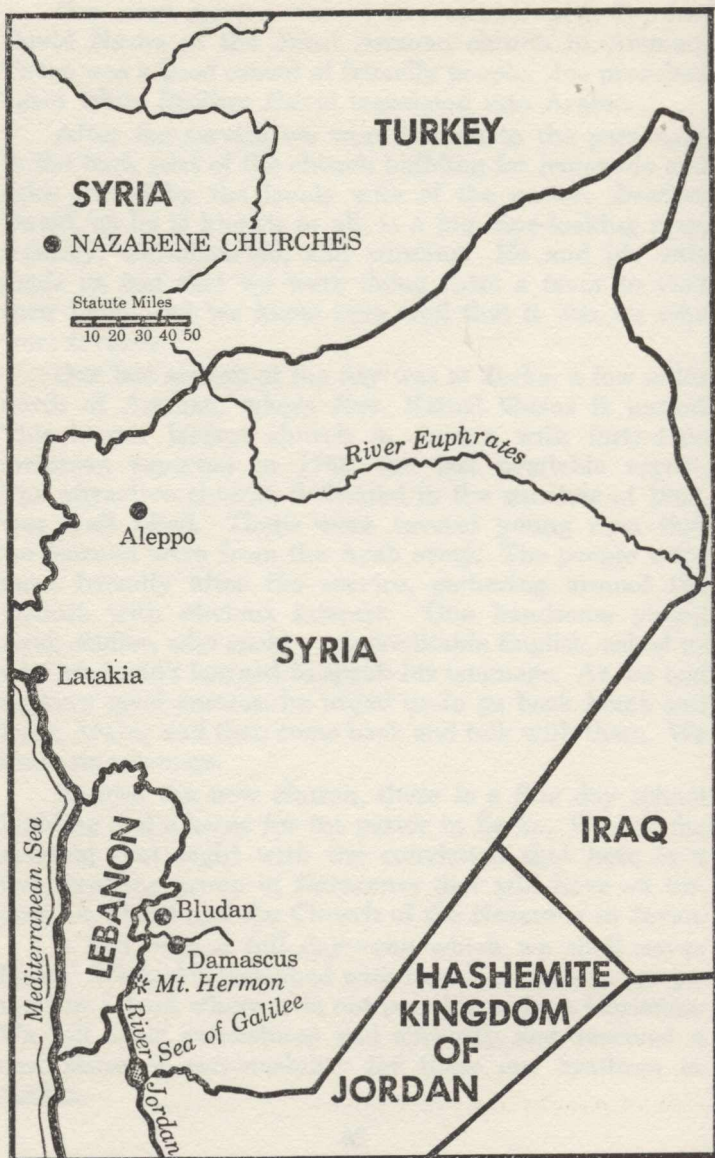
Our last session of the day was at Zerka, a few miles north of Amman, where Rev. Kamal Qusus is pastor. This is our largest church in Jordan with forty-four members reported in 1962, the last available report. The attractive church, dedicated in the summer of 1962, was well filled. There were several young men that we learned were from the Arab army. The people were most friendly after the service, gathering around the visitors with obvious interest. One handsome young Arab soldier, who spoke very creditable English, asked us why we hadn't learned to speak his language. As we had no very good answer, he urged us to go back home and learn Arabic and then come back and talk with them. We made no promises.

Besides the new church, there is a fine day school building and a home for the pastor in Zerka. We left the meeting that night with the conviction that here is a live, growing group of Nazarenes that will have an impact for Christ and the Church of the Nazarene in Zerka.

It had been a full day—one which we shall never forget. We had worshipped with four Nazarene congregations in a land where it is not popular to be a Christian. We felt their earnestness and sincerity and received a new sense of responsibility for these our brethren in Jordan.









## CHAPTER FIVE

# *Syria*

### BRIEF HISTORY

The small Middle East country known as Syria today is only a remnant of ancient Syria, which at one time included the entire area occupied by modern Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan. Twentieth-century archaeological discoveries indicate that Syria was inhabited by man long before permanent historical records were kept.

Along with the areas previously studied (Israel and Jordan), Syria was conquered and ruled successively by the Assyro-Babylonians from the east, the Egyptians from the southwest, the Hittites and Mitannians from the north, and the Romans and Greeks by way of the Mediterranean Sea from the west.

From the sixteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century Syria was dominated by the Turkish or Ottoman Empire. After liberation from Turkey at the close of World War I, Syria was under a French mandate for a period of twenty-five years. This was a time of turmoil and revolt because of an awakening nationalistic spirit and a desire for freedom which had been encouraged by British promises of Arab independence in exchange for Arab help against Turkey and the other Axis powers in World War I. The Syrian determination to gain independence was further strengthened by the apparently unwise administration of the foreign governors. Final independence came to Syria in 1946 with the withdrawal of all foreign troops.

Each conqueror left traces of race, language, and culture in Syria. But through the centuries the Semitic racial characteristics and the Arabic language remained in the ascendancy.

### THE COUNTRY

Syria, slightly larger than North Dakota, is bordered on the north by Turkey, on the west by the Mediterranean Sea, Lebanon, and Israel, on the south by Jordan, and on the south and east by Iraq. The greatest distance from north to south is about three hundred forty miles, and about the same from east to west in the north but tapering to about eighty miles in the south. Syria borders the Lake of Galilee for a few miles in the southwest, which is now a military area.

The Euphrates River meanders in a southeasterly course across the eastern part of the country. One other important river in Syria is the Orontes, which rises in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains on the border between Syria and Lebanon and flows north to water the plains of Hama and Homs. Mount Hermon, famous in Bible history, is the highest peak in the Anti-Lebanon chain and is on the Lebanon-Syria border. It is the traditional site of Jesus' transfiguration, and when Jesus walked on the Sea of Galilee the winds probably came roaring down the gulleys from Mount Hermon.

### ANTIQUITIES

It is understandable that land known to have been inhabited by man for six thousand years would have areas of great archaeological interest to the world. Before the creation of the Department of Antiquities in Syria under the French in 1920, archaeologists from many countries found there a rich mine of ancient artifacts. Unfortunately for Syria, many of these treasures found their way to famous museums abroad such as the Louvre in Paris and the Museum of Istanbul in Turkey. In recent years, however, steps have been taken to pro-



tect and preserve these monuments of other ages for the people of Syria and the whole world to enjoy.

### CLIMATE

The climate of Syria varies in relation to the distance from the seacoast and to the altitude. It is hot and humid in the summer along the coast and warm in winter, though sometimes dropping to the freezing point. The mountains are cool in summer and cold in winter with snow. The plains are hot and dry in summer but quite cold in winter.

Miss Olive Tracy described the sandstorms of Syria as "perhaps the most unpleasant and annoying ordeals to endure. . . . It is almost impossible to be out on the streets. The wind picks up the sand of the desert and pours it over the city and country. It sifts into the houses around the cracks of the doors and windows, and seems even to come through the very walls, clogging nostrils and throat as the people try to sleep."<sup>1</sup>

Rainfall varies from about thirty-two inches at the coast and sixteen inches in the interior plains to four inches in the desert. The rainy season is usually from November to March.

### PRODUCTS OF THE COUNTRY

George Haddad,<sup>2</sup> writing on Syria, says that it would be difficult to find such a great variety of plants and animals in so small an area anywhere else in the world as may be found there. The coast area produces citrus fruits, bananas, and palm trees. In the mountains may be found vineyards, mulberry trees, cedars, and pines. Grains such as barley, wheat, oats, and corn as well as other cereals are cultivated. Cotton, hemp, olives, and grapes are important for industry as well as beets (for sugar), flax, tobacco, sesame, licorice, and sugarcane.

Apples, figs, apricots, pistachio nuts, and vegetables are grown extensively. The raising of cattle, sheep, goats,

horses, and camels is an important industry. Fishing along the Mediterranean as well as in lakes and rivers also constitutes an important occupation. Wild animals may still be found in large enough numbers to attract amateur as well as professional hunters. These include gazelles, jackals, hyenas, wolves, and bears.

### INDUSTRIES

Following World War I large factories began to replace Syrian home industries long famous for fine glass, wood, metal, and textile products. This industrial movement has expanded until manufacturing is now second in importance to agriculture in Syria.

The spinning and weaving of cotton, silk, and wool cloth, using modern machinery, is the leading industry in Syria today. Especially noteworthy are the silk brocades from Damascus.

The manufacture and processing of foodstuffs using local raw materials is second in importance among the industries. These include vegetable oils, sugar, dairy products, and canned fruits and vegetables. Tobacco and alcohol and carbonated drinks are important products also.

Other industries include the processing of leather, porcelain, glass, soap, perfumes, pharmaceutical products, cement, wood, and metal products.

### SOCIAL CHANGES

Besides the great changes brought about in Syria by the industrial movement following World War I, there have been tremendous social changes. One Middle East writer states that Syria has changed from a somewhat medieval to a modern society in less than fifty years. These changes are first noticed in matters of dress, housing, and food.

European dress is now becoming the rule in Syrian cities, although laboring classes in the city as well as



villagers and farm workers in the country cling to the traditional dress. Matters of sanitation, comfort, and good taste are now considered by home builders. Beef "stake" has now replaced the traditional Turkish "Shish Kebap" in many families.

Social customs and institutions have undergone radical changes in recent decades, especially those concerned with birth, death, and marriage. Polygamy has virtually died out among educated people, and the traditional harem is practically nonexistent. Marriage that was formerly arranged by the parents without the agreement of both parties is beginning to be arranged with the consent of those concerned. In fact, in certain circles young people may meet and come to a preliminary agreement before consulting the parents, though this is not widespread.

Severe mourning customs have been simplified and the veil has been losing favor, especially among the educated classes. In general, more freedom for the individual seems to be the modern trend. There has also been a leveling process with the abolition of many class barriers and the ascendancy of a spirit of democracy.

George Haddad insists that, with all the revolutionary changes in Syria, the basic characteristics of hospitality, loyalty, reverence for old age, and strong family ties have remained much the same.

Other changes in modern Syria include improved sanitation, an increase in hospital facilities and in the number of doctors, and better educational opportunities from the elementary school through the university. Government schools are multiplying, taking the place of mission schools, which have heretofore filled a great need.

### THE PEOPLE

Syria has a population of 4,930,000 predominantly of Semitic background. Moslem Arabs formed the most re-

cent Semitic block to settle in Syria. In fact the influence on language, culture, and religion has been so largely Arabic that the Syrians like to refer to themselves as Syrian Arabs.

There was also an immigration of Armenians into Syria following Turkish persecution early in this century. These Armenians, who settled chiefly in Aleppo in the northwest, have kept their own language, schools, and churches, but in addition have had to learn Arabic.

Life in the villages of Syria is very different from that in the cities. "The city-bred Syrian Arab is educated, cultured, and well mannered. His house is clean and modern with all the comforts of civilization that this day brings. In the villages, however, the houses are cone-shaped and made of clay and straw, with the simplest of furnishings. There are no chairs. The family's cows, chickens, or goats wander into the room where the family's meal is being served. Sanitation is most primitive; there is no electricity or running water, though the Syrian government is aware of this problem and is beginning to do something about it. . . . In the village one might feel as though he were almost back in Abraham's time, the loose clothing and headwear are so simliar. . . . In the village the spirit of hospitality is true and genuine and the Arab's greatest joy is to provide for the comfort of his guest."<sup>3</sup>

So rapidly is our world changing, however, that even the remote Syrian villages are feeling the impact of modernization. In recent years there has been great improvement in village life, and now houses are flat-roofed and sanitation is becoming increasingly better.

#### RELIGION

The religious situation in Syria is similar to that in Jordan with 87 percent Moslems, 12 percent Christians, and a sprinkling of Druses and Jews. The Christians are divided among several branches of the Eastern church,



including Greek Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox, and Armenian Orthodox; the Catholic church, including Greek, Syriac, Armenian, and Latin branches; Protestants; and other minor groups. The Greek Orthodox have the greatest following among the Christian sects, closely followed by the Armenian Orthodox. There are estimated to be over 12,000 Protestants in Syria.

### SYRIA IN THE BIBLE

Syria is mentioned in the Old Testament as the home of the Hittites and Canaanites. It was Israel's important big neighbor in the north, sometimes friendly and at other times hostile. Jezebel, King Ahab's notorious wife, was a Phoenician princess from the west coast of Syria, which is now Lebanon, and it was in Syria that King Ahab met his death. Nebuchadnezzar conquered this area and later Jerusalem, carrying Daniel and his well-favored friends into exile.

In New Testament times the followers of Christ were called Christians first at Antioch, the capital city of Syria, while it was under Roman domination. It is now in Turkey. It is thought that Andrew, the apostle, visited Syria before his crucifixion, and that Thomas founded the church in Syria before evangelizing in India and Persia. Surely there were Syrians in Jerusalem who heard Peter's fiery sermon at Pentecost, and we know that Paul made at least one momentous visit to Damascus. Christianity made rapid progress in this area in the second century.

### SYRIAN CITIES

Damascus, the capital of Syria, is a city of about 490,000 people situated in the fertile valley of the Barada River. Damascus was a village 2,000 years before Christ, and claims to be the "oldest continuously inhabited city in the world."<sup>4</sup> The Old City is walled and has seven

bridges and main gates. But, as in Jerusalem, a modern New City has grown up around the old outside the wall.

The Jewish historian Josephus claimed that Shem's grandson Uz was the founder of Damascus. "It seems that Abram was quite well acquainted with the city, probably having passed through it leisurely as he followed the well-traveled caravan route from Ur to Haran to Canaan. . . . Jacob certainly passed through or near it on his flight to and from his Uncle Laban's home in Haran. David captured and garrisoned Damascus."<sup>5</sup>

Naaman, the Syrian army captain, lived in Damascus. Perhaps the beautiful Barada River flowed near his home and its purity and beauty accounted for the disdain he expressed for the Jordan River when the prophet told him to bathe in its muddy waters to be cured of his leprosy. There is now a small Moslem mosque at the site of Naaman's home.

Christians remember Damascus because it is the city connected with the conversion of the Apostle Paul. He had heard that the Christian "heresy" was invading the Jewish community there; and so, armed with authority to stamp it out, he journeyed the one hundred fifty miles from Jerusalem to Damascus. But on the way he met Jesus, and what a difference that has made to the world!

One may still visit the street called Straight, which ends at the east gate of the city, which is now being restored to its original condition. Nearby may be seen "Paul's Window" through which he escaped his persecutors in a basket. A Greek Orthodox church has been erected over the place where the Christians met in the first century. Beneath it are tunnels used when it was necessary for them to go into hiding. This area of Damascus is still the Christian quarter.

The bazaar area is a fascinating part of the Old City of Damascus. As in Bible times, the bazaars are zoned according to specialty. You may visit the silk bazaar,



the wood-carving section, the silver and copper smiths' bazaars, or the saddlers' bazaar. You may still buy the famous Damascus steel or equally well-known damask cloth.

Damascus ranks next to Mecca, and perhaps Jerusalem, as a stronghold of Islam. There are over three hundred Moslem mosques there. The Great Mosque contains the tombs of two of the wives of Mohammed as well as that of Fatima, his favorite daughter. The head of John the Baptist is believed by Moslems to be in the Omayyad Mosque of this city.

Aleppo is the second city of Syria, located in the north about two hundred twenty-five miles from Damascus. Tradition tells us that Abraham stopped here and milked his cows en route from Ur to Canaan, giving it the name which in Arabic means "milk." Aleppo was the capital of the Hittite kingdom as early as 2000 B.C. Through the centuries the city has been besieged by many invading armies, has suffered from two serious earthquakes, and twice from devastating cholera epidemics.

Aleppo was on the ancient caravan route between Europe and India by way of Egypt. Caravan inns are still to be found there. The old city walls with their nine gates still stand. A thirteenth-century fortress remains as a monument to splendid early Arab military engineering. The Great Mosque of Zacharia with its lovely minaret is supposed to contain the tomb of the father of John the Baptist.

## CHAPTER SIX

# *Nazarene Missions in Syria*

### BEGINNINGS

The Church of the Nazarene came to Syria in 1920—the first Middle East country to be entered by our church. But for several years before this date God was preparing His minister for the task in the person of Mulhim A. Thahabiyah.

#### MULHIM A. THAHABIYAH

Mulhim was born in 1893 in the lovely health resort village of Bludan, Syria, a few miles north of Damascus in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains toward Baalbek. To the southwest rise the white triple peaks of Mount Hermon. Mulhim's family was originally Greek Orthodox but became Roman Catholic. In spite of their church affiliation, young Mulhim was allowed to attend a Protestant Sunday school. Here perhaps were sown the first seeds which were later to blossom in the long, effective ministry of Mulhim Thahabiyah.

When Mulhim reached eighteen his father smuggled him out of Syria and to America to avoid his being drafted into the Turkish army, for Syria was at that time under the domination of Turkey. Father and son located among relatives in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where a colony of about four hundred Syrians, formerly of Bludan, had settled.

Young Mulhim was converted in 1915, joined the



Church of the Nazarene, and soon after was called to preach. He tells of his first sermon in broken English on the text "Ye must be born again." "I enjoyed the sermon very much and understood everything that I said, but they didn't."<sup>1</sup>

### PREPARATION FOR SERVICE

Olive Tracy describes the next phase of his preparation for God's task in Syria: "His relatives in America were infuriated that one of their kinsmen should enter the ministry. They did all in their power to persuade him to return to the Greek Orthodox faith. But God had added a commission to his call to preach, 'Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee.' He must go home to Bludan. And go home he would, but first he must prepare himself for the task. He attended God's Bible School in Cincinnati for a time; then pastored churches in Montgomery, Michigan, which he organized, and in Pioneer, Ohio. Later he registered at Olivet College in Illinois, and pastored a church at Westville, Illinois, at the same time. Even while he studied, his father and other relatives in Syria did their best to dissuade him, but he persisted. He finished his studies, graduated with his class, and was ordained by Dr. R. T. Williams, all in 1920. And on Christmas Day of that same year he arrived home in Bludan."<sup>2</sup>

### BEGINNINGS IN BLUDAN

Those early years were not easy. Mulhim later described their first "church" building: "In the summer, snakes lodged in the roof of the old house and during the evening and night hours made cackling noises like hens; they seemed to enjoy our revival hymns, joining us in our praise services. The mice became refugees in the thick walls of the house. In the wintertime, the roof leaked so badly that we had to put canvas over our heads as we worshiped. Here I pioneered our work."

Soon after returning to Bludan, Mulhim married a talented, consecrated Syrian girl who stood by him with great loyalty and effectiveness through the more than thirty years of his ministry in Syria. It was not long after his return that his mother and father, three sisters, and other relatives were converted and formed the nucleus of our first Church of the Nazarene in Syria, organized with twenty members in 1925.

### THE FIRST CHURCH ORGANIZED

The organization of this Protestant church brought instant opposition, especially from the Greek Orthodox church. An "insulting and threatening" letter from a local priest to Brother Thahabiyah aroused such a "storm of protest" from the townspeople, including his cousin the mayor, that the priest was forced to leave.

The young church was also threatened by the worldwide depression of the early thirties. Budgets and salaries were drastically cut and the Thahabiyahs and their little daughter, Laurice, suffered from malnutrition. Added to this was a siege of stomach and intestinal trouble caused by eating some black bread found, upon government investigation, to have been made of "moldy black beans, oats, the hulls of wheat, ashes, and dirt."<sup>3</sup>

### DAY SCHOOL

In the early days of his ministry in Bludan, Mulhim Thahabiyah organized a primary day school to which 75 children came the first year. There are now 230 enrolled with 10 national teachers in the Syrian day school located in Damascus. Through this means many are influenced and some actually reached for Christ and the church.

### TRANSLATION AND MUSIC

An important contribution of Mulhim Thahabiyah to gospel work has been in the areas of translation and



music. He has translated the entire Nazarene *Manual* as well as numerous sermons, tracts, and booklets into Arabic. In addition, he has composed a number of gospel songs and compiled four hymnbooks by translating many American gospel songs for use by the Syrian congregations.

Brother Thahabiyah is now retired, but he is living in Bludan, where he ministered effectively so many years, and is busily engaged in preaching and further translations.

### THE DON DePASQUALES

In 1945 new recruits arrived in Syria—Rev. and Mrs. Don DePasquale and their baby, Donald, Jr. Don DePasquale became the superintendent of the Syrian area upon the retirement of Brother Thahabiyah in 1952. The district now includes also the Arab countries of Jordan and Lebanon.

Don DePasquale was born in 1914 in Oakland, California, of Catholic parents, his mother having been born in Syria. While only a boy Don was interested in religion and was sent to a parochial school to train for the priesthood. When Don was fourteen a Nazarene neighbor took him and his brother Fred to the Northern California District Camp Meeting. Here Don was converted and sanctified and felt God's call to go to Syria to preach the gospel. After attending Pasadena Academy and College, from which he graduated with high honors in 1938, Don married Frances Dayken, a deeply spiritual girl who during her senior year at Pasadena College felt a definite call to missionary work. Together they pastored the Church of the Nazarene in Placerville, California, for five years before sailing for Syria in 1945. They now have four children: Donald, Jr. (1944), Marilyn (1946), Dorothy (1951), and Richard (1954).

In 1946 an Armenian congregation in Damascus

applied for membership in the Church of the Nazarene. For some time their pastor, Rev. Nerses Sarian, had been watching our church and its leaders and studying its doctrines. They were accepted on February 7, 1946.

#### ALEPPO AND LATAKIA

In 1954 services were begun in Aleppo, the second city of Syria, about two hundred twenty-five miles north of Damascus. Rev. Moses Hagopian, an Armenian who became an American citizen and who graduated from Northwest Nazarene College in 1921, became the first pastor of this new church. The years have brought growth to the Aleppo church, and a recent report indicates a Sunday school attendance of about three hundred. There is also a church in the port city of Latakia, the fast growing center of shipping for Syria.

#### DIFFICULTIES

There are many difficulties which confront a Protestant Christian mission in Syria. One of the greatest obstacles to church membership growth is the Syrian system of interrelation of religion and government. In order to change churches a person must go through government channels to get his registration changed. "This is a very long, troublesome process and many people are never able to do it."<sup>4</sup>

One result of this system is that the Church of the Nazarene actually has a following much larger than the recorded membership. For example, a church such as Bludan may show a membership of 35 and actually have a Nazarene community of 150. We are touching and influencing many more lives than the membership figures might indicate.

Another difficulty which faces the Protestant mission is the background of centuries of Greek Orthodox and Catholic predominance in the Middle East. For over five hundred years monastic orders have represented Chris-



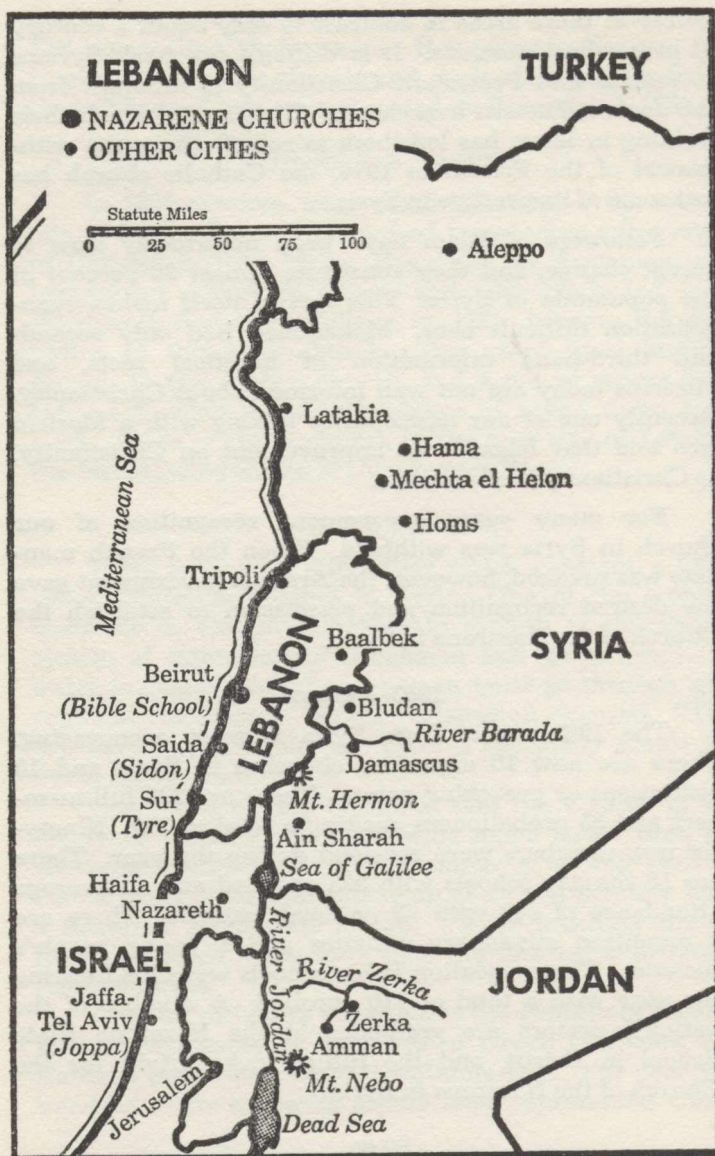
tianity in these areas in contrast to only about a century of evangelical missions. It is difficult for Arab Syrians to realize that Protestant Christianity is different from the ancient Eastern branches of Christianity which their training in Islam has led them to reject. Since the withdrawal of the French in 1946, the Catholic church has lost some of its prestige in Syria.

Followers of Islam have been notoriously slow to accept change, and they constitute almost 90 percent of the population of Syria. This fact in itself makes evangelization difficult here. Mohammed had only second- and third-hand information of heretical sects, and Moslems today are not well informed about Christianity. Recently one of our missionaries talking with a Moslem was told that Islam is an improvement on Christianity, as Christianity is of Judaism.

For many years government recognition of our church in Syria was withheld. When the French mandate was revoked, however, the Arabian government gave the desired recognition and permission to establish the Church of the Nazarene in Syria.

### 1963 REPORT

The 1963 report from Syria is most encouraging. There are now 10 organized churches in Syria and 10 outstations or preaching points. There are 225 full members and 85 probationers, making a total of 310. Ninety-six new members were received during the year. There are 13 Sunday schools with 523 enrolled and an average attendance of 448 with 23 national teachers. There are 3 organized missionary societies and 4 young people's societies. Three vacation Bible schools were held during the year with a total of 110 enrolled. A number of the national pastors are graduates of the Nazarene Bible School in Beirut, and the future looks bright for the Church of the Nazarene in Syria.





## CHAPTER SEVEN

# *Lebanon*

### BACKGROUND

Lebanon is a little country about half the size of New Jersey with a population of one and a half million. The name Lebanon is from the Aramaic word *Leban*, meaning "whiteness." The name may have come from the whiteness of the Lebanon Mountains with their limestone formations, or from the fact that they are snow-capped for six months of the year or more.

Lebanon's history parallels that of Syria until the period of the French mandate following World War I, when it was administered as a separate state. Lebanon became a completely independent republic soon after Syrian independence, with the evacuation of all foreign troops on the last day of the year 1946.

Syria borders Lebanon on the north and east, Israel and the Mediterranean Sea on the west. The country is only 105 miles long from north to south and 35 miles wide at its greatest width.

As the visitor approaches Beirut, the capital city, by air, he is struck with the sheer beauty of the coastline, washed by the deep blue Mediterranean with a backdrop of low brown hills and the towering Lebanon Mountains which parallel the coast. Beirut follows the lovely curve of the bay and climbs the hills around it with colorful homes, modern luxury hotels, apartment houses, and government and university buildings. It is a choice vaca-

tion spot with beautiful beaches, nearby mountains, and ancient ruins such as famous Baalbek only about fifty miles away.

Lebanon has one important river, the Leontes, which has its source in the mountains not far from Baalbek and flows south through the rich plain before turning abruptly west to the Mediterranean through a deep gorge.

The scenic Lebanon Mountains, the highest in this area, are quite densely populated, especially on the western slopes. These mountains are famous for cedar trees, which the Arabs call the trees of God. The timber supply has been seriously depleted during times of war by invading armies needing fuel, and now it can be found only in protected or virtually inaccessible areas.

Between the Lebanon Mountain chain which parallels the coast in Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon chain on the Syrian border lies the plain of Bekaa, a fertile valley extending about seventy-five miles north and south and from five to nine miles wide. It is said that Mark Antony made Cleopatra a gift of this rich farmland. Heber, from whom we get the name "Hebrew," and Noah and Seth are said to be buried in this area.

The rainfall in Lebanon is about the same as in Syria except that the western slopes of the Lebanon Mountains boast about forty inches annually, and temperature ranges from the forties to high eighties.

The economy of Lebanon is largely commercial and industrial, with agriculture ranking third. Important industries include cement and textile manufacturing as well as food processing. The sea and nearby mountains have helped to make Lebanon a tourist haven particularly famous for both winter and summer sports.

The main agricultural products are cereals, tobacco, citrus fruits, apples, grapes, sugar beets, cotton, and olives for oil. The silk industry has been important for centuries, especially in Beirut and Tripoli. Exports include



carpets, hides, lumber, fruit, sweet wine, silk, and silk cocoons.

Oil from Iraq, which is brought in through the big pipeline from the Kirkuk field to Tripoli, is the most important source of wealth for Lebanon. Another pipeline brings oil from Saudi Arabia to Sidon. Tripoli and Sidon both have large oil refineries.

Lebanon has "five thousand years of recorded history, with visible remains of seven thousand years of history," according to Earl Morgan, Nazarene missionary. The country was called Phoenicia by the Greeks and was the "geographical, political, social, and religious cross-roads of the world."<sup>1</sup>

The Phoenicians were intrepid sailors. They discovered the Atlantic Ocean, first sailed around the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa, and some believe they may have sailed as far as America.

The Phoenicians gave us our alphabet and invented glass and alloy steel. They planted colonies around the Mediterranean as far west as Spain. They were famous for commerce and "taught the world the power of enterprise and the fascination of wealth.

"Space will permit only a listing of some of the accomplishments of the Phoenicians, whose ideals and religion greatly affected the Jews.

"Zeno, a Cypro-Phoenician, founded stoicism, having physics and logic as a foundation. The great Boethius was of Sidon; Antipater of Tyre. . . . The Phoenicians outshone all contemporary lands in music, navigation (discovering the North Star for navigation), and carried their religion all around the Mediterranean and as far as Britain. Phoenicia has the doubtful distinction of giving Baal, the storm and reproduction god, to the world, and to the errant Jews. The Greek and Roman divinities were probably disguised Eastern deities, which had their heyday in Lebanon. . . . Strabo called the Sidonians

philosophers in astronomy and arithmetic, and claimed the greatest store of knowledge was to be found in the Phoenician cities; and a modern historian places them side by side with the Hellenic and Latin nations."<sup>2</sup>

#### CITIES OF LEBANON

There are several ancient cities in Lebanon that are interesting for their role in secular as well as Bible history. Beirut, the beautiful capital city of half a million population, combines the old and the new. Because of Lebanon's liberal policy regarding foreign investment, millions of dollars of foreign capital have poured into this city in recent years, causing a tremendous building boom. Some of the beautiful residential areas might have been transported bodily from the lovely hills of southern California. The new hotels are the last word in beauty, service, and luxury.

But a breathtaking ride through the narrow, winding streets where screeching horns take the place of street signals, and where the biggest bluffer has the right of way, makes one realize that this is the old world where history has been in the making for thousands of years.

Beirut was settled in 176 B.C. by the Romans and continued as a Roman center into the period of Greek domination. It was here that Herod the Great, who tried to murder the baby Jesus, had two of his sons tried and later strangled.

Remnants of the great theatre built here by Herod Agrippa I, who ruled from A.D. 41 to 43, may still be seen. Vespasian came to Beirut to receive congratulations after having been proclaimed Roman emperor in Caesarea, a few miles south on the coast. Titus stopped here after destroying Jerusalem in A.D. 70. It is likely that Paul passed through Beirut on his way from Jerusalem to Antioch. The famous grammarian and critic Marcus Valerius Probus, well-known for his versions of Horace and



Virgil, was from ancient Beirut. In the third century Beirut was world-famous for its law school.

Beirut is still an important educational center for the Middle East. Of its four universities, the American University is the largest. It was begun by the Presbyterians nearly one hundred years ago, but in 1921 it was secularized. It has a beautiful campus of seventy acres and fifty modern buildings. Its student body of over 3,000 (1964) has representatives from 51 nations and 21 religions. Other schools in the capital city include French and Lebanese universities, a Jesuit college, and Christian mission schools and seminaries. Here also is located the Fitkin Memorial Nazarene Bible School, which serves Jordan and Syria as well as Lebanon and whose graduates are found from Greece to Australia.

Sidon, a city of about twenty-five thousand, is quite modern although it has a venerable history. Sidon was at one time the capital of Syria, Cyprus, and Palestine under Darius. It gave its name to the ancient Phoenicians, who were called Sidonians. Sidon had skilled timber cutters who supplied cedar and other woods to many countries. Sidon claims a sarcophagus of Alexander the Great and a crusader castle.

Tyre, once the "queen of the seas, is now a miserable little town with nothing more of note than its fishing nets drying in the sun."<sup>3</sup>

In Old Testament times King Solomon of Israel made a league with Hiram, king of Tyre, to secure necessary fir and cedar lumber and stone for the Temple at Jerusalem which God had commissioned him to build. In exchange Solomon sent wheat, barley, wine, and olive oil to King Hiram. Solomon also asked for "a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that are with me in Judah."

King Hiram promised to float the wood and stone

on barges down the coast to Joppa, the ancient city beside which modern Tel Aviv was built. The timbers and stone were then transported overland to Jerusalem, less than fifty miles inland.

Since ancient times Tyre has produced dyes, especially royal purples treasured by queens and emperors. Tyre is on an island with a 200-foot causeway connecting it to the shore built by Alexander the Great when he besieged the city. It is still in use. The prophecies of Isaiah 23 and Ezek. 26:14 regarding Tyre have surely been fulfilled: "And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the Lord have spoken it."

Byblos, along with Jericho and Damascus, claims to be the "oldest inhabited city in the world."<sup>4</sup> Our word "Bible" comes from this city, which was an ancient center for cedar trade, cloth and garment making, the manufacture of coins, and the making of Egyptian paper from "papyrus." The word "papyrus" eventually become "Byblos," since Arabic does not have the letter *p*. Well-preserved remains of heathen temples may be seen here, dating from the period between 2400 and 1800 B.C. This old city is most famous for the Ahiiram inscription found here—said to be the first alphabet in existence.

Baalbek is famous for its majestic ruins of the Roman temples to Jupiter, Bacchus, and Venus. These were built by Roman emperors in the second and third centuries A.D. The Temple of Jupiter is 290 feet long by 160 feet wide according to the *Encyclopedia Americana*. The 6 standing Corinthian columns are 72 feet high with a circumference of 22 feet. One huge block of stone still in the quarry nearby is 75 feet long by about 15 feet square. As ancient caravan routes went by Baalbek, it is quite possible that Abraham passed this way. Tradition tells us that Solomon had a city in Lebanon with temples and priests to please some of his heathen wives. According to some authorities, it could have been Baalbek.



## RELIGION

Lebanon has the highest percentage of Christians of any country in the Middle East. They constitute a slight majority of the total population, though a census has not been taken for years. The Lebanese parliament of forty-four members is selected according to religion. The Maronite Catholics claim by far the greatest number among Christians. The Greek Orthodox are next, followed by the Greek Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, Protestants, Armenian Catholics, and several smaller groups including a small colony of Jews in Beirut.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# *Nazarene Missions in Lebanon*

### BEGINNINGS

The activities of the Church of the Nazarene in Lebanon have so far been concentrated in or near the beautiful capital city of Beirut. Investigation revealed that when the Armenian congregation of Jerusalem was scattered in 1948, about thirty-five Nazarenes migrated to Beirut.

Rev. Samuel Krikorian gathered them together for services with the help of his youngest brother, Dr. Pusant Krikorian, who along with several other dedicated men had founded the Christian Medical Center in a poor section of Beirut. The chapel of this hospital served as a meeting place for this group of Nazarenes for a time.

### BIBLE SCHOOL

By 1953 the demand for a Bible training school for national preachers had become so urgent that a lot was purchased and the Fitkin Memorial Bible School was begun in memory of Rev. Mrs. Susan N. Fitkin, for many years the general president of the Nazarene Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, and her son. From its hill-top the large four-and-one-half-story cement and stone structure overlooks the blue Bay of St. George and the Mediterranean Sea beyond. Behind it to the east rise the snowcapped Lebanon Mountains. After many delays the building was begun in 1954 through the efforts of Rev. Samuel Krikorian and Rev. Don DePasquale. First



classes were held in October of the same year, although the building was not yet completed.

The first Bible school class of eleven ministerial students represented five countries. In addition to the ministerial classes, English classes were organized for young women in the afternoon and young men in the evening, twice a week. There were about sixty-five young people enrolled in these classes the first year. Classes in Bible study as well are now offered at night.

The second year of the Bible school saw twenty-one enrolled with two graduating. In 1963 there were forty-two students in the Bible school, including English program students. Each year, since the first, has seen several talented, dedicated young men graduating to take up duties in Nazarene churches in the Middle East. The national pastors are the hope of our church in this area as on all mission fields.

A visitor to Beirut who wishes to visit our Bible school will find it listed in the French language in the telephone directory, since French was the official language in Beirut for many years during the French mandate.

Although students in our Bible school represent many nationalities including Greek, Armenian, Syrian, Turkish, and French, most classes are taught in English, which is rapidly becoming a second "national" language. Courses taught include many in Bible, theology, and holiness. There are also courses in evangelism, religious education, psychology, and in English, Armenian, and Arabic grammar.

In addition to the scholastic training, students receive much practical experience in field work such as teaching Sunday school, working among young people, doing personal evangelism, and conducting evangelistic campaigns. Missionary Donald Reed says the students' daily early morning prayer meeting is largely responsible for the high spiritual tone within the school.

The Bible school building has an auditorium seating 250 people on the ground floor, which is used for church services and school chapel. The dining hall, kitchen, storage, and a three-room apartment for the caretaker are in the basement, which is partly above ground since the building was erected on a hill. The floors above have library, classrooms, and three apartments besides dormitory rooms. The director of the school, Rev. Donald Reed, lives in a four-room apartment with his wife and four children: Donald Timothy (1956), Lawrence Paul (1957), Alice Marie (1959), and Robert Allen (1960).

#### THE DONALD REEDS

The Reeds arrived in Beirut in July of 1954 and became involved at once in the erection of the Bible school building.

Donald Reed, the son of a Nazarene minister, was born in 1926 in Damascus, Ohio. In his boyhood Donald felt God's call to become a preacher of the gospel, but during his teens he forgot the call. Through a special invitation to Sunday school he became interested again in the church and was led to make a new and complete commitment to God. Shortly before entering Eastern Nazarene College, Donald received a definite call to foreign missionary work.

Donald met Elva Pettit from Trenton, New Jersey, while they were both attending Eastern Nazarene College. They were married in 1947, after which they pastored the Kearny, New Jersey, Church of the Nazarene while Donald attended Drew Theological Seminary. It is largely through their devotion and hard work that the school has developed and become such a great blessing to the Middle East District of the Church of the Nazarene.

The Berge Najarians spent their first year in the Middle East in Beirut teaching in the Bible school and supervising one of the local churches before taking up their duties in Jordan in September of 1961.



## THE EARL MORGANS

For four years Rev. and Mrs. Earl Morgans have been giving excellent assistance to the work of the Bible school, both in teaching and in the English services held at the school.

Earl and Thelma were both born in 1923 and both were converted and sanctified in youth. Earl's awareness of a call to the mission field began early and became more and more intense as he grew older. He graduated from Olivet Nazarene College after a stint in the navy. Later he graduated from Nazarene Theological Seminary and partially completed work for the M.A. degree in education from Kansas City University. Earl and Thelma were married in 1948 and pastored for a time at Marshall, Missouri, where Earl received a B.S. in education from Missouri Valley College. After a five-year term of service in Italy, the Morgans were transferred to Lebanon.

## THE CHURCHES IN BEIRUT

Because of racial and language differences in Lebanon, it has been necessary to hold two services every Sunday morning in the Bible school auditorium. The service in Arabic is conducted from nine to ten. This is an organized church with twenty-six members. The church has a good-sized Sunday school, an N.Y.P.S., and weekly prayer meetings.

Donald Reed relates an interesting story of a social evening of the N.Y.P.S. of this church held at the school. Ninety young people showed up for the evening, but only thirty cups for serving cocoa were available. This situation created much dismay for the hosts, Donald Reed and his wife, until the problem was solved in a strange way.

As part of the entertainment of the evening a "great performing magician" was announced. He happened to

be one of the students with a simple rope trick, but as he took his place in the middle of the floor the building and everyone in it, including the magician, began to shake "like a dish of jelly." The building was quickly deserted by frightened young people, many of whom sheepishly returned in a little while. Then a second tremor scattered them, this time for good. It was a moderate earthquake, but some of the crowd believed that it was an atomic blast set off by the United States Sixth Fleet, which was in port that week. The problem for the hosts had changed. Now the question was, "Who could drink thirty cups of cocoa?"

The Armenian church at the Bible school is also fully organized, meeting from ten to eleven on Sunday mornings. There are thirty-five members but nearly twice that number attend. There are over one hundred in the thriving Sunday school and about thirty in the N.Y.P.S.

#### SIN-EL-FIL

In 1956, Arabic and Armenian Sunday schools were begun in Sin-el-Fil, a suburb in East Beirut. By 1957 church services were started for both language groups and by October, 1962, a beautiful and commodious new building was dedicated. This building accommodates not only the church services but has facilities for a large primary day school of 120 pupils and two apartments for national pastors. By government requirements, the full basement beneath the church may serve as an air-raid shelter. It fills many other needs of the church and school program as well.

This is a beautiful, well-constructed building which is a credit to the community as well as the church. Rev. Ata Nusrallah is pastor of the Arabic congregation with a membership of eight; Rev. Hampartsum Chaparian pastors the Armenian church of twenty members.



Superintendent Don DePasquale wrote of this new venture: "We are greatly encouraged with the prospects in Sin-el-Fil. Attendance has been steadily increasing, and on November 11 (one month after dedication) there were 110 in Sunday school.

"Once again folk in the homeland have joined hands with the church in Lebanon to erect a building to the glory of God and the spread of holiness. Already the folk of Lebanon have raised about \$3,000 for this church, and before the project is completed nearly \$7,000 will have been raised on the field for it. Pray for this church as they set their goal with evangelistic fervor toward becoming a self-supporting church."<sup>1</sup>

Besides the four organized churches in Beirut, there are four preaching points with a total average attendance of about ninety. These will, in God's providence, become our next organized churches.

There are 7 organized Sunday schools in Lebanon with an enrollment of 366 and a surprising average attendance of 372. There are 2 foreign and 24 national teachers.

### THE CHALLENGE

Though Lebanon has a high percentage of Christians (about 51 percent), most of these are Greek Orthodox or Maronite Catholic. It is thus a challenging field and many serious problems face the Protestant missionary. Missionary Earl Morgan, after four years in Beirut, suggests several of the needs and difficulties here.

1. There is increasing difficulty in getting visas to Lebanon.

2. There are problems of crossing national borders.

3. Property for building is high, scarce, and increasing in price.

4. There is a language problem—Armenian, Arabic, and French being used in Lebanon. Arabic is considered to be the second hardest language in the world to learn, with Armenian not far behind.

5. There is need of prayer that good prospective students for the Bible school may be found.

6. There is a shortage of qualified national teachers for Bible, theology, etc.

7. There is a continuing need for new Bible school pupils who are completely dedicated to their ministerial calling.

8. A way must be found to reach the Moslem population. It is against the law to convert a Moslem, in some countries.

Speaking of challenge, Earl Morgan points out that there are nearly two thousand villages in Lebanon, most of which have no live gospel witness and many no Christian witness at all. He writes: "The Middle East is passing through great times politically, so pray about the great spirit of Arab nationalism that is expressing itself in the Arab Federation, and that God might use it to further the salvation of souls in the granting and continuation of the wonderful religious freedom we have enjoyed. Lebanon has been good to us as a church."<sup>2</sup>

May we all rise to the missionary's challenge and pray much for little Lebanon and our faithful and dedicated missionaries who represent us there and throughout the needy Middle East.

#### REVIVAL

An encouraging note was recently received from Missionary Donald Reed. He writes: "We have just finished one of our best revivals in Lebanon among the Arabs. More than fifty adults sought the Lord for salvation and several for sanctification at services held in our newest preaching point, Jedediah. Eight were baptized and there is another group preparing for baptism in a few weeks. Among them are several persons with education and leadership ability. . . . Two more students are registered for Bible school."<sup>3</sup>



## LATE NEWS

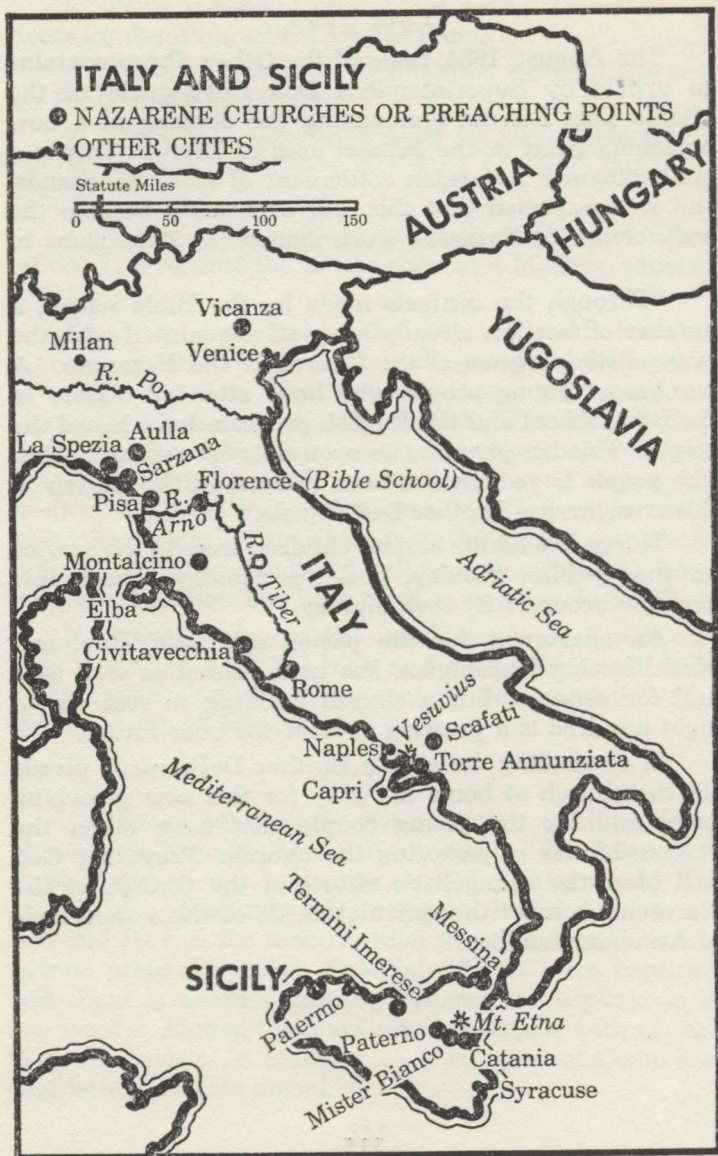
The August, 1964, issue of the *Other Sheep* contains an article by Superintendent Don DePasquale of the Middle East District announcing the opening of a new preaching point in the Jeitawi area of Beirut. This is a predominantly Armenian settlement of many thousands, and it is expected that this will eventually become the main center of Nazarene work among the Armenians in Beirut.

"Through the contacts made by the Bible school, a number of families already are well acquainted with the evangelistic program of the Church of the Nazarene. A number of young people who have attended classes in the Bible school and the English program have heard the gospel. This has given us an open door into many homes. The people have shown a keen interest in the church in this area," writes Brother DePasquale.

Thirty-five adults besides children were in the service on the opening Sunday, and the Sunday school now averages around fifty each Sunday.

An apartment for the pastor and wife, Rev. and Mrs. Khachig Khachigian, has been rented as well as a hall for services, but a church building to seat six to eight hundred is a pressing need of the near future.

In concluding the article Brother DePasquale pleads for the church at home to "pray for this new preaching point and for the young couple that have taken the responsibilities of pastoring the church. Pray that God will bless the evangelistic efforts of the Church of the Nazarene to meet the spiritual needs of these thousands of Armenian families."





## CHAPTER NINE

# *Italy*

### THE COUNTRY

Sunny Italy is one of the newer mission fields of the Church of the Nazarene, having been opened in 1948. It is the first country in continental Europe to which our church sent missionaries. More recently churches have been organized in West Germany and Denmark, and work has been opened in Sweden.

Italy presents many faces to the world. It is a land where songs from opera may be heard on the street—whistled by workmen. It is a land where marble is more plentiful than wood and where it is used commonly for floors, steps, and windowsills. It is a land where great white cattle rather than horses or mules are used for plowing and hauling. It is a land of terraced vineyards, olive groves, gemlike lakes, and lovely beaches. It is the place where Europeans of the dour north go for the sun, and all the world goes for history and art.

The rest of the world owes a tremendous artistic and cultural debt to Italy—the home of such greats as Dante, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Verdi. Italy gave us Amerigo Vespucci, Columbus, Galileo, Marco Polo, and Marconi. Many of our ideals of government, law, and statesmanship may be traced to Italy.

## GEOGRAPHY

Italy is the boot-shaped peninsula that extends southeast toward Africa from southern Europe. It is almost an island having a coastline of nearly five thousand miles including its offshore islands. The Mediterranean Sea bathes its western shores and the Adriatic its eastern. The lordly Alps form a natural barrier along its northern border, which touches France, Switzerland, Austria, and Yugoslavia. The Apennine Mountains extend from the north to the south, as one writer described it, like the dorsal fin of a gigantic fish.

There are three famous rivers in Italy. The Po rises in the mountains in the northwest and cuts completely across the country, emptying into the Adriatic Sea. It flows through the richest agricultural areas of Italy. The Arno River bisects the lovely city of Florence and empties into the Mediterranean a few miles west of Pisa. The Tiber rises in the north and reaches the Mediterranean after flowing through the city of Rome.

Italy has an area of 117,471 square miles, approximately three-fourths the size of California. It extends 760 miles from north to south and is about 100 miles wide in the narrowest place and nearly 400 miles wide in the north.

### STRAITS OF MESSINA

Just off the "toe" of the boot lies the island of Sicily, separated from the mainland by the Straits of Messina. Here two seas meet having tides of different levels, resulting in white-capped whirlpools known as "carnations."

"This battle of the Seas has been a hazard to shipping since the first vessel tried to navigate its warring currents, and long ago the stories told by surviving sailors gave rise to the belief that two monsters guarded the straits. On the Italian side, they said, Scylla, the six-



headed monster with the three rows of teeth in each head, watched, reaching out any of of her twelve long arms to snatch at ships that came too close to her cave. Across the narrow strait, living under a tree, was Charybdis, who three times a day swallowed all the waters of the world, then threw them up again. She preferred to suck her victims under. Actually Scylla is a high rock, and Charybdis, which is a rock also, is in addition a series of whirlpools and eddies. A mariner seeking passage between the 'monsters' can still be smashed on one or sucked into the vortex of the other."<sup>1</sup>

### CLIMATE

The climate of Italy ranges from extremely hot in the south to temperate in the north—described as African-to-Swedish in its range by one writer. There is snow on the mountains in the north the year around, but rarely is snow seen as far south as Naples.

Beautiful blue lakes such as Como, Lugano, and Maggiore are choice vacation resorts in the mountains of northern Italy. And the Italian Riviera, though less renowned, is no less beautiful than its French counterpart.

### MAKING A LIVING

#### *The Northern Area*

Economically Italy may be divided into three areas. The northern part, from Switzerland south to Florence, is generally much advanced over the rest of the country. Here in the temperate climate the people are industrious and eager for new ideas. American hay-balers, for example, may be seen in the agricultural Po Valley. Dairy products including cheese are important in this northern area. Other farm products include citrus fruits, pomegranates, grapes, olives, almonds, beets, cotton, and grains. An irrigation system designed by Leonardo da Vinci is still used in Lombardy today.

Manufacturing is of great importance in this part of

Italy with Milan as the chief city—called the American city by the Italians. Here the popular small Fiat car is turned out by the thousands to swarm the highways of Europe. Other industries and products include fishing, glassblowing, heavy machinery, shipbuilding, chemicals, steel, movies, textiles, and wine.

### *The Central Area*

The central area of Italy from Florence to Rome, according to Nazarene Missionary Robert Cerrato, "is still the core of culture, art, and craftsmanship. They are tied to tradition, yet torn by the pull of the north."<sup>2</sup> There is much garden farming on the terraced mountain slopes of this area, producing olives, beans, peaches, flowers, grapes, and grains. Here a farm the size of an American garden can care for a peasant farm family.

### *The Southern Area*

The south of Italy is an area of "arid stony wretchedness." Mr. Cerrato says that this area as compared to the rest of Italy is more completely "under the rule of the church, tied by tradition, superstition and poverty. The people live poorly and have difficulty keeping body and soul together."<sup>3</sup> Another writer describes this part of Italy as a "vast rural slum." As a result of the lack of opportunity in this area, there has recently been a wholesale migration of workers and young people to northern Italy as well as to other countries in Europe and America where workers are needed.

### IMPROVING ECONOMY

Mr. Cerrato writes that the "economy of Italy has improved greatly these last few years. The people are now able to buy refrigerators and television sets, and to put heat, running water, and bathrooms in their homes. The bicycle is being crowded off the street by the motor scooter and little 500 Fiat which is seen everywhere. The home has turned into a small factory where the wife can



work to make extra money, thus enabling the employer to be exempt from paying labor tax."<sup>4</sup>

This economic boom has not been an unmixed blessing to the country. With it "has come an indifference to the need of spiritual things and many have forsaken the church for the quest of material things."<sup>5</sup> The evangelical church has been hurt by this increased interest in making money, "for the young men are not too interested or willing to sacrifice and study to prepare for the ministry. The call of the world is great. The preacher can no longer live on his meager salary, and the people do not give to the church as they should."<sup>6</sup>

### THE PEOPLE

The people of Italy are as varied as the landscape. Invasions by Goths, Normans, Greeks, Moors, and Spaniards have all left their mark. The people of northern Lombardy are fair of complexion like their Germanic forbears. The Venetians have been described as "suave, white-skinned" like the Spaniards; the Genoese as tall, "black-haired and boastful"; the Tuscans in the Florence area, "stout, brown-haired" with the wide brows common in Etruscan painting.

With all this variety, there are traits generally thought to be common to the people of Italy. They are a gregarious people, loving to congregate in the *piazza* or village square, which is the center of village life. They have the gift of oratory and a fondness for communication. They are a volatile people, showing their emotions easily. They are apt to act first and think afterward. They are a courageous people of great patience and resourcefulness. They are an artistic people, which is indicated not only by their art treasures of the past, but also by the fact that they are among the leaders of the world today in modern design of textiles, furniture, clothing, and art objects.

## HOW THEY LIVE

As a rule the Italian people live in family groups since the cost of apartments makes it almost impossible for a family to live alone. The young couple moves in with Mother and Dad, brothers and sisters, and assorted in-laws. Every room has a bed or couch for some member of the family group to sleep on. Eating together is less expensive also.

Mr. Cerrato describes the daily menu for the average Italian family as follows: For breakfast—coffee, milk, and a roll. The noon meal consists of a plate of spaghetti, a small piece of meat with potatoes or a salad, and quantities of good, fresh, crusty bread. After this meal comes an hour-long siesta. The evening meal will be coffee and milk again with perhaps a bowl of soup for the workingman but nothing more.

An Italian "company dinner," according to Mr. Cerrato, "is something you don't soon forget. They often have as many as eight or nine entrees: at least three kinds of meat, vegetables, salad, sweets, fruit, and coffee (espresso). The best silver, china and linens are brought out, and flowers decorate the home. They may spend their entire food allowance on that meal, not only to make a good impression but to express their heartfelt friendship."<sup>7</sup> "Fresh fruit such as peaches, pears, plums, apricots and grapes may be served for dessert in a large bowl of ice water with ice chips. Some of the special dishes may not be to the foreigner's liking. One might find an artistically arranged platter set before him, colorful and mouth-watering, only to discover it to be snails, shark, or tiny birds—beaks, toes, and all intact."<sup>8</sup>

## ROMAN CATHOLICISM

The Roman Catholic church, according to tradition, was founded in Rome about A.D. 42. The church claims that Peter was the first pope and that there has been an



unbroken succession from that time. The adherents believe that the Bible is God's Word, but that it may be interpreted by the pope only, whom God protects from error. The pope is assisted by a College of Cardinals from various parts of the world acting somewhat as a senate.

The Catholic church believes in purgatory, a place of temporary punishment through which the redeemed soul must pass and suffer for his sins. Prayers by those still on earth and masses paid for by relatives or friends are supposed to assist the soul through this difficult period.

This doctrine of purgatory has led to serious abuses, particularly in the system of the purchase of indulgences to offset the punishments of purgatory. At first they were given out sparingly, but after about 1300, indulgences were sold in great numbers at tremendous profit to the retailers. This shocking abuse was one of the factors that brought about the Protestant Reformation led by Martin Luther.

Another practice of the Catholic church with which Protestants differ is the apparent worship of Mary and the saints. They also believe that the priest is God's mediator and therefore they approach God through the priest at the confessional for the forgiveness of sins.

The Catholic church is the largest branch of Christianity, claiming over 400 million adherents. The world headquarters is in Vatican City, a small, independent island of 108 acres in the great city of Rome, having its own government, postal system, police force, etc. It is at once the smallest state in the world and in some respects the most powerful.

#### THE EVANGELICALS IN ITALY

All of life in Italy is colored by the Catholic church. Ninety-nine percent of the more than 51 million people in Italy claim to be Catholics. Since the Catholic church

considers every Catholic to be a Christian, Protestants in Italy use the term "Evangelical" to distinguish themselves from Catholics.

The Italian who announces that he is an Evangelical is admitting to the world that he is no longer a Catholic believer. This is in itself a fateful step, for it may mean the loss of job or chance for advancement and the loss of fellowship with neighbors and society in general. It may result in the spreading of fantastic stories concocted by the old women of the parish. Young children may run screaming with fear that the devil will come out of the Evangelical. A man may wish to become an Evangelical but be deterred by the fear that his wife may be hurt or his children persecuted.

"In spite of all this," wrote Mr. Cerrato, "a man who is really true to God and his calling is quietly respected and secretly sought after by night for prayer and counsel. Many Catholics wouldn't be caught dead greeting an Evangelical in the daylight, but when no one is around they come and tell of their desire to know this Christ."<sup>9</sup>

But God has helped the Church of the Nazarene in Italy to gain a foothold in many places. Mr. Cerrato says that their converts "are showing the spirit of the early Christians . . . ever pressing to the high mark in Christ Jesus."<sup>10</sup>



## CHAPTER TEN

# *Nazarene Missions in Italy*

### ITALY IN BIBLE TIMES

Italy is mentioned a number of times in the New Testament and Rome, or Romans, even more. At the time Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the remote province of Palestine, the Roman Empire was at the height of its power. Roman legions had conquered a great part of the known world—from the British Isles to North Africa and from the Euphrates River to Spain.

Roman governors were sent to rule over the provinces of Palestine. Roman legions kept the subjugated but independent inhabitants in line most of the time. Roman coins were in use and taxes were paid to Rome.

#### *Priscilla and Aquila*

But not only did Romans come to Palestine; Palestinians traveled to Rome. After the complete break at the Council of Jerusalem with those who wanted to force Jewish rites and laws on the Gentile members of the young Christian Church, there was violent persecution which scattered the members over a wide area.

Apparently some of these early Christians went to Rome, for in the eighteenth chapter of the Acts we find that Aquila and Priscilla, Jewish tentmakers, had been forced to leave Italy by order of Emperor Claudius. Paul met them in Corinth and lived in their home for a time. J. B. Phillips suggests that it is not unlikely that there were Romans present in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost who carried the Christian faith back to Rome.

### *The Centurion*

The tenth chapter of the Acts tells of the conversion and baptism of the first Italian Christian on record. Cornelius was a centurion, that is, the captain of a band of Italian soldiers (probably 100) based in Caesarea, Herod's showplace on the Mediterranean. This incident was also Peter's first experience of preaching to the Gentiles.

### *Peter*

It is quite possible that Peter went to Rome as early as A.D. 50. There seems to be evidence that he was crucified there about 67 or 68. The Roman Catholic church claims that his tomb is located beneath St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome.

### *Paul*

Paul's Epistle to the Romans was probably written about A.D. 57, before his fateful trip to Rome. There was apparently a flourishing Christian church in the city by that time, for in the final paragraphs of this letter he greets nearly thirty persons by name besides those of certain households, including those that met to worship in the home of Priscilla and Aquila. Paul finally went to Rome in chains, stopping at Syracuse on the island of Sicily and at Rhegium and Puteoli (Pozzuoli), ancient port cities on the mainland.

He most certainly entered Rome via the Appian Way, remnants of which are still to be found. From prison in Rome (and for a time from his own rented house) Paul wrote the letters to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Timothy, Philemon, and possibly Hebrews.

Paul was beheaded about 67 or 68 outside the city walls of Rome to the south. In that area are landmarks bearing the name of Paul. St. Paul's Portal is an ancient gate in the old city wall, and several blocks south along the Via Ostiense may be found the beautiful St. Paul's



Outside the Walls. This church of pink marble has statues of Peter and Paul along the path approaching the entrance and wonderful bronze doors depicting scenes from the lives of Peter and Paul.

### *Catacombs*

Of the many memorials to the early Christians in Rome such as St. Peter's, St. John Lateran, Saint Mary's, and St. Paul's Outside the Walls, to name a few, perhaps nothing has quite the poignant appeal of the catacombs to the Protestant Christian. These underground passageways were originally used as burial places. During the period of intense persecution of the Christians, they were used as hiding places and meeting places, and even as living quarters by the hunted followers of Christ. There are miles of these passageways, some seventy-five or one hundred feet below the streets of Rome.

As the visitor gropes his way along these twisting tunnels by flickering candlelight and sees bones of ancient dead in the recesses, he begins to sense in a small way what it must have been like to profess Christ in the days of Nero.

Missionary Robert Cerrato, former superintendent of our Italian mission, says that heroism among Christians is not unknown in Italy today, where persecution of Evangelicals is common.

## THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

### *Beginnings*

Nazarene work in Italy began in 1948 when Rev. Alfredo Del Rosso became a member of the Church of the Nazarene. At that time he brought into the church four missions of about thirty members each, located in Florence, Civitavecchia, Rome, and Montalcino. (See Olive G. Tracy's *The Nations and the Isles* for details of the early days.) Brother Del Rosso is now retired as

superintendent, but continues as pastor of our church at Civitavecchia near Rome.

### *The Morgans*

Rev. and Mrs. Earl Morgan went to Italy in 1952 and served for a five-year term, before transferring to Lebanon for their second term. Their special responsibility was the training of future ministers for the church.

### *The Cerratos*

In 1960, Rev. and Mrs. Robert Cerrato and children, Linda (fourteen) and Robert (eleven), were sent to Italy to take charge of our mission. The headquarters of our work is at Florence, where we have a large two-story house with a church auditorium on the first floor and living quarters for the superintendent and family upstairs. The Cerratos returned to the United States in 1964.

### *The Wires*

Rev. and Mrs. Paul Wire and their three children came to the field in May, 1964. They are living in Florence and supervising our Italian work along with their language study.

### *1963 Report*

The February, 1964, *Other Sheep* gives the statistical report for Italy. There are 2 missionaries, 10 Italian workers, 284 members, and 170 pupils in 3 organized Sunday schools. There are 14 churches and preaching points, 5 of which are partially self-supporting. The greatest single problem of this field is the persecution of converts by the established church.

## THE ITALIAN CHURCHES

### *Sarzana*

Our church in Sarzana is one of the largest in Italy, reporting fifty-four members in 1963. The pastor, Luige Morano, and his wife and two sons have given fine lead-



ership in this place. This church has a real vision of soul winning, and home mission works have been started at La Spezia and Aulla, a few miles on either side of them.

Pastor Morano is recognized by the government as an ordained pastor and has won the respect of the people of the town. Sarzana is located about halfway between Genoa and Pisa near the Mediterranean coast.

### *Vicenza*

Vicenza is located about sixty miles northwest of Venice. Mario Cianchi and his wife were converted in the Florence church and accepted the challenge of going to Vicenza, a very strong Catholic town which has an American army base. Brother Cianchi worked at the base along with over one thousand other Italians.

Because of his godly life before his fellow workers many inquired about Christ and sought Him. Brother Cianchi cooperated with the army chaplain by counseling and Bible study with Catholic girls who were to marry Protestant GI's. Through this means a number were converted. Every Saturday Brother Cianchi drove twenty kilometers (twelve and one-half miles) on his motor-scooter to a little country village, where he held services for several families who met in one of the homes.

He is now pastoring our new work in Termini Imeresi (Palermo), where God is blessing the Cianchis abundantly and many new folk have found the Lord as Saviour and King because of their faithfulness to God and the church.

### *Florence*

Brother Cerrato and his wife who were in charge of the flourishing church in Florence, in addition to their district responsibilities, wrote: "We have had some wonderful victories here and it still thrills us to witness the idols and crucifixes being taken from the wall and religious mottos proclaiming, 'Christ is my peace,' or, 'As

for me and my home, we shall serve the Lord,' hung in their place. The priests come every holy week to bless the homes and take a religious census. These priests have come to several of our folk and have been told at once that they were converted to Christ and are now Evangelical."

One of these members of the Florence church, a redheaded young mother, had been converted only a few days when the priest came to her home for the routine "blessing" with holy water. "This house has already been blessed," she told him.

"What do you mean?" the old priest asked in astonishment. "I've known you since you were a little girl," he said, "and you've never acted this way before."

"The One who blesses has come into our hearts," she replied bravely, "the Great Blesser."

"Oh, I see," he replied. "You've been listening to the sweet words of the *Nazareno Evangelico*."

"No," she said, "he has given us the Word, and Christ has come into our hearts. Come in and I'll show you what I mean in the Bible."

Later, reporting to Brother Cerrato about it, she confessed that she didn't know how she ever got up courage to talk to him as she did. The priest threatened to make trouble for her through her husband, but she told him that her husband was studying to become an Evangelical minister. The priest then threw up his hands and warned, "I'll be back!" But so far he hasn't kept this promise.

Another member of the Florence church told the priest of her conversion. Three days later her employer told her to leave the Evangelical church or lose her job. She lost the job and found all doors closed to her for a time. However God, through His power, opened a door to her through another Evangelical family.

Life in Florence hasn't been all pleasant for the missionary family. Sometimes in the early days the



people of the neighborhood would form a line with their bodies to oppose Nazarenes coming to church. They also harassed the Cerrato children by blocking their way to and from home. One day Mr. Cerrato, who is of heroic build, marched out and began elbowing his way through the human barricade saying, "*Prego*," at every thrust. An Italian, says Brother Cerrato, can get by doing anything so long as he says, "*Prego*," which may be used to say, "Please," or, "Thank you." He had to use this tactic only once more to discourage this unpleasant persecution by the neighbors.

There is a large illuminated cross in Florence on the main highway from Milan to Rome which advertises the Church of the Nazarene a short distance from the road. It was with some difficulty that Brother Cerrato gained permission for such a sign for an Evangelical church. It has become a tourist attraction. "Do stop by and see the Protestant church where they have a cross to show the way," visitors are told. Brother Cerrato wrote: "I am praying that God will use this sign and the light that it gives in this dark country to enlighten the minds and souls of many."<sup>1</sup>

### *Civitavecchia*

There is a strong group in our church in Civitavecchia under the leadership of Brother Del Rosso. A membership of 57 was reported in 1963. Civitavecchia is a town of 35,000 on the Mediterranean coast not far from Rome. The Nazarenes in this city are eager to carry the gospel to others and make frequent evangelistic journeys to nearby towns such as Santa Marinella and Monte Alto di Castro.

### *Naples Area*

In the Naples area there are small groups in Torre Annunziata, Naples, and Scafati. But persecution has been intense and the halls have had to close for various reasons. However meetings are being held in homes and

it is hoped that in time churches may be opened. Now pastoring these three groups in the Naples area is Vincenzo Izzo, his good wife, and young daughter. Folk in this area are seeking for the peace which our Lord can give. Pray for this devoted couple who are bravely leading these people in the way of holiness.

### *Sicily*

The island of Sicily is just off the tip of the toe of the boot that is Italy. At one place on the Straits of Messina the distance is only 5 miles. The highest active volcano in Europe, Mount Etna, 10,755 feet high, is on the island. The island is chiefly mountainous and volcanic, but there are large areas producing grains, almonds, citrus fruits, grapes, olives, coffee, and tomatoes. The island is famous for fishing also, chiefly tuna, squid, and octopus.

"In Sicily we have a good group under the leadership of Pastor Cereda. He too has received his recognition as an ordained minister by the government and the church is growing. The men are on fire for God and have gotten Messina and other nearby towns on their hearts. We are sure this area will prove to be a stronghold for the Church of the Nazarene."<sup>2</sup>

We now have a hall in Catania, the second city of Sicily, with a membership of thirty-eight. There is also a small group in the nearby village of Misterbianco and a beginning has been made at Messina. Pastor Cereda is a self-sacrificing man who has been known to sleep in the car and get by on only one hot meal a day while on church business. Small wonder that the work is prospering under his devoted supervision!

Although Evangelical mission work is admittedly difficult in Catholic Italy, the Nazarene mission has had some signal victories during the past few years. The government of Italy has recognized the Church of the Nazarene and given approval for the holding of proper-



ties of the church in the name of the General Board. Permission to remain in Italy has been given to our missionaries. Several young men have been called to preach.

The establishment of a Bible school in Switzerland to serve our European fields is under consideration by the General Board. If this materializes, our Italian ministers would be trained there. A district bulletin is being published in Italy and there is a Bible school correspondence course going out by mail. Over 25,000 pieces of literature and more than 700 Bible study courses have been distributed in the community. A Nazarene hymnal in Italian has been published, and "*Il Nazareno*," the Italian equivalent of the *Herald of Holiness*, is being mailed out to 1,500 addresses.

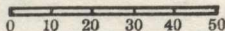
"Italy is a beautiful land with merry people," Brother Cerrato wrote. "She has beautiful cities and is a 'tourist's heaven,' but behind the mask of merriment is the mark of sin and the cry for deliverance. We, the Church of the Nazarene, have the message that appeals to the hearts and minds of the Italians. They want a Christ who demands something and gives something in return. . . . We must pray for Italy, for when we turn the corner away from the tourist's Italy, when the lights go out, we see her soul naked and bare, crying for the balm of Gilead, that alone can heal her heartache."<sup>3</sup>

# THE CAPE VERDE ISLANDS

● NAZARENE CHURCHES

• CHAPEL BUILDINGS

Statute Miles



## SANTO ANTÃO

Ribeira Grande (*Povoacao*)  
Porto Novo Leper Colony

Monte Mindelo (*Bible School*) Mission Headquarters  
Monte Sacebo Ribeira Bota

## SAO VICENTE

Ribeira Brava

## SAO NICOLAU

*Barlavento Group*

Espargo  
Santa Maria

## SAL

## BOAVISTA

Sal-Rei

*Sotavento Group*

## BRAVA

## SANTIAGO

*Nova Sintra*  
Cove Joana  
S. Filipe

Furna  
Mosteiros  
Cha

## FOGO

Ribeira da Barca  
Santa Catarina  
Picos

## MAIO

Porto Ingles

Achada de S. Antonio  
Praia  
Lem Cachorro

Dakar, WEST AFRICA,  
300 miles-----



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# *The Cape Verde Islands*

### LOCATION

The Cape Verde Islands, sometimes called the "lost islands" of the Atlantic, are situated about three hundred miles off the west bulge of Africa. They are, in fact, physically a continuation of the fierce, arid, rocky desert of northern Africa that is known as the Sahara belt. The islands are of volcanic origin, each having an ancient crater, some scarcely visible because of erosion. There are nine inhabited islands forming a horseshoe arc open to the west. The longest distance between the islands is about two hundred miles.

### DISCOVERY

The islands were accidentally discovered in 1462 by two Italian seamen under the service of Portugal who were blown off their course while en route to Africa. Immediately they claimed the land for Portugal and called it Cape Verde after the African cape of that name to the east. The islands have been under Portuguese rule since that time except for a brief period under the Spanish.

### THE PEOPLE

Uninhabited when discovered, these islands were first settled by Negro slaves imported from the African coast. For years Santiago (St. James) was a stronghold for pirates and a clearinghouse for slaves. For a time certain islands became prison colonies. Some Europeans,

mostly Portuguese, also settled in the islands. There is a small settlement of English in S. Vicente (St. Vincent) and a sprinkling of French, Jews, Italians, and Germans scattered throughout the islands.

All shades of color from black to white may be seen among the Cape Verdians today, but the predominant color is light brown, with brown eyes and black, wavy hair. Of the more than 200,000 inhabitants of the islands, over half are mulattoes, about one-third are Negro, and the rest, less than one-fourth, are white.

The mixed-blood Cape Verdian is generally of regular features and good physique, being taller as a rule than the Portuguese, who have contributed most of the white blood.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PEOPLE

A Portuguese writer<sup>1</sup> says that the Cape Verdians are intelligent and gifted with initiative, greatly appreciated in other countries to which they have immigrated. At the time of this writing two members of the Portuguese delegation to the United Nations as well as the former Portuguese ambassador to Brazil are from the Cape Verde Islands, and the Portuguese governor in office in Cape Verde is the son of a Cape Verdian.

This same writer says that the Cape Verdians have never revolted against Portugal, and that the percentage of crime in relation to the population is far lower than in Portugal. Literacy is high (between 70 and 80 percent) because the young are eager to learn, usually taking advantage of such educational opportunities as the Islands afford, sometimes walking incredible distances to school. Some of the upper-class sons are sent to European universities for higher education. Almost all the government employees and schoolteachers in the Islands are Cape Verdians.

Portuguese is the official language of the Islands, but a derivative Creole is the common language of the people,



differing from island to island. English is taught in the public schools. There are over two hundred grade schools in the islands as well as a high school in Mindelo (S. Vicente) and a beautiful modern high school in the capital city of Praia, Santiago. There are also three trade schools in S. Vicente.

Foreign visitors to the Islands report that Cape Verdians are friendly and kind, especially hospitable to strangers. They are an emotional people, exhibiting a passionate love of country and frenzied grief over the death of loved ones. Extended periods of mourning are common during which time the grief-stricken relatives shut doors and windows, turn pictures and other decorations to the wall, and take to their beds.

During the mourning period the activities of normal life cease, even to the cooking of their meals. Sympathetic neighbors and relatives bring in food and perform necessary tasks in the home.

The Cape Verdians are also highly superstitious, combining the rites of Catholicism with the fetishism of Guinea (the area in Africa from which the early inhabitants came). They are acutely fearful of death, and the unknown terrors of life after death haunt many to their graves. The threat of withholding proper burial rites is often sufficient to whip erring wanderers from the traditional path back into religious line.

They are peculiarly superstitious about the care of the body. While ordinarily ignoring the simplest principles of sanitation, many refuse to drink water, eat a banana, take a bath, or cut the hair for two hours after drinking a cup of hot coffee. Some go so far as to keep the mouth tightly closed for thirty minutes after a cup of hot coffee for fear of catching cold. The "soft spot" on the baby's head is often not washed for months, resulting in a scaly condition that often persists for several years. To ward off evil and sickness many depend on a small cactus-like plant placed over the door.

## RELIGION

Roman Catholicism was introduced in the Islands over four hundred years ago, in 1534. In spite of the long history of Catholic domination, however, some religious rites are scarcely above the heathen practices of their African forebears. "Holy Days" are marked by great festivals where the people drink *agua dente* and participate in vulgar dances "to the discordant rhythm of native drums."<sup>2</sup>

On one of the most unholy of these "holy days," St. John's Day, sometimes as many as three hundred drummers assemble in one place, each pounding a drum with all his might while hundreds of half-drunken "worshippers" perform their immoral dances and other barbarious practices too vulgar to describe. The people conscientiously perform the prescribed religious ceremonies, but the carry-over into ethical standards of living has been slight.

## HOMES

Living conditions vary greatly. In the finer homes in Praia and S. Vicente may be found spacious, high-ceilinged rooms with deep, lush carpets and brocaded sofas, the finest linens, silver, and china. On the outskirts of the city may be found tiny one-room homes built of black lava stone with banana-leaf thatched roofs and corn-husk mattresses for beds. Naked children play with pigs, chickens, and dogs on the dirt floor.

Many stone houses, however, are whitewashed or tinted in pastel shades, with tile roofs, glass window-panes, and comfortable furniture. Many homes boast at least one innerspring mattress, and many have linoleum or carpet coverings on the floors. But the wind, the ever-sifting sand, the tropical insect hordes, and the dearth of water in many places all conspire to make living at its best a hard existence. But as the Cape Verdians say, "It is the will of God! Next year will be better."



### CLOTHING

The people wear European clothing, but in the interior of the Islands the children may wear no clothes at all, while the adults often wear no shoes. On Sunday, however, they may blossom out in silk dresses and European suits with shoes and hats. The women usually wear calico skirts and waists with large shawls which may be used as protection from the cold at night or as a cradle to tie Baby to Mother's back by day.

Most of the people are poor and many must dress in veritable rags. During the drouth seasons many have been forced to sell the tiles from their roofs for food and clothing.

### MAKING A LIVING

Many Cape Verdians till by hand the rocky hills and valleys between the lava flows, raising corn, beans, sweet potatoes, coffee, sugarcane, and vegetables such as beets, tomatoes, and carrots. Tropical fruits such as bananas, dates, papayas, pineapples, breadfruit, and mangoes are also raised.

Fishing is an important industry in the Islands. Cape Verde coffee is very special, being exported to fine European hotels. Other exports include tuna, beans, goatskins, and salt. There are salt beds on the islands of Sal (Salt), Boa Vista (Good View), and Maio (May—so named because it was discovered on May Day).

Throughout the Islands the people and conditions present heartbreaking contrasts. But the heartening fact for the missionary is that many of the people are disillusioned with their former religious teachings and have hearts hungry for the Bread of Life. Few places in the world today present such opportunities for the spread of the gospel of Christ.

### DIFFICULTIES

Missionaries to the Cape Verde Islands do not like to emphasize the difficulties of service there, but per-

haps the people at home need to know something of the hardships in order to be more faithful in prayer and giving. Living in the Cape Verde Islands is at best difficult. Alice Spangenberg described it in these words:

"If you require three balanced meals a day with crisp salads and well-preserved meat from the refrigerator, never live in the Cape Verde Islands. If you expect quick transportation by rail, air, or ship, also bypass the Cape Verdes with their steep, rugged hairpin trails, and their little sailboats that sometimes require two days to cover ten miles of sea when winds are uncooperative.

"For easy access to hospitals, libraries, schools, and similar institutions that most people in America take for granted, never go to the Cape Verde Islands. For the protection of a telephone at your elbow, the convenience of the supermarket or even the little corner store, or the five-and-ten, and the drugstore, never settle in Cape Verde.

"The Islands are not the place, either, for people who enjoy their meals better when their own children get the food they require, when their pastors have more than one meal a day, and their fellow citizens are not fainting with hunger on the streets. For fullest freedom of worship, unmolested by incensed relatives and fanatical priests, Cape Verde is not the place."<sup>3</sup>

The problem of transportation alone assumes gigantic proportions in the Islands. When the Everette Howards went as missionaries in 1936 they traveled by foot or by donkey. Later they found an old car which they were able to rent on the Island of Fogo, but it had no top, no lights, no brakes, and the tires were old and patched. Aside from trouble with the car, however, other hazards of the road made these overland trips difficult. Not only are the roads narrow and filled with hairpin curves, but without warning, they might come upon burros in the road, runaway pigs, or another car parked or stalled.



Difficult as travel is on the islands, it is even more difficult between the islands. Only on the island of S. Vicente in the north is there a modern port. Although the distances are not great, it sometimes takes a week or ten days for a trip from the northern to the southern islands. Storms at times make sailing impossible, and just as often a season of calm will keep a sailing vessel in one spot entirely helpless without the wind. Fortunately, motorboats are now becoming more common and the new government ship that travels between the islands makes the voyage almost every week.

Except for the modern piers in S. Vicente and Port Novo (S. Antao), landing on the Cape Verde Islands is much the same as it was when the islands were discovered four hundred years ago. In Fogo the cargo and passengers are transferred to rowboats at some distance from shore. Then skilled oarsmen row toward shore, taking care not to be dashed on the rocks. Counting the waves, at the right moment they row frantically to shore, bringing the boat in on the crest of a huge breaker. At the same instant twenty to twenty-five brawny men rush into the water and grab the sides of the boat, balancing it as it strikes the sand. The rapid descent of the beach makes it impossible for men to wade out more than ten or fifteen feet. Sometimes the men miscalculate and the travelers are doused with salt water, but that is no serious problem in a hot, dry climate.

The climate itself in these islands is not a friend to the missionaries. It is hot and windy and suitable for many insects that flourish. Missionary Elton Wood described it thus:

"The wind screams around our house in S. Vicente like a wild mortal thing, beating and banging at every window and door until it seems like someone is breaking in. It becomes a trial just to step out of the house, and after battling our way to the church, the wind howls over the roof with such velocity that it sounds like Grand

Central Station with all the trains coming in at once, except there are no trains on the Cape Verde Islands. The wind whips the sea into a raging froth and no boats can venture out. The Mostellers were stranded for weeks on S. Antao just nine miles away, and were able to get home only in a comparative calm while the wind was getting ready to build up into a bigger storm.

"Our houses, which are much stronger than some in the States, are filled with grit and sand. It is understandable why there are so many red-rimmed eyes, and why many Cape Verdians don't like the night. Sand piles on them as they try to sleep and it is difficult to breathe. They say, however, that we owe our lives to this wind, for otherwise we would have tropical fevers and all sorts of diseases which are, instead, blown away. It is puzzling that the wind does not seem to bother the ants, fleas, or centipedes. We are never completely free of them.

"Pharaoh's frogs could not have been more plentiful than our ants, and the fleas cause us to leave blood spots on our sheets every morning, even though we use DDT and Flit. And the centipedes—I was eating my supper very placidly one evening when I felt something crawl up my arm. It was a five-inch centipede just entering my short sleeve. I yelled and jumped halfway across the room. It fell to the floor, where we were able to kill it. We never put on our shoes without looking inside them first."<sup>4</sup>

Drought and resulting poverty and starvation have haunted the Islands in recent decades. In 1942 there were ten thousand who starved to death on Fogo alone. In 1947 and 1948 over thirty-three thousand starved to death or died of disease on the Islands. National workers many times must get along on only one meal a day of coarse bread, perhaps, and *cachupa*—corn and beans cooked together. Food is a major problem to the missionaries as well as the Cape Verdians. Milk and fresh vegetables are scarce and canned goods difficult to obtain.



But there is a bright side to the story of Nazarene missions in the Cape Verde Islands. This is the story of the people themselves—the hungry, searching people, many of whom have turned anxiously toward the missionaries and their message of Christ in the years since John Diaz returned to his Cape Verdian homeland in 1901, and especially since the Howards went to the Islands in 1936.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

# *Nazarene Missions in the Cape Verde Islands*

### HISTORY

Nazarene work in the Cape Verde Islands is the second oldest mission field of our church—India being first. The beginnings go back to the year 1901 when the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America with H. F. Reynolds as its head sent young John Diaz back to his native Brava to preach, with a promise of \$16.00 a month salary.

John Diaz had gone to sea at the age of sixteen but found himself at an altar of prayer in a Protestant mission service in New Bedford, Massachusetts, about two years later. Returning to Brava, he endured fierce persecution. He was imprisoned four times; twice he was beset and beaten by fanatical mobs, once being left for dead. His own family turned against him, reporting that he conversed with the devil under his bed.

For thirty-five years John Diaz preached and witnessed in the Islands before the church sent missionaries to help. In 1936, Everette and Garnet Howard and little Elizabeth Ann arrived. They found two missions (in Brava and S. Vicente) and four outstations, with seventy-five full church members and fifty probationers. This was the result of thirty-five years of labor by John Diaz and others. They had planted well, however, and a rich harvest was to come in the next few years.



Other missionaries came to assist the Howards: Rev. Clifford Gay in 1939, the Earl Mostellers in 1946, the Ernest Eadeses in 1948, Miss Lydia Wilke, registered nurse, in 1949, the Elton Woods in 1953, Mrs. Charlotte Gay in 1955, and the Roy Hencks in 1959. Rev. Clifford Gay is the superintendent of the field.

#### TODAY

Today we have churches and preaching points on all 9 of the inhabited islands. The 1963 statistics report 14 organized churches and 27 outstations, or a total of 41 places where the gospel is proclaimed every week. The churches in Praia and S. Vicente took the step of full self-support in 1963, organizing church boards and voting on their pastors for the first time in the Cape Verdes. There are now in the Islands 1,151 members and 169 probationers, totaling 1,320. Ninety-five organized Sunday schools with enrollment of 5,087 had an average attendance in 1963 of 4,349.

The Maud Chapman Memorial Church in Praia reported 1,863 present in Sunday school on Easter Sunday of 1964. S. Vicente reported over 1,000, and the relatively new work in the island of Sal reported about one-third of the population of the island (3,000) in its Sunday schools.

There are 11 Nazarene elementary schools in the Islands with 289 enrolled, and a Bible school with 9 enrolled. There are 13 organized missionary societies having 544 members and 368 members of the Prayer and Fasting League. There are 14 N.Y.P.S. groups with 579 members.

The 1963 report shows that there are 22 national workers, most of whom care for one or more preaching points in addition to pastoring a church. Several of them are graduates of our Cape Verde Bible College, and all are deeply devoted and consecrated men. Seven were

ordained during Dr. Powers' visit to Cape Verde in November of 1963.

The population of Cape Verde is approximately 211,000 but we have only four missionary couples besides these twenty-two national workers to try to reach them with our message. And the responsibility is basically upon the Church of the Nazarene; for, aside from an independent Baptist mission and a few Adventist people, our mission is the only organized Evangelical, or Protestant, work in Cape Verde.

### A NEW ERA

Many thrilling stories have come out of Cape Verde since Everette and Garnet Howard went to the Islands in 1936. There is the story of the "Little Religious Man" of Fogo who prayed for seventeen years for a missionary to come to his island. He still lives in a fishing village in Fogo. (Basil Miller tells his story, along with the story of the Howards, in *Miracle in Cape Verde*, Beacon Hill Press, Kansas City, Missouri, 1950). And Nazarenes have been thrilled across the years with the story of the miracle of the spring of water in the old volcanic crater on Fogo Island known as the Caldeira (kettle).

Stories of miraculous healings have come from the Islands. The missionaries tell of a "bleary-eyed, old woman" who was a pitiful case of demon possession. Several times they prayed for her while on an evangelistic campaign in her village. Thirteen months later the Mostellers revisited this village in S. Antao. When the service was over a clean-looking, middle-aged woman came to them smiling. "It's a great change from last year, isn't it?" she said. They had to be told who she was. The pastor told them more of her later. "She has been led by one Voice from that day you prayed with her. She has been possessed by a fervent spirit, a clear vision, and glorious peace and pardon. She has walked



among her neighbors, forgiving and forgetting. Indeed it has been a great change since last year."

Some time ago a young lady in Brava who had been totally paralyzed for seven years and blind for eight months was completely restored to health. She walks six miles to every service in her church now, where she can praise God for His power.

Margaret Wood prayed with a small child in the Praia hospital when his parents and the medical attendants had all but despaired of his life. It was thought that he had a blood disease, perhaps leukemia. But several years have gone by and he is a faithful Sunday school pupil today. His parents often tell how God touched their little boy that day.

Alvaro Barbosa Andrade prayed with a little boy in his Sunday school in Fogo who had been condemned as a leper. God touched him, and today he is a young man in that church giving praise to God for health and salvation.

But more important than the miraculous healings in Cape Verde are the thrilling, challenging stories of redemption and salvation.

As late as 1956 there were still three islands in the Cape Verde archipelago which were completely unevangelized. This was not for lack of zeal or vision, for the pastors and missionaries had prayed for years that they might see an Evangelical work established in all the islands. It was for lack of workers and resources. Many times Christians who moved to Sal, Boa Vista, or S. Nicolau would write an impassioned plea to their former pastor or the superintendent in Cape Verde asking that someone come to their island to establish a "gospel light-house" or "soul-saving station" among the people there. And the years passed by with the islands awaiting His law, just as Isaiah had envisioned it centuries before (Isa. 42:4).

But when the first graduating class from the Cape Verde Bible College marched down the aisle of the S. Vicente church on June 19, 1956, this was the signal for the Church of the Nazarene that the time had come to reach these remaining three islands with the gospel. Now five more couples were ready to take their places among God's chosen workers in Cape Verde. Surely a new era had come in the work of the Church of the Nazarene in Cape Verde.

### BIBLE COLLEGE

The *Seminario Nazareno* is a three-year school which requires the equivalent of a high school education for admission. The course is designed to give the ministerial students the full course of study for ordination as well as other practical courses of instruction. During the years at the college each student takes an active part in the local church and usually directs a mission in the suburbs. The two missionary couples and one Cape Verdian professor attempt to offer a practical course which is almost equal to a liberal arts degree. The college is located in the island of S. Vicente. Alabaster money has been allocated for the construction of a dormitory. The two large classrooms and a chapel which constitute the school are in the annex of the S. Vicente church and bear the name of Mr. Andrew Riise.

The school was organized in 1952 and Missionary Elton Wood has been the director for most of the time since its organization. He says this means that he is also the dormitory counsellor, the chapel speaker, a teacher, the business manager, the registrar, janitor, school secretary, and librarian. He boasts of a library in the tower of the S. Vicente church with hundreds of volumes of evangelical literature all catalogued on the Dewey Decimal System. "It isn't much," he admits, "but when you remember we didn't even have textbooks or a building with shelves in 1952, it represents a lot today."



He finds romance in the fact that three of the five ministerial students enrolled in the 1964 class have come from the islands which were unevangelized until the first graduates were sent out in 1956. "If we had not reached these remaining three islands," he says, "these young ministerial students would no doubt be lost in sin today, without knowledge of the power and influence of Christ in their lives."

The school also makes contact and attempts to keep a file on all prospective students for the Bible college, sometimes giving them assistance with their high school work, because of the financial difficulties involved. There are six prospective students now who testify clearly to a call to the ministry. Two of them are completing terms of military service and need prayer in their behalf.

Gabriel do Rosario is from the island of S. Nicolau. Since the schools in Cape Verde are not free public schools, he was able to finish high school only with great persistence and personal sacrifice. At one time, in S. Vicente, one family was giving him his food, while another let him set up his cot at night to sleep in their living room, and yet another let him leave his trunk and personal belongings in their house.

But this was not his worst problem. He was used to finding secret places of prayer in the mountains of S. Nicolau or wide spaces of Sal, and since Mindelo, S. Vicente, is a city and a large place, he felt frustration in trying to find a place for private prayer. The church in S. Vicente is always open for prayer, but it is a very busy place. In the annex the missionaries teach their children correspondence courses, while the local elementary school of forty students is in progress and the Bible college classes are also meeting. In the afternoon, students practice the piano or their musical instruments and make preparations for the services, since there is usually some type of church activity every night. How happy he was to find a prayer chapel in the dormitory,

now that he is in the Bible college! He says his hardest problem has been solved and the greatest need met.

Alipio dos Reis comes from a Christian home in the interior of the island of Santiago. His home is very poor, but clean and radiant. His parents and brothers and sisters often sing "Mansion over the Hilltop." A new chapel has recently been completed in his parents' community mainly because of their faithfulness in witness and testimony. Now Alipio prepares himself for a spiritual harvest tomorrow.

Jose Aureliano Ramos Duarte is also from the island of S. Nicolau. He is the only Christian in his family but shows a determination to be a soul winner.

Jose Soares Delgado has helped with the support of his widowed mother and younger brother and sister ever since he was nine years of age, working in the hotel and in the main shop at the airport in Sal. It was a real test of his faith and consecration when he left his family in Sal to attend the Bible college in S. Vicente. It will mean sacrifice for him and for his family, but he has heard God's voice calling and pledges himself to follow it.

### THREE RECENTLY EVANGELIZED ISLANDS

Boa Vista is a small desert island where the people live mainly from fishing, salt mining, and pottery. We now have a church there with 28 members, an average Sunday school attendance of 206, 31 members of the missionary society, and 11 members of the Prayer and Fasting League, who contributed almost \$17.00 last year. To realize to the full the sacrifice this indicates, one must be aware of their meager earnings and inadequate standard of living.

Joao Goncalves is the pastor in Boa Vista. He graduated from the Bible college in 1963. He is yet a single man and the missionaries request prayer for him in the midst of sinful and immoral surroundings.



Sal is perhaps the most desolate of all the islands, were it not for the international airport there. It is relentlessly scourged by what is euphemistically known as the *brisa*. But "the breeze" is nothing less than the harmattan, the high northeast wind from the Sahara which sweeps African sand across the island in shifting dunes. The landward windows of most of the houses are perpetually shuttered against the penetrating grit. The capital is the small village of Santa Maria, which now has a beautiful Church of the Nazarene. The building is a miniature of the large Maud Chapman Memorial Church in Praia. It was dedicated in March of 1963. The congregation already boasts of 30 church members, an average Sunday school attendance of 178, a missionary society of 19, and 21 members of the Prayer and Fasting League, who contributed approximately \$60.00 in 1963. They serve as a challenge to the older churches on the Cape Verde District.

Add a bit more than double the above statistics and you can see the work being done in Sal, for there is another church established in the village near the airport. Its attractive building was also dedicated in 1963. Alvaro Barbosa Andrade pastors both of these churches, driving back and forth over the sandy roads in his small pickup truck, which was bought for his use by the local congregations.

S. Nicolau is the island which was known as the cradle of Roman Catholicism in Cape Verde. The people were proud of the Catholic seminary there and often stated that Protestantism would never gain a foothold there. But today there are two flourishing Nazarene congregations in S. Nicolau and the people of the island have been impressed by the reality of transformed lives. There are 42 church members here and an average attendance of 304 in Sunday school.

Antonio Leite is the present pastor in S. Nicolau. He is the one who declared, as a student in the Bible college,

that even if persecution and war conditions should completely close the doors to all missionary activities, if all the missionaries were called out of the field and no funds could be received from the outside world, "The national church would suffer—but it would go on! It would not—and cannot—die!"

#### ICE CUBES PAY DIVIDENDS

Humberto Pires Ferreira was a high-ranking government official in the capital city of Praia, back in the days of the ministry of Everette Howard. He had taken ill and had a high fever. The physician recommended an ice bag for his fevered body. But refrigerators were scarce. Where could he find ice cubes? Someone suggested that he send to the Nazarene missionary's home, but Senhor Humberto hesitated. These were those strange Americans. He had heard various rumors about them. He had even heard accusations among the people that they were from the devil.

He had no personal contact with the Howards, but eventually sent to their home and asked for a few ice cubes. Of course the missionaries were glad to be of assistance and offered to send ice every day until Senhor Humberto recovered. After his recovery he felt obliged to visit the Howards in their home to thank them for their kindness. After this pleasant encounter he returned again and again, for he was attracted by the joy, the music, and the Christian atmosphere in this home.

After being transferred to the interior of the island, he was drawn into a service in the little church in Santa Catarina one night after listening to the music from the street. He was a sinful man, attempting to drown his conscience in worldly pleasure. Sin had broken his home and he was separated from his wife and only daughter. His wife was serving as a medium for the Spiritists in Fogo. He was lonely and needed a friend. He forgot his



social connections and position as he knelt at that little Nazarene altar and sought for God.

God transformed his life, saved his wife, reunited their broken home, and gave their daughter a Christian home. Later, in Brava, even though he was the most important official in the island, it was he who sat down at the pump organ to train the choir and play for the services in the Nova Sintra church.

After several years God began to speak to the heart of Senhor Humberto asking him if he would leave his own place, plans, and ambitions to follow more closely the will of God for his life. Since God had now sanctified him, Senhor Humberto answered with a firm yes and asked for release from his position. Before his friends and social companions he had "stepped down" in a drastic way. But in 1952 he moved to S. Vicente with the full support of his wife and daughter. Since that time he has been the director of our printshop there, as well as dean in the Bible college and local Sunday school superintendent. His wife has been the local N.F.M.S. president for many years. He is a trustee on the first church board organized in the S. Vicente church.

The missionaries still marvel at how a few ice cubes helped to "break the ice" and lead the way for the salvation and calling of such a valuable worker!

#### PRINTSHOP

The "*Editora Nazarena*" had its inception in the old rented building called "Broadway" in S. Vicente. The mimeograph was the main machine in the setup for beginning a monthly bulletin, Sunday school lessons, missionary and young people's lessons, a preachers' magazine, etc. But Senhor Humberto, undaunted, set out to organize and build a printing plant that would give the Evangelical Portuguese world a vital contribution of holiness literature.

Later he moved into a small rented residence which was adapted to his needs. Here he actually had a small manual printing press and the help of two employees.

Today the electric press sits in a beautiful white building on an imposing corner just behind the S. Vicente church. It was built largely from Alabaster box funds and is a source of joy and wonder to the Cape Verde Nazarenes, who also give a Christmas offering each year for this work. Visitors are immediately impressed with the organization of the shelves and many drawers over which Senhor Humberto and his nine employees preside with efficiency.

From this building, completed in 1960, literature and books now go out, not only to the 9 islands in Cape Verde, but to Portugal, Mozambique, and Brazil. In the 1963 report for the printshop, Senhor Humberto reported over 30,000 pamphlets, cards, and letters had been printed there during the year. Also some 3,650 programs, 4,250 tracts, 5,000 booklets, and 8,550 books (5,840 copies bound by hand) had been prepared for immediate distribution. Among these was the second edition of *Holiness Explained*, by C. W. Ruth, translated by Mrs. Margaret Wood. Besides this, the regular periodicals had all been published on schedule: the "*Alyorado*" (*Young People's Journal*), the "*Lampada*" (Sunday school lessons), the "*Mana*" (*Preacher's Magazine*), the "*Seara Nazarena*" (missionary study book), and the "*Epistola*," which is the monthly news bulletin.

The type for all of this work must be set up by hand, after the most of it has been translated from English into Portuguese and adapted for the work in the Islands. The printing press must also be hand-fed. Is it strange that this efficient worker should dream of having plenty of type someday so as not to need to print only a page or two at a time because of lack of vowels for setting more? His ultimate dream, of course, is to obtain a linotype machine, but for the moment he has set his hopes



on offset printing equipment. The need for more literature is urgent.

### CONCLUSION

Many other stories of faith and heroism could be told of the missionaries and national Christians in the Cape Verde Islands, but space will not permit.

Reports still come of God's blessing upon His people and the church in Cape Verde. In the Bible college service of the 1963 assembly, the three graduates marched down the aisle in cap and gown to join the professors and undergraduates in singing a recently translated song which asks the Master's question, "Lovest Thou Me?" and closes with the reply, "Yes, Master, I love Thee more than goods, more than my own loved ones, and more than myself." Waves of glory swept over the students and the assembly in an unforgettable way.

On the last day of the assembly it was requested that the teachers and students repeat this number. The service had begun at 9:00 a.m., but no dismissal was given until after 4:00 p.m., for all forgot the time and other responsibilities as they revelled in the presence of the Master. Many fell on their faces before Him, renewing their covenant and consecration. Eight people came forward to be anointed for healing. Then there were unforgettable scenes of "love-feasting" as many went to friends and cleared up misunderstandings or just offered words of love and appreciation. The burdens seemed much lighter as each one went his way.

The islands are separated one from the other, bringing problems of transportation and communication. There is a lack of food and water as well as many other basic human needs. But the people can rejoice in the Living Water and Bread of Life, which are satisfying the soul needs of those who will turn to Him and attempt to fulfill the injunction of the prophet: "Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands" (Isa. 42:12).<sup>1</sup>

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2. *Fifty Years of Modern Syria and Lebanon* (Beirut: 1950), p. 7.
3. Tracy, *op. cit.*, p. 97.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
5. *Ibid.*

#### CHAPTER VI

1. Spangenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
2. Tracy, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
4. Spangenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

#### CHAPTER VII

1. "Lebanon in History and Bible Times," *Herald of Holiness*, October 9, 1963, pp. 5-6.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*

#### CHAPTER VIII

1. *Other Sheep*, March, 1963, p. 4.
2. Letter from Earl Morgan.
3. *Nazarene Preacher*, May, 1964, p. 19.

#### CHAPTER IX

1. Tracy, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-44.
- 2-10. Letter from Robert Cerrato.

#### CHAPTER X

1. *Other Sheep*, September, 1962, p. 4.
- 2-3. Personal letter from Robert Cerrato.

#### CHAPTER XI

1. Eduardo Mareira, *General Report of the Portuguese African Colonies* (London: World Dominion Press, 1935).

2. Spangenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
4. Tracy, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

## CHAPTER XII

1. The author is deeply indebted to Missionary Elton Wood for most of this chapter on the Cape Verde Islands, which he took time out of a busy deputation schedule to write.

**NOTE:** The books *The Nations and the Isles*, by Tracy; *Jerusalem and Beyond*, by Spangenberg; and *Miracle in Cape Verde*, by Miller (the last referred to in Chapter XII are out of print and if desired for reference purposes will have to be obtained from church or private libraries.



