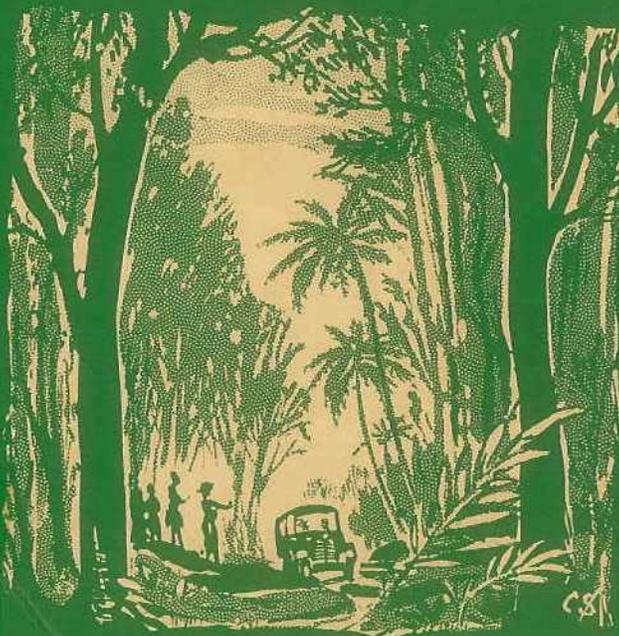


A MIGHTY WORK
OF THE SPIRIT



NORMAN P. GRUBB

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by Norman P. Grubb

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C.T. Studd, accompanied by one young man of 21 years of age, Alfred Buxton, landed at Niangara on the banks of the River Welle in the N.E. Belgian Congo, in 1914. They were the first pioneer missionaries to reach the exact centre of Africa.

I joined them five years later and had the privilege of a share in the spread of the Gospel in those early days among the tribes of the Ituri forest. It was another fulfilment of the age-old prophecy, "The people that sat in darkness saw a great light." In those days I think the depth of that darkness seemed more real and mighty to us than the greatness of the light.

In 1949, after 18 years absence (I joined the home end of the Mission in 1931), I was invited to re-visit the old field. This time it was the sight of the great light that had shined in the darkness which made the five months tour a constant journey of thanksgiving, particularly when I stood again on the banks of the River Welle at Niangara at the spot where C.T. Studd and A.B. Buxton had first landed 34 years before. The following is an account of my visit.

NORMAN P. GRUBB

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I.

INTO THE HEART OF AFRICA

I waved goodbye to my wife and daughter in London on Thursday morning, December 15th, 1949, and on early Friday morning we landed at the mouth of the Congo. Such is modern travel! I was kindly met at Leopoldville by Mr. Ohrneman, Secretary of the Congo Protestant Council, who did everything to make me comfortable during my two days at the capital. How good to be standing again on the banks of the mighty river, enjoying the warmth of the tropical sun, the luxuriant vegetation and the sights and sounds of Central Africa after an absence of 20 years. I had opportunity of fellowship with the Rev. Reynolds, Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, Col. Becquet, our good friend of the Salvation Army, and others, before taking the plane again 1,000 miles inland to Stanleyville, the town at the bend of the great river where the Lualaba, first discovered by Livingstone, becomes the Congo, first traversed by Stanley. Before taking that journey, I had time to learn of two challenges confronting God's servants in the advancing Africa of today: the one the outcry for education, which is in grave danger of swamping the missions and diverting them from their true Scriptural calling of evangelism and upbuilding of the living church of Christ; and the other the growing populations of these mushroom African towns.

The six-hour journey from Leopoldville to Stanleyville was over almost a solid 1,000 miles of forest. I had never seen such an unbroken carpet of treetops, with just the occasional glimpse of a motor road winding beneath us, edged by villages, like a brown thread through a green cloth, and much more commonly, the glimmering of water below the treetops in this great water-logged basin of the Congo.

At the Stanleyville airfield, I was met by Mr. Jack Scholes, who has been God's chosen successor to Jack Harrison as leader of our Congo field. The two came out together 28 years ago, neither realising the position of responsibility for which God was preparing them. Their nine years with C.T. Studd, in the pioneer days, gave them both the solid foundation in a missionary ministry in the power of the Holy Ghost, for which both never cease to thank God. God has His own business well in hand, and when one is taken who seems irreplaceable, lo and behold, there is the next just fitted to take his place! So indeed it was when "Harri" took Mr. Studd's place, and so again, it is all perfection in the choice of "Soli" (Jack Scholes). I found him looking tired, however, and white, for furlough is due.

Next day we drove 320 miles, north-east to Wamba, and so next morning another 50 miles to the hub of things, Ibambi, our central station. That journey was the first few hours of a fellowship in the light and in the Spirit which has been most precious to us both, and cloudless by the grace of God, as both have sought to learn from each other, and in honour to prefer one another in the Spirit. Over a period of nearly five months, our travels have taken us about 3,500 miles over Africa's rough roads, Soli always at the wheel, for I can't drive! I saw from the beginning, what I was to see everywhere, that Africa's mighty forests are rapidly receding beneath the blows of the native machete, in this era of Congo prosperity, when cotton and peanut and rice gardens can be so easily turned into francs, which are just as easily swallowed up by the disgraceful prices charged by exploiting traders for the many coloured garments and other attractions of the

wayside native shops. Bicycles, incidentally, are pouring in, not only for men, but for women also; and all the Africans say with one voice, "There are no bicycles like the "Englisis." "Rale" (Raleigh) is the popular make. The people themselves, mostly, though by no means all, wearing European clothes, are, I soon found out, the same simple folk beneath, responding eagerly to every approach of friendship and love. It is still God's great day of grace for the simple-hearted African, who can still receive the Word of Life as a little child, and is not yet hardened and blinded by "the pride of life" of a God-despising civilisation.

The country is amazingly beautiful. It is like driving through countless miles of parkland, the soft green and teeming vegetation right to the edges of the red-brown motor roads, tens of thousands of palm trees with their lovely waving fronds, from which Levers and other manufacture soap; and villages, villages everywhere, mud and bamboo huts of all sizes and shapes scattered among their groves of banana trees, not the kind of banana we eat, but the "plantain," larger and coarser, which is their staple diet boiled with "sombe," a kind of spinach. Indeed, this is a country that knows the bounty of God, for neither famine nor drought has every come stalking here. And every now and then, to our great refreshment, the road dives into a stretch of the old-time forest, still untouched by the hand of man; those giant trees, soaring 150 feet and more above our heads, speaking to the heart of the majesty and power of their Creator.

II.

THE HUB OF THE WORK

The Ibambi welcome was the first of many thrilling moments of greeting from our African brothers and sisters in Christ. There were the arches of flowers and palm branches, that immediately told their tale of growth and change from the days when only edible plants were worth a moment's consideration. There were running feet and whistles sounding, and then the orderly tramp of the various groups coming to welcome us, boys, girls, men, women, Bible School students, each with their written "address" of welcome to one whom someone had been heard to pray for as "The King of England"!!

It will obviously be impossible to give every detail of the many intensely interesting aspects of the work, either at Ibambi or in the other centres. I can only give a few highlights as we pass from place to place. Ibambi I found greatly changed, about twice the size, many fine brick buildings -- where there had only been mud and bamboo - - a valuable advance, because the ravages of the white ants make repairs a never-ending problem with the old type; also it is now a law of the Congo that a mission concession must be built in brick. The Bible School and the Print Shop stand out in importance, both legacies of the devoted labours of Jack Harrison, and both today in the very centre of the life of the growing church.

The Bible School is a compound by itself with its lecture-dining room in the centre, large enough to hold about 150 for meetings, and surrounded by a square of neat little brick bungalows, each for a married couple. That alone tells an important tale, for the outstanding significance of the School, which has put it in a class by itself, is that all wives are trained side by side with their husbands in the Word and the Spirit; none are accepted unless both have shown evidence in their local station of the new birth, consecrated and separated lives, their call of God to the ministry, and both able to read and write well enough to take notes. Considerable achievements, I can assure you, for an African woman. At the start, the School met with absolute opposition from the African church, and I believe was "opened" without a single student! But the Harris had God-given faith, and today all barriers are down, and not only our branch of the church of Christ in Congo, but those of our neighbouring missions, recognise that the only hope for a holy church is when the evangelist, or pastor, shows in the home life the transforming power of Christ, and where the wife can minister the gospel side by side with her husband. Today there are 20 couples in the school, and a steady flow of applications, which will soon bring the number to 30. The course is two years. The breaking down of tribal barriers has also been a great victory, shown in the feeding of the whole school together, in a country where normally the women never eat with the men. Not a penny of mission funds goes into this School. It is built and sustained by the African church. I came in for the end of the course of lectures by Mr. Scholes on 1 Corinthians, and heard various ones praising the Lord for light received. One woman thought she had just a body, until from 5:19 she saw it was the temple of the Holy Ghost. A man who had battles with temptation saw through 10:12 how God had "cut a road of deliverance through Jesus who had conquered Satan." Another could read the Bible and thought he was clever, until he learned from 8:2-3 that he knew nothing! Another said that he read that the Jews required a sign (1:22), which in Bangala is translated "wonderful thing,"

and that he had that "sign" to show people -- the "wonderful thing" God had done in him. I am sure it is the engrafting of the Word in the hearts and minds of the people these last 20 years, which has produced the growth of the church. It was a thrill then, and on later occasions, to talk to these Bible school students of the younger generation, with the light of Christ shining in their faces, in their eager eyes and through their receptive minds. How different from the bush pagan! In one thing this African Bible School differs from one at home, and that is in the numbers of little children running around; many of the young wives who attend the lectures have babes in arms. Congo population statistics are a serious concern to the authorities because of the decreasing birthright, owing largely to impure living and ignorance of child welfare. It is a constant cause for comment by visiting officials when they see the numbers of little children on the mission stations, and we are not slow in taking the chance of impressing the difference the gospel makes!

The Print Shop gave me to see visions also. God has raised up among us one who has both the call and ability to make a big thing of it -- Frank Cripps. And what a need today! Perhaps it is Priority No. 1. With only a treadle machine (16 ins. by 12 ins.) which has now been fixed to run by petrol motor, he has turned out a stream of work. He has trained a band of eight Africans who see printing as a call from God and do the job for a pittance a week, for which they could get a big salary in the world. They produce books, hymns, Scripture Portions, Readers, up to 200 pages. They have learned bookbinding and repairing. The standard of work is so good that orders come from Missions far and near, but at present through lack of a larger machine, Mr. Cripps has to turn down many. Now in co-operation with the Christian Literature Crusade the larger machine is arriving; but Mr. Cripps has his eyes on more distant landscapes, and he is all out for a Linotype and Wharfedale Cylinder machine, for he sees, as we all do, that printing on a large scale, both for our own church needs, and for many missions around, is the most vital method of evangelism for today. I am most thankful also to say that a stirring has come into our ranks on the question of new translations, where, except for what Mr. Harrison and one or two others have been doing; we were by no means active enough. A whole programme of translations is now being undertaken by various ones. The next to be published is a Church History by Muriel Harman, most valuable in a country riddled with Romanism. Of course, for many years we have had the New Testament in both the main languages we use, Bangala and Stanleyville Kingwana; also the Old Testament in Kiswahili, useable by a few, and O.T. extracts in Bangala; the full Old Testament in Bangala is soon to be produced by the Bible Society, the translation being completed by our friends and near neighbours of the Africa Inland Mission.

III.

THE MOVING OF THE SPIRIT

The first great event at Ibambi was the Christmas Conference, a series of meetings held right through the Christmas week-end in a large open-air church, giving shelter to the crowds beneath a roofing of palm fronds spread over a framework of supporting poles. There must have been about 3,000 there from the neighbouring bush churches. For the main Sunday meeting, the two Chiefs of the territory paid us a courtesy visit with their retinues, which at least meant that they both heard the gospel again, though they have heard it so many times; how hardly shall African chiefs, with their harems to which they are constantly adding, enter the Kingdom. The meetings were led by African brethren, and any of us whites who had the privilege to speak, did so at the invitation of the African leaders. I was most glad to find that the language in which I worked 20 years ago, Bangala, came back to me with great ease, although in this Ibambi area it had to be retranslated into Mabudu and Mayago. The main message God laid directly on me for all my tour was from 1 John 1: that the only thing which hinders the Christian from an overflowing of life is sin; but often it is unrealized sin, for in the subtlety of our hearts we so often call things by other names, which are really sin. But when we come to the light of God and are willing to walk in that light, sin is seen to be sin; however it may try to cloak itself. We cannot rid ourselves of sin or sinful habits, but we can be honest. We can recognise, acknowledge, confess with bended neck and broken hearts, for Jesus was broken by sin at Calvary that we might also "break". If we do, then thank God, the same Light which shines on sin, shines on the Precious Blood (1:7) and we can know at once not only forgiveness, but heart cleansing and deliverance; we can then learn not only to come to the light, but to walk in it by constant acknowledgement of the least deviation in thought, word and deed from the divine standard, and by constant cleansing. I then gave examples of various forms of sin and deliverance, which increased in number and variety as God dealt with souls on the tour. In further talks, in which the Spirit gave Mr. Scholes and me a complete oneness in ministry, we stressed the way of victory as given in Romans 6-8. All of this was only re-emphasis of truth constantly given to the churches, but often God uses new voices and special occasions to bring things home to hearts. And so it indeed was on the tour. The Spirit of deep conviction came upon many. In the Ibambi Conference about 300 were personally dealt with by the evangelists. A move of the Spirit began to be manifest about the third day, one of the elders saying, "God is doing a great thing here." They were up until 3 a.m. dealing with souls. Quite a stream of the girls and women were going to Miss Harman, putting quarrels, thefts, and so on, right with God and man. One said, for instance: "I had such a spirit of rebellion against my husband that I said, "Am I his slave?" and when I washed his clothes, I left half the dirt in!"

Some of the testimonies at the conference were good to hear. The wife of the African leader, herself a leader among the women, told of her temper, revealed in the house with her husband, but never in public and how she tried to get the victory through prayer, but could not. Then one day, when God was searching hearts in the Bible School, the Spirit said to her, "When you cease being a hypocrite and admit to your fellow-believers what you really are, I will meet with you." She did so and testified with a full

heart before us all how the Spirit came to her in His fullness at that time and gave her a complete deliverance. There was the simple village Christian who told how a white man, a cotton agent, had stopped in his village for a drink of palm wine and asked him for a cup. "Yes, white man," he said, "I have one, but you can't have it." The agent literally danced with rage, he said, and struck him a blow. "Why not, you animal?" Back came the answer, "Because this cup knows how to dip itself into water, but not into wine!" Another, a backslider, was recalled to God by a vision of Jesus appearing to him "in a long white garment," and saying, "I called you for My work and you ran away. This is your last chance." He used to work for a trader, even on Sundays, but he now decided to make a clean cut and refuse to desecrate the Lord's Day. "Very well," his employer said, "go and serve your God." Today he is in training for an evangelist.

I had my first taste at this conference of the new singing, which is the result of the introduction by Mr. Harrison of the Tonic Sol-fa. It was lovely. The African is naturally musical and there is a beautiful tone about their singing in parts. They are much less self-conscious than we, so that even the tiny tots from the Clean Children's Home (the untainted children of lepers) stood up before that great congregation and to the delight of everybody, quoted their texts and sang their little piece in parts with no musical accompaniment.

The early morning of the day the Conference broke up and gave me a chance of seeing another well-established institution of the African Church. In that lovely fresh hour when the sun has risen but is not yet too hot, representatives of all the out-churches brought their sealed wooden boxes into which their congregations put their gifts to God. Each is opened, emptied on the ground by a group of church leaders and laboriously counted, in the presence of many watching eyes; the amount is then chalked on a board with the name of the out-church, and the final sums announced at the farewell meeting. The money is kept, at the request of the church, in Mr. Scholes' mission safe, but is disbursed solely by the churches, which pay all their evangelists, and many other things besides. They came to Mr. Scholes after the Conference with 5,000 francs (*L*,36) as their tithe to be sent to other parts of the Lord's vineyard.

IV.

THE GROWING CHURCH

My next move was fifty miles to Wamba for the New Year Conference. The crowd was even bigger -- probably 3,500 were present -- and again the ordinary church building had to be abandoned for a large space in the open air, sheltered by palm fronds. Before the morning meeting, it was a moving sight to see a great parade of Africa's youth all being brought up under the sound of the gospel. The station school-children and out-church schools had gathered for the occasion, 1,200 of them, boys and girls, from 18 years old down to the first kindergarten, of about 60 tiny tots, recently started by Mrs. Buckley. All looked so neat in their different uniforms supplied by the parents, blue shorts and white shirts for the boys and blue dresses with white edging for the girls. Such a contrast to the wild, half-naked little kiddies of the villages. There was an African band of which they were very proud, especially as it included two boys trained in the cornet by our good friend Austin Paul of the A.I.M., who seemed able to play anything by ear. Round and round the football field this great parade marched, the head reaching to the tail, so that the whole field was surrounded, and watched with great admiration by about a thousand of the folks who had come for the meetings, many doubtless parents of the children. The station schools at Wamba, in the charge of Miss Daisy Kingdon, are probably the best in the Mission, and first steps are now being taken to centralise the small bush schools, attached to the seventy out-churches of Wamba, into two or three bush-central schools, built in brick by the voluntary work of the churches, who have bought their own brick-making machine.

I learned here of the two more advances in the life of the African Church. One is the women Sunday School teachers. There are now 300 of them at the various centres who go out each Sunday, armed with S.S. notes prepared and duplicated by Miss Harman, to teach the children in the villages. They meet in classes during the week where they are laboriously taught to express themselves: one leads the singing, another repeats the memory text, and another teaches the class as if they were the children. And to think that these, a few years' back, were the wild, loose living, free-for-all bush women, many of the plural wives of polygamous husbands.

The other interesting development is the setting aside a day of the week for "God's garden." On that day, usually Thursday, all the keen Christians of the bush churches gather for a meeting and then give the day to working in a communal plantation, the products of which are given freely to feed the school-children on the stations and in the bush schools. They bring in as many as twenty large baskets of rice at a time, also plantains, peanuts, maize, etc. There is such keenness to do this for the Lord, and it is equivalent each week to a half-day's pay, that a strict watch is kept by the church, and only those who are living right are allowed to work. Instead of begging folks to work for Jesus, they are kept back unless right!

Wamba is an important Government centre and therefore many of the people are more in touch with civilisation. This gave me my first chance of meeting another new type of African Christian, those who remain in the world of business, but are not of it. In old days, when few whites had entered this part of the Colony, and the Africans who were responding to the gospel were still unstable, it was almost a certainty that an African

Christian who joined himself to a white trader or official went back to the world. Nowadays, many know the keeping power of Christ. I met Mombe, the trusted African chauffeur of a wealthy trader, and once the owner of nine wives (or rather one wife and eight concubines); all eight were given upon the day of his conversion, and none of the purchase money asked back. He witnesses everywhere he goes, to whites and Africans, and flatly refuses to do the customary Sunday work for his employer. God has so prospered him that, as a sideline, he now employs twelve natives in his own carpentry business, giving much of the profit to God's work. He knows persecution, too, from some of the traders who hate him for his witness. One shouted, when he entered his store, "Get out of here, you and your Jesus Christ"; and another, "You and your God! If I were an official, I would kill you." But, generally speaking, all over this area the traders have come to recognise that lads trained by the Protestants know something of honesty, and they will fall over themselves to get our fellows even when they are those who have been sent away for misconduct. In the Wamba district alone, five leading men take a stand for Christ: the sergeant of police, this chauffeur Mombe, the telegraphist, the head African at a gold mine, and the head African at the central stores for the mines; and it must be remembered that in a community where responsibility is only just being put upon Africans, each of such men holds a place of importance in the natives' eyes.

On Monday morning, after the big Sunday meetings, the Spirit began to get the victory in hearts. About 80 came out that morning, increasing gradually to 200. They included several men for whom there had been much prayer lately, including the chief grumbler on the station, and his wife. Colin Buckley, in charge of the station, put off the church meetings that day so that the elders could go right ahead in dealing with the souls. Later, the leading elder, Samwele, came to say that God had done "a mighty thing" among them. Christians who they had thought were absolutely true, confessed to hidden sin, adulteries, lies, thefts, unpaid debts, hatreds and malice in their heart; one, a trader's man, was asking the Africans 200 francs for articles worth 100, and was pocketing the difference. The Christians were saying, "God has indeed filled us full with His Spirit."

The church meeting on Tuesday was interesting, when the leaders of all the local churches gathered to seek God's united mind on their affairs. I attended meetings of this kind at each station. Discussion is free and the Scriptures referred to when a problem arises. Sometimes the missionary takes the chair, sometimes the leading elder, but always the decisions are those of the whole group. The ultimate independence of each local church is recognised and safeguarded, but in this era, while many of the bush churches are small and weak, it is found most helpful for all the churches that have been born from the parent station to consult, and if possible, act together on their affairs. They can teach our home churches a good deal about maintaining the purity of the body of Christ. For instance, when a Christian young man or woman wants to marry, they have to appear before the church leaders. Unless both are approved as true followers of Christ, the marriage is forbidden, on pain of excommunication from church membership! The keen Christians nearly always abide by the decision of the church. Such a standard would do much to keep churches alive unto God at home, starting with the ministers and their wives!

Another important development is to find that Christian parents now want to leave their growing daughters in our schools until they marry (for every African girl finds a husband!) They feel that they will be more safeguarded from temptation. This does raise

problems, but one solution is being experimented with, that of putting these girls in the charge of Christian widows. The chiefs have such respect for the church nowadays that they don't take these widows, as they normally would, to force another husband on them. In one out-church, the leader has divided his family of widows into those who want to get remarried and those who don't. Which are the sheep and which the goats?

The next few days I had most profitable meetings with the evangelists and their wives of the Wamba area, about 40 of them. They said that God was giving a new vision of "really getting down to the sin that is tying souls up." Not the big things, but the little; it was this that came as a fresh message of God to them, and their "hearts had been set on fire." I heard later of numbers of souls being reached in the district around and that they were finding many prepared hearts. The evangelists often come face to face with the Roman Catholic priests. One told me that the priest asked him, "Can a person be saved without water baptism?" The immediate answer was, "Yes, the thief on the cross."

On January 8th, Colin and Mrs. Buckley and I moved 100 miles south to a most-interesting centre among the Babari tribe, practically a sub-mission station consisting of a large African village, "House of God," school, house for the visiting missionaries, and the large compound surrounded on three sides by living quarters, but in entire charge of an African, Malibatu. It is the centre for about 18 other bush churches. Malibatu, a man of about 50, is perhaps the best Scripture expositor in the work, a kind of Apollos, and looked up to as a "bishop" by these neighbouring churches. He has quite a remarkable talent in writing hymns and tunes, having a book of them, all his own composition, in the Babari language. His word at the first meeting was on being ready to hear God's voice, instancing Zechariah as unready and Mary as ready. There were 500 at the Sunday meetings and some grand testimonies. One young man tied a cord to his waist and got another African to hold the other end while he tried to struggle free -- to demonstrate the way sin had bound him. Then with all his heart he magnified the liberating power of the precious blood in his own life. A woman told of the long struggle before she was saved, part of her wanting Christ and part wanting sin. Another man told of how perverse and difficult he knew he was until Christ came into his heart and changed his whole attitude. About 100 responded during the day, and on Monday morning Malibatu came along to our mud house at about 6:30 a.m., poked his head through the small window, and said, "I have not slept this night. God has done a mighty work. All through the night people were coming to me, including several of the evangelists, saying that God has struck their hearts yesterday and that they must put things right with Him. The Holy Ghost seized hold of them yesterday and has lit a great fire in their hearts." Many quarrels between husbands and wives, cases of moral sin, lies and so on, came to light. One pair of evangelists, who have long been prayed for -- nothing was actually known to be wrong, but they just had not the fire -- were among the first to get right. Also among the crowd in this first service were about eight pagans who came out with the Christians to be saved.

V.

IN THE PRIMEVAL FOREST

Soli (Jack Scholes) and I continued our journey on Tuesday, January 10th, to Opienge, the centre among the Balumbi tribe, which was the outcome, 20 years before, of the pioneer journey into that tribe of the little lame evangelist, Zamu, who is still as fiery and active, though lamer than ever. Ivor and Mrs. Davies and Miss Roupell, our oldest missionary, who came out with Mr. Studd in 1916, occupy the station. The drive was 100 miles. I thought it the most beautiful of all our stations in its setting: small, compact, nicely laid out, as indeed are all the stations, with flowering shrubs, palm trees, and lawns of Congo grass, the bright green of which are such a lovely contrast to the red soil of the paths, and the usual buildings spaced around, church, schools, missionaries' houses, carpenter's shed, African houses and plantations. We were entering here, and further south around Lubutu, great areas of primeval forest, where the people live in much larger and longer villages, with long stretches of virgin forest in-between. Witchcrafts seem more numerous. I was told of some, too disgusting and degrading to be described in detail, from which some of the believers had been delivered. Tortures are used to extract confession from those denounced by the witches, about 70 of who live around Opienge. One Christian woman had lice taken from heads and put under her eyelids, causing her intense agony; another was confined in a basket and immersed in water until bubbles came up, then raised, and the process repeated until the man couldn't hold his head up, which was taken as a sign of confession. His hands were then tied and he was left among the stinging ants until rescued by fellow-Christians. One old man who had gone through these tortures and is now employed by a trader, absolutely refuses to work on Sundays, but comes along with his hands full of francs and says, "Bwana, put these in the box of God."

The parties came in, some from long distances, for the Conference. It was always a moving sight in each centre to see them coming, laden, some carrying little children, all with heavy baskets, bunches of plantains, and what not; some waving palm branches, all singing some gospel song led by their village elder. And to think that these simple, primitive-looking folk have tramped 50 to 75 miles to come for this week-end, for love of Jesus and His Word, and for no kind of earthly gain, and then have the same distance to return again. The meetings were held in the church, jammed out with about 500. God was at work again in hearts, about 150 being personally dealt with, a number being unsaved. As one missionary prayed, "The river has started flowing; may it flow on!" The singing in parts was beautiful here, probably because Ivor Davies is Welsh! One of the young men told the people that he was brought to Christ through the sudden death of his father by snakebite. Previously he had heard the gospel from his father as a lad and had great fear, for he heard the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, and feared lest God might tell his father to do the same! He then gave this typical African illustration. "If you take away the honey from a tree, do the bees return? Yes, for they smell the honey. But if you cut the tree down, there is no return." Then he explained that formerly he had the honey of sin taken away and his sins washed away in the Blood, but the remains were there and Satan returned and filled him again. But this time God has cut down the tree itself! A woman, too, gave a grand testimony, full of the joy of the Lord. She and her

husband had been on the station, but he was slow and became jealous of others. They left the station, but she started a girl's school in her village and kept on with God. She knew the secret of prayer and prayed whole nights for her husband. Now God is answering. Her husband saw in a dream the other evangelists using God's book and he not, and at the Conference he came to get right with the Lord.

Ivor Davies took us on an interesting trip of 140 miles to the remotest out-church at Bilote. We passed several other out-churches en route, and then turned off into the most tremendous forest I have seen. The road was cut by a gold-mining company clean through, up and down forest-covered hills, very rough. It was the gorilla and okapi area, the only forest in the world where both these two rare animals can be captured. We passed the camp where representatives of several zoos had recently trapped and caged a number of both. The natives must be evolutionists, for their name for gorillas and chimpanzees is "sokomotu" -- almost a man!" We penetrated far into this forest, and at last, came to the long, straggling village, Bilote, which seemed like "the uttermost part of the earth." As I stood there in the evening light, I rejoiced to think that Christ's gospel had reached even here. The village was untidy except for a beautiful little compound in the middle, where the church and school had been built, and the evangelist lived. An original man, this brother; he wanted to be sure that the people clearly heard the gospel, so he formed the habit of walking up and down the one street between the houses at 5:30 a.m. each morning. The houses are flimsy and all sound penetrates. At that hour folk are awake and preparing to arise. So he was quite sure that all would hear the message as he called it out!

About 30 of the keener ones had already taken the long rough journey on foot to the Conference. In spite of that, we had about 50 to the morning meeting, at which the village chief, who was near the Kingdom, made public profession of conversion, with 12 others. The people of this village have the horrible custom of eating dead children. What a contrast when we gathered for the Lord's Supper back in Opienge with the believers, and one woman from this village, or another as dark, praised for the blood of Jesus, which, said she, meant that through His death she had died with Him, and that He was now our life within us, and the day was coming when we would be feasting with Him in glory, face to face.

VI.

REVIVAL

Now came the longest journey, "farthest south" to Lubutu, yet deeper into that enormous stretch of forest. We had to take a somewhat roundabout route, covering about 400 miles. It was an eye-opener, because we travelled along many miles of road where the gospel has never yet come, except for a possible passing visit. A considerable distance of this was along the bank of the Lualaba River. We thought of the thrill of Livingstone, when, several hundred miles south, he was the first white man to set his eyes on the Lualaba, thinking and hoping it was the headwaters of the Nile. What an army of lightbearers have penetrated where he first blazed the trail, but these long stretches of the Lualaba on both banks are still unoccupied. Thank God, since our Missionaries' Conference, of which more later, first steps are now being taken to remove this "shame of Christ". I was appalled also at the prevalence of drunkenness in this district. There are two kinds of palm trees in Central Africa, both entrancingly beautiful and graceful, but both with a deadly poison lurking in their life's blood. If either palm is sliced open and drained at a certain age, it provides gallons of strong intoxicating wine, and then dies. The commonest palm, the oil palm, is never used for this evil purpose, because of its greater value in providing the palm nut. The other has no nuts; it has its uses, such as a strong string, which is used in all native buildings, but it is commonly grown for the wine. But never before have I seen miles of country where the wine palm far outnumbers the oil palm. The living Church of Christ, after ten years, is a miracle in these surroundings. Harold Coleman was in the middle of a free fight with spears on one occasion, when a drunken chief passed through the station and thought one of his wives was there. An official had said that the only remedy was to send soldiers and compel each chief to cut all the wine palms down; that might be a helpful government remedy, but the gospel remedy gets to the roots, as the people are proving; it cuts the tree of desire down in their hearts first, then they go and cut the other trees down!

Lubutu station is on a hill with a view for miles over an unending sea of forest. Certain sections are totally uninhabited, but through others run the roads, with the big villages each with two or three hundred people, scattered along them, stretching in one direction for 300 miles, with only Lubutu as a centre of light. Jim and Eva Grainger were the first pioneers here. Now two couples are at work, Harold and Margaret Coleman, and Robert and Nan Green. All was ready to welcome us with the flowered arches and warm greetings, and soon the companies from the bush churches were arriving. I think the decoration of the church was most original and African, just two full-sized banana trees standing at each end of the small platform, so that the speaker had an overhanging arch of the big leaves over him. There is so much water stored in the trunk that they kept fresh the whole weekend.

The crowd, as usual, packed the building, with many more standing outside and looking in over the low sidewalls. A party of burly gold miners had come in, live bright Christians, whose consistent testimony in their rough life so impressed their white overseer that he gave them permission to make the two day journey. There were about 20 of them and they asked leave to stand and sing. This they did with great gusto, beating time with their hymnbooks on their hands. It was a catchy native tune about

being full of joy for salvation, and took the place by storm, until the whole audience were on their feet singing and waving their arms. It became completely the song of the Conference, and Robert Green wrote out the tune for me to take home. Perhaps the most notable move of the Spirit of the whole tour was here. The Holy Ghost poured Himself out, and it was difficult to handle the flow. The first break came early, and from then onwards there was a stream. One afternoon and evening there were 15 groups of souls being dealt with one by one by men and women evangelists. Darkness came, but still they continued.

The food is distributed at dusk, and usually with some difficulties, but the people were not interested in food and hardly any came; it was 11 p.m. before the groups broke up. Margaret Coleman was saying that what had been given was no new message, indeed it was only what they themselves had constantly pressed on the folks with even greater emphasis, but *it is the Holy Ghost*. When He comes, He just convinces of sin and reveals Christ, and she said the marvel to them was to see the folks they knew too well, full of pride (for pride is the sin of this tribe, the Wakumus), getting up publicly, broken down and ready to face and confess sin. Carpenters were restoring stolen planks and nails, a woman a dress she had bought and not paid for; couples who were living separately were reconciled; a house boy confessed to thefts and lies. As one said, "The message has been God's great net. If I tried to escape up or down or sideways, I was caught every time and must get right." It was refreshment to the missionaries, as they had been seeking a break from God for two years. They had just been compelled to dismiss a number of boys from the school for card playing; they came to the meetings, standing on the outside and sneering. Later they were to be seen in a row near the front, and by the end all had come back to the Lord. Men and women, who had shown pride and hardness, were coming out publicly and humbling themselves as sinners needing the cleansing blood. Over 350 were dealt with. One backslider, an old man, got in front of the car when coming to the station, was knocked down and slightly hurt. He had to be in the government hospital during the meetings. His wife was blessed and revived. They had been quarrelling, but after getting the blessing she began to take food down to him. As soon as he had recovered, he came to the station saying he wanted the same blessing as had come to his wife, and the Lord met him.

After the conference, Harold Coleman took us 170 miles to the south to glimpse some of the territory still to be claimed for the Lord, and we could have gone another 100 miles, but the roads were rough and it was as far as we could reach in the day. We passed many big populations. We finally stopped the night after climbing a kind of Mount Pisgah in the forest, where the Belgians have put a lonely rest house with a marvellous view. There was another 100 miles of unevangelised land beyond. Thank God, as we shall hear later, provision is now to be made for these.

In all the tour we were accompanied by a Spirit-filled African from the Ibambi Church, who interpreted for me and sometimes he gave messages. He was also in charge of the personal dealing. He would spend as much as two hours helping one soul through. In one talk at Lubutu, he gave four illustrations true to African life. "Look at the chameleon!" he said. "It changes colour when it likes. Is a Christian like that? Look at the cockroach? It sheds its old casing and becomes white for a month, then brown again. Is a Christian like that? Look at the snake! It leaves its skin, but keeps its teeth and poison. Is a Christian like that? But look at the caterpillar! It struggles, dies apparently,

but when it comes out a beautiful butterfly, it does not change back again. A Christian *is* like that. That is what the Holy Spirit does in us.”

Once again, we were on the move, on Saturday, January 28th, to Kondolole. We had a delightful interlude en route, a night with our old co-workers of the Unevangelised Fields Mission, George and Mrs. Kerrigan, at their station in Maganga. They, like us, had recently enjoyed blessed fellowship with a team from Ruanda. Thank God, when the Spirit fills our hearts with love there are no mission barriers, we are just one in Jesus and in our mutual interests in bringing Him to our Africans. We had also met, just "by chance" in Stanleyville, our old friends, Herbert and Mrs. Jenkinson, the Field Secretary of the U.F.M.; we had lunch together and equally happy fellowship. They urged us to visit them at their station at Bongoza, but it was off our route and unfortunately our programme did not allow of it.

At Kondolole station itself, we only stayed a short weekend, as the population have been moved and a new station site had been applied for and granted, near Bomili, which will bring the workers right to the centre of their area. Harry and Gladys Jones were there, and William and Doris Derbyshire. The work is all among the Babari tribe, to whom Harry Jones has been, like an apostle the past 20 years. The Babaris were the home of the notorious Mambera witchcraft, which has now been blotted right out through the prayers and protests of the missionaries, and ultimately the law of the land; also of the Anyotas, the leopard men, and the most dreaded cannibalistic society in Africa. This also has been suppressed and any native found in possession of the anyota sacrificial knife is liable to the death penalty. Even while we were there they made a murderous attack on one of their own chiefs, because a tree had fallen on one of their men when working in the chief's plantation. We saw some of the real fruit of the work when we moved up to near the new station site, and stayed in the village of an old and faithful Christian, Ngwangwa, once the chief, and now retired through old age in favour of his son. There was a neat church and evangelist's house in his large village, where we stayed. A quick call was sent round to neighbouring villages where there are out-churches, and about 350 people gathered for a two day conference. It was a thrill to see the old chief with his shining face. I last saw him in 1923! He had never looked back from the earliest. The first visit to these parts was made by our early pioneer, James Lowder. When I enquired, about 50 hands went up of those who had first heard of the Saviour through him. The seed sown 30 years back was still bearing fruit. Others had laboured in the district, and lives have been laid down for Christ and the Barbaris -- Gray Jarvis and Elsie Partridge, whose grave I visited.

We expect there will be considerable advance in the work with the opening of the new station. At present it is just a patch of virgin forest, but the people are delighted at the prospect, and are just giving days of volunteer help in clearing the site. The Jones' are coming on furlough, and the heavy task of clearing and building will remain with Billy Derbyshire. "Bwana Dabi," as the natives call him, still has his heart much with the pygmies, of whom there are a good number in the district. He has even had some to come and help him in the clearing! Among others whose hearts God touched in the meetings was a good example of the sensitiveness to sin in many hearts. A man in a coffee plantation was a backslider, although he would come sometimes to worship. Nine years ago, he received a leg of an animal from Mr. Jones, but never paid for it, price (at present rates) 5d.! During all those years the Spirit of God was convicting him: "God,"

he said in his prayer, when he came back to the Lord, "I have earned thousands and hundreds of francs, but you have never stopped convicting me of these 2 1/2 francs!" He also told how he would be gambling on Sunday morning and hears the drum go for meeting; but, "I was busy taking other people's money, and they mine": also, how he would laugh at their filthy conversation, until one day one said to him, "You go to the house of God. Why then do you talk this filth with us?" It was an arrow to his heart.

VII.

THE LEPERS

From Bomili, we returned to our starting point, Ibambi, having completed the first half of our tour, round the stations to the south. After a few days quiet, getting up-to-date with correspondence, sharing in the day of prayer at the Bible School, and visiting some local out-churches, on February 9th, I went to spend a week with our leper workers, Arthur and Irene Scott in charge of the leper camps, Will and Rhodie Dawn from the U.S.A. looking after the untainted children and the practical work, and Winnie Davies in charge of the Maternity Home (which is not a leper, but general ministry). I was particularly keen to go into all details concerning the start and development of leper work because of the new call God has given the W.E.C. through Percy and Edith Moules to start the L.M.C. (Leper and Medical Crusade), and through which already first parties have sailed to open leper work in the seven countries of Senegal, Portuguese Guinea, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Gold Coast, Indonesia and the Indo-Tibetan Border. I must say I just marvelled at this living proof of the way the Spirit takes up the consecrated "earthen vessel" and glorifies the Saviour through it. Here is a leper ministry, very large, extending over five big "camps," really leper colonies or villages, scattered over a large area, containing between them 1,200 lepers and constantly on the increase, which even while I have been on the field, has increased to 1,300. Edith Moules was a trained nurse with a gift from God for medicine which made her equal to a doctor, and Percy was an able administrator; but after the Lord had taken Percy, and then Edith had also to go home for health reasons, the only one who could be left was Arthur Scott, just arrived from England for the first time, and with only a nine months' medical training at the Missionary School of Medicine! All honour and thanks to the training they did give him! In this condition of innocence of African ways and near ignorance of leper treatment, he was left with the whole thing! The leper camps are not our own as a Mission. They belong to the Belgian Red Cross and are under the final supervision of their doctor, who has a highly developed and magnificently equipped leper research centre nine miles away; but of course, their interest is really more in leprosy as a disease than in the leper as a needy soul. They supply the medicines, which are a great boon, and are available for consultation on difficult cases; they also have final medical responsibility over the camps, but beyond that, Arthur Scott is left with a free hand, and above all may forward the spiritual ministry among the lepers just as much as he likes. To give the Red Cross's own estimate of what Arthur Scott has done: when the Governor General of the Congo paid a visit to the Red Cross centre, the chief doctor introduced Mr. Scott as "Here is the man who really does the work among the lepers."

"Love is the way," and that is why most governments have now come to recognise and admit that only those who can combine personal love and care for the sufferers with their medical science, can meet the leper's need. As a result, they are eager to encourage missionaries to do the work, and are ready, in some measure; to provide some proportion of the medicines and buildings, which indeed they ought to as a Colony responsibility.

It is in the actual leper "camps" that the difference is seen. I visited several which were under purely secular supervision, the dispensaries were efficient enough, but, oh,

the camps -- untidy, uninviting, neglected looking, with houses all shapes and sizes and in all conditions of non-repair, with no organised plantations, which meant that the lepers could easily succumb to their big temptation of secretly growing "bangi" (a form of opium). But what a difference at Mabese, our main camp, close to the Missionary Compound, where the Clean Children's Home, the Maternity Home and the missionaries' houses have been built. We go down a long road, cut out of the forest, and wide enough to take a car. For the first quarter of a mile it is lined with chaulmoogra trees (from which medicinal oil is extracted) and without dwelling houses; then the leper village starts. First there is the Leper Hospital Unit, where the treatments are given by trained African male nurses -- trained by us, but examined and certificated by the Red Cross. There is a regular and carefully organised routine followed here, for diagnosis, various forms of treatment, record keeping, clinical examinations, etc. All, except the microscopic work, can now be done by the nurses, and plans are in hand to start training some of the lepers themselves as their own nurses. This hospital unit is in sun-dried mud, but the lepers themselves, trained as masons and builders, are now erecting a brick dispensary on the opposite side of the road. Near this central unit, there are other groups of buildings: a boys' home and school for leper boys who have already contracted the disease, and so cannot be put with the untainted children, and the same for girls. Elderly African women, who love the Lord, act as matrons over these young people. There is a small maternity building for leper mothers; small because the birthrate of leper parents is not high; and, best of all, the Leper Bible School, where already some ten couples, who have heard the Lord's call to their own fellow-sufferers, have had some simple Bible training and are now scattered round the various camps as evangelists, not merely in our own camps, but better still in the pagan colonies. I don't think anything has given me a bigger thrill out here than to meet a few of these gems in the Lord's crown, men and women who have triumphed over their horrible human fate by grace, and turned it into an open door for ministry, not just receiving the love of Christ, but ministering Him to others. I see one who came hobbling along in a pagan camp, hardly able to drag himself along, but bubbling over with the joy of the Lord; he carries on his own ministry in his own "house of God," built by believing lepers in the camp. I found that this brother was a trophy of God's grace through Mr. Staniford. Another led the meetings, disfigured in face and body, no fingers, thick swollen feet in bandages, with one toe left on each foot. He couldn't turn over the pages of the New Testament, which he has learned to read, but blew them apart.

Then along both sides of the road beyond the dispensary and other buildings, is the leper "camp" itself. I haven't discovered why they are called "camps," because they are just normal African villages built on a more orderly plan than usual. None but lepers are allowed in or near it. It is about a mile long and beautifully laid out, each mud house, built by the lepers themselves, stands in its own little piece of ground. This patch is kept scrupulously clean and planted with flowers and pineapples, so that it contains both beauty and refreshment! Most important of all, behind each house is a long stretch of plantation, perhaps a quarter of a mile, which was once virgin forest. Here the lepers keep themselves in staple foods in orderly rotation, plantains, manioc and its leaf which acts as spinach, maize, peanuts, rice, growing enough for themselves and to sell a bit and thus get a little pocket money; they particularly need this to buy palm oil to cook with their food. The camp contains about 400 lepers, part still pagan, part professing

Christian, and among them those who have really found and love the Lord. There are two places of worship, one in the more “Christian” end of the camp, and one more newly built to reach those who have made no profession. Of course, Christian and pagan alike are forbidden to grow opium or distil spirits, both of which the ordinary leper does illicitly. The village has its own leper chief and headman, and – a point of great importance – regular occupation is provided for all who are able-bodied, or according to their strength: growing food, building, sawing planks, school, blacksmith, kiln and brick making, teaching, and soon dispensing and nursing. Thus, they become a self-contained, although not fully self-supporting community; but they are occupied, instead of sitting about, contemplating their sad condition. Above all, they get the gospel. It would not be right to say that they respond better than others, but they do respond and are open to the Lord’s voice. I went over a Christmas Conference on Boxing Day. About 300 lepers were at the meetings, and some 90 were dealt with by the Spirit. There was a particularly distressing lad near the front, awfully disfigured, with huge lumps all over his face, and immensely swollen lips. He kept passing his equally lumpy hands across his face as if to hide it. The word was interpreted by a badly infected leper, although he didn’t show so much. But he told his testimony of his awful rebellion of heart when the disease was first discovered on him and the village turned him out. His mother, who lived in another village, heard of it and sent for him. What were his feelings again, when his mother gave him a special cup and spoon and he had to fetch water from a special place. He heard of the camp and came to the Moules, but when he was told that his cure might take years, he was tempted to curse God and call Him his enemy. His wounds then got so bad that he had to be separated even from the less infected lepers. In his bitterness of soul he said, “They told me Mr. and Mrs. Moules have love. Where is the love? They hate me.” Then God met him through the Word, where he saw the promise of a new body in heaven. He truly believed and said, “Oh, the joy now. The sorrow and bitterness has gone,” and he is now the most reliable teacher in the camp. A brilliant interpreter, he was the only one on my tour who translated into two languages consecutively.

This gives the outline of what we mean by a “leper camp” and is the type we hope to develop in the different fields, allowing, of course, for certain variations. The other four camps under Arthur Scott’s supervision are on the same lines. Three years ago, the coming of his fiancée, Irene Tomlinson, who became Mrs. Scott, was a great asset, as she had taken special training for leper work. Together, they go to the weekly round of the camps, but when reinforcements arrive, they hope to leave the well-organised Mabese camp in fresh hands, and concentrate on the other four, which, except for one, Arindru, are less developed, and equally need more continuous gospel teaching. I visited all the camps. They are beautifully situated, away from the main roads, in the depths of the forest, but splendidly laid out on Mabese lines, but with improvements even on Mabese, as new lessons are learned; for instance larger houses for health reasons, and more amply spaced gardens. Every camp, of course, has its dispensary and place of worship. Mabese has nearly 500 lepers, Arindru 130, Ekiakpu 180, Bakiani 300, Awesi 200, including in these numbers a small proportion of outsiders coming for treatments. As these camps become built up, at least 300 more lepers are waiting to come in. Yet these five camps provide for only a fraction of the lepers in our territory. I personally visited camps near Wamba and Lubutu which have no gospel, although they do have some governmental medical supervision; and there are many, many more. As God gives the personnel, there

must be considerable extension. Once again, we cannot but praise God that He has done all this through the Moules, and now through the Scott's, with so little "official" medical knowledge. But it must also be stressed that no cases are passed out as cured without a doctor's certificate, and that the Red Cross are so satisfied with the progress that they leave us almost too much to ourselves.

The Clean Children's work and the Maternity work are in close connection, because the African girls, being trained by Winnie Davies as maternity nurses, look after the tiny tots in the Clean Children's home as part of their training. There are now 48 children, all given up by their leper parents at birth, before they have contracted the disease. There were 60, but 12 have not grown to the age where they could be passed on to Ibambi School and grow up as normal children. As I said before, lepers do not have many children, which accounts for the numbers not rising, but with the others camps on the increase, doubtless more will come in. Some money has been given for the building of a home for them in brick in place of the present mud structures, and a start is now being made. It is a joy to see these little tots happily playing around the Dawns' home, rescued from the horrible fate that might have been theirs, and being brought up to know and love and Saviour.

Winnie Davies has indeed a whole time job at the Maternity Home. On the average she helps one little life into the world a day. The women come from all around, many from completely pagan homes. They recognise the love and care they receive. The Home has a reputation far and wide. While waiting for their babies, the women do a lot in the gardens, for that is one of the usual women's occupations out here. Thus they help to increase the food production for the whole community, and, as it were, in this way, contribute a little towards their keep. Every day, they hear God's Word and some receive the Saviour. Even if they do not openly confess Christ, they always feel a link afterwards and regard their babies as belonging to us. There is a desire to open this same kind of maternity centre in other stations. Girls are sent to Miss Davies from the stations for training as maternity nurses, for which they receive a government diploma, if passed by the government doctor. One, Mrs. Moules' first girl, Anakesi, is now in charge of a baby clinic at Ibambi, and does a splendid work both in the care of children and in giving the gospel to the mothers. A problem unsolved at the present is that all the girls plan marriage as soon as their course is finished, and in many cases, do not carry out any further maternity work.

VIII.

THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION

The second half of our tour started on February 17th, when we went 50 miles to Egbita, the station among the Meje tribe, manned by Albert and Olive Moore and Hulda Martens. It was among these people that old Solomon lived and died for Christ, the old man who said at C.T. Studd's graveside in 1931 that God had told Mr. Studd to go and live among a strange people and bring them the gospel, and that he had obeyed and never returned home again; and that now, he, Solomon, was hearing God's call to do the same. He carried it out to the letter, left his own Mabudu tribe and lived 17 years among the Meje, dying on the Egbita station. He had always talked about God sending His chariot for him; but when a plane passed over and it was suggested in fun that it was for him, he said, "No, nothing like that; God will just come and whisper in my ear, 'Come Solomon.'" And so it was.

The Mejes are a populous tribe, 120,000 are crowded into a small area, but the work goes slowly among them. Much trekking has been done, but not so far with a great result. There are 12 small out-churches. About 250 were at the Conference, and God worked in some hearts, some 50 responding. Some confessed to a sleepless night under conviction. One said, "Jesus had been without, but is now within." Another who had previously been accused of sin by a blind man on the station, but had stoutly denied it, and persuaded everybody to believe that the blind brother was a liar, was broken down by the Spirit and confessed. A leader, who had quarrels with his wife and children, gathered them together to confess his wrong and pray with them. A number had restoration to make of stolen goods.

The Egbita station is a centre of special interest to the whole mission because it has been chosen for the first experiment in a Central School. A great deal is said these days on the necessity of a greatly enlarged educational programme in African missions, and on the demands of governments that missions advance their standards. Our missionaries, with one voice, are very cautious about this. They feel that we have most carefully to safeguard the reason for the existence of missions, which is to win a people to Christ and build them up in Him, and to "preach the gospel to every creature." They also feel most strongly that there is nothing in God's Word to indicate that the church is to mingle its programmes with those of the governments of this world, still less to subordinate itself to government controls, which might compel the church to maintain teachers who were not showing forth Christ in their lives, or were even preaching anti-Christian things; although we always acknowledge the right of a government to inspect any part of the work. Too often, it seems to us, missions have got hopelessly immersed in an educational or even medical programme, which simply crowds out our foremost activity – evangelism.

For these reasons, all are agreed that we should not accept any educational subsidies from the government, nor confirm to any definite government programme on education. It is really the task of the government, not the church, to give education. If they are not yet in a position to do it, or if for some reason, they are unwilling, then we are ready to give, to our own people, the amount of education that can be given without impairing our paramount responsibility – but not more than that. Thus, all our out-

churches have elementary bush schools attached to them where boys and girls learn at least to read. Then, each station has boys' and girls' schools where only those who can read are accepted from the bush schools, and, where they are taken a stage further by a five year's course in the three R's, French, geography and other subjects. As a matter of fact, when we have come to examine the official standards for education, we are surprised to find that in all subjects, except arithmetic (where a changeover had to be made to the continental system); we are actually in advance of the curriculum. These station schools are in the charge of missionaries. But, it is at this point, that we are proceeding further very cautiously. We realise that our African Christian parents would often like their children to be given advanced education by the mission. We too would be glad for any to have such education, even as we ourselves have benefited from our homeland education; but we cannot accept that as a mission responsibility. If we did, it would almost certainly lay such a burden on us that it would crowd out our foremost task. The farthest we feel it right to go is the establishment of this one Central School at Egbita, which is strictly limited to lads of about 17, who have given evidence that they really know the Lord and want to train as mission teachers. It will be a test for them, for if they went on with a full government teacher training, they could become official "moniteurs," with a considerable salary, whereas with us, they will only have a pittance paid by the church on the level of an evangelist and take on our station schools as a work for the Lord, thus relieving more of the missionaries for evangelism and Bible teaching. We realise that we shall doubtless lose some who will be pulled by the attractions of higher pay, but some will go through with God.

The Central School has been started by Miss Marjorie Cheverton, who has accepted it as a call from the Lord, although she is not a trained teacher; but once again we have seen how the Lord knows whom he will choose. God's seal has been wonderfully on her. There are 28 lads, the cream of the station schools, and all young fellows who have given evidence of loving the Lord. They simply eat up all they are taught. There is a delightful relationship between them and their "Mademoiselle" (for all the teaching is in French), and above all, there are many signs that the lads are going on with the Lord. Once again, we had surprise and encouragement when they were visited by Mr. Ohrenman, Secretary of the Congo Protestant Council, and Miss Cheverton was told that some of the lads could easily go on to the moniteur's course, which is really much above the standard at which they are supposed to be.

So far, our aim is to take on just a few picked scholars who love the Saviour and fit them for teaching in the mission schools. Of course, one thing leads to another – that is always the danger – and we already agree that we shall have to have one another school for boys who have passed out of the station schools but are not yet old enough for the Central School; maybe such a school would have an industrial emphasis about it. Such a programme would not go far enough perhaps for the liking of some, but we feel it is as far as God tells us to go. It, by no means, solves all problems. For instance, the Catholics, who well know that they have not a gospel to offer people that really changes lives, offer in its place, the attraction of a good education, and we lose children to them. But even in spite of that, we do not feel that we should be led away from concentration on our main objective and full allegiance to our original foundation as an "evangelization crusade."

From Egbita, we moved on to Kesanga, to another section of the Meje tribe, called the Bakeres. But here again, after devoted labours, months at a time, being spent in the villages by various missionaries, very little of a permanent nature is yet to be seen. The people respond, but their “goodness is as the morning cloud,” it passes away, and up to the present, there are only five churches. We spent days of blessed fellowship with the missionaries, John and Mary Burgess, Agnes Chansler and Irene James, and had the meetings on Sunday with some results. We then moved on with the Burgess’ to seek a more central site for a new station. But since then, a new decision has been made, to offer the district to another mission who are looking for room to extend and are near neighbours there, while we develop the great Lubutu area, which still needs another two or even three stations. There have been a few outstanding trophies. One is a male nurse in a coffee plantation, a man with a big influence among the people. He came to John Burgess and said, “Can you teach me the way of salvation? I have got hold of an old torn copy of the New Testament, and the fear of God and of what is coming has gripped me.” He was absolutely transformed, constantly reading the Scriptures and witnessing in his spare time in the midst of much persecution. In another village, there was a small moving of the Spirit, and although some went back, one great trophy of grace was an outstanding and educated Catholic teacher. At that time, there were only four lady missionaries in the area, and when the priests heard of it, they pointed the finger of scorn at him for joining them. “Who ever heard the truth from women?” Francois’ answer was pungent. “Well, anyhow,” he said, “how can you priests forgive sin, when you live in sin?” In their rage, they had him deported for disrespect – for not raising his hat to them! Today, he witnesses a grand confession as head clerk to a big chief. All taxes are paid to him, but before he starts the day’s work, he always has a gospel meeting with the people. He has himself composed about 20 hymns.

IX.

A MIGHTY WORK OF THE SPIRIT

Malingwia, our next port of call, is in a tribe which is the opposite of the Mejes, the Ababuas by name. Their response to the gospel has been marvellous. Our week among them was one of the most thrilling of the tour. The work is much younger, about ten years old, and the Christians seem in all the freshness of a first love. They are a most independent and fearless tribe, many of them big, burly fellows, and an official has been heard to say that if a rebellion broke out in the North Congo, it would start among the Ababuas. Some of the things we heard, and the type of people we saw, bear this out.

We started by having a two days' conference on the station with a packed church of about 500. The singing, all in parts, by the schoolchildren under an African leader, was outstanding. One song on the birth of Jesus had both words and music composed by one of the school girls. The memory repetition of Scripture was remarkable too. One man repeated the whole of Hebrews 9, that most difficult and long chapter on the Blood; another group, John 15, another, Acts 1 – an unusual selection, but it showed the Scripture was being stored in their minds. The people listened intently to the messages and it was a joy to me to be able to speak in the old Bangala without interpretation. The Spirit worked in many hearts, and the leading elder, who with others dealt personally with each, said later to us that they were "amazed" at what they heard. "Hearts of stone had been broken," he said, and we should weep if we knew what went on inside houses, when all appears well on the surface.

This elder himself, with his two brothers, is an outstanding trophy of grace and the firstfruits of the work. Great big fellows with open faces and laughs, they told us how they were supposed to be Roman Catholic teachers, yet had 13 wives between them, and were often picked up drunk on the road. The Word first reached their hearts through a Scripture Gift Mission booklet, "The Way of Salvation," in Bangala, which was handed to them once when Mr. Scholes was passing in his car. "The Catholics," he said, "only showed us Christ with His legs crossed on a crucifix, but they never told us a word about the power of the Blood." Then he added, "The officials beat us with the whip, but we went straight out and did the same things again; there was no change. But this wonderful gospel does what the white man's whip could never do!"

At Malingwia, they have one unusual method with the school boys. Instead of housing them in a compound, the believers themselves suggested "adopting" them in their own homes on the station. This they do, each couple taking as many as they are led to, and looking after them as their own for the Lord. It seems to be very successful. They take the small girls also, but the older ones have their compound.

The remainder of the week was spent in three bush conferences in three main centres among the Ababuas. First we went with Bobbie and Ivy Milliken and Miss Ellen Shaw, who are the workers in the tribe, 60 miles to an out-church called Pamia. We had an example there of another kind of bright light in the Church of Christ, a kind which is shining all over our area. These are the unpaid, non-professional Christian leaders. They are really equivalent to and better than many evangelists. In fact, they really are evangelists, but we have kept that name for those who are set aside by the church and paid by them for whole time service. These other brethren all go for a six month's

training course to one or other of the stations, and then return to their own villages. Here they do the ordinary work of a villager, the cotton garden, and work for the chief and so on, but, in addition, they build a church and school, teach the children to read, and hold the week-day and Sunday services, expounding the Word to the people. Often, also, they go evangelising in their own area. This brother, for instance, to whose place we had now come, has opened five churches along a neighbouring road. These men are really the “backbone” of the Church of Christ. We usually call them “zamu” (guardian) or “motala” (elder). There are several hundred of these in the work.

The brother at Pamia, for instance, Bati, by name, is an ex-soldier. I don't think you could have a place kept more perfectly to the glory of the Lord. There is a spotless white-washed resthouse, so nice that the government official stays in it in preference to the official one and has called in the local chief and told him that this is how a house ought to be kept. The church the same, and the whole compound spotless. The people here brought us a love gift of 70 eggs, a goat, chickens, rice, bananas, and tomatoes and would not take a penny for it. About 150 gathered for the meetings. The testimonies of two women were typical. One was constantly drinking and fighting, and would take a stick or knife to her husband. The gospel was not for her she said, until one day, when she was brewing her liquor; lighting struck the pot and smashed it. It was God's voice to her and for eight years she and her husband have been out and out for the Lord. The other woman was distilling in the forest when her baby fell into the boiling stuff. She carried it home, all raw and dead. She thought her relatives would kill her, according to custom, and they talked of doing so. In desperation, she took two bottles of the raw spirits and decided to go and drink herself to death. As she did so, a dream came to her. She saw sheep on one side and goats on another, and a figure in the middle who called to her and said her child was not in sorrow or death; then she saw her babe all shining and grown up as a lovely young man; and the voice said: “If you leave the old company and enter the new, you will see your child again; if not, there is hell” – and she saw a pit behind her. She went straight to the evangelists and was gloriously saved.

From Pamia we moved to an out-church on a side road, 50 miles away, Agametu, by name. Here, the church was too small and they had made the usual outside shelter on a hill side, with a lovely view across the forest-clad valley. Again, there were enthusiastic meetings with about 125 present. A storm blew the outside awning down, so we had to crowd into the small church. There were more grand testimonies. One woman said, “No more bad throats through spirits and smoke; our husbands do not lay hands us to beat us; we do not get disease through our sin.” A man said he was “the slave of women.” Other men's wives were like animals for his use; if his wife said anything he disliked, he would put his hands on her to strangle her; but now he had the life of God and is “the slave of Christ” through the power of the Blood. He was an old man, he said, but does not sit still; he goes about “like birds flying” to teach people. Another said, “This is what the gospel has done for us: it has enabled us to look death in the face, and you know what death used to do to us.” Yet another commented, “It is only the gospel which has saved this tribe from fighting the white man – and the white man would not have won! How great is its power in our hearts!” They had their own way of saying “Hallelujah!” here, with their hands above their heads and clapping them together.

Our last bush conference was not in the bush, but in an unusual place, a trading centre, at Bambisa. I had not before seen a church and school right among the shops,

with a Portuguese trader living opposite, for these trading centres are usually sinks of iniquity. This one was no exception, till the leading African shop man was saved. What a character! Great strapping fellow, godless and fearless. Once a white official had come with 12 police to give him a whipping for his lawless behaviour, but he drew a knife and said to the official, "Come and give it me yourself, and if you do, you will get this in your bowels." He got no thrashing! What a change now! "I had," he said, "the heart of a beast." But, though an evil-living man with a wife and seven concubines, he wanted children and had none. One day he was given a New Testament. He could not read, but had heard God answers prayer, so he opened the book and asked for children. That night in a dream, a man stood by him and said, "You are heard. You will have two children, a girl and a boy, and after that many children." And so it came to pass. The girl and boy were born, and he began to seek God in earnest. When Mr. Milliken came that way, he spoke to him and said, "I must have God." "Then you must give up your concubines." "Certainly," he said, "but I must have God." "And the Blood came," he went on, "and killed things for me. Adultery, shame, wine, all went. Can anything else do that? Only the Blood of Jesus." When he told us this, we were in the church with about 100 believers, and he looked round on them and said, "And here are my many children."!

X.

OLD FRIENDS

We are now journeying on more familiar ground to me, in our visits to the last three centres, and the oldest: Poko, Niangara and Nala. From Malingwia to Poko is 130 miles, and we began to leave behind the forest for the first time and travel through grasslands, the African savannah, much more open, but much less beautiful and more sparsely populated. Poko was reached on March 10th to the accompaniment of the usual warm welcome with arches of palm branches and flowers, and a turn-out of the whole station family of several hundreds, with the missionaries, Vernon and Mrs. Willson, David and Anne Davies, and our old friend and co-worker, with whom Pauline and I had first travelled out in 1919, Miss Lilian Dennis. It was a great joy, too, to meet one or two of our old African friends, now leaders in the work of God, Baruti, the ex-hunter, now the “bishop” of the whole large territory; Twakali, the brother with the big laugh, now head African on the station, and a few others. We had much blessing in the meetings and a work of the Spirit in many hearts. About 500 were present from the 30 to 40 out-churches, somewhat fewer than usual because the planting season had started. Twakali’s wife, Rebecca, now in charge of the girls’ school, told the people not only of her conversion, but how she felt the need of being filled with the Spirit and how she had cried to God. “I saw in the Book of God that if we want and ask, we get; and God gave me His Holy Spirit”; and her life and ministry bears out all she said, Mrs. Willson told me. A brother, who said that he so loved wine that he could never resist the wine drum when he heard it beating in a village, told also how, since God had filled him with the Spirit, if someone brings wine to him, it now even smells foul to him, like dung.

On several stations, we met with men who had physical disabilities which they were conquering in the power of the Spirit. At Wamba, there was a crippled evangelist, who went about in a kind of wheelbarrow, and was pushed everywhere preaching the gospel. Here at Poko is a remarkable blind man, Batimai (Bartimaeus – all the blind Christians take that name!) He walked 70 miles to the Conference and will walk the 70 miles back, led by a stick held by another man. He goes about the villages quite on his own and is a fearless witness. He had his books with him, hymn book and New Testament, and he has so memorised both hymns and Scripture passages that folks who don’t know, think he is reading them.

I attended my first Young Warriors meeting here, led by the young people themselves, under the general charge of Ann Davies. No one may belong who had not a testimony to conversion. Mrs. Davies tells me that out of this one band (which was originally started by Mr. and Mrs. Scholes some years back as a Christian Endeavour); fourteen are now in the Lord’s service. But at the same time I heard from David Davies of the terrible temptations even the school boys are subjected to when they go on holiday to their heathen villages. God gave a move of the Spirit among the boys during the visit, and Mr. Davies then discovered that among the 60 dealt with, 75 per cent, had committed fornication in their villages, and 90 per cent confessed to drinking, besides lying and thieving. Only the miracle of the power of the Holy Ghost can keep boy or girl pure in the Congo.

A hundred miles through the grassland took us to Niangara, the capital town of the Welle Province, and a stronghold of Romanism. It was here, the geographical heart of Africa that Mr. Studd and Alfred Buxton landed on their first journey in 1914, and established our first centre. It was a thrill again to stand by the banks of the quietly flowing Welle River on the spot where they disembarked from the canoe, and where the first house, which they named "Buckingham Palace," was built at the cost of £8. Yet the work at Niangara has never prospered, and after all these 36 years, neither on the station nor in the district are there permanent churches. There have been in the past, but they have not continued. There are, however, more encouraging signs from among the townspeople. Eric and Daisy Smith, who with Ruth Dyer are carrying on the work, both spoke encouragingly, especially of the work among the women. There are a few who really know the Lord. There were about 200 at the meetings and a number were broken down by the Spirit. Indeed, we heard of more tears shed here than anywhere, when the evangelists were dealing personally with those who came to get right. One woman was in tears because she "went for" her small son and that put a barrier in between her and her husband. He too was broken because, when he got angry with the boy for a habit he had of putting his fingers to his lips, he stuck a needle into his fingers. A fresh start has now been made in forming an indigenous African Church from among the believers.

The last week of our tour was spent at Nala, place of many memories and spiritual ups and downs. The first baptisms were here, in 1916, commemorated by each bringing up a large stone from the river and making a heap, like the children of Israel when they had crossed the Jordan. The first great Christian, who might be called the African father of the work, Baragueni, was from Nala, and is now with the Lord. The first evangelists went out from Nala, and here the first translations of the Scriptures were made by Alfred Buxton. Nala had its lean years, but God gave a mighty revival a few years back under the ministry of Ellen Shaw and Mary Allison (now Mrs. Burgess). The work of the Spirit has continued under Hubert and Mrs. English, helped by Aubrey and Hulda Brown. Every chieftom has its out-church, about 40 in number, and some very fine. At the week-end conference, there were about 800, which are considerably fewer than usual, owing to the planting season. It was a special encouragement to also to meet with some of the leaders of past days who had backslidden and for whom there had been much prayer. They had not then the written Word, as they have now, and it was easy for them in their midnight darkness to be deceived into thinking that this was some kind of white man's religion and not God's word in Christ to their own hearts, with the result that many of those earliest converts ran well for a time and then fell by the wayside through sin or worldliness. But it was a great joy to contact several and find that the true seed had been sown long ago and that they either had got right with God or were ready to, particularly Ongoro, the outstanding Meje evangelist of the past, who had been a brother to me. We also visited Ezeno, who had been for years with Mr. Studd and Alfred Buxton, and was the leading Christian in the work when Mr. Studd died. He is of the royal line among the Bazandes, his father being the famous old Chief Gamu. He made the critical choice about 20 years ago when offered a chieftainship by the government, and he turned it down for it the lowly pathway of the Cross and poverty as an evangelist. He has now become one of the greatest chiefs in the area, most highly thought of by the officials, very efficient and very wealthy. The usual temptations have overcome him, and he now has about 14 wives. Yet he thoroughly backs up all gospel work among his people, and has a

number of churches and evangelists, and makes no secret of his own faith. He gave us the warmest of welcomes with tears in his eyes and entertained us with the best of everything. It was easy to see his royalty, efficiency, and the obvious respect in which he is held. We talked privately with him far in to the night and he faced again his adulterous life. Next morning he gave us a public meeting in his courthouse, with about 250 of his people present. There was an atmosphere of close attention and response that one would seldom get in a godless chief's courthouse. I was led to appeal right out for those who were not ashamed to own their Lord publicly. About twenty arose one by one and gave a little word of confession of Christ. Then without warning, from his chief's seat, Chief Ezeno spoke to his people and confessed himself as one who had got far away from God and wanted to return, and asked prayer that God would give him strength to put wrong things right. It was a great word before all his important people and his own womenfolk. I have not heard whether he had really taken steps to remove his unlawful "wives"; but God is merciful and gracious and heard that confession and prayer.

At Nala, as at other places, we had a baptism in the river – some twenty who had previously been tested by the African church leaders and proved the reality of their faith both by confession and life. The baptism was truly African, in the beautiful setting, almost idyllic, of the Nala river, quite narrow, waist deep, and on both the sloping banks all the green luxuriance of clumps of bamboos and forest vegetation. Silhouetted against this brilliant green background were the mass of black faces and bodies of the African congregation, perhaps 300 of them, gathered on both banks, and along the tree trunk which formed the bridge. The baptism was performed by African elders. Little has been said in this report of baptism or the Lord's Supper, although they were held on every station throughout our visit; but it has been for a deliberate reason. We believe that it is all too easy to lay an undue stress on them. All the concentration of the New Testament is on Christ on the Cross and in the heart of the believer. It is *He*, the living Saviour and Lord, not the symbols of water, bread or wine that really matter. Also, we have learned, through long experience, the tragedy of the mission field, where results are tabulated and published according to the numbers baptised, which are only too far from the numbers who are living members of the Body. We fell into that error ourselves in earlier days. As a result, we say little about baptism, lest any should think (as they so easily do), that it is salvation. If any ask (not are asked), for baptism, then if their new birth in Christ is patent to all, they are quietly baptised simply in obedience to God's Word; in the same way the Lord's Supper is eaten with the believers.

XI.

AFRICAN LEADERS OF THE AFRICAN CHURCH

And so, after a happy and blessed week at Nala, in which again God worked in many hearts, we returned the 60 miles to Ibambi.

The consummation of the visit was, two weeks later, first the African Leaders' Conference, to which they invited all the missionaries for the last two days. Some 150 church leaders, evangelists and their wives were present, only transport and accommodation difficulties prevented twice that number coming. This was the first time in the Mission's history that the African leaders and missionaries had met in a conference arranged and led by the Africans. It was a great step forward, and the fellowship together showed the readiness and eagerness of the church to recognise and accept its full responsibilities as a New Testament Church. At the same time, they made it abundantly clear to us that they loved the missionaries as their fathers and mothers in the faith, and still wholeheartedly felt the need of them, but now more in the capacity of elder brethren in Christ. They, by no means, felt that the time had come, or was anywhere near, for the missionaries to feel that their task was done; they are needed for Bible instruction, translation, educational and medical services, advance evangelism, and many another thing. It also has to be remembered that while the government gives, thank God, full liberty to all missionary work, they would, by no means, yet give the same liberties to the activities of a purely African church unsponsored by a missionary society. A bond, therefore, was recognised on a new level of brotherhood and equality between missionary and African leader; and the missionaries rejoiced to feel that the burden for souls and the care of all the churches, which has been heavy on our hearts all these years, is now being laid more than ever, by the Holy Ghost, upon our African brethren, that they will be the ones now who will never rest while there are still chiefdoms, areas, tribes with no permanent witness among them, and there still are many such: the ones to weep over the backslider, to be at the beck and call of the needy, to be servants to, not Lords over, God's heritage.

The missionaries' conference, fifty of us, was a wonderful time in the presence of God. Unity, liberty, freedom of discussion, yet ease of decision, freshness of vision, and above, all a face to face meeting with Him characterised every meeting of every day. Much grace was given Mr. Scholes in the guidance of the conference. Perhaps the two outstanding words from God to our hearts concerning the progress of the work were first, the agreement that the time had come to appoint a few African brethren of long spiritual standing to be what is really the equivalent of bishops, each to be responsible for the pastoral oversight of an area, yet such appointments to be carefully safeguarded against the erroneous idea of final authority in the hands of an episcopate. We hold firmly to the Scriptural standard of the full and final independence of each local church to arrange its affairs as God leads, in conformity with the Scriptures. The appointments will be made first in four or five of the older districts by the choice of the churches. These brethren will be set apart by the laying on of hands, and the missionaries will work in full and equal cooperation with them. Their names will be published among the missionary staff in our home end magazines.

The second special word from God was to call us to make a final effort to complete the evangelization of certain areas not yet reached, or, if reached, by a very occasional visit, not yet occupied. There are several such, and moves are being made at once to enter the largest. The missionaries are also looking thankfully to reinforcements now in training in the homeland, and also believing that the Lord is going to lay on the African Church a new sense of its own immediate responsibility, not just to keep existing churches going, but above all, to reach these unreached peoples. New stations will be needed in the south, probably on both sides of the Lualaba River; there are also specific areas in the Bomili and Malingwia districts. Besides these, which need definite new advance, there are a number of chiefdoms and headmen's lands, a considerable number, which have, as yet, no occupation, often because there has been no lasting response.

“Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised.” I return to the homeland with a stronger confirmation than I have ever had in my life of the simple fact that the gospel of Christ *is* the power of God unto salvation. I knew the heart of Africa in its days of total darkness; now I have seen the marvellous transformations, not of the outward – clothes, education, money – but of what clothes and cash, and the laws of the state, can never produce; the heart made pure through the blood of Christ, the evil habits destroyed, the life lived in the love and beauty of the Spirit in the happy service of God and man. “The Heart of Africa Mission,” as it was originally called, is the mother field of the W.E.C., God's pattern, we believe, for all those younger fields, now twenty in number, to which God has sent our fellow-Crusaders; and with what confidence and joy in the Holy Ghost we look expectantly to Him to erect this same holy building of God, houses not made with hands, in every land.

The End.