



**FROM
MULE
BACK**

**TO
SUPER
JET**

**WITH THE
GOSPEL**

**BY
MARSHALL
KEEBLE**

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PREFACE

Marshall Keeble's long-dreamed-about missionary trip to the Holy Land and Africa has become a reality. This event was wonderful and exciting in every respect—in fact, almost unbelievable. We were completely keyed up to it from the start. God prepared and blessed us in numerous ways. Many friends were backing us with money and earnest prayers; our families were standing with and supporting us, as they always have, and were willing for us to be absent from them in order to make together this great missionary journey. It seemed almost that God had planned this trip, and I am most grateful for the opportunity it afforded me as his co-worker.

For Brother Keeble it was almost out of due season in that he was eighty-two years of age, but his strength was superb and in every way his energy abounded. He wanted to do this work and was always sure that God was with him. He climbed the hills of old Judea and Jerusalem and moved through Africa with the stamina of a man in the prime of life. He saw visions that will last as long as life.

I wish you could have been with us as we traveled, visited, and worked. What a privilege the sights and sounds and emotions of the trip were for both of us. There are but few people who can boast of a life which has spanned as many years as Marshall Keeble's, and yet, at the same time be filled with so many rich experiences.

This was Brother Keeble's greatest missionary journey for the Lord, and he has made many journeys. On this trip he preached with great power. His influence was felt and it will live on in Africa, as he now has sons and daughters in the Gospel in that far away land, and through them the work of our Lord will continue.

His interest and desire to return to Africa are so keen that we are planning a return trip. This zeal for lost humanity and his determination to carry out the Great Commission of the Master, have in my mind and in the minds of untold thousands, made Marshall Keeble one of the truly great servants of God.

With great joy the experiences had by Brother Keeble on this

journey have been written, and he hopes you will find much pleasure in this narrative. May it cause you to have a great increase of faith to use the jet age to God's glory in advancing his kingdom in every nation of the world.

LUCIEN PALMER

TO:

My wife, Laura Keeble and to all the people who made this missionary journey possible.

“I will remember the works of the Lord: Surely I will remember thy wonders of old. —Who is so great a God as our God?”

PSALMS 77: 11, 13.

To Him Be All The Praise

MARSHALL KEEBLE

FROM MULE BACK TO SUPER JET

With the Gospel

In the summer of 1960, my good friends all over the country sent me on a missionary journey to Africa with Lucien Palmer. This was an unbelievable experience to me. Since going on this trip into foreign lands, I am strengthened spiritually, and I can never thank my friends enough for what it has meant to me. It is a long way from Mule Back, the way I rode when I was a boy in Marshall County, to traveling by Super Jet, the way we went in 1960. I was never in a jet before, and it looked as if we were on our way to meet Him right then. There were 165 people in that big super jet plane.

I came back from my trip full of new experiences. And yet some of them felt like old experiences to me. When I saw those women in Bethlehem carrying water on their heads in earthen jars, it took me back to the times I saw my mother walking tall with a bucket on her head; bringing back water from the spring down below the meetinghouse on Jackson Street in Nashville, Tennessee, where I worship.

One of the most wonderful things about this missionary journey was the chance it gave me to visit the Holy Land—the place the maps call Jordan and Israel. It's holy because that's the place where the Savior was born and lived and died for us. It was a marvelous thing to be able to walk the streets of Bethany and Jerusalem where He walked. All my life when I read about those places, I imagined just how it was. They were real to me. But now that I have gone and seen them for myself, they are even more real. I have been there. And I want you to know about some of the places Brother Palmer and I saw and the things that happened to us.

The first stop we made was London. We landed there on the Lord's Day in time for worship. We started looking for the church and when we found it, it was a small church; and to my surprise, one of the boys who graduated from my own Nashville Christian

Institute was helping to lead in that assembly. The Army had him over there, but he was also using his opportunity to work in the church of our Lord.

The brethren from the church at Aylesbury showed us all over London. We saw everything. We saw London Bridge, the Tower of London and the Queen's House—Buckingham Palace. It was a big square house with a fence around it. And every day at 11:30 there is the Changing of the Guard. These men—dressed up in red coats and big hats that came almost over their eyes—ride up on horses to take over their duties for the afternoon from the guards who have been there all morning. Those were smart horses. They looked like they had more sense than their riders.

We saw Big Ben on top of the Parliament Building. You're never the same after you've seen and heard Big Ben. We saw many interesting things in London. It was very odd to see all of the drivers going on the wrong side of the street. Our visit to England would not have been complete without seeing No. 10 Downing Street, Westminster Abbey, Piccadilly Square and Scotland Yard.

After we left London we flew to Paris. The missionaries there gave us a moving and kind reception. I preached one night in Paris, and I was glad to meet the brethren there, and see the good work they are doing.

In Paris, one of the strange things was the sidewalk cafes. I never thought I would eat at one of those places—eat right out on the sidewalk—and they charged us extra for eating outdoors. We visited many places in Paris and I especially liked Arc De Triumphe, the Eiffel Tower and the Palace of Versailles —this palace cost eighty million dollars.

Then we went to Rome, Italy. We met with the church in Rome, and there I preached with an interpreter for the first time. He was the fifteen-year-old son of a colonel in our armed forces stationed in Italy. This family is very zealous for the church. The young man made me feel comfortable, since boys have been a specialty of mine for so many years.

Rome is one of the most interesting and historical cities in the world. It has been the center of the Roman Catholic faith for

almost two thousand years. But I know that the law was to have gone out of Zion, and the Gospel of the Lord was to have gone forth from Jerusalem.

In Rome, the missionary's wife showed us around. She took us to the old Mamertine Church, built on the location of the prison where Paul was held while he awaited his execution. The dungeon is a circular room fifteen feet in diameter and under twenty-two feet of solid stone. Here is where Paul wrote Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, and other letters to the young churches. "Brother Keeble," someone asked me, "How did you know it was the prison where Paul was?" When I bought a ticket to Rome, how did I know I was going to Rome? They said the ticket was to Rome. How do you know you are a Christian? Paul said, "If any man love God, the same is known." Again he said, "I would not have you ignorant," and "These things are written that you might *know*." And I felt that I was standing in the dungeon of the man who wrote those things to the churches at Colosse, Ephesus, Philippi, and other cities. Paul was a knowing Christian. He said, "I know in whom I believe." There was no doubt in his mind, and why should I doubt that this is the place?

We also saw St. Peter's Cathedral and Vatican City, the home of the Pope. His Palace has one thousand one hundred rooms. The thing that impressed me most about St. Peter's Cathedral was the large bronze statue of the Apostle Peter. He was in a sitting position, and the tourists have literally kissed off his big toe. I am wondering what Peter would have said about this, since he said to the man who fell down to worship him, "Stand up, for I myself am a man."

I was moved when I entered the Colosseum, and my thoughts turned to the many Christians who met death, for their faith, when thrown to wild beasts. The catacombs, the underground caves where many early Christians lived and worshipped, were another reminder of those tragic times under Roman rulers. The old Roman Wall, the Road to the South and the Roman Forum also point to the destruction of this once powerful and rich kingdom.

We were especially interested in the areas where the 1960 Olympic Games were to be held, since a young lady from Tennessee—a student at A & I State College here in Nashville—was to compete in the meet. (She won.)

One of the strange things in Italy is the way they tell time. The clocks run from midnight to midnight, or from one to twenty-four hours. It sounded very strange to ask the time of day and have them answer, “Seventeen minutes to thirteen, or, “Our plane will leave at fourteen forty-five o’clock for Cairo, Egypt.”

In Cairo we ate our breakfast on the balcony of the Hotel Semaramis, looking out over the Nile River. We had time in Cairo to see the museum where there is a great collection of things which were found in King Tut's tomb—all the things the early Egyptian thought he needed for his trip into the other world. These things are more than fourteen hundred years older than the time of Christ and are very interesting. I didn't doubt that these were the things buried with King Tut. I think the man who doubts these things is looking for an excuse to doubt.

Soon we left Cairo for Beirut, Lebanon. We were only there overnight but we had a beautiful view of the Mediterranean Sea from our hotel window. The next morning we set out by car for Jerusalem, a distance of about two hundred or two hundred fifty miles south. We passed through the cities of Damascus and Ammon and Jericho. The thought of the road to Damascus just overwhelmed me because that was the road where Paul heard our Lord and was struck blind. That is where Paul's whole life was changed.

The road to Damascus and the Jericho Road made me feel so overcome with joy that I could walk these roads I had read about so often. Most of this was hilly dry land and I came to understand what our Lord meant when He said, “I will not leave thee desolate.” There were white houses on the hillsides as well as many tents and cave openings and quite a few apple trees. At one place on the road we saw a camel so loaded that he looked like a walking haystack. We saw many people riding donkeys, and otherwise living much as the people lived in Jesus' time. Camels

and donkeys are used extensively with farming as well as other types of work. The members of the famed Royal Jordanian Camel Corps patrol the desert areas of the country on camel back, safeguarding the land from intruders.

The only way to go inside of Old Jerusalem is to go to Lebanon, as we did, and go from Beirut. If you go to Israel first, which is most direct and most natural, you are barred from going into the Old City and the Holy Land. The hatred between Jews and Arabs, who hold Jordan and the Old City of Jerusalem, is so great that there is no traffic from Israel, although the Israeli border cuts across part of the New City of Jerusalem. Many tourists have been disappointed by trying to enter the Holy Land and Jerusalem through Israel, only to be barred at the very gates of the Old City.

We made the trip from Beirut to Jerusalem by car, passing many large mountains, one of the most famous being Mt. Hermon. Much of the country was dry and desolate and our impression along the way was rocks, rocks, rocks. There were immigration and custom offices as we passed from Lebanon to Syria and from Syria to Jordan in our car. We saw many Arab refugees, and were impressed by the conditions of the people generally, which showed that many of them were still living under conditions much as they must have been in the first century. One of the really touching things was to see the refugee camps. These Arabs had come out of Israel by the thousands when the Jews took over that country.

Around Jericho, in the rich Jordan valley, we saw many trucks loaded with oranges, bananas and other fruits. This territory is famous for its fruits and vegetables.

As we neared Jerusalem, I was moved to discover how clearly the Bible records the geography of the region. It is all just the way the Bible describes it. When the Bible says *east*, it means east; and when it says *west* it means west. If it says *up*, it means up, and if it says *down*, it means down. Going *down* to Jericho is downhill all the way from Jerusalem. And you go *up* to Jerusalem just the way the Bible says. Anyone who knows a thing about God's geography knows he is *there*!

When we got to Jerusalem, we couldn't find the church. In fact, we realized the church was not there. We lamented this greatly. We knew of plans to establish the work on the Israeli side in the near future; but couldn't help thinking how sad it is that no missionary was planning to come and settle in Jordan. Brother Palmer and I had our worship service alone. Both of us were moved to tears as we remembered the death of our Lord while we worshipped in the Old City.

We stayed at the American Colony Hotel, and our guide was Mahmoud Khamis, a Moslem. He is well-known for his ability as a guide and for his good knowledge of the Bible. He studied English at the University of Jerusalem and speaks five languages well. His service as interpreter for Arabs and Americans in both world wars has also helped to develop his unusual ability to hold the interest of any tourist who visits his country. He was particularly attentive to us; especially, I think, because he had received a telephone call from the States about us. Even though he had guided many famous Americans, such as Adlai Stevenson, he had never talked long-distance by telephone to America, about visitors who were coming. We felt as if we had received the finest guided tour this dedicated guide had ever given.

I have been asked if I could understand any of the languages in the Holy Land. No. But I was interested in finding out about the language our Lord spoke. It was Aramaic. I understood the language of the Lord better when I learned that the word we translate "uttermost" in the Bible is the Aramaic word for "speck." I see now more clearly what the Lord meant when He said the Gospel was to begin in Jerusalem, then to Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth. As long as there is one little speck of the world which has not heard about our Lord, we have work to do. Sadly I realized more fully how negligent we have been in doing this command of our Lord, to carry the gospel to every speck of the earth.

In Jerusalem you literally walk by faith. We walked the streets He walked, and saw the things He saw. There were many things which I am sure were exactly as they were in Jesus' day. We saw

people riding on donkeys like the one He rode into Jerusalem a short time before His crucifixion And we saw men carrying water in goat skins slung across their backs We saw the old walls that marked the location of Solomon's temple.

One of the most sacred spots near Jerusalem is the Mount of Olives. This is a large rounded hill about a mile long, outside the gates of Jerusalem. It is separated from the city by the deep, narrow Kidron Valley, which is also known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The Bible speaks of it as a "Sabbath day's journey" from Jerusalem. This is where Jesus went in the evening to pray, when other people went to their homes. You remember He said, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Luke 9:58). Then, Luke 21:37 tells us that, "in the daytime, Jesus was teaching in the temple and at night He went out and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives."

It was from the little Village of Bethpage on top of the Mountain that Jesus rode the borrowed colt down the slope and into the city of Jerusalem. After the Lord's Supper in the upper room, Jesus and the eleven went out to the Mount of Olives. Brother Palmer and I walked all over this mountain, because we wanted to be sure that we were stepping in His steps; and we felt very close to our Lord there.

At the foot of the mountain is the Garden of Gethsemane. Here he prayed in agony while his disciples fell asleep. We saw the large, flat rock where Peter, James and John are said to have slept while he prayed. There are many old olive trees in the garden. These trees are twisted and hollowed with age, but they still bear fruit, reminding everyone who looks at them that one never gets too old to bear fruit for the Lord. And it was here that Judas came and placed the kiss of betrayal on his cheek, which was the signal to take him. Thirty pieces of silver—approximately fifteen dollars—is mighty cheap to sell the Lord, but sometimes we sell him for much less.

Jesus' tomb is near here, and his ascension took place somewhere on the Mount of Olives. So this mountain is

connected with our Lord in very special ways. As we walked over its slopes and in the garden of Gethsemane, I relived all those events in his life. Climbing those slopes was hard for an old man, but I did not want to miss a step of it. It was a most moving experience, and it is impossible to tell you what it is like and how I felt.

In one of the mosques at the top of the Mount of Olives the attendants took off our shoes and we went inside. This mosque, like all of the others, had no furnishings or seats of any kind. Mohammedans when worshipping sit on the floor oriental style, or kneel. The fixtures and decorations are most elaborate--gold ceilings, gold chandeliers, colored glass and beautiful mosaic. Our guide took out his prayer rug and knelt facing Mecca. The Moslems are a very devout people, and five times a day they are called to prayer by their priests, who go up into tall towers all over the city of Jerusalem to call the faithful to prayer.

When our guide had finished praying to Allah, I asked him if I could pray too, and he said I could. How happy I was to pray to God, through the blessed name of Jesus, in this fine old mosque. When I finished, I could see he was greatly moved, for there were tears in his eyes.

The top of the Mount of Olives gives a fine view of the City of Jerusalem, looking across the Valley of Jehoshaphat. From here we looked toward the West and saw where Joshua stood and commanded the sun and moon to stand still that there might be more time for him to win a victory on the battlefield of his God. This is where Jesus stood and made His lament for Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23: 37.)

From the Mount of Olives it is possible to see many of the landmarks inside the walls of the Old City, such as the "Dome of the Rock." This Dome looms over the city. It is part of one of the two Arab mosques on the grounds where the temple of Solomon

once stood. Inside one of these is “The Rock.” This is nothing more than the top of Mt. Moriah. The top of this particular mountain projects itself into the center area of the mosque, and over it is the Dome of the Rock. It was on Moriah that Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son, Isaac.

The west wall of the Temple was for centuries the wailing place of the Jews. To a Jew the greatest joy was to be able to worship in the Temple area. But they were shut out by the Arabs, who controlled the area. So each Friday from 2:00 P.M. until late at night the Jews came to weep for the Temple which had been destroyed, and to pray for the coming of the Messiah, and the reestablishment of Jerusalem. This old wall was as near as they could come, and they leaned against it and wept. Today the Wailing Wall is silent, because there is not a single living Jew in the entire old city of Jerusalem.

On Friday, our guide took us to visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which is built on the hill believed to be Calvary. We began by going to the House of Caiaphas and to Pilate’s hall. Climbing the many steps leading from the courtyard of Caiaphas’ house to the hall where Jesus was tried was hard for an eighty-two year old man, so Brother Palmer asked me if I wanted to stop and rest. But I wanted to continue on—I wanted to feel the steps of the Lord as he went to his trial. It was most impressive. There on those steps, near where Peter denied his Lord. It was a painful thing to examine myself, and to ask if I would have been any more loyal to my Lord than was Peter.

We left the spot where Jesus was tried, spat upon and crowned with thorns, and we took the path which led to Calvary. The priests were making their regular Friday march along this path—the path which Jesus took to his crucifixion, carrying his own cross. This is called the *Via Dolorosa*, or way of sorrow. Walking slowly in this sad procession, we thought of the many sufferings which our Lord endured before He was finally nailed to the cross and lifted up.

I don’t think I would have been able to bear to relive these things in my heart if I had not remembered Jesus’ own words:

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”
There is power in the old gospel.

We had the privilege of going into the grave where Christ was laid—into the tomb where my Savior lay. I asked if I could pray, and I prayed. I stood there and cried. It was a powerful feeling something I can’t explain. This vine-covered tomb in a garden was the most impressive thing we saw in Jerusalem. Somehow, we felt that this was the place.

Bethany is a short trip outside of Jerusalem beyond the Mount of Olives. This is where Jesus often stayed in the home of His friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus. A church has been built over the site of their simple home. It was to Bethany that Jesus came when He was weary of the crowds. I am happy that I went into this home from which Mary and Martha ran to him, to meet Him after their brother Lazarus was dead. I was glad to go there and see the grave where Lazarus was buried. Jesus called to him. And how did he call him? By his name—“Lazarus, come forth.” (And that’s the way he calls his church, by his name.)

What a thrilling experience it was to stand in the identical spot and relive in my mind the very scene that the Bible plainly declares took place here! I wish you could have been there too.

The home of Simon, the leper, was also at Bethany. It was here the woman washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, dried them with her hair and anointed his feet with precious ointment.

Bethany is also on the road to Jericho. A little farther along the same road, halfway between Jericho and Jerusalem we came to the Inn of the Good Samaritan which recalls Jesus’ parable of the man who fell among thieves. And we saw the caves where robbers used to hide, waiting for the unprotected traveler to come along.

On this same road is a sycamore tree, the traditional place where Jesus told Zacchaeus to “Come down.” And he calls us to come down too. We must be humble. That servant, who would be great in his kingdom, must be least, and servant of all.

Near Jericho is the place where Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan. The Mountains of Temptation are here, too, where our

Lord spent forty days fasting and praying after His baptism. When we came to this spot on the river, we saw people dipping up water and putting it in bottles to take back home. We just hope and pray that these people know the Word of the Lord has recorded *why* John was baptizing at this place—“because there was much water there.”

The Jordan flows into the Dead Sea. We went around on the south side where we saw the openings of the caves where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. I was interested to learn that one of the leaders of this expedition was from Dyersburg, Tennessee. The guide and I sat on a small covered pavilion looking out over the Dead Sea, while Brother Palmer went swimming.

There is no river in the entire world surrounded by so many sacred memories as the River Jordan, especially at the spot where Old Jericho stood. Moses stopped on the east side of the Jordan when he left Egypt. Here is where Moses handed over the staff of leadership to Joshua. And here also is where Joshua took the city of Jericho with his armies and his trumpets.

This is where the conquest of Canaan began. Near here Moses died on the top of Mt. Pisgah. The lives of both Elisha and Elijah are associated with the River Jordan. Saul was made king here. God allowed battles to be fought in these surrounding plains which decided the course of the lives of His chosen people. Here is where John the Baptist preached his first sermon. And above all, it is where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptizer. Some of Jesus' disciples were called to follow him at this location. The guide pointed out many sacred sites, and each time he would say, “This is the traditional place,” or “This is the traditional spot.” I wondered why he kept saying traditional, and then I remembered that he was a Moslem, and not a follower of Christ. Through the use of the word traditional, the devil was trying to sow doubt in the hearts of them that heard him. The devil works in many ways to destroy our faith, but I know that our God is able to preserve and keep those places, that we might be encouraged. I'm just as sure that I walked where Jesus walked, as I am that he is now at God's right hand making intercession for those who trust him.

When we visited Bethlehem, of course we wanted to see the place of our Savior's birth. The Church of the Nativity has been built over the stable where Jesus was born. It is one of the oldest churches in existence. My memories of the simple manger, which the Bible says was where Jesus was laid when he was born, overshadowed the gold and jeweled decorations that man has added here. There is a Silver Star set in the marble floor of the church. Through a hole in the center of this star you can see the original rock floor of the stable. I was reminded of the Star of the East which led the wise men here. And I thought of Christ's people, living stones in His kingdom. What a thrilling day—for me to be in Bethlehem. How I was filled with joy to be in the very cradle of Christianity, where Christ, the Word of God, became flesh and dwelt among men.

Bethlehem is a few miles south of Jerusalem. Only a little farther south of Bethlehem is the city of Hebron, associated with Abraham and the Old Testament fathers. Hebron is one of the oldest cities in the world, and I did not doubt this one bit after being there. On the outskirts of Hebron are the Oaks of Mamre, where Abraham pitched his tents and where he bought a family burial place. Can you imagine how I felt when I stood under the Oaks of Mamre and thought that here or near here, the angels announced to Abraham that he should have a son named Isaac?

On the road to Jerusalem we saw the tombs of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob and many others; all located here in rocky caves, which have not been entered since the Crusades. The Crusaders built a small Moorish building over Rachel's tomb. The graves are cut out of solid rock and the bodies were wrapped in linen in ancient times and laid in the stone compartments, stacked on top of one another like dresser drawers. The well where Jesus had the conversation with the Samaritan woman is near these tombs. What a wonderful experience to review what our Lord said to this woman—"He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."

When we got back to Jerusalem, we had come to the end of our stay in the places associated with both the Old and New

Testaments. And if everything we saw while we were in the Holy Land was man made, the ground that we walked on was God made. My Lord's feet made footprints in that soil, and for over sixty-five years I have been trying to walk in the steps of the Saviour. "Trying to walk in the steps of the Saviour" is one of my favorite songs, and oh, how I enjoy singing it with my brethren. All the things we did in Jerusalem and the surrounding country were just a getting ready for our missionary trip to Africa. Because we had left the United States in order to obey our Lord's command, to take His gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth, to lift Him up to the native Africans of Nigeria.

I was sorry to leave the places where I had felt so near to my Lord, but I was glad to be going to do what I felt He intended me to do. So we turned our eyes from Jerusalem toward Nigeria.

We drove by car to Beirut and left Lebanon by plane on June 28. We did not go directly to Nigeria, but passed through Athens, Greece, and returned to Rome before turning South to Kano, Nigeria, and finally to Port Harcourt. One of the great sights as we crossed Africa was seeing the Sahara Desert from our plane. High over the desert we ran into a snow storm. Snow and ice collected on the wings and windows of our plane. I was anxious. Then I remembered how God had asked Job if he had considered the value of the snow. How wonderful it was to turn my mind to the nitrogen and other valuable properties of snow, sent by God's hand—I was no longer afraid.

The missionaries met us at Port Harcourt, and we went by car about eighty miles into the bush, to the Bible College at Ukpom, and a little later to the Bible College at Onitcha Ngwa.

This missionary visit to Africa was the real purpose of our trip and I was anxious to see the extent to which the work had progressed. Ukpom Bible College is in the middle of the bush country of Nigeria. The campus is composed of twenty acres and six buildings. About sixty to seventy students are enrolled each year and all are studying to be gospel preachers. The school started in 1954.

At Onitcha Ngwa, in Iboland, there is another Bible College

just like the one at Ukpom which was established in 1957. These schools have been and are doing much to get local gospel preachers prepared to preach to the natives. At present there are over three hundred fifty congregations in Nigeria and new ones are being established almost every week. The missionaries have done a great job in spreading the kingdom but probably their greatest work is in the training of native evangelists.

Nigeria has no free public schools like we have in the United States. Almost all the schools in the country are operated by private agencies, most of them church groups. The government is glad to cooperate with these schools when they meet certain conditions. The schools then become eligible for government grants. Because of this cooperative spirit in Nigeria, it is undergoing an orderly and peaceful transition to new ways.

Members of the church of Christ, under the Nigerian Christian School Board, conduct eleven village schools near Ukpom. Fourteen preachers who are graduates of Ukpom Bible College teach Bible to the two thousand five hundred children who attend these village schools. These schools also employ about eighty-five Christian teachers. Ukpom Bible College has become the training center for future leaders of the church, business and government.

The Christian schools of the country are supported by taxes and tuition paid by the Nigerians in the form of government grants. But they are dependent on the Nigerian Christian Schools Foundation for management and management expenses.

In order for the government to approve a private school the village must provide land, and build an adequate building, and must find a qualified person to be approved by the government as the manager of the new school. Nigerian parents, like American parents, want an education for their children; and there has been a great demand for managers to establish and run these village schools. Ukpom Bible College has helped to supply this need. Nigerian schools under the church of Christ are dependent on Christians from everywhere, for the support of the gospel preachers who bring them the message of the Bible.

There aren't many places where you can get a bargain these

days. But here is one place you can get one. For just \$60 you can sponsor a class of thirty boys and girls, so they will get one hundred eighty hours of Bible training. For \$2, you can pay the tuition for one boy or girl for a whole month.

The first converts were made through a correspondence course sent out by Lawrence Avenue Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1947. This course was designed for G.I.'s, but C. A. O. Essien, a native Nigerian heard of it and requested this course. He was baptized and became the lifeblood of the work with his people. From 1947 to 1952 about sixty congregations were established- all of them before the arrival of a full-time missionary from the church in America. Brother Essien died in the summer of 1959. I visited the grave of this fine soldier of the cross, and rejoiced that I could do honor to his memory.

Bush country was not a new experience to me, because sixty-five years ago I preached in a wild and little settled area like this, under a brush arbor. People came down the road from outlying places, carrying their lanterns. These lanterns were the only light they had. It was this way when I was young, and it is this way now in the bush country of Nigeria.

When I was preaching in Africa I had to have an interpreter. After a few minutes I caught on that I had to talk a little slower. It slows a fast man down, preaching with an interpreter on either side. I remembered Peter on the Day of Pentecost. This sermon was preached, and every man heard in his own tongue. We had about eighty-eight baptisms altogether while we were there.

Once when there was a large number of people to be baptized, they told me there were many wild beasts around this watering place—a herd of elephants, wild animals of all kinds, snakes, crocodiles.

I had come through that one time before. Once when I was preaching and baptizing in Hillsboro River near Tampa, Florida, I looked up and saw an alligator. I didn't bother the alligator and the alligator didn't bother me.

On one occasion while I was in Africa, I spoke to an audience of about two thousand— imagine two thousand native

Africans—many bare-footed, scantily dressed, babies in their arms, but they came to hear about Christ. Some accepted, and came so fast that Brother Palmer wondered if they understood what they were doing. He asked them, "Do you understand what you are doing?" Their answers proved that they did.

There were people running into the water to be baptized. They *ran*. After getting in the water, they ran. That is the gospel that is so powerful and quick that it saves. That is the word of God.

Everywhere I preached these people received the gospel with joy. It's a wonderful thing for a preacher to see the word of God take hold of a man. In order for the preacher to do his best, you got to back him up. Give the preacher the praise and the encouragement he deserves. Don't freeze the preacher. He's got the hottest message in the world. He just needs somebody to fan him.

During the time we were in Africa, we took part in Bible classes with the students at Ukpom and Onitcha Ngwa, and we joined with them in the Lord's Day worship. We also met with the Ukpom village chiefs and village council representatives.

Some of our time was spent going through the bush country to the little villages within a radius of seventy-five miles from Ukpom. As we drove and walked, we often saw little altars set up beside the road to pacify different gods. These people of the different tribes have not been taught about the one true God. They believe that the rivers and the animals all have spirits and they are afraid of these spirits. They make a little altar and bring an egg, an old hat, or a chicken to place on the altar as a gift to the spirits. These are really sacrifices. But they're aimed in the wrong direction. I wonder if we Christians, in our Christian nation, would give a chicken to the Lord, if we had only one chicken. These altars made me think of what Paul told the people of Athens. He said I perceive you are a very religious people; you have built many altars; and I see you have one to the unknown god. This is the One I want to tell you about. Paul used what he saw to preach Christ to those people of Athens. The blood of

these Nigerian people is on our hands if we do not teach them the gospel message. We are the ones who will be held responsible for those who do not know.

I taught in the Nigerian Christian Village Schools in some way every day while I was there, and I was always well received. I preached in the church buildings and in the open air—meetings both day and night. Once we met together with about twelve congregations present. I held Lord's Day morning service at Ikot Usen, where the work was started in Nigeria, and nineteen were baptized there. A welcome was held for us in the school building and several hundred people attended. There was a big program by the local people, with visiting dignitaries present. Then we turned the afternoon into a preaching service, and fifty-five were baptized.

One of the things Brother Palmer and I did was to help conduct a lectureship in Iboland. Students came from many surrounding villages. A few had bicycles. A bicycle to them is what the finest automobile is to us. One of their sayings is—a bicycle makes you many men. This useful possession is polished after each ride—every bit of dust must come off. With pride of ownership and devotion, he spends hours shining this valuable means of transportation. Altogether we spent three weeks in Nigeria, three of the most memorable weeks in my life.

Among the many interesting things I saw there were the open air markets—there are no stores like we have. The men and women came on market day from miles around—most of them walked, carrying fruits and vegetables and trinkets on their heads, to sell. Everything was spread out on the ground—the meat and everything else right out in the open. And great crowds of people came to buy. They came to market every fourth day. These people do not have calendars, clocks and watches like we do. They determine time and seasons by the sun and the moon. I was told that they are never late for an appointment, never get the days mixed up, and they know exactly the day, the month and the year. Just how they do this, I did not find out, but it seems to beat our way of getting to places on time. I was reminded how Paul used to

preach in the market place.

Nigeria is a long way from the United States. And its ways are a long way from ours. This especially is true in the back country—away from the European- built cities. There is no electricity and very few gasoline motors. The grass in front of the buildings at the Bible schools, twenty acres of it, is cut by hand with grass shears.

We received many gifts in many places. The students at the Bible College gave us a farewell party which was also attended by government dignitaries in the area. At this festival they made us promise to come back. I was given a robe and made an honorary chief. The walking cane of authority was passed over to me by the Paramount Chief. I am honored to be an African chief.

A Christian can't go to Africa without being reminded of our Lord's commission. The native people carry water in pots made of mud. And I thought how we Christians are earthen vessels—water pots of our Lord. Are we carrying the water of Life to the thirsting people of the world?

Another thing that is needed in Nigeria is hospitals. There are very few hospitals. When someone gets sick, four friends put him on a stretcher and carry him on their heads to the nearest hospital, which may be many miles away. All the stretcher bearers trot in rhythm, so the sick man won't be jostled about too much. Sometimes the hospitals are just too far away for sick people to get there. The church ought to have a hospital in this country. Jesus said, "Go out into the uttermost parts of the world and preach the gospel." Preaching and teaching may be the first parts of our commission. But Jesus also told his disciples to heal.

As Christians we are supposed to pray without ceasing. The Moslem knows you need to pray. It is tragic that people like the Moslems who do not believe in Christ as the Son of God have more zeal than those who are Christians.

Colossians 3: 16 tells us, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God." In Nigeria it interested me to hear the hymns and

psalms sung in three languages at once.

Such Christian fellowship I have never seen. Our whole journey was a witness to the fellowship that Christians share with other Christians. I am convinced, by the way they welcomed us, that the fellowship with us greatly strengthened the Christian faith in Nigeria. Brother Palmer knows the work well there, and he was directly responsible for establishing six of the Nigerian village schools. I was very fortunate to be able to go to Nigeria with Lucien Palmer. There is a great need for more Christian workers in Nigeria, and we should support them with our prayers and gifts. A feeling of Christian fellowship was evident as we met other Christians all along the way to and from Nigeria—in Rome, Paris, and London.

Everywhere we found our brethren faithful in the breaking of bread on the Lord's Day. We worshipped on each Lord's Day in many new and strange places, reminding us that the body and blood of Christ are available for the Christian, no matter where he may be. Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always."

Before I close I want to tell you about the final Lord's Supper which Brother Palmer and I shared on this trip. Our last Lord's Day together found us thirty-three thousand feet in the air, above the Atlantic Ocean, on a Super-Jet. Brother Palmer had foreseen this and he had provided the loaf and fruit of the vine. That was a most precious occasion to remember. I now know more fully that when God gives a command he will not hinder obedience.

"Providentially hindered" is man-made. Two or three can meet with our heavenly Father. Even one Christian must not forsake the request that was made by our Lord, "Do this in remembrance of me." John on the Isle of Patmos was in the spirit on the Lord's Day, and the windows of heaven were opened to him.

Now that I am home I think of what one Nigerian preacher said in one of his prayers. "Lord, help me to believe what I've been preaching." That sounded strange at first, but after thinking it over, I know he is right. All of us need to believe what we have been preaching—believe it so much that we are ready to live by it. And, if it be the Lord's will, I plan to return with Lucien Palmer, to

further the work of the church in the bush country of Africa.

Will you pray for us to this end?