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GENERAL EDITOR: BRUCE J. NICHOLLS



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possibility in mind she must be careful not to tie herself down to exorbitant house loans. The single person is blessed to be in that position where she can switch from secular paid work to voluntary Christian/humanitarian work, or overseas studies for longer or shorter periods of time without imposing a burden on loved ones.

The single woman needs to see the span of her singleness against the yardstick of eternity, so that she does not get discouraged by her marital status. Since our days are numbered, let those of us who are single use the best of our active years to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, instead of hoping and striving for 'Mr. Right' to appear. If you must strive for something, strive to make your life count for eternity, so that your arrival in heaven will be one of joyful encounter with your Master.

Florence Ng Sin Tong is an engineer by profession. She is a member of Katong Presbyterian Church. She graduated from the Discipleship Training Centre, Singapore. p. 375

Pioneers in Mission: Women in India in the 19th Century

Kathleen D. Nicholls

From the beginning of the 19th century, the Amy Carmichaels, Mary Slessors, Gladys Aylwards and Mildred Cables of this world demonstrated independence and fulfillment. They have been pioneers in Christ's mission throughout the world. With courage, faith and enterprise they pioneered education, medical and social welfare programmes, fighting for justice for the oppressed of all classes. They preached and taught the Gospel, established churches and opened Bible schools for the training of women.

OPENING THE DOORS TO THE ZENANAS

In 1821 Miss Cooke astonished the men and women of Calcutta by her eagerness to teach 'useless' girls. Her school for girls was perhaps the first of its kind and continued under this loving but determined woman in spite of many difficulties. This was a break-through. Getting into the closed zenanas (women's quarters) to teach young wives and their female companions was much more difficult and openings came very slowly. In an effort to provide teachers for more girls' schools and for the women living in the zenanas, another far-sighted and determined woman, Mrs Mackenzie, wife of an English merchant, wanted to establish a 'Normal School for Christian Female Teachers, English and Native'. In 1852 under the charge of Miss Suter the Calcutta Normal School was born and so was the mission under the title of 'The Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society or Zenana Bible Mission'. It is not difficult to understand why this became modified over the years to Zenana Bible and Medical Mission and in 1957 to Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship. It is now known as Interserve International.

The women who sought to enter the zenanas of the Hindu sacred city of Benares were not only brave and enterprising but, like their sisters in other towns and cities, very aware of the will of God, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the essential guiding and

strengthening of the Holy Spirit. They contended not only with the heat of the long summers, the filth of the bazaars and zenanas, the unsuitable clothing of the era, dangers from animals, insects and man and the urgency of acquiring fluency but also the might of Hinduism and the p.376 all-pervading presence of death and the gods and goddesses who held the people in bondage.

Along with their efforts to educate the women and girls of India, went complete honesty as to their intention of teaching biblical principles. Perhaps nothing tested their courage as much as the need to quietly persevere when some of their pupils professed faith in Christ and the inevitable violent response of relatives and friends became a reality.

Across India in Calcutta, Lucknow, Patna, Bombay, the health of the zenana women was very neglected, especially in the times of pregnancy and childbirth. Often missionary medical personnel were sent for when local *hakims* and *dais* had done their worst and there was no hope for the patient. Englishwoman Elizabeth Beilby in Lucknow (1875 onwards) and later others in the new (for women) profession of medicine had many stories to tell of the Lord's answering their desperate prayers for His intervention. It was in Lucknow that the first hospital for women (later to become the Duchess of Teck Hospital) was opened and eventually others in Patna and Benares. The shortage of workers often meant that the doctors' and nurses' days began at 5am and went on until late at night. Sleep, of course, was often interrupted by urgent calls, the health and strength of these women of compassion and steel often being pushed to a point of collapse.

The work of these early missionaries in schools, clinics, zenana visiting and hospitals led to many women and girls professing faith in Jesus Christ. A refuge for them was needed and this must be not only secure but also a real home. *Maika* in Allahabad became such a refuge and home and also a training place to enable the widows and girls to support themselves. There was a school where their children were educated and—it was a place where marriages were arranged in the traditional Indian way.

TRAINING FOR LEADERSHIP

It was here that a long tradition of giving responsibility to Indian women began and despite some disappointments continued through the history of the mission. The first matron of Maika was Maryam Begum. From the Bombay Indian Female Normal school came the first Indian woman medical missionary in Western India and Sundrabai Powar who opened the Zenana Training Home in Poona—women of ability and character who undertook formidable responsibilities. In the same mould was Qulsam Begum, a niece of the last Queen of Oudh and widow of the Indian Chief of Police. After a long struggle against the Gospel, she was finally convinced from her reading of the Bible p.377 that Jesus was indeed the Son of God and Saviour of the World. In time she became a much-loved teacher and evangelist and the special friend of 'Granny' Pollen whom she accompanied on her forays into the narrow lanes of Kurja in the United Provinces and the surrounding villages. Together they defended new Christians against the wrath of the Muslims of Kurja.

Schools, teacher training institutions, crafts and trades training, refuges—all good and necessary—but now in 1900 came a new vision in response to the expressed needs of students in Lahore in the Punjab. Professional opportunities for woman were slowly opening up and 'a college in embryo' began. The principal was an Englishwoman, but the other staff and faculty, both men and women, were nationals. For many years now the Principal has been an Indian and since Independence a Pakistani lady. So began the first inter-mission women's institution for higher learning. The influence of Kinnaird College has been felt right across the north of the Indian sub-continent.

One of the 'characters' of ZBMM was undoubtedly Rosalie Harvey, a frail woman who tried for eight years to reach India despite the unwillingness of her doctors. This irrepressible woman on reaching Nasik, Western India, in 1884 was not discouraged by the harsh bigotry of its Brahmins. In the villages she was fearless in her chastising of men who had ill-treated their young wives. In the city, woe betide any man or woman she saw ill treating an animal. In no time she had an array of animals in the mission compound and finally badgered prominent men to found and finance a branch of the SPCA. Relentlessly she besought the wealthy until at last a Veterinary Hospital was founded. But Rosalie Harvey will probably be remembered most for her compassionate care of lepers. Famine and, later, plague had made the already tragic plight of the Nasik lepers much worse. It was Rosalie who fought for shelter and food for them. With Indian and missionary colleagues, she spent her days nursing, cheering and comforting them. With wit and spirit she begged the authorities and businessmen of Nasik and Bombay to provide funds for a permanent asylum for the lepers. Her success in establishing first a home for untainted children and at last the Leper Asylum were in the succession of Carey's 'Attempt great things ... expect great things'. A babies' home and a purdah hospital were other longings of Rosalie Harvey's heart that were fulfilled.

INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The 1950s saw the first men accepted by ZBMM. Yet even today three-fifths of its missionaries are women. In the heritage of the intrepid **P.378** women of the 19th century, they have often been pioneers. Medical work in Nepal, the newly created countries of Pakistan and Bangladesh, fresh areas of opportunity in Central Asia, the Gulf States and North Africa—all have challenged them to a new commitment.

In India, they have encouraged nurses' fellowships and taken responsibility in medical colleges. International schools, theological colleges and Bible schools would be less effective without the capable women teachers on their faculties. Women have established writing institutes, bookshops and correspondence courses, ministered to college students and graduates and become church pastors and deaconesses. They have undertaken mission administration with its rigours of travel and recurring crises and been active in compassionate ministry to Asian immigrants in western countries. The door is opening for women to enter increasingly wider ministries. There can be no turning back. What is the Holy Spirit saying to the Church?

Kathleen D. Nicholls has served in India with Interserve since 1955. She co-ordinates the Traditional Media Unit of the International Christian Media Commission. **p.379**

Book Review

MEN, WOMEN AND GOD

by Kathy Keay (ed.)

(Marshall Pickering, Basingstoke 1987 pp. 304. £5.95)