

DAUGHTERS OF PRISCILLA

Text: "And Paul, having remained many days long, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila." (Acts 18:18)

Approximately two-thirds of all missionaries in modern times could be called "Daughters of Priscilla," the first lady to travel to foreign lands witnessing to Jesus Christ. She and her husband, Aquila, were tent-makers by profession, living as Jewish refugees from Rome in Corinth when they heard the Gospel from the Apostle Paul. The epistles (Rom. 16:3; I Cor. 16:19) mention "the church that is in their house" when they lived later in Ephesus and in Rome, and Paul says that "all the churches of the Gentiles" were grateful to them. Priscilla, usually named before her husband, could be called the "mother of missions." Today let us recognize the service and example of some of her little known daughters who labored in Korea and deserve far more credit than most of them have received. A century ago when there were few opportunities at home for women to serve professionally in church work, these missionaries, about half of them married and the other half singly, braved stormy seas, primitive living conditions, and hostile cultures to add their testimony to the saving power of Jesus as "the way, the truth, and the life."

1. NELLIE RANKIN My attention was drawn to this subject by some of her letters written 80 years ago which were given to me on my visit to the Independent Presbyterian Church (of Savannah) last year. We spent 38 years in Chonju and we often saw the grave of Miss Nellie Rankin in the quiet little missionary cemetery. From that plot can be seen now a city of over 400,000 and a great school with over 3000 students where once she had been principal for a handful of little girls. You can hear the bell ring from the one church in the city of her day, along with those of over 300 more today. Out among the surrounding mountains, where she struck out alone on horseback into places where no missionary lady had ever been to minister in simple village churches, are now hundreds of congregations. For 75 years, income from her legacy of some \$3000, known as the "Nellie Rankin Fund" has supported the education of young Korean women who have lived as Christians in home and church. Yet Miss Rankin served in Korea only four years, from 1907 to 1911, before her life was claimed by appendicitis, for which our modern treatment was unavailable in those days.

The picture gleaned from her letters reveal that Nellie came from a moderately wealthy and comfortable home ^{in Savannah} ~~of this city~~ where she could have moved in the highest circles of society, education, business, and church. With this background and a diploma from Agnes Scott College, life could have offered ease and security. Yet, against the

~~Agnes Scott College, life could have offered ease and security.~~ Yet, against the wishes of her parents (particularly her father), she sailed for Korea, the Hermit Kingdom. Here her brilliant mind quickly acquired remarkable mastery of a difficult language, her shrewd business ability managed a household, a garden, raising of pigs, purchase of land, and administering a school. She enjoyed picnics, boating, and riding with the few young bachelors available. She craved news of friends and social events of Savannah and was often homesick. But best of all she loved the Koreans who said of her, "Smiles grow wherever Rankin Pouin passes."

Two years after arrival, she was teaching 3 hours a day in the Girls' Boarding School, preparing to teach their own written language to illiterate women, rising at 6:00 A.M. to prepare for a day often interrupted by unexpected visitors, talking of taking a trip alone to a distant village to stay a couple of weeks, and humorously telling how her pig got loose, and ^{now} a Korean lady's gift of a hive of bees broke open in her house. Her account of a trip to a mountain region 40 miles from home is priceless: "Last Saturday I came on to this place and it was one of the hardest and most delightful trips I have ever taken. We went over 3 ranges and between dozens of others. The first [and second] range I walked up and down...the third I walked and started to ride down and would have given a pretty if I could have gotten off but I really didn't dare. We went down the steepest narrowest path I ever saw. A steep cliff above, almost a precipice below and at the bottom a wide river. It made my head swim to look down at it. My foot on one side scraped the bluff while the other hung over the almost perpendicular incline. Night caught us in a mountain wilderness of never ending mountains. Finally the sound of voices could be heard and a group of women came to welcome me. They had come about 2 miles fearing I was lost. I am literally 'dwelling in the house of the Lord' as I am keeping house in the little church built on a hill overlooking the village. The wicked flea has a strong fortress on the wall and makes one long for the house where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary will be at rest. People who have never been inside the church are flocking to the afternoon meetings to see the foreigner. I have eaten rice and pickled turnip, sea weed and native sauce till I feel pickled myself. There is no such thing as a timepiece within miles and no bells so people come at all times for classes. Everybody gets up with the first streak of day which is about 4:30 AM now. So from 6:30 AM on they begin to gather. Now when the day is long anyway I hate to get up at five but there is nothing else to do unless I dress, eat and do everything to a grandstand full. Teaching 2 hours in the morning, 2 in the afternoon, and 2 at night about uses up my voice so I really cannot talk to a continual string [of people]."

In another village she wrote: "I am in a tiny little valley in the heart of the Chidi

mountains. I am teaching three times a day and doing a sideshow act in between. I am the first foreign woman to have ever visited here so am quite a show. The people are very friendly and kind-hearted and have given me their best which is as follows...one room 8 x 8 ft. The floor is mud with rough matting rugs. In one corner is a big straw sack of grain with 3 smaller ones piled on it. On the other side over my cot is a shelf of two poles with innumerable bags, gourds, etc. piled up. The ceiling which is of twigs tied together with straw string is black from smoke and fly specks. On one wall hangs a large gourd, a mirror that distorts my beautiful features, a bottle of hair oil, and an uninvestigated cruise. Just outside my door hangs the chicken coop...a wicker basket affair. The pig pen is about 6 feet away and the pig is all grunt and growls. Honestly it keeps up a continual racket all day and all night. I have to sit on my cot to comb my hair and I just miss scraping all the dust and fly specks off the ceiling when I am in my stocking feet. The door is 4 by 1 and 1/2 ft. There are holes in the wall which are securely pasted over with paper.

Nellie Rankin could have been the belle of Savannah, but this is how she obeyed the command of her Master, in the text used by another missionary at the Sunday service before her death, words of Jesus to Peter: "What is that to you? You follow Me!"

2. MATTIE INGOLD. In 1895, only three years after the first "Southern" Presbyterian missionaries reached Korea, Dr. Mattie Ingold arrived. Entering the medical profession was not easy for a woman in those days, yet records show that some 100 women physicians were serving as missionaries abroad. Great interest and support for their work came from numerous mission societies of the elect ladies, forerunners of our modern "Women of the Church" organizations, founders of Montreat and other conference grounds, and financiers who generated much of the support for world evangelization.

After language study, Dr. Ingold arrived in Chonju in 1897 "and began immediately to repair a native house which could be used as a medical dispensary for women. The work of this dispensary was to be of tremendous influence in breaking down suspicion and prejudice. During the dispensary's first five months, Dr. Ingold treated four hundred patients. The first building to be constructed as a dispensary was erected for her on a new site in 1902...[and] consisted of a dispensary proper (32 by 28 feet) and a contagious ward (32 by 8 feet. But during the next several years the clinic was open only intermittently, since Dr. Ingold was the only doctor on the field and there were many interruptions. Often, she was called to the other stations to give aid. Despite the interruptions, during 1903 she treated more than fifteen hundred cases. And Dr. Ingold had evangelistic skills as well. She made the first translation of the

Child's Catechism into Korean. The catechism was published by the Tract Society and used throughout Korea for many years. In 1905 Dr. Ingold was married to the Rev. L. B. Tate, and after that time did not engage in medical practice except on a temporary or emergency basis." G. T. Brown, "Mission to Korea" pp 40-41

Pictures of the little huts where Dr. Ingold practiced reveal the ingenuity and fortitude required to work among filth and bugs and noises and smells with patients suffering from strange maladies which had often been mis-treated by local mal-practitioners. One contemporary missionary spoke of her using "Smith Cash Store boxes for shelves and Eagle condensed milk boxes for drawers." (Anabel Major Nisbet, "Day in and Day out in Korea, p.123) "'A medical missionary is' indeed 'a missionary and a half.' When suffering has been relieved, it is easy to listen to the words of the one who has brought healing. One poor woman, to whom Dr. Ingold had brought relief from intense pain, said to her, 'Can you not give my husband some medicine to make him stop drinking? He drinks a great deal and beats me and the children so much that it is hard to live.' 'Yes,' said Dr. Ingold, 'I have come to Korea to bring your husband that medicine, the Gospel. If he will only eat its teachings he will never again beat you or the children.' So the poor woman went home comforted, to try to persuade her husband to go to the services in the little church and learn of the Great Physician. The little dispensary, with its tender, consecrated doctor, was soon 'A light set on a hill,' and many who sat in darkness saw its gleam from afar and were led to the Savior.'" (Nisbet, Op.cit, p. 54)

And from that tiny beginning evolved a medical institution which ever since has brought healing of body and soul to countless Koreans under the care of great missionary doctors such as Dr. Lloyd Boggs, well known here in Savannah, and today stands as the great Presbyterian Medical Center with 500 beds, an immense daily outpatient clinic, a staff of Christian doctors trained in all branches of modern medicine and six full-time evangelists ministering to spiritual needs. Dr. Mattie Ingold too, deserves a place in the missionary hall of fame.

3. MARGARET PRITCHARD was born the first day of this century and went to her heavenly home Feb. 14, 1988. She came to Korea in 1929 and my first memories of her come from when I was a little boy and my mother was desperately ill...in fact nearly died. Margaret was a newly arrived trained nurse, assigned to a mission hospital fifty miles away, and in this emergency came to live in our home and care for mother.

She too was devoted to her Lord and dedicated to her calling. Like most missionaries, man or woman, she had to be a "jack-of-all-trade." Bedside nursing was practiced, of

course, but it was also taught to scores of Korean girls who quickly took over most routine duties. Once when Dr. Levie, the mission dentist, held "teeth extraction day" at the women's Bible conference, "Miss Pritchard told of how she assisted...in pulling 189 teeth in about two and a half hours! The women, wrote Miss Pritchard, 'walked in as if they were going to a picnic.'" (GTB Op. cit, p. 128) One night in 1933 the Kwangju hospital burned to the ground. The doctors and "Miss Pritchard and other members of the staff worked through the night to evacuate the patients and save as much equipment as possible. All the drugs, most of the operating equipment, half the beds and linens, the X-ray and dental equipment were lost. And yet by mid-morning the next day, signs and posters had been put up in the street announcing that the hospital was open and receiving patients! That same evening Dr. Brand performed an emergency operation, using instruments salvaged from the ashes and a homemade lamp." (GTB, Op cit, p. 145) You may be sure that much of that feat was due to the heroic leadership of "General" Margaret Pritchard!

We personally witnessed the major part of her career. When we reached Chonju, in 1948 she and Dr. Paul Crane had already begun the Presbyterian Medical Center, previously mentioned. While the shell of our home which had housed refugees was being rehabilitated, we boarded with Margaret and experienced her skillful home management. Rounding up nurses she had trained in pre-war years she supervised the nursing program of the hospital, managed the procuring, storing, and usage of drugs, linens, and equipment of all kinds...as well as planned, erected, organized, and opened a new Nurses' School modeled after the best in the U.S....all within two years.

The Korean War in 1950 necessitated her evacuating to Pusan along with two pregnant missionary mothers, and then returning to her post until the North Korean army took the city. Upon their retreat two months later, she returned to Chonju to begin all over again...cleaning up, repairing buildings, scrounging supplies, managing nurses, and, of course, reopening the nurses school. I saw that school with the chapel so full of beds for refugees you could not walk between them. With supplies from the UN she managed a milk-feeding program among the thousands in refugee camps. But her great goal was the training of nurses who were also deeply committed Christians, giving their witness to the Master. Today the Margaret Pritchard College of Nursing in Korea stands as her monument in brick and mortar but more important are living monuments by the score who serve in many lands around the world. During her final years in Richmond, Va. she was an active member of a local Korean Church. Loving former students now living in America came from far and near to minister during her final months of illness, and participate in her final memorial service. Surely her Lord greeted her with the words, "Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of

these, you have done it unto me."

4. MY MOTHER represents more than a third of all missionaries who have "kept the home fires burning." She was under appointment to go as a missionary to teach in Egypt when she met my Father and instead went to Korea with him in 1919. My father was a Bible scholar and teacher, and a rural evangelist responsible for planting and nurturing new churches over a large area. He was often away for weeks at a time in those churches, or teaching in Bible conferences and the Presbyterian Seminary. But mother, like hundreds of missionary wives around the world, "manned" the base camp without which he would have been helpless. Like a supply sergeant she would organize equipment for his country church trips...cot, folding table and chair (furniture was unknown in Korean homes), boxes of food and cooking utensils, medicines, clothing, bedding...everything.

Meanwhile she managed all the home affairs, ordering groceries, clothing, etc. from afar, planting a huge garden (too big, some of us small "weeders" often complained), saw to it there was fuel for the cold winters, kept the house in repair, and entertained guests both Korean and foreign. Best of all she raised three children and was their only teacher until they left home for high school 18 hours away by train. She was a thorough and strict teacher but a good one...and along with the three "Rs" we were taught the Bible from beginning to end, memorizing many chapters, and also the Westminster Shorter catechism...by far the best theological training I ever received. Never a week went by during all the years thereafter but what she faithfully wrote us, and who could say how often her prayers were raised in our behalf!

We could talk about mother indefinitely, but you in the home church need to remember the missionary mothers...they came from among you and are like you. But they left families and homes...for 7 year tours in the case of my mother...they endured primitive conditions...they saw their children leave at an early age for distant schools...yet without them their husbands could never have laid the sturdy foundations for great national churches abroad...and Korea became one of the greatest of them all.

5. WILLIE BERNICE GREENE was one of scores of unmarried ladies who performed day-by-day drudgery, unsung and seldom rewarded (at least in any tangible fashion). The male missionary evangelists went out into the towns and villages, far and near, and started churches...but like the Apostle Paul they had to keep moving to other places of opportunity. They returned periodically on short visits to preach, receive members, hold the sacraments, administer the affairs of the church. But these lady missionaries would go to such places and stay a week, sometimes several weeks. In

those days the first Christians were often largely women, with whom custom forbade the male missionaries to work. So missionary ladies would visit in their homes, gather them into the churches, teaching them first of all to read, then to read and study the Bible. This was hard work. It took physical stamina, courage, and persistence. They "endured hardship" like good soldiers of the cross. Without their follow-up who knows how much of the labors of the men would have vanished?

Miss Green was one of these warriors. She was the perfect librarian-type. Everything with her had to be in the right place, straight, and neat. Woe be the carpenter who built something crooked! With her exacting standards of perfection after the Korean War she administered what was then the Ada Hamilton Bible School for training women...in those days mostly widows and cast-off wives...for service as Bible teachers and visitors in churches, and that institution is now the Hanil Seminary with some 350 students. But she also itinerated, doing her share in the country churches.

I recall taking her to such a place, Yong-san village, 4 hours by jeep-ride. Across a creek from the little mud, stick and straw church, was the tile-roofed home of the wealthiest man in the village. He presided over a large clan residing in rooms around his courtyard. He was not a Christian, but had consented for Miss Greene to have a room there during her visit. The evangelist of the church was an elderly man who had been taken by the Japanese along with other Koreans as a workman to one of the Pacific islands during World War II. Because the GIs who later occupied that island called him "Pop," he assumed that was the proper English term for an old man and so he called Miss Green's host "Pop." Her meetings were all strictly for women and children, but each night "Pop" would come and sit quietly in the corner, watching and listening. On the final night at the conclusion of the service, he rose with all the dignity of an Oriental patriarch, than which there is no greater dignity, and said: "I have something to say. Each night I have come and have listened carefully to all that this American lady and her Korean helper have said. I have been to Chonju where she lives. I saw her house. It is a fine large brick Western home and I know contains many conveniences and nice things. And I also know that in America she left a much finer home and way of living. I have been thinking this over. I have decided that if this lady can leave her comfortable home in Chonju, and even better home in America, and come around the world to our poor land and stay in our miserable homes to tell us about this Jesus and what He has done for us, then I too should find out about this Jesus and believe in Him!" He did too...and became a member of that little church and for years I used to drop by to see him. It took a host of missionaries like Miss Bill Green to create the church of Korea and populate heaven with saints like "Pop."

CONCLUSION These are merely a few of the "daughters of Priscilla" but praise the Lord for all of them. Pray for those who follow in their train! Thank God for every one of them, and may their tribe increase to the glory of God and the establishment of His kingdom in the hearts of men and women and boys and girls around the globe!