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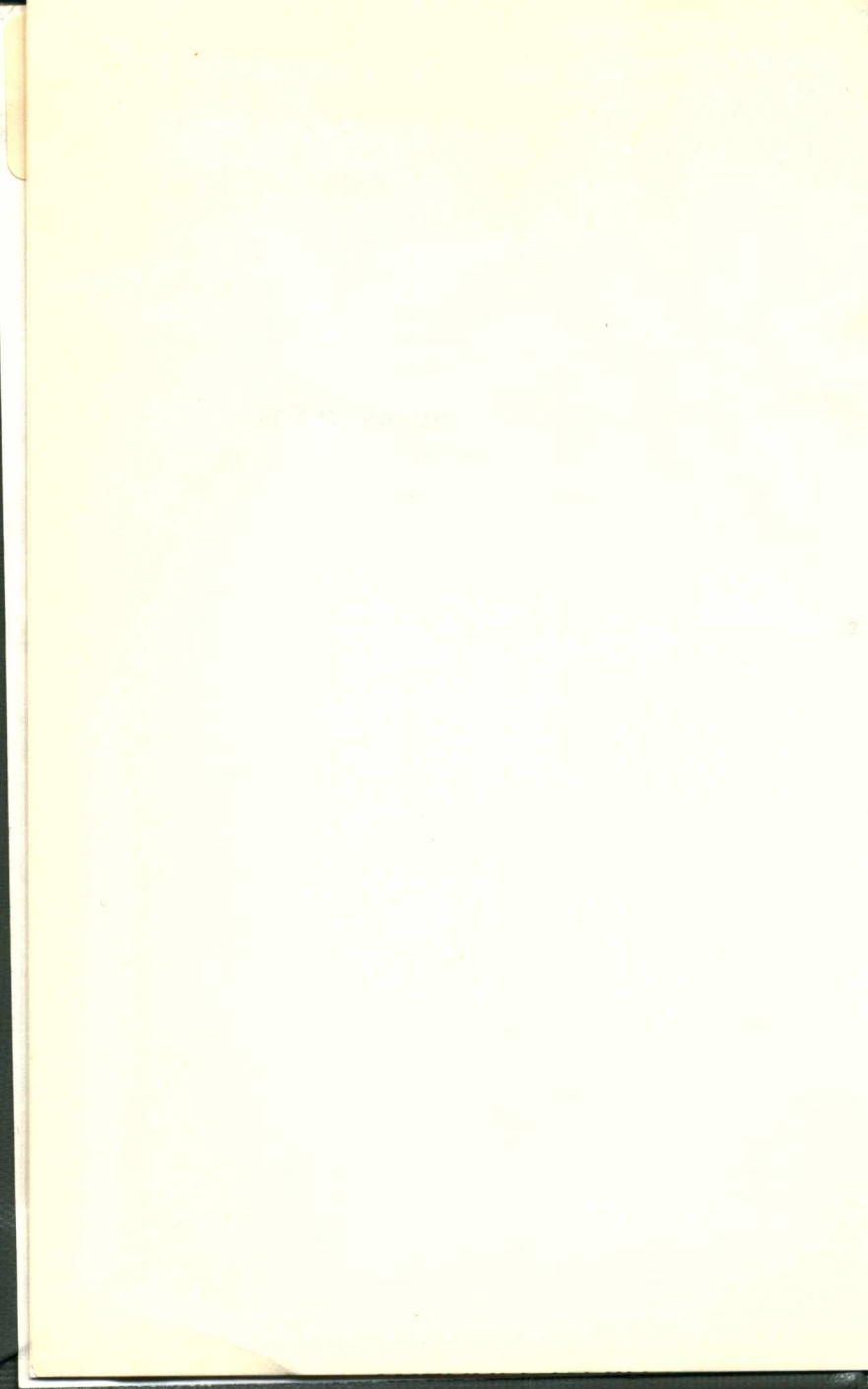
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**Places in the Night**

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# *Flares in the Night*

**The Story of Nazarene Missions in  
Trinidad and Tobago**

by  
Ruth O. Saxon



Nazarene Publishing House  
Kansas City, Missouri

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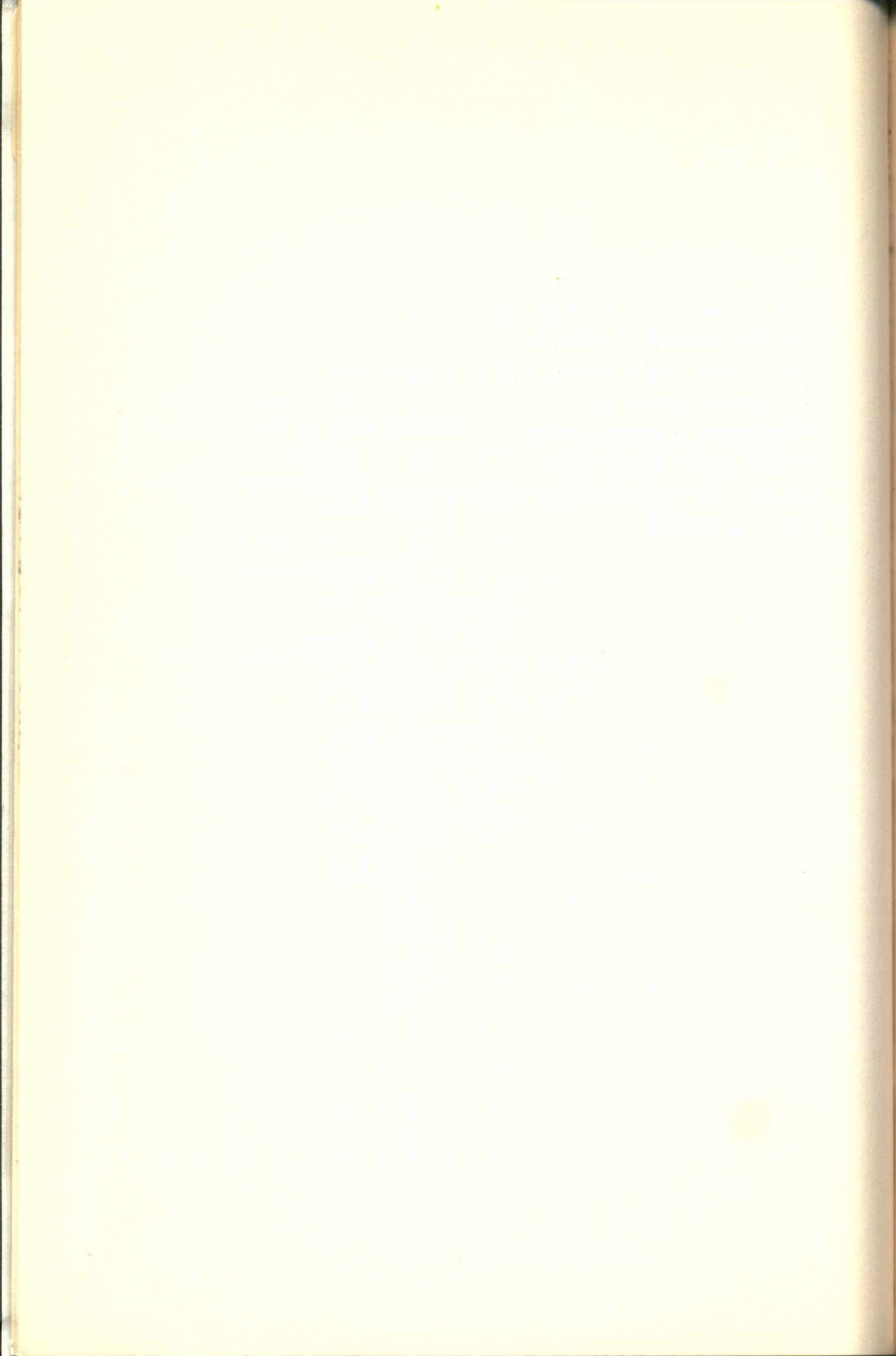
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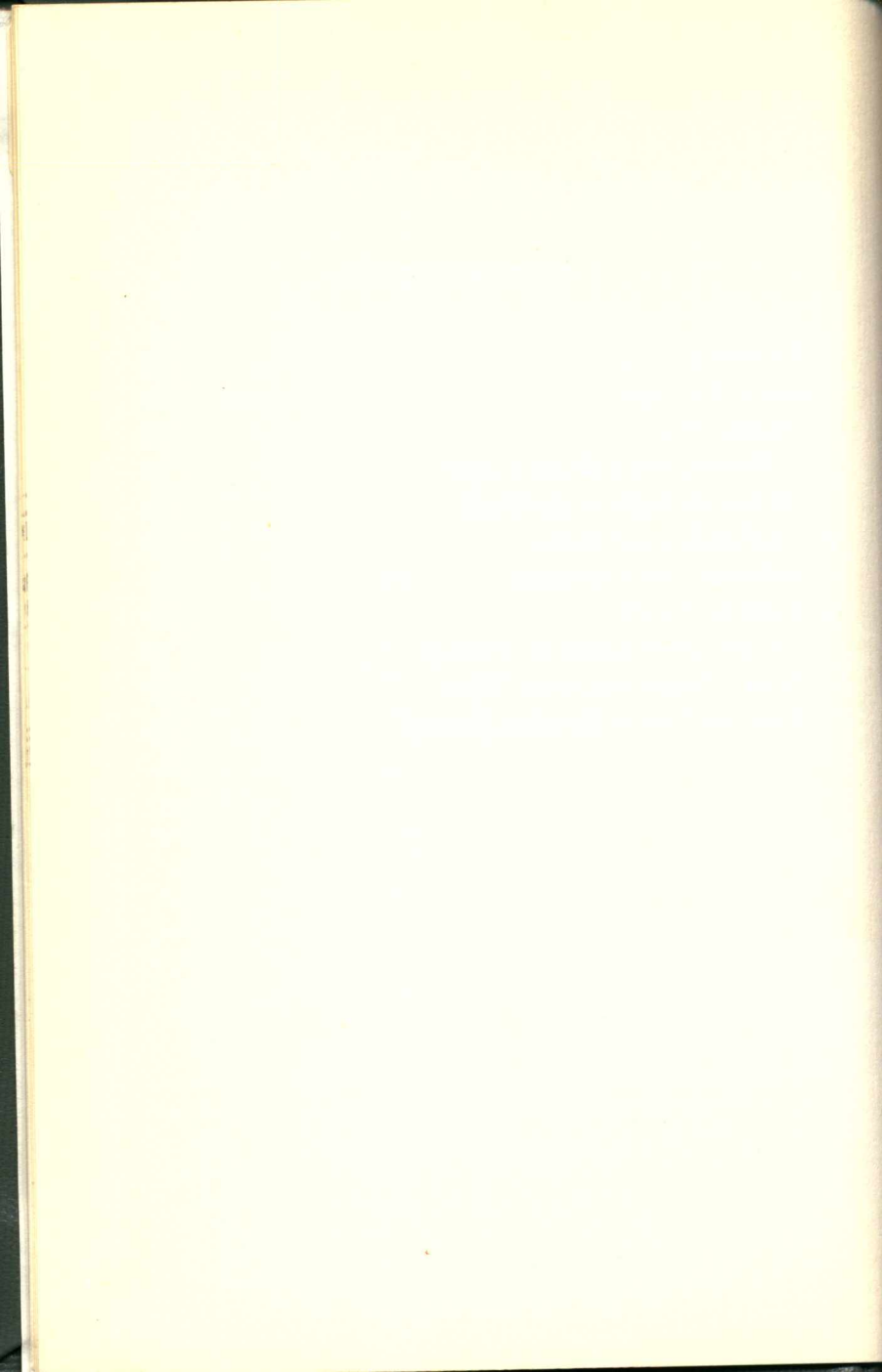
To all Nazarenes who faithfully  
shine for Jesus in Trinidad—  
laymen, national pastors, and missionaries—  
this book is inscribed.

With it goes the prayer that  
we shall shine more truly  
and more brightly for Him now  
than ever before.



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## Acknowledgments to the 1970 Edition

I have asked the Lord so many times to help me with this book that it would not be right to begin acknowledging the help of anyone else before recognizing His. The fact that it has been completed at all while continuing full-time missionary service is somewhat of a miracle in itself. If it is a blessing to anyone, that is further evidence that God has graciously answered prayer. A warm thank you goes to all in Trinidad and America who have helped me pray to this end.

For material, I have drawn heavily from my B.D. thesis, "A History of the Church of the Nazarene in Trinidad and Tobago." There are many nationals and missionaries who graciously contributed of their time for interviews to make that work possible, and the faculty of the Nazarene Theological Seminary gave me their encouragement and gracious consideration in its preparation and in their acceptance of it. Some new material in this present writing has come from recent personal interviews. Several *Other Sheep* articles have been of assistance even though not directly quoted, and the first part of Chapter 3, the story of Carlton Phillip, has come in large part from an *Other Sheep* article written by me, titled "Mr. Christian."

Sincere appreciation goes to Russell and Thelma Brunt, who have read parts of the manuscript and given helpful suggestions, and to the Missionary Study Committee of the Church of the Nazarene, who asked me to write in the first place.

The fact that Principal Russell Brunt, my immediate

"boss," and others of my fellow staff members of Nazarene Training College have not pushed me quite so hard as they might have during the days of actual writing has been a great help. For their sakes and mine, I am glad that it will no longer be necessary to plead, "Remember the book."

—RUTH O. SAXON

Santa Cruz, Trinidad, W.I.



## Flares in the Night

"But you are traveling to Trinidad on a one-way ticket. Why?"

"Because I will be staying there to do missionary work."

"But aren't you very young to make such a decision?"

I was young, but the Pan American steward could not understand such a thing as a call of God that had come to me 10 years before that.

The night was September 11, 1954; the place—somewhere between Caracas, Venezuela, and Trinidad. Aboard the *Clipper Dawn*, I was on the last lap of a trip that had taken me from New Orleans and family and friends just the evening before, to Miami, Cuba, Jamaica, Baranquilla, Maracaibo, Caracas, and soon to Trinidad. Never mind that I had never been inside a plane before yesterday and that this was my first time out of the United States. I was so thrilled and happy over being in God's will that the steward's words had about as much effect upon me as a summer shower upon the Atlantic Ocean. My Father had chosen for me, and He had used my church to guide me to the field of His choice. Friends and family would have to understand the lack of tears on my part; I was much too happy for that.

Now we were almost there. I strained to catch a glimpse of anything in the dark world of sea below us. Now and again there was a light—perhaps on an island or a boat—but mostly it was just black night.

It may have been the captain's voice over the intercom that informed us that we were almost there. But something had gone wrong at Piarco airport. The runway lights were out. Flares had to be lit. So with the voice on the intercom as guide,

I got my first tour of Trinidad while the plane circled aloft waiting for the emergency lights to be set out.

Port of Spain looked beautiful; the semicircle of mercury lights, that I later learned were lining Wrightson Road, reminded me of a crown of diamonds. Even the Caroni Swamp, lit by a full moon, looked enchanted.

Then it was time to land. I am sure my heart beat faster and my grin got wider as we swooped in over cane fields and then onto the runway! As we raced between the long rows of flares and taxied to the terminal, a thought and then a prayer welled up in my mind and heart. In substance, the prayer was: "O Lord, I won't be able to illumine all of sin's night in Trinidad, but help me to be a brightly burning flare for Thee, to guide as many as possible into Thy eternal rest."

That was 35 years ago, and in the intervening time I have come to know others whose lives have been flares to point the lost of this noble country to Jesus. I want to tell you about some of them and their work.

# Chapter One



## Pioneer Flare

The first Nazarene flare to shine in Trinidad was lit by God more than 70 years ago in the heart of an American by the name of James Ivy Hill.

Jim, as he was known to his familiar friends, was born in Illinois. His wife, Nora, was born in Missouri. Not until after the birth of their first child was Jim's heart lit by the flame of God through the ministry of a Rev. Larkin. But the flame soon went out, for Christ had revealed plans for him that didn't seem to him to fit. How could he, a man with a family and little education, possibly preach the gospel? He could not! He would not! And having decided this, he wandered for four miserable years in sin's night.

By his own testimony he became very mean and rough. He worked in a factory that made barrel staves for beer breweries, and he became a habitual beer and whiskey drinker, keeping a liberal supply on hand in his office.

One night when he came home drunk as usual, Nora began to cry. This angered him, and in his drunken state he hit her. She retaliated with a sound blow that sobered him immediately. Before he went to work the next morning, she looked him intently in the eyes and begged him not to drink that day. He promised—without the slightest intention of keeping the promise. But before he went out the door, she told him that she would trust him to keep his word.

The look in Nora's eyes haunted him as he walked toward the factory. Then a voice spoke to him, "Unless you quit this job, I'm going to withdraw My Spirit from you."

He answered, "Is that You, Lord? Please don't kill me now!"

He was a little later than usual getting to the factory, and the boss was waiting for him in his office. He promptly announced that he was quitting. The boss begged him to at least give a week's notice, but the terror-stricken Jim insisted, "I've already quit!" The boss cursed him roundly, but nothing would change his decision.

The church had a revival about that time, with Rev. Larkin again as the evangelist. Jim Hill went to church and the good evangelist approached him without delay. "What do you mean, Jim? I hear some terrible things about you." In honesty, Jim had to admit the reports were all true.

He was not long in going to the altar to seek forgiveness, but the first thing God asked him was, "Are you willing to preach, Jim?" He knew he had to say yes. Then he began confessing to God all the sins he could remember. The Lord insisted upon his going to Nora and confessing lying to her. He argued that she knew nothing about it, so why break her heart and her confidence? Finally he saw there was no other way. He knelt down by her chair at home, put his head in her lap, and confessed every lie he could remember. When he was quite through, he expected some violent reaction, but she calmly replied, "I knew you were lying all the time." And both God and Nora forgave him.

In 1908, Jim and Nora left the old-line denomination they had been associated with to join the brand-new Church of the Nazarene. They had the blessing of entire sanctification, and they wanted a church in which they could preach it freely. In 1909 he was ordained an elder in the Church of the Nazarene. God blessed his ministry and helped him put into play all the abilities that were before lying dormant. He be-



came a mighty preacher of the Word and an able church administrator. What he lacked in formal education was made up by God's grace, native intelligence, and bulldog determination. His pastorates included First Church in Ponca City, Okla., and in Long Beach, Calif. Elected to the district superintendency first in 1916, he served ably the Western Oklahoma and Southern California districts. ✕ ✓

But from the time of his conversion, Jim Hill had felt another call, a call to be a missionary. He bided God's time, ever watchful, it seems, for ways of fulfilling it. As superintendent of the Southern California District, he was next-door to Mexico. Here was his first real opportunity, and he went across the border, founding and superintending a few Mexican churches.

Then J. D. Scott, one of the three foreign missions superintendents that the general church had at that time (and formerly a missionary to Central America and Mexico), made a South American tour. Before returning to the United States, he stopped in the West Indies and saw a tremendous field for the gospel. Providentially, he saw Mr. Hill soon afterward and described the opportunities in the Caribbean. Hill's soul was set on fire with the challenge. He asked what sort of people they were, and Scott said they were dark. He asked their language, and the reply was, "English."

The depths of his soul was stirred, for not only were they the kind of people he felt called to serve, but also their language was no barrier! With the conviction that this was God's open door, he told Brother Scott, "You've got your missionary." A few days later, after the completion of another trip to Mexico to visit his churches there, he journeyed to Kansas City and applied for foreign missionary appointment to the West Indies.

The board didn't want him to go. They had various reasons:

"We can't let you go."

"You're too important to the work at home."

"The panic's on; no money." They were actually having to bring missionaries home at this time. Brother Hill said he had the money to send himself. When they asked what he would do if they did not appoint him, he frankly said he would go anyhow.

He was appointed—with only one dissenting vote.

The appointment was simply as district superintendent of the British West Indies, and it was up to him to decide where to work and how. But he loved pioneering; this was right down his line. Years later he expressed it thus: "I'm rough, awfully rough. I was the roughest thing that ever was before I was saved." He felt he was cut out to be a pioneer. Most of the family was grown; the youngest child was 16, and he himself was 44. He and his faithful wife sold their furniture in order to secure enough travel money. Setting sail from New York, they and their youngest child arrived in Barbados on August 27, 1926.

Barbados was chosen as a starting point because there were already some Nazarene churches *in name* there. Some Barbadians who had migrated to Brooklyn and become Nazarenes wrote home to their relatives and friends about their church. Liking what they heard, these islanders named their independent churches after the Stateside group. According to one report, one of the pastors had been sanctified wholly under the ministry of a Nazarene general superintendent who had passed through the island briefly. These people were definitely interested in becoming full-fledged Nazarenes, so the Hills wisely began with them.

The Hills also intended contacting Miss Carlotta Graham, a Nazarene Barbadian who a few months before had returned to her homeland. Some of her friends in Brooklyn saw the Hills before they set sail and told them about her. She was a graduate from Eastern Nazarene College and had a deep desire to do missionary work. She regularly attended the Pil-

grim Holiness church in Barbados, since the Nazarene churches there were not truly Nazarenes as she had known them in Brooklyn. But on August 31, the first Sunday after the Hills' arrival, God led her to attend the very "Nazarene" church they attended. The story of her joining forces with the Hills is told in another chapter.

After one month in Barbados, the Hills, in response to the invitation of a Trinidadian, set sail for Trinidad, leaving Miss Graham to hold revivals in Barbados. They found one good evangelical church in Port of Spain, plus a struggling preaching point or two in the country. The man in charge wanted to turn these over to the Hills, and in a short while the whole Port of Spain group had become Nazarenes.

Challenged by the vast needs and opportunities of Trinidad, the Hills stayed on for the greater part of the next two years. They sent for Miss Graham, who came and held some revival meetings and in January 1927 returned to Trinidad permanently to pastor a new work at Tunapuna, which Brother Hill himself had begun.

God never failed the Hills during their entire term of service, but they and their faithful colaborers in both Trinidad and Barbados certainly found out what hard times were. Because of the depression, there was no regular support. Only a token check came each month from Headquarters, and Mr. Hill was instructed to use this for his personal survival and to let the work go. It was hardly enough for the two of them, but by God's help he would *not* let the work go!

Years later, as an old man, he testified, "I've always had a way of making money." This talent or ability did not come without a lot of backbreaking labor. Once they kept a herd of 100 hogs. In Trinidad they bought a 26-acre estate of coconut trees and eventually resold it for a profit of \$2,000, putting \$1,000 of this back into the work. In Barbados they would buy old furniture, probably much of it beautiful mahogany, which Mrs. Hill would repair and rework for sale. Such profit would



help to keep the work going a while longer. They took in roomers and probably did a lot of other things here and there to keep them and the work moving forward in those days.

The two years in Trinidad were not easy. When the Hills first came they rented rooms from private parties and other missions. They recalled at least five such "borrowed" abodes. Then they built a little structure on their estate and saved that rent money. But this had its hazards, for it was only a box-wood house with large cracks between the boards. They killed seven boa constrictors in the yard, plus many other snakes in the house. But they thanked God for His protection, for they were never harmed by these unwanted guests. Mosquitoes were so bad at times that the missionaries had to burn leaves in the house to drive the pests out. One morning the Hills awoke to find the place full of bats, and they killed 17 before they could all get out of the house.

They never had a car in Trinidad and so had to walk everywhere or ride the small, crowded buses. Mrs. Hill suffered a sunstroke from walking out in the sun too much. The arthritis that plagued her to her death, eventually confining her to a wheelchair, began in Trinidad. In 1929, through a friend, God mercifully provided them a car for their work in Barbados.

The church in Barbados mushroomed while that in Trinidad grew slowly and with great difficulties. There were those who tried to put the Hills in a bad light with the government. Once detectives were sent to search the house as a result of reports they had received. Sister Graham at Tunapuna knew nothing of what was happening, but she could not sleep that night and finally arose at 2 A.M. to pray. God directed her praying toward the Hills, so by 7 A.M. she was at their home to find out why. They had been undergoing quite a nervous strain, and at this evidence of God's care they both broke down and wept.

Perhaps it was in connection with this same incident that



one morning Mr. Hill received a summons to see the chief of police. The chief, an Englishman, said he had been informed that Mr. Hill had preached against the Union Jack. Brother Hill repeated what he had said in the church—that England had done more to Christianize the world than any other nation. Then he requested that they send a detective to hear him every night he preached. The next time he saw the chief, the man spoke very cordially and said, "You are doing a good job, Mr. Hill."

Their faithful colaborer, Miss Graham, stood by them through thick and thin. Brother Hill recalled that when they had trouble she would fast for as much as three days at a time until God saw them through.

One of those troubled times came shortly after the beginning of the work—in March 1927. After Mr. Hill and the national who had begun the Port of Spain church had worked together for several months, it became evident that this man had expected to receive a healthy salary when he became a Nazarene pastor—\$75.00 per month, according to one source. (This was a healthy salary indeed for those depression days!) Mr. Hill had requested money from the General Board, but none was forthcoming. This pastor did not seem aware of the fact that Miss Graham and the Hills were also feeling the pinch of hard times but were staying on top by the grace of God and honest labor. He became angry, and a business meeting was called for a Tuesday night at which both Miss Graham and Mr. Hill were present. But there seemed to be no way to pacify the man. When Miss Graham tried to speak, he publicly ordered her to sit down. The meeting resulted in officially severed connections.

Brother Hill prayed and began looking for a place to rent, so that Nazarene services might continue uninterrupted in Port of Spain. In a direct answer to prayer, he was able to secure a large hall at 58 Roberts Street, Woodbrook. Handbills were printed and distributed in preparation, and there was a

good crowd for the dedication of the hall on the first Sunday morning. The people from the former Nazarene congregation came too. They loved Brother Hill both as a Christian and as a preacher, and they chose to follow him. From the very first service, God's blessing was indeed evident, and it continued in the months that followed.

During that first full year in Trinidad, 1927, Dr. H. F. Reynolds, general superintendent, visited the Hills for several weeks and helped them organize the church. He also conducted the First Annual Assembly in Trinidad on July 30-31, and in Barbados on August 16. The two sessions were separated in every detail, but the minutes were published under one cover, since both islands were, in a sense, one district. Miss Carlotta Graham was granted the only district minister's license in Trinidad, and the first in the British West Indies.

After two years of residence in Trinidad, interspersed with trips to Barbados, the Hills deemed it wise to make their permanent home in Barbados. There were at least two good reasons for this. First, the work in Trinidad had grown slowly and only with difficulty; the work in Barbados was rapidly increasing and demanded more and more of the district superintendent's time. Second, living conditions were much better in Barbados, and both of the Hills had better health there. But Trinidad was not forsaken. Mr. Hill made several visits there each year and sometimes as frequently as once per month. On occasion he stayed several months at a time, in spite of the fact that he suffered much physically from these trips and would sometimes be sick and exhausted afterward.

During the early and middle 1930s, grave trouble of a different nature arose. In addition to the difficulties of running the district, Brother Hill had to bear the pain of serious charges being filed against him. But God stood by His servant, and so did most of the people. In the Official Minutes of the Sixth Annual Assembly (1936) can be found the record of a very touching tribute paid to him. The assembly gave a con-

fidence vote, altogether unsolicited by Mr. Hill, but taken to let the general church know that his national brethren had confidence in him. Of the 85 ballots cast, Brother Hill received 85 favorable votes, and the assembly voted to draft a letter to Dr. J. B. Chapman, asking that Brother Hill be returned as their leader.

When Dr. J. G. Morrison visited the field in 1938, he did some careful investigation of the case. In his report to the General Board, he said:

I cannot close this report without again giving to Brother and Sister Hill the highest commendation and praise for the success that has been achieved. . . .

After carefully, and, we trust, impartially, surveying the development and extension of our Nazarene work in the West Indies, we are not surprised that the enemy should have marshalled all his efforts to blight it. While on the field, we contacted firsthand information that has led us to believe that all the charges which were preferred against Brother J. I. Hill were actuated by the deepest jealousy, were furthered by frank enmity against his success and were utterly unfounded. (J. G. Morrison, "Report of Visit to the Mission Fields of Barbados and Trinidad, British West Indies," 1938, 5)

By the assembly of 1939, Mr. Hill was very ill, and Mrs. Hill was also ailing. In the 13 years of hard labor they had not had a furlough. Twice he had seen his homeland, but only on brief business trips. Now with a badly ulcerated stomach, he with his faithful wife left the West Indies on May 20, less than two months after the eighth assembly, never to return. Foreign Missions Secretary C. Warren Jones approached them about returning, but Brother Hill's health and his age made this ill-advised. They were willing to return and give the last drop of their lives if there was no other way to keep the work going,



but with the Danielsons in Barbados to oversee both fields, it did not seem an absolute necessity.

And so, after three months of "rest," during which time they built a house to live in, Mr. Hill began what turned out to be a six years' deputation stint, specializing in four-day holiness and missions conventions. Then he retired to his home, appropriately named "Hills' Retreat," in Berryville, Ark., where they continued to lift in prayer the work in the West Indies. Many visitors came to see them and to draw from their rich spirits fresh blessing and encouragement.

It was my privilege, too, to be a guest in their home in 1965, and I found that the years had not put out their light. Vividly they could recall details from the past, but just as vividly they bore a burden for the present—including their youthful pastor and the whole church. They were concerned that the holiness message be proclaimed as clearly and as fearlessly in the present day as it was when they were young.

On March 28, 1968, God called James Hill home. From her wheelchair, Nora continued to shine a few years longer until God called her, too, to come higher. Their light has not gone out; heaven must be just a little brighter as they "shine . . . as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).



James Ivy Hill, district superintendent, British West Indies.

## Chapter Two

# A Burning and a Shining Light

Never underestimate the power of a woman—especially when that woman is on fire for God. The witness-flare of the Church of the Nazarene in Trinidad might have gone out after the Hills' return to the States had not God found a woman who, like John the Baptist, could be described as a "burning and a shining light" (John 5:35).

Carlotta Urcilla Graham was born on the island of Barbados. Her parents were strict Anglicans, and she early became known as a devout child. According to her own testimony she would rather have been whipped than made to miss a church service. When her mother wished to administer severe punishment, she denied her the privilege of attending her beloved church.

When quite young, Carlotta became a candidate for confirmation, along with other children about her age. But probably none took it as seriously as she. The minister taught them that this was the time when they would receive the Holy Ghost. At home that morning she prayed for God to give her His Spirit. He heard her prayer and saved her from her sins right there. Going to her mother, she tried to persuade her that God had already done the "confirming" and that it was pointless to go through with the church ceremony as planned. But

her mother, very conscious of what other people might think, insisted that she follow the usual custom. She submitted, but from that time on she carried her Bible to church instead of her Anglican prayer book.

After her father died, Carlotta decided she should go to the United States, where she could find work and thus help support her mother. One of her cousins and his wife lived in Brooklyn among a considerable population of West Indians, so it was only natural when she came to the States in 1912 that she should go to live with them.

Life with the cousin was not always pleasant. Neither he nor his wife were Christians, and they often tried to persuade Carlotta to go with them to the movies. When she refused, they gave her a hard time. They knew she loved going to church services, so they set about to try to take the joy out of it. When she would return home from a night service, the door would be locked and everyone would seem to be asleep. It was amazing how long it took them to hear her and to open the apartment door! The hall in which she waited was not heated, and Brooklyn winters can be very cold, as those cousins well knew. Carlotta discovered they were not really asleep, for once she slipped into the hall so quietly that she could hear them talking inside the apartment.

It was a relief when she was able to send for her oldest sister and the two of them could rent an apartment for themselves. Later they sent for yet another sister to come.

In the providence of God, in 1916, a gentleman invited her to attend the Church of the Nazarene, a hitherto unknown group to her. She liked this church so much that she decided to continue going. After two years she opened her heart to the Comforter, who came in to abide in His sanctifying fullness.

God had early had His hand upon this handmaiden of His. As a child in Barbados she had heard an Anglican missionary tell of the work in Africa, and right there the desire to



be a missionary arose within her. But it had been pushed aside and somewhat forgotten as she grew into adulthood.

Now in America, once again God spoke to her about working for Him. She was engaged to a man who did not want her to be a missionary. Against his wishes she enrolled as a student at Eastern Nazarene College in 1921 and continued there until her graduation in 1923. She insisted that, if he were to marry her, he too would have to be a missionary. This he was not willing to do. Carlotta really loved him, and when the final break came she was so sick she had to go to bed for a week. But she would not abandon God's call.

However, after graduation, she became discouraged and took a secular job. One Tuesday in 1924, as she was ironing a shirt in the home where she worked, she heard a voice speaking: "Is this what I called you to do?" She looked around her, thinking that perhaps the lady of the home had said it. But no one was in sight, and so she resumed the ironing. Again the same words were repeated. Realizing it was the voice of her Lord, obediently she replied, "No, Lord. I won't do it again after today."

The next day, Wednesday, she went to visit a Christian friend, Sister Archer. God seemed to prompt her to tell Carlotta that she ought to go into His work. The two of them spent the rest of the day together in fasting and prayer. Sister Archer's burden was that God would help this hesitating soul to step out by faith. And as the day wore on, Carlotta pleaded with God to assure her that He would take care of her if she did. In reply, He gave her this promise: "He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure" (Isa. 33:16).

Returning home that night, she turned to her own Bible and read again the same comforting words. The next day God assured her heart with another verse: "Your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot" (Deut. 29:5).

The following Monday, January 19, 1924, she stepped out by faith. Visiting hospitals and homes in Brooklyn, she found and won many souls to Christ. Her method of approach was a straightforward one. Whoever answered the door, she would ask, "Do you want prayer this morning?" Not once was she turned away. More than once it seemed as if God had sent her just at the right moment.

There began to grow within her heart a yearning to return to Barbados. And God seemed to speak directly to her again through words of Scripture: "Arise, and pass quickly over the water" (2 Sam. 17:21). Wanting more evidence that this was God's will, she asked Him to grant her a sign. She prayed that if He really wanted her to return home, He would send someone to give her something—someone who had never given her anything before.

The following Thursday night she walked part of the way home from church with a friend. Before they parted, the friend handed her an envelope, saying that the Lord had told her to give it to Sister Graham. In it was \$3.00, the first this friend had ever given her.

The next Sunday she preached for a Rev. Franklin. When he was introducing her to the congregation, he said that the Spirit had told him to take an offering for her. No one had planned for such an offering, it seems, but when the plates were passed, \$6.15 was collected. Thus God had granted the fulfillment of her sign twice, and she was sure He was leading. She was fully prepared to follow.

On Monday morning she announced her decision to her sister. Naturally the sister wanted to know how she proposed to make such a trip, for she knew that Carlotta's support for some time had been only what God's people had given through the Spirit's promptings. But bravely she testified of her faith that the God who had told her to go would supply the means. What if her total monetary assets were only \$9.15? She was taking her orders from the One who made the ocean, and



surely He could furnish her with a ticket to travel its broad expanse.

Carlotta's sister reminded her that she needed many things before returning, which was certainly true. She advised that she work for a while and then go home well-prepared. It sounded like the right thing to do, so she agreed; but after the sister had gone out, she turned to God for guidance. Looking in His Word, she found the verse for her need: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Tim. 2:4). Upon her sister's return Carlotta announced that God had told her not to take a job.

In seemingly no time, all the money needed for travel was supplied. But what about her meager wardrobe? In childlike faith she took that matter to her Heavenly Father. Many years later she could still vividly recall the details of His answer. Her simple request was for three more dresses; He gave her seven. One of her dresses she dyed black to wear to funerals. Another dress, a dark brown one, she chose to wear for her landing dress. But her sister and friends did not like that one; they perhaps wanted her to look a little gayer. So her sister-in-law bought her an attractive peach-colored dress. Then her friends insisted that she should have a hat of matching color. For some reason she refused and bought a black one instead.

Everything was packed, and on November 30, one day before the ship was scheduled to sail, she presented herself and her luggage at the docks. To her amazement, she was informed that the sailing date had been changed to December 8. She could not remain there for a week, nor did it seem wise to pay for shipping her luggage back to her sister's home. Trusting God to take care of it, she left all her bags at the docks—"at her own risk," the agent told her.

During that delay, on December 4, a cablegram came from Barbados bearing the news that Mother Graham was dying. Then it was that her well-meaning friends realized that

God was doing Carlotta's shopping for her. She had a complete black outfit, considered in the West Indies almost the only proper thing for a close relative's funeral.

Sailing on December 8, 1925, she reached home on the 20th, four days before her mother's triumphant home-going. Mother and daughter had both been secretly praying that they would be able to see each other alive again, and God had answered their prayers. Precious were those last days spent together.

The funeral behind her, Carlotta's mind naturally turned back to the place that had been her home for 13 years. She wondered if perhaps God had brought her to Barbados just so she might be with her mother, and so she sought His guidance about returning to Brooklyn and the work she had been doing there. She prayed about this from January to August, never receiving an answer. But she was wise enough to be still and wait when she did not know what to do. A friend with whom she had been baptized and who had accompanied her on her return to Barbados, offered to pay her fare back to the United States. Having no clearance from God, she refused, and the friend returned alone in early August.

The church in Barbados was a disappointment to Sister Graham. She found that it was Nazarene in name only, so she worshiped more often in another holiness church. But on August 31 she attended a service in the Nazarene church, where she met the newly arrived missionaries, Rev. and Mrs. J. I. Hill. They had been told about her by mutual friends in Brooklyn who were sure she would be of help to them in the work. Mr. Hill had been quietly informed of her presence in the service and called on her to lead in prayer. Then he made public announcement that he would like to meet her after church.

At the conclusion of the service, the Hills' traveling companion and a mutual friend (the wife of a deceased Brooklyn pastor who had meant much to young Carlotta) introduced

Sister Graham to these newcomers. Mr. Hill made an appointment to see her again the coming Friday. It was at this meeting that he asked her to become a part of the work in Barbados. She refused to give him an immediate answer and asked for time to pray about the matter. Instead of being bothered by the delay, he rejoiced to find her so dependent upon God. He exclaimed, "That's just what I wanted."

Taking the matter to God in prayer, she received clear indications that it was His will. The Spirit directed her to the words in Ezra, "Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings?" (4:22) and, "Whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily" (7:21*b*).

The next Monday she returned to Brother Hill and showed him these scriptures. He was pleased because God had spoken. Confidently he departed for Trinidad, leaving her to conduct revivals in Barbados.

But the spiritual ignorance and need he saw in Trinidad far surpassed that of Barbados. Writing to Miss Graham, he told her to pray about it, and if God would permit her to do so, she should cancel the remainder of her slate in Barbados and come to hold meetings in Trinidad. She fasted and prayed for guidance. And again God spoke through His Word: ✓  
"Come, get you down: for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great" (Joel 3:13).

Believing that it was His will, she took ship for Trinidad. In her heart was the prayer that God would confirm this step by giving her at least one soul the first time she preached. She landed in Trinidad on November 7, 1926. It was Sunday, and the Hills left her to rest while they went out in the country to the little work in Carapichaima, instructing her to take the afternoon train and come down for the night service. So her very first night in Trinidad she preached at Carapichaima and continued there for 10 days of revival services. The revival had been scheduled for two weeks, but it had to be shortened



because Sister Graham became ill. But God had answered prayer by giving two souls at the altar the first time she preached.

As soon as she had recovered, she returned to the Hills' home in Port of Spain. There she was faced with another proposition. The work at Tunapuna had to have a pastor or be closed. Would she accept this pastorate and remain in Trinidad or return to Barbados to continue holding revivals? Once more she prayed for guidance, and God led her to enter the open door of Tunapuna.

Going home to Barbados, she spent the Christmas and New Year's season packing to return permanently to her new field of work. On January 15, 1927, she again set foot on Trinidad soil. Quickly locating a home for herself, she conducted her first services in Tunapuna the following Sunday. It was the beginning of a long-term pastorate. And a longtime friendship was begun the following Wednesday night, when her first Tunapuna convert, Elmena Bailey, was won.

In the First District Assembly of the West Indies districts (1927), Miss Graham was given a district license. And in 1931, at the Second Assembly, Miss Graham was the lone candidate for ordination—the first from Trinidad and from the British West Indies. Dr. J. B. Chapman ordained her on March 15, 1931, and since she was district secretary, she had the unique privilege of signing her own ordination certificate.

In 1937, kind friends sent her a return-trip ticket to the United States. She went for exactly one year and spent much of that time in deputation services, telling about the work in Trinidad. Once again friends and fellow Christians rallied to her aid, and she returned with a considerable amount of money to invest at Tunapuna. With it she purchased a lot large enough for both a church and manse.

When her beloved Rev. and Mrs. J. I. Hill (she called them Daddy and Mother) left the field on May 20, 1939, less than a year after her return to Trinidad, she was left to finish

a building for the St. James church, pastor it and Tunapuna, and give some general oversight to the district work for five and one-half years (most of the period 1939-44).

The need for a church building at Tunapuna still weighed heavily upon her heart. They had the land but not nearly enough materials to complete the structure. In 1940 she wrote Dr. C. Warren Jones, then the secretary of the Department of Foreign Missions, telling him of the situation. A reply from Dr. Jones reads as follows:

Dear Sister Graham:

I have before me your letter of March 27th. I note that you have taken all your money and purchased material for a new church building. It looks like you might have a little faith. You can count on us that we are going to do our best for you. We are advertising this in the *Other Sheep* and praying that God will stir someone so that they will help us in building the church. . . .

That year at the General Assembly, Mr. Hill, still carrying a burden for Trinidad, pled for someone to answer this need. In response, Dr. and Mrs. Haldor Lillenas gave \$500 in memory of her father, the late General Superintendent Wilson. The church was completed, and Dr. Jones himself dedicated it as the Wilson Memorial Church on April 27, 1941.

Now Miss Graham wrote about the need for a manse at Tunapuna. She was living at some distance from the church, and frequent rains and poorly lighted streets made travel difficult and at times even dangerous. There was still land at the back of the church on which a manse could be erected.

But a letter from Dr. Jones, dated sometime in 1942, stated that, from the board's standpoint, nothing could be done about building a manse just then. Sister Graham went to the spot where the house was to be built, sat down there, and talked the whole matter over with her Lord, putting it into His strong hands.

Soon a friend sent \$70.00, and it was to her a direct answer to prayer. Brother Maynard, a trusted layman, was sent to buy sheets of galvanized roofing with this money. He had planned to buy it on a Friday, but Miss Graham felt it urgent that he go sooner. At her request he paid for the materials on Thursday, and on Friday a truck was sent to collect the 49 sheets of roofing. But at the supply house, the driver was told that galvanized sheets had just been put under a limit of 10 sheets per customer. He produced his receipt for 49 sheets, dated one day before, and they had to honor it. Triumphantly he returned to Miss Graham, telling her how lucky she was, but she knew it was much more than luck.

✓ God never failed His dependent child one time during the building. He tried her faith only to make it grow stronger. Friends and strangers (many of whom she had never met) sent in the money bit by bit until the walls were up, the roof on, water piped in, electricity turned on, and everything finished. Sister Graham paid great tribute to the West Indian Christians in Brooklyn, most of them non-Nazarenes, who were so faithful and so devoted to God's cause as to give unselfishly of their means at that time.

The war years were hard ones in more than one way. Rev. Robert Danielson, the missionary superintendent living in Barbados, found travel to Trinidad sometimes impossible, and his visits were necessarily few. He had to let many burdens rest upon Miss Graham's shoulders, and as "acting superintendent" she held the work together. She communicated with Mr. Danielson by letter, and it was her custom to write Dr. C. Warren Jones every month.

The burden of pastoring both churches was in itself a heavy one. God gave her faithful laymen who assisted as best they could. Elmena Bailey came to live with her, run the home, and be a real sister to her. This was a great relief and blessing, for former housekeepers had been less than sympathetic with her stand for righteousness. At least one of them



spied on her, trying to discover secret sins in her private life, for she didn't believe a single woman could live clean morally. But she never found "the man" in Sister Graham's life, for there was none.

Laymen conducted the services at the Tunapuna church while Sister Graham went to St. James. She was regularly at Tunapuna for the Sunday morning services and at St. James for the Sunday night. Once a month she went to St. James in the morning, too, to serve Communion. Transportation was particularly difficult. She waited sometimes as long as two hours for a bus, and then it would be so crowded that she must either stand in a crouched position (because of her height and the smallness of the bus) or kneel on the floor, out of sight of the inspector when the bus was overcrowded. She never reached home before midnight, and then she was so stiff it took a while for her to completely straighten out. It is no wonder that her knees bothered her for the rest of her life. But of those days she said, "Those were some times! But I wasn't happy unless I went. Responsibility is a great thing." ✓

In 1943, she suffered a physical collapse and was ill for three months. She did not see the church from July 4 to October 10, and people gave her up to die. But she knew she was going to live. Ever mindful of the work, she had asked God to reveal it to her if He was going to take her home, so she could write Dr. Jones to send someone to take over. The Lord assured her heart: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God" (John 11:4). Her condition worsened after that, but she held on to God's promise.

Rev. C. S. Jenkins, who was replacing Rev. Robert Danielson in Barbados while he furloughed, came to see her on Wednesday, October 6, and prayed with her. He promised to take the Sunday morning service, and she expressed her thanks and her regret at not being able to come herself. But the Lord touched her after he prayed, and on Sunday morn-

ing Mr. Jenkins was amazed to arrive and find Miss Graham on the platform to greet him!

Miss Graham saw missionaries come and go, but she stayed on. Rarely did she even return to Barbados for a visit. She was misunderstood and unappreciated at times, but she faithfully continued to serve. In 1956, on the silver anniversary of her ordination, the Tunapuna church honored her with a special service, and Mrs. P. L. Beals presented her with a gift on their behalf. After her resignation from the active ministry and pastorate of the Tunapuna church in 1965 (after 38 years as their pastor), the entire district honored her in a special service at St. James in December. General Superintendent V. H. Lewis was present, and a "This Is Your Life" type of program was given. There were many expressions of appreciation for her years of untiring labor.

After the home-going of Rev. J. I. Hill and Sister Lucas (a Barbadian pastor and schoolmate at ENC) in early 1968, Sister Graham felt an increasing longing to join them. Her work was done; eternity beckoned.

She became bedfast, and her once-heavy body wasted away. A pastor's wife from another denomination warned me that the end was not far away, so at five o'clock that afternoon I went to her home. Sister Bailey, near the point of exhaustion herself, ushered me into Miss Graham's room. Just as I had been told, she seemed more conscious of another world than of this. Her eyes hardly seemed to see the friends around her, but her right arm was often upraised as if waving to or reaching out for someone or something that we could not see. I leaned over her bed and asked her if she knew me, calling my name. She smiled in recognition.

Before leaving, I stood again over her bed and began to pray. Then my voice choked off, and it was some moments before I could regain control enough to go on. Through tears I opened my eyes and looked down at her. Now she was really seeing me, and the astonished look on her face seemed to ask



why I was crying! She would soon see face-to-face the One whom she had loved and served all those years. No time for crying now! ✓

At 11:30 the next morning, May 14, she left her pain-ridden body behind and went to be with Jesus and Brother Hill and Sister Lucas and a host of others.

At her funeral the next day, the small building was not nearly adequate for the huge crowd. It was a triumphant service, and the people who filed past her casket could better be described as rejoicers than mourners. There were tears, yes, but they were mingled with hand clapping and joyous singing. If I had not been a Christian, surely my heart would have been struck with deep conviction, as I believe some people's were. The undertaker became exceedingly nervous and wished to bring the whole thing to a hasty conclusion. Even the afterglow of this life was too much for some, but ever so beautiful to others.

In her declining years Miss Graham told me, "God has been good to me and supplied every need. I never had any people in Trinidad, and don't still, but I am happier here than I would be at home. I could never turn back on God, He has been so good." But she *does* have people in Trinidad! In the last day a host of her spiritual children will rise up to call her blessed because she lit the darkness around them and showed them Christ.

Carlotta Graham:  
Pioneer pastor, Trinidad.



## Chapter Three



# Ye Are the Light of the World

✓ Jesus left the job of witnessing to a small band of followers—a few preachers, but mostly laymen and laywomen. When He gave them the charge several years before that they were to be the “light of the world” (Matt. 5:14), He well knew they were not a brilliant lot in the eyes of the world. But He expected these ordinary men and women to reflect Him—the true Light. He still expects that of us today, whether we be butcher, baker, candlestick maker—or tailor, as Carlton Phillip is.

Carlton was converted about 35 years ago at the St. James Church of the Nazarene in Port of Spain, just as carnival season was beginning to get into swing that year. His friends, knowing how much he had loved to “play mass” and “jump up,” predicted that he would never keep his vows to Christ. But God helped him through all the temptations of that carnival season and of every one since.

He quickly became an all-out Nazarene, attending services practically every time the doors were open. He loved Sunday School, and it was in Rev. Wesley Harmon’s class of teenage boys, no doubt, that he learned many of the truths that helped to make him a stable Christian. He enjoyed the monthly workers’ meetings held on the campus of Nazarene

Training College, and would stay through the Saturday night prayer meetings the men students held in their dormitory cottage afterward.

He had been convicted of his need to be sanctified in the regular services at St. James, but the standard seemed too high. It did not fit with his earlier careful training that one sins every day in word, thought, and deed. But about a year after his conversion, God helped him to realize that, by His enabling grace, such a standard was possible. One week later he went to the workers' meeting and to the dormitory prayer meeting. Providentially, the question was asked, "Does anyone here realize his need to be sanctified and wish to seek the experience?" Carlton confessed that he did, and the fellows joined him in earnest prayer until victory came.

One Sunday morning Carlton came to Sunday School as usual, but upon his return home he became so ill that he had to be taken to the hospital. The doctor ordered an emergency appendectomy. Carlton thanked God it had happened *after* Sunday School, so he had not had to miss. By the next Sunday he was home, but with orders not to ride his bicycle and, of course, to take it easy. So he started out early, walking carefully to the church. He arrived a little pale-looking but in time for Sunday School. He wouldn't let a little thing like an operation spoil his record of perfect attendance!

Out in the country lived a teenage girl by the name of Adina. When her father died, she and her mother moved closer to Port of Spain and sought for the same Christian fellowship they had known in their country church. Eventually they found it at St. James and both joined. Adina proved herself as stalwart a Christian as Carlton, so everyone was pleased when they fell in love and were married.

For several years Carlton served his church through the NYPS, as a Sunday School teacher, usher, song leader, money counter, and as a member of the church board. He seemed to be always on the lookout for ways to serve. He was ready



anytime to do a little lay preaching in open-air meetings sponsored by the NYPS. One former steel-bandsman is a Christian and church member today as a result of this ministry.

Carlton is a tailor by trade, and a good one at that. He has spent some time as an instructor in tailoring at the government institute. He tells a story of an examination he had to take at the institute before he could obtain a certain certificate. One of his fellow instructors was asked to monitor it. Carlton received the paper from him and looked at the questions on the front. Oi, yoi, yoi! This is above me! he thought. Hoping the back part might be a little easier, he turned it over, only to find equally difficult questions there. Then he looked them all over again, trying to decide where he could make a feeble start. His friend, seeing his distress, offered to help by allowing him to take the paper home, look up the answers, and return it completed the next day. He said he realized it was a hard exam, and since they were both teachers, he'd do that much for him.

But without a moment's hesitation Carlton's answer came back, "No, my friend. I am a Christian, and if I obtain my certificate in a false way, every time I look at it hanging on the wall I will feel bad. I'd rather fail than to pass in that manner."

The man was embarrassed, but he saw that Carlton would have it no other way.

Later, when the results were announced and Carlton had somehow passed, he saw his friend and told him the news. The man replied, "Well, you are *really* a Christian!" And from then on, every time he saw him he called him "Mr. Christian."

One day Carlton was visiting the district superintendent, Rev. W. C. Fowler. He happened to ask about Somaru (Arima), a country church that a friend of his (whom he had won to the Lord) had pastored for a while.

"At present they're having only an afternoon Sunday

School. There is no worker to carry the responsibility for a full program. Would you like to go to Somaru?"

It was a question out of the blue, but Carlton promised to pray about it and discuss it with Adina. After prayer, both he and Adina felt that this was the Lord's leading, but Adina wisely warned that it would be hard.

In February 1967, they began—thinking it would be a Sunday School-only proposition. But the needs they saw pulled them out farther and farther until they were making the long trip several times a week. They loved the St. James church and had no thought of leaving it, but almost exactly one year later the district superintendent reorganized the Somaru church with Carlton Phillip as pastor. It thrived for a while under his leadership.

Over the years Carlton has continued to be a good tailor, receiving good pay for his labors. But other parts of his life have come unglued, including his marriage. His faith was tried and seemed to falter for a while. But remembering that some of his friends still believed in him, he determined by God's help not to break that confidence. Today he is a faithful layman in the Santa Cruz Church of the Nazarene.

Let's take a look at the church that fostered the growth of this fine Christian layman. St. James is the oldest church on the district, if its beginning is counted from the first Port of Spain congregation. It is often called the headquarters church, and indeed it is the mother of a large segment of the work today, furnishing pastors and some lay workers whose influence has been districtwide.

Reference has been made already to the original congregation, which joined the Church of the Nazarene soon after the Hills came to Trinidad in late 1926. After the break between Mr. Hill and the founder of this congregation, the move to 58 Roberts Street, a rented hall, seemed to be led of God in every way. Sister Graham recalled that the first service in the new location was a "melting time." In the dedication, Brother



Hill read Psalm 50. As he prayed the dedicatory prayer, a shower of rain fell. Sister Graham reminded him of this afterward, for to her it was a token of God's blessing. And in the months that followed, God's blessing was evident indeed. A person had to come early to get a seat, in spite of the fact that it was a large hall. Latecomers had to stand at windows and doors around the outside.

Four months after the move, the First Annual District Assembly was held in the hall, and it was reported that the Port of Spain church had a total membership of 66, a Sunday School enrollment of 91, an NYPS membership of 46, and a total giving for all purposes of \$108.57.

This work prospered at Roberts Street for at least five years. Membership in 1931 was reported at 142 with an additional 45 probationers. Then difficulties arose once again, and another pastor withdrew from the church, this time taking most of the congregation with him and founding his own sect.

There was very little of the former church left, perhaps not enough to continue renting so large a hall. At any rate, sometime in 1934 they moved their place of worship to the suburb of St. James—first to Nizam Street and then to the Oriental Hall on Western Main Road, which they continued renting until they occupied the first Nazarene church building in Port of Spain.

By 1938, when Dr. J. G. Morrison held the Seventh Annual Assembly in the Oriental Hall, the St. James church seems to have recovered some of her former strength, and Dr. Morrison described it as an "excellent congregation," with Rev. Joseph Garcia as pastor. But he saw the critical need for a building of their own. In his report to the General Board, he mentioned that the Oriental Hall was "a comfortable place, but on a very noisy street, and just over several shops where many people congregate in the streets, especially at night, and on Sundays. . . . This group of Nazarenes sorely needs a church building in a quieter section of the city." He wrote that

Mrs. S. N. Fitkin had sent a special gift of \$1,000 for relocation, and that he and Brother Hill had spent considerable time trying to locate a building that they could buy and remodel for the purpose.

Finally Mr. Hill had to settle for buying a piece of land on the corner of Mooniram and Angelina streets, which was to become the permanent home of the St. James church. In 1939 he began the erection of a small church there, but ill health and lack of finances forced him to return to the United States before he could complete it. His successor, Rev. Robert Danielson, not a resident missionary, had to leave its completion in the hands of Carlotta Graham. She finished and dedicated it on January 28, 1940. It was small, "only about the size of two rooms," said one observer. But it was a great step forward to have a church-owned building in Port of Spain—the first for the whole Trinidad District for that matter.

As previously related, Miss Graham lived at Tunapuna and for five and one-half years traveled back and forth to keep the two churches going. If it had not been for her faithfulness, perhaps there would be no St. James church today. There were some heroic laymen who assisted her, too.

In October 1944, Sister Graham welcomed missionaries Rev. and Mrs. Lelan Rogers. He became not only the field superintendent but the pastor of St. James as well. This was the beginning of a long line of missionary pastors—the Rogerses, the Sheltons, the Hendrickses, the Millers, the Harmons, the Sayeses, and the Brunts.

For various reasons some of these pastorates were very short, and the St. James people began to wonder why their missionaries never stayed.

Some of them wondered if the Missions Board was just using them as a proving ground or experiment station. When the Millers came in 1949, the people assumed that they would not stay long either, but they broke the old pattern and stayed for six years. The founding of Nazarene Training College and

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the rebuilding of the St. James church were two tangible victories God gave them during those years that helped the people have confidence in the stability of the church as never before.

But before the church could be rebuilt on a much larger scale, more land had to be obtained. On the land next door to the church was a house that was occupied by two families who were directly opposed to all that the church stood for. The church went to her knees in earnest prayer that God would somehow move the people out so that the church could purchase the property. God answered, the owner sold to the Church of the Nazarene, and joyfully plans were made for a larger, modern church to be constructed. It was to be adequate for district gatherings as well. Thus 1953-54 was the year of building. The old church, which had been enlarged once by Rev. Lelan Rogers, was moved back and incorporated into the new structure. When all was finished, Sunday School and church attendance picked up considerably.

With increased growth, it became necessary to find someone to assist the missionary in charge. The second such national assistant, Hugh McKenzie, was assigned to assist Rev. Wesley Harmon just after his graduation from Nazarene Training College in 1956.

God had led and prepared this young man in some rather unusual ways. From his early teens he had felt a burden of guilt for sin from which he earnestly desired to be set free. He knew nothing of the way of salvation; he prayed secretly, but no relief came. At age 19, still hungry, he enrolled in a radio-advertised Bible course. He wrote his "teacher" and asked how he might know for sure that his sins were forgiven. The answer was vague and disheartening: "Keep on praying and someday you may know."

A minister in the Fundamental Baptist church, hearing of his pursuit of this course, invited him to come and talk over the Scriptures. Losing no time, he went that very day, and the



good man led him to Christ in his home. He started going regularly to the church and soon joined.

Six months after his conversion, Hugh enlisted in the Trinidad police force, and for three years all went well in his spiritual life. Then he began to feel the need of a deeper experience. He talked to his close friend, Bertrand Doyle, then preparing for the ministry at Nazarene Training College. Bertrand told him about entire sanctification, a second work of grace. This was new to him, and he talked to his own church leaders about it, only to find that they did not believe in such an experience.

After Bertrand's graduation, he went to Couva to pastor, and Hugh, stationed at nearby San Fernando, attended the services whenever possible. One night there was a visiting speaker—Dr. C. Warren Jones—and Hugh heard his first holiness sermon. Realizing his need, he went forward and sought the blessing. During that week at the station he continued seeking in earnest prayer. Once before he had felt a call to preach, and now God reminded him of the call. After some delay he finally surrendered even this, if only God would sanctify his heart. The Holy Spirit did come in His cleansing fullness right there in the San Fernando police barracks.

Now some drastic changes had to be made in his life. He explained to his minister his change in theology and requested a letter of transfer. A few months later he united with the Church of the Nazarene at St. James, his home community. At the end of 1954, he resigned his position with the police force and made his preparations to enter Nazarene Training College in January 1955.

During his two years in school, the staff, recognizing in him a mature and disciplined person, put more than ordinary responsibility upon him. At times he must have felt that it was too much, but God steadied him and made him a stronger Christian character for it. During most of the two years he pastored at Dibe, in addition to on-campus responsibilities.

He was a good student, too, and he graduated salutatorian of his class in November 1956.

Hugh's sweetheart, Una Clarke, had come to NTC in the first class (1951), not because she felt a special call, but because she realized it would help her be a better Christian. After her graduation, she did Sunday School and church work at Dibe and assisted a Child Evangelism Fellowship missionary in addition to serving for a while as girls' matron at the Bible school. So it was an experienced Christian worker who became the new assistant pastor's bride a few months after his coming to St. James.

Progressive steps can be seen in Pastor McKenzie's life and ministry at St. James. At first he was an assistant to the missionary, but as more and more responsibility was thrust upon him, he was actually copastor before that title was officially given him in 1959. Then in 1960 he was named the full pastor of the church, with the assistance of a missionary advisor, which arrangement lasted for five years. Then without any assistance he continued as full pastor until his appointment as the first Trinidadian district superintendent in 1971.

Rev. Carl Bompart stepped into the pastoral role at St. James at that time and has continued to serve to the present. He has a good congregation with some very substantial laymen.

St. James has served well in her role as mother to the district. From those won to Christ or nurtured through her efforts have come two college presidents, two district superintendents, and a number of pastors. And as the center of new housing has shifted to areas outside Port of Spain and some of her members have moved with it, she has given of her laymen to sister churches, helping to strengthen them.



## Chapter Four



# The Light in the Valley

On April 19, 1923, a little boy was born into a Hindu home in central Trinidad and was named John. His father, Lal, from India, and his mother, a Trinidad-born East Indian, hoped that he would live to adulthood. Two of their children died in infancy, victims of diseases borne by the multitudinous mosquitoes ever present in the cane and cocoa plantations. These and other cruel conditions approaching slavery caused the parents to retire prematurely from their labor contract on the plantation, hoping in spite of the financial loss to better themselves and their children. Partly because of this, John was eight years old before he had the privilege of stepping inside an English school.

But wherever the family wandered in search of livelihood, they were careful to maintain their worship, and each new child was taught to take his place in the rituals. As soon as John Sonny was old enough, he too learned to begin the day with devotions to Mahabirr Sammy or Hanuman, the Monkey God, who was the central figure in his parents' worship. ✕

First, it was necessary to awaken Hanuman from his night's sleep by the beating of gongs, blowing of conch shells, and the ringing of small handbells. Next he was given a bath,

often in fresh cow's milk. Finally he was garlanded with gorgeous natural flowers. This ritual complete, the family then worshiped, praying to him and thanking him for answers as well as making new requests. As long as the chanting sound of the choruses and prayers lasted, John felt a stirring within him of religious emotions that made him believe that his god was really listening. But he began to realize an unsatisfied thirst for spiritual reality that persisted in spite of his most ardent devotions to Hanuman.

When John had reached his 15th year, he was walking one night in his home village of Tunapuna when he heard an interesting sound. It was different from the chanting he associated with worship, but as he neared the place on the Eastern Main Road from where the sound came, he discovered that this, too, was a religious meeting—in the open air. He listened—and for the first time he heard about a God who so loved him that He had given His only Son to die for him. A longing to know this God of love stirred in his heart; indeed all the old spiritual hunger seemed to come to the surface and clamor for satisfaction now. In response to the invitation, he went forward, prayed, and accepted this God as his very own. He describes the change that began that night as follows:

He wonderfully saved me, and this marvelous and miraculous experience became the major turning point in my life. That night the glorious light of God penetrated the darkness in my soul and I was born of God. Old things passed away and all things became new. Praise the Lord forever! This experience brought me into right relationship with God. . . . When I began to turn down invitations to worldly amusements and refuse to participate in the former religious functions, I became an object of resentment to some. To others I was looked upon as a miser, and yet to others I was judged as a fool. These obstacles, however, were matched and surpassed by the grace of God and the fellowship of God's people.

When the war broke out in 1939, having passed his electrician's apprenticeship, he went to work as an electrician at the American base of Waller Field. He was only 19, but he was a likable and reliable workman, and someone invited him to attend chapel services at the base. Every Wednesday, Rev. Lelan Rogers of the Church of the Nazarene held the chapel service, and it was here that he and John Sonny met.

They became good friends, and the missionary invited John to his home and explained to him the doctrine of entire sanctification. This was something he accepted without any difficulty, but his understanding of it had been limited and distorted until now. Mr. Rogers also told him about the Tunapuna Church of the Nazarene, and it was there that he became a member.

God had already laid a burden upon John's heart to minister to his own people. One day when he was traveling in a San Fernando train, he had had a vision of a large number of people without a leader, people "living among the bison" (water buffalo). Then he had seen a hand pointing to the people, seeming to say that he had a responsibility to help them. He later understood this as a call to preach the gospel.

Through the Church of the Nazarene he now found an open door, and he became the first East Indian Nazarene pastor in Trinidad. At first he worked at Couva for two years, the district's first preaching point in the south. Then he pioneered the church in Arima. On August 3, 1948, he and Miss Doolie Daniel were united in marriage by Rev. Lelan Rogers at the St. James church. In 1949, at the request of the new missionary superintendent, Rev. A. O. Hendricks, he left the Arima church and pioneered a work in Tacarigua and then in Five Rivers. All this time he was still living at Tunapuna, supporting himself with his electrical work. He had a naturally keen mind, but he needed more theological training if his usefulness was to continue to grow.

John Sonny Lal was not the only one who needed more



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training. Every superintendent since the work began recognized the need of training workers and had made some effort to this end. But it was very difficult when the potential students had to support themselves full-time and when there were no proper facilities for teaching. Both the missionaries and the general church envisioned a Bible training school that would serve both Trinidad and Barbados, as well as Guyana, when that field was opened.

God's time and God's man for this particular job came at last. In July 1949, Rev. and Mrs. R. R. Miller arrived. They were veterans of 19 years' missionary service in Africa. God had prepared them for the challenge they met here by giving them charge of a girls' school in Africa and by leading them to teach for two years at Bethany-Peniel College, just prior to their coming to Trinidad. They were informed of the need for a training school before they came, so they soon set about to look for the right location. The people of the St. James church were involved in prayer for God's guidance in the matter.

Finally an 11-acre tract of choice land in the beautiful Santa Cruz Valley was located. There was a large house already on it, with a used electric plant—just right for a school, it seemed. General Superintendent Samuel Young stopped to see it in October 1949, recommended it to the General Board, and its purchase was approved. The St. James people were kept informed, but their faith was almost staggered when they heard how many acres were involved. One person expressed their reaction of surprise: "What? Where you goin' get that money?" But they kept on praying for God to perform a miracle.

He did, but not as expected. He kept them from buying it. Legal entanglements thwarted the purchase, and they took this as being God's closed door.

Just when it became evident that this deal was off, another property in the same valley was put up for sale. This one was 26 acres—over twice the size of the other—and had one

large home and three small cottages on it. Furthermore, this one was well-planted with orange, nutmeg, cocoa, mango, banana, and avocado trees, whereas the other was unplanted. And amazingly, the price was enough *below* the other property that a brand-new electric plant could be purchased as well for the same total amount. No legal entanglements blocked the way this time, and it became the property of the Church of the Nazarene.

Now the Millers knew the time to begin a school had arrived. Begin they must, in spite of hindering circumstances. They were already overburdened with the St. James church and district work, but they trusted God and pushed ahead.

Once again they involved the St. James people—this time to help clear some of the bush away from their answer to prayer, for the property was very run-down. A cleanup day was declared, and a host of people journeyed the 10 miles out from town to help. It was fun—like a big picnic—but there was hard work too. All were inspired by the thought that this was *their* property that God had given *them*. A whole jungle had to be cleared, it seemed, for the place had been neglected for a long time. There were many holes in the road that had to be filled. Mildew had to be scrubbed from the walls of the houses, which had long stood empty.

The next step was to build a mission home. A Chinese contractor was secured and construction began. Mr. Miller had to go to the States for surgery about this time, so upon Mrs. Miller fell the job of supervising the work. In a sense *she* built this house.

The electric plant was installed in the old cocoa house next to the estate house. The estate house was strengthened and remodeled for school purposes simultaneously with the construction of the mission home. It was necessary to wire it for electricity, so naturally Pastor John Lal was asked to do the job. He and other Nazarenes who came out from time to time



had opportunity to get to know some of the men on the construction crew.

The Chinese contractor's right-hand man was a big black man by the name of Basil Moses. Trinidad had been his home for several years, but he was originally from the nearby island of Granada. He was a hard worker and made friends quickly. He became known as just plain "Moze" or "Fat Man." The way of the world was all he really knew, but he did object to his men drinking on the job. And he tried to insist that those who drank on weekends should go into town to do so instead of remaining at the construction site.

But these Nazarenes he was meeting now—there was something strange about them that attracted him. There were Rev. and Mrs. Ray Miller—they really impressed him with their kindness. That Indian man, the electrician—what was it that made him so different? One day Moze offered a cigarette to John, who took the opportunity to give a little testimony to God's grace. He told Moze that he believed someday he, too, would make a preacher, but Moze just laughed at the idea. He liked that Indian, though, and he kept watching him.

Sister Rethia Clarke from St. James was another acquaintance he made at this time, and she probably was one of the first to invite him to church. He had never been to a Protestant service before, but these Nazarenes were so friendly, so joyful, so strange, he decided to go to one of their services to see what it was that made them this way. God gripped his heart with conviction, and at the end of a prayer of repentance, he found the secret—God himself dwelt in their hearts, and now in his.

It was late in 1950 when Basil Moses was converted, and soon plans were afoot for the annual Christmas program. Newcomer though he was, these gracious Christians gave him a part on the program. He didn't even want to go home for Christmas, so happy was he in the fellowship he had found.

Doing things for God became his chief joy; he wanted to

do everything he possibly could. Gladly he accepted the responsibility of helping with two outstation Sunday Schools, at Carapo and Cumuto. His particular job was to drive the car for those who went out from St. James.

But he longed to be able to do more than just this. Secretly he dared to wish for an opportunity to study to be better equipped for the work of the Lord. He never expressed this desire to anyone until suddenly the door opened for him to enter Nazarene Training College. Grasping the opportunity, he entered with the first class on January 3, 1951. He had received no specific call from God to preach, but as he studied and worked in the church, his desire to preach began to grow. He saw the need of his people, and he realized *his* obligation to give them the gospel.

Strangely, and yet understandably too, the St. James people were not quite happy when they realized that some of their very finest youth were going out there "to the bush," as they thought of it, to study. Brother Miller learned of their fears and of their sorrow at having to give up these young people at a time when they could be a real blessing to the home church. In a sermon to the church he tried to show them that, "as an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings" (Deut. 32:11), so the Lord, like the eagle, was pushing the young out of the St. James nest to make them more useful workers in His kingdom. Even the mother church would reap benefits from it, though it might seem painful at first.

Certainly this has been true down through the years. Of the 16 enrolled in the first class, all but 3 or 4 were from St. James. And during the first 15 years of the school, approximately half of the Trinidad students came from this local church. But God has always given them an increase more than sufficient to replace those leaving. And often NTC students have assisted at St. James on weekends. For many years

now their pastors have been products of the school that at first seemed such a threat to their very survival.

In spite of the fact that the school was located in Trinidad, from the very beginning invitations were issued to Barbados and British Guiana to participate by sending students. This was in keeping with the earlier desire and vision for an area training program. British Guiana did send two, and somehow they got in line ahead of all the Trinidadians and enrolled before anyone else. John Lal, the East Indian, was one of the 16 in the first class. Barbados did not send her first students until September 1953.

Housing posed an "interesting" problem, to say the least. But God had provided facilities where this could be worked out. Bethany Hall, the remodeled estate house, was used for many purposes. The women lived in the back two rooms of the upstairs. The library, main classroom, and study hall were just in front of the dormitory section, all in the one large room opening onto the front veranda. The school chapel was in the downstairs front of the building, also used for table tennis in one corner and as a classroom when needed. The large back part of the downstairs housed the school kitchen, a maid's room, and the district literature room. For several years, meals were served upstairs on the veranda and in the hall, but eventually the dining room was relocated next to the kitchen, downstairs.

The men lived in two small cottages along the property frontage on Sam Boucaud Road. The one married student, John Lal, brought his wife and infant girl, and they lived in the third cottage. A little later, an adjoining 10 acres of land with a sizable cottage on it was purchased, bringing the total acreage to 36, and providing space for two or three married couples to live on campus at once.

The course of study was set up on a three-year basis, condensed into two calendar years. The "years" were actually seven-month terms, with a one-month holiday between each.



Ordinary holidays during the terms were largely ignored in order to have enough class hours to make this concentrated course adequate. This plan was never intended to be permanent, but the urgent need for trained workers was seen as sufficient justification for the temporarily stepped-up program.

School fees were not high, and students were allowed to work part of the day on campus to earn even a large part of these. The work program included for the men: cutting down the weeds, caring for the fruits, general gardening, maintenance of roads and buildings, and assisting in whatever building project might be current. For women, it included cooking, housekeeping, washing; roasting and grinding coffee and cocoa; cracking, floating, and sorting nutmeg. In order to allow enough time for everything, the schedule had to be carefully worked out, beginning with class at 6:45 A.M. (later changed to 6:30), and ending with lights-out at 10 P.M. Work hours came in the middle of the day, from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. with time out for lunch, of course. Classes and study hall came in the early morning and late afternoon and night.

Many of the early graduates are loud in proclaiming the "good old days" as the best. Yet they generally agree that life at NTC was much more rugged then than it is now. Basil Moses remembers lots of snake killing, water trouble, mosquitoes, and generally rough, hard work, as the little school community sought to make good its right to live next door to the jungle. It was as if the jungle, too long used to having its own way, was fighting back at man. Moses was a leader on man's side, and he is remembered by his fellow students as "the real workin' boy."

In the minds of the people at St. James, Santa Cruz was really in the bush, even if it was only 10 miles from Port of Spain. Some parents opposed their young people's going out there. The Millers became like parents to the young people, though, and everyone seemed like part of one family.



There was no government electricity in the area, and from high on the Saddle Road the school lights were the only ones visible in the whole valley. Mrs. Miller said that, if she ever wrote the history of the school, she would name it "Light in the Valley." So from her comes the title of this chapter.

Weekends were full of Christian service, with students going in several directions to spread the gospel story. Pastor Lal was very much a part of this picture. Continuing his ministry at Five Rivers, he rode back and forth in his old jitney. No one ever knew at what hour he would return, for that untrustworthy vehicle let him down many nights. Someone said that it was on this account that a very strict check-in system was first begun—in case Lal hadn't checked in by a certain time, someone had to go looking for him.

No new students were supposed to be enrolled until after the graduation of the present student body. All pursued the ministerial course, the one and only one offered at that time. But several new ones came at the beginning of the second term, including two from Curaçao, Dutch West Indies. One of these was Theophilus Harlow.

Brother Harlow was an older man from Barbados, but Curaçao had been his home for many years. There he owned a small grocery and bakery establishment. He was chief baker and had several men working under him. He found the Church of the Nazarene through Mrs. Garcia, in whose home the Nazarene Sunday School met. She had planned a small Sunday School concert, and hearing that Mr. Harlow could play the piano, she asked him to come and take part. This was the beginning of three or four years of helping Mrs. Garcia, and it opened the door to Nazarene Training College.

In 1949, Mrs. R. R. Miller visited Curaçao and explained more about the Church of the Nazarene to those who met in the Garcia home. Brother Harlow was there and heard her preach. As might be expected, she asked if anyone would be willing to come to Trinidad and prepare for the ministry. His

affirmative response was immediate, but it was two years and another visit from Mrs. Miller before he actually came.

His plans were to return to Curaçao after graduation, but the Millers encouraged him to stay in Trinidad. They asked him to play for chapel services and to teach a few private piano lessons even while a student. After graduation he continued living at the school, pastoring at Laventille for years, and teaching private piano as a part of his duties as a district worker. Thus he became the first national to actually teach in the Bible school and was the first dean of men. He is apparently the only permanent fruit within the Nazarene membership of the now-abandoned work in Curaçao.

As for the nonteaching staff, there were two very important nationals involved from their student days. They were Mahala Clarke and the previously mentioned Basil Moses. Sister Mahala, as she came to be known affectionately, was given charge of women's work and the dormitory. Brother Moses supervised men's work and did the marketing and driving, in addition to pastoring the Santa Cruz church. Except for a short time after her graduation when Sister Mahala went home so her sister Mazwyne could come to school, she has been with the school ever since, from which she expects to retire in 1990. Brother Moses served continuously and faithfully both at school and as pastor of the Santa Cruz congregation until he went to pastor at Point Fortin in late 1961.

At St. James there was one young man who had planned to enroll in the first class. He was a fine teenager named Lance Padmore. Lance loved God and wanted to preach His gospel. No one could understand why, but before school opened, Lance was suddenly called home to be with his Maker. Everyone was shocked and saddened and his fellow Sunday School pals were especially made to think seriously. Many of them were unprepared to meet God.

One of these was Farrell Chapman. Farrell had known of the church building at St. James for a long time, but he first

came when in his early teens he was invited to a Wednesday night prayer meeting. His ambition was to live a free and easy life, doing as little work as possible. But after Lance's death, God really confronted him in a revival meeting, and he surrendered his heart to Him. The next year (1952), he responded to God's call to preach, and in January 1953, enrolled in Nazarene Training College.

Some time after graduation, Farrell married one of his classmates, Leonie Brown. Together they served God in pastorates including Arima, Vance River, and Santa Cruz—the college church. His appointment to the district superintendency in 1975 marked the beginning of a new era in ministry for him, which lasted until his election as college president in 1983.

When the Millers left in 1955, Rev. P. L. Beals, veteran of many years in India, became principal of NTC. Then in 1957, Herbert Ratcliff began what has thus far been the longest time served by any one person. Rev. Wesley Harmon followed him in 1965. Faithfully filling in while both Ratcliffs and Harmons furloughed, as well as serving at other times, has been Rev. Russell Brunt.

During the Ratcliff administration, a young man by the name of Dennis Headley enrolled as a student. He had intended coming before, but family problems and other circumstances prevented. His mother, a hardworking woman of the Shouter Baptist faith (an indigenous religion composed of African cult religion fused with Protestantism), looked forward to the time when he would finish his secondary education and get a job to help her support the younger children. His father had died years before, leaving her with the heavy burden of earning every cent that she and her children were to have as they grew up. Now that he was of an age when he could help, it did not seem right to her that he should continue his schooling, especially to prepare for such a nonfinancial occupation as the Christian ministry! But God had made His will clear to



Dennis, and he felt he must obey. Finally he informed his mother of his decision to go to NTC. She felt stunned. For a few days she seemed as one in silent mourning for the dead. Finally she roused from her sorrow long enough to tell him, "Son, I want you to know that, if you go, you go alone. Do not expect any help from me." So it was with heavy heart that he enrolled.

His keen mind grasped the subjects easily. He was able to pastor the nearby Santa Cruz Old Road Church and still maintain a high average. And he graduated in 1960 at the head of his class.

Graduation night from his seat on the platform he could see his mother seated right at the back of the church. He was afraid to look at her as he gave the valedictory address. He did not know whether she had forgiven him or not. After the service was over, he sought for her, but she had disappeared. When he reached home, she was there. She didn't say much, but her "Son, I'm proud of you!" was perhaps more reward than he had ever expected.

From the beginning, Dennis had seemed to understand that his call was both to preach and to teach. And right after his graduation he was asked to remain with the college as a lecturer in some of the freshman courses. Happily he accepted this as God's open door, for he could continue his pastorate along with his teaching. In 1966 he took a leave of absence to study at Olivet Nazarene College, alongside his wife Lucille, a public school teacher. After their schooling, both returned to teach in the college. Then in 1972, Dennis was given the presidency, thus becoming the first West Indian to hold this office. His soon return to the United States to continue Ph.D. studies, however, threw the job back into Rev. Harmon's lap after only one semester. In anticipation of his return, he remained president in absentia until 1975, with Rev. Brunt acting for him most of that time.

Over the years there have been many changes in the



school's program and administrative structure. In 1957 the General Board approved a recommendation from the field that it be the official area training college. Soon its governance was vested in an Area Board (name changed to Board of Trustees in 1987) within the terms of General Board policy, with representatives from each district. The original 3 districts have been expanded to 10. The course of study has been revised many times and enlarged to include several diploma programs and a Th.B. degree given by Canadian Nazarene College, to whom we are affiliated. And even our name was changed in 1974 to Caribbean Nazarene Theological College.

Many staff members have come and gone over the years, including missionaries Howard and Dorothy Sayes, Wayne and Elwanda Knox, George and Marjorie Biggs, Gene and Catherine Smith, Laurie and Delores Seaman, Harold and Doris Harris, Victor and Nancy Dunton, Jeanne Collins, and Wanda Knox. Russell and Thelma Brunt have been connected to the school in one way or another since their arrival in 1957 and yours truly since 1954. Newcomers Jim and Diana DuFriend joined us in 1986. Some North Americans have come as short-term teachers or staff for one or two semesters or for a much shorter period of time, often on loan from one of our colleges in the U.S. or Canada.

Quite a few West Indians have served significantly. Among those who have taught are Una McKenzie, Dennis and Lucille Headley, Ena Thomas, Neibert Haynes, Bishai Ramganes, Jeffrey Leach, Eon Trotman, Susan Bhagwandin, Basil Ramkrit, Junior and Rosalita Sorzano, and Winston Seegobin. These have completed one semester—1989: Patrick Mason and Carl Bompart. Carlton and Theodosia Cumberbatch and Frank Drakes, full-time at our sister school, West Indies Theological College (Church of God, Anderson), have helped us out with part-time service for several years.

As for the appearance of the campus, this has undergone a series of changes. Through Alabaster funds and many other

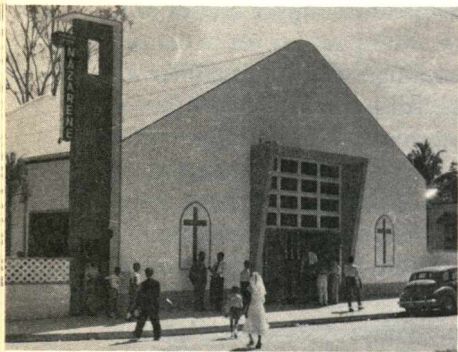
gifts of money and donated labor, we replaced the old estate house with a sturdy and beautiful administration building. It was designed and begun by missionary Wayne Knox about 1967 and completed by a series of 17 Work and Witness teams during the 1977-78 fiscal year. The old student housing has all been replaced with two dormitories (male and female) and two duplexes for married students. Four administrative homes (one a duplex) furnish space for five administrators and their families. The cocoa house and its electric plant are gone; we long ago hooked on to government sources of electricity and water (though we still use the spring as backup). Paved roads connect the inhabited parts of the campus, and the snakes mostly confine themselves to the uninhabited jungle fringe. Down in the valley a considerable settlement of new homes has grown up, and all the old grapefruit orchards are gone. But from our height of a few hundred feet, we can still see the panorama of almost the entire upper end of our beautiful valley.

In 1983, Herbert Ratcliff, who had served four times as president for a total of 12½ years, felt led to resign that position to clear the way for the board to elect a West Indian once again. And thus Rev. Farrell Chapman became the second of our own alumni to bear that office. He served from June 1983 until the Lord took him home at the end of a lengthy illness on August 1, 1987. Yours truly served for a year as interim fill-in.

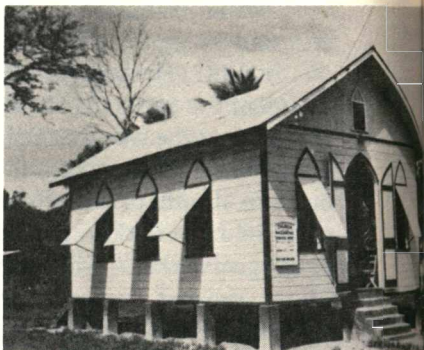
Then in May of 1988 the board elected Rev. Joseph Murugan to begin a four-year term of office. Joseph Murugan, one of our Guyanese graduates from the early '60s, has pastored some 14 years, served as district superintendent in Guyana for 12 years, and served as project coordinator and administrative assistant to the Caribbean regional director for four years. His bachelor of arts in business administration and master of religious education, coupled with his experience, should serve to make him a good president.

Yes, those of us who have been around for a while have seen many changes over the years. But some things don't change. One of these is our purpose to serve the area with trained pastors and workers. In the final analysis, only God can make a preacher. Only He can call him, inspire him, fill him, and commission him to do the task. Our little light in the valley will go out unless God keeps on sending us His men and women; unless He grants us spiritual power to meet the need of every new group of students; unless He has His way in the training process.

We have had some wonderful revivals down through our short history as a school. But we cannot live on these past blessings. Will you not add Caribbean Nazarene Theological College to your prayer list, that from this place—this light in the valley—will go forth men and women who will truly spread the light of Christ wherever they go?



St. James, Trinidad, Church of the Nazarene, mid-1950s.



Arima, Trinidad, Church of the Nazarene, late-1950s.



## Chapter Five



# Spiritual Chain Reaction

Spiritual chain reaction—that's what it was. Renaud Benjamin, probably the first East Indian convert at St. James, was won to the Lord during the days of missionaries Rogers and Shelton. His son, Robert, began attending the church as a Sunday School boy, and he experienced some careful shepherding by his teacher, a United States sailor stationed in the island.

In time, Robert gave his heart to God, and Rev. and Mrs. R. R. Miller helped him follow God's leadings to enroll in Nazarene Training College. His first pastorate was at Somaru, and here the Lord helped him win Walter Sutherland, another Indian. Walter had relatives in the village of Piarco, about seven miles away. Through his concern for them, a branch Sunday School was begun there under a house on June 24, 1956. Betty Algoo was to be the first adult convert.

Her story goes back to a little Hindu mother whose baby girl had just died. She longed for a child to replace her. Going alone to the forest, she fasted and prayed for nine days, begging her gods to send her another. In due time, Betty was born.

This little daughter was carefully taught in the Hindu way by her father. He was a highly respected man in the village and a "reader" (one who reads from the Hindi Scriptures to the people at special times). So skilled was he in his native tongue from India that people came to the home to study



✓ ~~✱~~  
Hindi under his tutelage. He taught Betty to rise early and bathe before dawn. Then, standing on one foot, she prayed to the sun as it rose to begin its journey through the sky.

✱  
One day a gospel church began services right in their village. They felt there was no harm in going, and the two missionary ladies were so kind that everyone came to love and respect them. Betty attended regularly as she grew to young adulthood. She still practiced her Hindu faith some but enjoyed the gospel services as well. Then for some reason the church was closed. Even the little building was torn down. And as yet Betty had not the faintest notion that Jesus had come to save people *from* their sins.

Her father was given a Bible by someone, and he read it without human prompting or guidance. Then as evidence of a hungry heart and some small measure of light, he commented, "If there is peace anywhere, it is in the Christian faith." But no one who could have helped him seemed to realize his readiness, and he continued on in the only way he had ever known.

[ A few months before he died, he gave this testimony, "I have lived the life of a Hindu and have never had satisfaction out of it. I read in the Bible that there is a beginning and an end, and a happy one. I would like to become a Christian." But not even Betty yet understood what he longed for. No Christian came and witnessed to him and prayed with him. So far as is known, his longings went unsatisfied. He died and was buried as a Hindu.

The Nazarene Sunday School had its first home under a house across the road from where Betty and her family lived. By now the little tots who had attended that first gospel church years before were grown men and women with families. So thrilled were they with the news that a Sunday School had begun again that by the second Sunday they had constructed benches and had put them in place under the house before the workers from Somaru arrived. Yuklan, Suilan, and

Moilan, Betty's three girls, were there with many more, from the very first service.

For a while the need for Sunday School teachers was adequately supplied by the Somaru church and Nazarene Training College. But when it came to Vacation Bible School, Walter and other laymen could not help because of their regular weekday jobs. Pastor Benjamin asked Betty, then in her late 20s, if she would be able to help. Willingly she consented, not realizing that this was to be the avenue through which the Holy Spirit would reach her.

At first she was more of a handcraft assistant than anything else. She enjoyed this. But when she began preparing to teach from the *Nazarene Vacation Bible School Teacher's Book*, her own heart became so convicted by the things she read that it was hard to concentrate on teaching others. For the first time she realized she was a sinner in God's sight and needed a Savior. ✓

Meanwhile she sacrificed and sent the oldest girl, Yuklan, to the first Trinidad District Youth Camp, held at Nazarene Training College in 1959. There Yuklan, still a young teenager, was genuinely converted.

Preaching services were begun soon after the Sunday School was launched, and in early 1960 the place of meeting was moved to Betty's home. A shed with dirt floor and galvanized roof, and illuminated by a gas lantern, served very well. For an altar, a large storage box for rice had to do. In the house next-door, Granny Algoo forever endeared herself to missionary pastors Russell and Thelma Brunt by always having a cup of coffee for them when they came. (Years later, in 1968, when the Brunts were returning for their third term, I asked Granny if she could remember Brother Brunt. She was weakened by sickness almost to death, but with all the scorn an old woman could put in her voice, she replied, "He's my son!" How did I ever think she could forget him?)

Some time early in his pastorate at Piarco, Brother Brunt

took Betty and others to Arima for an NYPS zone rally. That night as they drove through the countryside, Betty noticed that in a particular place all the houses were dark except one, which was brightly lighted. But for all its brightness, it could not light the darkened houses—only its own yard. Then the Holy Spirit spoke to her heart and said, "That's the way you are—like the darkened houses." He continued: "Listen, you are in darkness, just like those houses. And other people's lights cannot light you. You've got to have the Light within you."

No one else had heard the "still small voice," but Betty could not forget it, and the message lingered with her all the way home. Kneeling by her bedside that night, she fervently prayed and asked God to forgive her sins. There was no one to instruct her or to help her pray, but she believed God saved her then.

A few nights later Brother Brunt preached on entire sanctification. Her newly converted heart was hungry for all she could have of God, and she felt a great tug to go forward. But as she started to step out, she felt as if a hand had seized her by the ankle and pulled her back. The struggle went on until the last chorus of the invitation hymn, but she was determined not to let it finish with her still at her seat. By the help of God she broke from where she was and went forward.

Victory was not long in coming. She described it thus: "Heaven came down, and I felt such a peace come over my soul. Oh, my! It was an experience! From what God did for me that night, I know every Christian needs to go on and be sanctified. Brother Brunt asked me to pray, and there was no shame or fear or doubt."

When she had finished praying and arose from her knees, two things attracted her attention. One was her blouse—wet all over with tears and perspiration, a mute testimony to the depths of her struggle. The other was the fact that her friends in the congregation were crying too. She asked why, and one



told her, "We never heard anyone pray like you did who did not know how to pray before!"

Now anything that God wanted to tell her to do He could, for she was His very own possession. In spite of her very meager income, He asked her to tithe. She obeyed, and God began to help her in ways that she had not dreamed of before.

One haunting concern of hers was the poor health of Yuklan. Then she remembered that her Heavenly Father was able to heal, and her faith reached out to Him. Calling Yuklan aside from the others, she asked her if she was a Christian.

"Yes, Mommy, I am."

"Do you believe that Jesus could heal you?"

"Yes, I do."

"I believe He could too, so instead of going back to the doctor again, let's pray."

The two of them knelt alone before God, pouring out their hearts in earnest petition. Betty promised that if He would heal Yuklan, she would dedicate her to His service. He heard their prayers, and the healing was done.

Nor did the mother forget her promise. She did not know what God's will for Yuklan might be, but she felt that a good start would be to send her to NTC. In 1962 she enrolled and in 1965 graduated from the full ministerial course, having proven herself a better-than-average student.

But what was she to do after graduation? The church was not financially able to pay a full-time lay worker, she knew. Carrying her problem to her Heavenly Father, she sought His guidance even before school closed. She was sorely tempted to take things into her own hands. Living under the shadow of the airport, her mind turned to the neat hostesses she had often seen. She was a pretty girl herself, as pretty as any of them. She went so far as to obtain application forms, but when she confided her intentions to Missionary Orpha Cook, she was wisely cautioned to trust God and not run away from whatever He had in store for her.



Then God's opening came. On the basis of her typing skills learned at NTC, she applied for a job with a company in Port of Spain. Eighty-three girls had applied for that job the year before, but the boss had felt dissatisfied with them. Then when Yuklan applied, he recognized her as the honest, dependable girl he was looking for and set about immediately to train her as his financial secretary. God had opened the right door.

What was originally her mother's dedication became her own, and for many years she served God and her local church as organist, Sunday School superintendent, teacher of the adult Bible class, and program chairman of the NYPS. Her two sisters came to love Jesus, too, and found places of service. Betty became an effective visitation worker.

Others joined this family in the little church, and in a few years it became a fully organized church. For a while this congregation conducted four outstation Sunday Schools each Sunday afternoon. The old shed was replaced with a beautiful A-frame building, paid for half by Alabaster funds and half by the local congregation. One of its outstations, Guanapo, long ago became a fully organized church. The chain reaction—the process of one flare lighting another—is still going on.

Betty and her whole family have migrated to the United States and have found places of worship and service there. Piarco Church of the Nazarene has suffered from their loss and that of others. But the light has not gone out, and in time it will doubtless blaze even higher for God's glory.

## Chapter Six



# Light for the Oil

"You all better git t' singin' down there!" the old woman's voice called from upstairs. She was alarmed that the crowd had been quiet so long.

And so as enthusiastically as half-drunk people after midnight could, they began again:

*A little more oil in my lamp,  
Keep it burning;  
A little more oil in my lamp,  
I pray—*

It was in Trinidad's "deep South," Point Fortin, to be exact, right in the heart of the island's richest oil-producing area, sometimes called simply "The Oil." An oil well pumped tirelessly night and day in front of the rented mission house where I was the guest of Rev. and Mrs. Howard Sayes. Their next-door neighbor was officially known as "mother of the sick," and many people of her faith called for her help in their dying days. After the funeral, it was always her responsibility to see that a proper wake was held. Why did I have to come on one of those nights? Oh, well, it was interesting, and from my bedroom window, which looked right down on the ground floor where the night-long vigil was kept, I had a "ringside seat." What little sleep I got that night was well punctuated by new outbursts of song, laughter, or talk.

If it had been a few years earlier, probably they would not have known the perverted version of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp." The Christian songs and choruses that the Sayeses had taught in Sunday School had a funny way of cropping up here and there in other places—like the time "Deep and Wide" was played by the steel band at carnival for their road march.

Howard and Dorothy Sayes came to Trinidad in 1953, and for a while it had not been clear exactly where they would be stationed. In their first year they had moved four or five times. But then God began to providentially lead them to "Point." There, on July 17, 1954, they moved into a two-story building on Adventure Road that had been rented for the dual purpose of church and manse. It was an old shop building on a busy street. They were the only resident missionaries of any denomination there at the time.

In an attempt to make the place more livable, the owner had varnished the upstairs floor, but too late to be dry in time for them to move their furniture in when they arrived. They had to move temporarily into the downstairs (chapel) area, which meant postponing the opening services scheduled for the next day, for one week. Thus it was that the first Nazarene services in the "South"—oil country—were held on Sunday, July 25, 1954. There were 7 in Sunday School, 8 in morning worship, and a large crowd of 26 in the night evangelistic service! But attendance soon picked up, and on the official opening Sunday, September 5, there were 45 in the morning service and an overflow crowd of 207 to hear District Superintendent Miller preach at night.

The Point Fortin work was a "going proposition" from the start, although it was not without its struggles and setbacks. Two years after its beginning, a large, attractive, steel-structured church was erected. Nationals assisted missionaries in the pastorate for several years. Ralph and Orpha Cook spent their first years in Trinidad there. And now for many



years it has continued to grow and develop into one of the strongest churches on the district under West Indian leadership alone.

The Vance River work, at first known as Boodoosingh, began almost simultaneously with Point Fortin. As the Sayeses were traveling south one day, they noticed an empty house on the main road in this substantial village. Howard Sayes tells what happened from there:

On the way back North we found that a man in San Fernando was in charge of the house. He was repairing it to get ready to give it up, for he thought his lease was up on it. We finally found his home in San Fernando and made enquiries about the house. He said we could have it when he released it and would put us in touch with the owner.

But then the man discovered he had another year before his lease expired, so he allowed the Sayeses to begin a work *under* the house, which stood conveniently high on pillars. It seemed providential.

The day Sunday School began (October 3, 1954), a woman came over and warned the Sayeses not to stay nor to expect any children to come, for they were all at a fete at the Kern Oilfield Company. But the Sayeses had worked hard giving out invitations beforehand, and they were not to be easily discouraged. They waited patiently and finally the children began coming. Among the first to come was little Allan McAlpin, dressed in short, dark pants and white shirt, and leading two younger children. This one alone was worth waiting for, for he has grown up in the church to become a fine Nazarene layman. But 65 youngsters came that afternoon, so this work started much bigger than Point Fortin itself.

In early 1955, Cecil Loney, a new graduate of Nazarene Training College, came to assist in the southern work. Vance



River was one place among others where he worked, and after his wedding to Myrle Timothy in September, the work was turned over to their care. God blessed and gave them a strong church with an unusual number of young men.

When Mrs. Louise Chapman visited the "South" in October 1955, she seemed to fall in love with "Boodoosingh." There were 105 present to hear her preach, and as usual, about 95 of these came forward for prayer when the invitation was given. She urged them to join the church and make good Nazarenes, and she returned to the United States to raise money for the erection of a chapel there. The oil company granted a choice site on the main road, and Mr. Alan Forde, a layman on long leave from government service at the time, supervised the building. Over the years, several young men from this church have become pastors.

But no one who had been south seemed satisfied with the fact that we had no Church of the Nazarene at San Fernando, the island's second-largest city and industrial capital. Sister Carlotta Graham had prayed ever since 1926 for the Lord to give us a church there, and others had no doubt joined her in praying down through the years.

When the Cooks moved to Point Fortin, they began looking for a place to begin in San Fernando. It became a target of prayer and interest on the part of many on the district. Then in late 1960 the church was able to purchase with mission funds a home for the Cooks at 37 Manjack, San Fernando. Now at closer range they could concentrate more effectively on their search for a starting place.

Mrs. Cook was not well in those days, but while she rested from some of the more strenuous activities, her mind and heart was being poured out to God in earnest prayer. Then the Lord laid San Fernando on the heart of a Canadian couple, and they sent a generous gift that enabled the Cooks to rent space in the beautiful, new Soodeen Building, centrally located to give a strategic starting point. Rev. Wesley Harmon,

then field superintendent, wrote the Canadian couple: "We felt somewhat like the Early Church that was praying for the deliverance of Peter from the prison and then could hardly believe that their prayers had been answered. San Fernando has been such a burden to our hearts for so long. . . . Through you, God has answered prayer."

Regular services began on July 22, 1962. Space originally designed for offices had been arranged into a striking little chapel. The inaugural service was held at 3 P.M., so that those from other churches could attend. Nazarene Training College choir sang; the mayor and the ministerial association president brought greetings; and the district superintendent preached under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And Sister Carlotta Graham was there to witness firsthand the answer to her prayers!

By the time the Lord had given this church a more permanent home at "The Foliage," there were several people whose hearts had been reached and their minds made up to be Christians—within the Church of the Nazarene. The commodious old home at "The Foliage" served as church and manse both for years until finally a beautiful church building was constructed in front of it, freeing the house for manse alone. The church has at times suffered reverses, but today it is a good congregation with some very substantial people in it. Perhaps they are poised on the edge of their greatest period of growth thus far. ✕

Today due to world market conditions, the "oil bubble" has burst. No longer can the island rely almost solely on this source of income for foreign exchange, and many people are out of jobs. God has many wonderful children in this area, but there are many others so near to the oil and yet so far from the light of the gospel. May He give more light for "The Oil"!

## Chapter Seven



# Let the Lower Lights Be Burning

In a narrow neck of the Upper Santa Cruz Valley lies a small village known as Gasparillo. Nature has outdone herself in beautifying the spot. The hillsides rise close to the village, and their year-round coat of green looks at first glance like so much exotic jungle. But some of those mushroom-shaped trees are tonca beans (vanilla). Then there are the tall immortelle trees, under which grow the cocoa and banana trees, which need the shelter they provide from the blazing tropical sun. Then at the very time the latter need more sun, the white-trunked immortelles accommodate by dropping their leaves. For a little while the tall trees look stark and naked, except for the giant philodendrons creeping up their trunks and hanging lazily from the branches. Then the blossoms begin to appear—bright orange-red blossoms, so artistically arranged that one would think they came from a Chinese painting. Presently the blossoms begin to drop, paving the ground in loveliness as if in preparation for some passing monarch. Finally the emerald green leaves begin to reappear, fresher than ever, and just in time to protect the lowly but fruit-bearing trees below from the year's hottest sun.

But "beauty" was not the word to describe the humble little home of the average villager at the time I first knew it in



1954. Nor did it fit the lives of most of them held in sin's grim dominion. Religious? Yes. Righteous? No! The nearest church—to which most professed fanatical loyalty—was a mile or two away. So was the nearest school. They patronized them both when there was nothing else to do.

Gasparillo was only about two miles from Nazarene Training College, and Mr. Johnson, whose fleet of trucks supplied the college with much-needed transport of building supplies, lived in Gasparillo. Probably it was through him that the village first came to the attention of the college students. Some of them took the little spot on their hearts and begged for the privilege of conducting an afternoon Sunday School. They promised to walk over, if permission were only granted.

So, about 1954, Mazwyne Clarke, Basil Moses, and Clyde Greenidge began a Sunday School in Mr. Johnson's lean-to garage. Quite a few adults came with the children, and they were off to a good start. Then the priest heard of it and tried to quash the whole thing. His threats were effective for a while, and then curiosity or desire to learn drew some of the people back again.

As a junior missionary, I worked in Gasparillo for some time, assisted by Sybil Lowenfield and other students. We often visited the whole village prior to Sunday School time, and mothers with one accord promised, "Yes, yes, they'll come. We'll send the children." But when we returned to the Johnsons' lean-to chapel, only about a dozen would come to reward our efforts. Still a few adults came among them, and we tried to give them our best. If an altar call was made, everyone came forward, but no one seemed any different for it.

"O God," Sybil and I prayed, "give us one soul who will really get converted and will live the life in front of the people, that they might understand that knowing God makes a difference!" We thought it might be Mr. Johnson; he was an influential man, and everyone would notice his light. But after a



few months my assignment changed, and we had not yet seen that one soul.

One day Sybil returned from Gasparillo with the news that Miss Chen was laid up with a bad foot. Of course I remembered Miss Chen. Who could forget her? She had no nose; white cotton stuffed in the nasal bone pockets was all that barred the way against dust and insects. The upper lip was completely gone, too, and the upper front teeth protruded straight out, making it exceedingly difficult for her to speak clearly.

They say she was once beautiful, rich, and educated. A young man sought her hand in marriage, but she refused. In his frustration and anger, he vowed that no one else would ever have her. He wrote her a letter with a curse in it. After reading the letter, she noticed a pimple on her nose; it grew and grew until it took away the whole nose and upper lip. The villagers are sure it was caused by the young man's curse. A doctor at the leprosarium, to whom I described her, said that it sounded like a burnt-out case of leprosy. Relatives came in to nurse her in her illness, and it is reported that they helped themselves to her goods, leaving her poor indeed. The one lone confirmation of her former estate was the fact that she could read, something which few of the neighbors her age could do.

Armed with bucket, boric acid, and other supplies, I went with Sybil, prepared to soak the foot, which I supposed must have become infected from some wound. But when I arrived at her house, there was no wound that could account for the badly inflamed foot and leg! This was beyond me, I knew, so hastily we prepared to take her to the hospital in Port of Spain. I backed the Morris Minor as close to her cottage as I could, but we still had to help her to make the short trip up the path to the road. Neighbors and grandchildren watched the whole procedure.

On the way to Port of Spain, Sybil talked to Miss Chen

about her soul and asked her to accept Jesus as Saviour. We came to the Saddle, the narrow, one-way entrance and exit to the valley, just as the two were having prayer. I knew it wasn't safe to go through the Saddle without vigorous hornblowing, but not for anything did I want to disturb the scene in the backseat. I prayed silently for God's protection and then eased slowly through—safely!

At the hospital emergency ward, a young doctor soon made out papers to admit Miss Chen for treatment. But before they had made all the arrangements and had wheeled her away, there was time for her to express the newfound joy in her soul. She knew I could not understand her speech well, so without words, she patted and rubbed my arm and smiled beautifully, even without an upper lip! God had saved her, and she was grateful to Him and us.

When the condition was improved (it seemed to have been caused by a severe nutritional deficiency), I was notified that she was ready to be released. Sybil went with me to get her, but this time she needed no assistance to walk. When we reached Gasparillo, neighbors and family saw the car and came out to watch. When we had backed as far down her path as we could, she proceeded to step out, amid excited cries of "Look! She getting out of she car by sheself!" It was a royal welcome.

For several weeks we carried her to the clinic for treatments and vitamins, which gave us continued opportunity to encourage her infant faith. Sybil wrote out the words of "Blessed Assurance" and gave them to her. Then as we drove along, the three of us would sing them, Miss Chen following in her high, squeaky voice, which must have sounded beautiful indeed to her Heavenly Father. ✓

Mahala Clarke, matron of the girls' dormitory at the college, who was now in charge of Gasparillo, spent much time with Miss Chen and saw her grow spiritually in spite of bitter and sometimes intense persecution. When she could, she

came to services at the college church, and eventually she was taken into membership. She had led the way—the first in her village who had dared to leave the old church and follow Christ. The Lord alone knows what she suffered from family and neighbors, but she never turned back from Christ, so far as is known. She read her Bible, prayed, and sang of her Redeemer unashamedly. But while the young scoffed at her, a few older ones moved closer to Christ. At least two of them have died and gone to heaven, trusting Him for salvation.

A middle-aged lady of the district, Mrs. Agnes Paul, was invited to Santa Cruz church (the college church) by Gain-dalall Hetnarine, a student. As a result of that invitation and succeeding efforts, Mrs. Paul was converted. Her home became a haven for Miss Chen in her persecutions. Often the two were there together for the whole day, and Miss Chen had a great influence on her, helping her to become a stronger Christian.

Mrs. Paul had a son named Paul Sookdeo Singh, who lived at Arima. He was a staunch Hindu and understood some of the mysteries of that religion unknown to many of its adherents. He was not a priest exactly, but he had inherited some rituals from his grandfather that he says were quite effective, even in curing the sick. But one day something happened to him that showed the utter futility of all his skill. For seven days he was completely dumb, and people thought he was dying. They actually had a wake for him as if he were dead, but they still sought for powerful people to come and try to heal him.

On the seventh day a Baptist lady came in, and they told her about his case. She came to his bedside, and he heard her speak, but he could answer nothing. She began praying for him and continued in prayer a long time. Suddenly he felt light and lifted up; then he began to murmur, and finally he could speak plainly. His first word was "Jesus." He gave up all



the books, rituals, and charms that he had relied upon for so long and began to seek Jesus.

Sookdeo worked for the county council. One morning before going to work he had an unusual experience. His wife got up to cook at about five o'clock. Remaining in bed for a while, between sleep and waking, he saw what he described as a vision. Two men on the job started to fight. He ran in to part them. Then he awoke. Next he heard a voice saying, "Singh! Not to go to work!" Three times he heard it, and so vivid was the experience that he called his wife and told her about it. However, he got up and started preparing for the day. He felt that he must go, since he did not want to lose a day's wages, but his wife and son followed him as far as the road, begging him not to.

When he reached the job, he found the boys having tea. Telling them to hurry, he went on to the area where he was to work that day. Then suddenly, two fellows jumped out at him—one with a hoe and one with a rake. Sookdeo had a cutlass in his hand, so when they started to lash him, he swung with the cutlass, hoping to frighten them away. But they didn't back off and both got cut—one severely. Then a police car came and took him into custody without any questions being asked.

Between the incident and the trial, a long period of time elapsed, and in the interim Sookdeo came to live in Santa Cruz. He worked on the estate of Gasparillo, but he lived nearer to the tent that was then housing the Santa Cruz church. His mother invited him to attend services, and he came. There he was genuinely converted and soon joined the church.

Then the trial came up, which resulted in his being sentenced to several years' imprisonment, the plea of self-defense being ignored. But Christ went with him to prison, and as Joseph received favor with his jailers, so did Sookdeo with his. He was allowed to wear the red armband for good behavior



and to assist in caring for the other prisoners. In 1968 he was released and became a layman in the Arima church.

After nearly 10 years of living for Jesus in Gasparillo, Miss Chen was released too. She went to be with her Lord forever, where no one will mock her or scorn her; where the roof will not leak; where the pains will not rack her little frame; where her meager pension will not be "borrowed" again by unscrupulous people.

Others have been saved from her little village. Some of them have joined the Santa Cruz church, about two miles away. Bro. Noray's van makes the trip faithfully every Sunday. And a regular Sunday School and preaching point is still carried on in a very small wooden church constructed by laymen from Santa Cruz. Thank God for her witness—not spectacular, but consistent and clear. She was probably what the hymn writer would have called a "lower light." God give us more of her kind. "Let the lower lights be burning!"

## Chapter Eight



# Send a Gleam Across the Wave

*Let the lower lights be burning!  
Send a gleam across the wave! . . .*

But in this case it was first a matter of sending a *beam* across the wave, a radio beam, that is, carrying the "Showers of Blessing" broadcast. Thus the Church of the Nazarene "entered" Tobago long before it officially entered in 1959.

Tobago is a sister island, much smaller than Trinidad, and lying about 20 miles off the northeast coast of Trinidad, although it is 75 miles by boat from Port of Spain harbor. The Carib Indians, whom Columbus found there, were users of tobacco, and the name of the island seems to be merely another form of that word. But it is best known to the outside world as "Robinson Crusoe's Island" and a good holiday resort. For years it was tossed back and forth among the British, Dutch, and French, until finally in 1814 it was ceded to Britain. For many years it was a ward island of Trinidad, being administered by the British under the same government. Then with independence in 1962, the name of the country became officially "Trinidad and Tobago."

The first official exploration for the Church of the Nazarene in Tobago seems to have been conducted in 1953 by

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R. R. Miller, when his family went over for a holiday. Then in September 1955, after Earl McMillan (a Tobagonian living in Trinidad) had graduated from NTC, Mr. Beals asked him and Lomax Morris, another recent graduate, to go over and explore the land. Earl had relatives in the village of Canaan, so they held a week of services there. They found the church was already widely known through the "Showers of Blessing" broadcast. At the kind invitation of the Salvation Army, they preached in their Scarborough hall, too, in the capital. They stayed only two weeks, but there was considerable interest that seems to have carried through to the actual starting of the work.

In April 1958, Rev. Howard Sayes went over and made arrangements for the coming of a small "army" of 11 NTC students. The students and he made their camp at Plymouth, in a Moravian school, and preached in Plymouth, Black Rock, Scarborough, Roxborough, and Montgomery. In the 20 services they conducted, 85 people came forward for prayer.

In 1959, the Trinidad Mission Council requested the General Board to send funds and a missionary couple to open this work. But the General Board gave permission to go ahead *only* if Trinidad could do it within the bounds of present personnel and budget!

Perhaps if the right national could be found to pioneer the work, his salary and house rent could be paid for from mission funds. But where would the money come from to secure a place for services, move the pastor and his family over, and tend to all the other expensive details of such a venture? The mission treasury did not have that much available, and yet everything else seemed to indicate that God's time had come.

While District Superintendent Harmon pondered these things and contemplated asking the Trinidad District to contribute, one of the smaller churches invited him and Rev. Bertrand Doyle, the national who by now had been chosen to

spearhead the effort, to come for a service. They wanted to hear about the recent exploratory trip that Harmon and Doyle had made. Brother Doyle told them about God's leading them to the village of Canaan, of the enthusiastic reception there when they heard that the Church of the Nazarene had planned to enter Tobago, and of the fact that God had enabled them to find an adequate house for rent within walking distance of the village. This last was a wonder indeed, for in this agricultural island, people build houses to live in, not to rent.

Before the service was over, this little church had pledged \$90.00 (W.I.) to help underwrite the project. Shortly after that, Brother Doyle was invited to Nazarene Training College to tell the story, and at the conclusion \$146 was pledged. And so it went from church to church, until a total of over \$1,400 was pledged. What a blessing that the General Board had been forced to refuse our earlier request, for the Trinidadians now were truly involved themselves in missionary work!

By midyear the Doyles had moved over, and Earl McMillan went to help them prepare for the opening date. For weeks they distributed hundreds of handbills and tracts. Special announcements went out regularly over "Showers of Blessing." And the church in Trinidad backed them with daily prayer and the paying of pledges. Finally, on July 5, the first service was held in the little rented store building, which had been freshly painted and hung with two bold "Church of the Nazarene" signs. The district superintendent came over, accompanied by NTC Principal Herbert Ratcliff. Rev. Wesley Harmon brought the message—on holiness—to a packed house. The little building with a capacity of 110 was jammed, and an even larger crowd stood around doors and windows, totaling in all 250. People expressed afterward the feeling that such a message was needed in Canaan.

The people kept coming night after night to the services following the opening. Average attendance in the crusade was



155, and a total of 52 seekers came forward for prayer. Many of these were received into a probationers' class for instruction leading to church membership, and the first 14 joined on September 6, 1959. In January 1960, the church was officially organized.

Monday, September 30, 1963, I turned on the radio to hear the news at noon while I ate lunch. A warning was issued that Hurricane Flora was on her way and would pass somewhere between Trinidad and Barbados late that night. Trinidad had not been hit by a hurricane since the 1930s; nevertheless, we were warned to prepare. Before the lunch hour was over, the sky was very dark, and rain had begun. As news kept coming in on the transistor, the predicted time of the hurricane's arrival was moved forward.

While I prepared—taking in the porch furniture, closing all windows, coaxing in the dog, settling down to wait—news came that Tobago had already been hit. All communications had been cut off, so it would be a long time before the extent of damage could be known. The next morning a ship carried Red Cross officials, rescue workers, reporters, doctors, and nurses to relieve the one doctor who had been on duty around the clock during the disaster. They found at least 30 dead, and only a few houses left standing in the hardest-hit places. A state of emergency was declared, and no one was allowed to go there unless he had a permit.

District Superintendent W. C. Fowler tried in vain for days to contact Pastor Laurinal Tittle to find out what had happened to the church and its people. When contact was finally made, he learned that a large tree had smashed the little building, so that its owner felt it beyond repair. Some of the members were homeless. Pastor Tittle himself had been in Scarborough, several miles from home. His wife, Jean, home alone, grew very frightened as the anxious hours went by. Finally he came walking in. No car could get through because the roads were blocked with the many fallen coconut trees. At

least their lives and home had been spared, but they suffered with their people during those days of inadequate food and laborious reconstruction that followed.

The church was given accommodation under an upstairs house. But years of searching at last turned up a good piece of land with a clear title. It was purchased and a lovely church constructed with Alabaster money about 1971.

Over the years several young people have come from Tobago to NTC/CNTC to study. One of them, Matthew Crooks, has pastored and served on the college staff for years. Another one, Esther Daire, recalls that it was the singing of the Nazarenes that first attracted her. She was already a Christian, but the people in her church did not sing like that. Nor could she understand her church's doctrines like she could the simple gospel preached by the Nazarenes. Also influencing her decision to join was the way those Nazarenes loved one another.

With the conversion of Victor George in recent years, the Canaan torch burned higher. He had been a leader among the youth of the village as a sinner, and now he led many of them right on into the church with him. A full house for Sunday services (approximately 200) became the norm. And God honored Victor with a call to preach and a fine pastor's wife from his home church. He is today continuing to spread the flame in Cocorite Church of the Nazarene where he is pastoring.

## Chapter Nine



# Keep the Fire on the Altar Burning

Over 60 years have passed since J. I. Hill officially launched the Church of the Nazarene in Trinidad. Politically the span has been from British colonial days; through a measure of self-rule under the People's National Party and Dr. Eric Williams beginning in 1956; to capital of the short-lived West Indies Federation; to full independence as a part of the (British) Commonwealth on August 31, 1962. Economically, the country has come from her days of dependence on the British handout to amazing wealth during the oil boom years, to a currently deep recession now that the oil bubble has burst (which is forcing diversification and may in the long run lead to a much healthier economy).

The Church of the Nazarene has continued through all the changing scenes, doing a fair amount of changing herself. A long succession of missionary district superintendents held sway from the founding until 1971—J. I. Hill, Robert Danielson, C. S. Jenkins, Lelan Rogers, A. O. Hendricks, R. R. Miller, Prescott Beals, Howard Sayes, Wesley Harmon, William Fowler, Samuel Taylor, and Bob Caudill. The lone West Indian with some right to be included is Carlotta Graham, who always thought of herself as a missionary and who acted



as superintendent during the war years when the official district superintendent was resident in Barbados.

But 1971 saw the beginning of something new. Dr. Edward Lawlor, general superintendent in jurisdiction, appointed Rev. Joseph Murugan as district superintendent over Guyana, and Rev. Clyde Greenidge over Barbados, our two contemporary neighbor districts. Then on August 23, he appointed Rev. Hugh McKenzie district superintendent of Trinidad and Tobago.

For a few years, a missionary advisor served as liaison between the district and the Department of World Mission. The last resident missionaries attached to the district, Wayne and Elwanda Knox, furloughed in 1975 and were replaced by nonresident personnel (Bob Ashley in St. Lucia from 1975 through 1981 and Tom Pound following him as "mission director to the Caribbean," resident in Miami). Today the districts work directly with Dr. James Hudson, regional director of the Caribbean, in their endeavors to be fully participating members of the International Church of the Nazarene.

In 1975, when Rev. McKenzie stepped down from office, Rev. Farrell Chapman was appointed superintendent. In 1976, the district was declared a mission district; from that point on, the people elected their own superintendents. Rev. Chapman remained in office until 1983, successfully leading the district to Regular District status that year. After his election to the presidency of Caribbean Nazarene Theological College, Rev. Carl Bompart, pastor of the St. James church, was elected to replace him as superintendent.

Carl Bompart was born in Paramin Village in the mountains above Morne Coco, Maraval. His father was from Venezuela, and the whole family spoke Trinidad Patois, some Spanish, and of course English. They were ardent Catholics, as were all the people of that area then. He was an intelligent, good-looking boy, so it was natural that the priest would pick

him for an acolyte. Thus he got his first church leadership experience.

But big brother Coleman married a lady from Santa Cruz and moved away to Sam Boucaud—within half a mile of the site chosen for Nazarene Training College. First his wife and then he gave their hearts to the Lord and became a part of the Santa Cruz Church of the Nazarene. Eventually Carl came to live with them and went to church too. Soon he also confessed his sins to Christ and was born again. Not long after, the Lord honored him with a call to preach, and in obedience, he enrolled in the nearby college. He taught for a while in a Nazarene day school in the Point Fortin area, and there he met his wife, Bernice. Their pastorates included Vance River, Santa Cruz Old Road, and Santa Cruz, before they moved to the Port of Spain area to assume responsibility for St. James, where he has pastored for the last 16 years.

After serving three years in the district superintendency, Rev. Bompart decided to concentrate once more on the St. James church and asked that he not be considered for reelection. God had someone else ready.

I do not remember when I first met Clifford Manswell; he seemed to me forever to have been a part of the Santa Cruz congregation. But in reality, he was a young adult before he met Christ.

His father had been a well-educated man for his time and served as headmaster of a school. Perhaps it was after his retirement that he moved to Toco, in the northeast peninsula, to become overseer of someone's agricultural estate. He took young Cliff with him. Clifford had half brothers who remained with his mother and stepfather in Sam Boucaud Road, but he seemed to have been close and dear to his dad. Eventually death came to his father, and I suppose it was then that he resettled in Sam Boucaud.

He had gone to Junior Cambridge level in high school—about as far as anyone did in his day, unless he had in combi-

nation big brains, money, and ambitious parents. His father had had higher ambitions for him and left a little money for his continued education in his will. But the needs of his mother and home were so many that Cliff did not blame her because he never had the privilege of using it.

He went to work as a bookkeeper at the Government Cocoa Propagating Station in La Pastora, the other side of Santa Cruz Valley. It was the beginning of a longtime job. He also took many courses in trade unionism and industrial law as time went on, so that in later years he was offered a big salary, office, and automobile if he would only consent to becoming a vice president of a certain trade union. He had done more qualifying courses than anyone else at that time.

But other things occupied his spare time during early adulthood. He liked the few pleasures that Santa Cruz had to offer, and he drifted with the wrong crowd. His concern for religion was aroused by the Jehovah's Witnesses, and he accepted their offer to study the Bible with them. But after two or three years of it, when he understood that they did not believe in the Trinity, he broke with them. His early days in Catholic catechism stood him in good stead; he *did* believe that God was triune.

Pastor Basil Moses of the Santa Cruz Church of the Nazarene began to befriend him and to invite him to services. He liked Bro. Moses, but he never intended to go to his church. Always he had an excuse—until one fateful night during a crusade. Almost trapped into going, he felt his embarrassment and anger become acute when the evangelist, Missionary Wesley Harmon, began to talk about *his* personal sins. He thought his friend Bro. Moses had told that white American all about him! But when the invitation was given, the same Holy Spirit who had been convicting him of sin led him to an altar of prayer and then to sweet release in the knowledge that for Christ's sake all his sins were forgiven. He became an ardent Christian and church member.



God brought into his life a young schoolteacher from Grenada. Elaine's parents both—first one and then the other—had left their several children at home in Grenada and run away to Trinidad, both settling in Santa Cruz. She and the other children had grown up virtually as orphans, but God in His love had sent some missionaries into their lives from the Fire Baptized Holiness Church. Particularly one or two of the single women became very dear to Elaine, and she learned of Christ and Christian service from them. She began teaching school, and then she, too, migrated to Trinidad, settling in Santa Cruz. She took whatever jobs she could find and eventually became cook at Nazarene Training College. While she was on our staff, a student who was especially close to her and me slipped the good news to me that she and Clifford Manswell had become engaged. In due time they married.

All seemed well with Clifford. He had Christ, he had Elaine, he had a good job, and he had a good church with whom to fellowship. But somewhere in his early years as a Christian, he discovered that all was not well. The local church became involved in some sort of church trouble, and he was on the board. He heard all about it (at least one version) and cared deeply, so deeply that his emotions were uncontrollable. He was shocked, shamed, and embarrassed at his own reactions. In grief of soul he cried out to the Lord for forgiveness and for whatever he needed to keep that from happening again. The Lord heard and answered, cleansing his heart and filling it with His own sweet Spirit. Now he understood what Nazarenes really meant when they said you needed to be sanctified wholly after conversion.

Cliff and Elaine's home was gladdened by the birth of a son. Then the Lord took him home to heaven, leaving them shattered. Over the years He gave them five more boys, however, and each of them is strong and healthy today.

At some point in his walk with God, Clifford heard His call to preach. He was all God's. He wanted to do His will. But

it did not seem to be God's will for him to give up his government job to come to Bible college. How would he support his family? He did not know what to do, so he continued for 10 more years as a faithful layman at Santa Cruz.

In 1972, Herb and Alyce Ratcliff returned to Trinidad to work at CNTC. Herb was full of enthusiasm over a new program of Theological Education by Extension, which he was heading up. He held services all over the district to explain it to the people. He came to Santa Cruz, to the College Church, where one might not expect to find much need for it since the college was so close. Clifford Manswell came to him after service declaring, "For 10 years I have had a call to preach and have not known what to do about it. I believe this is God's way of helping me fulfill it." He enrolled for the first class.

I was pastoring down the valley at Santa Cruz Old Road. I heard about this 10-year-old call. My church was in an evangelistic thrust via a series of open-air services in various locations. I asked Cliff if he would preach for me in one of them, and he agreed to. It was one of the best sermons I had listened to for a while. It sounded like the product of a veteran, not the efforts of a raw beginner. I said to him, "Cliff, that was a mighty good sermon!" He replied with neither pride nor false modesty, "Well, I guess it ought to be. I've been practicing on the grapefruit trees in the valley for 10 years."

In the summer of 1973, my Uncle Bill was dying of cancer in Biloxi, Miss., and the Lord made it possible for me to fly home for a three-weeks' vacation to see him. I needed someone to fill my pulpit for me. I thought of Clifford Manswell, and he agreed once more to help out.

Upon my return, the people were enthusiastic about the good preaching he had done. I was pleased, and the Lord began almost immediately to indicate that he was the one to be my next student assistant. Knowing it would be more difficult for a man nearly 40 years old with a growing family and a full-time job, I wanted to be sure this was of Him. I asked my

church to help me pray about an unspoken prayer request in our Wednesday night prayer and fasting. My prayer was very definite: "Lord, if this is really of You, give me some token to help me know it."

The next morning, I felt I should go "fishing." I knew very well Clifford should be at work, and yet I felt led to go to his home. Armed with the bait of a good book to give as a little appreciation gift, I went. Elaine, of course, was home alone except for the two smallest children. I gave her the book for him and told her that the Old Road people really appreciated him and his ministry. She replied, "Well, he has a vision for Old Road." Cliff would *never* have told me that. He had seen himself in a vision pastoring *my* church! Elaine had said to him, "Well, boy, I don't know how that could happen. That is Miss Saxon's church." I went away inwardly rejoicing; I had my token!

I talked to District Superintendent McKenzie and received his permission to proceed. Next I took it to my church board. "How does he feel about it?" they asked.

"I haven't mentioned it to him yet."

"Well, find out whether or not he would accept," they insisted. And so I talked to Clifford and Elaine about it, asking for a delayed answer until they had time to pray about it. He agreed to let me know the answer when he came to class on Tuesday night. But for some reason I had to go out on Tuesday night, so he left me a note, which read in part:

When you first spoke to me about assisting you at Old Road, I said, I cannot do that. But after I prayed about it, the Lord said, Yes you can, and you must. Thank you for helping me to get into the ministry.

Ours was a good working relationship that lasted for the remainder of the time I was at Old Road—about two more years, including a three months' furlough, when Bro. Manswell alone carried the load.



The three older Manswell boys had not been too happy at the Santa Cruz church. Sometimes they were playing outside behind the building when their parents thought they were in their Sunday School class. But at Old Road, they found buddies of their own age whom they enjoyed being with, and they became a part of it in a new and special way. Today the whole family is united in their love and service to God. Anthony, second from oldest, is called to preach and is preparing at CNTC. Sometimes Bro. Manswell tries to give me credit for winning his boys, humanly speaking. But I know that God used these parents' unqualified obedience to reach the hearts of their children. This is just one of the wonderful spin-offs of their minding God.

I suggested to Bro. Manswell that he try to accelerate his school program by getting into some daytime classes, since it would take a very long time to finish his course by extension. He found that the people at work were willing to let him come in a little late if need be in order to take morning classes, just as long as he completed all his work. And he could study in the office, once his work was done properly. He had weeks of accumulated leave, too, since for years, whenever he took a vacation, he would come back to find that all his work was waiting for him. "Catch it up, and we'll credit back the time," they would tell him, explaining that they had been unable to get anyone to do his job while he was gone. Then he was due some time for study leave that he had never before taken. Amazingly, they found someone else now who could do his work while he was off. In four years, he completed the three-year Ministerial Diploma, keeping his job, home, and church responsibilities intact. Only in his final year was it necessary to take a cut in pay due to his schoolwork.

The district superintendent asked me to pray about moving to another church. It was the plan that Bro. Manswell should move, too, to continue as my assistant. God made it very clear to me that He wanted me to make the move, even

though I was very happy at Old Road. I spoke to Clifford and Elaine about the planned move, asking them to pray about their part in it.

They came back with the results of their prayers: "We don't feel that the Lord is through with us yet at Old Road, but we believe in submission to authority. We are willing to move if the district authorities say we should."

Puzzled, I went back to the Lord. "Lord, You let me down," I prayed. "You were supposed to tell them the same thing You did me."

But very clearly the impression came back, "No, I wasn't. I want you to move, and I want them to stay at Old Road."

"Then You'll have to make that clear to the district superintendent, Lord," I prayed. And He did. A few months later I moved, but Bro. Manswell remained to handle Old Road without me. His vision had been fulfilled.

In time Clifford Manswell was elected district treasurer, and he did the job efficiently. He moved eventually from Old Road to the Sangre Grande pastorate, where once again God blessed his ministry. Other churches called him for crusades, and some of them wanted to call him as their pastor.

Finally that day came in 1986 when Rev. Carl Bompart asked that he not be considered for reelection as district superintendent. After several ballots, Clifford Manswell emerged as the new superintendent. By the grace of God he has been doing the job ever since, being returned to office after his initial two years by a very strong vote in March 1988. His training in bookkeeping, in industrial law and trade unionism, in lay churchmanship, and in pastoring—all have served to make him a good man for the job. And his deep devotion to God and His work is evident to all who care to look.

Growth has always seemed to come slowly for the Church of the Nazarene in Trinidad and Tobago. With our 23 churches today, the absorbency point has certainly not yet been reached. There are quite a few areas where new churches

could be started. With just over 2,000 members, we have not yet seen the multitudes coming to Christ as we wish we could have seen. But thank God for every soul who has been won. Some of them are already in Glory, and some are serving the Lord in places to which they have migrated—the U.S.A. and other “promised lands.”

Ancient Israel was commanded to bring to the altar a burnt offering every morning and evening. The ashes had to be cleared away regularly; and even during this process, the fire was not to be put out.

The fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it. . . . The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out (*Lev. 6:12-13*).

Today in God’s Church, we are commanded to be living sacrifices. Our hearts are the altars, God’s Spirit the Flame. ✓  
Thank God for faithful pastors and laymen in Trinidad and Tobago who have tended the altar fires over the years. Time and space would fail to tell of them all. But God has kept exceedingly good records. Now He would have us clear away any ashes, add more fuel, and fan up the Flame on the altar. Indeed, may He himself send a fresh outpouring that will cause the fire of the Spirit to burn more brightly. Then the night of sin about us will be punctuated by the flares, and souls will continue to find their way to the Savior in that light.

Fellow Nazarenes in Trinidad and Tobago, keep the Fire on the altar burning!



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