



*REINFORCEMENTS FOR ARABIA.*

At its last Annual Meeting the Arabian Mission appointed a committee to prepare a report on the subject of reinforcements and send it to the Trustees. The report has been received and is substantially as follows :

“In January, 1900, the Mission unanimously resolved ‘that in view of the present needs and promise of the work we appeal to the Board for the following reinforcements to be sent out immediately: Two single ladies for evangelistic work, a medical missionary for touring in Oman, and a specially qualified worker (lay, medical or clerical) for evangelistic work among the Bedouin tribes.’

“In January, 1901, after a year of fruitless expectation, the Mission reiterated this plea and at that time Mr. Wiersum was still with us. His death left a large gap, yet unfilled, and the more need for the very workers he plead for with us. We desire to lay before you the following unvarnished facts :

“1. The character of our field and its climate certainly indicate that on the bare plea of economy in money and men, each station should have some reserve force to meet emergencies. Yet Muscat has hitherto had only one man at a time to hold the fort. With only one missionary for all of Oman touring is hardly possible. The same is true in a measure at Bahrein and at Busrah since the doctors are tied down so largely to dispensary and hospital work. Nor must the Board forget that the vast distances between our stations, fortnightly mail service and quarantine regulations all unite to make it impracticable to go from station to station frequently without serious loss of time and much expense.

“In occupying these three strategic points in Eastern Arabia we have not followed our own devices but the leadings of Providence. Every year proves that the centers for influence were well chosen. We cannot and must not give up that which was purchased by so great a sacrifice. But unless we receive reinforcements either the work or the workers will break under the strain. This year the furlough of Mr. Cantine should and would have been asked for had there been a trained second-year man ready for Muscat. All of us would rather take the risk of a too long-delayed furlough than see work well begun abandoned.

"2. Regarding the extra medical missionary there is no need of argument. Unless the Board is ready to close medical work at Busrah, and so slap opportunity in the face, or is ready to shut up a new-built hospital at Bahrein when the doctor goes on furlough, they must send a physician to acquire the language and so be able to take over the work. In any case a hospital needs more than one doctor.

"3. Only a grave sense of responsibility would urge us again to plead for single lady missionaries, after the repeated resolutions of the Board to the contrary. We were all greatly surprised and grievously disappointed that the report sent to the Board last year in January and unanimously adopted by the Mission did not convince them of the need for and the practicability of such work. The opportunity has been demonstrated. The married ladies of the Mission have done what they could (some of them hazarding health in doing more than they should) to meet opportunies golden and direct calls of necessity for help. Hitherto and now we have not had any one who could devote all her time to work among women. Conditions in Arabia are less hard for single ladies than for those who are married. Socially and morally we who are on the ground can see no objection whatever to their work among Moslem women, and there is every prospect of blessing. We *know* we have lost golden opportunities in the past ten years by not having a staff of single lady missionaries such as is working in many other Moslem lands under similar conditions as face us in Arabia.

"4. In a letter dated October 8, 1901, the question was asked by the Finance Committee "whether a larger employment of native agents in the field might not obviate the necessity of further increase in the force from America"? The opinion of the Mission became evident during the last meeting when this matter was brought up. Although we fully appreciate the reasons for the inquiry the answer can only be negative at the present. In all pioneer effort leadership is important. Our helpers include men of spiritual power and capacity, but none of them are fit to inaugurate work or to carry on work without constant supervision. This is rather because of the character of our field and all mission work among Moslems than because of any serious lack in the men themselves. We love our native agents and would gladly increase

their numbers, but even this is only possible if we receive reinforcements from home.

"5. Finally, your missionaries on the field make bold to suggest to the Board that the only business policy for the Arabian Mission is reinforcement, and reinforcement immediately. We must hold what we have lest we lose our crown. The political affairs of the Gulf all point to greater opportunities in the near future and equal religious liberty for Eastern Arabia as is enjoyed in Egypt or India. Shall we be prepared to preach and gather in converts when the Persian Gulf has become an English lake and the railway from Kuweit opens all of Mesopotamia? Or will it be a lame mission with a weak staff of workers that represent Christ's Kingdom here? We believe that if the Board will select and appoint the men, that the money will be forthcoming for their support. A live man is more precious to the Church than the gold of Ophir, and she needs only to see and hear the man to make the exchange. Some of the men who are volunteering for Arabia are known to us personally, and we have every reason to believe that their support would be guaranteed within one month after their acceptance and appointment by the Board. We are making this matter of reinforcement an object of special prayer. It is not a small request nor a light-hearted appeal. We do not desire to conceal the fact that we appeal for *picked* men and women—the King's own."

The Trustees have already withdrawn all objections to the sending out of unmarried women, and the Woman's Board has generously assumed the cost of sending and supporting one and possibly more.

The Board is also seeking for men to answer this call. It should be understood, however, that neither men nor women can be sent out unless funds are specially contributed for this purpose and pledges made for their support. Aside from the fact that the Board has no means of borrowing money, it is a principle adopted in the beginning that it will not run into debt. To all who are interested in this Mission and desire to see the great opening in Arabia promptly embraced this call is urgently commended.

HENRY N. COBB, *Cor. Sec.*