

THE MISSION TO LEPERS REPORT  
TO  
THE MEDICAL MISSIONARY FELLOWSHIP

Oct. 1963

**STAFF:** Dr. Gerald Wilson and Miss Mary Butterworth are on furlough. Rev. C. M. Lloyd continues his work as administrator and liaison officer with other leprosy institutions. He reports that the resettlement project near Kyungju for cured leprosy patients is getting on quite well after two years. The residents are working hard on their land which is producing good crops. Dr. Florence Murray is substituting for Dr. Wilson and Miss Grace Bennett continues as nursing director.

No full time Korean doctor has yet been found but doctors from the university hospital are giving valued assistance. The recent arrival from England of Miss Eunice Bicknell and Mr. and Mrs. West, all of them nurses, was warmly welcomed.

**NEW HOSPITAL:** The opening in December 1962 of the new fifteen bed hospital and city clinic on the grounds of the university hospital in Taegu in cooperation with that institution was the great event of the year. During the first six months 57 patients were admitted to the greatly increased space and facilities of the new building, the average length of stay being 29 days.

The chief conditions for which patients are admitted are acute exacerbations of leprosy (reactions), neuritis, ulcers, and eye conditions, all of which are common.

Unfortunately, all members of the medical profession are not yet enlightened in regard to the fact that half the leprosy patients in this country are not infectious to others and can safely be treated in general hospitals. All are not aware that infectious leprosy patients are less contagious than those with other infectious diseases. This being so, even emergency cases cured of leprosy are refused admission to general hospitals with the exception of one or two mission institutions. Often the Mission to Lepers Medical Centre is the only hope for these people.

**CLINICS:** The clinics, four in Taegu and twelve in outlying districts, continue to grow as more victims of leprosy hear about them, new patients registering in 1963 already numbering 283. It is gratifying that more are coming in the early stages when best results can be expected. Deformities and mutilations so common today should be prevented in these patients. One clinic in a colony is for the treatment of eye conditions only.

**PROBLEMS:** It is difficult to get infectious patients to bring the members of their families for examination.

Some have hidden their condition from them and are unwilling to give themselves away. When after much urging some have brought children for examination, several were found to have contracted the disease.

It is also difficult to get uneducated or older patients to understand the danger of passing on the disease to others or to take even the most elementary precautions against it, the dear old grandmothers being the worst offenders. Of 207 individuals in the city examined for diagnosis only 65 were contacts, while in the country 31 out of 88 were contacts.

**TEACHING PROGRAM:** Medical students attend the city clinics for observation and instruction. A group of herb doctors sent by public health authorities for teaching on leprosy brought two cases they suspected of having the disease. ~~It~~ They had, and treatment was started.

Patients in hospital and clinics are taught how to care for themselves and prevent infection of others. Illiterate patients in hospital are taught to read and write, the educated being encouraged to teach the others. One man thought he was too old to learn but now shows off his knowledge by reading his Bible every time a visitor enters the ward.

**TREATMENTS NOT RECOMMENDED:**

1. Eating snakes. Even eating 1,000 did not help.
2. Placing anesthetic hands in boiling water for 10 minutes each day for a week. Tried and found wanting, at least the fingers were soon wanting.
3. Soaking anesthetic feet in lye removes the skin but not the leprosy.
4. Morphine injections only add a distressing habit to the original condition.
5. Caustic applications cause deep ulcers, leaving the disease unaffected.
6. Eating human liver, recommended by some as a sure cure. Horrible but it happens.

Why people resort to such drastic methods on the advice of ignorant friends and refuse to use splints, plaster casts, or suitable shoes advised by their doctor remains unexplained except on the basis of the perversity of the human animal.

**RESULTS:** Large numbers of patients do continue treatment, positive cases regain their health and become innocuous to others, deformities are improved by persistent exercises, eyesight is preserved by adequate treatment, and several persons have been discharged cured.

Christian patients are happy to join worship and preaching services in hospital and clinics. Some have become Christians while others are interested and it is hoped will soon accept the Lord as their personal Savior. To Him be the honor and glory forever.