

MEMOIRS ON THE MOVE—1963

On a very cold clear January 10, 1963, three colporteurs set out on a two-week itinerary of visiting isolated Brethren en route to Miami, Florida.

Upon arrival at destination, they commenced colporteur in the town of **Miami Springs**, but not before they were properly fingerprinted by the police authorities. Volumes sold in Miami Springs were 31 plus 8 returns from tracts in approximately four weeks' time.

Through their colporteur efforts, a woman was contacted who had an aunt who once studied with the Bible Students in the Northeast, whom Br. and Sr. Dinwoodie are now trying to encourage to resume studies.

Throughout all their experiences they played cat-and-mouse with the J.W.'s as on one rainy day two old staunch Jehovah's Witnesses called upon our colporteur friends. They were welcomed in and a very hot discussion ensued leading up to Revelation 12 and they left in a hot hurry. At one of the local Brethren's homes, a series of discussions were held with some younger enthusiastic J.W. brothers.

Upon finishing the town, the town of **Opa Locka** was selected and 15 Volumes were placed in one day's time. The work was interrupted by the authorities who maintained colporteur could not under any conditions be carried on without a \$50-\$75 fee, for each participant.

Meantime, returns were coming in (totaling 7) answering an inexpensive Spanish ad in Miami Springs. One came in from Puerto Rico.

In **Lakeland**, they supported a three-ecclesia effort (of Miami, Orlando, St. Petersburg) for the public talk of the convention. Because all avenues for tracting were blocked, ingenuity took over and the tracts (4,800) were individually wrapped in Saran wrap and gingerly pitched from the car window to the base of the mailboxes, which were rural. No public responded. Incidentally, the Baptist ministers warned their congregations of their activities. Nevertheless, many requested the free booklet of the tract.

Moving into the Obenland home, the **Miami** area was covered by following-up and colporteur and tracting. In follow-up, many interested persons were contacted. One individual, Jewish by birth and J.W. by conversion, is currently corresponding on doctrinal questions with one of the colporteurs. There was much common ground with another German immigrant J.W., who agreed on many key doctrines.

One contact was a nurse who was very much enraptured in religious literature dispersion who very gladly gave a sampling to the girls; and she bought a Volume as well. A prayer was offered before they all parted company.

One of the highlights in Florida was a German gentleman who had the Studies in the Scriptures in his native language in Europe. Having had his books burned by the Hitler machinations, he was extremely glad to have Pastor Russell's writings in his possession again. The grand total of Volumes placed in Florida was 90, From January until the last day in May.

The next chapter opens in **Trenton, New Jersey**, having been spiritually refreshed at the New Brunswick Convention and having acquired an addition to the colporteur family of three, making it four. Necessary permits were secured with ease.

Housekeeping was set up in "Neverest Inn" in Cornwells Heights, Pennsylvania. Trenton was found to be decidedly Catholic and correspondingly grouchy. Despite the adverse circumstances, 133 Volumes were placed in approximately three weeks' time.

On one occasion a shabby, foreboding and extremely large home was accosted by two colporteurs. It was set some distance from the road, but as they approached, two men who had parked automobiles in the driveway eagerly greeted them. The colporteurs met them just as directly and quickly funneled the conversation with these intelligent gentlemen to the absurdity of hell fire with its heathen origin. One gentleman was quite pleased with the presentation and wanted to buy a volume and also for his friend. Later he explained he was a real estate interested in rehabilitating the old mansion for a film production. The home had in the last century belonged to King Joseph Bonaparte.

In one discussion with a gentleman, a kindred chord was pulled along the lines of early church organization. As a result, the gentleman desired his minister (Church of Christ) and the colporteurs to have an interview, having exchanged literature, on a subsequent day. The minister, having previously studied to be a lawyer, drew out a paper accompanied by oral argument, the philosophy of the trinity. The colporteurs were, however, given ample opportunity for presentation and summation of their beliefs. About four o'clock in the afternoon, the minister broke in, "Well, I told my wife if I couldn't crack you by four o'clock, you couldn't be cracked." Also covered in our conversation was the difference between mediator and advocate, and how often the Memorial should be celebrated.

In cooperation with the Trenton Ecclesia, the colporteurs also engaged in some follow-up work. On one occasion, a Spiritualist invited them in for orange juice, whereupon she related a recent experience in seeing a vision arise from someone whom she was nursing, who was dying. The colporteurs prayed to the Lord as she continued her story and left shortly thereafter.

August and September found the girls in activity with the Bible Students Congregation of New Brunswick. **Plainfield** was discovered to be a friendly and receptive community and generally religious, i.e., to the tune of 279 Volumes sold.

A number of Jehovah's Witnesses were contacted; a few discussions ensued and one person attended the Fifth Volume Study in the local ecclesia. In one of the discussions, a Jehovah's Witness and her student discussed the organization of the Society; but nothing concrete was settled, especially concerning our major doctrinal difference regarding the benefits of the Ransom.

All the names in Plainfield on the follow-up file were called upon. Some Brethren from the local class went out regularly to help; and a number of profitable studies were the result. Health permitting, one of the very interested persons will be attending the New Brunswick Ecclesia.

Two of the colporteurs served at the Redding Fair in Pennsylvania in cooperation with the Brethren from the surrounding area. Although the response was sparse, the lessons gained spiritually were abundant. Later all four colporteurs helped man the fair booth at the Trenton State Fair in joint cooperation with Paterson and New Brunswick Ecclesias. Many of the neighboring booth personnel provided extensive and profitable conversations along Truth lines.

The Lord greatly blessed the effort for all those involved in serving. The total Volumes placed was 353, including two sets, during the five days' time. As a result of this blessed effort, three very interested persons are attending the Paterson Ecclesia.

An all-time high for Volumes sold in one day was reached when one of the young people with whom the colporteurs were staying engaged in the work for a whole day. Together they placed 32 Volumes.

Moving on to **Bloomfield**, New Jersey, in October and November, the colporteurs worked in conjunction with the joint Ecclesias of Jersey City, Paterson, and New Brunswick. The town proved itself to be rather cold and Catholic. Nevertheless, 296 Volumes were placed in the hands of the public. The individual members of the Ecclesias, including elders, came from behind the lines and encouraged the colporteurs by going with them from door. Their active and continued encouragement proved a real incentive.

The night before, having participated in a Second Volume study concerning a "stronger message," the colporteurs had occasion the next day to present the Truth in its uncompromising entirety to two young Presbyterian ministers. Because of their forthrightness, one of the ministers lost his composure and became intensely aggravated. The burden of the conversation centered around the fall of Babylon, the nature of Christendom, the qualifications of a Christian. They parted after shaking hands, the ministers having informed the colporteurs they would warn their congregations.

A number of refreshing insights into people's religious life and needs were experienced, proving a benefit to the colporteurs and also the people contacted. All the names were turned over to the joint-Ecclesias secretary for follow-up invitations for public meetings to be held in the beginning of next year.

The first two days back in Plainfield in the beginning of December were spent in personally inviting the more appreciative contacts to follow-up meetings, the first being a showing of the "King of Kings" film, and the second a lecture on "Is There a Hope After Death?" The total attendance was 13, which was of great encouragement.

Colportering in Plainfield and North Plainfield concluded the activities of the year with a total as of December 15, 63 Volumes sold.