



Miss A.A. Dyason – Mrs F.E. Cooper – 1924 (Edition 1)

In April 1924, Miss Afra Dyason went out to India commended by the Parnell assembly, Auckland. She went straight to Narsapur in the Godavari Delta and learnt Telugu with Mr and Mrs Naismith from U.K. In 1926 she had her first season on a houseboat with Miss Morgan in the East Godavari and subsequently moved to Amalapuram teaming up with Miss Munro from U.K. The partnership in houseboat and village evangelism lasted for almost 20 years. Women's meetings were arranged in the villages, the Scriptures distributed, and women and children taught the Word of God. Many of those people learnt up to 500 verses of Scripture by heart each year. In 1936 they obtained a car for getting out to the villages and appreciated the difference in arriving at their destination fresh and ready for the events of the day. The events could never be fore-told but they could guarantee the heat, and dirt, and the interruptions. Travelling by houseboat or car or camping out amongst the people they would visit an average of over 100 villages a year giving every woman in each place the opportunity of hearing the gospel. Many confessed Christ but many remained secret believers. As well as Amalapuram they concentrated around Bendamurlanka where there were three large canals and hundreds of villages accessible from each. Those canals were from 40 to 45 miles long and only one could be visited satisfactorily each year.

In the 1940's Miss Dyason helped occasionally at Montauban Rest Home at Ootacamund. From August 1946 she stopped in New Zealand for several years to care for her aged mother and was then married on 29th September 1950, to Mr F.E. Cooper who had returned from Israael [sic] where he had been engaged in printing work [for information on the work of Mr Cooper and his first wife in Palestine see p. 84, 85 of the source book]. Mr and Mrs Cooper went to Fiji in 1950 to commence a printing press and to help with the Telugu-speaking Indians.

In 1952 they went to Coonoor Rest Home in the Nilgiri Hills but Mr Cooper had a heart turn and they had to return to New Zealand the following year. They settled in Auckland for several years until Mr Cooper's death on September 25th 1956.

Mrs Cooper set out again for India in February 1959 and took up visiting some of the 100,000 people who lived in villages surrounding Bendamurlanka. Together again with Miss Munro they had many classes amongst the children and also a women's Bible School. In those years they were reaping a harvest which had been sown in years gone by.

The 1960's were really tremendous years for Mrs Cooper. The annual Bible School for women was a real success, The women trained there led many others to the Lord, resulting in more women being baptised than men. Thousands of tracts were distributed in those years both at the festivals and also in the villages. Many people who had been previously visited showed their continued interest.

In 1963 she moved to Ambajipeta and renovated an old mission house making it the base for visiting that area. There they continued the women's Bible School and in 1966 launched Dr Irene Leeser's Hospital Project. From a temporary dispensary they developed into a full scale hospital. By 1970 when Mrs Cooper returned to New Zealand they were treating up to 600 outpatients a day as well as bed-patients who were in the maternity and general wards. The Lord blessed that work in many being saved, some of whom testified that they had first heard the message from Mrs Cooper on the houseboat.

She has now settled in retirement in Kensington Home, Christchurch.

[Source entry includes uncaptioned photo of Mrs Cooper. Page 85 has a photo captioned "Mr and Mrs Cooper (nee Miss Dyason), India' Page 171 has photo captioned: 'Missionary group in 1924. Back: Mr Irvine, Miss Mai, Mr Brewerton. Centre: Miss Sundgren, Mrs Noel, Mrs Black, Mr Noel, Miss Mosley, Mr Revell, Miss Treweek, Miss Townley, Miss Starck, Mr Buchanan. Seated: Mr and Mrs Thomson, Mr Black, Mrs Irvine, Mrs Revell, Miss Dyason, Mrs A. Redwood. Note: Mr Brewerton was visiting India from Malaya.' Photo on p. 224 is captioned 'Montauban Group 1935. Back row: A. AIKEN, D. BURT, G. JUNCK, T. BROWN, Second row: Misses TREWEEK, F. Patient, Bates, MRS A. NOBLE, Miss Patient, Dr Vine, Messrs G. FOUNTAIN, W.T. NOBLE. Third row: MISS WALLACE, MR LYNN, Misses Peebles, SUNDGREN, Conway, Whaxton, Mrs Patient, Misses NICOLL, Adams, Mr Hill, Miss DYASON, Mr and Mrs Smele. Seated: Mr and Mrs IRVINE, Misses Morgan, Thompson, Messrs Thomson, Patient, Misses Clarke, Lynn, Mrs WALTER REDWOOD, Mrs Hill, Miss MOSLEY, A[...] and N[...] Redwood. (N.Z. Missionaries names in capitals.)']