

The Diaries
of
T. Keith Edwards, M. D.
written in Africa from 1957 to 1968

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. . . And As You Go

Preach

PROLOGUE

When Dr. Baker James Cauthern gave us our charge on the night of our appointment, he chose as his text: "As You Go preach". I sincerely pray that the Lord will teach me to preach on rounds, in the O.R., in the Out-Patient Clinic and at every opportunity; for I am convinced that only when we transcend the physical and touch the spiritual have we done anything of lasting value.

April in Richmond was wonderful -- We met the secretaries of the Board, the president of the Board, Mr. Jenkins, and fellow appointees. Somehow at the banquet table on the night before appointment I felt that I had just come home to have a warm supper with my family. It is hard to explain the feeling... these were all great men, men to be proud of, men to respect, men to wonder at, but the feeling was more one of love and pride that you would feel for a younger or older brother.

I felt enormous pride that Dr. George W. Sadler was my area secretary. He is an aging man now with white hair and partial blindness to one eye, but when he tells of one of his journeys or exploits in the field of deputation work, one finds himself agreeing with his statement that "A younger man could not have stood it." His wife, Mrs. Maynard Sadler, was originally from Williston, S.C. She is one of the most gracious and beautiful women that I have ever met. Even now the years have been unable to hide the tranquillity and inborn loveliness of her face. Yet on her arrival in Africa as a young girl, her first African housegirl hid her face on seeing her. After a time Mrs. Sadler persuaded her to tell her what the trouble was. The girl answered: "Oh, Ma. you are so ugly! But then don't feel bad, because not everyone can be black and beautiful."

Orientation Conference in Texas at Baylor University, was a mad whirl. Again I felt that family-feeling on Sunday night as Dr. Cauthern preached: "We are not going into this work planning

to return for brother's graduation or even for a parent's funeral. There are some of you who, like Bill Wallace, may not return. Some of you will leave little graves in the lands to which you go..." Something came up in my chest and something clutched at my throat for I knew that some member of my mission family would suffer all these things. But then as we joined hands around the huge thickly carpeted lobby of the Union Building I felt as if we held hands around the world; that regardless of where we were or whatever happened we would still be spiritually holding hands with each other -- and with God.

Packing has been a problem. Alton Blankenship, of Marion, N. C., my brother-in-law, and a most devout Christian, helped me considerably with the building of the crates. However due to a bleeding ulcer, I had to insist on his resting and taking Pro-Banthine. For a time I was very worried about my ability to square up the crates. I consoled myself with the knowledge that Jesus was a better carpenter than I; and I prayed without shame that He would help me not to blunder too badly in His ancient trade. He must have helped for the crates at least fit well; although they were not all pretty to look at. In one respect I have fallen into the pit of pride. I think that I have managed to save the board close to one thousand dollars by doing the carpentry work, all the packing, and shipping by freight.

I have said "I" in a number of places. Actually it is "We".

Alice has proved to be a full partner in all of it including the hot wearying moil of packing. And a times she is the leader in formulating some of our correspondence and urging us all on to complete the job at hand. All of this and she has still found it possible to so unite our family that I have noticed very few new neurotic traits in the children. The callus on Benjy's thumb where he sucks it at bedtime always becomes harder when he is insecure because he sucks during the day then too. It has stayed about the same. Alisa has shown some tendency toward spoilage, however she is still a good child. She likes to be held, but is not afraid of strangers and can be left in a church nursery at

any time.

We are to sail on the S. S. Shonga of the Elder-Dempster line from the Atlantic Basin, Brooklyn, New York, on August 29, 1957. I earnestly pray that God will keep us pure, lead us daily, and teach us how to preach as we go...

Columbia, S. C.

August 5, 1957

T. Keith Edwards,