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Women's Missionary Union

First Baptist Church (Shelby, NC)

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### Correspondence- Jean Teague - August 1979

Jean Teague

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Dear Friends,

So much has been going on here since I last wrote! That's why my letter is later than usual. I've really gotten behind in personal correspondence, too; however, many letters I did write never reached their destination due to several postal workers' strikes in Israel. I hope this letter will suffice as answer to your letters--just this once. I'll get back to personal answers whenever possible after this!!

In January I finally got moved into my "permanent" apartment on Port Said Street, Gaza City. Until then, I lived on the hospital compound. Now, I am diagonally across the corner from a mosque; directly across the dirt, side street from one of Gaza's concrete products companies (they make 1 block at a time - sometimes beginning as early as 3:30 a.m. !!); across main street from a boys' primary school; and in a building directly over a dry cleaner and a furniture factory! Doesn't all that sound exciting? It is! All the time!!! I can now return to sleep after the calls to prayer during the night - and the noise of the cement block machine when it starts in early morning. All the little neighborhood kids think we're Israelis and constantly say "shalom". I've begun explaining in Arabic that I'm not Jewish, but American!! I now usually get a "Hello" or "Marhaba".

After I finished my English class for lawyers, we decided to take a month's rest before continuing the second session. At the end of that time, I was ill so didn't get the group going. Pray that the Lord will re-open this opportunity this fall, if it is His will for me to continue this outreach ministry. Three of us in the mission family have had opportunities to teach English classes to various professionals this school year. Pray that this outreach will be effective. This year we've tried to touch the lives of doctors, nurses, lawyers, and educators.

The middle of March we participated in a church revival led by Joe Underwood (F.M.B.), with Joe Ann Shelton, soloist, and Loeen Bushman, pianist. Each day after the services, we ate dinner together then went into 2-hour sessions of a discipleship seminar with Billie Hanks of Fort Worth, Texas. My heart and my life were tremendously blessed by the dedicated ministries of each of these precious people. I thank God often for the experiences He led me through during those days. He continues to work in and through my life. I'm grateful!

As a follow-up to the discipling training, we have met together weekly for continued cassette tape lectures by Billie for scripture memory drill, for book study and discussion, and for Bible Study. Our pastor, Jim McPherson, leads the sessions and teaches the Bible Study for the men. Although I haven't been able to participate in the other sessions, I do teach the Bible Study for the mission women (we're using Irma Warr's The Godly Woman). Pray for all of us as we work toward being better equipped and more dedicated witnesses in this place.

I alluded earlier to my illness -- and I want to tell you more about that. In the middle of our revival/discipleship training, I developed another difficulty with my back and right leg. I was in bed a total of 6 weeks -- only 4½ of them solely for the back problem. Just as I was readying myself for a return to my classes, I became terribly ill with labyrinthitis. That was worse than the back, in that I couldn't move my head a fraction of an inch without "spinning in orbit" around the room! The final disappearance of this inner ear problem didn't leave me for 12 days!! I never cease to be amazed at the way the Lord uses us and our circumstances to open up new opportunities for His people. During most of my weeks in bed, I had visits from my students, my Arabic teacher, my fellow missionaries. I can't begin to tell you how often I was enabled to give testimony, to have prayer, or to share in other ways with my visitors. I am most grateful that the Lord gave me this time to be available to people in need of something I could give - or people who just needed someone with whom to share their "hurts".

I finished my 1978 - 79 English classes in the School of Health Sciences in early June. Shortly afterwards, I took my annual leave time for a vacation outside Gaza. I returned refreshed and ready to begin working on plans for next year, when I'll again teach English and serve as Dean of Students.

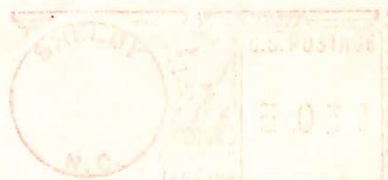
Also during the spring semester, I taught part of the sociology/psychology classes for the 1st year students. I had them write a sociological study of their own families. Here are some interesting excerpts: "My home consists of 2 sleeping rooms, a kitchen, and a toilet. My family at home consists of 10 persons including my father, my mother, my grandmother, my four sisters, my two brothers and myself." Or, "I live in a family which consists of 14 members: my parents, my oldest brother and his wife, my 4 unmarried brothers, my 5 sisters, and myself...our family faces a very great problem, I think. Our father keeps crying and screaming all day. My mother, 40 years old, developed diabetes 3 years ago; this has caused some problems for her and makes her emotionally disturbed. She fights with my father everyday." Finally, "Because of the number in my family, 22 persons, and because there are 2 wives, there are some problems. My father has decided to divide the house into 2 houses. Each mother will live in a separate section with her children. This will prevent some of the problems and keep the children loving each other. My father will be the head of the 2 families." Well, do you understand more now what it's like to be a refugee camp dweller? All of my students live in situations very similar to the 3 examples I've given here. Their futures hold promise for a better existence because they're getting training - but most young people are not. Pray for these people with whom I work - that the Lord will provide a way for their survival as His children, too.

Life here is interesting (I get caught in traffic jams with donkey carts!) and exciting, and I like it very much!! But, of course, I do look forward to my return to the U.S. in January, 1981. Already, the Foreign Mission Board is making assignments for me for World Missions Conferences. I've already scheduled several speaking engagements, and am working on my summer camps as well. If you should want me to be with you in your church for any sort of presentation (speech, slides, conference, etc.), I would suggest that you contact me directly - except for Word Missions Conferences; Mrs. Martha Belote, F.M.B. Box 6597, Richmond, Va. 23230 schedules those for us. I do look forward to seeing you and sharing with you about our work here in Gaza. I hope you'll give me the opportunity to do so.

Continue to keep us in your prayers. Knowing you're praying during these times makes each day a bit easier.

In Christian Love,  
Jean Teague

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