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gypsy work magazine



Work of God

The testimonies published in this issue are of the utmost importance because they prove without question a divine work; an intervention of the Holy Spirit directing this revival. It cannot be the work of a man, although God uses His children as witnesses. It is the work of our God of Love Who forgives, saves, delivers, transforms and makes the human being happy regardless of his colour and past, as long as he lets God save him and puts his faith in Him.

The reading of this issue will encourage you to persevere in prayer for the salvation of the Gypsies in the entire world.

We have had the desire to share with you our joy, especially with you who pray and maintain us in our apostleship.



*A Gypsy home
At right is the
Samovar from
Russia
for tea*

A Gypsy Challenge in America

MISSIONARIES from all of the Christian churches are scattered across the world from Africa to the South Seas, and often the individual Christian feels that mission work is far removed from him. Its problems, its successes and its failures are brought home to him only on special Mission Sundays or in lectures and talks given by missionaries on leave from their posts. And many Christians prefer it that way — they do not then have to feel responsible. With the Gypsies that responsibility is right there on their doorstep.

With the modern world becoming more technical and more "civilized" every day, with conformity almost a religion on its own, the life of the Gypsy is becoming an anachronism. His greatest clash with the world is beginning now. What the result will be depends to a great extent on the attitude of the Church and the individual Christian. It remains to be seen whether the Christian is courageous enough or "Christian" enough to accept the challenge.

DEREK A. TIPLER

COVER: A Gypsy girl of Stevo's Family in Paris

THE GOSPEL TO THE GYPSIES

by Joe G. Mazzu, Jr.

SEVEN thousand Gypsies, with 1,200 trailers, crowded onto the 21 acres in the small village of Les Choux, France. I stood amazed at the sight, though this was the third international gathering I had attended since 1966! But this year's meeting far exceeded all the others! The evangelical witness and revival among these nomadic people is one of the newest and most exciting marvels of God's grace in our time!

This revival began in 1950 when a wandering Gypsy lady, Madam Reinhard, received a small piece of paper from a pastor selling Bibles and New Testaments in the marketplace of Lisieux, France. Unable to read, Madam Reinhard dropped the paper several times, only to sense an urgency to save it. Then when the doctor told her that her son would not recover from an appendectomy complicated by tuberculous peritonitis, she asked someone to read the piece of paper she had saved. It was an invitation for the sick and the lost to attend gospel meetings! She rushed to the church and, interrupting the pastor's sermon, cried out that her son was dying. In faith the pastor assured her that God, Who is all-powerful, would answer prayer in the boy's behalf. Visiting the boy and praying that Christ would make him whole was the pastor's next step of faith.

News of the boy's healing and recovery spread far and wide! The family accepted the Lord Jesus Christ, and others soon followed their example!

In 1952 several Gypsies attended another gospel meeting in Brest and requested Rev. Clement Le Cossec, who was conducting services in a public auditorium, to baptize them in water. Since Gypsies marry according to their tribal laws and customs and not according to the laws of the land, they normally could not be accepted into church membership and thus were denied baptism and communion like other church members. Rev. Le Cossec conferred with the authorities and took the necessary steps to legalize their marriages. Satisfied that a work of grace had taken place in their lives, he proceeded to baptize several of these new converts. At this time he resolved to do everything possible to evangelize the Gypsy people.

The Gypsy revival is not one of sectarian or denominational dimension but of unusual birth of the Holy Spirit. Clement Le Cossec states that the early formative days were marked by simple faith in the words of Jesus Christ and belief in the divine and final authority of the Bible. Taking Christ at His Word produced changed lives in keeping with the work of the spirit and an



unusual depth of prayer in protracted meetings of waiting on God for the fulfillment of his Word. Many were baptized in the Holy Spirit and filled with the love of Christ. Many were healed. God changed the lives of drunkards, dancers, and those given to idolatry and superstition. Homes were reunited, and harmony was restored to many families. The desire to follow Christ has endured these 18 years, and today over 10,000 have repented and followed the Lord in water baptism. Though the greater part of them could not read, they would listen to anyone who would take the time to read and minister the Word to them, often retaining entire passages which they had heard only once. This faith founded on the Holy Scriptures was the force that produced the current revival.

At the same time the Spirit was being outpoured upon the Gypsies in France, those in other nations were being brought to Christ, too. The need for leadership and counsel became obvious. Since they did not have church homes and moved from village to village, the lack of instruction and teaching intensified the need for help. At this time about 100 gathered in Brest and asked Rev. Le Cossec to help them. According to Titus 1:5 Rev. Le Cossec selected five, whose lives were worthy of the position, to be responsible for travelling and providing prayer and worship services.

The work became indigenous almost from the beginning and has been self-propagating (from family to family), self-supporting, and self-governing. Over 500 attended the first Gypsy convention in 1954, which was to become a practiced means of promoting the revival in every area of France. These gatherings have four objectives: (1) to bring converts together for spiritual direction and strength; (2) to evangelize the unconverted brought by families and friends; (3) to examine the spiritual and material problems relative to the movement's progress; (4) to provide a protracted witness to non-Gypsies.

Special mention should be made of the overwhelming love expressed to visitors and non-Gypsies who attend these gatherings. Christ's love opens new and wonderful avenues of service for these unusual people.

A two-semester (term) Bible School will begin its third year this Autumn where students are prepared to serve their people better. Each student must spend two years working with a pastor after completing his studies. French pastors, missionaries, and educated Gypsies serve on the faculty, lending to the development of the work. The French Government provides a teacher for the children whose parents remain stationary in Les Choux.

Current plans call for purchasing property, a continuation of efforts to reach all European countries with Gypsy populations, and in the immediate future an evangelism thrust into Asia. Your prayers for this young, bold work for God will be appreciated as they coordinate in a worldwide plan of evangelization before Christ returns.



A typical Gypsy Craft

Joe G. Mazzu and his wife . . .



Joe G. Mazzu and his wife Charlotte, Assemblies of God missionaries, arrived in Paris in the Autumn of 1965. In addition to his work among the French, Rev. Joe Mazzu was pastor of the Camp des Loges servicemen's fellowship until that base was closed. He is an instructor at the Gypsy Bible School which had 29 students this year.

THREE GYPSY PREACHERS

IMPRISONED TEN DAYS IN MADRID'S JAIL FOR THE CAUSE OF JESUS CHRIST'S NAME

DURING the month of October three Gypsy preachers: Fatar, Tchninine and Lokate decided to go and testify to the Gypsies spread out in the suburbs of the town of Madrid.

All three made some savings for that purpose and travelled at their own expense to proclaim Jesus Christ first to the Gypsies whom they had met in France when they came for the grape-picking season, and whose addresses they had.

They arrived in Madrid with their caravans and stayed on a tract of land where there were many Gypsies. On this waste land on a hill, surrounded by imposing red-brick building, huts made of boards and sheet-iron are crowded together. Some Gypsy families live in the midst of such poverty. The preachers went from hut to hut to talk of the Gospel, and of the power of Jesus Christ to save and heal. They prayed for the sick who had faith in the promises of the Lord. Many were healed. The Gypsies began to gather in the huts to hear them.

The crowd ran up to one of these huts. A paralysed man sat on a chair, his suffering showing on his face. He radiated confidence, believing that God could heal him. After explaining the Gospel and exhorting each one present to put his faith in Jesus the preachers prayed for the sick. Several were healed. At the moment when they prayed for the invalid he suddenly felt life in his paralysed limbs. He touched his legs, his arms, hit them — there was no more pain and they worked normally. In one bound he stood up. A preacher commanded him to walk. He started to walk and was soon walking easily. He began to leap, and then ran outside the hut and up the hill without tiring. His face was bright with joy, and the amazed Gypsies shouted: "Gloria a Dios!" ("Glory to God!"), praising God for His marvellous works.

The news spread. Meetings continued in a more isolated hut than the others, higher and more conspicuous on the hill. More and more Gypsies came to hear the Gospel; in eight days the audience grew from forty to 200 and more. Soon the hut could not accommodate them, so, without thinking of the Spanish laws which forbid all open-air religious gatherings, they decided, oblivious of the danger, swept away by the enthusiasm of the revival, to hold the meetings outside in the courtyard.

The preacher explained the Gospel and stressed the fact that it is Jesus Who saves and heals. While he was finishing his sermon and preparing to pray for this sick a Police car arrived, to the amazement of everyone. The Police jumped out and hustled the preachers into the car, without a word being spoken. The crowd were shocked and indignant at these men being treated like common criminals. They were put into a cell where they remained for two days without food or bedding, and with only a sheet of iron for a bed. They were then transferred to the main jail of Madrid where there are about 1000 prisoners. They were there eight days.

We came to their rescue and after many proceedings they were set free on probation with a bail of 10,000 pesetas (about \$150) per person, asked by the Judge.

We know that, albeit the Judge was a just and open-minded man, all those who heard the news of the arrest prayed and without any doubt God heard the prayers.

The Spanish law only permits 20 people to gather together in a house. But what if there are 200? We cannot hold 10 meetings a day! The only solution is to rent, buy or build a hall in the Gypsy quarter, a hall that will hold everybody. This is our project. Please pray with us for it.



Among the Gypsies in SPAIN. Fourth from right: John le Cossec. The third is missionary JOHNSON of Assemblies of God, U.S.A., working in Madrid

A Letter from John

PRAISES unto God, our living Creator,

I praise God for the wonderful work that He is doing and of the moving of the Holy Spirit among the Gypsies, and so I would like to take you to SPAIN for a moment and show you how God moves in that country:

My father, 5 French Gypsy preachers and myself arrived on Monday the 13th of April in Balaguer, a town situated about 300 miles N.E. of Madrid, where we had a four day Spiritual Retreat for the Gypsies.

Each day we had two sessions of Bible Studies from 9:00 A.M. until noon and from 2:00 P.M. until 4:00 P.M. with 40 ministers. They were so thirsty to know the truths of the wonderful Word of God. They were filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, prophesying and having visions. It was also a joy for me in those meetings to see these men having one desire: To be better workers for the Master. They sang and prayed with

all their hearts.

During the seminary we have been visited by the missionary in Spain, Rev. Samuel Johnson of the Assemblies of God. He offered his co-operation by giving Christian Spanish Literature and explaining to them about the "Correspondance Bible Course". Most of them can read and I know this will be a great help to them.

And then we had two other meetings, at 4:30 P.M. and 8:00 P.M., for the Gypsies living in that area and in the country abroad to come and hear about God. At every meeting the hall was full. The Gypsies were so happy to hear the Word of God that they were singing the praises of God. They had tears streaming down their faces. Several came to the Lord.

Sixteen young Gypsy men were accepted as candidates for two years. They are in charge of new churches in several towns under the responsibility of mature preachers.

On Saturday the 18th of April we had two meetings in two different villages. In each room of the house there were about 40 people and, even though they had hardly any room to sit, they did not mind standing for a couple of hours to attend the meeting. God is moving in the country of Spain, glory to His name.

We were in Madrid on Sunday the 19th of April. There, another joy was awaiting us; 10 Gypsies were baptized in water at

JOHN'S LETTER—continued

the evening service. Among them was a young man who was a guitarist before he came to the Lord, playing in Night Clubs and making much money. Now his only desire is to serve God. Another man who used to be a big gambler has accepted Christ as his personal Saviour.

On the preceeding pages you have read the story about 3 Gypsy preachers who were imprisoned for preaching the Gospel in Madrid. Now I would like to tell you the results of the final trial which took place on April 21st. After 5 months from the time they had been arrested and released on probation, the court of Madrid granted them their freedom, and the right to preach the Gospel as long as they preached in houses or halls.

We had one more meeting before leaving Spain; it was in Valladolid, a town 150 miles N.W. of Madrid, among the Gypsies. We had the evening service from 9:30 P.M. until 11:00 P.M. Everyone (about 100 Gypsies) stayed up to listen to the Word of God.

It really touches my heart to see that in this world where so many souls do not want to come to Christ, there are still thousands of souls hungry and desireful for God. We ask you to pray with us for this missionary work among the 300,000 Gypsies in SPAIN.

In Christ.

Missionary John Le Cossec



Baptism of Gypsies in MADRID. On left the three preachers who were ten days in jail



All the Gypsy preachers

Above: the first ones

Bottom: the new candidates



Right: Gypsy preacher Emiliamo with all the young men he Brought to Christ during the last two years. All are candidates for the ministry

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INTERNATIONAL GYPSY BIBLE SCHOOL



The Gypsy students. On left Missionary John Le Cossec, Professors Payon and Djimy and the students. Among the professors are also Revs. Kenneth Ware and Joe G. Mazzu from the States.

ON the above picture you see the 29 students who came this year to study the Word of God in our Bible School during the session February — March.

Why this Bible School? We have judged it necessary for the Biblical formation of our young Gypsy men.

Once the two-month session terminates, each young candidate to the ministry must to with an experienced preacher to continue his practical application in a church or in a group.

Previously we have sent some young Gypsy men to a Bible School. Some of them have since become good preachers like Djimy, who is now teaching at our Bible School.

But since then, ALL THE NON-GYPSY BIBLE SCHOOL HAVE REFUSED THEM BECAUSE THEY ARE GYPSIES. We had, therefore, to open our own Bible School.

The number of students attending the school justify the necessity of this school; each year the number of students is growing. They are all enthusiastic for the Lord. They bring much joy and give the assurance of a spiritually prosperous future through the depth of their spiritual lives and the good Biblical knowledge acquired at this Bible School.

To all those who help us to prepare these students for the service of God, who pray for us and encourage us, we give our sincere thanks in the Lord.

Big International Gypsy Convention in France with 1500 Trailers

The work progresses without ceasing. There will be a very big International Convention from July 12th to the 26th, which will gather together over 1,500 travelling caravans on a ground of several acres. It will be held near the town of TOURS about 100 miles southwest of Paris, at the village of SAINT-MARTIN-LE-BEAU.

Each day meetings will be held at 4:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M.

The youth meeting will be held at 4:00 P.M.; about 2,000 young Gypsies will attend this pilgrimage.

There will be a camp-fire meeting and a baptismal service in the river.

Several Pastors, Evangelists and Missionaries from France, England and the United States will participate at this conference.

We welcome all readers who desire to join us with the Gypsies.

There will be news of this Convention in the next issue.

A Gathering of Gypsies at a Convention



God is Moving in Roumania

WITH two Gypsies speaking their language we have travelled through Roumania and other eastern countries. In almost every village one can see Gypsies. There are about one million in this country of 20 million inhabitants.

Some Gypsies live in houses, many of which are very nice. They work in factories or are farmers. We have met Gypsies working as post office employees, or policemen, or technicians. Some of them also still move about the countryside in poor caravans but with beautiful horses. They are salesmen or tinsmiths.

We have encouraged the believers, taught the new preachers and co-ordinated the testimony work. There are nine preachers who speak the Gypsy language and about 2000 converts (not 20,000 as was indicated by a printing error in the preceeding issue). Their faith is strong and their love of the Word of God is very great.

We were able to distribute 40 Bibles in the Roumanian language. Those who received them clasped them to their hearts and kissed them, because in that country Bibles are very scarce and valued as true treasure.



Old-fashioned Gypsies somewhere in Roumania. They are tin-smiths

continued from page ten

In order to preserve the lives of those Christians, we are obliged to give no names of the preachers or the villages where we went. What we may say is that everywhere, in the villages where only Gypsies are living as well as at the roadside, the Gypsies have given us a warm welcome and listened carefully to the Word of God. We have met the oldest Gypsy preacher, who is 74 years old and still active. He was converted in 1928, and became a Pentecostal preacher in his village in 1933. His son is also a preacher and a member of the Action Committee.

Among the selected testimonies, one is remarkable:

A young Gypsy of 25 went to the capital Bucharest. He went from door to door selling axes. He knocked at the door of a brother, a member of the Action Committee. He did not know him, or that he lived there. There is no doubt that God guided him. The preacher then handed him a record in the Gypsy language, with songs and preaching, a record which was produced in France and edited by Burenas Novas of the United States. He played the record to at least 200 people in the village and the record is worn out after being played so many times. (We distributed 70 others during our stay. All help for this programme of evangelisation by the record will be appreciated.) This young man is going to be baptised very soon, and has decided to be in the ministry. The ways of God are marvellous.



At right the oldest Gypsy preacher and his son, also a preacher, seen in Bucharest

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YOU ARE GOD'S TRAVELLER

I come from a big family of respectable background and steeped in tradition. This stern upbringing gave me an intense desire to see the Rom people live a morally sound life.

However, since the end of the war I noticed, particularly amongst my relatives, increasing loose living. I tried to lead them into more honourable ways. Being unable to do so I decided to leave France and go far away. I went first to Israel and then to Italy where I joined some relatives. Our intention there was to make enough money to return to the United States. Already my cousin had gone there and was waiting for me. But something strange was happening; while my parents had success in their business, everything that I was undertaking went wrong all the time. I was troubled because these repeated failures seemed to me as a mysterious force pitting itself against me. Filled with superstitious fear I decided to go back to France with my family. We went to Lyon, a town situated south of Paris.

Once there, I met a cousin by marriage, Badia. I was surprised to meet him because I knew that he had been travelling in the northern countries. He spoke to me about God. He said to me: "Stevo, since I was converted two years ago, I have prayed every night that I might meet you alone, because, among your brothers, you are the one who can best understand the Bible, better than the others." He made me read the Bible. Some chapters troubled me deeply. I often went with him to evangelical meetings.

I said nothing to Badia but every night I thought about and meditated on the verses I had read. Some other Gypsies came to talk to us about the Lord. But I was waiting with impatience for the moment when it would be possible for me to meet Brother Le Cossec. He arrived late one evening. I asked him several questions that I had on my heart. The Lord illumined me with His light. I was able to tell Brother Le Cossec one day that I had accepted Christ as my personal Saviour. I finally found the meaning to the

events of Italy, because I understood that the Lord's plan was that I should come to Lyon, to meet Him. A few days later I was baptised in water.

One Sunday morning in a non-Gypsy church where nobody knew of my future projects, the Lord sent a message through the mouth of a non-Gypsy brother, a message on which it was impossible for me to delude myself as to its meaning:

"You are God's traveller. I send you among your brethren of the Gypsy race. Do not wait any longer."

The meeting finished. I said: "It is clear, I must go." What else is there to say when the Lord has spoken!

I left with my family for Paris. The Word had been sown and was already accepted favourably. The Roms gathered together voluntarily to hear me. It was the starting point of the conversion of a great number.

I believe that eventually I will go back to the United States one day. But I will go with the Lord, to testify of His love and to tell my Gypsy brethren that Christ died for them also.



In the States during 1964, Stevo (under the cross X) talking about the Lord to the Gypsies travelling North. At right, Gypsy preacher Filex from France



Gypsies of Stevo's tribe in Paris

IN MEXICO

AND REFUSED ADMISSION TO THE STATES

AFTER a sojourn of three months in Mexico, Stevo tried to go into California to establish a Gypsy church. The news of the conversion of the Gypsies in Mexico had spread into the United States and some Gypsies implored Stevo to come and speak of God and of the Bible.

He planned for his sons to enter the United States with him, but one of them, arriving at the border with his wife and children, was refused entry, although he had a visa. He was given no

reason by the customs-officer. Not wanting to leave his children alone, Stevo returned to Mexico. But now the Police began a policy of hounding Gypsies from town to town. Stevo and his family were arrested, then released a few hours later. Facing this hard situation Stevo came back to France with all his family, waiting for a new door to open for admittance into the United States.

During those three months God had blessed the Roms in Mexico and filled them with His Holy

Spirit. A young Rom atheist, a fervent believer in evolution and against the Gospel, came to visit his Gypsy friends one day. On that particular day Stevo was holding a Sunday morning service with some newly baptised converts. This young man was obliged to remain in the house, at this service. It was then that the Holy Spirit visited him. He fell on his knees, declaring: "Yes, God is alive, I believe now." From that moment his life was changed and he also asked to be baptised.

LOULOU DEMETER

CONVINCED BY

THE BIBLE WHICH HE WANTED TO USE . . .

"BEFORE I knew the Lord Jesus I was a Roman Catholic. I knew the Catholic priests who worked among the Gypsies quite well. Among us, the Roms, the Catholic religion is, more than anything, a religion of idols. Every time something was going wrong we asked the idols to intervene for us. But we always felt that we were not in communion with God.

"Last winter my father went to Lyon, to stay with cousins. As the cold was severe I decided to collect him. When I arrived in Lyon I learned that my cousins were converted to what I called "the new religion". During my father's stay with them they had given him their testimonies, trying to bring him to the Lord. We had a long talk together, but my father and I left Lyon without receiving the Word of the Lord. But the seed had been sown... At home, in Paris, we had a Bible that I had quite often read. On my return I opened it to look for some arguments against what had been said to us in Lyon. But on reading the Bible verses the light came to me and I said to my father:

"It is they who are right; the Word of God cannot lead us astray; we must believe what they told us." And so we began to seek for instruction in the Word of our Saviour.

"Since my conversion I am no longer sad. I have the peace of the Lord in my heart and the assurance that he has brought eternal salvation to me."

And now Loulou acts as pastor and has the spiritual leadership of the church in Paris. What he has received he wants to communicate to his Gypsy brothers, that they may also be saved.



Loulou Demeter talking with Gypsies in Roumania. These Gypsies listened to the Word of God and received a Bible with joy

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THE GOSPEL

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Everyone can co-operate in this effort. The smallest offering can become a powerful help when it is regularly sent. Who knows how long we will have the freedom to act in certain countries?