# Daisy Marsh 1929-2016



**Servant to the Kabyle people of Algeria**

Daisy was the daughter of Charles and Pearl Marsh who served in Algeria and later in Chad before returning to England for the sake of Pearl's health. Pearl (née Lamb) was born in 1903 to missionary parents in Algeria. Henry and Mary Lamb arrived in the isolated village of Tabarouth in the mountains of Algeria in 1900. They saw one person – a servant who worked in their house – come to faith in 40 years!

This is where Pearl spent her childhood. She grew up speaking both Kabyle and French. She gave her life to the Lord by the age of 17, but vowed that she would never become a worker in a Muslim land! It is interesting that when Daisy made a full surrender of her life to the Lord in her teens she also told the Lord she would be happy to go to India but not to a village in Algeria!

Charles was born in Enfield, England in 1902. He was one of six brothers. They were brought up in a godly home and he committed his life to the Lord aged 17 after attending a small Gospel Hall and hearing a message on the second coming of Jesus. Some time later Henry Lamb spoke at this Gospel Hall. With him were his wife Mary and his daughter Pearl. Pearl was just 18 and for Charles it was love at first sight! They got engaged five years later and were married in Algiers in 1927. Charles received his call to work among Muslims through Pearl's father.

Daisy was born in 1929 in the isolated village of Tazmalt in the Algerian mountains. Like her mother before her, her early years were lonely. When she was three years old her brother John was born. As he grew they were able to be companions for each other.

In 1939 war was looming. Many missionaries were leaving Algeria. One family was returning to England and offered to take Daisy with them. She was now 10 years old. Charles and Pearl gave her the choice whether to go or to stay and she chose to go. Little did she or her parents know that she would be 14 years old before they saw each other again! This separation was particularly hard for Pearl who had known a similar separation from her own mother and a similar loneliness. Charles and Pearl returned to England on a troop ship in 1945 with John and a baby sister, Ruth, who Daisy had never met.

Daisy had trusted God as her Saviour aged 11 at the children's mission at Ross-on-Wye. In 1943 she went to a Christian school – the Park School in Yeovil – for her last years of school. Aged 16 she responded to God's call to mission as long as it was not Algeria!

She realised the vital role of medicine for anyone going out in mission and so she trained as a nurse at the Royal London Hospital (1945-51). She also completed courses in the eye clinic and a year's midwifery at the Salvation Army Mother's Hospital in Clapton. Her medical training was completed in 1953.

The realisation was slowly dawning on Daisy that God may be calling her back to Algeria. She needed to be sure and so she asked God for a sign. If he wanted her to go to Algeria she asked for the exact sum of money for the fare to be given to her without her making the need known to anyone. The money came slowly but by the time she needed to book the fare she had the exact amount. Her mother's prayers had been answered. After 23 years away she was on her way back to the land of her birth.

As she prepared to return to Algeria the name Tazmalt kept ringing in her mind. She asked her parents where it was and if there were any workers there. She learned of a couple called George and Violet Young. She contacted them to see if they needed any help. They had been praying for a nurse for some time. Daisy arrived in Tazmalt in the last months of 1953. Tazmalt was 170 kms inland south east from Algiers.

The clinic was a far cry from the modern western hospital! Also Daisy found she had forgotten most of her Kabyle during her years in England. The Youngs were coming up to retirement. They had actually worked with Daisy's grandparents and found it amazing that the Lord should send the



Charles and Pearl Marsh

granddaughter of their former colleagues to help them at a critical time. In 1962 Mr Young's health was failing so that Daisy had to accompany them back to England before returning to Algeria the next day.

Daisy spent the next 18 years in Tazmalt. She found she needed much patience and much love to earn the opportunity to share about Jesus. Less than a year after her arrival the Algerian War of Independence broke out. It started in Kabylia and lasted 8 years. Over 100 people were killed just in the small village of Tazmalt.

During this time the women couldn't come to the clinic. The only option was for Daisy to visit them in their homes. Slowly she realised that it was through this very hard time that she began to be accepted in the community. She had suffered as they had. She was caring for the sick and she had stayed even though she could have left. She wrote in her biography (**There is a God in Heaven**) as follows:

**"God's ways are higher than our ways! He is never in a hurry in His dealings with us. All He asks is that we should accept His authority and follow Him whatever the cost!"**

After independence, people around the world sent clothes, blankets, milk powder, baby food, vitamins etc. Daisy distributed these to villagers in great need as winter approached. At this time she was grateful to have a co-worker, Irene Harris. Daisy had worked for 5 years of her time in Tazmalt with no co-worker. The only one with whom she could speak English was her Heavenly Father.

She was glad to distribute needed relief to the villagers, but this had its complications as far as the way they viewed her as their benefactor rather than someone on the same level as them. By 1970 Daisy felt the time was coming for her to leave Algeria. It was hard to leave her friends – especially the new believers.

Back in England many thoughts occupied her mind. She had assumed she would be in Algeria for life. Now after 18 years she was back in England. Had it been worth it? What had she achieved? Soon after her return to England she attended a Missions Conference. In one meeting she joined in the singing of the well-known hymn, **"Facing a task unfinished that drives us to our knees"**. The words struck Daisy with a new force. Her task was unfinished but how was she to discover where to go next? For seven months she worked as a nurse at the Bethnal Green Medical Mission.

When Daisy went to Algeria aged 23 she had faced the fact that it probably meant she wouldn't marry and so would never have a family of her own. Now back in England a friendship formed and she began to believe that after all God was going to give her a husband. They got engaged only for him to call the engagement off just a week before the wedding. This was a shattering blow to Daisy! At the urging of the donors she used some of the wedding gift money to make a trip back to Algeria.

She enjoyed the visit but felt very detached. She had a strong sense that this was no longer where God wanted her. She returned to England via the south of France where there were many North Africans. One of the couples in Marseille offered her a home with them if she believed God was calling her to work there. A year earlier Daisy had begun to wonder if God wanted her involved in a radio ministry to Kabyle people.

Around the same time she came into contact with Mildred Swan who was making radio programmes in a Moroccan Berber dialect. Mildred offered to share some of her airtime with Daisy to help her get launched on air with Kabyle programmes. Daisy was seriously considering this as a possibility. She contacted TWR (Trans World Radio) asking for a ¼ hour slot some time during the week.

The end of 1972 saw Daisy in Marseille reaching out to the many Kabyle immigrants in the city. After staying with co-workers for six months God opened the door for her to have her own apartment in an area that was almost entirely Kabyle. Once again she was able to "face the task unfinished".

During her four years in Marseille Daisy saw TWR launch the first Kabyle radio programmes. Her first project was adapting Dr. Paul White's Jungle Doctor Fables. She was working on the 12th programme when she received a letter from TWR offering her prime time on a Saturday evening. In the same

post she received a cheque and together with the money she had already saved this covered the cost of the 12 programmes. This was a real confirmation of God's will. At that time she would never have imagined she would continue in this radio work for 17 years with all its demands and needs for funding.



Kabyle Ladies

At the same time the Algerian government was exerting pressure on the Berber people to conform to Islam and Arab culture. Their language was no longer heard on Radio Algiers. The Kabyle youth rebelled. As interest grew in Kabyle programmes, Daisy prayed for a male voice to put over the message since women were not highly regarded in North Africa. No one came forward and she later came to realise that God allowed a woman to broadcast at this crucial time of political instability because 'women didn't matter'!

There was an encouraging response to the programmes and little groups of believers began to form all over Kabylia. Some young men from these groups did join in the programmes by giving their testimonies or reading the Scriptures.

Daisy continued to work with this ministry once she had left France making annual visits back. She realised that God had given her a ministry that could be carried out from anywhere in the world. This meant that she would be available when help was needed for her ageing parents.

In 1968 Charles and Pearl returned to England because of Pearl's failing health. In 1976 Daisy realised God wanted her to move back to England to be a companion and help to her mother. Pearl died in January 1981. By this time Charles had already had a minor stroke. By 1985 he was beginning to fail. Daisy sold her flat and moved into the family home to care for him. Charles died in October 1988. In April 1990 Daisy was delighted to be able to fully hand over to Kabyle believers the work that God had enabled her to do for 17 years.

Once again Daisy needed God to shine a light on the path He wanted her to take. She was still involved in the radio work. She still had her health and strength and so could travel. She enjoyed many visits to Kabyle friends in Lyon, Marseille and Paris. Kabyle believers were active in evangelism. By this time the New Testament was available in Kabyle and the translation of the whole Bible into Kabyle was progressing well. As Daisy considered various possibilities, she wrote, **"It is inevitable in life to reach a stage realising that one is not indispensable. God used my knowledge of the Kabyle people and their language at a time when no one else was available to fulfil the role He gave me. Now I had reached the stage when others had taken over the work. What was to be the next step?"**

About this time a Scripture verse was highlighted to Daisy in a number of different ways, ***"Get up, go away! This is not your resting place."*** (Micah 2:10) What did this mean? Did God want Daisy to leave Enfield and the family home where she was so happy? She knew that if this was God's word to her she would have no peace until she took the first step.

In 1995 Daisy put her house up for sale. Although sales generally were slow, it sold in a remarkably short time! Where should she settle now? Worthing seemed like a good possibility. She would be near the headquarters of AWM (Arab World Ministries) and could meet former colleagues and stay involved in the work.



Village Street in Kabylia

God provided her with a small terraced house just five minutes from the train station and two minutes' walk from AWM headquarters.

From there Daisy was able to continue her visits to Kabyle friends in France and she was able to stay involved with the work as much as her health allowed.

The last lap of the journey was her move into a lovely Christian care home in September 2014 where she was lovingly cared for until her call into the nearer presence of the Lord she loved and served on July 7, 2016.

## Some Exerpts from a Tribute given at Daisy's Thanksgiving Service on July 21, 2016

***"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing."*** 2 Tim 4:6-8

Paul was nearing the end of his life in a Roman prison. He knew that his death at the hands of his Roman executioners couldn't be far off. He had given his life to preaching the Christian message all around the Mediterranean – from Jerusalem to the modern countries of Syria, Turkey and Greece, perhaps even reaching Spain. But now the end has come, and he can look back and say:

***'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.'***

Daisy also gave her life in a similarly dedicated way, but to a more specific group of people – the Kabyle Berber people or, in their language, the **Imazighen** or 'free men' of Algeria.

Now, for Daisy, the race is over and the battle finished. What message and encouragement does Daisy's life leave for us? All who have believed in Christ are in this race. It isn't just for special people. We all need to renew our motivation to fight this good fight and run this race so we also may receive this crown. Daisy would urge us to do that.

Paul doesn't call it a fight and a race for nothing. It requires effort and struggle. There will be wounds, hurts and weariness. Daisy experienced all these, but she continued and fought through to the end. Now she has reached it. But we are not yet there. We still have laps to run! Let us run them with the same perseverance and dedication as Daisy. This will be the best tribute we can give her.

Here is a story we heard recently. One of our colleagues returned from Algeria and reported:

**"As I stepped off the plane in Algiers, I was met and driven to the Protestant Church Centre. The brother who drove me gave me a message to pass on to Daisy Marsh. It was from Pastor Moussa of the church in Aït Melikeche, a village near Tazmalt. He said: 'When I was 5 yrs old Miss Marsh came to our house because I was sick. She asked if she could pray for me. I remember her well, because she prayed in fluent Kabyle and few foreigners could speak our language well. As she laid her two hands on my head she prayed: 'Lord, heal this boy, protect him and may he belong to you!' Please tell Miss Marsh her prayer has been answered and today I am a pastor'."**

Truly, no one can know the impact of a life lived for Christ!

**The Hymn that was such a challenge to Daisy**

Facing a task unfinished
that drives us to our knees,
a need that, undiminished,
rebukes our slothful ease,
we who rejoice to know You
renew before Your throne
the solemn pledge we owe You
to go and make You known.

Where other lords beside You
hold their unhindered sway,
where forces that defied You
defy You still today,
with none to heed their crying
for life and love and light,
unnumbered souls are dying
and pass into the night.

We bear the torch that flaming
fell from the hands of those
who gave their lives proclaiming
that Jesus died and rose;
ours is the same commission,
the same glad message ours;
fired by the same ambition,
to You we yield our pow'rs.

O Father, who sustained them,
O Spirit, who inspired,
Saviour, whose love constrained them
to toil with zeal untired,
from cowardice defend us,
from lethargy awake!
Forth on your errands send us
to labour for your sake.

Frank Houghton of the China Inland Mission 1894-1972