Maude Cary 1878-1967

Pioneer in Morocco



Maude was born in Little Falls, Minnesota and brought up on a farm in Kansas. She was the daughter of Jed and Sarah Cary. Her parents constantly offered hospitality to evangelists and mission workers passing through who held meetings in the Cary homestead. Maude was impressed from an early age with the great importance of sharing the Gospel with those who have never had a chance to hear. She saw how her parents honoured these workers and understood that this was a very important calling.

Aged 18 Maude enrolled in the Gospel Missionary Union (GMU) Bible Institute in Kansas City, Missouri to be trained for ministry overseas. Her mother was a very independent woman – a talented musician and a gifted Bible teacher. These same characteristics were evident in Maude.

The first GMU workers arrived in Morocco in December 1894. Around the same time a few workers had arrived from other societies. Mr Fisher, the founder of GMU, reported back concerning the warring of the tribes and the brutality of the Sultan's soldiers in order to intimidate the Berbers. He wrote in 1896, **"The work is to be no holiday excursion, but there is nothing to interfere with pressing on into the interior except personnel!"** Maude was one of the recruits in answer to the prayers of these early workers.

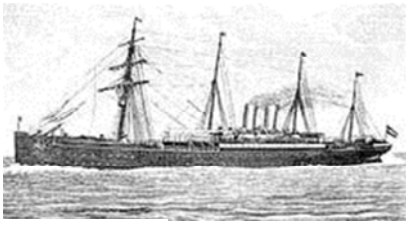
On completion of her course Maude worked in several inner cities including Leavenworth, Kansas and Hastings, Nebraska. She was accepted for work in Morocco and set sail from New York with four other GMU workers on Saturday November 2, 1901 on the steamship Aller. Altogether there were 40 workers with different societies sailing together. As they slipped away from the pier they were singing, **"Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go; anywhere He leads me in this world below. Anywhere without Him dearest joys would fade. Anywhere with Jesus I am not afraid"**.

The first part of the voyage was extremely rough and they were very glad to reach calm waters on the fifth day. After two days in Gibraltar they were able to catch a Spanish mail steamer that took them to Tangier. On November 19, Maude's 23rd birthday, they began the long trek by mule to Fez the ancient capital of Morocco established ~700 A.D. Maude was an accomplished horsewoman and so this presented her with no problem. Thus began Maude's 50 years of service in Morocco. She believed passionately that the dominance of Islam in Morocco would one day be broken.

Maude's first months were devoted to language study. She kept a diary in which she recorded her spiritual temperature each day. After a few weeks of language study she wrote, **"Life is not what it was on the way to Fez. The Saviour's face does not seem so real!"** The reality of her situation had replaced the romance of her long anticipated ministry.

There was only one man in the group – Mr Enyart. Maude was a gifted linguist and provided him with much competition. As she was constantly complemented by the teacher, she had a real battle with pride in her heart. Each of the language students had their own room in the home of the Welliver family. Mrs Welliver found that Maude's skills in cooking and cleaning were not up to her standards and this caused Maude much distress. She wrote in her diary, **"My proud heart struggles to justify itself, but I know it has no grounds to do so"**

So far there had been good fellowship between the British and American workers, but the British came to disagree strongly with the open methods of witness used by the Americans and so fellowship was cut off completely. The GMU workers decided to wear Moroccan clothing so they would attract less attention on the street. They insisted that they were not attacking Islam, but simply seeking to satisfy longing hearts with the truth revealed through Jesus Christ. This rift between the British and Americans was soon healed and they began intermission prayer meetings realising that they were facing the same powerful enemy – Islam.



Steamship Aller

The mission policy was to itinerate in the villages during the summer months. The whole Welliver household set up camp in the country areas outside Fez so they could visit the surrounding villages.

In the autumn the political situation became more and more unstable. Sultan Abdelaziz IV was pro-European and this angered the various Berber tribes leading to rioting and attacks on foreigners. These attacks were more on their nationality than on their religious beliefs. In January 1903 all the GMU workers joined those of many other groups in the coastal city of Larache. During their time there they were able to distribute about 250 copies of the Gospel of Luke which was the first Scripture portion to be translated into colloquial Arabic.

Perhaps harder for Maude to bear than the political difficulties was what happened at the annual workers' conference. A group discussion on the evils of flattery ended with a "criticism meeting". Each worker told the others what he/she thought of their lives and they didn't mince their words! Maude thought she was prepared for anything! She discovered that she wasn't! By the time they had gone round the whole circle she felt there was nothing left of her. She was seen as a proud, deceived worldling, having nothing in common with the mission. She went to bed about 5 am broken-hearted. She woke an hour and a half later feeling she was in the midst of enemies rather than friends.

From all that had been said, it seemed that her first two years on the field had been a total failure. The mission would have been better without her. She was selfish and forgetful. She had written at least one unspiritual letter and she didn't always pray with the Muslims to whom she witnessed. Gaiety, friendliness and laughter had all been misconstrued and added to her tendency to idle talk and her pride of dress. These became a mountain over which her co-workers had stumbled.

Maude was stunned. Was she really a curse to the mission? The first thought of the leaders was to send her home, but realising how devastating this would be, she was finally allowed to stay. Final decisions about future placements were made at the end of October. It was agreed that Maude should stay with the group in El Kasr.

Once again the workers gathered for the annual conference of 1904. Maude had had some correspondence with a fellow worker by the name of George Reed. As they talked together she became even more uncertain about her future. She searched her heart. What were her motives for studying a Berber language? She knew she could never face the difficulties of working amongst the Berbers alone. Would she be so interested in studying the language if it were not for the fact that George Reed was working among them? She was still single on her 30th birthday. She knew George Reed had said he wanted a humble wife. She chose a new motto for her life – **"Seek Meekness"**.

Maude was assigned to stay on in the Mission House as language teacher to two new recruits who had arrived from the USA – Belle Marshall and Elizabeth Tyron. Elizabeth was a special blessing to Maude. She had previously worked in India and she became Maude's closest friend and confidante. Belle eventually had to return home due to ill-health.

There was no end to the number of people knocking on her door day by day. Some were well-to-do and some were beggars. It made no difference to Maude. All were welcomed and, if necessary, fed or clothed. Without fail the Gospel was explained to every caller.

Set times were established for classes for boys and girls even though they didn't always keep to their appointed times. However ill or tired Maude was, she never failed to visit homes in El Kasr. Sometimes one of the new girls went with her. Maude found that often no one listened to her when she told stories but when she sang they all went quiet and paid close attention. She worked for many hours translating and correcting hymns in the language of the common people.

As she walked to the different homes Maude was often accosted by young man who challenged her beliefs or insulted her. Sometimes the children showered her with pebbles and dust. It was not an easy life and she recognised that she was not really willing to be a fool for Christ sake.



Town of Fez

The annual workers' conference in 1907 was held in the lovely coastal city of Larache. There were a number of subjects for discussion:

- How shall we present to Muslims the wrath of God against sin and the deity of Christ?
- How can the ladies sell Scriptures?
- Shall we eat the sacrificed meet of the "Great Feast" of Islam?
- What shall we do to perfect our Berber translations?
- Shall we translate Genesis into colloquial Arabic?

Most of 1907/8 was spent in Larache due to flooding in El Kasr and increased anti-foreign feeling. Following an attack on Casablanca, French troops occupied the region. There was a fear that the same troops planning to subdue the Berbers would also restrict their efforts to give the Gospel to the Berbers.

In January 1908 George proposed to Maude. She took a few days to consider. She wrote in her diary, **"If our union may be for the furtherance of the Gospel, may it come to pass. And if not, may it be calmly set it at nought"**. She accepted George's proposal and joyfully anticipated the future. In fact the marriage never took place. George effectively broke the engagement in 1914 when he decided to leave Morocco and open up a new work in Sudan. After leaving Morocco he never spoke to Maude again! Maude accepted her singleness and from then on called herself an "old maid missionary".

In November 1913 Maude and the Swanson family took up work in Sefrou. Belle Marshall had returned from the USA and had married Victor Swanson. In 1914 Maude said her final goodbye to George Reed and returned to Sefrou. She wrote in her diary, **"I am more of a weed than a tree! O may some fragrance flow out to Jesus from this crushed weed!"**

Certainly that prayer was answered. Lessons of youth had been well learned although Maude wasn't aware of that fact. Back in Sefrou Maude wrote a poem:

When in the west my sun has set,
When wiped the lashes, often wet,
When silenced every sad regret,
It will not matter then.

When all the wilderness is past,
And I have reached the goal at last,
When I can earth with heaven contrast,
It will not matter then.

When I my Saviour's face shall see,
And hear His welcome home to me,
To share His bliss eternally,
It will not matter then.

A loving, sovereign God had gently led Maude Cary into a life of total, willing submission to Him.



Maude with the children

Sefrou was a town of ~10,000 inhabitants. Most people knew Maude. The women loved her and appreciated her caring concern and the simple medicine she was able to give them. She believed that the way to their hearts was through their children, so she always had a few sweets for the kids before opening her Bible. Over the years, whenever Maude was in Sefrou, she taught the young boys. It was a kind of junior church. This meant that Mr Enyart and Mr Swanson could debate with the men. The first "fruit" was among the Jewish boys rather than the Muslims. On Saturdays ~200 came to listen to Bible teaching. These talks often turned into debates as people came and went all through the day. When called on to do so, Maude was capable of holding her own in deep theological debates with Islamic scholars. In any one of her languages she could reduce the flow to a trickle to make the way of salvation simple enough for the untaught women to understand.

Maude tried to establish a resident work in three tribal towns – Bahalil, Agorai and Ain Djemma. Bahalil was about 3 miles from Sefrou crossing the rugged hill by a donkey path. It was built into the side of the mountain. Most of the homes were rocky caves – some natural and some hollowed out by hand. The people were farmers tending their vineyards and olive orchards in the fields below. They were not Berbers, but descendants of Christian captives of the Barbary pirates. Their ancestors might have been Spanish or Portuguese, but they vigorously embraced Islam when forced to do so by their captors. This tiny town had two mosques. Maude found a small room and lived there for a month. Up to 1970 (when her biography was written) she was the only Christian worker to have lived in that fanatical town.

George Reed and others had lived in Agorai briefly in 1905. Maude hoped the climate of the foothills might suit Elizabeth better than the plains. The governor was not happy about having Maude in his town. The only reason she found a room there was because the French army captain sent a soldier with an order to find her a place to stay. Before long she gave up and returned to Meknes.

Ain Djemma was a Berber settlement of about 150 tents. It was in Girwan territory 18 miles from Meknes along the new railroad leading to the coast. The governor was not sympathetic to the Gospel, but was willing to rent a room to the foreigners since he could charge a higher rent. There were no conveniences in Ain Djemma. Water had to be bought from a water boy and food was in short supply. But there was a great advantage. It was situated among the Berbers. From their door they could count 7 tent settlements and others were within good hiking distance. Market day brought hundreds of people from more distant villages. They were curious and friendly. Ain Djemma was the gateway to the Zemmour tribe.

Zemmour country covered an area about 40 square miles and was thought to contain about 12,000 tents with 60,000 people. No Sultan had been able to subdue this tribe, but the French occupation army whittled away at the tribe, conquered the territory, enforced submission and unwittingly opened the door for the servants of the Lord to enter.

In 1917 Mr Enyart and Mr Swanson took a trip to the country markets of the Zemmour tribe. They were two despised Christians travelling unmolested through the very heart of the warring tribe, preaching in the public markets the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. On later trips the women also went along. Maude wrote, **"We were singing and preaching as loudly as we could to crowds of one or two hundred people"**.

After 23 years Maude returned for the first time to the USA. She wore the same style dress and hat she had worn when she left in 1901. She returned to the lively era of the 1920s and found herself entirely out of place. During this time at home she was able to care for her elderly parents who both died during that year. Her mother had written her a letter every week for 23 years. It was a time for reflection. What had been accomplished in those 23 years? Had churches been founded? Were



Meknes El Hedim 1930

mission schools overflowing with eager students? Were the new believers winning their own people to put their faith in the Lord Jesus?

No! In terms of outward success very little had been accomplished. Of the few new believers, at least one had turned back through fear of persecution. Was it truly worth the sacrifice? Maude was convinced that it was. Now aged 47 the only home she really knew was Morocco.

In 1928 Maude returned to Sefrou with a new worker – Signe Johnson. They could drive from Meknes to Sefrou in a Chevrolet truck. This made the journey three hours instead of an overnight trip! It was four years since she had last lived there. The children ran into the street calling her name. She resumed her classes – two a week for Muslim boys and one for girls and the same for Jewish boys and girls.

The work among the Muslims was hard. Some stopped coming since they had been told Maude was teaching blasphemy and one boy burned the Gospel booklet on the doorstep.

Mehdi Ksara was a typical Sefrou child. His grandfather came from Fez which was the refuge of his Moorish ancestors who were driven out of Spain. His family were involved in the progress of the community. They were not rich but were classed as intellectuals. His grandfather was a learned man, so well favoured by an early Sultan that he was sent to the city of Marrakesh to study law. He was much respected during his years as a judge in Fez.

His son, Muhammad, was a well-educated young man when the family moved to Sefrou. There he helped his father until he was appointed to the position of Muslim priest. As an authorised teacher, he officiated at burials, led prayers and taught the people to pray. For his duties he received two dollars a month. Mehdi's mother was a Sefrou girl whose family came from the Sahara. She was the daughter of a Muslim priest. Her family descended from those who claim a direct connection to the Prophet Muhammad. *'Shurfa'*, descendants of the Prophet, were greatly revered.

The birth of a son to this religious couple was a great reason for celebration. He was the son of a priest and the grandson of a judge. The whole town turned out to honour his birth. Five sheep were butchered to feed the many guests who attended the naming feast.

Mehdi had a happy early childhood. He was taught to revere Islam and respect his elders. Aged 7 he enrolled in Quranic School where he learned to read and write as well as study Islam. At 6 o'clock each morning he began the task of memorising the Quran. A light appeared in his world in the form of an unassuming little woman of another race. Some of the boys accepted invitations to go to her home. Mehdi tried to shame them for listening to blasphemy. But when he was told that she spoke both French and Arabic he became curious. Perhaps there was no harm in having a look to see what she was doing. No harm had come to the boys who visited her home and so Mehdi decided to join them. She read from a book printed in Arabic. It was not the Quran and he soon recognised it as the book about the hated Christian leader.

He told his father about the strange woman and her teachings. The Muslim priest explained to his son that some of the Christian teachings were true, but what she said about Jesus Christ could not be believed. His father didn't object to him continuing to go to the classes. He enjoyed the clean home and the calm atmosphere. Whenever she talked about Jesus he tried to close off his mind, but it was clear to him that Maude was just eager to share with others a message that meant so much to her. Her words were always impressive words of gentleness and unmistakable goodness.

The boys who went to Maude's classes were given pictures of Bible scenes. These meant a lot to young Mehdi. If other boys threw away the pictures, he gathered them up until he had quite a collection of Bible story pictures. For Mehdi these were a treasure that filled many free moments.

They reminded him of all the stories Maude had told. When Maude went on furlough the classes stopped and this left a big void in Mehdi's life.



A Berber Family

Together with his friend Muhammad Bouabid Mehdi was chosen to take a special training in Fez. They were both in their teens when Maude returned to Sefrou. In the Spring of 1929 Mehdi and Muhammad both received Christ as Saviour. From that time Muhammad was just known as 'Bouabid'. Both boys made a clean break with Islam and were outspoken in their witness for Christ. Mehdi soon lost his job. He was sent to Meknes to work in the Bible shop. There he studied God's Word and fearlessly shared his testimony with others. He reasoned, **"If a person is unwilling to share his knowledge of the way of salvation with others, it is doubtful that he has ever been born again!"**

When Mehdi and Bouabid turned to the Lord there was cause for great rejoicing. They were outstanding young men from the upper-middle-class, refined and well-educated. Both gave convincing testimony to their faith in Christ even in the face of mocking and scorn.

GMU recruits continued to dwindle. By 1938 Maude found herself alone with just one other single missionary to take care of the GMU stations. Two more single women arrived just before the outbreak of World War II. From then the borders were closed and so doors were effectively closed to new workers. These four ladies split up to keep the three stations open. Maude and the other more experienced worker each took a station and the two new workers stayed together in the third station. In 1945 the war was over and the work had suffered very little thanks to the faithful sacrificial work of four single women who had chosen to remain on the job.

Following the war new recruits began to arrive. In the first group of seven, three were men. Maude was now the 'elder stateswoman'. She felt that her initial pain had been well worth it! She ran the language school and helped the new recruits get situated. But her pioneering days were not over! At the age of 71 she was assigned to open the city of El Hajeb to resident work.

It was an uphill struggle in El Hajeb. Sometimes the French government intervened to stop the boys pelting the front door of the mission house with rocks. Maude remained optimistic. Opposition was nothing new to her. She wrote, **"The Lord must have some here who will believe or He would not have sent us! The work is prospering, as one can see by the battered front door!"**

Before long many were coming to Maude's classes first they came from curiosity some dropped out when they discovered Maude was not a follower of Muhammad, but others kept coming to see the pretty, smiling American lady and before a year had gone by one young man had decided to follow Jesus Christ.

There was one very dark cloud hovering on the horizon – the Cooneyites. They were an erroneous British sect who dogged the footsteps of the workers and the Moroccan believers. Some had been turned aside including one promising young leader. Now this group – also known as the 'Two-by-Two'ers' – were trying to rent a house in El Hajeb. It seemed that wolves were settling near the pasture where weak young lambs were feeding. The new believers were vulnerable and could only be protected by persevering prayer and solid teaching of the Word.

The reality was that if you preached in a different place every day it would take almost 2 years to cover all the busy crowded markets splashed over the whole of Morocco. It was evident that the most efficient way to reach the people was through open-air meetings in the markets. Back in 1913 George Fisher had urged other workers to join him in an outdoor meeting in a busy marketplace. They were in Meknes – an Islamic stronghold all but closed to the Gospel. This first outdoor service drew a crowd. People were astonished, but no one stopped the meeting. No one had ever done this



Berber village in the High

before, but there was no law against the public testimony of infidels. By the time the authorities were aware of what was happening the practice of holding street meetings was well established.

The French authorities were baffled as to why the foreigners wanted to hold these meetings. One enquired politely, **"What are you preaching to these people?"** Mr Swanson replied in his best French, **"We tell them to repent of their sins and believe in Christ."** The officer responded, **"That is moral. No one can stop you from preaching morality, but be careful; don't preach religion. If you preach religion we shall be forced to ask you to stop."**

Every village had a clean swept area that was sometimes walled where the market was held on a certain day each week. Other days the market was an open space. Sometimes entertainers used the space and it was always available for open-air witness. It was a social space and a bright spot in the week for those who came in from the villages. Of course there were no loudspeakers and in addition to shouting their message, Maude and the others were able to use their gifts in singing which was always very popular. The crowd were always astonished to hear Maude speaking in their Berber language. They were also astonished to see Mehdi Ksara on the side of the "infidels" in the market debates. Sometimes they were invited back to the tents. There they found that some had treasured the first Gospels of Luke in Arabic that had been distributed years before.

By the 1930s the population of Morocco was estimated at 6 million and by 1968 it was 14.6 million. Five missions and a few independent workers had banded together to reach the whole population. Resident workers lived in 20 cities. Every town on the map was touched by Bible correspondence courses. The 5 participating missions were GMU, NAM, BCMS, Emmanuel Mission and the Fellowship of Independent Missions.

In 1938 there were three busy mission stations Khemisset, Meknes and Sefrou. The goal was to complete Scripture translation, translate more hymns, preach in dozens of marketplaces, present the Gospel in city and country homes, teach the new believers and to hold Bible conferences. Only two personnel were left – Maude Carey and Signe Johnson. Just before the borders closed at the beginning of World War II two more ladies joined the team – Ellen Doran and Emmagene Coats.

Due to Maude's urgent need of surgery she sailed for home in late May 1945. When she returned to Morocco the following year she had the joy of taking with her Ila Davis the first new worker in six years. Slowly over the next years more recruits arrived and a good number of them were men. Maude had been praying for 10 men.

Just 2½ miles out of Khemisset, in the heart of the Zemmour tribe there was a large farm. It was owned by an Englishman – Charles Fraser Smith. He offered the farm to the GMU for a very reasonable price and so it came about that the mission purchased **Sunset Farm**. It consisted of a good deal of land along with a three-roomed house and a long narrow stable.

In 1950 the Field Council made definite plans for a Bible Institute for men. And in 1951 a Bible Institute was organised to train young Moroccan men. Three men enrolled and two were from Maude's station at El Hajeb. This school was dedicated on January 13, 1952. Sixty people attended the service. This venture had cost the workers a great deal in money and preparation, but this couldn't be compared with the cost to the young Moroccan believers who gave up everything to attend. One of them said, **"If I enter Bible school, there will be no more returning home"**. So the Bible school that Maude and others had prayed for and longed for was finally a reality! For years Maude had had dreams of opening a Bible Institute, but sadly she was not there for the dedication since she had returned to the USA for medical treatment.

Later that year, aged 74, she was back in Morocco and once again involved in the work that she continued for three more years. Due to her severe health problems, the mission decided the time

had come to arrange for her retirement.

She had been diagnosed with Pemphigus. From the crown of her head to the soul of her feet she was one large open sore. Her suffering was intense. This disease was horrifying and was very difficult to care for. In June 1955 Maude said her final farewells to a tearful crowd of workers and Moroccan believers in Casablanca. She hoped she would again be able to return to Morocco but in her heart she feared that her 54th year of service would be her last and so it proved.



Bedouin tent in Morocco

Her departure in 1955 coincided with the end of the French occupation of Morocco and an exciting new era of relaxed restrictions for the missionaries. For the next 12 years they were able to work openly and freely and many Muslims responded. Around 30,000 enrolled in correspondence courses. But the good times were not to last. In 1967 the Moroccan government closed the door to all foreign missions. This ended 75 years of service for the GMU. Radio broadcasts continued to beam the Gospel into Morocco for those who would listen, but for all practical purposes the tiny Moroccan church was on its own.

In the last years of her life back in the Mission House in Kansas City, Maude relished every piece of news she received from Morocco. She rejoiced to hear that the boys and girls from El Hajeb were standing firm in their faith. Maude stepped into the presence of the Lord on July 15, 1967 at the age of 88. That same year the leaders of the mission groups in Morocco received formal notice to leave the country.

Much remains to be done in Morocco but the faith and perseverance of Maude and the other early workers laid a firm foundation and opened doors for the Gospel throughout that land.

