

# Near East Mission

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From this part of the world came Isaiah the Hebrew prophet, Plato the Greek philosopher, Mohammed the Arab founder of Islam, and Jesus the universal Christ.



COUNTRIES INCLUDED IN THE NEAR EAST MISSION  
OF THE AMERICAN BOARD: BULGARIA, GREECE,  
TURKEY, SYRIA.

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*Issued by*

THE AMERICAN BOARD

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# The American Board In the Near East

## BULGARIA

### MISSIONARY BACKGROUND

When the Mission began its work in 1871 few Bulgarians had any idea of what the Bible contained. Today the national church has the Bible in its own tongue.

In 1933 Bulgaria ceased to exist as a Mission of the American Board, but financial help was given until 1936. Only five missionaries remain: Miss Agnes M. Baird, Miss Edith L. Douglass, Mrs. Alma S. Woodruff, and Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin F. Stoltzfus.

### THE CONTINUING TASK (Under Bulgarian Leadership)

#### RELIGIOUS WORK

Thirty-six congregations having regular services. Union fellowship with the churches of the Methodist Episcopal Mission.

Progressive program of religious education under the leadership of an American trained Bulgarian,— Mr. Furnadjieff.

Bible Women's Work: This extensive work centers in Sofia, but is carried on in rural districts by Bulgarian Bible women.

#### SOCIAL and EDUCATIONAL WORK

Orlinda Childs Pierce Memorial School and Community Center, Sofia, in charge of Miss Agnes M. Baird.

Activities: Kindergarten; Day School; Headquarters of W.C.T.U.; Welfare Work for Mothers and Babies; Hostel for Young Women.

## GREECE

### THE LAND, THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE PEOPLE

Greece is about the size of the State of New York with a population of 6,500,000, which includes 1,400,000 Armenian and Greek refugees who migrated from Asia Minor after the Smyrna fire in 1923. King George II rules Greece which includes old Macedonia, Western Thrace, Epirus, Crete, and other Aegean islands.

### *Beginnings of American Board Work In Greece.*

Work began in Athens in 1830 by Rev. Jonas King, who remained there until his death in 1869.

From 1869 to 1923 there were no missionaries in Greece and no institutional work, but there was a Protestant Church where evangelical leaders of promise continued in the spirit of their missionary leader.



## TODAY

**RELIGIOUS WORK:** There has been a rebirth of spiritual Christianity in the Church life of Greece. The American Board shares in a happy and satisfactory cooperative enterprise with leaders of the Greek Orthodox Church in carrying on what is known as the "Zoe" Movement. "Zoe" means, "Life". A significant sign of this "new life in an old church" is in the Sunday Schools which have over 60,000 pupils.

**PUBLICATIONS:** Publications are distributed under the supervision of Mr. J. Riggs Brewster, and are another channel of cooperation with the leaders of the Zoe Movement. In 1936 some 120,000 pages of Christian literature were published. Much of this was used among the evangelical churches of Greece including the four Armenian and Greek groups in refugee centers near Athens. 10,000 Gospels of St. John and 15,000 of St. Luke were printed for distribution in the hospitals, orphanages, prisons, and other institutions.

**EDUCATIONAL WORK:** In 1922 a great tragedy occurred in Smyrna, Turkey, which left a Mission School for girls in ruins. From the burning city Miss Minnie B. Mills, principal of the American Collegiate Institute, led her Armenian and Greek students through peril on land and sea to a country which opened its doors to these helpless refugees. This story constitutes one of the most dramatic incidents in American Board history.

### ORLINDA CHILDS PIERCE COLLEGE

No educational facilities were available for these refugee girls, so Miss Mills reopened her school in Old Phaleron (suburb of Athens) under the name of the American Junior College for Girls. Almost immediately the school attracted Greek girls from the non-refugee population, and the enrolment and prestige increased.

The College is now housed in its new home at Ellenico and the building program continues. In 1937 was laid the cornerstone of the administration building, the gift of Dr. Willis F. Pierce of Los Angeles in memory of his wife, Mrs. Orlinda Childs Pierce for whom the college will hereafter be named. The total enrolment is 260, the majority of whom are Greeks, but there are also Armenian, Albanian, Russian, English, and American students. In addition to the many regular subjects, religion is being taught by a very able Greek Orthodox professor. He brings a deep spiritual experience to his work, and the girls are seriously interested in his subject.



## SOCIAL WORK IN REFUGEE CENTERS

The Greek Social Center in Kokkinia, which has been under the American Board for nine years, will be carried on cooperatively for awhile with the Y.M.C.A. Boys and girls from 8 to 18 years of age have opportunities for night school lessons, social activities, and physical training.

Last year 4 vacation Bible schools taught by 17 teachers and with 535 pupils were held in the Athens area. We hope that this work can be continued although financial grants are diminishing. Many poor children are being taught the elements of knowledge, fair play, and growth in Christian character.

## TURKEY AND SYRIA

### *Did You Know:*

—that Turkey has been a Republic since 1923, that Kemal Ataturk is President, and that the capital is Ankara?

—that the former capital, Constantinople (now Istanbul) was the ancient city of Byzantium which Constantine the Great changed to Constantinople in 330 and which Mohammed II conquered from the Greeks in 1453 when it became the capital of the Ottoman Empire?

—that Turkey is the land of the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers,—of the ancient routes over mountains and plains traversed by Alexander the Great, and Xenophon, and of famous cities associated with St. Paul?

—that in Aleppo, Syria, Queen Elizabeth established in the sixteenth century a British consulate, because it was on the main route to Persia? The consulate continued without interruption until the World War.

—that the three great Missions of Turkey which continued until after the great War—Eastern, Central, and Western Missions—included work that extended to the borders of Persia, Russia, and Mesopotamia?

—that the American Board is the only Mission Board in Turkey?

## MISSIONARY BACKGROUND

Jerusalem, not Constantinople, was the goal of the early missionaries who went to the Near East. "What can be done for the Jews?" was the thought of those first missionaries, Pliny Fiske and Levi Parsons, who were sent to Palestine in 1819. But in the vast territory of the Turkish Empire of that day were Mohammedans, Turks, Arabs, and Kurds, and there were Greek, Armenian and Syrian Christians in addition to Jews, who were scattered throughout the Empire.

Jerusalem proved to be impossible as a base, because of continual disturbances; so the pioneers moved to Beirut. Read the accounts of these heroic men and women and your modern soul will be stirred and strengthened for the difficulties of today.



## From 1819 to 1918

For over 100 years the Board's work was largely connected with the minority races,—Armenians, Greeks, and Syrians,—who were nominal Christians with few opportunities for education. Many of them knew only that the Cross was the sign of their people, and the Crescent, the sign of the Mohammedans. They had little or no knowledge of the connection of the Cross with the life and love of Christ.

Churches, Schools, and Hospitals were built throughout the Turkish Empire and hundreds of missionaries and thousands of native leaders built Christ into the lives of the people of the Near East.

### RESULTS IN TURKEY AFTER 100 YEARS

*Western Education:* The idea of education for each and all has taken root and already produced fruit. Over 500,000 pupils are in schools of the Western type.

*Public Health and Hospital Service:* Mission hospitals which were maintained for over 50 years made large contributions to the modern medical work of the Turkish Republic.

*Immortal Memories:* Out of the past decades are memories of men and women missionaries of scholarly fame or of humble living, of Greek and Armenian leaders in church and school, and of simple Christian folk in rural areas. All of these made their lasting impressions.

### AMERICAN BOARD SCHOOLS IN TURKEY AND SYRIA

Aleppo: American High School for Girls.  
Beirut: Near East School of Theology (Union).  
          High School (supported by Armenians).  
Istanbul: American Academy for Girls.  
Izmir: American Collegiate Institute for Girls.  
Merzifon: Girls' School.  
Talas: American School (for boys).  
Tarsus: American College (for boys).

### MEDICAL WORK IN TURKEY

*Hospital:* Gaziantep: Azariah Smith Memorial  
*Clinics:* Adana: In charge of Dr. Cyril Haas,  
          (self-supporting)  
          Merzifon: Dr. Charles Clark.  
          Talas: Dr. William Nute.

### PUBLICATIONS

Rev. J. Kingsley Birge, head of the Publication Department of the Mission.

Books of religious and moral value.  
Series on Great Christian Mystics.  
Translation of Excerpts from Turkish Press.  
Comments about Turkish Literature.

### OTHER AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS IN THE NEAR EAST

*The Near East Colleges* which are making a sig-



nificant contribution to the training of leadership have an international reputation.

They are:

Robert College, Istanbul, Turkey.

American University of Beirut (includes International College formerly at Smyrna).

Istanbul Woman's College.

The American College, Sofia, Bulgaria.

Evangelical College, Aleppo, Syria (Union).

Thessaloniki Agricultural and Industrial Institute (American Farm School).

Anatolia College (for boys) Thessaloniki, Greece.

Anatolia Girls' School (Department of Anatolia College).

The American Hospital, Istanbul.

Although these institutions are independent of Mission Boards, they had their beginnings in the work of missionaries and there is a happy relationship between them and our representatives.

On the staffs of the Evangelical College, International College, American College, Anatolia College, and the American Hospital, are American Board Missionaries.

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## ILLUSTRATIONS OF AMERICAN BOARD WORK IN THE NEAR EAST MISSION

*From Paul Nilson, Talas:* "The Governor telephoned from Kayseri stating that he was making a village trip to Endurkuk and wished Dr. Nute and me to accompany him. What a joy it is to see a national leader spend his Sunday holiday among the humble villagers, giving them sympathetic help! In New Turkey a New Day has dawned for the humble peasants in 40,000 villages."

**THE BIBLE IN TURKISH:** After seven years of intensive work the world's "Best Seller," the Holy Bible, has been translated into modern Turkish by Dr. Frederick W. MacCallum of Istanbul. He remained in Turkey nearly four years beyond the usual age for retirement in



order to complete his task of translation which is regarded as the crowning achievement of his 47 years of service.

**HONORED IN PUBLIC:** Effa Bousheva, the child of a Bulgarian peasant, was orphaned at seven, and sent to the Mission School at Monastir. After graduation she opened and conducted mission primary schools in rural Bulgaria for 23 years. In those pioneer days the work was full of hardships. Later she became one of the first teachers in the Thessaloniki Agricultural School. During the War she did valuable work among the wounded, and since then has been a Bible woman in Sofia. Her 40 years of service were celebrated by the Church of Sofia by honoring her in public.

**THEIR LABORS WERE NOT IN VAIN:** Dr. Jonas King, an astute, heroic, and unconquerable missionary, maintained a lonely mission in Athens for 39 years (from 1830-1869). Sixty-eight years later (January, 1937) the honored pastor of the First Evangelical Church of that city who was also the moderator of the Greek Evangelical Synod, died, and many and varied were the tributes of praise and gratitude for his life of Christian service. St. Paul who preached his famous Sermon to the men of Athens on Mars Hill (Acts 17) would have rejoiced in the faith and works of this modern apostle and the heart of Jonas King would have been gladdened.

**A STATESMAN'S DREAM COMES TRUE:** In 1929 Venizelos, the great Greek statesman, expressed to Miss Mills the appreciation of his government of the work of the American College for Girls at Athens and its approval of efforts to raise funds for buildings and equipment. He also expressed his own personal hope that this College might become a factor of international friendship and understanding. Today, eight years later, the hope of this greatest of modern Greeks who died in 1936, has been realized.

**AN INTERNATIONAL, NON-SECTARIAN GROUP MEETS IN ALEPPO:** A group of 25



young people including Jews, Moslems, Protestants and Catholics, and American Board missionaries, met recently in the home of one of Syria's Nationalist leaders who had just returned from Paris. This group is eagerly seeking to get the point of view of other people and races. They are weary of being bound to their small circle by racial and religious traditions.

**FRIENDLY RELATIONS:** There are several ways in which America is trying to help the people of Turkey in their task of constructing their state upon Western lines. Besides the educational and medical work there are channels of friendship through which Turks and Americans share with each other the best that their countries have to offer.

**SUMMARY OF AMERICAN BOARD WORK  
IN THE NEAR EAST MISSION**

**PERSONNEL**

Total missionaries .....	108
Total national workers .....	373

**RELIGIOUS WORK**

Total organized churches .....	76
Total membership .....	5,300
Total Christian community .....	18,400
Total Sunday Schools .....	106
Total Sunday School Pupils .....	6,400

**EDUCATIONAL WORK**

Total boarding and day schools .....	65
Total number of pupils .....	4,800

**SOCIAL WORK**

Total estimate of people helped through social service .....	5,300
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**MEDICAL WORK**

Hospital .....	1
Clinics .....	4
Total patients treated in one year .....	17,000

**PUBLICATIONS**

Pieces of Literature issued .....	19,300
<i>Cost of Missions in 1936</i> .....	\$ 247,000





*Girls in the Near East Aren't So Different*

*Do You Know the Stories of:*

DR. ELIAS RIGGS, who had a command of 20 languages and helped in the translation of the Bible into Armenian, Bulgarian, and Turkish?

ELLEN STONE, who with Madam Tsilka, a Bulgarian, was kidnaped by bandits in Macedonia and held for 172 days for a ransom of \$68,000?

JAMES L. BARTON, former missionary to Turkey, later a Secretary of the Board, and the Founder and Head of the Near East Relief, one of America's greatest philanthropies?



*For further information refer to:*

The Turkish Quest ..... 10c  
(The story of the American Board in Turkey).

The American Board Year Book ..... 35c

For specific information including mimeographed letters from missionaries and articles of special interest, and a map of the Near East, write to your State Office, or Project Secretary, American Board, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Free upon request.



*Typical Students of the Near East*