

OLIVE RAWN: DAUGHTER OF THE CHURCH—MISSIONARY TO AFRICA

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By Cheryl Hersh

BEGINNINGS

On September 27, 1921, in a house by the Perkiomen Creek in Yerkes, PA, the Rawn family welcomed their third child and named her Olive.

Olive's father was a flour miller by trade. Her mother, who at one time had thoughts of becoming a missionary, was a homemaker. A total of eight children were born into the family, but only five survived infancy/childhood. When Olive was six years old, her family relocated to her grandparents' farm in Graterford, PA. Though her father continued to work as a miller, everyone—adults and children—pitched in to handle the farm. That first winter on the farm (1927), both Olive and her older brother contracted scarlet fever. She remembered waking up one night and asking her mother and father to pray for her brother right then and there. She believed God could heal, and the Lord answered that prayer with recovery for her brother.

Olive recalled taking a definite stand for the Lord during revival meetings held the following spring by Rev. W. F. Heffner, pastor of the Graterford Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church. She felt the Lord speak to her one night, but she did not go forward at the altar call. The next evening, having no desire to miss out a second time, Olive barely waited for the invitation before she was out of her seat and at the front of the church.

From age six to sixteen, Olive lived on the farm with her family. Her friends were the few neighbors, mostly relatives, living close by. She fondly recalled good times—sledding in winter and playing baseball in summer. Her older brother was her closest companion during her childhood. When Olive was thirteen years old, her nine-year-old sister died. Olive and her remaining younger sister, seven years her junior, were not close as children, but became pals as they grew older.

Olive's childhood centered around the church. Her father was a Sunday school teacher and a deacon. If the church doors were open, her family was there. As a child, she very much enjoyed mission Sunday. In an era when children were expected to sit quietly through the entire service (no children's church), hearing stories from visiting missionaries about faraway places brought an exciting change of routine to Sunday morning services. Not only did missionaries tell stories, but they also showed pictures and displayed artifacts from these strange and distant lands. Today we have information at our fingertips which can take us to any place in the world. At the time of Olive's childhood, the missionaries on furlough brought a glimpse of unknown places and people across the globe.

At the age of sixteen (1938), Olive moved with her family to Hatfield, PA. There she finished her last two years of high school, graduating in 1940. The family attended the Hatfield Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church (Bethany). In 1939, Pastor E. W. Bean took her along to a

send-off for a missionary traveling to South America. Olive's records do not name this missionary. The only missionaries to South America supported by the denomination at this time were Rev. and Mrs. Feldges, but they are listed in the denomination's yearbook as on furlough. Regardless of the identity of the missionary, this experience created a lasting impression in Olive's mind.

In lower grades, Olive did housework to earn spending money. During the last two years of high school, she worked in the school cafeteria and cleaned a nearby hardware store. From childhood, she was taught to earn what she needed or wanted because her father couldn't afford to give the children money. Upon graduation from high school, Olive took a job in the garment industry at the Sunlite Shops in Souderton, PA. Having learned to sew as a child, she was assigned buttonholes and other detail work. From June 1940 until August 1942, she worked and saved her money for nurse training.

TRAINING

Through the next three years, Olive studied nursing at Grandview Hospital in Sellersville, PA. Looking back, she recalled that though she could see the Lord's hand in her life, she was never willing to say she was training for missionary nursing. Whenever that thought came to her, she would put it out of her mind. This was a time of great struggle for Olive. She wanted to serve the Lord, but the idea of leaving her homeland was terrifying. She never thought she'd be capable of such a thing.

On Labor Day of 1945, at services held by several churches at Chester Heights, PA, Olive dedicated her life to the Lord. She marked that day as the one when she truly "meant business" with God. She continued working as a general duty nurse in maternity, all the while feeling as though there was something more for her. She wasn't unhappy, but she knew the Lord was dealing with her. She prayed that winter as she never had before and felt led to attend the Bible Institute of Philadelphia (now Cairn University). It was near to home, and she could visit every weekend. Right after she was accepted to Bible school, she was offered a position of more responsibility at the hospital. She again sought the Lord's will and felt she should go ahead with Bible school. During her two years at Bible school, her parents moved to Maryland, 170 miles away. Waiting until vacation to visit home was difficult for her since Olive was very close to her mother, but she reported that the Lord was good and she was not homesick. During Bible school, Olive worked at Hahnemann Hospital in Philadelphia and managed to graduate from Bible school debt free.



Graduate Nurse

THE CALL

Olive's call to Africa was a gradual revelation. She considered various fields as she heard missionary speakers, but Africa always seemed to come out on top.

In November of 1947, she spoke with Rev. P. T. Stengele, Presiding Elder of the denomination's Allentown district and president of the mission board. He told her to pray about it, and if she felt the same way, they would talk again. It wasn't until February of 1948 that she learned the mission board recommended that she apply to Africa Inland Mission (AIM) where J. B. Henry (pastor at Fleetwood/Blandon) served on the AIM committee. She immediately began the application process. In September of 1948, Olive attended the AIM Annual Conference held in Southampton, PA. There she learned she had been accepted and was asked to be the medical person for a new work in Sudan. At this point, she began to inform churches of her intentions, but not much happened until December of 1948 when she was called to meet with the denomination's Board of Foreign Missions at an addendum to the executive board meeting. Brother P. T. Stengele had already talked with Olive, but he wanted her to answer questions from the board members for herself. In addition to Brother Stengele, other participants in the meeting included Brother C. L. Miller (pastor at Allentown), Brother J. B. Henry, Brother E. N. Cassel (pastor at Nazareth/Northampton), Brother N. H. Wolf (pastor at Bethlehem), and Brother T. E. Turnbull (pastor at Wissinoming). Questions were many. Did she feel as strong a call now as she had at the beginning? How did her parents feel about her going to the field? What money needs or other items were required? Brother Cassel asked, "What is faith?" and "Are you going to have faith in the church or the Lord for your support?" Brother Cassel also gave her some appreciated fatherly advice along the lines of reminding her that we take ourselves with us wherever we go, and an animal doesn't change because it has a boat ride.

Brother Stengele felt her to be a bit "backward" in communicating her needs for the field and that she would need help. They discussed speaking at various churches, which prompted Olive to feel she would soon need to give notice of resignation of her job at Hahnemann Hospital. Olive left the meeting feeling somewhat flustered, but of course, the mission board had accepted her.

At this time, Olive had been working in the general wards at Hahnemann, and she had recently requested a transfer to maternity, seeking more experience in that field. AIM told her to be ready to go by March, and by the time the transfer went through, she only had two weeks to work in maternity.

Many churches gave Olive gifts of clothing and household goods. Her local church in Hatfield, pastored at the time by Brother H. K. Kratz, offered extra support. Brother and Sister Edwin Kern gave Olive a home and a room in their house to gather her supplies. She rounded up trunks for packing, and Clyde H. Snyder did carpentry work on shipping cases. Irene Snyder sewed. Missionary Russell Baker Sr. gave some packing advice, in particular about how to pack dishes in the barrels. She bought supplies at Gilbert Detweiler's store on the corner of Broad and Market in Hatfield. A treadle sewing machine bought in Norristown was taken apart and packed in a trunk. Many folks stopped by to help her pack, including Katherine Walker and Elsie Bosico who once stayed an entire day to pack.

The first months of 1949 quickly passed with several trips to Philadelphia for cholera, typhoid, tetanus, and smallpox immunizations. She also traveled on several occasions to the AIM headquarters in New York. On one of these trips she met Bill and Dorothy Beatty and their young son Barry, fellow missionaries to the new Sudan field. She also spoke in various churches

and Menno Youth groups. When the time came to depart, Caroline Zeigler had folks write letters so that Olive would have one to open each day of her trip to Africa.

TERM ONE: 1949–1954

Thus, with confidence in God's presence, Olive Rawn set off on the adventure of a lifetime.

On the Home Front

The report of Foreign Missions at the Sixty-Sixth Annual Conference of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church stated:

The Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions reported a total of thirty-one Missionaries now fully supported by our Conference. Of these, three left our shores this year, all of them members of our church (Olive Rawn and Herbert and Betty Dyke). This increased interest is vital to the overall success of our activities as a church. The concern of the various congregations was shown by the substantial support approximating Thirty-Seven Thousand Dollars."

(Mennonite Brethren in Christ 1949 Year Book, pg. 95)

Total expenditure of the mission board that year was \$34,058.81, which included \$250.00 to outfit Olive for the field.

The 1949 yearbook told of Olive's farewell service held on a Friday night in the Bethel Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church, Allentown, PA. Also included was her first field report, which was from Congo as she was not yet in her eventual placement of Sudan. The 1950 yearbook related Olive's first account from Sudan describing her work and helpers in that country. Often the mission board took space in the yearbook to exhort church members to pray. Following is a typical entry:

Nothing is more important than prayer and no thing [*sic*] more neglected than prayer. Each gift to missions accompanied by prayer will do more and go further than a gift though large without prayer. No greater privilege is given to the believer than that of prayer. *(Mennonite Brethren in Christ 1950 Year Book, pg. 57)*

The missions report of 1951 noted the development of Women's Missionary Societies in various churches. They contributed \$2,763.54 as well as donated to the material needs of missionaries and natives including food, special equipment, medication, clothing, toys, and printed materials. Through the years, Olive certainly appreciated items sent by individuals and Women's Missionary Societies, especially the bandages.

By 1952, the yearbook discussed the new plan of Designated Missionary Support in which individual churches could either continue to make undesignated contributions, or they could chose specific missionaries to support. Hatfield (Bethany) chose Olive as their missionary.

By the year of Olive's furlough in 1954, over twenty churches had officially organized Women's Missionary Societies with ever increasing activities. There was also a push to more thoroughly organize the Foreign Missions Department, and a constitution, principles, and guiding rules were passed. The committee began meeting with every missionary home on furlough in order to deepen and clarify the vision of the board's responsibilities. The report of

this year also commented on the success of churches adopting a missionary in terms of personal interest and prayer support.

Before Olive departed for the field, she and her mother had committed to writing a letter at least once a week, and they carried out that commitment. Even though letters were lost, delayed, or held and received all at once in a great pile of mail, those letters were Olive's lifeline to her prayer-warrior mother. In the best of times, mail took two weeks to cross the ocean. During her time in Africa, Olive rarely managed to send a Mother's Day greeting in a timely fashion and always filled the delayed greeting with apologies. She also kept up a vigorous correspondence with many others, eagerly receiving news of activities and happenings in the United States. She once complained that folks often wrote that they supposed she had heard all about some event when, in fact, no one had actually shared the details.

She followed the church calendar with particular interest in annual conference and noted all the changes (this was during the era of frequent reassignment of pastors). The year after she left for the field, her home church in Hatfield was assigned a new pastor, Brother W. A. Heffner. Having attended and loved camp meeting in her growing up years, she followed the schedule and prayed for the meetings. She maintained a vigorous prayer intercession for people and events in her homeland.

On the Field

Olive sailed from New York to Africa on a freighter. At the time, this mode of transportation was often chosen in order to arrive in Africa at the same time as one's goods. Plane travel in this era was expensive, and the first commercial jet plane service would not be available until 1952. Olive wrote that leaving was a tearless goodbye as, due to a one-day delay, no one was actually at the dock at send-off time. Pastor and Mrs. Kratz, Sister Didden, and Brother Toro from her home church had come to see her off, but they were unable to stay the extra day. Pastor E. W. Bean (her previous pastor) and Aunt Sara were also at the dock, but she missed seeing them completely. Though disappointed and unable to see the reason for the delay, Olive began as she would continue through the years and wrote that "in all things the Lord has something to teach us. I am willing to take His way for His ways are best. We can only go a step at a time, but that step with Him is everything."

In the fashion of most who start a new thing, Olive's letters to her parents were filled with enthusiastic descriptions of her joy in all the things she saw and did. Everything was new. Her first glimpse of Africa at Port Gentil thrilled her. Her first steps on African soil on April 9, 1949, after fourteen days at sea, delighted her. She began the process of adjusting to the new culture and her new home.

A train ride, her first plane flight on a DC-3 (which she only told her parents about after it was over as to not cause worry), a road trip of 200 miles, and Olive finally settled in at the hospital complex in Oicha, Congo. There she trained in tropical medicine under the tutelage of her mentor, Dr. Becker. (She would come to call Dr. and Mrs. Becker her "African mother and father.") With the help of the Beckers and other medical staff (both missionary and native), she practiced skills she would need in order to carry the sole responsibility of the medical work in Sudan. She also tackled Kingwana (Swahili), the African trade language, and eventually began learning Acholi, one of the languages of Sudan.

By the end of November, Olive scrambled to gain the last bits of experience, gather supplies, and set out for Sudan. She had a ride, and in Africa, one traveled when there was a way, even if the timing wasn't quite as hoped for.

She arrived in Sudan by mid-December, one of a team of six missionaries. They set up the station at Opari, Sudan to begin the work in Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (ruled at the time by Egypt and Britain). Olive settled into her "mansion" of a little round mud hut, which reminded her of living in a tent at camp meeting. She eventually moved to a stone house.

Olive held her dispensary under the trees and hauled boxes of supplies out of her hut each morning and back again at the end of the day. She sterilized equipment in a pressure cooker over an open fire, and more than once her helpers allowed the fire to get too hot and blew a gasket on the cooker. Mercifully, no one was ever hurt in that sort of mishap. In the era before disposable needles, Olive worked hard to keep her needles



First Home

sharp and materials sterilized and ready to go. By the end of December, she averaged thirty-seven patients a day although it was the dry season—no gardens to tend—and many folks came just to see what this nurse did. She helped as she was able, often without medicines or proper diagnostic tools. She had no microscope until almost a year into the work. Her first microscope, bought and donated by Dr. and Mrs. Becker, was a prized possession. Though she never felt completely proficient with the microscope, she was able to teach her helper, Monwelli, to use it. He remained a faithful medical worker for many years.

Adjustment was a way of life in those early years. The initial team of six missionaries had their interpersonal challenges. They were all from different church backgrounds. They all were adjusting to life in a new climate, a new language, and a new culture with all the accompanying questions as to how to live and work in a culture so different than their own. Many of Olive's letters home to Mother and Daddy requested prayer for unity. Two of Olive's oft repeated lines written in letters home at times of upheaval were "God knows all about it" and "we go step by step."

Olive's background dictated that a Christian should not drink, dance, smoke, or go to movies. So what was to be done in a culture with a different view? Olive was burdened for the people of the local tribes and quite concerned about the drinking that took some of the men away from their responsibilities to their families. She trained many to help in the medical work and had a local man as a cook and others to work in her house and garden. She learned to put things away so as to not tempt the workers. Olive felt the disparity in wealth. Though all her workers were paid, she knew that the missionaries had so much more in comparison to the village folks. Seeing the school boys often brought thoughts of her younger brother to mind. She couldn't help comparing the advantages of a US education to the struggle of the Africans for the most minimal of schooling. She knew that simply giving things away wasn't the answer, and she poured most of her money into buildings and medicines for the medical work.

By early 1951, additional missionaries joined the Sudan team. Some of the medical responsibility eased with the arrival of a doctor who was shortly followed by his fiancé. The

Sudan field threw a wedding with all the trappings of an American celebration. The Africans wondered whether the money had been exchanged in Africa or the States. They thought the USA to be a great place when they learned that a bride price was not a common practice.

The missionaries were now located at three different sites: Opari, Lohutok/Logotok (about 100 miles away where the doctor was stationed), and Katire Ayom (the Beattys' new assignment). Olive was close to the Beattys, and when they moved, she missed Dorothy's daily companionship. By 1952, three more missionaries joined the team.

Food in the first term consisted of what could be hunted (by the men), what was grown in her garden, or what was sent from the home front. Olive always maintained a large garden, battling with the monkeys and birds for food she would preserve by canning. One year she had over 200 tomato seedlings started. She also kept chickens and had more than one encounter with pythons and even a leopard trying to find an easy meal.

Travel in Africa was always interesting. It seemed as though each and every trip involved either a flat tire, engine malfunction, or a blocked, impassible road. The missionaries traveled great distances over dirt roads and sometimes simply drove where they knew the road had been. Olive did not often leave the station due to the responsibilities of her work.

By 1953, the Beattys headed for furlough. Kenya experienced increasing unrest, and more conversation in Sudan concerned independence. With north Sudan primarily Muslim and the south primarily animist and Christian, the seeds of conflict were taking root.

That fall, Olive began preparing for furlough, organizing her work and securing return permits. As happy as she was to see family and friends, she struggled to give up her work and pass it to another. She often reminded herself that it, in fact, was not her work but God's work. She wrote, "I say the Lord brought me here, not for what I am, but for what he wants to do through me."

In mid-November of 1953, Olive began her trip home to the USA through Europe. She liked to move gradually back to the faster-paced life of America. It took a plane trip with several stops to arrive in Holland to visit Anne Punt, her Bible school roommate, then to London and finally on the Cunard Line RMS Queen Elizabeth across the Atlantic. By mid-December, she docked in New York where her mother, Uncle Howard, Brother Henry, Brother and Sister W. A. Heffner (Pastor of her home church Bethany), Mrs. Feusner, her brother Raymond and his wife Evelyn, and the Beatty family greeted her.

Furlough quickly filled with work at Grandview Hospital, missionary conferences and speaking engagements at churches as well as summer camps and Mizpah Grove, the church camp meeting. As much as she had tried to keep up with things at home, she felt that she didn't quite fit in the same place as before. By mid-September 1954, she turned her eyes towards Sudan and began packing barrels for her return. She felt that God gave her the following verse:

And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed. Deuteronomy 31:8 (NKJ)

TERM TWO 1955–1959

Home again. Olive celebrated her arrival back in Sudan, a country working out its new independence.

On the Home Front

By this year, the denomination supported thirty-five missionaries with total expenditure that year of \$46,422.21. Olive reported that the land was independent and the Sudanese flag was flying on the station. Her account to the conference this term included more political news as tensions in the country increased. She appreciated her correspondence with Brother A. L. Seifert, the new pastor of her home church, Bethany. He kept her up-to-date with the changes in the denomination and of all the happenings at church. These were the years the denomination considered a name change. In a letter to Brother Seifert in December 1955, she wrote:

I am sending the ballot back about the church name. It is too late, but I'll send it anyway. I can see why some of the changes are wanted but to me the name is alright and never really hindered me in any way that I can say. I wouldn't know what name to suggest for another. But that doesn't mean I won't stand by whatever the conference feels best to do about it. May the Lord lead in this very important thing in our church. For I do believe it is important in this day where there is so much division and unrest. Out here on the foreign field we see more and more of the unity needed for the cause of Christ especially because we are working with governments that uphold a different religion and unless we can be working together to win Souls we are here in vain. We are looking for a oneness and I feel the Devil is trying in every way to get our thoughts away from the real thing and not have the strength for Him as we should. I'll be remembering you at Bethany.

Olive always enjoyed boxes from home. She received many things around Christmas time. Once her home church in Hatfield held "Christmas in September" so she would be sure to receive many lovely things by December. Churches sent foodstuff and bandages, and she used everything. Olive's mother remembered the other missionaries as well and often sent toys for the children. This term had a first as Olive and her parents sent tape recordings back and forth as a change from the letters.

On the Field

Olive sailed from New York in January of 1955. The trip took twenty days, and she landed in Cape Town, South Africa with her seventeen pieces of luggage. Her home church in Hatfield (Bethany) had purchased a second microscope with offerings from summer Bible school, and she kept it by her side for the trip along with a typewriter. Her freight would arrive later, but she wanted her microscope beside her. After sailing up the coast to Mombasa, Kenya, she traveled across the continent by train, Lake Kioga Steamer, bus, Lake Albert Steamer, and the Nile River Steamer to Nimuli. Her assignment this term was at Katire Ayom where the main medical work was to be located. The Sudan team now had fifteen to twenty adults, depending on who was in country or on furlough.

Olive gave her greetings to the folks at Opari, working back into the Acholi language. After a quick trip to Juba to register back into Sudan, Olive was driven to Katire Ayom. On the way to the station, they passed a man on a bicycle bringing in a woman for medical attention. Work began before any supplies were unpacked. Olive never knew how word traveled so fast in a

land without telephones. Things continued as they started, and medical numbers were often up over 100 patients a day. The dispensary was out of doors with a simple structure of poles and a grass roof for shade. Olive wanted to build, but delay after delay postponed the building.



At work

Early in this term, technology came to southern Sudan in the form of records of the Gospel by native speakers that were played on a wind-up Victrola. This was an event. To hear a voice coming out of a box was one thing, but to hear it in their own language was really something.

Olive carried many responsibilities and very much felt the need of the prayers of others. She wanted to be used as God desired, and the Lord enabled her to help. She cared for infections, wounds, many foot injuries, TB, worms, and leprosy. Of course, she delivered babies, although only difficult cases came in by this time.

She often asked for prayers for wisdom in letters home. Not everyone listened or followed her medical direction. One man took his stitches out because they hurt. At times she had to let folks go their chosen course. The need for more medicine was always upon Olive.

Some of the medical workers Olive had trained in the first term continued on with her. They skillfully assisted with giving the needles, doing the microscope work, and organizing the crowds of people. They were able to continue some service for the local population when Olive was called away from the station.

Working with the government of the newly independent Sudan became more difficult in this term. Because the seat of power was in the north, Arabic became more important in the south. The government required schools, including mission schools, to teach Arabic to all students. Some of the missionaries took time in Khartoum to study Arabic. Soon after Olive had returned from furlough in 1955, hostilities broke out between the north and south. Some officials were killed in Torit, and the mission women and children evacuated to Congo for a brief time. Olive felt that Sudan seemed to be a special target of Satan, and she prayed that the people would throw themselves on the Lord that they would know the power of His might.

For about four months in 1957, Olive was reassigned to Oicha, Congo. The Sudan field had a number of nurses, and the Congo field was short due to furloughs. After Olive had returned to Sudan, the government began seeking more and more control over the medical work and declared that there could be no inpatients. By this time Olive had four huts for that purpose. She upheld the new government in prayer that the Word of the Lord not be hindered and that whatever happened, she would be ready to do His will. A short time later they were allowed to go on as before because the government didn't have enough of their own staff to meet the medical needs of the people.

By the next year, however, the medical work had to close as only the Government Medical Services was allowed to dispense medicine in Sudan. Olive worried about the people. Often the government didn't have enough medicine to go around. For a time there was confusion as to how much intervention was allowed. Eventually there was clarification that she was allowed to help individuals as needed, but not anything like the dispensary of the past. With no medical

work, Olive began biking out to villages to hold services. Benedeta, a local woman, became her companion for the trips to outlying areas.

This term was difficult because of the tightening of government oversight and difficult medical issues of the missionaries. Once when Bill Beatty became gravely ill, they loaded him onto a mattress in the back of a station wagon and took a wild 500 mile trip to Oicha, Congo, a trip which took twelve hours longer than it should have due to floods and other difficulties. Under the care of Dr. Becker, he recovered his ability to walk. However, he lost the use of his arm for several years. At this same time, many of the other missionaries fell ill with malaria and other ailments, and Olive felt Sudan was a special target of the enemy.

An even more devastating illness involved the Beattys' son Ricky, born in 1955. He fell ill when he was a year old. Olive traveled from Katire Ayom to Opari where the Beattys were stationed on the fastest trip of all her years in Africa. She arrived at his room to the sight of the African workers on their knees praying for the situation. Ricky recovered that time with paralysis on one side. However, a year later, the same illness reoccurred, and this time he died. It was always hard for Olive to lose a patient, but this was particularly distressing because of her closeness to the family. She felt the strain of her responsibility. Mrs. Becker shared a quote with Olive that often came back to her through the years. The words from Bishop Taylor Smith were: "The Lord will be no man's debtor. If he asks from you much, He will repay even more abundantly."

By 1959, Olive made plans to head back to the USA. At first she thought she could only obtain a six-month return visa but then learned that she could get a one-year leave of absence because she had been in the country at least four years. She felt that independence was a great thing but that it brought many problems as well. The land needed prayer. Olive again went home by way of Europe. On a sightseeing tour in Rome, she met incoming AIM missionaries (a missionary can always spot another missionary). To everyone's delight, Olive discovered they had heard of her visa situation and had been praying for her back in New York. Olive continued her way home and for the first time took the trip across the ocean by plane. She met a new little niece and became better acquainted with her nephew and other nieces. She had a blessed time on furlough. With fewer missionaries in those days, she kept a busy speaking schedule and enjoyed connecting and fellowshiping in various churches, feeling it would help them better pray one for another. So it went. Olive prepared to return to the field with confidence in Mathew 28:20, "Lo, I am with you always."

TERM THREE 1961–1964

On the Home Front

By Olive's third term, the denomination sent forty-seven missionaries to the field with total expenditure of \$99,263.18 in their support. With more missionaries on the field, reports in the yearbook were about the missionaries, not direct letters from them. In 1962, Olive's report mentioned how her little radio kept her in touch with the outside world. The report went on:

Olive reminds us that the rate of speed by which Colonel Glenn circled the earth, would mean that missionaries in Africa would be only a half hour away. Wonderful as space travel must be, prayer is still the greatest phenomena of all.

Shut in with God in prayer, we may instantly be in touch with missionaries and saints of God scattered around the world, for prayer brings us into fellowship around the throne. With the camp meeting folder in hand, Olive kept in touch with us, following the daily program and praying for each speaker. (*Bible Fellowship Church 1962 Year Book*, pg. 104)

Olive looked forward to letters and packages from home. She liked hearing from a variety of folks because it gave her a different light on events in the USA. She also kept a good correspondence with the pastors of her home church. In 1962, she wrote a goodbye to Brother C. Cassel and his wife, suggesting they would soon catch up to her in moving. She then sent a letter to Brother and Sister C. E. Kirkwood to welcome him to Bethany, though she would be getting to know them through correspondence. She told them they were very welcome to visit but should do it quickly before any more changes came their way.

On the Field

This was the first term Olive returned to Sudan by air. The rapid transition of her twenty-four hours of plane travel as well as exposure to the smoking allowed on the plane resulted in a foggy and unwell feeling until she adjusted to time and climate. Her plane trip from Khartoum to Juba took four hours and fifteen minutes for the 1000 miles. Her road trip from Juba to Katire Ayom took four hours and fifteen minutes for the 120 miles. Olive happily moved to a vacant house that had been built with a water system. She also had a gas-powered refrigerator.

Olive picked up where she had left off before furlough. She was back in Sudan but still not allowed to run a dispensary, so she biked to the villages for evangelism. She had tried to buy a bicycle in Khartoum, but she wasn't able to locate a girls bike as it wasn't considered "good" for women to ride a bike. She used her bike from the previous term which she had crashed into a tree, but it worked and got her where she wanted to go.

Hunger was a big problem for the Africans in the area, and many of the folks drank instead of eating. Often Olive recommended people go to one of the government dispensaries for medical problems, but they usually didn't follow through. They felt that if you didn't have money, you wouldn't get good medicine anyway. Olive tried to be careful in any intervention so as to not destroy any chance of giving out the Gospel, but she did help in emergency situations. Once, Lucepu, the faithful head man at Katire Ayom, was attacked by a rhino and walked three hours to the station. It caused quite a stir as a large crowd gathered, thinking he would die, but Olive sewed him up and he recovered.

The Sudanese government continued to increase oversight. No one from the team went to Annual Conference because they were afraid that if eight folks asked for exit permits to leave the country, they wouldn't be allowed back in. Just crossing the border involved more red tape than ever as no country wanted the problems of another. Olive even asked her mother to avoid sending developed photos all in one package for fear it would cause trouble if the government opened letters and saw so many photos of Africans.

A few letters in each mail were opened, and Martha Hughell, one of the four missionaries at Lohutok (Logotok), was denied reentry after her furlough because of something they saw in a letter. Olive experienced quite a shake up when the Field Council reassigned her to Lohutok in mid-May of 1961 to be with Barb Battye when the Rineers left the station for furlough. The mission did not want single women alone on a station. Olive wrote that when she heard the

news, she had to go to her room and “take the Word” until she was steady. She moved, dragging along over 100 tomato seedlings and planting, among other things, twenty-nine hills of sweet potato, raising food in an area where apparently there had not previously been much success in gardens. Olive applied herself to learning a new language and taught the boys helping in her house how to read. She felt they needed extra guidance and prayed for wisdom in how to deal with them. She wondered what the Lord had in it all.

By April of 1962, she was back at Katire Ayom when the Rineers returned from furlough. She moved to a vacant house which had the advantage of an indoor toilet. By December of that year, another missionary had to leave Sudan and several returning from furlough were not allowed back into the country. The missionaries very much felt they were foreigners in the land. No one knew who would get their walking papers next.

In the first three months of 1963, the government sent three more missionaries out of the country. Even an African pastor from Congo was told to leave Sudan. By this time, only ten AIM missionaries were left in Sudan with two due for furlough in the summer. Barb moved to Katire Ayom so Olive would not be alone on a station. They all went day by day.

Olive did get a vacation to Kampala, Uganda in May, and she placed a phone call to her parents—a first. Phoning home was a bit complicated in this era. It involved sending a letter to ensure family would be home at the appointed time, connecting with an operator, hanging up the phone, and waiting until the operator called back to be finally connected with loved ones. The three-minute call cost \$10.00, and Olive considered it well worth the money.

For a time, things were quiet. The Sudanese in the south were not happy, though, and there were sporadic reports of mutineers in the area. Olive and Barb moved to Opari for safety. Two weeks later, the Opari group went to Lohutok (Logotok) through Torit (with all the usual vehicle troubles) so all the missionaries would be in one place should there need to be a quick exit.

In November of that year one of their number was injured in an ambush on the road, and by the end of November, all the missionaries left the country with a government escort. Olive never returned to Katire Ayom. She landed in Uganda and then went on to Oicha, Congo.

1964 started with Olive back in white and brushing up on her nursing. Congo itself was not quiet and there were sporadic reports of trouble. Olive planted her garden (only twenty-two tomato plants, but something to “baby over”). In July she received word that all her possessions were lost. The rebels had destroyed most of the stations in Sudan and had been particularly rough at Katire Ayom. Then she found out that her two microscopes were recovered by virtue of being at other stations. After thinking all was lost, she felt herself to be quite rich.

As conditions continued to deteriorate in Congo and more news of the Simba rebels reached America, Olive tried reassuring those at home. Mail was delayed, at times as much as a month. Olive was steadfast in her desire to continue in her work in spite of the frightening information. She reminded her parents that they had dedicated her to the Lord, and she prayed that God would give them peace at her staying. The missionaries sat tight, carried on, and looked to see how the Lord led day by day. The time came when most of the missionaries at Oicha evacuated. The local government would not give Dr. Becker his exit papers, and after much prayer, Olive and three others decided to stay behind with the Beckers. This was a decision surely made with the full knowledge that staying might be at the cost of their lives. In her letter home she wrote:

We are where the Lord has placed us and in His place He takes care of us. We are safe with Him even if danger should come, for He is with us at all times. I am safer here in His place than anywhere which is not His place for me.

By the next day Dr. Becker received his exit papers, everyone evacuated, and Olive was once again a refugee in Uganda. Hope that things would settle enough to go back dimmed, and Olive made plans to go on furlough early. After losing her possessions twice over within a year, one of the last things she did before leaving Africa for the fall weather of the USA was to buy a red coat. It took three different visits to the store and assurances from her fellow refugees before she could bring herself to buy it. Two weeks after her evacuation, she left Africa resigned to furlough yet wishing Congo would open before she actually had to leave.

On a side note, another family supported by the denomination, the Manns (with a young son and infant daughter), had been held by the rebels in Congo for approximately four months before being liberated by the Congo National Army troops. Though they were rescued, several who were held with them had been killed. The denomination had no word from them by the publishing of the 1964 yearbook. The next year's report states:

During the year the Lord has bared His arm on the behalf of one of our missionary families—The Manns. The Church at home united in prayer on their behalf and the Lord gave deliverance the end of November. (*Bible Fellowship Church 1965 Year Book*, pg. 117)

This term was by far the most chaotic of Olive's career with moves and changes and all the dangers of national conflicts. In spite of all the confusion of her life, she kept close tabs on her homeland through *Time* magazine and her radio. With the Telstar, she could get news on her radio almost as it happened and marveled at the technology that allowed it. She was quite upset to learn the Supreme Court found prayer in schools to be unconstitutional. She delighted in the news of John Glenn going into space and mourned the death of President Kennedy's baby, praying for him and Mrs. Kennedy. She heard of the March on Washington and Marion Anderson singing at the Lincoln memorial. In November of 1963, in the midst of the turmoil in Sudan, she and the team learned of President Kennedy's assassination, news which rocked the world at the time. This was one of the few times she wished for a TV to actually see the news. Africa was not the only troubled place in the world, and she remarked that only the Lord Himself could bring peace to individuals who gave themselves to Him.

TERM FOUR 1965–1971

On the Home Front

By this term, the Bible Fellowship Church supported forty-five missionaries with a total expenditure of \$107,134.93. Her first report to the denomination told about her car and reported driving to the dispensary by a circuit to try and reach many more children near the station. The children would run to the road, and she would always wave back when she heard the calls and cheers even if she couldn't see them. Over the next few years, reports in the BFC Yearbook shortened, eventually containing no notes from most of the missionaries, though there continued to be a separate booklet on missions.

On the Field

Olive joined the work at Nyabirongo/Kagando in Uganda, a station spread out over two miles in the foothills of the Ruwenzori Mountains. Dr. Becker and many of the Congolese staff from Oicha as well as Mary Heyward and Jewell Olson began the work there until Congo reopened. At one time, Olive might have walked or biked the two miles, but she was older now and bought Dr. Becker's 1961 VW Bug, her first car in Africa. After about a month, the Beckers, many of the national staff, and Jewell Olson (Olive's friend she first met in 1949) returned to Congo.

This left Olive, Mary Heyward, newly graduated Dr. Waddell, and a few very capable African helpers to run Nyabirongo. Working with a doctor full-time on a station was a first for Olive (other than her short stays at Oicha). It was a busy medical work, and the first year in particular was very difficult. Mary was due for furlough and, having worked with Dr. Becker for many years, had trouble adjusting to working with a younger doctor. Money issues were always upon them, and there was an ongoing doubt that the work could stay open. Yet, it was an open opportunity, and those working there would not close it easily. In later years, Dr. Waddell wrote that Olive was under a lot of pressure during that time, but she didn't get flustered. She simply seemed to take the stress as part of her service to God. (In spite of this rocky beginning, the hospital has recently been named one of the top three hospitals in Uganda. However, at the time, all was in doubt.) Olive streamlined her correspondence by sending carbon copies of letters to family and friends instead of individual letters to each.

The missionaries tried to comply with the demands of officials, but the Ugandan government was not always clear in what it wanted. Olive reported that they would continue on as they were until someone came and told them they definitely had to change ways. About halfway through Olive's first year back, Dr. Waddell became very ill and was out of the work for several months to recover. Another blow came when Olive received the telegram to inform her of her brother's death, and she mourned from a distance.

From time to time there would be flare-ups of rebel activity, and things were not calm at the border. Olive considered the USA to be in a mess as well. All the news about riots and murders affected her. The poor world was a mess, and her heart ached for the lost souls everywhere. She felt it to be a glimpse—a small understanding—of the pain the Lord has for the world.

By 1966, the Rineers arrived in Uganda. Early the next year, Field Council decided to transfer Olive to Congo. She was surprised, but the potential for two other nurses to join the Ugandan team made it possible for Olive to fill in for furloughs in the Congo field. She didn't actually move immediately, and until the actual transfer, she and Anny Rineer were kept very busy with medical and maternity cases. Olive managed to drive her car into a ditch in May 1967 and was robbed one night in July. Her move was delayed due to an upheaval in Congo, but by December of 1967, she was in Oicha, manning the station and visiting outlying dispensaries three out of four Fridays a month.

Many of the mission's doctors were stationed in Nyankunde, the central site for training in Congo. Once a month, one of them came to Oicha for surgeries. A national named Benjamin was trained to do emergency caesarian and hernia surgeries. MAF planes carried the doctors to and from Oicha, and Olive could always contact a doctor through the radio if necessary. The roads were not kept up as before, and Olive was unable to use her VW for some of the distant dispensary runs. She often used fellow nurse Jewell Olson's Land Rover (dubbed "the pray and

push"). Work was busy with many deliveries. Olive carried a heavy load of responsibility. They lost a number of babies but also saved many as well. Government laws were becoming more and more complicated, there were some labor problems with staff, and medicine was not as plentiful as it had been at one time. The book work was complicated and never her strong talent. Another sorrow came in 1969 when she learned of the death of her good friend Dorothy Beatty. Olive always felt God's hand upon her and continually turned toward Him for her strength.

By the end of 1970 she was again heading home to the States, slightly delayed due to lack of a replacement. One young person meeting her at the airport at home boosted her spirits when he told her she didn't look as old as her picture. By this time, her parents had moved to Hatfield, and she stayed with them while filling in as nurse at Victory Valley and Pinebrook as well as fulfilling the usual deputation work of furlough.

TERM FIVE 1972–1975

Olive returned to Oicha, Zaire—same country, new name.

On the Home Front

The denomination supported forty-one missionaries as reported in the 1973 yearbook. By the year of Olive's furlough, they were up to forty-nine. Most of her reports this term cited the need for more personnel. She always thanked folks for their continued help in sending bandages and for their prayer as shown in part of her 1974 report:

I do covet your prayers and help daily for me and each of our workers. I want to be faithful in praying for you folks too. As I get letters I can pray more intelligently. (*Bible Fellowship Church 1974 Year Book*, pg. 106)

Churches were still sending boxes of various items to Olive, though they took a long time to get to her. Boxes of Sunday school papers from the Sinking Spring church were sent in April and received in November. Likewise, a box of bandages and nighties for the children were sent from Allentown Bethel church in March and arrived in November.

On the Field

This term, her plane trip was uneventful. She felt she brought too much luggage, but she managed because this was the era when air travelers were happy to watch one another's luggage.

Olive saw the changing of the times in this term. Now over fifty, she felt her own age in terms of her ability and energy. Deteriorating roads caused difficulties reaching the outlying dispensaries. She carried heavy medical responsibilities. Patient numbers were high. Each baby clinic treated around 400 children. Not everyone living on or near the station had a close relationship with God, and problems with stealing from gardens and houses increased. However, she did have an intercom system from maternity to her house, making on call time easier on the maternity staff. She also had good help from Angwandia (Yonama), the Director-Administrator who also did the emergency caesarian and hernia surgeries.

Government control increased. New rules dictated that the nationals should only use African names (causing a bit of confusion for Olive), and women were to wear wraps that reached the ground (the teen girls managed to wrap their skirts in such a way as to defeat the intent of modesty). The government also banned the printing of Christian magazines. The missionaries were never sure of what would happen next and were careful about what they wrote in letters. Olive prayed for God's will in the going forth of His word.

Many visitors traveled through Oicha. Eventually they set up a small tourist cabin so visitors had a place to stay. (Letters home contained more than one reference to the short skirts of some of the visitors.) Olive also played "mama" for a few African weddings, helping with arrangements for the big day. Olive enjoyed her work with the children and ran Bible classes for children. With over 100 in attendance, at times the meetings fell into chaos. Olive often tried to find work for the school children when they had vacation. She set up a rotating schedule in her house for the boys and put the girls to work sewing quilts for the babies, allowing them to earn money towards their school fees.



Olive with the children's class

1974 marked the beginning of health problems for Olive, and in 1975 she was out of the work for a short time due to surgery. How hard it is for a nurse to become the patient. Due to delays in mail, she didn't receive support from the home front until a few weeks after the surgery, and she struggled with being ill so far from the support of loved ones.

By the time Olive left for her furlough, more African doctors were joining the team in Nyankunde. Everyone was thrilled to welcome Dr. Muhindo, whose father had trained with Dr. Becker as a medical helper years before.

Olive left Africa in December of 1975. She was met at the new Allentown Airport by a large group from her church (Pastor R. C. Mahurin). They gave her roses and sang "To God be the Glory." Olive looked forward to connecting face-to-face instead of by letter. She fully expected to return after her year of furlough. As the time to return approached, it became clear to Olive, after much prayer, that her parents were in need of help, and she took leave to care for her parents. She worked part-time in a nursing home and entered into the life of her home church. Her mother died in 1978, the same year Pastor John Herb took over at Bethany. Olive continued to care for her father until his death in 1989.

BACK TO THE FIELD

After her father's death, Olive's thoughts once again turned toward a return to Africa. AIM allowed Olive to return to the field but sent her on a volunteer basis for a year as they were concerned about her age and length of time off the field. In 1990 at the age of sixty-eight, Olive returned to Oicha, Zaire. She praised the Lord for the ability to minister in her retirement years. *The Missionary Directory of the Bible Fellowship Church* listed ninety-five missionaries with an

additional fourteen appointees in 1991. Olive begins her report that year, “What a joy in that the Lord allowed me to return to Oicha, Zaire.” Olive settled into an available house. In addition to the things that had been stored for fifteen years (in surprisingly good condition), an afghan from Sister Elizabeth Gehman dressed her sitting chair and another from the Spring City WMS was on the couch.

Dr. Kimbale headed maternity, and Olive joined a staff of about ten women to cover three shifts. The national staff and Olive took care of the nearly 200 deliveries a month. She found the buildings much the same. Many in the leprosy work were now being cured. There was also a training school for nurses. Four years later, she returned to the USA for the final time. The hospital staff wondered why she was leaving as she was still so able to help.

Back in the USA, Olive reentered life at Hatfield (Bethany), her home church (Pastor H. Wells). She took notes on the sermon for those who missed church, served on the mission committee (keeping everyone current with the needs of the denomination’s missionaries), offered rides to folks from her apartment complex to church and kept up a vast correspondence. She was well known for handing out birthday and anniversary notes and many Sunday mornings she could be found walking through the church before the service with a stack of cards in her hand. For those not in the church, she used the mail. She embraced technology and kept up with folks by email as well. By the end of her life she had over 400 names in her contact list. She enjoyed her family and entering more fully into the lives of her nieces and nephews.

On January 23, 2018, at the age of ninety-six, Olive Rawn entered into Glory.



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