

Marjorie Trout Birch

During a missionary service one evening in the Philadelphia Wesleyan Church in which Miss Roberta Wylie was speaking, a young lady in the audience heard the call of God to go to Sierra Leone as a missionary.

Since she was a Christian, one would expect there would be an immediate response in her heart. But for several reasons it was hard to say yes. Should she go to Sierra Leone West Africa to preach Jesus after having

spent seventeen years of her life in the Belgian Congo with her missionary parents? She had known before that God had called her to Africa. But Africa had meant the Congo, and here the Spirit was saying Sierra Leone. And there was still another reason to hesitate. Strangely enough she was in this very service because some years before she had met a young man who was planning to go to Sierra Leone as a missionary. Largely through school day friendship in Westervelt school with him and his sister she had found this church of his denomination when she came to the city, Sierra Leone! What would he think! She hesitated to see as the will of God any move on her part that would be interpreted by anyone else as from anything less than the most unselfish motives. It was a struggle such as only a sensitive Christian young woman can know. Nevertheless, it was a real struggle. She must face it. Even if she were to go to Sierra Leone as a single missionary and he were there somewhere—ah, that would be hard. She settled it. She must obey God.

In time Marjorie looked back to see why God demanded her answer in that service. It was his hour for her to hear, for herself, the call to Sierra Leone, independent of any other influence. The young man who had felt the call to Sierra Leone saw in this God's seal upon a secret hope he had cherished for many a day. He felt he would not have dared tell her Africa meant "Sierra Leone" instead of the Congo. But since God had told her, why should he not tell her more. Thus it was that two lives were later united in God's will.

Marjorie Trout was born in San Bernadina, California and taken by her parents to the Belgian Congo as a little girl. The love for Christ and needy humanity so eloquently expressed in the self-sacrificing lives for her parents' 25 years of service in Africa entered into the very heart of Marjorie at an early age. She returned to America before the opening of World War II to enter high school at Westervelt leaving her par-

ents in far-off Africa ministering to leperous bodies and souls not knowing that the war would hinder their returning until long after furloughs were due.

Now (1945) her father, Dr. Charles Trout, M.D., is back in America spending his furlough working on experiments for the cure of leprosy in medical laboratories in California. He plans soon to return to a pioneer field in the Congo under the Conservative Baptist Society accompanied by Mrs. Trout and son Charles and his wife, also missionaries.

A friend writes of Marjorie, "One day while attending Taylor University Marjorie was sorely tempted to the point of distraction and defeat. She went to her room and in the darkness knelt by her window looking out, when she seemed to see a group of Africans seated around an open fire. She said her soul longed to go to them and her heart was fixed. From that time on every step of her preparation was made with the one thought of returning to Africa to tell them of Jesus." This was but the confirmation of a call she had felt from childhood as she had played with the black children and told them of Jesus.

After college days Marjorie came to Philadelphia for two years of nurse's training. Her self-sacrificing spirit was manifest in her constant care of her younger sister Jean while parents were far away. Jean was called to the mission field too. That meant a struggle for her to complete schooling, for her eye-sight was not strong. Marjorie spent her evenings reading and helping her with her lessons. During this time both sisters were enjoying the spiritual fellowship of Christians in the Philadelphia church. Marjorie found these friends a priceless comfort in the sorrow which soon followed. In the spring of 1944 sister Jean was accidentally drowned. It was a sorrow doubly hard to bear with parents so far away.

Thus God has called, blessed, refined, and purified as by fire the heart of this young missionary.

Who Will Go?

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