

# Passing on the Torch

A few months before he died he had a glimpse of the summit of missionary ambition, the native church itself catching the missionary vision and sending its pioneers to the tribes beyond. (\* Much evangelizing had been done by natives in their own tribes, and in isolated instances in distant tribes, but not until now did the native church as a whole begin to catch the missionary vision of the tribes beyond.)

There was an insignificant little man, by name Zamu, a member of Adzangwe's church. He had a large



ulcerous wound on his leg, which would not heal and which compelled him to walk on the toes of one foot. He was already a marked man by his fiery praying, consistent life, and keen witness in the villages of his own tribe.

In the spring of 1931 the missionary vision came to this little man. He was stirred by news of tribes in the distant parts to the south. They were his hereditary enemies. Were not these the tribes that killed and enslaved his own people? Would it not be death to go among such people with no protection from the white man? But he had had a vision of their souls, he had seen the Outstretched Arms nailed to the cross for the sins of the whole world, and, above all, the Spirit of his Saviour had fallen on him and he had learned to count "the reproach of Christ as greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."

And so one day he came and told Miss Roupell that God was calling him to the "Tribes beyond." She tested him from every possible angle, but to each query he replied by two words. "What about your foot, Zamu?" "God is, White Lady." "But the food is quite different; no palm oil, no salt down there." "But God is, White Lady." "You might starve or be killed." "God is, White Lady." And the biggest test of all, "What about your wife, Zamu?" "She will accompany me. God is, White Lady." There was nothing more to be said, but joyfully to bid him Godspeed. The first stage of his journey took him through Ibambi. It was the last time he saw the old warrior whose life and teaching had so influenced him.

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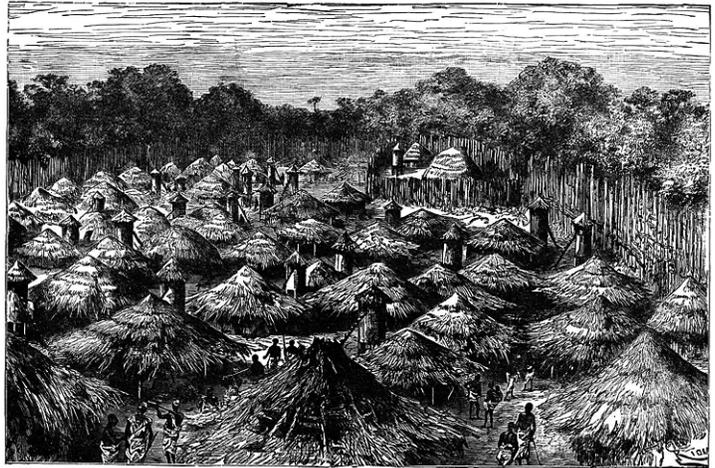
"He turned up the sleeve of his coat and said, 'See, Zamu, this arm of mine, once very strong, is now weak, and the flesh shrunken. I can't go with you.'"

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Mr. Staniford, who visited him a year later, asked him about that interview:

“What did Bwana say to you?” I asked him. ‘Oh, very many things. He turned up the sleeve of his coat and said, “See, Zamu, this arm of mine, once very strong, is now weak, and the flesh shrunken. I can’t go with you. My time is nearly finished among you black people. I only go on from day to day as God gives me strength. So don’t depend on me, depend on God; He is with you, He won’t die, He will keep you.” And then he said, “Don’t go with shame! Don’t be afraid! Be bold and preach the gospel! Don’t drag the flag of God in the earth! Put it up and don’t bring shame upon it! Set your face like a soldier to overcome.” Then again, “How many of you are going?” “Just my wife and I.” “Well, if you are true, God will make you a great company one day.” ’ ’

Zamu went eighty miles through the forest, across the Ituri river, and then striking due south through the land of the Barbaris he put another 100 miles between his own tribe and himself. Finally, he entered the land of the Balumbi tribe. These people gave him a good reception, but they had never before seen a black man like him who did not gamble, drink, quarrel nor live impurely, nor was out to make money or parade as some important person, so they called him “The Stray Man.” Their friendliness soon cooled, however, when they discovered that the message which he preached cut right across their sins. He and his wife would have starved had it not been for the brother of the chief, who had received the Word gladly, and took Zamu to his garden and told him to help himself freely to the plantains, cassava root and spinach growing there. But courage, faith and love won the day. In one place opposition was broken down by Zamu kneeling on the ground and tending the feet of a sick old woman whose toes were being eaten by dozens of “jiggers,” and who had been left to fend for herself, even by her own relations. The insipid food, without salt



or palm fat, became their greatest trial, and finally he asked the Lord to send them a little luxury, “O Lord, You have kept Your messengers from starvation, but we long for a little salt. Send us this as a token that You are with us.” The answer was indeed beyond their dreams. Unknown to them, other members of his home church had been stirred into action by his example, and just at the very time that he prayed that prayer the first party of reinforcements were leaving to join him. One day, a fortnight later, he saw a party of strangers coming down the village street, and then recognized them. What greetings and what joy! News from home, old friends united, reinforcements, and, to crown all, a large packet of salt—a gift from Mrs. Grainger.

Where Zamu went alone in 1931, there are now some ten evangelists scattered among the Balumbis. But his venture of faith has had more far-reaching results than even this, for it has kindled the missionary flame throughout the native church; numbers have volunteered, and already some fifty native pioneers and their wives have penetrated to all points of the compass, entering some six new tribes.



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