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# A Unique Ministry of the Disciples of Christ

C. M. Yocum

*United Christian Missionary Society*

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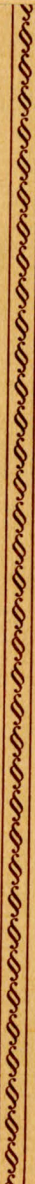
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A  
Unique Ministry  
of the  
Disciples of Christ

**D**ISCIPLES missionaries are at present caring for and often healing people with leprosy, in two places—in and near the town of Mungeli, India, and near a village called Sapucay, in Paraguay. They are also treating such people clinically in Congo Belge; and they are cooperating with the Mennonites to found a new colony in Paraguay. Like the other American Protestant denominations, the Disciples carry on this ministry in collaboration with the American Mission to Lepers, an inter-church body founded in 1906 for this purpose. At Mungeli—because it is in India—two other partners also cooperate: The Mission to Lepers, of London, and the Indian government. In Paraguay also the government cooperates to some extent. These several agencies provide the buildings, food, clothes, medicines and other living requirements of the patients. The share of the United Christian Missionary Society is the time and services of their missionaries.

### MUNGELI

In this town of central India is the Christian Hospital and Dispensaries with Dr. Victor C. Rambo in charge. The surrounding country is heavily infested with leprosy. The Mission is attacking it in two ways: through the Victoria Leper Home in a neighboring town and through a cluster of clinics—at the Hospital, at the Home, and on through several villages into the hills.

The Home, on a ten acre plot of land, is owned by the Mission to Lepers, of London, superintended by Rev. D. A. McGavran of the Disciples Mission, and medically supervised

by a brilliant young Indian doctor, Dr. Philip James of the Mungeli Hospital. It has a hospital, chapel, and living quarters for 88 patients—which is an absurdly small plant for the area it must serve. It has therefore become primarily an asylum-hospital for the badly crippled, and Dr. Rambo is pressing his clinics as hard as possible, to find and treat in time the new and curable people.

Dr. Rambo is a man of exceptional enthusiasm and warmth. He never writes of cases but of persons and they are friends whose lives are of passionate concern to him. Himself an ophthalmologist, he has done some very delicate operations to save eyes on the verge of being destroyed by leprosy. For such relief (leprosy patients sometimes suffer extreme pain from eye trouble) he receives perhaps more personal gratitude than for all his other leprosy treatments.

### **SAPUCAY**

This colony in Paraguay has had the sorriest history of all those the American Mission to Lepers aids.

Paraguay is a desperately poor country, its male population almost wiped out by wars. Early in the 1930's the few of its citizens stricken by leprosy who were cared for at all were living in an uninhabitable hutch in the city of Asuncion. There they were befriended and treated by a young Scottish doctor, at his own expense. In time he secured the cooperation of the Disciples Mission, the American Mission to Lepers and the government. At length the President himself became interested,



gave 2500 acres of land in the country near Sapucay, and set the young doctor up as superintendent in what seemed likely to become a well-established national leper colony.

Then came a political overturn. All plans for the new colony came to an end and the young doctor found it necessary to leave the country. The Disciples Mission carried on such a ministry as was possible for the derelict patients out on the muddy and barren farmland. The man who was the focal point of this contact was Rev. Malcolm Norment.

There are only a few men in the world like Malcolm Norment. He was already doing a full-time job in Asuncion—in teaching, social service, and evangelism. But he became completely impassioned by the plight of these people at Sapucay. He rode the difficult miles out to the colony over terrible roads. He restored a morale that had been shattered. He helped the patients rig up the elements of physical comfort. He built up all over again in the new government a friendly attitude toward the Mission and a sense of government responsibility. For a year or two it looked as if a plan of cooperative management between the government, the Disciples, and the American Mission would be worked out. Then counter-forces beyond Mr. Norment's control, perhaps beyond the government's control, intervened. The plan did not carry forward, and the patients were dropped back into desperate need.

But Mr. Norment is still at work, and some new factors have altered the situation a great deal. A United States Health Commission, working in Paraguay as part of the recent Inter-

American policies, has provided four buildings amid the mud and hovels in which the patients have long lived: two hospital pavilions, an administration unit, and a kitchen and laundry. It has also started a 300-acre farm aimed at the largest possible self-support. The government now furnishes a doctor, medicines, food and houses—on paper; but in actuality these simplest of social obligations are being defaulted or mal-administered. However, Mr. Norment has now been assigned by the Disciples Mission to full time leprosy work. The U. S. Health Commission has made him director of the farm program. The Mission to Lepers puts \$2000 a year at his disposal to spend at Sapucay. And the Mennonites have invited him to direct the building of the new joint colony. The limitations upon both these pieces of work are enormous. Yet it is hoped that, with Mr. Norment's extraordinary devotion, and with the collaboration of the Paraguayan Protestant Community and the Mennonite settlers, Paraguayan citizens who have leprosy may soon find adequate care.

*The United Christian Missionary Society has always taken delight in its co-operation with the American Mission to Lepers both in India and in South America. The officials of that Mission have always been graciously cooperative, liberal in their contributions, and understanding of all problems. It has been a pleasure to work with them through the years.*

—C. M. YOCUM, *Executive Secretary*  
*United Christian Missionary Society*

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AMERICAN MISSION TO LEPERS  
INCORPORATED

156 Fifth Ave., Suite 1134, New York 10, N. Y.

*Branch Offices:*

156 FIFTH AVENUE, SUITE 1017, NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

326 W. THIRD STREET, LOS ANGELES 13, CALIF.

77 W. WASHINGTON STREET, CHICAGO 2, ILL.

140 PUBLIC SQUARE, CLEVELAND 14, OHIO

411 HENRY GRADY BLDG., ATLANTA 3, GA.

14 BEACON STREET, BOSTON 8, MASS.

509 BURT BLDG., DALLAS 1, TEXAS

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