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ENRICO A. NELSON: His Work in Brazil

This is the partial story of a man who devoted his life to preaching the Gospel in foreign lands as a Baptist missionary. The material was gathered from Mr. Nelson's letters and reports written to Rev. W. J. Willingham and Dr. Ray, secretaries of the Foreign Missions Board of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1893 to 1925. Mr. Nelson began preaching in Brazil as early as 1891 on his own, representing no denomination and receiving support from no one. His first letter to Willingham, therefore, is in the form of an application asking if the Board will accept him as their missionary in the Amazon Valley, and he writes a brief sketch of his life for the Board's information. This is on March 3, 1897, and is written at the behest of two Baptist missionaries, Ginsburg and Entzninger, who are working in other parts of Brazil. Mr. Nelson was born in Sweden on December 17, 1862. His father was a preacher also and the father's influence no doubt affected Enrico Nelson's decision to devote his life to the same cause. In 1869, when Enrico was only six, the family emigrated to the United States, settling at Rehaunts, Kansas. His father continued preaching in this country until his death on June 3, 1896 at seventy-five years of age.

Mr. Nelson says he was converted when fourteen years old, was a member of the church for five years, and was active in the Sunday School and Young People's Meetings. However, it seems he had trouble with the Devil for he tells us, "I found myself struggling against the Demon of youthful pleasures and my conscience condemned me for partaking of the Lord's Supper. So I asked the church to erase my name, but not having done anything the church could condemn I was permitted to stay another six months. But my doom was sealed. I

could not get strength for the conflict and so I left home for a number of years, running cattle on the plains." ¹ However, during the winter of 1888-89 he visited his folks and because of his love for his father he decided to stay and take care of the farm. As a result he came under the influence of the church again but, as he tells us, "the Devil still bothered him." How he finally won this struggle with the Devil is best told in his own words for it involves an emotional reaction that is hard to explain in words. "Once more, under the influence of the Gospel, I was obliged to take a stand. Of course, the Devil having driven his victim as an ass to slaughter was afraid he would lose me, and put the weapon of infidelity in my hands. But I had no rest nor comfort and was not satisfied with its conclusions, and made up my mind to read the Bible through once more. While reading thoughtfully, page by page, night after night, till two or three in the morning, I arrived at the marvelous book of Joshua. But before I was through I was convinced of its veracity and all my sins of doubt and unbelief rolled up before me. So I was able once more to have Communion with Him who I had so shamefully left, but my joy was mixed with sadness, remembering that I had wasted so many years of my life in sin and disobedience." ² From this time on there is no mention by Mr. Nelson of struggles with the Devil or of doubts concerning Christ and his teachings so apparently the book of Joshua cleared everything up for him as he explained. His peace of mind established, he at once organized a Young Peoples Society in the church, but this did not satisfy him; he felt he was not doing enough and so decided to spend his life preaching the Gospel. However, he was uneducated and totally unprepared for being a pastor, and so he hesi-

1. To Willingham, March 3, 1897.

2. Ibid.

tated to say anything to anyone of his decision. The first thing he did was to write to churches at Morgan Park, Chicago, and at Atowa, Kansas, asking for an opportunity to preach for them, but they told him to preach elsewhere first and acquire some experience. So he preached in various parts of Kansas for three months, and had not been at it long when he decided to go to Brazil. He gives no explanation whatever of what prompted this decision, but a good supposition would be that he wanted to do still more for his Master, whom he had drifted away from so often, and felt that the heathen natives of Brazil were in greater need of Christianity than the people of his adopted country. He made up his mind definitely on the matter in January, 1891, and thereupon began corresponding with several training schools (seminaries) in an attempt to enter one. He felt some seminary training would be necessary before going to Brazil. He was invited by a Dr. Gordon, through a mutual friend, to come to Boston and enter the seminary there in October, 1891. He accepted the invitation and passed the intervening time by preaching in Chicago, La Porte, Indiana, and Missouri. Then in May he was informed that the seminary had changed from a term of nine months to two years. This was longer than he wished to delay his sailing and since he had gotten a fair amount of preaching experience and had saved some money after preaching five and six times a week in both Swedish and English, he determined to go to Brazil at once. Furthermore, he was not accustomed to indoor work, and he had no promise of future employment from Gordon. He planned to "work with his hands" till he learned the language and to do what missionary work he could.

Mr. Nelson arrived at Pará, Brazil on November 19, 1891 and found in this seaport city large numbers of poor foreigners and sailors to work amongst. He began his work by preaching aboard vessels in the

harbor which must have been trying work to say the least. He continued working on his own for some time but he next tells us that 'finding it impossible to work among Brazilians as a single man I³ was obliged to marry.'

His wife was a native of Randolph, Kansas, born of Swedish parents. She was converted at sixteen years of age and at seventeen she applied at Miss Burdett's School in Chicago, but was rejected because of her age. Mr. Nelson first made her acquaintance during his preaching tours in Kansas. She knew of his plans regarding Brazil and wanted to devote her life to missionary activity also, so she went to Brazil alone after spending some months in a training school at Kansas City. The future Mrs. Nelson was a member of the First Swedish Baptist Church of Kansas City, Missouri, and she had a fair education including training at a Business College at Lawrence, Kansas. Mr. Nelson met her at Pará and they were married by the American Consul⁴ on January 7, 1893.

Together now, they continued their activities, preaching on board vessels of many different nations as they came to Pará to discharge and take on cargoes. In addition to this, they helped support themselves by selling Bibles, and in less than two years they sold nearly four thousand Bibles, texts and Gospels. By now they were looking for a hall in which to hold meetings in the city, and it was only after much difficulty that they secured a hall in which they could preach in Portuguese. The difficulty of their work was added to by much persecution both from the civil authorities and the Roman Catholic officials. This persecution took the form of having rocks thrown at their house and being arrested once. As mentioned before, they were in Brazil

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

representing no particular denomination and they supported themselves entirely by selling Bibles, by the voluntary help of some ships' captains, by contributions from the foreign population of Pará who contributed about \$200.00, and also by the aid of churches and personal friends in the United States, England, Sweden, and Brazil. Strangely enough, the cost of living in Pará was much higher than in the United States, often being twice as high. During the first six years, Mrs. Nelson suffered from yellow fever twice and climate fever once. Although living and traveling were so expensive, they never had asked help of any one church or society, believing⁵ that "God would take care of us."

It took the Foreign Mission Board over nine months to make up its mind about Mr. Nelson's request and it was not until December 11, 1897 that the Board's Secretary, Rev. W. J. Willingham, was able to write⁶ Nelson telling him that the Board had agreed to accept them. Thus it was that Mr. Nelson, believing he was not going to get a reply, earlier in the year accepted an offer by the Christian Alliance to take charge of a proposed work on the Amazon on condition that: Mr. and Mrs. Nelson would organize Baptist churches, have Baptist helpers, and have full liberty to be guided by their own convictions. These conditions were imposed by the Nelsons, and a Christian Alliance representative gave them a certificate to that effect and they were asked to sail on July 14 for the United States to pick helpers and get necessary supplies. However, when the agreement signed between Nelson and the representative reached the Christian Alliance Board it was not accepted by them. After waiting six weeks the Board asked them if they "wished to join the Alliance with or without the work", and application papers were sent. Mr. Nelson replied that he was

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

since July 1 "Superintendent of the Amazon mission, and could not think of making application for something we already had, and as far as separating from our work that was out of the question." ⁷ He heard no more from the Christian Alliance and finally gave up the idea of working for them. ⁸

When this affair with the Christian Alliance was finally closed, Mr. and Mrs. Nelson made a trip to Manaõs, eight hundred miles up the Amazon River, and stayed for fifteen days. They held meetings every evening and baptized five. They were asked to go back there and baptize others and found a church, which they expected to do. The next time they return from Manaõs they hope to stop at Santarém to see if work can be started there. Santarém is an old American colony, with some Americans still there who invited him to stop.

Their church at Pará grew slowly but due to trouble with the Christian Alliance they were hindered and had no hall to meet in from July 1 to November 15. They were also cut off from friends in the United States since they were expected to return home, and suffered for a time from lack of means, but they finally acquired a well-located hall. On New Year's Eve (1897) they had a splendid meeting and he felt that their position was then very promising. They had a Sunday School that was well-attended, and their church membership was ⁹ seventeen.

"As for joining the Southern Baptist Board, that is in the hands of God, but I will give you to understand, that we have believed that God called us to the Amazon Valley and now we know it; hence we will not consent to leave the Amazon Valley under any circumstances unless God ¹⁰ shows us different." However, Mr. Nelson was willing to go further

7. To Willingham, April 12, 1898.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

up the Amazon River and establish work if the Board wished to take over the work in Pará. He believed that Pará was a city with a big future.

He hoped now to return to the United States and interest some personal friends in the work, and if possible to get a little steamer for traveling on the upper Amazon. He was figuring on returning to Brazil before winter set in again.¹¹

On the twenty-fourth of January Mrs. Nelson wrote thanking the Board for its interest and sympathy, and reiterating their desire to join the Board if they were not sent down the coast away from the Amazon Valley. The work at Pará, started by S. L. Ginsburg, an important field, should be developed. Mr. Nelson is now at Manaós and may found a church there.¹²

On his return to Pará, Mr. Nelson on April 12 acknowledged the receipt of a letter from Willingham telling the Nelsons that they had been appointed by the Foreign Missions Board to work for a salary of \$500.00 a year. Willingham also said that help was being sent to them. (One of the biggest difficulties faced by the Nelsons was their lack of good men to help them in the work. Time and again Mr. Nelson implored Willingham to send help, and more often than not help never arrived.) He told Willingham of the hardships they went through because of the high cost of living but added that God had not forgotten them. They are also facing difficulty in the form of persecution from Catholics and even Protestants. "We have been tried hard in many ways but now it feels especially good to be in remembrance by the Brethren (Board) as the Methodists are trying everything possible to make us detestable in the sight of the people of this city and country."¹³

11. Ibid.

12. To Willingham.

13. To Willingham, April 12, 1898.

They held a series of meetings that were well attended, as well as Sunday afternoon meetings in the outskirts of the city in a shed built by one of the deacons. When their series of meetings ended, they hoped to open services in several parts such as Maranhao (down the coast and Manaós (800 miles up the river).

He received a letter from a Miss Jennie Edwards of Leicester, North Carolina, saying she would be joining them in August with no salary. Mr. Nelson hoped to open a day school in English when Miss Edwards arrived and expected to put her in charge of it.¹⁴

Mr. Nelson wrote to the Foreign Mission Journal telling them of the need of a steamer on the Amazon, but now a prayer of six years had been answered from an unexpected source. A Mr. Wilt had arrived via England and was trying to find some man to run a steamer, since an Englishman would build one for him.

They had more trouble with the Methodists. "The Methodists have publicly challenged us to prove our right to baptize. They also ask why we exclude all who are not baptized from the Lord's Supper."¹⁵ This challenge had been accepted and they did not fear the outcome. Such a state of antagonism between two religious groups with so little difference between them is hard to understand; and how the Brazilians were willing to accept the teachings of either when they saw the fighting going on between the two groups is harder still to understand.

He concludes his letter of April 12 by saying that they have sent to New York for one thousand Bibles to help them in their work. They are both in good health, although so many years without a change has told heavily on them. They have now been in Brazil for seven years.¹⁶

In June, 1898, Mr. Nelson wrote to the Foreign Mission Journal from

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

Pará, telling of a terrific drought and lack of food in the two states of Ceara and Piahy. Every vessel from these states was crowded with passengers and there was great suffering, which was increased by the breaking out of yellow fever in the interior. The people of these two states crowded into the states of Amazonas and Pará, and the state of Pará opened colonies on the islands of the Amazon River for these people. Mr. Nelson wished to visit these islands and scatter the Bible amongst these unfortunates, and also to visit the vessels, as in past years, distributing the Bible. At present he has 1,100 Bibles in the Custom-House and expects another lot by the last of August from the American Bible Society. However, it costs about two and one-half cents a pound in duty to get the Bibles out of the Custom-House, or about five cents for each Bible which is sold for fifteen cents; but he asked not for help or money, but for prayer that their work may be carried through. ¹⁷ (They may have been narrow-minded in the "good old days", but they certainly had a stronger faith in God.)

His next letter is dated August 2, 1898, and is written from Pará. Their meetings were well-attended but there was little response from the people. From their membership they chose three deacons, one of which lived forty-five miles into the interior. This deacon held meetings at his village and they visited him and sold some Bibles there. "We have also incorporated the church (in Pará) and have now been offered the columns of one of the daily papers for any announcement we wish to make, free of charge. The authorities have also offered us protection from ruffians disturbing our meetings." ¹⁸ Apparently the civil authorities were taking more kindly to them.

17. Ibid.

18. To Willingham, August 2, 1898.

They prepared to make a trip up the River and if possible move their headquarters to Santarém, which lies half way between Pará and Mantaõs. "We hope to be able from there to look after the work better on the whole Amazon."¹⁹ Also, the house rents at Santarém were much cheaper, which was of necessity a prime consideration. The work at Manaõs had stopped temporarily because of the illness of the young man (Brazilian) who was preaching there. As usual, they were short of means but trusted in God to care for them. The sale of Bibles was still good, which he indicated in his letter of September 2, 1898 from Pará. In two months they sold 550 Bibles and over 800 Gospels²⁰ and testaments, and sales kept increasing.

Mr. Nelson's attitude toward the Roman Catholics is clearly indicated in this letter in which he cites the case of a Catholic merchant who accepted the Protestant ideas about religion. "He (the merchant) sent for quite a number of Bibles and gave them to his friends. He read it through several times, then took his 'Saints' (images of gold) that he like all Catholics worship if they will but admit it, and ground them into dust and threw them into the River."²¹ Such an attitude shows not only narrow-mindedness and ignorance, but is also very harmful to both groups in the eyes of the "heathen" Brazilians. Today in missionary fields this old attitude is practically extinct and all groups work in greater harmony for a common cause. Mr. Nelson tells us that the Governor of Pará cooperates in every way with the Bishop and vice-versa, and thus many priests are coming into the area. "One of our greatest drawbacks here is the word 'Protestant'. The people call us 'Protestants' because we protest against the errors of Rome, but they call our (Protestant and Catholic) Bibles the same and thus thousands

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. To Willingham, September 2, 1898.

are afraid to buy, and they say, 'Look, all the foreign sailors and merchants (nearby) are Protestants and they care neither for Rome or God.'²² He replied to the natives firmly declaring his Bible is written by the Apostles and Prophets and not by Luther. "We are the children of God, not of Calvin or Wesley, hence Christians not Protestants."²³ This view of the question helped them several times with the natives.

Mr. Nelson made the trip to Santarém and returned to Pará on January 9, 1899, and wrote to Willingham on January 19. He sold 539 scriptures and parts in Santarém in thirty days. He took his family to Santarém with him but left them there when he returned to Pará. On his return to Pará he baptized five more converts in the presence of fifty people. A young Brazilian who was doing some preaching came along fine and Nelson felt he could leave the work at Pará to him if no one from the States came to help. He hoped the church at Pará could soon pay its own expenses, and in Santarém he hoped to continue with a hall for the meetings. He expected to go to Manaós the next month to try to organize the work, and return there next year if it was possible to go to the United States that spring. "The Brethren in Manaós would do well if I were with them right along. I hope to make our home there."²⁴ He stayed in Manaós till the end of March with the hope that it could be arranged for them to return to the United States. They were practically worn out and could do no more without rest; he got little sleep and Mrs. Nelson was so weak she could hardly get up. They had no money for traveling expenses but trusted in God to provide the means.²⁵ He left for Santarém on January 20.

On February 20 he was again back in Pará and wrote Willingham of

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. To Willingham.

25. Ibid.

what they had done. When they left Santarém, it had a hall for meetings, well-lighted and good enough for several years. Its rental cost was only \$3.00 to \$4.00 per month (according to exchange which is changing almost constantly). They had no one to preach there yet but hoped to have someone before long. From Santarém they went to Manaus, but things were so high there they could not stay with their limited scale since there was no one who could preach. They decided to let things stay as they were at Manaus for the present since they hoped to leave for the United States on March 14 and return to Brazil before cold weather set in again. The work at Pará was getting along nicely. The young Brazilian preacher was doing well there, and although a better hall was needed, they could fix up quite a place with \$1000. It is almost impossible to rent a hall at Manaus because the rent would be at least \$50 a month (a living house the same). Therefore, they proposed to try to raise enough money to buy a house for living in and also a beginning for a hall. The Brethren at Manaus had \$100 ready to start with. Part of the purpose of their trip to the United States would be to raise this money.

The Nelsons arrived in New York on April 9 and expected to leave for Richmond in a couple of days, but some money they were expecting was sent to Brazil instead of New York. Also, the Christian Alliance owed them \$200 and they had to wait a week for it. They finally got to Richmond on April 20 and met Willingham for the first time. He listened with interest to their report and promised them all the aid at his command. They stayed only a few days and were back in New York on April 28. After returning to New York, they decided to attend The Southern Baptist Convention to be held at Louisville, Kentucky.

26. To Willingham.

27. Ibid.

There was no information as to what took place at the Convention and the next time he writes is from Chanute, Kansas, on May 25. After leaving the Convention they went to Kansas City to visit his family and in a few days they hoped to leave for Randolph, Kansas, where Mrs. Nelson's people lived. They got to Randolph early in June. 28

On September 15 Mr. Nelson wrote from Randolph stating that on August 14 a son was born, and that the mother and child were doing well. As for preaching, they have not been able to do much work as yet due to their run-down condition. The week before he spoke at a meeting of Swedish Baptists at Leonardville in which he spoke of Brazil and their work. At the end of the meeting \$20 was collected, and half was sent to the Southern Baptist Convention, the other half was sent to the Home Mission Society. He hoped to visit Missouri the next month and interest the people there in his work.

As mentioned before, he hoped to return to Brazil before cold weather set in again but now he realized it was necessary for them to stay in the United States till the following Spring in order to regain sufficient strength. When they returned to Brazil he hoped to take a printing press with him, a small organ or two, and enough money for two moveable halls for their work at Pará and Manaõs.

"We have great hopes for the future, and expect to stay a long time in Brazil next time." 29

On September 21 Mr. Nelson wrote that he had just returned from a thirty mile trip, and found there was some secret opposition to missionary work although no one opposed him openly. He continued this sort of work for some time with the help of Mr. Nelson, and on December 21 she wrote Willingham that they had been greatly encouraged

28. Ibid.

29. To Willingham.

by the response they received in their travels through Kansas and
30
Missouri.

The next letter written by Mr. Nelson was on January 9, 1900 from Randolph in which he says they expected to return to Brazil in April. They wanted to return earlier but feared the change would be too sudden and too great. The news from Brazil was that things have not been going so well at Pará although the deacons still carry on the meetings. They have secured the promise of an organ for Pará and one for Manaõs, and he also wanted to get one for Santarém in possible. They bought a small printing press for their work in Brazil, which was badly needed since there were no others near them. It took them twelve days to get to Bahia from Pará and sixteen days to Campos. During their lectures in the United States they did not take collections, but many people personally handed them contributions of from one dollar to ten dollars. "You will understand that it takes means to work the Amazon Valley which has nearly eleven thousand miles of
31
navigable rivers and over three million people"

On February 15 Mr. Nelson wrote again, asking if anyone was to be sent to Brazil with them to aid in the work. "Since we now have a work extending one thousand miles and our Bibles have reached one thousand miles further, we almost stagger at the greatness of the work before
32
us." They decided to make their home at Manaõs (900 miles from Pará). Brother Aranyo (a Brazilian helper) promised to put up a building if permanent work was established there. Also, from Manaõs they reach all parts of the Amazon Valley with the least expense. "We consider it the wisest thing to go direct to Manaõs and while my wife is getting our home ready there I can look over our interest in Santarém, then straighten up our church in Pará and get here in working order, and

30. Ibid.

31. To Willingham.

32. To Willingham.

finally return to Manaõs and take up the work in earnest there. By holding these three places (or changing from Santarém to Obidos on the north side of the Amazon) we can have a great deal of influence over the whole Amazon Valley. This gives you an idea of our plans for the near future."³³

In his letter of March 5 from Randolph Mr. Nelson reported that he had inquired about a boat sailing for Brazil and steamer "Hubert" of Booth and Company sails April 25 and they decided to take. The cost for Mr. and Mrs. Nelson and the children was \$288. Their strength was not what they had hoped it would be by now but they determined to sail nevertheless. They left Randolph on April 4 and went to Chanute to say goodbye to his family, and expected to be in New York about the nineteenth of April.³⁴ On May 7 Mr. Nelson wrote from New York that they had missed the April 25 boat because their furniture had not arrived in time, but they left for Manaõs on May 9. They took 500 Bibles, 200 testaments, and 500 Gospels with them.³⁵

They arrived safely in Manaõs on June 5 according to his letter of July 5. The meetings had been kept going by Brother Aranyo and his wife, and on their return Mr. Nelson baptized five more converts. Altogether, thirteen were baptized since their return. They rented a better hall at Pará for \$35 a month. They had not visited Santarém but hoped to soon. Their salary did not help their traveling expenses much since living costs were so high. Mr. Nelson again implored Willingham for help. For one man to care for the territory under his charge was well nigh impossible. "Oh, that our Brethren at home where the Gospel is so plenty would come and help us in the Amazon Valley."³⁶ So far, this time, they had experienced no persecution.

33. Ibid.

34. To Willingham.

35. To Willingham.

36. To Willingham.

It was not until October 8 that Mr. Nelson again wrote to Willingham. At this time he reported that the work at Pará was going hard but some converts were being made, including an ex-Catholic priest. With the aid of one of the deacons and the ex-priest, the church at Pará fared well. The work at Manaõs went ahead, and he baptized eight people on September 30, this made thirteen for Manaõs, ten for Pará or twenty-three since their arrival from the United States. "Last Friday, the fifth of October, we organized the Second Baptist Church in the Amazon Valley with twenty members." They looked for a larger hall and the sale of Bibles in both Portuguese and Spanish languages was good. "My work during the day is selling Bibles and at night preaching the Gospel."

On January 11, 1901, Mr. Nelson had more good news from Manaõs. He baptized a total of twenty-four in Manaõs and twenty in Pará. Altogether forty-four. The ex-priest led the meetings in Pará. They had a good hall but had difficulty meeting expenses. They had spent over \$200 on the church at Pará, and ^{at} Manaõs raised \$250 and they had \$50 in the church treasury. "We cannot afford to pay \$100 a month for hall rent so we preach in our dwelling house. We have now thirty-one members here, forty-five Sunday School scholars, and have sold 2,200 scriptures, and 2,600 tracts." On Christmas day they had a feast for the children.

The next letter dated January 25 contained a complaint. Brother Ginsburg at Pernambuco organized a union of the churches under him, which included Pará and Manaõs. Mr. Nelson did not like the idea because such an arrangement was of no benefit to either Pernambuco or

37. To Willingham.

38. Ibid.

39. To Willingham.

Pará and Manaõs. It meant he would have to make trips to Pernambuco to make reports and attend meetings. It cost at least \$100 for a return trip to Pernambuco and back to Manaõs and \$150 from Pará. It took twelve to fifteen days to make the trip and no one ever visited them from other parts. He did not believe money should be spent in making such trips unless absolutely necessary. "We hope by the Grace of God to have a union of the churches of the Amazon Valley and if possible as far south as Maranhao. If Ginsburg can get as far north as Ceara we will then be able to control the whole coast,"⁴⁰

They expected to go to Pará in May or June, to give the ex-priest some help, and they had some young men (Brazilians) who were a great help to them later on.⁴¹

According to his next letter written on March 13 he decided not to ask the Board for financial help. Things improved. They now had plenty of means to pay \$ 80 a month for a hall if necessary. "We are now thirty-seven members and are looking for two families with means from the interior who have been believers for some years but not baptized."⁴² They held meetings in four different parts of Manaõs, but they were persecuted. He had four other members who helped him with the preaching, and others were ready to be baptized. "While we are waiting for a suitable hall we are preparing the city (Manaõs)."⁴³ In a nearby colony they scattered many Bibles, tracts, and Gospels, but the priest there burnt all he got hold of, and promised to have assassins ready to greet them, but they hoped to preach there soon anyway. The printing press they took to Brazil was being used occasionally to print invitations and arguments against the priests. The

40. To Willingham.

41. Ibid.

42. To Willingham.

43. Ibid.

church at Manaõs voted about \$25 a year to help the publishing house in Rio de Janeiro that prints the Baptist paper. They also sent \$20 to aid one of their neighboring churches, and to the persecuted brethren at Pernambuco. However, the work at Pará was not faring quite so well and needed constant care, but he expected to visit Pará in a few weeks. He mentioned the birth of his fourth son, Ira Spurgeon Nelson, which occurred on February 27.⁴⁴

In a letter written to the Foreign Mission Board on the same day, March 13, Mr. Nelson explained why the work at Pará was not prospering. Pará had a business crash and was not liable to rise for many years. "Our members there are poor and cannot possibly do anything for themselves for some time. Our salary of \$75 a month does not make it possible for us to do justice to Pará and we therefore ask the Board to consider why we have not the same privileges as other missionaries in Brazil. Since our territory is larger than any, hotter than any, and the cost of living is twice that of others, sending someone⁴⁵ to Pará would be a wise step if not \$25 per month for hall rent." He also wanted to have their traveling expenses paid by the Board as the expenses of other missionaries are paid. "You will remember that two years ago when in Richmond, I said, 'The Amazon Valley is to Brazil what the West was to America a few years ago.' Since then thousands have arrived in this valley and the Gospel is acceptable to the people. In a few years it will support itself. Just now is the time to help⁴⁶ the Amazon Valley. The outlook for our field has never been so bright." By saying that the Amazon is to Brazil what the West was to America, Mr. Nelson means that the Amazon is just beginning to be opened up, and that people are now migrating into this area in thousands. The

44. Ibid.

45. To Foreign Mission Board.

46. Ibid.

wealth of this region is immense and the possibilities of expoloration are limitless.

On March 18 Mr. Nelson asked Willingham to send a man at once to Pará since the ex-priest could handle things and he could leave Manaõs long enough to help Pará as he wanted.⁴⁷

Mr. Nelson wrote on June 1 that he arrived at Pará on May 13 and found things in poor shape. He had to put the ex-priest out of the church for immoral living. However, Brother Thomas Lourencio de Costa came from Bagby's church, and he had charge of things when Nelson left. Also, a young Brazilian from Manaõs went to Pará and sold Bibles under the guidance of the deacon. Mr. Nelson received offers from friends in the United States to support a native (Brazilian) preacher, and he recommended this young man whose name was Angosto da Silva Lima. So he asked all who wish to help this man to send their money to Willingham, and Willingham could then send this money when he sent his salary. To support a man every month at least \$50 was necessar^y.

The work at Manaõs was at low tide but there was a good prospect for the future. The outside meetings there had been closed by persecutors. Therefore, he had to go back to Manaõs and open them again, since the natives had more respect for foreigners.⁴⁸

On August 12 Mr. Nelson was able to report from Manaõs that three more young men had been baptized and a Young Mens' Auxiliary Society with sixteen members founded. "Our aim is to give special instruction to young men and through them reach the hundreds of clerks in this town."⁴⁹ One of the deacons fitted up a hall in his home and they preached there once a week, and he expected more baptizms before the end of the month. The weather was excessively dry and hot but they

47. To Willingham.

48. Ibid.

49. To Willingham.

were in fair health.

On August 27 he had further good news from Manaõs. They now had a good hall in the center of the city that holds 150 people. They paid \$75 a month rent, but there were other rooms to the building and they lived there. They hoped to start a school as soon as possible. The church paid \$50 per month and they paid \$25. The Women's Auxiliary Society paid the light. The church was not a year old but it raised more than \$75 a month. He also had a fund for a new church amounting to \$1,500. They expected to baptize several young men the following Sunday

"The church at Manaõs raised over \$2000 last year. We look for a strong church here, and now since we have been able to persuade Brother Ginsburg to take charge of the church in Pará (he expects to move there with his family in November), we feel that we can do justice to the upper Amazon. We hope the Brethren will continue to send out men so that we can have at least one missionary in each capital."⁵¹

In December Willingham informed them that they were to receive during 1902 from the Board \$900 for which Mr. Nelson, in his letter of January 7, 1902 was most thankful. On top of this, Ginsburg informed them that they would no longer have to carry the burden of the Pará church.⁵²

At Manaõs they now had fifty-five members and were in the middle of a prayer week. He concluded by saying they expected to make some extensive trips up the River this year.⁵³

They left Manaõs on February 5 (he brought his wife and two babies with him to Pará). On arrival at Pará they hoped to rest for a few days but found the work in such poor shape they were kept constantly

50. Ibid.

51. To Willingham.

52. To Willingham.

53. Ibid.

busy. "But thanks to God, things are quieting down and today
(February 26) we baptized the last four of the candidates, seven
in all."⁵⁴ The big need in Pará was for men (Americans, not Brazilians)
to preach in the state of Pará. "The field is ripe in this whole
state. We have visited two places nearby and at both we could preach
had we men. It seems strange that no one wants to come to Pará, a
city of 200,000 counting the suburbs, with opportunities for winning
souls unequalled in the United States and with a growing future."⁵⁵

On March 7 they were back in Manaós after selling thirty Bibles,
thirty testaments and eighty Gospels at stops on the way. He hoped
to make many trips this year but wanted to have a man with him to
sell Bibles. The work at Manaós continued satisfactorily. He was
in fair health but Mrs. Nelson was suffering from catarrh in the head.⁵⁶

A little over a month later, on April 15, Mr. Nelson wrote asking
Willingham to give the following message to the Convention of the
Southern Baptist Board meeting at Ashville: "We are still alone on
this field after ten years of labor. One missionary and his wife on
11,800 miles of navigable rivers, two churches and only one pastor
(American), and the churches nearly one thousand miles apart. Who
will come and help us? Who will take charge of the work in Pará?
Who will send us a steamer for the Amazon? We need both the man and
the steamer this year. Our work is prospering. God is with us."⁵⁷
This certainly shows most eloquently their position and the vastness
of their task. There is no mention of what happened to Ginsburg but
apparently he did not go to Pará as intended. On June 23 they were still
at Manaós and busy as ever. They preached every night and the meetings
were crowded. They baptized six last month and seven this month (June)
and the sale of Bibles was going strong.⁵⁸

54. To Willingham, Feb. 26, 1902.

55. Ibid.

56. To Willingham, March, 1902.

57. To Willingham.

58. Ibid.

On July 29 he reported that he was now in Pará again after being down with fever for two weeks. He had visited the mouth of the Amazon to bathe in the salt water and get the sea breeze, and felt the better for it. He expected to baptize some candidates at Pará and on July 31 he returned to Manaõs.

When he arrived at Manaõs he got worse instead of better and was very weak, but after taking medicine for a week he improved and soon was getting stronger and back to work. Their hall at Manaõs was now too small and he looked for a new place. They had hoped to build a new hall but did not have much success in raising money. Four were baptized last Sunday, and the membership was then seventy-two.

In a September letter, Willingham informed him that a Brother Hamilton was coming to Pará, and Mr. Nelson in his reply of October 21 was most joyful. Further good news was that Mr. Nelson's church in Chanute, Kansas had offered to raise the money needed to buy a steamer.

Unfortunately, he took sick again, as well as many of the church members, and Mrs. Nelson had to work so hard she nearly gave out. Under such circumstances they found it impossible to continue the care of the hall, so they turned it over to the church, and rented a house for themselves. The expenses were as follows: house rent per month, \$50; hired girl, \$13; flour, \$8; wood, \$5; and correspondence papers, etc., \$5; a total of \$ 81. This left them \$19 for sugar, coffee, meat, vegetables, clothes, medicine, collections, and the education of the children. By living away from the meeting hall they had \$50 more to pay. The Board sent them \$25 but that still left them \$25 under the cost of living in the hall. "It takes about three times as much to live here as in Pernambuco (a common clerk in a hardware store has \$100 to \$125 a month and can lay aside no money if he has a family). Now do

59. To Willingham.

60. To Willingham.

61. To Willingham.

not take this as a complaint, but take it as a statement of facts."⁶²
He hoped to raise \$25 a month by selling Bibles but was not able to
since business was at a standstill. "But let me warn the Board that
unless God gives supernatural strength I will not hold out many months,
walking the streets in this sun and traveling these sickly streams
selling Bibles, and for the Board to have a man ready when I break
down."⁶³ He believed that if he could concentrate on preaching instead
of walking in the sun selling Bibles he might hold out for years.
The church now had seventy-eight members, with baptizms conducted every
month.⁶⁴

On November 22 from Manaos Mr. Nelson announced the birth of another
child, Eunice Orvilla Nelson.⁶⁵

They hoped to start working a few days later in the small villages
in the interior. Mr. Nelson was feeling much better now but he could
not stand the heat as he used to, and he had had to quit selling Bibles.⁶⁶

It was not till January 3, 1903, that Mr. Nelson again wrote to
Willingham. At this time he was able to say he had seen Brother
Hamilton at Pará and was very pleased with him.

On New Year's Eve they had a Sunday School feast which was a big
success with plenty to eat for all. Four more people were ready to be
baptized, and the church had voted \$25 for the Public House and \$25 for
a printing press for the same house.⁶⁷

On January 27 from Manaos he wrote: "By the time this letter reaches
you I am in Iquitos, Peru, to see what can be done there for the ancient
people, the Incas, who are still robbed and sold on the east side of the
Andes (one of them is coming to our meetings), and also to see what can
be done for the territory lying between this point and that."⁶⁸

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. To Willingham.

66. Ibid.

67. To Willingham.

68. To Willingham.

By March 5 he was at Iquitos, Peru, and wrote Willingham of what had happened. He left Manaos on February 3 on an Amazon River boat. There are many places on the way of from 200 to 600 people and he stopped at several of them, selling 200 Bibles and testaments. The first Peruvian town on the Amazon is Caballococha of about 1000 people, and the next town is Iquitos of about 10,000 people. Ocean liners from Liverpool come this far up the river twice a month. "All through this region you find small villages, mostly rubber gatherers; and now let me tell you that slavery is almost openly carried on, that is, it's known to everybody although it is against the law. They will kill the father and mother if they resist the capture of their children (I have this from good authority). They bring them down here (Iquitos) and dispose of them."⁶⁹ Many of the Indians could read and he sold seventy Bibles while waiting for the steamer.

From Manaos on March 12 Mrs. Nelson wrote Willingham that the work was progressing nicely in Mr. Nelson's absence. Five young Brazilians were helping her with the work but they needed training. "We hope to start a school (daily) for children this year."⁷⁰ She expected Mr. Nelson back on April 7.

Mr. Nelson got back to Manaos on April 4 according to his letter of April 13, after an absence of two months. Altogether he sold 300 Bibles, testaments and Gospels on the way; and 1200 in the Republic of Peru. He was well-treated and the leading men of Iquitos wanted to see work started there. "Let me say that we ought to have missionary who could take up the work as soon as possible."⁷¹ He prepared a young Spaniard for that field who studied for the priesthood, but if he proved faithful Nelson hoped to go with him and start him unless Willingham could send

69. To Willingham, March 5, 1903.

70. To Willingham.

71. To Willingham.

another man. At Manaõs things were going as well as could be expected, and several were waiting to be baptized. ⁷²

By June 3 they had baptized twenty-seven that year at Manaõs. They had materials for building a hall but no money to construct. They ⁷³ were going to build for 500 seats with room for a gallery later.

He had been sick again with "gastric fever" but was now recovering. "I hope to hold out till next year when I expect to spend some months in the Southern Brazilian mountains. My wife will go home to leave the ⁷⁴ children in school, and while she is at home I will seek my health."

Many times Mr. Nelson implored the Board for help only to be rebuffed. Again on June 16, 1903, he writes to the Board and tries to impress on it the impossibility of one man covering the area under his care. The states of Pará and Amazonas are both larger than Texas. A man was needed to help Brother Hamilton at Pará so he could devote more time to teaching and working in towns near the capital. In Manaõs the work was progressing so well that he hoped to work almost entirely in the interior in the near future, since they now had a Brother Kern with them. They also had two other helpers who were doing well, but the work was not small. By traveling constantly it would still be impossible to reach all the rivers in one year. There was now a new state called Acre (the territory in question between Brazil and Bolivia), and this needed a strong man since the climate was almost unbearable. Also, he says Iquitos should be opened up before the priests get in there and prepare the people against us.

His health was improving and he hoped to work another year without a change of climate. ⁷⁵

Mr. Nelson spent some time now in Manaõs helping the work along

72. Ibid.

73. To Willingham, June 3, 1903.

74. Ibid.

75. To Willingham.

and on August 31 he wrote that the work was still going well. One of their young men, Emigdio Bento Alves, was going to Santarém to start the work. Mr. Nelson was going to St. Isabel to sell Bibles and see what could be done in that region. He was gone about ten days. The new printing press was working well and they hoped to accomplish much with it.

Mrs. Nelson was troubled with catarrh in the head and the doctor said an operation was necessary. If so, she was to go to the United States and the children go with her. If the Board granted her a few months leave, they planned to delay the opening of a reading room and book store, otherwise they would have opened a store by January 1. "There is no book supply this side of Rio de Janeiro and it's too far to do business there."⁷⁶ They hoped therefore to have a supply of Bibles and religious books and journals in Manaós, but he would not start the store in the absence of his family. Mrs. Nelson wanted to leave about March 1, 1904, if that is all right with the Board. He is glad to say he is enjoying good health.⁷⁷

Willingham on October 10 wrote saying they had been granted the right to send the children to the United States, and on November 12 Mr. Nelson replied thankfully. He had just returned from Santarém where one of the helpers had gone for his health and after preaching and interesting some people he wrote to Nelson asking to come at once. Together they preached for a week and baptized several people. "Hamilton agreed with me that we ought to continue work there, as I had done some work there five years ago and the field is ripe."⁷⁸ When he returned to Manaós more people were waiting to be baptized. "The rainy season is coming so I have rented a good house for \$53 a month. We hope it will help us keep our health."⁷⁹

76. To Willingham, August 31, 1903.

77. Ibid.

78. To Willingham.

79. Ibid.

Three weeks later he wrote concerning a trip to a place called Piriquito. One of the church members went to Piriquito a year before and preached. Things went so well then that they decided to visit it and there was much interest in the Gospel. Six were baptized and a church was founded. There was also encouraging news from Santarém. Emigdio sent word that Hamilton was there and hoped to organize a church. As for Manaós, Mr. Nelson wrote: "Our church here continues to work without any extraordinary occurrences, persecuted but not overcome."⁸⁰

By January 22, 1904, Mrs. Nelson had decided to sail about April 4 with the children. Mr. Nelson hoped to embark for Rio Madeira as far as Rio de Janeiro in April, since he felt weak again and needed a few days near the ocean. Brother Hamilton was still in Santarém doing good⁸¹ work but was being persecuted.

March 16 brought bad news to Willingham for Mr. Nelson was down with fever and ague again and was useless for work. He had decided to go with his family as far as Barbados and await the steamer's return. This gave him about fifteen days on the island and put him in shape again. "The Amazon Valley is ripening for heavy work and I am anxious⁸² to get strong, and also to get help for the work."

At the end of April Willingham was surprised by a letter written by Mr. Nelson from New York on April 26. They left Manaós on April 7 and when they got to Pará they found out that they would probably be quarantined at Barbados. Five days later Barbados was reached, and all of them so sick they could scarcely get up. He could not leave his wife with the children to care for since she was very sick herself. Also, it would be useless for him to be quarantined on Barbados for ten days, so he resolved to go to New York to recuperate and to help⁸³ his family.

80. To Willingham, December 5, 1903.

81. To Willingham.

82. To Willingham.

83. To Willingham.

They reached New York on April 25, the children feeling better but Mrs. Nelson quite sick. After resting a couple of days she went to Randolph, Kansas where her folks lived. He hoped to return to Brazil about May 5. He was still weak but better and hoped the few days rest and the return trip would fit him for a few years work. "I feel I have done the best I knew how under the circumstances and hope the cause and all concerned will be benefited. The church at Manaõs at its last meeting resolved to help Sameiras with \$37 a month in his work in Iquitos, Peru."

84

Since Mr. Nelson was in the United States, Willingham invited him to stay for the Convention to be held at Nashville and Nelson accepted the proposal. In his letter of April 28, Nelson said he would go to Richmond on his way to Nashville. Mrs. Nelson left that evening with the children for Kansas, and she planned to meet him at Nashville. After the Convention they went to the Rocky Mountains. He expected to be in Richmond the fourth or fifth of May.

85

There was no information on the Convention in his letters, and the next news from him is from St. Louis after the Convention had ended. They arrived here May 18 and he decided to stay in the United States a few months. While in St. Louis they consulted a well-known physician on Mrs. Nelson's trouble and they were told she had catarrh of the head and throat. He gave her a medicine to give her relief and advised her not to return to Brazil this year at least. The children were well except the oldest boy who was under a doctor's care.

86

They were back in Randolph by May 31 and on that day Mr. Nelson wrote that he expected to go with Mrs. Nelson to Colorado Springs for about six weeks and then prepare to return to Brazil in October. He was going to use his salary to buy an organ and a bicycle, for the work in Brazil. When he returned to Brazil, he planned on leaving the children

84. To Willingham, April 26, 1904.

85. To Willingham.

86. To Willingham.

in a home in this country, but they were having difficulty finding a good
87
home.

The next day, June 1, Mr. Nelson went to Chanute where his mother was seriously ill. He stayed here for about five weeks and during this time attended a preachers' summer school for two weeks. His mother passed
88
away near the end of June.

On July 22 he wrote that they had been in Colorado Springs a week. He was enjoying it but Mrs. Nelson's catarrh was not improving, and they expected to return to Kansas in a few days. He hoped to be back in Brazil by October 1.

When they got back to Randolph they were informed that there is a missionary home for children in Greenville, South Carolina, but it would not be ready for some months. Whereupon, he decided to fix a home for his wife and children to live in till the home in Greenville was ready. Mrs. Nelson was improving and they hoped she would be perfectly well
89
by spring.

From Chanute on September 12 he informed Willingham that he had decided to leave New York on October 5 and would be in Richmond after twenty-fifth. He needed \$30 for his ticket to New York and \$100 for his trip to Manaós. Willingham, a short time previously, had promised
90
that his traveling expenses would be paid.

He visited Willingham on September 28, spoke in Washington the next night (there is no mention of whom he spoke to) and then proceeded to New York. He sailed from New York on the night of October 5.

His first letter from Pará is dated October 21. In his absence Brother Hamilton had gone ahead with the building of a new hall, and already the walls and part of the roof were in place. It was to seat

87. To Willingham.

88. To Willingham.

89. To Willingham.

90. To Willingham.

400 people, and with the recent anonymous contribution of \$500 which was needed to complete it, they expected to open it by January 1. He left Pará on October 23 and hoped to be home (Manaõs) by the twenty-⁹¹ eighth.

There was no more news from him till December 13 at which time he was back in Pará, having arrived that day from Manaõs with Emigdio who joined him at Santarém. He hoped later to send Pinheiro to Santarém, and ordain one of the deacons at Manaõs to be pastor there, and he traveled between the churches and helped both. However, he kept his home at Manaõs since that was the center of his work, unless Willingham insisted otherwise. He planned to follow this plan unless someone was sent to Pará. However, he asked that Ginsburg not be sent since they did not agree very well. He was given an increase in salary and replied thus: "I am thankful for the increase in salary. Sorry it came too late for Brother Hamilton (I found out he had eaten only one square meal a day for some time as his expenses were so heavy, and this was the principal⁹² reason why he could not stand the sickness; he was too weak)."

Brother Hamilton had died of overwork and lack of food (as just described) after doing a noble work both at Pará and Santarém. Mr. Nelson was most sorry to lose him. However, he hoped to keep things going at Pará till the hall was finished since Emigdio was a good manager.

Mr. Nelson helped the work at Pará along for some time and did not return to Manaõs till January 7, 1905. He was again short of funds and had had to borrow \$125 to help himself along, and although conditions were fair he felt that unless more missionaries came to Brazil things⁹³ would go downhill. He expected to go to Pará again in February.

91. To Willingham.

92. To Willingham.

93. To Willingham.

In his letter of January 16, 1905, from Manaõs, Mr. Nelson tells of some of the financial problems facing him. The already high exchange was getting higher and they had to pay \$10 to \$15 a month more for rent. Houses were getting scarce and he could not find one for his family at less than \$75, and he asks Willingham to make the following proposal to the Board: "A house built on a sanitary plan for this country would cost \$8,000 to \$10,000. A house built of poles and mud plaster will cost \$2,000 to \$3,000 and will last with care about 15 to 20 years. After that you still have the lot and brick tilings for a roof. These kind of houses are as healthy as others while they last but must be built in the outskirts of town. Now my plan is this. Would it be against the rules of the Board to advance me \$2,500 to \$3,000, I paying off at the rate of \$600 a year, capital and interest. That would save me from paying \$75 a month to a Brazilian for a house that has no night ventilation whatever, and the same or \$50 a month would go back to the Board for money advanced, and at the same time give me six years of comfort and throw the house in at a bargain. In two months time I could be living in my own house and by January 1906 I would begin to pay off the capital so that you would hold back \$600. I am willing to pay as big a per cent as you can get and more if you like since here I would have to pay 24 per cent. Our health depends
94
on our dwelling place a great deal."

On February 7 he reported that he was ready to leave for Pará to open
95
the new temple. From Pará he wrote on February 20 saying that the temple would be opened on March 5 and that they went in debt about \$100 in building it. The helper at Santarém became sick and came back to Manaõs but he planned to send another man next month, and wanted to go

94. To Willingham.

95. To Willingham.

there himself from Pará. A woman at Manaõs had agreed to give money for the work at Santarém and he planned to see about the chances of building a temple since it was almost impossible to rent a hall there. He expected to be back in Manaõs by April 5, and was still in good health.⁹⁶

Mr. Nelson arrived at Santarém on March 11 and was holding meetings every night with good audiences. He had a good helper there but was unable to find a hall, however, he thought he could buy a lot on which to build one. There was a great need for a man at Santarém which had about 20,000 people. "It is a good location for a seminary, the most healthy place on the Amazon now, and can be improved. It is growing fast."⁹⁷ He left for Manaõs on the twenty-second.

On April 5 from Manaõs he was able to report that he had received some money from friends in the United States to pay off the debt incurred in building the temple at Pará. Soon after writing this he was off again for a trip into the interior and visited three small churches and baptized four. He preached in a new town called Anamá and hoped to have a church there soon.⁹⁸ He returned to Manaõs on April 25 and was happy to learn that the brother of J.E. Hamilton was coming to Santarém. He claimed they were still persecuted and hindered in their work by civil authorities and by other denominations.⁹⁹

On July 21 he was back in Pará and in answer to a question from Willingham he wrote that he believed he could build a house for \$4000 at the present time. However, a business crisis was taking place and he hoped to be able to buy a small house at a mortgage sale.¹⁰⁰

The hall at Santarém had been started and he wanted to go there next if possible dedicate it the last part of August. There were candidates

96. To Willingham.

97. To Willingham, March 16, 1905.

98. To Willingham.

99. To Willingham.

100. To Willingham.

for baptism in all the churches and he did not get back to Manaõs for a month. According to the Religious Herald, H.L.Hamilton was going to Bahia instead of Santarém and Mr. Nelson was very disappointed at this report. He stressed the difficulty of his job due to high living and traveling expenses. He had to travel third class, everywhere with the cattle. "It is not the climate altogether, but it's the expense that drives such men as H. L. Hamilton to go South, and shall I say it, J.E.Hamilton to the grave, as it seems."¹⁰¹

It was not till October 26 that Nelson wrote again and he briefly writes of his plans for the near future. He planned going to Santarém on the eighth of November to open the church there. About December 1 he hoped to go as far as Pará and try to be back in Manaus by January 1, 1906.¹⁰²

A few days later, October 30, Mrs. Nelson wrote from St. Louis that she arrived there on the twenty-seventh and was staying with some friends. She planned to leave for Greenville, South Carolina on November 1 and leave the children at the missionary home.¹⁰³

Mrs. Nelson arrived at Greenville on November 6 and wrote that she was leaving the three youngest children at the Margaret Home and was taking the oldest two with her. The ones left at the home were Ira Amazon Nelson, age 11, Inor Gordon Nelson, age 9, and Carey Hawthorne Nelson, age 6. Mrs. Nelson expected to stay in Greenville till November 19 or 20 when the Home was formally opened.¹⁰⁴

The next report from Mr. Nelson is that of November 7 from Manaõs. Alves, his Brazilian helper at Pará was sick again and Nelson feared he would die and leave him the work to do alone once more. Once again he implored Willingham to send a young man to the Amazon where they

101. To Willingham.
102. To Willingham.
103. To Willingham.
104. To Willingham.

were so greatly needed.

Soon after, he was on his way to Santarém and opened the new meeting house which seated 100 on November 19, and since his arrival he and Emigdio had been preaching every night.

106

Mrs. Nelson arrived at Pará from New York on December 20 and Mr. Nelson was there to meet her. He arrived at Pará on December 8 and held very good meetings, and he hoped to use the basement of the church for a printing office. A further improvement had been the addition of electric lights and a tank for baptizm.

107

They were back in Manaõs by December 30 but there is no report from him till January 26, 1906. He expected to go back to Santarém a few days later to help the young man preaching there. In Manaõs the rainy season had come on and they were forced to move out of their house and move into a suitable home which cost them \$80 a month. The work was going fairly well all over the field, they had had some conversions during prayer week and planned to have more baptizms. Also, the sale of Bibles was still going very well.

108

On February 25 he wrote from Santarém of the receipt of a letter from a Mr. Parrack at Louisville, Kentucky, saying he was coming to the Amazon. Mr. Nelson inquired of Willingham if the Board was sending him or if he was coming on his own hook. He had been in Santarém since February 10 and was preparing things for the arrival of a new helper, Almeida Sobrinho, who was to arrive the fifth of March. He expected the church here to do well under Sobrinho's care. The work at Manaõs was going well, but would go better if he could be there constantly.

109

On March 17 Mr. Nelson left for Solimoes to work for two weeks

105. To Willingham.

106. To Willingham.

107. To Willingham.

108. To Willingham.

109. To Willingham.

but there is no report from him while there. He next writes from Manaõs on April 5 after his return and he points out that if he could get two men from the United States, one for Pará and one for Manaõs he would be able to spend all his time in the interior. On April 16 from Manaõs he had some good news to report. They were having a series of meetings and hoped to keep it up for a month for the interest is good. Those baptized so far in 1906 were as follows: Pará, 19,¹¹⁰ Santarém 1, Manaõs, 3, and Solimoes, 3, a total of 26.

¹¹¹
Mr. Nelson went to Pará on May 10 according to Mrs. Nelson and on June 11 Mr. Nelson wrote from there that Mr. Parrick had arrived the night before. He was delighted with Parrick and stayed a few days with him. The church at Pará now had 114 members and expected more soon. By July 4 Nelson was back home in Manaõs and Mr. Parrick with him since Parrick was to live with them while he was learning the language. Mr. Nelson asked that the Board to pay at least all their house rent from October on for it would greatly ease their financial situation.¹¹²

On July 11 Mr. Nelson wrote once again to the Board reminding them of his need for men. The weather in the Amazon Valley was not suitable for Brazilians from other parts and they therefore did not last many years, and he needed two more men at once. "I would also remind the Board that we have been in the Valley almost 15 years. It may be necessary before many years to seek a different climate. We may therefore find it necessary to go south into Motto Grosso."¹¹³ No Protestant work was being done in that state. Furthermore, they still had no men for Iquitos, Peru.¹¹⁴

He was still at Manaõs on August 17 and he reported at that time that the church had chosen a regular pastor and paid him \$85 a month. Mr. Nelson and his family decided to move to Santarém for the work at

110. To Willingham.

111. To Willingham.

112. To Willingham.

113. To Willingham.

114. Ibid.

Manaõs was safe and there were several towns near Santarém which could be worked only from there. Also, house rent at Santarém was cheaper, which they had to consider. A piece of bad news for Mr. Nelson was the sudden resignation of Mr. Parrick for which no reason whatever was given. "It surely is a blow to our plans, but we are getting used to surprises and God knows what is best."¹¹⁵

A little over a week later Mr. Nelson was laid up with hemorrhage, and it was not until September 8 that they were on their way to Santarém. Before they left, the church at Manaõs presented him with a gold watch, and Mrs. Nelson received a gold pen and pin. By September 8 Mr. Nelson¹¹⁶ was better but still very weak.

On September 21 Mr. Nelson was at Pará and he wrote that his family was at Santarém but due to the difficulty of getting a good location they were not permanently settled yet. He finished by saying he believed the allowance for 1907 should be the same as this year.¹¹⁷ One month later he was still at Pará helping the work but said he would be in Manaõs by Christmas, and then spend at least three months in Santarém helping the work there.*

On November 21 he wrote from Pará that his helper there, Alves, had to be thrown out of the church for "living a double life" and he was still there straightening things out. In a few days a Brother Aguiar planned¹¹⁸ to take charge of the work and Mr. Nelson was to go to Santarém.

He was back in Santarém by December 11 and then made a short trip to Manaõs, but returned to Santarém on December 20 with the news that they were all well, but the town was full of leprosy. In his first letter of 1907, dated January 7, he says that half the families of Santarém had leprosy, and they necessarily came into close contact with them. This

115. To Willingham.

116. To Willingham.

117. To Willingham.

118. To Willingham.

situation added doubly to their work and made it far more dangerous. To add to this difficulty he had just received word that Aguiar at Pará was ill and could not stay there any longer, so Mr. Nelson decided to go to Pará in May or June. To offset this news, Mr. Nelson was able to report that the Women's Audiliary Society was doing good work and that the Sunday School at Santarém was doing well, but as for Pará he believed¹¹⁹ "there is a tough fight ahead."

Soon after this Mr. Nelson fell sick again and on February 6 he asked that Entzminger be sent at once for he was needed at Pará and Manaós. Mr. Nelson was fearful that he would have to return to the United States again to recuperate although already he felt better. A little over a month later, on March 16, things were worse for Mr. Nelson had been sick for seven weeks and could hardly walk, so they decided that he was to go to Sao Paulo or further in April for his health. Furthermore, Santarém was being ravaged by smallpox which they had to be more careful of catching. They expected their home to be finished in a week, and the church also.¹²⁰

One month later he was in Pará having arrived on March 14. How he managed to recuperate the way he did seems well-nigh miraculous, for now he tells us that he is better so is not going south as planned. The work at Pará seemed to be doing fairly well and the church was still active, but Pará still needed a good man to take care of the work there. He was to preach at Pinheiro on Sunday, and then proceed to Solimoes in April. On March 27 Mr. Nelson made his report for the first quarter of 1907 and made the following statements as to his plans and conditions in the Amazon. There were fewer churches in Solimoes now since so many people had moved up the River. As for Pinheiro regular services were being held there now and members were being added every month. There was

119. To Willingham.

120. To Willingham.

a conference to be held at Bahia but he was too busy to attend much as he wanted to, and for the same reason he found it impossible to go to Pernambuco for a week to preach as he was invited to do. He hoped to go to Solimoes the next week, March 14, and to the headwaters of the Amazon (Acre Region) in December, and he hoped to have a church in Anamá the following year. These are the things he prayed and hoped he could do but their accomplishment would be assured if he had more men to help him, workers were still needed badly. He felt much better now and the climate at Pará agreed with him.

121

It was not until June 1 that Mr. Nelson again wrote to Willingham and he said that they had finally found a good house in which to settle. The work was progressing nicely and he still felt fit. His worker at Solimoes, Gomes dos Santos, was at Pará since his wife was sick, therefore, with Santos to watch things in Pará Mr. Nelson could go to Bahia after all, and on the way he planned to stop off to see what could be done to other points to the south.

122

Mr. Nelson did not write from Bahia but waited till his return to Pará on July 31. He much enjoyed the trip to Bahia and his first Brazilian convention. He stayed there for two weeks and did some preaching, and his stops on the way showed him that the district between Pará and Bahia around Pernambuco needed men to open up work. Gomes dos Santos had to go to Ceará for his wife's health and so Mr. Nelson wanted him to work there for he believed it would become a big mission, since so many people went there to live. It had the added attraction also of being a health resort. He stated that the work at Pará and Manaós was ahead of Bahia. Pará now had railroads and streetcars and he wanted to see Christianity strongly entrenched in this growing city.

123

In his letter of August 20 written to the Foreign Mission Journal, Mr. Nelson merely reviewed four books that had been sent him and in the

reviewing again indicated his dislike of Catholics and other Protestant denominations.¹²⁴ This attitude was prevalent everywhere at this time however, so Mr. Nelson's attitude is hardly unexpected or strange.

On September 6 Mr. Nelson made a brief report to the Foreign Mission Board which included the following figures for the second quarter of 1907. "They have baptized eleven, one has joined the church by letter, and four have been reconciled (those who had joined previously but strayed from the church and now come back), making a total of sixteen. However, nine were excluded from the church for straying, and one member left to join another church, a total of ten. Therefore the total increase in membership is six. As for finances they have raised about \$650 on the field."¹²⁵

Mr. Nelson does not write again for almost four months for his next letter is dated December 2. He moved his headquarters 250 miles south of Pará to establish Baptist influence in the states of Maranhao, Pinhy, and Ceara. Another consideration was that he could regain his full strength from the sea breeze in this region. "You will tell me that we have too big a field now. This is a fact, but we believe we can do better work in the Amazon by having our home outside at this stage of the work. The time has come in Brazil when missionaries must take a back seat as Pastors, or cause divisions and cripple the efforts of the natives. It is therefore not altogether necessary to have a missionary at the head of a church. We should give our time to instructing native preachers and opening new fields."¹²⁶ He planned going to Castanhal the next Sunday to baptize; twelve were baptized there lately and he hoped to organize a church there in February. It seems that persecution was going on in Santarém and he was needed there but could not go there till they were settled at Maranhao and he had regained his full strength.¹²⁷

124. To Willingham.

125. To Foreign Mission Board.

126. To Smith.

127. To Smith.

On December 30 Mr. Nelson wrote to W. H. Smith (acting secretary of the Board in Willingham's absence) asking him to present the following consideration to the Board. "The Amazon Valley Baptist Convention had just closed its second session. Last year we met in Manaõs; we were then six ministers. This year we were only three because one could not come for lack of means, one had been excluded for sin, and one, Mr. Parrick, had 'skipped the country'. We have had a tumultuous year of it, but we have come out ahead so we thank God and take courage. We respectfully present to you the following table which represents actual needs. Since we have lost all hope of receiving any reinforcements from the States, in the form of missionaries, we must utilize native helpers, and in order to do that we must pay them a salary commensurate with the needs of the Amazon Valley"¹²⁸ Mr. Nelson suggested the following yearly salaries: for Manaõs \$400, for Solimoes \$500, for Santarém \$500, Pará \$400, and for Castanhal \$500.¹²⁹

Mrs. Nelson was almost worn out physically and it seemed impossible for them to hold out another year. Therefore, if they could not go to the United States they planned to go to Maranhao or Ceara to recover their health and to open a new station.¹³⁰

By January 16, 1908, they had moved to Maranhao and Mr. Nelson writes asking for \$100 for moving expenses and \$100 for seats and lamps for the mission. The churches at Pará, Manaõs, and Santarém were doing well, and he was to visit them a couple of times a year, and he again asked for a man or two if the Board could send them. At Pinhy one of his old converts got several other people there interested in the Gospel so Mr. Nelson went there to start a church. At Maranhao, they had preached several times already in the home of a convert, and also a couple of times for

128. To Smith.

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid.

the Presbyterians.

They received the right to come home in the spring and the money to bring them home, but Mr. Nelson writes on January 20 that they had changed their minds and were staying in Brazil. This changing of plans is hard to understand when only two weeks before he had written that they could not hold out another year. The only explanation given is that they were needed in the field. The previous evening, January 19, they held a meeting in the home of a convert and made benches with their own hands, bought a lamp and prepared the first meeting room at Maranhao. They were looking for a hall to rent at \$25 a month and he asked Smith to send \$25 a month and also to pay their rent till they could build their own hall, thus they needed \$500 for Maranhao this year. He hoped to get a man from Pará to sell Bibles here, and in the Spring of 1909 a man from Manaõs to take charge. He bathed daily in the salt water and felt better.

The next news from him is on March 7 from Pará where he arrived a few days before. Before going to Pará he went into the interior by railroad and started a church of 21 members and bought a good lot for \$100 on which to build a hall later. He felt well and planned to proceed to Santarém in a day or two. Another two months passes before he writes again on May 5 from Maranhao, and the letter is to Willingham again who had taken over his post as secretary to the Board. Mr. Nelson sent his quarterly report at this time as follows: 15 had been baptized on the field; two churches had been organized; two new fields opened (Obidos and Maranao, Obidos is about 100 miles up the river from Santarem); one worker had been ordained, he had acquired three new workers, one lot for building a church had been bought (at Castanhal), and one building had been put up in the Acre country which he had not yet visited. "Our

131. To Smith.

132. To Willingham.

quarterly report is not much but its our very best. Lack of and the field expanding all the time of course make things scattered." ¹³³ While he was traveling he left the work at Maranhao to a young inexperienced man with Mrs. Nelson helping. He had been preaching in a cabin to large crowds but they later rented a hall and by the last of the month they expected a young worker from Santarém (Pastor Manoel Gomes dos Santos) to take charge of this field. He expected to visit Rio de Janeiro next month and after he returned he planned taking up the work in the interior and visit the states of Pinhy and Ceara. One of his converts from Manaos had started work in Pinhy, and in a few days a deacon of Pará went to Ceara, to he hoped to establish work in these states before the end of the year. He had just returned to Maranhao from a trip up the Amazon where he started a church at Castanhal (22 members) in the state of Pará. He also visited Obidos and baptized five there, but did not organize a church because there was no one to take charge. In the neighborhood of Manaos a church was started with thirteen members and a young man ordained. They needed a man to take charge of Maranhao and start a school for it was too far to send a man to Rio de Janeiro to be trained. "We need a supply for the Amazon Valley and this is the place; living is cheaper, but especially the climate is good (he must be referring to the coast). Besides, I must take my family home next year and someone ought to be here in my place to look after the work in my absence." ¹³⁴

On May 30 Mr. Nelson said that he was leaving for Rio de Janeiro to attend a convention. He also reports that a man had gone to Ceara to work and that \$500 ¹³⁵ a year was needed for that state.

On June 17 Mr. Nelson wrote from Rio that he had been to Sao Paulo

133. Ibid.

134. Ibid.

135. To Willingham.

for three days visiting Bagby. "He (Bagby) has a fine field, a good school and a good book store."¹³⁶ On July 1 he was still at Rio and wrote that he would stop at Ceara a couple of weeks on his return trip, and try to organize a church. He had decided to make Maranhao their permanent home because of its good climate. It was near enough to the Amazon Valley to make it possible to look after that field; house rent and other expenses were less; it was the nearest point to the Amazon Valley; and finally since they were extending their work to Pinhy and Ceara, it was a central location. "The state is populous, it raises cotton and has three big cotton factories and still exports raw cotton and a cotton of exceptional quality."¹³⁷

The reason he visited Sao Paulo was primarily to see how the school work was carried on in the different fields. "We are convinced that very few of our Amazon Valley men will study in Southern Brazil; it's too cold. Customs are different, the Amazon Valley people are too much Indian to put up with strange customs readily. Therefore, we must prepare a school nearer home. Manaos and Par  are expensive and not healthy, therefore Maranhao is the place. Any missionary can live there; our workers in the Amazon need to come to Maranhao now and then to recuperate and they would then stop a year and study. Changing about we could have a strong force of workers in Maranhao who would study and work at the same time. Many families from all over the Amazon would willingly send their children to Maranhao if we had a permanent institution or college for children. Maranhao classes itself the 'Athens of Brazil'."¹³⁸ Mr. Nelson said he would open a school at Maranhao on his return to Maranhao if they were not so run down physically and forced to return to the United States the next year. "I wish to say a work here without

136. To Willingham.

137. To Willingham.

138. Ibid.

reflecting on my Brethren. We missionaries must not be Pastors. We must get Brazilians to do that work and only practice makes perfect. Therefore, let me have a missionary to educate the young preachers and pastors. I can open fields and supply the school with students and only thus can we save Brazil through Brazilians. If we do not look out there will be a split between missionaries and workers, the same as has happened with the Presbyterians, and that will be unfortunate. (It has happened in our churches in Pernambuco, Maceio, Bahia and Rio to a large extent). I do not believe it will happen in Sao Paulo and I have no fear in the Amazon as I put Brazilians to work, but especially I will have no truck with masonry." ¹³⁹

The son of Mr. Mrs. Bagby was thinking of going to Brazil and Mr. Nelson was going to write to him and try to get him to take over when they went home the following year. The convention had ended and he returned north on July 9.

On July 28 Mr. Nelson was back in Maranhao and while in Ceara he preached three times and went 100 miles into the country. Now that he was back in Maranhao he prepared for an extended trip to the state of Pinhy. ¹⁴⁰

One month later he was in Maranhao. He wrote to Willingham that young Bagby was not coming to Brazil since he wished to go to a seminary, but he (Bagby) advised Nelson to try J.J.Oliveira. He expected to start for Pinhy and Ceara in three days, and he hoped to go to the Acre territory in December. Pará had had twenty baptizms lately as had Mañaoś and Santarém. Physically he was still run down and although not actually sick he could not preach ten days in succession. He concludes this letter ¹⁴¹ by inviting Willingham to come down and see their work next year.

Because of his condition it is not surprising to hear on September 10

139. Ibid.

140. To Willingham.

141. To Willingham.

that he was obliged to stay at home due to illness, and Mrs. Nelson had been sick also. However, he said he hoped to be off by the end of the week. He was also still paying the hall rent for Maranhao and Ceara and was surprised at the delay of the Board in helping these two states. He warned that the work in these two states would fail if the Board did not come through since his private means were used up. They were working in a territory equal to two-fifths of Brazil, but in spite of these difficulties he hoped to open more fields on his next trip. ¹⁴²

We next hear from Mr. Nelson three months later, on November 10, at which time he was aboard the ~~S.S.~~ S. Jaboaatãs. He left Maranhao on September 16 for the interior passing the state of Maranhao and crossing on the only railroad in that state, about sixty-five miles. He went to Pinhy first, baptized four and started a church at Jerumenha, on the way back he baptized four at Floriano, preached at Amarante and hoped to have a church there in the near future for there was much interest. No one had ever preached at these places before and this interest showed the possibilities for spreading the Gospel in Brazil. After this he went to Therezina, the capital of the state, and preached for a Presbyterian congregation; and hoped to open work there in February. The chief means of transportation in this area was by horseback or on the Parnahyba River. "The state is not populous but the people are the most liberal of any state in the union." ¹⁴³ There were eight good-sized towns of from 5,000 to 25,000 people. On the eighth of November he spoke at Camosim in Ceara, but the persecution was so great he resolved to embark on the steamer Jaboaatão to save his own life and those of a number of Catholics who were resolved to defend him. He asked for protection from the

142. To Willingham.

143. To Willingham.

Governor, but got no response; however, he hoped to go back to Ceara in March or April.

On November 11 he reached Ceara and preached there that night. On November 12 he preached and baptized several and organized them into the First Baptist Church of this state. He acknowledged receipt of Willingham's estimate for 1909, forwarded by his wife. "It surprised me not a little. I am extending our work in five states, the last quarter of this year we have the necessary means to work our field. Now for next year you cut us down to \$500 for two new states. How can the Board expect a church of ten members to sustain a pastor, where we fight against odds? I will have to modify our plans for the states of Pará and Amazonas. Robbing them to supply the states of Pará and Amazonas. But I am not going backward. If I can get a competent man for the new state of Pinhy I will ask for five hundred dollars for that state alone."¹⁴⁴

Mr. Nelson was in Pará on November 21 and he reported that a young man from the Presbyterians with two years study had come to him and would take care of the work in Ceara. On November 22, he left for Santarém and Solimoes.¹⁴⁵

About the middle of January, 1909 Mr. Nelson sent Willingham his report of the Amazon Valley Mission for 1908. They traveled more than 15,500 miles, took part in the convention at Rio de Janeiro and visited churches south as far as Santos. He visited and established a church in Maranhao, in Pinhy and in Ceara. Altogether, five churches were formed during the year and 146 were baptized, the total number of converts in his field was now 412, and he had some very good helpers amongst them. The work was branching out still more, and he hoped several of the churches would be self-supporting in 1909. During the year many Bibles and testaments were sold and over \$2,800 were raised on the field. The

144. To Willingham.

145. To Willingham.

vastness of the task is well shown by his expression: "Our field from Ceara to Manaõs and Rio Acre would cover from Galveston, Texas to New York and Boston with one missionary at Atlanta, Georgia."¹⁴⁶

On February 10 Mr. Nelson told of a letter he received from Olliveira who offered to come to the Amazon as a missionary. Nelson was much pleased but pointed out to Willingham that what Brazil needed was pastors more than missionaries. The pastors stay in one place, become one of the people and thereby gain advantages in training the people. Missionaries have to move about too much and have to put up with much opposition. However, he had asked Olliveira to come and help, also because they had to go to the United States in the spring and someone had to take charge of things in his absence.

Since they still had no hall at Maranhao he preached in the parks on Sundays and on the streets week nights. However, in spite of these difficulties, there was a lot of interest and three were baptized the next Sunday. Since Manaõs was self-supporting he used its \$400 allowance at Maranhao, but if Olliveira came he said he would need \$500 alone as he would have to travel a lot.¹⁴⁷

Almost a month later, on March 4, he pleaded with Willingham to find out what had happened to his children in the Margaret Home in Carolina since he had not heard from them since December 2 when scarlet fever broke out there. He ends by insisting that if someone does not relieve them in a few weeks they will have to leave as they cannot hold out any longer.

Two weeks later, on March 18, he was happy to report that he had finally heard from his children who were well. They had made definite plans to leave Maranhao about June 1 for Manaõs where they planned to catch a steamer for New York. On March 23 he wrote to the Foreign Mission

146. To Willingham.

147. Ibid.

Board expressing his elation over their promise to give \$12,000 toward the building of a seminary in Rio if the Brazilian churches provided the amount to raise the total to \$50,000 which was the amount needed. Many of the Baptist missionaries in Rio who thought that the Amazon work was of no account and kept other missionaries from going there, calculated from the number of members and previous contributions how much each section of Brazil should contribute and found that the Amazon River section was second only to Rio in importance, and this from 1,000,046 square miles containing 3,000,000 whites and one missionary family. This statement indeed shows eloquently the great piece of work being done by Mr. Nelson with the able assistance of Mrs. Nelson and a few good native helpers.

On May 12 Mrs. Nelson at Maranhao acknowledged receipt of their passage money for home and explained the necessity of their returning to the United States. Mr. Willingham had told her that the Board was in debt and in her reply Mrs. Nelson offered one dollar a month to it and hoped other mission stations would do likewise. This seems a small offering but considering their own position it is far from small. Many times Mr. Nelson had bought equipment for the mission at his own expense and never once complained of the fact.

By the twenty-eighth of May Mr. Nelson was once again back in Maranhao and writes Willingham of his latest trip. He had just returned from Pinhy where he held splendid meetings in three different towns and even preached on two big ranches and baptized two. In Amarante he spoke for fifteen days and made fifteen converts there. Mr. Nelson said a man was needed in Pinhy to take charge over that large territory for much work could be done there. At Jermenha the priest with half a dozen assassins ordered him out of the town and as he was alone with no police protection in that area he left. However, he had secured government protection in that area now and he believed it would not happen again. In Maranhao they now had thirty members, all won in one year.

A few days later they left Maranhao to begin the trip to the United States. They proceeded first to Pará where "the church is doing well", reaching here on June 20. From here they went to Santarém¹⁴⁸ and then to Manaós planning to get the steamer about July 17.

The Nelsons arrived in New York about August 15 after which they went to Richmond on the 18. There is no information as to what happened here, merely postcards telling of their arrival. From here they proceeded to Greenville, South Carolina to pick up their children and then they went home to Chanute, Kansas arriving there on August 27, tired but happy; On October 2 Mr. Nelson wrote to Willingham and listed their traveling expenses from Manaós to Chanute and total amounted to \$504.50 and this sum the Board was willing to pay. On October 26 Mr. Nelson expressed his joy at hearing that a Rev. C. F. Stapp and wife had been appointed to the field in Pará and he asked confirmation of the report. The Board had also agreed to pay the expenses incurred by keeping three of the children at the Margaret Home. On February 8, 1910 Nelson was pleased to report that Olliveira had accepted the Board's offer of \$500 to work in Brazil and he was to leave in May or June. "The Amazon work is spreading fast¹⁴⁹ and needed good men in Pará, Pinhy and Ceara." A month later on March 7 Mr. Nelson sent to Willingham a report of the money raised by Manaós during 1909. During the year the Sunday School raised \$191.50, the Women's Auxiliary Society raised \$238, and the Young Peoples' Union raised \$217. After all expenses had been paid for the year, the church had \$52 of this amount. However, this was by no means all for the church members had raised nearly \$3,500 for a new church making their net assets in 1909 over \$5,000. This church at Manaós was ten years old and self-supporting; its members were planning to build another church and four of its members were preachers who were helping to evangelize the Amazon

148. To Willingham.

149. To Willingham.

Valley. This word picture is surely another tribute to the magnificent work so thoroughly started by Mr. Nelson in this equatorial land.

A week later on March 14 Mr. Nelson replied to Willingham that he would be willing to go anywhere in the United States under Southern Baptist control to speak on missions if Willingham so desired. He had decided to move to Waco, Texas soon after May 15. On March 29 he was off for Hobart, Oklahoma to speak and on April reported that he was being well-received. However, he had not heard from Texas and it seemed he was not wanted there.

Mrs. Nelson in Chanute on April 5 sent to Willingham a report of the Amazon work for 1909, admitting that it was incomplete. During 1909 about 100 baptizms took place. In addition, a church was organized in the Acre territory in 1908 with 23 members (this had been omitted in Mr. Nelson's report for 1908). At the end of 1908 the total membership in the Amazon Valley was 412, by the end of 1909 it was 538, an increase of 126. The churches all over the Valley were doing well, with the church at Manaõs prospering the best.

Mr. Nelson next wrote from Sawton, Oklahoma on April 13 where he was having good meetings, and was being invited to other places. He planned to be a Chickasha on the fourteenth, Ardmore on the fifteenth, and at Denison, Texas on the seventeenth, and from there he planned going to Dallas. He added that if Olliveira went to Pará he would stay in the United States during 1911 and speak all over the country, but he wanted to return to Brazil after that. He also told Willingham at this time that he would like the Board to put \$500 into motor boats for the Amazon Valley field.

By April 29 Mr. Nelson was back in Chanute and in his letter to Willingham reports that his trip was very successful with the churches responding well, and he believed it would be a very good idea to always have some missionaries touring the United States and in this way keep

up interest in the missionary work. His expenses amounted to \$47.50 which were paid by the Board, and on this amount he visited twenty-three towns and cities in Oklahoma and Texas. The hotel bills ranged from twenty cents to \$1.80 and averaged fifty cents, quite in contrast with hotel rates today.

Mr. Nelson did not write again till May 16, and he urged that Olliveira be sent to Brazil at once. Also, he again posed the question of the motorboats and asked what the chances were. From here he went on to list the needs of the Amazon Valley: (1) a kerosene motor boat for man and wife on Madeira River, (2) a three horsepower motor for a canoe to run on the Acre River, cost \$300, (3) a motor for a canoe on the Solimoes River above Manaõs, cost \$300, and (4) one motor for a canoe for personal use, cost \$300. This would make the total cost \$3,900 and the grand total including freight costs and duties about \$5000.

About the end of May Mr. Nelson wrote to Willingham saying he had decided to go back to Brazil in August. (Olliveira was still in the United States and there was no explanation as to why he had not gone to Brazil). The Board decided not to appropriate the money for the boats requested so Mr. Nelson asked for \$500 expenses in the Madeira River area especially since the Madeira Manicoré Railroad was to make the river the thoroughfare of Bolivia.

On June 3 he was at Randolph, Kansas and wrote that he hoped to raise enough money for a boat for himself. He had learned that Olliveira had finally gone to Brazil but he had decided to return anyway. He was well and strong again and longed to get back to his chosen field. On June 22 from Chanute he requested that Mrs. Nelson be allowed to remain in the United States another as "no American woman can stand the climate in Northern Brazil during the age of change of life".

A week later Nelson discovered there was to be no Board meeting in July and so he asked Willingham to lay the following matter before the Board. "A church of twelve members has been organized (May 23) on the Madeira River. The church was organized by the pastor of the Antes Miri church on a small tributary of the Madeira River, so this makes two churches with no pastoral help from the Board. We ought to help this man and work on this river."¹⁵¹ On his return to Brazil he hoped to make more of the churches self-sufficient, but he also hoped to open new ones which would require money; therefore, he asked that allowances for 1911 be the same as that for 1910. He planned to leave New York¹⁵² on August 15.

He sailed from New York on August 16 and arrived in Pará on August 31. He met Olliveira who was well, and planned to stay in Pará for a week. A month later on September 29 he was in Maranhao and reported that the church at Pará had secured a Pastor and so Olliveira had opened up work in another part of the town, and was also working along the railroad area. Another helper was working from the coast towards the interior and together these two men covered 100 miles and ten towns. With these men in Pará no missionaries were needed, but he asked the Board to send someone to Manaõs or Maranhao. He also made another financial request of \$100 for literature and incidentals since other fields were allowed¹⁵³ this amount.

The next letter from Nelson is not till November 26 in which he acknowledged receipt of his allotments. He did not receive an appropriation for the Madeira River area but he hoped to make both ends meet until next year when new appropriations were made. The reason for his being kept in Maranhao for two months was the illness of his helper who would never be

151. To Willingham.

152. Ibid.

153. To Willingham.

able to work again. However, he expected to get a new man who was ordained in Pará last September, and then he hoped to go to Manaõs to dedicate the new brick church. On December 17 he was at Pará preaching every night.

His next letter is dated January 20, 1911 and is from Pará and he explains that he intended going to Manaõs but things went wrong at Pará. Olliveira couldn't handle them so I sent him up-river to do evangelistic work. Here is where Hamilton died, where Parrick got scared and where the Devil has his headquarters.¹⁵⁴ He was preaching three times every Sunday, led the Sunday School and preached every night except Saturday (a rather full schedule to say the least particularly considering the climate in which he is working).

Two months passed before he wrote again on March 25 from Manaõs. The second church at Manaõs had been dedicated and he expected a third church to be built soon. Both churches were having excellent meetings. He planned on going back to Pará for three months as things were still in bad shape there. From Manaõs he planned on going to Pernambuco to attend a convention.¹⁵⁵

On May 2 he wrote from Pernambuco that there was a young man in Pará who had been accepted by the Northern Board to go to Assam but he had soon resigned and went to Brazil. The young man now wished to be accepted by the Southern Board and Nelson requested that this be done for a man who was badly needed at Pará.¹⁵⁶

There is no news from Nelson again till June 20 at which time he was at Therezina in the state of Pinhy. He arrived thirteen days before and was preaching every night. The priests tried to disturb him but this time he had government protection and large crowds listened to him. "This is a good place for a man as the authorities are cooperative, and

154. To Willingham.

155. To Willingham.

156. To Willingham.

a school is needed there as the priests have a seminary."¹⁵⁷ He finished by saying he was going up-river 200 miles, then to Maranhao and Pará.

Another three months pass before Mr. Nelson writes again, this time from Pará on September 14 with the sad news that one of his finest helpers, Pastor Thomas Aguiar, died that day. He wrote again five days later rather despondently. He realized the Board was divided as to what to do about his field so he determined to work harder with less materials. "Pinhy desperately needs a man. A Pentecostal movement under Vingren has arisen. Forget my other petitions but send someone to attend that multitude."¹⁵⁸ Since Thomas Aguiar had died he could spare no one. As usual he was preaching every night and twice on Sundays.

Mr. Nelson stayed in Pará doing what he could to strengthen the work till December 4 at which time he was ready to leave for Manaõs according to his letter of that date. "Unless I get a helper from the Board I cannot advance, and might go backward. I am well but cannot handle it all!"¹⁵⁹

On December 16 he wrote from Manaõs saying it was important to get a pastor for this church. The church was self-supporting and could pay a salary. Mr. Nelson received word that a second missionary had been sent to Espirito Santo and that he inquired as to why the Board could not afford to send one to Pará or Pinhy. "May God have compassion on this lone worker abandoned to this vast region."¹⁶⁰ Certainly it seems his field was being slighted and after the splendid work he had done in the past ten or more years he had good cause to utter such a request.

Mr. Nelson did not write again till February 21, 1912 which letter

157. To Willingham.

158. To Willingham.

159. To Willingham.

160. To Willingham.

he starts by saying he was sorry he wrote the above of December 16. Things were not going well with the Board, and he explained that working alone he gets nervous. The Manaõs church offered a salary of \$2,000 yearly for a pastor and he wished the Board could get someone to come. As soon as he leaves a state the work begins to fall. The territory was too big and unless he got at least one man the work would decrease since it was impossible for him to cover it all alone.¹⁶¹

On April 10 he was able to report some good news, namely that three had been baptized in Pará this year, and also three at Cestanchel.

Two months later on July 5 he wrote from Pará that he had just returned from Manaõs. They were holding a convention on the 24th and he hoped that some of his problems would be solved.

However, just ten days later he had to report that the convention was not held since too few people could come. This turn of affairs left him very disappointed as can be very easily imagined since it was the first one to have been held in his territory. He hoped to leave on July 16 for Pernambuco to confer with his fellow missionaries.

On his way back from Pernambuco he stopped at Maranhao a few days before going on to Pará, but he was back in Pará on August 21.¹⁶²

Mr. Nelson spent the next nine months doing his best to strengthen the work in Pará and he does not write again till May 27, 1913. Toniz Reis, one of his helpers, had been sick for some time but was now well and had been chosen pastor of the Pará church, and he (Nelson) was going to try and get a man from Manaõs from Southern Brazil. Mr. Nelson tried to impress on Willingham the importance of the Amazon Valley by stating: "The great American financier, Farquer, thinks so much of the Amazon Valley that he has about fifty steamers, the Madeira Manicoré Railroad

161. To Willingham.

162. To Willingham.

and the ports of Pará and Manaós and a large tract of land on the north bank of the Amazon in his hands." ¹⁶³ He constantly had trouble primarily because of the lack of good missionaries to aid him. It seems the Foreign Mission Board did not think his field as important or fruitful as some of its other fields of endeavor.

Another three months goes by before Mr. Nelson writes again on August 4. This letter also takes up his worker problem. "I think that the Board ought to send Rev. Kirchner who is in Southern Brazil in Victoria. There are two missionaries there and it is the smallest field in Brazil while mine is the largers, therefore two missionaries are not needed in Victoria but two are needed in the Amazon Valley." ¹⁶⁴

This letter is written from Maranhao just after he returned from a trip to Therezina and Codó in Pinhy and Maranhao (states) respectively. His helper at Codó was doing a fine job and eight were baptized during this visit. Now he was back in Maranhao and was preaching nightly.

On September 3 he wrote to Willingham that he had heard that Dr. Sangston was going home for a rest, and he was wondering if Dr. Sangston could not be sent to the Amazon Valley after his furlough ended. "Send him to Pará to open a school as he is a natural teacher, a second Hamilton." ¹⁶⁵ By November 10 he still had no reply for missionaries, and on top of that he writes that the financial situation was bad. He also took this opportunity to make a formal application to go to the United States in April, 1914 for just a few months. "I wish to bring back my wife. She is a poor sailor so it is not best for her to come alone. Also, I wish to put my children where they can get an education away from their parents." ¹⁶⁶

From December 21 to 25 the Brazilian Baptist Convention met at Pará and on the thirtieth Mr. Nelson writes jubilantly of the results.

163. To Willingham.

164. To Willingham.

165. To Willingham.

166. To Willingham.

"Every field was represented and the Amazon Valley showed up excellently and lots of work was done. A splendid spirit of union was manifested. All missionaries present agreed that the field (Amazon) has a great future and must be manned at once. We need a permanent man and wife at Pará and a man from the South is willing to come. I feel much younger since the convention." ¹⁶⁷ Mr. Nelson wrote again the next day, December 31 expressing his regret at hearing of Willingham's illness. He was at Manaós and street preaching constantly with more response every night. However, financially there was a depression in the Amazon Valley. All houses were closing down since the price of rubber was very low and there was no rise in sight. There were over 1000 houses vacant, but in spite of this state of affairs he determined to meet all expenses if possible. Both Dr. Sangston and Dr. Kerchner were to come to the Amazon but had as yet received no reply from either. Having received the permission of the Board to come home he planned to leave Pará on March 30.

He arrived in New York on April 19 and went straight to Stillwater, Oklahoma and on the twenty-seventh wrote that he was preaching there and in the neighborhood. He was sorry to see that Mrs. Nelson was not so well as he expected. On May 9 from Stillwater, Mrs. Nelson wrote that Mr. Nelson was then in Kansas attending a convention.

Mr. Nelson wrote next on June 13 when he was back in Stillwater. He preached several times a week here but found it too expensive to travel around. A piece of good news for him was that a Rev. E.F. Trip of Hicory, Oklahoma wanted to go to Iquitos, Peru. "I sold eight boxes of Bibles there in 26 days eleven years ago. It is a good field and needs a good man." ¹⁶⁸

On June 16 Mr. Nelson learned from Dr. Ray (temporary secretary in Willingham's absence due to illness) that the Board would be willing

167. To Willingham.

168. To Willingham.

to pay his touring expenses if he spoke in behalf of the Board on his lectures.

On August 7 Mrs. Nelson wrote that Mr. Nelson was in Kentucky attending a convention.

The next report from Mr. Nelson is on September 10 from Stillwater. He enjoyed the convention at Kentucky and was very glad to be able to talk there and in Tennessee. "The Campbell County Baptist Association resolved to buy a motor boat for the Madeira River." ¹⁶⁹ He was now anxious to get back to Brazil as the news from there was encouraging. However, on September 16 Mr. Nelson was told that the Board probably would not even be able to send him back to Brazil this year because of financial difficulties. Therefore, on September 21 Mr. Nelson replied that since he could not go back to Brazil at present he would continue lecturing since he felt that was the way he could do the most good. During the following months spent in lecturing Mr. Nelson received \$129.16 from the Board per month plus his traveling expenses.

Mr. Nelson next wrote to the Foreign Mission Journal from Mobile, Alabama on February 20, 1915 stating he had greatly enjoyed his stay in the United States because it gave him the opportunity to speak to thousands of people and to create new interest in missionary work, but he ¹⁷⁰ hoped that he could return to Brazil this year.

On March 9 from Fayette, Alabama Nelson wrote that the campaign in Alabama would be over by the fifteenth. Dr. Graves, the man with whom he was working, had asked him to go to Tennessee and help in a campaign ¹⁷¹ there but he said he was anxious to get back to Brazil. On March 12 Dr. Ray informed Nelson that he could probably return to Brazil in May and asked him to continue helping Dr. Graves until then.

On April 26 he received bad news from Brazil. Hamilton at Pernambuco said that matters were serious at Pará, and he was not taking steps to solve the difficulty till Nelson returned. He was afraid a division

would occur in the church. Dr. Ray informed Mr. Nelson on May 6 that he could sail for Brazil in early June, and on May 25 Dr. Ray wrote that Nelson could travel on June 10 from New York and enclosed the passage money. Dr. Ray had to refuse the \$300 Nelson asked for to buy motors since the Board was in debt.

Mr. Nelson arrived in Pará on June 28 after enjoying a good trip and he was going to Maranhao in a few days after he did what he could for Pará.¹⁷² He wrote again on July 1 from Pará saying that two Pentecostal missionaries were there with another expected soon. This makes his job all the harder but he was hopeful. He now had two outboard motors to aid him in getting around but two more were needed. He was having difficulty settling the dispute that threatened to divide the church. However, he hoped to go to Santarém this week and on the way stop at Parintins and try to locate a new helper.

Mr. Nelson found he would have to stay longer in Pará than he figured on for he writes from there again on July 20 with the news that the pastor of the Maranhao church would soon be leaving to go to Pernambuco to study, and on top of this the two pastors in Pará could not look after their field by themselves. In addition, the pastor in the state of Amazonas was not well and could not possibly cover his field by himself which was three times as big as Texas, so Mr. Nelson decided to leave Pará and Maranhao for Amazonas and the Acre territory. "A man will be desperately needed in Pará by 1916 as I am going to be in Manaõs then. The missionaries of Pinhy and Pará can look after Maranhao."¹⁷³

Each year that he went to a convention he planned to stop at Maranhao for a month if he was needed. "The new missionary to Pará will have to open a school there to keep students in Pará. All northern Brazil realizes the need for this and I consider it necessary."¹⁷⁴

172. To Ray.

173. To Ray.

174. Ibid.

The next day, July 21, Mr. Nelson replied very hotly to news he had received that day. "I thought there was no money for new missionaries but other fields get them and not mine. That makes a liar of me to the churches where I spoke while at home. I was also under the impression that no one offered to come to the Amazon but now I know that Sangston offered to come, but still he was sent to Argentina. So I shall leave Pará so that I won't be in the way; this for the love of the cause. Send a man at once to Pará, God will not abandon me; send me anywhere; I'll work in harmony with the brethren. I'll go to Iquitos, Peru where we have several Baptists and sold several hundred Bibles thirteen years ago." ¹⁷⁵

Mr. Nelson's attitude and bitter letter are well justified after what he has gone through in the Amazon, and after requesting aid year in and year out and getting practically no response. The reason he said he would leave Pará and go elsewhere was because he thought he had done something to alienate the Board and that it did not want to help him. One month later on August 28 Dr. Ray replied to Nelson acknowledging receipt of his letter of July 21. It was true that the Board refused to send Sangston to Pará but Dr. Ray promised to show them his letter. Dr. Ray continued as follows: "I am sincerely sorry. I had no idea Sangston offered to go to Pará. He never expressed his desire here. If we have money we will send a man soon. I am not aware that anyone thinks you are in the way. We in Richmond heartily appreciate your endeavor and desire to cooperate fully. If some new missionaries are sent it might mean a shift of men but not through a lack of appreciation of you. I believe you are the pioneer; you desire to open new fields and go into the interior where the opportunities are. If you go I hope it is not with a feeling that we want you to eliminate yourself, but by the call of God." ¹⁷⁶

175. To Ray.

176. To Nelson.

A month later on September 29 Mr. Nelson replied to this sympathetic letter thanking Dr. Ray for understanding his position and the stand he took. The pastor at Pará was ill so he planned to stay there until a new man arrived.

On October 7 Mr. Nelson received a letter from Dr. Ray suggesting that he work with the other denominations in the Amazon to help him
177
cover his field. Mr. Nelson replied on October 23 saying he could not cooperate with all denominations. "First of all an Englishman opened a mission in Maranhao and called himself Baptist till I arrived, and then called himself a 'free Baptist'. He was never a member of the Baptist Church or ordained. He belongs to no organization and gives the Lord's Supper to all even Catholics. Secondly, the Pentecostals (Holy jumpers and rollers) have tried to work with the Baptists and Presbyterians but the people always drive them away as fakers. Thirdly, the Presbyterians sell shiskey, tobacco and go to the theatre. They are missionary and anti-missionary and their churches don't work together. Fourth, the Adventists are here and they only work amongst Evangelical Denominations. Fifthly, the Plymouth Brethren (Darbyists) baptize in every way, and they are divided into groups. And sixthly, the Prazilians are Roman Catholics, fanatical by nature, and it is hard for them to
178
be liberal and true to the Bible at the same time. They go to extremes." With these sort of conditions it was practically impossible to agree with the other denominations or to work effectively with them for the common cause. "If we can't work in union at home how can we preach union in the foreign field. Also, missionaries are stubborn and teach only what they
179
believe. They can't compromise or teach what they don't believe."

Mr. Nelson's next report to Dr. Ray was on January 5, 1916 from Pará. He had substituted the Castanhal workers for Pará since Pará was still

177. To Nelson.

178. To Ray.

179. Ibid.

lacking a pastor, and he had moved Angelo Banos from Santarém to Castanhal. "Castanhal is 45 miles from Pará and is a splendid center. Raimundo Nombé went to Santarém in Banos' place and I know he will do a good job."¹⁸⁰ Manuel Gomes dos Santos of Itacoatiaca was looking after the work at Santarém, at Solimoes, and at Rio Madeira. He also had two students helping him, one at Pará, the other at Manaós. He had just returned from a successful trip to Pernambuco, and on the way preached to interested crowds at Maranhao.

On the twenty-sixth of January Dr. Ray had to write and tell Nelson that because of lack of money a man could not be sent to Pará this year. Mr. Nelson did not reply till May 10. He had been touring for two months; all was well at Santarém and Itacoatica was building a church house. The Manaós church gave \$600 toward the projects, and Manaós was full of interest for eighteen were baptized last Sunday in the river. In one month twenty-eight were baptized there. He expected to go to Pará and Maranhao from Manaós a few days later but return as the Manaós work is "ripe for harvest".

On May 12 several of the preachers in the Amazon Valley wrote collectively to the Foreign Mission Board praising the work of Mr. Nelson. "When he goes to Pará and Maranhao, Manaós misses him and needs him. He baptized twenty people in one day and there are several more candidates every Sunday. Nelson's intense preaching is bringing tremendous results and many more will come to Jesus. Please send Pará a missionary."¹⁸¹ Dr. Ray replied to this on June 1 congratulating Nelson on his fine work but saying it was impossible to send anyone. The Board finished 1915 with a debt of \$180,000 and they were doing their best to lower it.

180. To Ray.

181. To Foreign Mission Board.

Mr. Nelson continued working at Pará and on July 19 he wrote that the owner of the church house in Maranhao would sell out at the end of the year and the Board should try to buy this or another location now. "It is necessary to act now as I will have to rent a house in Manaõs and will need extra money for a new hall in Maranhao if you don't buy a lot." ¹⁸²

On August 1 Dr. Ray wrote to Nelson that he hoped to send a man to Pará soon but expenditures had to be kept down to get the Board out of debt. However, on October 9 Dr. Ray had to retract his promise to send a man and said he could not send anyone till next May. Mr. Nelson replied that since a man could not be sent to Pará he would continue to work there.

On October 31 he wrote that he was going to Bahia for a few days and would try to get a man there for Pará. Dr. Ray replied that if such could be done that the Board would agree to the transfer. The group of Northern Brazilian missionaries gathering at Bahia wrote to the Southern Brazilian missionaries pleading for greater cooperation. "A better distribution of missionaries and fuller cooperation will strengthen both sides." ¹⁸³

By December 18 Nelson was at Maranhao and reported that the North Brazilian mission had decided to take over Maranhao and was sending a man here. The North Brazilian mission had also decided to let Dr. Downing go to Pará and when Downing got to Pará, Nelson planned to take all his belongings to Manaõs. On January 1, 1917 Dr. Ray writes to Nelson that the Board approved Dr. Downing's transfer, and the taking over of Maranhao by the mission. On January 22 Mr. Nelson was at Maranhao with the good news that Dr. Downing had finally arrived at Pará and he was much relieved. The North Brazilian mission was to meet in Manaõs in December

182. To Ray.

183. To South Brazil Mission.

so they would be ablt to see what progress he had made. "Next year I hope to penetrate further up the rivers and preach to the Indians closer to the Andes."¹⁸⁴

On February 5 Mr. Nelson reported briefly on his work at Manaõs. "I am getting settled and working hard. There were 66 baptizms in Manaõs last year and its 480 members contributed \$4,800 for all purposes and they hope to do better next year."¹⁸⁵

Once settled in Manaõs Mr. Nelson bought a two-story house to live in and cooks his own food. He did not expect to travel much this year but would try to build up the church. During this time when Mrs. Nelson and the children were in the United States they received \$91.50 every month from the Board.¹⁸⁶ By June 12 he was able to report that things were well and that he was preaching every night to hundreds of people with baptizm being held once a month regularly.

After his letter of June 12 there was no letter from Nelson until January 18, 1918 from Manaõs. There is no explanation of what happened to Dr. Downing at Pará but apparently he had left for Mr. Nelson insisted that Downing must return to Pará. He hoped to give most of his time to working in the interior. On March 4 Dr. Ray wrote to Nelson informing him that Dr. Downing would probably return to Pará in the fall. According to Dr. Ray's letter, Dr. Downing was forced to return to the United States due to his wife's illness. On April 23 Mr. Nelson replied. He had just returned from a six weeks cruise amongst the islands and lakes, and two churches were organized and thirty-five in all were baptized. "I preached in a number of places both on Rio Solimoes and Rio Madeira. Everywhere I was well received and we have calls for a number of places. I will try to go up to the head waters of Rio Madeira in June and work down the river.

184. To Ray.

185. To Ray.

186. To Ray.

Gomes will go with me. I expect to travel together with him from now on for we do the best work that way. Gasoline is very high now, almost sixty cents a gallon but it's the only way to travel and we will go as far as money will take us."¹⁸⁷

On June 6 from Santarém Mr. Nelson wrote to Dr. Ray telling him what appropriations he needed for next year. "Santarém will only need 100 milreis per month, while Monte Olegre will need 125 milreid a month. I will need more traveling expenses since I must travel constantly in the motor boat and gasoline is high. I will have to go over every river in the whole Valley next year so I need a good launch and a boy to help run it. I need \$7000 in order to do my work."¹⁸⁸

Mr. Nelson did not write again till December 6, 1918 with the news that he had been sick with the "grip" for five weeks along with almost all the members of the church at Manaõs and the rest of the city. "We closed our church at once and I have my time to the sick. Though run down a couple of times, I escaped with a slight soreness of throat. Out of a population of about 30,000 some 3,000 are under the sod."¹⁸⁹

Mr. Nelson did not receive Dr. Ray's letter of October informing him that most of the money he asked had been granted by the Board till January, 1919 and on January 8, 1919, Mr. Nelson thanked the Board for their consideration and vowed to do his best to make the most of it. He was leaving for the interior in a few days. It seems that Dr. Downing did not return to Pará for Mr. Nelson pleaded with the Board to send a man there. In Dr. Ray's letter of February 7 he explained that Dr. Downing was going to Corrente since a doctor was badly needed there. "He (Downing) believes and all of us believe that we can find a man more easily for Pará than we could a doctor for Corrente, so we are looking now for someone for Pará.

187. To Ray.
188. To Ray.
189. To Pitt.

I do not think it is beyond the range of possibility that someone from the Pernambuco station might go to Pará, though this has not yet been determined upon."¹⁹⁰

On April 28 Mr. Nelson was at Presidente Marques and reported that he had been very successful here. "Yesterday I baptized two and there are quite a number who would follow if they were legally married so in time we will have a ~~big~~¹⁹¹ work here."

On July 26 from Manaõs Mr. Nelson wrote again optimistically of the opportunities in the area covered by the Madeira Mamore Railroad, and asked for a Brazilian preacher for that zone, and another man for Ita-coatica to take Gomes' place who was going to Obidos. "My furlough should come next year but unless these two men arrive I do not see how I can leave though I have had two months of malaria and am more a skeleton than a man."¹⁹² Since the malaria prevented him from traveling Mr. Nelson used his two months traveling expenses to buy a boat, and built a cabin that was rain, sun, and mosquito proof. He planned now to drift 700 miles down to Monte Alegre and help the preacher there, return to Manaõs by October 20 and then go up to the Acre territory by Christmas.

Dr. Ray on October 9 was able to inform Nelson that the Board had agreed to grant him a furlough to begin the summer of 1920. The Board also decided to provide him with a motor launch. Mr. Nelson replied on October 29 thanking the Board for its consideration and thanking Dr. Ray for his efforts. Mr. Nelson had decided to stay in Brazil for the next year since no men had arrived to help the work, and it was therefore necessary for him to stay in Brazil. On January 17, 1920 he was at Porto Vilho, one of the stops on the Madeira Mamore Railroad line and he wrote that he was going to the end of the line tomorrow and would try to

190. To Nelson.

191. To Ray.

192. To Dr. Love.

be back in Manaós by April 1. He also stated in this letter that he had changed his mind about staying in Brazil this year. There was no clear explanation for this and it may have been due to this run-down condition since he reports still having occasional attacks of malaria in spite of quinine treatment.

He must have left for New York directly after the writing of the above letter for he is next heard from at Stillwater, Oklahoma on May 19. He expected to travel and preach in different places in that section of the country. On June 28 he was at Anna, Illinois arriving that day from Corbinville where he spoke twice to a fine crowd. Today he preaches at Anna and tomorrow proceeds to Johnson City, and then winds up about July 21 or 22 at Illinois Assembly. "I notice you had your Board meeting and hope of course that you found the right man for Pará and another couple for school work on the upper Amazon. Surely we have waited long enough." ¹⁹³ However, on July 3 Dr. Ray had to write Nelson that the Board had not found a man for Pará. "I (Dr. Ray) am mighty sorry we were unable to find a man at our last appointing season for Pará. My belief is that such a man will come through during the year. I hope ¹⁹⁴ you will be on the lookout for him and it may be you will find him."

Mr. Nelson spent the next couple of months resting at home at Stillwater and on September 15 with a knowledge that the Board would be meeting again soon he wrote thus: "I will expect liberal plans for my field. We will need a man for Itacoatica and therefore 100 milreis a month; also a man to travel with me on the laundh. He will need 200 milreis a month. You will not forget that we need school men and women for the Amazon ¹⁹⁵ but they, of course, must be missionaries." He expected to leave soon for Tennessee and Kentucky, and leave for Brazil sometime in November.

193. To Love.

194. To Nelson.

195. To Ray.

After working about a month in Kentucky and Tennessee with Dr. Taylor, Mr. Nelson returned to his home at Stillwater, Oklahoma, but he did not stop to rest for long for on November 16¹⁹⁶ he was off to Chich-asha to attend the Oklahoma State Convention.

During these months the secretary of the Board was trying to arrange Mr. Nelson's passage back to Brazil but they were having trouble since very few boats were running and fewer still were stopping at Pará which was Mr. Nelson's destination. As a result it was not until November 30 that the secretary was able to inform Nelson that a reservation had been obtained on a ship traveling about the middle of January. Mr. Nelson was in New York by January 11, 1921 but there were further delays and the boat did not leave New York till about January 22. He wrote from Pará on February 12 and said he was helping the pastor as much as possible. The launch was being built and would be ready for service inside of a month.

On March 29 he was still in Pará partly because the launch had not yet been completed. "My object in writing at this time is to show the Board conditions here. You know I am the only missionary in the Amazon. The Presbyterians and Methodists have none but the Pentecostals have had five for years and twelve arrived this month. How can we look after this whole Valley? If I can live here and these can live why can't you see to it that we have help! What is the matter? Is it the Board¹⁹⁷ or the missionaries? What are you going to do about it?" The corresponding secretary replied to this appeal on April 20 with the news that if it were possible at all, that at the June meeting of the Board appointments would be sent to the Amazon.

There is no further work from Mr. Nelson till July 20 at which time he was at Manaõs. He was preparing to leave for a three months trip

196. To Ray.

197. To Love.

up the Black and White Rivers north and west of Manaõs. Mr. Nelson did not write again till October 18 from Porto Vilho. "I am having splendid success and have organized a church here with thirteen members. The launch works like a top and is a real help to the cause." ¹⁹⁸ On December 10 he was back at Manaõs. "We baptized thirty-nine on this trip having beptized sixteen from Pará to Manaõs. We now have believers scattered along the whole Madeira River far up into the state of Motto Grosso and we are looking for a man for that region." ¹⁹⁹ On January 25 from Manaõs he made a partial report of his work in 1921. "We have organized two churches and baptized something near 200 on the field during 1921 though we are only four pastors. I have just returned from Rio Branco near the Venezuelan border where I baptized four and with ²⁰⁰ members from Manaõs organized a church at Boa Vista."

Mr. Nelson does not write again till August 31 from Manaõs. He had just returned from a trip to Rio de Janeiro but there was no information on what took place. However, it seems that once again the Amazon Valley was to go without help. "It did disappoint me extremely to learn you could promise no help forthe Amazon even though the Holy Rollers invade all our field and now three missionaries of the C.M.A. are at Pará. While the Board can send three missionary families to settle in Southern Motto Grosso, we here work half of Motto Grosso from the North though ²⁰¹ not quite so populous." He had just returned from another successful trip up rivers he had not traversed before, and four were baptized.

His letters were much less frequent during these last few years and it was not until August 9, 1923 that we hear from him again. He had just returned from a trip to Rio Branco and had "splendid success". His next letter is dated January 3, 1924 and comes from Itacoatica in Amazonas. "I am writing to say that three of the Kentucky missionaries

198. To Ray.
199. To Love.
200. To Love.
201. To Love.

are on the field, two in Pará and one in Santarém. Now that I am living in Manaõs and that is the real center of the Amazon, I am hoping that you will consent to let one family come and live in Manaõs. Since I am always traveling in the interior I can do nothing for school work. Miss Hunt and Miss Fuller spent a few days in Manaõs and I am sure they agree as to the advisability of our Board controlling Manaõs".²⁰²

On October 18 of the year 1924, the secretary of the Board informed Mr. Nelson that he had been granted a furlough to begin in the fall of 1925.

Mr. Nelson was at Porto Vilho again on November 28, 1924 and he said that he had been attacked by beri-beri. However, he hoped to finish this trip up the Madeira Mamore Railroad, but if the disease got the better of him he would have to return to Manaõs and then to Ceara. On December 20 Mr. Nelson was glad to report that he had overcome the disease and expected to be perfectly well soon. At this date he was still at Porto Vilho.

There are no more letters either from Nelson or the secretary of the Board except a short note by Nelson written from Stillwater, Oklahoma on July 3, 1925. "I am preaching some and will be at Your orders by September. I hope you can get work for me from then on till we go back in the Spring."²⁰³

202. To Love.
203. To Ray.

John W. Bain