



JANUARY 2019

INDIA MISSIONS

Under the oversight
of the elders of
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“...from dead idols to serve the living and true God...”
1 Thessalonians 1:9

church of christ india missions

india ink

HOW WE DO IT

When folks see our reports of our efforts in India, the immediate reaction is “how is that possible?” The answer is relatively simple. The problem is that too often we have preconceived ideas about mission work—& how mission work “works”. So let’s take a look & let me explain some things.

In this article, “we” refers to our India Missions team. The greatest part of this team—by far—is composed of Indian brethren. Currently, more than 53,000 preachers work with us in one capacity or another. Where do these men come from, & how is it they become part of our team?

Our approach from the very beginning (in 1979) was to reach denominational preachers with the Truth. At first we found congregations of the Lord’s church & offered to help in any way we could. This led to speaking appointments with those churches—& then Bible classes & Gospel meetings. Those meetings were being set up by Indian brethren who requested (& wanted) help in converting their denominational friends, classmates, relatives & former co-workers.

Then our brethren, working in a number of places, gave us contacts—some Christians, & some who were friends in denominations—who were interested in learning more about the Lord’s church & His Word. These were scattered throughout several districts of Andhra Pradesh, in smaller towns & surrounding villages. We went to those places by invitation, & as a result, additional churches were planted through preaching the Gospel. Many of these churches were begun because preachers from denominations obeyed the God—& then they helped their own congregations to come to the Truth.

And when denominational preachers—especially leaders for that particular group in an area—had become part of our fellowship, this gave us great opportunities to teach other denominational preachers who had great respect for them. In such type situations, these denominational preachers were curious & were willing to consider what churches of Christ believe & practice. Almost every time one of those men obeyed God, it meant 2 churches were very likely to follow the lead of their preacher. Why? Because most preachers in India work with 2 (or more) congregations.

So these who obeyed the Gospel taught, & our brethren taught—& soon folks were being baptized. The work spread from village to village, town to town, as those who heard the Word from Indian brethren—& us—became Christians. Our job is basically to verify & substantiate what the Indian brethren have already taught. We have been involved in this work 40 years—& the borders God’s kingdom have been extended in a mighty way, by the grace of God & the power of the Gospel.

We did not get where we are today overnight. It has taken hard work, much prayer, teaching, training & discipling. This is not just go & preach & then baptize great numbers. The most 3 common numbers from our 1-day Gospel meetings are 0, 1 or 2. In 2018, we averaged 1.93 folks being baptized per meeting. Some meetings lead entire churches from their denominational affiliations; other meetings result in a much higher response than the “average”. Here are examples from the work of V. Balu & his son, V. Bharath Chandra, for just one day. All these meetings were conducted in Prakasham District of Andhra Pradesh. V. Balu conducted 8 meetings on “Xmas” day. Denominational groups have special programs on such days & our brethren have been wise to exploit these situations for the sake of the Gospel.

(Continued at INDIA NOTES)

india notes

(Continued from INDIA INK)

At ABM Palem in Giddalur, 6 were baptized. Then at the 2nd place, in Kondapeta Colony, 12 more obeyed the Gospel. At SPG Palem 10 were baptized in the village of Pitikayagulla, & 8 more at ABM Palem in that same village.

Later that day, Bro. Balu went to SC Colony at Pedda Obinenipally, a village near Bestavaripet (where Balu lives & has a very good congregation). A total of 14 were baptized there. At a 2nd meeting there, in a colony called Tadivaripally, 14 more obeyed the Lord. Bro. Balu then conducted 2 meetings at Cumbum (near his home town). At Urban Colony, 13 became Christians; & 3 more obeyed the Lord at Poosala Colony.

This is a total of 80 souls baptized. His son, V. Bharath Chandra, conducted 5 meetings the same day in other villages. More were baptized from his meetings—36, to be exact. In one day, these 2 men & those who work with them conducted 13 Gospel meetings, resulting in 116 obeying the Lord & being added to His church.

While these meetings are not typical of those our team is conducting, they do demonstrate the receptiveness of many of the people of India, who are the most religious folks in the world. Millions of souls are eager to hear & learn about Jesus & His Word.

Think about this: If we had as many people east of the Mississippi River in the USA as India has (1 billion, 368 million), & we had 53,000 preachers working as a team; & if that team was conducting 1,500 Gospel meetings each day—don't you think we would be baptizing many more in our country than we are now? In India, with these same numbers, our team is baptizing 2,900 per day.

The church is exploding with growth in India. God is blessing the preaching of His Word. Most of the Indian preachers working with us are zealous & active in teaching others. These men love the Lord, His Word, His church & lost souls. And they are doing a tremendous job.

The greatest Restoration Movement in world right now is what is happening in India. If you ever wanted to see what happened in the early church in the Book of Acts, that is what is going on in India right now (without the apostles & miracles). And it is exciting to witness.

As long as we have the resources to send men to teach the Word of God, we know that God will bless our combined efforts. Your help—through your prayers & by supplying the financial fuel necessary to do this work, many precious souls will continue to hear & obey the Gospel.

Please pray for the church in India. The church is growing in numbers, in knowledge of God's Word, in spirituality, in good works & in other ways. Thank you for your help.

A LOOK AT INDIA

METHODS IN MISSION WORK

The “normal” way of doing mission work in a foreign field is to follow this pattern: (1) select a place to work & establish a “beach head” by finding interested souls & teaching them; (2) when those who have been taught are ready, baptize them; (3) plant a congregation & have regular worship services for these new Christians.

Then, (4) work with that congregation, increasing its size by teaching more interested people & baptizing them; (5) training local men to be preachers; (6) when the church is ready, appointing faithful men to serve as elders & deacons; (7) turn the work over to local brethren & then doing the process all over again. This is not a short term situation. A number of years are spent in achieving a successful outcome using this method.

Often such a plan is not limited to one missionary (or missionary family). In a number of places, a team of workers (2 to as many as 5 families) work in tandem to accomplish these goals. This plan is certainly workable—but has some very decided drawbacks.

One problem is that such a plan takes workers “out of the pool”, so to speak—there is duplication of time & efforts (maybe an unnecessary overlap?)—as well as a dilution of the amount of work that could be done.

Certainly, we need others to lean on & to encourage one another in the Lord's work. But if 2 to 5 families work with one (the same) church, only one or 2 men will be preaching on any given Lord's Day.

What is needed is more preaching & teaching—and such cannot be accomplished by banding workers together in one congregation. All workers we can muster are needed to serve in new places, so we can “attack” those areas with the Good News of Jesus—regardless of how small those groups are in the beginning.

Our emphasis in India is to involve, train & equip local workers. We employ the “4-T” formula: “Teach ‘em, Train ‘em, Trust ‘em, Turn ‘em loose.” This is their culture, their customs, their languages, their people—and it is their job to do.

In the 40 years of our working in India, the conversion of thousands of denominational preachers has meant that thousands of congregations have been planted. Today, there are well over 100,000 churches of Christ in India—and very likely double that number.

Much work has been done in India since J.C. Bailey went there in 1963. This has led to the tremendous success in the greatest mission field in the world today. Indian brethren are taking the Word to bordering nations—and so India is truly becoming a leader in world evangelism.

KAREN'S KORNER

\$3.00!!! WHAT CAN ONE DO WITH \$3???

Well, you can't go to see a movie for \$3!
 You can't buy a soft drink or popcorn at the movie for \$3
 You can't get a haircut for \$3
 You can't get a decent hamburger & fries for \$3
 In many places, you can't even get a cup of coffee for \$3
 Let's face it! There isn't much you can do with \$3 in today's economy in the USA.

BUT THERE IS AT LEAST ONE THING YOU CAN DO FOR \$3—LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT IT!

The India Missions team consists of 7 full-time American workers & more than 53,000 Indian brethren. The fact is, the Americans do not have 9 to 5 office jobs—all their work is directed toward the Lord's work in India. We maintain an office staff in Hamilton, Alabama in the USA; a secretary in Bangalore; a secretary in Hyderabad, as well as other staff members (drivers, office workers & cleaners) in Hyderabad; a housekeeper in Bangalore.

We provide regular support for 82 Indian preachers (this costs \$15,000 each quarter). In addition, we give help to hundreds of other preachers & send 100 team leaders out each month to "do the work". This means that even though they preach for one or more local congregations each Lord's Day, doing the work of a local preacher, they also go on campaigns to share the Gospel in many different locations.

We support 4 doctors & a nurse practitioner in 2 clinics offering free medical assistance for the poor; we support 2 women to teach ladies' & children's classes.

We provide care for a total of 45 young people in 2 children's homes. We help send young people to college. (Last year we helped 116 young people from poor Christian families.) They are studying to prepare for work in the fields of nursing, accounting, teaching, secretarial work, mechanics—to name just a few.

Counting all of the above expenses (& more), divided by the number of those our team baptized each of the past 4 years, the cost per conversion has been. . . .

ARE YOU READY FOR THIS? JUST \$3!!!

So, you can see that \$3 goes a long way when bringing lost souls to the Lord. Will you help us to bring lost souls to salvation? Can you spare a few dollars to help us in this effort? Our work continues to grow—as does the resulting salvation of lost souls—but it costs a lot of money for us to keep all these phases of our work going.

PLEASE HELP US IF YOU CAN! We need your prayers; we need others who will go to India to help us; we need YOU to help find speaking appointments to tell about our work. Your gift of \$3 means a lost person will be brought to salvation. You can count on it! **So—WHAT CAN ONE DO WITH \$3?** Well, In India, **\$3 DOES A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF GOOD!**



TOP ROW: (L) Bro. P. Daniel with his wife (now deceased) & granddaughter, Lydia, at her birthday celebration. Lydia's mom (Pregna) is standing behind. Daniel is one of the finest preachers & workers in India. (M) Bro. P. David (one of Daniel's sons) is talking to a young lady about the importance of baptism (R) Bro. M. Prakash Rao giving similar Bible instruction to 6 more who are about to be immersed. **BOTTOM ROW:** (L) Gospel meeting being conducted by Indian brethren (ML) R. Shant Kumar, excellent preacher working in the city of Belgaum (Karnataka state) (MR) This is a much "better than average" church meeting place in India—but has no padded pews, no A/C, no heating, no carpet on the floor. And that is where the members sit—on the floor. Give thanks for the church building where you worship! (R) A brother speaking at the lectureship at Nereducherla during services for the 4th batch of graduating students.

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

AN OFFER WE CAN'T REFUSE

We read in Revelation (21:4) that when we get to Heaven there will be “no more pain.” This is a wonderful promise from God, & we as the children of God are obligated to inform our world of this serene alternative. When you think about it, pain is a sobering fact. In India, America & everywhere else in the world, many good people are constantly or chronically suffering from pain.

We as Christians have the panacea & we should take seriously the obligation to every other human being on our planet to get the Word of God—the hope of salvation—to them. Too many people follow some kind of religion & say they want to please God; however, from a self-interest point of view, God has made our options clear. “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

In the classic movie, “The Godfather”, one of the famous scenes shows the underworld leader comforting a member of his family who is a struggling performer. He sees the heartache & the crying, so he cheers him up by promising he will soon get a phone call offering him a role in an upcoming movie. The crying actor laments that the movie director will not consider him & he has no legitimate hope on his own of getting a role.

Then the “godfather” implies he has the power to make sure the promise is kept. The “godfather”, an underworld “don” with a lot of “muscle” under his command, utters the famous words: “I’m gonna make him an offer he can’t refuse.” The sinister way he keeps his promise as a gangster plays out later in the film—the offer was not pleasant.

Maybe we can see in mission work & evangelism a righteous parallel. Our loving Father has compassion to make us part of His family. We formerly were bad people, & God, as a loving Father, has made to us a promise—“an offer we can’t refuse”. He did this in giving us His Son to die for us—& gives us a way back to Him & to eternal life (Mark 16:16).

Our Heavenly Father does not need to use outrageous scare tactics & intimidation to harass, coerce, strong arm, or bully us to obey. And just as importantly, when we present His surefire plan to save lost souls to others, we are on His behalf—in a righteous way—making them an offer they cannot refuse.

He promises us true salvation & a home in Heaven where there will be no more pain. This is what I want—for me, & for all those in my family & all those I love. And this is what all of us, as, members of the body of Christ, should desire for all men. Why? Because God loves us & gave His Son for us (John 3:16).

—Ben Renegar—

NEWS FLASH! Our office manager, Candice Hicks, gave birth to Jonah Allen (her 2nd child) on Jan. 16th. He weighed in at 6 lbs., 13 oz. & baby, mom & dad are all doing well. We at India Missions are very happy for Candice & her family.

Newsletter by E-mail—To receive the India Newsletter by E-mail, contact us at IndiaNews@cocindia.net and we will be glad to add you to our mailing list. You will also receive our special monthly report (NAMASTE!), sent only by E-mail.

If your name, mailing address or E-mail address has changed, please contact our office at IndiaUSA@cocindia.net and tell us of any correction needed. If you are receiving more than one newsletter or are getting both the paper copy and the E-mail version, please inform us so we can correct our mailing list.

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INDIAN SPICE

This 'n' That

Please pray for these men who work in India. Although they are not a part of our team, we are all working for God. #1—Hershel Bearden (Lufkin, TX) is undergoing treatment for cancer; #2—Dale Foster (Houston, TX), is battling recurring cancer; #3—Royce Frederick (Ft. Worth, TX) has several on-going health issues; #4—Michael Hughes (Marion, AR) has had several major surgeries & is recuperating. All 4 of these men are good, faithful workers, & are men who have served in India for a long time.

Robert & Faye Hall’s youngest daughter, Brittany, was married on January 19th in Tanner, Alabama to Josh Hatton (who is from Muscle Shoals, Alabama). Brittany’s dad performed the ceremony. Brittany is a very sweet young lady with a pure heart & who loves the Lord & His church. Please pray the newly wedded couple—for their health, happiness & the best of all that life has to offer.

Our successes are YOUR successes. When you give to this work, you help in teaching the Word of God to those who want to hear it. Please send as generous gift as you can to—

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—OR—

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