

HIGHLIGHTING THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA • THE CHANGING OF DIVERSIFIED INDIA

FrontLine

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India

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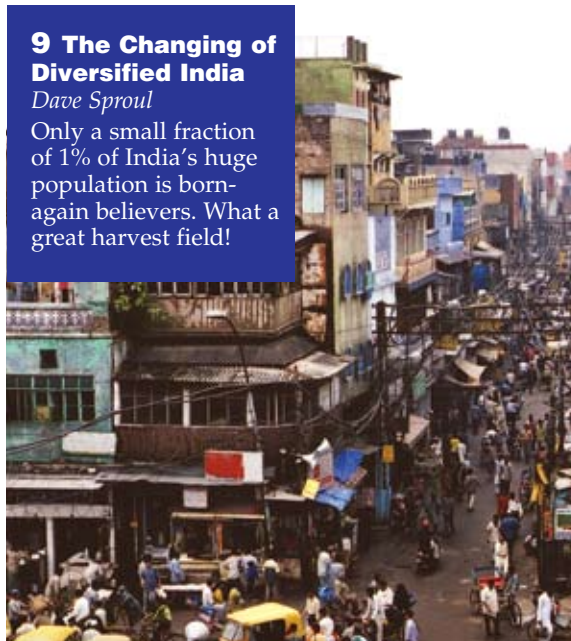
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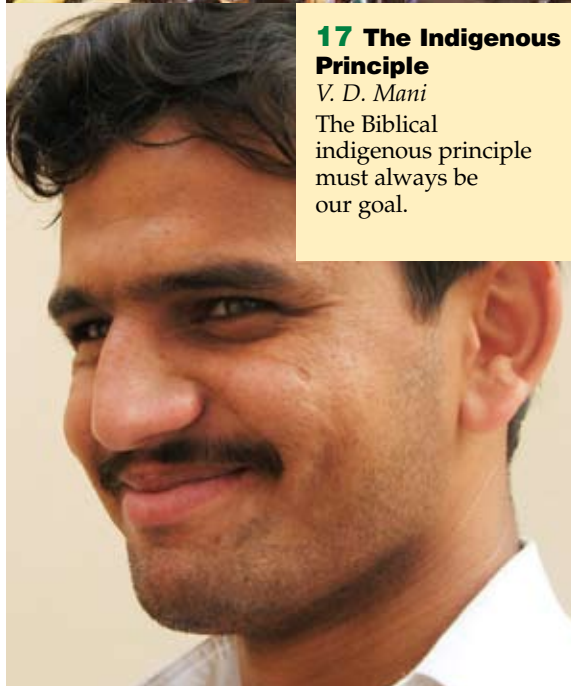
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We very much appreciate getting the *FrontLine* magazine and especially the last issue on missions. It is right on target.

*Bob and Liz Patton
Suriname*

The recent issue of *FrontLine* magazine was especially exciting and thorough. It has been very beneficial to the cause of Christ to see some of the objections to indigenous missions broken down by the careful use of the Bible as a guide.

I had always regarded missions among the Jewish people as a difficult but important field on an equal plane with other mission efforts. . . . I was recently challenged to consider again what the Lord may have meant by "to the Jew first" (Rom 1:16). Even after Paul said, "I go to the Gentiles," he continued to go to the Jewish people first in every town he visited. Perhaps

the Scripture means "to the Jew first" in priority, not merely first in order. The word "first" is the same word used in Matt 6:33 where Jesus told us to seek "first the kingdom of God." First must mean first in priority, not just first in order. . . .

Jewish people are largely unreached in much of America. Many cities have Jewish populations that are largely unevangelized. Local churches, though they may not yet realize it, are already equipped with the very best missionaries, that is, Christian friends, neighbors, and loved ones who already meet these Jewish people in the course of everyday life. . . . After all, God chose to use the Jewish people to give us our Bible and our Savior. Our debt to the Jewish people is acknowledged by making their souls our genuine concern.

*Gary Huffman
Belleville, IN*

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As the journal of the FBFI, *FrontLine* Magazine provides a forum for God's people to reverently express a conservative Christian perspective on pertinent issues. In an effort to keep readers informed, quotes and references to many different individuals and organizations will appear. This does not imply the endorsement of the magazine or its board. Unsolicited manuscripts and artwork accepted for review.

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What We Can Learn from India

John C. Vaughn

Some time ago, in order to continue the ministry of *FrontLine* magazine with a largely volunteer workforce, we shifted our strategy for the selection of topics and recruitment of authors. Pastors and other Christian leaders who have a burden for a particular subject—and who have already been engaged with other leaders in important discussions about it—have taken up much of the responsibility for developing those interests into specific issues of *FrontLine*.

We now have a strong production schedule in place well into 2008, with topics under consideration beyond that. Fundamental Baptists are invited to present proposals for specific topics on which they would be willing to do research and to recruit competent writers to address.

Two issues back, our focus was on “Rethinking Missions,” particularly the “indigenous principle” of missions. This had been a subject of widespread discussion: it provided the basic idea and has resulted in even further discussion since its publication. This issue of *FrontLine* has grown out of that same discussion. It focuses on “Indigenous Missions in India” for some fairly obvious reasons. India will soon become the most populous nation on earth. Although it has a rich history of evangelism from the early days of the modern missions movement, it is essentially closed to foreign missionaries now. Yet churches continue to be planted and Bible colleges continue to train large numbers of Bible-believing leaders

because missions were indigenized in India as they must be in other nations, and quickly.

Former Communist countries are toying with the benefits of the old ways of doing things. We cannot assume that because the Cold War between Russia and America has ended, Communism is gone. China and North Korea as well as oil-rich Marxist Hispanic nations are using their economic, military, and energy resources to wield influence on world affairs unimagined just a few

years ago. These geopolitical shifts are occurring while the West is increasingly preoccupied with its own confusion over the reality of the threat from Islamic Fascism. The world is changing quickly, and the windows of opportunity may close before we expect them to while new opportunities, for which we may not be ready, open up.

Working with national leaders has never made

more sense. How would the evangelization of India be possible today without this growing number of serious, well-trained ministers, teachers, and missionaries who were born and raised there and who have accepted the responsibility for spreading the gospel in their own country and among their own neighbors? In our issue on “Rethinking Missions,” we hoped to advance a discussion that has been needed. In this issue we hope to drive home the benefit of continuing that discussion and working diligently toward its practical application.

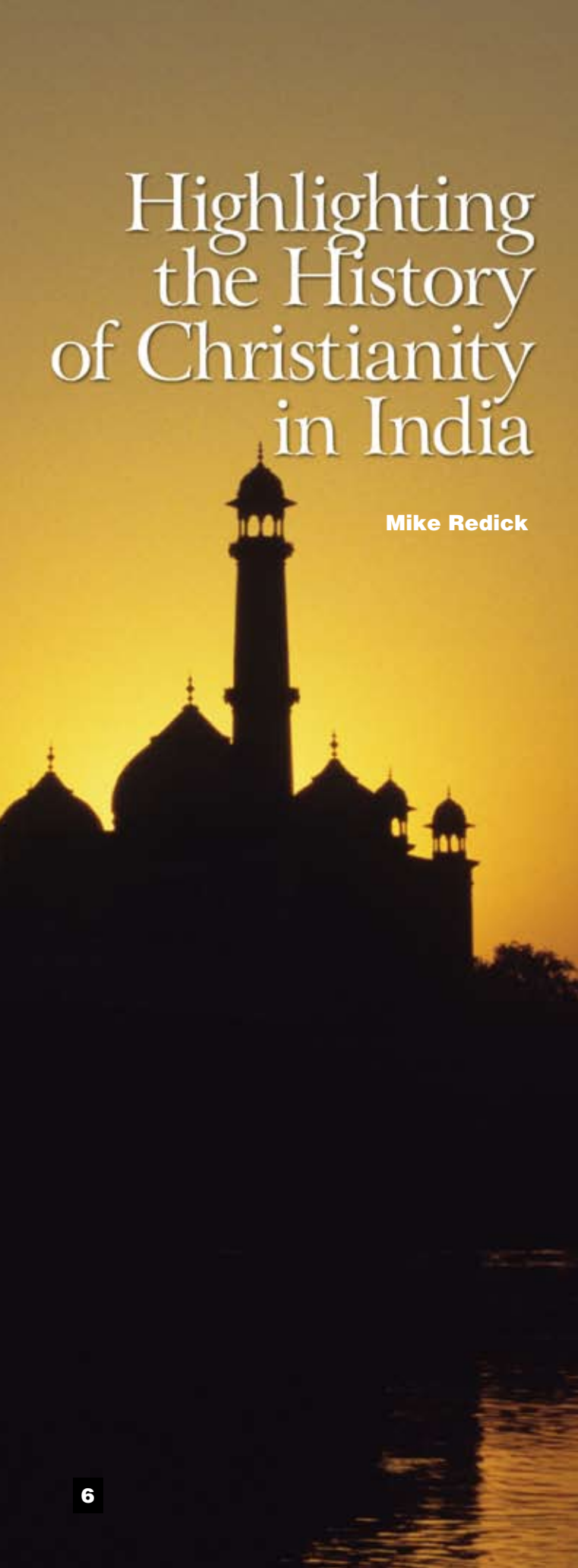
As our readers and potential contributors engage in this discussion, participation from pastors who have

traveled to specific mission fields, mission directors and missionaries who have extensive experience in particular cultures, educators and Christian business or government leaders who understand the global issues that are impacting world evangelism is essential. Fundamental Baptists must not abdicate their responsibility in this discussion. Wealthy evangelicals, enriched by their own bestselling books, maintain their appeal by carefully avoiding offense, even the offense of the gospel. We should know by now how easily that truncated approach deteriorates into mere social work. We must admit the benefit of asking, “What would Jesus do?” But someone needs to keep asking the question, “What did Jesus say?” We are not here merely to follow His social example but to announce His saving gospel!

Without discounting efforts to relieve hunger, disease, and other forms of human suffering, we can rejoice and use our own limited resources and manpower to focus on the one thing that has power to bring change for eternity: the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When we look at India, we could be overwhelmed. So many people, so many languages, so many problems, so many needs, so few workers, so little time. . . . Where do we even begin? If we take the approach that we have to have big programs and big methods to do this big job, we can be defeated before we begin.

But when we recognize the life in the seed of the gospel and when we recall that God has prepared both soil and sowers already, we remember the harvest ahead. As you read what Indians are saying about their hope for India, find hope yourself, not only for India, but for the world.

Working with national leaders has never made more sense. How would the evangelization of India be possible today without this growing number of serious, well-trained ministers, teachers, and missionaries . . . ?



Highlighting the History of Christianity in India

Mike Redick

It has been said that India is the mother of one of the oldest and most complex religions of the world: Hinduism. This native Indian belief system has produced many offspring including Jainism, Sikhism, Hare Krishna, Transcendental Meditation, the New Age Movement, and Buddhism. Sadly, today billions of people around the globe adhere to one of these pagan religious systems.

Early Missions Efforts

It was five hundred years before the birth of Christ that a young disillusioned Hindu named Siddhartha Gautama claimed to have reached the highest degree of God-consciousness, or Nirvana. This young man would soon be known to the world as the Buddha. It is no surprise, then, that India would be the first major thrust of foreign missions. Although William Carey is rightly known as "The Father of Modern Missions," he was not the first missionary to reach the shores of India. Thirty years before Carey, Count Nicolaus von Zinzendorf sent missionaries around the world; ninety years before Carey, King Frederick IV of Denmark, a German Pietist, established the Danish-Halle Mission. In 1706 he sent Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Pluetschau to Tranquebar on the southeast coast of India.

Although Ziegenbalg and Pluetschau were hampered by the commercial opposition of the Danish East India Company, they nevertheless made progress and witnessed many conversions during their years of service, eventually translating the entire New Testament and a large portion of the Old Testament into one of India's many languages.¹

In 1750 the Danish-Halle Mission sent Christian Fredrick Schwartz, and for forty-eight years he faithfully served the Lord in Chennai (Madras). By the time of his death in 1798 he had mastered several Indian dialects and built a church with two thousand members. It would be through the help and influence of Schwartz, who was on good terms with the Danish East India Company, that William Carey, Joshua Marshman, and William Ward would be allowed to enter and stay in Kolcota (Calcutta) and eventually start the Serampore Mission, which would eventually be the center of Baptist missionary activity in India.²

When William Carey and John Thomas arrived in India on November 19, 1793, under the banner of the Baptist Missionary Society, they ushered in what is commonly known as the "Great Century" of foreign missions. It has been said that William Carey, "more than any other individual in modern history stirred the imagination of the Christian world and showed by his own humble example what could and should be done to bring the lost world to Christ."³

It was Carey who uttered those immortal words: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." By the end of his forty-year ministry Carey had seen hundreds saved and baptized. He established the Serampore College for the training of indigenous church planters and evangelists.

He also made three translations of the Bible (Bengali, Sanskrit, and Marathi) and helped in other whole and partial Bible translations.

Through the influence of Carey came Adroniram and Nancy (Anne) Judson, Luther Rice, and five others. Although their stay in India was short-lived due to the anti-missionary position of the East India Company, they made history as being America's first foreign missionaries.

In 1813, just one year after the Judsons left India for Burma, the British Parliament wrote into the charter of the East India Company allowances for missionaries from England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland to begin work in the three Presidencies in India, which were under the British East India Company's control. Prior to the change in policy the British East India Company refused to allow any Christian missionaries into their territories. They believed that the missionaries were a threat to their commercial interests. In 1833 the British Parliament wrote another clause into the charter of the East India Company, this time opening missionary work to all non-British missionary societies.⁴

After the new charter of 1813, missionaries from the British Empire flocked into India, and by 1833 missionaries from around the world were free to evangelize. One of the most innovative and influential missionaries during this time was Alexander Duff of Scotland. Duff, who had the support of William Carey, was burdened to evangelize the upper classes of Indian society by means of higher education. From the start his school was a tremendous success. Hundreds sat in his classes and heard the gospel. His concept of combining education and evangelism was copied by other missionaries around India, which planted the seeds of the gospel in the hearts of many in India.

While Duff was reaching the elite and upper classes, American Baptist Missionaries Dr. and Mrs. John Clough were reaching the untouchable lower classes. In 1865, in their work at the Lone Star Mission in Ongole a tremendous revival broke out among the outcastes. The moving of the Holy Spirit was so powerful that in one day during the summer of 1878 Clough baptized 2222 believers. During the century following that time, more than one million Mala outcastes professed faith in Christ!

Later Missions Efforts

In 1892 the young student-volunteer John Hyde arrived in India. From the time of his arrival he was deeply burdened for a spiritual awakening in India. He devoted much of his time to intercessory prayer, often spending

whole days and nights pleading to God for an outpouring of His Spirit. Some 50,000 were reportedly saved during one six-month period.

In the year 1904 his prayers were answered in Sialkot, Northwest India. Revival came that deepened the spiritual life of Christians and brought many unbelievers to faith in Christ. The American Presbyterians reported that from 1904 to 1909 their churches in Northwest India saw a 400% increase. In Punjab it was reported that the Christian constituency from 1904 to 1914 quadrupled, from 37,695 to 163,994. During the same period Christianity grew sixteen times as fast as the Hindu majority, and the number of Indian evangelists and workers also doubled.⁵

During the same period, Welsh missionaries, such as John Roberts, D. E. Jones, and others, traveled into the rough hills of Northeast India to evangelize the animistic headhunters of Assam, Naga, and Mizoram. In early 1903 missionaries and church leaders in the Khasia Hills, Assam, met together to seek an outpouring of the Holy Spirit

throughout Khasia and all the world.

In 1904 these prayer meetings became more fervent in spirit, and in March 1905, God answered their prayers and a wave of revival swept the hills of Northeast India. This revival continued for several years, bringing thousands of men and women to Christ.

Regarding this moving of the Spirit, revival historian J. Edwin Orr said, "One effect of these Revivals, within a generation, was to make head hunters into a predominantly Christian people, inhabiting India's most Christian and most evangelical area, in zeal far surpassing the early evangelized fields, as well as the places which claimed a thousand years or more of a traditional Christianity."⁶ Today, nearly one hundred years after the initial moving of the Holy Spirit this area, Northeast India has the highest percentage of Christians in India and is one of the most Christianized areas of the world, claiming to be 80-90% Christian. The hundreds of Baptist and Presbyterian churches are self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating and have thousands of Bible students and missionaries throughout India and Asia. It should be noted that not all these who call themselves Christian are born again. Sadly, over the years liberalism has slowly crept in and confused many.

At the turn of the twentieth century God sent a host of missionaries to evangelize the land. To South India came the young and eccentric Amy Carmichael. Within a few years she established the famous Dohnavur



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Fellowship, which is remembered for saving children from a life of temple prostitution. In the decades to follow hundreds of children were rescued, born again, and housed at Dohnavur.

Others such as C. T. Studd, who labored for six years in India before moving into Inland Africa, also came. In the early twentieth century came E. Stanley Jones, who labored among the educated elite. His reputation as an evangelist and Christian statesman brought him into contact with Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharal Nehru. By the mid-twentieth century missionaries had established Christian schools, colleges, and hospitals. By 1940 it was estimated that 90% of all nurses in the country were Christians and about 80% of these had been trained in Christian hospitals.⁷

But the most important legacy left by the missionary was the establishment of the Bible college. Here thousands of local men and women could be trained to take the gospel to areas the missionary could not go. In the last forty years it is likely that thousands upon thousands of men and women have been trained in good Fundamental Baptist Bible colleges and have taken the gospel back to their towns and villages and to remote corners of the

earth. Although India is no longer open to the traditional church-planting foreign missionary, their work remains and is carried on by those who received their message.

Although India received the first foreign missionaries from Europe, England, and the United States, it is still one of the least-reached countries in the world. In 1887 the Christian population of India was 0.79%,⁸ and today it hovers around 2%. It also contains the largest concentration of unevangelized people in the world. In Uttar Pradesh in North India there are some 180 million people, and less than 0.1% are Christians.⁹ Since India is one of the least reached countries in the world and will likely be the most populated country by 2025 we must "pray . . . the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matt. 9:38).

¹ Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), p. 114.

² D. Arthur Jeyakumar, *History of Christianity in India* (Delhi, India: ISPCK, 2004), pp. 18–19.

³ Tucker, p. 114.

⁴ Jeyakumar, p. 24.

⁵ J. Edwin Orr, *The Flaming Tongue* (Chicago: Moody Press), pp. 153–57.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁷ Jeyakumar, p. 40.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁹ Patrick Johnstone, *The Church Is Bigger Than You Think* (Manila, Philippines: OMF Literature, 1998), p. 223.

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The Changing of Diversified India

Diversity in India

From the rugged Himalayas in the north to the southernmost tip, India is a country more diversified than any in recorded history. This diversification involves such major components as language, the caste system, ethnic backgrounds, industry, religion, culture, dress, climate, and other elements too numerous to mention. In spite of visiting India fifteen times between 1975 and 2006, I still feel like a four-year-old child when it comes to grasping the diversity and complexity of this populous country.

When India received its independence from Great Britain on August 15, 1947, it was a country of 250 million people. Sixty years later, as the largest democracy in the world, it now has increased to over 1.2 billion people and is projected to pass China's population by 2020. India's population equals that of North America, South America, and Africa on a land mass two-thirds the size of the US. Our country has approximately 75 people per square mile, but India has well over 5500 people per square mile, with the huge area of the Himalayas uninhabitable. Visitors to the major cities of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Hyderabad, Delhi, and Bangalore discover the streets filled with people even from 1 to 3 A.M. "Overwhelming," though often overused, is a proper description of India's major cities.

As you enter Bombay on its excellent train service, you are confronted with a slum area that beggars description. For some fifteen miles you observe living conditions that are appalling. Stretching back from the tracks for a half a mile or more on each side are small tin-roofed shacks built closely together where many tens of thousands of people live. There is no electricity, no air conditioning, no running water, and no indoor plumbing except for a little ditch leading away from the shack and filled with human feces.

Most living here are in the lower caste. Unemployment is rampant with no government or private services available. A job for the underprivileged usually pays no more than a dollar a day with the remainder of the population reduced to begging or stealing to stay alive. In such extreme circumstances, an individual is often limited to a bowl or two of rice per week. In the major cities many thousands sleep in an alley or doorway. Early in the morning two men push a cart through the area. They kick each body. If the person moves, they go on. If no movement is detected, they dump the body on the cart. With twelve to fifteen bodies in tow they go to a potter's field where others have dug a large hole. They dump their load and return for more. Life is cheap among the 100 million untouchables—but each one has a soul for which Christ died.

By contrast, located in the heart of Bombay is the elegant Taj Mahal Hotel. Room rates start at \$300 per night. Indeed, ground in central Bombay is now more expensive than anywhere in the world. The rich are very rich and the poor make little progress. Speaking economically, India has a small percentage at the top of the economic ladder that are very rich and some 300 to 400 million at the bottom that live on a \$1 per day. Unfortunately, India has existed for centuries with little or no middle class, but times are changing rapidly and the middle class is growing tremendously.

Technology in India

Many Indians riding the technology boom are now making \$200–\$300 per month, with some attaining even higher levels. Such salaries were unthinkable thirty years ago, especially for a nation cursed by illiteracy and poverty for centuries.

Today roughly 66 million Indians have cable or satellite television.

The economy is growing rapidly, with a projected 8% GDP for 2007 and beyond. India graduates 400,000 engineers every year, and half its population is under twenty-five. Over 125 Fortune 500 companies have R&D bases in India, which is often referred to as Silicon Valley East. In an article entitled "India Awakens," *Time* magazine says, "Fueled by high-octane growth, the world's largest democracy is becoming a global power. . . . Every night, young radiologists in Bangalore read CT scans e-mailed to them by emergency room doctors in the U.S. . . . In ways big and small, Indians are changing the world."

But in the midst of this change there remain many complex areas of diversity. Seventeen major languages are spoken along with hundreds of dialects. Hindi is the recognized national language, but hundreds of millions cannot speak it. English is known as the trade language and is used by many in the higher education industry. Most citizens of northern India do not understand the speech of those in southern India and vice versa. Although some Indians speak three or four languages, they still may have major problems communicating with someone from a neighboring state.

The caste system was outlawed years ago but in reality is still a formidable diversifying force. There are four major castes, with the elite Brahmins at the top and the untouchables at the bottom. These four major castes are subdivided into hundreds of subcastes. You become a caste member by birth, and no amount of education or

wealth will change your position. Nor is intermarriage with someone from a different caste considered a viable option. No self-respecting Brahman would arrange a marriage for his son or daughter with one from the untouchable caste. If an untouchable caste member walks through a Brahman neighborhood, people may react by washing all the streets to cleanse their area of the untouchable residue. The untouchables' illiteracy rate is extremely high.

Ethnic backgrounds only further accent diversity. Skin color and physical features vary significantly. People from northern India have similar features to the Chinese after centuries of intermarrying with them. Their skin color is lighter than the darker brown found elsewhere.

We Americans are familiar with the beautiful saris worn by Indian ladies. But even these differ in various parts of the country. In some of the major tribal areas, dress is not a problem. Rather it is lack of dress as both men and women practice semi-nudity.

Agriculture has been and still is India's major industry. But this is changing as technology and technology-related industries develop rapidly. India had three shopping malls in 2001 but is scheduled to finish the 350th this year. Unfortunately, problems can develop in getting products to market as trade barriers between states are sometimes as high as between countries.

Religion in India

But the Christian's greatest concern when it comes to diversity is the country's religions. Figures vary depending upon who is citing them, but approximately 82% in India are Hindu with a minimum of 33 million gods and goddesses. Hindus have a different god for each day of the week and every conceivable event. They have many heathen practices and beliefs, including reincarnation. That belief alone sets them aside from most other religions and radically affects their lives. They refuse to eat pork and beef, believing they may be eating one of their dead relatives. This, in turn, often causes starvation even while water buffalo wander everywhere.

Some 13% are Muslim with well over 100 million adherents, making India the second largest Muslim country in the world. Buddhists and Jains are 3%. A mere 2% claim Christianity. This would include Roman Catholicism, major Protestant denominations such as the Church of South India, and the ever-present Charismatics. Only a small fraction of 1% of the 1.2 billion are born-again

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What a great harvest field!*

believers. What a great harvest field!

But what about the future of Bible-believing Christianity in India? Shortly after being sworn in as the prime minister of an independent India in August 1947, Jawaharal Nehru uttered these memorable words: "A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance." Those prophetic words spoken about a slumbering giant are being literally fulfilled in many ways today—but perhaps nowhere more than among India's Bible-believing Christians.

Christianity in India

On my first visit to India in 1975 I observed a dearth of Bible-believing churches in most of the country. The major denominations were apostate. Schools and organizations started by Carey and others such as the Hindustan Bible Institute were no longer trustworthy. American missionaries had been banned from India, and only a few aging missionaries were allowed to stay. Indeed, Biblical Christianity was in deep trouble, with major cities having little or no gospel witness. It was obvious that Indians must evangelize their own nation and start Bible colleges and churches. On that trip I met Dr. Jacob Chelli and was introduced to Berean Baptist Bible College and Seminary, which had approximately seventy students. Today the college has 650 students and has graduated some four thousand students, which are scattered all over India and several countries in Asia.


Berean in turn has helped to start several Bible colleges in India, Nepal, Myanmar, and other countries. One of these is the South India Baptist Bible College in Kerala state. My wife and I visited the school in 1984 when they had seventeen students and were meeting in chicken coops. Today, under the direction of Dr. P. D. Cherian, they have a lovely campus with seven hundred students, and they graduate over two hundred each year.

Pastor Chandrashekar Eda went to New Mumbai and started Calvary Baptist Bible College with the help of Berean. Today Calvary has 125 students. Others, such as Dr. Sambu De, started Faith Baptist Bible College in Kerala, and they have over two hundred students. Numerous other independent Baptist Bible colleges are also flourishing.



But even more important is that these good schools are sending out church planters all over India and neighboring countries. Under the guidance and help of International Baptist Missions, our Indian coworkers have now planted over one hundred churches in one national organization. In this group alone, more than 15,000 independent Baptist believers meet in their respective Baptist churches and preaching stations on a Sunday morning! To God be the glory! God's work is advancing, and the future of Christianity in India is as bright as the promises of God!

Dr. Dave Sproul is General Director of International Baptist Missions, Tempe, Arizona.


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Adapted from a message delivered at the 50th anniversary of BBBC&S

Berean Baptist Bible College and Seminary (BBBC&S) of Bangalore, India, is poised to enter its fifty-first year as a faithful anchor for the Fundamental Baptist movement in India. Our fifty years cause us to exclaim with the psalmist, "The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

Humble Beginnings

From a humble beginning of two part-time students in 1956, Berean Baptist Bible College has grown to over 650 this academic year. God has truly blessed us abundantly! As we reminisce about the working of God here, we pause, look back, and praise the Lord for godly men who labored and gave themselves for the furtherance of the gospel through the training of young men and women. Over 3900 students have graduated from this college, and many of the graduates are serving the Lord as pastors, assistant pastors, professors; some have even started Bible colleges. We have 563 churches within our fellowship along with six other Bible colleges, three of which are supported by Berean. Of these three, the Biblical Baptist Bible School is the oldest, celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. It is located in Churchandpur, Manipur, in Northeast India. The purpose of the school is to administer training in the local language for lay pastors. Through the ministry of the Biblical Baptist Bible School, we were able to start the Fundamental Baptist Bible College in Tamu, Myanmar (across the border from India). And last year the Biblical Baptist Bible College was started in the state of Assam, with training being given in the local Bodo language.

We are thankful for Dr. Jake Johnson, who had the vision to start a Bible college; for Dr. Alan Ironside, who labored here faithfully for forty years and stood by our father and strengthened his hands through many rough waters; and of course for our father, Dr. Jacob Chelli, who led this ministry to where it is today.

Reaching to the Needy in India

India is a religious nation. With a population of 1.2 billion (and growing), there is a great need for the gospel to be preached, as millions are still groping in darkness. Four of the world's major religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism—have their birthplace in India. The

people have a religion, but no true relationship with God, which is available through His Son the Lord Jesus.

In writing to the Romans Paul said, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (10:13–15a).

Our Father, a Follower of God

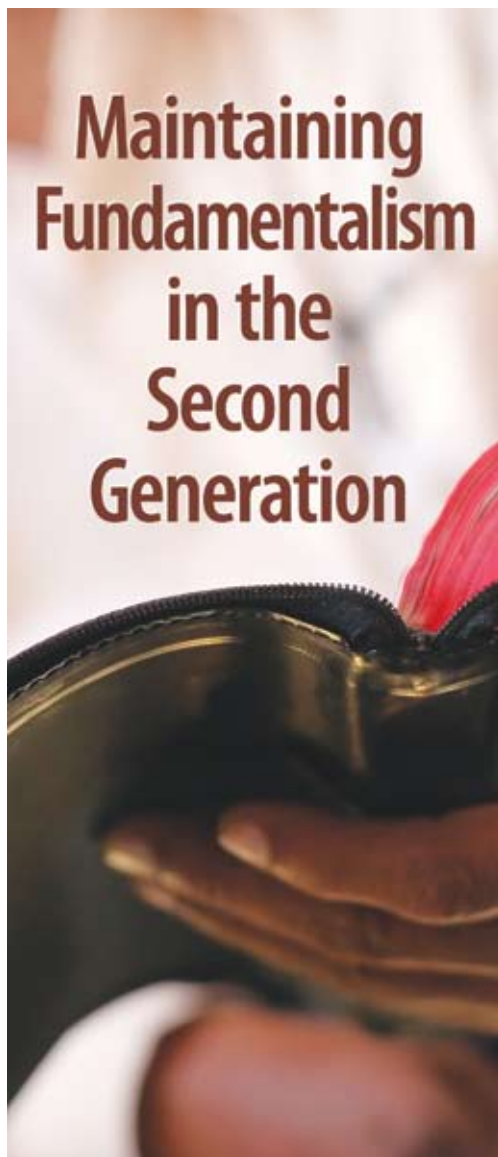
Our father, Dr. Jacob Chelli, was born into a Hindu family. At the age of twenty he accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as His personal Savior through the preaching of an evangelist from Dallas, Texas. He then started a church in the city of Hubli and was stoned while preaching. There were several other attempts on his life. He also established an elementary school in the city of Hubli, where the gospel was preached during the morning and afternoon chapel, and several hundred young people were saved. As a businessman he funded the school and built the buildings with the salary he received. He continued this way, reasoning that if he were to have been in full-time Christian service, God would have sent him to a Bible school, not to a business university, for he had a master's in business administration-accounting.

Once our father received the call of God, he left his position as a manager of a thriving, successful company where he had over four thousand employees under his supervision, only to be put through, as he would say, "the grinding stone." God had to crush him before He could use him. But God was preparing him to take Berean to where it is today. When our father came to head the institution they were at a crossroads. There were about seventy students when he became president; and just before his home-going the college

had an enrollment of over 750 students. God used Dad and the help of God's people in the USA and the UK to orchestrate several building programs, including the construction of the boys' dormitory, the classroom building, the administration building, and the church. Today, we are reaping the blessings of Jacob!

Gratefulness for the Past

We are thankful to the many churches and pastors who have continued their support for this ministry. Till his last



**Edwin Chelli and
Johanon Chelli**

breath my father was concerned and cared for the needs of the college. In spite of several close calls on his life, he still persevered, persisted, and sacrificed to the end. And when he was called home, he was still in prayer—"he died with his boots on—fighting the good fight and finishing his course." Yes, we are thankful to our father who gave of his time, talents, and treasure for the cause of Christ. Today we celebrate fifty years of God's faithfulness and blessing upon a man who yielded himself fully to the call and service of God.

When we look back, we are in awe at what God has done, but when we look forward we visualize what God is going to do as we continue to be faithful to that which has been committed to us. As we read in Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Enthusiasm for the Future

The goal of the Berean Baptist Bible College and Seminary is to

1. Evangelize our Jerusalem (Bangalore), Judea, Samaria, and uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). We thank God for the many students scattered throughout India, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Nigeria, the border of China, and Bhutan.
2. Educate and train young people to be preachers and teachers and to follow God's will for their lives (2 Tim. 2:2, 15).
3. Establish Bible-believing churches (Acts 2:41).
4. Educate lay pastors in the doctrine of the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16, 17).
5. Contend for the faith in an age of apostasy (Jude 2).

The road ahead will be one of challenges, but we know we can overcome all through Christ, who strengthens us. When we look back at the various trials this institution has experienced, we can also see the unseen triumphant hand

of the Almighty God as He has seen us through each step of the way.

Proverbs 22:28 says, "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set," and my brother and I will certainly not depart from the truth. We have purposed in our hearts to continue the work on the same foundation this institution was built. We will keep, maintain, and hold to the same standards upon which this college was founded. We will continue teaching sound Biblical doctrine, ensuring we have a doctrinally sound faculty, and allowing only those who are "of like precious faith" to preach from our pulpit. Knowing the days are evil, we will separate ourselves from disorderly brethren and maintain the strong separatist stand our father practiced. We are determined to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints."

During World War II, bombers destroyed the Kaiser Wilhelm Church in Berlin. As the rubble was cleared away, workers found a statue of Christ with the hands missing. A sculptor agreed to restore the statue, but the church leaders decided to keep it as it was, a vivid reminder that we are Christ's hands.

While other men's work is interrupted by death, Christ told the disciples that His work was to continue after His departure. What He began, others would complete. He was handing the torch to them. Likewise, men of God have labored here and have gone, but the torch has been handed to us to carry on the work that has stood the fifty-year test of time. By God's grace and with His omniscient hand to guide us, we will shine the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ to a world that is lost and dying without Him. And so we say "If God be for us, who can be against us?" May God enable us to "be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, . . . [knowing] that [our] labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Dr. Edwin Chelli is the President of Berean Baptist College and Seminary in Bangalore, India. His brother, Rev. Johanon Chelli, is the Vice President.

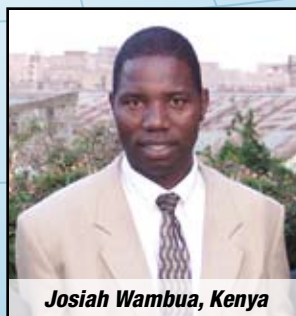
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Building Baptist Churches in India

India is an ancient country, in existence since 2000 B.C. In fact, the Bible mentions it in Esther 1:1: "Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:). . . ." Ahasuerus or Xerxes, the king of Persia (modern-day Iran), ruled during the fifth century B.C.

India, with only 2.5 percent of the total world area, contains 16 percent of world's population. Sixty percent of India's population is under thirty years of age. The people live in twenty-seven different states and seven union territories. There are 600,000 villages in India.¹ Although Hindi is the national language, there are twenty-two officially recognized languages. However, Indians are believed to speak 1652 languages and dialects, thirty-three of which are spoken by over

100,000 people. English is widely spoken and is perhaps the best language link between north and south.

Economically India's GDP is growing at the rate of 7.5 percent per annum.² More than 835 million people follow one of the four religions born there (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism). Besides this there are 130 million Muslims. But the Christian population is less than 2.5 percent.

The growth of Christianity is slow. The largest population of Christians exists in the south and northeast. Christians have failed to make a significant impact on the millions of people in central and northern India. The Indian people are not tolerant of Christianity and also have a tendency toward violence. Many national pastors and evangelists have been beaten and chased out of their villages.

In the midst of this dark and gloomy situation we see teeming millions heading toward a Christless eternity. As Bible-believing Christians we need to be sensitive to the Great Commission of our Lord: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). This work can be carried out in India only by nationals; missionaries are not allowed to plant churches here. (India does not prohibit tourists, businessmen, or students, however).

We Indian preachers have a mandate to fulfill. Let me give you a few guidelines that we follow.

Men

The importance of born-again dedicated men and women is the key to accomplish the goal. We need to have men with a great commitment and vision. The apostle Paul, while emphasizing this need, wrote to Timothy and said, "And the things that thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).

Message

Christ commanded that we "go . . . and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19, 20). And Paul, working in the city of Ephesus, confidently wrote, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). The most important factor to understand in church planting is to have a right understanding about God and His Word, upon which the church of Jesus Christ is built. God the Holy Spirit takes the Word of God and changes people's lives. Peter knew the importance of this when he wrote, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). The word "sincere" is forgotten by many. It means "guileless, unmixed, and unadulterated, without dishonest intent."³

Proper understanding of God's Word is the key for establishing God's church. There is no room for "cultural contextualization," "synthetic methods," or "homogeneous principle." Truth is not relevant but absolute.

In their great zeal to plant churches, some have neglected a proper understanding of the Word of God, which is the foundation for the minister of God. When we understand the importance of the message, we give high priority to train people. In India during last three years, more than one thousand Bible institutes were established, training people from two weeks to three years. Alarming, the percentage of the people who have only two to twelve weeks of training greatly outnumbers those with better training.

Many organizations claim to have started thousands of churches in a short period of time, but the churches lack Biblical quality. It excites many of us when we hear such great statistics, but the people need to be built on the Word. For a Hindu, Christ is just another god who goes along with his other thirty-three million gods and goddesses. We need to emphasize John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." This eliminates pluralistic views of religion.

Many tribals who were converted to Christianity fifty years ago have now converted back to Hinduism. In the state of Orissa, a radical Hindu group boasts of reconverting three thousand tribals from Christianity to Hinduism. Sadly, these people did not understand the truth and were not saved. Yet even without the experience of salvation, they were baptized. They viewed baptism as a ritual that would change their social and economic status. Right teaching of the Word eliminates such tragic consequences.

Methodology

Various methods have been tried in church planting: Can we have different methods in church planting? Whatever methodology you use needs to be built on Biblical truth. There may be variations of methodology but we must not stray from Biblical principles as we develop quality churches and schools.

Plan

The target group can be divided based on language, tribe, or caste. Caste may divide people, but language unites them. In India the states are divided based on language group, so the best way is to target such a group. Once the language group is identified, your geographic location will become clear.

Program

Implementing your plan demands the right program, and the most important factor in implementing your program is prayer. Much time spent in prayer has been a time-tested recipe for the success of various Indian missions.

The second factor is evangelism. The evangelization of India needs to be viewed from two perspectives: urban and rural. Different methods need to be implemented in these different locations.

Urban India

More and more people are moving to the cities. In India there are more than twenty-seven cities that are over one million in population; there are 427 cities with populations of 100,000 or more.⁴

In 1982-83 our church in Mumbai distributed fifty thousand Bible tracts in less than two hours. We did this every fortnight for more than one year.

After a few hours of distribution, we went back and found that 85% of the tracts had been thrown on the streets. As a result, we re-evaluated our strategy and started visiting homes with the tracts. Calling on homes proved productive for some time. But for the last two years, more and more apartments have closed gates with guards. Now we are trying to reach the people through friends, relatives, and other contacts.

Here again the methods are tried and tested. The great Baptist missionary Dr. William Carey had a diversified ministry. He worked in the fields of education, agriculture, horticulture, printing, banking, and social issues such as the abolition of sati (a practice in which a widow is thrown into the funeral pyre of her husband). His ministry had a great impact through establishing educational institutions. Yet his whole focus was to preach the gospel, win souls, and establish churches and educational institutions.

The problem in the big cities is to find a place for the church. The cost is prohibitive for young congregations to buy a place. One of the methods is to buy an office space in multistory buildings and start a church. Also, home Bible studies are more effective in the urban set up.

Rural India

There are 600,000 villages in India, so we encourage our pastors to stay in a bigger village and focus on several surrounding villages.

When "Brother John" got saved from a Hindu family, his family disowned him. The church took care of him and sent him to a Bible college. After his training he based himself close to his village. Every day he visited at least two nearby villages. Within one year he was able to reach fifteen villages with the gospel and started two churches and three Bible studies in three different villages. After ten years of ministry he has two churches with more than two hundred people and has established another five churches with less than thirty-five people in each church. He has three trained people taking care of the other five churches. Every year he tries to bring all his converts together for a special conference.

"Brother Peter," a seminary student, joined the summer outreach team and went to the state of Sikkim for two summers. After his graduation he was sure of God's will for his life. He went to Sikkim and rented a house to live in with his wife and children. Within two years he won more than twenty people to the Lord. After seven years of ministry, he has a congregation of fifty people who were converted from Buddhism. He also encouraged five young men to go to Bible college. Now he has five trained men who have started three churches. These men are from the same state, and they are reaching their own language group of people. If all the team members continue with the same focus, in ten years he will be able to have at least twenty-five churches in that state.

After earning his doctorate in theology from a strong Fundamentalist school, "Brother James" went back to remote villages in India and ministered. He translated Bible lessons into their native tongue and started informal Bible training. Each week students came for three days and spent day and night with James. They had a systematic study of the Word. In less than four years these men were trained to pastor churches. Bro. James not only established indigenous churches but raised leaders among them to continue church ministry.

Purpose

It is very important to be focused on church planting. Involvement with various programs can easily lead us astray. Satan is cunning. He will divert the attention of potential leaders from the church to social activities. Missionary William Carey, in spite of his varied activities, never forgot his goal. There are hundreds of preachers who are focused and are building up God's kingdom. We need to constantly depend on God and His strength to stay focused on our mission.

Productivity

It is easy for the church to get sucked into the world's pragmatic philosophy, especially when it tries to adopt the world's marketing and corporate culture to attract people. As in the U.S., the churches in India are attracted to this approach. What are the symptoms? The goal of messages becomes keeping people happy. Sin is glossed over, and preaching of the true Word is neglected. The result is shallow Christianity.

"Mr. Uday" is a seminary graduate who has worked in northern India for the last fifteen years. He has evangelized every home in his city and also in twenty-five villages surrounding the city. But after years of ministry he has only thirty baptized members in his church, and as a result his mission has dropped his support.

I greatly rejoice in growing ministries, but at the same time I do not belittle a man of God who has small numbers in a ministry. Paul himself said, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

Pastor Chandrashekar Eda is a national missionary serving under International Baptist Missions, Tempe, Arizona.

When we understand the importance of the message, we give high priority to train people.

¹ Census 2001.

² Malayalam Manorama.

³ Strong, J. (1996). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*.

⁴ Malayalam Manorama.

Editor's note: Names of many individuals in this article have been changed for their safety.

The Indigenous Principle



A Success in India

V. D. Mani

Webster's defines "indigenous" as "originating in and characterizing a particular region or country; native." Thus, an organization conducted by and for nationals can be categorized as an indigenous organization. When the indigenous principle is applied to a local church or ministry, it indicates a work that either was started by national workers or has been turned over to national control. But in either case the work is totally self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting. Any continuing help given by outside sources in any of these areas negates the indigenous principle.

A Foundational Practice

This principle is a foundational practice of the New Testament in the spreading of the gospel. We see numerous instances of such practice in the early church, especially in the ministry of the apostle Paul. For instance, on Paul's first missionary trip in Acts 13 and 14, he and Barnabas visited previously founded churches on their return trip to Antioch. They ordained elders in every church (Acts 14:23). There is no evidence of a missionary from Jerusalem or Antioch staying in each church for years to pastor the church. Rather, the nationals were the ones ordained in the various cities. The churches were under the leadership of their own pastors: thus the indigenous principle was practiced by Paul and Barnabas.

Throughout the New Testament Paul writes to specific local churches and mentions others by name. The same is true when John writes to the seven churches of Asia Minor. In none of these is there any Scriptural evidence they were controlled by anyone or any organization outside their own country. This is strong evidential proof they were self-governing and no doubt self-propagating and self-supporting as well. They were practicing the indigenous principle while recognizing the local church as the "pillar and ground of the truth."

However, lest someone misunderstand, we deeply appreciate missionaries from the West who have sacrificially gone to other nations and people groups to propagate the gospel of our Lord. We in India will always be indebted to William Carey and other noble soldiers of the cross. Those who received the gospel light from missionaries will never forget their wonderful ministries and godly examples. But it is proper for those missionaries and missionary organizations to entrust the work to a national leader at the earliest appropriate time because the Biblical indigenous principle must always be our goal.

Having learned the character and nature of the indigenous principle, we named and registered our ministry as the Indigenous Baptist Mission with the Indian government in 1995. We brought all our ministerial entities under the mission. Now all our ministries have the indigenous principle as their goal. Some parts have achieved it totally, and in others it is a work in progress.

A Faithful Outreach

As we gained experience and knowledge in our ministry, we have developed a plan that works both for church planting and internship for the Bible college students. Indian Baptist Church and Baptist Theological College work together to promote evangelism every second Saturday. We go to villages to preach the gospel. We distribute tracts while singing and preaching the Word in the streets. In India it is not difficult to get a gathering for a public meeting. The least we expect for a night meeting is two hundred. After the preaching, we make note of those who professed faith in Christ. Then we appoint a Bible college student to visit the village and disciple them. When the discipling is finished, we start a worship service in the home of one of the converts. Eventually, that congregation grows to be an independent Baptist church. We have repeatedly started churches in many villages this way, and it has been very effective. We established more than sixty independent Fundamental Baptist churches in remote villages in the last nineteen years. All of these churches are now pastored by our own Bible college graduates.

As for our local church here in Erulu, my wife, Razia, and I began our ministry by starting a work in our home area in 1985. From our church grew multiple ministries such as the Bible college, church planting, local TV ministry, and a Christian day school.

Today, the church has some eighty families and more than 350 individuals attending each Sunday. Last year we had over four hundred on Easter Sunday with forty professions of salvation and several for baptism. All financial obligations are met by the congregation. My salary comes from the congregation. The church is supporting two students receiving Bible training and two pioneer pastors who are trying to establish churches in an unreached area. All expenses of the church programs—such as evangelism; gospel campaigns; women's, youth, and children's retreats—are completely supported by the church. Meanwhile, our church is led by the pastor and governed by the congregation and the deacons.

A Financial Solution

In 1987 the Lord led us to start Baptist Theological College. We ran this school with difficulty for years due to a lack of funds. And now it is a great blessing to our nation. We are getting students from other states in India who are learning the Word of God. Our college students receive financial help for three years. Afterwards, each student is supported for no more than five years to establish a church. In that time the church is expected to become self-supporting and all support stops at that time. Though this church-planting plan has not been 100% successful, overall it has worked well. I know it is God's plan for church planting.

To substantiate our claims, I submit the names of the following churches

who have become totally self-supporting: Grace Baptist Church, Rajahmundry; Indian Baptist Church, Kalakurru; Independent Baptist Church, Tadepalligudem; Penuel Baptist Church, Badampudi; and Bethel Baptist Church, Eastern Locks. Many others could be added to this list. Anyone visiting India should please come and see us. We will be delighted to show you churches in our fellowship who have become totally independent.

Meanwhile, we are striving to make Theological Baptist College self-supporting in the next five to ten years. In this process we have started a Christian day school, anticipating that it will eventually become self-supporting and help support the Bible college financially. We are also planning to buy a ply ash brick making machine for students to use to make money for college by selling the brick product. We have about six acres of fertile land with a good ground water supply. At present we are cultivating some vegetables for the college and want to do more so we can sell the excess. We already have 270 coconut trees on our campus; most of them are yielding and generating income.

But understand that none of the above-mentioned ministries are run by foreigners. We do receive counsel, oversight, and financial aid from our supporting churches through International Baptist Missions in Tempe, Arizona. Those funds go primarily to start new churches, construct buildings, and help with the Bible college. Our college is looking forward to the day it will become self-supporting. The present financial situation of our Indian community makes it difficult for a Bible college to be supported by Indian funds alone. At the same time we cannot neglect the Bible college, for there is such an urgent need. Hopefully, our Bible college will become completely self-supporting in the future and not need any foreign funds. Then it will be totally indigenous as are now many churches in our fellowship.

Some may differ, but I want to emphasize that it is possible for national ministries in India to become self-supporting. They need prayer, planning, and determination to achieve their goal. May the Lord help the leaders of the independent Baptist ministries in India to lead their organizations, churches, schools, and ministries to the Biblical indigenous principle.

Pastor V. D. Mani is a national missionary serving under International Baptist Missions, Tempe, Arizona.



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First Partaker

A New Bible Reading Schedule

I'll never forget the announcement. My sixty-something-year-old pastor prefaced his Sunday morning sermon by quietly rejoicing that he'd finally finished reading through the Bible as many times as his age. Perhaps any number of believers could say the same thing, but that was the first time I'd heard of anyone doing so.

Jesse Boyd had been reared in a pastor's home, but it wasn't until his college years at LSU in the late 1930s that he turned serious about serving the Lord. Sometime after that he began reading through the Bible once a year, and at some point even later he evidently hit upon the idea of catching up his times through Scripture with the years of his age. Finally he did so and visibly delighted in telling us. It was inspiring to our whole congregation.

I'm sorry to say that I probably won't ever be able to make the same happy announcement. Though I read my Bible devotionally every morning except the Lord's Day and often complete reading entirely through it every two to three years, I haven't made it a consistent goal to read all of it every year.

There have been, however, several times when I've decided to do so. The most profitable of these was the year I set the goal of reading it through in sixty days. It requires reading nineteen to twenty chapters a day and takes about an hour at pulpit rate. But when you finish, your whole Bible lies before your mind as one connected story. It's a superb experience.

The other times that have been most rewarding have been when I've used an approach devised by a

young Scottish pastor, Robert Murray M'Cheyne. Since many Christians like to begin the new year with a fresh start at reading through their Bible, I'd like to tell you about M'Cheyne's Bible reading calendar and a little bit about the devout pastor who devised it.

"The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits"
(2 Tim. 2:6)

M'Cheyne

Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813–43) was a Church of Scotland minister who died before his thirtieth birthday. Nevertheless, his impact upon Scotland's religious life was immense, not only through his preaching and praying, but most especially through the renown of his walk with God. It has continued to be a powerful inspiration to this present day through the regular republishing of *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne*, compiled by his friend Andrew Bonar. *This book is one of the best and most profitable volumes ever published*, wrote C. H. Spurgeon. *The memoir of such a man ought surely to be in the hands of every Christian and certainly every preacher of the Gospel.*

M'Cheyne pastored St. Peter's Church in Dundee, on the north bank of the dark River Tay near the North Sea. Dundee was a spiritually hardened city of about four thousand souls whom M'Cheyne observed to be *given to idolatry*. Andrew Bonar, his friend's biographer, called the area a *mass of impenetrable heathenism*.

In a letter to a student, M'Cheyne once wrote, *A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God*. It was in this spirit that he entered upon the work at Dundee and prepared himself daily for the challenges of spiritual warfare. Though constitutionally weakened due to an irregular heartbeat, he disciplined himself to rise early lest the demands of his large flock (about 1100) overwhelm the new day before he'd had opportunity to break bread for his own soul. *I ought to spend the best hours of the day in communion with God*, he wrote to himself in a document on personal reformation. *It is my*

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noblest and most fruitful employment, and is not to be thrust into any corner. The morning hours, from six to eight, are the most uninterrupted, and should be thus employed.

Many times he began his devotional exercises by singing a psalm of praise. His consistent practice was then to read three chapters of Scripture, generally in three different parts of the Bible, followed by prayer over what he read in order to adjust his whole inner man to both the words and spirit of his daily portion. On Sabbath mornings he liked to look back over all the chapters he had read through the week and give additional thought to any verses that he had marked.

A short distance from Dundee were the ruins of an ancient church. Often he rode out to them during the afternoons in order to isolate himself for prayer and meditation. And then, in those comparatively quiet years before the Industrial Revolution altered forever the rhythm of civilization, he enjoyed evenings of yet more Bible study, reading and prayer. *Evening*, he wrote in his diary. *A very pleasant quietness. Study of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Came to a more intelligent view of the first six chapters than ever before. Much refreshed by John Newton; instructed by Edwards. Help and freedom in prayer.*

You'll notice that there are two readings a day for family devotions and two for private. Ignore those divisions and read all four columns yourself if you're employing the calendar privately. But I do want to at least mention that in M'Cheyne's day Christian families regularly read a chapter together in the morning and another just before bedtime in the evening.

But M'Cheyne's time wasn't all spent in rich devotional retirement. During his first winter in Dundee a fatal influenza carried away many within the neighboring streets around his church. For several months a great deal of his time was spent visiting these dying souls. *Did I tell you of the boy I was asked to see on Sabbath evening, just when I got myself comfortably seated at home? he wrote a friend. I went, and was speaking to him of the freeness and fullness of Jesus, when he gasped a little and died.* The distressed pastor's papers are filled with such examples. *She breathed loud and groaned through pain. Died this evening at seven*, he recorded of one. Of another he recalled, *Found him near death. One or two indescribable gasps, and he died!* Of yet another, *Could not get anything out of her. Died at twelve noon; no visible mark*

of light, or comfort, or hope.

The young minister was dismayed at how often his efforts to win these people were futile. Writing several years later to W. C. Burns, he expressed that there were two things he felt that it was impossible for a minister to desire with sufficient fervor. One was personal holiness, and the other was the honor of Christ in the salvation of souls. It was this last passion that caused him to reflect on his inability to awaken people as he longed to do. *As I was walking in the fields, the thought came over me with almost overwhelming power, that every one of my flock must soon be in heaven or hell. Oh, how I wished that I had a tongue like thunder, that I might make all hear; or that I had a frame like iron, that I might visit every one, and say, "Escape for thy life!" Ah, sinners! You little know how I fear that you will lay the blame of your damnation at my door.*

The Calendar

It was in January of 1843 that M'Cheyne first published for his people a Bible reading plan that would guide their reading through it in a year. A letter of introduction accompanied it. *My dear flock*, he began, *the approach of another year stirs up within me new desires for your salvation, and for the growth of those of you who are saved. . . . What the coming year is to bring forth, who can tell? . . . We must be driven more to our Bibles, and to the mercy seat, if we are to stand in the evil day.*

M'Cheyne's device is a calendar arranged with a center column containing the day of the month. Readings to the left of the center column are for family devotions, while readings to the right are for secret (personal) devotions. Here are the first five days of a new year.

JANUARY				
Genesis 1	Matthew 1	1	Ezra 1	Acts 1
2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5

Notice that one begins reading in four different places simultaneously. The advantage of this approach over other plans for reading through the Bible in a year is that it doesn't take months to finally arrive at the Psalms or the New Testament. The variety of readings, therefore, helps hold interest from day to day. For instance, notice the first five days of April.

APRIL				
Leviticus 4	Psalms 1	1	Proverbs 19	Colossians 2
5	2	2	20	3
6	3	3	21	4
7	4	4	22	1 Thess. 1
8	5	5	23	2

But it isn't merely the variety of this approach that is appealing. There's something else. M'Cheyne's plan doesn't merely take the reader through the entire Bible in a year. It takes him through the entire Psalms and New Testament *twice*. By reading just four chapters on most days, we're able to double our exposure to the Psalms and New Testament. The second time through the New Testament begins on June 21st and the second time through the Psalms on August 4th. That's pretty attractive.

You'll notice that there are two readings a day for family devotions and two for private. Ignore those divisions and read all four columns yourself if you're employing the calendar privately. But I do want to at least mention that in M'Cheyne's day Christian families regularly read a chapter together in the morning and another just before bedtime in the evening. I think one of the most beautiful tributes along this line that I've ever read comes from the pen of John G. Paton, missionary to the New Hebrides in the mid-nineteenth century. His father, he recorded, began at the age of seventeen, while still in his own father's household, to get the family together for prayer, reading of Scripture, and *holy singing* both morning and evening. *That blessed custom*, Paton testified, went on probably without one single avoidable omission till he lay on his deathbed, seventy-seven years of age. One has to wonder what the effect would be on the life of a church today if its families resumed this devout practice for even a single year.

If the calendar were used for family as well as private devotions, M'Cheyne suggested that *the head of the family should previously read over the chapter for family worship, and mark two or three of the most prominent verses, upon which he may dwell, asking a few simple questions*. Then, at family meals, *Let the conversation often turn upon the chapter read and the psalm sung. Thus every meal will be . . . sanctified by the word and prayer*.

Usefulness

M'Cheyne's letter of introduction to the calendar pointed out that by following such a scheme several benefits would be enjoyed. For one thing, time would not be wasted. *Often believers are at a loss to determine towards which part of the mountains of spices they should bend their steps. Here the question will be solved at once in a very simple manner*.

In addition, if an entire church reads together, *Their pastor will know in what part of the pasture the flock are feeding—He will thus be enabled to speak more suitably to them on the Sabbath*. And then too, *The sweet bond of Christian love and unity will be strengthened. We shall oftener be led to agree on earth, touching something we shall ask of God. We shall pray over the same promises, mourn over the same confessions, praise God in the same songs, and be nourished by the same words of eternal life. As to fellowship, Friends . . . will have a subject for profitable conversation in the portions read that day. This will be a blessed exchange for those idle words which waste the*

soul and grieve the Holy Spirit of God. He also suggested that the readers use portions from their daily readings in letters.

Dangers

Wisely, M'Cheyne also warned of four dangers accompanying any such scheme. *Formality* was the first. *We are such weak creatures that any regularly returning duty is apt to degenerate into a lifeless form. The tendency of reading the word by a fixed rule may, in some minds, be to create this skeleton religion. Guard against this. Let the calendar perish rather than this rust eat up your souls*.

I think one of the most beautiful tributes along this line that I've ever read comes from the pen of John G. Paton, missionary to the New Hebrides in the mid-nineteenth century. His father, he recorded, began at the age of seventeen, while still in his own father's household, to get the family together for prayer, reading of Scripture, and holy singing both morning and evening. That blessed custom, Paton testified, went on probably without one single avoidable omission till he lay on his deathbed, seventy-seven years of age. One has to wonder what the effect would be on the life of a church today if its families resumed this devout practice for even a single year.

A second danger might be *self-righteousness*. M'Cheyne even posed the possibility that many in Scotland were living without any divine work on their soul—*unpardoned and unsanctified, and ready to perish*, who nevertheless spent their appointed times in Bible reading. *This is going to hell with a lie in the right hand*, he warned.

Then there's the possibility of *careless reading*. It was grief to M'Cheyne to have to say that few trembled at the word of God. *Few, in reading it, hear the voice of Jehovah, which is full of majesty*. Instead, they actually tire of it. *Some, by having so large a portion, may be tempted to weary of it, as Israel did of the daily manna, saying, "Our soul loatheth this light bread!" and to read it*

in a slight and careless manner. M'Cheyne cautioned that this would be fearfully provoking to God.

Finally, some might find such a schedule to be a yoke too heavy to bear. They may find conscience dragging them through the appointed task without any relish of the heavenly food. If this be the case, throw aside the fetter, their pastor advised, and feed at liberty in the sweet garden of God. My desire is not to cast a snare upon you, but to be a helper of your joy.

Advice

M'Cheyne encouraged his people to mark two or three of the richest verses they encountered each day and to pray over every line and even every word of them. He advised making the Lord's words their own when He prayed to the Father, *Sanctify them through thy truth: Thy word is truth* (John 17:17).

In another letter to a young believer, M'Cheyne counseled, *You read your Bible regularly, of course; but do try and understand it, and still more to feel it. Turn the Bible into prayer.* Thus, if you are reading the 1st Psalm, spread the Bible on the chair before you, and kneel, and pray, "O Lord, give me the blessedness of the man, etc." "Let me not stand in the counsel of the ungodly, etc." This is the best way of knowing the meaning of the Bible, and of learning to pray.

I'd like to add to M'Cheyne's counsel a suggestion or two for those who find it nearly impossible to read all of the portions every day. You can still make profitable use of the calendar by dividing it right down the center column. Read those chapters to the left of the dates in one year and those to the right in the next. In this way you'll still read the entirety of Scripture every two years. But happily, because of the way the calendar alternates the Psalms and New Testament between family and secret devotions, this approach will still get you through the entirety of Psalms and the New Testament once each of those years.

What if a day's reading is missed? In such a case you may find it's best not to delay your progress for the sake of recovering the day. Press on with the next day's readings first so that you're caught right back up. You may then find that you still have time to make up the lost day. But I wouldn't let myself get too far behind while trying to catch up, lest discouragement get a foothold and one be tempted to scuttle the whole plan.

Testimonies

I entitled this column *A New Bible Reading Schedule* because no doubt some are hearing of it for the first



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time. But many thousands of the Lord's people have followed this approach year in and year out for much of their Christian lives. Some have been glad to share their experience and to urge us to adopt the plan ourselves.

For instance, in the spring of 1969 Dr. David Martyn Lloyd-Jones delivered a series of lectures on preaching to the students and faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary. Having urged them to read through the Bible at least once every year, he went on to recommend M'Cheyne's plan: *The whole object of his scheme is to get people to go right through the Scriptures every year omitting nothing. . . . I have found this to be one of the most important things of all.*

John Stott, one of the most widely read evangelical authors of the twentieth century, also recommends the M'Cheyne calendar. In his work on preaching, *Between Two Worlds*, he expresses appreciation to Lloyd-Jones for introducing him to it twenty years earlier. My own practice, he relates, *has been to take three chapters each morning, if possible reading two and studying the third, and to keep the fourth chapter for the evening. . . . Nothing has helped me more than this to survey the rolling landscape of Scripture, and to grasp its underlying and recurring themes.*

Then there's R. Kent Hughes, pastor of College Church in Wheaton, Illinois. In his excellent book *Disciplines of a Godly Man* he includes an appendix (D) that has the entire calendar, plus six of M'Cheyne's directions for using it.

More recently, D. A. Carson of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School has issued two volumes entitled *For the Love of God* (Crossway Books). They are daily devotionals that follow M'Cheyne's calendar and comment expositionally and devotionally upon one of the day's four chapters. I understand that a third and fourth volume are projected so that a reader of Scripture with the calendar will someday have a page of devotional exposition for any chapter that he may care to know more about on any given day.

The M'Cheyne calendar is not difficult to obtain. It's in the *Memoir and Remains*, Hughes' book, Carson's volumes, and is even available through the Internet. Just type the words "M'Cheyne's Calendar" into the Google search engine to find downloadable versions. I've put the calendar and an introduction to it on four pages that are reduced down to one 8½ x 11 foldable page so that my own people can slip it handily into their Bible covers.

One thing I'd be interested in is further testimony to the calendar's usefulness. If any reader has used the M'Cheyne plan in the past, how about dropping an e-mail to the *FrontLine* editor about it? Your testimony will no doubt be encouraging to another reader.

Happy new year of Bible reading! ☞

Bring . . . the Books

Praying Hyde—Apostle of Prayer

After hearing so much about the powerful spiritual impact of the life story of John Hyde, I determined to read his biography for myself. One of the most readable biographies of his life is *Praying Hyde: Apostle of Prayer*, edited by E. G. Carre (reprinted by Bridge-Logos publishers in 1992). Hyde's story is an invitation into his prayer closet.

As the son of a Presbyterian pastor in Carthage, Illinois, Hyde first learned about prayer by observing the passionate praying of his father during his growing-up years. After conversion and seminary, Hyde journeyed to India as a missionary. Progress was slow. In 1904 he and two other men determined to hold a meeting in Sialkot for the encouragement of pastors, missionaries, evangelists, and lay workers. Eventually there would be seven such meetings. The convention's secret was the prayer work done in advance by Hyde and his small band of prayer warriors. For thirty days prior to the conference, these men gathered around the clock, beseeching God to bless the conference and send revival. Many credit the famous Sialkot revival to these conferences and to Hyde's praying. He and his band covenanted together in what became known as the Punjab Prayer Union, whose principles were set forth in five questions to which each member signed his agreement. On observing the difficulty of this covenant and the extended and strenuous prayer labor, one of his dear friends stated, "Do you who read these words look at those long continued vigils, those days of fasting and prayer, those nights of wakeful watching and intercessions, and do you say, 'What a price to pay!' Then I point you to scores and hundreds of workers quickened and fitted for the service of Christ; I point you to literally thousands prayed into the kingdom and say, 'Behold, the purchase of such a price.'"

Hyde's efforts went beyond evangelism. He sensed more and more that his real ministry in India was to be one of prayer. As effective as he was in the pulpit, his real power and ministry lay in the unseen ministry of the prayer chamber. Often he would pray all day without even rising from his knees for meals. Those who traveled with him testified that he would rise every two or three hours throughout the night to spend time in prayer. As a result, many of these meetings were greatly blessed by visible and lasting effects in those who attended.

In the early years of his ministry, not all understood his call to this unique ministry. Some, feel-

ing that he was not sharing the load of ministry duty, grew critical of the time spent in his room praying while others were laboring in the work. However, in time, these questions were put to rest by the evident power upon all ministry endeavors for which Hyde prayed.

Hyde rarely talked about prayer. Instead he prayed. The secret to his prayer life was that his life was prayer! Once when a coworker inquired as to what had led Hyde to so consecrate his life to prayer, Hyde explained that two related incidents led him to this ministry. First, shortly after he had surrendered to be a missionary to India, a family friend left a letter in his cabin on the ship taking Hyde to India. He promised to pray until Hyde was filled with the Holy Spirit. Deeply wounded and angered by the implication, he threw the wadded-up letter on the floor of his cabin and stormed up to the deck of the ship. After several hours he retrieved the letter and commenced a three-day battle with God. Finally he surrendered all ambitions and dreams of success as a missionary and asked for the empowering of the Spirit at any cost.

The second event took place in the first month of ministry in India. After hearing a missionary preach on the power of Christ to deliver from sin, a well-dressed, educated Indian man asked the speaker whether he himself had thus been delivered. This question penetrated Hyde's heart, for he knew he was still in bondage to certain sins. He returned to his room determining that he would not preach deliverance to others until he had first experienced it personally. He was convinced that the secret to his deliverance and the power on his ministry were due to the victory God gave him during this season of prayer.

Hyde's ministry in India lasted only nineteen years. The extended fastings and night vigils took their toll on his body. He died on February 17, 1912, and was buried next to his parents in Carthage, Illinois. His earthly life ended, but the effects of his prayer ministry continue. Those who read his life's story will be challenged to become modern partners with him in the labor of intercessory praying. ☞

*"... when
thou comest,
bring with thee
... the books"
(2 Tim. 4:13)*

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The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do so are an abomination.

Exegetical Observations. (1) The verse does not contrast female ('ishah) and male ('ish), but female ('ishah) and man in his distinctive masculinity (geber). The term *geber* connotes youth, vigor, virility, strength; a related noun *gibbor* specifically denotes a warrior. (2) The phrase "that which pertaineth unto" (22:5a), often assumed to denote clothing or garments, is not the same word translated "garment" in 22:5b. The word in 22:5a (*kaliy*) refers to equipment, implements, or even weaponry, and is never translated "garment" or "clothing." Here it denotes distinctively masculine gear. (3) "Wear" (22:5a) is an inferred translation of the common verb *to be*. The text literally reads, "The accoutrements of a man (*geber*) shall not be upon a female ('ishah); and a man shall not wear a female's garment."

Historical Observations. "Sympathetic magic" (symbolically mimicking desired results) was common in ancient cultures. In the ancient text *Akhat's Sea*, a woman tries to obtain male valor to avenge her brother by putting on a man's clothing and dying her skin dark. In another ancient text, a witch performs a ritual designed to treat impotency. The man is brought to an archway and given a spindle, a mirror, and dressed in female clothing; after passing through the archway these feminine articles are taken from him and replaced with a bow and arrow (Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*). The exchange of clothing and symbols in rituals of sympathetic magic was common in ancient Middle Eastern religions; transvestism was involved in many ancient pagan practices (Hoffner, "Symbols for Masculinity and Femininity," *JBL* [85], 1966). Such practices are common in some pagan cultures today. At some Indonesian weddings, transvestite priests (with distinctly feminine dress, appearance, and gestures) are believed to insure the couple's fertility.

Interpretation. Vocabulary alone demonstrates that this verse concerns more than wearing a style of attire similar to that worn by the opposite sex. Historical context corroborates that there is a spiritual/religious as well as a sexual principle at stake behind the prohibition. The law implies the unnaturalness of the practice and seems aimed at prohibiting gender-related role reversals—a blurring of the distinction between the sexes that was associated with pagan religious and sympathetic magic rituals practiced by the surrounding nations. It specifically targets transvestism for two reasons: "First, transvestism tends to be associated with certain forms of homosexuality; second, in the ancient world, it is probable that

transvestite practices were associated with the cults of certain deities" (Craigie, *Deuteronomy*). Merrill concurs that 22:5 is "a restriction on transvestism" to protect "divinely ordered distinctions" (*Deuteronomy*).

"Rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2 Tim. 2:15)

Applications. Attention is typically limited to 22:5a; but focus on 22:5b. What specific application immediately comes to mind? (Should missionaries to Scotland preach this text against kilt-wearing men?) Clearly, 22:5b addresses sexual perversion (transvestism). Transvestism (cross-dressing) is the adoption of dress and behavior typical of the opposite sex usually for purposes of emotional or sexual gratification. Consequently, 22:5a should be interpreted in light of 22:5b, rather than in contextual and cultural isolation from it. It is hermeneutically inconsistent to limit this verse to a style of clothing which, in our culture, happens to be characteristic of male attire, but which does not carry overtones of sexual perversion or even the intention of gender role reversal. The primary focus of any application of 22:5 should be, first, a general prohibition of illicit magical/spiritual manipulation and a specific prohibition against any such pursuits employing transvestism. If that sounds impractical in our culture, we must remember that in other cultures and missionary contexts this application is the most obvious and practical. A second contextually justified application of 22:5 would be a prohibition of (transvestism for) illicit sexual pursuits, because the text indirectly calls attention to larger sexual issues addressed elsewhere in Scripture. A third contextually justified application would be a prohibition against inappropriate role reversals, again because the text indirectly calls attention to that larger issue addressed elsewhere in Scripture as well. Such role reversals may be common in the surrounding society; but that was part of the purpose for the prohibition in the first place—to avoid practices like those of the surrounding nations that would make them indistinguishable from their pagan neighbors, especially when those practices undermined the true God and His divine order.

Cautions. There are other Biblical principles that govern our choices in the area of dress, including modesty as well as maintaining God-designed gender distinctions in appearance and behavior. We need to avoid incorrect justifications for correct positions. Right positions and policies are often rooted in a wider base of truth, a larger composite of general principles and impressions than can be summed up in a single proof text. Inaccurate, artificial proof-texting undermines valid Scriptural principle and genuine Scriptural authority when people discover that the text does not teach what it has been used to teach. ☞

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Windows

God's Answer to Tormenting Fear

Fear is perhaps the oldest negative human emotion, based on the experience of our first parents in Genesis 3:10. From the moment Adam and Eve separated themselves from their Creator through an act of disobedience, man has been haunted by fear. While there is a righteous fear of God that leads to blessing, the Bible likewise speaks of an unrighteous fear relating to life, a fear that torments the person who possesses it. Solomon wrote of it in Proverbs 28:1, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth."

Grolier's Encyclopedia has this to say concerning the problem of fear: "A phobia is an irrational, obsessive, and intense fear that is focused on a specific circumstance, idea, or thing. Phobic disorders, according to modern classification, are a subcategory of anxiety disorders. Some common phobias are fear of public places, high places, closed spaces, social situations, death, the dark, animals, foreigners or other groups of people, meteorological events, and electricity. Phobia sufferers may experience a variety of symptoms, including dizziness, palpitations, nausea, and immobilization. The cause of phobia is unknown, but numerous theories have been advanced: that phobias result from a single frightening experience with the thing feared; that phobias mask anxieties dating from childhood; that phobias are 'learned' gradually, over a long period of time; and that phobias result from distorted thoughts about the thing feared. Various treatments have been developed for phobia sufferers, each with similar high levels of success. Psychoanalysts strive to help their patients remember suppressed thoughts about childhood traumas. Behaviorists may use one of two treatments—gradual exposure to the thing feared, or intense exposure (flooding). Cognitive psychologists seek to alter the way their patients think about what they fear. Drugs and other forms of psychotherapy have also been used in successfully treating phobia sufferers."

According to a March 1986 report by psychiatrist James Reich in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, three percent of the population in the United States experiences panic, six percent agoraphobia, three percent generalized anxiety, 2.5 percent simple phobias (fear of a specified situation, object, creature, activity, or experience), and 1.5 percent social phobias (dread of situations in which you may be observed by others).

Sources of Tormenting Fear

A Sense of Guilt—Something from the Past That Haunts Us

Genesis 3:10: "And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."

At the age of fifteen, Robert Garth hit an elderly man on the head to steal money for an athletic

uniform. He didn't intend to kill him, but the blow proved to be fatal. The police had no clues. Garth knew that it was very unlikely he would be caught; yet he was miserable. Finally, after fifteen years of mental anguish, he confessed to the police. He was tried, given a relatively light sentence, and sent to prison. Some people said his sentence was too lenient. Robert's reply was this:

"I've been incarcerated in a cell for six months. I've been incarcerated in my mind for fifteen years. There was no comparison. The mind was far worse" (Herbert Vander Lugt, *Our Daily Bread*, 6/1/87).

In Genesis 42, the sons of Jacob entered Egypt to buy food, not knowing that the man who controlled the grain market was their younger brother Joseph, whom they had sold to slave dealers twenty-two years earlier. To test them, Joseph accused them of being spies, and they immediately associated their misfortune with their sinful deed. Undoubtedly they had been haunted by it.

A Lack of Peace—Something in the Present That Upsets Us

Philippians 4:6: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

"We're all afraid: I dread going to the dentist. Once, to ease my tension, I listed my middle name as 'Wimp.' The receptionist read it, laughed and assured me that many patients felt the same way. Half an hour later, the receptionist came into the waiting room. Looking directly at me, she said, smiling, 'The doctor will now see the wimp.' Three other people got up with me" (Patricia Mitchell in *Reader's Digest*, December 1988, p. 100).

There is an interesting map on display in the British Museum in London. It's an old mariner's chart, drawn in 1525, outlining the North American coastline and adjacent waters. The cartographer made some intriguing notations on areas of the map that represented regions not yet explored. He wrote: "Here be giants," "Here be fiery scorpions," and "Here be dragons." Eventually, the map came into possession of Sir John Franklin, a British explorer in the early 1800s. Scratching out the fearful inscriptions, he wrote these words across the map: "HERE IS GOD" (Richard W. DeHaan, *Our Daily Bread*, 4/14/86).

A Loss of Courage—Something in the Future That Threatens Us

2 Timothy 1:7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

"To every preacher of righteousness as well as to Noah, wisdom gives the command, 'A window shalt thou make in the ark.'"

Charles Spurgeon

Larry Hinshaw said that on the morning of the great Southern California earthquake they couldn't get into their daughters' bedroom because both beds had jammed against the door. Larry called out through the doors, "Be calm. Don't worry. We Hinshaws are noted for our cool heads in the face of emergencies." Inside he heard a frail little voice which sobbed out, "Daddy, I think we take after mama's side of the family." For days after that earthquake when there were little tremors, their children would run terrified and screaming into their bedroom thinking it was happening again (Dr. Joe Harding, Central United Protestant Church, Richland, Washington).

In his book *Three Deadly Foes*, Henry Durbanville writes about John Chrysostom: "Exiled from the position which he held as the greatest preacher of his age, this noble man refused to be intimidated. 'What can I fear?' he asks. 'Will it be death? But you know that Christ is my life, and that I shall gain by death. Will it be exile? But the earth and all its fullness are the Lord's. Will it be loss of wealth? But we brought nothing into this world and can carry nothing out. Thus all the terrors of the world are contemptible in my eyes, and I smile at all its good things. Poverty I do not fear; riches I do not sigh for; and from death I do not shrink.'"

Solutions to Tormenting Fear

Boldness Relating to the Past Based on His Forgiveness

1 John 4:17: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world."

On February 9, 1960, Adolph Coors was kidnapped and held for ransom. Seven months later he was shot to death. His body was left on a remote hillside. After some search the murderer was apprehended. Mr. Coors' son, Ad, was fifteen, and his father had been the best friend he had in the world. The boy grew up with an enormous hatred in his heart. He went into the Marine Corps, then came out and went to work. He kept on harboring hatred for the man who killed his dad. There was a constant feeling in his heart, "Oh, if I could only have caught him before the police!" Then in 1975 Ad became a Christian. He became very active in Prison Fellowship and visiting in the penitentiary. The leader of his group, Dale Morris, asked him one day, "Have you forgiven the man who killed your father?" And he said, "Yes, in my heart I have forgiven him." Morris persisted, "Have you been to him personally and have you forgiven him, and not only that, have you asked him to forgive you?" With that the young man grew angry and said, "Why should he forgive me?" He said, "Because you hated him for so long." And so Ad found the grace to go to the penitentiary, and he took a Bible in his hand in which he had inscribed these words: "I'm down here to see you today. As a Christian, I have been commanded by my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to ask for your forgiveness. I forgive

you for the sins you have committed against our family, and I ask you to forgive me for the hatred I have had in my heart for you." Later that young man was able to say with freedom, "I am able to love that man, Joseph Corbin, because of the love Jesus Christ has given in my life." And he could pray (Dr. Peter Rhea Jones, Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology).

Confidence Relating to the Present Based on His Love

1 John 4:18: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."


"It is often given as a wonderful proof of confidence in a friend that once when the great Grecian emperor, Alexander, was ill, it was told to him in a letter that his physician intended to give him poison under the form of medicine. The emperor put the note under his pillow. The physician came, poured out the potion, and gave it to him. The emperor looked his friend full in the face, drank the contents of the goblet, then handed him the letter. It was a beautiful trust. We are to have similar confidence in the will of Christ for us. We are never to doubt His love nor His wisdom" (Edythe Draper, *Draper's Book of Quotations for the Christian World*).

Newlyweds are often hesitant to open up to each other concerning their deepest feelings, not knowing what their mate's response will be. The longer a husband and wife live together in a wholesome, loving marriage relationship, the more they can confidently open their hearts to each other, knowing how their mate will respond.

Faith Relating to the Future Based on His Promises

Hebrews 11:1, 2: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report."

In the early days of the French Revolution, the schoolboys of Bourges from twelve to seventeen years of age formed themselves into a Band of Hope. They wore a uniform and were taught to drill. On their holidays their flag was unfurled, displaying in shining letters the sentence—"Tremblez, Tyrans, nous grandirons!" ("Tremble, Tyrants, we shall grow up!"). Without any charge of spurious enthusiasm, we may, in imagination, hear the shouts of confidence and courage, uttered by the young Christians of the future as they say, "Tremble, O enemy, we are growing up for God!" (Charles H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Sermon Illustrations*, Kregel Publications, 1990).

The attack on Pork Chop Hill, the decisive battle of the Korean conflict, was to begin at dawn on New Year's Day. The evening before was bitterly cold, following heavy rains. The troops were huddled in groups around what warmth they could find, eating C-rations. A newspaper reporter turned to a bedraggled Marine eating from his tin with his bayonet tip and asked, "If you could be granted one wish right now, what would you wish for?" Without hesitation the Marine replied, "Tomorrow" (William R. Lampkin, *Minute Devotions*, Fairway Press, 1990). 

Bud Stedman pastors Community Baptist Church in South Bend, Indiana.

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Building a Bible College in India

P. D. Cherian

Direction of God

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Establishing a Bible college in India requires faith that God will direct and provide. South India Baptist Bible College and Seminary (SIBBC&S) is one such ministry. The founding president, Dr. P. D. Cherian, along with other like-minded men of God around the world, sought the will of God in establishing a Bible college in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India, for the purpose of training church planters. It is imperative to find the will of God in all aspects of ministry, as did Noah, Moses, Nehemiah, and the apostle Paul.

SIBBC&S began in a rented facility in 1983 with only seven students. Today, the campus is home to several beautiful buildings and a multitude of students eagerly preparing for the Lord's service. With 700 students enrolled for the 2006–2007 academic year, SIBBC&S has become perhaps the largest Bible College in Asia. Graduates of the college are working hard to reach the lost in many Asian countries. Most graduates serve in India; however, a growing number are going as foreign missionaries to places such as Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, Andaman Islands, Thailand, and Bangladesh.

The following are some basic guidelines that one can follow to start a Bible college in India.

Aims and Purpose of the College

When starting any ministry, including a Bible college, it is important to have clear-cut goals. Before undertaking any of the physical planning of the college, it is necessary to answer several important questions: What is the purpose of the college? What are its goals? What are its views on Scripture, on education, and the ideals that you want your students to support?

Dependable Men of God

Not only must we have the right aims and purposes, we also need dependable men of God to fulfill these guidelines. An essential element of a successful ministry is dependable men: leaders and followers. A Bible college cannot succeed without having them. Moses selected Joshua and

a host of other people to function under his leadership. The disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ were trustworthy men who carried the gospel around the world. In order to establish a ministry, there need to be men who are God-fearing and faithful, men who have a vision for God's ministry here on earth. Many institutions have failed because of unfaithful men who sought to advance their own glory above the Lord's. You need a faculty and staff who lead exemplary lives, have a great knowledge of the Scriptures, and who seek to serve the Lord. It is not enough for the professors to teach the Scriptures: they need to exemplify what they teach (1 Tim. 4:12)

Suitable Location

In addition to having men of God, one needs to have a suitable location and facilities for the ministries. With a population of over a billion people and 33 million gods and goddesses, India is a country that desperately needs the gospel.

Choosing a location for a Bible college involves careful consideration of some key factors. First of all, is the location already saturated with similar ministries? Second, is it more viable economically to choose a place within the city as opposed to a small town or village? Today, the price of properties and the cost of renting facilities in big cities have soared. Therefore, it may be more financially prudent to choose a location outside the city. Finally, a Bible college should be located in an area where transportation is easily accessible for students, faculty, and staff. Ideally, there should be train and bus stations within twenty miles of the school.

Adequate Facilities

After seeking the will of God and finding a suitable area to establish a Bible college, the next step is to provide quality facilities to meet the needs of the faculty and students. Living areas that are comfortable and educational environments conducive to learning lead to satisfied, fulfilled students and employees.

For many years, SIBBC&S has functioned with minimal facilities. Over the last five years the college has seen enrollment increase by 200 percent. There is therefore a constant need to add infrastructure. The building projects on campus seem to be endless; however, we are praying and working toward the goal of providing facilities for 2500 students.

A Good Mission Board

We certainly rejoice in what God is doing in India; however, a relationship with a good mission board is helpful. What are the qualities of a good mission board? Obviously, the mission board needs to be Biblically sound. It should have a vision for the furthering of God's kingdom here on earth. There needs to be a partnership between the mission board and the mission worker. In such a partnership, the mission board should be loyal to the missionaries and involved in the work on the field. The mission board is responsible for proper representation of the mission field. It lets others know about the needs of the mission field and helps raise support. A good mission board will have its personnel make occasional oversight visits to the mission field. It is also ultimately responsible for the receiving and disbursing of finances to the missionaries.

A Baptist mission board with high integrity is invaluable in representing the ministry to churches and friends. It builds confidence in those who pray and give to the ministry, especially when their money is being processed through a mission board and they are receiving a tax-deductible receipt on time. The mission board is a bridge builder between the missionary and his supporters. Many of the supporting churches may not witness firsthand what is being done in each mission field, but the directors of the mission board should visit the missionaries on a regular basis and present updates. A good mission board is a great assistance in handling the support, sending tax-deductible receipts, occasionally writing thank-you notes, writing brochures, making DVD presentations, editing and sending newsletters, and so on. One of the successes of SIBBC&S is having a strong mission board, International Partnership Ministries, which adequately represents the college.

A Proper Board of Men

To run a Bible college effectively, it is necessary to have a group of men to lead the institution. These men are responsible for any decision-making regarding the college. They are in control of the college, thus eliminating dictatorship and self-enrichment.

Therefore, it is imperative to have men who are highly qualified to lead. These men need to be God-fearing and faithful, and they need to have a vision for the school. Their decisions need to be based on what they think is best for the students and the overall operation. Ultimately, however, they need to recognize that God is the Head of the college. It is His will that will influence any decisions made.

Financial Accountability

Registering the institution under the Societies' Act or Trust allows you to apply to the Home Ministry of India for Foreign Contribution Regulation Act number. When this is granted, you can receive foreign contributions for which no tax has to be paid. This ensures that the recipient is accountable to the government. It is mandatory to submit all the income and expenses of the college to the Home Ministry every year. Once the institution is registered as a charitable trust, an institution can apply for tax exemption for all properties.

A Good Selection of Degrees

Of course, an important aspect of any college is the education. As a Bible college, it is important to focus on the school's purpose. Since the school's focus is on missions, it must then provide classes that will prepare students for the mission field. Since the students come from various religious backgrounds and possess different gifts and talents, it is necessary to provide a range of degrees that will accommodate different aspects of the mission field.

A wide range of degrees will help the students to select the course of study that is compatible to them. SIBBC&S offers ten degrees: Diploma in Theology, Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Divinity, Bachelor of Religious Education, Master of Divinity, Master of Theology, Master of Religious Education, Bachelor of Arts in Bible, Master of Arts in Bible, and Doctor of Ministry. Through careful consideration, faculty members help guide the students to pursue the right course.

Careful Selection of Students

A majority of the students in Indian Bible colleges are from the northeast

part of India and many from the country of Myanmar.

Biblically, the college is a place of training for men and women who want to serve the Lord. Students seeking admission go through an interview process. Each student is asked to give his testimony and once admitted has to comply with the rules and regulations of the institution. It is important that the students are born again and called of God. Students that exemplify a true desire to study but do not have the financial resources are provided with a work scholarship.

In conclusion, a Baptist Bible college in India is grounded on Paul's instruction to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

Dr. P. D. Cherian is President of South India Baptist College and Seminary, and he serves under International Partnership Ministries in Hanover, Pennsylvania.

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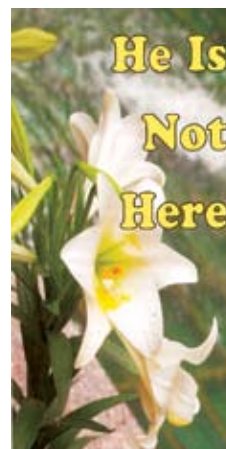
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The rooms where the severely mentally handicapped are cared for at the Dohnavur Fellowship in India are called "The Place of Lovingkindness." —Elisabeth Elliot

When you hear I have gone, jump for joy!
—Amy Carmichael of India, on her impending death

Sometimes it was nasty as a stone caught me in the back. A humble Christian would shadow me all the way home, watching sympathetically. Later I would be warned by him of impending dangers. Sometimes the crowd surged towards me with wild cries as we were forced up the street. —Jock Purves, N.W. Frontier, India

We cannot expect to fulfill the [Great Commission] mandate that Jesus gave unless we prioritize reaching those who do not necessarily match up with our current definition of missions. —Charles F. Keen

"Giving and receiving" may seem an unusual way of referring to an offering, but it describes it well. The expression brings to mind the two sides of a ledger—credit and debit. Paul's debit was met by the Philippians' credit. —J. Carl Laney

The role of the West in world missions is changing. More and more, Westerners are helping to facilitate training and support for new missionaries from developing countries. —Tamela Baker

William Carey penetrated the heart of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism. In a pluralistic arena, he proclaimed the uniqueness of Christ as the only Savior. . . . He did not soften the claims of Christ or the warnings about the eternal destiny of those without the Savior. —William D. Taylor

No matter how many sports celebrities, movie stars or business gurus strut their stuff, the public thirsts for more. People still want something or someone greater to believe in—some sense of hope for themselves. —Quentin J. Schultze

Most attempts at world evangelism are inconsiderable in comparison of what might be done if the whole body of Christians entered heartily into the spirit of the divine command on this subject. —William Carey

Doing missions solely by checkbook [without examining the reputation of the non-Western mission] has . . . perils. Money without accountability can kill initiative and create division and dependence overseas, just as misguided government spending does here. —Stan Guthrie

Americans are especially vulnerable to an appeal that says, "Give us your dollars, but not your sons and daughters." If we do that, missionary vision will die within a generation, and the dollars will also eventually stop. —Roger Hedlund

Our mission work must be rooted in biblical theology, not in the social sciences nor in management and marketing. . . . Some are redefining the uniqueness of Christ. The North American concept of missions is often too pragmatic, too numbers-oriented, and too reductionistic. —William D. Taylor

I cannot possibly come. I am a Christian. I don't want jewels. I have Jesus now.
—Lavana, a young Indian convert who defied her parents' pleas to return to them

When you do find material in a Christian bookstore on the subject of missions, it is almost without exception not written by a fundamentalist from our perspective or doctrinal position. —Charles F. Keen



After 12 hours Pastor Jones was starting to regret beginning a radio ministry.

Compiled by Dr. David Atkinson, pastor of Dyer Baptist Church, Dyer, Indiana.

The Love We Seek

Kim Melton

My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. Song of Solomon 2:10

These are words that every young girl dreams of hearing. Even as an adult, I love the stories of Cinderella, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, and Beauty and the Beast. Females long for our “prince” to come and rescue us, to be loved for who we are with all of our flaws, and to live that fairy tale ending of “happily ever after.”

So many times we look to other people to meet a need in our life that no human being can possibly meet. I know that our husbands are commanded to love us, but each of us has our own definition of the word “love.” Expectations run high when we say those blissful words, “I do.” We picture that man standing opposite us showering us with his love and devoting all of his energy to making us happy. After the honeymoon, reality begins to set in. There is a job that he has to go to, bills to be paid, and the responsibilities of fatherhood, if the Lord should choose to bless with children. No matter how much energy a husband puts into showing his devotion to his wife, if she is seeking fulfillment through that devotion, it will never be enough. Perhaps you are reading this and you are single and wishing you had a husband. Again, if that is the love you are seeking, it will not be enough for you.

One of God’s attributes is love. We know that He loves us and that all love comes from Him, so why do we leave Him out of this picture? Romans 5:8 tells us “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” He knew every sin that we would commit and yet He loved us enough to die for us. Personally, I have spent most of my life looking for love the way I thought I had to have it. I did not know that there was Someone waiting to shower me with His love. I knew that the Bible said that God loved me. I sang the song, “Jesus loves me, this I know . . .” but it was only head knowledge. When a trial or hardship would come my way, my first thought was either, “God doesn’t love me” or “I’m not good enough for God to love me.”

One day, through a series of events, God showed me that I did not understand His love for me. I began to seek to understand that, and I was not disappointed. It didn’t happen immediately. It was a search. God promises us in Jeremiah 29:13 that “ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”

There are many things involved in the search (Prov. 2:1–5). First is prayer (Prov. 2:3). Paul prays in Ephesians 3:18, 19 that the *believers* “may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.” God is the one who must open our eyes to this truth, so we must ask Him to do it. We must ask others to pray this for us. We must pray it for others and ourselves.

The second part of the search is reading *and* studying God’s Word (Prov. 2:1, 4). It is His love letter to us, and yet many times it is the one thing on our “to-do” list that we get to “if we have time.” When we do get to it, we rush through without taking time to read and reread and think about what He is saying to us. We don’t take the time to look up words that we don’t understand and search out the meaning. Many times we are so busy serving God that we forget to spend time just being with Him and listening to what He has to say. If you are married, think back to the time when you were dating your husband. What would you have thought if he called you “when he got around to it” or didn’t show up for a date because he “simply ran out of time”? He probably wouldn’t be your husband today if that were the case. It grieves the heart of our loving God when we don’t make time for Him.

Third, as you begin this search, God will begin to show you sins in your life that are harming your relationship with Him. These must be confessed and forsaken. There cannot be any sins between you and your God if you want to know the assurance of His love. As I began my search, God immediately began to show me sins in my life and things that were eating up my time that were not important. God also began to show me things that I was clinging to for my own happiness. These things were important to me, but they were not

helping my relationship with Him. They did not draw me closer to Him. I had to let them go. James 4:6–8 says, “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.” Think back to the dating analogy. When you became serious with that special someone, old boy-friends, pictures, and mementos had to go. Maybe you had to resign from a job and move to another location so that you could join that man in marriage.

The fourth part of the search is memorizing God’s Word (Prov. 2:1b, 2). Let’s face it, there will be times when we honestly don’t have time to sit down and read and study the Word. Maybe the baby is sick and you are sleep-deprived from giving around-the-clock care. There are days when our human frailty kicks in, and we sleep through the alarm. You may plan a special afternoon with the Lord and have circumstances beyond your control keep you from it. When these kinds of things happen, our thoughts begin to run away from us. We are tired, frazzled, and frustrated. We feel everything but loved. If you are memorizing God’s Word, you will have something to meditate on throughout your day. This will help you to think on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Phil. 4:8). One very special time for me with the Lord was watching my daughter at her

swimming lesson. I was working on memorizing Romans 8:32: “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” The Lord began to teach me the meaning of that verse as I sat there meditating on it. That was almost four years ago, and I still have not forgotten it.

As you can see, all of this takes lots of time. That was true of your dating relationship as well. The more serious you became with your mate, the more time you probably spent together. As you spend time with the Lord and He begins to teach you, you will find yourself looking for more time to spend with Him. He will become more and more precious to you. There will be memories of times with Him that you cannot forget.

The day God opened my eyes to His love for me is a day that I will never forget. I saw things about His love for me that can only come from Him, through His Word. It truly was “rapture divine.” It changed all of my earthly relationships. I was no longer looking to others for the love that I sought. I now knew that His love was the only love that could meet my deepest needs, and I saw Him meeting those needs. God sent His Son to rescue me. He loves me in spite of all my flaws. With Him I will live forever. Now I hear those words that I have longed to hear for so long; “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.”

Kim Melton and her husband, Tim, are missionaries to Japan. They have three children.



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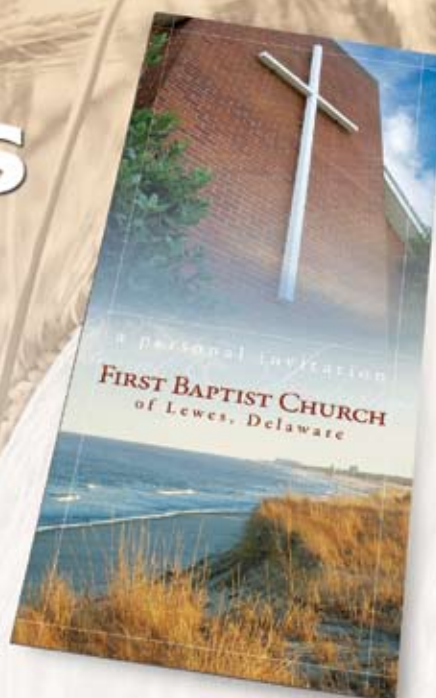
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God's Word Never Returns Void

Jerry Sivnksty

In Isaiah 55:11 the Lord promises, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." This is a wonderful truth! When we proclaim God's Word, we can be assured that it will do its work and impact the lives of those who hear it. We read in Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." What a profound truth to realize that the Word of God is quick, alive, and active! It is powerful, which means it is the "dynamite" of God to break the hardest sinner on earth. It is also sharper than any two-edged sword, which means it cuts right through the conscience of man to make him see his own wretchedness and his need of Christ as Savior.

Several years ago I was preaching a meeting in an eastern state. A man came one night who got so upset and angry with me that he told his wife he would never go back to hear me preach. Three years later I was in the same church for a return meeting. At the close of the Sunday morning service, a man walked up to me and said, "I've been waiting for three years to see you. I heard you preach when you were here last, and I was not a Christian. I was infuriated with your preaching and told my wife I would never go back to hear you preach. However, I could never get away from the message you preached. I want you to know I was under such deep conviction that I trusted the Lord as my Savior. I have been eagerly awaiting your arrival here to let you know I got saved because of your straightforward preaching of Christ as the only way to go to heaven." Remember what the Lord said in our text? "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void."

Many years ago I was holding meetings in Lakeland, Florida. One of the ladies invited an unsaved friend to the services. This lady came three nights in a row to hear me preach. On the last night she walked up to me, said that she had never heard the Bible preached before, shook my hand, and left. Twenty minutes later, someone tapped me on the shoulder; I turned around to see this unsaved lady. She said, "We were going home, and the message you

preached tonight really spoke to me. I asked my friend to turn the car around and go back to the church because I want to know how to be saved." My wife took the Bible and led this lady to Christ. "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void."

Recently a Muslim from West Africa who read one of my gospel tracts wrote me and gave the following testimony: "My father told me that when he sent me to school, he did not send me to embrace Christianity but to get an education. However, after reading the tract you wrote I realize that Jesus Christ is the one who died for our sins, and I have accepted Him as my personal Savior." He has written to me twice and related that his Muslim friends are forsaking him and his uncle has told him he can no longer live with him since he has become a Christian. "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void."

Several years ago I had a meeting in Indiana. A lady flew her niece from a southern state to be with her for the week of meetings. The reason she did so was because this young lady's mother was a prostitute and was trying to convince her daughter to follow in her footsteps. One night at the close of the service, the aunt brought her niece to meet me; she was seventeen years old. In the course of our conversation I asked her whether she knew Christ as her Savior. She told me she felt she hadn't done anything bad enough to go to Hell. I told her I knew a lot of people who were good and were going to split Hell wide open! I then gave her the plan of salvation and had the privilege of leading her to Christ. That was in the month of June; in August she enrolled at Bob Jones University. She knew so little of the Bible that when her teacher asked the class to turn to the book of Matthew she raised her hand and said, "Sir, I didn't know I had to buy that book for class." She graduated from BJU and is now married. That's the power of the Word of God!

Always remember what the Lord said in Isaiah 55:11: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void." I challenge you today to share the Word of God and watch what the Lord will do with it in His time.

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EZRA, PART 1

A new year always carries with it the potential for a fresh start, a rededication to building (and in some cases, rebuilding) the work of God in your life. Ezra and Nehemiah are just such books of new beginning and (re)building. God had graciously brought His people through the long winter of captivity and opened a door for their return to the land of promise and blessing. Though books of ancient history, Ezra and Nehemiah testify to truth that is timeless, practical, “profitable for doctrine . . . reproof . . . correction . . . and instruction in righteousness,” and essential for the maturity of the most modern believer (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

One of the most valuable lessons of history is that the basics—the nature of God and the nature of man—never change. “Secular history” is a misnomer, an oxymoron. All history is theological. History is the illustrated encyclopedia of the acts of God, a virtual branch of theology whereby God makes Himself known to any man who has eyes to see it and a Bible by which to interpret it. This is precisely what one discovers with the opening words of Ezra: “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia [538 B.C.], that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah [605 B.C.] might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing” (1:1). Kings and nations, dates and documents—these are the stuff of history. But here the purposeful plan and involvement of God are pushed unmistakably into the foreground. That is where the Book of Ezra begins.

Outline

Ezra is part historical, part autobiographical. In the first six chapters of the book that bears his name, Ezra records events that precede him by eighty years. He does not come into the story until chapter 7. Ezra divides into two major segments:

- Ezra 1–6: The First Return under Zerubbabel (538–516 B.C.)
- Ezra 7–10: The Second Return under Ezra (458–424 B.C.)

The events of Nehemiah, Ezra’s contemporary who returns in 445 B.C., also occur within the time frame of the last segment of the book of Ezra. This column will survey the first segment of Ezra.

Survey

Cyrus’s Decree and the Jews’ Return (Ezra 1–2)

1:1–4. Cyrus’s decree to permit the Jews to return to their homeland was not an isolated policy but a universal policy toward all expatriated refugees throughout the empire that he had just wrested from Babylon. Cyrus ordered that

all the gods and temple paraphernalia confiscated by the previous rulers be returned to their original places of worship—accompanied by all the former captives who wished to return to their own homelands. From a purely historical perspective, the policy was both humanitarian and shrewdly politic, for it is “easier to control an empire full of contented subjects than discontented ones” (F. F. Bruce). Simultaneously, however, Cyrus’s policy was providential and prophecy-fulfilling. It is inviting to suppose that God “stirred” Cyrus’s heart to do something unique especially for His people. But the universality of Cyrus’ act—applying across the board to all conquered nations—in no way diminishes the evident providence behind it; it only enlarges it. God sometimes providentially prompts individuals to take decisions and actions that specifically benefit His people; but sometimes He orchestrates—mysteriously through the free and independent choices of men—wide-ranging policies that equally address the needs of His people and carry forward His purposes in the earth. (Think of the tax of Caesar Augustus that brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem for the birth of Messiah.)

1:5, 6. In fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy (Ezra 1:1) and in answer to Daniel’s prayer (Dan. 9:1ff.), God providentially prompted individuals to freely fulfill His will. He “*stirred up the spirit* of Cyrus king of Persia” (Ezra 1:1) and prompted a select remnant, “*whose spirit God had raised*, to go up to build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem” (Ezra 1:5). This language of divine “stirring” corrects a popular notion that everyone who did not return to Judah was (at best) disobedient and out of God’s will or (at worst) unspiritual, materialistic, and perhaps even pagan. In addition to several other arguments against this misconception, the language of Ezra 1:5, 6 indicates that (1) God Himself did not prompt everyone to return, (2) those who remained behind materially assisted those who did return, and (3) those who remained behind were not necessarily disobedient for not returning. Some see an intentional theological point in this selective stirring. God, as if “to emphasize that He is not the God of the big battalions, stirred only a remnant of this remnant into action. This whittling down of numbers and power . . . is reminiscent of His way with Gideon’s army” (Kidner). In fact, He makes this point explicitly in the encouragements of Zechariah 4:6 (“not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit”) and 10 (“the day of small things”), later spoken to this very generation of returnees.

1:7–11. The largest segment of this introductory chapter on the return of Jewish exiles to Israel is devoted to the mention and enumeration of the temple vessels that were being returned to Israel along with the exiles. Why? If these

verses seem to supply just another bit of tedious historical detail of little spiritual value or theological significance, you need to check your marginal cross references. The record of Jerusalem's destruction includes detailed references to the systematic looting of the temple valuables (see 2 Kings 25:8–17). And just as specifically as the record of their removal, God prophetically promises their recovery (see Jeremiah 27:19–22). In the historical context of Jeremiah 27 and 28, this prophecy served an immediate and practical function. The test of a true prophet was whether or not his predictions materialized exactly as predicted. Jeremiah warned his contemporaries not to listen to the false prophets. They insisted that Israel would not remain in servitude to Babylon (27:12–15) and, to prove it, prophesied that the plundered temple vessels would soon be returned from Jerusalem (27:16–17). One false prophet named Hananiah even claimed that the Lord would bring back the temple vessels “within two full years” (28:1–4) as proof that He would deliver them from the yoke of Babylon. Jeremiah's reply is stunning (28:5–17), and in the end it was his prophecies that were fulfilled. The details belabored in Ezra 1:7–11 vindicate the absolute reliability of God's promises in His Word.

2:1–70. Like the details of 1:7–11, the list of the names and families of the first returnees does not reflect some Jewish preoccupation with genealogical tedium. Its function is to demonstrate “five ways in which Yahweh was faithful to His promise of restoration” by furnishing them with “legitimate leadership,” preserving them as “a covenant people,” returning them to their rightful inheritances, “[providing] for fellowship with them,” and granting “the necessary resources” for the return (David Shumate, “The Theological and Practical Value of the Name Lists in Ezra 2 and 8,” *Biblical Viewpoint*, November 2003).

Worship Restored in Jerusalem (Ezra 3)

For seventy years, the Jerusalem temple lay desolate, while weeds sprouted and wild animals found refuge in its ruins. Then the bronze altar was set up, worship was restored, the Feast of tabernacles was observed, and the foundation of the temple was laid. That's when the opposition began in earnest.

Work Stopped by Opposition (Ezra 4)

Ezra is particularly instructive and remarkably modern in its insight into opposition strategies of the enemies of God's purposes and people. Strategy 1 is *deceptive infiltration*—proposed cooperation (on basis of common ground) but with an ulterior motive (4:1–3). Strategy 2 is *direct interference and harassment* (4:4, 5); this continued “all the days of Cyrus [538–530 B.C.] . . . until [the second year of] the reign of Darius [520 B.C.]” The reader must jump from

4:5 to 4:24 to complete the immediate thought of harassment in building the temple. All the intervening material (4:6–23) is an extended parenthesis that telescopes forward to include later examples of the same kind of opposition during Ezra's time (about seventy-five years later). Strategy 3, introduced in that parenthesis, is *legislative intervention*, characterized by intentional misrepresentation and mischaracterization (4:12), misinformation (4:13), disingenuousness (4:14), and inflated alarmism (4:16). These strategies are strikingly modern.

Work Resumed Despite Opposition (Ezra 5)

Just as God “stirred up” the spirit of a pagan king to issue a decree (1:1) and “stirred up” the hearts of a remnant of His people to return (1:5), God again “stirred up” the spirit of the leaders and the people to resume the work on the temple (Haggai 1:14). And He did it through the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah (5:1). Haggai and at least the beginning of Zechariah fit chronologically right between Ezra 5:1 and 2. God did not cause the harassment of their enemies to cease, but prospered the labors of His people in spite of it.

Opposition Reversed, Work Completed (Ezra 6)

Eventually, God providentially reversed the harassment of the enemies of His people. Their letter of warning and protest to Darius (5:6–17) actually produced the opposite effect. Darius's reply (6:1–12) commanded them not only to refrain from hindering the Jews, but also to financially support the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple by redirecting their tax revenues directly to the Jewish officials. As a result, the temple was completed and dedicated (6:13–18) and the Passover celebrated (6:19–22). Ezra 6:21 enunciates a principle of separatism that should govern the worship of every believer: “Separated . . . to seek the Lord God.” Both are essential for true worship and biblical separation. When we seek the Lord without being willing to separate from the defiling influences of the surrounding world, we betray a fundamental misunderstanding of God and His character. When we separate for its own sake without genuinely seeking the Lord, we become externalistic, legalistic, and petty. I don't know which is worse, but I know neither is Biblical. We must have both.

Conclusion

Since all history is theological, all history is relevant to my life and yours. What timeless messages does Ezra 1 communicate to God's people today? Here are two. (1) *The precision and reliability of all of God's words.* What could have sounded more unlikely to an ancient Jew than that

Continued on next page

At a Glance Continued

God would literally raise up a pagan king named Cyrus to deliver His people after exactly seventy years of chastisement and restore them back to their land along with the preserved treasures of the temple? What as-yet-unfulfilled prophecies seem too unlikely to be fulfilled literally? The fleshing out of explicit prophecies in history furnishes God's people of all ages certified reasons for clinging confidently to whatever promises and assurances God has made to us

in the Bible regarding our origin, our destiny, our circumstances, or our future. (2) *The remarkable providences God can employ to effect what He has said.* These include God's ability to work providentially in and through the free acts and choices of the most unlikely candidates (including even heathen kings and false prophets), and God's ability to work providentially in and through His own people to pray, to obey, to follow, and to give in order to accomplish His words and purposes, however unlikely they may appear.

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Deporting Missionaries

Christianity continues making inroads in India, a fact that does not set well with the leaders of a Hindu sect who are calling for the deportation of Christian missionaries and have already initiated violence against some.

"In published remarks S.V. Seshagiri Rao, a vice president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), said those on his blacklist include 68 foreigners from mainly Canada and the United States, who he claimed converted 6000 tribals to Christianity in several areas of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, where the BJP is in power. Tribals are India's most ancient and impoverished groups. . . . 'Teams of Christian missionaries have fanned out in various tribal areas of Nalgonda district and are forcibly converting tribals to Christianity,' he said." (<http://www.worthynews.com/christian/india-hindu-leaders-threaten-deportation-of-foreign-missionaries/>, accessed December 15, 2006)

World's Tallest Building

According to various Web reports, the Center of India Tower is set to become the tallest building on earth . . . when and if it is completed sometime in 2008. Details are sketchy, but, according to wikipedia.org, "the planned site . . . is

Katangi, Madhya Pradesh. Besides being among the tallest structures, the building is set to become the largest structure in the world by mass." With a design reminiscent of a Hindu temple, "the construction . . . is being financed by Hindu spiritual leader Maharishi Mahesh Yogi," who has the dubious distinction of being the creator of Transcendental Meditation. Apparently TM pays well. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Center_of_India_Tower, accessed December 15, 2006)

Poverty in India

According to author Paul Wallace, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Missouri in Columbia, "The absolute number of poor in India today is larger than the population of India at independence. The fact that the percentage might be going down is one statistic. But the absolute number is enormous. And if one looks at the global figures of poverty, India's record is not very good.

"India is very good at IT, manufacturing is booming, . . . the new national highway system is to be commended. A number of other developments are truly meritorious. At the same time, the problem of how to deal with the poor has still not been addressed."

Wallace comments on another difficulty in Indian culture: an apparent

overemphasis on family and local obligations at the expense of the nation's overall good. "Out of this emphasis on the family . . . comes the notion that one must first help family members at any cost—and that sometimes extends to clan and the region." ("UPA may lose in 2009 if it does not fight poverty," <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/msid-809327,curpg-1.cms>, accessed December 15, 2006)

No-Strings Help

Seattle has a new program to help alcoholics that will make rescue missions a thing of the past. The city spent 11.2 million for a 75-bed institution that will provide good living arrangements for drunks. Unlike abstinence-based facilities, giving up alcohol is not a condition for the use of the facility. The rationale is that keeping these drunks off the streets will reduce their use of prison and emergency services, ultimately saving the city money. Yet emergency responders have come to 1811 Eastlake an average of four times a week. Many neighbors see this institution as a huge problem. Since freedom from addiction is not among the goals of the institution, it is not offering any real help to its residents, and statistics demonstrate it is not providing any real relief in any other way either. (*World Magazine*, "Bunks for

Dunks," October 14, 2006)

SBC Survey

The Baptist Bulletin reported the following statistics from a Lifeway survey on why people have left SBC churches: "A total of 59 percent indicated 'changes in life situation': 19 percent in that class said they became too busy, 17 percent cited family/home responsibilities, 15 percent said 'work,' and 12 percent indicated divorce/separation. Another category of people said it was 'disenchantment with pastor/church' (37 percent) that caused the flight: 17 percent of these said church members 'seemed hypocritical,' 17 percent said they were 'judgmental of others,' and cliques accounted for 12 percent. Other main categories included 'church was not helping me to develop spiritually' (14 percent) and 'stopped believing in organized religion' (14 percent)." (<http://www.baptistbulletin.org/?p=70>)

Free Speech on Marriage

The Alliance Defense Fund is filing an appeal to a federal court in a free speech case. A Montana Baptist Church supported a state marriage amendment and found itself in violation of reporting laws in its state. The outcome of this case holds deep ramifications for churches that make public stands on moral issues that intersect with public policy. (<http://>

www.alliancedefensefund.org/news/pressrelease.aspx?cid=3881)

Stem Cell Success

British scientists Nico Forraz and Colin McGuckin have successfully developed dime-sized livers through the use of stem cells. These livers are already sufficient for medical testing. The hope is that the process will be developed for transplantation in the next fifteen years. Yet with all the outcry in the pre-election hype, why was this story kept so secretive? The answer: the stems cells were harvested not by destroying embryos, but from the umbilical cord. (*Weekly Standard*, "The Big Stem-Cell Breakthrough You Are Not Hearing About," November 3, 2006)

Prayer in Jesus' Name

A Fredericksburg, Virginia, councilman, Hashmel Turner, and the Rutherford Institute have brought suit against the county council because of being barred from praying in Jesus' name. The practice of the council was to begin with prayer on a rotational basis. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the People for the American Way (PFAW) have argued that the real issue is a violation of the establishment clause. They have succeeded so far in defining Hasmel's actions as government speech and hence an establishment of religion. According to this extremely broad definition of government speech (speech on government property by those loosely associated with the government), even high school students would be prohibited from praying in Jesus' name at a high school graduation. (www.crosswalk.com/news/1441766.html)

NOTABLE QUOTES

It makes no more sense to talk about a worldly Christian than to talk about a heavenly devil. —Billy Sunday

He who has God and everything has no more than he who has God alone. —C. S. Lewis

Jesus taught us to give and to give generously, but He also said that He would supply all our needs. It is important that we learn to have simple trust. —Wendell Heller

When I get to heaven, I shall see three wonders there. The first wonder will be to see many there whom I did not expect to see; the second wonder will be to miss many people who I did expect to see; and the third and greatest of all will be to find myself there. —John Newton

We are not only to renounce evil, but to manifest the truth. We tell people the world is vain; let our lives manifest that it is so. We tell them that our home is above and that all these things are transitory. Does our dwelling look like it? O to live consistent lives! —J. Hudson Taylor

Live so as to be missed when dead. —Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God. —William Carey

I never made a sacrifice. We ought not to talk of "sacrifice" when we remember the great sacrifice which He made who left His Father's throne on high to give Himself up for us. —J. Hudson Taylor

No one attains remarkable eminence or success without a resolute and habitual self-denial in subordinating every secondary point to the primary object. —Charles Bridges

While he is tempting us, he impresses us with the lie that one fall does not matter. What a lie! No sin is a trifle. If we fall, we do not easily recover. Of course, because of our own sin nature, we all have fallen more than once; but we must *never* excuse sin. Even by one fall, we lose something we never regain. —Ed Nelson

Compiled by Robert Condict, Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International Advisory Board member and pastor of Upper Cross Roads Baptist Church, Baldwin, Maryland.

Newsworthy is presented to inform believers. The people or sources mentioned do not necessarily carry the endorsement of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International.

Hope for the Untouchables

India's economy is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, growing an average of eight percent each year since 1991. But the wealth does not reach everyone. Though the caste system has been outlawed by India's constitution, the caste structure remains very much in place. No one knows this more than the subcaste known as the "Dalits" or the "Untouchables." Three hundred million Indians are classified in this way and will be kept in a life of deep poverty. Discontent is growing. Many of these "untouchables" are turning from Hinduism to Christ. Numerous forms of persecution have followed those who seek to reach this group. Yet there is joy in the presence of God over every sinner that repenteth! (*World Magazine*, December 9, 2006, "Up from Hinduism," Jamie Dean).

New US Birth Statistics

According to AP writer Mike Stobbe, thirty-seven percent of US births are to unwed mothers. While this number has remained consistent over the past few years (it has been on a slow but steady rise since 1990), teen pregnancies have reached an all-time low. In fact, the rate grew in all child-bearing age categories except for teenagers. The birth rate grew most dramatically among twenty-year-olds.

To put this into focus, of the 4.1 million births last year, 1.5 million were to unwed mothers. The rise was concluded to be from the "burgeoning number of people who are putting off marriage or living together without getting married." (<http://www.breitbart.com/news/2006/11/21/D8LHMFDO0.html>, accessed November 11, 2006)

Building Empowering Partnerships in India

Pearson Johnson

I dialed the number on the back of the credit card. On the other end of the line was a friendly voice with a strong accent. "You've reached credit card services. How can I assist you?" I explained the reason for my call, and then asked out of curiosity, "By the way, where are you located?" "Mumbai," the man answered.

Global partnerships are becoming the norm in commerce and technology. Communication is instantaneous worldwide, and this has opened doors which the business world has plunged through. What effect have partnerships had on employees here in the US? What have these partnerships changed about the cultures abroad? These are the questions many people are asking.

The questions are similar in missions partnerships in places such as India. It seems that we now have the opportunity to get more accomplished, both personally and financially. However, we do not always think about how sending our resources affects our churches here and how it changes the believers overseas. What principles can we keep in mind so that our partnerships are empowering and truly helpful?

First, understand what a true partnership is. A partnership is not a way to accomplish more by our money and their blood, sweat, and tears. It is "a complementary relationship driven by a common purpose and sustained by a willingness to learn and grow together in obedience to God."¹ The focus of a partnership should be building relationships where we genuinely work together to accomplish the tasks of church planting and pastoral training in restricted access nations.

Second, we must understand something about the problem of dependency. Where dependency begins and ends is the million-dollar question in missions partnerships. It is impossible to answer, but it had better not be ignored if one is to accomplish anything of lasting result. One author with a lot of experience in partnership development outlines several ways sure to create unhealthy dependency: making an alliance with

a lone ranger who bypasses their local churches; sending money directly to individuals; financing pastors and local churches (beyond the planting stage); giving resources based only on presented needs; and underwriting 100 percent of any ministry's need or project.²

Third, we must focus on establishing genuine, trust-filled relationships. In the US, "getting it done" is our primary focus. In other parts of the world, relationships are much more important than results. It is not enough to provide money, a list of goals, and a preaching trip and think we have a partnership. One BMM missionary I talked with today said he makes his trips to India at least a month long so those he partners with run out of places for him to preach! At that point, they can spend informal time together deepening their relationship.

Fourth, focus on building capacity in your partners. "The decisive factor in a developmental partnership is managing the gray area between what *you* can do for a ministry and what *they* should do for themselves."³ First ask your national partners what they can do for their project or for supporting their church planters, and then ask how you can help fill the need that is lacking. A key ingredient may be transitioning from supporting projects or church planters to providing pastoral leadership or seminary training.

The Church is blessed with many godly brothers and sisters in India with whom we can partner in planting churches. How will our partnerships help them? More importantly, how will our partnerships *change* us?


Pearson Johnson is the Pastor of Missions and Evangelism at Inter-City Baptist Church in Allen Park, Michigan. If you have questions or comments, please contact him at pjohnson@intercity.org.

¹ Daniel Rickett, *Building Strategic Relationships* (San Jose, CA: Partners International, 2000), 1.

² Ibid., 18–20.

³ Ibid., 39.

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Chaplain News

Chaplain Joe Willis (LTC)

Operations and Plans

Standing behind the podium in Adnon Palace last week, I could not help but think upon Galatians 6: 7–9, where Paul urges us to “be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” It was from a podium like this that Saddam Hussein addressed the people of Iraq in the affairs of his dictatorial empire. It was from a podium like this that the sons of Saddam pronounced cruel and inhumane sentences on those who would dare question their authority or even lose a soccer game. It was from a podium like this that threats of destruction were cast upon Israel and all of her Western allies for defying Iraq and challenging Saddam’s tyrannical actions.

But isn’t it amazing how God always has the final say in the affairs of His creation? Today, the use of this podium had changed somewhat. On this day in September of 2006, I stand behind this pulpit with the other chaplains here in the International Zone of Baghdad, Iraq, to proclaim a different message. Now the message is one of love and not hate. It is a message of hope and not fear. It is a message of life and not torture and death. It is the message of Christ! What an irony.

I started out in the military in 1980, fresh out of high school in Columbia, South Carolina. After I finished college with a Biology and Military Science Degree, I was whisked off into the Army as an active duty Chemical officer in Nurnberg, Germany. Little did I know how my life would change as I

crossed paths with a fiery evangelist by the name of Ron Comfort. During a revival meeting in the summer of 1986, I received Christ as my personal Savior, and my life has never been the same.

I remained on active duty for six more years as I served as an operations and plans officer during both peacetime and war. For several years after I got saved, I knew God was tugging at my heart to surrender to the ministry fulltime. In 1992 I left active duty to go to BJU in pursuit of an MDiv degree. Upon completion of that degree from Heart of America Seminary, I re-entered the Army Reserves as a Chaplain. I also served as an assistant pastor in a couple of churches over the past eight-to-ten years. But now, ten years later, here I am using those exact same skills (operations and planning) that I used before. However, this time I get to do it while being able to proclaim His name along the way as I serve as an Army Chaplain.

As of February 1, 2006, I was mobilized again and assigned to Headquarters US Central Command in Madill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. I am assigned as the Operations and Plans Chaplain. This is much different from all the other Chaplain duties I have had in the past. In this position I am responsible to assist in the writing of plans and orders that affect the War on Terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan. I am responsible to make sure that these plans generated are ethical and moral in their intent and that they also contain information pertinent to religious activities in general.

On a daily basis I have the opportu-



nity to be a part of history as it pertains to this current war. I work alongside some of the most prominent leaders in the world whom we see in the media on a daily basis. This has opened up several opportunities to talk to folks about the Lord, as well as to seek God in prayer when some very important decisions are being made. Please pray that God would give me wisdom as I seek to do His will in this setting.

I also share a role in ministry to the over 3500 personnel that make up this headquarters, but that is my secondary role at the moment.

It’s a funny thing—the personal ambition I gave up for God in pursuit of the ministry, He gave back in order to use for His honor and glory. What an awesome God we serve!

The path that brought us to this place hasn’t been easy, nor is the journey complete. The task in this war has come with its losses and the cost has been high, but in due season we will reap if we faint not. The freedom of the American people back in the 1700s was paid for by the shedding of precious blood. The freedom of the Iraqi people will not be any different. Then again, the price for our salvation was pretty expensive and sacrificial too.

Believers and Unbelievers

Differences and distinctions are common throughout the world. An important division of the human race is male or female. A significant division in Scripture is believer or unbeliever. Though unisex adherents would tend to obliterate the male/female distinction, it is normally evident and surely will persist. God's great gulf between believers and non-believers is not always so evident, but in His Word, in His sight, the difference is both clearly seen and exceedingly important.

Believers are those who have accepted His deliverance through His Son, Jesus Christ, as set forth in His Word, the Bible. They have been born again. Unbelievers may know about the gospel, but they have not accepted the new-nature offer of the gospel.

Infidels and Apostates

Unbelievers, too, can be divided into two different groups, infidels and apostates.

An infidel is a person who rejects God's way of salvation, follows another path of supposed deliverance, or denies any need of deliverance. Muslims are infidels. Buddhists are infidels. Atheists are infidels. Spiritual fellowship is impossible with infidels; they have no spiritual nature, and thus there is nothing in common other than things of the flesh and of the world.

An apostate is a person who denies

the gospel while claiming to be a Christian. The difference between an apostate and an infidel is that an apostate names the name of Christ and often wants to be recognized as a Christian or to be accepted into Christian fellowship. Like infidels, however, apostates deny the gospel, and thus there is no basis for fellowship in a realm they neither comprehend nor understand. Apostates are not Christians; they are enemies of Christ. Apostates are as lost as infidels.

An apostate may deny just one fundamental doctrine of Christianity, but that one denial puts him outside the realm of Christian fellowship. Whether a certain one is a believer or not, only God can truly judge; it is possible that one may have actually trusted the Lord and was thereafter intellectually persuaded to depart from the true gospel. His present position, however, puts him outside the realm of permitted fellowship. We need to stand for and to uphold the whole counsel of God. The gospel as clearly revealed in the Bible cannot be cut up and discarded at will.

"Religious" or Saved

Satan does not care which religion a person has; they are all within his realm, under his control, and futile as a means to satisfy God. Religion is Satan's counterfeit to God's grace gift of salvation and continuance. Satan is not troubled by how religious any

person might be.

Every works religion is contrary to the gospel of grace. Works plus grace is an impossible amalgamation. God's grace is negated by any superimposed form of human endeavor. Religion involves some fleshly or outward accomplishment, man doing something to merit reward or gain favor with God.

Faith is an inward yielding to and acceptance of divine provision.

The payment for sin accomplished by the death of Jesus on the cross far exceeds what any man can do or what all men together might do. Redemption has been earned by that death; it is not something yet to be accomplished, only to be accepted. It is not by works of any sort. Religious striving, religious feelings, ritual endeavors, oral recitations—whatever might be used in an effort to gain the favor of Deity—is all a slap in the face of our loving Father! He wants us to be totally submitted to Him, not employing Satan's tools in repeated disobedience.

Dr. Vanhetloo publishes Cogitations by e-mail regularly. You may request to be placed on his e-mail list by contacting him at cbsvan@sbcglobal.net.

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Behind the Lines

Dan Hall and Brenda Ellis

Chaplain Dan Hall is serving behind the lines in Iraq. In addition to his usual ministry to the Marines stationed there, he has been able to begin three small radio stations and hopes to see another in the near future. He sends greetings from the Royal Emirate of Qatar, about 1000 miles south of Iraq.

"I arrived here very early this morning (around 3:30) for a few short days of Rest and Relaxation. My Commanding Officer surprised his staff when he announced that all of us were taking a few days off to unwind and recharge. We boarded an Air Force C130 in Al Asad and flew to Kuwait; from Kuwait we flew to Doha.

"The Air Force pilot, when his Crew Chief told him there was a Chaplain on board, invited me to the flight deck for fellowship. The Lord continues to surprise me with the quality of Godly people He has throughout the military.

"Here in Qatar for R&R are Soldiers, Marines, Airmen, and Sailors from bases in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Djibouti. The average civilian would be miserable here as it is very industrial in nature. It is not what you would think of a resort. The buildings are warehouse style and we cannot leave the base. But there are good food, games, Internet, phones, movies, swimming pools, and even a Chili's restaurant (because there are permanent people stationed here with their families). Compared to Iraq, it is wonderful!

"During my stay, I plan to get some sleep (!), study for my Fleet Marine Force Officer board examination, and

fellowship with the Lord and others. After a few days here, I'll be returning to Al Asad for the remainder of my deployment—hopefully, rested and ready to go.

"The radio station is on autopilot while I'm gone. Whenever I have been away from Al Asad, the station has performed perfectly on autopilot. The Al Taqqaddum station is up and running, and I will be installing the Fallujah station when I get back. God is good. Eighty percent of the Marines in Iraq will be able to hear the gospel broadcasted twenty-four hours a day on 88.5 FM by the time the Fallujah station is operating! Praise the Lord with me on this! Stay tuned for more updates on this innovative ministry."



Another brother, Bob Ellis, is serving behind the scenes, still plugging away faithfully. Since Brenda's homegoing on September 6, 2006, Bob has continued to travel fulltime serving as a Chaplain to the Chaplains. Below are excerpts of a testimony that Brenda gave shortly before her homegoing.

"Back in December I was diagnosed as having lung and liver cancer, and the doctor said that if I did not have chemotherapy, I had eight to twelve weeks to live. If I chose to take the chemo, I would have nine months to three and a half years if the chemo worked, and there was only a forty to forty-five percent chance that it would work.

"Now all of this was a complete surprise to us. We had been told a couple weeks before, when we were

in Virginia, that I had pneumonia. Of course, it wasn't a surprise to God. In all of what we were facing, we could say, 'The Eternal God is my Refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms.'

"Mrs. Charles Cowman wrote, 'It is nobler to sing a victorious song in time of trial than to be crushed in grief.' I prayed that the Lord would help me do that, that the words out of my mouth would be victorious, and not focused on the problems. One of my very favorite verses is Psalm 16:11, 'In thy presence is fullness of joy.' So if I'm staying in God's presence, I'll have joy, and I won't be gloomy because I'm not looking at my troubles. When my focus is on my problems, then I'm going to be downhearted.

"When I was in the hospital back in December, after hearing the prognosis, God gave me a verse that I made my prayer: Psalm 39:13. It says, 'O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.' God has answered that prayer, and He has given me strength to travel with my husband again. We don't know how long I'll be able to do that. But, you know, that doesn't worry me. I know God can heal me completely, and if that's His will, I'll be grateful. But, if it's His will to take me home soon, then He's made me content for that to happen.

"The last part of Psalm 16:11 says, 'At thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.' I'm thankful for each day God gives me to serve Him, but how can I be sad, to think about going to a place where there are pleasures forevermore? I'm content to be wherever God puts me—here on earth, or up there in heaven."

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