

Vineyard Echoes

A monthly Magazine
for the ministry of the Word and tidings
of the Lord's work in India

THE SEED IS THE WORD



THE FIELD IS THE WORLD

June 2009

Vol. 3

Issue : 6

CURSED THE GROUND FOR THY SAKE

Koshy Zachariah

We read the above verse in Genesis 3:17. Our puny little minds often wonder why the earth should be cursed for the first man's defiance to fall in line with the commandment of God. At the end of the six days of creation, God saw that everything was very good, though "everything was good" only at the end of the creation of the earlier five days. It is obvious that creating man in God's image and likeness had changed "everything very good". When man looked around, the universe was beautiful, yea marvellous beyond description; the pods waving and dancing in the rustling breeze, the luscious fruits ripening in the sunshine and so on. Stuart K. Hine, the hymn writer, penned, "O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder, consider all the works Thy hands have made, I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, Thy power thru-out the universe displayed.....when thru the woods and forest glades I wander and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees, when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze.....Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee, How great thou art, How great thou art.....". And such a wonderful earth was cursed for man's disobedience.

A careful study and a close look at the word of God at this juncture will bring in great blessings. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake", points to us the tremendous blessings that will accrue to those who are called according to His purpose. "For thy sake" conveys that it is for our sake, for our blessings and for our advantage. "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee" (Gen 3:18). In verse 17 we also read, "In sorrow shall thou eat of it all the days of thy life". Adversities in life are thorns and thistles. They are absolutely necessary for the spiritual growth of His people. Paul says, "There was given me a thorn in the flesh".

What purpose? "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations" (2 Cor 12:7). The thorn in the flesh was the messenger of Satan to buffet him and that thorn in the flesh enabled him to be strong for the Lord.

Many a time the thorns and briars of life are the consequences of our own sowing. Our aspirations and ambitions to get rich quickly lead to loss of wealth and disappointment. The situation is in no way different from what Ezekiel, the Prophet uttered, "for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness (33:31)". When circumstances and material benefits go to our advantage we tend to forget our spiritual blessings in heavenly places. When matters go to our disadvantage, we grieve over the material loss and tend to despair, and such occasions are golden opportunities to a child of God. Instead of losing balance and getting into the resultant depression, the soul should rise above all concerns and anxieties to quietly rest in Him for His guidance to steer clear our lives. We would realise that the desperate situation was our own making and we allowed thorns and briars to grow. In fact such a situation in a way is blessing to a child of God.

Ill-health is another form of thorns and briars. These days many are taken ill with cancer and other incurable diseases. These diseases stare at you, just like death sentences. Young lives, all on a sudden, are seized with irresistible sorrow for the fear of life – one comes to a cross road at the prime of his life. These diseases ebb away life with every passing moment. There are only thorns, thistles and briars all around as if one is caught in a thicket of them. There are many life sapping diseases to which our flesh is heir and to every child of God such thorns are blessings to sharpen his faith and hope.

These thistles and briars set us on the right course and we, who are His children rise above sorrows and despair to find comfort and strength in Him.

Yet another form of thorns and briars is disobedient and stubborn children. Bad children cause tremendous pains to their parents. Any amount of counselling and logical arguments does no good to them. Neither they listen to nor even respond, even if they listen to. Godly parents get consumed in their anguish and sorrow as the deaf ears and stony hearts of their children never turn to wisdom and all the efforts to win them over are just like a line drawn in the water. David, a man after God's own heart, had his measure of grief and sorrow with regard to his children Absalom and Adonija. For fear of Absalom, David had to flee the country. F.B. Meyer writes, "When the daughters make unfortunate marriages and sons spread their sails to every gale of passion, there are thorns and briars enough to make misery in the best appointed and most richly furnished homes".

When we are positioned to work in work places with men who neither have the fear of God nor regard for equity and justice, we have thorns and thistles all around. Inordinate love for flattery, greediness, jealousy and intemperance of these worldly men make our lives miserable and we feel that any counsel is waste and uncalled for. Some of these worldly men are predisposed with strong tendencies towards evil and irresponsive ears. We sadly moan and realise that it is like all the goodness of a field going to waste in weeds. But then, a child of God lives above all these threatening situations.

The thorns and briars fret us sometimes beyond our tolerance or endurance and we feel that our tender flesh gets mercilessly torn to pieces. The heart bleeds and hope dies in the soul. We despair of our lives and long for freedom from the flesh. But then we hear His soft voice as Paul was told, "My grace is sufficient for thee". The thorns of confusions and perplexities and annoyances and vexations disappear all on

a sudden. Now the remarkable point is that the sign of the curse, the thistles and thorns became the symbol or emblem of royalty on the brow of Christ. We read, "And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns and put it on His head" (John 19:2). The Lord has transformed the curse into a blessing. He obtained for us the best and highest blessing, out of that cursed soil that did breed thorns and thistles. The thorns that inflicted excruciating pain on his brow became the constituents of that crown of victory. He endured it patiently setting himself as an example to enable one to overcome obstacles and sorrows in his life; to lead to a victorious Christian life. The thorns in one's life are wholly benevolent in the discipline to which he is subjected. He sets us down among the thistles to transform the barren wilderness of our life into a paradise and over the years we see these thistles weaving themselves into a crown. History reveals that man has risen to his full height using the strength of his brain and sinew to wring subsistence from the hard ground where the soil has been unkindly and the climate inhospitable. That teaches that a man can only attain his true royalty by enduring disaster and loss. Yes, this is what we see in the thorn-crown on Christ's brow.

Difficult it may appear to endure afflictions and sorrow that tear our tender flesh slowly and steadily, but His grace is more than sufficient to meet the challenges. In Paul's words, "I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:8,9). The punishment turns out to be a chastening of a Father, who loves. It is just like the knife of a surgeon, definitely not that of a destroyer. Surviving a terrible accident or serious sickness is a pointer of His taking us behind His providence. We have one of the greatest verses in his grand letter to the Corinthians on the grace of our Lord. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich, yet for your sake, He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor 8:9).

Ve

THE CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Things which have been most surely believed among us,
as the ministers of the word delivered them to us

James Varghese, Brahmavar

Contd from last issue

Sacrifices and Offerings of a NT Worshipper

Our worship of God is through the sacrifice Christ offered on our behalf. However NT teaches us of some sacrifices we offer or some offerings we bring to God. A careful student would find that most of these also have some kind of parallels and types in OT. Though OT sacrifices are, as C. H. Mackintosh has shown us, predominantly types of Christ, many of them like a burnt offering and a meal offering would also represent offering to God ourselves and what we have. Let us have a brief overview of these sacrifices and offerings taught in the NT. (a) Sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips (Heb, 13:15) We have already considered importance of praising God in our worship and will see more of it later in this study. Let us only look at the engagement of our lips in our worship at this point. As the thoughts in the heart, so also the utterances in the lips become an offering pleasing to God (cf. Ps. 19:14). David prays for divine help to open his lips so that he should praise God (Ps. 51:15). God has ordained praise out of the mouth (Ps. 8:2, Mt. 21:16). (b) Offering our bodies as living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1)

We can have many valuable lessons from the burnt offering of Leviticus with regards to offering ourselves to God. But this offering in Rom.12 has an additional dimension in that it is a *living* one as different from the animal *killed* on the altar. This also has a parallel in the levitical system in the Levites *living* as an offering made to God. The Levites were offered as a 'wave offering' from the children of Israel to separate them for the work of the LORD (Num. 8:11, 13-14). They were to consider themselves as offering made to God. In Rom. ch. 12 we see we must prove to be a living offering both by our renewed character and also by the services rendered in the house of God. (c) Material fellowship in ministry and sharing with those in needs 'Doing good and sharing' are 'sacrifices God is well pleased' (Heb. 13:16). About the gift the Philippian church sent to him, Paul says, "a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God" (Phil. 4:18). Let us also note in this regard that 'collection for the saints' became a part of the Sunday gathering (1 Cor. 16: 1-2). Deut. ch 26 vv.10-11 show how the Israelites were to bring the first fruits to the presence of God and share it with Levites and the foreigners. Verse 10 clearly shows that it is done as an act of worship. Likewise he has to share his tithing with the Levites, and the poor, the foreigners, orphans and widows. It would not only be a proof our faithfulness to God but also, as we see in 2 Cor. 9:12, result in offering of thanksgivings to God from the people so comforted by our charity. We have a remarkable passage in 1 Chr. 29:10-20, David and the people of Israel glorifying God in the context of the gifts they made to build a Temple for God. (d) Eph. 5:1-2, "Walk in love as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God

for a sweet-smelling aroma". What Paul teaches here is sacrificial love, giving ourselves in the service of others. Such a life is an offering pleasing to God. We become fragrance of Christ to God (cf. 2 Cor. 2:15). (e) For Paul his gospel work was a worship of God (Rom. 1:9). This is stated more strongly in Rom. 15:16 where he sees himself "to be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God". He wants to bring gentiles as an acceptable offering before God. Upon this sacrifice he wants himself to be poured out as drink offering (Phil 2:17; 2 Tim.4:6).

Worship in Christian Congregation: In order to have a right understanding of worship, we must look through the whole Bible, both OT and NT, for information and insight. We must also consider the place worship had in the gatherings of Israelites and must presume that the concept of worship and the relevant aspects of ecclesiastic practices in the Temple and Synagogues were retained with implications and modifications appropriate to the dispensation. For instance, we know the value of such verses as, "In the midst of the congregation I will praise You" (Ps. 22:22). The NT does not seem to be providing direct information how a church meeting was conducted. However, sound inferences are possible concerning the components and order of the church service. Worship constitutes an important constituent of a gathering of NT church. We can see quite a few references in the NT where worship terminologies are used or worship is described in connection with the gathering of God's people.

On the first Sunday of NT church, the eventful Pentecost, when the believers were filled with the Spirit, the first thing they did was they spoke the wonderful works of God, Acts.2:11. Later when the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit, they also magnified God, Acts. 10:44-46. Let us consider other references of worship in the context of gathering of God's people.

1. In Acts 2:47, among the various things characterized the Jerusalem church, we see that they *praised God*. In fact what is said in 2:42 as "prayers" also should include in it an aspect of worship as the prayer Lord Jesus had taught them began and closed with words of worship, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name" and "Yours is the kingdom and power and the glory forever Amen" (Mt.6:9,13). This form of prayer must have been retained. See the disciples' prayer in Acts 4:24 begins with words glorifying God.

2. A careful consideration of Rom.15: 5-12 can show us, by inference, an important thing we do as we receive one another when we gather together in the name of our Lord: we must 'with one mind and one mouth *glorify* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

3. What James says while discussing use and misuse of tongue and mouth in Jas.3:9-10, "with it we bless our God" also implies public worship rather than personal worship as the context is that of the Christian congregation.

4. In Col.3:15-17, we see that those who are 'called in one body', evidently an expression denoting Church, are exhorted to have 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs'. We have the same exhortation in Eph.5:19.

5. In Heb.10:22-24, gathering of God's children is mentioned in the context of discussion of true NT worship on the basis Christ's sacrifice. In our 'the assembling of ourselves together', we also 'draw near with a true heart' to worship God.

6. In Heb. 13:15 we read, "let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name". Arguably, the word "continually" might indicate our daily worship. However verses 7 and 17 give an ecclesiastical setting.

7. Peter in his first epistle ch. 2 v.5 says of the church as, 'being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ'. Then in verse 9 points out an activity they have in the Spiritual House, "that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light". We make two significant conclusions from these findings. The first is that, when the saints of God gathered together, worship of God was a preeminent occupation. Secondly, while personal perpetual worship is essential for every individual believer, congregational worship is also as much important.

The Content of Praise

We offer the sacrifice of praise to God (Heb. 13:15). It will be informative to examine those passages where words of praises of God are recorded in the Scriptures and find out the things for which they so praised God. In the present study we restrict this inquiry to the New Testament.

Peter says that as a holy priesthood serving in the Spiritual House "you may proclaim the praises of Him" 1 Pet. 2: 5,9. The Gk word '*areta*' translated as 'praises' in NKJV is rendered 'excellencies' in RV meaning 'virtues' or 'eminent qualities'. It is speaking well of God. Both in our personal and public worship we must praise God for His attributes and mighty deeds and proclaim His work of salvation and the manifestation of His love therein.

We praise God for what He is in His glory. Read the doxologies in Rom. 11:36; 1Tim.1:17; 6:15-16; Eph.3:20-21; 1 Pet. 4:11 and Jude v.25, glorifying God for what He is, the 'I am that I am'. They are among the best expressions of worship in the NT.

We praise God for the fact that He is our creator. In Rom.1: 25, Paul glorifies God as, "the Creator who is blessed for ever. Amen" (Rm.1: 25). Describing His divinity, eternity and power and the fact that He is Creator, Paul says that it was a grave mistake on the part of the Gentiles that they failed to glorify God for what He was. (Rm.1:21). We can see the disciples of Christ saying to God in their prayer, "Lord, you are God, who made the heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them", Acts 4:24. The glory of God as creator is very prominently presented in the OT both in God's words to His people and also His peoples' worship of God. In fact even the heavenly creatures worship God for His work of creation. Rev 4:11.

We praise God for His Son and our Lord Jesus Christ, God's indescribable gift (2 Cor. 9:15) and the unreachable riches of Him (cf. Eph. 3:8).

We praise God for His work of salvation. Concluding his elaborate description of God's work of salvation, Paul glorifies Him, Rm.11:33-35. See also Rm. 16:24-27. In Heb. 13:15 where we are exhorted, "let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name", the writer has brought to our attention the suffering of Christ [in v.12] immediately before this.

We praise God for that the gospel is reaching out to whole world. Paul sees the Colossian church for an instance of this (Col. 1:6). We praise of God for the fruit of our Gospel work (1 Thes. 2:13-14). We praise God for fruit received in the ministry (2 Cor. 1:11; 2:14).

We praise God for the church of God, for the local assemblies. Let us note how Paul praised God at the remembrance of the churches of God, which included not only those doing commendably (1Thes. 1:2-4) but also those having some problems (1 Cor. 1:4) and those even in places he had not gone (Rom. 1:8).

We praise God for what He has done in us. One of the things that is mentioned in 1 Pet 2:9 in connection with proclaiming the praises to God is that He 'called you out of darkness into His marvelous light'. Evidently it is appropriate to declare this in our worship. We have this truth clearly spelt out in Ephesians ch. 2. See also Col. 1:13. Apostle Paul was never shy of stating this truth even to the best of his audience as we can see in 1 Tim. 1:12-17. However this dark side of us is a mention in passing or only a thought leading to the bright side. Our hearts must dwell more on the latter than the former.

Let us be guarded when speak about ourselves to God. None of us would dare to speak as the Pharisee did in Lk. 18:11. But there is a danger of some swinging to the other extreme. Uninformed minds would think it humility to speak ill of ourselves. We know that we still have many imperfections and infirmities in us. But it would be inappropriate to speak of them in worship. We must tell God about the good work God has done in us and not how bad we still are. We are not like the prodigal son when he was approaching the gate of his father's house; we are like when he was sitting in the feast his father made to celebrate his homecoming. And our thoughts and words must be fitting to such occasion. Since God is delighted to hear us speaking well of Him, we must not presume that He will also be pleased to hear us speaking ill of ourselves. "What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15). We are precious for God. Lord Jesus saw us as the joy set before Him for which He endured the Cross (Heb. 12: 2). About the people who are redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, Isa. 53: 11 says, "he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied". Shall we then downgrade that which is the delight our Lord by speaking ill of it?

We must have our focus in the right place and emphases in the right order. Our hearts must be occupied more with the thought of what we are now than what we were in the past. We must see it as what *God did* and not so much as what happened to us. Our focus must be on God and Lord Jesus Christ who saved us and not on ourselves. We must know to keep the central thing in the centre.



SPLENDID TREASURES

(EPHESIAN STUDIES)

Koshy Zachariah

“He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Eph 1:4)

4 (a). He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world. What a glorious fact? This is a great statement too wonderful to believe. This mystery was hidden in the past but now revealed. Apostle Paul goes right back into eternity and starts with what has been done by God the Father. We should always be conscious of the fact that the Bible starts with God the Father. Also we cannot ignore the fact that the Bible is the record, revelation and explanation of what God has done for salvation of man. The Apostle writes this on the basis of the revelation to him by God, just as was done to the OT Prophets.

When Apostle Paul wrote this fourth verse, he was not making an independent statement of fact. He links the fourth verse with the third verse by “according as”; in fact the usage “according as” stands for all the verses from the fourth to the fourteenth. Now the fourth verse explains how the spiritual blessings become ours; they become ours because God has chosen us before the foundation of the world. The question arises in a human way, “how could even a single blessing come to us when we are conscious of sin and failures”? That may appear to be a mystery but the truth is that all the blessings are appropriated to us through the choice of us by God before the foundation of the world; the choice is nothing but the fact that we are elect according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father (1 Pet 1:2).

In the past eternity God chose us to belong to Himself; it was according to His foreknowledge. With His perfect foreknowledge, God saw that we would exercise faith and therefore on this matter no man has any right to dispute or argue as there is nothing unjust about it. All we could say is that God has chosen us as the result of His own good pleasure. In fact God chooses those who have chosen themselves to be Christians. All what are explained above cannot be comprehended by the unbelievers. The unbelievers can never attain to the heights and depths of God; the earthly wings

can never take them to this height. That is why Apostle Paul is writing here “to the saints that are at Ephesus”.

Now let us look at the choice of us more closely. We are chosen in Him, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the positional aspect while the statement “He chose us” is a positive fact of the election.

God could not have accomplished the choice according to His good pleasure unless the Lord Jesus Christ had made it possible in Him. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones holds the view, “The primary action is that of God the Father who chose unto Himself a people out of the whole mankind before the foundation of the world and then presented, gave these people whom He had chosen to the Son, in order that the Son might redeem them and do everything that was necessary for their reconciliation with Himself. That is the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He came into the world and accomplished His work for these people who have been given to Him by the Father. So He goes on to say: “I pray for them: I pray not for the world but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine” (John 17:9).

The Apostle continually repeats the truth that there is nothing whatsoever given to the Christian apart from the Lord Jesus Christ; there is no relationship to God which is “true and saving”, except that which is in and around through the Son of God. “There is one God and one mediator (only) between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”. The Lord Himself spoke, “I have manifested thy name unto men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word” (John 17:6). We are the Son’s people because we have been chosen by God in Him, the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. (b) That we be holy and without blame before Him in love

The purpose of God in Christ is that we should be holy and without blame. No sinner can have access to God. If we have to be before God, we should be holy and without blame. We ourselves could not do anything in this regard; it is beyond human capability, however good the

intention is. God only can undo, remove and rectify completely the effects of sin as the result of the fall of man. The fall brought terrible consequences on man. The fall was the work of the devil. This work had to be destroyed and this was no small act. Therefore the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). The words, "holy and without blame" refer to sanctification. In the same epistle (Chap 5:27), he uses the term "holy and without blemish". "Holiness" denotes a state of inward purity and "without blame" denotes a state of outward purity. No doubt, holiness is the stronger and greater term because it is the inward condition. But outward condition is also important.

We observe in chapter 5 that the ultimate purpose for the Church is that she should be not only holy inwardly but "not having spot or wrinkle or any such things" outwardly. Both the terms essentially point to wholeness just like the function of a very healthy human body in which every part or everything works together in perfect harmony without detraction. Holiness in every respect is aimed at to be in line with what we read, "The Father of lights with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). That is why we are told, "Be ye holy for I am holy". There is only light and not even a speck of darkness; essentially everything is perfect. God wants to be like Himself and that is possible only in Christ Jesus.

We read further that we should be holy and without blame before Him. The term means that the purpose of our calling and election is that we may walk before God in full fellowship with Him. We have a more enlightenment in what Apostle John wrote,

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that you also may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of Him and declare unto you that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:3-5). God expects us to be in the same state as the first man Adam. Adam lived a life of perfect correspondence with God, living with Him, talking with Him and walking with Him. We also read Enoch walked with God. When God appeared to Abraham (Gen 17), He said unto

him, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect". God wants us to be perfect before Him.

Also we read that we should be holy and without blame before Him, in love. What a stupendous quality? We are to live in this world, "loving God, loving our fellowmen, loving the law of God, delighting in it and not merely conforming mechanically to a moral pattern" (D Martyn Lloyd-Jones). The essence of holiness is love. Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom 13:10). We can only conceive of holiness when we conceive of it in terms of love. "God is love". "God is holy". We could appear before Him in holiness and love. "The Christian is a man who loves holiness and he appears before God, because he is holy in love".

Through the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost (Rom 5:5), we appear before Him in holiness. What a treasure in that stupendous and glorious statement of Apostle Paul, "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love".

HOME CALL

G.S Joseph (94), Anantapur, went to be with the Lord on 17th April-09. Born in 1915, saved in 1939, graduated from MCC, worked in Revenue Dept, Resigned job in 1945 and was in fulltime ministry in Anantapur till death. His contribution to the assembly testimony in Anantapur is remarkable, as now there are seven assemblies in the city and 70 in the district. He helped for 25 years in publishing the only Telugu Magazine then "Christian Hope" started by Mr. Silas Fox. The Brethren in A.P will miss in him a great man of God. The funeral took place on 18th in the presence of a large gathering of believers and friends. He is survived by his wife Lalitha Rachel (88) and two children. Pray for them.

Gladice Devasahayam (76), wife of Evangelist Bro. J.S Devasahayam of Kurnool, A.P, went to be with the Lord on 22.04.09. Prayers are coveted for the bereaved family.

VINEYARD NEWS

ANDAMANS

01/06/09

Selvakumar, Campbellbay

On 12th April-09, seven believers were baptized and added to the assembly. Please pray for their spiritual growth and also for the VBS which will be conducted in the islands from May-July-09

02/06/09

M.K Sunny, Garachrama

By the abundant goodness of God, they were able to complete the construction of the Assembly hall and it was dedicated on 23rd May-09. In the months of May & June, they plan to conduct VBS in which they expect around 500 children from all the islands. Prayers are requested for all other efforts also.

ANDHRA PRADESH

03/06/09

P.Paul Raju, Tanuku

On every second Saturday, the assembly here does a regular outreach work in the town; they have been able to cover many areas with the Gospel. Their tribal area gospel tour this year was held from 26th April to 2nd May. Ten members including 7 evangelists participated. Prayers are coveted for the seed sown.

04/06/09

S. Prabhudas, Nandyal

Brother's wife had a fall and fractured her thigh bone and was under treatment in Hyderabad for about three months. By God's grace, now she is better and able to walk. Prayers are requested for her speedy recovery. Special meetings were held at Nandyal from 13th -15th April-09.

05/06/09

Jacob G, Chowkercharla

The evangelists and elders of the district of Nellore, conducted an outreach work recently for three days in which they were able to cover eight villages with the Gospel. Prayers are requested for the seed sown.

06/06/09

Bhaskar Rao, Vizianagaram

The Beracha Christian Assembly here is gathering in a tiled house; as it is old and not sufficient to hold all believers, they have prayerfully started the construction of a new hall. Prayers are solicited for all the needs.

CHATTISGARH

07/06/09

K.V Thankachan, Durg

On 12th April-09, the Gospel message was preached in the Central jail here with the permission of the authorities. The response was good. On 4th April the new assembly hall was dedicated, when brother Babu Varghese was the guest speaker. On 23rd the Sunday school anniversary was held in which P.Samson was the speaker. Prayers are solicited.

HARYANA

08/06/09

Samuelkutty MC, Hissar

Brother is under treatment for Diabetes and prostate infection; however the regular activities are going on. A special meeting was held at Hissar on 15th April-09; two brethren from Trivandrum ministered the Word of God. Please remember the educational needs of his children.

09/06/09

P.S Sunny, Rohtak

The Brethren Assembly here is praying to buy a piece of land and build a hall for the assembly which was started in 1995 having 50 members. The estimate is 15 lakhs. Prayerful co-operation of the believers sought in this matter.

JHARKHAND

10/06/09

Subrata Das, Banke

The ministry in this tribal belt is going on well by His grace. From 15th to 30th May-09, they had an outreach programme in Nala area. Prayers are needed for the ministry here and also for the need of a two wheeler.

11/06/09

Shailendra Murmu, Sahibganj

The Lord's work is progressing here by the Grace of God. Special Gospel meetings were held along with a baptism service in the month of May-09 in Paktari village about 40Kms away from here. At Sahibganj a VBS programme also was held. Prayers are requested.

KARNATAKA

12/06/09

T.G Benny, Bangalore

On 29th March-09, a few believers were baptized and added to the assembly. From 10th to 12th April, our brother had special meetings in Mysore. From 20th to 25th April-09, they had a VBS for children. Prayers are sought.

13/06/09

Chandrasekar, Bangalore

In the VBS held from 13th to 18th April-09, nearly 100 children attended. Two junior children accepted Jesus as Saviour. Prayers are requested for them as well as for the other ministries.

KERALA

14/06/09

T.M. Sebastian, Kalaketty

Brother is very weak and not keeping well as he is undergoing chemotherapy at RCC in Trivandrum. Prayers are requested for his good health.

Mathew Kodithottam, Kottayam

Brother had been bedridden for long due to his massive swellings on the legs. Hence he had difficulty to walk. He was under treatment in Bangalore due to some liver complaints. Please pray for his good health and for the ministries at Payyapadi.

MAHARASHTRA

15/06/09

N.S Borde, Borsi

The ministry is going on well. Brother is still waiting for the kidneys to function normally so that he could go for the angioplasty. Please pray for his good health.

16/06/09

B.D Balid, Ahmednagar

The ministries are going on well. In three villages away from here, they are regularly conducting gospel work. Many are showing interest. Recently an RC teacher accepted Christ and is ready for baptism. In the city assembly, activities are going on as usual. Prayers are requested.

17/06/09

B.A Tadke, Wagholi

Brother is working here in this village which is about 12 Kms from Pune. There is a small assembly here as well as a Widows' Home. Presently there are four inmates in this Ashram. First floor construction of the building is going on. Prayers are requested for its completion.

NEW DELHI

18/06/09

P.A Samu, Dwaraka

The Assembly witness at Dwaraka (Delhi) is progressing well. The Lord is helping them to contact people through personal witness and other assembly activities. The prayers of the saints are sought for its blessings. Any brethren seeking for fellowship in Delhi area may contact them at: 011-45610988; Mob: 09312476483; 09999233247

ORISSA

19/06/09

Mathew C.P, BBSR

By the Grace of God they were able to hold the first phase of the Training for 38 evangelists at Jeypore Assembly hall in participation with GLS Mumbai. The second session is planned for September. Brn. Babu Thomas, A.G Jacob, Sam N Jacob and Dr. Varghese John and a few others were taking the various sessions.

20/06/09

Prakash Naik, BBSR

The ministries are going on well. They have been asked to vacate their present house and so are on the look out for another one. In the meantime kindly note his present address: C/o. Dr. P.C Thomas, N-5/460, Nayapalli, IRC Village P.O, Bhubaneswar-15, Orissa.

21/06/09

K.A. Dominic, Gopalpur

By the Grace of God the village evangelism which went on for three months was closed on 30th April. God willing two months' Bible Training is planned in July & August-09.

22/06/09

Panchanan Paul, BBSR

They are now concentrating their ministry for the displaced people from Kandamal. He was in Rambha for three days of special meetings. He had the joy of baptizing eight believers in the Chilika Lake. Prayers for these new believers are requested.

Surendra Takri, Sunabeda

Inspite of many hardships the Lord is enabling them to do His work faithfully. Four believers are getting ready for baptism, which will be arranged on a convenient day. Pray for them as well as for the educational needs of his children.

PUNJAB

23/06/09

K.K. Oommen, Pathankot

From 1-15 March the YMEF team was here for follow up work. They were able to cover 31 villages to preach. Gospel meetings were held at different homes in the evenings. Three persons professed faith in Christ. Prayers are needed.

24/06/09

Vijaya Raju, Amritsar

At present they are working in three places, of which two are outside the city: Medical Enclave, Bua Nangli Village & Rodhi Vill. A workers' meeting is arranged for 9th June-09 here in which about 30 evangelists from North West India will participate for prayer and fellowship. Prayers are coveted.

RAJASTHAN

25/06/09

V.J. Thankachan, Ajmer

Brother informs that after much prayer and waiting on the Lord, he has shifted his place of ministry recently from

Churu to Ajmer. Therefore kindly note his new address: "Beaty House", H.No.36-A/10, Todarmal Marg, Civil Lines, Ajmer, Rajasthan-305 001

James Paul, Banswara

On 26th April-09, they they had the joy of witnessing the baptism of six believers; Four of them are new believers from other backgrounds. Brother Naveen Kumar is also being used for the ministry here. Prayers are coveted for all the ministries and especially for the new believers.

T.J Joseph, Alwar

The graduation and missionary meeting of NIBI went on well. Many of the old graduates and workers also came together. An outreach was held at Balia, UP in which a few people came to the Lord. A short term Bible school, for Hindi speaking people was arranged. During the summer holidays, they had outreach work in Andhra Pradesh. Prayers are coveted.

TAMIL NADU

26/06/09

Sekar P, Dindigul

Brother informs that they have shifted their place of ministry from Trichy to Dindigul. Therefore kindly note his new address: *Hebron Lakeview Gospel Hall, 15-B, Mangalapuram, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu-624 003*

L.C Samuel, Oddanchatram

The ministry here and in surrounding places is going on well. A few believers were baptized on 12th April-09. They are praying for a small piece of land for burial ground. Covets prayers.

27/06/09

P. Stephen, Ganapathy

On 17th Febryary-09, he had another medical consultation at CMC Vellore for lung abcess. The doctor's report shows that it has reduced. By the Grace of God and prayers of the saints he is now better. God is blessing the ministry here at Bethel and at Peniel. They are praying for a full time worker to do ministry at Peniel Assembly in Madukarai Market about 15 Kms from here.

Balamurugan M, Karumbalam

By the goodness of the Lord the assembly and its activities are going on well. In the month of May-09, they had a Summer outreach from 22nd to 31st. Prayers are requested for the ministry.

Samson Jayakumar, Kallikuppam

Brother requests prayers for his good heath as he is suffering due to high sugar. For the last one month he had been suffering with pain in the shoulder. The doctors advised surgery; but pray that with medicines it may heal. Remember the assembly at Villivakkam.

TRIPURA

28/06/09

C.O Davis, Agartla

The Lord is enabling them to continue His work in the Vineyard. Two youngsters: Rajen & Sumesh, are waiting to know the Lord's will, as they like to serve the Lord full time. Our brother's daughter-Nissy completed her 10th standard and wants to pursue her higher studies in Kerala. Prayers are solicited.

UTTAR PRADESH

29/06/09

K.P Abraham, Lalitpur

By the Grace of God they were able to complete the assembly hall construction and dedicate it on 03/01/09. Dr. Santosh Daniel opened, Bro. P.A, Samuel dedicated and Bro. Shalu T. Nainan, shared the Word. More than 300 believers gathered on the occasion. Brother had a fall and injured his leg. God kept him from major problems. He is recovering. Prayers are coveted. Please note his new address: *Hebron Gospel Home, Navjeevan Colony, Jhansi Road-Elite, Lalitpur, U.P-284 403*

P.P. Philippose, Jhansi

The ministries are progressing well both at Jhansi and at Gharman. God willing they are planning to conduct a seekers' camp in November-09. Prayers are requested also for his good health as he is to undergo a prostate surgery at TMM.

WEST BENGAL

30/06/09

Ajoy Das, Kalipathar

The ministries are going on well. Recently they have commended to the Lord's work, bro Abjit Singh who studied both at BBTI and SBC. He is very useful for the ministry. Please remember him in your prayers.

Samuel Das, Adra

They were able to conduct revival meetings from 10th to 12th of April-09, when Brother V. Mathew from Chennai was present and shared the Word. It was a great blessing to all who attended. During these meetings eight believers were baptized. Prayers are coveted.

Timothy Das, Canning Town

They have decided to cover about 10 districts of WB by the year 2010, already the work is in progress in some districts. VBS programme was held in two places from 18-20 May-09. A new Bible study group started at Sonarpur has about 12 ladies attending. The children's club on Saturdays brings together about 60 children. All other ministries are also going on well. Prayers are solicited.



KNOW YOUR FRIENDS AT SBC

Nipen Das



I come from Basantimata Colyari in Dhanbad district of Jharkhand. I was born and brought up in a nominal Christian family. From my childhood, I was attending Sunday school and learning the Bible. At the age of 13, I had the opportunity to attend a family conference which was held in Jamtara. It was during this meeting through a Lord's servant I realized that I was a sinner who needs repentance and salvation. So on 03/10/2002, I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour.

Then on 24/03/2003, I was baptized in the waters of baptism. And I have been in fellowship with the local assembly, ever since. Then I had a desire to study the Bible and in 2006, I joined BBTI and studied for two years. My desire to study further brought me to SBC, Chennai. Now I am studying in second year. Please pray for my studies and future ministry.

Doubt sees the obstacles; Faith sees the way;
Doubt sees the blackest night; Faith sees the day;
Doubts dreads to take a step; Faith soars on high;
Doubt questions, "Who believes?"
Faith answers, "I"

PRAY FOR

The Gospel Fellowship Trust of India
(Regd. Society No.183/1968)
No.1, Bethesda Centre, Kodungaiyur P.O,
Chennai-600 118. India.
(Legal Jurisdiction: Madras)

Objectives of the ministry of GFTI

1. To encourage the preaching of the Good News of Salvation throughout India and elsewhere.
2. To encourage the planting of New Testament-based Christian Assemblies.
- 3 To act as a channel to pass on to the Lord's Servants (enjoying current commendations of their home assemblies) the voluntary contributions of God's people. We now serve over 900 brethren.
4. Assistance to those in distress through natural calamities etc.,
5. To support those in extreme need such as widows, the poor and those parents in difficulty to educate their children.
6. Evangelism through Literature, Special Conferences.
7. To Support Assembly-based Bible Education.

***Note:** Only Biblically sound articles are accepted for publication in "Vineyard Echoes". However, Vineyard Echoes does not necessarily endorse or hold responsibility for the views expressed by the authors in their articles and the material information furnished by the brethren for the Vineyard News column.*

All Correspondence, Articles and contributions for the Ministry may be sent to: The Gospel Fellowship Trust of India, No.1, Bethesda Centre, Kodungaiyur P.O, Chennai- 600 118, TN, INDIA.

Phone: +91-44- 2555 0598 / 2555 0295

Email: admin@gfti.org.in