

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

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THE BEST FRIEND

A true friend stands firm both in adversity and prosperity. Hard times shall reveal genuine friends. Solomon says therefore, "A friend loveth at all times" (Prov 17:17). A note from D.L. Moody's Bible says, "A true friend is like ivy - the greater the ruin, the closer he clings". We are told also in v 17, "And a brother is born for adversity". One of the greatest privileges of brotherhood is to be at your side, when you need him most. Truly we see the Lord Jesus Christ in this verse. We read, "He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb 2:11). Now the question arises, "Is it possible that God should become man and identify Himself with His creatures that He would call them brothers"? The answer to this is in Psalm 22:22, "I will declare your name to My brethren". Johnson Oatman penned: *"There is not a friend like the lowly Jesus No not one! No Not one! There is not an hour that He is not near us, No not one! No not one! No night so dark but His love can cheer us No not one! No not one!"*

The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). This is the greatness of human self sacrifice. The Lord Jesus Christ laid down His life for His friends. Of course, they were enemies, when He died for them. After they were saved, they became His friends. The Lord said, "I have called you friends" (John 15:15). The Gospel of John, chapter 14 to 17 speaks of His concern and care for His disciples, as they were His friends. He said to them that He was going away and they would not be able to see Him. When that happened, their hearts should not get troubled but believe in Him (14:1). They could pray to the Father in His Name and receive their requests. "If you shall ask anything in My Name, I will do it" (14:14). The Lord promised them that He would pray the Father to send another Helper - the Holy Spirit. He would abide with them forever (v 17). And not only that He would teach them all things and bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever He had said to them (v 26). Now in verse 27, we could see the Lord's

concern about His disciples and this could come only from a best friend. Just like a person who writes a last will before his death, the Lord Jesus bequeaths inward peace to His disciples, so that their hearts "be not troubled or afraid" (v 27). The Jewish people were looking for the day when the Messiah would set up His kingdom and the power of Rome would be broken. Probably the disciples also cherished this hope. Now the Lord was telling them that He was going to die, rise again and go back to heaven. And the Holy Spirit would come and the disciples would go out as witnesses for Christ. Naturally this would have given occasion to them to be disheartened and shocked. In 16:1, we read, "These things have I spoken unto you that you should not be offended". As a Friend, He told them in advance so that they would not be made to stumble. Further, He told them that excommunication from the synagogues would happen to them". But these things have I told you that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them" (16:4). The Lord was concerned that His disciples be not moved by their afflictions when these happened. These afflictions all were part of His plans for their lives and the disciples were warned of the path that lay ahead of them.

When the disciples heard the Lord, they were filled with sorrow over their own troubles rather than over His. Now the Lord encouraged them, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you" (16:7).

Now the Lord plainly told His disciples that He would be away from them for a little while (three days) and then He would appear to them after resurrection. He would go back to His Father in heaven and then after a little while (the present age) He would come back to them (His second coming). Being their Friend, He revealed these things to His disciples. They naturally had a doubt at this juncture. Whom would they ask about their doubts? He would no longer be with them bodily. The Lord knew their thoughts and answers. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it to you. Hitherto, have ye asked nothing in My

Name; ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full" (16:23,24). He assured them that His Father loved them because they had loved Him and had believed that He came out from God (v 27). The Lord revealed at this point to them that their Friend was God Himself, "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father" (v 28). They now realized that He is the eternal Son of the eternal Father. Therefore they responded, "Lo, now speakest Thou plainly and speakest no proverb. Now we are sure that Thou knowest all things and needest not that any man should ask Thee; by this we believe that Thou camest forth from God" (vs 29,30). Yet the Lord knew that they did not fully understand that Jesus was one of the persons of the Godhead. Their belief was still imperfect. No doubt, they loved and trusted Him. But the question was, "Did they really know that He was God manifest in the flesh"? - May not be fully. In a short while, He would be arrested, ill-treated, mocked, tried and crucified. Desperate, humanly weak, they would forsake Him and run to their homes. He would not be deserted because the Father would be with Him.

The disciples needed real strengthening. He assured them, "These things I have spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (v 33). Could not we sing with Joseph Melicott Scriven

"What a Friend we have in Jesus, Precious Saviour still our refuge; In His arms He'll take and shield thee, "What a Friend we have in Jesus! - a Friend who is always available and always approachable. All our concerns matter to Him and He is sufficient for our every need. There is nothing too big for Him and there is nothing small. His Divine shoulders are strong enough to bear; His Divine heart is tender enough to share and in His Divine arms we find "a solace there".

Now, when we come to John chapter 17, we see the High priestly prayer of our best Friend, the Lord Jesus. In this prayer He makes intercession for His own. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou has given Me; for they are Thine . Now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given

Me, that they may be one as we are" (vs 9,11). I pray "that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil...sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth" (vs 15,17). "Father I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (v 24). This Friend is more than life to us.

He is the Lord who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities (Heb 5:2). Marcus Rainsford puts it as follows:

"The whole prayer is a beautiful illustration of our blessed Lord's intercession at the right hand of God. Not a word against His people; no reference to their failings or their shortcomings. No, He speaks of them only as they were in the Father's purpose, as in association with Himself, and as the recipients of the fullness He came down from heaven to bestow upon them. And the Lord's particular petition for His people relate to spiritual things; all have reference to heavenly blessings. The Lord does not ask riches for them or honours or worldly influence or general preferments, but He does most earnestly pray that they may be kept from evil, separated from the world, qualified for duty and brought home safely to heaven. Soul prosperity is the best prosperity; it is the index of true prosperity".

The Lord is the greatest Friend the world ever has seen. He loved the world and gave Himself. When in the earth they said, "a friend of publicans and sinners" (Math 11:19, Luke 7:34). As a Great Friend "He came in search of them, found them and saved them" with His own spotless blood that was shed on Calvary.

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FOR PRAYER

The Trustees of SBC have prayerfully decided to construct two more floors on the existing dormitories, to facilitate the intake of more students. SBC has now upgraded the course to a three year B.Th, program and is expecting to have more inmates by the next academic year. The estimated cost of the project is around Rs. 20 lakhs (Rs. 2 Million or USD 50000) The valuable and prayerful support of the Lord's people is requested as this ministry is run on the free will offerings of the Lord's people.

THE PSALMS THEIR UNIVERSAL APPEAL (3)

James Varghese, *Brahmavar*

Some of the psalms like Ps.69 describe the troubles and agonies of the psalmist himself as much as that of the Lord. Also, we may be able to trace reflections of our own sufferings in the lines of these psalms. These would show that what we suffer Christ has suffered more. However, it is important for us to understand that the psalmist David knew that he was speaking about the Messiah (cf. Acts 2:30).

Hope of Eternity with God:

The Psalmist affirms a blessed hope of life with God in glory. In Ps. 16: 9-10 David says to God, “My flesh also will rest in hope, for You will not leave my soul in Sheol”. Then he says in v.11 what he awaited to have for eternity. About the men of the world he says that they ‘have their portion in this life’. But he has a hope for life beyond this life. So he declares “As for me, I will see your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness” (Ps.17:14-15). He believed that after he finished his life Lord will receive him to glory (Ps.49:15; 73:24-25).

Calling Peoples to God : All the things we have considered hither to, including God’s work amidst Israel when it is seen in the right perspective, have universal appeal. Now let us consider the most important feature of the Psalms we noted as having relevance to mission, the call to the nations to worship God.

The call is given to all the earth, “Shout joyfully to the LORD all the earth” (Ps. 98:4; also 66:1); to all the lands, “Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all ye lands” (Ps.100:1); to the kingdoms, “Sing to God you kingdoms of the earth; Oh sing praises to the Lord” (Ps.68:31-32); and to all peoples, “Oh, praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples” (Ps.117:1). We can see these calls in the context of Israel’s deliverance from and the conquest of enemy nations which demonstrated the power of Israel’s God. The appeal to nations is given independent of happenings in Israel also. The famous Pss. 100 and 117 are examples. Ps.67 is remarkable; it shows that Israel’s blessings and prosperity would result in making the salvation of God known to all peoples of the earth. It reflects God’s promise to the patriarch, Abraham, that God would bless and make him a blessing and in him all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. 12: 2-3). We may wonder if evangelism among the nations actually took place at that time. It must have taken place though only in a measure and, of course, in a manner appropriate to that dispensation. By such evangelism the Gentiles were to be able to know God, essentially, as much as the Jews at that time. One of the means of evangelism was praising God while amidst them. In worshipping there is witnessing (cf. Ps. 40:3). People listen to their songs of worship and understand their content (Ps.137:3). In Ps.71:14-24 we can see praising and preaching going together. When the

Gentiles are called to praise God (notably, even using the second person “you” as in Ps 117:1), is it only a desire of the Psalmist? There must have been some kind of proclamation of the truth to them. Ps. 96 is an eloquent appeal for the universal worship of God. Significantly, it also urges to proclaim the truth of God among the peoples of the world (vv.3,10). Ps.105:1-2 says, “Make known His deeds among the peoples” and “Talk of all His wondrous works”. Ps.145: 10-12 shows that saints of the LORD would actually do that.

The witnessing was not limited to making the glory of the LORD known to the peoples but, presumably, went to the extent of preaching forgiveness of God and leading people in the way of righteousness. It is missiologically significant that in Rom. 4:6-9, after quoting Ps. 32:1-2, “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin”, Paul asks, “Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also?” The obvious answer to this question is relevant to the Old Testament times itself as much it is to the NT times. By confessions of sins and faith in the gracious God the uncircumcised Gentiles could obtain forgiveness of sins. In Ps. 51: 13-14 David says, “I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to you”. We may ask, as Paul asked, “who are these converts, only Jews, or the Gentiles also?” In the final commissioning of the disciples for gospel mission, as recorded in Luke’s gospel, our Lord Jesus says that it is written “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations”. Lord’s words compile truths expressed in different verses of different books of the OT. In this verse of David we have a reference to preaching of remission of sin. And, it is what David wanted to do in his own time. Finally, let us also note that Ps. 22:27-31 tells that the work of salvation Christ accomplished on the Cross would be made known to ends of earth and to all peoples even to generations to follow. What we must be more interested in our study is God’s purposes than man’s performances. Psalms show us that the Psalmists, David in particular, knew for sure that it was purpose of God that peoples of the world must know the truth of God. And the truth of God revealed in the verses of Psalms provided sufficient material to carry out this mission in most profound way.

Even today these Psalms can be used to reach people with truth of God. A collection of judiciously selected Psalms could be a very valuable tool in the hands of the evangelist. In most traditional communities, poetry is more appreciated than prose especially when the subject matter pertains to divinity. Verses impress them more than descriptions. Their presentation in the form of prayer and praising would be particularly appealing.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH (8)

AMAZIAH
Koshy Zachariah

Strength of Jehovah (2Kgs 14:1-20; 2Chrn.25)

Amaziah, son of Jehoash, made a good beginning as the King of Judah. The name means “Strength of Jehovah”. In fact God was his strength when he began, but he fell way side, in the latter part of his life. Thus he did not live up to his name. All the Kings of Judah except a few, fell into the error of idol worship, despite the consequences of that sin reaped by the earlier Kings recorded in the history. This is true of Christians also. Despite what we have heard and seen with our own eyes of the shipwreck made by some of the fine servants of God, we allow ourselves to fall into the trap. We have the examples of some of the godly servants in the height of their ministry falling for fornication thereby making their faith and ministry a mockery; in the process those who have been brought to the Lord by such men, backslide and draw away from faith.

Amaziah’s mother’s name was Jehoaddan, meaning Jehovah-pleased. She appears to have been a woman of piety. Probably, her influence on Amaziah helped him to make a good beginning. We had seen how his father Jehoash was in great sickness before he was slain. As a result of this, he reigned a year jointly with his father (compare 2 Kings 13:10; 14:1, 2 Chr 24:1). Though what he did was right, yet his heart was not perfect (2 Chr 25:2). This is the condition of many of the Christian believers. They know what is right and allow such right things only to prevail, though in their heart they are not clean and perfect. We know the doctrines and truth fully well but when it comes to practice in our private life, we are not true to it. That shows the lack of heart devotedness. With the killing of his father and also his father’s great disease, things were not

under full control as he began as a King. So the Kingdom had to be stabilised and established. As soon as he established or he was in full control (2 King 14:5), he thought of avenging his father’s killers. We read, “Now it came to pass, when the Kingdom was established to him, that he slew his servants that had killed the King his father. But he slew not their children, but did as it is written in the law, in the book of Moses, where the Lord commanded (Deut 24:16) saying, The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin (2 Chr 25:3-4).

Now Amaziah thought it necessary to have a good army. We read, “Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together and made them Captains over thousands and Captains over hundreds, according to the house of their fathers, throughout all Judah and Benjamin: and he numbered them from twenty five years old and above and found them three hundred thousand choice men able to go forth to war that could handle spear and shield. He hired also a hundred thousand mighty men of valour out of Israel for a hundred talents of silver (2 Chr 25:5, 6). In fact this decision of hiring from Israel a hundred thousand mighty men was foolish. Most of the children under the Kings of Israel were idol worshippers and taking of them to strengthen Judah was “like heathens being added to believers’ fold for strength and show”. We are told how Jehoshaphat went to help the children of Israel when in trouble and God sent Jehu the Prophet to ask, “shouldst thou help the ungodly”? Here Amaziah is reversing the order seeking the help of the ungodly. So there came a man of God to Amaziah saying, “O King Let not the army of Israel go with thee: for the Lord is not with Israel to wit, with all the children of Ephraim. But if thou will go do it, be strong for the battle: God

shall make thee fall before the enemy: for God hath power to help and to cast down" (2 Chr 25:7, 8). Ephraims were not a courageous people. We are told, "The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows turned back in the day of the battle" (Ps 78:9). If they were not reliable, then the entire army would face defeat and God knew that they were not dependable and trustworthy. They showed their true colour when they were asked by Amaziah to return later. One of the principal lessons learnt by Judah in the battles with the enemies was – that the victory is not by number or by might when the battle becomes the Lord's". In the lives of the earlier Kings, we have seen this. In the days of Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20:22-24), the Lord did the battle for them.

Amaziah was willing to correct his stand at the word of God brought to him by "a man of God". But his worry was on the one hundred thousands of silver paid to the Ephramites. He would stand to lose this if he sent them back. One good thing with Amaziah at this point of time is his willingness to listen and correct. And the man of God answered, "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this" (v 9). Amaziah quickly acted on this. "Then Amaziah separated them to wit, the army that was come to him out of Ephraim, to go home again: wherefore their anger was kindled against Judah and they returned home in great anger" (v 10). Thus Amaziah obeyed the Lord. "To obey is better than sacrifice". However, Amaziah was able to see the true colour of the Ephramites then and there. He now knew how much a problem they would have been, if he had allowed them to associate with his army. As the Ephramites returned, they avenged their insult by falling upon defenceless cities in the north of Judah. Their men plundered them and slaughtered three thousand of their own flesh without any cause. However, Amaziah was an enlightened man by now.

We read now, "Amaziah strengthened himself and led forth his people and went to the valley of Salt and smote of the children of Seir ten thousand. And other ten thousand left alive did the children of Judah carry away captive

and brought them unto the top of the rock and cast them down from the top of the rock, that they all were broken into pieces (2 Chr 25:11-12). This treatment appears to be cruel to the naked human eye. The circumstances that prompted this cruelty, is not recorded in the Bible. Even the cause of invasion is not known. To us Christians, this is incomprehensible, when we look at the "standard" we have received from Him who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. In view of the lack of reason given in the scripture, we need not judge or excuse them for their terrible act. God has left it without comment. However, it was not God's act but Amaziah's.

However, this invasion became a stumbling block to Amaziah. This man of God so far trusted in the Lord fully and listened to the voice of God spoken to him through Prophets or men of God. But the gods of Seir attracted his devotion. We read, "Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir and set them up to be his gods and bowed down himself before them and burned incense unto them" (2 Chr 25:14). What a spiritual declension? It is difficult to believe. But it happens. We feel get attached to some good provisions of other "beliefs" and try to copy them little by little until our Church doctrines and truths are replaced or sacrificed. We are aware how heathen customs have crept in unaware to the detriment of Christian faith and doctrines. If we bear in mind the sad situation prevailing in the midst of the Christian denominations to-day, then the situation to which Amaziah was drawn at the beauty of the gods of Seir, could be understood. But then, we have to decry such tendencies capable of provoking God to anger and action.

"Wherefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against Amaziah and He sent unto him a Prophet which said unto him, "why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thy hand? And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that the King said unto him, "Art thou made of the King's Counsel"? Forbear; why shouldst thou


be smitten? Then the Prophet forbore and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee because thou hast done this and hast not hearkened unto my counsel” (2 Chr 25:14-16). Earlier he listened to the word of God and now what God spoke to him through the Prophet fell into deaf ears.

Now God had determined to teach Amaziah through bitter experience. Amaziah started feeling great about himself. He got puffed up. He took other counsels and these ungodly men, in order to please the King, ill-advised him when he felt like fighting with the King of Israel. He had in mind the wrong doing of the Ephraimites, but then the King of Israel was less responsible than Amaziah himself who had hired them to be part of his army. Anyway the desire to fight Israel was of God for the punishment of their idolatry. Thus Amaziah challenged the King of Israel saying, “Come, Let us see one another in the face”. “And Joash King of Israel, sent to Amaziah King of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon (Amaziah) sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon (Joash) saying “Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon (Joash’s army) and trod down the thistle. Thou sayest Lo thou hast smitten the Edomites and thine heart lifteth thee up to boast: abide now at home: why shouldst thou meddle to thine hurt that thou shouldst fall, even thou and Judah with thee. But Amaziah would not hear; for it came of God that he might deliver them into the hand of their enemies because they sought after the god’s of Edom” (2 Chr 25:18-20).

Even though wisdom was put to his mouth by the King of Israel, Amaziah would not listen to. And in the battle, “Judah was put to the worse before Israel and they fled every man to his tent” (v 22). Amaziah was captured and brought to Jerusalem. And he witnessed the destruction of the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, four hundred cubits. Josephus states that Joash King of Israel could gain entry into the city by threatening to kill Amaziah if the inhabitants refused to open the gates. Joash “took all the

gold and the silver and all the vessels that were found in the house of God with Obededom and the treasures of the King’s house, the hostages also and returned to Samaria” (v 24).

Amaziah lived more than fifteen years after his defeat. He died by violence like his father and grandfather. “Now after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the Lord, they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem and he fled to Lachish; but they sent to Lachish after him and slew him there. And they brought him upon horses and buried him with his fathers in the city of Judah (2 Chr 25:27-28).

When he was assassinated he was fifty four. He ruled the country for twenty nine years. He was also one of the Kings who started well but ended in badly. Probably, that is what we see around us among the Christian believers. Good beginning followed by sad ending. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor 10:12). 

KIND ATTENTION! ALL INDIA WORKERS’ CONFERENCE

The 17th All India Workers’ Conference is planned to be held at the OM Centre in Secunderabad, A.P from 16th to 19th October 2008. We expect several international speakers including J.B.Nicholson (Jr) and Kurian Parayil. We are expecting speakers from UK and Canada also. This conference would need substantial resources and prayer and support will also be valued. We would appreciate many Lord’s people all over the world who have a great burden for the ministries in India, to set apart their time and join the conference. We would be extending invitation to 350 English speaking Evangelists. They may communicate their participation well in advance. Please uphold this matter in your valuable prayers so that it will be a time of great blessing.

Note: Requests for Educational Assistance are being frequently made to GFTI by many servants of God. But GFTI is not able to concede to their requests as it does not receive specific funds for this purpose. We pray that many be exercised on this great need.

Vineyard News

ANDHRA PRADESH

01/04/08

G. Satyam, Seetharpeta

Brother informs that this year eight believers witnessed the Lord in waters of baptism and have joined the fellowship of the assembly. The Lord's work is going on well in all these villages. Prayers are solicited.

02/04/08

J. Moses, Jammulapalem

God blessed the Church here with many new souls being added to the fellowship. Now they are constructing an assembly hall. Flooring and wood works are to be completed. Prayers are requested.

BIHAR

03/04/08

P.M. Skariah, Tatanagar

They had almost one month's visiting the assemblies of Jharkhand and Bihar to encourage and equip the believers. Around 50 people were baptized during this trip. Bros. C.K. Isaac from Kerala and George Mathew from Bombay also participated in this visiting. Valuable prayers are requested for the smooth functioning of the Mercy home which is run for the poor children.

CHATTISGARH

04/04/08

Pramod Paul, Kondagaon

The assembly ministries in Kondagaon and Dhodai are going on well. Earnest prayers are solicited for his wife who underwent a major operation in CMC vellore.

05/04/08

Rajendra Rajwar, Digwadih

God is using him mightily in various villages in Dhanbad and Bokaro districts for the spread of the gospel. In a gospel meeting conducted recently they were able to get ten new contacts. Now they are constantly reaching out these dear ones with the truths of the Word of God. Prayers are coveted for their salvation.

06/04/08

N. Solomon, Bachel

The work here is going on well. However, they are

facing some difficulties from some anti-social elements. A brother named Sudhakar specially covets our prayers.

GUJARAT

07/04/08

Jose Dali, Vapi

Since last October they are having some new openings in the tribal village areas. They have started a regular Bible study classes on every Wednesday and Thursday. Two of these villages are 125km away from Vapi and Bro. N. Reghu is also actively involved in this ministry along with other brethren. Pray that God may make this ministry fruitful.

08/04/08

V.P. Mathew, Kutch

God helped them to work here for last two and half years for the furtherance of the gospel. Through this ministry many people from different languages are now in the fellowship of the assembly. Pray for the growth of this assembly.

JHARKHAND

09/04/08

Daniel Malto, Hiranpur

Here the assembly ministries are being blessed by the Lord. Around 45 people are gathering for the assembly meetings. Moreover some are ready to take baptism. Prayers are coveted for the blessings of these activities and also for him as some opponents are threatening him to stop the ministry.

KARNATAKA

10/04/08

R.S. Mirajkar, Belgaum

Many believers from different villages were encouraged and comforted by the special meeting they conducted recently. With the great burden for teaching the real truths from the word of God, he has published a bulletin in Marathi language- "Let us fight the good fight". Pray that through the reading of this bulletin many may stand firm for the Lord.

KERALA

11/04/08

George Peter, Chittur

Biju, our brother's son who had met with a serious accident is now getting back to normal life by the grace of God. They had conducted a thanksgiving meeting on 2nd February for God's marvelous work on Biju. The ministry is going well here. They had a gospel campaign from 31st January to 3rd February. Prayers are solicited for the good health of Biju.

12/04/08

M.A. Jos, Thrissur

They held their annual convention from 23rd-26th March, and Bros. Jose Mankudi, Josph Maduram, Varghese Kurian, and Binu Mathew preached the Word. Pray that God may add some new souls into the church through the Word preached.

MADHYA PRADESH

13/04/08

Benjamin Singh, Lucknow

The ministry of the "Gospel Truth Centre Publishers" is going on well. Many brothers and sisters are participating in the gospel team work, which includes door-to-door evangelism, tracts distribution and other activities. Pray for the needs of these ministries.

14/04/08 **Ranjith Kumar Bagh, Mahavir Cly**

They had three special meetings and the response from the people was encouraging. At Datia where bro. Rajendar is working 6 brothers and one sister obeyed the Lord in the waters of baptism in the month of January. In Dabra where Bro. Gabbar Singh works among 8 villages, five brothers and a sister are ready to take baptism. Continue to pray for these team works in different parts of this state.

MAHARASHTRA

15/04/08

David Bandarkanti, Sironcha

They had conducted a youth camp and a gospel camp which were blessed by the Lord. 72 youngsters attended the meeting and many of them experienced the blessings. Prayers are solicited for the growth of these youngsters as well as for the blessing of the ministries in the villages as there is some opposition to the gospel.

16/04/08

B.A. Tadke, Pune

They have started the construction of the Asha Home Widow Care Centre at Wagholi. They are praying for completion of the work before Wagholi being included in Pune municipality. Please prayerfully support this ministry.

NAGALAND

17/04/08

O. Georgekuty, Dimapur

They have started a gathering in Dimapur, which is 10-15 km away from the city. Dimapur is a city highly populated with non-Christians. Though there are a few new believers in this city, so far he with his family could not stay in Dimapur because of high rent. Pray for the furtherance of this ministry. Please note his new address: O. Georgekuty, P.O. Box. 18, A.R.T.C-PO, Nagaland- 797 115.

NEPAL

18/04/08

Vikram Ningleku, Dharan

A new work has been started in a village called Gachhiya, where 7 new people came forward to accept the Lord Jesus as their personal Saviour. Some of them expressed their desire to be baptized. The political situation is still not stable here. Please pray for this ministry.

NEW DELHI

19/04/08

George Dawson, New Delhi

Our brother was in Europe and Malaysia, visiting many assemblies and involving in ministry. Till 12th May-08, he will be in Australia followed by a month long ministry in Karnataka. Prayers are requested for his health and travel.

ORISSA

20/04/08

Sunny T. Daniel, Jeypore

The grace of God is keeping them well and using them mightily for His service. Bro. Susanta and Sujit are a great help for continuing the ministry as he is confined to the local activities due to his bodily ailments. They had a special meeting for all the brethren in Koraput district on 23rd January. Moreover they are planning to organise a youth camp in the third week of May. Prayers requested.

PUNJAB

21/04/08

P. Vijayaraju, Amritsar

The Assembly here is planning to conduct some special meetings for the believers and for the regular contacts. Children's camp, Gospel meetings in three villages, and special meeting for the prisoners in Amritsar Center Jail would be the main activities during these days. Pray that God may provide them good climate and other important needs.

TAMIL NADU

22/04/08

Joshua Daniel, Oomachikkulam

They are prayerfully planning to have a film programme in the villages. Prayer matters: for the permission; that many may come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ; for the marriage of his sister which God willing would be solemnized on 5th May-08; Please note the new address: *Joshua Daniel, Ebenezer assembly, Madurai Illam, Indira Nagar, Thirumalpuram Post, Oomachikkulam, Madurai- 625 014.*

UTTAR PRADESH

23/04/08

Jaison Samuel, Harthala

Pray that God may open many doors for the gospel and establish an Assembly testimony here. Please note his new address: *Jaison samuel, C/o. Gopal Singh, E. 133 M.M.I.G., Himgiri colony, Harthala, Sonakpur .P.O., U.P- 244 001.*

24/04/08

Kripa Sankar, Varanasi

Gospel outreach continues in this city through door-to-door evangelism. The village ministry is also being blessed by the Lord. During the last four months 19 persons have trusted the Lord. Some have expressed their desire to take baptism. Prayers are requested for the growth of these believers and also for his wife who is bed-ridden due to pain in the leg.

UTTARANCHAL

25/04/08

Beharilal Benjamin, Dakpathar

The new assembly hall was opened for the service of the Lord in the month of January-08 when they had a week long special meetings. The Out Patient department (OPD) in the

hospital is getting good response. They are in need of around 2 lakhs rupees immediately to settle the dues to the contractor who constructed the Assembly hall building. Prayers are solicited.

WEST BENGAL

26/04/08

Prince Louis, Jaigaon

The Lord's ministry is progressing here. Recently during a special meeting a Nepali sister witnessed the Lord in the waters of baptism. Around 80 children are regularly attending the Sunday school. The village ministry is being quickened with purpose of establishing an assembly testimony there. Prayers are solicited.

27/04/08

Purnendu Jha, Chinakuri

The assembly outreach is going on well in Mithani village. As the result of the consistent door-to-door evangelism, some people are interested to know more about Jesus Christ. They had Sunday school anniversary in a place called Main Denwo where more than hundred children from other backgrounds attended. Pray that these ministries may be fruitful.

28/04/08

Molay Kanti Das, Barasat

Every morning from Monday to Friday they are taking free tuition for the poor children with the purpose of reaching out their families. Wednesday and Saturday they have children's club, where around 70 children from non-christian background attend regularly. Moreover in the month of May they are planning to conduct a VBS for these children. Prayers are requested for these meetings and also for a baptism service being planned in the month of April.

OTHER MATTERS

29/04/08

Y. Rajkumar, Markapur

On 31st January they had conducted a special meeting in the local assembly. During this meeting 8 persons obeyed the Lord in the water baptism. Pray for their spiritual upliftment.

30/04/08

R. Jayapal, Pallavaram

They were able to purchase a piece of land in Thirusoolam area for constructing an Assembly hall. At present they are planning to construct a hall for worship and gathering of the saints which may cost around 6 lakhs rupees. They have only 52,000/- in hand. Prayerfully support this assembly.

KNOW YOUR FRIENDS AT SBC JOHNSON PRABHU

I come from Virudhachalam in Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu. I was born and brought up in a Roman Catholic family. I was very much occupied with my religious set up especially having the faith in Mary. I was studying from a hostel till the age of 17. My life in the hostel was not satisfactory, having no peace of mind.



During my post graduate studies, a believer told me about the Brethren Assembly at Perumbalur, near my place. I went there out of curiosity. But there I heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ being preached from the Bible. I believed that the Bible was speaking to me and I accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, having confessed my sins to him in the month of August 2005.

Since then I have the joy of having my sins forgiven and the assurance of going to heaven. Then I joined the fellowship of the saints at Perumbalur and was baptized on 10th September 2006. Then I had a desire to study the Word of God deeply. So applied to SBC and was given admission. I have just finished my first year course and waiting to enter the second year after the vacation. It is my desire to serve the Lord after finishing my studies. Please pray for me.

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

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.

APPLICATIONS INVITED:

Stewards Bible College, Chennai, (formerly ABTI) is a unique institution of its kind in teaching the Word of God systematically. Anyone who is born again, baptized and in fellowship with a local assembly, committed to the Lord's work and desiring a serious study, and deeper understanding of the Bible could apply. The medium of instruction being English, the candidates should have a working knowledge of English preferably +2 or its equivalent. Applications are invited for its next course which will start in the first week of June-2008.

SBC offers a three year programme leading to Bachelor of Theology (B.Th). We cover almost all aspects of the Bible including various disciplines in systematic theology and related subjects. Write immediately for prospectus and application form to:

Stewards Bible College,
1, Bethesda Centre, R.V Nagar,
Kodungaiyur P.O, Chennai-600 118, Tamil Nadu.
Phone: 044-2555 0598 / 2555 0295 / 9444366863
Email: admin@gfti.org.in

The last date for receiving filled in application forms will be 30th April-2008. The current session of SBC will come to a close on 29th March-08, with a simple farewell function. After the summer vacation the college will reopen on 16th June-08.