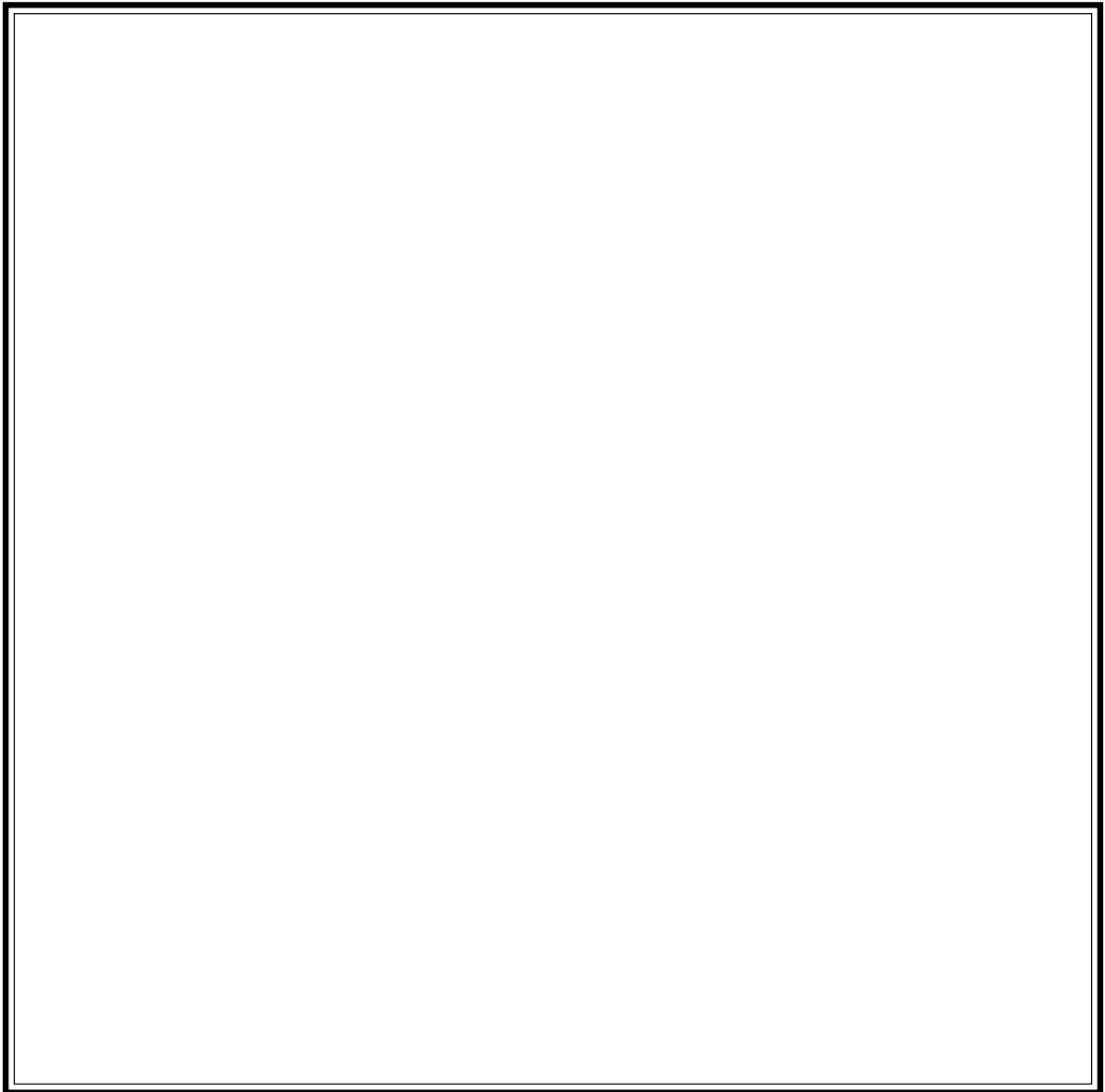


YEAR OF HARVEST

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From the Chairman...

YEAR OF HARVEST

Dear Friends,

Loving greetings in the Name of the Lord of the Harvest! I praise God for His grace that continued the restorative work in our lives as individuals, families, teams and also in our ministries throughout the year 2004, the Year of Restoration. I can testify of this restoration in certain key issues. When there was no sign of even a small cloud of rain at the beginning of the year, I experienced heavy showers towards the end! We all may have similar testimonies. Praise the Lord!

In his feature article brother R. Stanley, the founder of BYM, wrote in the January issue of *Blessing 2004*, "Revival results in explosive Evangelism!" The Spirit of God has rightly prompted the hearts of the leaders of BYM to joyfully declare the year 2005 as the "Year of Harvest." The text that the Lord brings before us for this year is John 4:35—

**"Open your eyes and look at the fields!
They are ripe for harvest!"**

The significance of this statement gets sharper when we recognize the author of this pregnant verse. It is Jesus, the Lord of the Harvest, the unchanging, "I am who I am" (Ex 3:14). He urges us to open our eyes (lift up our eyes—KJV) and to look at the fields. This implies that our present vision is either clouded or downcast. We need to somehow catch the right vision of the field. Further, Jesus says, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Mt 9:37). The twofold message to the Church is crystal clear: catch the vision of the ripe field on the one side and the scarcity of workers on the other.

For a moment shall we lift up our eyes to see the fields in the current Indian context? There is an awakening in the Church for the missionary work. For example, the Tamilnadu branch of BYM has pledged to form 1000 Blessing Missionary Prayer Cells (BMPC) before 2006. Tentmaking missionaries are moving to needy fields. The fast-growing telecommunication systems are launching varied Gospel programmes from within and outside the country. There is an unusual move among Christians everywhere to partner together and network to proclaim the Gospel, breaking all denominational barriers. Political analysts predicted the continuance of the then government after the

general elections. But the Church which witnessed scattered persecutions in various States of India during the recent past pleaded before the Lord of the Harvest for His intervention. What was the result? All poll predictions were falsified! The repeal of the Anti-Conversion Bill in Tamilnadu and the aftermath in the religious and political scenario of this State reiterates the ripeness of the field at large. People everywhere are harassed and undergo enormous suffering. They are helpless and look like sheep without a shepherd (Mt 9:36).

Young people live without direction. They try worldly pleasures to satisfy them but become all the more disappointed and despondent at the end of the day. Young or old, all are searching for a shepherd who will have real concern for their poor and tired souls; a real good shepherd, who even at the risk of His very life, would bind up their broken hearts; a Deliverer who would release them from bondages and shed light in their dark hearts; a trustworthy friend who would comfort in their times of mourning, who would bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes; who would pour oil of gladness instead of mourning and clothe them with a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair (Isa 61:1-3). What an opportunity to introduce our Good Shepherd and pave the way for the harvest!

These and other portraits of the fields would be clear to us only when we open up our eyes and look beyond. The Church should not only catch this vision but also should respond positively to carry out the harvest. Our missionary slogan is, 'Go and Send.' There is a considerable response for the latter; but the need of the hour is a positive response to the former, 'Go!'

I thank you, dear friends, for your faithful and consistent support to the ministry of Blessing Youth Mission all these years. I call upon you not just to stop with supporting the missionary cause, but also to jump into the harvest field to fulfil the role of a harvester. Your reward from the Lord of the Harvest in Heaven is certain, because the harvest is plenty!

On behalf of the Blessing Youth Mission, I wish you a very happy New Year of rich and bountiful harvest!

Your fellow-harvester,
M. ARTHUR JOHN

THE LORD OF THE HARVEST

A. Lionel

As we meditate on the theme of “harvest,” all through this year, it is fitting to begin with the Lord of the Harvest, as it was His cry to send out workers into the harvest field (Mt 9: 38). His primary concern was to spell the goodnews and save the lost. This overriding desire to save man from sin caused Him to leave the comfort of heaven and descend upon earth in human form. All through his dispensation Jesus was keen to do the will of His Father, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and finish His work” (Jn 4:34). What is the will of the Father? The Bible in no uncertain terms states that it is the Father’s will that “no man should perish.” Jesus as the Son of God was eager to accomplish the desire of His Father that no man should perish.

To realise this mission, Jesus took upon Himself the task of teaching and preaching, moving from village to village, seeking after the lonely and strengthening the weary. Having lived a fulfilling life, at the close of His mission on earth, He charged His disciples, “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature”. This commission is not merely a command to the early apostles but to every believing Christian and disciple. The reality of today, however, is that believers of all ilks are engaged in their own pursuits and are caught in webs of worldly affairs that restrict their usefulness in the context of the field.

The mandate of Christ is clear: “lift up your eyes and see the fields are white for harvest”. His call to see the need around requires from us a positive response. Multitudes as in the days of Jesus continue to live in sin and are deprived of the joy and peace that Jesus offers. The need is more urgent now than ever before for Christians all around to see the ripe harvest and respond. If we wait and not proactively move, the blood of these souls will be upon our heads. We have no option but to follow the footsteps of the Master and proclaim the salvation of our God. Outlined below are certain keys that

should propel us to engage in the harvest of the Lord!

a) His Name

The Angel of the Lord said that He would be named as Jesus because He will save His people from their sins. The name, “Jesus” means Saviour. There is no other name under heaven given among men other than the name of Jesus by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12). No one other than Jesus came searching for the lost and gave His life as an atoning sacrifice. He is the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8). He is the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29). Jesus firmly confirmed, “ I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man comes to the Father except by me” (Jn 14:6). Having known that there is no other name through which salvation can be wrought, the onus is upon us to perpetuate this Name across the length and breadth of this land.

The early disciples knew the power in the Name of the Lord and ensured that the attention of all seekers was focused on the Name above all names. Today’s ‘disciples’ clamour for attention and are gratified when the same is lavished on them rather than on His Name. Seeking to glorify self over the selfless Saviour and self-exaltation over the exaltation of the Saviour is the malady of Christendom today. The need of the hour is a group of faithful harvesters who will shun self acclaim but surely invest their time and effort in proclaiming the Name of Jesus, the Lord of the Harvest.

b) His Will

It is the will of God that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4). God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but the world through Him might be saved. The pre-eminent will of God drove Jesus to the earth and should be the driving force for the harvesters to actively implement the will of God in the lives of the lost.

The early disciples recognised the will of God and gave of themselves without restraint in carrying out His will. Today's disciples employ the will of God as a guise to disengage themselves from active evangelism. There is no other will than the stated will of God that "all men be saved" and this can be a possibility only if we will take the ownership for enabling His will to be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

c) His Love

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. The love of God lavished on earth is the story of Jesus. The Love of Jesus that took Him to the cross should take us to our knees and out on the streets to knock at the doors of the unbelievers with the everlasting love of Christ.

The early disciples demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the love of Christ and allowed their entire lives to be so consumed by this overriding love. Paul the apostle states definitively that he would rather be accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of his brothers (Rom 9:3) Today's disciples have tasted the love but have lost their first love and are floundering in mediocrity. May the love of God constrain us as never before to carry the message of His unchanging love to the corners of the earth.

d) His Vision

Ungodliness is on the increase and wickedness is on an all time high. The generation of today are looking for a model to follow. The whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs seeking for direction. Jesus demonstrated a clear vision of the lost. His eyes were sharpened and His intent was definite to go after one lost sheep. He did not allow His vision to be slurred by the transient and fleeting issues of the world. The need is to catch His vision and allow that vision to become a passion for the lost.

The early disciples had a clear vision of the lost and so allowed themselves to suffer enormous hardships—that the lost

souls may somehow be gained. Their vision of the lost was complemented by a vision of eternity. The separation of an unsaved soul for eternity was far too gruesome for them to sit back and let time slip by. So they engaged in continuous work in the vineyard, counting all things that were gain to them as loss for Christ (2 Cor.4:18). Today's disciples are more concerned of being on tele-vision rather than carrying out His-vision. The need today is that we be so gripped by the vision of the lost for eternity, that the temporal concerns of the world would be dispelled by the far-reaching vision of the world.

e) His Prayer

The model Jesus set in this regard is par excellence. To translate His vision into reality He spent significant time in prayer and urged His disciples that they pray that the Lord of the Harvest send labourers into His harvest.

The early disciples continued the practice of prayer in their personal and public lives and were often seen together meeting for prayer and thanksgiving. Today's disciples arrange for prayers but seldom pray. The need of the hour is prayer warriors who will continue to win battles on their knees before they set their feet on the streets.

f) His Commitment

Jesus did not allow His physical discomforts to deter His commitment and perseverance in the pursuit of the lost. He tirelessly traversed through Jerusalem and neighbouring parts searching for the needy. No storm would stop Him, no opposition would deflate his resolve and no threats would squash his drive to proclaim the goodnews.

The early disciples suffered afflictions, encountered persecution and braved martyrdom to proclaim the Gospel of Christ. Today's disciples are easily sidetracked by small rumours and insignificant intimidations. As the labourers of the Lord of the Harvest, we have no other choice than to renew our commitment to make Him known, despite all odds. *(Contd. page 12)*

Train your Brain!

Dr. Mrs. Lilian Stanley

A very fundamental discipline for every Christian is the training of the mind. When neglected, mind becomes the bull's eye of the devil's target. Everything stems out of the mind. If anyone concentrates on training his mind from the start of his christian journey he will enjoy abundant life without the unhappy interludes of backsliding. The Bible admonishes, "Let this mind BE in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5 – Master mind!). That's our goal. Paul, writing to the Corinthian Christians, states, "We HAVE the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16). Between the two statements lie the long and hard training process.

How to have the mind of Christ? How did Paul and his companions attain the mind of Christ? At the outset it must be understood that it is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow to the unsaved. Because it is salvation that acts as a helmet to protect the mind (Eph 6:17). Without this helmet the mind is vulnerable to the arrows of the devil. Below are seven aspects of training the brain.

1. Love for God

Jesus said that the first and the great commandment was that, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your MIND" (Mt 22:37).

When all your mind is enslaved by something, it doesn't care to wander anywhere else. It is a falling-in-love experience with God. When you are in love, you don't think of anything else. Whatever you may be doing, your mind is flying around your love. That's called the first love (Rev 2:4). It is a dominating love that rules you. It's the love that loves God not for personal gain but because of who He is.

This does not mean we should absentmindedly do our other duties. Just

like a maid in love will do everything for her man perfect to please him, all our duties should stem out of our love for the Lord. She will not be able to think of another man. When anyone tries to flirt she will only become furious. Such faithfulness is possible only when we love God with all our mind. Neither the world nor the devil can seduce us.

"First love" tends to wear off as emotions cool down. The solution God prescribes is to do the "first works" (Rev 2:4,5). When we were first found by Christ, how fervent we were in Bible reading, prayer and witnessing! We should redouble our efforts to continue these, to keep the flames of love alive. After marriage the emotional love settles down to a committed and caring love. Many get scared when romance becomes lackadaisical after marriage. But this is the norm. In Christian life also we cannot expect the excitement to continue forever. Stick on to the routine whether you feel high or low till the love flower blooms. The more you love God the less tendency your mind will have, to wander along dark alleys.

Jesus asks us as He asked Peter, "Do you love Me?... Excuse Me ma'am, do you love Me?... Sorry for asking you a third time sir, do you love Me?" The next question He tosses at us is, "With all your mind?" What does occupy your mind most? Your problem or work or bank balance or anything else or God? The answer will tell you if you love the Lord with all your mind. When we do not like to retain God in our knowledge He gives us over to a debased MIND, to do those things which ought not to be done (Rom 1:28). The reason why many spiritual giants are today a husk of their former self is that they have failed to love the Lord with an undivided mind.

2. Law of the Mind

In Romans 7:21-25, Paul talks about two laws: (1) The law of God which is imprinted in the mind to become the law of the MIND. The mind of the Christian, now 100% passionately in love with God has the law of God written in it. (2) Another law in our bodily members is the law of sin. This law constantly wars against the god-loving mind to capture it to make it a slave to the body. That's why in Romans 12:1 Paul writes about sacrificing our **bodies** on the altar of God, and renewing our **minds** (v 2). Or else they are bound to be at loggerheads. The whole experience feels like a tug of war between sinfulness and holiness.

The life of a Christian aims to align the mind and body. The mind is the master of the body commanding it and keeping it under strict control. But the frustrating fact of life is this formidable enemy often rebels and takes over the mind as its captive, so that it can behave as it pleases.

This was Paul's day to day struggle that made him feel wretched. He wanted to crown his mind as the king but often witnessed his body sitting on the throne and his mind at its feet a chained and helpless slave. Finally he struck upon a solution that worked very well. "Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight; not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection." Disciplining the body is like taming a wild bull... It will refuse to run along the path of the Spirit unless whipped and goaded. If this discipline is not served regularly, Christian life will be one of uncertainty like a cat on the wall. It is like a teacher disciplining a student, punishing him when he goes wrong and rewarding him when he excels.

Joseph's mind ordered his feet to run away from temptation. Daniel and his friends brought themselves under the difficult discipline of a vegetarian diet on a table sprawled with non-vegetarian delicacies. David could have easily done the same

when he saw Sheba's Bath but instead okayed his body to have the last word. Deal ruthlessly with your body. Fasting is one way to achieve this discipline. When we discipline ourselves, when we are sincere and eager to please God, we will find God helping us. Have you ever noticed that when you long to sin there is no opportunity and when the opportunity presents itself you are in no mood to sin? That's God helping us to obey the law of the mind.

3. Spiritual-mindedness

Now the next battle starts, that is between the spiritual mind (focussed on eternal things) and the carnal mind (grabbing the temporary pleasures). Everyday in an innumerable instances the decision has to be taken whether we would walk according to the flesh or according to the Spirit. Usually the spiritual mind is low-key whereas the carnal mind is brash and profane. This battle is described in Romans 8:1-8, "There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit... for those who live according to the flesh set their MINDS on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal MIND is enmity against God... So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

Those who are in Christ Jesus belong to two groups: the spiritually-minded, who will not be condemned and the carnally-minded who shall be condemned. There are two roads dividing before us—the way of the Holy Spirit and the way of our nature. The path we choose depends on the decision of the mind, or who wins the battle, our nature or God's Spirit. If our mind is oriented towards the desires of an old nature we are inclined to choose the path of the flesh, if towards the Spirit, the path of the Spirit (Mk 14:38). The results of the choice are spelt out—death or life and peace. In search of life and peace many, even believers

are duped by the devil to choose the carnal path. They think money, achievements, wealth etcetera will get them the life and peace they long for. How sadly they are mistaken!

Everyday a Christian experiences victories and defeats alternately in this battle. But as he trains his mind to choose the spiritual path in every struggle, the victory score goes up and the defeat score comes down. A true Christian will not allow his mind to be choked by the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. We need savings in the bank, pass the examination, build a house, settle our children, deal with lives intricacies. But it is another matter to allow them to strangle us. We must not be unduly worried about these things. I have learnt in my experience, instead of worrying and doing something impulsively, if I just relax and trust in God, He takes control and things take care of themselves.

Unless we hold tight the reins of our mind it has a tendency to run wild. That's why Paul writes to the Colossian Christians to set their MIND on things above, (eternal) not on things on the earth (temporary) (3:2). When you set your feet on the path of the old man, stop, think and make a right about turn to take the path of God's Spirit. There is life and peace at the end of the road and you will never regret your decision.

4. *Renewal of the mind*

The carnal mind now pushed to a corner, the spiritual mind takes over. It needs fine tuning to know the mind or the will of God. Once that's done you can hold the handlebars of life with considerable aplomb.

Paul, before declaring, "But we have the MIND of Christ" asks a question, "Who has known the MIND of the Lord that He may instruct Him?" This he says in the context of discerning spiritual things (to understand the mind of the Lord or know the will of God (1 Cor 2:13-16). It is interesting to note that in Romans 12:1,2 again, before speaking about the mind Paul quotes the same verse, "For who has known the MIND of the

Lord? Or who has become His counselor?" (Rom 11:34). The inference is, 'No one.' "Therefore," he says, "present your bodies a living sacrifice... and do not be conformed to this world (go by the customs of the world) but be transformed (a right about turn) by the renewing of your MIND that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Renewing of our minds leads to our transformation.

What do we understand from this? The natural man cannot know the mind of the Lord. But if our mind learns the new pattern of thinking and not go as the world goes, then, and only then can we discern the mind of the Lord, ie the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. In simple terms, we will know what God would have us do. Now do you understand why many flounder not knowing the will of God for their lives?

Writing to the Ephesians (4:17-32) Paul warns them to no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their MIND. This means their understanding was darkened and heart blind. In short, they lost their capacity to discern good and bad. Paul contrasts the condition of the Gentiles to that of the believers and says, "But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus. "What was taught by Christ? That we have to put off the old man and be renewed in the spirit of our MIND (v 23).

Sometimes God speaks like blips in the video screen. At other times like ECG, difficult to interpret. The more we pursue after righteousness the more our mind is renewed day by day and we will be able to know the mind of the Lord when we tick together with Him.

One important principle for renewing our minds is to be associated with simple and lowly people to keep ourselves humble (Rom 12:3,16). "Be of the same MIND toward one another. Do not set your MIND on high things, but associate with the humble."

5. Communication with God

When our worries go haywire, the Bible gives the following tips to ease our mind. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanks giving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and MINDS through Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:6,7).

When we become anxious and tense we often end up acting indiscretely only to regret later. Anxiety churns our mind like a storm stirring up an ocean. A prayerless mind is a misfiring engine. Instead of taking hasty decisions at the moment of mental turmoil, if we can just bend our knees and cry to God who seems to be sleeping, "Lord, I perish, "He will come to our rescue. After a session of prayer our mind will be calm enough to think and take a rational decision. God will help us to see through the problem and hit upon the solution. To expect to find a panacea to all problems is pointless. But God will help us decide the best possible way to deal with it. Toxic worry is unnecessary and unproductive and a drain on the brain.

Prayer is a balm to the mind. It is quiet and undisturbed conversation with the all-powerful, all-mighty God. It is like entering the counselor's room spending time pouring our inside out, listen to Him and come out enlightened. He throws light on areas we could not see earlier and guides our thinking. The counselor doesn't set right the problem and point to the solution rather helps us to have insight into the situation and find the best way to approach the matter.

"Guard our hearts and minds"—Our hearts and minds are the seats of our emotions. If these are not heavily guarded we can be swept off our feet by the tempests of life. This safeguarding is done mysteriously by prayer. One who does not spend time talking to God everyday cannot handle the situations of the day. We should

never allow anxiety to torment and sway us. Learn to give thanks for everything. As you pray and plead and give thanks the peace of God beyond all description will descend on your hearts and minds like dew. It will protect your baffled heart and mind from any hasty action. It will generate faith. "He who believes shall not make haste" (Isa 28:16).

As we converse with God we understand the mind of God and learn to think like Him. The more time we spend in the prayer closet the sooner we attain the mind of Christ. Phil 4:4-6 is a great formula to train our minds. Follow it to the letter and you will experience a transformation of your mind. Even the Old Testament writer Isaiah knew this formula and taught it to people. "You will keep him in perfect peace whose MIND is stayed on You, because He trusts in You" (26:3). That's the secret of perfect peace enjoyed by pray-ers.

6. Word of God

Warning about backsliding Peter writes, "Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure MINDS by way of reminder), that you may be MINDFUL of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets (OT), and of the commandments of us, the apostles of the Lord and Saviour (NT)" (2 Pet 3:1,2). Why does he write this? The context is backsliding in the last days. Scoffers say, "Where is the promise of His coming?... For this they willfully forget that by the Word of God the heavens were of old (vv 4,5)... Same Word" (v 7). When we forget the Word of God we are sure to return to our vomit (2 Pet 2:22).

Especially in these last days the Word of God fortifies our mind to be alert to hold on to God and never slide back. The carelessness resulting from neglect of the Word of God is serious. Peter's words cannot be improved upon. "If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again

entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them" (2 Pet 2:20,21). Balaam heard the voice of God, did not give heed to it and ended up in madness (2 Pet 2:16). That's the fate of those who do not fill their minds with God's Word.

The Word of God influences the way we think and how we think influences the way we live. Draw out a plan to read the whole Bible in a year. Get a good study Bible, audio tapes and listen to them. Memorize important verses. Meditate and keep a journal of your meditation. Join a Bible Study group. Study your Bible in detail personally. Join a correspondence course. Take Bible tutuions or start a Bible tutuion class. Read good and balanced religious books. Make use of Bible study CDs. There are many websites to feed your soul sumptuously. Buy a computer Bible. It's lot of fun to do word study in the electronic Bible. Today a believer has no excuse to neglect God's Word. Even a blind person has the Bible in Braile. Etch out a mini Bible in your mind.

Learning to emulate the mind of Jesus is not a one day process. It is a life-time labour attained by allowing the Word of God to mould our thinking. The mind of God is imprinted in the Word of God. The more we read, study and apply it to our lives the more we think like Jesus.

7. Clear Thinking

Disarray of mind is the devil's ploy to confuse our thinking and lead us astray. In practical life we often find ourselves deep in the mire of confusion. However, God's will for a Christian is not that. God is not the author of confusion. He has not given us a spirit of fear but of a sound MIND (or better thinking ability) (2 Tim 1:7). Learn, not just to rely on emotional responses rather to think things through.

Many Spirit-filled Christians believe they can hear the Spirit's voice or experience God leading them explicitly. Perhaps it is true sometimes. But often God chooses to leave us to do our homework—ie to consider all the information before making a decision. The Bible does not always give us direct solutions to all our problems. If that were so, it will not speak so much about 'sound mind' and 'sobriety.' The very fact that the Bible speaks about sound mind shows that God expects us to think clearly on any issue. For example meditate the following—

Gen 30:27; Exo 18:19a

Paul writing to Timothy says, "Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things" (2 Tim 2:7). The art of thinking through problems and situations comes by experience. Sober-mindedness (clear thinking) is a quality required for bishops (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8), young men (Tit 2:6), older men (Tit 2:2), wives of spiritual leaders (1 Tim 3:11); young wives (Tit 2:5); all Christians (1 Thess 5:6,8; Tit 2:12; 1 Pet 1:13; 4:7; 5:8), all women (1 Tim 2:9,15). The word 'sober' is translated as self-control in some places rightly. Clear thinking leads to self-control. A person who has no control over his spirit or body lacks sobriety.

Spur of the moment decisions, except in emergencies, are dangerous. The best thing to do when you face hard situations is to let it go for some time. Take time to think through the situation. Pray, consult one or two senior people whom you can rely on and only then act cautiously. Instead of waiting for a preternatural reply for your prayer from the blue, do some exercise in thinking through and come to a conclusion.

Mind is the battle ground where God and the devil meet. Stand by God and defeat the devil. As the saying goes: "A good head is better than a hundred strong hands." Training your mind will give you the winning edge!U b

CAREER CHOICE CLUES

Duke Jeyaraj

Life is about making decisions. We make decisions and our decisions make us. One decision, we all must make is to choose our profession. If we zero-in on our choice quite early, while we are still in school, we will have ample time to gear up and prepare ourselves to land up in the profession of our dreams. We all have to face dilemmas like these: Should I become an Engineer or an Engine Driver? Should I turn to be a Doctor or a Tendulkar or a Jashca Richter (MLTR lead singer)!? Should I stay at home and do cooking or go on stage to be a Ronan Keating (of Boyzone fame)?! Tough choices to make, right? Let me pen for you, what I have learnt from my study of the Scriptures and from Saints (especially America's top Family Counselor, Dr. James Dobson) as to how to go about choosing a vocation.

1. It must be something you love to do.

In Old Testament times there were 'slaves'. Though that term is derogatory in our context, those days 'slaves' (some of them) commanded a lot of clout. In Abraham's household, there was an Eliazer. He was given the power to even choose his master's daughter-in-law. In Portiphar's household, there was a Joseph. He could say, "No one here has more authority than I do!" (Gen 38:9 NLT). So the slaves' job, here, was a royal one! As per the laws of God, slaves should be set free in the seventh year. But if he loves his job and his master, he should be given permission to stay on in his master's household as a servant permanently (Ex 21:4-6). Here the Scriptures set forth an important principle, ie if you love a job (as a believer), then that's the job God intends for you to do all your life!

So look for a career option, a profession you genuinely like to do all through your life. To make this choice you need to ascertain the identity of your own plus points, minus points and attractions.

Right from my High school days, I've loved to preach and write. I look forward to a lifetime of doing just that. Thierry Henry that fantastic striker from France once said, "Money? I'd pay to play football!" Why did he play football as a profession? He simply loved to play the game!.

2. It must be something you have the ability to do.

If you dream of being a pilot, but have the 'fear of heights' then it's better you alter your dream. If you plan to become a Marketing Manager but you hate the idea of meeting new people, you better think again!

Take for example, Apollos. This Egyptian believer had a silver tongue—the ability to speak. The trendy Peterson version of the New Testament says that he was a "terrific speaker, eloquent and powerful in his preaching of the Scriptures." He became a fulltime traveling public debater for the cause of Christ (Acts 18:24-28). Or take the cases of Bezalel and Oholiab. While Bezalel had the God-given ability "to create beautiful objects from gold, silver and bronze" and skill "in cutting and setting gemstones and in carving wood," Oholiab was to be his "assistant." These two guys became fulltime architects of the resplendent tent church. The reason: they had the natural God-given ability to do the job well (Ex 31:1-6 NLT). What are your talents? What comes naturally to you? Which is your favourite subject— maths or biology? Lean towards what others say you do well. What are you appreciated for? Ask these questions and the answers will tell you where your abilities lie.

3. It must be something you can earn a living by doing.

The idea of learning a profession is to earn some money to meet your daily needs. You may want to write novels, but if people don't publish your novels you could starve. The work that really satisfies you, should put food and drink on your table for you to enjoy! (Eccl 2:24). Paul's rule for all believers can't be missed in this context: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat" (2 Thess 3:10). What Paul actually wanted was that all followers of Christ must choose for themselves a job that will earn them enough money to take care of their basic necessities.

4. It must be something you are allowed to do.

What is the whole point in your dreaming of doing an M.B.A. and becoming a management

trainee in a multinational company if you can't gain entrance into a reputed management school (like XLRI or the IIM)? Paul in his youth wanted to be a teacher of the Torah. Guess what he did? He enrolled himself in the 'College' where Gamaliel, one of the finest exponents of the Torah, taught! I'm sure several youngsters of Paul's time, were thinking along the same lines. But perhaps they never got a seat in the Gamaliel school. God used Paul's knowledge of Old Testament in his evangelistic efforts with the Jews. There is a close link between the college you study and the career you will launch into. So make sure you choose a profession for which you have the intellectual sharpness to get into a college to be trained for!

5. It must be something that your folks around feel you should do.

If you are dying to be an airhostess, but none of your buddies and peers think you'll make it, think again! In nine times out of ten, others can assess your abilities and aptitudes better than you can! Respect their opinion. His peers best recognized David's leadership capabilities (1 Sam 22:1-2). Gideon's conquering skills made his people say to him, "Be our ruler!" (Jud 8:22 NLT).

6. It must be something that you feel God approves of.

There was a guy called Demetrius in Ephesus. His business was 'manufacturing silver shrines of the Greek goddess Artemis' (Acts 19:24). Paul's red-hot preaching against idolatry made a dent in to his flourishing business (v 26). He triggered a riot against Paul in Ephesus. His was clearly a profession God would not approve. Elsewhere in Acts we read about certain men who made money through a demon-possessed girl who predicted the future — another profession God would not wink at (16:16-19). I have heard of a wine shop called St. Paul's! The Scriptures and such business cannot jog together. As believers we better steer clear of shady professions wherein lying, cheating, bribing, immorality are part and parcel of the profession itself. The key is this: whatever profession we land up in, let us strive to be as Daniel was in Babylon; as Moses was in Egypt. Let us be folk who "chosse to share the oppression of God's people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin" (Heb 11:25 NLT).

Chum, let's say you dream of becoming a great cricket star. Fantastic! But just take care you don't end up taking bribes like South Africa's superstar captain Hansie Cronje! Why? Simple: we worship "the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and takes no bribes" (Dt 10:17 NLT). Let Max Lucado summarize this whole thing for us in one sentence: "Our assignment is found at the intersection of God's plan and our pleasures" (Psa 37:3-5).

Let me sew up this article with some practical tips. As a squirrel would go about collecting nuts, you go about collecting information on various career options available in this fast-paced 21st century. Devour magazines and newspaper supplements like *Competition Success Review*, the Times of India's *Ascent*, The Hindu's *Opportunities*, etc.

Then roll-up your sleeves to begin a full-throttled research of seven to ten occupations that sound like music to your soul. It is said that NASA Astronaut of Indian Origin, Kalpana Chawla, assembled articles after articles on her profession before she chose the same. Fix-up a chat with people who are already working in those fields. Take their advice and counsels. Attack the problem like the Hardy Boys or Nancy Drew would, if they were unraveling a mystery. Unscrew every bolt and nut; turn every stone. Once you have hit upon your occupation of interest stick to it like how a bubble gum would stick on to your shoe sole. Stay focused and swim deeper into the ocean.

Don't forget to claim the following precious promises from God's Word as you make up your mind on your profession's choice:

You will see your teacher with your own eyes, and you will hear a voice say, "This is the way; turn around and walk here" (Isa 30:20, 21 NLT).

The LORD your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, says: "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is good and leads you along the paths you should follow" (Isa 48:17 NLT).

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will direct your paths. Don't be impressed with your wisdom (Prov 3: 5-7 NLT). f

PAULS AND TIMOTHYS' MEET

(A report of BYM Coordinators' Get together, Chennai, 1-3 December 2004)

S. Saravanan, Asst.Coordinator, HRD

"In the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Prov 11:14). This Scriptural principle is one of the basic formulas on which Blessing Youth Mission functions. The founders envisioned and endeavoured to raise second line leaders to fulfil the vision that God gave our Mission. 44 Leaders, both Pauls and Timothys, who came together from 14 States of BYM's operation in India at the Bethel Hall, Maduravoyal, Chennai testify to the tremendous blessings they experienced in these three days.

All the Regional, State Coordinators, Department Coordinators, Associate and Assistant Coordinators are serving enthusiastically with an understanding that leadership is an influence and not exercising authority. This faithful band of men and women are interested in functioning, rather than aspiring for positions.

Mr. Prakash Yesuadian the seasoned Bible teacher led the Bible Studies relevantly focusing on the leaders' lifestyle and ministry. He challenged the group on the supreme priorities of life and enlarged the vision of all participants. He gave a clarion call to the ministers to beware the dilution of theology, deviation in life style and divisions among people. Mr. Y. Paul Dinakaran led the group for a time of introspection, when all cried to the Lord, "Search me O God and know my heart today." The major prayer concerns of the mission were taken up in an exclusive time of intercession led by Mr. Samuel Jothiraj and Mr. S. Samidoss. In the presence of God, all the participants evaluated their own performance, which was an eye opener. They sought the help and counsel of one another and committed their ways to God so that they become better and effective instruments in God's hands.

The business sessions were both informative and interesting. The concerned leaders initiated the discussions and reviewed the activities on specific areas like Revival, Youth, Training, Literature, Magazine, Church Planting, Social Concerns, Management, Finance and Staff Welfare. It was a joy to hear all of them expressing their views spontaneously and with real concern. The interactions were free, frank and fearless. The management-

skit focusing on the transfer of leadership to the juniors staged by Mr. S. Regunathan and team became a hit, powerfully communicating the need of the hour viz. patient training and equipping of secondliners with relative freedom.

On the concluding day a joint action plan for 2005 was worked out in a systematic and strategic way with specific goals and targets set for each Region, State and Department. Brother A. Lionel, the General Overseer of the mission brought the concluding message from the life of king Asa (2 Chronicles 14-16) and motivated all the leaders towards a consistent and godly life.

The Chairman and the Field Coordinator were present for all sessions and brought valuable insights and encouragement. The physical arrangements were taken care of by Brothers A. Jeyaraj, A. Suthanthirasingh, S. C. Vedasironmani and Jebaseelan. The love and hospitality extended to the participants by the host Mr. J. D. Sapphire was greatly relished and appreciated.

The programme coordinators Mr. A. Malarselvan and Mrs. Esther Samidoss designed each session richly.

The evening walk and stay in the dormitory strengthened the informal fellowship. The Coordinators' vision became clearer, the mission became focused and the team spirit got strengthened. The retired senior missionaries Mr. Kingsley Chelliah and Mr. Ponraj Isaac meaningfully conducted the Holy Communion service. All the participants shook hands and hugged each other and departed with zeal and enthusiasm to invest more productive team effort for a greater and better harvest. f

(Contn. page 4)

The Lord of the Harvest is the best example to emulate. His initiative in reaching people across boundaries and in diverse settings should continue to challenge us to greater involvement in His field. As we embark this year of the harvest, let us pick our sickles, renew our resolve and march in the footprints of the Lord of the Harvest to bring in the sheaves, thirty fold, sixty fold and a hundred fold! f

News from Fields

Compiled by E. L. Mathansingh, Field Coordinator

The Blessing Youth Mission has stationed over 300 missionaries in 13 States of India, namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, for revival ministries and cross-cultural missionary evangelism leading to church planting in churchless places. The news of various fields is compiled here for PRAISE and PRAYER.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Â In a Missionary sponsorship dedication service conducted in Zion Church, Vijayawada 500 believers were challenged to pray for the missionary work. One of our well wishers there has come forward to sponsor a missionary. May many more harvesters be sent into the fields!

Â The Lord poured out the spirit of Intercession in the three day fasting prayer in Bhimavaram. 150 people took part and prayed earnestly for the Revival in our motherland.

Â Pray for the salvation of Sunil, Jeyakumar, Bullemma, Sulochana, Pinkey, Sweety and Nageshwara Rao.

Â Vasanthakumari and her son Pinkey are tormented by witchcraft. Pray for divine intervention in their lives.

Â Pray for the deliverance of the following: Prakasamma (TB); Udayalaxmi (Night blindness); Vimalakumari (Fits); Rajasekhar (Eardrum damage).

ASSAM

Â Missionary Ruby Gnanapragasam and our local partner Mrs. Joy visited the Guwahati cancer Institute and shared the Gospel to the patients and prayed for their healing.

Â Our student contact John of Guwahati Medical College is showing keenness to the Gospel. A Gospel Meeting has been arranged exclusively for seekers in the city.

Â God enabled our missionaries to conduct a literature programme in North Lakhimpur. Pray for the Revival in this needy town.

Â Our contacts, Merlin and Simon met with road accidents and fractured their hands and legs respectively. Pray for their speedy recovery.

GUJARAT

Â A three day Revival meeting held in Centenary Methodist Church, Vadodara was a blessing to 250 people. Missionary E. L. Mathansingh challenged them to become a 'community saturated with God' in this strategic city.

Â Through the ministry of our Deborah Team in Boriyawari and Kanjari villages Mariyam accepted Jesus as her personal saviour.

Â 32 people attended the all night prayer in Nadiad. Pray that such prayer movements may arise throughout this state.

Â A coworker is needed to help the missionary team. Pray that the Lord of the Harvest may send a suitable harvester.

JHARKHAND

Â Campus ministry in Mundu lodge, Deepugada and Adivasi hostel is taking roots. Pray that many students may become disciples of Christ.

Â Our student contacts Monica, Abhilasha, Pradeep, Ajay, John, Salestin, Anthony and Sushil to be equipped effectively to take on responsibilities in the Lord's work.

Â A teacher Basantram, one of our gospel contacts in whose house we conducted gospel meetings met with a road accident and the Lord preserved his life.

Â Prakashram, Kiran, Manoj, Hensadh and Nameeta have accepted Christ. 310 people received God's Word in places like Korrah and Hearanganj. Pray that they may be established in the Truth.

Â Sashi Raven was saved from dacoits and a snake in her house graciously; She is a widow living with her children.

KARNATAKA

Â God enabled our missionaries to visit the following villages with the Good News: Sirle, Hulidevaramane, Kanakanalli and Kakulli.

Â A special meeting was organised for the seekers in Ramdurg; 20 people participated enthusiastically.

Â Four slum youth were anointed with the Holy Spirit in Dharwad. Pray that they may become bold witnesses to Christ.

Â 25 boys and girls were threatened and stopped from attending our prayer cell in Dharwad. Pray for God's intervention in this opposition.

Â Pray for a breakthrough in our ministry among children in Kawatgi, Siddapur, Kalaballi and Jamkhandi.

Â Pray for the believers in our Soundatti Church, to actively involve in soul winning.

Â Pray for Vathsala (Tumour in Uterus); Anil (mental problem); Erappa, Geetha, Renuka (childlessness) that God may touch and heal their sicknesses.

MADHYA PRADESH

Â Ramprasad reconciled with his wife after a period of nine months through the continuous prayers of our missionaries. Praise be to the God of reconciliation.

Â Tulsia, a believer was bitten by a mongoose, but God saved her life wonderfully amidst the unbelief of the villagers.

Â Praise God for Suresh, who was restored to the living faith from his backslidden condition.

Â Our believers in Baraj are facing problems in their families. Pray that God may enable our missionaries to counsel them appropriately.

Â Praise God for saving the lives of our missionaries George Allembly and Kadhirvel from a road accident. Pray for the speedy recovery of the former from his leg injury.

Â Our Jabalpur team shared the Good News of Christ to the students of St. Xavier's School through songs and skits. Pray for a proper follow up.

Â A Seekers' meeting was held in Deori where 12 attended with much interest and expectation.

Â Pray for the new contacts: Dharam Prasad, Rajkumar, Gauri Shanker, Ajay Rajkumar, Mukesh, Purshotam and Sarman Ben.

MAHARASHTRA

Â Rajul Kore of walve village was delivered from nightmare and hallucinations; Manik Manse gave up alcoholic addiction through prayers.

Â Balu Kamble with his wife Rani has joined our Church in Jath, taking a decision to follow Christ.

Â 16 well-wishers from Solapur visited Jath and encouraged the believers.

Â A weekly prayer cell for girls being conducted in Mahad is fruitful.

Â Missionaries Vinod and Veena have moved to Vasai to help Mr. & Mrs. Peter Louis to accelerate the work among Mangal Kolis.

Â Pray for the family of Mr. Ramachandran who collect offerings for the missionary work regularly. His wife and elder daughter Rizia are very sick; Pray for God's intervention.

Â Mr. Puneekar Chacha of Jath, a Muslim friend, who was instrumental in constructing the first worship hall and enabled us to purchase the land for the present Church, passed away recently. Pray for the salvation of his family members.

Â Our laymen's team in Dharavi, Mumbai visited Matunga and the CNI churches in Malad and Goregaon to introduce Blessing Literature and Cassettes. Pray for the active involvement of more lay people, that the revival flames may spread to many more cities.

Â The Lord enabled us to distribute Rs. 35,000/- worth of Blessing Literature in Pune. Pray that those who bought the books may read them and derive spiritual blessings.

ORISSA

Â God delivered Saabi Saber from demon possession and mental imbalance, through the prayers of our missionaries.

Â Our native worker Eraiah Saber fell down from a tree and became a paralytic. Pray for divine healing.

Â Missionary Premalatha Chezhan spoke in the one-day retreats conducted in Ambaghatta, Kutrichaper and Kodikipara villages and motivated

the 150 women who participated for fruitful Christian family life.

Â Missionary Prakash Nag's father-in-law was brutally killed by the villagers. He was an ardent supporter of our ministry in Ramagiri for the past several years.

Â 13 people obeyed God's commandment through water baptism. Pray that they may reflect the life of Jesus in their day-to-day lives.

Â God protected our missionary Suresh Santa from a cobra, on his way back from the ministry.

Â Night schools were started for the welfare of the people in Debuguda and Chothamb villages.

Â Udayo of Thumbaguda village was miraculously set free from demon possession. He tried many other ways, but was delivered through prayer.

RAJASTHAN

Â God enabled our missionaries to visit the following new villages with the Good News: Kharkhada, Toda, Madhogarh, Ghavadi and Khira ki dahni. New worship service has been started in Rawathala ki Dahni.

Â Praise God for Manoj, a believer who brought a new contact Kedar to Christ.

Â Doors are opened to our missionaries in the CNI Church, Ajmer for ministry among children and families.

Â Tarachand, Pratabji, Rukma and Ramesh, our believers in Srimadhapur covet your prayers, to come out of their debts.

Â A team of wellwishers from Thanjavur (Tamilnadu) visited our mission fields and encouraged the missionaries and believers in Chirani, Gehali and Manotha villages.

Â Mahaveer and his wife Manju joined our Neemkathana team as native workers to speed up the Church planting ministry.

Â Blessing books and Cassettes worth Rs. 4660/- were distributed in Jodhpur, Udaipur and Zavar mines. Pray that the power of the printed page may kindle the Revival flames in the churches.

TAMILNADU

Â The Gospel was shared to Andi, Umaiyan, Chinthamani, Annamalai, Sangeetha, Shivashanker,

Jeyamani and Ramasamy. Pray that the power of the Gospel may deliver them from all bondages.

Â Praise God for the 58 youth who participated in a Bible study conducted in Sitteri Hills. They were motivated towards discipleship and soulwinning.

Â Saroj and Nirmala renounced idol worship and accepted Jesus Christ as the Master of their lives. Praise the Lord!

Â In a night Gospel meeting held in S. Thathampatti village, 100 people heard the Good News and 30 responded to follow the Lord.

Â Our missionaries are facing severe opposition in Vallimadurai; Pray that those who oppose may have a personal encounter with the Lord.

Â 32 students committed their precious lives in the hands of Christ Jesus in a Sozo conducted in Keeraipattai. Pray that they may proclaim Jesus through their transformed lives.

Â Pray for the Divine Deliverance of Kuppu (Uterus Cancer); Govindan (Paralytic); Parvathi, Elizabeth and Elumalai (Mental illness); Sathia Moorthy (Heart ailment); Ponni and Nagaraj (Witchcraft); Raman, Kanthan, Palani and Murugan (Alcoholics).

Â Mrs. Jothi Ponraj Isaac (65 yrs.) wife of Mr. K. Ponraj Isaac, the first missionary of BYM received her Home Call on 16 Dec 2004. She is survived by her husband, son, daughter and their families. Please pray for the bereaved family. Await more details in the next issue. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord" (Rev 14:13).

WEST BENGAL

Â Blessing Retreat was conducted in Siliguri. 100 people attended. Mr. & Mrs. Ilango Antonyraj from Chennai challenged the christian friends for holy living.

Â God delivered Bicky Roy and Biraj Pradhan from drug addiction. Pray for their spiritual growth.

Â The Gospel was shared to Ravindra Paswan, Sumir Dutt, Vijayalaxshmi and Shankar who are very eager to know more about Christ.

Â Our West Bengal State representative Col. K. K. Ghissing's elder sister had her home call. Pray for God's comfort to surround the bereaved family. f

Pray more, Reap more!

“Blow the trumpet...declare a holy fast...gather the people...bring together the elders...Let the priests who minister before the Lord weep...Let them say, ‘Spare Your people, O Lord!’ ” (Joel 2:15-17)

The Tamilnadu Branch of the Blessing Youth Mission has organised
Zonal Fasting Prayers at the following centres on the

22 & 23 January 2005
(Saturday & Sunday)

Zone	Venue	Coordinator	Organiser
South	CSI Retreat Centre, Muttam, K. K. District (15 km from Nagercoil)	Mr. D. Samraj 04651-260818	Mr. Santiago Devadoss 04652-220745
East	Hotel A.R.K. 21, TSR Big Street Kumbakonam (Uchi Pillayar Koil bus stop)	Mr. E. L. Ephraim 04367-254264	Mr. A. Sundarsingh 0435-2424393
Central	YMCA Hall Puthur, Trichy (Opp: Govt. Hospital)	Mr. D. M. Hastings 0431-2760400	Mr. P.G.A. Victor 0431-2555005
North	Bethel Hall Mettukuppam Road Maduravoyal, Chennai (Opp: Tel. Exchange, Ration Shop bus stop)	Mr.S.C.Vedasonmani 044-23744488	Mr. A. Jebaseelan 044-24511500
West	Nagarathaar Kalyana- Mandapam, Karur (Near bus stand)	Mr. R. Balasundaram 0424-2272182	Mr. Daniel Dhandapani 98433-60222

**Come, let's plead with the Lord of the Harvest to send a Revival in the Church
and to send His workers into His Field for the Harvest!**

This Magazine presents the message and the ministry of Blessing Youth Mission, an inter-denominational Christian organisation, dedicated to Church Revival and Missionary Evangelism, functioning since 1971.

Founder: R. Stanley, B.E., M.Tech.



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Address for Correspondence & Contributions :

BLESSING, CHURCH COLONY, VELLORE 632 006, INDIA (TEL: 0416-2242943, 2248943) <bym@sancharnet.in>