

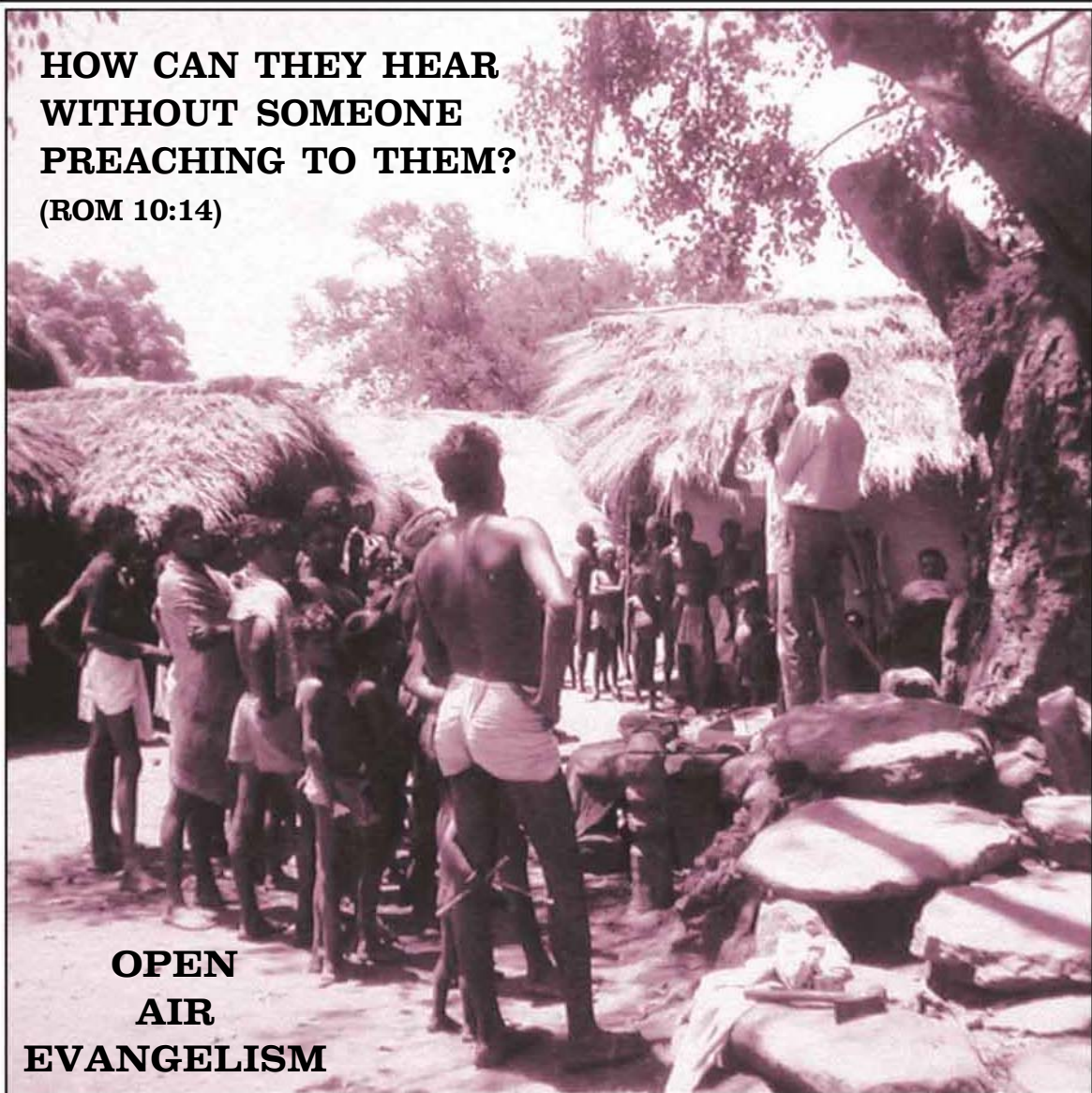
YEAR OF HARVEST

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Blessing

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**HOW CAN THEY HEAR
WITHOUT SOMEONE
PREACHING TO THEM?
(ROM 10:14)**



**OPEN
AIR
EVANGELISM**

OPEN AIR EVANGELISM

Dr. James A. Stewart

GOD was the first open-air preacher! His message was addressed to one man. The place was the Garden of Eden and the message was simple, direct and definite: "Adam, where are you?" (Gen 3:9).

The PROPHETS and the APOSTLES proclaimed their messages under the blue canopy of the heavens. JOHN THE BAPTIST was a very successful open-air preacher.

CHRIST was the greatest open-air preacher. He conducted most of His ministry outdoors – OUT WHERE THE SINNERS WERE – along the sea shore, fields, grave-yard, desert places, mountain side, etc.

Open-air preaching is an ancient and honourable ministry. It is a pity that this glorious ministry is so sadly neglected by Christians today. Many of us are ashamed of open-air preaching. Why should we be? Study the following Scripture verses and you will be encouraged to aggressively enter this noble ministry.

"Cast your bread on the waters; for you will find it after many days... He who observes the wind (and waits for all conditions to be favourable) shall not sow and he who regards the clouds shall not reap... In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening withhold not your hand: for you know not which shall prosper, either this or that" (Eccl 11:1,4,6).

"For just as the rain and snow descend from heaven and do not return thither except they have drenched the earth, and made it bring forth and bud and have furnished the seed to the sower and food to the eater; so is My Word that proceeds from My mouth. It does not return to Me except it has done what I please and has succeeded in the mission on which I send it" (Isa 55:10,11Wh.).

"I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God, Behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child.

But the Lord said unto me, Say not I am a child: for you will GO to all that I shall send you, and whatsoever I command you, you shalt SPEAK. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with you to deliver you" (Jer 1:5-8).

Prepare yourself!

You cannot preach outdoors unless you are living a holy life before your fellowmen. What you are is more important than what you say. A holy Gospel must be backed up with a holy life. Your life must correspond with your message. Study carefully the following Scriptures –

Romans	6:11-22
	12:1,2
1 Corinthians	6:19,20
	10:31
Philippians	3:20
2 Timothy	2:4

The saintly Murray McCheyne said, 'A holy minister is an awful weapon in God's hands.'

Next, be filled with His POWER. We often feel very inadequate to invade Satan's kingdom in the open-air. The only answer to that need is the POWER OF GOD. Be filled with the Holy Spirit and never go forth to an open-air preaching without having received a fresh anointing of the Spirit. Past anointings may not suffice for the present emergency!

HOW TO CONDUCT AN OPEN AIR PREACHING

It can be stated here that the open-air evangelism is the most difficult of all. Because, here you face the most critical of all audiences. You have to boldly address people who are merely passing by or who are merely sitting or walking in the open-air for their own relaxation. In a church or auditorium, a congregation comes to hear a preacher. But here you go looking for a congregation. A factory gate, shopping centre, street corner, bus stand, village green and any

such imaginable spot can become your blessed 'pulpit!' The audience can be 10 or 10,000. NEVER BE DISCOURAGED AT THE SIZE OF THE AUDIENCE. Here are a few guidelines on HOW TO DO IT.

1. Organising the Team.

There needs be no strict rule about the size of the team. Of course, when you plan to go to crowded streets and heavy-traffic areas, you must control the size of the team to avoid public inconvenience. There should definitely be a LEADER of the team. The leader must be in control of the programme from start to finish. Every member of the team should obey him. It must be made sure that all the members are born again. A bald-headed man cannot be a good representative to advertise and promote the sales of hair oil!

2. Music and Singing.

Music and good singing attract crowds. When God's Spirit descends on the musicians and singers, mysterious results will be achieved and miracles will take place. Sound Gospel songs should be practised in advance. It's better to memorize the stanzas because it is more impressive to sing looking at the audience than looking down at the song book. The singing should be clear and music should never smother the singing. New songs and tunes can be employed but anything too jazzy should be avoided.

3. Testimony and Message.

The personal testimony to the power of the Gospel in your life is the most convincing message in the open air. When giving your testimony, do not brag about yourself. Exalt your Redeemer. Don't revel in the things you did before your conversion. You may relate them but do not give the impression you are bragging about them. Following the personal testimony, there can be a brief singing and then the main message. A message should have –

1. An appeal to the sinner;
2. An entreaty by the Saviour; and
3. A warning to the rejecter.

Select suitable Bible verses for each of the above and quote them clearly. For example – Appeal (Ezek 33:11); Entreaty (Isa 1:18, Mt 11:28); warning (Prov 29:1; Mk 16:16). The message should close with a powerful invitation. The crucified Saviour should be exalted that the sinners may believe on His Name and receive Him. A solo to invite sinners to Christ may be found very effective here. A Gospel portion should be offered to the interested inquirers. The team members should be quick to counsel the interested ones who come forward for the booklet. Tracts should never be distributed while the open-air preaching is going on. This will only divert their attention from the speaker. Every member should try to contact at least one person at the close. Be skillful in drawing the souls into the gospel net! Close the ministry with a prayer, and a 'THANK-YOU' to the listeners will be very impressive.

HELPS FOR THE OPEN-AIR SPEAKERS

Be simple.

Do not strain at the Scriptures. The Word of God is full of direct and plain passages. Isaiah 53:6, John 3:16, Acts 16:31 are examples. Use simple language for explaining the truth.

Use illustrations.

Illustrations help to illuminate the Scriptural truth. Draw illustrations from current events as well as nature and history. Never tell a story which is too difficult to believe. Good illustrations will arrest the people.

Be Scriptural.

It is good to use illustrations, but don't be dwelling too much on them. The Word is the Sword of the Spirit which God uses to pierce the hearts. Memorize Gospel arrows from all parts of the Bible so that you can quote them readily even without needing to read them from your Bible. The Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension and Second Coming of Christ should be clearly proclaimed.

Use proverbial sayings.

Proverbs and pungent sayings are very effective in open-air evangelism. Here are a few illustrations:

'Any dead fish can go with the current, but it takes a live fish to go against the current!'

'You need not die to go to Heaven; you can have Heaven on the way to Heaven by taking Christ into your heart!'

'Hell lies at the end of a Christ-rejecter's life!'

'If you accept Christ as your Saviour, man may laugh at you; but if you reject Christ as your Saviour, God will laugh at you!'

Be interesting.

In one meeting, the speaker talked on and on. One by one his listeners left until there was only one man remaining in the audience. 'My friend,' said the speaker, 'I am happy to see that you appreciate my talk and remain to listen.' The man answered, 'I have to because I am the next speaker!' Do not drive your audience away.

Be bold.

Speak with authority. You are an ambassador for Christ and a herald of the King's message. "Thus says the Lord..." is your message. Dr. Billy Graham had his most successful revival in a Crusade where he used his favourite clause, 'The Bible says,' innumerable number of times. Always preach with your Bible in your hand as that is your authority and God shall back you!

Be gentlemanly.

You are an ambassador of High Heaven, speaking on behalf of your Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. You represent Him! Hence your behaviour and mannerism count a lot in the public. Beware of vulgar sayings. Dress neatly and tidily. Be decent and presentable. Rudeness and discourtesy should be completely absent. Avoid peculiar behaviour and eccentric mannerism. During the preaching, the team members should not talk between themselves. If a listener wants to talk with you, ask him if he can wait until the end of the preaching. If he cannot wait, then follow him away from the spot.

Be humble.

Do not seek to show your ability to preach, but Christ's ability to save. John 3:30 is the gospel classic on humility for open-air preachers: "HE must increase, but I must decrease." The thought of Calvary will always keep you tender and humble.

Don't get angry.

During the open-air preaching, there may be many interruptions. It may be from a drunkard, an atheist, or someone who hates the very thought of Christianity. DO NOT EVER LOSE YOUR TEMPER OR GET ANGRY. This is a snare of the devil to sidetrack you and spoil the testimony for Christian virtues. Beware! When a man interrupts, ask one of the team members to skillfully and quietly take him aside and talk peacefully. "Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside,... Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man" (Col 4:5-6). Don't attack other religions. You are to preach "Christ and Him crucified" only.

Avoid any spiritual show-off.

When a member of the team is preaching, the other members should either be attentively looking at the speaker (all standing in a semi circle around the speaker), or at the audience. Don't hang down your heads, closing your eyes, moving your lips for praying, etc., while the preaching is on. This will look very strange to non-Christians. They may think you are doing some 'mantra' (magic) while the speaker is preaching! Pray sufficiently before you set out for open-air preaching and you should be in the spirit of prayer while preaching is on, but with open eyes.

Encourage immediate decisions.

Press for immediate decisions for Christ. Never tell the crowd to 'go home and think about it.' They may never have another chance. Someone in the crowd could be killed in an automobile accident before he reaches home! Believe in the power of your message. BELIEVE that God is honouring His Word and LOOK FOR RESULTS. Remember the promise: "**He who goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall DOUBTLESS come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him**" (Psa 126:6). f

The Most High's Ways in the High Waves!

Duke Jeyaraj

High sea waves, called 'Tsunami' lashed at scores of coastal areas of South Eastern Asia and parts of the African continent on 26 December 2004. It was a "killer tsunami" to be precise. Thousands perished within blink of an eye. Countless became homeless. Asia went panicky, as a result. "Why on earth did this happen?" was the oft-repeated query. An examination of passages in the Bible where storms and squalls are talked about will help us see this tidal tragedy in God's perspective and take home some life lessons. Yes! We can discover the Most High's ways in the High Waves! Here are some of the lessons that I could learn.

1. REVERE

It was God who made the seas and also gave the command: "This far you may come and no further; here is where your proud waves halt!" (Job 38:11). It is God who sets a "boundary the waters cannot cross" (Psa 104:9). So if we find the sea sweeping into the land it is because God gave it permission to do so. Yes, it is true that God allowed "the proud waves" of the sea to march menacingly into the plains. What does that tell us about God? It tells us that He is powerful and that He is sovereign. He can command a clout over the sea. Hear Ethan's glowing tribute to the Almighty, "You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up you still them!" (Psa 89:8). He can still the waves also: "He who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of the waves" (Psa 65:7). Who can forget that Jesus, the Son of God, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!"? The wild wind died down and the stormy sea was completely calm in an act of instant obedience. Following this, Jesus' disciples asked each other in reverence and awe, "Who is this? Even the

wind and the waves obey him!" (Mk 4:35-41). The sea obeys His commands. It became violent when His prophet Jonah took a voyage in direct disobedience to His will. "Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up!"— that is what we read up in Jonah 1:4. As the world gets more and more modern and sophisticated we tend to think that we can do away with God. We have sadly lost our reverence for Him. We are inclined to forget that there is an all-powerful God who is in absolute control of this world. The giant waves that shook the world on 26 December 2004 is a sobering reminder that we ought to revere Him always since He is the Lord of the universe.

2. REPENT

The Titanic Tsunami waves that hit us call us to repent. We hear bitter complaints that "innocent" lives were lost. According to the Bible no one (of course with the exception of children) is innocent in this entire planet. All of us have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). All of us deserve to die and go to eternal hell. In that case how many of the victims of the horrible Tsunami were lost eternally? We do not know. But we who have escaped these waves are no more righteous than those who perished in it! Remember it is to those who escaped the Siloam Tower Crash that Jesus preached, "Do you think they (those who died in the Tower Crash) were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish!" (Lk 13:4). The lesson for us from the breakers' devastation is plain: breakdown in repentance before the Almighty before it is too late!

One reason we must repent without any delay is that the return of Christ is near—a fact which is evidenced by the multiplication of earthquakes in recent times (Mt 24:7). Even on that black Sunday there were a series of earthquakes that caused terrible turbulence in the seas. Jesus preached, “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man!” (Mt 24:37). Yes, He definitely meant that the morals of the people living on the earth would slide for the worse as the morals of the people who lived in Noah’s time did. One of the reasons for a Great Flood in Noah’s days was that “all the springs of the great deep burst forth.” Did not something similar happen on December 26? Jesus is coming real soon and we must repent and turn to Him.

3. REQUEST

Can you guess what happened during some of their voyages when Israel’s merchants went out into the sea seeking to do trade? Something similar to the distressing events of that fateful day happened. Hear it from the mouth of the Psalmist: “God spoke and stirred up a tempest, that lifted high the waves! They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits’ end” (Psa 107:25-27). How did the Jewish merchants respond to such a life-threatening squall? Read the very next set of verses: “Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress! He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and He guided them to their desired haven” (vv 28-30). We all must call on the Lord like them following our life’s traumatic tempests as the first resort. When we are faced with storms in our lives we run helter skelter trying to solve the problem ourselves or seeking the help of man. We would rather do anything but get

on our knees and request God’s intervention in our problems first. The lesson these recent big billows want to drive home is direct: *Call on God who alone can calm the squall—not just the ones that occur in the sea but also in our lives and do it as a first resort!* If we even doubt the power of God to provide an answer for our request in accordance with His Sovereign will we are like unsteady waves (Js 1:6)!

4. REACH

When the ship Paul sailed on was tossed around by a typhoon, Paul was surprisingly calm (Acts 27:14,15). The reason? He maintained a constant communication with His Maker who gave him the calm assurance that “not one would lose a single hair from his head” (Acts 27:23,24,34). Not only that. He grabbed the opportunity to tell many who were scared by the furious squall about the “God he served” (Acts 27:24). I guess Paul would have referred to the miracle in which Jesus calmed the storm in the Gospels to add fuel to the faith in the hearts of his frantic co-passengers. He even converted eating time into witnessing time when he was in the ship that tossed by the wild blizzard (Acts 27:35). The sad events can serve as an excellent backdrop for us to share the Gospel with those who do not know Christ. The only thing sin can do to our lives is to make us restless. The Bible compares the wicked to a ‘tossing sea, which cannot rest whose waves cast up mire and mud’ (Isa 57:20). But there is hope for us. Jesus came to this world to die for our sins. He now says, ‘Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest’ (Mt 11:28). Like apostle Paul, let us avail this opportunity to reach out the lost with the life-giving Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, any discussion about the high waves of December 26 can be deliberately guided into a discussion about the Most High God’s plan of Salvation! f

SALT SPEAKS

John Thomas

I am the salt that Jesus spoke in His Sermon on the Mount. He wanted all God's people to be like me. Why? Hear me as I speak through this message.

1. Salvation

I am drawn out from the sea. As long as I am in the sea, I am useless. Nobody takes the sea water to cook anything. I need to be channelled to salt beds where they crystallize me directly under the sun and finally I am made salt. So also, my dear friends, as long as you are one with the world, you are useless for God. Jesus said, "I have chosen you out of the world" (Jn 15:19). When you were lost in the world, God separated you, made the Sun of Righteousness to shine on you and made you the salt (2 Cor 4:6). That is why you are called the "Church" or in Greek, "Ecclesia" meaning "the called out."

These days separation is a relative term. The line of demarcation between the world and the church is shifted as per convenience and likes of individuals instead of God's standards in God's Word. Dear child of God, are you clear about the line of demarcation? Are you true to God who made you salt?

2. Sanctification

People like to use me only if I look white and dirt free. For this, I need to go through a process of cleansing in the factory. I am boiled and the scum is removed. Again when I am dried, I look cleaner and whiter and I glitter. The more I am exposed to the sun, the more I glitter. Similarly you will be liked by people when you live holy. Whiteness is symbol of holiness (Rev 7:14; 1 Jn 1:7). That is the reason Jesus prayed to His Father to sanctify you (Jn 17:8,19). You need to go through a process of sanctification to bless others. The more you expose yourself to the Sun of Righteousness the more you will shine (Psa 34:5a). Keep looking to Jesus in worship and in

His Word. You will not be used if you look dull and unclean. God's way of sanctifying you is a hard process.

Jesus who compared you to salt also compared you to a branch of vine, and He claimed Himself to be the true Vine (Jn 15:1-5). First of all, He wants you to abide in Him. By doing that you bring forth fruits. But He wants more fruits from you. So He still cleanses you by cutting off the unwanted things from your life (v 3). Though it is sometimes painful, it is inevitable for bearing fruit faithfully and effectively. But only when you go through sanctification God will use you more and more.

3. Service

I am born to serve. There is no other purpose for me in this world. I savour anything that comes in contact with me. I make an influence. I bring about change.

Do you know the purpose of your living? It is to serve God who made you salt. You are a powerful commodity for Him. Like me you can bring about change in whatever you come in contact with. You can change people, families, circumstances etc., When you speak to the people they will change. As salt, even right now when I speak to you through this message, you will experience some change in you. I am also a taste maker. You can influence people and make them sweet. You can bless all those whom you come across.

4. Sacrifice

Jesus mentioned both symbols of salt and light at the same time to compare them to you. There is a reason behind it. Both salt and light are a blessing to people. If it is so, both have one thing in common. That is sacrifice. When a candle gives out light, it burns out to nothing. When I am mixed in the food stuff, I also reduce

to nothing. During Old Testament times, salt was added to the burnt offering. Without salt there was no burnt offering (Ezek 43:24; Mk 9:49). It is impossible to serve God without sacrifice. In other words, the more you are prepared for sacrifice, the more God uses you.

This does not mean that you should be a pauper or a hermit. But this simply means that God is the owner of all things and you are only the user. I would like to illustrate this with a story. There was a rich businessman who announced sale of a pearl of great price. A crowd gathered around him. No body dared to throw a bid. At last one man dared to come forward. The bargain for sale cum purchase began. The businessman asked how much the buyer could pay. The buyer told him the cash amount he had taken with him to buy the pearl. The seller took note on a sheet of paper the details of all the possessions of the buyer one by one such as, his money at home, bank balance, his car, bungalow, movable and immovable properties, his wife children and finally he himself. He demanded the whole lot as the price for the pearl. The buyer because of his determination to buy the precious pearl agreed for the terms. The transaction was over.

Then the seller slowly moved towards the buyer with the list in his hand. He said, "Look, this paper will be with me. All the items listed out will be with you. From now on I am the owner of these and you are only the user."

Dear reader, God does not want to deprive you of any good gift that pertain to this life. He wants you to prosper in all things as your soul prospers. But He wants that we should not be possessive of any blessings of God. Whenever He demands, we should be prepared to sacrifice it for Him.

Jesus spoke about sacrifice in Mt 16: 24-26. Preceding this passage He spoke about the power of binding and loosing (vs 19). This means if you want power (to bind and loose) you must be prepared to lose.

5. Security

As salt, I am used to secure things from being spoiled or rotten. When you cut lemon into pieces and leave them, they will rot. But if you apply me on those pieces, they come out as delicious pickle. Cut an animal and leave the skin. It will stink. But apply me. The skin can shine and be used for your bags and belts! The same way you are to preserve this rotting world from decay. As long as the Church is in this world, the enemy is kept at bay (2 Thess 2:7,12). Once you and I are taken away from this world, the world will perish because of unrighteousness and deception (v10). This is a clarion call for you to live righteously so that you may not lose your savour. Your righteousness will preserve others from unrighteousness.

6. Savour

There is always the danger of losing my savour. Keep me in a saucer. I slowly absorb moisture from the air and become watery. The very water from which I was weaned out is always a threat to me when I am exposed. That is why when Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth," immediately He also added, "If the salt loses its savour, how can it be seasoned?" Is it not the same with you? The very world from which you have been separated is always a threat to you to loose your savour of righteousness.

God's righteousness is your savour. You have a great responsibility to safeguard it. Think of the people of Israel. Though they were brought out from Egypt, the sin of Egypt kept biting their heels, trying to drag their feet back! Are you in anyway worried that some sin or temperaments of the old self still nagging you and dragging you back? Don't worry. Though you are in the world, the world has no power over you (1 Jn 4:4). As long as Jesus is in you, you cannot lose savour.

In Jesus times, they also used to extract me out of the rocks taken from the banks of the Dead Sea. The cut rocky salts were boiled with water in big caldrons. During the process my savour left the rocks and got dissolved in water

and finally I came out as pure salt on crystallisation. They still called the rocks as salt, but without my savour. These were crushed and thrown on the murky paths for the people to walk over without soiling their feet. That was what Jesus referred to as salt without savour. But God has **not** made you salt to be trodden under foot but to fulfill His purpose.

7. *Sociable*

Well, I am known as common salt. I am commonly available to the entire world to all people. I don't differentiate between rich or poor; male or female; high caste or low caste; wise or fool. I am used by all. To the rich I am available in beautiful ceramic salt shakers but to the poor I remain in an ordinary earthen pot. I am adaptable as told by our Apostle Paul in 1 Cor 9:19-22. I am available for all nations, every tribe and every tongue. I am a global commodity. Are you an easily approachable person? Are you ready to serve any one, any time, in any place and in any capacity?

The people exchange me as a symbol of peace. Even nations make Salt Treaty to make peace with each other. Jesus also said, "Blessed are the peace makers" (Mt 5:9); "Have salt in yourself, and be at peace with each other" (Mk 9:50b).

Let me close my story with an interesting incident that happened in a BYM mission station in Sitteri Hills. Once, a tribal man came all the way to a weekly market walking 10 km, just to find out my price. He walked back home and brought the money walking up & down again to buy me and to take me home. Even for that poor tribal man I was so inevitable. He needed me.

If you are the salt of the earth, how much more people like that tribal man needs you! They need to be reconciled with God and have peace within. According to Dr. S. D. Ponraj's book, Tribal Challenge, there are 90 million tribal people in India. Only 20% of them have been reached with the gospel. What is your response if you are the SALT? f

Another Aquila!

The Christian community of Trichy in Tamilnadu and the Blessing Youth Mission in particular has lost another Aquila in the home call of Mr. J. M. Devapaul at 88 on the New Year day of 2005. "Uncle," as he was affectionately called by one and all, was a man of vision, vigour and vibrancy. He would put the youngsters to shame as even in his seventies and early eighties he went from house to house briskly to mobilize funds for the missionary work, which was so dear to his heart. The constant drive in his mind was, "I have wasted my youthful years for self; but now before I end my race I want to do maximum for God who filled me with His Spirit in 1976."

Uncle was a senior secretary in the Kannan Devan Tea Company in Cochin. His secretarial excellence was remarkable. He would take anyone to task if he was shabby in accounting, especially in Christian ministry. No wonder his eldest son Mr. Hastings was a smart officer in the State Bank of India. Uncle's unmarried second son tragically drowned at 23 in 1973. But for the joy of the Lord, Uncle and Aunt Mercy would not have been able to handle this loss.

Uncle's love for the missionaries and his daughter-in-law Mrs. Prema Hastings' hospitality kept the doors of the Mercy Cottage in Puthur, Trichy, always open to the BM Missionary kids who always enjoy the homely meals at weekends. The BM pays homage to this great man who was a blessing to everyone who met with him!

— J. Gabriel, Trichy



At the Crossroad

He stood at the crossroads all alone,
With the sunrise in his face;
He had no thought for the world unknown,
He was set for a manly race.
But the road stretched east and the road stretched west,
And the boy did not know which road was the best.
So he took a wrong road, and his life went down,
And he lost the race and the victor's crown;
He was caught at last in a sinful snare,
Because no one stood at the crossroads there,
To show him the better road.

Another day at the selfsame place,
A boy with high hopes stood;
He, too, was set for a manly race,
He was seeking the things that were good.
But one was there who the roads did know,
And that one showed him which way to go;
So he turned away from the road that went down,
And he won the race and the victor's crown.
He walks today on the Highway fair,
Because one stood at the crossroads there,
To show him the better road.

(Selected)

Soulwinners Column

Fishing in the Train!

D. Rebecca, Chennai

I am a believer and everyday I travel by train to attend my office in Chennai. It was a rainy day when I met a co-passenger in the train. The Lord prompted me to share the Gospel with her which I did, by His grace. Because of heavy showers the train got stopped in a station and could not move forward. We waited for about two hours in the station but of no use. I availed that opportunity to befriend that girl and shared with her more about the love of Christ. We had to discontinue our travel because of rains and we returned home. On the way I got her address. The next week-end I visited her home and invited her to join me for the church. She began to attend church, hear God's Word and started reading the Bible.

One fine day she publicly proclaimed her Faith by water baptism and the Lord graciously anointed her with the Holy Spirit. I was surprised to see that she became an active soulwinner. Very soon she led three of her collegemates to Christ. I could not believe my ears when I heard that she led her mother also to Christ and she was baptised too. She continues to witness for Jesus and takes steps to win as many souls as possible. I understood in practical terms the meaning of Matthew 13:23, "...the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man (woman) who... produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown." To God be all glory. f

But for her...

(A tribute to Missionary Jothi Ponraj by her bereaved husband Mr. K. Ponraj Isaac)



The home call of my beloved wife on the 16th December 2004, at 65, following a massive heart attack, came as a rude shock to me, and all the family members. The questions which surged in our minds were quietened by an act of submission to the Sovereign will of God.

Jothi's parents were both teachers and she was the eldest of the five girls in the family. The prolonged illness of her mother pushed her to play the role of a mother to her four sisters. This training at home was handy for her during our missionary career to take care of our daughter Jemima and son Soulwin so well in spite of frequent change of fields and several inconveniences.

I entered fulltime Christian service in 1974 and Jothi joined me a year later after working as a School Teacher. We hardly had any bank balance when we became the first missionaries of the Blessing Youth Mission. Her contentment with whatever we had, willingness to live without, and simplicity of lifestyle were exemplary for junior missionary families. Her spirit of hospitality was obvious to every visitor. No one would ever think that we had just had our daily bread. Brother Stanley who used to visit our home in Chennai so often during his

student days in the late sixties made reference, in his message at the thanksgiving service, to my wife's "Spirit of unusual hospitality and natural humility."

Jothi accepted God's call in my life as hers. She was a true "Sarah" to me! The cross-cultural missionary work in the States of Orissa and Assam cost her dearly especially with respect to her health. But nothing could snatch from her heart and face the joy of the Lord. The fellow-missionaries always enjoyed her company because of her sense of humour, innocent at that! I miss her terribly.

Jothi was a great assistance to me in my literature work. In spite of her failing health, she would sit for late hours with me for proof-reading. She did it until the day prior to her death. She was my first audience whenever I composed a new song. Her patience and polite corrections were such an encouragement. It's definitely not an empty saying that behind every successful man is a woman! "Thank You Lord for my spouse, your greatest gift next only to Your Son!"

Both my children are married and I am blessed with three grandchildren. Pray much for me as I have to play a double role in the family responsibilities, besides continuing with the work the Lord has entrusted to me. I thank every one of my relatives and friends for standing with us in this hour of grief. God is good!

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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 Praise God for His enablement to our missionaries to visit the following new villages to share the Gospel: Hasenpuram, Pacheru, Gopalapatnam, Attada, Bommika, Chinnapuram, Kothuru, Ravivalasa, Ginjeru and Bolucliu-gottaoalem.

Â God answered the prayers of our Korukonda believers and sent enough rain needed for the crops through which they were all greatly excited. Praise the Lord, the God of Elijah!

Â A Discipleship Training Camp was conducted in Vizianagaram. The participants were challenged through the revolutionary teachings of our Lord.

Â Praise God for the fruitful 'Blessing Literature Drive Programme' in Visakhapatnam in which books and cassettes worth Rs. 1.8 lakhs were sold. Pray that those who purchased these materials may become channels of blessing to many in this strategic coastal city.

Â Pray for the salvation of Venu, Kondandam, Appalasatyam, Simbachalam, Achayamma, Ramu, Lakshimi, Appa Rao, Venki, Gourinaidu, Satyanarayana, Raja, Muktheswari, and Rambabu.

Â The Lord enabled us to publish the book *Little foxes* in Telugu. Also two Blessing books were reprinted, recently.

ASSAM

Â Praise God for the revival meetings in Gossener Evangelical Lutheran church in Ghinai in which missionaries R. Elisha and J. Gnanapragasam enlightened the congregation, to lead a God-pleasing life. Deena Elisha and Ruby Gnanapragasam addressed the special sessions for women. Pray that the seeds may grow.

Â Pray for God's wisdom and power for our missionaries as they make attempts for evangelism through friendship and distribution of gospel booklets.

Â Pray for the salvation of our new contacts Moah Boro, Jogesh Deka and Moon Das.

Â Missionary Ruby Gnanapragasam visited our fields in Madhya Pradesh and encouraged the lady missionaries through her testimony.

Â A youth prayer group has been started in Sibsagar Baptist Church. The members regularly meet and pour out their hearts in intercession for the needs and challenges of our mother land.

Â Pray for a suitable life partner for missionary Leence Joel. Dedicated youngsters to serve in North eastern states are wanted.

GUJARAT

Â God blessed our youth camp, Halo 2004 in Ahmedabad. 160 young people were challenged for holy living by the messages given by our missionaries Duke Jeyaraj, Malarselvan and Rose Allen. Missionary Michel Singh led the worship sessions and Mr. & Mrs. Robinsam systematically coordinated. 11 Prayer cells were formed. Pray for a proper follow up.

Â 55 friends participated in the Partners' Meet held in Nadiad. Mr. A Jeyaraj, our AC member (Liaison) imparted motivation.

Â 15 girls regularly attend the prayer cell in Nadiad. Pray for their spiritual growth.

Â Mrs. Urmila Ben, one of our well wishers in Nadiad lost her 32 year old only son. Pray

for God's comfort to sustain this bereaved family.

Â Pray that a recently published book in Gujarati *12 Happy Months* may bring spiritual blessings to many in a practical way.

JHARKHAND

Â Manju Sinha was delivered from demon possession through prayers. Praise the Lord!

Â Our Prayer Cell contacts Abhishek, Prakash Ram, Hansadaly, Nomita, Kiran and Manoj have committed their precious lives to Christ. Pray for their spiritual growth.

Â Missionary Kusha shared God's Word in Sheetal family gathering and in another meeting in Mundu Compound. 200 people were blessed through the messages.

Â 35 people of Mehto community in Behari village were blessed through the ministry of missionary Kuldip.

Â Pray for a divine intervention in the lives of the following persons: Tileswaridevi, Rajeshwari (Leg pain); Suresh (Nose problem); Phuldevi (Paralytic); Anthony (Pneumonia); Parveen Lal (depression); Jaychand (Eye problem); Basanti, Clara and Kiran (Childlessness).

KARNATAKA

Â A team of 62 committed partners from Tamilnadu visited our fields and encouraged our believers and missionaries. There is nothing better than seeing things by our own eyes. Today's need is Needy Land Tours!

Â Praise God for the new contacts: Prasadh, Prakash, Baskar, Maruthi, Reshma, Dasharath, Sadna, Ragibai Ramish, kajavi, Puntip, Chandru, Ajith, Babu, Raju, Shivapatri, eranna, Govindappa, Sidhu, Savittiri, Bagubai, chavi, Sonubai, Badiger, and Mambu Gowda. Pray for their salvation.

Â 35 families were benefited by the Family Enrichment Seminar held in Yellapur, in which Pastor Edward Francis edified the participants to lead a witnessing family life.

Â Many of our youth in various fields need suitable life partners; pray that God may help them to find believers as their spouses.

Â God delivered Virupaksha from alcoholism after much prayer and counseling. Hallelujah!

Â In a three day fasting prayer conducted in Ramdurg 45 people enthusiastically participated and earnestly prayed for our nation; God poured out the spirit of prayer among them during these days.

Â The ministry among children in Thoravi, Hanchanal Thanda and Kathijapur are growing gradually. Pray for the salvation and the future of the children.

Â Missionary Mohana Krishnan participated in the special training organised by RZIM in Bangalore, focusing on apologetics.

KERALA

Â Blessing Youth Mission, Kerala Branch organized a three day Revival Camp in Nallathanneer Estate near Moonar from 3-5 December 2004. Dr. Jayakumar, Mr. P. Prince Sounderraj, Mr. Vettrichelvan and Mr. P. Prabhu brought God's message. The music team of Mr. V. Jayakumar of Tuticorin and the skits presented were well received. The programme was a great blessing to the Church.

Â Brothers Francis Sounderraj and Vettrichelvan also shared God's message in Chekkanad and Moonar CSI Church in their fasting prayer gatherings. Missionary Jesu Raghavan efficiently organized these programmes along with the sale of 'Blessing' Malayalam books.

MADHYA PRADESH

Â An all night prayer was organised for the SFJ prayer cell members in Jabalpur. 14 of them attended and decided to have a 24 hour chain prayer for missionary evangelism.

Â 84 believers joyfully attended a three day retreat, '*Blessing Festival*' in Sagar, organised to enrich our rural congregations. 19 people obeyed the Lord in baptism and all the participants actively involved in the programme. Missionary couple S. Raja and Martha ministered to them.

Â Suresh, Dhuran, Ram Singh, Santhal and Ramsevak have backslidden. Pray that the Lord may restore them to faith.

Â Pray for the healing of Kallu Bai (Pneumonia); Rajkumari, Chotti bai (Anaemia) and Achelal (Tuberculosis).

Â The free medical camps conducted in Barkeda, Bammori and Barkhedi villages in Deori area were fruitful; 400 people were benefited.

Â Special Christmas programmes were meaningfully conducted in the following villages: Barait, Taparian, RamToria, Naraanpura, Baraj, Baraita, Ramgad Mohalla, Jagthar, Patari, Pipariya, Kandwa and Badera. Singing carols among the downtrodden people brought real jubilation.

Â Missionary Andrias Soni shared the Christmas message to 150 eager people of Deori. The Sunday school children staged the nativity of Christ powerfully.

MAHARASHTRA

Â Pray for the salvation of Suresh Jadav, Babu Mallappa, Sachin Kohli, Vittal Kamble, Padma Eknath, Viswash Kamble, Kadam, Subhash, Prakash and Sharad.

Â Praise God for Sujatha Patole, who was delivered from evil spirit through much prayer. Pray for her normal delivery.

Â Babu and his wife, Pandu and Vidhya are separated. Pray that God may help them to reconcile and reunite to rebuild their family life.

Â Patients in Leprosy Mission Hospital are regularly visited by our missionaries and prayers are offered for their healing.

Â Our missionaries shared the Good News in Katkuri village where Umesh, Ratan, Ankush and Ganesh are showing much interest to know more about Christ.

Â Kadam one of our believers is facing severe financial problem in his business. He covets your earnest prayers.

Â Pray for the divine healing of Solomon John who is suffering from skin infection. His father is one of our active lay leaders of Mumbai.

Â 500 people participated in the Christmas Service held in a beach near Vasai and worshipped

Jesus the King. Missionary couple E. L. Mathansingh and Lalitha ministered to these congregations of Warli people group and visited a few villages. Pray that God may raise effective native workers to consolidate the people movement.

Â Missionaries Peter Luis and Vinod Mallappa need more wisdom and power to strengthen the believers and to train the native workers.

Â Pray for the Christian fellowships in Mahad and Alibag who are playing a supportive role for missionary work.

ORISSA

Â Many of our believers were miraculously healed from cerebral malaria. Praise the Lord! God should work out a permanent remedy for the poor people and the missionaries living in malaria infested areas.

Â Subhas, a believer from Dobabania village fell down from a tree, but the Lord graciously protected him without any injury.

Â An one day youth retreat was conducted in Cuttack in which Mrs. Sabita Das Challenged 50 youth for holy living.

Â *Jesus* film was screened in Dhaimal, Hatibari, Tenka Dongri, Jamjodi Satighat villages through which Gospel was shared to 300 people. Pray for a rich harvest.

Â Church Planters Training Camp was conducted in Ramagiri; 40 native workers were trained and motivated to plant more number of churches. Missionaries A. Malarselvan and V. Ponnusamy taught church planting principles.

Â 24 believers fasted and prayed in Lakipakana village and in answer to this prayer 8 backslidden believers came back to God's fold.

Â A three day Ministerial Efficiency Programme conducted in Cuttack challenged 250 Christians to be fruitful and faithful stewards in the Lord's ministry. The senior leaders of BYM—John Thomas, V. Ponnusamy, Victor P. S. Kumar and E. L. Mathansingh taught the Word.

Â Missionary E. L. Mathansingh ministered to the congregation of Union Church, Cuttack.

Â Missionaries Jason Prince and Esther Bercy got married in Thoothukudi on 12 Jan 2005. Congratulations to the dedicated couple who will be serving in the remote areas of Orissa.

RAJASTHAN

Â Praise God for the 39 young girls who expressed their desire to follow Christ in a special retreat conducted in Ajmer, in which missionary Jyothi Selvan exhorted the participants.

Â Mr. John Das lost his job due to false accusation. Pray that God may acquit him from all false charges and he may get his job again.

Â Adult Education programme is being conducted in Gehali, Ghavadi and Neem- ka-Thana villages. Pray that the people may learn to read and write through this programme.

Â In the monthly believers' retreat conducted in Singhana 40 believes were motivated to be prayer warriors.

Â Praise God for Rajkumar who experienced the deliverance from alcoholism, to lead a victorious christian life.

Â 20 people committed their lives to Christ in Phulera.

Â The Lord protected missionary couple Devakumar & Ruby from a road accident.

Â 10 native workers were trained meaningfully for higher responsibilities. Missionary S. Mohan was the resource person.

Â The dark clouds of opposition and persecution are disappearing from Srimadhapur. Pray for the growth of the believers and the health of missionary Grace Vyas.

Â Pray for the speedy recovery of missionary A. Malarselvan who has injured his right knee.

UTTAR PRADESH

Â Christmas love was shared with the ragpickers in Chandangaon and the poor villagers of Jerirah amidst severe cold in Lucknow.

Â Christmas message was preached to the eager friends of Nandanpura in Jhansi.

Â Pray for the family of Dr. Amarsingh whose wife is helping us in translating the *Blessing* literature into Hindi. Their son Vipulsingh is

our representative in Allahabad Agricultural Deemed University campus.

Â Missionaries Joseph Devaraj, Rose Allen and Monica Allen successfully completed the theological course offered by Global Module School. Renowned theologian Dr. Alvin Low gave away the graduation certificates and prizes in a colorful function held in Lucknow.

Â Pray for the health of missionary Monica Allen who is in the family way.

WEST BENGAL

Â The Needy Land Tour led by Mr.E.Ebenezer from Bangalore visited places around Siliguri in the Himalayan mountain region travelling across the snow covered roads.

Â The common Christmas function organised by all churches and Christian organizations of Siliguri was largely attended by non Christian friends.

Â Missionary Regina Chelliah and Ms. Anandi shared the Christmas message with the people of Terai village.

Â The 'Blessing' well wishers meet held in Siliguri encouraged the local Christians to get involved in missionary evangelism in a better way. Missionaries Elisha and Deena ministered to them.

GENERAL

Â Pray for the victims of Tsunami waves that struck unawares and swallowed many lives. One of our partners Mr. Parameswaran of Nagapattinam has lost three of his sweet little children and seven other relatives. Pray for the relief operations in worst affected coastal areas of Tamilnadu— Nagapattinam, Cuddalore, Kanyakumari districts and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Â National level Leadership Training Seminar of Haggai Institute will be conducted in Sitteri hills, Tamilnadu from Jan 30 to Feb 9, 2005.

Â Pray for Hyderabad Missionary Convention, 26-28 Jan 2005. Speaker: Missionary E. L. Mathansingh.

Â Pray for Mr. S. C. Vedasronmani (59 yrs.), our Literature Coordinator, Chennai who underwent a bypass surgery on 31 Dec 2004. f

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND TEACH

- 📖 **The Bible is the Word of God;**
*we must meditate on it regularly to know God
and overcome Satan.*
- 📖 **God is a spirit;**
we must worship Him in spirit and in truth.
- 📖 **Christ died for us, rose again on the third day
and is now seated on the right hand of the Father in Heaven
as our Advocate;**
we are saved by faith on Him.
- 📖 **The Holy Spirit empowers us, and equips us with His gifts
and fruit, to witness for Christ thro' our life and lip;**
we must stay filled with the Spirit.
- 📖 **Baptism in water is an act of obedience and a pledge of
good conscience;**
*we must please God in everything,
living in accordance to His will revealed in His Word.*
- 📖 **All those who are born again are members of the
Body of Christ, whatever denomination they may belong to;**
we must accept and love one another as Christ loved us.
- 📖 **Christ is coming again real soon;**
*we must be watchful in prayer and zealous in our
responsibility to fulfil the Great Commission.*

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



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