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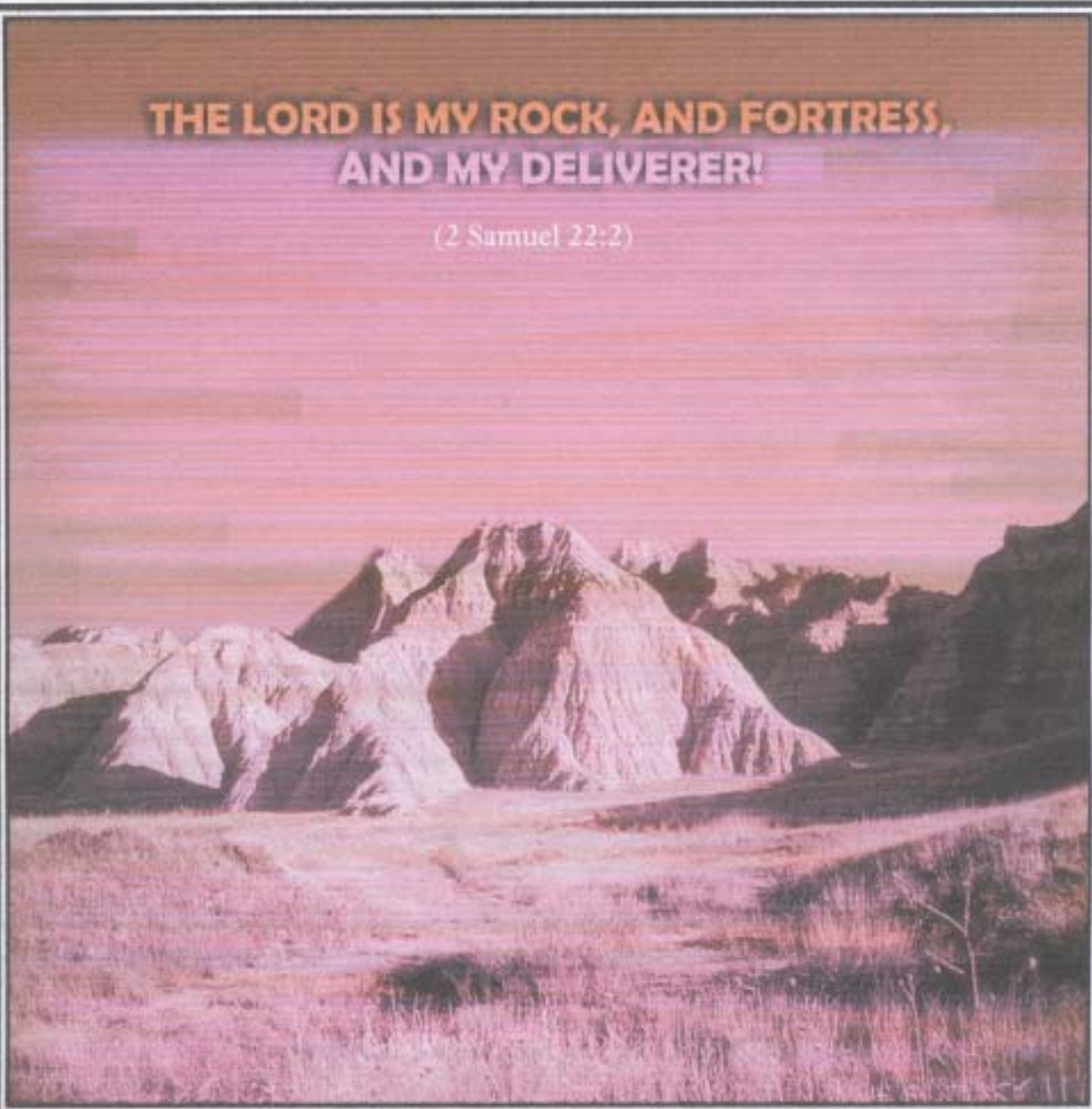
Blessing

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**THE LORD IS MY ROCK, AND FORTRESS,
AND MY DELIVERER!**

(2 Samuel 22:2)



LET GOD BE OUR ROCK!

A. Lionel

I would like to share with you three things gleaned out of a particularly trying situation in the life of King David, a man after God's own heart. In 2 Samuel 24:24,25 we read how David numbered Israel, bought the threshing floor and oxen from Araunah and offered burnt offerings to the Lord. In answer to his prayer the plague on Israel was stopped.

1. David's Temptation

Why did this plague strike Israel? Because David sinned. Temptation came to David whom God had declared a man after His heart. David was anointed, was led of the Spirit, yet he was also tempted. David who had once killed Goliath fell into temptation. Yes, whoever we may be in whatever position of importance we may be, Satan will attempt to make us fall. The twentieth chapter of 1 Chronicles records David's victories one after the other. He conquered the Ammonite King and took his golden crown set with precious stones (v 2). He subjugated the Philistines (v 4,5). Thus David moved from one victory to another. To such a conquering hero this temptation came. "Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel" (1 Chr 21:1).

His commander, Joab cautioned him, saying, "Why does my lord want to do this? Why should he bring guilt on Israel? (v 4). Yet David persisted. This is a temptation which comes to those who wish to do great things for God. There is no exception because the Scripture says, "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour" (1 Pet 5:8). Satan is our arch enemy and we have no other adversary. Neither believers nor other churches nor other ministries are our enemies. The prophet Elijah took up

an uncommon challenge and won in the mountain of Carmel, yet the words of Jezebel made him run for shelter (1 Ki 19:1-3). Praise God for we are not unaware of Satan's schemes (2 Cor 2:11).

The snare was, that David who relied on God's power was now counting on his military might. David was satisfied that he had in Israel eight hundred thousand able bodied men who could handle a sword and in Judah five hundred thousand. He felt complacent (2 Sam 24:9). This David had earlier confronted Goliath singly and with no other weapon than his sling and five pebbles. But now he depended on the strength of his army. How foolish of him! "This command was evil in the sight of God" (1 Chr 21:7). Let us not forget what Paul pointed out as examples in 1 Corinthians 10:1-12. Are we comfortable that Blessing Youth Mission has a good number of partners and our message reaches all over the world? Paul writes, "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on man's wisdom but on God's power" (1 Cor 2:4,5).

Let us not depend on our education, experience, wisdom or physical wellbeing but let us depend solely on God. It is futile to trust in the arm of flesh. Psalms 33:16,17 says, "No king is saved by the size of his army, no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance. Despite all its great strength it cannot save." Political influence, and any strength other than that of the Spirit will fail. Listen to the Psalmist: "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They are brought to their knees and fall but we rise up and stand firm" (Psa 20:7,8).

It is the same boy hero who challenged Goliath saying, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin but I come against you in the name of the Lord almighty, the God of the armies of Israel whom you have defied" (1 Sam 17:45). But now he had fallen to this deplorable state. David was tempted on all three fronts: "Lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and pride of life" (1 Jn 2:16). Satan made David trust in the number of the men in his army. Let us not fall back on such human might. May the Lord always be our source of strength and refuge. Consider what happened to the tree which boasted of its height (Ezek 31:10-14). Let us always remain humble, may the Lord use us, lead us and guide us.

2. David's contrition

What I like about David is his contrite heart. "I have sinned greatly in what I have done" (2 Sam 24:10). When David realised that what he had done was not pleasing in the sight of God, he lamented and mourned, "I have sinned greatly in doing this. Now I beg of you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing" (1 Chr 21:8). Notice how he thought of his error and confessed it three times. He did not justify his action, neither did he blame anyone else. Wisdom asks, "Who can discern his errors" (Psa 19:12). On the day he cut off a corner of Saul's robe he was conscience-stricken. How often we blame others! But listen to David's broken-hearted confession, "Search me O God and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there be any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa 139:23,24). Such a spirit should be found in leaders. "It is like the precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard..." (Psa 133:2). This contrite spirit should originate among you, the key partners of our movement, and flow to others. Why do people suffer? Why is there no divine blessing on the land? Is it not because of the men of God sin? Because of David's transgression, the entire Israel was

stricken by plague. Likewise when men of God and children of God transgress, the nation comes under God's curse. Do not blame leaders of the church; do not condemn others. Let us be like David and confess, "I have sinned."

3. David's Sacrifice

As plague followed transgression, sacrifice was needed to stop the plague. In order to put an end to the death toll, God placed three alternatives before David through the prophet. They were seven years' famine, three months of fleeing before the enemy or three days of plague. David's immediate response was, "Now let us fall into the hands of the Lord" (2 Sam 24:13,14). When God saw the intensity of the plague on the people He "grieved." Some translations say 'God wept.' Finally on the threshing floor of Araunah a covenant was made. The threshing floor is a place of constant beating, to separate wheat from chaff (suffering). This threshing floor stood on the mount of Moriah where hundreds of years ago Abraham went up to sacrifice his only son. It is here that David offered burnt offerings to turn God away from His wrath. The very place became the site on which Solomon built the magnificent temple for the Lord (2 Chr 3:1). Hallelujah! Here David set aside his regal position and walked up to a common citizen to ask for his threshing floor to be sold to him for a price (2 Sam 24:19-21). He did not send for Araunah, he went to him, a broken man of a poor and humble spirit, He pronounced death to his self-esteem and pride. When Araunah out of his loyalty to the king offered the floor and other things needed for the sacrifice, free of cost, David replied, "No I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the Lord what is yours or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing" (1 Chr 21:24).

I admire David's attitude. He said that he would not make an offering to God, that which costs him nothing. This is sacrifice.

There is no ministry without sacrifice — A sacrifice of time, talent and treasure. But generally, we do something for the Lord as and when it suits us; we evangelise if it does not hurt us, and if only we find time we involve in God's ministry. No beloved, as the poor widow gave away her entire livelihood, are we ready to pour out everything, all that we have, for the Lord? (Lk 21:4). Consider what faith the poor woman possessed that she gave away everything. Reflect on 2 Corinthians 8:9, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty may become rich." Jesus came down to earth laying aside His heavenly glory, so that we may attain the glorious inheritance of saints in Heaven. To redeem us the Lord chose to go through a life of suffering from the manger to the cross of Calvary.

We try to work without soiling our hands. As the Tamil saying goes, we want to kill the snake without hurting the stick! We speak of a comfortable gospel. If we want to strike the old serpent we should not mind the stick cracking under the impact. We wish to win souls, comfortably without undue strain, without any sacrifice on our part. Souls are not won that way; without pounding the grain can one get flour out of it? The Bible does not teach a painless way to heaven. Only through manifold trials we are to enter the kingdom of God. Ministry without sacrifice — laying our prestige, our family our everything on the altar—is merely a day dream.

Have you heard of C.T. Studd, one of the famous "Cambridge Seven"? For twenty one years he laboured as a missionary without a break and went to his home land when he was 52 years old. But he did not tarry long. He went over to Africa. He was a millionaire who offered his life a living sacrifice. As a result, Africa the dark continent saw the light. His heart cry was "If Christ died for me no sacrifice on my part can equal His." Like Peter and John one should rejoice if one were "counted worthy

to suffer disgrace" for the name of the Lord Jesus. Peter, writing to saints everywhere says, "But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ you are blessed" (1 Pet 4:13,14).

We are nine children in our family and I am the seventh. When I joined the Engineering college I had only two sets of clothes. I washed them daily and wore them alternately. My pocket money per day was five rupees. I would buy soap for Rs. 2/- and save the rest for our ministry. Bro. R. Stanley who was with me then received ten rupees as pocket money per day. We pooled our resources and went to preach the gospel to lepers, every week. We had to miss our Sunday special dish, chicken, at the hostel because of our outreach programme. Jesus went and sat down at the well in Samaria exhausted and hungry. How sad today we find everywhere an easy going trend in the ministry. I am reminded of our days in Karaikudi on every occasion I think of taking time for a battle on the knees. Those were not days of telegraphic prayer but travailing in prayer. Paul writes to Roman believers, "I urge you brothers by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me" (Rom 15:30).

Lord, where has all this earnestness gone? Where are the tears, the groaning in travail? Yes there are our planning sessions, our intelligent preaching, our deep meditations, but where is intercession? The Lord heard the prayer for the nation and stopped the plague. Who is there today to stand in the gap sacrificially? Many are the ills that plague our nation today: AIDS, Cancer, Terrorism, Confusion and so on. Who will come forward to commit themselves to a life of selfless giving? Rightly sang Bro. Emil Jebasingh—

*"They are no losers
who lose their all in Christ's cause.
They suffer no loss
who suffer for His Kingdom's glory." f*

FROM ERRORS TO EXCELLENCE

Missionary Rebekah Thomas

The disciples followed the Lord Jesus Christ obeying His Word. They counted the call a great privilege. There is no doubt they loved Him. They were excited hearing His discourses. They were proud about the miracles of their Master. They got to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven from Him. They received authority from Him to preach the Gospel, heal the sick and cast out demons.

But when we examine their lives closely, we can not lose sight of their failures and errors, the pain they inflicted and the many disappointments caused to their Master because they did not understand His mind and the purpose of their appointment. The heart of the Lord Jesus Christ was disappointed even till the day of His betrayal by the very disciples whom He appointed. The very disciple to whom He handed over the treasury was ready to betray Him for money. Though He promised the twelve disciples that they would rule over the twelve tribes of Israel along with Him, still they had argument for temporary recognition as to who was great! The one who expressed his deep love for Jesus and said to Him “Even if I have to die with you, I will not deny you,” would later deny Him with an oath “I do not know the Man.” Considering all these, the Lord must have felt that even the cup He was about to drink from His Father would be easier!

Having risen from the dead, Jesus showed Himself alive to the disciples. But the disciples were still in the earthly realm expecting the Lord’s Kingdom on earth, so that they would become rulers with Him (Acts 1:6). But He did not point out their failures, knowing their human-ness. He didn’t even regret for having appointed them for the great task ahead. He totally trusted them. But He commanded them to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father by which Jesus knew that their lives would be transformed (Acts 1:4,5). Later on they obtained the testimony that they

turned the world up side down. They excelled in the areas in which they erred. How did this turn around happen? We understand this when we turn the pages of the book of Acts of the Apostles.

1. Egoism to Equality

At the time of Passover the Lord instituted a very important sacrament, the Lord’s Table. He also set an example of servanthood (Jn 13:14). In spite of Christ modelling of servanthood, there was an argument among the disciples as to, “which of them was considered to be greatest” (Lk 22:24). The same problem is found among Christians today in all spheres, at all levels and in all peoples. This plague is wide spread. Much teaching and preaching are given on this subject of servanthood. Many participate in such programmes. Still the egoism poses gigantic problems beginning from Christian homes to Churches and organizations causing tsunamis among God’s people!

But after the disciples received the power from above, a great change is seen in the Book of Acts. On the very day of Pentecost the disciple Peter who always tried to stand out among the others, *stood with the eleven* (Acts 2:14). A change from Egoism to Equality. Again we see that wherever Peter addressed the Jews, they in turn replied not to Peter but to the team as a whole. For example, during the time of his preaching and when he faced the Sanhedrin he trampled egoism and maintained equality with others (Acts 2:37; 5:29). But today in Christendom are there not God’s ministers who project their own family members and keep aside their associates who labour with them day and night from the beginning of their ministries? The Spirit-filled Apostles of those days are a challenge to the leaders of today.

Matthew Henry in his commentary writes, “Peter and John had each of them a brother among the twelve. Yet now, they both seem

to be knit together more closely than before.” They seem to have had a peculiar intimacy after receiving the power from above. The disciples loved one another dearly. They were all of one heart, and of one soul. Though there were many, of different age groups, different tempers and make up, they were unanimous in their faith. Being all joined to the Lord, they were joined to one another in holy love. Jesus’ prayer for them was that “they all might be one.” The disciples who received the anointing of the Holy Spirit demonstrated the answer to this prayer.

2. Anxiety to Assurance

An interesting incident is recorded in Mark 10:28. When Jesus spoke about riches, Peter asked him, “See, we have left all and followed You.” These words reveal the anxiety about his future. The Lord did not despise the words of His disciples for He was concerned about all their needs. So His reply was, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for my sake and the gospel’s, who shall not receive a hundred fold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children or lands, with persecution—and in the age to come, eternal life” (Mk 10:29,30). Jesus announced the returns, that no bank on earth could give!

Now, Judas Iscariot too heard this statement. But why did he succumb to the temptation while Peter succeeded? Pentecost brought the difference between these two. What did Judas gain by loving the money? By the time he realized his mistake the doom was decided. His decision to return the money to refrain from shedding the innocent blood was too late. He became disgusted. He could neither make the money a gain nor could he receive the forgiveness of God.

Great men of God have become victims to the love for money. Boyd’s Bible Handbook records, “Among the things, which men have manufactured, money is perhaps the one which

defiles the most. That it soils the souls of men is quite evident. It is desired by all, sought for, stolen, envied, loved more than anything else and often more than life itself. It is more deadly than all the deadly diseases combined.”

Many succumb to this. The pity is that, it is not those who do not know the Lord. It is those who know, obey and follow Him. Did not the Lord choose Judas? Was not he given equal status among the twelve by the Lord? The love for money in him was not by chance. Little drops of lust for money made it an ocean of covetousness in him, which cost him even the life of his Lord!

The new believers are being assured more of earthly blessings by the prosperity preachers of today. The healing evangelists are selling the free gift from God. The sacrificial offerings of the people of God are taking the shape of monumental structures and huge assets. It is no wonder the people of this world see Christians, especially some who are in the ministry, as earthly minded! This lust has taken hold most of today’s youth. The concept of going abroad for making money has become the norm of today. Money is needed, but that is not all. Some are even prepared to sacrifice their time meant for family, church etc., for the sake of their career and money. By the time they realize their folly, enough damage has taken place. Even if they try to compensate, it may take their lifetime to undo the wrong.

But, the disciples of the Lord who were transformed through the anointing of the Holy Spirit set a world record! A great wealth was brought and kept at their feet (Acts 4:34). It was used only to meet the needs of the people and not to fill their pockets (Acts 4:35). How could they practice this? They remembered the words of their Master who taught them how the Heavenly Father fed the birds of the air and clothed the lilies of the field. So they believed that if they sought the Kingdom of God first, all those earthly needs would be met by God (Mt 6:26-33). They passed from anxiety to assurance. How about us?

3. Hardness to Heartiness

The heart of Jesus was moved with compassion when He saw the multitude like sheep without a shepherd. When he found them hungry He fed them even without their asking (Mk 6:34-44). But the disciples asked Jesus to send the crowd away because they did not realize the need (Mk 6:36). But Jesus decided to satisfy the hunger of the people by the very hand of those disciples (Mk 6:37). He wanted the disciples to continue this ministry of compassion even after His ascension.

In the same way we see the hardness in the hearts of the disciples, when Samaritans did not receive them. But we see compassion in the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ (Lk 9:54,55). Though Jesus rebuked them, it was hard for the disciples to accept it.

But the change, which Jesus could not see during His physical presence with them, was the result of the anointing of the Spirit they received later. The lame beggar we read in the 3rd chapter of the Acts asked for alms from Peter and John. But what was their response? They understood that his problem couldn't be solved with a few coins. Just like Jesus they were moved with compassion and solved his problem by meeting the needs of both his body and soul. Thus their hardness of heart seen in Mark 6:35,36 mellowed down to mercy and love.

Again, in the early church there was a problem of widows of Grecian Jews being neglected in distribution of food (Acts 6:1). The Apostles who were fully engaged in the ministry did not neglect even such a problem of physical nature. They took efforts to appoint a committee to solve the problem. They had a place in their hearts for the poor widows. These disciples who received the Spirit of Christ were not any more hard hearted, but on the other hand were full of compassion towards all those who were in need (Acts 5:15,16).

4. Cowardice to Courage

Peter loved Jesus Christ. In Mark chapter 14 we observe that he was anxious to express

that he loved the Lord more than the other disciples did. Though all the disciples fled from Him at the time of His arrest, Peter followed Him at a distance. He loved his Master and desired to know what would happen to Jesus. But he was afraid to confess Him even before a servant girl. Jesus had said that the disciples were His friends. But what did they return to him in a time of great need? All of them deserted Him. I come across many who say that they know the Lord and love Him too, but still they cannot confess Him openly out of fear. Thousands receive healing from their sicknesses and deliverance from their problems. In my own family this happened. After my father was healed of cancer through prayer, for 14 years, we did not openly confess Christ! But now, by the grace of God, all the members of our family are serving the Lord in different capacities.

The sin of not confessing Christ as the Lord is as bad as not knowing Him. Jesus said, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell (Mt 10:28). Then again firmly He said, "Whoever disowns Me before men, I will disown him before My Father in heaven" (Mt 10:33). But to some, often these teachings of Christ are like *blowing the trumpet in a deaf man's ear*.

Even after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the disciples locked themselves inside the closet for fear of the Jews (Jn 20:19). But after the anointing of the Spirit, they challenged even the rulers of the Jews (Acts 4:13). They declared, before all the people impudently, "You killed the author of Life, but God raised Him from the dead. *We are witnesses of this*" (Acts 4:20). Where from did they get such boldness? The Lord gave them boldness to speak the Word of God (Acts 4:31b). The Bible says, "With great power the Apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus..." (Acts 4:33).

Today the threat from the anti-Christian activists sometimes makes the Church lame. We fail to present the uniqueness of Christ for fear of offending others. We should not hesitate to take a stand for the Truth. May the Lord give us discretion and boldness through the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

5. *Slumber to Supplication*

When the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ was heavy with grief, the eyes of His disciples were heavy with sleep. Even in the midst of His agony He was mindful of the prayer life of His disciples. He said, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation" (Lk 22:46). Concerning the cross the Lord knew that He had come for that hour and He had determined to do His Father's will. But what about His disciples? How could they overcome such temptations in future? This was a matter of concern for Him.

How inferior the disciples were in their faith and prayer life. Though Christ had given them power over evil spirits, yet they could not always cast them out (Mk 9:18). Either they distrusted the power of the Holy Spirit, or they did not commit themselves to the kind of prayer they ought to have. Christ reproved them for their failure (Mk 9:29).

The anointing of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples changed the scenario. The Church was born in the atmosphere of prayer (Acts 1:4). In answer to prayer the Spirit was poured out on the disciples (Acts 1:4; 2:4). Prayer continued to be the Church's natural air (Acts 2:42; 6:4,6). Prayer of saints and the presence of God in His power went hand in hand in the early Church (Acts 4:31). In times of crisis the Church resorted to prayer (Acts 4:23; 12:5,12).

The Spirit-filled disciples could understand Christ's emphasis on prayer. A definite time of prayer was found in their daily schedule (Acts 3:1). Amidst their busy schedule they gave top priority for prayer (Acts 6:4). Even in hunger Peter did not refrain from praying (Acts 10:9,10). Because the Spirit of prayer

prevailed in the Church, even when it faced persecution the gates of hell could not prevail against it (Acts 12:5,12). What a fantastic result! The Apostles worked so many miracles and wonders. People were healed even under the shadow of Peter (Acts 5:15,16).

"If one species has a close association with another species, the former will become like the latter" is a common saying. So if we have to partake His nature and know His mind, there is no other way than to have close fellowship with Him. The more time we spend with Him, the more we acquire His character. There may be many who can preach mightily, give away their possessions abundantly, work for God actively and write effectively and so on. But only those who fuse themselves in His nature and know His mind can supplicate like Jesus Christ (2 Pet 1:4).

We pray for signs and wonders to take place in our days as in the days of the Apostles. That alone is not enough. We need to move from our errors to excellence: Egoism to Equality; Anxiety to Assurance; Hardness to Heartiness; Cowardice to Courage; Slumber to Supplication. The anointing of the Holy Spirit on us will make it possible for us to overcome the weaknesses and excel in life. **f**

(Contn. of page 15)

Â The Blessing book, *Wild Honey* has been translated into Nepali and ready for printing. Pray that God may provide the needed funds for the printing of this book. Contributions are welcome.

Â Mr. B. K. Biswas, one of our partners shared God's Word in a cottage meeting and encouraged the new contacts. Praise God for such lay leaders.

GENERAL

Â A month long *Workers' Training Programme* (WTP) is arranged in Sitheri Hills, Tamilnadu, 1-31 August 2006. Pray for the missionaries to be trained, the resource persons and the programme coordinators, Mr. S. Saravanan and Mrs. Deena Elisha.

Â One of our young partners in Chennai, Mr. K. Daniel (37) went to be with the Lord on the 8th of July 2006. Pray for the bereaved family. **f**

What Touched our Hearts

(A Report of the Needy Land Tour undertaken by a team of Partners from Thanjavur of Tamilnadu to the Mission Fields of Karnataka and Maharashtra)

E. L. Ephraim

The beautiful forest land with tall teak trees reaching to the skies, and the all pervading silence reminded one of Africa. More so because the few human beings we saw here and there bore a striking resemblance to our Black brethren. These Siddhi tribals were brought to India as slaves by the Portuguese settlers. When they fled from their masters they took refuge in the dense forests of Karnataka and stayed there for nearly two centuries. It was a rare experience to the group from Tamilnadu which met the Siddhi's for the first time.

We were eleven eager people who left Thanjavur on the 21st of April and reached Alnavar the next evening. The Sunday service was attended mostly by new converts. Bro. Jason Pandian conducted music classes and taught the Bible for three days.



The visiting Team

Indienhilfe has built a home for BYM to accommodate the tribal children in Alnavar. Forty Siddhi and Gowli boys stay here. These children are the hope of tomorrow's India. The Blessing Youth Mission's efforts in raising efficient educationists and far sighted servants of God from among these children is noteworthy.

A few years ago our missionary C.D. Kumar met a boy, who along with his parents, was in bonded labour for seven years in order to clear a

debt of seven thousand rupees. Today he is a pastor, taking care of a church at Kambarkanvi. We met him and were reminded of Isaiah 61:1. He lives in a simple house cooking his meals on a smoky oven. It is a surprise that the place has no supply of electricity.

From Kambarkanvi we went to Honnapur. In ten minutes a crowd of believers arrived. We were touched by their enthusiasm. These people were ready to donate a land for the construction of their church and our group was led to contribute Rs. 35,000/- for its construction. The hour has come for people everywhere to worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth.

We visited our field at Sambrani where we met our missionary couple who were blessed with two children after they adopted one child. At midnight we reached Yellapur.

On the 24th morning we saw the first church built for Siddhi people, thirty years ago at Kuchugaon. We learnt that one of the political leaders here was a person who had attended our



The visiting Team with Gowli people

Blesso Camp at Thanjavur in the eighties. We reached Bilki at lunch time. At midday the people had gathered in the church. Their smiling faces warmed our hearts. We went to Uchikeri in the evening. The field suffered tribulation in the hands of those who opposed the gospel. It is very encouraging to know that many backsliders are

now returning to the love of the Lord Jesus.

We rested a while at Kathur and then moved over to Kodambi, a nearby village. The singing and the worship of the large number of young women believers is unforgettable. A church building is an immediate necessity of the people here.

We came to Mynalli late in the night. We have a worship shed here situated in a beautiful palm grove. The spot is ideal for worship. Here we prayed for our missionary Hannah Gently who is suffering from cancer. The next morning we visited a day-care-centre at Kuthirenalla. When the children sang, we saw the words of the Lord, fulfilled before our eyes, "From the lips of children and infants You have ordained praise." The work of the young missionary who stays alone and looks after these *Gowli* children is a challenge to us all.

On the way to Hubli we visited the Buddhist monastery at Mundukode. For us who struggle to raise some thousands to build a church, it was a challenge to look at the huge building worth a few crores! The statue of Buddha is made of Gold, they say. When will we give away our gold coins to the cause of the God of glory?

When we reached Soundatti it was rather late for lunch. This is where we saw the devotees of the goddess Ellamma. They continue to offer their girls to the goddess for temple prostitution. They take a dip in the pond hoping to be cleansed of their sins. They fall prostrate before the goddess or go rolling around in worship. It was heart-breaking to watch these unfortunate people. Though the evening was far gone the young people of Ramdurg waited for us patiently. Their Kannada rendition of Father Berchman's song, "We praise and worship You Lord" continues to ringing in our ears. We came to Jamkandi at about midnight and the Karnataka State Coordinator, Bro. Chandrasekar Sadamal and his wife gave us a warm welcome and an excellent dinner.

Our hearts were touched by the service rendered to AIDS victims and to those reclaimed from the Devadasi system. The Government has given us a land where we are to build a tailoring unit.

On the 26th of April we came to Kathijapur in the morning. We saw the renovation work of the church which was built in 1984 and had become dilapidated. We had our lunch at the historically

famous Bijapur. We discussed the work going on among the Banjara people.

It was 9 O' clock in the night when we reached Jath. We were moved by the crowd of believers who were still waiting for us to join them in worship. Missionaries of Jath have commendable plans to reach the upper caste communities. They are attempting to reach the Lingayats, Marattas, Mang, Mar and fourteen such sections of people using Web Evangelism, a principle they learnt in the B.Miss degree course. We saw the big mission hospital at Miraj on the 27th of April. Missionary Mohan Deenadayalan, the Western Regional Coordinator of BYM greeted us there. At Belgaum missionary Paul Dinakaran and family gave us a good farewell meal and saw us off. We congratulate our van driver Subash who drove us all the way from Alnavar to Miraj.

One of our team members, Bro. John who works as a manager in the Railways was thrilled on meeting the first generation Christians. His wife Chandralekha was greatly impressed by the hospitality and simple life style of the missionaries who welcomed the team with a smile whatever be the time. Ms. Shanthi Ponraj who owns a photography studio opined one gets to know what missionary work actually is only when one sees it first hand like this. Ms. Jacqueline Arokiasami, Superintendent at Tamil University has decided to raise Preventive Prayer Partners (PPP) for the sake of the missionaries who live with minimum comforts but give their maximum to the Lord's work. Dhivakar, our student member maintained that the trip was enjoyable because of the love and kindness of the missionaries. Bro. Noble has decided to be of help to missionaries who struggle against opposition. His wife Mary says, she was greatly thrilled to travel through such beautiful places.

The Agricultural officer Jason Pandian was impressed by the missionaries who have come up from the Siddhi tribe. Electrical Engineer, Kavitha Ephraim was impressed to see how very remarkably the gospel has raised these people who are backward socially. Sibia Ephraim enjoyed the company of missionary children. She has invited the missionary kid, Sophia Sadamal to study engineering at Mannargudi. The monks we met at the Buddhist monastery are all the first born of their respective families. The writer of this article wonders why and how Christians have neglected this particular instruction of the Bible—even the great commission! Many say they do not have a
10 'call.' Who called them, then to become doctors, engineers and so on?
f

Senior Staff Syndicate Meet 2006

A Report of the Meeting of Senior Staff of BYM held in Chennai, 9-12 April 2006)

P. Chezhan

Learning from the rich experience of the senior missionaries is a great boon. The SSS was born in 1989 mainly to recognize and take advantage of the experience of the senior staff in the mission. Joshua learnt from Moses, Elisha from Elijah and Timothy & Titus learnt a lot from Paul! The SSS is not an administrative body but a resourceful contributing body for the growth and development of the mission. This unit meets once in three years for a time of fellowship and to discuss and draw out proposals for the well being and welfare of the staff of BYM.

In the latest gathering of the SSS in Chennai, 58 senior staff participated. Mr. Y. Paul Dhinakaran convened this important gathering, which was organized by the honorary office bearers, Mr. A. Malarselvan, Mrs. Vasanthi Regunathan and Mr. P. Chezhan. Mr. Thomas Rajasingh was the chief host. The programme was held in the peaceful campus of Dhyana Ashram near the Santhome beach. The theme of this meet was "Ever Excellence."

On the inaugural day each couple welcomed another in the traditional way with sweets and flowers and prayed for one another. Mr. Kingsley Chelliah brought a thought provoking keynote address. The participants paid homage to one of the earlier members, Mrs. Jothi Ponraj who had her Home call in 2005.

Mr. John Kirubakaran the General Secretary of Friends Missionary Prayer Band was the guest speaker who led the morning Bible Studies. On the first day he drew attention to Acts 26:19 on the importance of vision. He declared that having sight without vision is the greatest sin and the poorest are those who do not have a clear sense of purpose. He gave a clarion call to the members of SSS to have a sanctified, sharpened and shared vision. When he narrated the sacrificial and successful story of missionary Jeyaraj who went, served and died among the Malto people group of Bihar, all the participants rededicated their lives to serve the Lord in obedience to the heavenly vision.

In his second talk he challenged the participants to become Transformational Leaders focusing on Daniel who acted in God's way, in God's place and in God's time (Dan 6:1-5). He pointed out that only such fruitful men and women will have the preparedness to change themselves in accordance with God's perfect plan and bring a change in the lives of others through influence.

During the business session, participants were divided into eight groups to bring constructive ideas for the preparation of Staff Manual initiated by Bro. E. L. Mathansingh. The discussions were fruitful where the members gave valuable suggestions for improvement.

Missionaries A. Jeyaraj and John Thomas led the discussion on staff welfare. Matters related to revival and youth were led by missionaries Y. Paul Dhinakaran and R. Elisha. The interaction of the members on Church Planting and Church Growth was led by missionaries V. Ponnusamy and A. Malarselvan.

Mr. A. Jeyaraj shared about the vision 2020 and motivated the state coordinators to take their team members to the right destination. Mr. J. D. Sapphire, the Cairman designate of BYM met all the coordinators present in the forum and encouraged them to be productive catalysts. Dr. M. ArthurJohn the Chairman of BYM exhorted the members to carry the ministry forward with sincere efforts, clear conscience and brotherly love.

Missionaries N.K. Kusha, Mrs. Deena Elisha and Mr. M. Manivannan were unanimously elected as the new office bearers for a period of 3 years.

In his concluding message, Mr. John Kirubakaran pleaded with the members to involve in soul winning with greater enthusiasm and deeper commitment.

The members left with a sincere commitment to remain EVER EXCELLENT in the Lord's ministry.

MAKE DISCIPLES

(A report of the Discipleship training camp 19-21 May 2006, held in Baruch, Gujarat)

R. Robin Sam

Fulfilling the Great Commission of Christ by mobilizing the youth force is an integral part of the mission statement of Blessing Youth Mission. When Jesus commissioned His followers to 'Make Disciples' of all Nations, it was not an option but an obligation. With this clear cut vision, not only Gospel rallies are arranged for youth and students, but Discipleship Training Camps are organized to counsel and nurture the committed youth in the path of discipleship.

The specialized youth camp *HALO* was conducted during the past 2 years in Gujarat and the Lord enabled to arrange a Discipleship Training Camp now to guide and develop the youth who had participated in the earlier camps. In the sovereign plan of God, 105 young people underwent this Training Programme. The Spiritual Life Centre, an excellent camp site on the bank of river Narmada in Baruch provided a conducive atmosphere for this meaningful programme.

Mr. T. Prince, one of our partners and Chief Manager of Indian Bank, Nadiad, inaugurated the camp on 19 May 2005 at 9.00 a.m. by lighting up a candle. He delivered the opening message and called the youth to prepare their hearts to receive God's blessings. Missionary Michael Singh led the group in a lively praise and worship session with action songs. Nadiad prayer cell students Sunny, Robin and Wilson played musical instruments. After the sessions of the first day, 20 youth committed their lives to Jesus Christ with strong determination of 'No turning back.' Interesting singing and games programmes renewed and refreshed the campers.

Lessons on Discipleship were taught impressively by missionaries M. Manivannan, R. Robin Sam, and Mr. Michael Singh. Mr. Victor P. S. Kumar who is our AC member for youth ministry at National level ministered to the participants from the Word of God and from his rich experience. The lessons on discipleship included. Disciple and the Master, Disciple and the Call, Disciple and the Daily Walk, Disciple and

Faith, Disciple and Power, Disciple and Kingdom, Disciple and Holiness, Disciple and Relationships, Disciple and Fellowship, Disciple and Vision and Disciple and Spiritual Warfare.

The exciting Bible Quiz competition conducted in the open air motivated the participants to enrich their scriptural knowledge. The talents night brought the hidden skills and talents of those youngsters. Ms. Princess, Mr. Collin and Ms. Nidy were awarded prizes for coming out as successful toppers in the tests conducted. The question and answer session brought light on some shady areas and practical problems explained on the Biblical basis by the senior brothers.

The campers left the campsite with a firm decision to follow Christ at any cost! The total expenditure of the Camp amounted to Rs.34,000/- of which 50% was raised locally. Please pray for these prayer cell leaders who will be doing the follow up: Mr. Stevenson (Jalod), Miss. Shetal (Gothra), Mr. Royal, Mr. Sallins, Miss. Philomina and Miss. Neelam of Naidad, Ms. Mary (Baroda), Mr. Raju (Narmada) and Mr. Anania (Ahemedabad). It is our prayer and desire that we should follow the foot steps of our Lord and Master who invested his quality time and energy to make disciples during His earthly ministry. f

PLEASE PRAY

The following programmes are scheduled to be conducted in **Vijayavada** in the month of **September 2006**. Kindly look to the Lord very earnestly in prayer—

- A Annual General Body Meeting of BYM (9,10)
- A National Consultation on Church Planting (11-13)
- A Executive Coordinators Committee Meeting (14,15)

News from Fields

Compiled by E. L. Mathansingh

The Blessing Youth Mission has stationed 322 missionaries in 14 States of India, namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, 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 Fifty people participated in the Partners' Meet arranged in Guntur who were edified through the Word of God shared by Missionary couple Saravanan & Suganthini. God enabled us to release our book *Goodbye Satan* in Telugu on this special occasion.

Â Venkatesh, Padmanabhan, Ganesh, Giddaiah, Sukanya, Vijaya, David Nath, Sunitha, B.P. Ratnam, G.Prakash, Ravi, David, Wilson, Kusuma, Rama, Prasanna, Vijaya Kennedy, Kanikaram, Vardhini, Nalla Prasad, Anandam, M. P. Sudhakar, Marthamma, Deena and Mamata are new seekers. Please pray for their salvation.

Â Praise God for good opening among students of B.Ed. college. Kindly pray for the student contacts Ludia, Radha, Malleshwari, Sneha, Rajani, and Anuradha to grow in the Lord and in His Word.

Â Susmitha, our student contact needs divine healing from brain tumour. Pray that God may heal her completely and use as a witness among her family and friends.

Â Pray for the epidemic fever, which has affected many believers in Korukonda village. This fever is prevalent in many parts of Andhra Pradesh.

Â Kindly pray for the following people: Suvarna Benjamin (kidney problem); Devarani, Bhagyamma (Chicken Gunya); Jyothi (thyroid problem); Marthamma, Vijayavardhini, Sirisha, Mary, Saroja, Suguna and Suneetha (childlessness).

Â Mr. Prasad of Anakapalli, one of our partners had his Home Call. Pray that God may console his family members.

Â Missioanry Saroj Apat married Bharathi in Vizianagaram on 13 July 2006. Pray that they may build a fruitful, witnessing Christian family.

GUJARAT

Â God blessed a three-day Revival Meet at Sharon Methodist Church, Baroda. The BYM founder R. Stanley taught on: *Christian Priorities, Christian and Money, Missionary Christian, Personal Pentecost*, etc. to 1200 participants. Pray that the fruits may remain.

Â Two prayer cells for students have been formed recently. Pray that God may use the team leaders Mervin and Ananiah fruitfully in nurturing their respective campus cells.

Â Our Deborah Team visited civil hospital with the Gospel where twelve patients responded positively. Pray for Mrs. Maniben & Mrs. Barthiben (asthma) and Miss. Ansaben (malaria).

Â God blessed our prayer cell students with good results in their board exams. But Smisha, one of the students has failed and is much discouraged. Pray that God may teach her to accept the failure and work hard in future.

Â The Cholera epidemic is rampant in Nadiad because of polluted water. Pray that God may protect His people as the apple of His eye and hide them under His wings (Psa 17:8).

Â Mr. Robin Sam taught the trainees of 'Susamachar Mission Missionary Training Camp' in Nadiad. Pray that God may raise many missionaries and help to reach the unreached in the State.

KARNATAKA

Â Pray for God's guidance in constructing worship sheds in Honnapur, Kambarganvi, Katur and Kodambi.

Â Believers are showing keen interest in the Bible study programs and are meeting regularly in three places viz. Jeyanagar, Kalyan Nagar and Sriram Nagar. Pray that people may lead their lives on Biblical principles.

Â Nursing college students Sivanna, Sunitha, Kavitha, and Amurtha are receptive to the gospel and are attending our fellowship regularly. Pray for their salvation.

Â Filomina, Kasthuri, Arputham, Esther, Ashirwadamma, and Annapoorna are facing severe family problems. Pray for the divine intervention.

Â Hunnu from Hanchanal thanda village was on sick bed and the doctors gave away hope. But God answered the earnest prayers of our missionaries and he got healed. Praise God for the miraculous healing.

Â God blessed three days revival meet conducted exclusively for *Siddi* believers in Kuchigaon. Mr. Kanakaraj, Mr. Solomon, Dr. Jhogul and Mr. Suresh Saler shared the messages on the theme, *Fight the Good Fight* to the 300 participants.

Â Kindly pray for the following: Sasikala (tumour), Paul (chest pains), John Immanuel (Sinusitis), Solomon (demon possession), Sudha (confinement).

MADHYA PRADESH

Â A two days youth camp was arranged in Shahgarh and Banda in which seventy-five and twenty-eight youth attended respectively. Pray that God may enable them to stand firm in their decision to follow Christ and lead a witnessing life in the society.

Â God enabled our missionaries to start two new prayer cells for girls in Civil Lines and Ranjhi. Pray that many students may be benefited through these cells.

Â All the eighteen students of Blessing Home, Katni have come out successfully in the school exams. Pray that God may bless them and provide their needs as they continue their studies in the new academic year.

Â Suresh, Amol, Athai, Punna, Makhu, Hemraj Uttam, Hallu, Mohan, Tulsiram, Nitu and Anita are new contacts. Pray for their salvation.

Â Pray for the divine healing of the following: Sylvester & Premkumar (diabetes), Mrs. Kunjilal (weakness), Imrat (urinary infection), Ramsevak (fever), Prasadi (oral cancer).

Â Praise God for the worship service started in Barkheda village. Pray that many people of the nearby villages may come to God through this contact point.

MAHARASHTRA

Â A three days Staff Retreat was arranged for the Maharashtra staff at Lonavala. God dealt with them individually and helped all to refresh and rejuvenate in the spirit. Mr. Ramesh Jadhav and Mr. William were the resource persons.

Â Mr. & Mrs. Sanjay Dongare are serving the Lord by keeping their base at Murgud. People of Murgud and its neighbourhood are sincerely hearing God's Word. Pray for many more to be added into His fold.

Â Shrimant Mane, a believer from Gheradi village died of cancer. His small children overcame the pressures to deny Christ, stood for the Lord and professed their faith boldly with real conviction.

Â Dinesh Kamble, son of a believer has returned home after many years, but is very sick. Please pray that God may grant him health and hope.

Â Praise God for the eight people who obeyed the Lord recently. Pray that God may help them to stand firm in their decision and testify among the people around.

Â Pray specifically for Shamrao Kamble (paralysis), Rukmini (high BP), Rani Khude (arthritis).

Â Missionaries Mr. & Mrs. M. C. Ponniah have joined the team of Maharashtra and are based in Gargoti. Pray that God may use them with their rich experience in the church-planting ministry.

ORISSA

Â A team of 14 members led by Dr. Jebasingh from Chennai visited the mission fields of Umerkote and Jhorigaon. Many of them were challenged for missionary work and burdened for the ministry of prayer. Pray that their efforts may benefit the harvest.

Â God blessed our believers by reviving them spiritually through the fasting prayers conducted in different places. Govindapalli (25), Biriguda (30), Bodoborondi (20), Perrula Chowk (20), Andri (50), Simildara (18), Doldoli (15) and Sankoroda (25).

Â Mrs. Florence Jaisankar delivered a girl baby. Many thanks for your earnest prayers.

Â Ninety youth participated in a three days *Discipleship Training Camp* held at Lamtaput. Mr. Ashok Vedasiromani and Mr. Ponnusamy challenged the participants through the Word of God.

Â A two day revival meeting was conducted in Jeypore. The 300 participants were edified and enlightened by the Word of God shared by Mr. Y. Paul Dinakaran.

Â God blessed a four day *church-planters training camp* held in Ramagiri. 48 workers attended from all stations of BYM, in Orissa. Mr. & Mrs. Y. Paul Dinakaran taught various strategies in soul winning and motivated the participants for effective evangelism.

RAJASTHAN

Â God enabled us to extend the ministry in and around Khumbi and Ananthapuri. The service and commitment of our native workers are very much remarkable.

Â Eight girls are regularly attending the prayer cell in the mission compound, Jaipur. Pray that they may experience God's touch personally in their lives.

Â The Lord is honouring our prayerful efforts towards revival of the youth fellowship in CNI church, Jaipur. Pray for the the Bible studies conducted there to strengthen them in faith.

Â Jhumpa, Bhavadi, Deverla, Nemada, Napawali Jahaj, Itala, Rupakheda, Patia and Khuti were newly visited with the Gospel. Pray that these villagers may experience the love of God in their lives.

Â Prayer cell girls in Ajmer are learning the Word of God with much enthusiasm and are sharing the same with their family members. May His Word renew and transform these young seekers.

Â Kindly pray for the divine healing of Mrs. Singh (eye problem), Jitendra (fits), Dilip (chest pain), Raoji (kidney problem), Sarjit (high BP), Sem and Kachriyaji (debility), our believer Makkan's son (childlessness).

TAMILNADU

Â 55 Tribal believers participated in a Bible Teaching Programme in Chitling, conducted by our missionaries.

Â 20 belivers gather for worship regularly in our Church in Mannur. The thatched roof and mud walls of the worship shed are severely damaged. Missionary Samuel and his wife minister in about nine villages around Mannur. Construction of a new church building is proposed at Rs. 1,50,000/-. Please pray for this building project.

Â More than 20 youth are regularly gathering for worship in Alagur village where missionary Perumal and his wife minister. Since the hut in which they stay is in very bad condition, it is proposed to construct a missionary quarters with one bed room and a kitchen at an estimated cost of Rs. 80,000/-. Please pray.

Â Blessing Elementary School in Sitteri Hills is upgraded as Middle School from this academic year. Three more class rooms, a Library, Laboratory and additional facilities are needed. Please pray for God's provisions.

UTTAR PRADESH

Â Pray for the Blessing well wishers' Meet to be held in Jhansi on 15 August.

Â Missionary Lalitha Mathansingh is diagnosed for ovarian cancer and is admitted in the CMC Hospital, Vellore. Pray for God's miraculous touch on her.

Â Missionary Suchita Subhash and one of our sponsors, Sheela Rajasekar are in the family way. Pray for safe confinement.

WEST BENGAL

Â Praise God for the fruitful visit to Coochbehar by our missionaries to raise subscribers for *Blessing* magazine. May this magazine be used as God's tool for the revival of many people in this area.

Â God blessed the survey visit of our Missionaries in Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya. A Blessing Literature Distribution Programme has been planned.

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Mr. J. Santhakumar
Camp Coordinator,
4/617, 24th Street, Shanthinagar
Palayamkottai 627002
0462-2542909, 94433-42909

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Address for Correspondence & Contributions:

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

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