



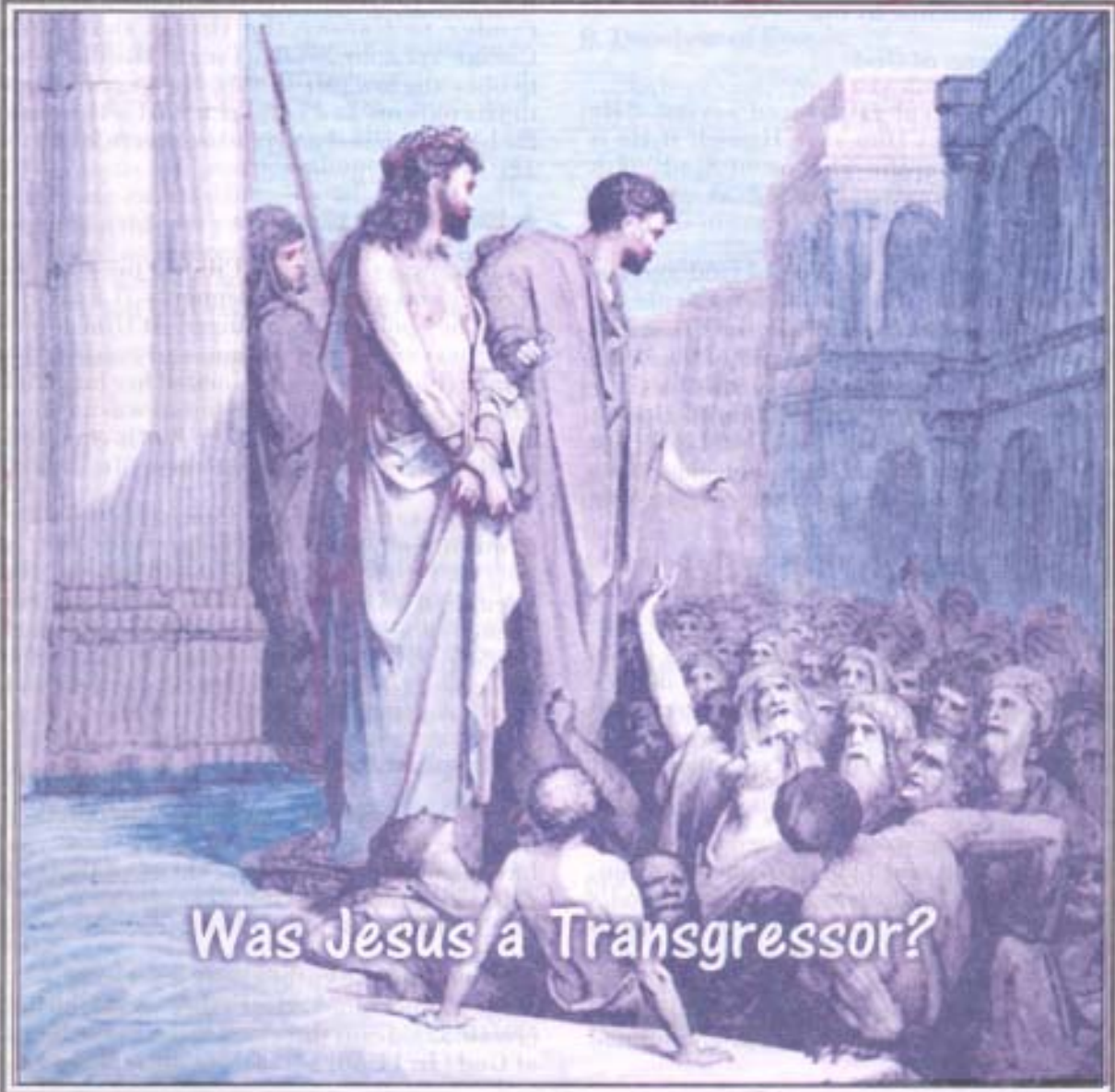
www.BlessingYouthMission.org

Blessing

July 2007
Volume 36 Issue 7

Single copy Rs. 5/-

Annual Subscription Rs.50/-



Was Jesus a Transgressor?



MUMMY, DADDY, LISTEN!

Arputhamani (21), Alangulam (Youth Contest)

Even in the 21st century every home has parents who seat their children and pour out their counsel. But I am yet to see parents who sit beside their child and ask, "How would you like us to be?" If we are given the freedom to change our parents like we change the shirt, many parents will be rendered childless. In everyday life, what I see in homes made me to take some decisions to be a good parent and that has taken the shape of this article.

1. Expressing Love

The very reason why the world still goes round is the small four lettered word called love. If it is removed, the earth will turn instantly to hell. The first and foremost that children expect is love. From the newborn babe to the bride / groom they long for love. Parents should love their children the way the Father in heaven loves us (1 Jn 4:9). Shower love on your children, without locking it up in your heart (1 Jn 3:18). Only those starved of parental love will go in search of other love.

2. Giving Comfort

What the child needs on its return from school or college is not authoritative commands rather words of comfort. A cup of tea or a balm for the headache. Simple as they may seem these are the acts that lay the foundation for future relationship. Enquire about their day and their experience and be a well spring of comfort.

3. Meeting Needs

How many parents are thoughtful enough to meet the needs of the children even before they ask? You can buy a pen before the exams or a new dress to the one entering a new class. I am not suggesting that you give in to all their demands, no. But forethought touches their heart. When Isaac was in the marriageable age and longed for a mother's love, even before he expressed his need, Abraham was sensitive to look for a companion for him (Gen 24:2,3,67). But when

Isaac failed to do it, Esau went bride-hunting on his own.

4. Trusting

Many parents who believe the words of their neighbours hesitate to trust their own children. Trust them and tell them so. Tell them, "Wherever you go, with whoever you interact, we believe you will not dare sin against God or us." Such words of trust will keep them from evil friends and wrong moves. If you do suspect foul play, instead of hurling abusive words like Judah, approach gently (Gen 38:24).

5. Praising

Jesus received praise from His Father before and inbetween His ministry (Mt 3:17; Mk 9:7).

Daily look for opportunities to praise. In my own experience I have witnessed that a simple appreciation like, "Very good" boosted a student and kept up his spirit the whole day. Never forget to commend him for the smart dress, giving his seat to an old lady in the bus, giving alms, watering the garden or warming up your tea.

6. Giving Freedom

Let children develop according to their taste and desires. Don't force upon them the shirt you choose for them that day. Don't be adamant that he should become a doctor. If you take them to the hotel, happily allow them to eat what they want instead of forcing them to eat the *idlies* you order for them. Let them feel free to express their feelings, likes and dislikes. At the same time don't turn the other way like Eli when you see sin in them (1 Sam 3:13). They need correction and discipline that will deliver them from the wrath of God.

7. Spending Time

Parents who buy a cellphone for children for Rs. 4000/- are unable to spend four minutes with them. If you do not spend quality time with them they will turn out to be your shame. David had no time to see what his son Amnon was suffering

If we are given the freedom to change our parents like we change the shirt, many parents will be rendered childless.

from. Neither did he stop for a minute to wonder why Tamar had to come (2 Sam 13:6,7). He had to face the consequences of his negligence. Spend time with them to know their personality. How many of you know what class your child is studying in, her marks, his college friend's name, your daughter's favourite colour or the examination date?

8. Respecting Friends

This generation expects its friends to be accepted as part of the family. Love your children's friends and give hospitality to them without caste, religion or language discrimination. It will pave the path for your children to respect you, foster family friendships and help unbeliever friends to know Christ. When Saul did not respect Jonathan's friendship, he had to lie to his father (1 Sam 20:28-34).

But parents should have their eyes wide open to children's friends and warn them against improper friends. Remember Jonadab who misled Amnon.

9. Feeding Self-Confidence

In this era of stiff competition inferiority complex is an inescapable enemy for children. Parents who ought to wipe it off their face sometimes nurture it. In many homes dogs and cats are given beautiful names but children are called by abusive names like stupid, useless and so on. This only hinders their growth. Remove your children's complex regarding beauty, intelligence or ability and replace it with self confidence. Feed them the I-can-do spirit. Make a decision to leave off words like idiot, get out, nonsense and shut-up.

10. Impartiality

Just like our five fingers are different, kids also differ in their beauty, intelligence and ability. That should not be the basis of parental love. The partiality of Isaac and Rebekah spawned many ills within the family (Gen 25:28). Love all children equally. When one child needs more attention explain it to the others.

11. Avoiding Complaining

Children hate your complaining about them to relatives or neighbours. Have a straight talk with

your children. David needed a middle man Joab to be reconciled to his own son. But the son turned out to be his enemy (2 Sam 14:1,19,21; 15:13)

12. Avoiding Comparisons

Children are deeply hurt by comparisons like, "Look at David. He's got 90% but you have got just 80%" or "See, Mary is such a quiet girl. Why are you so talkative?" Teach them good behaviour from the Scriptures. Expect according to their ability. Presenting them with good books and encouraging them to read helps a lot.

13. Forgiving

Don't be lamenting about what happened years ago. Forgive and forget. Let them know how deeply you were hurt but with the idea of correcting them. Father and mother should not join hands to judge a child; rather remember how the heavenly Father forgave us.

14. Sharing

When children want to know your conversation, instead of getting angry, explain to them what they need to know. Discuss with them when you plan to buy a house, jewels, clothes or vehicle. That will boost their self respect and build up confidence, respect and love for their parents. "You don't need to know. Don't poke your nose into everything" attitude will put them off. After all, Naaman's

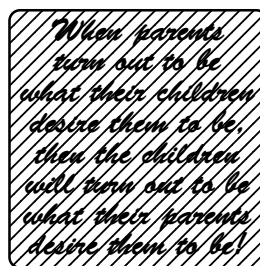
leprosy was healed by the counsel of a little girl (2 Ki 5:3,14).

15. Role Modeling

How can you expect them to do what you do not do or not do what you do? They are your replicas. Like mother like daughter. The grandmother and mother were Timothy's models (2 Tim 1:5). Money or land or things are not what they need. Earn a good name for yourself so that they will be proud to be introduced as your children. Cornelius was an excellent model to his children (Acts 10:2).

When parents turn out to be what their children desire them to be, then the children will turn out to be what their parents desire them to be! f

(Miss Arputharani is a trained teacher taking tutions at home.)



GUESTS OF HONOUR!

E.L. Ephraim

Sixty five year old Thulasirani Devi was a poor woman living by begging on the road leading to Kolkotta airport. Mrs. Malai Saha stepped out of her car one day, to meet Thulasirani Devi. She wrote the latter's name on the envelope and handed over the wedding invitation of her daughter, inviting her to the function. Thulasirani Devi went with trepidation to the house in Jotpur Nagar and the Saha couple greeted her at the entrance. And an even greater surprise awaited Thulasirani. There were more than 250 beggars seated on chairs in the marriage hall. Each one of them was given new clothes and sweets and were invited to part take of the rich feast. And then they were asked to stand together as a group. The bride and the groom came in and fell at the feet of these guests to receive their blessings. Among them were the blind, the lame and those infirm because of age.

Mr. Malai Saha was gratified. "No words can describe the joy of my invitees. Whosoever I could have otherwise called for the occasion, my daughter and her husband would not have received the kind of blessing these grateful hearts pronounced. My father invited a hundred and seventy five poor people and honoured them at my wedding, I have invited two hundred and fifty and I am sure my son will also carry on the family tradition."

When I read this in the news paper on 12th March 2007 it set me thinking. Some of us boast of our families and its traditions. Can we point to anything equal to this act of generosity? Speaking about dinners our Lord Jesus said, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor your rich neighbours, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind."

"And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just (Lk 14:12-14). Following this teaching Jesus tells us the Parable of the great supper to which the master had to give a second invitation asking his servants to go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor, the

maimed the lame and the blind and also to the highways and hedges compelling people to come and fill his house. Part of the Lord's earthly ministry was to preach the gospel to the poor. The leaders of the early church reminded Paul and Barabas to remember the poor. Paul was himself particular that the poor must be taken care of (Gal 2:9,10). Notice also how James the apostle stresses the point: "Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in trouble and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (Jam 1:27). Preachers are drawn mostly to the latter part of the verse which speaks of keeping oneself unspotted from the world, rather than to the first half which is about showing love and concern for the needy. Paul writes to the Romans telling them to cater to the needs of poor saints and to be hospitable (Rom 12:13).

Our dear brother, Patrick Joshua of FMPB is well known among Christian circles. He gave up his high ranking post in the LIC to serve the Lord full time. Since then he has chosen to lead a very simple life style, which is an example to many of us. During vacation it was his practice to take his children with him to the slums to distribute household utensils, clothes and eatables among the poor and also share the gospel with them. We have to follow the example of such practising Christians. James writes, "If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?" (Js 2:15,16). Bro. Patrick Joshua's only son died a martyr among the Malto people, at the age of twenty five. His personal effects at that time were kept in a carton, and these were one or two sets of clothing and nothing else. A book entitled *Mission Mandate* was released at the conference of Heads of Missions, in the year 2000. The book contains an article, 'Life style of an Indian Evangelist.' It tells how important a simple life style is in the work of proclaiming the gospel in India. In fact identifying oneself with the poor is the first step an evangelist ought to take.

“Do not forget to entertain strangers for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels” (Heb 13:2). Think of Abraham who saw three men standing by, ran up to them and invited them to rest a while because it was noon time, prepared a young calf, and give them to eat with cakes, butter and milk. These strangers were angels.

Tamilnadu was well known for its spirit of hospitality. The old houses here have raised platforms along the breadth of the house open to any traveller who wishes to rest by day or by night. But today such extensions in the front part of the house are also enclosed behind iron grills and doors which can be locked. Somebody joked about the usual warning: “Beware of Dogs” hung at the entrance, asking whether it includes the people inside along with the canine watch. How artful we are when visitors over stay, to remind them of their return ticket and ever offering help to book them! Once upon a time friends and relatives were expected to come three days before a wedding. Whereas now a days guests are expected to come at the right time and leave also within the expected period. They are not to bother us by arriving early or by over staying.

Take note also of the fact that the widows in the early church were to be taken care of without racial discrimination. The Bible has provided the model for welfare activities of any community. Today’s governments come up with projects for the welfare of the poor, the handicapped and the widows. Look at what Moses taught the people of Israel when they celebrated festivals.

“You shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your man servant and your maid servant and the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates” (Deut 16:14). God gave equal status to children and strangers in this commandment. At harvest time too God told his people to be mindful of the poor. “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger. I am the Lord your God” (Lev 19:9,10). Let us put away our miserliness which prompts us to give away only left overs or unserviceable throw away articles to the poor.

There is a well known ancient family in Thanjavur, the family of Abraham Pandithar, who has rendered yeo man service to Tamil, Tamil music and Tamil medicine in his day. It was customary for him to set aside to God the first place at the annual family love feast. On such an occasion when his children, their spouses, the parents of the spouses were all gathered, a stranger in dirty, worn out clothes came and sat at the place set aside for God. Pandithar was out raged. He couldn’t tolerate the insolence and saw to it that the man was driven out. But that night Pandithar (Man of learning) could not sleep. His peace was gone. God spoke to him saying, “I was hungry, you gave me no food.” He repented and wrote the following lines:

*“Who was it that came?
Was He God’s own son?
Who was it that came?
Was He the one Angels celebrate?
Who was it that came in our human form,
Taking on the appearance of the poor?”*

Don’t you know on the Day of Judgment our attitude to the needy is going to determine where we would spend our eternity?

Jesus when He visited Nazareth during his years of ministry and at the synogogue read the following passage from Isaiah and related it to his ministry: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, To preach deliverance to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Lk 4:18,19).

The Lord considered preaching the gospel to the poor as an important part of His earthly ministry. In the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus let us consider why the rich man went to hell. Because he was selfish he took no notice of Lazarus who was laid at his gate. Lazarus needed only the crumbs which fell from his table. We too are often guilty of our sins of omission, sin of not doing what we ought to do.

We all accept fasting as a spiritual discipline. But here is the fasting which pleases God, “Is this not the fast, that I have chosen, To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let

the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who is cast out When you see the naked you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? (Isa 58:6,7).

Late Mrs. Hepzibah Pandian of Thanjavur preached the gospel to the beggars every week. She invited them to family celebrations and on festival days gave them new clothes to wear. She ministered to the handicapped also on a weekly basis. She personally shared the love of God with the patients who came to her husband's eye hospital. No wonder her daughter Dr. Lilian Stanley took up projects like **FEED ORISSA** and took efforts to help Tsunami victims.

Helping the poor is not a matter left to our option but is a command from God. "For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore **I command** you saying, "You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land" (Deut 15:11). The Lord has commanded us to: "Defend the poor and the fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy, free them from the hand of the wicked?" (Psa 82:3,4).

Did not Nehemiah encourage the repentant remnant to go back rejoicing and as part of their celebration, send portions to those for whom nothing was prepared? (Neh 8:10).

Mordecai likewise instructed the Jews to send presents to one another and gifts to the poor when they celebrated Purim (Esther 9:22).

When Job justifies himself before God he speaks of how he helped those in need: "If I have kept the poor from their desire, or caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or eaten my morsel by myself so that the fatherless may not eat of it (but from my youth I reared him as a father and from my mother's womb I guided the widow); If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or any poor man without covering; if his heart has not blessed me, And if he was not warmed with fleece of my sheep" (Job 31:16-20). "Then let me be punished," says Job. He also claims, "No sojourner had to lodge in the street, for I have opened my doors to the traveller (Job 31:32). Wouldn't we call this practical christianity?"

Moses warned the people of Israel, "Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'the seventieth year, the year of release, is at hand' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the Lord against you, and it become sin among you" (Deut 15:9).

"You shall not oppress the hired servant who is poor and needy, whether one of your brothers or one of the aliens who is in your land within your gates. Each day you shall give him his wages and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it, lest he cry out against you to the Lord and it be sin to you" (Deut 24:14,15).

How mindful the Lord is of the poor and the needy! We read in the book of Proverbs, "He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker but he who honours Him has mercy on the needy" (Prov 14:31).

"He who gives to the poor will not lack But he who hides his eyes will have many curses" (Prov 28:27). "He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker" (Prov 17:5).

"Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard" (Prov 21:13).

Let us take heed of the warning God has sounded through the prophet Isaiah: "Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, Who write misfortune, which they have prescribed to rob the needy of justice, and to take what is right from the poor of my people and that they may rob the fatherless" (Isa 10:1,2).

One other curse placed on the people of Israel when they do not obey the law of the Lord goes like this, "Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due the stranger, the fatherless and widow, and all the people shall say: Amen" (Deut 27:19).

Our God is the friend of the poor. Singing His praises the Psalmist says, "You are the helper of the poor" (Psa 10:14) and, "All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like You, Delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, Yes, the poor and the needy from him who plunders him?" (Psa 35:10).

“For He will deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also and him who has no helper, He will spare the poor and the needy, and save the souls of the needy” (Psa 72:12,13). “For He shall stand at the right hand of the poor, To save him from those who condemn him” (Psa 109:31).

The prophet Isaiah has described the Lord likewise: “For You have been a strength to the poor a refuge from the storm, a shade from the noon day heat; for the blast of the terrible one is as a storm against the wall” (Isa 25:4).

Jeremiah prophesies to his people, “Thus says the Lord: Execute judgement and deliver the plundered out of the hand of the oppressor. Do no wrong and do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place” (Jer 22:3).

Throughout His earthly sojourn, the Lord Jesus identified Himself with the poor. The angels declared at His birth, “And this will be the sign to you; you will find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger (Lk 2:12).

The Magi thought the Baby born King of the Jews would be in a palace; they were in for a surprise. Jesus has Himself said, “Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head” (Mt 8:20).

Paul writes, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich” (2 Cor 8:9). Also, (Christ) “... made Himself of no reputation taking the form of a servant and coming in the likeness of men” (Phil 2:7).

How hollow by contrast is the snobbery of men who casually drop names of the rich and the powerful in order to be identified with them!

Sister Sarah Navaraji singing of Him has writttern, ‘The King, Jesus stands by you, having taken the form of a poor human’

The famous politician late Chief Minister of Tmilnadu (India), C.N. Annadurai used to say, ‘We see God in the smile of the poor.’ Being kind to the poor brings down God’s blessings upon us.

The Scripture records, “He has dispersed abroad He has given to the poor, His righteousness endures forever, His horn will be exalted with honour” (Psa 112:9).

“He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, And He will pay back what he has given” (Prov 19:17).

“You shall surely give to him (the poor among your brothers) and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing, the Lord your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand” (Deut 15:10).

We have all paid attention to the Lord’s invitation to ask. But we are yet to learn the principle of giving. Just give and see how you receive in good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over (Lk 6:38).

In remembrance of my mother’s anniversary on 31st of May this year we visited the Bethesda Home for the Aged and Disabled, run by TELC. “May God bless you” said an aged mother residing there. So earnest and sincere were her words that I consider it a highly valuable blessing. Similarly in commemoration of my father’s death anniversary we have been visiting Anbu Illam every 30th of November for the past nineteen years. This is a home for the mentally retarded. Our parents were not themselves well to do, yet they befriended the poor. We walk in their footsteps now.

Mother Theresa, whom the whole world holds in respect led a very simple life. She was so honoured by the nations of the world that she had freedom to travel to any place in the world, even free of cost. Her funeral was attended by dignitaries from more than a hundred and fifty countries. Kolkotta just shook that day. The Prime Minister of India, Hon. I.K. Gujral came in person to pay his respects. The Chief Minister of Bengal, Com. Jothi Basu, a man who would normally never bow before another man came to pay homage to her. The same gun carriage which took Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to the burning ghat carried mother Theresa to be buried with the hope of resurrection. REMEMBER THE POOR, YOU WILL BE REMEMEBERED FOREVER. **f**

FAITH WARRIORS

Persecution of the Early Christians

(Taken from the book, Foxe's Christian Martyrs of the world by John Foxe)

The Third Persecution

During the third persecution, Pliny the second wrote to the emperor Trajan, complaining that thousands of Christians were being killed daily, although none of them had done anything worthy of persecution.

During this persecution Ignatius was condemned to death because he professed Christ. At the time, he was living in Antioch, next in line as bishop after Peter. As he made the trip from Syria to Rome under heavy guard, he preached to the churches he passed and asked the church in Rome not to try to save him. Condemned to be thrown to the lions, Ignatius replied, "I am the wheat of Christ: I am going to be ground with the teeth of wild beasts, that I may be found pure bread."

The Fourth Persecution

After a respite, the Christians again came under persecution, this time from Marcus Aurelius, in A.D. 161.

One of those who suffered this time was Polycarp, the venerable bishop of Smyrna. Three days before he was captured, Polycarp dreamed that a pillow under his head caught fire, and when he awoke, he told those around him that he would burn alive for Christ's sake.

Hearing his captors had arrived one evening, Polycarp left his bed to welcome them, ordered a meal prepared for them, and then asked for an hour alone to pray. The soldiers were so impressed by Polycarp's advanced age and composure that they began to wonder why they had been sent to take him, but as soon as he had finished his prayers, they put him on an ass and brought him to the city.

As he entered the stadium with his guards, a voice from heaven was heard to say, "Be strong, Polycarp, and play the man." No one nearby saw anyone speaking, but many people heard the voice.

Brought before the tribunal and the crowd, Polycarp refused to deny Christ, although the proconsul begged him to "consider yourself and have pity on your great age. Reproach Christ and I will release you."

Polycarp replied, "Eighty six years I have served Him, and He never once wronged me. How can I blaspheme my King, who saved me?"

Threatened with wild beasts and fire, Polycarp stood his ground. "What are you waiting for? Do whatever you please."

The crowd demanded Polycarp's death, gathering wood for the fire and preparing to tie him to the stake.

"Leave me," he said. "He who will give me strength to sustain the fire will help me not to flinch from the pile." So they bound him but didn't nail him to the stake. As soon as Polycarp finished his prayer, the fire was lit, but it leaped up around him, leaving him unburned, until the people convinced a soldier to plunge a sword into him. When he did, so much blood gushed out that the fire was immediately extinguished. The soldiers then placed his body into a fire and burned it to ashes, which some Christians later gathered up and buried properly.

In this same persecution, the Christians of Lyons and Vienne, two cities in France, also suffered, including Sanctus of Vienne, Maturus, Attalus of Pergamos, and the woman Blandina, all of whom endured extreme torture and death with fortitude and grace.

The Fifth Persecution, A.D. 200

During the reign of Severus, the Christians had several years of rest and could worship God without fear of punishment. But after a time, the hatred of the ignorant mob again prevailed, and the old laws were remembered and put in force against them. Fire, sword, wild beasts, and imprisonment were resorted to again, and even the dead bodies of Christians were stolen from their graves and mutilated. Yet the faithful continued to

multiply. Tertullian, who lived at this time, said that if the Christians had all gone away from the Roman territories, the empire would have been greatly weakened.

By now, the persecutions had extended to northern Africa, which was a Roman province, and many were murdered in that area. One of these was Perpetua, a married lady twenty six years old with a baby at her breast. On being taken before the proconsul Minutius, Perpetua was commanded to sacrifice to the idols. Refusing to do so, she was put in a dark dungeon and deprived of her child, but two of her keepers, Tertius and Pomponius, allowed her out in the fresh air several hours a day, during which time she was allowed to nurse her child.

Finally the Christians were summoned to appear before the judge and urged to deny their Lord, but all remained firm. When Perpetua's turn came, her father suddenly appeared, carrying her infant in his arms, and begged her to save her own life for the sake of her child. Even the judge seemed to be moved. "Spare the gray hairs of your father," he said. "Spare your child. Offer sacrifice for the welfare of the emperor."

Perpetua answered, "I will not sacrifice."

"Are you a Christian?" demanded Hilarianus, the judge.

"I am a Christian," was her answer.

Perpetua and all the other Christians tried with her that day were ordered killed by wild beasts as a show for the crowd on the next holiday. They entered the place of execution clad in the simplest of robes, Perpetua singing a hymn of triumph. The men were to be torn to pieces by leopards and bears. Perpetua and a young woman named Felicitas were hung up in nets, at first naked, but the crowd demanded that they should be allowed their clothing.

When they were again returned to the arena, a bull was let loose on them. Felicitas fell, seriously wounded. Perpetua was tossed, her loose robe torn and her hair falling loose, but she hastened to the side of the dying Felicitas and gently raised her from the ground. When the bull refused to attack them again, they were dragged out of the arena, to the disappointment of the crowd, which

wanted to see their deaths. Finally brought back in to be killed by gladiators, Perpetua was assigned to a trembling young man who stabbed her weakly several times, not being used to such scenes of violence. When she saw how upset the young man was, Perpetua guided his sword to a vital area and died.

The Sixth Persecution, A.D. 235

This persecution was begun by the emperor Maximinus, who ordered all Christians hunted down and killed. A Roman soldier who refused to wear a laurel crown bestowed on him by the emperor and confessed he was a Christian was scourged, imprisoned, and put to death.

Pontianus, Bishop of Rome, was banished to Sardinia for preaching against idolatry and murdered. Anteros, a Grecian who succeeded Pontianus as Bishop of Rome, collected a history of the martyrs and suffered martyrdom himself after only forty days in office.

Pammachius, a Roman senator, and forty two other Christians were all beheaded in one day and their heads set on the city gates. Calepodius, a Christian minister, after being dragged through the streets, was thrown into the Tiber River with a millstone fastened around his neck. Quiritus, a Roman nobleman, and his family and servants, were barbarously tortured and put to death. Martina, a noble young lady, was beheaded, and Hippolitus, a Christian prelate, was tied to a wild horse and dragged through fields until he died.

Maximinus was succeeded by Gordian, during whose reign and that of his successor, Philip, the Church was free from persecution for more than six years. But in 249, a violent persecution broke out in Alexandria without the emperor's knowledge.

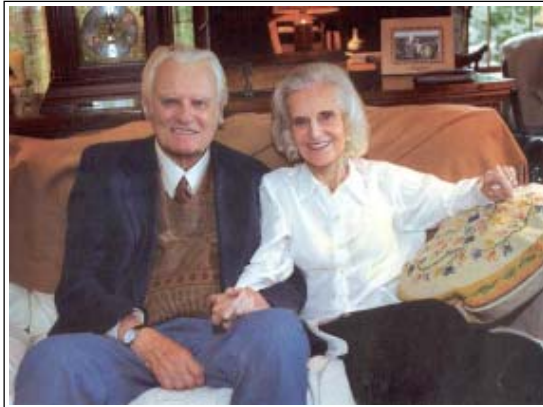
Metrus, an old Christian of Alexandria, refused to worship idols. He was beaten with clubs, pricked with sharp reeds, and stoned to death. Quinta, a Christian woman was dragged by her feet over sharp flint stones, scourged with whips, and finally stoned to death. Apollonia, an old woman nearly seventy, confessed that she was a Christian, and the mob fastened her to a stake, preparing to burn her. She begged to be let loose and the mob untied her, thinking she was ready to recant, but to their astonishment, she immediately threw herself back in to the flames and died. f

Ruth Graham — A Tribute!

Billy Graham the renowned preacher who preached for more than sixty years lost his wife on June 14. What a great life she had. Who could have known Ruth Graham better than Billy Graham. This tribute to Ruth Graham is taken from <http://billygraham.org>

Billy Graham's Tribute to Ruth Graham on the Occasion of her Death on 14 June 2007

My wife Ruth was the most incredible woman I have ever known. Whenever I was asked to name the Christian I ever met, I always replied, 'My wife, Ruth.' She was a spiritual giant, whose unparalleled knowledge of the Bible and commitment to prayer were a challenge and inspiration to everyone who knew her.



My favorite photograph shows her sitting on our front porch at sunrise, quietly reading her Bible and coffee—her daily routine for many years. A night never went by, when we were together, without us her hands and praying before we went to sleep.

Ruth also was a wonderful mother. Her task wasn't easy since I was away from home so much, but she handled our children with both great love and wise discipline. She felt it was her calling, and without willingness to bear the major responsibility for raising our children, my work simply would not have been possible. She spent hours every week teaching them the Bible and praying with each of them. She also full of fun, always ready to play a

joke on someone. Our children all knew that life was never dull with I around!

She was committed also to her church and her community. She was a devout churchwoman who loved Presbyterian heritage, which came from her parents who were medical missionaries in China. She was with several presidents' wives and had been received on occasion by Queen Elizabeth II, but when we heard of anyone in our community who had a need, she always was there to help

with food or flowers other ways. Many people went to her for advice and counsel, or just to pray with her, and she was a friend to the wives of many associates.

Ruth loved sports and was quite athletic, although she rarely played athletic games herself. Years ago she was fixing a swing for some of our grandchildren, and when she climbed the tree to test the swing, it broke and she fell about fifteen feet. She fractured several bones (including a crushed vertebra), and was never quite the same physically after that. For years she suffered severe back pain and was hospitalized here in Asheville and at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester because of this and other ailments. She was a gentle, smiling and kind person whose primary goal was to live for Christ and reflect His love. In her last days she talked repeatedly of Heaven, and although I will miss her more than I can possibly say, I rejoice that some day soon we will be reunited in the presence of the Lord she loved and served so faithfully. f

Soul for a Cup of Tea!

(How I won a soul)

Was it yesterday? Though four years have rolled into eternity and gone out of the reach of humanity, it looks as if it had happened only yesterday! It was fortyfive minutes past midnight. The post midnight peace was shattered by quarreling voices, that came from the house opposite to ours. An old lady aged eighty was quarreling with her son aged fifty. The feminine ferocity drove her son to our threshold and he did not let go the calling bell until the door was opened. He sought the help of my husband, a police officer. Praise God, my husband could bring them to their sense. From that day, whenever the old lady crossed our gate we usually greeted her in the traditional Indian way. Our earnest and sincere desire was that God should save granny.

Granny belonged to an orthodox hindu family. She had a rosy complexion. One could always find red kumkum and white stripes on her forehead. When we became better acquainted and the relationship had a foothold, we invited her for a cup of tea. She came. How to make this tete-a-tete the first step towards granny's salvation? One day we invited her to a prayer meeting held at our residence. To our joy, she accepted our invitation and participated in the prayer meeting. This went on for three months. Then granny suffered a huge loss in her life. At Tuticorin port, her son met with an accident, fell into the sea and died. "God, comfort her; Let her find solace in you." Our prayer was answered. Nearer... nearer... yes, she started to go nearer to God. Our family altar got enlarged as granny sat with us daily and joined our family prayers. Her forehead marks disappeared.

Once she fell sick and was bedridden. I made it a point to visit her daily, looked after her and comforted her. Unable to wash her clothing, she had kept the soiled linen in a bundle in a corner. In the morning, before I went to my office, I washed them for her. In the evening, when I came back from my office, I never forgot to buy her medicine or bread etc. By the grace of our Lord, she recovered from her illness. Never a day went without her visiting our home. Though granny was an illiterate, as we read the Bible, she listened

attentively and tried to repeat them. My husband sang some songs of calvary. He would explain their meaning. Whenever I and granny found some time to spend together, I taught her Biblical Truths about creation and fall of man, the necessity of human incarnation of Godhead as Jesus Christ and about heaven—the home of eternal joy, in a very simple way.

Valliammal granny became a missionary in our colony called St. Mary's Colony. She took pains to invite and bring people from our colony to the prayer meetings held in our home.

Once, during *Deepavali* season, I asked her whether new clothes had been bought for her. "I told them not to buy new clothes for me, as *Deepavali* has nothing to do with me," was her answer.

On 30th Decemeber 2007, granny came into our home by 5.30 pm. I and my husband welcomed her with a cup of tea. One day I asked her, "Granny, do you believe Jesus is the true God?" "Cerntainly" she said. "Then you need to be baptized" I replied. Her answer was simple, "Whatever you say." She told us that she would come back by 6 pm and went back to her house. To our surprise and distress, the chair on which granny usually sat was empty during the prayer time. The question "why" nagged our hearts. By 6.45 pm a big crowd gathered before granny's hosue. Later we learnt that she went straight from our home, laid down on her cot, slept peacefully and went to be with our Lord. The mourners siad in one accord—granny's participation in the daily prayers conducted in our home gave her a peaceful death.

granny's lifeless body was put on a pyre and the funeral procession started towards cremation ground in the traditional Hindu way.

Through granny's dedication and service, God Almighty found a foothold to reach her family. Now her grand daughter has become a believer and attends a church with her friend. Hallelujah!

—Mrs. Mahesh Robin, Tuticorin



2 July 2007 was a golden day for Blessing Youth Mission when the General Overseer of the Mission, **Mr. A. Lionel**, was honoured with a gold medal and a cash prize of Rs. 10,000/-. He was one among the five of 73,000 employees of the Tamilnadu Electricity Board to be honoured.

He started his career as a Junior Engineer in TNEB in 1971 and completed his service after 36 years when he retired as a Chief Engineer. His crowning achievement was the SWAP project. He noted that the time when Punjab and Haryana States needed electricity for the wheat season was different from that of Tamilnadu for rice production. He arranged for Tamilnadu to loan electricity for Punjab and Haryana and got it back for rice production later. The Board got crores of profit because of the wise arrangement. He also lighted the Pachamalai village which is the mission field of the Church of South India.

Mr. Lionel testifies, "By the grace of God I am what I am. He honours those who honour Him."

Congratulations!

—Blessing Youth Mission

MY FAITH EXPERIENCE!

It happened in 1977. I was working as Station Master at Kattur, on the busy Tiruchi-Villupuram Chord Line Section. I had only six months more to retire from the Railways. I had set my family at Tiruchirapalli for the sake of children's education. I was staying at Kattur alone. Once a week I used to go home. On that dark and unforgettable day, October 17th, 1997, I was busy with my Train Passing duties. The Control bell rang. I took up the receiver. "Jacob, you start at once to your home. One of your sons met with an accident, an electrical shock" said the caller.

There was no immediate train to reach home. I was able to catch a bus which took an hour to reach home. During that one hour, our Lord was preparing me to face the sorrowful situation. Regi, our 24 year old son had a sudden 'take off' to Heaven. Our Lord plucked this beautiful flower from our garden to adorn His beautiful Heaven. We had no choice but to surrender and accept the situation. Regi's death was caused by a leakage of power in the iron box while our daughter was ironing. The leakage passed through a faulty wire connection to the cloth line. While Regi was hanging a towel on the cloth line he had the fatal shock.

I thought my wife would break down as also the other children. But it was wonderful to see how the comforting Spirit of the Lord was caressing all of us. Regi was a committed young boy, a Bible lover and a voracious reader of Christian Literature.

Regi's death did not shatter our faith. We were all able to experience the wonderful grace and healing from the Lord's hands. Regi's death has prompted me to share our faith in the resurrected Lord and to comfort others with the comfort we have already received (2 Cor 1:3,4). Regi's home call has strengthened my faith in the Resurrection. It renewed my faith in the life after life, the Heavenly mansions which the Lord has prepared for all of us. It has given me a stimulus to wait for the New Kingdom where we all shall serve the Lord for ever and ever.

—M. J. Jacob, Goodnews Bookshop, Trichy

News from the Fields

Compiled by S. Mohan Deenadhayan, Regional Coordinator, West

The Blessing Youth Mission has stationed 323 missionaries in 15 States of India, namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, for reviving Churches and missionary evangelism leading to church plantation in churchless places. The news of various fields is compiled here for PRAISE and PRAYER.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Â Revival programmes were conducted in Angalakuduru village near Guntur in which 30 people were blessed. Mr. Bapaiah and Neelima accepted Christ as their Saviour.

Â 80 students attended the VBS in Vizianagaram and Warangal and four members fulfilled the Lord's command to follow Him.

Â Missionaries were edified through the two days fasting prayer conducted in Guntur. Missionary S. Mohan Deenadhayan ministered to them.

Â Pray for Bullodu, Srikanth, Muralidhar, Aruna, Mariyamma, Anusha and Jyothi to experience the salvation of God in their lives.

Â Pray for the healing of Santhamma (Kidney stone), Bapaiah (Blood clot in brain), Mercy, Hemalatha (Childlessness).

Â Pray for suitable life partners for Rathnakumari, Syamprakash, Kalyani, Bhaskar.

Â God enabled us to open a new mission field in Ongole from where missionaries S.V. Swamy family and Suresh will do revival ministry.

Â Korukonda church believers evangelized 12 villages of Bhogapuram mandal. Pray for a systematic follow up.

Â *Jesus* film was screened in Manapuram village.

Â Mr. Samuel, father of Missionary Jothi Ratnakar went to be with the Lord. Pray for Mrs. Anna Mary Samuel and other members of the bereaved family.

ASSAM

Â Pray for the arrangements going on for a State level *HALO 2007* (Youth Camp) in Sibsagar.

Â Guwahati Medical College prayer cell is growing. Dr. Senti, walesa, Sunge Kennelward and Gillian are a few zealous participants.

Â The *Blessing* Readers meet held in Johat encouraged our contacts. Dr. Alfred Devadason shared the Word.

Â Praise God for the involvement of Capt. Sangina family. Mrs. Singdha Sanguna has taken up the responsibility of checking the translation of our publications.

Â Mr. E. Ebenezer's family from Bangalore visited our Assam branch and encouraged the missionaries.

CHATISGARH

Â Missionaries R. Elisha & Deena Elisha ministered in CNI St. Paul's Church, Raipur and distributed Blessings books.

Â Pray for the preparation of the recording of the 6th volume of Hindi Song Cassette. We welcome your contribution for this purpose.

Â Pray for the ministerial efforts taken by our State Coordinator Mr. G. Rajadhas among the Lutheran Churches through Revival programmes.

GUJARAT

Â 1000 people heard the Word of God in a two day meetings arranged in the Alliance Church, Mehemedabad. Missionary Y. Paul Dhinakaran ministered the Word of God.

Â Mr. Bekabhai has accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. In response to experiencing a total deliverance, he removed all idols from his house.

Â God opened doors for the Gospel in Yal, Juni Jamuda and Kakarpada villages through the efforts taken by our native workers.

Â Prayer cells in Nadiad and Davda are growing fast. Pray for the salvation of Nody, Happy, Arpan and Nyon.

JHARKHAND

Â Missionary N.K. Kusha ministered in Patratu, Hurhuru, Korrah, Panditjee Road and Pugmil villages. Pray for a spiritual transformation in this area.

Â Dinesh, Sujjata and Teresa accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Satish, Prabhu, Silver and Behri show interest in the Gospel. Pray for their faith to grow.

Â Pray for the healing of Arvind (Appendicitis); Subash (Depression); Rebadi (Mental illness).

MADHYA PRADESH

Â In response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, 20 people have left their evil ways and committed their lives to Christ in Banda, Badagaon and Barethi villages.

Â Pray for the protection of our missionaries who are threatened by anti-Christian forces.

Â In a gospel meeting 20 youngsters responded to the Word in Magardha and Bhusa villages. As a result the youths started gathering everyday for prayer.

Â 60 children were blessed through His Word in a special program in Ghoghra village.

Â 18 people were blessed in a seekers' meeting at Barethi. Pray that they may find the Truth.

Â In Deborah Camp at Jabalpur 300 Christian women participated and were blessed. Mrs. Minvelli Sapphire from Chennai shared God's Word and challenged them to get involved in God's ministry and raise up Godly families.

Â In Blessing Children's Home, Katni all the 20 boys passed with high academic excellence. Harprasad and Bhagwat have come out with flying colours in the SSLC. Thanks to the well wishers for their regular support to these under privileged children.

Â Missionary kid Jesvin Devanesan was graciously healed consecutively from Tonsilitis, Malaria and Typhoid. Thanks to God.

Â Pray for the Tailoring School and Adult Literacy Programmes to be started soon in Shahgarh, Magardha and Bhusa.

KARNATAKA

Â More than 747 children attended the VBS in various fields in Karnataka and came to know more about Jesus Christ.

Â A new Sunday School was started in Thavarakatti village. Pray that the children may come to know the Saviour.

Â Pray for Dhanakka of Thavarakatti village who underwent a stomach surgery. Pray for the speedy recovery.

Â Forty people eagerly attended the VBS teachers Training Programme. Mrs. Shakuntala Sadmal gave the teaching. Pray that they may reach out many children for Christ in the days to come.

Â Droupathy family, Geetha, Kariyappa, Boju, Keshappa, and Basavva are the seekers. Pray for their spiritual upliftment.

Â Church construction work is getting delayed due to heavy rains. Pray for favorable weather.

Â Sunanda, a four year old girl was suffering from Hepatitis B and was about to die. But the Lord healed her through fervent prayers.

Â Missionaries S. Regunathan and Chandrasekar Sadmal with their spouses participated in the Life Revision Seminar organized by MUT, Vellore.

MAHARASHTRA

Â In a 3 day fasting and prayer seven elders from Jath Christi Mandir gathered and prayed earnestly. Similarly 20 believers gathered at Vaduj for a one-day Fasting and Prayer.

Â Pray for the compound wall construction project of Gargoti Church. We welcome your contributions.

Â Steps are taken for the Registration of Marathi *Blessing* Magazine as monthly periodical. Pray for quick processing.

RAJASTHAN

Â Praise God for Mr. Pearson and Bipin as they have opened their house for Prayer and Bible study. Also in Agwari and Bhudoli villages we are getting response to present the gospel.

Â A 3 days Youth camp *HALO 2007* was conducted in Rajasthan Bible Institute, Jaipur during 19-21 June 2007. 120 youths (boys and girls) from five districts of Rajasthan participated.

Missionary couple Manivannan and missionaries Devanesan and Jebasingh ministered to the youth from the Word of God. 20 youth experienced the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Praise God. From Kishangarh 10 students (children of sex workers) attended the camp. That was the first time they heard about the salvation in Jesus Christ. The World Vision team extended their cooperation in bringing these students to the camp.

Â Mr. Kalu a T B patient in Ghatiya village was healed when he heard the gospel and believed in the Lord Jesus. Earlier he was not able to eat and walk and now he is all right. His whole family has turned to the Lord.

Â Believers in Jamkudi and Shakarwara villages are facing opposition from their family members and relatives. Pray that they may stand for the Lord boldly and that peace may prevail in their families.

Â 15 children attend the Sunday school at our Missionary's rented house regularly.

Â Native missionary Mahaveer is suffering due to kidney stone. Please pray for his complete healing.

Â Men believers are not able to attend the Sunday Worship service. Pray that our Lord may remove the hindrances.

TAMILNADU

Â 2119 children attended the VBS in various fields in Tamilnadu and came to know more about Jesus Christ.

Â 38 villages were reached with the gospel in Sitteri and Aranuthu hills through the Summer Missionary Programme. 750 persons heard the gospel through the night meetings conducted in eight villages.

Â Nine girls passed out of the ten who appeared for the 10th exam from our Blessing girls's home. Thanks to Indienhilfe for their support to these children.

Â God saved miraculously our three Missionaries alongwith other passengers when their bus down the hill met with an accident.

Â Our missionary Devanesan's eldest brother, Mr. J. Jeevanantham went to be with the Lord on 12 July 2007. He had a heart attack. While working in a private company, he gave his spare

time to win souls and raised a congregation and pastored it Sengipatti village, 7 km away from Budalur, his native place. Please pray for his wife Hepzie, five sons and other members of the bereaved family.

WEST BENGAL

Â Missionary Sylvester John has newly joined our Siliguri team for His service.

Â A prayer cell has been newly started among Bihari people.

Â Missionaries P. Chezhan and V. Chelliah visited the pastors and leaders of the main line Churches in Kolkata and mobilized volunteers for the forth coming BLESSING VOLUNTEERS MEET.

Â Mrs. Chelladurai of Arupukottai had a mild heart attack while visiting West Bengal Mission field and was hospitalized in Siliguri. Through prayers she got recovered quickly. f

Help Us to Help You!

f Please quote the numbers computer printed above your name on the address label in all your correspondence with us.

f Note the expiry date of your subscription given on the address label and remember to renew the subscription promptly. **Annual Subscription Rs. 50/-; Life Subscription Rs. 500/-.** Send the money by money order or bank draft or cheque in favour of Blessing Youth Mission, Church Colony, Vellore 632 006, India.

f Don't forget to write your old address when you inform us of your new address.

f If you receive more than one copy of the Magazine, please send us both the envelopes so we can duly cancel one.

f Write for back issues of BLESSING to introduce the same to your friends and make them subscribe. Testify to them how this Magazine ministers to you month after month.

f Write to us if we can serve you better. Thank you!

—Editor

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers
for India under No. 30302/76

Published on 28th of every month

Postal Registration No. TN/CCN/139/06-08
Licensed to post without prepayment
WPP No. TN/CCN/23/06-08 (Inland)
189 (Foreign) 06-08

MAY WE PRAY FOR YOU?

The Prayer Room at the Headquarters Office is regularly accupied by staff who take turn to pray for the needs of people.

“And the prayer of faith will save the sick ... and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (Js 5:15-16).

Post your prayer requests to—

**PRAYER SECRETARY
BLESSING YOUTH MISSION
CHURCH COLONY
VELLORE 632 006**

MY FAITH EXPERIENCE!

You are invited to share about a true experience in your life that illustrates the influence of faith in God applied to a specific situation, in two pages of foolscap paper. Experiences that will uplift the faith of others will be considered for publication.

HOW I WON A SOUL

Please write to us how you led a person to the Lord. This may encourage another Christian to become a Soulwinner. You may write in any language and send to—

**THE EDITOR, BLESSING MAGAZINE
CHURCH COLONY, VELLORE 632 006
INDIA**

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

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



Subscription:

Single Coy : Rs. 5/-

Annual Subscription: Rs. 50/-

The Life Subscribers will freely receive not only the Magazine but also the books published by BYM from the date of their enrolment.

Other Language Editions :

Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Tamil and Telugu.

Address for Correspondence & Contributions:

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

Printed by Paul Aravamuthan at M/S Bapuji Printers, 5 Kurban Ali Street, Woods Road, Mount Road, Chennai 600002 and Published by V. Ashok Immanuel on behalf of Blessing Ministries, No.21 West Coovam River Road, Chitadripet, Chennai 600002. Editor: Dr. M. Arthur John