

The India Alliance News Letter

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AKOLA, BERAR, INDIA,
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DEAR FRIENDS

With the massing of the black clouds that herald the monsoon or rainy season in India at this time of the year, we rejoice in the assurance of the cleansing, refreshing and fertility that showers will bring to our burning plains following the arid months of the hot season.

We rejoice, too, in the knowledge of the showers of blessing which have fallen on various parts of our mission field, so that we can report a continuance of the harvest effort. In Akola, Murtizapur, Anjangaon, Amraoti and Chandur districts there have been more outcaste Mahars who have followed the Lord in baptism during the cold and hot seasons. Since his arrival in India, in February, the editor of this news letter has had the joy of personally witnessing fifty-one of these baptisms. There have, of course, been many more besides.

In view of the many who are turning to Christ in the villages of Berar, there is a crying need for pastors, evangelists, teachers, elders, Bible-women and lay leaders—thoroughly grounded in a knowledge of the Bible, well disciplined in the school of prayer—who will be thoroughly equipped to preach, teach, exhort, administrate and witness. In this way only can adequate provision be made for the shepherding of the flock of lambs now being brought into the fold.

To this end your prayers are solicited for the efforts which will be put forth this rainy season by the missionaries with their Indian brethren in the Bible schools of Khamgaon and Nargaon, and in the short term schools of the various districts. In these schools the plan will be to teach the Word, to establish believers in their new faith, and to choose leaders who, we trust, will be in the vanguard as the Church militant advances in India.

Another phase of our work which, at this time, calls for concentrated effort and prevailing prayer is the Christian youth movement which the Holy Spirit has inspired among the churches of Berar and Khandesh. Our young people continue to inspire their elders as they give themselves whole-heartedly to Jesus Christ in worship and service. The leader in this movement is a young Alliance man—college educated, gifted with leadership qualities, humbled by suffering—who is filled with a holy enthusiasm for work among the young. Encouraged by him and others like him, young peoples' societies have sprung up in urban and rural churches alike, young people have formed witnessing bands, and young people from various denominations and districts have met together for conferences and short term Bible schools. Through the impetus of this movement many a young life has been salvaged from the wreckage of sin and enlisted in an endeavour which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, promises to be a channel of revival blessing to the whole Church.

Politically, the situation in India is quiet for the time being. Except for a new crop of speculative comments, the release from protective custody of the physically failing, old nationalist, Mr. Gandhi, has done little to disturb the peace of the moment.

The defensive measures taken by the military authorities in India have proved quite adequate in warding off any serious threat of a Japanese invasion. Apart from fantastic rumours which go the rounds in a land where illiterate masses have little access to news facilities, the tense international situation has had little effect on the common people of this country.

[Though prices]

Though prices on commodities are still very high, the food situation has greatly improved, and even in the famine-stricken province of Bengal the Government has done much to eliminate the food scarcity by importing grain and distributing other necessities in the affected areas. Profiteering and hoarding has been stringently dealt with by those in authority, and the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, has shown himself unusually sensitive to the needs of India's suffering poor.

India continues to give a good account of herself in the war effort of the United Nations. Her factories are doing their full share in manufacturing war material. Many of her people are donating much of their time and money to noble causes like that of the Red Cross. Thousands of her youth are volunteers for service on the battle field where, by virtue of their valor and military prowess, they rank among the best of the world's fighting men. Within these ranks are a number of our Christian boys. Pray for these lads, and for their British and American comrades serving in India. Some of our missionaries have frequent opportunities to witness to soldiers: Pray that their ministry may bear fruit for eternity.

Though absent from their stations, and enjoying a much needed change of air in the hills during the hot season months of May and June, our missionaries have, nevertheless, been kept on the job even in this so-called vacation period. Our chairman, Mr. K. D. Garrison is never free from administrative duties. Mr. A. I. Garrison has been engaged in evangelistic ministries in the hill stations of Mahableshtar, Coonoor and Ootacamund. Messrs. Fred Schelander and Gerald Carner have been on a three weeks preaching tour through the native state of Travancore. All our missionaries have been busily occupied with correspondence, study, and preparation for the tasks of the rainy season.

We ask a continued interest in your prayers for the health of our missionaries. Not a few are very worn in body due to furloughs long overdue, some have been tried by sickness, and three underwent operations during the hot season.

Considering the magnitude of the task and the challenge of this crisis hour in India, our ranks are even now very thin. With the exit in the near future of missionaries proceeding on furlough with none to replace them, we are going to be faced with a very serious personnel problem on this field. If the opportunities confronting us today continue in the post-war India, we shall urgently require a goodly number of God-chosen reinforcements. Remember this when you ascribe your prayers to the Lord of the Harvest.

In conclusion, may we say that it is not without reticence that Lauren Carner has taken over the editing of the news of our India mission field from one so able as Mrs. K. D. Garrison. Upon his arrival in India at the end of February, he found himself appointed to this and other tasks. He is profoundly grateful for our heavenly Father's protection on the long, perilous journey, and rejoices in the privilege of once again joining his Indian and missionary comrades in the peerless task of making Christ known to the people of Hindustan!

Thank you for your prayers and gifts. We greet you in the name of our triumphant Saviour.

Yours in Him,

The Alliance Missionaries in India.