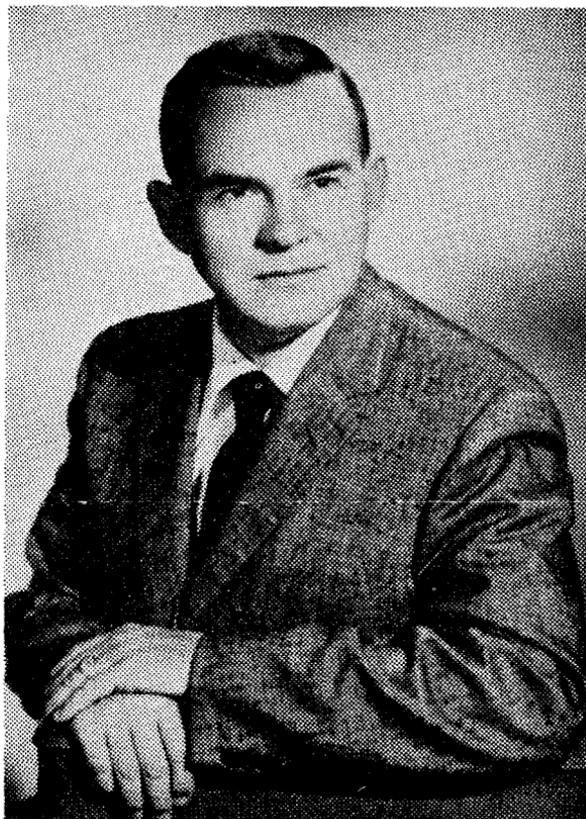


1960

# THE INDIA ALLIANCE

Bulletin of the Marathi Field of the India Mission of the  
Christian and Missionary Alliance



**Rev. Lauren Roy Carner**  
(August 7, 1908 — March 26, 1960)

**IN MEMORIAM**

This number of the *India Alliance* is not sent as a eulogy of our beloved comrade, the Rev. L. R. Carner. He would not have appreciated laudation. It is the prayer of those who send it that, reading of his devoted service to the Lord Jesus Christ, others may be challenged to yield their lives for loving service in the ranks of the Captain whom our brother served ~~so~~ wholeheartedly.

## TOURING AND TEACHING\*

REV. AND MRS. LAUREN R. CARNER

*'And he went through the cities and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem'* (Luke 13:22)

Cogently expressed, the essential task of a missionary, if he follows his Master, is to tour and to teach! 'In journeyings often', whether by the Apostle Paul to Lystra and Derbe, by William Carey to Serampore, by David Livingstone to Ilala, by Hudson Taylor to Ka-shing, by Robert Jaffray to Makassar, or by Mark Fuller to Akola,—the missionary has always found, sometimes despite many disturbing digressions, that he must travel to the City of God by the two-lane path of touring and teaching. This privileged pathway of service has, very distinctly, been ours—despite our unworthiness—to try to tread during this first year of our fourth term in India.

Our allocation to Amraoti included oversight of the work in that district and teaching in the Union Biblical Seminary at Yeotmal. To facilitate greater mobility for both these tasks we set up a semi-permanent camp about half way down the highway to Yeotmal from Amraoti, near the outstation of Nandgaon Khandeshwar. From this camp Lauren commuted on Tuesdays and Thursdays for his classes in Pauline Epistles and Comparative Religion at the Seminary. The camp also expedited teaching ministries to the Christians in the nearby village of Pohora and served as a base for evangelistic effort in the surrounding areas. We were assisted in the camp by a full-time student worker as well as four part-time lay workers who joined us there at different times during our stay. The camp ground, an oval-shaped grove of tall mango trees with a fine well, considered haunted by nearby villagers because of three suicides which had previously occurred in the well,—was at first avoided by our non-Christian neighbours. When our Indian comrades in the Gospel cleaned up the place it looked so inviting that it attracted numerous visitors, and especially when it was realised that we could stay there night after night

\* Mr. Carner's last report to Annual Conference in October 1959 which embodies for us all the spheres of service in which he was so proficient—writer, teacher, preacher and *kirtankar*.

with impunity. This made for numerous opportunities for personal witness. One old woman, who later became a devoted friend of Lacy Lee, remarked, 'When I first saw you and your tents here I was afraid to come anywhere near for I thought you were the D.S.P. come to investigate the last suicide'.

From the Nandgaon camp our touring party went for 'kirtan' to Yeotmal and Umri in the Free Methodist area, and in return Seminary students came to assist us in 'kirtan' ministries in some of the villages near our camp.

After four months of teaching and touring from this camp as our base, and following Commencement at the Seminary, we made a quick tour of the rest of Amraoti Taluka to invite village Christians to the East Berar Church Council *subha* which the brethren decided to convene at our Nandgaon camp. Fred Schelander ministered most effectively Easter week-end to about one hundred village Christians who gathered from both Chandur and Amraoti Talukas for this *subha*. Our Church Council leaders, Mr. and Mrs. Tilman Amstutz from Chandur, Mr. Nichols from Yeotmal and Mrs. Schlatter joined us in this time of joyous fellowship with our Risen Lord. As part of the *subha* programme Pastor Ratan Chavan solemnized the marriage of a Christian policeman from Nandgaon to his bride from Chandur Taluka. This Christian wedding gave witness to our Lord to a large number of non-Christian policemen who were wedding guests of the bridegroom. The Easter *subha* was a fitting climax to our stay at Nandgaon. The white tents in the once dark, forbidding grove had come to symbolize at this Festival of the Resurrection, even in the minds of non-Christian villagers, the triumph of Light over Darkness.

After breaking camp at Nandgaon Lauren joined Roland Perret on a *kirtan* tour among Wanjari tribes people in his area. Their unusually friendly and attentive interest in these meetings was obvious proof of the effective work Roland and Betty Perret had accomplished among them during the cold season. After this tour in Akola district Lauren returned to Amraoti for the move to the Nargaon Bible School the end of April following the departure of the Gerald Carners for furlough via Kodaikanal.

Our teaching ministries began again when the current school year at the Bible School opened the middle of July. A week following the opening of school the five-weeks refresher course

for our workers began at Nargaon. Ed Jacober of our Gujarat field gave a splendid two-weeks series of lectures, intellectually stimulating as well as spiritually edifying, on *Typology of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness* (interpreted from English to Marathi). This was followed by a one-week series of lectures presented by Lauren on *Christianity and Political Ideologies in Asia Today*. Our preachers were fascinated by instruction on the miraculous working of God in the Church in Asia in the face of the great host of opposing forces in this continent in modern times. Fred Schelander in his inimitable way concluded the refresher course with a challenging two-weeks series of lectures on the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. Because of the situation arising from the newly introduced scheme of indigenization attendance at the refresher course was entirely optional. Nevertheless, nine workers attended the first series of lectures, nine the second and fifteen the third. Only two remained for the whole five weeks. Our preachers evinced a keen interest in the course and there was evidence of a ready response in their hearts to the message of admonition and encouragement which God's Word brought to them. Our Bible School students also profited much by the course; those passing the examinations of the respective lecture series had extra credits applied to their academic records.

The Bible School this year has an enrolment of twenty-eight men of whom four are from the Free Methodists, four from the Baptists, three from T.E.A.M., two from the P.I.V.M., one from the Methodists and fourteen from the C. & M. A. Twelve of the students are married and their wives are enrolled in the women's department of the School. Two national brethren, Devrao Telgote and Abhiman Damle, serve full-time on the teaching staff, and one erudite layman from Jalgaon, Jaidev Sirwaiya, serves part-time. Assisting in the women's department are two part-time teachers, Shantabai Telgote and Nalinibai Kamble. It is especially gratifying in these trying times to note that five sons of Alliance preachers are enrolled in the current year in addition to a grandson of the late Pastor Ratnakar Dhiver whom Lauren very highly esteemed when he was a boy in India and the pastor worked with his father. Your prayers are earnestly solicited that we may faithfully discharge the grave responsibility committed to us that the things these young men hear from us they may, in the words of St. Paul, 'commit . . . to faithful men, who shall teach others also'.

A few weeks after conference adjourns our students will be scattered to seven different areas in Vidarbha, East and West Khandesh for the touring inter-session. To meet all the unsolicited requests for our student teams this year it has been necessary to divide the four regular teams into two groups each for the touring inter-session. We trust that this experience of practical Christian service, added to the studies of the Word at Nargaon, may mean definite response to the call for many, if not all, of them to 'preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching' (2 Tim. 4:2—A.S.V.). Thus may they follow, by touring and teaching, in the blood-stained footprints of the Son of Man as He leads them on to the glory of the New Jerusalem!

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### COME LET US SING UNTO THE LORD A NEW SONG

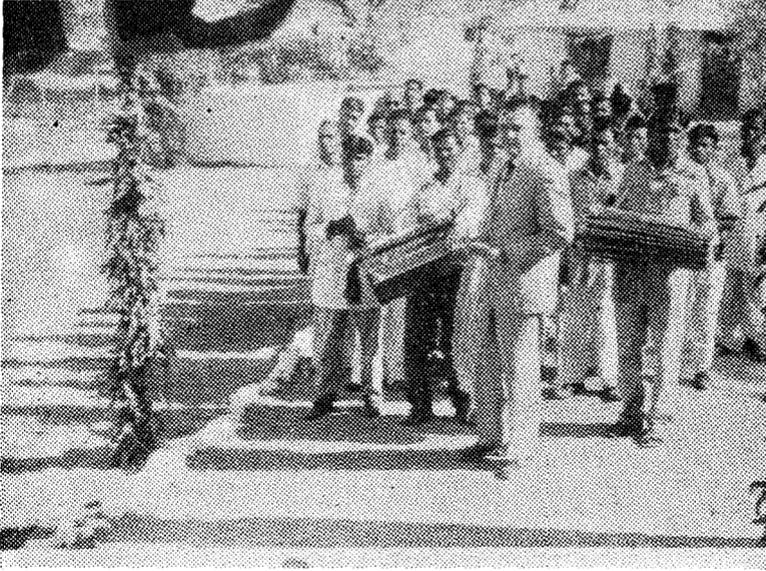
A fitting legacy which Mr. Carner has left to the Indian Church of Maharashtra is the Marathi Chorus Book, now in its third edition, entitled *Gazar Sangrah*. Widely used throughout the Marathi language area it contains in addition to Gospel songs, choruses and songs to be used to the rhythm of the everyday village life of India,—songs of worship and praise to the Lord Jesus to be sung at the grinding mill, while picking cotton, a lullaby to the rhythm of the cotton cradle slung in a tree while the mother works in the nearby field. It was compiled with the villager in mind. Quite fittingly, there is in the back of this book a simple *kirtan* on the Life of Christ, designed to teach the villager how to use a method they already know to spread the message of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

# 'KIRTANKAR LADKHE MAHARAZ URPHA KOPREBUA'

(The Beloved Kirtankar or God's Cornerstone,

Rev. L. R. Carner)

V. V. HIRARLE



**L. R. Carner with his bhajan torli**

All India loves a *kirtan*. There is no greater delight to the people of Maharashtra than to sit and to listen to their gods extolled through the medium of speaking, and songs accompanied by the sweet sound of instruments and the rhythm of the cymbals, which is a *kirtan*. Both those who give the *kirtan* and those who listen are completely absorbed in the message and are drawn into a deep sense of devotion. It is used extensively for the spread of Hindu religious information and is very useful in the dissemination of information on other subjects. Hearing of a *kirtan* to be given, thousands will put aside all their work and problems and, forgetting their cares, will walk many miles to sit and to listen hour after hour, devoutly absorbed in hearing the name of their god through message, music and song.

From childhood, the Rev. L. R. Carner had watched the people of India sit fascinated as one of their *kirtankars* recounted again the long histories and stories of their gods. Travelling with his parents through the villages and the *kirtan* loving area of Amraoti he heard many *kirtans*, and sat through the long hours of recital.

When he returned to India as a missionary, he was amazed to realize that India's people were eager and ready to sit quietly and devoutly, to listen and to sing enthusiastically through a four or five hour *kirtan*, oblivious to the passage of time. Christians, on the other hand, became restless after a service of only an hour or an hour and a half—given over mostly to preaching. He began to realize that the *kirtan* could be a very effective means for the spread of the Gospel. He decided to learn to give *kirtans* and to use this unique Indian method of teaching to spread the Good News of Salvation.

That he was a foreigner, or that Marathi was not his mother-tongue or that his voice was not that of an Indian—to these things he gave no heed. Claiming the help and enabling of the Lord he began to do *kirtans* among Christians and non-Christians.

His first helper in his *kirtans* was a gardener. The next was an evangelist. The three of them together began to tour the villages of the Anjangaon area and to witness to the Gospel through the medium of *kirtans*. He knew from the start that unless this were of God and unless it was done through the Holy Spirit, it would never be of any use. Through much prayer and much practice he kept giving more and more *kirtans*. He studied Marathi music and musical instruments with a true student's thoroughness. He made long journeys to hear the famous and expert *kirtankars* of Maharashtra and to study their methods. He attended many of the Hindu fairs and *yatras* and with keen insight gathered much useful information in the technique of giving *kirtans*.

He realized that a good *kirtankar* must have a good singing and playing band to help him. Using the information he had gathered he trained ten or fifteen young men to help him. Together they began to spread the Good News of Salvation through *kirtans* in many places in North Berar. Watching his splendid work, his love for India's people, his untiring zeal and the lasting results of his work through this type of work peculiar to India, one of his beloved friends and helpers gave him the Indian name

—*Ladkhe Maharaz*—The Beloved Kirtankar. Seeing his splendid technique, savouring of the sweetness of the message of love which he brought them through the *kirtan*, it was not long before he became known all over Maharashtra as *kirtankar Ladkhe Maharaz*. It was by this name he was advertized and known in the large towns of the Marathi-speaking area, in many large Christian churches, in the small villages and in the many famous places where he gave his *kirtans*. Literally thousands came to hear the foreigner who was so expert in the giving of an Indian *kirtan*, and through his messages heard the Gospel, many for the first time. That one not an Indian could use an Indian method so expertly amazed them and they began to spread his fame. Many important and influential people who would not have attended a Gospel preaching service heard the Gospel through his ministry as a *kirtankar*.

Once he did a *kirtan* in a leprosy hospital at Nasik and as usual everyone present received a great blessing. They said to him, 'We are poor people—lepers—and we have nothing of this world's goods to give you. You are building God's house through *kirtans*. Like your name—Corner—you are a cornerstone in God's House. Therefore we give to you the title of 'Koprebua—God's Cornerstone!' From then on many because of their love for him began to call him *Ladkhe Maharaz Urpha Koprebua*—The Beloved Kirtankar or God's Cornerstone.

He had a booming voice. He was a strong man with a great frame. He always dressed for his *kirtans* exactly as the *kirtankars* of Maharashtra dressed. His singing band was always dressed in spotless white. He had the best of musical instruments. When he stood to begin his *kirtan*, one was conscious of his deep sense of devotion to His Lord. His Marathi was excellent, always suited to his audience. In educational centers he used the highest of Marathi—in the villages, simple village Marathi which all could understand. He made much use of homey stories, proverbs and every day happenings to illustrate his *kirtans*. Like his forerunner David who danced before the ark in complete abandonment to His Lord, so Lauren Carner completely lost himself in the witness of His Lord whom he so adored, in his *kirtans*. Thousands heard the Gospel of Salvation as they sat hour after hour unwearied, enthusiastic to the end as they listened to his splendid presentation of the old story which is forever new.

He gave his last *kirtan* as the guest speaker at the Baptist Camp Meeting on Saturday, March 11th at Tondgao. The theme of his messages and his *kirtan* was 'Come, let us go to the New Jerusalem'.

'*Ladkhe Maharaz Urpha Koprebua* has gone to be with His Lord!' This news spread like wildfire all over Maharashtra. Those who heard were stunned with the news and were grieved at the loss of their beloved brother. Many said, 'A great diamond of the Church of Maharashtra has been lost. Our brave *kirtankar* has gone. A wise and well educated man, one who worked night and day for the salvation of souls, this true worshipper of God has gone'.

Rev. L. R. Carner has finished his service as a *kirtankar*. He was completely exhausted in this giving of *kirtans*, and now, in the New Jerusalem, as in his last message, he has gone before us into the fellowship of his Lord. —A Translation

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### WITH THE LORD

REV. R. P. CHAVAN, *President, Marathi Synod*

Rev. Lauren Carner was called into the Presence of the Lord on March 26, 1960. He suffered a good many years from stomach ulcer.

Mr. and Mrs. Carner served as missionaries in India for twenty-six years. Mr. Carner was the Principal of the Nargaon Bible Training School. He has also served in different places in various capacities.

He loved India, its people, culture, art, beauty, history and philosophy. He was real Indian in heart. India was his home. He devoted his life for India and he is buried in India in the beautiful town of Chikalda so cherished by him.

He had an art of winning friends of all classes so he was quite popular all over India. His chief interest was *kirtan-bhajan* and Bible teaching. He had a fruitful ministry.

He loved discipline, order and tidiness. He was an excellent writer, orator, and singer of Indian tunes. He was very zealous for the spiritual, social and economic welfare of the Indian people. In him we have lost a great soul, an able leader and a dear friend.

I hope his passing away will inspire many young people to yield their lives for His service. Pray for Mrs. Carner, Gopi,\* E.R. and G. L. Carner families.

\* His son's Indian name.

## AN APPRECIATION OF THE REV. LAUREN

R. CARNER, M.A., M.A.T.

A. C. EICHER

Pastor Chavan has stated in his tribute to our beloved brother, Rev. Lauren R. Carner, that he loved India's people, culture, history. This love, coupled with an intense desire to win India's people to Christ, led him to scores of Hindu places of pilgrimage including the sacred city of Benares. He made it a point to visit the four corner posts of Hindu pilgrimage. He mingled with the teeming multitudes at Puri on the eastern coast and Dwarka on the west. He also visited Rameshwaram in the hot, southernmost tip and climbed the hazardous trails to mingle with the pilgrims who plodded to Badrinath's shivering heights to bathe in the Himalayan streams fed by the melting of eternal snows. On a number of these journeys he met people from his own beloved Berar in Central India. The information and insight into Hinduism which he gained on these journeys gave him immensely colourful, authentic background material for the presentation of Jesus Christ as the only Saviour from sin in sermon or kirtan.

Being particularly interested in India's history, he made it a point to visit scores of places of historic interest, particularly the forts of Shivaji, Maharashtra's hero general. It was my privilege to hike to a number of Shivaji's forts with Lauren while we studied Marathi near Poona. What rich illustrative material he gleaned from these treks to use in his sermons and writings! What blended warmth of Christian devotion and richness of historic colour he wove into an article which appeared some years ago in the INDIA ALLIANCE, entitled 'Warming The Prayer Drums'. He got the illustration while watching the huge drums being warmed of an early morning at Shivaji's 'Glory Fort'.

Lauren Carner not only travelled the length and breadth of India to know its people and places better, he also used every opportunity available for furthering his studies on the subject. While on a previous furlough he took advanced studies at New York University—all of them having to do with India's history and philosophy—and received his M.A. degree. His B.A. he had won at Asbury College prior to going to India as a missionary.

He also studied at the Missionary Training Institute in Nyack. At Indiana University in 1958 while on the furlough from which Lauren and Lacy Lee Carner had recently returned, he was granted his M.A.T. (M.A. in Teaching). Again, all his courses were aimed at broadening his knowledge of, and increasing his usefulness in India.

His approach in presenting the claims of Christ was ever a positive presentation of Christ as the only Saviour from sin, coupled with a kindly appreciation of India's history and what is worthwhile in India's culture.

But this is not written as an adulation of my lifelong friend (we grew up together as boys in India); he would not have appreciated eulogy. He was ever bashful and self-effacing. His one concern was to present an all-sufficient Christ to India's heart-hungry, pilgrimage-weary millions, and to do it in a way that would appeal to and be understood by the humble villager as well as the educated city man. The extent of his success in achieving this goal is effectively narrated herein by Bro. V. V. Hivrarle.

At Lauren's own request, he is buried in the beautifully flowered cemetery at Chikalda, in the Satpura Hills. He loved those hills and knew them well geographically and historically! The site overlooks the spreading plains of Berar where he was born and where he so effectively preached and taught and sang the Gospel. His earthly remains await the Trump of God from that sunlit, windswept hill top. His spirit, triumphant in Christ, has already answered the call of His Master, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!'