IS THE DOOR FOR CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM IN INDIA CLOSED?

REV. G. L. CARNER (Page 2)
This past year has been a good year spiritually in our two Bible Schools. At the Nargaon Mens' Bible School there was an enrolment of 23 students with a graduating class of eight. This year, in addition to the weekend Gospel teams there have been Sunday School teams sent out, and the students have received much spiritual as well as practical help from these efforts.

The Khamgaon Womens' Bible School had an enrolment of 36 this past year with a graduating class of six students. During the year special meetings were held with Miss W. Sanford bringing the messages and from these, stemmed many victories over self and sin. We praise the Lord for the report that the effects of these meetings are still being felt.

A new effort is being made to reach the college students of the city of Amraoti in the form of a reading room. This has now been opened and we are trusting that this may be a means of great blessing and opportunity in this promising area.

Again this year Short-Term Bible Schools were conducted in Anjangaon and Akola. Village Christians and inquirers came to these central locations and for a two week period, studied the Scriptures. A total of 29 attended these schools after which 26 met the Lord in the waters of baptism, Praise His Name!

Many were greatly moved by the sincerity and joy of a small group of Christians in the village of Ashegaon (A-shay-gow) at the dedication of their new church building. This is indeed a monument to God's grace and power in the lives of His people.

Our junior missionary family grew slightly with the happy arrival on February 15th of Donald Lauren to Laird and Mary Ann Stengele. From time to time we have these additions to our missionary family and cannot but hope and wonder if someday they will be back in this land, or some other mission field conveying the blessed News of the Gospel to those without Christ. The truth remains that approximately one third of our missionaries on the field are themselves missionaries children.

This brings us to a critical need of prayer. In the last ten years there have been lost to our Marathi Field through retirai, sickness or death, eleven missionaries with only one replacement. Are the Lord's words true again?

"And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap for me for the land, . . . but I found none."

—Ez. 22: 30

There are too many "gaps" in the hedge. Pray!!
IS THE DOOR FOR CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM IN INDIA CLOSED?

Those who are engaged in the Christian mission in India today are greatly concerned at the attitude and outlook of so many in the West towards India as a mission field. There seems to be a very widespread impression that the door for Christian evangelism in India is now largely closed. Several reasons can be found for such a wrong opinion.

1. India is an old mission field and the ears of God's people have become jaded through hearing again and again of the staggering needs of this vast land.

2. Mission work in India has always been difficult. The opposition and indifference of the people have been well-known throughout the Christian world. John Oxenham described it so graphically years ago—

   "A fortress armed and guarded jealously
   With every portal barred against the Light.
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   The Light beats up against the close-barred doors,
   And seeks vain entrance, yet beats on and on."

3. There has not been much of the spectacular and the amazing in the story of missions in India. The work has been largely the slow, plodding witness with results seeming very meagre in comparison with the multitudes of people.

4. With these old excuses has come the more recent news that the government will not allow new missionaries to enter the country.

   But what is the true picture? What is the situation in India today? Consider prayerfully the facts and ponder your own responsibility in their light.

1. The common people everywhere hear us gladly. In city and in village, in public place and private home the witness of the Gospel is going out from day to day. There is an openness, a spirit of enquiry—a friendliness and readiness to listen—on every hand. No doubt there are exceptions to this that could be cited. But in the total picture we can tell you without hesitation, that India is ready today to listen to the Gospel.

2. The ministry of the printed page has been multiplied many-fold in recent years. Gospels are being distributed by the thousands in every language. Through tracts, books, magazines and correspondence courses the Gospel message is reaching out into every part of the country.

3. Christian reading rooms and libraries are being opened in many cities, and are filled each day with students and others eager not only to acquire knowledge but enquiring about the Christian message.

4. The educated people are studying the Bible more widely today than ever before. Bible correspondence courses in English and all the major languages are going out to thousands of people every month. Lawyers and doctors, college professors and school teachers, business
Missionary Directory

Rev. and Mrs. A. C. Eicher, P.O. Box 5, Akola, Maharashtra.
Miss Ferne Gerrie, P.O. Box 5, Akola, Maharashtra.
Miss W. S. Sanford, P.O. Box 5, Akola, Maharashtra.
Miss Gladys Jasper, P.O. Box 5, Akola, Maharashtra.
Rev. and Mrs. J. F. Derr, Mission Bungalow, Akola, Maharashtra.
Rev. and Mrs. G. L. Carner, Mission Bungalow, Akot, Maharashtra.
Rev. and Mrs. L. F. Stengele, Mission Bungalow, Amraoti, Maharashtra.
Miss Ann Droppa, Girls’ Boarding School, Khamgaon, Mah.
Miss M. D. Ransom, Women’s Bible School, Khamgaon, Mah.
Miss Hilda Davies, Women’s Bible School, Khamgaon, Mah.
Rev. and Mrs. E. H. Lewellen, Mission Bungalow, Murtazapur, Mah.
Rev. and Mrs. G. F. Vandegrift, Men’s Bible School, Nargaon, E. Khandesh, Mah.
Rev. and Mrs. F. E. Eicher, Sunrise Cottage, Chikalda, Dist. Amraoti, Mah.
Rev. and Mrs. F. W. Schelander, Kedgaon, Dist. Poona, Maharashtra.
Rev. and Mrs. A. B. Shaw, “Longcroft”, Kodaikanal, South India.
Miss Julia Derr, 7 Shunker Shet Rd., Poona, Mah. (until furlough).

*Rev. and Mrs. C. H. Dyke, Expected return from furlough, Spring, 1963.
*Rev. and Mrs. L. E. Hartman, On furlough until retireal.
*Mrs. Ruth Schlatter, On furlough until retireal.

*These can be contacted through: The Christian and Missionary Alliance, 260 W. 44th St., New York 36, N. Y., U.S.A.
“Well Done Thou Good and Faithful Servant(s)”

Mrs. Ruth Schlatter, after serving 38 faithful years in India has retired from the Marathi Field to serve the Lord in the States. Her husband, Mr. Olen Schlatter came to the field in 1923, after which they were married in Akola in 1926. Together they served the Lord at Amraoti, Malkapur, Charlisgaon and Murtazapur, after which the Lord took Mr. Schlatter to be with Him on March 22, 1942. In recent years Mrs Schlatter has served the Lord in the Khamgaon Women’s Bible School and has had added ministries among the pastors’ wives and Christian women in the villages.

Mrs. Schlatter, our prayers are with you as you continue to serve Him, now in America. India will not soon forget the help, encouragement and Words of Life that you have freely shared from your experience in Him.

Rev. and Mrs. L. E. Hartman arrived in India in 1920 and ’21 respectively and following language study were married in Akola in 1922. Their ministry has been large, ranging from one end of the Field to the other, where they have ministered in every mission station except two. In recent years the Hartmans were stationed at Amraoti from which, on the eve of their retirement, they agreed to fill a vacancy at the Dhond Boys’ School, near Poona. This was to be for six months, but extended to six years. Despite health that has not always been good, and with India’s burden always pressing upon them, their last term of service has extended for 14 years, instead of the usual five and one half.

Brother and Sister Hartman, may the Lord bless you richly as you minister for Him on your well-earned furlough.

ABOUT THE COVER PICTURE

This is the baptismal service held at the close of the Short Term Bible School at Anjangaon. Rev. Jingu Thorat is conducting the service.
THE LAY WORKERS' INSTITUTE

There has been much prayer requested from time to time for the Lay Leaders' or Lay Workers' Institute. However, there may be those who ask, "What is this School and what is the purpose of it?" To answer this we must go back in order to explain the reason for having such a school.

There are many areas in which the pastor or evangelist must minister to four or five groups of believers. As they are encouraged to observe the Lord's Day, it is impossible for the evangelist to visit all these groups in one day, and due to Christians being scattered in other villages, he can only visit a group once in two weeks. There is therefore the need of a Lay Worker instructed in the Word of God, to carry on in the absence of the pastor.

The School was begun in 1958 as a co-operative effort with neighboring evangelical missions. Two terms of three months duration are conducted annually. To date there have been eighty-one men and their wives who have completed their first year course, and forty-five men and their wives who have completed their second year and been given certificates. Couples have come from 68 villages. Training is provided for each member of the family, classes being held for men, women, and children. Many of the families have never had to live under a school discipline, so the first few days are a time of real adjustment. Learning to keep regular hours (something entirely new), staying awake in classes (never had to before), leaving children and infants in the care of those appointed to look after them (unheard-of), observing sanitary regulations etc., are only a few of the new things that are foreign to their village backgrounds.

Many have been the reports of those returning to their village groups and who, in the absence of their pastor, have challenged their own people to higher heights in the Lord. This is a new step, but one already that is proving a blessing in reaching and strengthening His children here in India.
men and government officers are requesting that these courses be sent to them.

5. These Bible studies are opening up opportunities for contact and personal work on every hand.

6. No longer is the Christian church under the stigma of being the instrument of the foreign ruling power. Under the Government of free India the foreign missionary is now plainly recognized to be what he actually is—a Christian witnessing to his religion.

7. India has declared itself to be a secular state and it must be said that the policy of religious neutrality has been firmly maintained. In the Constitution of the republic of India we have one of the most remarkable clauses guaranteeing freedom of religion to be found in any country in the world. Read it and realize its significance—“Subject to public order, morality and health and to other provisions of this part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practice and propagate religion.”

8. Up until five years ago it could be said that there were on an average of over 1,000 baptisms from among the non-Christians of India every month. This may still be true but statistics are not available to prove it. Such statistics are small, we must admit, in relation to the population of this vast country. But in relation to Christian world missions it is perhaps correct to say that there are probably more people from non-Christian religions being baptized in India each year than in any other country in the world.

9. Regarding the matter of new missionaries entering India many facts have been distorted and certain specific cases so magnified as to give a totally wrong impression. Many from the United States have been refused entry, but not all. On the other hand, new missionaries from the countries of the British Commonwealth (among them Canada) can enter without difficulty. India is really no exceptional case in the withholding of visas to foreigners. It has become increasingly difficult throughout Asia to obtain entry permits for missionary personnel. Perhaps the main reason for the lack of new missionaries to India is the apathy of the sending churches towards this country and the consequent lack of interest among missionary recruits.

It is a fact, to which the Christian church throughout the world should give full attention, that India today presents one of the greatest opportunities and challenges for evangelism of any country in the world.

Probably the gravest danger to the work of the Gospel in India is the indifference and lack of concern for this work on the part of the Christians of the West who are supposed to be the praying partners of their fellow-workers in this land. We little realize what could be accomplished if praying Christians were thoroughly aroused to this unique hour of opportunity for India—the largest country (in population) of the free world.

REV. G. L. CARNER
THE VILLAGE READING ROOM

Approximately five years ago, the burden for teaching his people with the Gospel through Christian literature, was laid on the heart of an evangelist, Namdev Gevei. Though faced with many discouraging obstacles, his vision and burden were not dimmed, and today in the village of Shelu-Wital stands a Reading Room (see pictures) which is visited daily by Hindus of all castes.

In this village stands a Hindu Shrine to which hundreds come each Sunday, seeking salvation and healing. The reading room, located on the road to this shrine, becomes a convenient place to read attractive literature while resting weary feet, before going on. If the traveller cannot read, there is always the evangelist present to explain the story behind the colored Bible pictures on the walls, or to play the Gospel records on the phonograph.

Pray that as this Christian literature is read, and questions asked, those who come seeking in darkness, may go away having found the Light of the World.

Statistics of the Marathi Church Area

Our responsibility in this area—2,382,000 people.
Number of pastors and evangelists fully supported—21.
Number of pastors and evangelists partially supported—20.
Number of ordained pastors—10.
Number of missionaries—42.
Number of organized churches—29. Unorganized—22.
Amount contributed in offerings in 1961—Rupees 25,000.
Total baptisms in 1961—72.
Number of Sunday Schools—33. Number Scholars—954.