

India after Independence

THE NEW INDIA

August 15th, Independence Day for India, has come and gone, and we may praise God for the manner in which events passed off on this momentous occasion. We share the joy of Indian friends, and we continue in prayer for the two new Dominions of India and Pakistan.



It is far too early to venture upon positive statements as to the future, but the informed and thoughtful must confess the mingling of both hopes and fears. We are grieved at the terrible happenings in the Punjab and elsewhere, which must bring home to the new rulers the seriousness and magnitude of the responsibility they have now assumed. Present events should deepen our sympathy and intensify our praying for the leaders of both India and Pakistan, and also for the vast masses of people whose ignorance and tragic suffering reveal convincingly their need of the gospel of the grace of God.

Many friends of the Mission are asking how the changes in India will affect our work. We are thankful that there are not reports of serious communal strife within the various areas of the S.B.M. activities, and most of our Missionaries have reported favourably as to the actual proceedings on August 15th. Certainly on every hand we have news of happy relationships with those to whom the Gospel is being taken, and there is even manifest a new interest and eagerness to hear the Word of God.

Our Missionaries are now guests in the new India, and we must remember them very prayerfully in all the implications of this relationship with the people of India, both Christian and unconverted.

October 1947

Witnessing in the Train

The train came in and pandemonium reigned, even though it was 3 a.m. Pushing through the milling crowds we attempted to get into a third class women's compartment. It was difficult to distinguish who were getting out and who were getting in, but at last we found ourselves in one of the box-like sections of the carriage. At last two women gathered themselves into smaller spaces and made room for us to sit down on a hard wooden bench, but we were grateful even for that, as we had over 250 miles to travel.

Presently, we began to take stock of our fellow travellers and met the smiles of a young Brahmin woman. We found that the Lord had led us to a compartment where there was a soul secretly feeling after him. She had a Bible and was reading it in secret, and said she believed, but dare not confess Christ openly. She said: 'You know I should not touch your things, and I should not let you touch mine, but I don't keep those customs now. See, I don't even put the mark on my forehead,' and sure enough the Hindu marks were missing. She was wearing some lovely jewels. 'See' she said, 'I don't care about these, but I must wear them to please my people.'

Soon there came an exchange of addresses and the hope of further contact. When we arrived at our destination, she was met by her Brahmin relatives, and wanted to introduce them to me. As I had a dear caste woman and her daughter with me, whom I was taking to safety because their determination to follow Christ had put their lives in danger, we felt it best to mingle quickly with the crowds and try to pass out of the station unobserved.

Grace Huckett - January 1953

TAMIL PREACHING IN MALAYA



Wilfred and Doris Kuhrt served in Malaya from 1958 to 1962. They travelled out to the rubber plantations to preach the gospel to Tamil migrant workers. This picture shows them preaching from the back of their van.

The meeting continues. In this kind of ministry it is necessary to explain the origins of sin, and to assert the fallen nature of mankind. So often a meeting will begin with the story of Creation and the Fall, and go on until as full an explanation as is possible is made. Then this is followed by a distribution of literature and the sale of Scriptures and other Christian literature.

THE ANNUAL MISSIONARY CONFERENCE 1954

This year our Annual Missionary Conference took place in the Mission compound up on the Kolli hills. After we had had a time of prayer together, we separated into two groups for our Informal Talks; the S.B.M. Missionaries to discuss their own particular affairs, and the L.Z.A. Missionaries to puzzle out their own problems. The Sunday was spent in happy fellowship with the Kolli Hills Christians. The morning service was conducted by Missionary D.A. Thrower and the afternoon service was conducted by Missionary W. H. Kuhrt. In the evening, the Hostel children and some of the women on the compound gathered together and sang their favourite hymns and choruses, while Miss Ethel Flory accompanied them on her piano accordion.



On Monday the whole day was given up to prayer and waiting upon God, and there is no doubt that by reuniting ourselves in the fellowship of prayer, and by first enquiring of the Lord concerning his own work, we were most effectively prepared by him for the difficult business of the days to follow.

The next three days were occupied with the business sessions of conference. The most important matter which occupied our attention was the need to make our Indian brothers and sisters realise that they must gradually re responsible for supporting their own Pastors and other church workers, and for conducting all their own church affairs; and they must work towards making their churches indigenous, and should look less o the Mission for financial support.

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Monica Harris - May 1954

GO SPEAK - A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

The words of the angel to the Apostle Peter in Acts 5:20, "Go... speak... all the words of this life", would best sum up the leading of the Lord to me to full-time service for him. But it was when reading an article in an early Report of the Mission that God spoke to me concerning India. Dr. Harris was speaking about young men and women responding to the call of God to come to India, 'Lest the light be extinguished'. These words came home very forcibly to my heart. I knew that God was speaking to me. After much prayer and seeking of guidance from the Lord, he gave me peace and assurance that South India was to be the place where I would serve Him. I had to come and 'Speak... all the words of this life.'



It is now with thanksgiving to God that I can write this article to you from India having arrived recently in India. This year, God Willing, I shall be living at Sendamangalam with Mr. and Mrs. Kuhrt and Miss Cook. Most of my time will be taken up with Tamil studies, but I pray that God may so fashion my life that even though I cannot speak the Word my life may show forth the praises of Him who hath called me out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Yvonne Conacher - January 1966

MORUPATTI

I opened out a pair of compasses to a three mile stretch on the map, put the steel point on Morupatti and drew a circle in pencil enclosing, if my arithmetic is correct, about twenty-eight square miles of country. I then counted the villages I had encircled, and found that I had netted twenty-six, or almost one for each square mile. Inside the circle there were three large villages of three or four thousand people each, and if the other villages may be assumed to have two to three hundred people each (Morupatti has about 500), we must have clustered round us about 15,000 people, hardly any of whom are Christians; and no doubt several thousand of them were not even born when we first came to Morupatti in 1957. If instead of stretching the compasses to a mere three miles I had opened them out to six miles, I supposed I should have encompassed about 100 villages with a population of some 60,000 persons, and it would still have been true that nearly all of them would have been strangers to the Gospel

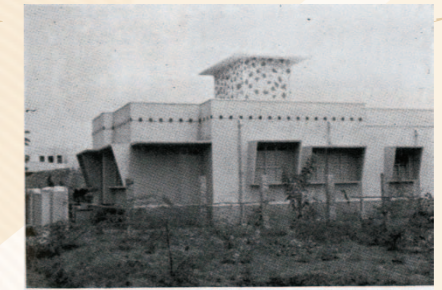


Morupatti van which is used as a mobile book shop and enables Mr. and Mrs. Champion to reach the villages in their area. Photo: George F. Champion.

of God's grace, and would have had little opportunity of hearing of our Lord unless we get to their villages.

George Champion - September 1965

Good News House - Dindigul



Mr. and Mrs. Appleby's home at Dindigul and the Home of the new Radio Evangelist Studio. Photo: H. J. Appleby.

As we write the noise of the carpenters banging upstairs is like music to our ears - for it signals the fact that the last stages of the construction have been reached. The rooms are being given the necessary acoustic treatment to fit them for their tasks.

In the lower section is the house as it stood when we first rented it. The upstairs rooms comprise three sections, (1) the sound-proof studio, (2) the equipment room containing the recorders, and (3) the workshop and office room. The sound-proof studio is a larger room than we had in Kovilpatti. We have arranged for this room to be halved, as required, by large doors across the middle. By treating the two halves of this large room differently, from an acoustic point of view, it has been possible to obtain a large room with lively acoustics, for music, or a small room which is acoustically dead, for speech. It may also be possible, by opening half the dividing doors, to have a large studio possessing one lively end and one dead end, which is a facility sometimes useful.

By the time we have finished, some £800 will have been spent. And that is a lot of money. But if, through this studio, we reach 8,000,000 people in eight different countries - that money will have stretched much further than it might when spent in other ways! "O earth, earth, earth, hear the Word of the Lord."

John and Eileen Appleby - November 1967



THE POSITION AND POLICY OF S.B.M. WORK IN INDIA

Under present legislation we cannot send new missionaries for evangelism into India. When visas are refused we have no grounds of appeal for such missionaries, and so unless there is a change of policy by the Government of India we must take it that the door is closed to our new recruits.

We believe that present missionaries will be able to continue in their work, but as they retire there will obviously have to be the running down of the work in India. This is what the present Government of India intends.

We wish, however, to re-affirm our sense of call and purpose to work in every possible way to bring the Gospel to the Tamil-speaking people within and outside of India. We shall not withdraw missionaries unless compelled to do so, and it is our wish to do more, not less, for the Tamil people.

The President, Pastor J. K. Thorpe - January 1968