

India



"The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him."

—2 Chronicles 16:9

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The Bible Student Friends of India Committee Newsletter

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Austin Williams' Visit to India

Bro. Austin Williams visited the brethren in India during late 2010. During his visit, he met with the brethren and ecclesia described below:

Srinivas

A woman at the age of 25 without children almost looked like a curse had befallen her. She went to a Hindu religious place and made a vow: If blessed with a son, she would dedicate him to this god for life. Each year he would make a pilgrimage back to this place, cut his hair, and they would pledge sugar, or something equivalent, equal to his body weight to this god. Later, a son was born and they named him Srinivas, after this god. After Srinivas was born, the family had 4 daughters.

Born and raised a Hindu, at the age of twelve, Srinivas joined the Hindu fundamentalist movement which had, as their objective, to make India a purely Hindu country. Srinivas personally liked all of the castes and Hindu people, but hated everything about Christianity—its people and its religion. He had a very close friend, Santosh, who was a Catholic. One day, Santosh tried to tell him how Jesus was nailed to the cross for all of us. So Srinivas took a sharp compass and poked it straight into Santosh's palm, and told him, let us see if any blood comes out of your hand since Jesus died for you. Over time, their friendship grew, and Santosh became his best friend. Santosh always spoke about Jesus and Srinivas hated it with passion.

When they reached their early 20s, Srinivas was unemployed. One day, Santosh asked him to visit a fellow friend. They visited Varma who greeted them warmly and served them coffee and biscuits. When Srinivas found out that Varma was a Christian, he became interested. He scoped out Varma's place so he could report back to his militant leader that there was a Christian actively involved in converting Hindus to Christianity. Srinivas began to develop a plan to attack Varma. He was used to desecrating Christian places of worship and inflicting bodily harm on the people of this persuasion.

In the meantime, Srinivas was visiting Varma mainly because of the coffee and refreshments. His host was very kind and caring. Srinivas' attitude was,

since I am here, at least let me hear what Varma has to say. In his mind he started to wonder why Hindus were converting to Christianity. What was the allure? He was very curious about this.

Varma did not say anything about Christianity on this first visit. Instead, Varma invited Srinivas back again and again. It was on Srinivas' third visit that Varma asked him about his outlook on Christianity. Srinivas responded that they were the most uncultured people. They always talked about drinking, eating, and being merry, and Jesus was their God. Varma then explained to Srinivas about the creation of the world and Adam and Eve. He gave Srinivas no books or tracts, but Varma told him there is only one Almighty God and Jesus is his Son.

Srinivas was astonished to hear that Jesus was not God, in contrast to what he had been told. Varma had Srinivas read the Bible and directed him to the Lord's prayer and to Jesus' crucifixion, where our Lord addressed God as his Heavenly Father. Srinivas' curiosity led him to conclude that there is something unique about this Bible. No Hindu book, or even the Koran, came close to this. Then Varma explained about the plan of God, Adam and Eve, and how sin entered into the world. He explained the Bible's testimony on how so many languages came about, and why the first world was destroyed. The other religious books were just stories, but the Bible spoke of reality.

This conversation was not designed to convert Srinivas, but to encourage Srinivas to examine the facts. Slowly, Varma began to teach until he came to the doctrine of resurrection of the dead. This made Srinivas really think. He was dumbfounded and started to cry out of joy.

Questions arose in Srinivas' mind. If Jesus was a son of God, who was God's wife? This sounds like a Hindu god. Why did Jesus die and suffer, and for whose sake? Because of my sins?

This was a turning point for Srinivas. He wanted to be immersed and follow the Lord. He quit worshiping idols. When his family came to know this, they were furious. They reminded him that he had been born because of the Hindu god's blessing, therefore, he should not abandon Hinduism. They told him, you cannot leave Hinduism or we will all die because of the curse.

The Hindu fundamentalist group he belonged to wanted to chase him out of the area where they lived. They made a big show of wanting to chase his whole family out of the area by demolishing their house. To prevent Srinivas from leaving the Hindu faith, his parents hoped to marry him to a Hindu girl. In the meantime, Srinivas announced that he would marry a fellow Christian.

This was the final straw. Srinivas' parents gave him a final warning! If you do this, we will never see you again. Meanwhile, his parents called the Christian girl's parents and warned them not to come to their city, or they would be chopped into pieces. Srinivas packed his belongings and left home with nowhere to go. He left with only his books, especially the Bible which he treasured.

The wedding cards for his marriage to the Christian girl were printed and the date was announced. No one from the family came to the wedding, except one of his sisters. Nevertheless, many brethren helped Srinivas, notably Ebenezar and Varma.

Srinivas is now married to Annie, a fellow Bible Student, and they have a lovely 4 year-old daughter. His parents live in the same place. Recently, Srinivas' mother had a massive heart attack, and Annie cared for her. This helped bring the family back together.

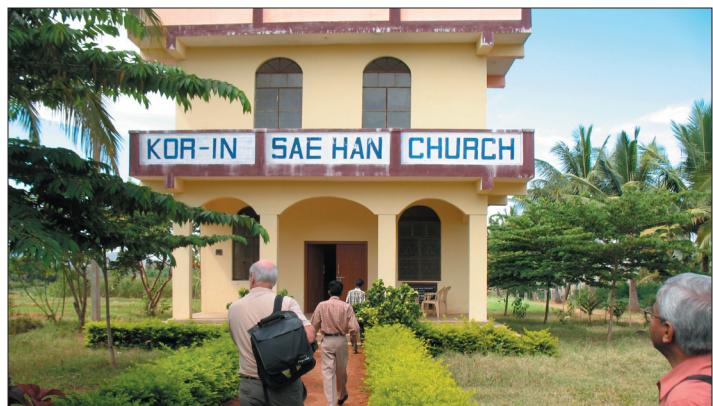
The family's attitude toward Srinivas has changed. Compared with his previous life of drinking and worldliness, Srinivas has become a good citizen with a productive life. The family loves him, and his wife and he take good care of his parents. Srinivas is 10 years into his consecration and continually striving to please God daily.

Nagenahalli Ecclesia

Twenty-two years ago, Bro. Ramanna was a Hindu with 5 brothers who lived together in a joint family. His wife was very sick and, after appealing to many Hindu gods for her healing, they reached out to the Lord, and she recovered. They believed that Jesus was the reason for her recovery.

Since there was no Christian church in their village, Bro. Ramanna started to bring a Pentecostal pastor from the city to witness to the villagers. His objective was to preach the Good News, and serve the Lord. Because of this, all his brothers and relatives ostracized him and his family. They made sure that Bro. Ramanna was thrown out of their community and the village.

Bro. Ramanna and his family of 7 children moved to a wilderness place and started a farm. They called the villagers to join them in their worship and praise. As the worship of God started to grow, one of Bro. Ramanna's 5 children started to perform voodoo, witchcraft, etc. in the name of Jesus Christ. Bro. Ramanna was aghast, and ensured that the brother had no part in the ministry anymore. Then Bro. Ramanna sent one of his sons to a Korean Bible College to learn all about Christianity and become a better witness.



Church built by Korean mission on Bro. Ramanna's farm

The son went to this theological school and studied for 8 years, after which he enrolled in the Masters program, M. Divinity. The son also taught himself Greek and Hebrew. The Korean mission built a church on Ramanna's farmland so that they could proselyte other villagers.

Meanwhile, Bro. Ravi (described later in this article), regularly traveled to a nearby village where he assisted a pastor named Job in visiting other nearby villages to preach the Gospel. When Job asked Bro. Ravi for money and realized that all he would get from Bro. Ravi was the Truth, they parted company. After this, Bro. Ravi would finish his studies in the village, and then walk 8 miles to the closest town to catch a bus to take him back home. During one of those walks, Bro. Ravi met another person who then took him to Bro. Ramanna. Bro. Ramanna introduced Bro. Ravi to his son, Prabhakar, and instructed him to be taught by Br. Ravi.



Bro. Prabhakar

Prabhakar was already involved in giving Biblical lessons to four individuals. At his first meeting with Bro. Ravi, he inquired about Bro. Ravi's educational background. Did he have any degrees, courses, or certificates? How could he teach this when he was not even qualified to do so? After a brief introduction about the Word of God, Prabhakar learned how God's Word can be shared and interpreted by the measure of the Holy Spirit.

Next, Prabhakar wanted to know if Bro. Ravi could explain Revelation, prophecies, etc. He wanted the date of our Lord's second coming. Bro. Ravi was taken aback with a question like this. God has not revealed the date in such a simple format. Bro. Ravi responded by first explaining the first advent and later the second advent. After a 2-hour session on the first advent, Prabhakar was so taken by what had been presented, he said that after 8 years of studying, not once did he receive such teaching. Soon, Prabhakar realized that this is the Truth, and there is a better service for him to do.



Nagenahalli ecclesia

The Korean Pentecostal preachers tried to convince Prabhakar not to leave their church. They asked him, what will you find with the Jehovah's Witnesses? In response, Prabhakar requested a joint meeting between them and Bro. Ravi. However, the Korean Pentecostal ministers were not interested. As a result, Prabhakar invited the Bible Students to hold regular meetings in the church which the Korean mission had built on his father's farm.

After 4 years of continual study, there are 19 consecrated and 7 additional members in the Nagenahalli ecclesia. Last year, they held a convention and, after the convention, Prabhakar was married in the evening. As a family, they are witnessing to the Truth despite being isolated and with little income.

Ravi

Bro. Ravi comes from a Hindu background where his father owned a temple and was the high priest. Somehow, Bro. Ravi started to question the Hindu belief system and was not very happy about his father's behavior, including his drinking habit. At the age of 7, Ravi developed a bad case of Cholera which resulted in the death of at least 300 people in the same village. His parents admitted him to a Baptist hospital and vowed that, if he survived, they would dedicate him to their Hindu god. Soon, Ravi recovered from the illness and was totally cured. That is when he started to delve more into the tenets of Hinduism. He also got hold of a Bible and started to read it. Ravi's father warned him one day, saying, "When I return this evening, if you are still in possession of that Bible, I will burn you both together."

Ravi ran away from his home at the age of 9 and went to the city, where he lived off the street by accepting odd jobs in construction, etc. Meanwhile, Ravi went from church to church, asking them questions. By this time, Ravi had completed just a 5th grade education in their local language. He had received no education in English. Ravi roamed around for a while and found himself in a village where the organization, Judah Mission, based in Germany, had a facility which cared for destitute children. In 2002, Ravi was

put in charge of this place, and he started to care for the destitute children.

During a Hindu festival, where the public worships the instruments they use to earn a living, a drunken neighbor took a machete and almost chopped off Ravi's mother's hand. She went to the hospital where they applied a bandage, but could not treat them fully because Ravi and his mother could not afford the charges. A neighbor took pity on Ravi's mother and treated her for 15 days with herbal medicine, food, and water. After the 15 days, a Pentecostal minister paid for some medicinal oil to apply and, after prayer, she recovered fully.

This was a real encouragement to Ravi's mother. They did not pray for a miracle but it happened when they least expected it. Now her hand is better than the hand which was not injured. This Pentecostal minister knew a believer named Isaiah who was then introduced to Ravi. Isaiah went



Bro. Ravi

to a government office one day where he was told that he had the seal of 666 on his forehead. Isaiah felt very sad and told Ravi about it. Together, they met with a Bible Student where they discussed Revelation 4:11 and asked questions about the Scriptures.

The mission where Ravi worked had a caring facility and a church next door. On October 16, 2003, they hosted a meeting and invited this Bible Student to come and conduct a study. His first study was on our Most Holy Faith, and the four living creatures of Revelation 4. These studies continued and during one of them, there was a discussion of Job 14:22, where it is said that the flesh will suffer after his death. The meeting was immediately stopped because of this verse. Then they began to meet with the one who explained this teaching, Varma. Another Bible student, Eleazar, took an interest in Ravi and taught him 23 out of the 53 lessons. Soon, Ravi was immersed and began a life of service to the Lord.

Bro. Ravi is so diligent in witnessing that the brethren have bought him a two-wheeler which he takes everywhere with his wife to conduct lessons in remote areas. On an average, he travels about 100 kms per day. Bro. Ravi is married with 2 little children, who he is putting through school. He and his mother, wife, and children live on \$75 per month and are helped by brethren. Bro. Ravi, who started with a 5th grade education, taught himself English. Bro. Ravi lives in a slum where their home has 2 rooms measuring 140 sq. ft. It houses 3 adults and 2 children.

The house is built on land which was taken over by the slum dwellers. The government has issued an order for them to vacate the house because it will be demolished for new construction. In response, Bro. Ravi applied under a new law where the government will allot property to an individual based on their

income. Many have applied numerous times to receive their allotment, but Bro. Ravi received his allotment on his very first try. The brethren scrambled to help him to pay the initial deposit. Now, he has to pay the balance of \$3000 total at which time he will own a piece of land that is $30 \times 40 = 1200$ sq ft. Bro. Ravi requested that I prayerfully seek the Lord's guidance so he could provide for his household as he continues to diligently serve the Lord.



Herald Magazines just brought in from the printer

Translation Work

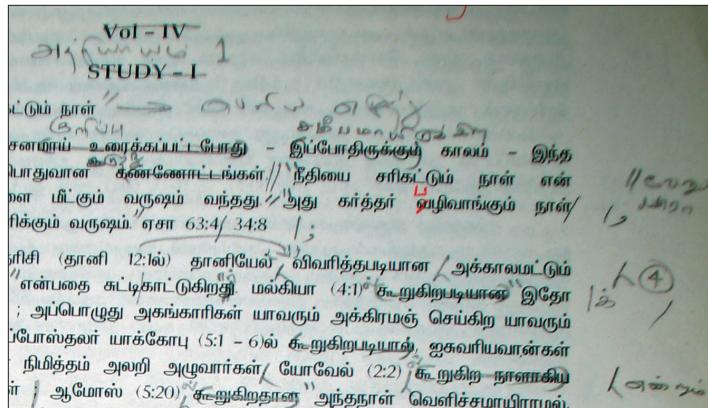
Several different groups of brethren in India work continuously to translate the Truth literature into their local languages. With 22 official languages recognized by the states in India, the translation effort is an important key to the spread of the Gospel message throughout the country of India. Since the BSFOIC Newsletter's Winter 2010 report on the translation work, the effort has expanded in both scope and participation.

The following is a brief update on some of the current and new projects being undertaken. Information for this update was received from Bro. Selvaraj of Chennai, Bro. Khurrsino Miranda of Bangalore, and Bro. S. Baskaran of Erode.

Tamil Translation Work

The Chennai Bible Students are still working on revising the Tamil (regional language of state of Tamil Nadu) translation of Volume 4, *The Battle of Armageddon*, and have about 100 pages left before this work is complete. After finishing this, Volume 3, *Thy Kingdom Come*, will be translated and printed. In addition to their translation work on the Volumes, the Chennai Bible Students are currently preparing the *Daily Heavenly Manna* and *Songs in the Night* for printing in the Tamil language, and have begun translating the booklet *Creation Triumphs over Evolution*. Bro. Selvaraj, of Chennai Bible Students, says that their plan is to print and distribute 1,500 copies of each of these.

The *Herald of Christ's Kingdom* magazine is still being translated and published on an ongoing basis



Proofing and editing of Volume 4

by the Sangiliyandapuram (Trichy) ecclesia with 500 copies printed and distributed every other month. In addition, *The Dawn* magazine is now being translated and 500 copies distributed monthly by the Manaparai (Trichy) ecclesia.

In January of this year, the Coimbatore Bible Students ecclesia started a new work of translating and distributing the reprint articles under the name *The Laodicean Times*. Beginning with the final articles published in 1916, and working in reverse order, two to three reprint articles are being translated and issued periodically with 1,000 copies printed for distribution. Bro. Khurrsino Miranda says that this project has been "wonderfully received by all."

Brethren in the Erode, Salem, Coimbatore, and Villupuram ecclesias have taken up the effort of translating the book *What Pastor Russell Said* into the Tamil language. As expressed by Bro. S. Baskaran, the hope is for this translation effort to be complete in time to publish in December of 2011. After this, they hope to focus their efforts on translating *What Pastor Russell Wrote for the Overland Monthly* and *The Life of Christ* books.

Other Translation Work

As reported in the BSFOIC Newsletter Winter 2010 issue, Volume 1, *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, was translated into Marathi (regional language of state of Maharashtra) by Bro. Barse in Mumbai and was awaiting publication. With the aid of Bro. Prasad from Bangalore, 1,000 copies were printed and are now being distributed.

The booklet *The Doctrine of Christ* has been translated by Bro. V. A. Thomas of the Kottayam ecclesia into Malayalam (regional language of state of Kerala). The handwritten translation is now being entered into the computer and prepared for publication.

The *Daily Heavenly Manna* and *Songs in the Night* are currently being translated by Bro. Ajay Atwal and his wife Susanna, who live in Delhi, into the Hindi language. As reported by Bro. Khurrsino in April, Bro. Ajay and his wife have been generating handwritten manuscripts for about six months.

The *53 Lessons*, used extensively in Indian witnessing efforts, are being translated into a variety of regional languages including Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, and even French.

Indian Ecclesias

The following reports were written by the Indian brethren about the ecclesias with whom they meet.

Coimbatore

The Coimbatore ecclesia, also known as the “Bible Students Association” is located at 17/E, Narayana-samy Layout, Rathinapuri P.O., Coimbatore – 641027, Tamil Nadu, India. It was established in the year 1925 under the eldership of Bro. T. J. Deva Sagayam. Though it is called Bible Students Association, it had a several changes in its name since its establishment, namely Associated Bible Students Coimbatore, Bible Students Union Coimbatore, etc.



Bro. Newlin Rajkumar

After the visit of Bro. C. T. Russell to India in 1912, his follower Bro. S. P. Devi, who had met Bro. Russell in the USA, and had received the Truth there, started a small ecclesia in his native town of Trivancore, and another ecclesia in Madras (now Chennai). After the death of Bro. S. P. Devi, the elder of the Madras ecclesia, Bro. Deva Santhosam, shifted his residence from Chennai to Coimbatore in

1925. He and his brother T. J. Deva Sagayam started the Coimbatore ecclesia in that year.

Before 1986, the Coimbatore ecclesia was called by the name of IBSA (Indian Bible Students Association). After 1986, our senior brothers, Bro. Daniel, Bro. I. A. Joseph, Bro. V. Jacob, and Bro. Anthony-samy, started in the name of “Bible Student Association,” due to some problems with other branches of the IBSA.

In the past, many public meetings were conducted through the General Secretary by all the branches of the IBSA.

Since 1925, Coimbatore ecclesia study classes and prayer meetings have been conducted in the homes of our brethren until 1986. For eighteen years, prayer meetings were conducted in Bro. V. Jacob’s home at Elango Nagar. It was a very small tiled house. All were sitting on the mats. Then our prayer meetings were conducted at Bro. Ponniah’s home near the Sivananda colony. It was very difficult to conduct the meetings in this way.

Then our brethren collected funds from our congregation and bought a small piece of land, and built a new prayer hall. Later, our foreign brothers from USA contributed to build a terrace building. Now we have sufficient place for study and prayer meetings.

There are 130 consecrated brethren in the Coimbatore ecclesia. The ecclesia meets several times per week. On Sunday morning, there is a General Service

followed with a youth study class. There is also a study class on Sunday evening. On Wednesday evenings, we have book study. Currently, we study the Epistle of Romans. We have a topical study on Friday evenings, and on Saturday evening we have basic Bible lessons for the youth. The above studies are based on our basic doctrines, and the writings of Bro. Russell and other Bible Student brethren.

The Coimbatore ecclesia also conducts one-day conventions every two months. Once in a while we conduct debates about the critical Scriptural topics.

We have a youth study class after the ecclesia gathering every Sunday. The class includes songs, prayer, a discourse, volume study, and quiz program. Younger ones will be given assignment to give a presentation about the basic doctrines and characters of the Bible.

On Sundays, sisters conduct children classes for the children from ages 2 to 15. Once in a while, the children give presentations about what they have learned to the ecclesia in special one-day, or half-day, conventions.



Coimbatore children's class

Youth seminars are also conducted by our ecclesia. Youth from other ecclesias in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka participate in these seminars. Twice, youth from the USA and Moldova have attended our seminars. We have just conducted the 13th Youth Seminar on December 30, 2010 through January 2, 2011 at the C.D. Foundation near Coimbatore.

The Coimbatore youth help the nearby classes of Bible Students like Mettupalayam, Pollachi, Podanur, Vellakoil, etc. in their witnessing projects. This help involves activities related to the public meeting and follow-up classes for ecclesias as far away as Chennai. Our ecclesia youth also mail our Tamil-based monthly magazine to all of the other parts in India.

—Brother Newlin Rajkumar

HAL Ecclesia

Our ecclesia meets at Bro. Jai’s place in the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (H.A.L.) company-owned quarters near the old Bangalore airport. Our ecclesia was formed in the year 2005. We all received the Truth through the personal witnessing of Bro. Varma between 1995–1999. Initially, we started with a gathering of

brethren in the nearby vicinity every Wednesday. We met for nearly a year before forming as an ecclesia. We have been able to grow individually and have built up the congregation spiritually. Every brother has the responsibility to study the Word of God to prepare the sermons. Since the ecclesia is small, we are able to understand each one easily. We are committed to attend and be involved in all our gatherings.

There are six consecrated brothers and six consecrated sisters in our ecclesia. We, by the grace of God and the guidance of other elder brethren, chart out or plan our meetings for a year. We gather on the



H. A. L. Ecclesia

third, fourth, and fifth Wednesdays for discussion on verses which a brother or sister needs better understanding. On the first Wednesday of each month, Bro. Prasad has given us opportunity to share the Word of God in his home. The second Wednesday meeting is dedicated for prayer. On the fourth Thursday of each month, Bro. Jayaprasad (of the Dawn Ecclesia) has given us the opportunity to share the Word of God in their ecclesia. Every Friday evening, we gather at the homes of ecclesia brethren for cottage (home) meetings where we alternatively share the Truth with newcomers, and meditate on the Scriptures chapterwise. Presently, we are studying Romans.

Saturdays are allocated for the youth of our congregation. Brethren prepare doctrinal subjects for them and also moral messages on how "to be out of the world" on a day-to-day basis. In the recent past, we conducted a one-day youth program and gave them the opportunity to speak on 1 Timothy 4:12.

When we gather on Fridays for cottage meetings for study, brethren invite newcomers to attend the meeting and we witness to them. We do not conduct conventions of our own, but participate in all of the conventions conducted by the other brethren in Bangalore.

Our sisters conduct children meetings on Saturdays which involve short moral stories, memorizing the verses, teaching them hymns, and chorus. Every second week of the month, we visit the brethren of Singaporeplaya (Hassan) and Chickamagalur.

—Brother Tony Xavier

Dawn Ecclesia

The Dawn Bible Students ecclesia is located in Bangalore, a metropolis in Karnataka state in South India. The first ecclesia (Jehovah Shammah) in Bangalore was formed during the 1930s. This ecclesia was founded by brethren who spoke Tamil, the language of the state of Tamil Nadu.

The Dawn Bible Students Association ecclesia was the second ecclesia formed in Bangalore. It was organized during the 1960s to serve brethren who speak Kannada, the language of Karnataka state. The elders of the Jehovah Shammah ecclesia, comprising Bro. Joseph Sunder Rajan, Bro. S. R. Gilbert and others, supported the formation of the Dawn ecclesia.

The Dawn ecclesia was led by Bro. Peter Fernandez. Since the 1960s, the ecclesia meetings have been held in the house of Bro. Peter and Sr. Mayura Fernandez, located at No. 27, Lalbagh Road. Both of them are now gone and their son, Bro. Charles Suresh, is continuing these meetings at the same location.

In the last few years, others such as Bros. Prakash, Jayaprasad, Daniel, Murthy, and Partha have joined Bro. Charles Suresh in the role of leading the ecclesia.

Bro. Suresh attended the International Convention some years back, and Bros. Jayaprasad and Prakash participated in the International Bible Students Conventions held recently in Poland.

The ecclesia is informal in nature. Financial contributions are voluntary and collected according to the ecclesia's needs. There are no financial accounts kept, nor is a bank account maintained. The ecclesia also does not have any formal titles like President, Secretary, etc.

The Dawn ecclesia has grown in number and in the Gospel work since the 1970s. Many Bible Students from the USA have visited our ecclesia over the years including Bros. Pollock, Fay, Gilbert Rice, Ray Krupa, Carl Hagensick, and so on, and more recently by Bros. Kuenzli, David Rice, Tim Krupa, Luke, Montague, and others.

Since the 1960s, more than 400 consecrated brethren have been in our ecclesia, though there are no formal records of this. Presently, there are about 100 consecrated brothers and sisters in the ecclesia. A significant number of the brethren are from the Hindu background. They have joined the ecclesia since the 1970s.

Since the 1970s, the Dawn ecclesia has its prayer meetings during the evenings (6:30–8:30 pm) on



Bro. Partha

Thursdays and Sundays. There are also “cottage” prayer meetings on all Saturday evenings. The ecclesia hosts one-day conventions 5-6 times in a year, conducted in the same venue. These conventions are held during Sundays and sometimes during other holidays.

A typical prayer meeting includes hymn(s), prayer, a Bible reading of the text chosen by the brother giving the discourse, a discourse (could be anywhere between 45 minutes to 1 hour 15 minutes long), hymn and prayer. The topic for discourse is typically chosen by the brother who is speaking. It could have been taken from the Volumes, Pastor Russell's teachings, or our own composition drawn from various other dictionaries and Biblical books.

The ecclesia used to conduct Sunday classes for children for many years but that is not being done in recent months. During the 1980s and 1990s, many ecclesia brethren have distributed pamphlets printed in local languages and other reading material in public gatherings.

In the last few years, the number of ecclesiases in Bangalore has grown to 6-7 as the city has grown. Bangalore now has a population of over 7 million.

The Dawn Bible Students ecclesia of Bangalore acknowledges the fellowship and support provided by brethren from all other ecclesiases including from USA. We thank our God Almighty and His Only Begotten Son for their blessings, grace, and mercy showered on us. We pray the same on all the brethren and ecclesiases around the world.

—Brother Partha

Mysore

The Zion Bible Students ecclesia currently is located at Door No. 51, 3A main road, Old Bangalore Mysore Road, Subahnagar, Mysore - 570007, South India. This ecclesia was formed in the year 1948 by Bro. Charles Jayappa.

Some of the events that take place in our ecclesia are the distribution of tracts regularly during summer. Also, ecclesia members travel on their bikes to various places to teach the doctrines of Pastor Russell.

About 25 members gather for prayer regularly on Sundays. Of this number, 6 brothers and 2 sisters are consecrated. Currently, we are studying about Passover-related subjects. We also study about the book of Revelation, prophecies, the Volumes, parables, etc.

We do not conduct youth meetings. However, we conduct thanksgiving conventions and, recently, a Pre-memorial convention was held in our prayer hall.

—Brother Pushparaj■



Bro. Pushparaj

Indian Conventions

2011 BSA General Convention

The BSA's 90th Annual General Convention was held at Coimbatore, on May 6-8 2011. Nearly 550 brethren participated in the convention. A total of 23 brethren gave discourses during the three days on various subjects. All of the discourses were recorded on audio DVDs for distribution to all the ecclesiases. Seventeen new members were baptised.

Separate classes were conducted for all of the 70 children who took part in the convention.

Despite the scorching summer, the weather cooled somewhat and the G. S. N. community hall contributed to the smooth going of the convention. Overall, the convention was conducted very smoothly by the Grace of God. We thank God for his blessed and wonderful presence with all of us.

—Brother A. Jeyaraj

Coimbatore Convention

We conducted the two-day convention on May 7th and 8th in Coimbatore. Six hundred brethren attended.

Eight subjects were taken and there was one panel discussion on the subject, “Ecclesia and its order.” Children classes were also conducted. For the youth, Tabernacle Shadows subjects were covered.

Thirty-one new brethren consecrated at this convention. My daughter Mabel Princy, also consecrated in this convention.

Our sincere regards to all the saints there.

—Brother J. Joshua

Salem Convention

The Salem ecclesia held a convention May 7th and 8th, 2011. There were 100 brethren who attended. The theme of the convention was, “Remain in me, and I will remain in you” (John 15:4). Ten brethren served the convention with discourses on the following subjects:

- (1) “All Things in Heaven and on Earth Together” (Eph 1:9,10) by Bro. Sampath
- (2) “Paul, Sufferings of Christ” (1 Pet 4:12,13) by Bro. Prakash
- (3) “Solve the Problems” (Amos 5:19) by Bro. Babu
- (4) “Light and Darkness” (Matt 4:15) by Bro. Charles
- (5) “Angel (Messengers)” (1 John 4:1) by Bro. Zaccau
- (6) “David Anointed King (3 Times)” (1 Sam. 16:12,13, 2 Sam. 2:1, 5:3-5) by Bro. Baskaran
- (7) “Potter’s Vessel” (Rom 9:21) by Bro. John Bosco
- (8) “To be Fulfillment of Prophecy” (Ezek. 38:8-12) by Bro. Lakshmanan
- (9) “Meat in Due Season” (Psa. 145:15,16) by Bro. Amalanathan
- (10) “The Day of Preparation” (Nah. 2:3) by Bro. Paulraj.

—Brother Baskaran■

International Convention 2012

The BSFOIC plans to sponsor six Indian brethren to attend the 2012 International Convention which will be held in Baia Mare, Romania on August 6-13, 2012.



Bro. J. Joshua

convention for these brethren. The BSFOIC tried to sponsor Bro. J. Joshua to attend the 2010 International Convention but bureaucratic delays in granting Bro. Joshua his Indian passport prevented him from attending the convention.

Bro. Naresh will speak on a subject of his own choosing. Bros. J. Joshua and Alexander Barnabas have been asked to participate in a symposium at the convention. Bro. J. Joshua will speak on the parable of the Wheat and Tares, while Bro. Alexander Barnabas will speak on the parable of the Sower.

The BSFOIC will contribute \$2000 to each couple. This will cover their convention expenses, and provide \$1,500 for their airfare. These brethren will be responsible for the rest of their expenses.



Bro. Alexander Barnabas

BSFOIC Update

The BSFOIC is continuing its work of supporting the Indian brethren. Recent and ongoing activities include:

—Late 2010, donating \$1,000 to the Bible Students Association (BSA) to support the annual BSA Youth Seminar held on December 31, 2010 through January 2, 2011 at the CD Foundation near Coimbatore.

—Late 2010, spending over \$2,000 to ship 2,000 copies of the booklet, *God's Grand Plan of the Ages* to India. The booklets were donated by Bible Student Publications. Shipment was made by USPS flat-rate boxes to insure the booklets were received by the Indian brethren. Shipment is complete, with 1,000 copies being sent to the BSA and 1,000 copies sent to

Bro. Prasad in Bangalore for distribution.

—Spring 2011, donating \$2,000 to the BSA to support its annual General Convention which was held on May 6-8, 2011 in Coimbatore.

—Spring 2011, donating \$1,000 to the Erode ecclesia for the purchase of a computer and a printer. The Erode ecclesia is currently translating the book, *What Pastor Russell Said*. The computer will be used to assist in this translation work.

—2011 Ongoing, sending Truth literature requested by the Indian brethren during Bros. O.B. Elbert and Ernie Kuenzli's 2010 trip to India. The literature requested includes *Daily Heavenly Manna/Songs in the Night*, *The Life of Christ*, *The Character Development Book*, as well as Reprints, volumes of *The Studies in the Scriptures*, Bibles, Bible Concordances, Bible Dictionaries and other Biblical reference books. The BSFOIC has allocated \$2,000 to obtain and ship the requested literature.

—2011 Ongoing, working with Bible Student Productions to send additional Truth material to the Indian brethren on DVDs.

—2012, sponsoring three speakers and their wives to attend the 2012 International Convention. \$6,000 has been set aside to assist in their travel expenses. [See previous column for more details]

Future Trips to India

Bro. and Sr. O. B. Elbert and Bro. and Sr. Ernie Kuenzli are planning a trip to India in January-February 2012. If you are interested in joining this trip, or visiting the brethren in India, please contact the BSFOIC secretary, Bro. Ernie Kuenzli at ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com

Annual BSFOIC Meeting

The BSFOIC will hold its annual meeting at the Bible Students General Convention on Sunday, June 26. During this meeting, it will set its budget for 2012 and determine what additional projects it will support for the upcoming year.

BSFOIC Newsletters

In the past year, the BSFOIC has produced three issues of its newsletter. If you or your ecclesia are interested in receiving this newsletter, please contact Bro. Ernie Kuenzli at ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com.

In Conclusion

The BSFOIC wishes to thank those ecclesiastas and individuals who have generously contributed to support the work of assisting our Indian brethren with their various needs.

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