
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

Volume 7, Issue 1

The Bible Students Friends of India Committee Newsletter

Spring 2007

"More than Conquerors" 12 Indian Brethren Attend IC 2006



From left: Br. Newlin, Br. Jayaprasad, Br. Ebe Manoharan, Sr. Ranjitham, (Sr. Kuenzli), Sr. Flora, Br. Samuel Premraj, Sr. Girija, Br. David, Sr. Esther, Br. Selvaraj.



Br. Udhayakumar and Sr. Thelma Rani

WHEN APOSTLE PAUL wrote, "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37), he spoke of the adversity that the church has overcome by the grace of God. God's grace and power was demonstrated in allowing 12 Indian brethren, sponsored by the BSFOIC, to attend the 2006 International Convention.

The final obstacle, obtaining the Polish visas, was achieved the day before their flight to Poland. Br. Samuel Premraj was far back in the line at the Polish consulate in Bombay when the office opened. A Polish official noticed Bro. Premraj and inquired as to his business. When Br. Premraj explained he was there to obtain visas for 10 brethren, he was invited to the front of the line and the documents were promptly signed. We do indeed wrestle with "principalities" and "powers," but nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38,39)



Br. Samuel Premraj (with guitar) leads the Indian brethren signing a hymn in Tamil at a testimony meeting

Our Indian brethren captured the hearts and minds of the brethren at the IC 2006 with their presence, their joy, and their understanding of God's Word. They sang praises to God before the entire convention, touching everyone with their love for God. When they visited various classes throughout Poland for a week following the convention, the entire group served as wonderful ambassadors for the Indian brethren and were a testimony of the grace and work of God in India since the days of Br. Russell.

"They captured the hearts and minds of the brethren."

The entire project was the result of the love and support of brethren world-wide. The BSFOIC received many donations to support this project, for which it and the 12 Indian brethren are very grateful. The Polish brethren who assisted with the visa process learned much that will help with future projects of this type. The Indian brethren experienced firsthand the power of prayer and faith.

This victory has encouraged the BSFOIC to plan on sponsoring another group of Indian brethren to attend IC 2008. We are inspired by Paul's words, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:57,58)

Please see related articles and photos in this issue.

BSA's New Team

Central to the work of preaching the Gospel and ministering to the Indian brethren has been the Bible Students Association (BSA). Elders from South India, from Chennai to Mysore to Combiatore, meet annually to elect a 3-elder committee to help steer the work of serving the brethren in South India through conventions, pilgrim service, humanitarian aid, and witness activities in this region as well as other parts of India and Sri Lanka.

The newly elected committee includes Br. Udhayakumar as their General Secretary, Br. Chinnapan as the Secretary, and Br. Johnson as the Treasurer. They succeed Brs. Ebe Manoharan, Deva Kirupa and David Pushparaj,

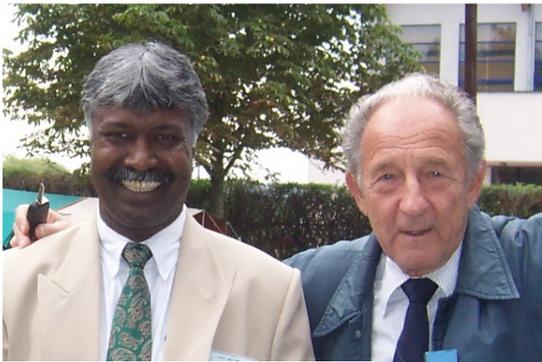


Br. J. Udhayadumar

who served as General Secretary, Secretary, and Treasurer respectively for many years.

These officers meet with elders throughout South India to prioritize the projects for each year. They communicate with our committee (BSFOIC) their plans and their budget and the BSFOIC makes donations to specific projects. Their organization, zeal, and love for the Lord and the brethren compare with brethren all around the world, and we thank God for their fellowship in the Gospel.

IC 2006 — “Blest be the tie that binds!”



What is the BSFOIC?

The Bible Students Friends of India Committee (BSFOIC) began as the Northwest Committee for India over 75 years ago. One of its founders was Br. Livermore [father of Stuart Livermore], of Portland, Oregon. As a young man, he served in the British Navy in India and made contact with the brethren there. When he returned home, his experience moved the northwest brethren to form a committee to support the Indian brethren.

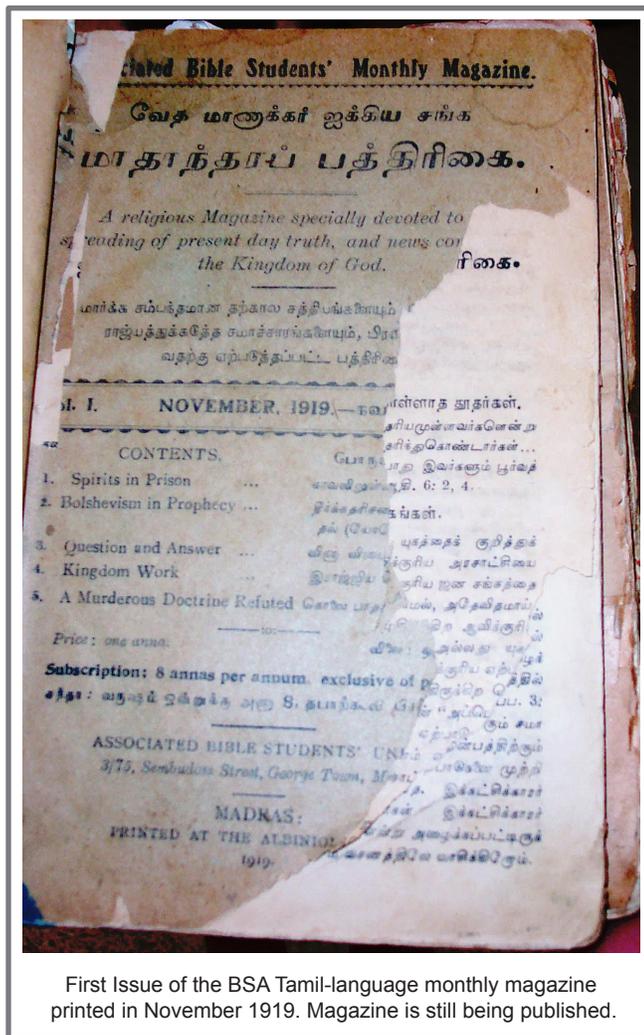
Initial support was temporal, since many of the Indian brethren were destitute. Starting in the 1950s, the committee sponsored periodic trips of an Indian elder to the U.S. General Convention and ecclesias around the country. The committee also sponsored periodic trips by an Indian elder to the International Convention. Trips by Brs. I.A. Joseph, Charles Suresh and D. Daniel raised an awareness of the Indian brethren with the brethren in Europe.

Beginning with Brs. David Bruce and Ray Krupa in 1983, the committee starting sending its own members to India every 1-2 years to see the Indian brethren firsthand, understand their needs, and see how funds were being spent.

The BSFOIC has supported local conventions, the Indian General Convention, their monthly magazine, translations of the Studies in the Scriptures, sending books and literature, and public witness efforts, including translation of "For This Cause" into the Tamil language.

The greatest concentration of Bible Student ecclesias is found in the state of Tamil-Nadu. The elders of these congregations elect the Bible Students Association committee to organize their collective efforts. Our committee works with the BSA since it represents most of the Indian brethren. The BSFOIC also works with congregations in Bangalore and other cities in Karnataka, an Indian state north of Tamil-Nadu.

We frequently are asked for support by Indian brethren who wish to work outside the BSA. While these are usually sincere in their efforts and requests, we are more comfortable dealing with the BSA committee elected by elders representing most of the Indian Bible Student congregations. We feel that our method of dealing with the BSA committee has stood the test of time, and that this method continues to be blessed by the Lord.



First Issue of the BSA Tamil-language monthly magazine printed in November 1919. Magazine is still being published.

BSFOIC 2007 Budget

BSFOIC is an IRS recognized non-profit organization [91-20033219]. Our activities are funded by individual contributions, and support is on a "Lord willing" basis. The BSFOIC budget for 2007 is:

1. \$3000 for the Indian General Convention
2. \$3000 for the Indian Youth Seminars
3. \$1000 for Pilgrim service of local Indian elders
4. \$1000 for humanitarian aid - disbursed by the Indian BSA committee

Budget Items Explained

1—The 3-day Indian General Convention is held each year in Tamil-Nadu with 600-800 brethren attending. BSFOIC supports about 50% of the convention costs.

2—The 3-Day Youth seminar is held twice a year budget permitting, with 100-250 young brethren attending.

3—The Pilgrim service supports local elders traveling to other, smaller ecclesias for monthly service.

4—While humanitarian aid is not really our mission, the BSFOIC sends two donations per year to the BSA committee for their dispersal. They report back how the money is spent and they understand that our support in this area is limited.

TRANSLATION and PUBLISHING SUPPORT. These are no longer in the BSFOIC budget since other Bible Student groups are now supporting these efforts. We supported these efforts for the past 60 years and we still assist in prioritizing the current efforts. [Our next newsletter will have more on this subject.] We communicate with the BSA committee on these subjects and refer inquiries in these areas to the other organizations now involved.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION TRAVEL. We provided support for 12 Indian brethren to attend IC 2006. Donations specifically for this project were collected aside from our regular budget items. This expense totaled \$12,000 for the 2006 convention. Funds permitting, we would like to repeat this effort for the 2008 International Convention with a different group of Indian brethren.

DESIGNATED DONATIONS. We accept designated donations where the donor specifies which project they wish to support [General convention, Youth seminar, humanitarian aid, etc.].

Five Indian Elders Speak

Five Indian elders spoke at the 2006 International Convention.

Br. Samuel Premraj, Br. Udhayakumar and Br. Jayaprasad combined to narrate a one hour Powerpoint presentation on the brethren in India. Br. Premraj described overall Bible Student activities in India. Br. Udhayakumar described the brethren and ecclesias in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Br. Jayaprasad described the brethren and ecclesias in the Indian state of Karnataka.

Br. Premraj gave a 30-minute discourse on "Jehovah's Dwelling Places." He discussed seven dwelling places: Garden of Eden; Tabernacle of Moses; Solomon's Temple; Temple built by Ezra, Nehemiah and Herod; Jesus the Messiah; Millennial temple and Messiah's bride.

Br. R. Selvaraj gave a 30-minute discourse on "The Two Likenesses." He compared the likeness of men and the likeness of God and described how the church is being developed as sons of God.

Br. Ebe Manoharan gave a 30-minute discourse on "The Seven Eyes of Jehovah." (Zech. 4:9-10) He focused on the seven eyes of Jehovah particularly as they apply to the building of the anti-typical temple, the church.

Br. Jayaprasad read a 30-minute discourse written by Br. Francis Paul on "The Dragnet." Br. Francis Paul planned, but was unable, to attend the convention. Br. Francis Paul's discourse focused on our Lord's parable of the Dragnet. (Matt. 13:47-50)

These lessons are printed in the IC discourse book.



Br. Samuel Premraj



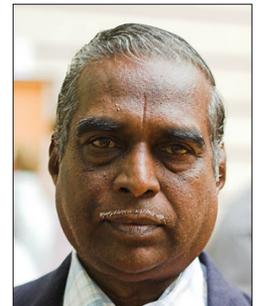
Br. Udhayakumar



Br. Jayaprasad



Br. R. Selvaraj



Br. Ebe Manoharan