

Oh, What a Saviour!

Anniversary Book 2008

Introduction

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue... and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. II Peter 1:5-8

Now our great God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus, is looking for an abounding life in His disciples. Yes, when He has purchased us with His own Blood, does He not deserve to be loved and served in an ever-abounding manner?

In the world around us we can see an increasing affluence and an abounding materialism which arises therewith. In other parts of the world, there is a growing crescendo of murmuring and grumbling over entitlements and services which are being curtailed due to the want of government funds. But in the midst of both groups, there is a vast increase in tears and suffering. Whenever people and nations distance themselves from the knowledge of Jesus Christ, there will be much suffering.

Now what has all this to do with us? Somehow I cannot help feeling that we are both directly and indirectly, in fact, more directly than indirectly, responsible for so much of this avoidable suffering. Wherever sin is sown, there will be an eventual outbreak of suffering. Whenever a father or mother, leader or administrative head breaks the laws of God and hides sin and deceit, there will be a harvest of sorrows, suffering and disruptions. While our Master calls us 'the salt of the earth', why have we failed so glaringly, openly and unashamedly in sowing the truth around us and thus salting society and the nations at large? We do not even seem to recognize this failure, nor do we repent for it. We must "rend our hearts and not our garments" for these lapses and failures in our Christian effectiveness and fruitfulness.

Most Christians appear to live in tiny cocoons with even tinier insular agendas for their lives. They simply fail to see their responsibility to show forth Jesus, the Author of man's salvation who gave Himself for us as "an offering and a sacrifice to God." (Eph. 5:2)

Thus while some of us, 'good' Christians are busier than ever with our small goals, 'fiefdoms' and kingdoms, the world around us is dying for the knowledge of Jesus. It grieves me much that many who say that they want to serve the Lord do not have the passion and zeal for His glory which little David, the shepherd boy had, when he went forth armed only with a sling and a few smooth stones to confront the seasoned warrior, Goliath. Yet we are meant to be abounding in every good work and steadily advancing, overthrowing the giants of greed, vice and uncleanness around us.

Have the resources of God come to be depleted of late? Can't our all-sufficient Saviour turn us yet into men and women who are characterized by His abounding grace? One thing is clear to me that it is only those who are hungry for Jesus that will experience this abounding power and love which is promised to us.

If there is any in our midst who is still sitting on the fence, or merely existing in name only as a disciple of Jesus, it is time for that individual to fall on his face or her face at the nail-pierced Feet of Jesus, humble themselves and put off for ever their sloth and love of self and ease. Then, looking unto Jesus and being endued with power from above, let us "freely give" seeing that we have "freely received" so much from His loving Hands.

While we talk of the millions and the billions whom we are seeking to reach, let us be practical and realistic and begin with the precious individuals whom we meet daily. As a first step, let us be more disciplined in our prayer life and individual times with God, knowing well that the Fellowship and our service for God will be only as strong and true as our personal prayer life.

In the narrative which follows we give you a brief survey of some few significant events and developments which have taken place in the recent past.

A Miraculous Answer to the Prayer of the Fellowship

Soon after the American Retreat closed, Bro. Joe had to go in for his customary annual medical check at the Cleveland Clinic, which is roughly two hours of driving distance away. What was expected to be a two days' stay in hospital turned out to be a traumatic period of nearly twenty days.

When the interventionist failed to access the affected part of the heart due to the occluded arteries, he reluctantly gave up. At this point, Bro. Joe was in a critical condition with a 99% blockage.

When Dr. Raymond, the expert who attended on Bro. Joe and has become a personal friend of his, handed him over to a young surgeon, Dr. Gonzalez, he sat on the hospital bed and went through with Bro. Joe all the contingencies and complications which were attendant upon open-heart surgery which was the only viable option. When Bro. Joe gave him the go-ahead, the blood thinners which the failed stenting had required were discontinued and after a period of examination, the surgery was performed. At about 1 am, Bro. Joe was wheeled out of the operation theatre after an extremely long operation. Sister Lily and the children who were waiting outside were able to leave.

Two or three hours later, in the intensive care unit, it was discovered that Bro. Joe was bleeding profusely and he was rushed back into the operation theatre to be opened up again. It was then found out that even from nonsurgical parts of the heart blood was oozing. Hence the flooding which had taken place caused the heart to stop. Now the Lord had told Bro. Joe clearly that there would be grave danger but that "He was the Resurrection and the Life." Though at this point he was not conscious, yet this was the scripture on which his hope and trust were anchored firmly.

Retiring to bed in the small hours, after hardly a couple of hours of sleep, sister Lily was awake and felt the urge to pray. The telephone rang and she was informed of the crisis and that Bro. Joe was back in the operation theatre. How the bleeding stopped and the heart revived is a mystery which can only be described as a miracle.

The volume of prayer and its intensity from various quarters of the globe and from small groups, even in little villages, is something which speaks of the wonders of God's love, when poured into the hearts of men, women and children. There was so much tearful crying to the Lord that God saw it fit to put Bro. Joe back on the road to recovery.

The doctors and the nurses who were in attendance during the post-surgical period found their patient to be a polite, uncomplaining, rejoicing and praising person. For Bro. Joe himself this was a very trying period when he had to learn afresh to walk, talk and recover even his normal thinking. The days of delirium and semi-delirium were soon forgotten. The nurses expressed even sadness to let Bro. Joe leave.

Watching over a much weakened husband during his long convalescence fell to the lot of Sister Lily who very patiently cared almost singlehandedly for Bro. Joe during the months of recovery from September to December 2007.

There was much rejoicing and praise to God when Bro. Joe resumed preaching, which he did in late November. Even the little grandchildren joined the many children, who had earlier prayed for Bro. Joe's recovery, in praising God with joy.

Now with more work on his hands than he had faced hitherto, Bro. Joe constantly focuses on greater humility and total conformity with Jesus' own life, love and compassion. He desires to be grateful to God and to thank all of you who prayed so much for him.

NEW CENTRES AND ADVANCES

Live Transmission of the Annual Retreat on the Internet

It is simply impossible to gauge the magnitude, effect and fruitfulness of the internet ministry, as literally millions from across the world can be reached by the message, if indeed the authentic grace, power and punch of "Thus saith the Lord" is present.

Where fanatic religious practices or communist governments have imposed a 'black-out' by blocking the truth of God's word from entering their countries, what a 'lifeline' the message of Jesus over the internet is proving to be!

The number of people logging on to either read, hear or watch the message is continually increasing. The potential thus created to reach millions who would otherwise perhaps never be reached, simply cannot be measured.

This year the Lord enabled us to have live transmission of the Annual Retreat on our website. This helped many who could not come to the Retreat to log on to our website and watch the Retreat live on their computers. Thus many reported that they were greatly blessed. The number of people who were watching the Retreat proceedings kept growing day by day.

We praise God for this new feature which enables those in other countries also to participate in the Retreat. Now the Retreat messages are on our website for anyone to download and watch. This also helps those who desire a recap to consolidate the blessing which they had received at the Retreat.

Students' Meeting in Oxford University

Oxford and most of the universities of the West are far removed today from godliness and faithfulness to the word of God. Our young people however are faithfully placing our specially prepared international "Christ is Victor" in the university notice boards and racks, for the students to pick up and read. Some are stepping out of the shadows and reading our magazines.

When Bro. Joe spoke, the university itself was in the midst of a break which meant that many students were not in town. But some students did turn up at the meeting on March 13 and other young people were also present. We launched into the proceedings without long introductions. The company were soon gripped by the word of God and Bro. Joe could preach to them freely without anyone glancing at the clock or leaving the lecture room.

We must pray that God will use our students who are currently studying in this hoary and elite university.

New Advances in Nepal

Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia, bordered by China to the north and India to the south, east and west. Prior to 2006, Nepal was a kingdom. At present, Nepal is officially and constitutionally a secular country. Its recent history has involved struggles for democratic government with periods of direct monarchic rule. From 1995 until 2006,

Nepal suffered from a civil war between government forces and Maoist guerrillas of the Communist Party of Nepal.

On December 28, 2007, the Interim Parliament passed a bill and declared Nepal to be a *Federal Democratic Republic*. The first meeting of the Constituent Assembly officially implemented that declaration on May 28, 2008. The capital, Kathmandu, is the largest city of Nepal.

In spite of their physical limitations, Dr. Karunakaran and his wife laboured in Nepal till recently, for almost thirteen years. In July 2007, Bro. Joe sent one of our trainees from Beulah Gardens to continue the work and to reach some unreached areas. Trusting God, this brother travelled into Nepal with his family, without even a proper identity card. But the Lord took care of them, as the border security people did not even ask for it.

After much prayer, they moved into Butwal which is situated in the low-altitude flatland, 26 km from the Indian border. This town is known for commerce, industries and agriculture. It has Nepal's second largest horticulture business, and has more than one thousand industries and business enterprises employing over four thousand people.

Since Bro. Joe wanted our brother to reach the villages of Nepal, in December 2007, he visited three Nepali villages. He made his way through a big forest extending over a stretch of 10 km to reach three neglected villages and give them the Gospel. The names of the villages are Bhale Bhariya, Mejkuri and Sohsa. Now he is going there every week on a regular basis and becoming known to the local people. The people in those villages are found to be very receptive to the Gospel. But the Maoists were trying to hinder his efforts. But he says, "I remembered Bro. Joe's words, 'Without taking any risk, we cannot do the Lord's work.' This encouraged and emboldened me much and I went forward with faith and prayer and the Lord helped me to preach the Gospel in those villages." He had also to overcome the attacks of the powers of darkness which withstood him very much, by much fasting and prayer.

Let us pray much for Naveen, his wife and two sons, that God will use them to reach the unreached in this dark land of Nepal. They should receive more prayer support from us.

Our First Telecast in Germany

In Germany, the Lord led us to a TV station within the Nordrhein-Westfalen Cable network. Nordrhein-Westfalen is the most populous of all the German states. This expensive German telecast targets a thickly populated industrial belt. We commenced our telecast from September 2007, and it is aired on Sunday mornings at 8.30 hours. The message is in English and German.

This TV station receives many calls in response to our programme, appreciating our straight-forward message. The director of the station takes a positive stand for the programme and encourages us to keep the telecast going, saying that from the responses they received they feel a significant viewership has been built up.

One of our sisters in Germany, who takes the phone calls from the public, had so far several enquiries from people. A Nigerian businessman, a Filipino woman and a Bulgarian pastor called us to say they were blessed by our programme. So we could invite some of these viewers to our German Retreat. The livestream of this broadcast can be viewed by connecting to www.nrv.tv from anywhere in the world. This station can potentially reach 4.2 million households. Let us pray that the message of the All-sufficiency of Jesus will bring Joy, Hope and Peace to many viewers.

New Telecast in Paris, France

Our new telecast in Paris, "The Lord's Challenge", has been launched from July 2007, on 'Living God TV', every Wednesday at 8.30 pm. It is an English-Tamil programme. It covers the whole of Europe, Middle Eastern countries, parts of Africa, and Canada.

The response from the viewers is very encouraging. One lady from Canada rang up and said, "I have heard thousands of sermons in my life so far, but this message on your programme is so unique."

Another call from Switzerland reported that the Lord is speaking to some of them so clearly and is convicting them of their low spiritual condition. They said that they were waiting with keen expectancy to listen to our programme every Wednesday.

Thus the Lord is speaking to many needy people and touching souls. Please remember our numerous weekly telecasts that the dear Lord will use them to reach the millions who have never heard the word of God.

New Telecast in Marathi

We have been praying for a telecast in Marathi, which is spoken in a very large area of Western India, including Bombay, by over 80 million people. Now the Lord enabled us to commence our TV programme in Marathi. Pray that many will be touched by the Lord. We receive many calls from various needy people of Maharashtra.

We must pray that the Lord will touch every one of these viewers and make them true witnesses.

Another Telugu Telecast

The Lord has opened to us another TV channel in Telugu, Subhavartha TV. On Sundays, we have a full-hour programme from 2 to 3 pm on this channel which is being watched by a growing number of viewers each week. This will help many regions where Sunday services are not to be found close at hand.

We constantly hear about more and more strangers and others becoming our regular viewers, as the Lord speaks to them clearly through the message which God gives us.

We also have a 30-minute evening broadcast on this channel, on Thursdays, from 8.30 to 9.00 pm.

We are trying seeking to reach out to other states of India in their local languages.

Our Hindi Magazine "Mritunjay Christ" Launched

Hindi is the national language of India, a nation of over 1 billion people. More than 180 million people in India regard Hindi as their mother tongue. Another 300 million use it as their second language. It is a direct descendent of Sanskrit.

Though some of our books have been translated into Hindi, yet our literature output in Hindi is very meagre.

In October 2007, we have launched the Hindi edition of our monthly magazine, which is called, "**Mritunjay Christ**" with a colourful cover. It is packed with edifying messages and articles which will prove to be a blessing to the readers.

Many Hindi-speaking people are being reached through this magazine. Our brothers in the vast desolations of the North of India are taking great pains to distribute these magazines in their cities and towns. We have commenced now in a small way, with a circulation of 1200 copies. We must pray for a hundredfold increase in its circulation.

Please pray much for the Hindi magazine ministry and introduce or subscribe on behalf of your friends and relatives who can read Hindi.

The New Prayer Hall in Dimapur, Nagaland

While commercialism is said to be making great strides in this business centre of the North-Eastern region, Dimapur, so is the relentless extortion and factional killing which is triggered by the swelling ranks of the 'underground.' There is no security of life and people do not venture outdoors after dark. Some would say that this is the most unsuitable time for the preaching of the Gospel. When John Wesley heard the swearing and the blasphemy around the streets in Newcastle in the north of England, he observed, "These people are ripe for the Gospel and revival." Bro. Joe also felt that he should address God's word both to the public and the people whose hands are dripping with blood, without any further delay.

In such a place, the Lord has given us a commodious prayer hall. Although this hall is scarcely ready, Bro. Joe scheduled revival meetings here from June 3 to 6.

Though the city itself was in the throes of fear and bloodshed, the people braved the dangers and filled the hall. Even the balcony began to be occupied in spite of the rough unplastered stairs.

A nice little bookstall with good books and Bibles, "Beautiful Books", was also dedicated to the Lord one morning.

Some mountain spirits to whom prayers and offerings were being made before some huge trees in the neighbourhood were said to have fled, abandoning their abode. The worshippers of these spirits gave up their incantations and offerings, seeing that the demons had disappeared.

There are many other demons and powers of darkness which are still active in many parts of this country who need to be quelled and thrown out of their age-old strongholds. We must claim the victory of the Blood of Christ with more faith and finality, so that these evil powers that blind the hearts of millions will find that they can no longer resist the 'marching orders' which they have been given. Let us humble ourselves for our lethargy in claiming the great things which God has promised and see the more powerful works of the Holy Spirit.

In Churachandpur and Pallel, Manipur

Churachandpur is the second biggest town of Manipur, 65 km away from Imphal. What began as a small cottage ministry here has now developed into a significant company.

When Bro. Joe visited this place in 2006, his visit proved to be a great blessing to many people. Since our centre was functioning in a noisy market area, Bro. Joe asked our brothers to look for a commodious place away from the dusty area. Now we have moved to a new place, where about a hundred people gather every Sunday to listen to God's word.

Soon after the youth camp closed in Imphal on June 9, Bro. Joe rushed to the open-air meeting in a huge plot of ground at Churachandpur. Now no one would attempt an open-air meeting after the onset of the monsoon which is generally quite severe in these parts. But a huge congregation had gathered and the clouds were driven away by God's angelic hosts.

After this great company had listened to some very good singing from local church choirs of various tribal groups, Bro. Joe's spoke the word of God with uncompromising firmness. The people were told how tribal divisions and animosities had no place whatever in the Church of Christ. Bro. Joe insisted that he should be interpreted into Manipuri much against the wishes of many who would have preferred a tribal language. Whereas Bro. Joe expected men of all religions and no religion at this meeting, these men thought that no Hindus or others would be present. He gives no quarter to such sentiments of unfaith. The Hand of God was at work amongst the vast crowd and the Lord Jesus was lifted high.

Every Sunday our brothers from Imphal go to Churachandpur to give the Word. One of our young men trained in Beulah Gardens is now taking care of this work.

Pallel is another town in Manipur which is 45 km away from Imphal. We have a regular Sunday service here also. Many needy people are hearing the word of God with great hunger. One of our young couples is now taking care of this work. They left their lucrative jobs in Imphal and moved to Pallel to build the work of God here. We must pray much for this region.

Beginning of the Work in Gurdaspur, Punjab

Gurdaspur is a small town in Punjab, just 30 km from Pakistan border. John Hyde, the great missionary to India, had laboured in this area. This is the only Christian area in the whole of Punjab.

Some young men from Gurdaspur, who worked as carpenters in our hospital in Anantanag, Kashmir, were touched by the Lord in our humble ministry there. They were burdened about their own city and state, and started praying for a regular Sunday meeting in their place in Punjab.

When Bro. Joe came to know about their burden and vision, he prayed about it and guided them to have revival meetings in Gurdaspur. He asked some of our young preachers who are labouring for the Lord in North India, to go and preach God's word there at these meetings. So we had our first revival meetings in Gurdaspur from Feb. 1 to 3. More than 300 people gathered to hear the word at these meetings. The Spirit of God visited the people and many were crying to God during the prayer sessions.

After these meetings, we have started Sunday worship in Gurdaspur. One of our young men has been sent from Anantnag, Kashmir, to help in the ministry here. We must pray much for these precious souls that they may rise up as mighty witnesses for the Lord and be a 'light' and 'salt' in their state.

The Military Base of Ambala, Haryana

The state of Haryana in North India was carved out of the state of Punjab in 1966. It is bordered by Punjab and Himachal Pradesh to the north, and Rajasthan to the west and south and Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh to the east. The capital of Haryana is Chandigarh which is administered as a union territory and is also the capital of Punjab. It is a leading industrialized state of India, with a 50% share in the national production of cars and motorcycles and it ranks third in software exports. The altitude of Haryana varies between 700 to 3600 feet (200 metres to 1200 metres) above sea level.

The city of Ambala in Haryana is a district headquarters. One of our families living in Ambala Cantonment area, started praying much for a ministry here. Upon their request, our Chandigarh team started visiting this place from time to time to give them the word of God.

When we had a carol service in Ambala Cantonment area in December, the hall was packed and people listened to the message very earnestly. Seeing the great need of this area, we have now started a regular Sunday evening service here. You should join us in asking the Lord for a rich harvest of souls in this city and state.

Reaching out to Solan and Shogi, Himachal Pradesh

The Indian state of Himachal Pradesh (Abode of Snow), situated in the heart of the Western Himalayas, is a mostly mountainous area. In the north it is contiguous to Jammu and Kashmir, and in the south-east, it adjoins the hilly areas of Uttar Pradesh. In the south and on the western side, it is bordered by Haryana and Punjab respectively, whereas on the east it borders Tibet. The north-eastern part of the state is snow-covered and is thinly populated.

Himachal is however a much neglected area. It has the lowest percentage of Christians in India, compared to any other state. Seeing the vast need here, we have been praying for an opening here.

One of our research students in the Solan University here, invited our team from Chandigarh to come and labour there.

When we had our first carol service here in December, many people came and heard God's word, in spite of the bitter cold. Some of them heard the Gospel for the first time in their lives. Now we have started a regular Sunday service in Solan.

Shogi is another important town which is just 10 km from Shimla, the capital of Himachal Pradesh, and 30 km from Solan. Many people came to our carol service at Solan from here. As the Lord has touched them, they wanted to have the Gospel preached in their town also every Sunday. Now we have started a regular Sunday evening service in this place.

Please pray much for these two places where there is so much need. How true are the words of Jesus, when He said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few"! Yes, let us cry to God that He may send forth faithful labourers into these ripe harvest fields of North India.

Our New Bookstall in Cochin, Kerala

Kerala stands in the forefront of Indian states in the matter of literacy and education. But in this state, eternal things appear to fade and recede into oblivion, while money and worldly prosperity occupy the whole spectrum of people's thinking. So God is nowhere in their thinking, except for charm bringing religious practices. Some are very zealous for their antique observances.

As Bro Joe was burdened to open a bookshop in Cochin to reach these people who are under strong bondage to tradition, we opened our bookshop, "Beautiful Books", in the front portion of our new prayer hall, in November 2007. Slowly people are coming to visit our bookstall, where we have many Malayalam and English books and Bibles on display.

The Lord has enabled us to publish three of our books in Malayalam. We are making efforts to translate some of our other important books into Malayalam. Our magazine in Malayalam is reaching some needy families.

Highly literate Kerala has always been full of competing conventions and a wide variety of religious organisations. We need Spirit-filled preachers and people who will reach the teeming, fainting crowds who had their 'fill' of religious rites and pageants.

In Gujarat

It was a joy to see twenty-four people from Gujarat at our Annual Retreat this year. Eight of them were Gujaratis who had turned to the Lord from Hinduism. One of them is an old widow who stood fast for the Lord in spite of much opposition from her family members. The Lord answered her prayer and helped her to see her son turn to the Lord. Now her daughter, son-in-law and grandsons are also attending our meetings and are very receptive to the Gospel. The Lord has touched and changed the lives of some more people in Gujarat and they are coming to our meetings with their whole families.

Although Bro. Whitson is no longer young, he has been visiting Gujarat from time to time and preaching to several needy people since 2001. This has brought much encouragement to our people there and the work is spreading to more areas. We have our regular Sunday service and Saturday night fasting prayer in two places, Ahmedabad and Daman. We expect to start our weekly meetings in Baroda soon. The other places which Bro. Whitson visits are Rajkot, a pilgrim centre, Gandhinagar, the capital of Gujarat, Anumala, the atomic station, Surat, the textile capital of Gujarat and Bharuch. People with true faith, love and vision must rise up to assist us. We praise God for those who have been doing pioneering work in the difficult and dangerous areas of this state.

Now some of our people are beginning to be burdened about reaching new places here with the Gospel. In spite of the hostile atmosphere in this state, the Lord is enabling us slowly to inch forward.

WORLDWIDE LABOURS

IN EUROPE

Europe as a whole evinces extreme indifference to the things of God outwardly and is quite a hard place in which to labour. However, where the Gospel has not been proclaimed in power, there is bound to be an abundance of suffering, which arises from the prevailing unrighteousness. Therefore this only underscores the urgency to lift Jesus up before dying eyes. For this, great power from above is needed and not mere talk or empty rhetoric. So Bro. Joe says, "It is therefore with much fear and trembling and a deep sense of my own frailty that I venture to labour there."

Summer Retreat in England

The hall allocated to us in this Retreat Centre where other groups also were meeting at the same time, was just sufficient.

A cold spell and torrential rains such as Britain has not had in the last sixty years made it hard for those who had planned to attend the latter part, to get to the retreat, which took place from July 17 to 22.

The Lord gave us His word plentifully. Dr. Job, who was visiting his daughter at this time, was able to share both his testimony and later a message at one of the sessions.

The convicting power of the word of God was much in evidence, as some wept and poured out their hearts in prayer.

Seeing that he had to address so many meetings and several campaigns before going almost directly into the English Retreat, Bro. Joe felt keenly that he was not doing complete justice in conveying to the people the whole counsel of God. He says, "I can only say that the Lord is most merciful, in spite of my many inadequacies."

Winter Retreat in England

Not many people want to travel even short distances to retreats in winter. Moreover, UK and London were passing through an unusually cold spell at this time.

Clapham, where our retreat took place from Jan. 3 to 6, is just about four kilometres from Brixton, where our bookstall is situated and is quite close to the heart of London. Those who did make it to the Retreat were people who set their hearts on being there, in spite of inconveniences. Our small team worked hard and saw that everything was shipshape for the meetings in this church which we rented.

Johannes Weidenmuller helped with the afternoon sessions, so that Bro. Joe could get a short rest between the morning and evening sessions. Bro. Gunther and Maria had their hands full with the catering of food and care of those who attended. Our students helped with the music. Hence Bro. Joe's part was chiefly to deliver the main messages.

Now this was a real test to see how well Bro. Joe would function in the cold of winter, after his critical heart operation. The Lord granted great freedom and utterance to him so that it was difficult for anyone to turn away from the truth of God. The retreat closed in the afternoon of the first Sunday of the New Year. The British nation requires urgently a loud and long trumpet call to repentance to be sounded in its ear.

Meetings in Paris, France

Leaving London the very next day after the Summer Retreat in England in July, Bro. Joe and Sister Lily got to Paris. But somewhere in the holiday rush at the airports, British Airways mishandled their baggage and left them without their one suitcase with nearly all their clothes in it. To Bro. Joe, it seemed like a minor inconvenience compared to the largeness of the task which was before him. Our work has hardly touched the surface of the need here.

The numbers at our meetings were small. The world has many distractions for both young and old here. Rarely does one see a happy face. Rescuing people from the world is something which the Lord alone can do. Bro. Thilag and his wife have been working hard and little by little the word of God is getting wider exposure.

IN THE US

Thanksgiving Weekend Retreat in the US

So many people prayed with faithful entreaty that Bro. Joe should receive new strength to be able to preach at this retreat, which came while he was yet recovering from his heart surgery. The dear Lord strengthened Bro. Joe with His own enabling to declare His word.

When it gets to be November, Michigan turns cold and gloomy. People up here like to go to the southern states which are less cold in the winter. Though light early snowfall lay on the ground, we were in no sense incommoded.

For the very first time we had the whole retreat in our church from Nov. 23 to 25. Thus many who had travelled long distances to be at the retreat were spared another extra hour of driving to the campgrounds in Vassar, 70 miles to the North of Detroit, where we always had this retreat in the years past. Some of the people were accommodated in an inexpensive motel not far from our church in Novi. Our young women cooked and provided good healthy food to the people, in the hall attached to our church.

Our retreat began on Friday evening with a goodly number present, in our little church at Novi, Detroit. Following the morning session of Saturday when both John and Bro. Joe preached, there was a good, long season of prayer.

Bro. Joe, who could hardly speak a sentence just a few weeks ago, was greatly strengthened to preach with no change in his voice and utterance. This encouraged many and of course all praise belongs to the Saviour by whose "stripes we are healed."

It was so good to see people trying to find seats. To the local people we are still strangers and they prefer to go to large denominational churches and thus not many people want to come to us.

America is passing through a very critical period in its history. Joblessness and re-possession of homes is everywhere. Unless God moves in mercy and grants a turning and repentance amongst the very mixed population of today, there is no one who can save America!

We see so much want, suffering and homelessness around us that it breaks our hearts. But we continue to labour for this nation and the people of many nations who come here. Pray that the message which is going out over the Internet, TV, radio and the specially printed "Christ is Victor" magazines will truly touch many souls.

Easter Retreat in Detroit

Bro. Joe says, "When one returns after being away for two and a half months, one does not find everything set on a platter for him. Our folks here have their hands full getting ready for the retreat themselves. Thus contending with the tiresomeness of the long journey and jet-lag on the one hand, and the burden of the message and the pile-up of letters or e-mails on the other, one has to begin right away to work hard. Thus praising God at every turn for His marvellous grace bestowed on us, we press on."

You can imagine how hard Sister Lily has to work, buying groceries and organizing the kitchen to feed the people coming in from long distances in the intense cold. She does it joyfully on the run.

What was called the severest winter storm of the season hit Michigan on the Easter weekend. Though the snowfall in the Detroit area was not the heaviest in the region, several of our retreat comers suffered from very dangerous skidding and some accidents on the icy roads. But all of them were miraculously kept from injuries.

The Lord granted to us His presence in spite of the severe testing which we seem to get just prior to each retreat. The word of the Lord went forth with power and some were able to participate in the retreat, though far removed from the venue, through the live transmission of the message through the internet.

IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

In Malaysia

It is amazing both to Sister Lily and Bro. Joe that they were able to take travel in their stride and thus they were able to labour two nights in Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur in February 2008. So Bro. Joe says, "The uplifting power of the prayers of many that has been available to me over the years, has been such a strength to me. There is no way I can thank all of you and those whom I may never possibly meet on earth, who have carried me in the arms of prayer in my continual itinerations even to the present time."

A small team of our converted brothers and sisters from Penang came to the meetings. Faithfully James Bong and his wife Amber have been carrying literature to churches and reaching out to souls. Bro. Singarayar was able to bring a number of Malaysians from a distant location. The sowing of God's word will surely bring forth fruit.

In Singapore

Over the years Bro. Joe has laboured for many in Singapore. After their arrival there from Malaysia, on the first night, Bro. Joe and Sister Lily joined a small group of praying people on Saturday night. Sunday's two services were blessed of the Lord.

John Daniel, who had scheduled some work which needed to be done for his company in Singapore, was able to help Bro. Joe in the ministry.

Dr. Rajadorai, who occupies a position of great responsibility in one of the big government hospitals, needs to be supported with much prayer as he ministers Sunday after Sunday to the people. Enoch too helps in various ways including the special ministry of reaching a large number of workmen who are at work all the time, building towering buildings which reach high into the sky. Some of these men are converted people, who had been blessed at some remote centre of the Fellowship.

The people here work under so much pressure that even coming to a meeting after their work requires quite a degree of dedication. Our prayer should be behind our little team here.

YOUTH CAMPS

All-Asia Students' Camp

Extraordinary blessing was experienced at this camp, inasmuch as a powerful conviction of sin took hold of many young people. It was wonderful to see the spirit of prayer gripping people. Hence the sound of prayer could be heard from several quarters of Beulah Gardens, continuing until late into the night. What is particularly encouraging is that this Spirit's work did not cease after the Camp. News kept coming in of souls repenting, restituting and coming through from many far-flung centres from which young people had come.

Though Bro. Joe was not able to come and labour at this camp this year due to his critical health condition, it pleased the Lord to use Bro. John Daniel and Bro. John Branch in a mighty way, as they themselves were very much cast upon the Lord for the message. The preaching was well supported in the Discussion Groups by our older brothers who led the young people to find the right answers to the thought-provoking questions which were set for them.

The testimonies and the reports from the widely scattered fields spoke to many and greatly widened their horizons and spiritual vision. There were students from Africa too. We do not know how an Indian student had managed to come all the way from Shanghai, China. What a joy it was to have students from England too!

Now let us pray that these young people, scattered far and wide, from the borders of Burma, China and from farther afield will be faithful to the Lord, in spite of their demanding studies and carry the fire to many unreached people and those untouched by the word of God.

Youth Camp in Imphal, Manipur

So many young people had gathered for our youth camp in Imphal, which took place from June 6 to 9. John Daniel was one of the principal speakers and was kept busy helping the young people. Lydia, the youngest of the Daniel children, also took two special classes for the young women in the camp and they soon began to interact quite freely with her.

In the three days of the camp, the young people were given a great deal of truth from the word of God, as several of our team members helped, including Bro. Priyanath from Vijayawada.

In the evenings, to a well-filled hall, Bro. Joe spoke the truths of God's word demolishing tribal barriers, ancient hatreds and murderous instincts which simply have no place in God's kingdom of love and purity of heart. A tremendous spirit of prayer began to take hold of the young people and people were found praying and confessing their sins and repenting with tears.

Our prayer is that this movement of God's Spirit will continue and bring forgiveness and salvation to many.

THE BIG CAMPAIGNS IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Stuartpuram Convention

Our construction team had completed the extension of the huge hall in Stuartpuram by a further addition of a wing of 40' x 210'. There were several other additions of a temporary nature which the swelling crowd filled once again to overflowing.

Now this vast congregation had to be fed with the word of God. People who had gathered from many distant places, had to be sent back with flaming hearts to remote areas to kindle new fires of revival.

The many hours of prayer spent in the Lord's presence in this place for two or three months before the campaign, caused the whole campus to be charged by the spirit of expectancy and hunger for God's word.

From the outset, the Lord caused His unction to rest on Bro. Joe and the word went forth with such power that on several occasions the congregation was broken and searched before the Lord. How the multitude cried out to God during the prayer which followed the messages!

It is the good Lord alone that strengthened Bro. Joe and helped him to withstand the heavy work of these four days in Stuartpuram. Bro. John Daniel also managed to be present and preach before the convention closed.

Revival Meetings in Vizag

During the three nights here in January, the Lord granted great liberty in preaching His word. John, who could help Bro. Joe during the first two nights, preached before Bro. Joe preached.

People who had gathered from numerous places, some having come from remote jungle areas, heard God's word with rapt attention.

After these three nights in this rented premises came two days of follow-up meetings at our own large centre, some 300-400 metres away. Bro. Joe was able to address only one of the morning sessions at our centre. Now the brothers who followed him, preaching in the last few vital meetings are faithful and trusted men who have learned to labour with all their hearts for true revival blessing.

Revival Meetings in Hyderabad

So many gathered in our hall here that it was hard for the ushers to find adequate room for them. The Lord helped Bro. Joe to pour out his heart with burden and anguish to the people. Some of the young people in particular are presently riding on the crest of high salaries and emoluments. This of course constitutes a grave danger. They needed to be warned from getting sidetracked and deflected from doing God's will, while the many newcomers to our meetings needed to be brought to the Foot of the Cross.

Revival Meetings in Vijayawada

During the four nights that Bro. Joe addressed the growing crowds here, the Lord granted His word to go forth with power. On the last night, though the open-air meetings were held in our campus which is as large as a football ground, it was filled to near capacity with just standing room for late-comers. The message was also relayed to a large wedding hall situated opposite our grounds.

Now after the evening meeting, on two nights Bro. Joe spent time counselling and praying with some people. The whole team was engaged in ministering to a wide variety of spiritual needs during these days. The two morning meetings of each day too were well-attended.

OTHER IMPORTANT CAMPAIGNS

Revival Meetings in Madurai

Finding a suitable location where a large number of people can be accommodated at the meetings is becoming harder and harder in this temple-city of Madurai, in Tamil Nadu. But with the exercise of faith, our brothers managed to find a hall which could seat at least a part of the crowd with the spill-over occupying a smaller hall below the main auditorium, during the revival meetings here in February.

As the word of God is being carried by our preachers into the outlying towns and centres of population, even the poor and the illiterate are stirred by spiritual hunger to spend money and come to these meetings. Although Bro. Joe could only address the evening meetings, members of the team took the morning meetings.

Bro. Joe says, "It hurts me greatly that I am only able to spend a limited time with the many who desire prayer after the message." The people however thronged the platform desirous of Jesus' touch on their spirit and bodies.

Revival Meetings in Chenglepet

Chenglepet, which is situated just south of Madras, has had no revival meetings of the Fellowship in the last several years. Our brother Johnston, who has been preaching here, has been very busy itinerating and preaching at several preaching points, out in the country.

While Bro. Joe preached for the first two nights, Dr. Jesudas, who had been taking the Bible classes, preached on the last night of the meetings. He also stayed over and conducted a follow-up meeting on the Sunday following the revival meetings here from Feb. 14 to 16.

Both our small church building and the ground outside were filled to capacity and many had to stand out on the road in front and listen. Bro. Joe says, "These meetings helped me to see how almost under our very noses there can exist great spiritual need which is not met. I cannot understand how anyone can be satisfied with their love and service for Jesus, while thousands are milling around who have never been impacted by God's word. What an opportunity we have today! And surely we cannot forgive ourselves if we fail at this hour of desperate need." The word of God must increase and spread like a wild fire.

Meetings in Anna Nagar, Madras

While Bro. Joe seems to address revival meetings in various places, the city of Madras itself gets to be neglected. Anna Nagar, which appeared to be a new and developing suburb of Madras some years ago, has now become such a booming residential and commercial centre with numerous educational institutions.

The four evenings which were given to the meetings here brought in several people who were strangers to the message which the Lord has given us. Some of these men were people whose lives, if truly transformed, would be a blessing to many both in their official and private capacities. Now the Lord alone must continue to speak to them and work in them.

It pains us to see that some are tending to make use of television channels to advertise themselves and their achievements. This self-promoting trend in preachers accompanied by the inevitable appeal for funds, appears to be leaving a very bad taste in the minds of non-Christians, who simply conclude that the preaching of the Gospel is merely motivated as a money-making device. Bro. Joe says, "I want to see the uniqueness and power of Christ to transform human hearts and nature to be manifested." Every effort of ours should result in lives which are totally transformed. Let us therefore beware of the shallow trends of our day and keep on seeking eternal souls.

Revival Meetings in Trichy

Trichy is an ancient centre of Tamil culture. All around it are historic monuments and places. There is such a proliferation of educational institutions imparting a variety of disciplines.

That in the last nine years no revival meetings were held here only shows how slow and even unmindful of the need we are. Hence we seem to be indicted on many counts. Bro. Joe did pour out his heart to the people during the first four days of the revival meetings here, which took place from June 25 to 29.

Our compound here saw more people in attendance than hitherto. So much more needs to be done, that it is simply impossible to give you a glowing picture of our spiritual health here.

Bro. Peter Iqbal being present was a great help. In the absence of Sister Percis, who was called Home barely a month ago, Anne, their second daughter, did a great job helping in numerous ways in assisting with the many guests.

The many populous and strategic places around this city are still without a strong testimony for Jesus. The great man of God, Sundar Singh, once pictured South Indian Christianity as a man with elephantiasis. In other words, he meant that their feet would hardly move in the missionary cause. If we also manage to catch elephantiasis of this sort, as Mr. N. Daniel (Senior) used to say, "there would be little hope for this country." Hence let us mend our ways. May the Lord chasten us for our small and poor service.

Revival Meetings in Cochin, Kerala

During the four days of revival meetings in our new hall here, soon after the Annual Retreat, from May 22 to 25, John Daniel and Dr. Jesudas assisted Bro. Joe, preaching and conducting the Bible class respectively, before he preached.

The crowd was small but very attentive. In a place like this, souls must be dealt with one by one if there should be any abiding work. Bro. Joe says, "My old practice from my student days of being able to address even a handful of people with all my heart, stands me in good stead. Thus, though the crowd was small, I could pour out my soul to those who have ears to hear."

Bro. Abraham, who was formerly a senior executive of a bank, and his wife, Jolly, who had turned to the Lord even as a student, are currently entrusted with the big job of caring for the souls here. We certainly need to see the 'greater things' promised by God in this whole state of Kerala.

THE ANNUAL RETREAT

Now when we consider how amazingly the Lord took us through the recent Annual Retreat of May, we cannot but marvel at the works of God. Every retreat brings to us a new and fresh experience of treading in areas which we have not trodden before.

We added to our lodgings four buildings of three floors each and a large dorm and yet over 2000 people lived in the temporary booths constructed with bamboo and palm leaves and camped out under the trees. Our small press and printing crew also worked almost night and day to supply us our latest Hymn Books and other valuable books.

How the two retreat kitchens managed to keep three meals ready for us on time, even when the numbers soared to nearly 7000 people is hard to explain. The diligent work done by our cooks was augmented by the hard work done by the tuck-shop where people could purchase some snacks, sweets and other titbits. Nearly 9700 people registered while a few thousand more attended the 'open' evening meetings.

In fact, the Retreat is assuming the proportions of a small town. Only it is meant to be a praying town and a regimental centre which sends out spiritual warriors to far-flung places.

The central agenda of the Retreat was the word of God and the prayer sessions which followed. The Lord blessed and anointed His word to our hearts. On two occasions,

following the message when we went on into the prayer session, there followed such a movement of God's Spirit that many poured out their souls in prayer.

The speakers themselves are greatly chastened in the presence of God when the Spirit of God comes upon us all. In fact, it is our endeavour to only bring people on stage who have a broken spirit. This contriteness of heart is the secret behind the blessing. And in the midst of the bigness of the crowd, the hall and other peripheral circumstances, this crucial condition of heart needful for all true spiritual progress should never be lost sight of.

Bro. Poe who underscored the need for sanctification in his messages spoke to many hearts. Bro. Branch, who keeps praying and preparing his heart for the Retreat for almost six months, continues to bring a fresh message to many.

The composition of the crowd also was very significant with men and women who spoke various languages and who have had amazing experiences and encounters with God. Then also there were those who were just hungry for the word of God. People were also warned that this was no occasion for needless talk or gossip of any sort.

We thank God that many seem to have taken advantage of the live four-hour transmission of the Retreat through the internet, in various parts of the world. Thousands of DVDs of the Retreat messages too were purchased and carried away by many.

LITERATURE MINISTRY

As the Fellowship expands and presses on to reach new areas all the time, there is the urgent cry for more soul-winning and soul-nourishing literature. Hence constantly good books and biographies are being translated and published.

In Telugu, the life of Ziegenbalg, who was one of the earliest missionaries to South India, Norman Duncan's "Spiritual Warfare", Bro Joe's "Near the Cross but Lost" and a Children's story book, "Wild Flowers—Vol.3" were published.

Then also at some of our big campaigns, the demand for our books is so great, that we quickly run out of stock of our more popular titles and have to quickly go for a reprint. In Telugu 15 titles were reprinted, including "Another Daniel", "Faith is the Victory", "Victory over Demons and Fear" and "Sadhu Sundar Singh".

In Tamil, "Faith is the Victory", which consists of valuable daily readings from the sermons of Joshua Daniel and Bro. N. Daniel, was published. Moreover, eleven other books are being reprinted in Tamil. New Editions of our Telugu and Tamil song books were released at the Annual Retreat.

As the shop next to our 'Beautiful Books' in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, fell vacant, Bro Joe asked our team to take advantage of that to extend our bookshop. Thus the extended bookstall came into operation from February.

As the state government notified all pavement shops near Central Station, Madras, to be removed, our small Moore Market branch has been moved to a shopping complex near Madras Central Railway Station.

We held book-fairs in 14 places in Andhra Pradesh, Koraput, Jeypore, Navarangpur in Orissa, Jagdalpur in Chattisgarh and Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh. We rented stalls in the 10-day-long secular book-fairs in Neyveli Township, Tamil Nadu and in Bhubaneswar, Orissa. These book-fairs serve to scatter the seed of God's word and many outsiders pick up books which will certainly transform their thinking and make them open to God's word. Our press has been hard at work, producing books in many languages.

Bro. Joe says that our present coverage in literature distribution in India and the neighbouring countries is so poor that our hearts must grieve over our small faith. We need to get into large-scale printing of huge editions of many books, in several languages so as to reach the millions.

The readership of our monthly magazines keeps growing continually.

TV AND RADIO MINISTRY

It is amazing what the Lord is doing. Our TV and radio messages are reaching men of so many nations and souls are being challenged and blessed. Only our prayer and follow-through for the souls who are being touched should be considerably improved.

Our telecast from London is sounding throughout Britain and Europe and into the Middle East. This channel, viz., Revelation TV, is being heard by many. In spite of people getting very selective as to whom they will listen to, yet our listening audience is continually growing. Many say our message is different and they seem to desire more of this straight talking. Holding forth the truth and exalting the Saviour is our only aim. Some of the channels on which we speak are being heard in the Middle East.

Now the Lord has enabled us to launch out into Germany and France also with our weekly telecasts through the local channels there.

Our television viewers appear to be growing in numbers and there is evidence of the Spirit's work in their hearts in every place where people watch our programme.

In India, we have our TV broadcast, "The Lord's Challenge" over ten channels covering the greater part of this vast sub-continent. Airing our message over ten channels is by no means easy. It involves hard, diligent work by our team. As we pray, the dear Lord sends in help to pay for the enormous cost of these telecasts.

We must pray much for our 34 weekly radio broadcasts around the world.

OUR MEDICAL WORK

Numerous of our doctors both men and women are labouring in various capacities and helping to take the Good News of the dear Lord and His salvation to many who would otherwise never be able to hear.

The Lord has been strengthening our medical doctors and nurses in our Gospel clinics, as they go through their daily grind of painstaking service to the poor and sick in body and spirit.

In our hospital in Anantnag, Kashmir, our crew and their ministrations continually grow. We are having to send the needed additional staff to help with the increasing number of patients.

Our Gospel Clinics in various places like Coonoor in Nilgiris mountains, Velliankadu, Gummidipundi in the plains, Royapuram in Chennai, Shillong in Meghalaya and Delhi serve the poor and not too well-to-do of these regions. People who come for treatment often open their hearts and share their problems with our doctors, as they know that our doctors and nurses are godly and praying people. Thus they receive counsel and prayer along with medical help. When invited, some of these patients attend our meetings and turn to the Lord.

In Guyana, South America, Dr. Danny is being used of God as he testifies to patients and does a full job as a preacher in our ministry there.

Dr. Andreas Heinzl, our dentist, in Cavan, Ireland, is going forward against all odds. He needs our prayer support.

Dr. Rajadorai in Singapore, together with his full-time job as the boss of the antenatal department of a large hospital, gives much time to taking care of the ministry there. He needs our prayer support.

Dr. Sydney in Deniliquin area of New South Wales, Australia, takes care of the radio work here besides all his other work.

In the Sunderbans or the marshy tracts of the Gangetic Delta, in West Bengal, there are many villages where tigers and crocodiles have rendered many children fatherless. Our medical team from Calcutta does a steady work especially in one part of the Sunderbans.

Medical Camps

A team of doctors, nurses and volunteers conduct free medical camps in the outskirts of Madras. At these camps, the whole team is kept very busy serving the sick. They conducted medical camps in five villages this year. Around 250 to 300 patients turned up at each of these camps for free treatment.

Our team members take this opportunity to counsel them and give them the Gospel. People with various problems and those afflicted with evil spirits are also prayed over. We must pray much for our medical teams in their efforts to reach the unreached.

OUR SCHOOLS

We started our schools with the only purpose of making the light of the Gospel shine upon little children in their tender age and thus give them the right values in life. When these children receive the light, they introduce Jesus and His matchless love to their parents in their daily interaction with their families.

It gives great joy to Bro. Joe whenever he sees this purpose being fulfilled. The Lord has touched and changed the lives of some of these young students who studied in our schools. In fact, two of those boys, who were touched by the Lord when they were studying in one of our schools, are now in our Bible school under training. Both of them come from staunch Hindu families. We must see more and more students rising up as mighty witnesses for the Lord from our schools. So we measure our success with that yardstick and not by mere academic achievements.

We praise God for the good results in the Matriculation exam this year. Our school in Bansi, Uttar Pradesh, not far from the Nepal border, has once again obtained 100% passes. Our Matriculation schools in Salem and Mettupalayam continue to maintain their record of 100% passes. In our Salem school, all the 13 students who wrote the exam passed in first class.

Our Matriculation school in Ponneri was very unfortunate to miss this distinction once again this year, as twelve of the thirty-two students failed in science, in their matriculation final exam.

Continually we are spending money for upgrading the facilities in our schools. While many regard schools today as a business venture, we regard it as an investment in valuable lives and a means to nurture great leaders of the future.

While many schools are giving large salaries to their teachers, collecting high fees from the pupils, we are trying to keep our fees at a most moderate level in order that we should not be a school for the rich. Hence our teachers have to be sacrificial people who will make do with small salaries. At the time of writing, we are in need of such teachers who will sacrifice and build great lives through prayer, exemplary conduct and excellent teaching.

CONCLUSION

We have given you a sketchy and brief survey. But on a daily basis, we hear of the works of the Lord from different regions and we do not want a day to pass without the love of the Cross being manifest in a fresh way and in some new souls being reached.

Instead of 'baby' steps, let us pray that we may run with this great news of God's love, reaching out to the neediest places and people.

May the Lord help you reader or listener, to also partake in this eternal harvest, wherever you might happen to be, in the work of God.