

TRAINING FAITHFULMEN TO REACH THEIR OWN

Jim E. Waldron

On December 22 and 23 there were sixteen Bible lectureships held in India's most southern states: Tamil Nadu and Kerala. All lectures were delivered by native brethren in their own languages. The total attendance was 1676 of which 344 are currently students in the sixteen Bible training schools conducted in south India through the church at Banner Elk, NC and the Main Street church in Crossville, TN.

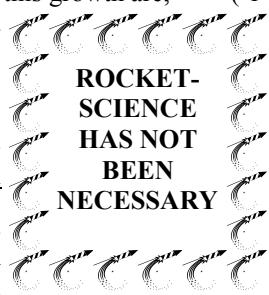
Not only were those who delivered the lectures Tamil and Malayalam (Kerala) brethren, but the vast majority were self-supporting gospel preachers. This particular work of training native brethren to reach their own with the gospel began in 1989 with eighteen men in one school of preaching (SOP). Today we are working with fifteen such schools in the south with more than 350 brothers presently enrolled as students.

Surely Paul spoke the truth when he said, *God "is able to do exceedingly abundant above all that we ask or think"* (Eph. 3:20). Three important observations concerning this growth are, (1) Co-operation by many congregations and individuals have, by the grace of God, made this work possible.

(2) Rocket science has not been required, but it has been necessary to follow 2 Timothy 2:2, that is, train faithful men to train others. In this program no new convert may apply to attend a SOP where he receives support for his family until he has been a faithful Christian for at least two years. Even then he must sit for a stiff Bible entrance exam. Once he qualifies he spends 1540 hours in Bible classes over a three year period. Most are high school graduates but have no skills except to do farm labor, thus they are encouraged in their spare time to learn a trade or skill.

(3) A welfare program has not been created to be funded by American churches. When a brother completes the three-year school of preaching he is provided with a bicycle but not put on support. Of the 1332 preachers attending the lectures more than 95% of them are "tent-making" preachers (cf., Acts 18:3).

There is a great opening to preach the gospel in India, but we must not be naive and get trapped by scalawags and carpet baggers. As one brother, a medical doctor and Indian, who lives in Canada said, "I would send no money to India unless it were



**ROCKET-
SCIENCE
HAS NOT
BEEN
NECESSARY**

www.waldronmissions.org

Feel free to use articles from
Bulletin Briefs for your own bulletin.

BULLETIN BRIEFS

Volume 10

March 2007

No. 3

CARPET BAGGERS & SCALAWAGS

Jim E. Waldron

The apostle Paul wrote, *"A great and effective door has opened to me and there are many adversaries"* (I Cor. 16:9). This truly describes the work in India. For it presents great opportunities for soul-winning in our generation, but it also presents many adversaries.

Some of the reasons for the opportunities include: (1) A democratic government which is modeled after the British parliamentary system; (2) The general openness of the Hindu majority to be tolerant of other religious views (*Only 12.5 percent of Indians are Muslim*); (3) The use of English as a second language; (4) The affinity, especially among the rising middle class in that country, for America; (5) The large population (1.1 billion), etc.

Adversaries include: (1) Fewer than ten percent of the population actually speaks English; (2) There is sporadic persecution from fanatical groups among the majority; (3) An inordinate amount of bribery and other forms of corruption pervades government and business; (4) Often this latter point is also seen among many in the general population.

Regularly I receive letters from churches in the U.S. wanting to know about some preacher in India who has written a pitiful letter wanting help of one kind or another. India has its carpet baggers and scalawags just as we do in America. Below I have printed an article from brother Russel G. Bell that goes to the heart of the problem of doing mission work in India, especially in the state of Andhra Pradesh, which appears on addresses as AP.



GOD—MAN—MONEY

Russel G. Bell

There was a man in Tennessee who used to send one hundred dollars a month to a number of preachers in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India, with instructions to give ten dollars per month to each of the preachers to aid them in preaching the gospel. This writer met some of those groups of ten. Some were not preachers at all. They could not preach or even pray publicly. The man who received the one hundred dollars would have the ten, ten-dollar checks endorsed by the men, take the 400 rupees (\$10.00), keep half and give them half. That way he would receive \$50.00 per month and they received five dollars each.

There are areas in Andhra Pradesh where there are so many churches of Christ with so much corruption that even a veteran missionary of twenty years in India, cannot sort out the good from the bad. What do you do? There is much good work in India, but not all the works among churches of Christ are good. A couple of Indian preachers, who know the work much better than this writer, refer to such areas as “snake pits.” They admit that they cannot sort out the good from the bad.

There are other ways money is received from American churches. Some India preachers have asked for and received from the States the book, *“Where the Saints Meet.”* With this book of mailing addresses of all the churches of Christ in America, Indian preachers begin to write to them of their needs for food, medicine, salary, bicycles, Bibles, books, etc. Some who write for help are not preachers and some are not even Christians. This is how it is done: A man with addresses of churches of Christ in the U.S. goes to a print shop in India where he orders 100 letterheads with Church of Christ at the top along with his address and name as the local preacher. He then writes a convincing letter on the letterhead of a growing church where he preaches. He asks for a small salary. He sends this to twenty-five churches in America. He may start receiving regular support or a one-time gift. He may be a good preacher or he may not be a preacher at all. The situation is what would be called a “confidence game.” The internet is being widely used for this scam.

Orphan home corruption

There are orphans in India because of diseases like aids, malaria, typhoid fever, cholera, etc. Also, there are orphans because of devastating storms and earthquakes that kill thousands. It is good

for Christians to help care for orphans and widows, just as the scripture teaches in James 1:27. This is pure religion. But there are “so-called” orphan homes in India receiving regular support from churches of Christ, who have never had a child in their care. When Americans come to see the home, the locals gather some village or relative’s children and pass them off as orphans. When one is in a strange country that speaks a different language, it is not difficult to be deceived. American news programs like “60 Minutes” have exposed some of these phony orphanages in developing countries. This should make people more careful about whom and what they support.



The scam is simple. They gather a group of children, take pictures, make many copies and send them with a letter to many churches in the U.S., and start receiving support for non-existing orphans. They visited the print shop like the fake preacher did, and purchased children’s home letterheads on which to write letters for help.

These sad situations are not the whole story. There are many good preachers and churches in India. Faithful Christians operate many good and trustworthy homes for orphans. Yet, the offenses described above are real. It is not second-hand information; this writer and others have seen these activities first hand.

Another scenario of this corruption that comes from the love of money is preachers arranging two, three or even four different American sponsors, with each sponsor thinking he is supporting the man fully. This is dishonest and needs to be stopped. This writer receives dozens of calls from brethren every time he returns from a trip, asking about different Indian preachers. He does not know all the preachers in India but corresponds with hundreds of them. He believes the best about every Indian preacher until forced by the evidence to do otherwise. But the known cases of deceit and duplicity are a force for evil that must be dealt with. Bringing men to the States for Bible training is especially precarious because one rarely knows if the student is sincere and/or he will not return to his native land.

Church building deception

All over India, but especially in the south, American dollars have built some nice permanent church buildings. This is not a bad thing but great caution is necessary. J.C. Bailey, the Canadian

preacher who really opened up the work in India beginning in 1963, explained to this writer an important principle; “That which costs people nothing is valued at nothing.” His idea was to refuse to build the Indian congregations’ church buildings, but to offer to help. This is a good principle and will separate good works from the bad. One approach is to donate ten thousand rupees (\$225.00) to any good church of Christ that, on its own, will build its church building up to roof level. Presently, this writer is helping to complete thirty permanent church buildings each year. The money should not be given until the partially constructed building is seen. On several occasions I have traveled to see church buildings under construction, only to find they were homes trying to be passed off as church buildings. Other times they would show old uncompleted structures. Sometimes the buildings were even Protestant church buildings trying to be passed off as buildings of the church of Christ. Surely one can see how easy this deception could be done with pictures from India to churches in North America. It is foolish for American churches to send funds to India for these different projects without some way of verifying the legitimacy of the work.

Jealousy caused by money

“For where jealousy and factions are, there is confusion and every vile deed” (James 3:16). Many schools of preaching in Andhra Pradesh turn out preachers every year. Many of them are well trained, but the churches they begin preaching for cannot pay a living salary. A few of them will find foreign support. What happens to the majority of those who do not receive foreign support? Some of them take secular jobs and preach also, like the apostle Paul (Acts 18:3-4). Others have wives who work; the local church pays a small amount and the preacher works full-time in ministry. But others, who do not find foreign support, begin to tell stories against the preachers receiving such support, with the thought that they might eventually receive that support. I do not know of any Indian preacher who has not had serious charges brought against him to North American preachers, either by mail or in person. Upon investigation many of the charges are found to be lies. Why are these lies told? The answer is simple, jealousy. Efforts are made to emphasize over and over again at preachers’ meetings and the schools of preaching that Christians are always to be honest.

If you wish to have a copy of brother Bell’s book—*God-Man-Money*—write or phone him at 5712 S.W. 35th Street, Topeka, KS 66614-4594; phone: 785-272-0711