

On 23 April Samson drove us the hundred miles from Dindigul to Chettipalayam where the Bible Schools for the young men and women are held. On Saturday there were fifteen women and six men to get their diplomas. We drove back to Dindigul that evening. On 29 April we drove west from Dindigul the 90 miles to Veliyode in the state of Kerala for the graduation there on the 30th.

Actually on Saturday morning we gave away Bible Diplomas to graduates from two schools of preaching. There were six graduates from Travadarum, Kerala's capital where the preaching school was started by Don three years ago and 15 from the school at Veliyode which we started eight years ago.

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APRIL 1 – 30

The bicycle campaign was held April 2-4, and with follow up work there were a total of 898 baptized by the end of the month. Here are the totals: 1054 preachers took part in the bicycle campaign; 447 gospel meetings were held; 44 new congregations were planted and 898 baptized.

God willing, I will be home on 11 May, if any would like for me to visit and report please let us know at Crossville. I truly thank all for your prayers and your help in this work of obeying Matthew 28:18-20.

With love for all,

Jim E. Waldron

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NEWSLETTER

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A QUICK OVERVIEW OF APRIL

The month of April was busy because of so many graduations. When I came from the northeast I located at Dindigul which is in the heart of India's most southern state, Tamil Nadu (TN). It is here that we started the Dindigul Bible Institute 21 years ago in June 1989. There are now 28 schools of preaching around the three southern states of south India, which, by the grace of Don Iverson and I are working with. Not only so, but these could not have come about without the tremendous help from saints like you in America. A large number of these schools are evening schools that Don has found very effective for training leaders in the village churches. This we could not have done without the enormous help of faithful Tamil brothers. This number does not include those in the three northeastern states.

J.W. Samson is the principal at Dindigul. He and I were busy throughout April traveling to speak for graduations. On the evening of Friday April 9, we rode a train overnight the 260 miles to Chennai in order to be at the graduation at Arrakonam. In Chennai on the morning of the 10th we were met by James Rajkumar (JRK), who drove us the fifty miles to Arrakonam where I spoke and handed out Bible Diplomas to 21 brothers who had completed the three-year curriculum. In the afternoon JRK drove us about 200 miles to the city of Nagapathinam (Nagapattinam) on the east coast of Tamil Nadu, where I preached for the local church the next morning. Five brothers had earned a one-year certificate for their school work.

In the early morning of the 12th we drove the 110 miles to Cudulore, where we gave out similar certificates for four brothers. JRK drove us back to Chennai and that night Samson and I returned by train to Dindigul.

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I SPENT \$29.20 OF YOUR MONEY

Poonamal (Poo-naa-mul) is a young sister in Christ, who lives in a village called Paligoundapatti (Paali-goun-daa-putt-ti), which consists of two dozen or so houses made of masonry, mud or thatch. She is 35, married with four children: a boy, 16, a girl, 14 and two younger girls 10 and 7. Her husband, who is a rather congenial man, has a problem with “likker” as they say here, and is not consistent in his support of the family.

Their house, which is masonry, is about 18 feet long and 9 feet wide with two small rooms and no furniture except one small metal cabinet. *(This photo shows their house with the thatched roof directly behind the people seated on the*



mats.)

Six years ago Poonamal was diagnosed with a cancer in her right arm and it (the arm) had to be taken off. After I met her in 2009 we bought her five goats to assist her as the bread winner of the family.

When I saw her at worship on this trip (April 18), I asked if we could hold a gospel meeting in front of her house on the 21st; she enthusiastically agreed. With the local preacher, Arokiyadass, and some others, J.W. Samson and I went to her house at 5:00 p. m. on that Wednesday. She was not there, but her four children and a flock of other village children were.

Poonamal was at work on a state road project, which project has come about because the Indian government in an effort to relieve the dire circumstances of the impoverished masses has guaranteed one hundred days of employment this year to anyone who will work. Her job is to fetch things for others, that she can carry with her one arm, as they need them. The pay is \$2.10 a day.

While we were waiting for her I sat observing her little house, her four children and the scene that exuded poverty and evidence of the extreme struggle she has to provide for herself and her four children. Also knowing the passion of Indian ladies to serve their guests at least a cup of tea, I was sure that our little sister would come home and feel shame that she had nothing to serve.

Thus Samson and I went about five miles to the center of a small village to buy not only tea, milk and sugar, but some other things that would be required in a home of six. We bought her 55 pounds of rice, four pounds of sugar, a sack of salt, tea, tooth brushes, tooth paste, laundry and bath soap, washing powder, a bag of candy, some cookies, a liter of milk (it comes in a plastic bag) for the tea. The cost as I noted above was \$29.20.

When we got back to the village Poonamal was home and laying out mats for the guests to sit on in front of her house. She received the things for the tea and began preparing it for the guests. To appreciate the scene I need to tell you that she has no stove, but has formed a “u” shaped “stove” of clay about eight inches high which sits on the small slab of concrete that forms her porch.



She made the tea and served the fifty-five people who attended the meeting. Not only was this good, but her husband stepped forward and helped with the preparation of the tea.

Poonamal and her mother-in-law were the only two Christians in the village when we went there. The entire area is given over to idols; thus with Samson translating I had someone read Acts 17:22-31 where the apostle Paul speaks of our heavenly Father, saying, “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.”

We explained Paul’s message to the group, and then turned the meeting over to Arokiyadass, who is a master at extending the invitation in pure uninterupted Tamil. Poonamal’s two oldest children made the good confession and six others including one man, who is above sixty. The baptisms took place in an irrigation tank, which Poonamal’s husband showed us. The 3.5 ft deep tank was in a mango orchard. Two of the students from the SOP did the baptizing.

FAST FORWARD FIVE DAYS

On Sunday the 25th we went back to Paali-goun-daa-putt-ti, where the eight were baptized on the Wednesday before to begin the new congregation. We had to have the service at 6:00 p.m. as Arokiyadass has two other congregations for which he preaches that meet earlier in the day. We had to meet in the open in front of Poonamal’s house again since the room we were hoping to use was not available.

To set the scene you have to see with your mind’s eye 25 people sitting on mats looking toward Samson and me, who were sitting on chairs in front of them. Keep in mind that it was twilight and time for goats and chickens to find a place for the night. Poonamal’s ten goats that a neighbor grazes for her came charging around the group. She had to get up and tie them up for the night.

Not only so, but she has several chickens and they decided it was time to go to roost. These she puts under a large basket at night, so she snared them with her one hand and crammed them under it. The singing and prayers went on in spite of the distractions and by the time I spoke the group was in order. Since everyone was seated on the mats, when Arokiyadass served the Lord’s Supper he had those who had been baptized to stand on their knees.

This gives a bit of an insight into what is necessary to plant a church in a village in a Third World Country. May the Lord of Harvest give us men who will say to God, as Isaiah did, “here am I send me” and thereby tens of thousands of such churches may be so planted.