

News from Bethlehem Bible College

When our students returned to the campus this year, they found many improvements had happened over the summer: The chapel walls have been repaired and painted. The classroom building and the dorms were all freshly painted. The bathrooms and showers in the dorm were completely renovated as well. Our electrical work was brought up to code and combined with improvements in our electrical service, our electric is now on 8-10 hours a day instead of 4-6.

[Editor's note: Please imagine having your frig only on for part of a day, no lights, no TV, no computer, no AC or heat for most of the day. We take so much for granted.]

Bible College Sunday--Like every year, the elders of the Damoh church gave our students the opportunity to conduct the Sunday services on September 12. Hundreds of Christians attended the student-led worship service. One of our seniors, Amit, brought the message, which many commented was outstanding. The students distributed the Lord's Supper and collected the offerings. Jay's younger brother led the music team in singing the special numbers, which were also superb. It was a truly memorable service.

God has been so good to us (in all these 21 years) as the Bible college continues to train our young men to be leaders and preachers in our language and culture. All those who have graduated from the college are involved in the Lord's work throughout India. Because of the Bible college, the Lord has helped us start over 80 congregations in many states of India as well as in Nepal. We do not have words to thank God enough for His mercy and grace. We thank our dear friends and the many churches who continue to help us in this ministry, which India needs more than she knows.

Bible college outreach projects

The pre-school project

This outreach of the Bible college is helping pre-schoolers so much, not only in learning, but with other problems too. One little girl, who did not want to talk at all, is now talking and doing very well. This very sick child, who could not get out of



her parent's house, now looks forward to her school time to come and enjoy. The teacher and her helper are doing excellent work. Since this is at Marwahi, where we have a church building, and it is our preacher's wife who teaches, it helps gain the favor of village parents as well.

The goat project

It is too early to assess all the good points of the goat project. (We anticipate running the program for two years before we can do a solid assessment.) But what is obvious, is that this is a very feasible project, and it will definitely help poor village Christians enhance their family income, and, thus, be able to help support their local churches.

The Churches

Ernest and his team (sometimes bringing Jay with them) continue to visit the churches started by the Bible college. These churches are from 2 hours to 16 hours away, and some are a few hundred miles away. Many of these churches are located in very remote areas, where there is no electricity or running water, no proper roads, and no trains or regular buses. But Christians are there. They are so hungry for fellowship and for God's word that they sit for hours on the floor just listening.



Katni: We have 15 families at Katni, a city about two and a half hours away from us. (This city is a commercial center; it has one of the largest railway junctions in India, is known for its minerals, and has many textile mills.) The church there is desperate to have a place for worship. A piece of property has already been located, and the church

family has donated a good amount of money to purchase the property. After the Pendra project is complete, we plan to construct a building here for worship with a parsonage for the preacher and his family. Jay, Ernest and the team members visited this place in July and encouraged the preacher and the leaders to keep on the good work, knowing that the Lord will provide the much-needed building in His time.



Borsi, Bhilai: By God's grace, the work at the Bhilai church is doing well. (This church is just a few miles from one of the largest steel plants in India.) We routinely visit Bhilai and other churches to have fellowship with the members, to encourage them, and to let them know that we care about them. But once in a while we do visit just to meet with the leaders and listen to them about how they are doing, what some of their problems are and challenges that they are facing. We visited the leaders Bhilai in August for just this reason. We spent several hours with them, learning about both minor problems and some challenges they were facing. They just needed some guidance, suggestions, and encouragement. So Jay, Ernest, and two others from the mission spent about 3 hours with their leaders. They were so happy and relieved, and offered many thanks for our visit. With this church's support, we have been able to start the Utai church plus two other congregations in this area, by God's grace.



Utai: Since Utai is also located just a few miles away from Borsi, we had a meeting with the leaders there as well. The church there is getting on well. They do have a problem of not having enough space for the Sunday

school and there are no toilet facilities for men or women. The ladies are little concerned about this as some of these people travel from a little distance to attend the church service. We are trying to see how soon we can do something about this. They are willing to raise half of the expenses to build the facilities. We need \$800 to build two toilets.

Hymnbooks

Praise God, we are growing. There are more churches and more Christians. We don't have so many buildings. Most of our churches meet in homes or the courtyard of a home. It is no longer safe to have tent meetings or meetings under the trees and few people will rent to us because of the



danger to themselves. Our few church buildings don't have overhead projectors they could use to show song lyrics (and electricity is quite erratic in

any case). Traditionally, Indian Christians carry their own Hindi Bibles and hymnbooks (which they cherish) to services.

Update

Romola has completed compiling a new edition of the hymnbook, and they are now being printed. We have had a large donation to help toward the cost of printing, but that donation is contingent upon our raising the remainder of the money ourselves. Fortunately, we have found a new vendor who will print the hymnbooks for less than \$3 a piece. We could really use 10,000 of them. Please pray for this need and if you can help, it would be a blessing to many people.

[Ed's note: Yeah, we know, hymnbooks aren't very glamorous. But they are important to Indian worshipers. \$3 is not much money to most of us. Could you afford \$3 a week? \$3 a paycheck? \$3 a month? If everyone who gets this newsletter sent us \$3 a week for the next ten weeks, we could print all the hymnbooks. That doesn't sound so impossible.]

Opportunities to Help

Of course, building toilets and printing hymnbooks are not our only needs. This is just a reminder that you can buy a goat (or two), a sewing machine or support a Christian widow or help send a Christian child to pre-school, or support a Bible college student or village preacher. If you can help in some way, no matter how small, it would be greatly appreciated. Just contact our field representative for more information or visit our website at www.midindiachristianservices.com.

As always, we covet your prayers. Thank you for remembering us.

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