

TRANSFORMING PARTNERSHIPS

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Indian Contributions to Missions (1991-2016)

Edited by
Raju Abraham & Robin Thomson



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Transforming Partnerships

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*Dedicated to the unsung heroes of the faith
in the two thirds world.*

FOREWORD

I am truly humbled to see that what began as a conversation over a barbecue in London, more than 25 years ago, between three strangers brought together by a love for Jesus and a love for India, could result in partnerships and an impact that none of us could have dreamed of or imagined.

Dr Raju Abraham, Professor Prabhu Guptara and I were discussing the issues and challenges facing India. Issues relating to business – something I was keen on as a businessman; academia, professional services and political developments – subjects close to Prabhu’s heart; and mission and outreach – passions that we all shared and which were clearly driving Raju.

What we were all convinced about was the need to see wholistic transformation in every aspect of Indian society – transformation of individuals and societies rooted in spiritual transformation. The challenges we agreed on were these: Could India be reached for Christ in our generation? Could we see the deep inner change that He would bring?

We met and prayed regularly and fervently – in my office, in Charing Cross Hospital where Raju worked as a consultant neurophysiologist, in the kitchen of my home, in Raju’s dining room. This prayer

culminated in Raju and Catherine being commissioned by South Asian Concern (SAC) to serve as its first missionaries to India.

The contributions to missions in India described in the book are not from SAC alone, but the work of our partners over the past 25 years. The contributions cover a remarkable range of transforming activities – health, education and training, leadership, business, dealing with poverty, crossing community barriers – all with an overarching focus on spiritual transformation rooted in prayer. They show that mission is not about superficial changes of culture or community, but a transformation of attitudes and hearts that impacts all of life, for individuals and communities.

Each chapter in this book is about some of these partners' initiatives. Only a fraction of what God has been doing through each partner is recorded here. There are also many others who have been serving in numerous ways across India. What we read here is only a small sample of what God has been doing.

Written by practitioners who continue to be engaged in mission, this book is based on their personal experience. There are real examples of partnership in action, the joys and the heartaches they have experienced, the sacrifices that they have made and the blessings seen in their respective ministries.

It has been a joy and privilege to be involved with this significant and strategic missions effort as a Diaspora South Asian Christian, along with many others in the Diaspora – in Europe, the USA, South East Asia and beyond. We in the Diaspora count it an honour to have been a part of this journey – even if in a limited way and at a distance!

May our Lord continue to bless and guide. We look forward to and pray that we will see even more fruit and blessing in the years ahead.

Ram Gidoomal

Chairman, South Asian Concern

Chairman, Lausanne International Board; Stewardship Services

Co-chair INSADL

INTRODUCTION

This book is a record of contributions to God's work in India over the last 25 years (1991-2016). It attempts to look back and reflect on key initiatives in mission, celebrating what has been done, learning from mistakes and sharing lessons and principles for the future. Within India, this will be an encouragement and challenge to further engagement in mission. Outside India, there are many who have been praying with keen interest.

The last 25 years mark the period that South Asian Concern (SAC) has been involved in India, led by Raju and Catherine Abraham. During this time, they partnered in different ways with the writers of this book. They stimulated and encouraged each other, as they worked in cooperation. This book is about some of the initiatives of these partners. There is much more that they have done and there are many, many others who have also been serving in numerous ways across India. This is only a small sample of what God has been doing.

NICE: SAC'S INITIAL AIMS

When SAC began working in 1989 its aim was to enable, equip and encourage followers of Christ to be more effective in outreach and mission among South Asians, using the power of the South Asian Diaspora network. SAC was not planning to do things on its own, but to work in partnership with others, building on what they were doing, joining people together and looking for gaps that needed to be filled. At SAC's first prayer gathering in May 1989, Raju told the group that the goal was to be NICE (Network, Initiate, Catalyse, Encourage).

SAC began to look for ways to serve, both in the Diaspora and in South Asia. Raju and Catherine had already been exploring openings in India and finally decided in June 1990 to return to India for a trial period from July 1991. Raju was seconded to Emmanuel Hospital Association (EHA) where his classmate, Dr Vinod Shah, was Medical Secretary. He began travelling and observing, aiming to be **NICE**:

Networking: What is happening? Who is active? What are they doing?

Initiating: Where are the gaps? Are there things that need to be started?

Catalysing: Are there resources – people, finance, connections, ideas – that would enable them to do more? What leverage can we apply?

Encouraging: How can we help others to do new things, or increase their effectiveness?

During these early years, he met the leaders of large organisations and national networks, as well as many individuals who were engaged in significant work, particularly reaching out to new people and communities.

PREM: SAC'S STRATEGY OF LOVE

What should SAC's strategy be? As Raju reflected on this with Ram Gidoomal and explained about the research, prayer and encouraging he was doing, Ram came up with the acronym **PREM** (the Hindi word for "love"). They agreed that love was the basis of all that SAC would do – love for God and for people. Ram and Raju began to spell out PREM:

Prayer: This was the foundation. Raju had already linked with Dr Zach Fomum and later with Ray Eicher, who was initiating a prayer movement linked to the Kumbh Mela. Other links and initiatives followed (chapter 1).

Research: What were the languages and people groups to engage with? This work was later taken up by Tony Hilton and Rajesh Tiwari (chapter 2).

Equipping: There were signs of growth, but what was the quality? The primary need was for teaching the Bible in the emerging churches, which led to the School of Biblical Teaching (SBT). Others were also involved in equipping – DAI, OA, UPM, to name just some (chapter 3).

Mobilising: How to get people involved in prayer and action? How to mobilise new workers? The "100/100/100 strategy" was part of SAC's vision at this time. Broadly, this strategy was to ask God to send out new workers – 100 into India, 100 cross-culturally within India and 100 from India to other countries. This included links with Patrick Johnstone at Operation World and later with the Joshua Project, Luis Bush and others. Over the years much more has been done to mobilise God's people (chapter 4).

To begin to implement the PREM strategy, SAC linked with Interserve India, where Robin & Shoko Thomson were based for two years (1991-93). Working with the Executive Secretary, Dr LN Tluanga, they developed the TIDES goal to recruit people involved in Tentmaking, Innovative ministries, Disciplemaking, Education and Social impact. Raju continued to work with EHA, as it sought to be truly wholistic – caring for the whole person, including evangelism and church growth.

To develop the PREM strategy further, the North India Harvest Network (NIHN) brought together a large and diverse groups to pray, research, plan and reach out in cooperation and mutual support. Victor Choudhrie linked up with a pioneering approach developed by Pastor Koshy in Ludhiana, to provide very short-term training to new believers and launch them as “Grassroots Church Planters” (like China’s “barefoot doctors”). S D Ponraj produced manuals for training and a manual for other groups to take up this approach.

CONCERN was started in 1996, under the leadership of Mr Lalchuangliana. He helped develop NIHN. CONCERN soon developed into an effective ministry to bring together and support many “Little Known Ministries”, providing the infrastructure and support that many of them lacked (chapter 9).

PLUG AND PEPSi

What was the best way to reach out? Different people had different approaches. One way to combine them was through another acronym, **PLUG**. This meant reaching people through:

People Groups (chapter 5)

Languages (chapter 6)

Urban Ministry (chapter 7)

Geographical Strategy (chapter 8)

A workshop with John Rogers of Interdev spelled this out, seeking to get people to play their part in partnership and networking.

A fourth acronym, **PEPSi**, overlapped the others and emphasised the wholistic dimension of reaching out:

Pastoral Care (chapter 14)

Equipping (chapter 15)

Prayer Mobilisation (chapter 16)

Social impact (chapters 17, 18, 19, 20)

People started new initiatives in all these PEPSi areas:

- Pastoral counseling courses led to the establishment of the Biblical Counseling Trust of India (BCTI).
- Prayer ministry continued with Zac Fomum, a scientist from Cameroon who came regularly to India to pray and focused prayer for the huge Kumbh Mela festivals.
- Seminars and workshops were held on Biblical justice with scholars like Mike Schluter and Chris Wright and on vocation with John Gilead Das.
- Raju developed teaching material on Hinduism and produced the first *30 Days Prayer for the Hindu World* in 1999.
- The role of the South Asian Diaspora continued to be significant in supporting new initiatives (chapter 13).
- Many initiatives began to utilise Business as another important part of mission – to work for economic growth and justice. One is documented in this book (chapter 20).

FURTHER INITIATIVES

In 2000/01, Raju met Mohan Philip, a former Air Force pilot and businessman. From his burning vision came another initiative, with the opportunity to work out a geographical strategy based on administra-

tive Districts and Blocks. As this developed, they quickly realised the need to train the workers – equipping them to study and teach the Bible and also to mobilise many more voluntary workers, first hundreds, then thousands. They also realised the importance of the local churches and developed a distinctive structure to support and encourage them.

In 2001, the School of Biblical Teaching entered a significant new phase as it began to build an Indian team of Bible teachers and resource people (chapter 3). Around the same time, Development Associates international (DAI) began leadership training, first at a non-formal level and then as a Master's level course.

As various non-formal training programmes were started and grew, it became clear that there was a need both to maintain quality and also to provide recognition. The Ministry Training Network aimed to do both by providing a way to evaluate and accredit the different courses. After a successful beginning, it was unable to continue – though the need which it was trying to meet continues. We wait for a sustainable model.

In 2002, David Bennett completed an important study on the types of leaders needed to build and expand the church in India. He came twice that year to lead seminars for North Indian leaders, in February and November. It was already striking to see the growth in numbers and quality of North Indian leaders. Another remarkable development that year was the Yeshu Darbar at Allahabad Agricultural Institute (now Sam Higginbotham University of Agriculture and Technology – SHUATS), where thousands came each week to learn about Jesus and to receive prayer. At one point the crowd reached 20,000.

KACHHWA: A TURNING POINT

2002 was also a turning point for SAC and for Raju and Catherine. As many were reaching out and small house churches were being started and thousands came to the Yeshu Darbar, a small EHA hospital in Kachhwa, UP, played a significant role as a base for training and

outreach. But it was struggling as a viable hospital and EHA decided to close it. Raju and Catherine offered to move to Kachhwa from Mussoorie and re-open the hospital as a base for wholistic ministry that would include healing, evangelism, church planting and training. The ministry at Kachhwa later developed into Kachhwa Transformational Ministries, a truly wholistic ministry that also included education and economic development (chapter 20).

Paul and Su East returned to India with SAC to develop a Barnabas ministry of support for leaders of churches and organisations, small and large. They made themselves available to mentor, counsel and advise (chapter 12). Others were engaged in initiating work with young people (chapter 10) and catalysing partnerships around Kachhwa (chapter 11).

Prayer remains the fundamental need for the nation and for the church. In 2004, the prayer ministry developed into NPCTI – National Prayer and Church Transformation Initiative. In 2012, this developed further into United Christian Prayer for India (chapters 4 and 16).

The task continues. The challenges and opportunities increase. Through all the different initiatives, SAC and the contributors to this book are committed to the following underlying priorities:

- *Local churches*, as signs and agents of God's Kingdom, serving as salt and light to transform the communities around them.
- *Prayer*, as the basis for all work, demonstrating our total dependence and God's unlimited power.
- *Wholistic transformation*, reflecting God's concern for the whole person and the combining of different ministries to fulfil this.
- *Partnership*, recognising our interdependence and seeking to model transparency and accountability.

So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow... For we are fellow workers in God's service. (1 Corinthians 3:7,9)

To God be all the Glory!

CONTRIBUTORS

CONTRIBUTORS ARE LISTED IN CHAPTER ORDER.

DR RAJU ABRAHAM, FRCP (UK), is a Neurologist and Neurophysiologist who resigned his consultant post in London. He and his wife Catherine moved with their family to North India in 1991. They are based in a mission hospital in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. They have three married sons and a daughter and seven grand children. He is the Missions Director of South Asian Concern.

H TONY E SAMUEL is Director of the National Research Centre, New Delhi. He did his BTh from Allahabad Bible Seminary, BD from Union Biblical Seminary and an MA in Sociology from Chennai. He taught himself computers and became adept at Access, Mapping Software and Filmmaker, which he uses for research. He is a pioneer in missions research trends in India and has published over 52 books, as well as training material. He is married to Shankuntala, a teacher, and they have one teenage daughter.

ROBIN THOMSON was born in India and spent 20 years there teaching the Bible and training church leaders in institutional and non-formal settings. He is married to Shoko and they have two adult children. He has worked for the last 23 years with South Asian Concern in London, researching, writing and training on issues relating to the Bible and Asian culture. He is on the Advisory Board of the School of Biblical Teaching.

REV DEVENDER VERMA is Pastor of Delhi Bible Fellowship. He has been serving DBF from 1996, served as a senior/coordinating pastor of DBF for six years and is now one of the senior pastors. He has developed many leadership and discipleship courses. His church has grown from six families to six congregations during his ministry. He has been teaching contextualization of the Gospel and is Director (Hon) of the Ezra Trust which runs the School of Biblical Teaching, Ezra Conference and Ezra Theological Course.

DEEPAK MAHTANI is a Sindhi, who was born in Hong Kong and currently lives in London. He is a businessman and management consultant, training and speaking to executives around the world. He has a passion for bringing change and transformation through preaching and teaching in his church and elsewhere to both secular and Christian audiences. He is married to Celia and they have two sons, Arun & Sanjay.

DR ALEX ABRAHAM is a Neuro-physician by profession who is currently working with Operation Agape and Associated Missions. Operation Agape is involved in Establishing churches, Equipping leaders, Engaging the scripture-less and Empowering the poor. He is also part of several national and international ministry networks.

CDR THOMAS MATHEW availed voluntary retirement from the Indian Navy and is at present serving as CEO of a Christian IT company doing Business-as-Mission. He is also involved in mission activities as part of Operation Agape's church planting ministry. He is involved in executing the Gateway Languages Bible translation project in India. Also, several software tools are being developed by his team so as to accelerate the translation process and to ensure the accuracy of translation work. He is based in New Delhi.

REV VIJU ABRAHAM worked with university students from 1964 for 15 years in India and South Asia. He moved with his wife Valsa to Mumbai in 1971, sensing a call to work in the city. Later in 1984 he worked to form a network of leaders and to bring unity between leaders and training and leadership to the church in the city. In 1973 he along with members of the Evangelical Graduates Fellowship founded the Association for Christian Thoughtfulness (ACT). He continues involvement with ACT as Chairman Emeritus.

LALCHUANGLIANA is a former civil servant and Executive Secretary of the Emmanuel Hospital Association. Presently, he leads a ministry called CONCERN as its Executive Director.

JONNY ABRAHAM studied at Woodstock School in Mussoorie, Uttarakhand and did post graduate work on Leadership in Denver.

ANTONY SAMY is a post graduate water engineer married to Punitha, an eye surgeon. After eight years in university teaching he moved into missions in 1993 and served in different parts of India leading various health and developmental programmes and also a hospital team. He trained many young professionals and helped them to find their space in missions. He conducts training for mission leaders on organisational development and is also a certified trainer for interpersonal skills. He is an advisor for an international agency for their India programme.

PAUL EAST, a Hospital Administrator in government service in the UK, together with his wife Susannah, a Nurse/Midwife, came to India to join Emmanuel Hospital Association in 1973. The call of God was to disciple, train and mentor emerging young leaders in medical mission. They became part of South Asian Concern in 1993 during a long stretch in the UK. They returned to India twelve years later to continue consulting, leadership training and personal mentoring. He and his wife manage a Travel and Training Consultancy Partnership.

DR JOHN K JOHN is the Founder Director of Biblical Counseling Trust of India (BCTI) in Delhi. He has been working in medical missions in North India from the mid 1970s, first with The Leprosy Mission and later Emmanuel Hospital Association, until 2005 when he moved out to support the wider Church through BCTI. He has a degree in science, Bachelor of Divinity from Union Biblical Seminary and Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Counseling from Westminster Theological Seminary, USA. Presently he and his wife Annie live in Dehradun.

DR ANNIE ABRAHAM is a medical doctor by profession currently leading the Deborah Ministries under Operation Agape. Her primary focus is training indigenous grass-root level women leaders in Northern India through orality principles using Bible stories and other discipleship tools. She is also involved in wholistic ministries among women and children using the 4S Strategy: Save her soul, Send her to school, Strengthen her hands, and Shelter her in a home.

REV SAMUEL YESUDASS was called to serve the Lord in North India in 1972. He studied at Doon Bible College, Dehradun and later joined the staff, resigning from the position of Principal in 2004. He founded Bethel Ministries and Mount Carmel Christian Academy (MCCA) in 1992 at Fatehpur, Chhutmalpur in Saharanpur, providing education and community development programmes such as childcare, youth development, skill development, health and environmental issues. He

is married to Stella and they have three children, who are also involved in Bethel Ministries. He is part of the National Team of NPCTI.

BRO CORNEL NATHAN was born and brought up in Belgaum, Karnataka. While doing a Diploma course in Mechanical Engineering, he felt a deep desire to serve the Lord. Consequently, he joined Southern Asia Bible College (SABC) and completed his M. Div. in 2006. After graduation, he was exposed to the greater vision of mobilising churches for prayer and transformation. He joined the NPCTI movement and has been travelling extensively and envisioning churches, Pastors and Leaders. He is married to Seema and they have two lovely children, Sandesh and Sthuthi.

DR VINOD SHAH is Chief Executive Officer of the International Christian Medical and Dental Association, (ICMDA), based in Vellore, Tamil Nadu. Its aim is to develop leadership amongst Christian medical students and dental students and graduates in 75 member countries. He was Head of the Department of Distance Medical Education at Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore, 2004 to 2011. Before that he served with Emmanuel Hospital Association for 15 years as Medical Director and then Executive Director. He is married to Shalini, also a physician, and they have three children: Arpan, Pritica and Rohan.

DR JACHIN VELAVAN is a Family Physician who graduated from CMC Vellore, worked in remote mission hospitals and presently heads the Distance Education Unit at Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore. She is involved in running various need-based distance learning programmes for general practitioners, government doctors, nurses and church and para-church workers in India and other developing nations. She has authored more than 100 self-learning modules for these courses. Her husband, an administrator, has worked with her closely in all these initiatives. Their dream is to empower a large number of

people who would be able to deliver wholistic healing to nations, especially to those who are poor, marginalised and are deprived of access to appropriate healthcare.

MR MOSES PRASHANT RAO is the CEO of Progressive Cooperative Credit Society. A post-graduate in Personnel Management from a premier business school, he has over 23 years of experience of which the last thirteen have been in the social space handling relief, rehabilitation and poverty alleviation projects. The first ten years were in Human Resources, working for large multinationals including setting up and scaling their operations in India. In the last eleven years he has been involved in providing livelihood support to over 120,000 families across North India, providing Credit, Credit Insurance and Life Insurance services. He has been selected to participate in various international programmes and has widely travelled. He was trained at the Harvard Business School for Strategic Leadership in providing services to the Bottom of the Pyramid. He and his wife live in Lucknow.

MRS SHANOO MOSES is the Managing Director of a Non Banking Finance Company: Vindhyanchal Finlease Private Ltd. She is a qualified Electrical and Electronics engineer who has worked in Mumbai and Hyderabad and has been involved in teaching engineering at the graduate level. She has been involved in community development through various outreaches in Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad. She holds an Executive MBA from Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow. She has undergone intensive exposure to small loan finance and possesses valuable administrative and social entrepreneurship experience.

CONTRIBUTORS

SHANKAR RAMACHANDRAN is a disciple of Jesus, husband to Blodwen and father to Prarthna, Vishwas & Arpan. Having moved to Uttar Pradesh in 2014, he currently serves as the administrator at Kachhwa Christian Hospital in the Eastern region of UP. He loves to see the transforming power of God at work in the lives of people brought forth by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

P A R T I

PRAYER

RESearch

EQUIPPING

MOBILISING

RECENT PRAYER MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

RAJU ABRAHAM

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. (Colossians 4:2-4)

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

The prayer efforts in India over the last 25 years continue from many other prayer movements of the past. What follows is a brief overview of the prayer movements that I have come to know and others that I have been involved in personally.

EARLIER PERIODS

One documented early movement that prayed regularly every morning at 5 A.M. were the Mizo village churches in the North East of India under the Mizo Presbyterian church and later the Zoram Baptist

churches. The Mizo churches have had periodic revivals since the Welsh revivals in 1906. The Mizo churches raised finances for missions – with one hand full of rice for the family and one hand full of rice for missions, one egg for the family and one egg for missions. Today, they raise locally more than Rs. 65 crores (\$9.5 million) a year for missions and also have over 2600 missionaries all over the country and beyond. They are the only mission organisation I know who regularly monitor their mission activity. The Mizo churches have the highest proportion of missionaries per head of population in the world.

THE 1950s

The Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) was also birthed in the deep desire for revival and held regular prayer events for revival in the same period (recorded in *To God be the Glory* by Robert McMahon – an account of EFI 1950-1971).

The movement in Britain was the Prayer Fellowship for South Asia (PFSA), where a group of returning missionaries have been meeting regularly twice a year and exchanging news letters about happenings in South Asia.

THE 1960s

In the early 1960s, there was intensification of prayer with the Friends Missionary Prayer Band (FMPB). Prayer groups were started in different places in Tamil Nadu with leaders committed just to pray for the nation. The pray-ers became members of FMPB. I still remember Dr Sam Kamalesan recounting to me in London how in the early 1960s when they were praying for India they felt a mighty wind and they all went about shouting and praising God and laying their hand on a map of India on every district and claiming it for Christ. He told me about an overseas missionary who was staying in the house and was fast asleep. They woke him up asking him how he could sleep at such

a time as this. Out of this prayer, the amazing missionary movement of FMPB was born – a mission society with sacrificial giving and dedicated prayer. Its members don't think that giving is a burden on them, but rather that it is a precious privilege for them to give whatever they have to the Lord. Today, FMPB raises more than Rs. 60 crores (\$8.7 million) a year for missions and has over 2500 missionaries working across the subcontinent.

THE 1970s

The first people I know who did prayer *walking* in the country were FMPB pray-ers. Every year throughout the 1970s, these pray-ers used to take a return train ticket (in those days the Indian railways used to have a concession “See India” ticket for a small sum) to the major North Indian cities. About ten to twenty of them, mostly rural teachers and others, would take an overnight train (so that they did not have to pay for a hotel), go to a local CNI church to have a bath and then use the church hall to pray for that city.

In 1978, another prayer movement was started in Nalumavadi, a small village in Tamil Nadu, by Mohan C. Lazarus and the “Jesus Redeems” ministry. When I visited Nalumavadi in the 1990s the movement had 6,000-10,000 people meeting for twelve hours of fasting and prayer for the country every month. I understand it has grown to 40,000+ pray-ers every month. Other prayer movements that have been running since the 1970s include “Quiet Corner” led by Thomas Samuel (former head of OM India) and “Jesus Calls”, the prayer towers in India founded by Dr DGS Dhinakaran.

THE 1980s AND 1990s

In the mid 1980s, South Asian Concern (SAC) came into the picture when it connected with the Prayer Fellowship for South Asian (PFSA), a group which used to meet for a weekend of prayer every year. Later,

SAC started its own 24-hour prayer and fasting for India every spring.

When I finally resigned my job in London and we came as a family to India in 1993 I soon realised the immense need of prayer. In 1993 when Dr John Robb came to Varanasi, he gave me a book by Diane Eck, *Benares City of Light*. It stimulated me to do a spiritual map of Varanasi that was circulated and taken up by the YWAM team. With Victor Choudhrie, we did our first prayer boat trip.

In 1994, my brother in Mumbai, Viju Abraham, told me about Dr Zacharias Fomum, a Cameroonian biochemist and apostle of prayer, who had a church of 3000 in Yaounde and a 24-hour prayer ministry led by a sister, Esther. My brother helped Dr Fomum to publish ten (really intense) books on prayer in India. Dr Fomum had been making visits to India, taking a room in hotels in Mumbai and Varanasi and other cities for ten days and having only water and tea while praying for India.

I invited him to come again and teach on prayer. From 1994 to 1998, I went around India with Dr Fomum as he taught on prayer and exhorted prayer for India. He was particularly popular with FMPB in Tamil Nadu, as their prayer movement was flagging. His books were translated into Tamil and were widely read. Once, I was with him at a FMPB conference in Tamil Nadu that was attended by nearly 2000 missionaries and their families. In the middle of the heat of May, we had two days of teaching and praying for India.

In the late 1990s, I also developed a prayer booklet, *30 Days of Prayer for the Hindu World*, with a partner from YWAM. The booklet was on the same lines as the *30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World* by YWAM. This was produced each year from 1998-2001 by South Asian Concern in partnership with YWAM.

Between 1994 and 1996, there was a modest worldwide prayer movement for the Kumbh Mela spearheaded by Greg and Debbie Wiley of YWAM. Peter Wagner was involved, as well as the spiritual warfare track of the AD 2000 and Beyond movement, so ably led by Dr Luis Bush.

It was about that time that the North India Harvest Network (NIHN) was born. I had prepared a paper on the challenge of North India, “The Core of the Core”, which Dr Bush edited and published and put on the web. Later, Dr Bush came to India and led seven awareness meetings in North India which were also published as a short book, *The Move of the Holy Spirit in North India*.

In 1997, the then head of FMPB, Patrick Joshua, called us for three days of fasting prayer with leaders of FMPB in Allahabad. On the final day, we went in a boat to the Sangam (the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna) and worshiped and prayed. I felt the dark clouds around UP turn grey. After he retired from FMPB, Bro Patrick started the National Prayer Network which at present (2017) works in ten states to encourage believers to pray, fast and intercede for the country.

That same year, I worked with Tony Hilton Samuel (son of the first FMPB Missionary to be sent to North India) and his friends, Rajesh Tiwari (my research assistant) and Sheena Gidoomal (Ram Gidoomal’s niece) to produced books on Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Nepal. In those books, we outlined every people group, language, urban agglomerate and geographical district. This material was produced so that people could pray for India with understanding and accurate information.

I think the first truly 24-hour prayer ministry was started in the 1990s by Bro Chelladurai in Chennai under the ACA Independent Church. The 24-hour chain prayer had 3500 volunteers with a true 24-hour, non-stop prayer for the country without a minute lost in between.

1998 KUMBH MELA IN HARIDWAR

Greg Wiley took a film that I had picked up from SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) in London and edited it to a short film on the Kumbh Mela, which raised prayer worldwide for the 1998 Ardh (half) Kumbh in Haridwar.

By that time, the Wileys had moved with their prayer team to Mussoorie (35 miles from Haridwar) and Ray Eicher (formerly head of OM in India) had got involved. Every month we used to take a team to Haridwar to fast and pray for the Kumbh. Also, we had 24-hour fasting prayer every month in Mussoorie for North India. We also met every day from 6-7 A.M. for prayer for North India. We also produced our own film on the Kumbh Mela led by a YWAM film crew.

In 1998, the prayer movement had an additional spurt. It was taken over by Bro Vardaraj and he and Dr Fomum went to cities and towns that had sometimes 5,000 and even 10,000 people at a time praying for the country. This went on till 2004.

The following year I did the first Spiritual map of India which was later developed and activated by NPCTI (see below). Ray Eicher prepared a strategy where he got five million gospel packets in eleven Indian languages distributed in 26 locations, mostly in Uttar Pradesh, through nearly 800 volunteers (750 from OM). Amazingly, all the tracts were distributed without a single violent reaction.

2001 ONWARDS

At the full Kumbh Mela in Allahabad in 2001, Dr Fomum held a prayer conference where nearly 900 Christians gathered for prayer at ABS. This was arranged through Conrad and Nina Menezes and Bro. Vardaraj. During that Kumbh Mela, OA raised two million packets of tracts in six Indian languages and distributed them in ten different locations, through 350 volunteers.

In January 2001, at a Sunday meeting at the chapel of the now Sam Higginbotham University of Agriculture and Technology (SHUATS) in Allahabad, there were over 300 mostly village people crowded into the meeting. It was led by a revived Dr R B Lal, Vice Chancellor of the University.

By June of that year, there were 5000 village people meeting at the SHUATS sports stadium. By December of the same year, 50,000 were

coming every Sunday to hear the Gospel preached at the Yesu Darbar by Dr Lal. The rest as they say is history. And that history is still being recorded.

In 2004, the National Prayer and Church Planting Initiative (NPCTI) was launched. This was followed, in December 2012, by the United Christian Prayer for India (UCPI). Both of these are described in later chapters of this book. On 5th January 2013, over 300,000 people met under the leadership of Mohan C Lazarus and Jesus Redeems Ministries in Chennai to fast and pray for twelve hours for India!

From February 2016, at two sites in Uttar Pradesh (UP), there are teams of four (two volunteers from South India and two from North India). They pray through every district in UP with prayer books containing requests in four languages (Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam and English). Two at a time pray for two hour stretches in rotations for twelve hours a day. The teams change every week.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

I have described a potted history of personal involvement with those I have been able to carefully document. There are of course many others that I have not been associated with or have been unable to document. Prayer is the foundation of all that we are and do. *When we work, we work. When we pray, God works.* The prayer of righteous people is very powerful. There are so many unsung heroes of the faith. It makes me want to sing:

*God is still on the throne, and He will remember His own;
Tho' trials may press us and burdens distress us, He never will leave
us alone;
God is still on the throne, He never forsaketh His own;
His promise is true, He will not forget you, God is still on the throne.*

RESEARCH ON INDIAN MISSIONS

MY PERSONAL JOURNEY

H TONY E SAMUEL

What kind of information is useful for mission organisations and how is it collected? The writer has spent many years carefully gathering information and making it freely available.

HOW I STARTED OUT

I was inculcated into missions by my parents. In 1967, my father, Harris Hilton, was the first Friends Missionary Prayer Band (FMPB) missionary. He was always interested in unreached peoples. Patrick Joshua, his mentor, encouraged my father to get all the village data. He used to take me to the Survey of India to get maps. In 1973, we moved from Tamil Nadu to North India. I finished my B.Th. at Allahabad Bible Seminary in 1987.

From 1987, I worked for five years with India Missions Association where I had my first experience of research. Ebenezer Sunder Raj, the Director at the time, initiated the Christian Media Discipleship

(CMD) project. He came up with the idea while he was working with Operation Mobilization (OM) in Uttar Pradesh. While he was sharing the Gospel with a tea stall owner, the man said “I wrote to the Bible Society after getting a tract, but have not heard from them.” This made him think of a way to address this issue. He then invited twenty leaders involved in media to collect addresses of those who had responded to radio programmes or received literature. Most fell sick and couldn’t come. Only one came – Promod Das, Director of Amar Jyoti from Orissa. So we started our research with Orissa (now Odisha).

PIN CODE RESEARCH

The beginnings of the Geographical strategy were from this Odisha research project. Through Campus Crusade, Jesus Film, TWR, Bible Society, FEBA, and Amar Jyoti, we collected seekers’ addresses. From all the organizations, there were 500,000 addresses in Odisha. Each address had a pin code (or post code). Each pin code has a population of approximately 30,000.

I followed up the addresses in Odisha. There were 91 organizations working in the state, of which twenty were IMA mission organizations. There were 4,200 full time Church workers. The addresses helped us to identify potential seekers. One important discovery was that there were no church planters in some places where interested people had written to the organisations. For example, Kalahandi district had many villages where 50-60 people had finished the Bible correspondence courses through Amar Jyoti. There were seekers, but there were no churches. Whereas in Koraput district, there were 80 church workers and 20 denominations in one pin code. The result was that the organisations could reorganise and relocate their workers appropriately. Later, Viswa Vani, working with Trans World Radio, used the same approach very effectively to reach seekers and plant churches.

(Note: Below is a map that highlights how the population of Christians can be unevenly distributed in a district.)



OTHER TYPES OF RESEARCH

People Groups

With IMA, I helped to make People Profiles of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Neighbours in India. We also listed the 4,635 peoples from the list published by the Anthropological Survey of India in 1999. Later, YWAM published 100 Mega People group profiles.

Languages

We published the From Every Language Handbook, based on the 2001 census. Now, the National Resource Centre (NRC) in New Delhi has published a Serve-A-Language handbook based on the 2011 Census. We have made language maps of India and this has helped with Bible translation (chapter 6).

Cities and Colonies

We published a Serve-A-City Handbook under People India, based on the 2001 Census, which was used by several missions. Then I helped NRC to do the Ludhiana city survey. 77 Wards and 609 Colonies were surveyed and we found 198 churches in Ludhiana city. We published the book for churches to use there. Our most recent development is that we are collecting information on Colonies in the cities. We are also getting the latitude and longitude for each colony, to exactly locate the churches and workers. NRC has published Serve-A-City list.

Research for Movements

In 1992 to 1994, I completed my BD in Union Biblical Seminary (UBS). I was then involved with the Indian Christian Handbook, which unfortunately never saw the light of day. From 1998 to 2004, I worked for Mission 21 India and The Bible League (TBL). During this period, I was involved with the Pray for India movement, the Philip Project and the Church Planting Movement.

Geographic Areas

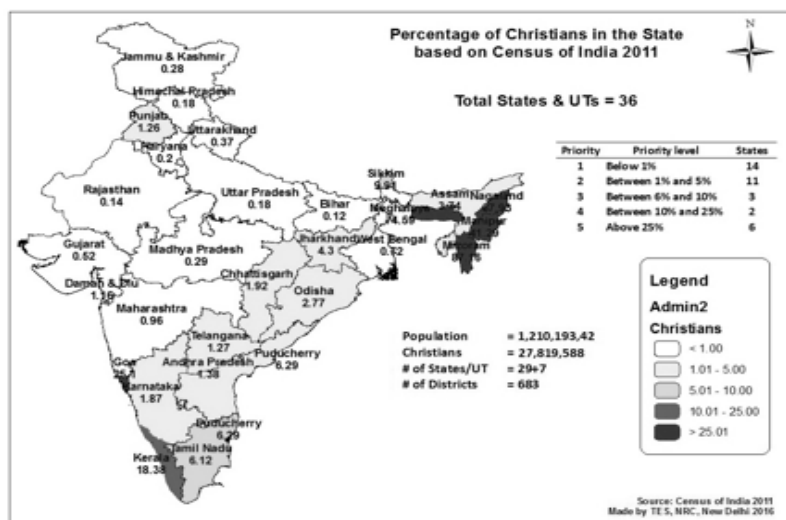
When CONS (DAWN) asked me, in 1995, to collect the names of all the villages in India, I was reading about Jesus feeding 5000 people. Jesus asked his disciples to have the people sit in groups of about fifty each. This helped to develop a District strategy. Huge tasks should be divided and made into small segments. We collected data from all the villages in India and helped the churches and missions for prayer and planning.

During the same time, I worked with Dr Raju Abraham, Rajesh Tiwari, Sheena Gidoomal, my brother Caleb and my cousin Wesley to prepare books on UP, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Nepal. Also we did assessments of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. These were distributed to various mission organisations.

When the Government came up with data and maps on sub-district units it was a breakthrough. We learned that 80% of the

Christian population of India was in the South of India, 10% in the North East and only 5% were in the Northern states (which have 40% of the population). There were large swathes of North India which had no believers.

We then started publishing District Handbooks under People India, based on the 2001 Census, which were used by several missions. Now NRC has published the handbooks based on the 2011 Census. The map below highlights the percentages of Christians in all the states of India from that Census.



Harvest Force Data

CONS were collecting Harvest Force data for South India, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Odisha states. In 1997, Dr Binu Alexander (then a 14-year-old), encouraged by Roy Wingerd, produced Harvest Force data on 4 North West States – Himachal, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab.

IMPACT OF THE RESEARCH

I was always interested in helping Church planters, mission agencies and churches to get the information they needed, so I joined Operation Agape when they started the National Resource Centre in 2007. Based on much research, *Finishing The Task* came up with 310 Unengaged Unreached People Groups. 290 have been adopted and 200 have been engaged by Indian Christians (chapter 5).

Several Mission organizations have taken this challenge forward. They have started sending workers to unreached districts in the North and slowly it has started having an impact, first through mission agencies and now through major denominations.

GROWING CHURCHES NEED BIBLE TEACHERS

THE SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL TEACHING

ROBIN THOMSON & DEVENDER VERMA

How do new believers grow as disciples and new churches grow healthily? They need member and leaders who can teach the Bible effectively in their families and churches.

The School of Biblical Teaching (SBT) is a network of churches and organisations that helps to build the emerging church in North India and west Nepal, by training church planters and other leaders to study, apply and teach God's Word effectively, so that they can teach and also train others to teach.

BACKGROUND

In 1991, there were signs that the church in North India was beginning to grow. Dr Raju Abraham and others realised that with growth would come the need for Bible teaching that would be faithful, clear

and relevant to the spiritual and cultural needs of large numbers of new believers, so that they could grow as disciples and bring transformation to their communities.

Could their new churches become the agents of God's Kingdom, serving as salt and light to transform the communities around them? For this they would need local leaders as well as gifted teachers from the wider church, who could teach the Bible effectively and equip the new believers (Ephesians 4:11-16).

INITIAL HELP: PROJECT TIMOTHY

Where were the Bible teachers? How could existing ones be strengthened and new ones raised up? Raju contacted David Jackman of the Proclamation Trust in London for advice. He immediately put him in touch with Trevor Archer of Project Timothy, which aimed to send Bible teachers to other countries on a regular basis, to help train leaders to teach the Bible. Within weeks, Raju and Robin Thomson met Rupert Bentley-Taylor and Colin Smith in London. They had been assigned to visit India, hoping to do so regularly over the next 5 years. Their first visit included Delhi Bible Institute and Zion Ministries in Lucknow. Other visiting teachers followed, going to Dehradun, Kanpur, Ludhiana, Hyderabad and Rajasthan.

THE NEXT STEP: BUILDING A TEAM IN INDIA

The programme ran for several years and Delhi Bible Institute has continued the partnership to the present. A review in 2000 highlighted the impact of these visits, as well as some limitations. How could the visitors' contributions be strengthened by further application to the local context and, even more important, by multiplying trainers? It was time for the next stage – building a team of Indian Bible teachers and trainers and producing local materials.

In November 2000, a small group held an exploratory workshop in Delhi, followed by a consultation in Dehradun. The main teacher was Rev Jonathan Fletcher, senior minister of Emmanuel Church, Wimbledon (UK), along with representatives from CONCERN, DBF, Prem Bhavan in Dehradun, RSP, SAC, Trust in Christ, UBS and other agencies.

A CLEAR VISION: BASIC SKILLS AND MULTIPLICATION

From these meetings came a clear vision to focus on teaching basic skills to study, apply and teach the Bible, with multiplication built in from the beginning. A smaller group of trainers would be taught and immediately pass on what they had learned to a larger group from their church or network, with the aim that they would continue to teach and train them in the coming months. This was the first purpose statement.

Aim

To equip, over a period of five years, a select number of trainers and resource people to equip the church in North India, especially Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, for Biblical preaching and teaching, with application to the total needs of the people of these two states.

Specific Outcomes

1. To equip twelve trainers who will:
 - a) Train 60 Hindi speaking preachers and teachers.
 - b) Produce a series of tapes of Biblical preaching in Hindi, Garhwali, Bhojpuri, etc.
 - c) Produce a series of written Biblical expositions and commentaries (similar to the Bible Speaks Today series) in Hindi and English

2. To help Biblical scholars and Christian leaders to:
 - a) Reflect on the application and communication of Biblical truth in the North Indian context.
 - b) Write materials for the church in India and beyond.
3. To equip other trainers who will in turn train church or mission workers for wholistic outreach

GETTING STARTED

It was decided to begin in May 2001, with a two-part workshop in Mussoorie. In the first part, a group of ten trainers were taught in English. Jonathan Fletcher was joined by Dr G. Isaiah (professor of homiletics at UBS and later SAIACS), Rev Raju Bhagwat from Pune, Dr Raju Abraham and Robin Thomson. There was teaching on Matthew's Gospel and the History of Redemption (the overall framework of the Bible's story), along with practical skills and principles of studying and teaching from a passage. It was hard work, especially as the majority were not very confident in English. After four days they were joined by 29 others, some of them from the same churches. A group of seven who had stayed on from the first workshop passed on what they had just learned, this time all in Hindi.

There were moments when it was not clear if it was working! One of the new trainers kept coming out of the room where he was teaching, saying, "Uncle, what do I say next?" But as they began to teach, what they had learned began to fit together. Before they left, the first group (trainers) committed themselves to follow up by regularly meeting at least one other person from their church or network, and to go on teaching in the way they had been learning. Devender recalls:

For me this pattern of two-part workshop meant that I was learning and practising at the same time, right there in front of the resource people. It was impressive. I was one of the trainers from the first group and I saw that these pastors had been

missing something in their preaching ministries. They had got it now and were excited. I translated for Jonathan Fletcher, preaching from 1 Timothy. I had never seen before such highly qualified, experienced godly leaders investing in the life of grass root, Hindi-speaking, semi-illiterate, non-seminary pastors.

A second pair of workshops was held in November 2001 in Varanasi, with 12 trainers and 56 who joined them in the second part. An immediate gain was that one of the May workshop trainers became part of the resource persons' team – Rev Devender Verma from Delhi Bible Fellowship. He taught James, memorably. He further reflects on these workshops:

When I met these godly leaders, full of passion for teaching and training Hindi speaking pastors and leaders, I realized this is the training I was looking for myself and for our Hindi speaking people. I have a passion for studying and teaching the Word of God and I found that here, too. Then and there, in Varanasi, I thought in my heart that I would be part of this team. Though I never thought that SBT will become so big and I will be heading that movement.

Reflecting on the first year, we felt that we had made a start – but the task was bigger than we had expected and we still had much to learn. We recognised needs in the following areas:

- *Language*: we needed to focus on Hindi
- *Materials*: we had made a start by recording all the talks and preparing written summaries which could be printed and distributed. These were the work of Mrs Stella Bhagwat, who continued doing this for several years.

- *Skills to understand and teach from a passage*: this was clearly the right approach, but we realised we needed to break the task down into small and simple steps. There were different styles of teachers, which was good, as it provided different models. But we needed to make the basic steps clear and easy to understand.

OUR MODELS: EZRA AND PAUL

We came back to our model of Ezra, whose whole desire was to study God's word, apply it to his own life, and teach others (Ezra 7:10). We wanted to train people who would train others to be like Ezra, in the context of North India.

We added to this Paul's example in 2 Timothy 2:2, teaching Timothy to teach others who would pass it on again, in a multiplying chain. We aimed to build this multiplication into the structure of SBT. It worked well in the context of the actual workshops, as the first group taught the second. But would they continue, once they had got back to their own situation?

Our original hope was that they would meet each other monthly to review and encourage each other. We realised that in order to keep on being effective in Biblical preaching and teaching we need not only skills and resources but also on-going, mutual encouragement and suitable networks in which we can give and receive this.

CONCERN had appointed Rev Lalzuala, based at Prem Bhavan in Dehradun, to travel and visit the SBT trainees. Later in 2004-05, Alok Srivastava became available to visit and hold regular gatherings. Their reports showed the value of meeting to encourage each other and learn together. We did not have the capacity to develop regular 'preaching clubs' as in some other training networks.

We were greatly encouraged by the support of the Langham Partnership. Dr Chris Wright, the Director, wrote to express their full commitment. Langham Preaching had been conducting training workshops around the world, with a similar purpose. They chose not

to begin them in North India, but to support the work of SBT. Chris looked forward to helping with teaching himself and to the support of the group of “Langham Scholars” in India.

A NEW WAY OF SEEING

Over the next three years we continued to develop the programme, following the same pattern, while working to clarify and improve the “Basic Skills” book for studying and understanding a Bible passage. By this point, the distinctives had become clear.

Sharp Focus

We concentrated on a simple and practical approach. Some of those being trained had been to Bible school or seminary, but they found that SBT brought together all the contents of seminary homiletics in simple steps through which the participants learn and practise for themselves and also go straight into teaching others.

Teaching From a Passage

We wanted them to be able to study a passage in its context, find its main theme, understand its message and apply it to themselves. Then teach that to others in a clear way, so that they could in turn understand it, apply it to themselves and pass it on.

This focus on a passage was strange to some. They had been used to picking verses and ideas here and there, simply repeating basic Gospel texts, exhortations and stories. But they began to see its value. Subodh Daniel, a church planter from Bihar, explained it like this: “You look for the main point; that is like the headline in a newspaper. Then you teach what is in that passage. When people go home they can look at their Bibles again, read the passage and remember the points that were taught.”

The Overall Framework

The focus was on the passage. But each passage had to be seen in its context – the immediate context within the book and the larger context of the whole Bible. This was the *History of Redemption* (HOR). As they went through the whole Bible they learned its overall story in broad outline: God’s plan of redemption – *Creation, Fall, Redemption in History, New Creation*. This gave them a “new way of seeing” the overall framework and message of the Bible, the big picture.

Again, this was a contrast to old habits of picking verses here and there, preaching based on the preacher’s own framework and whatever was on his mind and heart. Teaching the stories of the HOR had another advantage: the individual stories are an excellent way of communicating the truths of the Bible, particularly to those from an oral culture.

Preaching with Purpose

Teaching was not just explaining the contents of a passage. It had a definite aim, to bring change in people’s lives. This aim must be identified and each part of the message of the passage must be applied. But this application would not just be based on the preacher’s concerns at the time. It would come from the text, understood in the context of the whole Bible’s message.

Multiplying Through Teaching Others

This was vital. 2 Timothy 2:2 was one of our theme verses. So whenever the trainers studied a passage they would immediately begin to prepare to teach it, passing on what they had learned and encouraging their hearers to do the same.

Models

Most of us learn preaching and teaching by copying what we see and hear. We need good models. In each workshop the resource people gave a model as they taught passages and Bible books. A pastor listened

to Jonathan Fletcher teaching through Philippians, passage by passage, in sequence. He thought “I could do that in my church.” And he went home and began to teach in that way. Another pastor went to a local church on Sunday during our workshop. He came back excited: “The pastor preached from a passage in the same way that we were taught here.” It was a model from “real life” for him.

The resource people also provided a model of training, as they not only taught in plenary sessions but also led the smaller group workshops, gave feedback and personal assessment and interacted closely with the trainers. They trained by example and on the job, seeking to follow the way that Jesus and Paul taught and trained.

BRINGING SBT TO THE HOUSE CHURCH LEVEL

At the end of 2004, we decided to start a new phase. Mawizuala, CONCERN’s energetic field director, commented after the 2004 workshops, “We have made a breakthrough. They have grasped the approach and now they are confident to pass this on to others.” So we changed the pattern of the central workshop, making it a longer session of ten to fifteen days. Our aim now was to help the trainers to train their house church leaders, preparing material and making a plan. Each day they met in a “practice house church”, teaching what they had learned as though to their house church members and then preparing outlines to pass on to their house church leaders. They went away carrying whole sets of outlines, as well as a plan for teaching over the next three to six months.

We continued to develop materials that they could use to train their local leaders. There were two main booklets: 1) *Basic Skills* had two parts – a simple method that anybody could use to study a passage and more detailed steps for preparing to teach from a passage. 2) *12 Truths* attempted to bring together the whole process of teaching the Bible, from basic motivation to skills of interpretation. It asked four 4 basic questions: Why? Who? What? How?

WHO Should Study and Teach the Bible?

This question was significant for the basic focus of SBT. It showed the fundamental role of two main types of Bible teachers: 1) **local leaders**, both in the family (especially parents) and in the local church, to teach the local believers on a regular daily and weekly basis and 2) the equally important role of **outside leaders** (in our context, the church planters) to equip and train these local leaders.

How do we train these different types of Bible teachers? It has to be through multiplying, passing it on through the chain. But how do we get training right down to the local level? This was a challenge for all those involved in starting new churches at this time in North India. David Bennett produced a study of different types of church leaders, India Leadership Study. It outlined five types of leaders in India:

Types 1 and 2: Self supporting local leaders of small groups and house churches.

Type 3: Full-time paid leaders of local churches (often also responsible to supervise local house church leaders).

Type 4: Full-time regional leaders.

Type 5: Full-time national leaders.

The focus at this time was on training Type 3 leaders. Being paid, they were more accessible and also had higher levels of education and training. The North India Leadership Consultation, held in Delhi (February 2002), summarised the situation with regard to these leaders and their training:

1. *God is at work and churches are growing in each region. There are considerable facilities available for training in general, at various levels.* However, much of this is primarily directed at training Type 3 (full-time) leaders. It is also not clear how many of them are accessible to the people of the region

2. *Type 1 and 2 leaders are the key to the healthy growth and multiplication of the church.* They are self-supporting and provide leadership, teaching, pastoral care and outreach at the local level. They are needed in large numbers, compared to the other types. But there are hardly any facilities for adequate training of Type 1 and 2 leaders.
3. *Type 3 leaders have a key role in training the Type 1 and 2 leaders.* But many of them are not doing this. They need to be envisioned and equipped so that they in turn identify and equip the Type 1 and 2 leaders.
4. *Type 4 and 5 leaders have a key role in equipping, particularly the Type 3 leaders,* so that together they can fulfil their role of equipping the Type 1 and 2 leaders.

So the goal must be to bring training down to the level of the Type 1 and 2 house church leaders, through the Type 3 full-time leaders (mostly church planters). This was SBT's aim, though we were not always able to check how it was being fulfilled, as our focus was on the workshops. Based on the same analysis, other ministries trained their paid church planters (Type 3) so that they could teach and train their local leaders (Type 1 and 2).

Kachhwa Transformational Ministries realised they needed to equip their house church leaders to teach the Bible, rather than relying on the church planters, who were getting most of the training. They began to identify and train the house church leaders, through the church planters. Recently the Kachhwa Bible Church began intentional training for its Type 1 and 2 leaders who attend the church.

WHAT Should We Teach From The Bible?

This was another key question from *12 Truths*. The answer given there was "The whole counsel of God", as Paul had taught the Ephesian church (Acts 20:27). This would include a combination of (a) the History of Redemption, (b) studying Bible books and passages in their

context and (c) themes and topics.

To do this effectively would mean preparing a PLAN for teaching the Bible in the family and in the local (house) church. So during 2005-07 we put a lot of emphasis on preparing materials that house church leaders could use, and on making a plan for teaching the Bible in the local church.

BUILDING “A” TRAINERS

From 2008 onwards, SBT began to focus on building 2nd line leaders. We identified those who had been coming regularly and labelled them “A” Trainers (mostly Type 3 leaders). They were invited to come early to the central workshop, for two days of extra training, to prepare them to teach and train in regional workshops, as well as in their local situation. When the other trainers arrived for the central workshop, the “A” trainers took over leading the small groups in which they worked on passages. Up to now, the resource people had led these groups. Each evening, the “A” trainers and resource people sat together to reflect on the day’s programme and plan for the next day.

From 2010, the “A” trainers began to teach in the evening plenary sessions, receiving feedback from the resource people and the rest of the group. It was a significant step forward for many of them. At the same time, the number of regional workshops was increased, with the help of the “A” trainers. Additional central workshops were added each year, in Lucknow (2009) and then in Kachhwa and west Nepal. From 2013, the “A” trainers had their own training session each year.

From 2011, the Ezra Conference gave an opportunity to be refreshed through models of good exposition by national and international Bible teachers, along with workshops applying the Bible to practical life situations. Meanwhile, both Kachhwa and Zion Ministries (Lucknow) were developing their own complementary training programmes, including the first women-only workshops at Kachhwa. Women had been sharing fully in the SBT workshops from the beginning, but this gave a new

opportunity, which proved to be very effective.

The women's leadership initiative at Kachhwa started in 2003 with a training conference in Varanasi, led by a team from a church in Memphis (USA). This has continued every year with about 100 women. In between, Catherine Abraham led smaller meetings 4-6 times a year. Earlier, Dr Violet Devapalan taught illiterate women to read and then trained them to lead Bible study groups. In 2011, Surekha Kamble, Anju David and Catherine started the women's SBT alongside the women's leadership initiative. Through regular workshops, they have studied about a dozen books of the Bible and developed seven women resource leaders.

EZRA THEOLOGY COURSE

As leaders grow in ability and qualifications, how do we retain them in their local churches, while continuing to develop their capacity? In February 2015, SBT launched the Ezra Theology Course (ETC), a new programme to make available recognized, seminary-level training in Hindi from a local church base. This was based on regular intensive sessions, led by Indian and international resource people, combined with study and practical assignments, as part of on-going ministry.

Twelve "A" Trainers were selected. They continued to serve in their local church, guided by their own church leaders, working closely with a mentor to monitor their progress in personal character, ministry skills and study. This built naturally on their experience in SBT and they continued to help in the SBT workshops. Another eleven joined in February 2016 and the number will increase by about twelve each year.

At the same time, SBT saw another significant development. Devender Verma, a senior pastor of Delhi Bible Fellowship, who had been leading the SBT team, was appointed Honorary Director (part time). The Ezra Trust was registered and a local board was established, with representatives from sending churches and organisations. They set the curriculum and standards, selected participants for ETC in consul-

tation with churches, and ensured that SBT continued to grow in the right way.

FINAL THOUGHTS AND VISION

SBT has given simple and effective tools to church members and leaders, some with very little background, which have enabled them to study and teach clearly and with impact from a Bible passage, within the framework of the Bible's story as a whole – the History of Redemption. We have seen change in those who have continued. They can teach from passages with confidence in a way that clearly brings out their distinctive teaching and applies it to their hearers. Some have gone on to teach whole books of the Bible and to plan their teaching in a systematic way.

As we have seen, there is a need for both non-formal and formal training for the pastors and church planters in North India, Central India, Nepal and Bhutan. These are the areas where the Gospel is spreading rapidly. Every day, new churches are planted by the local believers and leaders. These are people who have never been to any Bible training, but are excellent in evangelism and church planting.

We are growing as a team, but the need is also growing. Right now we have over 80 “A” trainers and a team of approximately fifteen resource persons. Every year, we have around fifteen regional workshops, three central workshops, one “A” trainers workshop and the Ezra (preaching) Conference. In addition, there are three modules of ETC. Our vision going forward:

1. Spread this movement geographically to other parts of India and also to Nepal and Bhutan.
2. Train these “A” trainers to the level of resource person.
3. Invite more resource people to our team.
4. Develop the ETC to a diploma or degree level, which is recognized by an accredited institution.

UNITED CHRISTIAN PRAYER FOR INDIA

A CALL TO PRAYER AND ACTION TO REACH
THE NATION

DEEPAK MAHTANI

Can the churches in India be mobilised to pray and work together for the good of the Nation? Here is a challenging account of recent developments.

Over the past ten years a Prayer and Action initiative has been developing that involves the church in India to serve our Nation and share the good news of Jesus. In order to do this, the whole church in India needs to be mobilised. The past two years has seen acceleration and it is possible that we might actually see this dream turn into a reality. This acceleration through a subsidiary movement called United Christian Prayer for India (UCPI) is for the first time bringing together all the Catholic, Episcopal, Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches on the same platform to realize this vision.

THE GENESIS OF UCPI

This movement commenced in September 2004 when a small group of Church leaders came together in Chennai. This birthed an initiative for praying for the Nation and sharing the good news under the umbrella of the National Prayer and Church Transformation Initiative (NPCTI). The movement was voluntary in effort and finances and totally Church based and Church centric. The story of NPCTI is told in more detail in chapter 16.

Over the years, incremental steps were taken to mobilize the Church, first to pray for the Nation as a corporate body and through that prayer inspire dedicated workers to be released by the Church. There has been slow and steady progress culminating in more than 50,000 churches mobilized by 2012. However, the bulk of these churches were independent Pentecostal Churches.

At the end of 2012, the movement gained ground amongst the Catholic and the Episcopal Churches and we believe that this sudden breakthrough is prophetic. In one year, three meetings involving church leaders of the Catholic, Other Episcopal Churches, as well as the organized Pentecostal churches took place. The Vision ‘to reach our Nation with the good news within our Lifetime’ was endorsed by all of them. As one of the participants mentioned, “This is indeed a miracle unfolding in our lives.”

WHO AND WHAT IS UCPI?

UCPI is a movement of committed believers with one purpose: Reaching the Nation in our Lifetime through United Prayer and Action. Most of us are volunteers who give up our time because we are convinced this is a vision that comes from God for such a time as this. There are 3 teams:

The Strategy Team, the State Teams and the Central Team work to plan and deliver the objectives for UCPI. In each state where we hold meetings, we encourage active participation and involvement of the local churches to own the vision and host the events. This has been a way of preparing the churches to work together not only during the conference but before and hopefully after the conference. This has led them to see the benefits so they continue to work together.

In order to underpin everything that we do theologically, the UCPI Theological Forum was set up representing theologians from different parts of the church in India. The objective of the forum is: “Through mutual sharing and searching we will strive to discover the promptings of the Spirit to help us achieve the vision of reaching our country with prayer and action.” We should nurture a spirit of unity so that prayer and mission involving the whole Church can be undertaken with the purpose of reaching our nation in our lifetime.

THE GROWTH OF UCPI

A significant event that occurred following the formation of UCPI was the Prayer for the Nation event of 30th November 2013 that took place in approximately 1,200 places in India. The Churches were also encouraged to pray for the Nation during the Lok Sabha Elections in May 2014.

The prayer event was an encouragement in mobilising the Church. However, there was a realisation that reaching the nation would require more than this. It was strongly felt that there was an urgent need to bring the Church Leaders from all denominations together to catch a common vision of Reaching the Nation in our Lifetime through United Prayer & Action. The first meeting took place at the CEO Centre, SAIACS Campus, Bangalore and some 50 National Leaders from the Episcopal churches were invited for a 3 day envisioning meeting on the 27-29th May 2014. They were unanimous in agreeing that this vision is needed and they were willing to support it.

A similar meeting was then held over three days in September with another 50 National Leaders representing 30 denominations from the established Charismatic & Pentecostal Churches and again they were unanimous in agreeing the vision. Based on the successes of these meetings, each leader was asked to invite up to five of their peer leaders from their denominations and states, if they were able, to similarly share the vision.

Following the two smaller, formative meetings in 2014, the first national envisioning meeting took place in Bangalore on the 6-8th January 2015. A total of 467 leaders including several Archbishops, Bishops, and other heads of church denominations attended. The majority of them caught the vision and were committed to the five objectives of the vision:

1. Pray for the Nation and preach the Great Commission for five minutes every Sunday.
2. Organize National Days of Prayers.
3. Hold Envisioning Meetings to spread the vision.
4. Adopt a district for prayer, prayer walking and sharing the good news.
5. Equip and empower the laity for Great Commission work one to two days a year.

To make this practical, leaders were invited to take these specific resolutions back to their own church board or committee:

1. I agree to have prayer for my Nation and adopted district for five minutes every Sunday during my church service.
2. I agree to preach or read the Great Commission following the prayer for my Nation and adopted district every Sunday during my church service.
3. I agree to adopt a district and to conduct prayers and prayer walks there.

4. I agree to conduct an envisioning meeting in the next four months (before the next National Meeting) by calling 30 leaders in my area of influence to share about the UCPI vision.
5. I agree to conduct a Day of Prayer on Pentecost with my church and possibly with other churches.
6. I agree to motivate my church members to commit two days of their time to share the good news with at least ten people in our adopted district(s) during the Easter and Christmas seasons this year.

The 2nd National meeting in Hyderabad brought together 760 participants representing leaders from 27 states and 16 denominations of the churches in India – the Anglican, Baptist, Brethren, Catholic, Church of North India, Church of South India, Episcopal, Evangelical, Jacobite, Mennonite, Methodist, Mar Thoma, Orthodox, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, and Salvation Army Churches.

UCPI has held two National Leaders meetings every year with between 500-800 leaders and two subsequent meetings of Women's Leaders and Youth Leaders twice a year with approximately 300-400 leaders. The momentum has gathered and is continuing. Reports are being received regularly from across the nation of churches organising prayer meetings cross denominationally based on the vision of UCPI.

From July 2016, there were approximately 1,200 regional meetings planned over the next year. In each meeting, an average of 30 Pastors were going to participate. State Coordinators are following up on actions agreed at the National meetings to ensure that the work on the ground of the Five-Step plan is being implemented. The total number of church leaders expected to be envisioned through these meetings will be about 36,000.

To date, a total of six National meetings have taken place in Bangalore, Hyderabad, Kochi, and Odisha. At the recently concluded National meeting in Bhubaneswar, Odisha in July 2016, one denomination signed an MOU with UCPI agreeing to take the vision to all

1,200 churches in their denomination. This meeting was strategically held for the North East states – Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, UP, MP, Chhattisgarh and Odisha. These states are often “the forgotten states” in the national picture. The leaders expressed their sincere appreciation for UCPI including and involving them in this national movement.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE NATIONAL MEETINGS?

The primary purpose of the national meetings is to bring together the most significant leaders of the main denominational churches in India in order to catch the vision for reaching the nation.

Day 1 focuses on the Centrality of Prayer and Day 2 focuses on the Centrality of Action. We stress that prayer without action is as ineffective for God’s will to be done as action without prayer. Both are needed and must complement each other, if there is to be a tangible difference. We seek to connect participants with Head, Heart and Hands. This is delivered through:

1. *Plenary sessions* (where everyone sits in cross-denominational, cross-state groups) which include:
 - Biblical Teaching on Unity & Purpose.
 - Unpacking the Vision Statement.
 - Presenting the state of the Nation through video and statistics.
 - Providing the Biblical basis of the vision based on Joshua 18.
 - Providing the context on which we stand, understanding the Christian Contribution we have inherited and asking the question: What contribution will we leave for the next generations?
 - Table discussions, sharing in twos and threes, and sharing in the larger Plenary groups.
 - Focus on challenge, need and urgency.

2. *Tent sessions* (where groups are split into State groups) which include:

- Introducing State Coordinators and Facilitators
- Networking and introducing them to each other
- Providing State data and statistics
- Introducing the Envisioning Booklet and its use
- Planning strategies of outreach, adoption and prayer
- Encouraging commitment and follow through based on the 5-step strategy in each state

The discussions include looking at the strategic place of India in the world, and what this means for the church's role to pray and act on behalf of the nation. In Kochi, Dr Priscilla Singh, a Methodist leader, spoke about India's role as one of the BRICS nations (a group consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). She highlighted that India needs to align its spiritual, political, financial, social and moral values to God's word because of its growing global influence. She encouraged and challenged the leaders present that there is a ground force waiting, as women are the majority in church, and youth have energy. As one sixth of the world's population lives in India, if we can change India, we can change the world.

TRANSLATING THE VISION INTO ACTION

UCPI had an impact on many leaders. What follows are quotes from leaders who attended the National Meetings, as well as some ways that leaders have acted upon the vision.

Comments From Participants

- What UCPI has done is nothing less than a spiritual revolution in India. Talking about unity is not limited to a theoretical realm but is now happening in real life.

- It is beautiful when God's people come together, breaking the barriers of denominations.
- It is a great privilege to be with and to share the same platform with leaders of different denominational churches.
- I felt the living presence of Jesus in these meetings.
- These meetings felt like heaven.
- It's wonderful to see the diversity in the family of God.
- God took away all our anxieties.
- This meeting created an environment for working in unity.
- I'm going back home with a burden to pray for the nation every day.
- Joining hands together with all the children of God irrespective of denominations was touching.
- Unity in Christ – united in mission, praying together, working together – can achieve great things for God.

District Adoption

- A pastor encouraged his church to adopt a block for prayer. Prayer walks were carried out and a worker was sent to preach in the area.
- After attending the June 2015 National Meeting, another pastor encouraged his congregation of 32 members to pray and conduct prayer walks in their adopted district. Nineteen members faithfully did so, and today they have 100 new members.
- A Bishop endorsed the strategy of adoption, saying, "personal engagement is essential to change an area."

Envisioning

- A pastor in Gujarat has conducted envisioning meetings with every National Meeting participant from his state with excellence and a systematic approach.
- Pictures of UCPI State Volunteers and other leaders conducting envisioning meetings across the country encouraged others to actively spread the vision.

Mandate for the Whole Church

- One leader has taken an evangelical prayer journey through all 30 states of India, consecrating each state to the Lordship of Jesus. His second journey will be with members of different denominations.
- A pastor and his wife sold their home to buy materials to reach over 5,000 villages with the good news. Suggesting that clenched fists hold tight and receive no more, but open hands give and receive, he challenged the gathering:

You who have the eyes, will you see?

You who have the wealth, will you spend?

You who have the call, will you go?

You who have the idea, will you preach?

National Day of Prayer

National Days of Prayer were observed in 13 states, with one more state holding it in December. Reports were received on events as small as a single church praying for the nation together in Assam, to large events of 3,000 people from several denominations with an extended program in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

The Gujarat diocese of the Church of North India (CNI) observed the month of August 2016 as a month of prayer, and on 25th August 2016, 400 church leaders and laity under the leadership of their bishop, held prayer walks in their respective areas and then joined for a fellowship lunch. The bishop thanked UCPI for providing a “breakthrough” for united prayer and action that helped initiate this first-time event for the diocese. The diocese also observed their first National Day of Prayer on 2nd October.

A young man cycled through several states with his father to pray for churches and the nation at the May 2016 UCPI Youth Leader Meeting. Inspired by this, a youth leader in West Bengal conducted an envisioning meeting with youth leaders from 4 denominations and challenged youth leaders to organize a similar prayer cycle rally. They travelled to local churches to pray.

Working for the Great Commission

Challenged by the National Leaders' Meeting in January, a pastor of the Kheda Methodist Church in Gujarat organized a team to conduct outreach at festivals in the area, which attract hundreds of thousands. In one day, the team distributed more than 100,000 tracts and 300 New Testaments. Some recipients have followed up by inviting the team into their homes for more personal sharing.

THE FUTURE

To make this dream a reality needs a sustained effort in mobilising both the Episcopal churches, as well as the Independent churches. National meetings and State level meetings are being planned twice a year for the above mobilization. A simple yet effective plan of the adoption of a District for Prayer and working for the Great Commission has been put in place. The Movement's future will depend on the determination and perseverance of the Leaders that have endorsed this vision, therefore, constant envisioning becomes the prime method by which this movement can be sustained.

The efforts of the past four years have shown us that there is both an appetite and willingness for church leaders to work together to achieve more than we ever have in the past 2000 years. We believe this vision is from God Himself, led by His Holy Spirit, which is why many catch the vision. Barriers of hierarchy, structure, and fear of change are being broken and bridges of cooperation, unity, acceptance and friendship are being established and strengthened. We trust that the seeds that have been sown will bear much fruit for the Nation of India and we watch expectantly how God will use this movement to accomplish His purposes for India and for the world. Many have told us that what is happening is historic and other nations are watching to see how this vision captures the hearts and minds of Indian Christian leaders, in order to take this movement to their own nations.

P A R T I I

PEOPLE GROUPS

LANGUAGES

URBAN

GEOGRAPHICAL

DISCIPLING ALL PEOPLE GROUPS IN THIS GENERATION

ALEX ABRAHAM

What are people groups and why are they important? What should the Indian church be doing?

THE GREAT COMMISSION

We are living in one of the greatest times of harvest in the history of the Church. More people are coming to Christ now than ever before. Churches are being planted among some of the most resistant cultures in the world. Countries and people groups long closed to the gospel are opening up. Mission leaders around the globe are now talking seriously about completing the task of the great commission in this generation – that we would see the gospel preached to every people and language group in every city and villages of the world, and churches planted where new believers might grow toward maturity in Christ

It has been 2000 years since Jesus gave us the Great Commission:

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all *nations*, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19,20)

We notice that the target group of the great commission is *nations*. The term *nations* comes repeatedly in other Great Commission verses. Matthew 24:14 says, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all *nations*, and then the end will come.” In Luke 24:47, we read, “And repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all *nations*, beginning at Jerusalem.” Mark 13:10 repeats, “And the gospel must first be preached to all *nations*.” The same term also appears in Revelation 5:9 and 7:9.

What does the word *nations* mean? It was Ralph Winter from the US Center for World Mission who unfolded the meaning of the word *nations* to the body of Christ at the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, held in 1974. He is often talked about as the man who dared to shake up world missions. The Greek words used in Matthew 28:19, *panta ta ethne*, mean “making disciples of all ethnic groups and not a geopolitical nation.” He introduced the concept of people groups in missions and became the advocate for pioneer outreach among unreached people groups.

WHAT IS A PEOPLE GROUP?

A people group is a significantly large ethnic group or sociological grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another. In most parts of the world, lack of understandability acts as the main barrier and it is appropriate to define people group primarily

by language, with the possibility of sub-divisions based on dialect or cultural variations. Such a list may be referred to as an ethno-linguistic list of peoples.

For evangelization purposes, a people group is “the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance” (1982 Lausanne Committee Chicago Meeting). In South Asia, another major factor that determines a distinct people group is endogamy. In India, the Anthropological Society of India under the leadership of the late Dr K S Singh has done extensive work on people groups. His listings are more on ethno-cultural people groups than on ethno-linguistic people.

From 1985-1989, several agencies, mostly the US Center for World Mission and World Vision, came together and did extensive research to gather information about all the people groups in the world. By 1989, they had identified about 12,000 people groups in the world with a population of more than 10,000. They also found that there were 1,739 people groups with less than 2% evangelical Christians. These were listed as Unreached People Groups (UPGs).

THE 10-40 WINDOW

In 1989, Dr Luis Bush introduced the concept of the 10-40 Window at the Lausanne II Congress in Manila. This geographical region between 10 and 40 degrees north of the Equator, the location for 95% of the world’s UPGs, became popular. It includes North Africa, the Middle East and Central and South Asia. The impact of the 10-40 Window Initiative:

- Massive prayer initiatives
- Increased awareness
- Focused ministries among the Unreached people
- Major adoption drive
- Thousands of new churches in UPGs

- Extensive ongoing research and monitoring

Since 1990, various groups have tried to define more precisely the people groups to be focused on based on priority. The most comprehensive initial list of people groups in the world was published under the name Joshua Project (see www.joshuaproject.org). Here are some current statistics on the 10-40 Window from the Joshua Project:

- 69 countries that represent 4 major religious blocks
- 8164 people groups (5576 are UPGs)
- 68.3% of the people are unreached
- 83% of the UPGs in the world are in the window
- Poorest of the poor live in the window
- Resistant countries and high persecution

FINISHING THE TASK MOVEMENT

During Amsterdam 2000, an event hosted by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, an ad-hoc group of mission agency leaders committed to begin a strategic relationship together. The purpose was to see all the people groups engaged with church planting initiatives. This group, representing several major missions, has now come together under the banner “Finishing the Task”. They coined a new terminology Unreached and Unengaged People Groups (UUPGs).

A UUPG has less than 2% Christians and has no known workers living among the group doing intentional evangelism, discipleship and church planting. In 2006, Finishing the Task published a list of 639 UUPGs in the world with a population of 100,000 or more. These are the people groups with no known indigenous reproducing Churches. These groups need attention on a priority basis. This list can be viewed at www.finishingthetask.com. These groups have a total population of nearly 550 million people and reaching them must be the major priority of the Church. 310 UUPGs are in India, which make up 71% of the

whole population of the world's UUPGs.

The list has since then been revised several times to include all the Unreached Unengaged people groups irrespective of the population size. As of now there are still 600 UUPGs with more than 5,000 people who are yet to be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The following are the most popular sources for information on Unreached People groups:

Finishing The Task	www.finishingthetask.com
World Christian Database	www.worldchristiandatabase.org
Joshua Project	www.joshuaproject.net
People Groups	www.peoplesgroups.org
Global Mapping Intl	www.gmi.org
Mission Info Bank	www.missioninfobank.org
Ethnologue (language list)	www.ethnologue.com
Finishing The Task	www.finishingthetask.com

INDIAN RESPONSE TO THE FINISHING THE TASK MOVEMENT

In 2006, Christian leaders under the banner of India Missions Association and Serve A People India networks met to consider the question of reaching the 310 UUPGs in India. The ultimate goal to reach all of the 4,635 ethno-cultural groups of India was talked about, but the leaders felt these 310 are a good list to begin with.

These groups recognized that the steps to engage with these 310 UUPG was as follows:

- Select a specific UUPG and adopt it for potential ministry.
- Search diligently like the lost coin in the field.
- Do an initial survey, gather all possible information and then choose the location where you want to start as the initial focus.
- Develop a comprehensive plan for church planting. 7E is a good model or any other model that is appropriate.
- Prepare the ground with prayer.
- Choose an appropriate evangelism and discipleship plan.
- Plant and establish churches that are poised to multiply through trained local leaders.

One story of engagement with an UUPG in Indian took place in the state of Odisha, the abode of the Parja people group with a population of 400,000 people. In 2006, a local Parja leader adopted his own people group as the focus of his ministry. They identified 12 villages with no believers, fully inhabited by the Parja people group. They did an initial survey of these selected villages and started prayer and prayer walking as their entry strategy. They also identified a need and an opportunity to start three non-formal schools for the unschooled children in these villages. Along with their secular education, they also learned about Jesus through Jesus films and Bible stories.

People started responding to the gospel and today there are about 6000 believers and 52 pastors working among them. They also started four schools for the Parja people and are running a children home for them. The local church is also now translating the New Testament into their heart languages, Pengo Parja and Bodo Parja. There is a church planting movement among them. This movement has now spread to 23 other UUPGs in the same cluster. Several local leaders are being trained. New churches are being planted by indigenous leaders. The

Bible is being translated through the church networks in their heart languages.

CONCLUSION

The concept of people groups has revolutionized world missions in the last 25 years. Today, there is a possibility that all the people groups in the world can be reached in this generation. It is time that Indian churches take responsibility for in-depth engagement of all the people groups in India so that we can see the fulfillment of Revelation 7:9 soon.

BIBLE TRANSLATION: STRATEGY & STATUS

THOMAS MATHEW

How many Indian languages don't yet have a Bible? How long will it take to get one? Dramatic changes are taking place in the way the Bible is being translated today.

THE MANDATE

The Great Commission from the Lord is to “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). The Church had interpreted it in several ways in the past. Its implementation assumed several forms throughout church history.

The early church, under the leadership of the original apostles, resorted to a model involving evangelisation of strategic cities, establishing churches and equipping indigenous leaders; thus enlarging the frontiers from Jerusalem to Rome, and to the ends of the earth. The model yielded excellent results, as long as it was followed faithfully.

The subsequent centuries from the third to fifteenth witnessed the rise and spread of the Christian church and other institutions all over the civilised world. The discipling process of the new believers from varied cultures and remote locations highlighted the need for making the Scripture available in languages of the diverse groups. Consequently, the Bible was translated into certain vernacular languages.

This has sounded an alarm bell about the inadequacy of some of the translations into the less developed languages and consequently, the church leaders violently discouraged such attempts.

Therefore, the story of Bible Translation ministry is the story of sacrifice, rejection, persecution, and spiritual obstacles. These obstacles were overcome by those who were passionate for souls and who overcame the world by their faith in the Son of God.

CHRONOLOGY OF BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

1400 BC	Ten Commandments received.
500 BC	Hebrew Old Testament compiled.
200 BC	Hebrew Old Testament translated into the Greek Septuagint.
1st Century AD	Greek New Testament compiled.
315 AD	27 books of the New Testament canonized.
382 AD	Jerome translated the OT and NT into the Latin Vulgate (It remained the only official version for another 1000 years.)
1384 AD	Wycliffe's English translation completed.
1455 AD	Only 33 translations existed and very limited copies were in circulation. Then, Gutenberg developed the printing press.
1487 AD	Censorship introduced: Only Latin Bibles were approved for circulation.
1516 AD	Erasmus translated Greek/Latin Parallel New Testament.

1522 AD	Martin Luther's German New Testament completed.
1526 AD	Tyndale's English New Testament completed.
1539 AD	"Great Bible" in English (with 80 books) published.
1611 AD	King James Bible published. The emphasis now shifted to making different versions of Bibles in the same language such that there are about 900 versions of the Bible (in full or in part) in the English language (American Bible Society report)
1800 AD	Total of 71 Translations in different languages.
20th Century	About 250 languages covered.

COPYRIGHT: DOES IT THROTTLE THE DISTRIBUTION OF SCRIPTURE?

Copyright laws were enacted to protect the publishers from losing autonomous control on the intellectual property and consequent misuse of the literary product, as well as loss of revenue. The law was first passed by the British House of Commons in 1709 AD and was implemented from the following year. Its context was the proliferation of the printing and publishing industry and several cases of stealing of intellectual property after the time of Gutenberg.

As Bible Societies emerged as authorized publishers of Bibles, the copyright laws have been misused on several occasions in the garb of protecting the sanctity of the Holy Scripture. The use of these laws has seriously hampered the unrestricted distribution of the Scripture in a free market economy. Moreover, the Scripture which has been already translated into a language would need to be modified to meet the needs of the differently enabled people and those under special categories. Due to several practical reasons, the Bible Societies may not be able to produce such derivatives of the Bible. Moreover, the additional cost of licensing levied by the Bible Societies acts as a deterrent to other agencies in utilizing the existing translations to produce the derivatives or wider distribution of the text.

A large number of Bible translations in various languages are in urgent need for revisions, as the languages keep developing at a very fast pace. Due to reasons of economic viability, such revisions are delayed by several decades or even more than a century in many instances. Had there been a more open and easier copyright law, the desired changes to the translations could have been accomplished faster and at lesser cost. Because of the reasons given above, there is an increasing trend of publishing the new translations under a new copyright law named “Creative Commons, by attribute Share Alike” (CC by SA).

FACTORS CAUSING DELAYS IN BIBLE TRANSLATION INITIATIVES IN INDIA

Poor Availability of Linguistic Research Data

Mission research in India is poorly coordinated and the sharing of information is rarely practiced. The translation agencies and their sponsors would need the latest information about the status of church planting efforts in the target language groups, the linguistic features and sociocultural situation existing in the region, so as to assess the priority of translation need in that language group. Non-availability of such data hampers the planning process.

Lack of Coordination Among Translation Agencies

Even though most of the Protestant Bible translation agencies are members of the “Association of Indian Bible Translation Agencies”, the information exchange among them is not adequate. Moreover, several church networks, mission agencies and zealous individuals who are not part of the forum of Bible translation agencies attempt translations without consulting others. This results in duplication of efforts and, on many occasions, serious compromise on quality of the finished work.

Lack of Resources in Under-Developed Languages

It is a well-known fact that in most of the languages in the world, the Bible was the first book ever printed and published. Similarly, for languages without any Bible translation, they have no other books, or very few, in that language. The computer software tools commonly available for processing developed languages such as English are, sadly, not compatible with many of the less developed languages. It is, therefore, imperative that the software tools be modified to make them compatible for use in minority languages. This is often a demanding task as trained IT professionals from such language groups are difficult to obtain and costly to train.

Technological Limitations

The languages remaining without Bible translations are mostly spoken in remote locations and in rural areas. A reliable internet connection, having reasonable bandwidth, is difficult to obtain in remote areas. Also, the non-compatibility of fonts may pose a problem. It is also found that in several minority languages, the translators may lack software skills, nor a passion to learn new skills.

Funds

It goes without saying that the availability of funds for translation projects is critical for the progress of any such project. We have a history of months of delays in translation projects because of the non-release of funds on time.

BIBLE TRANSLATION STATISTICS

Total languages in the world:	7105
Languages with a Full Bible:	534
Languages with a New Testament:	1350

Total languages in India:	473
Indian languages with a Full Bible:	76
Indian languages with a New Testament:	79
Recent releases of NT by Operation Agape:	34
Translations in progress through church networks:	100+

PARADIGMS IN BIBLE TRANSLATION

Bible translation ministry has undergone several paradigm changes in the last few centuries. There were, at least, three major paradigm shifts and their comparative features are explained in the table below.

	Paradigm 1	Paradigm 2	Paradigm 3
Translators	Other tongue	Mother tongue	Mother tongue
Management	Expats	Expats	Local church
Assistants	Expats, some locals	Expats, some locals	Locals, some expat
Church engagement	Separate	Increasing	Integral
NT completion	25 years	10 years	2-4 years
NT cost	< \$2 million	\$200,000	\$50,000
Revisions	Rarely	Infrequent	Frequent
Formats	Printed	Printed/digital/ audio	Printed/digital/audio/ video
Legal controls	all rights reserved	all rights reserved	free and open
Target	NT	NT / portions	What church wants
Content Redistribution	Expensive	Expensive & restricted	Expensive & unrestricted
Quality assurance	Expat	Expat	Local church
Publishing	Exclusive	Exclusive	Non-exclusive

The Paradigm 1 was heavily dependent upon cross-cultural missionaries, who were mostly scholars of Biblical text in original languages and used their own skills and a manual process to translate the Scripture. The weakness of the process was that it was extremely slow, costly and done in isolation from the church. It used to take 25 to 30 years to complete the translation into a new language. This has resulted in poor availability of Scripture in hundreds of languages. Even in many languages in which Scripture was translated, the church was reluctant in accepting the translation due to variations in cultural or linguistic features. The sad fact is that hundreds of such translations remain unutilised due to such reasons, which could have been easily overcome had the church been partner to the translation process in the first place. Even in the latter half of the 20th century, the number of languages with complete Bibles remained at just about 250. The resulting increased demand for faster translation has led to adaptation of Paradigm 2.

The Paradigm 2 was characterized by the emphasis in using mother tongue translators under the supervision of the trained overseas missionaries. Also, there was an additional thrust in use of technology for accelerating translation. It was a major improvement over Paradigm 1, in that the translation time was reduced to 10 to 15 years and the cost was also reduced considerably. However, it was also mostly supervised by overseas experts and had resulted in the same major cultural and linguistic disconnect which plagued the Paradigm 1 translations. Moreover, the demand for faster pace of translations became increasingly louder. The rapid development of information technology and linguistic tools created an optimism which encouraged the translation agencies to adopt a shift to paradigm 3 in which we operate in these days.

The current paradigm, Paradigm 3, lays emphasis on the following aspects:

- Church centric translation projects
- Employing MTTs and indigenous management teams
- Community ownership of the efforts
- Advanced technology tools being used extensively
- Unrestricted access to Biblical content under CC by SA copy-right rule.

TYPES OF TRANSLATIONS

Scripture translations are mainly of two types: literal and dynamic (or meaning-based). The literal translation tries to be as close to the form and meaning of the original source text. In many case, this type of translation results in unclear meanings in the translated text and poor readability in the target language. A typical example of a literal translation is the King James Version of the English Bible.

The meaning-based translation tries to make the translated text more clear in its conveyed meaning (adapted to the cultural context) and better in readability, but this often happens at the cost of losing the original form and expressions. The Good News Bible is a typical example of such translation. Ideally, we need both types of translations in a language to cater for the needs of both the serious students of the Scripture and others with less academic interests.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY TOOLS

Technology and Scripture translation are closely linked. The language technology tools available in various languages have been utilised to accelerate translation projects. Also, several special software tools have been developed to ease this process. The recently developed tools or updates of the existing ones are listed below.

- **ParaText (version 8)** – Owned by United Bible Societies and SIL. It is a comprehensive and powerful, but complex tool developed exclusively for Bible translation. It includes a host of resources for reference and checking. This is the industry standard tool for most professional Bible translators.
- **Sovee Engine** – A machine translation tool that is not available any more, but played a large role in encouraging and equipping rapid Bible translation movements.
- **Translation Studio** – Developed by Wycliffe Associates (available under CC by SA). It is a comprehensive tool.
- **Translation Tracker** – Developed by Bridge Connectivity Solutions, New Delhi. This is a specialized tool for managing several translation projects simultaneously.
- **Autographa** – Developed by Operation Agape. It is a user-friendly drafting and editing tool for mass deployment. It is free and open source. It started as a summer project by Joel Mathew and Dr Binu Alexander (Operation Agape). It was developed as a backup measure when Sovee Engine was suddenly discontinued in early 2016 and Bible translators were forced to use excel spreadsheets for editing Bibles. As of today, it is currently being used by around 40 Bible Translation Projects in India and elsewhere. Many people in India have shown interest due to its unrestricted availability, support for Indian Languages and ease of use. It is the first Indian initiative to provide a free alternative for MTTs.

In addition to the above, several tools are under development for handling non-unicode fonts, security of documents, accuracy of translation, comparison with original Greek and Hebrew texts, etc.

FRESH GLOBAL INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS BIBLE TRANSLATION NEEDS

Wycliffe Global Alliance, SIL, The Seed Company, UBS have all renewed their efforts to have a translation project started in all the languages that need a translation, by year 2025. The Wycliffe Associates have launched an program to finish the task of making the Scripture available in all the remaining languages by year 2025. They launched a new project, the **Gateway Languages Project (GLP)**, last year.

A Gateway Language (GL) is a language of wider communication through which a bilingual speaker can have access to Biblical Source text and translate it into the second language. Over 50 GLs have been identified globally, of which 12 are in India. The GLs in India are Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Oriya, Assamese, Marathi, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam.

Since established churches are available in these language groups, it is possible to find indigenous resource persons to undertake translation tasks. Also, the church denominations among that language group, and the community, can be mobilized to partner in this process. This approach eliminates the risk of rejection of the translated text by the churches and makes it more adapted to the linguistic preferences of the community. As many of the indigenous translators may not have adequate scholarship in Greek, Hebrew, theology, or translation methodology, a large volume of training and reference material is also made available to help in the translation process.

The Bible was translated into the GLs of India between 1820 and 1860 AD. However, due to existing copyright restrictions, the current version of these translations are not available for unrestricted use. Hence, the need exists for creation of an independent version. The GLP envisages the creation of a literal Bible by revision of non-copyrighted old versions of the Bible in various languages and fresh translation of a dynamic version in each. The completed material will be published on a website for use by that language community.

THE GLP TRANSLATION PROCESS

The GLP uses the English language version of an Unlocked Literal Bible and an Unlocked Dynamic Bible, published under CC by SA, as source texts. A set of additional resources (listed below) is also made available.

- Translation Studio (An IT tool for translation, checking, recording, and publishing)
- Translation Academy (A training handbook for Translators)
- Translation Notes
- Translation Questions
- Translation Terms
- Translation Keyboard
- Door43 (A platform for content management and distribution)
- UnfoldingWord (A web-based tool for publishing and facilitation of audio, ebook, print etc.)

The church based translation initiative, in general, follows the process given below:

- 1) Selection and induction of translation team. The group of translators will consist of mother tongue translators (MTTs), tech support personnel, linguists, church leaders, and community of believers.
- 2) Training of the team using Mobilized Assistance for Scripture Translation (MAST) process. This process consists of eight different activities to be carried out in sequence.
 - a) Read the passage to be translated and divide it into small chunks.
 - b) Discuss among the group. Internalize the content.
 - c) Drafting of the passage into the target language by MTT.

- d) Validation of accuracy of key terms used.
- e) Checking by same Individual.
- f) A peer check by a different MTT.
- g) Verification of Translation by the community of experts and believers.
- h) Validation of the Translation by the leaders of church networks.

The church is acknowledged as the final authority for accepting the translation. Further checking by other agencies may be carried out if the church leaders consider it to be necessary. The books of the Bible are grouped in clusters as per the level of difficulty to translate them. On a scale of 1 to 5, they fall in difficulty levels 2 to 5. The translation teams start with the least difficult cluster of books and gradually progress into the more difficult ones.

STATUS OF GLP IN INDIA

The GLP in India is coordinated by Bridge Connectivity Solutions Pvt. Ltd. (BCS), an IT company belonging to the family of Wycliffe Associates. Translation of the New Testament into six out of the twelve Indian GLs is managed by New Life Computer Institute (NLCI) in Bengaluru. The other six are handled by BCS. As an additional step toward ensuring higher quality standard, Wycliffe India is partnering in this project.

The project was launched in January 2016. Eight to twelve different church networks and mission organizations are involved in the project in different languages. Several experts in language, theology, technology and translation methodology are involved in the project. By September 2016, the “Unlocked Literal Bible” (ULB) version of the New Testament in ten GLs have been cleared by the church leaders who were closely involved in the project. Translation into the remaining two GLs is now ready to publish. The additional documents such as notes,

questions, terms, etc. are also being uploaded onto the UnfoldingWord website.

The translation of the Old Testament books and notes has already begun. We hope to complete the same by the end 2017. The project for “Unlocked Dynamic Bible” (UDB) will be taken up, subsequently. In addition to translation of Scripture and the notes, several software tools are being developed for enabling faster editing, checking, and publishing work. IT tools for monitoring the progress of the project in real time are also being developed. The same is expected to find global application in tracking similar projects.

RESPONSE FROM THE CHURCH NETWORKS TO GLP

The GLP is an excellent example of synergy created through participation of specialized agencies and church networks in Scripture translation activities. The initial step of envisioning of churches and obtaining their acceptance and cooperation from across most of the Protestant denominations and missions all over India was the most trying endeavor. We have received the special favour of God in this activity and the body of Christ extended excellent support to the project teams.

Moreover, about 8 to 12 denominations and churches belonging to specified language groups in local settings have spared two to three persons each on a weekly or fortnightly basis for checking each verse of the translated document for its clarity, accuracy, naturality, acceptability, etc. The documents were subsequently proof read by qualified linguists and church leaders for accuracy of language and use of theological terms. The resulting text has been checked by eminent bishops and senior leaders of churches and missions. An extract of responses and comments received from a few such leaders are reproduced below

Assamese Language

“...now we are having the Bible in ASSAMESE, NOT IN Christian language”

Kannada Translation – Gospel of Luke

“Thank you for asking me to peruse the new translation of the gospel according to Luke. I do confess that I have not gone through the entire text. If my observations are of any help, you may accept them.

At the outset I found the translation was welcoming to me as a reader. The vocabulary is simple and the language flows smoothly. I did not have to read a phrase or a line more than once to understand the meaning. The text has simplicity as well as clarity. I was impressed by the easy flow of thoughts which effortlessly carried me to read further.

My general observation was that there was transition from one idea to the other without any jerks or hurdles in the text. I did not have to stop to look back at all while reading as I was carried forward without any struggle to decipher the meaning,

One more and I close. In the present version we have, I have to read cautiously, keeping an English version handy to compare so I can clearly understand the Kannada text. I found that your version did not warrant me to have any English version to be kept handy for ready reference.”

Odia Language

“I have verified all 26 books/scripts/text of the revised New Testament in the Odia language. Hereby, I authenticate this revised Odia New Testament to be used by the churches and Odia readers for their spiritual upliftment.”

Bishop (Dr) Jugal Kishore Pradhan

Vice president

Blood of Christ Universal Episcopal Church

Mahati Sena Church, Angul

Telugu Language

“...many time I come across questions from our church people about the vague and outdated manner the old version sounds, I refer to the language. With the tremendous advancement of the Biblical research, the fruit of which should be handed over to the Bible readers. I feel that such thorough revision should happen every 20 years”

Bishop

Evangel Church of India

THE NEXT BIG LEAP

It is expected that the GLP will be completed by 2018. The notes and other related documents, as well as the software tools, are also expected to be ready before that time. The Android version of the translations are being made available along with the soft copies soon after the translation is completed in a language.

The last and most demanding stretch of the Church’s journey towards eliminating the Scripture famine in India is to begin by end of this decade. More than 300 languages, most of them being less developed and spoken by minority people groups in remote locations and tribal areas, would need the Scripture translated into them. This end-time task will be undertaken by the respective church networks ministering to those language groups. This massive work will be carried out simultaneously among all the remaining language groups. It is estimated that with the cooperation of the Indian Church, supported by the specialized agencies possessing relevant expertise and material resources, this is a feasible initiative. Our prayers are that by the year 2025, every Bible-less language should have the full Bible translated into them and available in a format that the people can use.

The audio and sign language versions of Bible in each language are being planned. Technology provides us with tools for obtaining derivatives of the translation in a language so that the special versions of Bible to meet the needs of the differently enabled persons can be facilitated.

Making Scripture available in a language is only one part of the resources needed for establishing churches in a language group. There is already a demand for a study Bible and other exegetical study material from several languages. Moreover, resources for literacy programmes, Sunday school material, books for training youth, women, community development teams, church leaders, vocational training institutes, etc. are to be compiled. It is hoped that the church networks will respond to the needs of their ethnic groups and facilitate creation of such material.

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

It is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes! The effort to translate the Bible into the Greek language three centuries before Christ, so as to benefit the scattered members of the Jewish community, has now reached global proportion and is poised to cover the people of all languages in this generation. The sacrificial contributions made by thousands of missionaries, several mission agencies, and innumerable other believers give us the optimism and confidence that this dream will be realized in the foreseeable future. The spread of the Bible was opposed by several powerful and influential individuals and organizations in the past, but it has overcome all of them and is poised to realise Revelation 7:9. We have the privilege of seeing it happen right in front of our own eyes!

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

WORKING WITH THE URBAN POOR

A JOURNEY OF SHIFTING PARADIGMS

VIJU ABRAHAM

Nearly one third of India's people live in cities – small, medium, large or mega. How do churches serve them and demonstrate the true peace and welfare that only Jesus brings?

MY BACKGROUND IN URBAN MINISTRY

In 1971, I moved with my wife Valsa to Mumbai, sensing a call to work in the city. Since then, I have been involved in urban ministry based in Mumbai, but reaching out to other cities across India and beyond. I have been part of a range of projects and initiatives. Some have continued, others came to an end. I have seen many changes of emphasis, advances and setbacks. In this paper I want to focus on a single aspect: **the recovery of a church-centred, wholistic witness in the city.**

The Shift From Local Church to Mission Structures

In the first century AD, it was considered normal for local churches to be involved in a multi-dimensional witness to their community. But over time, this responsibility was taken up by missional structures, as in the monastic orders in Europe and onwards. A local, church-centred mission did not re-emerge till much later. As mission structures began to be organised, as seen especially in church funded mission agencies, the local churches also went from service-oriented groups to mainly worshipping congregations. The power of local, church-based initiatives started to decrease. A historical study could be treated in a separate paper, but I will share my personal journey and experience of the recovery of a church-centred, wholistic witness in the city.

The Great Divorce

I am treating the subject from the perspective of what has been called the Great Divorce among evangelicals. What is the priority between evangelism and social concern? The social gospel was taken up as most important by the liberal church community, especially in the West. This resulted in eliminating the mandate to proclaim the gospel. The emphasis was on meeting the physical and social needs of individuals and society. Those who accepted the Bible as foundational reacted by swinging the pendulum to the other extreme and chose to forsake their social responsibility.

This affected the church in the global South. When I worked with the Union of Evangelical Students of India (UESI), the Indian counterpart of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, this became our stated position. We decided to focus on evangelism in our work with students in the universities. This kept thousands from getting involved in society. Many are still struggling with the issue.

A Life Changing Encounter

In 1973, I was in Mumbai as an associate staff worker with UESI. I had accepted an invitation to manage a Christian bookshop in the business district of South Bombay. I would commute by train to the city from my suburb in Bandra. One day in May 1973, I had a life-changing encounter.

At the railway terminus in what used to be called Victoria Terminus (now Shivaji Terminus), I came across a group of people looking inside their circle. Curious, I looked to see a destitute man lying unconscious on the pavement. He had soiled his clothes with vomit and excreta. Some kind soul had dropped coins in front of him. Another had kept a banana and another put a glass of water. My heart said, “get involved,” but I turned away. It would have taken a whole day to deal with the needs of that man. The police, the transport and the admission to a hospital would all have to be dealt with. My work at the bookshop awaited me.

As I walked to the office, God started to speak to me. He said, “Son, why did you turn away?”

“You know why” I responded, “I am going for your work.”

God responded, “I think I remember a Bible story where the same thing happened. My servants turned away from involvement.”

“I know the story of the Good Samaritan” I replied, “But what can I do today? My work awaits me.”

Heavy in my heart I went to the Bible Lovers bookshop and reflected on my experience. “It looks like only those like Mother Teresa and her Missionaries have the time for the poor and destitute,” I thought. What about Bible-believing Christians? We did not seem to find time or have an answer to the destitute and poor on our streets and in the slums. Rural migrants were pouring into the city at the rate of 1,000 every day. Something was wrong with our belief system!

Two of the UESI alumni turned up to visit and I shared my inner turmoil with them. They recounted how they passed the same man on the road. After some discussion, we decided to re-study our Bibles. I

turned to former Marxist Dr Chris Wigglesworth, a missionary who was a geologist and an Evangelical theologian. He was finding sites for digging wells in the arid regions of Maharashtra.

I asked him to lead us through the scriptures to study how we need to respond to social needs. He obliged. Six months of reflection later, after weekly studies with him, five of us concluded that we had a lopsided theology. As a result, we decided to form a fellowship of volunteers to get involved with the poor of Mumbai.

We needed experience. We decided to volunteer with Mother Teresa's home for the destitute in the suburb of Santa Cruz. We turned up on Sunday mornings after church, to scrub the inmates, cut their nails and give them shaves and haircuts.

THE ESTABLISHING OF ACT

Three months later, we sensed we had learned a bit on how to work with the poor. Now was the time for further involvement. It was April 1974. We decided to call ourselves the Association for Christian Thoughtfulness (ACT). Five years later, in 1979, we were registered as a Charitable Society under that name.

Beginnings

Mary Mathew, a member of our group, was doing a Masters in Psychiatric Social Work. She said she knew of a good place to start. Next to the Bhabha Atomic Energy Commission's staff quarters, a huge shanty town of squatter had sprung up. 75,000 people lived there. Among them was a community of weavers who had come to Mumbai from Madurai and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu.

They were known as Sourashtras. Speaking a mixture of Gujarati and Tamil, they were descendants of temple priests who had fled after the Muslim invader Mohamed of Ghazni had massacred their ancestors in Somnath, Gujarat four centuries earlier. They were given asylum by the king of Madurai. They had adopted weaving as their trade. With

weaving becoming less lucrative, they had moved to Mumbai. They took up jobs in textile mills. Mary was assigned community work with the Sourashtras.

Enter ACT. Seeing the need and also struggling with the Evangelism and Social Concern divide, we concentrated on Social Concern. We bumbled through starting a preschool and a nutrition programme. Then we got involved in a cottage industry with a tubercular Sourashtra shuttling a loom producing bed sheets. The loom and the yarn were supplied by ACT. After eight years and many failures, to our wonder the whole community had moved up socially. They had become wealthier than us. It was time to move on.

In 1981, we answered a call from Mr K Kurian, an oil mill executive living in Marol near the present international airport. He was a Mar Thoma church layman who had a great heart for the poor. He had received a request for preschool education from a slum called Adarsh Nagar, next to his housing society. The Ghada wallas were tribal people who had donkeys that they loaded with construction material, like sand, for building sites. One of the leaders had approached him for help in educating their children. As a result he started a kindergarten. He requested our help. That was ACT's next move.

Mr Kurian was a creative entrepreneur. In a piece of land he owned under the overhead, high-tension electric cables, he had built a shed and extensions that held a classroom, an alcoholic rehabilitation centre and later an office. His heart reached out to those without opportunity. We decided to work with him. Mr KJ Joseph, our chairman, recommended the project. Over the next few years, we got involved with three kindergartens that had 300 children in the slums, in and around Adarsh Nagar. The children and teachers mostly came from surrounding slum clusters.

On the spiritual side, we saw some interesting breakthroughs. One spectacular incident, in which we could only say it was God who stepped in, was when the slum well went dry in the middle of a hot summer. The slum dwellers asked for help and we helped by organising

as best as we knew. We started by cleaning out the well with a volunteer work group. It did not work. We then went to a relief agency that helped to install tube wells. Holes were drilled in different directions in the rock without success.

The Sunday School teacher, Mr Suryawanshi, then suggested another method. "There was a time God gave water to His people from a rock," he said, referring to the time when God used Moses to bring water from a rock. "Let us try prayer," he said. The teacher and the children, along with the team, assembled and prayed around the well. They did not see any water immediately, but over the next week the water trickled in till it reached a height of fourteen feet. The well has not gone dry since.

Different donors came to help out and the project developed to include a women's spice making unit and a rolling lending fund. We asked World Vision to partner with us. They responded by working with us faithfully for close to seven years. Most Social NGOs adopt this model of funding. Start a project with a challenging social cause and then raise funds and hire personnel. Some of these are highly effective.

A Turning Point

A crisis of belief hit us, in 1992, when Mr Kurian told us that he did not believe in prayer or spiritual regeneration. Social work was his only concern. He was also project manager. This hit our basic beliefs. Our board decided to take a two-day prayer retreat seeking God on what to do. As we prayed, we sensed together God saying to us, "Leave the project and the assets. Go and serve my body, the church, in Mumbai. They have the biggest asset – manpower. Teach them what you have learned." This was a paradigm shift for us. Though there were churches who had their own programmes of social involvement, NGOs did not normally work with churches.

A NEW PARADIGM: FROM PROJECTS TO CHURCH-BASED MINISTRIES

We had been following a Project model. This model typically involves the following:

1. Pioneer senses needs and responds.
2. Recruits fellow workers, generally hired.
3. Proposals developed for fund raising.
4. Publicity materials developed.
5. Fund raising. Sometimes the pioneers are the chief fundraisers.
6. Focus is money. Sometimes the end beneficiary ends up being a tool for raising money.
7. The cart, money, is put before the horse.

We were called now to move to the model of church-based ministry. The church has several advantages:

- It is multigenerational – from children to grandparents.
- There is no conflict between evangelism and social concern. This is what is normally done.
- They have meeting places which can double as a base for programmes.
- There is an abundance of volunteers.
- They are self financing.
- Ownership of the project is long term.
- The work is sustainable.
- Leadership can come from the local church.
- The budget initially can be small and later can expand.
- This a replicable model.

In 1992, we had the advent of HIV AIDS. During this time, we had an interesting visit from World Concern in Bangkok. They told us about the scourge of AIDS hitting their city. Being a place for sex tourism, the disease spread rapidly. They had a well-thought-through programme and had responded with awareness to communities and clinical intervention among the poor. They offered to partner with us to start an outreach in Mumbai. After a trip to Bangkok to understand the crisis of AIDS, we began our awareness programme with Intermission, a similar ministry doing clinical intervention. Our staff took the awareness seminars to several institutions. We probably had 800 seminars in two years. Schools and colleges, the Navy and nurses groups invited us to do workshops. The medical fraternity were not prepared for the epidemic that hit India and its cities.

Working With Churches

With 10% of funds for administration, we moved into helping churches. We appointed a staff person to visit churches. Vanessa was our first recruit. She had done her Bachelors in Social Work and admired Mother Teresa. She took on the task of visiting pastors to ask if they would like to start working with poor communities of their choice. Our staff would come alongside them with skills training for education, literacy and savings groups. We would also help with surveys of the community and with up to 50% of their budget for three years. After three years, we believed they would become self sufficient. As long as churches kept their budgets at sustainable limits, they found they could manage the finances. When we ran out of funds from the administration fee limit, a business friend offered to take up ten churches that year.

In 1995, the AIDS ministry turned to both advocacy and care. At its peak, we were caring for 200 out-patients a month. The group sessions included worship. Some said they were strengthened by the worship and that it was tonic for their souls. We carried on the church-related community development team and eventually merged the two

departments.

The ministry focus has moved on today from education and literacy to health and community development, which meet needs in the area and equips church leadership to address the needs of a locality. But the central strategy for partnering with local churches continues since 1992 and keeps growing. We have now partnered with 170 churches since 1993. Every year, ten new churches are taken on. The staff team of ACT multiply themselves as they share their skills with church workers.

A Fruitful Orchard

Mumbai now has several churches having a ministry to communities of the poor. We have learned the principle of fruitfulness of a whole orchard compared to a lone fruit tree, as we saw the work blossom in many churches. It was a kairos (opportune) time in our city, as we have seen churches taking on the work and support of ministries to the less-privileged during this period. Preschool feeding programmes, tuition classes, computer academies, rescue homes for survivors of human trafficking are some of the innovative outreaches.

Churches have multiplied in our city and so has the scope of blessing to our city and the poor. Church-centred programmes, aided by skills and advice from NGOs, are a model that has great potential for India's cities. May God bring many such partnerships into being.

TRAINING LEADERS FOR THE CHURCH AT EVERY LEVEL

TWO CASE STUDIES

RAJU ABRAHAM & ROBIN THOMSON

As churches are started in different geographical areas, the challenge is to develop leaders at every level, from local house churches to senior leaders. Here are two responses to this challenge.

CASE 1: TRAINING LOCAL LEADERS FOR HOUSE CHURCHES

Establishing House Churches

One organisation, which has been seeking to establish new churches, decided to invest in the most strategic places in order to establish strong discipleship and training links, which would set off a chain reaction. Its aim was “to raise up disciples who will establish house churches”. They began by identifying the areas in which they should work. Then, they sent workers to establish a “spiritual foothold”. The approach was care-

fully planned and effective. There were several basic steps:

- Pray for a spiritual foothold in each identified area.
- Move forward then to establish the foothold.
- Work on consolidating the foothold.
- Systematically and thoroughly equip disciples to move forward and gain fresh ground.

The workers found a place to stay and prayerfully identified ten villages. Then they followed five steps:

1. Research

- Who is the village headman?
- What are the spiritual strongholds?
- What are the cultural strongholds?
- What are the communities?

2. Prayer

- Pray daily for each of the ten villages.
- Prayer walk in the villages (usually for 2-3 months).

3. Houses Of Peace

- Go from house to house and offer to pray (beginning with the village headman).
- If the families agree, visit the homes at least once a week to pray.

4. Outreach

- Explain the Gospel in each weekly visit (18 planned in sequence).
- Hold a 3-day evangelistic teaching programme.

5. House/Cell Churches

- When people see prayer answered and respond to Jesus, a house/cell church is formed.
- Baptise new believers, meet twice a week, have the Lord's Supper, tithe, train potential church leaders, etc.

A Multiplying Focus: Developing Local Leaders

At the beginning, this outreach was done by Type 3 leaders, workers paid to plant and lead local churches (see Chapter 3 for the description of Type 1 to Type 5 leaders.) On the initial eighteen visits, they endeavoured to take new disciples with them. But the responsibility still laid with the Type 3 workers. They themselves received intensive training for 3 days a month, along with intensive field work and supervision.

The organization realised that they needed to move from relying on their paid workers, both to establish and lead new churches and to go on reaching out to start new churches.

So from the beginning they consciously built in a multiplying focus and from 2004 the church planters were challenged to disciple more men and women to serve as self-supporting church planters. These new disciples, numbering about 2000 at that time, received regular on-the-job training too.

At the same time, they developed in their churches a Four Pillars model of local house church leadership, with four bi-vocational leaders in each house church. So each house church is built on the following four pillars:

1. *House Church Leader*: A leader of the house church.
2. *Timothy*: An evangelist who is equipped by the House Church leader to go to three or four villages himself.
3. *Esthers*: Women who can connect most effectively and directly to women.
4. *Daniels*: People mandated to care especially for children.

This model is not a single leader, but a leadership team. This is both Biblical and practical. Each of these leaders had their own on-the-job training and job description. For example, Timothy (or Evangelists) were expected to do the following:

- Manifest the biblical qualities the Apostle Paul speaks about in 1 Timothy 3:1-13.
- Understand their job description clearly.
- Be willing to go to three to five villages to open up the way for the Gospel.
- Be ready to teach what they have been taught. (2 Timothy 2:2)
- Deliver clear teaching about finances and tithing, regardless of how poor people are.

They were also taught the extreme importance of focused prayer for the Indian nation and for Christians everywhere to pray for each of their nations. They were taught about the everything the Bible says about nations and that prayers for the nation can be drawn each day from the newspaper. Only prayer can see many of the major evils rooted out. The church's most basic role, therefore, was to pray for the nation.

Organisation and Values

By all of these means a sort of pipeline process is put in place to develop the church planting process. So, first of all there are the overall Church Elders, then the Regional/District Coordinators, then the Block Coordinators, then the House Church Leaders. By this means, the many developing House Churches Leaders are not resting on their Block Coordinators alone, but on the Regional Coordinators and finally the Elders above them. Thus, there is a mutual interflow from one end of the pipe to the other and back again. The organisation continues to work on having all their workers accountable to those immediately above them. Reports of progress are regularly submitted.

Constant work is also required to achieve biblically orthodox doctrinal understanding of the Gospel. This starts with the 18 initial visits to teach the first 18 lessons. Thereafter, as people respond, there will follow no fewer than 50 foundational training visits to each House Church. In the 18 weeks series and in the 50 foundational training visits, the Biblical content is very clear and exactly follows the material in the training manuals. The aim is to produce people who are proficient in the Word of God, so that they can minister in the field and enable each person to reproduce themselves in the manner of 2 Timothy 2:2: "The things which you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."

In all the training, there is a strong emphasis first on exegesis and understanding exactly what the text is saying and second on contextualisation into all the differing individual contexts where people find themselves. Where there is illiteracy, the material has to be adapted and also basic literacy and numeracy taught. Beyond the basic requirements of being able to lead someone else to Christ, lead a prayer group, plus be willing to progress to pastor a church, the overall curriculum for the Church Planters and (where possible) the House Church Leaders is basically a three year body of input.

The Core Values are 1) Responsible and capable Eldership (this is key), 2) Accountability and 3) Integrity. These Core Values are pressed into the Lord's people at all levels, whether village, block, region/district, or central leadership. In this, it is also understood that no one can be over anyone unless they are under someone!

Everyone in their assorted ministries from the most senior to the most junior are also taught about finances -- how to keep accounts and how to give a written and submitted report regularly of every rupee spent. Beyond that, every single home and every single disciple must have a Bible. Then everyone must commit themselves firstly to prayer for the nation and secondly to obedience to the Great Commission. There can be no simple sitting around and having a nice time if we are

in the Lord's service. The key is getting everybody committed first of all in this prayer for the nation and then allowing their personal needs to follow after that.

Through this training, the organisation is providing carefully planned training for its Type 1 and 2 leaders, working as leaders within house churches and sometimes leading a group of house churches.

CASE 2: EMPOWERING SENIOR LEADERS FOR THE KINGDOM

Leadership That Reflects the Values of Jesus

Another organisation is committed to developing the integrity and effectiveness of Christian leaders, so that the Church can fulfil its role in extending the Kingdom of God. It seeks to help Christian leaders reflect the values of Jesus in their leadership, rather than just their own local cultural values. When Christian leaders become more and more counter-cultural they become servants, lead with integrity, care for their families, act humbly and seek justice for those who are oppressed. When leaders let God change them from the inside out to live and lead in these ways, their churches and organizations change and grow and the healing power of the Gospel is released to bring needed change in their communities.

Without this kind of growth and change, leaders struggle. Sometimes they have a vision of the change they want to bring, but are unable to manage people, money and organizations in ways that enable them to thrive. The right training, mentoring and consulting enables Christian leaders to model the Gospel and be equipped as effective leaders who create and lead NGOs that bring needed services or provide business and organisational leadership that is life-giving and transformative to the local challenges. War, disease, injustice, corruption and ignorance begin to diminish while more peace, stability and joy of the Kingdom of God is evident.

Non-Formal Training

The organisation began work with non-formal training, trying to assess the most important needs. With one ministry in Chennai, the entire first day of a workshop was spent with little response from the group of Bible students gathered. But finally during an afternoon break, one of the students timidly approached the teachers and asked, “Are you trying to say that possibly our gifts and talents should be considered when we are placed in a job?” (This was one of the main points of the prior session.)

“Why yes,” came the answer. “That is exactly what we are saying. Every person is made uniquely by God and how he/she is gifted enables him/her to do certain jobs better than others. Servant leaders want to put the right person in the right job to maximize their gifts.”

“Oh, that never happens here,” came his response. “We do nothing like that. If there is a job opening, you just choose your nearest relative who needs a job and put them in it. That’s all that is considered when people are placed in jobs! But I like the idea that maybe I am designed for something special!”

In another workshop, we gathered second line leaders from many of the key ministries in India to talk more about servant leadership. As we shared God’s heart for them and his desire for leaders who would listen and enable others, there was a quick response. One person responded, “Oh, if only our leaders would behave like that. They only direct, tell and give orders, never listening to the input we want to give.”

Yet one week later we found ourselves in a smaller gathering of the Presidents and Senior Leaders of just those same organisations. As we began to talk about leaders being servants, more than one began to literally shed tears. “Oh, if only we could be leaders like that,” they said, “but here in India that is impossible. Our followers would never allow it, they expect us to tell them what to do, and they would refuse to let us lead like servants. It is just too counter to the culture here to try to lead like Jesus.”

It became very clear that Christian leaders want and need help in managing people, money and organizations. We learned that they desire to change and become more Christ-like in their leadership, yet for differing reasons feel it is too hard.

Master's Degree Designed

As staff continued offering workshops with consulting and mentoring, leaders would often ask whether we also offered a formal degree program. Our answer was always the same: "We were birthed at a university, but we are the non-formal education group, and we don't offer degrees."

But it was in a workshop in North India that God got our attention. One of the North Indian leaders asked, "Would you please put these courses together into a formal degree programme?" We responded with our standard negative answer, but he continued, "But you really must! If we have a certificate with a Master's Degree on our wall, we will have more respect in our local communities, and we can serve them more!"

That was enough to change our minds! These were senior (Type 4 and Type 5) leaders, with wide responsibilities to lead and train others. The Master's Degree in Organizational Leadership (MAOL) was designed and we decided to offer it in partnership with local universities who would offer the accreditation. It soon became clear that this met felt and real needs of the local leaders and was wildly popular!

Today

Those who have completed courses often take those courses and teach them to others. Some graduates of the programmes have taken the curriculum and contextualized it to serve corporates and political parties to help them develop better ethics and more effective management processes. Health care groups also tell us that their services have grown in effectiveness, due to this training. These Type 4 and Type 5 leaders are being empowered to train and equip others.

Our sense is that leaders are hungry for help in our rapidly changing world. This is true for both those leaders who have had significant training and those who have had none. Leadership development is never a “quick fix” because changing the systems that create injustice, poverty and violence first requires letting God change us. Then, with his broken heart for the world, we humbly ask Him for the courage and strategies to overcome the selfishness, evil, corruption and ignorance that surround us.

But as these committed local Christian leaders let God help them bring change in their own communities, hope is kindled. The helpless become the helpers, the vulnerable grow stronger, the sick are healed, and violence is answered by the peacemakers. It sounds a little like the coming of the Kingdom of God.

PART III

NETWORKING
INITIATING
CATALYSING
ENCOURAGING

THE POWER OF NETWORKS

LALCHUANGLIANA

Networking is a key part of our ministries. But what does it really mean and how does it contribute to mission? Here is one model.

The terms *networking* and *partnership* have always been interchangeably used to denote the coming together of people or missions/churches/companies in their attempt to achieve common goals. For our present consideration, we will use the term *networking* because partnership seems to indicate a more conditional contract with terms and conditions, whereas networking is a borderless, unconditional and voluntary coming-together for a passionate pursuit of common goals. Therefore, we will use the term networking throughout our presentation here.

WHY NO NETWORKS IN INDIA?

This is a good question to start from and we may consider the following points:

1. In India, as a Church, we have not understood this concept because we do not have a model of networking. Our parent missions came from overseas with a background of their exclusive churches and their own exclusive agenda. We simply follow in their footsteps.
2. A strong sense of *denominationalism* can be a great impetus for action, but we have not realized that individual group action has great limitations, in terms of man-power, resources, skills and envisioning.
3. We have failed to grasp the fuller meaning of the Kingdom of God and we tend to circumscribe this Kingdom within our own denominations. Consequently, there is no space for others in our schemes of things.
4. We tend to be content with *little* and we are happy with what we, on our own, can achieve. We sometimes justify our failures to accomplish by saying that God asks for faithfulness and not results. A faithful ministry that does not produce results will be contradictory.

WHY CONSIDER NETWORKING?

If so little networking is taking place in India, then why should networking be considered as part of mission. Here are some reasons to consider:

1. It is the model of God. It is noteworthy that when God created the heavens and the earth, he did it by his word (Genesis 1). But when it came to dealing with man, God said, “Let us...” I am not a theologian and I do not know who all are involved in this “let us.” I simply believe it must be God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The first person plural form tells us the importance of *we* and not just *I or me*.
2. It is the model of Jesus. “He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach” (Mark 3:14). These twelve, we are told, were from different tribes and from various walks of life. Jesus’s only kinsman (from the tribe of Judah) was Judas Iscariot! If Peter were to call others, he probably would call only fishermen, from the town of Bethsaida. This is what we normally do. But Jesus’ way is different.
3. It is the Holy Spirit’s way. On the day of Pentecost, Jews from all kinds of nationalities – Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Cretans, Arabs – were touched by the Holy Spirit’s fire and “they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer” (Acts 2:42). That was the beginning of church growth and it was a divine networking among those who were strangers the day before.
4. The end picture is the imperative for networking. “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah” (Revelation 11:15). “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14). This is the end picture of our mission enterprises. But has this happened now? Not yet. Do we believe it will happen? Oh, yes. Do we have a part in bringing about this final picture? Oh, yes. Do you think you can do it by yourself – by you, by your church, by your Mission – on your own? Unlikely. What shall we do, then? We should do it together.

5. Networking creates exposure and opportunity for building relationships. As we exchange information, we empathise with others and create desires for mutual help.
6. To be in the know. This means to become aware of events, developments, opportunities and people who matter.
7. Serendipity is the rule rather than exception when you network. Pleasant surprises await as we network.

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Suppose you are going fishing. You may want to catch just a few fish for your family. Or you may want to catch more to share with your neighbours and relatives. Or you may want to catch a great deal which you can sell and make good money. You can go by yourself with a fishing rod. The fishing rod is an efficient tool for catching fish but you can catch only one fish at a time. And it is not possible to catch a great deal of fish with a fishing rod. But if you want to catch more fish, you need a net with many strands. And if you want to catch a great deal of fish, you need a big net for which you need many other people to help. Networking is casting a big net with many people joining hands to catch a great deal of fish! We will amplify.

What Networking Is

- Networking is connecting people of like interests for the purpose of uncovering opportunities, identifying landmines and learning the best practices. You want to catch many fish but there is no point asking MS Dhoni to come alongside because he is interested in cricket, not in fishing! To understand where are the best spots to fish, you need to enlist someone who knows the river well. But you also need to have someone who knows what and where troubles can come and someone else who knows where the best nets are to be found and someone else who knows whether to go out in the morning or at night. We want many people to come to the

Lord. We need people with the same interest. We need people who know better than us what to use and where and when to use our resources.

- It is meeting people who can be of help to you and you being a help to them. A gathering of believers in any form is a good opportunity to find out who can help you and who you can help – by exchanging your passion and goals. Small talks between meetings, in the dining hall, in the room, is a good way to start networking. There is a maxim: It is not what you know, but who you know, that matters.
- It is a process. We need to remember that networking is not an end in itself; it is only a journey and not the destination. It is making your journey lighter; your fishing trip more productive. It is a two-way street for gathering information and building trust.
- It is about relationship. It is appreciating and recognizing others' achievements and contributions. It is about holding one another's hands and pulling one another up rather than pushing one another out. It is about sharing in the joys and sorrows of one another. It is about keeping mutual confidence. Conversely, gossip and speaking ill of others is sure to kill networking. Deception will ruin opportunity for networking. As such, networking is effective only if it is used properly. There is no point in networking just for the sake of networking.
- It is creating a win-win situation where your work is done even as others' work is done at the same time. It is the opposite of competition. It becomes second nature once you do it, but it is also intentionally learned behaviour. Networking is building a mutually beneficial relationship.

What Networking is Not

- Networking is not just for fixing your problems. You will do better to call for professional help if your task at hand is solving your current problems.
- It is not a short-term solution for challenges you face in your ministry. You may want someone to teach you the language of the people group you intend to work for and you try to create a network just for the language challenge. The relationship will end the moment you learn the language.
- It is not making connections with people in your own denomination or area.
- It is not simply looking for answers.
- It is not asking for favour or support.

CONCERN: ONE MODEL OF NETWORKING IN NORTH INDIA

Twenty years ago, the Lord gave us the vision of North India where there will be bodies of Christ in every corner praising God and living out the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. We formed a body called the North India Harvest Network (NIHN) and friends from Interdev and others came to teach us about partnership and networking. The task was enormous:

- Over 500 million people
- More than 2000 people groups
- Many languages and dialects
- Seats of major religions
- Christian population less than 1%

It was obvious that no one mission or church could undertake this mission, but it was dawning on us that together it was possible to reach North India for Christ. Several strategies were developed and one

of them was networking. As we came to understand that one of the key principles in networking is the presence of a Facilitator, our small organization called CONCERN realized that this was the calling God gave us. From the very beginning, we began to function as a Network Facilitator. However, networking per se is not our goal – it is an important strategy for reaching our vision and mission.

The common mission of the CONCERN Network is the fulfilment of the Great Commission. By our coming together in a network, we have experienced acceleration of this process, as shown in our records for the past fifteen years. We cannot say that we are the most successful network but we can honestly say that if it were not for the networking, what has been accomplished would never have taken place.

As a Network Facilitator, the roles of CONCERN are mainly:

- Advocating for the ministries of the members before others.
- Advice on relationship, availability of resources.
- Channelling resources – funds, materials – and accounting for them.
- Encouraging with visits, prayers and exhortation.
- Mentoring the young and emerging leaders.
- Preparing consolidated reports and sharing results.

In this Network, we have experienced the characteristics of networking that we have outlined above:

- A strong sense of common purpose.
- Deep relationships.
- Willingness to share resources.
- A facilitator as a clearing house.
- Giving credit where it is due.
- A sharing of joys and sorrows.
- A sense of accomplishment of the common purpose.
- Appreciation for our differences.

CONCERN has networking in its DNA. It is networking by nature, by instinct. In terms of operational philosophy, the CONCERN Network members (including over 50 missions and organisations) are free to do what they want. The network encourages diversity that is truly unparalleled.

The advantage this confers over a model that emphasizes a centralised line or view is clear. A network structure allows all its ministries to evolve, in different ways, with different views and approaches, at different paces and in response to different challenges and the common vision. A centralized authority works on the principle that it knows best, that all constituent units must receive their wisdom from one authority and that there is only one view. This limits every member's ability to be unique, different and to change and cater to their relevant goals.

CONCERN believes that all its members need only to subscribe to a few overarching principles that define the network: Think of others, Contribute, Respect and trust others. Otherwise, they are the masters of their ministries, encouraged to carve out their own distinct identity and never required to follow one centrally determined line. Their freedom of thought and action is unlimited.

Each member is free to function on its own without having to constantly look over its shoulder or second-guess central decision makers or the prescribed line. There is only one master, the Lord Jesus. This allows members to react with speed and seize unexpected opportunities as they see fit. This makes the sum of many ministries bigger than the sum of their parts. Networking for CONCERN is not a matter of expediency. Networking defines CONCERN in the sense that the inspiration comes from a divinely inspired Word of God. Our spirit of networking is derived from our respect for individual autonomy and creativity, which draws deeply from Biblical principles. A networking structure, along with a certain unity founded on respect of each other despite diversities, thrived in the early churches.

Networking is in a way a balance between two conflicting forces that always apply to any collective human endeavour – authority and liberty. Neither can exist on its own. Both need to feed off each other and they always challenge each other. Progress is a tug of war between authority and liberty. Networking provides the best solution to this conflict because, while there is an authority, the powers of that authority are limited by liberty and those powers diminish as the whole body grows. Networking is, then, ultimately a reflection of its deep faith in freedom and liberty to do what is right in the sight of God. Any group needs an authority to stay together, but all constituents need liberty and freedom of thought and action if they and the collective are to evolve and flourish. A networking structure allows evolutionary dynamism; it frees all members from unitary determinism, the defining attribute of a centralized structure.

CONCERN is a compact and agreement that its many members will chart their own ministries while remaining a part of the collective network. If there are many members in the CONCERN networking structure and if all of them have the liberty to take their own approach and the freedom to differ with each other, then which of the members of the CONCERN network best embody the CONCERN belief system? The correct answer is all of them. All network members have the freedom to opt out at any time.

We want to make clear here that the nature and practices of networking, as outlined above, are not our discovery. We have learned these from our teachers and experienced practitioners of networking from here and overseas. We have borrowed and imbibed a good deal of their ideas, words, expressions and explanation – and we are grateful to them.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Having practised networking for over fifteen years, we asked our CONCERN Network members to tell us (in their own words) their understanding of networking – its aspects and impact and what they think of the CONCERN Network itself and their own networks. Their comments are fascinating!

On Networking

- Networking is very helpful and upholds each other to help, pray, share and partner. It helps us a lot in the achievement of our final goal for the Great Commission.
- In a network, we can share our abilities and strength, bring people of common vision together to achieve a common aim – reaching people for Christ; experiencing abundance of spiritual life.
- Networking, in my understanding is working together for one vision, one goal and one cause. Helping each other share our views, thoughts and resources with each other. It is encouraging and uplifting to each other. The ultimate goal is to unitedly fulfil the commission of the Bible.
- My understanding of networking is to develop strategic partnerships with like-minded ministries committed to function for a common goal and to exchange tangible and intangible resources available within the body of members for the growth and progress of all.
- As I understand it, the meaning of networking is the Church and Christian organisations working together to provide supervision of spiritual growth and well being of the Church and organisations. It also provides relationships for individuals/organisation, support to each other in terms of prayer and guidance, learning from each others, encouragement and sharing resources. Also, networking binds us in the cord of unity and integrity. It's very good and necessary to expand the Kingdom.

On Aspects of Networking

- I think that without networking we are nothing. The important aspects of networking are to encourage each other, help each other, support each other, know each other, have good fellowship each other and partner to share in every single work to the next person.
- Bringing committed people in a platform, sharing vision and taking the burden of other members like a family to finish the common task. Another important aspect is to care people and their spiritual and physical matters.
- Important aspects of networking are unity, one in faith, one in mind, patience with each other, bearing with one another's faults and overlooking these to see the big picture.
- Important aspects of networking could be:
 1. Commonly owned vision, strategic with achievable goals/objectives.
 2. Built on mutual trust and relationship.
 3. Need-oriented and facilitation-driven.
 4. Collaborative in the process, not event-oriented.
 5. Developing partnerships with clear identities.
 6. Meeting expectations of stakeholder.
 7. Transparent communication and celebrating achievements.
- The important aspect of relationship is to connect with the right people/individual and build relationship with each other. To accelerate the effective work is to meet or gather together from time to time – sharing and learning about spiritual or organisational growth in a systematic way.

On CONCERN Network

- CONCERN network is a grassroots-level, new emerging organisation. And CONCERN network always stands for those who have a call to serve the Lord in the mission field and reach the unreached people groups in North India. I have always seen this myself.
- We always like to attend the network meetings of CONCERN.

When the dates are declared we are very eager to reach the meeting. CONCERN network is always standing when we need it the most. I like this part very much. Sometimes, we requesting big things and we are refused. That part I don't like.

- CONCERN Network is very helpful in our ministry. We have great experiences of CONCERN network. It is an important platform for us where we learn to serve in mission. We are blessed spiritually and physically by this network. When we joined this network we had just one family, but now thousands of people are following Christ in our field and are blessed through this network. We like the humbleness of the leader of this network, who has a father's heart to encourage the weak (physically, spiritually and financially). This network is a unity in diversity.
- CONCERN Network is a facilitating body that supports grass-roots-level, native organisations or missions that are working for the Great Commission. It mostly provides missionary support and sometimes provides items such as a whole Bible or pastoral training materials. This network handpicks and advocates for needy native North Indian missions/organisations. The uniqueness of this network is that it is focused on Great Commission ministry, though there are many worthy causes to support.
- CONCERN Network is the most excellent network that I have ever seen. It is very good and valuable for me and for my Great Commission ministry.
- It's one of the best networks in North India, bringing together all people of God for growth of His kingdom under strong leadership. Through this network, different organizations come together, who are not from mainline churches/big organizations. It should continue in future.

On the Importance of Networking

- Networking is very important for ministries because we need each other's encouragement, help, prayer support and good fellowship. Guidance and sharing is so needed these days because of the huge task we are all involved in, which is impossible to finish alone.
- It is a common platform to share our experiences, success stories of mission and learn from each other for application
- Networking is important because everybody has different ideas and thoughts in working in the mission field. We learn from each other. Through networking, we can see where we need correction and where our strength and weaknesses lie. Through networking, we can depend on others through hard times and persecution. Through networking, we can expand our area of operation in the mission field.
- Networking is so important. It unites the God's people, churches and organisations. It helps us to know each other and learn new areas in the ministry. It creates opportunity to praise God by hearing how God is working wonderfully through an organisation or church where the Gospel has never preached. Network meetings, workshops and seminars help us to learn more about leadership, discipleship, effective ministry, financial management, etc. We can share our prayer request, take suggestions to solve any problems in the ministry, get important updates and information on ministry, etc.

On the Impact of CONCERN Network

- This network plays a very important role in my ministry. Our vision was narrow. Because of CONCERN network we now have a broad vision. Sometimes we follow the suggestions given by the network and we can see big success in our ministry. When we face persecutions and hardship, we immediately contact the network and we receive the relief immediately. This has a very big impact on our ministry.

- Our ministry has roots from CONCERN. I had a growing individual ministry and I was focused on being a solo leader. However, things changed when I came to CONCERN. I learned about networking and started relationship building with other ministries and Great Commission ministries. Through CONCERN, I came to know much more about North India, though I didn't intend to be a missionary here.
- The impact of CONCERN network meetings has brought growth in the Great Commission ministry.
- By the grace of God, many cell churches have been established through our pastors as a result of training given to them through the CONCERN network. Our pastors have been given leadership and discipleship training every month during the fasting and prayer meetings.

On Starting Their Own Networks

- We started to form a network, since January 2016, soon after finishing the CONCERN Network annual meeting where uncle Lal shared about networking. We save funds from local contributions to manage its expenses. God has enabled us with great zeal to form this common platform. Therefore, we are not worried for anything. We are getting wonderful support from CONCERN to achieve our aim/vision.
- I have already formed a network called the Bhojपुरi Network. Quarterly we meet for two days. During this time, we share our successes and failures with each other, pray together and have the Lord's Supper. Personally, I visit our network partners, encourage them, coaches them on various strategies and distribute resources like bicycles, musical instruments, Bibles, literature and motor-cycles. If any places are going through persecution, we all pray together and pass on the information to each partner for prayer and updates. Sometime we have contributions to help out partner in need.

- I am a networker and I love every aspect of networking.

Networking is not an easy job. It requires a lot of hard work to love each other, spend time with each other and care for one another. It's a challenging role. It is hard to raise the resources to every network member and one person cannot satisfy one member's needs. Only God can satisfy his/her needs.

- Our network is facilitating in nature and ,functionally, we are Great Commission ministries. We are managed by volunteers and funded by private supporters who know our ministry. However, we do have a formal apostolic team that guides us with accountability while we have board members for legal compliances.

HELPING YOUNG LEADERS GROW AS SERVANT LEADERS

THE ISSACHAR INITIATIVE

JONNY ABRAHAM

What do younger leaders actually want? How much initiative and freedom can we give them, without risk? This research decided to find out – and act on their findings.

BACKGROUND

Our leadership development group in India focuses on increasing the integrity and effectiveness of Christian leaders. Its tagline is “Committed to Servant Leadership” and it engages leaders through ongoing training, mentoring, consulting and connecting. The core focus is to help leaders become more Christ-like in their approach to leadership and adopt a servant and service mentality in their contexts. Programs include a Master’s Degree in Organizational Leadership,

several non-formal training programs in servant leadership and a range of mentoring initiatives.

In 2006, we carried out a research project to listen to the needs in leadership of the younger generation of Christian leaders in the developing world. One of the outcomes of the research was the need for younger leaders to come together and discuss (rather than be lectured to) on issues which focused on servant leadership, spiritual formation and formulating a biblical worldview. The programs that we have run with younger leaders in this regard are referred to as The Issachar Initiative.

This name came from the reference in 1 Chronicles 12:32 to the men of the tribe of Issachar, who “had understanding of the times” at a critical period of Israel’s history, so that they knew what needed to be done. We wanted to equip young people with the same kind of understanding for their times, so that they could respond appropriately.

LEADERSHIP FORUMS

As a result of this research, in a pilot initiative in 2008, we started holding “Leadership Forums” for young Christian leaders in Nepal and North East India. The research conducted in 2006 had indicated that young leaders (aged 20-35) had a desire for peer-based learning and mentoring, a non-threatening place where they could meet others like them and hear how they might biblically address the issues of their day.

After running several forums, we realized that young leaders need to be given more of a voice in the training room. We became very deliberate in using adult learning methodology for these young adults and found that there was a high level of learning as we did so. For topics we focused on “Servant Leadership”, “Spiritual Formation and Spiritual Disciplines”, “Conflict Resolution”, “Biblical Stewardship” and a host of other subjects that were mostly chosen by participants.

Our methodology is distinctive in that it focuses on the long-term character formation and heart-change in the individual. In order to do

this, we do not do one-off trainings. Instead, we focus on ongoing trainings and modules that take place at timed intervals for anywhere from one to four years. The structure we created for these forums with young leaders was to meet as a larger group and then continue to meet every couple of months in small groups in their locale for discussions and prayer around specified topics. By 2012, we made these Forums into more structured meetings that met three times over a period of a year, with small group meetings in between. From 2008 to 2016, we trained around 550 young church leaders in this way in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. Most of our cohort sizes were around 30 participants.

SERVICE IN TRAINING

One of the initial lessons we learned from conducting Forums with young leaders was that many of them wanted more than just theory. That is, they thought it was nice to talk about servant leadership and stewardship but wanted to respond practically at the same time. At one Forum in North East India, we chose to address the subject of environmental stewardship. Many of the participants wanted to do more than just discuss this, so we decided to ask the Forest Department if there were spots close to our training centre where we could plant sapling trees. We spent part of the evening planting trees as a group and we could see the satisfaction in the participants' eyes.

Such responses made us re-frame the way in which we ran small groups gatherings, both in between our sessions and in our workshops. We found that the underlying longing which these young leaders had was for a training that was practical: something that did not just involve knowledge but also involved doing something. What was apparent to us after listening to the young leaders was that there was a need in the Church for sincerity in speech and deed. It seemed that many young church leaders were disillusioned with simple talk. They wanted something more; to act on what was said.

Our response to this trend, which started in 2012, was to add a service or action aspect to every training. For a start we tried to make every training as practical as possible. Teaching servant leadership always involved foot washing; the topic “Bridging the Generation Gap” often involved them visiting or serving in an old people’s home; the topic of “Prayer” involved significant amounts of praying, and so on.

In addition to the service aspect in training, we added a small group service area outside of the training room. While previous small groups had met to discuss topics, we now asked the groups to come together and do creative service projects. This was one of our biggest successes in carrying out the forums. Small groups were better at motivating themselves towards acts of service rather than simply meeting for discussion. Many groups started carrying out very creative and effective service projects anywhere from helping in orphanages in Kathmandu to cleaning the toilets in the Dhaka Cricket Stadium. One interesting trend we noticed here was that the more service projects the small groups would do, the more they would continue to do. Practical service became contagious for these young leaders.

One of our most proud moments, while doing several forums over the last eight years, was during the 2015 Earthquake in the Gurkha region of Nepal. Although the Kathmandu valley faced significant damage itself, many of the young leaders whom we had trained got together in their original service groups with others from the Forums and carried out relief projects in partnership with other organisations. When training theory and practice turn into real change for society there is no greater reward for the trainer.

TRENDS IN YOUNG LEADERSHIP

Collaboration

Over the last eight years, we have noticed specific trends in the leaders with whom we work, in regard to needs, worldviews and outlooks for the future. Although none of these trends is empirically verified,

they are based on small group interactions with several hundred young leaders over a six year period. One of the trends which we noticed is the desire which young leaders have to collaborate and work together with other believers who are not necessarily from their denomination or Church background, in order to further the kingdom of God.

In our discussion with these leaders, we found a significant amount of discontent and irritation with an older generation of church leadership that sticks too closely with their denomination and refuses to partner with other Christians over minor differences and past grudges. In our discussions with these leaders, we realized many were voicing the need for the whole Church to look past what divides and unite to work together for the kingdom of God.

The unity which the young leaders were looking for is often expressed as partnership to fulfil specific kingdom goals. For example, many of the young people we worked with emphasised the need for churches to work more in collaboration when it comes to localised evangelism, prayer and discipleship.

Observations: In many ways this trend is in tandem with the global trend of young people being more dissatisfied with structured denominationalism and thus moving more towards non-denominational churches. Such a switch, it is important to note, is not a trend away from Christ but rather a movement away from an insular Church which refuses to work together with other Christians due to minor differences in theology, competition, hurt or fear.

Ownership

Over the course of training young leaders in 2010, we realized that many of the young people we were working with actually had more to offer than just being part of the discussion. That is, many of these young leaders were capable of facilitating training themselves and even taking leadership roles in the forums. We started making “Young Leaders Committees” which would lead the logistics, topics, prayer, and other specifics of the forum. As soon as we set up these commit-

tees, we realized that the attrition of those in the training dropped at the same time as the general quality of the training went up. We also realized that many of these leaders could co-facilitate topics with us and thus eventually facilitate on their own.

We set up such committees in two places in Nepal, North East India and in Bangladesh and to this day they continue and have a rotating leadership structure. Out of these committees we have also been able to raise up several facilitators who are able to facilitate in the forums, as well as in other contexts. For us, this is the core of servant leadership – to build up others to carry out and multiply the work.

Observations: So much of leadership training in the Church these days is focused on knowledge dumping rather than long-term, practical use of biblical narrative and values in the context of leadership. For us the best way to train up leaders is not to simply push information on them, but rather to use story-based teaching, apprentice them in that teaching, and hand over the reins. Although such an approach is not easy to do and needs to be done with accountability, it is absolutely essential to helping young leaders grow.

Generational Antagonism

In all of our forums, we make a point of holding discussions on “Bridging the Generation Gap”. As we have done so we have realized the hurt, resentment and general disdain many young leaders have for the older generation in the Church. When pushed further on this most young leaders would say that they do not feel respected in their interaction with older leaders and feel used, misunderstood and out of touch with the older generation of Christian leadership. Many young leaders have complaints ranging from the older leaders “not listening” to “having abusive amounts of control over the Church or organization”.

In our training, we have pushed for a deliberate reconciliation between the generations, spearheaded by the younger generations. We have seen it is easy for disaccord and unforgiveness to creep up at the various generational poles, if such antagonism is not dealt with in a

biblical way. Having seen so much antipathy between the generations we have always pushed for forgiveness, reaching out in love and listening to older leaders.

Observations: Our anecdotal research has shown it would be extremely judicious for those who are in the older generations and in leadership in South Asia to be deliberate in the way they listen to and practice authority over younger leadership. The hurt in this area is often deep-seeded and needs time and prayer to heal. Many young leaders felt they were not being seen as leaders or competent workers but more as tools for a dominating leader. Big-boss leadership is very apparent in the Church in South Asia and at the same time is hardly ever realized by the leader who practices it. Any Christian leader must introspect on their style of leadership toward the younger generation and see if it is empowering, serving, trusting and in line with the model of Jesus Christ.

CATALYSING FOR NATION BUILDING

A CASE STUDY OF THE 100 BLOCK STRATEGY

ANTONY SAMY

How do you bring wholistic transformation to an area? And how do you then develop a strategy to extend this across a larger area? Here is an innovative model of partnership.

ESTABLISHMENT OF KACHHWA TRANSFORMATIONAL MINISTRIES

During the pre-Independence period, a group of British medical professionals established a rural hospital in Uttar Pradesh, 40 kms south of Varanasi, which later become a hub for medical services between Kolkata and Delhi. However, the hospital went through many setbacks due to lack of Indian professionals and leadership, as a result of which it came to the verge of closure. In 2002, Raju Abraham, a neurologist who had worked in London for 20 years, along with one of the Directors of a group of hospitals, could not ignore the fact that the

entire unit was closing down and letting go of its vision. Raju volunteered to move in and he took over the hospital, redefining its vision in line with the founders' vision.

His hard work and vision revitalized the hospital, making it a beacon in that region for wholistic transformation. The entire operation was renamed as Kachhwa Transformational Ministries (KTM). The commitment and perseverance of Raju inspired many professionals to come forward. One of them was an engineer who left his comfortable position in Delhi and joined as a development professional to spearhead the 100 Block Strategy.

The work of KTM will be explained in more depth in chapter 20. In short, KTM has been touching thousands of poor and marginalized families, impacting their spiritual, mental, social, physical, economical realms through the following six programmes:

1. Church planting
2. Medical work
3. Community work and development programmes
4. Economic development through skill training
5. Primary education
6. Leadership development

In five years, KTM become a catalyst to form 700 house churches led by 100 church planters and provide primary education to 7,000 children. Thousands of patients were treated and healed through a multi-disciplinary team in the hospital. 5,000 families have been reached through various health and development programs. 2,000 youths have been trained through various technical training courses.

Hundreds of grass root leaders are trained every month through various leadership courses to improve their work. At present, KTM has a foothold directly in 1,000 villages, impacting the community by one or more of the combined programmes, thereby fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.

An unprecedented number of people have accepted Christ. A gathering of 10,000 to 15,000 people worship during Christmas. All the villages are opened for the Gospel. Local workers with limited education background reach out to all the villages, giving no space for any cross cultural issues faced by the foreign missionaries. Different groups of people like children, youth, women and families are served through different activities, as per the need and demand.

ENLARGING THE VISION: THE 100 BLOCK STRATEGY

When we analysed the sociopolitical situation, receptiveness of the community and availability of local manpower, it prompted us to enlarge our vision to reach out to 10,000 villages in 100 blocks in 10 districts of Eastern UP. (A block is a geographical area containing about 100 villages. There are about 10 blocks in a District. These are both the Government's geographical units for administration and development).

But this new vision could only be pursued by developing a new model of partnership. That new model was called the 100 Block Strategy. The features of the 100 Block Strategy:

- It is a joint venture of transforming communities in 10,000 villages in adjoining 100 development blocks in 10 Districts in the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh
- It replicates tested and proven strategies within a time frame for definite results in a specific region.
- It mobilises churches, professionals and business houses to reach out to people groups with a common vision and need-based programmes.
- It develops a road map to reach India, which is divided into 6,300 blocks.

- It extends hand holding support to others to set up their own mission fields in a block, helping them to reach out to all the villages through their own area of expertise and resources, impacting them with wholistic transformation.

We wanted to provide a model of how to reach a Block and District in a wholistic way. And then to provide a model of strategically reaching a region of 100 Blocks. This requires partnership. KTM could not do it alone. So it extended an invitation to others to join in partnership with us by adopting one or more blocks, in which they would begin their own church planting and outreach.

The partners would be responsible to recruit, support and supervise their own workers, both cross-cultural and local. KTM would provide an appropriate infrastructure, including:

- Agreed strategy and understanding of mission and ministry
- Introduction and facilitation to begin their work
- Participation in the on-going training network covering the whole area
- Fellowship and mutual support
- Resources of KTM's ministries (clinical services, community health, micro-enterprise, education, leadership training, community meetings, Bible teaching and gatherings for worship)
- Help in establishing multi-purpose buildings in the block as a bases for ministry

WORKING OUT THE STRATEGY

Why This Strategy?

- KTM alone cannot reach out to 10,000 villages with its limited resources, manpower and capacity.
- It is Biblical: "...as their nets were breaking they called their partners in the other boat to come and help them" (Luke 5:6-7).
- It is similar to "understanding the times" like the men of Issachar (1 Chronicles 12:32). Sowing requires less manpower, but harvesting requires more.
- It recognises the body function concept. Building the body of Christ requires different gifts and expertise. KTM does not have them all.

How Can This Strategy Be Possible?

- Carrying these princes (partners) on our shoulders.
- Conducting Envisioning conferences, Exposure trips and Educating them on ground realities.
- Establishing their ministry.
- Encouraging and equipping at every stage.

Uniqueness of This Strategy

- The preparatory and start up phase takes a short time so that operations can start within a week of arrival
- Sharing of wisdom and experience makes the learning curve short without any need to reinvent the wheel.
- Building confidence through needed moral and technical support onsite.
- Safety net - there is help available in all situations.
- Tested and proven model in place.
- Infrastructures available for training and meetings.

Expected Outcomes

- Hundreds of villages reached through independent partners.
- Solidarity – Thousands of Christians in a region influencing the local governance.
- Rise of many institutions like English-medium schools, colleges, factories, hospitals, financial businesses, micro finance units, Bible colleges and universities.
- 100 Mini KTMs.
- Emergence of new local leaders building God's kingdom on earth through a shared vision.

PARTNERS BEGIN TO COME

The strategy was developed into programmes, goals and objectives. The outcomes were worked out along with costing. The strategy needed partners to make it a reality, so envisioning meetings were held for church leaders from different parts of the country. They revealed what God was doing in and around Varanasi, a difficult region. An operational plan, financial implications, manpower requirements, risk and opportunities were also presented in the context of need and urgency, based on the KTM model.

Every one had the desire but not all had the courage and capacity to launch a programme (lack of lead person and resources). Many were excited and motivated to become part of this movement. The overall response was good in spite of a few raised eyebrows. Interested leaders were brought to the KTM fields for exposure visits for better clarity and understanding. Out of the ten leaders who came for the first exposure visit, two showed interest in adopting a block.

Many more leaders were challenged and a few took bold steps to come back on their own and enquire about the ministry. In a span of six to twelve months, six churches/mission groups started sending their leaders for block adoption. KTM provided the field information, support for field selection, initial logistics and local manpower to kick

start the work within a week.

Today there are eleven partners in the 100 Block Strategy, working in a variety of ways (as seen in the description of their ministries below). All the partners meet once every 6 months to share their experiences, to pray and to fellowship at KTM.

THE RESPONSE & IMPACT OF PARTNERS

- An HR professional with fifteen years of experience in the corporate world decided to move to the field two months after his exposure visit. However, he faced many difficult situations. For example, the staff given to him by KTM couldn't adjust with his work culture and even turned against him. He carried on with two staff who were willing to walk along in his pace. Now, he has a presence in 150 villages and is expanding his work in neighbouring districts. He also trains many leaders, using the KTM facility. Currently, he has a team of 15 full-time leaders and is leading a chain prayer that mobilises prayer warriors from various states. He is also linked with many other networks, encouraging them to start the work. He also runs a school to help needy children.
- A family who had already moved into one of the blocks, supported by their church in the South, immediately adopted the strategy and initially followed the KTM approach. Later, knowing various other training models, they decided to implement another model in their block. As a result, we grew in fellowship, building trust in such a way that they could challenge the KTM model and point out grey areas in it. It was a humbling experience for KTM to learn from these partners and take corrective measures. Surprisingly, they grew faster and developed their outreach strategy on building local leaders. In a short span of five years, they covered more than 100 villages and built centres in two places. It is truly amazing to see the local leaders owning the vision and joining hands to reach out to their neighbours. They can also move into another district, estab-

lishing two Mini KTMs

- One of the leading pastors from Kerala brought his congregation members twice. They stayed for a week and experienced the field situation. After a two month collective decision, two youths from the church were sent in spite of tough resistance from the top leadership. On studying the ground situation and the need, he was convinced to start a school rather than evangelism. It was a challenging and difficult path for success, but he took a bold decision and stuck to it. After working hard towards that goal, today 400 children from nearby villages are being educated. Beautiful buildings with five classrooms were built, with skill training and leadership added later.
- After seeing the response, another group quickly sent their leaders. They established their centre by acquiring land and moved faster than we expected. They have their own leadership development plans and curriculum and function independently from KTM, but they stick to the vision of KTM.
- While mobilization was going on, one of the leaders of KTM moved out and started working independently in one of the blocks as a partner. He worked among youth, conducting skill training and leadership development initiatives. With his contact, we were able to attract many church leaders and groups from the South who visited their field and established their own support base. It is amazing to see the growth and expansion. It is encouraging to know that exposure to ministry opportunities and planning gives courage and confidence to move out and start separate ministries.
- The leader who was responsible for implementing the 100 Block Strategy became a practitioner himself. He moved out of KTM and started living out the vision of KTM. Along with his team, he started a hospital from scratch, forming networks in the block and also helping various groups through training and capacity building. They still extend support to KTM through their expertise, as and when required. It is the vision which keeps like-minded people

together and still gives leadership for the 100 Block Strategy.

- One group leader, who learned about the strategy, became engrossed with the vision and decided to start work in a selected block. As there was a delay in identifying a leader, his family could not wait. Feeling the urgency, KTM helped to identify local staff and looked after the work for six months. Once the new leader came, they started functioning independently in 30 villages and raised resources to build centres.
- Another group sent their staff team to work alongside the KTM team. It was a unique partnership as KTM felt that their skill and expertise would benefit its programme.
- KTM personnel visited one mission board to share about the 100 Block Strategy. It was well received and the board said that soon they would adopt a block. The chairman of the board kept reminding the board, but they failed to give attention to his words. Four years after the chairman's death, the board became serious about the matter and decided to take up the block. They contacted KTM leaders, visited the adopted block and in six months they started working. It took five long years to see the response.
- There is a leader with an established ministry near Kachhwa. He is a part of KTM, extending support whenever possible to help and streamline KTM's ministry. So, KTM is willing to take help of partners when needs arise. This partner expanded his ministry in a spectacular manner and grew larger than KTM. KTM was and is always supportive in extending any possible help, as and when required, as it is a joy to see its partner growing in leaps and bounds. They have started a separate network in another region to develop leadership for reaching out in that region.
- Another local partner, who has a large congregation, expanded his work in several districts with his networks and contacts. Yet, he wanted to be part of this network for safety and moral support. Whenever there is harassment and persecution, KTM always stood with him.

REFLECTIONS ON THE STRATEGY

Challenges

There were apprehensions, doubts and fears about the partnership and the 100 Block Strategy, but as we started working together, faith built and fear faded away. There were times when the expectations of the partners were not met, leading to mistrust and strain in the relationship. Whenever there was a gap in stability of leadership in KTM, partnership initiatives took a back stand.

KTM is able to provide support during the start-up phase of a partner. The input and support required at further growing phases is beyond the scope of KTM.

What Could Be Done Differently?

Vision is cast by an inspirational leader, but it requires institutional leaders to take it forward. Without such operational leaders, vision would become a distant dream. Here are some reflections on things that could be done differently in the future:

- Though the vision remains the same, we need to revisit the strategy with respect to time, ethnicity and needs. Flexibility and freedom, without compromising hard core vision and mission, are critical elements in this initiative.
- This strategy requires costs in resources, time and perseverance, making it a necessity to be prepared well in advance.
- It is necessary to review the capacity based on growing challenges and demand. Team could then be equipped, accordingly.
- Strategy development is not done keeping the expansion and growth in mind.
- The growing and establishing phase requires a separate team and budget, which KTM is not equipped to provide. This has led to a lack of new partners.

- There is a danger of pushing our agenda in the partners' initiatives.
- There is a fear of the partner becoming dependent on KTM, due to frequent visits and interactions.
- The success of lead agencies is to be measured by the success of partners in achieving their mission.

The Way Forward

Change is the only thing constant in this fast moving world. We need to revisit our strategy and operation, as per the changing scenario and demands. In education and health sectors, major contributions were made by mission agencies during the post-independence period. But, in these days, many universities are being established by corporate houses under CSR whereas churches and missions are yet to realize the same. Opening universities and training centres is extremely important to build leaders, thereby building the nation.

The dichotomy between sacred and secular, spiritual and physical is still in the nerve system of missions and ministry. The 100 Block Strategy should bring in partners who understand mission in the changing context. Restaurants, business houses, financial institutions are working 24 x 7 and doors are always kept open, whereas church doors are closed, except on Sunday. Effective utilization of resources needs to be looked into.

Huge infrastructures established by churches are underutilised. Unity, sensitivity, urgency and coordination to finish the task would create interdependency and optimum use of resources to build God's kingdom.

CONCLUSION

We all need to learn from history. The God of generations is watching over us. God was happy to work through prophets for 1,000 years, from Abraham to Samuel. People were protected, fed and sheltered by God himself even during punishment. They were never sent out from his presence. But the people wanted to follow the world and wanted a king to rule them. From the third generation, the kings forgot the commandments. As a result, the kingdom divided and later the entire nation was sent into exile and scattered all over the world. Kings rely on swords, prophets rely on the Word. Kings seek the counsel of intellects, prophets seek the counsel of God. The choice is ours: to be a Prophet of the 21st century or to be the Prince of this world.

There is no doubt that the 100 Block Strategy is a God given vision: **100 blocks, 10,000 villages, 10 districts, 100 KTM**s. By God's strength it should be fulfilled, will be fulfilled and must be fulfilled. Shall we join hands to build our nation by replicating this 100 block approach?

NURTURING NEW LEADERS THROUGH NETWORKS AND MENTORING

PAUL EAST

The growth of churches means a shortage of mature leadership in both churches and organisations. Mentoring and the right networks can provide support to emerging leaders.

INCREASING GROWTH BRINGS INCREASING PRESSURES

The past quarter of a century has seen dramatic changes in the spiritual demographics of India and there is very little evidence to suggest that this period of change is coming to an end. Rather, some are making evidenced claims that we are moving even closer to a “tipping point”, where the rate of change will accelerate to previously unseen levels.

However, this projection also assumes that the appropriate structures will be in place and functioning to a capacity that will sustain the demands created. How do these changes manifest themselves in

the more public domain? (Here I am looking through a Christian's eyepiece.) We expect ever-increasing numbers of people voluntarily changing their religious identity, publicly declaring that they have become Christ-followers and participating regularly in gatherings for worship and teaching. While for some, these may be pre-existent churches, for the majority these will be newly formed gatherings, without prescriptive structures, operating practices and agreed lines of authority, in line with what we have seen in the past decades.

There will be particular challenges for children and young people. Some may have been brought up in another religious tradition, which changed when other family members became Christ-followers. At the same time, there will be a growing number who will have only ever known life as part of a Christ-following family and community.

The parallel assumption is that an increasing number of the recent Christ-following individuals, families and communities, will also be subject to greater degrees of social and economic pressure, ranging from the occasional to the persistent and from the mild oral taunt, through discrimination, to the physically life-threatening.

THE NETWORK: ITS PLACE AND PURPOSE

New Church Structures

The past two decades have seen the establishment of several new denominations (e.g. Good Shepherd Church of India). The majority of denominations, though, have origins going back centuries, whether indigenous (mainly from South India) or with colonial or cross-cultural mission antecedents.

Alongside the above, the growth of Christ-follower gatherings flows from the prompting of the Holy Spirit in an individual or a small team, working amongst a particular and responsive community. In due course, they have sub-divided or, more commonly, individuals have been commissioned to go out and commence the groundwork for new gatherings in another location. This in due course will become a local

house-church or gathering. While some remain subject to the authority (and remain the responsibility) of the parent gathering, more often they have the vision of becoming a self-governing, self-funding and self-propagating gathering, though probably retaining a relationship of spiritual accountability to the original “planter”. This vision, however laudable, is often well nigh impossible to achieve in the short/medium term. The reasons include the lack of mature leadership, finance, resources for training and pastoral support skills.

“Bridging the gap” between the denominational model, with its structures and resources, and the self-operating gathering, requires trust and innovative communication, coupled with sensitive implementation, maintaining this with a pastoral heart. While in the denominational model the strength of individual personalities may often play a significant role, ultimately it is the ongoing position and the accountability structure, rather than the personality, that will shape the future. This may be contrasted with the self-operating model, where commonly much of the present and future flows from the personality rather than the position. Boards or Trustees (if they exist) tend to be subservient to dominant founder/leaders, while accountability often gives way to the stagnated, narrow vision, often referred to as “Founder Syndrome”.

Networks Can Bridge the Gap

One established and respected “bridge” has been to encourage proactive networking between a number of different gatherings, identifying threads of commonality and bringing these together through sustained prayer and regular informed sharing at different levels. These networks may function purely between the founding gathering and those planted from there. However, if the networking partners are ready to accept the challenges and possible constraints, then there is a greater benefit from the “sum of the parts” as they meet as more diverse gatherings (including denominations) to network for prayer, for training, for sharing the Good News, for mutual encouragement and for developing strategic plans for ministry.

Mentoring Patterns – Formal and Informal

Networks should, by nature, provide peer support between leaders, but become even more fruitful when they morph into a vehicle for mutual accountability. To bring this about it may be useful to have formal mentoring in place, but this can be easily misunderstood as a structure to exert control, unless the pastoral support is given sufficient emphasis and readily accessible. Network patterns may vary, some versions having just the leaders networking, while in others the sense of belonging to a network extends to all members of the constituent gatherings.

Denominations and self-operating gatherings share a common need to nurture mature, servant leadership, both for the present and the future, if they are to see the fulfillment of the call of God on their ministries. Leadership can be a lonely calling. To address this, while developing servant-hearted leaders, informal mentoring is an effective relational way to enrich churches and networks.

Support For Leaders in Churches and Organisations

It is not only churches, old or new, that need this support. It is true for organisations, as well. The unprecedented growth of Christ's body means that there is a shortage of mature leadership in both. We praise God for the numbers of emerging leaders with great potential. They carry heavy responsibilities and are often under pressure. They value counsel and fellowship, along with advice on organisational development and raising standards. Being part of a network is a great way to receive this, but there is also an important place for more confidential mentoring, whether formal or informal.

Our Personal Experience of Mentoring

Ten years ago, the ministries with whom we were working invited us to help in this process. They identified those leaders whom they believed we should seek to build relationships with. In response, we prayerfully developed these friendships, by listening, encouraging,

praying with them and seeking to mentor their growth.

A particular area of focus was to organise workshops for marriage enrichment and growth for couples, many of whom were leading very stressful and demanding lives. We also developed Management for Ministry (M4M) to provide additional training and consultancy, in the context of the mentoring relationship. Over the years we have been working with some eight leaders on a formal basis, as well as with many others informally, as part of wider networks.

Mutual Gains in the Mentoring Relationship

What they have appreciated most has been the freedom to be open and honest in a “safe” and confidential relationship with a mentor who acknowledges his own brokenness. Where this exists, mutual prayer support becomes normal and desirable. Many have expressed the value of the mentor’s interaction and impartial counsel in seeking to discern God’s Will, when faced with difficult choices.

What we have learned and gained from this experience is that mentoring is rarely helpful in the short-term. The Mentor and Mentee need time and opportunity to get to know each other at depth and to appreciate where they are spiritually close and to respect each other’s differences, whether of belief or practice. While face to face interaction in sharing is always the most desirable, modern technology with on-line computer live-links or mobile phones used on a regular basis will facilitate the relationship and mutual accountability.

The Mentor-to-Mentee Relationship

The mentor-to-mentee relationship is at the crux and has to be well understood. While I mentor several leaders at the same time, this is not a coaching class and each relationship is unique, confidential and based on mutual trust and transparency in each direction. It helps some people to appreciate the relationship when it is pictured as, “two men walking down the same road, but one (the mentor) is a few steps ahead of the other.” This is not the all-knowing guru revealing enlightenment

to the faithful disciple, but a relationship of learning and maturing together. One part-time city pastor, with whom I walk this road, serves under his elderly father, as lead pastor. The younger man's maturity is developing through the opportunities that the mentoring relationship gives him.

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR MENTORING WITHIN NETWORKS?

The chronicles of the early New Testament Church, included in the Canon of Scripture, cover perhaps little more than the first thirty years of its life. However, they bear ample witness to the perceived need and the benefit of linking up the various gatherings of believers, most of whom were new in their faith. It was surely God's timing that the establishment of the 1st Century AD Roman Empire, with its centralized governance and effective communications by land and sea, facilitated the freedom and the speed by which the Gospel spread around the shores of the Mediterranean sea and ultimately to the borders of the Empire. These same factors were equally significant in linking up the scattered gatherings, with an emphasis on encouraging, challenging and reporting, together with the development of young leaders and mentors, such as Timothy and Titus.

Paul, although often itinerant, except when detained by the authorities, was eager to establish linkages and encouraged mobility for key workers. Perhaps Priscilla and Aquila exemplify this, with active "home-hub based" ministries from Rome, Corinth, Ephesus and perhaps elsewhere, within a two decade window or less (Acts 18:19, Romans 16:3-5, 1 Corinthians 16:19). While networking today is often fruitful when there is a commitment to multidirectional flows of information, learning from each other and building up one another, the New Testament does not record this happening with Paul. Rather he holds a more apostolic role, identifying a number of those he would mentor, requiring specific reporting, teaching and encouraging in

particular relationships. Paul's custom of greeting specific persons by name in his letters, while identifying them with a particular house, reinforces the networking of gatherings, rather than individuals (e.g. Nympha, Priscilla and Aquila in Colossians 4:15, 1 Corinthians 16:19). Perhaps they represented a point of stability in what seemed to be a fast changing world.

Paul gave special time and effort to a number of key people and encouraged them to follow his example. The initiative of Priscilla and Aquila taking Apollos to their home and building a mentorship would surely have encouraged Paul. Others such as Epaphras and Epaphroditus, perhaps merchants or in government service, made good use of their travels to link up with gatherings and act as couriers, with Paul's encouragement (Colossians 4:12, Philippians 4:18). Timothy and Titus, although being discipled for bigger things in the future, were effectively "legs, eyes and a mouthpiece" for Paul in his latter years of detention, when he had little opportunity to travel except for one period of release.

Study of these New Testament Scriptures reveals that the early practice of networking and developing leaders through mentoring was not prescriptive, but was rather a diverse tapestry of forging strategic relationships, involving reporting, challenging, rebuking, warning, exhorting, encouraging, comforting and more. Moreover, this was undertaken with considerable flexibility, driven by the need, the availability of persons and the safe transit of letters.

This section seeks to reflect on the New Testament origins of networking and not to be a justification for serving in a particular way or for specific groups of people. In the rest of this chapter, I will focus on some aspects of networks, but with a focus on the mentoring/encouraging ministry that is a vital part of an effective network.

PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF NETWORKING AND MENTORING

A Good Foundation

Those people wishing to initiate Christian organisations and regular gatherings for worship are usually inclined to talk enthusiastically about the need for “good foundations”. Perhaps it comes from Jesus’ familiar parable of the two men, one wise and one foolish, who each constructed a building, but with different foundations. Local networks are not built on ways typical of organisations or even some worship gatherings. They will usually be built around shared or complementary concerns or desires and they are held together by mutual trust and transparency. These are not “pieces of rock”, nor do they need a legally-binding agreement in order to flourish. I say this from my experience and observation of local networking and mentoring in North India over the past thirty years.

Good foundations for networks are all about looking forward and shared vision. Visions need to be articulated, persistently prayed over and taken ownership of. When the Holy Spirit moves a number of local leaders to take hold of this vision and to own it, not allowing their diversity or real differences to constrain them, then we may thank God for laying down that solid foundation. It will be essential to sustain networking and mentoring relationships when their unity comes under spiritual attack, or the fire of the Spirit cools down. That is when mutual trust, respect and transparency are vital. This will be the test of the good foundation.

Who Fits in the Net?

I am quite sure that it is our Creator God who knows the ones He desires to be a member of a network or to be blessed with a mentor. But as we look to His Holy Spirit to work in their hearts, we need to discern what He is doing. Church growth experts have studied long and hard

to evaluate the effectiveness of the Homogenous Unit Principle (not least the seminal work by Prof Donald McGavran, largely in rural India in the 1960s). Crudely put, this can be summarized, as “peoples like to be fellow Christians with peoples they like” (the plural is intentional).

In the current decade, where there has been significant church growth amongst certain tribal peoples in the Western Himalayas, several of their own trained and ordained pastors are not welcome to be part of a network because of their caste origins. The challenge for those facilitating the network is to discern whether this is their past blocking the work of the Holy Spirit, or if it is not yet God’s time for all to be together in the one net? Are we responding to a social, or spiritual challenge or a mixture of both?

Similar questions have emerged further east in the Ganges Plain because the newer local Christian leaders and the established cross-cultural leaders, mainly from South India, were not able to sit together in trust and transparency, while declaring a common faith and vision. (This is nothing new – it happened in the first century church with the face-off between Jewish and Gentile believers.) It is by no means bad news everywhere – breakthroughs have come, through seeking the grace of God and prayerful submission to God and to each other.

Spiritual Accountability and Oversight

To use a modern sociological term, this can be the “Gamebreaker” for the life and existence of the Network (or indeed of a mentor/mentee journey together). At the same time, it should be a key determinant of the depth of the life of a network or mentoring relationship, which otherwise is just a forum for selective sharing. My personal assessment is that I have not seen in recent years, despite the encouraging growth of local networks, much visible evidence of the mutual accountability that this refers to. (This is a limited personal view and I apologise to any who may feel they have been misrepresented.)

Oversight may take various forms, but I will restrict myself to only two. First, where the Network finds itself consisting of pastors/leaders

who are all serving within the same church organisation, or at least a significant majority of them are, the equality and mutuality is often sadly lost. The hierarchical, formal/or informal structure within the group is translated from the church into the Network and the senior most member will be reluctant to see colleagues “step out of line”.

Second, where an external Facilitator/Coordinator, who enjoys the respect and confidence of the members of the Network is able to identify and develop a successor. The focus in this relationship is not to enhance the network from an organizational perspective, but to identify and raise up a leader in maturity and servanthood. In reality, this Facilitator is serving as a mentor in an informal sense. A good example of several years ago is that of CONCERN, a large networking partnership across much of North India, which was in dialogue with the Herbertpur Trust Association (HTA).

HTA is a small charitable society committed to venturing initiatives, primarily within the catchment area of the Herbertpur Christian Hospital (covering about six Districts). With funding from HTA, a joint appointment was made of an experienced Community Mobilizer (not a Pastor) on secondment from the Hospital to (1) encourage existing local networks, (2) initiate new ones and (3) mentor local Facilitators. His primary reporting and accountability was to CONCERN, but with periodic secondary reporting to HTA. The initiative was concluded after two years, and local Networks are currently active in four Districts with their internal coordination. The key tasks were mobilization and mentoring leaders to the next level, rather than theological education or church planting, which were taken forward by others. The Community Mobilizer continues to be available to those in the area on a personal and informal basis.

Defining Network and Mentoring Areas

Mostly the defining of the physical area coverage of a Network happens automatically, as Pastors and other leaders oversee their own areas of ministry. Nonetheless, questions may be raised as to whether

an expansion should be made or a division that multiplies the number. It is helpful to have agreed criteria. Examples that have been used effectively are:

1. *Civil Boundaries – the 100 Block Strategy.* At the eastern extreme of the State of Uttar Pradesh are a cluster of Districts whose communities are diverse, but are all influenced by their proximity to the city of Varanasi. Numerous ministries, from the very small to the very large, have started work in these areas, but not with an even distribution. A key centre for training has been Kachhwa Transformational Ministries, based out of the Kachhwa Christian Hospital in Mirzapur District. A group of visionary leaders, recognising the discrepancies between the ministry resources in different Blocks (sub-divisions of Districts of approximately 100,000 in population), let alone Districts, decided to focus on 100 co-terminate Blocks and to invite agencies and individuals from across India to come and take responsibility for a specific Block(s), where a ministry was not taking place at present. They would form a mutually supportive network for reporting, prayer, training, etc. Kachhwa Christian Hospital would form a natural and “neutral” hub, for training, sharing information, mutual support, etc. (See chapter 11 for more detail on this network.)
2. *People Groups – Jaunsari, Scheduled Tribe.* This is a specific tribal group in the North West of Distt. Dehradun, living mainly 6,000 feet above sea level in the Himalayas. This largely animistic faith people have had regular contact with Herbertpur Christian Hospital since the late 1930s and have had very little integration with other peoples of this region. Although a number of workers have sought to reach this tribe, it was only some thirty years ago that the first believer was recorded. Emmanuel Hospital Association extended its Community Health and Development work from Manduwala, near Dehradun, to a residential outpost in the tribal area and established outreach to several key villages, with encourag-

ing results and strong opposition. Today a network, as a registered NGO, coordinates all outreach activities (spiritual, social and educational) for the Jaunsari peoples, whether in their area or now in the plains to where many have migrated.

Earlier this year a gathering of all Jaunsari believers was held on the plains (numbering more than 200) with the joint ownership of all the gatherings and the non-tribal agencies networking together. The Bible is close to publication in the local language and an extensive songbook is already in use. These are both projects jointly owned by various agencies with this single focus.

3. *Geographical – Catchment area of Herbertpur Christian Hospital.* The majority of patients coming to Herbertpur Christian Hospital and served by their community services, come from six Districts, within four States (Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh). They are a very diverse group with all major faith communities widely represented: Animist, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Tibetan Buddhism and Christianity. There is also wide economic and social discrepancy. Some years ago, various agencies, individuals and praying people in different countries recognised that the only common denominator for all these people is their faith in the hospital, known locally as “Lemon Hospital”, after its founder Dr Lehmann, who came to the area in 1936 and worked most of the time as the solo doctor until 1973. The “footprint” has provided an increasingly effective identity for ministry since then.

Lifetime and Leadership

These are issues that may be potentially contentious and it would be wise to explore them before they are presented to a Network as current, or even worse, as immediate issues. The church and parachurch organisations in India (as elsewhere) are littered with structures, bodies and meetings, which have survived long beyond their usefulness. Wise entities review their situation periodically, either internally or with help from outside. Networks having very little structure and a

primary focus on mutual cooperation and support of front-line ministry, rarely review themselves.

A Coordinator of a local network should not lose sight of the need to be alert and to encourage review. A dropping off of significant numbers of members, or local, social, political or religious changes and other signs may suggest it would be better to merge with another network, possibly in another location. Similar scenarios may suggest a total shutdown, at least for a period of time, and then review in the future. Sometimes, the non-availability of a suitable facilitator/coordinator will dictate a similar step.

Network lifetimes are most often directed by the availability of suitable leadership. Often it is resolved by appointing the only Network member willing to take it on. We then have leadership by default. Looking to the future, as social (and some Christian) attitudes and beliefs change, I want to see more ladies active in Network meetings, leading to a renewed source of excellent facilitators. We also need to see a more open-minded attitude towards recent arrivals for ministry, encouraging their participation in networking and mentoring, rather than expecting them (quite unofficially) to undergo a “probationary period”, which may last several years!

Individual mentoring relationships also need careful thought about their effective lifetime. This may sometimes be agreed at the start, or more often as part of regular review, which should be built in from the beginning.

The Network and the Local Ministry

The Network is not a “Club” for Pastors and Ministry Leaders, even though they may be the only persons who attend meetings. It may be better described as a “Clearing House”. As information is shared, as prayer is made, as strategic partnerships are forged to maximize the impact of local ministry to saturate the society with the Good News, there needs to be feedback to the congregation or ministry programme. Similarly the congregation has the right to expect that their rejoicing,

their thanksgiving, and their challenges will be shared and taken up by the Network members. When there are conventions or retreats, for example, the Network is a forum to seek prayer support and participation and to reassure the congregation that it has been shared. This can be done appropriately, not just in a general worship gathering, but also in ladies, youth, children and other groups. The Network has a voice if we nurture it, which will bless beyond all expectations.

Finance for Networking and Mentoring

“We would do it, if only we had the funds.” How often do we hear these words? The good news is that networking and mentoring can be one of the most cost-effective things in a local leader’s field of ministry. It takes a simple travel fare, perhaps some petrol in the tank of the motorcycle and a commitment to be there for your mentee, or to attend as many meetings as you can from the schedule.

It’s much more than money. There is also the effort to be a loyal member, to grow in relationships of mutual spiritual accountability, to immerse yourself in intercessory prayer for other members and receive that from others, to experience the joy and uplift of sharing in another’s ministry, to see God growing a new leader, to have your spirit renewed through the blessing that He is sharing with others. There can be few greater joys than investing ourselves in the lives of others, as we share in a network or work together in a mentoring relationship.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE DIASPORA

ROBIN THOMSON

The 20th and 21st centuries have seen the greatest ever movement of peoples around the world, including Indians. What impact has this had on God's work in India?

INDIANS AROUND THE WORLD

Indians have been on the move as far back as history records. Traders, Buddhist and Hindu missionaries and others travelled in all directions, but especially to South East Asia. The whole region was influenced by Indian trade, colonization, culture and religion.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries the British Empire became the dominant vehicle for spreading Indians abroad, to labour in plantations in Fiji, Malaya, South Africa and Central America, or to build the railways and run the trade of East and Central Africa. Indians also went abroad to study and prepare for careers in law and the public services,

back home or elsewhere in the Empire. Mahatma Gandhi is perhaps the best-known example of this.

In 1947, after the partition of India, hundreds of thousands of people moved within the region and beyond. Now it was not just Indians on the move, but South Asians from all the countries of the sub-continent. The need for workers in Britain, North America and other countries meant thousands more were on the move. The process has continued and accelerated. Indians – and South Asians generally – are in demand as skilled professionals, consultants, entrepreneurs and traders.

Today, nearly 40 million South Asians live in the Diaspora¹, scattered around the world, making significant contributions both to the countries where they now live, as well as to their original homelands. It is a strong network, closely connected.

There is constant interaction between the diaspora communities and their "mother country". People travel in both directions and resources are shared. The net worth of Indians in the Diaspora is equivalent to the total GDP of India. When natural disasters strike, such as floods, famines or earthquakes, Diaspora communities are a major source of relief.

The Indian government has recognised this for many years, inaugurating the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (Overseas Indians Day) and setting up various facilities to enable Diaspora Indians to contribute to and benefit from the Indian economy.

¹ The word 'diaspora' refers to the dispersion of a people from their original homeland. It was first used to refer to the dispersion of the Jews from the 6th century BC onwards. Today it is used for the many movements of peoples away from their homelands, The South Asian Diaspora is one of the largest. See *Catalyst for Change: The South Asian Diaspora* (London: South Asian Concern, 2005) and *The New People Next Door*, Lausanne Occasional Paper 55 (London: South Asian Concern, 2005); available from <https://www.lausanne.org/content/lop/lop-55> as of 10 February 2017.

THE SPIRITUAL POTENTIAL OF THE DIASPORA NETWORK

South Asian Concern, a Diaspora organisation, realised the spiritual potential of this network for sharing the good news of Jesus in ways that would have impact, in the UK, South Asia and the whole Diaspora. It consciously sought to mobilise South Asians for mission both in the Diaspora and in South Asia.

In 1993, Viju Abraham, based in Mumbai, urged Ram Gidoomal in London to join him in attending a gathering in the USA which led to the inauguration of NACSAC – the North American Council of South Asian Christians, led by TV Thomas, a Diaspora Indian living in Canada. It was another reminder of the power of the Diaspora network for sharing resources to and from South Asia. Ram commented, “I experienced the Diaspora effect. Seeing the possibility of sharing with family members, I was struck by the ‘hundredfold’ fruit of those discussions.”

This was not the first gathering of this kind. In the 1970s, Dr GD James, a church leader and evangelist living in Singapore, set up the Fellowship of South Asian Christians (FOSAC), with the same vision. It was a pioneering effort, the first of its kind.

Following FOSAC and then NACSAC, other Diaspora consultations and organisations have been set up. For example, in 1992, Sunil Kapur began African-Asian Concern, Kenya (ASCKEN) to reach out to the many South Asians living there. It included a number of missionaries who had come from India for this purpose. Today ASCKEN’s vision is continued by the Fellowship of Asian Christians in Kenya (FOACK), reaching out and working to equip churches to reach out to Asians.

In 2002, the first conference of the International Network of South Asian Diaspora Leaders (INSADL) took place, followed by further conferences in 2003, 2005 and onwards. At these conferences, the

leaders committed themselves to work together for the evangelization and mobilisation of South Asians around the world, reaching out to the 1.4 billion South Asians. They identified three priorities: prayer, strengthening the family (particularly in disciple-making) and sharing resources.

There have been several other Consultations and networks since then, all concerned to mobilise the resources of South Asians – in South Asia and around the world – for effective and united outreach. In the words of TV Thomas, co-chair of INSADL, “we need to believe that doing ministry in the 21st century is more like the first century than the 20th century.” He was referring to the ways in which the Gospel spread in the first century, as people travelled for business and trade, taking the good news with them.

The 20th and 21st centuries have seen the greatest ever movement of peoples in all directions, some forced to move by war or disaster, others migrating for economic reasons or the search for a better life. Some have carried the good news with them, sometimes to closed countries and societies (for example Indian Christians in the Middle East), while others have been made open to the good news through their travel.

The South Asian Diaspora has been a great example of this, as the good news has moved through its many networks. For example, Gujaratis migrated to East Africa for business and were then forced to move again to the UK. Some of them came to Christ through this experience. They then shared this good news with family members back in Gujarat, often people with no meaningful contact with the Gospel in their local situation.

THE DIASPORA CONTRIBUTION TO MISSION IN AND FROM INDIA

The rest of this chapter describes a few examples of the Diaspora’s contribution to mission in India. There are many others that could

have been included, and many more that we are not aware of. Perhaps the main contribution of the Diaspora has been to support and encourage what God is doing in India and the other countries of the sub-continent. This is always a two-way process of giving and receiving, as we have already seen. Often the first movement is from India, as Indians have travelled for their personal reasons or for mission. Then, in response, there has been movement back to India. What follows are various ways of contribution.

Sharing Resources: People

The most important resource is people. Diaspora Indians have gone back to India, some short term, others investing themselves long term. They have been able to serve in a variety of ways, sometimes bringing new and creative vision. Some of the stories in this book are illustrations of this. There are numerous other examples as people have ministered from Singapore, South Africa, Indonesia, New Zealand, Germany and many other countries, including of course the UK and North America.

Indians living in India have also ministered in the Diaspora, short and long term, as evangelists, pastors and Bible teachers. Some have been called to work with Indians and other South Asians, while others have served the majority host communities of the countries where they have gone.

George Melel, Director of Diviya Jyothi Mission, has served for many years in Germany, ministering both to Indians and the local community. Soon after his arrival in Germany, some local pastors questioned his authorisation: “Who invited you to come and work in Germany?” His reply: “Who invited Ziegenbalg (one of the first pioneer missionaries in South India) to go and work in India?” There were no more questions. God calls people to serve in every direction.

Sharing Resources: Finances

Finances is another important resource. Diaspora funds have been used in response to natural disasters, as already mentioned, as well as to support many ministries in India.

Connecting People

Because diaspora people, by definition, belong to more than one culture – their Indian background and the culture of their host country – they tend to be quite outward looking, often seeking connections. In the diaspora context, some of the divisions “back home”, including language and community, are less important. Political barriers between countries can also be overcome. So Indians, Nepalis, Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, Bhutanese, Maldivians and Afghans can all meet and mix together in the Diaspora in ways that they could not do in South Asia.

An example of this was the Transform World South Asia conference in Kathmandu, Nepal in October 2009. It brought together seventy Christian leaders, including individuals from countries where severe persecution, restrictions and hardship were a daily part of their lives. It also enabled the participants to meet Christian brothers and sisters from countries they could not visit, for political reasons.

The conference’s aim was to foster a regional identity for South Asian Christians, building relationships, networking, sharing good practice, highlighting problems and challenges, so that they could go on supporting one another. Several participants commented how, as they entered the conference hall, it felt like meeting long lost cousins. They could feel the close connection and all that they had in common.

Another group divided by politics and religion are the Sindhis. At the time of Partition, most of the Hindu Sindhis had to leave their home in what is now Pakistan. Today, there are around 40 million Sindhis in Pakistan, India and around the world, Muslim and Hindu, with maybe ten thousand who follow Christ. So it is still considered an “unreached people group”. In the Diaspora, it was possible to estab-

lish an International Sindhi Partnership, which seeks to share the good news of Jesus with Sindhis wherever they are, including India.

This is a good example of the way that Diaspora ministries both give to and receive from India, as Leah Rausch illustrates from her experience of working with Sindhis in the Philippines:

How would I know as a 4 year old...how would anyone know that the events happening in 1947, in what is now known as Pakistan, would have a great impact on my adult life? At that time in its history, the Hindus living there were forced out of their homes leaving their livelihood behind to live and work in India and other countries of the world.

In November 1977, as a new missionary, I arrived in Manila, Philippines, with a heart burden to minister to Indians living in that city. Some of my first contacts told stories of how that day in 1947 affected their lives.

Yes, God had sent me to minister to the Sindhi Community of Manila. God's timing was certainly evident as we began ministering to Sindhi children living in an apartment compound. This ministry opened doors to Indian homes and God gave fruit among the young people and a few adults. One of the first converts was Rakhee Mirpuri, cousin sister to Ram Gidoomal. We were blessed by his ministry in Manila at an outreach programme among our Sindhis called Good News For Sindhis.

God gave the increase and today the Fil-Indian Fellowship has its own Indian pastor, Mark Sudhir, and outreach programmes in our local Sindhi community and in a few other cities of the Philippines. The FIF is a member of the International Sindhi Partnership Consultation group that reaches out to Sindhis around the world. A Punjabi fellowship led by Pastor Mark is now a growing cell church of the Fil-Indian Fellowship.

Creative Ideas and Experimenting

The Diaspora can be a place to try new ideas. As people came to Christ from Hindu backgrounds in the Diaspora, some of them experimented with an “alternative Diwali”, which they called a “Festival of Light”. It seemed a creative way of retaining some of their cultural heritage and reaching out to their families, in a context where they were not surrounded by an all-pervasive Hindu presence, as they would have been in India.

Some in the Diaspora have come to Christ from communities that have very few believers back in India. They are able to make connections with their families and relatives who would otherwise be completely unreachable.

For example, Harsh Gudka came to Christ in Kenya from a Jain background, one of very few. Today he is active in sharing good news with his own relatives as well as equipping African disciples to reach out to their Indian neighbours:

South Asians in the African diaspora number about 3 million in the continent with their presence in more than 22 countries. As a follower of Christ from a Jain background born and raised in Kenya, I have been involved bi-vocationally as a lecturer in a Christian university in Nairobi and an associate trainer with Naya Jeevan Project. Through Naya Jeevan’s “Love Your Neighbour - Basic Hindu Evangelism Seminar” (LYN), our team based here in Kenya helps equip and mobilize local African believers, church and mission leaders to more effectively and sensitively share Christ with the South Asian communities. We continue to mobilize prayer partners to specifically pray for South Asians and encourage the workers among them.

CONCLUSION: ENCOURAGEMENTS IN EVERY DIRECTION

Mission in today's world is in every direction. Sam George is Director of Parivar International, a family based South Asian community organization, working with families in North America, as well as India. He lives in Chicago and is active in mission in the US, in India and in other parts of the world. He comments:

As Asia, Africa, and Latin America have become the new centers of Christianity and missionary work, they have also exported millions of people all over the world. As people everywhere began to read scriptures in their own heart languages and were led by the Spirit to take the gospel of Jesus Christ across cultural barriers to the ends of the earth in new ways, multiple center hubs of centrifugal missionary activities began to arise. Almost every inhabited region of the world is now both sending and receiving missionaries. Mission is a two-way street as prior senders receive and former recipients send missionaries all over.

This has been our experience in the Indian context, too. Visiting India and sharing in what God is doing there, brings much blessing and huge encouragement in every direction. India and its Diaspora network have been significant for mission and this can only increase in the years ahead.

TV Thomas, Director of the Centre for Evangelism & World Mission in Canada, was brought up in Malaysia and studied in India and North America. He ministers in many countries, including India. Here he reflects on his experience of visiting and ministering in India:

My prime contribution has been through preaching, teaching and equipping at conferences for Christian workers (pastors, missionaries, evangelists, etc.). All of my ministry has been carried out through multiple invitations from varied ministry agencies and denominations in North India. I have been blessed to minister in Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Maharashtra, Punjab and West Bengal.

I have observed several encouraging trends over the twenty-five years I have visited North India:

1. Increase in the number of younger Christian workers joining the harvest force.
2. Increase in the number of Christian workers from non-Christian backgrounds.
3. Increase in the number of Christian workers with only informal theological training.
4. Increase in missionary vision coupled with an optimism that India can be reached with the Gospel.
5. Increase in the rate of disciple making.
6. Increase in the number of churches planted.
7. Increase in the degree of contextualization in ministry approaches.
8. Increase in the number of indigenous quality leaders at most levels.
9. Increase in funding resources from within the country.
10. Increase in the size and fervency of prayer movements.

PART IV

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BIBLICAL COUNSELING TRUST OF INDIA

EMPOWERING CHURCHES, HEALING
COMMUNITIES

JOHN K JOHN

How do leaders of new churches care for believers, providing counsel and support so that they can understand and deal with challenges in their personal lives? Here is a unique ministry providing training for this.

Biblical Counseling Trust of India (BCTI) is a movement established to support the church in Hindi-speaking regions of North India to respond to the challenge of Christian living in the 21st century. We do this by building the capacity of the Church to become a caring community through biblically based training and resources on issues of everyday living.

INTRODUCTION

The Hindi-speaking States of North India have traditionally been resistant to the Gospel. But during the past twenty years a large number of new churches have come up in this underdeveloped region. These new believers face serious problems as they have to readjust to their now hostile old culture. Clarity in the midst of clash of value systems is often too difficult for these new congregations to address. There is a tremendous need for adequately trained and committed leaders to shepherd these flocks through this phase. Currently, there is a lack of sound biblical teaching and written materials in Hindi for these Church leaders to equip them to address pastoral care issues faced by the new Churches (conditions of which are in many ways similar to the Corinthian churches in the first century). BCTI is the only ministry that offers training in Pastoral Biblical Counseling to equip Pastors and leaders of churches in North India.

If we say BCTI is God's idea it might sound a bit grand, but as we consider our journey over the last twenty years, no other explanation would fit. It was in the mid-nineties that Dr Raju Abraham of South Asian Concern introduced the ministry of Christian Counseling Education Foundation (CCEF) to leaders of the Emmanuel Hospital Association (EHA) and North India Harvest Network. Dr David Powlison and Dr Paul Tripp from CCEF visited India to hold seminars in Biblical Counseling at a few locations for Church leadership in the northern region. John K John, at that time working with EHA, was so impacted by their teachings. He went on to study at Westminster Theological Seminary, the academic institution connected to CCEF, for his DMin in Pastoral Counseling.

The idea for setting up a ministry to focus on pastoral counseling for the growing churches in North India was born around this time even though it took many years of prayer and deliberation before it took shape in the form of BCTI. Several leaders met together in

Delhi for an informal consultation on 6th June 2004 when Paul Tripp visited. The second consultation was held on 25th November 2004 at Bible Bhawan when the decision was taken to start BCTI as a ministry based in Delhi. This resulted in John and his wife Annie shifting from Dehradun to Delhi in early 2005 and BCTI was registered as a charitable trust on 7th March 2005.

The majority of the leaders we work with are first generation believers who lead village, small town, or urban churches. Most of these men and women will not be eligible for admission in theological colleges and even if they were accepted, they would not be able to access these trainings due to various other factors like family, logistics, financial constraints, etc. What they need is a Gospel-centred program at their locations, delivered in ways that are easy to understand and adaptable to their situations. While there are several institutions offering both formal and non-formal training in theology and missions for grass roots leaders, BCTI is the only agency of its kind which is committed to equip grassroots Pastors of Hindi churches in pastoral care right at their locations in North India. We do this through:

- Semi-formal training programs for pastors and church leaders.
- Short seminars on major issues (Marriage, Parenting, Conflicts, Addiction, Trauma).
- Counseling services for people in need.
- Making available Christian books and training resources.

If we wish to make a change in these churches we need to make a change in the leaders who lead and equip the church. Training is foundational to what we do through BCTI. We focus on the life of the trainees and make them the change to equip the community they lead. Our Training of Trainers program is a major part of our endeavour to multiply the impact in the community.

Over the past eleven years, church leaders who went through our training programs have experienced radical transformation in

their own lives and relationships. Also, the biblical insights and skills acquired have significantly impacted their counseling and teaching ministries. Congregations in turn have been blessed and many churches have grown and multiplied and become effective witnesses to the community around them. Pastors with a gifting and desire to teach other church leaders have helped multiply the impact by reaching out to other churches.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS AND THE JOURNEY

Even though BCTI was registered as a Trust, initially for the purpose of administration (financial and legal requirements) BCTI functioned as a project of Herbertpur Trust Association (HTA) of which John was the CEO. BCTI started with no funding, but the Lord has been faithful and the ministry has been growing steadily. From the very beginning, our efforts were focussed on training and equipping pastors and church leaders primarily in Hindi-speaking regions of North India. Over the last eleven years, BCTI has impacted over 11,000 pastors and lay leaders through our courses and short seminars in Hindi and English all over North India.

2005-2008

In the first two years, we ventured steadily to establish relationships with churches and networks, to develop curriculum and train and mentor young theological graduates to be trainers. Initially, all recruits were required to go through the Introduction to Biblical Counseling Certificate Course (IBCC) in English, but after the launch of the online course, all trainers are required to go through the fourteen online courses offered. By 2005-06, we completed our first two 10-day modules of IBCC in English with leaders from Dehradun and different parts of India. Kalpana Andrews joined as trainee in 2005 and when she left after a year for her further studies, Fairy Tewari replaced her.

Meanwhile we were working on the IBCC program for Hindi speaking Pastors and Church Leaders which in time became our flagship program. The adaptation of the English course material for the Indian Church, “Dynamics of Biblical Change”, started in early 2006. This was ready by the end of that year and was later named “How People Change”. The translation in Hindi was also ready by the year end. The first module of the Hindi IBCC was started in 2007 with nineteen participants. This group completed two modules by the close of the year. Partnerships with Zion Ministries, Kachhwa Transformation Ministries, and a couple of other networks were forged to train their leaders at their own places during the second half of the year.

In August 2008, a new batch of 25 church leaders from various States started another module in Dehradun. In 2007-08, Mr Shamsher Singh Bahadur worked for six months and helped with the Hindi training programs. Sarah Prabhakar, a qualified Counsellor trained in Australia joined as staff in February 2008 initially for a year. Sarah registered for the IBCC in English and also started working on the training material along with Fairy Tewari, who had successfully completed her IBCC. During 2007-08, four graduates of IBCC English helped in training leaders and pastors through the IBCC Hindi Course. We had the first graduation for the English batch when eight participants graduated.

In 2008, the Hindi translation of *Shepherding a Child's Heart* by Dr Tedd Tripp was completed. This was released during Tedd Tripp's visit for conducting parenting seminars in November 2009. A shorter version of the first and second workbooks for the two foundational courses for IBCC in English were made and translation in Hindi was also completed during this year. By the end of 2010, Sarah Prabhakar went back to Australia for her theological studies. Another highlight of 2009 was the first Hindi IBCC graduation.

2009

In 2009, we had the first Training of Trainers (TOT). This was led by Dr John Eappen (Director Institute of International Business

Relations, Hyderabad). In mid-2009, Mr. Ritesh Dutt joined as a trainee following completion of his studies at New Theological College. Later Akshay Rajkumar, Daniel Ratna Khawas and Vinita Chacko joined the Team. Vinita Chacko joined as Administrator in addition to the role of Trainer-Counselor. After two years of studies Kalpana Andrews rejoined during mid-2009. She, however, left at the end of March 2010 to join her husband, Mr. Bonny Andrews, who started a youth ministry, Livejam.

2010-11

The year 2010-11 was a mixed one for BCTI as we saw progress in several areas, but also faced some challenges like financial crisis and a shortage of Trainers. The first impact analysis of BCTI ministries was done during this time in order to draw up an effective plan for the next three to five years. An evaluation of the ministry was conducted by two senior leaders of Oasis India who came up with a very encouraging report even though it also raised some issues that needed to be addressed. The following is an extract from their report:

- The BCTI team is extremely committed and is passionate about their work.
- In speaking with various stakeholders and partners, such as church members, pastors and church leaders who have benefited from the programs of BCTI, all spoke highly of BCTI and the work that it is doing. For many of the trainees, the IBCC was the first time that they in their ministry were introduced to the concept of Biblical counseling and have testified that this has been transformational in their lives and their ministries.
- Staff and Trustees have full clarity about BCTI's vision and mission and take care to ensure that all the programs and activities are aligned with the same.
- The external communication in terms of the BCTI webpage

and newsletter is good.

- Even in the midst of financial uncertainty from time to time, BCTI has been able to deliver the program effectively.
- BCTI has a good resource centre for books and materials on counseling.

The four year formal partnership with HTA came to an end during 2010-11 and so did the funding from Panahpur Trust who had supported the programs since 2006-07. A major financial crisis marked the following few years, which led to uncertainty about the future course, especially in planning training programs and drawing up budgets. The team, however, never lost their zeal for the ministry and stood together in prayer.

Getting into a partnership for a pilot project with the Central Delhi Congregation of Delhi Bible Fellowship for training their leaders (in English) was an encouraging development. Steve Palmer joined the team in 2011 to strengthen the English side of training, but Mr Daniel Khawas left around the same time. Books distribution did not grow adequately this year as we could not get enough copies of several fast moving titles from the publishers. Uncertainties in the area of funding and the inevitable effects of this on the training programs and other activities slowed down our otherwise hectic schedules.

The impact evaluation encouraged us greatly in terms of the positive responses we received from our trainees. Their valuable suggestions for improvement made us look at our training methodology and teaching aids afresh and gave the team opportunity to use their creative talents, too. They worked on improving the student's handbook and incorporating a number of activities into the training program to make it more interactive. It was also a major tool in the development of the strategic plan for the next three years.

2011-12

Hearing of natural disasters (e.g. Kashmir and Sikkim earthquakes, Leh floods, etc.), the Church wanted to help the affected communities, but did not know how to get involved. BCTI in partnership with other ministries was in the forefront in equipping community counsellors for post disaster counseling. Steve Palmer, a specialist in addiction and trauma counseling, worked on a trauma counseling training manual. This manual, *A Training Guide for Community Counsellors Assisting Survivors of a Natural Disaster* has been adopted by the government as the base material for the training of community counsellors. This year saw Laldushakha and Vicky Patel also joining the team, while Akshay Rajkumar left in April 2011.

2012-13

Our IBCC program had become popular among churches over the years and the total number of trainees that year rose to 322. Trauma Counseling training programs had been on the rise, too. Ebin Thankachan and Nidish Philip joined during summer 2013. We began work on the consolidation of our training programs.

2013-14: Highlights

- Partnership with SIM for fundraising efforts resulted in a substantial grant, thereby improving the financial situation.
- Book sales went up ten times, Hindi language training fees five times and short seminars receipts three times during this year, compared to the previous year.
- The number of participants completing the IBCC training modules in Hindi went up to 399 from 322 the previous year.
- The number of persons attending short seminars this year was 1095.
- Trauma counseling training conducted for trainers and community counsellors from several churches and organizations.
- Vinita Chacko and Ritesh Dutt left as employees, but continued to be part of the training team as volunteers.

- A partnership agreement for an online counseling course was signed with Christian Counseling Education Foundation (CCEF).

2014-15

Four major mental health conferences, seven parenting seminars with Tedd and Margy Tripp in as many major cities and the launching of the online course in May 2014 were the major highlights of the year 2014-15. The year concluded with the 10th anniversary celebrations on 31st March 2015.

In May 2014, in partnership with EHA and Mental Health Forum, Dehradun, the first national conference on A Christian Response to Mental Health was held at New Theological College in Dehradun. This was a successful effort in bringing together leaders of different fields in healing ministry to share experiences and learn from each other. Dr Ed Welch and Dr Mike Emlet, faculty from CCEF were the plenary speakers. 250 participants attended from all over India.

2014-15 marked a change in the way we delivered training for English speakers in India, with our core program shifting from the residential school based IBCC to the online-based biblical counseling training in partnership with CCEF in the USA. We launched the online program in May 2014 and our first class started in January 2015. Sixteen students enrolled from urban centres all over India (Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi, Ludhiana, Dehradun) in “Dynamics of Biblical Change”, the first unit offered.

2015-16

The changing sociopolitical situation in the country had its effect on our training programs during the year 2015-16. The targets set for the year in the training program for Pastors and leaders (IBCC) could not be fully attained as a number of scheduled training programs had to be postponed or cancelled during the reporting year. The situation has improved to some extent now and hopefully we will be able to do better in the coming years. After she completed her Masters in Theology

and six months intensive at CCEF, Sarah Prabhakar rejoined BCTI in early 2015 and took over as Manager for the training programs and the newly launched online course. We were sad to say goodbye to Steve Palmer and his family and this was a great loss for the ministry.

The online course took off and gathered momentum during 2015. With the strengthening of our trainer-counsellors team, the counseling service has been picking up gradually. The Training of Trainers (TOT) and mentoring program have resulted in a good number of volunteer trainers now conducting training programs at their own locations. Several of them have now joined the BCTI training team as volunteer trainers which reduces the team's travel time and cost. Continuing education for our Trainer counsellors was another new initiative this year. All of them were enrolled as students for the online courses directly with CCEF.

The Present BCTI Team

BCTI has faced various challenges. But even through these difficult times staff members have stayed on displaying a significant level of commitment to the vision. Currently, there are eight members of the team and one volunteer who is studying in the US:

1. Dr John K John, the founder Director, gives overall direction and leadership.
2. Sarah Prabhakar is the Manager for Counseling and Training.
3. Ebin Thankachan is the Administrator.
4. Fairy Tak coordinates training programs in Hindi.
5. Shiju John, Nidish Philip are Trainers.
6. Bino Philip looks after finance and accounts.
7. A John is in administration and books promotion in the Dehradun office, in addition to ministering to people.
8. Dr. Raja Paulraj, volunteering as Consultant Psychiatrist, and his wife Jessica Paulraj are currently in the US where Raja is undergoing his MDiv studies in Pastoral Counseling.

Ministry of BCTI At A Glance (April 2005 - March 2016)

Description	English Participants	Hindi Participants	Total Leaders, Lay Persons
IBCC	309	1046	1355
Short Seminars	5301	1484	6785
Training of Trainers	8	34	42
Counseling Sessions			437
Book and Training Material Distributed (Approx.)			3000
TOTALS	5618	2564	11619

IMPACT OF THE INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL COUNSELING COURSE (IBCC)

A Life Transformed

Geeta (name changed) is one of our IBCC participants in Ranchi. The first time I looked at her, I thought of her as a person who is in the training because of the pressure of the organisers. I doubted whether she was able to understand what we were trying to teach in our training of Biblical change. But she amazed me later with her story. While we were doing a session on “our identity”, Geeta got up to testify how this training has helped her look at herself from God’s perspective. Geeta said that in a culture where “fair is beautiful” she used to be ashamed of herself being dark. But after hearing how God made us wonderfully and fearfully and His promises and thoughts for us, we witnessed streams of tears coming from Geeta as she confessed that she has not respected God by questioning Him in the way He created her.

That was just the start! Geeta kept surprising us with her continuous testimony of change that is happening in her and her family life. Geeta said, “even if there is no one coming for this training, even if it’s too hot, too rainy or cold, I will be there for this training. I look forward to what you have next for us and for me personally. I have

never understood the Bible like this before and I enjoy every bit of this training”.

A Pastor's Story

“This training is different than all the trainings I have attended thus far. Being a pastor, I always advised people based on my own understanding. But here I learnt the method of understanding people's struggles. Being a pastor, I always thought that I was right and my church should obey whatever I tell them. There was a situation when I had to stay outside of my home for a week to attend training. But it so happened that I came back home after three days. I was quite surprised at the response of my family on my early arrival. They thought that their opportunity to live in peace for a few days had been destroyed by my sudden arrival. This incident hurt me a lot and I had bitterness against them. But, through this training, I realized that I need to change first. I need to put people and their needs before mine. So I went home after the third day of this training and I apologised to my wife and children for being so dominant and not being Christ-like. They were surprised and happy at this change in me and after many months I could feel the warmth in our relationship again.”

The “Know It All” Teacher

“I had that attitude of ‘I know it all’. I used to go to many seminars and easily grasp the information and was very proud to teach it to others. But after attending this training I realized that my life and my teachings were not deep enough. I used to teach the importance of getting feedback from others about our walk with God and others. But after coming to this training, I could see myself in the mirror of God's Word and I learned about so many things that I need to change in myself. My neighbour troubles us and I always prayed for God to change them but after this training I realized that God wants me to change through them. So after attending the training for two days, I didn't shout at them and didn't put the garbage they put at our door to

their door. I quietly cleaned all the garbage. They were surprised and were asking what happened to me. I testified to them that my God wants me to love and forgive them.”

More Testimonies of Participants of IBCC

“The first module was awesome! The revelation that the Cross alone is the centre point for human heart change hit me hard. I knew the Cross was needed for salvation, but felt we could somehow bring about behaviour change through other means.”

“I called my teenage son yesterday evening after the sessions and asked his forgiveness for my unbiblical ways in relating to him. We both wept!”

“The big picture of becoming more like Christ everyday was a big encouragement for me in the midst of the struggles that I faced in my life. Your training is that instrument which is helping people to become more like Christ.”

“I was having relational problems with my daughter. After going through this training, I could see how my controlling nature has contributed to the problems between me and my daughter. After the training, I realized how I made an idol of myself and have been worshipping my own desires. God helped me to learn to commit her future to God and ask forgiveness for trying to control her.”

IMPACT OF OTHER BCTI OFFERINGS

Short Seminars

Neetu attended one of our alcohol addiction seminar and gained many insights from that. Her husband, though not an addict, used to drink occasionally. Neetu used to quarrel with her husband when he came home drunk and the situation would worsen. However, after

attending the seminar she started responding differently and the results were positive. Her husband has almost stopped drinking. The family is now happily growing in the Lord.

The story doesn't finish here. Neetu owns a tailoring shop and she is using this platform to reach out to other women struggling with similar issues. She says she is improving on her listening skills and her clients are opening up more and more. To her delight, clients counts are increasing too!

Training of Trainers (TOT)

"This training was quite beneficial for me to understand how to teach adults in ways that are interesting and easier for them rather than just lecturing."

"I want to thank God for this time and you brothers. Because the struggle which I was undergoing was quite hard for me, but now I got new directions and was able to understand myself. I have learnt many things and would like to make those things practical. I would like to ask forgiveness from my Co-Pastor (a fellow participant), because I had spoken harshly about him and against him, so I want to say please forgive me, as I seek forgiveness from my heart. I was able to do this because the cross gave me strength to take this step."

Online Course

"I am a medical doctor, working in a Christian medical institution in North India. I am the mother of three young children. I felt a keen need to understand the way I thought through things, [to] see how the Word of God could speak to some of the struggles I was going through. I was also increasingly seeing young medical students around me struggling to cope with the pressures of life and felt helpless in the face of the many things that I saw there. The "Dynamics of Biblical Change" course was God-sent. The course spoke directly into my life, my needs and my struggles. Dynamics changed my way of thinking

and responding tremendously. I learned the subject by walking the change myself. The most amazing thing about the course was that it opened for me a whole new platform for accessing wonderful reading material, insightful articles, and in-depth lectures.”

Counseling Services

Nirmala (name changed) is a Hindu who came for Biblical Counseling regarding very serious struggles in her married life. After going through several sessions, she said, “The truth about our sinfulness and our tendency to love ourselves more than others has opened my eyes.” As a result, Nirmala has been working on checking the issues of her heart rather than focusing on her husband and his responses. According to her, she feels much more at peace within herself. This insight has strengthened her to choose to honour her husband even in difficult times. She found the Biblical concept of grace and forgiveness powerful and impacting.

DEVELOPING GRASSROOTS LEADERS AMONG WOMEN

OUR TWENTY YEAR EXPERIENCE WITH WOMEN
IN NORTH INDIA

ANNIE ABRAHAM

Sometimes our outreach, however well planned and executed, fails to connect. Here is how one person's response to God's call was multiplied through a chain of emerging women leaders.

BACKGROUND OF DEBORAH MINISTRY

After two millennia, hundreds of Bible colleges have been established and thousands of graduates emerge every year. But the job is not yet over! We have not reached the finish line! Untold millions are still waiting to hear the Gospel. Many of them “heard” it, but did not understand because it was not communicated in their heart language and style. Out of all the unreached souls, most of them are women.

There is Hope

At last, the global church is opening its eyes to this truth. There is an increasing awareness among mission agencies, since the formation of Table 71 at Amsterdam 2000, to train and send oral communicators who will take the Gospel to unreached people in their heart language and style, so that they get an opportunity to understand and respond. If we want to see the Great Commission fulfilled in our generation, we need a paradigm shift in the way we think and train our evangelists and leaders.

Whatever their academic credentials are, unless they are willing to go down to the common man and communicate the message in his/her heart language in a culturally acceptable and Biblically sound method, there will not be effective church growth. To reach down to the common man, the grassroots leader must be familiar with oral communication methods because a majority of the unreached people are oral learners. The lecture pedagogy has to be replaced by oral method. This was our experience over the past two decades.

The Beginning

In the late 1980s, the ministry of Operation Agape was launched as a humble effort to reach out to the people of Punjab who were going through unspeakable misery because of Sikh militancy. Committed men went from door to door with the gospel of the Prince of Peace. Several people accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour and house churches were formed. After my post-graduation, I was working as a lecturer in the Department of Radiology, Christian Medical College, Ludhiana, Punjab. I visited some of the mission fields in Punjab, Jammu Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. The condition of women in those areas was miserable. Illiteracy, ignorance, male dominance, dowry-related problems and forced abortion were some of major issues that women were dealing with. They were oppressed and depressed. They had no voice or choice. They were left to suffer at the hands of husbands, In-laws and society. The only hope for them was Jesus, who could deliver them.

But who will take the message to them? Most of these women were not accessible to male evangelists. They needed women from their own communities to communicate the message in their own language and style.

The question that the Lord asked Isaiah, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for me?” (Isaiah 6:8), was ringing in my ears. These thoughts haunted me till I said, “Yes Lord, if you send me I will go.” But where should I go and what shall I do? India is a vast country and a country made up of many countries, each with its own culture and language. Can a drop make a difference to the sea? As I look back, after 20 years, I am simply amazed by the wonderful things God did through this humble ministry. I can say with Paul, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow” (1 Corinthians 3:6).

Initial Years

After I resigned from my post, I started praying for guidance. The Lord opened the doors. With the help of house church leaders, we organised meetings for women in different places. We preferred to host these meetings in the house of a believing woman or in an open space rather than churches. This was helpful as women from the neighbourhood could come, irrespective of their faith. We addressed the issues faced by women and prayed for those who shared their problems. We could present Jesus, as the only one who can understand our problems and deliver us. We travelled extensively through various unreached areas and conducted women’s prayer cells for three to five days in each place. There was a tremendous response, but there was no one to do the follow up other than the house church leaders who were almost always men.

Mission and Vision

Deborah was just an ordinary woman who lived in Israel. She was a judge and a prophetess. Compared to her predecessors, Othniel, Ehud

and Shamgar, she had no credentials. But under the anointing of God, she did great things, which even the men of her time could not do. She was instrumental in delivering her people from the hands of the enemy.

Those of us involved in Deborah Ministry believed that women, irrespective of their educational qualifications or status in society will do great things under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, if they surrender their lives to God. With his belief in our hearts, the vision of Deborah Ministry became: *To see that every woman in North India gets an opportunity to hear the Gospel.* And the mission became: *To develop women leaders at the Grassroots Level in each community.*

DEBORAH MINISTRY LEADERS

Training of Leaders

After ten years of travelling and conducting Deborah prayer cells, we observed that it was not enough to have evangelism and discipleship programmes. We needed to develop leadership among the women with the following distinctions in mind:

- We needed leaders from each ethno-linguistic group, as the culture and style are different in each group.
- The leaders should be “insiders” and not outsiders.
- The leaders should have short, practical and ongoing training.
- The training should be focusing on oral methods rather than lecture type teaching.
- The leaders should have a sound knowledge about the basic principles of faith in Christ and a good testimony in the society.

Keeping all of this in mind, the Deborah Leadership Program was launched in 2006. We selected mature women with a good testimony from the house churches. We gave them two weeks of intensive training, in the foundational doctrines of the New Testament church.

Special emphasis was given on family life and ministry skills. At the end of the course, they were ready to start women's prayer cells in their areas. At the end of the month of ministry, they came back with exciting reports. Later, we extended the program to other states. Today, there are more than 120 leaders who are involved in Deborah Ministry.

These leaders receive ongoing training in the following areas:

1. **Bible study:** As many of the women selected for the leadership program are not well rooted and grounded in the word of God, we have a time of Bible study when they come together every month. This is done by discussion, presentation, skits, etc.
2. **Practice for ministry in the field:** The stories to be shared in their prayer cells are well practiced. Workshops are also conducted to demonstrate how to conduct the prayer cells and clubs.
3. **Mentoring:** It is not easy for women leaders who have family (sometimes a joint family). Very often the husband is not sharing the household responsibilities. Therefore, is not easy for women to go out of the home and be actively involved in evangelism and church planting. As women evangelists, they are sometimes ridiculed by their society. They need to be prayed for and to be encouraged.

Responsibilities of Deborah Leaders

1. Women's Ministry

Deborah leaders are to organise weekly women's prayer cells. Most often this is conducted in a woman's house. This makes women from different religious background gather easily. The Deborah leader shares the word of God through storytelling.

2. Children Ministry

Every Deborah leader is trained to conduct a children's club. This is different from Sunday school, which is focused on the children of the believers. In the club, children attend from all faith back-

grounds. Wherever possible, they conduct Balwadies (non-formal schools) for the children who do not go to school and free tuition centres for the school-going children.

3. Prayer Ministry

The leader, along with other believers, does prayer walks around the community. Once a week, all the leaders do intercessory prayer, along with other believing women.

4. Evangelistic Visits

Instead of going door-to-door, the leaders are asked to make a list of their contacts (e.g. neighbours, children's friends, etc.), pray over them and share the gospel. They use various resource materials:

- New Believers' Manual (a collection of 21 lessons for the starters)
- BILD series (Biblical Institute of Leadership Development)
- 50 Bible stories (a collection of 50 stories related to evangelism and discipleship)
- Community Transformation Handbook (a collection of 50 subjects related to social issues)
- Audio Visual aids (e.g. Jesus film, evangel cube, etc.)

5. Accountability

The leaders are supposed to submit monthly reports, which are checked and discussed. This gives them accountability and responsibility.

Levels and Evaluation of Leaders

Deborah Ministry has different levels of leadership. Master Trainers (MT) are the coordinators of a state or region. They are full-time ministers who train and develop the next level leaders or D1 leaders. The D1 leaders are the local grassroots leaders who conduct women's cells and children's clubs. The next generation leaders or D2 leaders are volunteers who share their testimonies and the gospel. D1 leaders, including oral learners, go through the simplest level of training called Leadership Mastery-1 (LM-1), which is part of the BILD course. Those

who are capable go to higher levels.

A Deborah leader is evaluated in different ways. From time to time, we help them to evaluate their own personal life, family life and spiritual life by questionnaires and Bible lessons. Their scripture knowledge is evaluated by Bible quiz and competitions. This challenges them and encourages them to study the Word. Their ministry is evaluated by checking their monthly reports as well, as by the field visits of the Master Trainers.

Orality Training

A large section of the women in unreached areas remain oral learners. Some are oral learners by necessity, as they have not been to school (primary oral learners). Other choose not to read (secondary oral learners). We conduct special meetings for these oral learners on a regular basis. This is done through storytelling and discussion in small groups, learning songs and Bible verses related to the story, analysing by the SWORD method, skits, competitions, etc. We have found this extremely fruitful. Some of the oral learners surprised us by their memory power and ability to grasp the Bible truths through stories. A few of them have emerged as leaders, conducting women's prayer cells and children's clubs.

STORIES OF DEBORAH MINISTRY D1 LEADERS

Note that all the names have been changed.

Radha

48-year-old Radha has a big family – husband, eight children, three step-children (from the second wife of husband) and six grandchildren. They belong to the Marathi people group. Several years ago she and her husband settled in a slum in Ludhiana, Punjab, along with few other families. Her husband did some petty jobs and she did rag picking with the other women. Her miserable life continued until one day a

student from the Agape Bible School, Prakash, shared the good news about Jesus during his outreach ministry. As Prakash was also from the same Marathi people group, he could communicate well with the slum dwellers. Four people believed, including Radha. She opened her hut for the prayer meetings. Later, several others also were added to this fellowship. In her extreme poverty, Radha stood firm in the Lord. Her husband and children also became believers. After some time, though, Radha's husband married her sister and had three more children. The family often did not have enough food, but Radha's hard work made sure that everyone had enough to eat. She brought several slum dwellers to faith in Christ.

As believers' number increased, a small church hall was built in the slum. Radha and other women helped in the construction of the hall. She became an elder in the church. Ten years ago, as we started the Deborah Training Program, Radha joined the team. Though totally illiterate, she emerged as a good leader and was influential among her own people. She can recite more than 100 Bible verses and stories. God has blessed her children and grandchildren. She is a voluntary social worker in the slum.

Rani

45-year-old Rani migrated from Bihar to Ludhiana, Punjab with her husband and three small children. She did not know what was in store for her. They rented out a single room and they struggled to provide for the children, who were often falling sick. One day, her neighbour, Usha, another Bihari woman who had recently accepted Jesus, shared her faith with Rani. Rani and her children started attending the local house church. As they started praying and singing songs at home, her husband opposed their faith. But Rani was strong in her faith. Her prayers brought him to the feet of Jesus. Rani started attending the Deborah training every month. This family was staying close to the Bible school run by Agape Ministry. Every six months, a batch of students graduated and went to different parts of the country to serve

the Lord. Rani had a desire in her heart for her husband to also become a pastor. But how could this happen? If he goes to the Bible school, who will provide for the family? Hoping against hope, she shared her dream with us. We did not know how to provide for the family, but the Lord opened a door.

A missionary couple who visited us during that time decided to support the family while he was in the Bible school. Varun, her husband was taken as a student. He struggled to cope with the studies, as he had done only primary schooling. Again, the Lord did wonders and he graduated. They were allotted an area of people from Bihar who stayed in a colony. They also stayed in a small room near them and ministered among them. Rani did more work than her husband and soon a house church was formed. Rani is semiliterate and reads with difficulty, but she attended the Orality training without fail. She now has a good knowledge of the Bible and has developed generations of disciples. Some of them have emerged as excellent leaders. Together, Rani and Varun are pastoring a fast growing church among the Bihari and UP diaspora in Punjab.

Gurnam

Gurnam had everything she wanted in life, but she had no peace after her husband's younger brother committed suicide. Her husband started having dreams about his brother who was inviting him to also commit suicide. So Gurnam and her family tried different things to bring peace to her husband. In spite of spending money to those who promised to heal him, nothing happened. Finally, her sister who had recently accepted Christ asked her to call a pastor and conduct a prayer meeting at her home. The Lord healed her husband in that meeting, where the word of God was shared. Gurnam and her family were baptised and they joined the local church. She soon started sharing her faith with friends and relatives, some who believed and some who opposed.

We invited her to attend the Deborah training program. Though she was an enthusiastic believer, she lacked knowledge and foundation in the Word of God. The oral learners' Bible knowledge challenged her and she started to study the word. Gurnam is an excellent leader now and has a church at home. She is boldly witnessing that Jesus is the Saviour. Her special burden is on her community of Jat Sikhs. She travels all over Punjab and neighbouring states and shares the truth that Jesus Christ is the real Guru (the teacher).

Kiran

Kiran and her husband are from UP. They lived in a small rented room in Ludhiana, Punjab with four other families, each living in a single room. They did some petty jobs to provide for the family, but poverty and recurrent diseases made life difficult in that one room house. A woman from the neighbourhood shared the good news about Jesus and soon Kiran and her husband started going to the house church. They experienced the peace and joy that was available in Jesus. The children were admitted in the Agape Christian School, where they learned to sing songs and pray. Kiran shared her faith with her neighbours and all four families living in her compound became believers. Kiran was asked to join the Deborah training program. Though totally illiterate, she quickly learned the stories and Bible verses. She also learned how to tell the stories well. She developed a burden for the children of her neighbours and started a weekly children's club in her small one room house. Her teenage daughters help her in conducting the club.

Saroj

42-year-old Saroj is from Haryana. Her one hand was weak from childhood due to polio. When she was a teenager, one of her neighbours shared about Christ. She attended a local church and the believers prayed for her. The Lord healed her. Though her hand was still thin, it became functional. She became a believer, but her family forced her

to marry a non-Christian. Saroj shared the gospel with her husband and led him to salvation. They had two daughters. She attended the Deborah leadership program and started a prayer cell for women in her one-room house. Later, men also started attending the meetings. The local pastor helped her to conduct the church. As more people started attending the church, there was no space and she prayed. The pastor bought a piece of adjacent land and made a church hall. Today, Saroj and her church are meeting in a spacious place. Her story is inspiring many others.

Sarita

35-year-old Sarita is from a Christian family in Darjeeling. She settled in a small rented house with her husband and daughter. She regularly attended the local house church. Four years ago, she joined Deborah training and became an excellent storyteller. She is living in a house where four families stay in separate rooms. Sarita developed a burden for the neighbouring women and started a weekly prayer cell for them. Along with the women, their children also started coming. These children were not going to school for various reasons. One of the rooms in her compound became vacant. She converted it to a non-formal school and started teaching 30 children to read and write for two hours a day. On Saturdays, she called their mothers and conducted a women's prayer cell. She faced opposition from some of the neighbours, but stood firm in her faith and prayed. Today she has emerged as a good leader, actively involved in the training of oral learners.

CONCLUSION

It is our desire that the Lord will raise thousands of women leaders in India who, like these simple women, can communicate the message of the gospel to their own communities, transforming the lives of women who are oppressed by the powers of darkness. In summary, we are commending the following ideas:

- Developing grassroots leaders is the need of the hour.
- Women are best reached by women.
- The churches and mission agencies are to encourage and support women leaders.

NATIONAL PRAYER & CHURCH TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE

A SUMMARY HISTORY

SAMUEL YESUDASS & CORNEL NATHAN

How do you bring transformation to a Nation? It has to begin with the church being transformed and committed to prayer and action for the Nation, as this initiative demonstrates.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

In September 2004, a group of Church Leaders came together in Chennai, India. This meeting birthed an initiative for a focused prayer for the Nation and sharing the gospel. This initiative was named the National Prayer and Church Transformation Initiative (NPCTI). The leaders spent a whole day praying and discussing how to lead on reaching the Nation during their lifetime. They came up with the following

objective for NPCTI: To raise up an umbrella of prayer and share the Word of God all over the Nation. Executing the Great Commission in every Village, Urban Colony and among every People and Language Group with a sense of urgency. (Note: This is to be accomplished by the efforts of the Church in India by sending out one person from every Church supported by that Church)

They agreed that the NPCTI needed to be 1) Totally Church based and Church-Centric and 2) Voluntary in efforts and finances. Over the past ten years, teams of sincere volunteers at State/District/Block/City levels have been developed to envision the Churches with the above objectives. It is noteworthy that more than 47,130 Churches have been envisioned to pray for the country and to conduct prayer walks, especially in North India. 3,267 Churches across the country have adopted a district for prayer and the sending of their missionaries.

In 2012, in a Review Meeting of the NPCTI, volunteers/elders/leaders at Chennai voiced that efforts should be made for the involvement of the Episcopal and the Organized Church Organizations. An opportunity was then given by the Lord to address and envision many such Christian leaders. Eventually, United Christian Prayer for India (UCPI) was originated with a spirit that the united Church can contribute to the blessing of the Nation. The development of UCPI is told in more detail in chapter 4 of this book.

This has been a long journey over the past several years. The vision to reach our Nation must be the priority of the Church, according to the biblical mandate of the Great Commission. This involves both a burdened prayer and an executable plan involving the whole Church. The task of bringing the whole Church to plan collectively with this common burden seems like an impossible task. But God is accomplishing all that is necessary to reach the people of our Nation with an urgency and concern.

It has been 2,000 years since the gospel reached this Nation and still only two to three percent have received the Gospel. It is the role of the Church to pray and intercede for the Nation and also to disciple the

Nation in the Word of God, leading to transformation of our Nation. NPCTI has become a movement to bring the vision of this mandated role back to the Church. It is a Church-centred and Church-based movement, working in and under the authority of the Church.

BACKGROUND OF NPCTI

On 6th September 2004, a group of Church Leaders met in Chennai to discuss the need for national level prayer for various challenges and issues facing the nation. The just-concluded elections were seen as the intervention of the Lord and an answer to prayer and this was taken as a window of opportunity for the Church to be the Nation builder. With this background, the meeting resulted in the birth of NPCTI, setting clear objectives.

The overwhelming response of all the leaders was firstly, that God was indeed expecting his people to ask for the Nation to be transformed. Secondly, that this should be a united effort with prayer and intercession for the sins of the nation as a whole, which are the essential prerequisites for the work of God in the Country. Thirdly, they fixed an urgent time frame to reach out with the good news. The following assessments came out of hours of prayer and deliberations from 2004 to 2007: 1) Raising an Umbrella of Prayer and the Word of God over the Nation and 2) Challenging the body of Christ to intercede for the blessing of geographical areas, urban colonies, villages or people groups.

In the last ten years, we have been steadily moving on the two focused objectives of NPCTI:

- **Prayer and Prayer Walks:** To focus intense prayer and intercession for our Nation by the Body of Christ of India for healing of the Nation (1 Peter 2:9, 2 Peter 3:9, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Ezekiel 22:30).

- **Great Commission:** To execute the mandate of the Great Commission in every location and people group with urgency. The effort by the Church to do the works of God has to be carried “piggyback” by the Prayer and Prayer Walk effort of the whole Church in India. This crescendo or buildup of prayer is for the Lord to answer the prayer to reach out to India with urgency. “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty” (Zechariah 4:6).

2004-2011: THE JOURNEY OF NPCTI

2004-2007: Strengthening of the Vision

Since its beginning, NPCTI has recognized that unity couldn’t be achieved without a purpose and the purpose should be big enough that everyone can get involved. United efforts were put to develop strategies to implement the vision. A Prayer Circuit was planned for systematically covering the nation in prayer. A workable strategy was developed to train disciples to take the Gospel to needy villages in a systematic manner.

Decisions were taken during a meeting on 31st July 2007 in Chennai. The following suggestions were considered to further the objectives of NPCTI for the year 2008:

- *Focus Area:* 80% of the Indian Church is in South India (Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka) and 10% in the Northeast. These are the areas to envision for prayer.
- *District Coordinators:* Envision and nominate District Coordinators (Volunteers) to envision the churches within districts and help the vision of NPCTI reach the villages. The District Coordinator will work to find one volunteer per block for envisioning. Block Coordinators will then be tasked to envision local Church leaders in their blocks.

- *Prayer Walk*: It was suggested that all the District Coordinators, who are selected/nominated/envisioned as volunteers to carry forward the NPCTI objectives, be invited to attend an upcoming prayer walk for first-hand, personal experience of a prayer walk in such a stronghold in such large numbers.

From 27th to 30th October 2007, NPCTI was successful in bringing together and envisioning Pastors from 97 Districts of South India and about 100 Districts of North India to a prayer walk event in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh. This event moved the vision of NPCTI from the State leaders to the District-level leaders. The culmination of the event was the “Yeshu Yatra”.

2008: Focus on Prayer Walks

The gospel sharing movement in our Nation, which is the second part of the vision, has to be undertaken by the Church of India releasing lay leaders supported by the Church in serving God. However, we have felt that between the burden casting and the actual sacrificial move of the Pastor, we need an intermediate phase. This intermediate phase is a focused, planned and executed prayer walk event in the whole of the country.

With this as a background, over 2,500 Pastors and church leaders from several Indian denominations and many hundreds of independent pastors from over 2,000 blocks (clusters of 100 villages) met in August 2008 in the Apostolic Christian Assembly Church (ACA), Chennai for two days to deliberate as per the stated objectives. They travelled on their own expense. The facilities for stay and food were basic, which included sleeping on the floor for all.

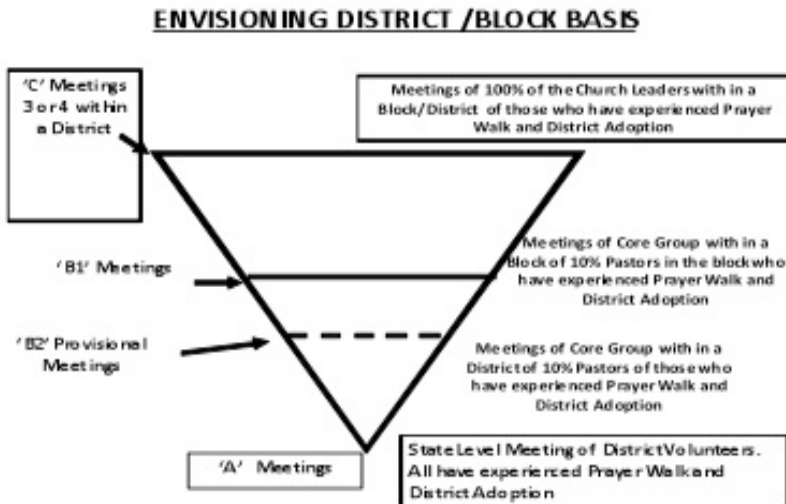
During this period all delegates were helped to systematically plan for the 2008 Yeshu Yatra, which should involve all the Churches in their respective blocks. The elements of the plan were:

1. Survey for strongholds (places, people and events).
2. Envision all the Churches.
3. Involve all the Churches for the Prayer Walk in October 2008.

Following this meeting and much local envisioning, about 30,000 Pastors participated in the Prayer Walk from October 2008 until 2009. It was a great experience, as testified by many.

March 2009: Meeting in Mumbai

All the key leaders from different States met in Mumbai in March 2009 and discussed the completion of the envisioning of 100% of the pastors in the 97 districts of South India through the ABC Method (see graphic below).



The following resources of the B and C meetings were made:

- *An envisioning booklet*: This booklet had the shortened version of the vision to help the Pastors when they will visit their colleagues to share the burden of NPCTI. This booklet also had a planning sheet to get the list of the Pastors who will take the responsibility to envision and bring all the Pastors for the C meeting.
- *Planning for the C meeting*: Our tentative programme for the C meeting was made out and distributed, so that all the elements of the C meeting can be planned out by the Pastors during the B meeting.
- *Stronghold Booklets*: “Prayer Places” booklets for distribution to the Pastors were also given to them.
- *Pledge Card*: A Pledge Card was distributed to all the Pastors when they came for the C meeting. Pledge Card has three parts: 1) Select and pray as a Church for an unreached District in your State. 2) Your Church will engage in sustained Prayer Walk in that Adopted District. 3) Challenge one person from your Church to go to that District according to Matthew 28:19, supported by the Local Church.

April 2010: Meeting in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh

In April 2010, about 1,000 Pastors and leaders came to Hosanna Mandir in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh. Representatives came from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra, Karnataka, North Eastern States and Uttar Pradesh. Hosanna Ministries hosted the event. Reports were presented from representatives of the different states. Many testimonies on the effects of Prayer Walks were shared and future plans were put forth. Information was presented in such a way that delegates were challenged to enlarge their vision.

In South India, envisioning had reached District and Block/Mandal levels. The main objective now was to plan how to envision 100% of the churches in the areas of each of the attendees. Each Church/Pastor/Leader was exhorted to pray, to do prayer walks, to sign the pledge card adopting a district and to commit to the Great Commission from their church. They were also encouraged to use the different tools for sharing the gospel, which were presented by various resource people. All the delegates planned for the C Meeting. All the Leaders were led by the Lord to intercede for the Nation by praying symbolically in the shape of India.

July 2011: National Meeting in Thiruvalla, Kerala

On 13th and 14th July 2011, over 360 Block Coordinators representing Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, North East, North India, Tamil Nadu and Kerala met in Thiruvalla, Kerala. During the meeting, the representatives from every State could fathom their present situation in the field of prayer, prayer walks and envisioning churches in their adoption of a District. The most important highlight of this meeting was that the core teams from the different states in South India and the North East had built up State and District Teams and planned to carry the work further.

This meeting was a turning point for the NPCTI as the ownership of the Vision for the Nation and resolve to move ahead was taken on by these core teams. Needless to say, this was very satisfying to the Elders and Patrons to see this response of ownership.

Planning was also done to complete the task, including a plan to involve the Organized Churches, as well as the balance of the other Churches. In addition to prayer for the Nation by the adoption of districts, greater emphasis was placed on sharing the gospel by churches

For example, the following organisations in North East India have approved or are in the process of taking the Initiative forward, under their framework, through their organisational channels:

- CBCNEI (Council of Baptist Churches in North East India) and a few of the Conventions under it like Assam Baptist Convention. Manipur Baptist Convention
- Mizoram Baptist Church
- Mizoram Presbyterian Church
- Presbyterian Church of India, Shillong, Meghalaya
- Salvation Army (Eastern Territory), Aizawl, Mizoram

Adoption of Districts by the churches under them for prayer, prayer walks and the Great Commission have already been done with their approvals.

2012-2014: TRANSITION TO UCPI

January 2012: National Core Leaders Meeting

From 12th to 14th January 2012, a National Core Leaders Meeting was held in NLAG Church, Chennai. The meeting was called to take stock of the situation, to give thanks to the Lord and to think of the future of this unique movement, which was mobilizing the churches to their mandated role of intercession and fulfilling the Great Commission efforts.

It was unanimously voiced that all efforts be made to continue the NPCTI movement with its objectives to reach out and make disciples with urgency. Discussions were held on the great need to ask the Episcopal, as well as Organized Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches to be involved in the prayer initiatives. It was pointed out and emphasized by the leadership to make all necessary initiatives to approach the top leadership of different Organized Churches before the next national meeting

United Christian Prayer for India (UCPI)

Eventually an opportunity was given by the Lord to address and envision many Christian leaders of several Episcopal and Organized Churches between July and December 2012. As a result, United Christian Prayer for India (UCPI) originated with an emphasis on what the united Church can give to the Nation. It was agreed to begin with united praying for the blessing of the Nation. Archbishop Vincent M Concessao kindly agreed to be Chairperson for this UCPI initiative. He travelled with the volunteers of UCPI to several states of our country to envision the church leaders.

As a first step for UCPI, it was agreed to unitedly pray for the Nation. The Prayer for the Nation event of 30th November 2013 took place in around 1,200 places in India and was held unitedly by several Churches. The Churches were encouraged to pray for the election of the Nation, so that the right kinds of leaders are elected to rule the Nation with justice and righteousness.

UCPI also encouraged the Churches to pray for the Nation during the Lok Sabha Elections in May 2014. On 26th May 2014, our Nation had a new government sworn in under Shri Narendra Modi. In what could not be a coincidence, on 27th May 2016, the Meeting of United Christian Prayer for India was attended by Bishops and Church Leaders of so many denominations in a very symbolical manner. We prayed for our Nation and joined hands together to seek the Face of God for our Nation.

As told more fully in chapter 4, the movement of prayer for the nation has continued through UCPI. Perhaps it is the fulfilment of our common missionary mandate that will truly bring us together into the one Church that Jesus prayed for in John 17.

MAIN POINTS OF PROGRESS

Praying For the Nation

Significant progress has taken place in the first part of the objective – to envision the Church of India to have a burden for prayer and to pray for the Nation. Over the years, it is seen that churches all over the Nation were gradually getting this burden and having regular prayers for our Nation.

Collective Events for Prayer

Simultaneous to routine prayer for the Nation in the Church, various events have been organized to strengthen the process of prayer for the Nation such as the Global Day of Prayer and the National Day of Prayer. These have brought in unity of purpose and in participation of many local churches.

Prayer Walks

Over the last few years, we have seen the start of churches sending out teams for prayer walks in North India or locally. This prayer walking is such a crucial element in the whole strategy for reaching the Nation. We have seen thousands of prayer walkers from different churches come to pray for the Nation, covering several places that need prayer.

In 2010, the Tamil Nadu state team shared their experience of prayer walking: “We have been motivated to send prayer warriors on their own to North India and specially to the states like Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, also to Karnataka. By God’s grace we have sent prayer warriors to Karnataka and have covered 14 districts out of 29. Pastors have been busily engaging themselves and praying for their districts every week or once in a month.”

Adoption of Districts by Churches

Prayer for India and Gospel sharing go hand in hand. They are two faces of the same coin. Prayer by itself will NOT complete the role of the Church. With this in mind, over 3,267 churches have each adopted a district to send dedicated workers by signing a pledge. During the NPCTI National Meeting in July 2011, one of the decisions was to mobilize 500 missionaries in Kerala. The team in Kerala took a Mission Challenge Trip to all fourteen Districts of Kerala, challenging the churches to release missionaries. Then on 3rd October 2012, about 1,000 pastors/leaders came together from different churches in Kochi, Kerala and joyfully prayed for and dedicated 304 lay people to serve God.

Transformation Stories

A prostitute area in Andhra Pradesh was transformed into a vegetable market because of prayer in 2009-10. Moreover, many of the sex workers became members and leaders of a local church.

Elsewhere, the Malappuram district in Kerala has been resistant to the gospel. Over these years there has been constant prayer and prayer walking in this district by the few churches within the district and church from different parts of Kerala and India. This resulted in a progressive increase in distributing gospel literatures during Christmas season. In Christmas 2013, a small team with fear and trembling distributed about 100 New Testaments and tracts, in 2014 about 4,000, in 2015 more than 10,000 and in Christmas 2016, more than 35,000 were distributed and received well.

Many servants of God in North India testify that more people have come to the Lord in recent years. There is a sweep of God all across this North Indian belt. This includes a cross section of communities across northern parts of our land who are from different faiths. We believe the accelerated church growth is directly related to the accelerated prayer initiatives.

CONCLUSION: TRACKING DEVELOPMENT

The NPCTI has evolved over the last twelve years. It has gone through all the development stages and is firmly in place at the Implementation Stage. As we track the development, we find that presently those who are carrying it forward are fulfilling the expectations of the Patrons and Elders who laid the foundation, as the present teams at State, District and sub-District levels have taken the ownership of the Vision of NPCTI. They are doing it sacrificially.

A commitment has been displayed to see the transformation of our Nation in our life time. From the small group who sat in September 2004 and birthed the foundation of the Movement, the Vision grew and got passed on to States, then to Districts and then to the individual Churches at the sub-District level. This spread of the Vision has been a step by step development by the Grace of God. We need to carry it forward with renewed resolve and commitment for the Kingdom of our God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

MISSIONARY INNOVATIONS IN HEALTH

A PERSONAL JOURNEY

VINOD SHAH

Medical missions has always been a vital part of missionary work in India. But do we need to change the way we do it? Here are lessons learned from years of personal experience.

BECOMING AN INDIAN MISSIONARY

It was the early 1960s. An innovation took the Indian church by storm. Well it was not really an innovation, but a truth rediscovered. Overseas missionaries now could not come easily to independent India. Indians should now do it all by themselves. The concept of missionaries, supported by South Indian churches, moving to the North was in the air. Two major organizations were birthed: IEM or the Indian Evangelical Mission (courtesy EFI) and FMPB or the Friends Missionary Prayer Band. These showed the way ahead. Refusing foreign financial support

and challenging the Indian church to support their own missionaries was probably the most crucial “innovation” for free India.

I was caught up with this phenomenon. Shalini and myself were doing post graduate training in CMC Vellore and we decided that we would join an indigenous missionary agency as against other better established, wealthy missionary societies. Thus, in 1976, we found ourselves part of IEM, headquartered in Bangalore and headed by Rev Theodore Williams, a great charismatic leader. We may have been among the first few missionary doctors in India who were supported by churches (Richmond Town Methodist Church, Bangalore) rather than salaried by hospitals. IEM had no hospitals and no community-based health interventions.

Shalini had finished her post graduate studies 6 months ahead of me and so she began to do “research” about needy people groups in India. She got census data (hard to find those days when there was no internet) and soon zeroed in on the “Bhil Tribe” in West India. This tribe extended over 4 states (MP, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra) and two countries (India and Pakistan). Before joining IEM, we did an exploratory trip to Gujarat and Rajasthan. The Garasia tribe in Danta was identified as the locale for our mission. As mandated by the Indian Evangelical Mission, Shalini and myself (and little Arpan) attended the missionary training course in Nasik for 3 months before moving to Danta.

TAKEAWAYS FROM OUR DANTA EXPERIENCE

Location of Health Centres

Missions health centres are often located in big cities or in very small hamlets. Since health access is important, a mission station should always be located wherever bus/train services are easily available. Danta was a watershed taluka headquarters and drained people from all the surrounding villages.

Building A Hospital is Not Always Necessary

In Danta, there was a Rajput King who lived in a palace and had plenty of property, including a run-down harem. The Indian Government had put a stop to the “saliyana” or monthly gift to the Kings in lieu of the property they had handed over. Hence, the King had chased away all the women in his harem and some of the buildings were empty. In the due course of time, we convinced him that we could run a hospital in what was previously his harem. A deal was struck and we had a busy hospital going within a year of our arriving. We had effectively moved our health operations from a barber shop (measuring 12 x 10 feet) to a palace.

Initially we moved into a small house, not fully realizing that Danta was a vegetarian village. When egg shells were discovered in the trash, we were immediately asked to shift out. We found another house and managed with a vegetarian diet till we found one of the outhouses near the hospital.

Proclamation and Demonstration

Proclamatory missions were thought of as bonafide missions and demonstrative missions (i.e. health care, uplift of the poor, etc.) were seen as sub-serving the former. We were often reminded that serving the soul was more important than serving the body. However, the concept of wholistic or integral mission was now in the air and the cause of much debate. An integrated understanding was not achieved until the 1990s.

We travelled almost every day, except Mondays, to the neighboring villages to make friends, preach and show movies (the Jesus film using a diesel generator). Besides the hospital workers, we had church planters and Bible translators. Anyone who was free would go for these village trips. We made contacts in many villages, but some names I still remember over this 35-year period are Kuvarsi, Vadvera, Kanbiyavas, Bordiyala and Kukdi along the Himatnagar highway and Harivav, Piplavativav and Dhabavativav along the Ambaji highway.

The first to follow Christ came from Vadvera. They were the Hominana family, on whom I had done a gastrojejunostomy and vagotomy (Shalini giving the anaesthesia). Solomon Parmar had made the contacts and provided the teaching. He and his extended family were baptized by Theodore Williams. Then Johnny Desai had made contacts in Bordiyala and 40 of them were baptized. Victoria Williams was involved in Bible translation of the Garasia language and the New Testament was released some 10 years ago. Victor Dhas skillfully managed the accounts and Liza, his wife, was a wonderful nurse along with Sheela and Cecilia Daniel. All this while Shalini was using an Australian curriculum to home-school the children.

While working in a desperately poor area some development initiatives are as important as proclamation. Our proclamation was very loud, but we didn't yet have a focus on development. Time and again they asked us to dig wells for them to improve their agriculture, but we did not have that focus. We created enemies of the high caste who all lived in Danta town proper and they arranged to "reconvert" all the tribals who had accepted the Lord. Obviously, this is not the end of the story. Some young people refused to be reconverted and one of them was sponsored to do a Bible training course. He finished it and started a church in Dhabavalivav, which is still going strong. In fact, recently about 60 tribals began to follow Christ and are using the Garasia New Testament.

EMMANUEL HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

After four years, I returned to retrain as a Pediatric surgeon in CMC Vellore. I then rejoined IEM as a Medical Secretary and was based in Bangalore. While in IEM, I helped with developing small dispensaries cum church-planting stations amongst the Abujmadia tribe in Bastar district, amongst the Koya people in Dhammapeta and amongst the Himachali people in Bhuntar. The failure then was no community development project was developed and the health impact of the

dispensaries was mainly contact generation rather than health improvement. These were years when our understanding of mission was not sophisticated.

In 1989, I joined Emmanuel Hospital Association (EHA). Initially, I was made Medical Secretary and later the Director. I spent close to fifteen years with the organization and would like to summarize what I have learnt. Before joining EHA, I was somewhat unsure about taking on a job which required the difficult task of recruiting doctors. However, the Lord seemed to be telling me, “Don’t worry, I will make you fishers of men; all the people you covet will join you!”

I have been told that my greatest contribution has been that I generated a great big group of Indian Christian doctors and nurse leaders, who provided leadership for EHA and other organizations. I think the first duty of any Christian organization is to throw up leaders who will make things happen. Two important ingredients of developing leaders are to paint a “big picture” and throw them in the deep end without micro-managing them. Jesus came preaching the Kingdom of God – the biggest picture any one can paint.

As a clinician, the most difficult health lesson to learn was that hospitals do not necessarily make a health impact unless they have a community-based development programme, not a hospital-based community health programme. We started close to 29 community health and development programmes in about ten years and this went a long way in making EHA an effective organisation.

THE NEXT STEP: DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY OF GPs IN INDIA

After fifteen years at EHA, I felt it was time to move on even though I was not sure where I should go. Shortly before leaving, I contacted the Principal of Christian Medical College, Vellore. I told him I had a vision to develop the capacity of GPs in India. The truth was that I was not sure how I was going to do that. However, the Principal and the

Director welcomed me to work with them.

I began to think and plan furiously. How can I engage the GPs in India? How can I communicate to them? Serendipitously, I was invited to IGNOU (Indira Gandhi National Open University), the country's lead innovator in distance education, for some workshop on environmental pollution. I saw the power of distance education. The technology for education was growing rapidly. I enrolled for a distance learning diploma in distance education and began to absorb facts like a sponge. I was especially fascinated by the SLMs or self-learning materials and the rules that help make them user friendly.

I worked out a formula for communicating with the GPs:

- Write wonderful SLMs and write them as “problem based” rather than as “system based” (i.e. not diseases of the nervous system, but “a convulsing child”).
- Use personal language, ask many review questions and provide answers.
- Add neat little call-outs, tables and graphics.
- Allow much white space, so that they progress rapidly through the book giving them the illusion of progress.
- Package it in glossy, well-printed and seductive books.
- Add DVD lectures, video conferencing, some hands-on experience in nearby mission hospitals and you could create a heady mixture that they cannot reject. Great plan and no money!

We managed to find funding and the project began. At the age of 58, I realized that I had a gift that I had not recognized. I was actually good at speed reading, integrating, analysing and classifying. In fact, I became addicted to reading material and rewriting it in simpler language and in a neatly classified way. I began to think of “pithy” call-outs to spice things up. I learned to put down protocols in an algorithmic way. Often, I used to forget it was lunch time and used to bring home my lunch box uneaten. I thoroughly enjoyed writing the family

medicine material. It was all covered in 73 problems (e.g. “an approach to convulsions in an adult”) and printing it extended to twelve volumes of books. We were all set to launch the Post Graduate Diploma in Family Medicine (PGDFM).

We spent close to Rs. 3 lakh on advertisement for the course in all the national newspapers (not easy to get permission) and then I told myself, “If less than fifteen people apply, I will resign and slink away as quietly as I came!” One week later, no application had come. I was wondering how I could make a dignified exit. Then on the 8th day, Reena, our secretary said we had five applications. On the 9th day, we had fifteen. By the end of 30 days, we had 500! GPs in India could be reached!

Eventually, the Tamil Nadu Government accepted the programme and then the Central Government’s National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) invited me to train government doctors in 8 states. The PGDFM had now become a nationwide Government approved programme. Other courses followed, including the very popular Lay Leaders Community Health course, described in chapter 18 of this book. The Nike advertisement says “Just Do It”; good advice! If you have a dream, don’t spend your time collecting advice. Do it! Shake off the inertia.

PARADIGM SHIFTS NEEDED IN HEALTHCARE

From Rituals to Justice

Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
 only a day for people to humble themselves?
 Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed
 and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?
 Is that what you call a fast,
 a day acceptable to the Lord?
 Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
 to loose the chains of injustice

and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke? (Isaiah 58:5-6)

How long will mission hospitals continue to give charity? Another hundred years? Why should the poor be the objects of charity? Should not our health policies be changed and structures modified so that the poor can lay claim to health as their right?

The paradigm shift needed here is from Religious rituals (e.g. giving alms, free treatment in mission hospitals) to Justice for the poor (e.g. influence to change policies). Religion that is full of rituals, devoid of concern for the poor, is a false religion. This has great significance for what we do for the poor in the health field.

Many of us in Community Health Projects provide free services to the poor and give them free drugs and other kinds of handouts. This is not enough. What is needed is justice for the poor, which will really empower them. This means just land laws, just wages, just police forces (which will not victimise the poor) and equal opportunities for primary education and primary healthcare.

From Exclusiveness to Social Engagement

“...For my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”
(Isaiah 56:7)

Many years ago, I visited a Christian hospital and had the privilege of spending several days there. A ceremony was organized for the inauguration of the private ward and the Collector was invited. An old missionary from abroad took me aside and said, “Things are changing here. Worldliness is entering in.” This really typifies the old paradigm. Being aloof. Being exclusive. Having no social contact with the Government or anyone except other Christians. Sometimes this has been called the “mission compound” mentality. This isolationist policy of old has meant that there has been little ownership by the commu-

nity. A paradigm shift is needed from being Exclusive to Inclusive or from being Exclusive to Social Engagement.

Several mission agencies have reported the benefits of having a community advisory committee drawn from the local population, a committee that gives valuable feedback about their needs and also the functioning of the hospital or institution. In the current milieu, it is impossible for the usual mission hospital to survive on its own. In fact, developing social capital is one way to recapture relevance and meaning.

From Secular Leadership Models to Servant leadership

“Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’” (Matthew 20:25-28)

In research done by the World Council of Churches, they found that one of the most important factors that affects sustainability of mission hospitals is leadership and governance styles. Leadership underwent a paradigm shift when Jesus role-modelled servant leadership. Can it be that our style of leadership and governance has been self-serving and authoritarian? Such leaders do not encourage spawning of leadership and I believe that introspection and radical paradigm shift is needed.

From Programme Development to People Development

People development should come before programmes. We need to focus more on developing “fishers of men” rather than “fishery” programmes. The first call to mission by Jesus was about developing a person. Jesus said to Peter, “Come, follow me and I will send you out to fish for people” (Matthew 4:19). Jesus did not say, “Follow me and I will help you start a huge programme for community development.”

Most of the Christian organizations use up budgets doing programmes and activities. Only a small fraction is used for nurturing and mentoring people.

This needs to change. In 1947, India had about 650 mission hospitals that provided 30% of India's hospital beds. With independence came some anti-missionary sentiment and foreign visas were curtailed. Though there was some Indian medical leadership available, they had an employee mentality rather than a leadership mindset. By 1970, 300 hospitals had closed. The lesson to learn is that investment of money and time should be first for developing people rather than in programmes and hospitals.

Running Programmes	Building People
Programmes produce visible quick impact.	Harder and longer process involving several years.
Anyone with skill can run programmes.	Requires rapport with people and will not happen unless you are an authentic human being.
Requires a lot of capital for infrastructure, specially in the healing ministry.	Does not require large capital for infrastructure.
Not sustainable after the pioneer has retired.	Long term – very sustainable and greater impact.
All about performing tasks or a task.	All about creating a visionary.

From Programme Approach to a "Culture Change" Approach

All of us have excellent programmes, but we do not work at transforming culture. This has great potential for impact. For example, all of our hospitals are probably involved in repairing the rupture of the pregnant uterus. This is because there is a delay in mothers coming to the hospital. The delay is often because the mothers are not in control of the medical decision-making. It is the mother-in-law who takes this decision. If we were able to change the traditional culture in such a way that husbands and the labouring mothers are more in control of the decision making, they would be able to access medical help earlier and

several complications can be averted.

Another example is young people and their sexuality. The programme for AIDS prevention advocates using condoms for safe sex. While this is true, it means that condom distribution has to go on and on. Suppose we were able to transform culture and get young people to abstain from sex before marriage and then remain faithful in marriage, HIV/AIDS can be prevented and the huge costs involved in pushing condoms can be reduced. Focusing on culture change is a more sustainable strategy than pushing condom promotion.

What we can do for the health care of the people in urban slums? The present reality is that the private practitioners living all over urban areas do not have a “social conscience” and they are not involved in caring for the slum dwellers. This necessitates the involvement of many NGOs. However, if the private practitioners were sensitized and if they accepted some social responsibility, they would be able to care for the urban poor.

Nurse leadership development can and does happen in a programme situation, such as in a leadership-training workshop. However, if the culture of the doctor-nurse relationship would change and if the doctors would begin to accept nurses as equals and colleagues, this will produce a far greater impact on leadership. The changing culture of relationship between doctors and nurses can have a greater impact than programmes alone.

Programme Approach	“Culture Change” Approach
Repairing ruptured uterus.	Empowering mother in decision making.
Condom distribution.	Abstinence and faithfulness.
NGOs involved in slum health ministry.	Private practitioners accepting social responsibility for slum health ministry.
Nurse leadership training.	Doctors treating nurses with dignity.

From Emphasis on Ownership to Emphasis on Being Good Stewards

In the parable of the tenants (Mark 12), the stewards of the vineyard assume ownership and therefore kill all the emissaries. They did not understand the stewardship model. Many of the leaders of hospitals and medical institutions have to learn the stewardship role and give up the ownership mindset, as well. Below is a brief look at the differences between an owner and a steward.

Owner	Steward
An owner controls.	A steward facilitates.
An owner is unaccountable.	A steward is accountable.
An owner is permanent	A steward has a term.

From Training to Mentoring

Mentor was the name of the wise guardian of Telemachus, in the Odyssey, the Greek legend. A key component of mentoring is “value transfer”. We have many training programmes in the Christian medical world in India but few mentoring ones. A lot of our training is without values and this is a soul-less exercise.

Training is contractual – one receives money and in return imparts training. All our programmes should be mentoring programmes. Values should not only be taught, but also be role-modelled. Below are some other differences between Training and Mentoring.

Training	Mentoring
Training is contractual.	Mentoring is role-modeling values.
Training is equipping to do a predetermined task.	Mentoring is inculcating a vision.
Training can be done by any professional.	Mentoring can only be done by an “authentic” human being.
Training is done in numbers.	Mentoring is done by “names”.
Training need not be participatory.	Mentoring is always participatory and empowering.

From Service Delivery to Impact Orientation

We, in the Christian medical world, do not have an “impact” mindset. We have goals, but do not monitor progress. We do not have impact indicators either. We can, therefore, be incompetent and be blissfully unaware of it. We can boast that we serve the poor, but we will have no evidence for it. In a study done three years ago in some EHA hospitals (the study was admittedly small and the sample inadequate), we found that EHA hospitals had made minimal impact and I am afraid this might be true of many others Christian hospitals in India. We do not have impact because we do not have an impact orientation. We simply generate services without evaluating the outcome.

Thinking of impact and the factors that affect impact will:

- Make us more innovative and more wholistic since we have several disciplines to achieve health impact.
- Make us more accountable.
- Help us to focus on something that can be measured and achieved instead of spraying many kinds of services onto a very wide spectrum of people.
- Improve the morale of the staff since they see “impact”.

From Doing it All by Yourself to Making it Happen

Christian hospitals have suffered from a low self-image and have been content with lighting a small candle in a small corner while a very wide arena is utterly dark. We need to move from being bearers of small candles to being lighters of many candles. The micro-role we play has meant that Christian medical work is mostly irrelevant to the country. We can play a catalytic role by getting many NGOs together to make a major impact in a block or a district or even a state. We have what it takes to be such a leader – namely passion, commitment and ethics. These are the very ingredients that are in short supply.

TRAINING CHURCH WORKERS AS AGENTS OF WHOLISTIC HEALING

JACHIN VELAVAN

How do we bring the benefits of health to people where they are, especially those in remote areas? Here is a great example of innovation in identifying and training the people who are already there to help.

DESPERATE NEEDS

Mr Y, a missionary working in a remote area of Bihar, was walking dejectedly in the rain. Every year, this rainy season brings malaria and many die in the area he is serving. Just now, he is returning from praying for a baby with diarrhea who has become very sick even after being treated by a local quack doctor and the local magician. He wished he could do something for these people in the village who tend to borrow money on interest whenever anyone falls sick. He quickly said a prayer that his own children, who were coming home from their school hostels

for holidays the next week, would not fall sick. He wondered, “What can I do to help this situation?”

Dr X was staring out of his Mission Hospital window watching his patients walk in the pouring rain into the dusk towards the last dusty bus that leaves the place to their villages. His thoughts went to the ward where there was a boy with kidney failure due to a simple untreated skin infection. The woman next to him came with fits yesterday and the baby was dead inside her womb. If only there was someone in her village who could just check blood pressure while she was pregnant! And how could he forget the 1 kg baby who was struggling to breathe, who was delivered at home at seven months by the 15-year-old mother? He is so busy in the hospital fixing these problems that he doesn't even have time to share God's love with the patients. But the sad part is that all these problems are preventable at the village itself! “Who will do it?” he wondered.

THE INDIAN HEALTH SCENARIO

India is the second most populous country of the world with 1.2 billion people. This large number of people poses huge health needs. Medical care today has become very specialised and super-specialised. We have separate doctors for eyes, the heart, kidneys, etc. As medical care has become more specialised, it has also become more expensive. How can a common man afford it?

Again, where is this medical care available? It is mostly in the cities and towns, while 68% of our population lives in the 640,867 villages. What do people do then? They usually go to Pujaris, Priests, Ojhas, Mullahs, Local Quack doctors or Magicians for medical care. No wonder that India has a very high number of children and mothers dying when compared to the many other countries of the world.

Every year, India loses about 50,000 mothers to pregnancy-related problems and about two million avoidable deaths have been attributed to infectious diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhea and neonatal sepsis.

1/3 of the world's malnourished children live in India and about 50% of all childhood deaths are attributable to malnutrition. Apart from all these we also have the burden of diabetes, cancers, mental health issues, etc.

This health scenario appears very serious, does it not? But the good news is that many of the common health problems do not need a doctor to treat them. They can be easily prevented, even before affecting a person, by very simple measures at the village level. Also, many diseases in our country are caused by or made worse by many wrong beliefs and practices. All that is needed to stop these diseases is to give people the right kind of information and increase their awareness. All that is needed are non-medical lay-people who are well trained. Just imagine what a big change it would be to the health scenario in our country if each of our villages would have a person like this!

QUESTIONS AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

As we pondered over these issues at the Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore, we were faced with two key questions:

1. If simple community-based interventions can change the grim health scenario, it would need a large committed, well-trained, visionary workforce. How does one generate such a large community-level workforce at an affordable cost?
2. We also strongly believed that this can be done effectively only by people who have real concern and care for people and who have seen the real need in the country because they are based in remote areas. Also, health is not just physical. Wholistic healing also involves emotional, social and spiritual areas. Who can deliver this kind of wholistic health?

Dr Vinod Shah was then the head of the Distance Education Department in CMC. It was decided to empower nurses to impart

primary healthcare training to church/mission workers, who are already working for the welfare of their communities, through blended learning modes (both a distance component and a face to face hands-on component). The Community Lay-leaders Health Training Certificate Course (CLHTC) was started in 2011 as a one-year blended learning course designed and run by the Distance Education Department of CMC, with the motto “Be a Health-Change Agent”.

The aim of this course is to equip Christian church/mission workers serving in rural India with basic Primary Healthcare knowledge and skills, so that they will be able to extend wholistic care to the communities they serve and to their own families. These workers, who are already based in very remote areas, can show their love to the poor who suffer time and again from preventable diseases and can promote health in these areas.

The objectives for the training were as follows:

1. Partner with rural Mission Hospitals across the country to establish them as training grounds.
2. Empower nurses in these rural hospitals to become trainers to train the church/parachurch workers.
3. Partner with churches and mission organisations and envision them to send their workers and teachers to serve in remote areas and be trained in Primary Healthcare.
4. Help the trained church/parachurch workers to partner with the communities they serve, train village-level health volunteers, partner with local schools and teach good health practices.

WHAT WAS DONE?

Partnering with Rural Mission Hospitals

Partnerships were formed with secondary level hospitals based in rural areas belonging to CMC's mission network hospitals with a shared vision to transform communities. Thus, CLHTC contact centres for training were identified in 14 states and we now have 23 rural hospitals partnering with us and they train trainees from all 29 states and 6 Union territories. One centre has been started in the neighbouring country of Nepal. The support of the management was sought at each hospital and a formal MoU was signed in each location. A two-day orientation programme was held for a doctor from each of the hospitals to pass on the vision, so that there is ownership of the programme and support of the Regional Nurse Trainers.

Training of Master and Regional Nurse Trainers

Four experienced nurses, with experience in community and patient care, were identified and were trained by doctors to be "Master Trainers" and vision casters. Nurses have long been recognised as the backbone of healthcare, but their potential is very under-recognised and under-utilised in developing nations like India, where doctors monopolise healthcare. Nurses, if empowered, could bring about major changes in healthcare delivery, thereby reducing medical costs and improving health care delivery not only to the lucky few who have access to health care in the hospitals but also to the largely unserved rural communities. These Master trainers are based in CMC and they travel periodically to the 23 centres to provide motivation, monitoring and support to the regional trainers and trainees. They also plan and coordinate the training programme and develop and distribute teaching and learning materials.

Each of the identified 23 Regional Centres was motivated to send a minimum of two nurses to be trained as trainers for 90 days and a

doctor who will be sent for a two-day orientation programme in order to support the nurses. The nurse trainer is trained for 90 days to be a visionary, motivator, teacher, mentor and manager. So far, 62 trainers have been trained in four batches.

Vision Casting Among Organisations

Multiple consultations were conducted with about 200 church/parachurch organisations to impart the vision of CLHTC. The organisations were urged to send their workers and school teachers for primary health care training as an added tool to the work they are already doing in the communities. Now about 120 church/parachurch organisations work with us.

Selection of Church/Parachurch Workers For Training

Being based in remote villages of India, the selection screens for a minimum academic grade of 12th Standard Certificate and checks to ensure integrity and motivation to serve the underprivileged. Women are given priority. They are trained through the one-year distance course and 60 days of hands-on skills training at one of the regional centres. 830 have been trained including a few from Nepal, Bangladesh and Nigeria.

Programme Design

The programme has been designed so as to have a MULTIPLIER EFFECT. Four Master Nurse Trainers from CMC have thus far trained 62 Regional Nurse Trainers who facilitate the contact programmes in the 23 contact centres and have thus far trained more than 830 lay leaders who will render basic health care to around 9,000 villages, conduct school health programmes in 2,400 village schools and train around 6,000 village-level health workers. Each trainee is expected to cover ten villages and a minimum of three village schools.

Course Design & Content

The course is designed as a one-year blended learning programme based on adult learning principles, with three 20-day hands-on “contact programmes” delivered at a centre near their location. The course material, organized into 60 self-learning modules (SLMs), covers the knowledge and part of the attitude component. The knowledge and attitude components cover the sharing of the vision, sensitizing to the health needs of the nation, social responsibility and motivation. The skill component includes imparting communication skills, clinical skills, dispensing skills and diagnostic skills and is delivered in the face-to-face contact programmes through role-plays, demonstrations and skills stations. They are also taught health promotion using songs, skits, flash-cards, puppet shows, videos, debates, etc. The course is being offered at a highly subsidized cost of Rs. 8,000 (\$120) per student including course materials, tuition fee, boarding and lodging for 60 days.

Course Focus	Knowledge	Attitude	Skill
Course content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 problem-based, well illustrated self learning modules (SLM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision • The need • Our responsibility • Self motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Clinical skills • Dispensing skills • Diagnostic skills
Course delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active learning using SLMs • Interactive lectures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision • The need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration • Return demonstration • Role playing

Evaluation & Research

The trainees are assessed by formative assessments such as assignments, project work, peer reviews, daily and weekly assessment of clinical skills, dispensing skills and diagnostic skills during the contact programmes and also summative assessments in the form of theory and practical examinations. Feedback on the course is obtained regularly from the trainers, trainees and the administrators of the rural hospitals and from church/parachurch organisations. On the basis of the feed-

back received, the course has been modified to meet the felt need. As part of the course, the trainees are also involved in community-based research projects. The medicine misuse study done in collaboration with the University of Melbourne, Australia, gave us country-wide data (4,000 samples) and is presently being analyzed. It will likely provide information which can help suggest policy changes. A cancer prevention project is being carried out by the trainees and this is in collaboration with Edinburgh University, Scotland, UK and Cornell University, USA.

IMPACT

In these five years, we have trained 62 nurse trainers who have helped train the registered 830 candidates covering about 22 of the 29 states of India. Each layman trainee reaches at least ten villages and hence through the training we have been able to reach at least 9,500 villages.

Impact on the Master Trainers

The four Master trainers have developed a very large vision for the health of the country and other developing nations. They have become enthused about the role nurses can play in health transformation. Two of them presented their work in the 30th Annual conference of Distance Education at Wisconsin-Madison, USA, which was a great boost to their morale.

Impact on the Nurse Trainers

The 62 nurse trainers have blossomed into visionary leaders. From being a nurse devoted only to patientcare or to a couple of community projects, the nurses have transformed into teachers, facilitators and motivators. They have also acquired a lot of leadership and management skills and are much respected in their own hospitals. They feel that now they have a bigger meaning and purpose in life and more confidence.

Impact on the Regional Centres

The mission hospitals have expanded their community reach from a few villages to hundreds and thousands of villages through the church/parachurch workers trained through CLHTC. Appropriate patients are referred by these graduates to these hospitals. So it is a win-win situation. The role of Mission Hospitals in today's milieu has changed from being pure service delivery units to hospitals which also are involved in academics and training. We cannot do Missions as we did 100 years ago. Mission hospitals have to move with the times and embrace relevancy to modern times without losing core Christian values.

Impact on the Church/Parachurch Workers and the Community

We have very encouraging reports from the field about early identification of tuberculosis and cancer cases, prevention of death due to use of simple remedies like oral rehydration therapy, etc. The church/parachurch graduates adopt schools in their areas and they teach children the right things about health, thereby preparing the next generation with the right understanding of health and health-seeking behaviors. They also train and develop village-level health-change agents in each of the ten villages they care for. Their acceptance in their communities has increased and they have developed a vision for themselves.

Shanker Yadav, a parachurch worker who works in Bihar, says, "I found there were a lot of TB and malaria patients in my area. There were a lot of defaulters and so with the details I collected from the PHC, I followed up with them and helped them to complete the treatment courses. I have developed good rapport with the PHC doctors and the staff of the nearby Mission Hospital. With their help, I am able to render health care to the community. I have helped identify over 150 TB patients in my area.

Impact on Policies

We have been invited by the Government for consultations to upskill ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) workers and to input into the National Health Policy draft. We can already see a ripple effect being created in the health status of our country through this endeavour.

Awards

The innovative nature of this course has been recognised by these awards:

- *FICCI Healthcare Excellence Award 2015* was awarded for using Blended learning to teach PHC doctors & Village level community lay-leaders.
- *FAIMER Projects that Work Award* in TUFH (Towards Unity for Health) Conference in Shenyang, China 2016.

Current Status of Project and Future Roadmap

	Achieved So Far	10 Year Roadmap
Regional Centres	23	200
Developing countries reached	4	15-20
Master Nurse Trainers trained	4	40
Regional Nurse Trainers trained	62	600
Trainees trained (lay men/women)	830	10,000
Village impacted	9,500	1,00,000
Village-level change agents trained	Exact figures not known	1,00,000
Population impacted with basic primary healthcare	9,500,000	100,000,000 (@ 1000 people per village in 10 villages in 10 years)
Schools covered by School Health programmes	Approx. 1,500	30,000 (impacting around 3,000,000 children @ 100 per school)

Health awareness drives are also a part of the future roadmap. Each trained Lay-leader would conduct a minimum of five health awareness drives per year (creating awareness among 1,000,000 people @ twenty participants per health awareness drive).

Replication

The infrastructure needed is minimal, the trainers are not specialists, the material is highly simplified and it has been piloted in a highly populous, multilingual, large country with positive results. This makes the course easily exportable. It has been tailored to meet the needs of developing countries. It is easily translatable. Interest has been shown by other developing countries, too. We have already had trainees from developing countries like Nepal and Bangladesh and are exploring the possibility of taking the training to Myanmar and African nations. We hope to decentralize the training programmes with region-wise monitoring and administration.

SUMMARY AND THE DREAM

A large task force is needed to meet India's health needs. With trained health personnel unwilling to move to the villages of India, the workers of church/parachurch organisations who already live among the poor at the grassroots level and are committed to their welfare can be the solution to this problem, if they are adequately trained. Ultimately, helping communities and individuals to take responsibility for their own health is the solution. A well-planned training programme conducted by a premier institute, focused on knowledge, skill and attitudes, using already established regional centres based in rural India, using nurses based in these centres as trainers, can help equip this task force at the national level in large numbers with minimal expense.

This was exactly the vision of Dr Ida Scudder, the founder of CMC, Vellore. She found a great need for a woman doctor in India, went back to the US, trained as a doctor and came back, not to start a hospital but

a medical college to train many more women doctors.

Our dream is to train at least 10,000 such church/parachurch workers who could impact 100,000 villages, which would cover nearly one sixth of our Indian villages. This “Be A Health-Change Agent” initiative can be realized and could help transform our country’s health scenario through appropriate primary healthcare delivery.

Long ago, out in the hillside of Judea, one little boy gave five loaves of bread and two fish into the Master’s hand and watched in amazement as he fed more than 5,000 people with it. Anything given into the Master’s hand multiplies and that has been our experience with CLHTC as well.

BUSINESS AS MISSION: OUR PERSONAL JOURNEY

MOSES & SHANOO PRASHANT RAO

What does business have to do with mission? Can they be combined? Is it possible to do business with integrity? Here are some remarkable conclusions from personal experience.

ESTABLISHMENT OF NIRMAAN BHARATI IN LUCKNOW

In 2005, while Moses was still working with CBN & OB India, we felt God calling us to move to North India as missionaries. We imagined it was to plant a church. With that in mind, Moses traveled extensively to North India several times across cities and states, surveying the land and praying about our move.

On one such trip in November 2005, on his way back to Hyderabad, he had spare time in Delhi and was invited to a private meeting where a few mission leaders were discussing with a seasoned professional about

starting a microfinance business in the North. At the end of the meeting, these mission leaders turned to Moses and said that they thought he was the right person for the job. There was even an assurance that Rs. 25 lakh would be arranged for the setup of the business. A salary was also proposed for Moses; this offer was about 50% of what he was earning at CBN and one fifth of what he made while at Citigroup.

To cut a long story short, in January 2006, we visited Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. After much prayer and seeking the Lord, we moved there with our family on 9th February 2006 to start a Not-for-Profit Microfinance (MF) Business branded as Nirmaan Bharati (NB), which means “Building India”.

The MF professional, who was part of the initial ideation group, became a close family friend and mentor. He visited Lucknow and introduced us to several people. Through these introductions, we made our first hires. Through this person we were introduced to several lenders, donors and grant makers and also received capacity building of the best quality.

In early 2006, the business started with seven employees. It grew quickly to serve over a hundred thousand poor households and employ over 350 staff by 2008. We had favour from banks and the community in which we served. NB was the first company to start an urban, micro-finance project. It also received support from the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. (Cashpor was present in the Varanasi region before us, but their work at that point in time was based on a rural model.)

In 2007, during the rapid phase of our scale up, I was introduced for the first time to the Chairman of the largest MF company of the country (with about 2,000 crores in its portfolio). He suggested that we needed to have a private conversation. He took me and a colleague of mine aside and stated, “You have a purely Christian Board and need to broadbase it now. Immediately add a Muslim and add a Hindu.” I responded, “We have seven members already on the Board, comprised of highly competent people and these people have supported me in the day of my need. Whenever one of them resigns, I will reach out to you

so that you can recommend a person of your choice to serve on our Board.” He replied that I did not understand what he was implying and left, saying that I should keep in touch with him.

GROWTH AND CHALLENGES

Soon, our success with urban MF attracted national attention. In early 2008, the largest MF player of the country started lending indiscriminately in Lucknow and Kanpur. This was done against all standards and practices of MF. This lending led to an over-indebtedness of the poor. Quickly, this lender started to face repayment problems. Meanwhile, NB continued to enjoy customer confidence and recovery rates of 100%.

In April 2008, we had an international agency conduct a rating of NB. They gave us a high rating, but also made this comment:

Overall, NB has very good prospects that match the excellent background of its Board of Directors and Board of Advisors. However, it could face the prospect of mass default by its large number of Muslim borrowers. NB’s predominantly Christian governance and management in a volatile political environment lays it open to such a risk.

We made a written representation to the Chairman and further shared with the Managing Director (MD) that basic principles of the Audit process were not being followed. All findings must be presented to the management team of the institution being audited and a reply sought within reasonable time. The draft audit report sent to us didn’t have this comment nor did it have any verbal reference to such an observation from any of the auditors. The MD of the rating institution could not find the file related to our rating and said that it had been misplaced. Upon further follow up and enquiry, we found that the Chairman of the largest MF company sat on the review board for our

specific assessment and these were his comments.

In October 2008, the staff of our main competitor spread a rumor in Lucknow and Kanpur that the founder of NB, Moses, had died and that all loans were waived off. This was done via loudspeakers on motorbikes riding across various parts of Lucknow and Kanpur. This immediately led to a large scale default among our clients. We faced a major crisis. Within one week, about 60% of our portfolio had turned to non-performing assets because we were unable to collect back from the poor in order to repay the banks from whom we had borrowed. This led to our defaulting to our Lenders.

OCTOBER 2008 – OCTOBER 2011: AN INTENSE PERIOD OF CHURN

Audits

The period after the client default was followed by bank audits. Seven of our lenders came for seven days and went through our books and our field to check if our problem was genuine or if we had siphoned the money. After a 49-man-day audit, they gave us a good report and said, “Promoters and the management have high integrity. Clients were genuine and there were no instances of ghost clients detected during the study.”

Negotiation With Banks

Since the bankers gave us a good report, we started negotiating with them to help us in the crisis. We had meeting after meeting, but the bankers had made up their mind not to support us. During one such meeting, the bankers asked us to step out for a while as they would discuss among themselves and get back to us. One of those lenders later informed us that, during the private conversation in the room, the reason the bankers were not willing to support us was because we were Christians. We did all that we could to convince bankers that we were genuinely interested in a turn around and brought in ASA from

Bangladesh, the largest MF company in the world, to help us.

Microfinance Crisis in Andhra Pradesh

Two years after our problem, despite running from meeting to meeting with bankers, there came no help. In October 2010, the government in the state of Andhra Pradesh, which had the largest microfinance portfolio in India, made an announcement that clients need not repay any money borrowed from the banks. In a matter of days, all banks together lost about Rs. 27,000 crores.

Bankers Turn Against Us

We also had a combined meeting with Bankers and Investors where we had the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation and Oiko Credit participate as investors. In that meeting, the investors offered to invest Rs. 25 crores to get us back on track. They wanted the Bankers to support us, too. The bankers took a stand to not support us, though it made business sense to do otherwise.

At the end of all the meetings, the Bankers made us sign an irrevocable letter granting them permission to sell us. We agreed to it and also found a big MF player to buy our portfolio. But SIDBI refused to allow us to be sold and instead chose to go to court to get us wound up.

Suspicion

Lending institutions started suspecting that our motive for working in North India was primarily for proselytizing our clients and that we were using the MF platform to further this goal. Though our hearts' desire was that everyone would be eventually be saved, our MF company was not the platform to fulfill the goal of presenting the Good News.

During this time we also faced difficulty with our local church. A Prophet came and prophesied that Moses was not a Christian and was only acting as one. As a result, we had many of our Christian employees leave us at this crucial time. They were of the opinion that God was probably not with us because we were facing so many problems.

As individuals, we faced a strange, two-fold problem: 1) the world was thinking we were converting others and 2) the church was feeling that we were fake Christians.

PERSEVERANCE AND A NEW BEGINNING

God gave us the grace to go through all this and we started a For-Profit company in 2009. This time we had no support from anywhere. The only reason we kept going was the fact that we had over 250 employees dependent on us for their livelihoods and we could not just leave them. The urge to run away and take up some secure job was always there, but we continued to stay the course. The business moved at a snail's pace, but it did provide employment to over 100 people during our worst period.

Without fresh funding or capital infusion, survival became very difficult for the business. During this period, God put a desire in our heart to start a cooperative for the community, which would be owned and managed by the members. We tried acquiring several existing Cooperative Unit Banks and four times came up to the point of issuing an advance, but each time the conversation would turn to a full cash transaction and we eventually had to drop the deal.

The license for multistate cooperatives was not being issued by the Government of India for a long time. Early in 2011, one of our friends in RBI called us and said the government was looking at fresh applications for Cooperatives. We took advantage of this window of opportunity and made an application for fourteen states across North India. After the second rejection, we split our application into seven states each and made two separate applications. After over twenty trips and fifteen rejections and re-submissions to the Ministry in Delhi, we finally got our License on 14th October 2011.

We now have a cooperative doing community-based banking activities only for its members, who are mostly unbanked and are spread across seven states of North India. We currently serve about 40,000

and aim to increase our services to over 1,00,000 members. The grace of God has been abundant and has allowed us to continue in this spiritually dry land and participate in the work of His Kingdom.

IMPACT

We believe it is too early to look for the impact of our business. It normally takes about 20-30 years before a business can be seen as a significant force and its impact studied. But we have noted the following as steps towards progress in the direction of establishing a business for sustained impact over time:

1. We are providing financial services to a section of society that normally does not have access to these services. The clients we service are mainly poor women who do not have any stature or recognition (even within their own families). Helping them to start a business of their own has given them boldness and confidence to deal with their situations.
2. We operate in cities with large populations falling in this category of society. Our work alone is not sufficient to reach out to these large populations. We have been pioneers doing this work in areas where people have feared to tread, but we have paved the way for many other players to come and work. This has benefited the poor because they now have various options available to them.
3. One of the key statements we tried to live by is "Credit with Character". We have tried to teach our employees values of honesty, integrity and respect for the poor, thereby treating the women with respect. This has led to a social change, making us the preferred lender in the market.
4. We have been able to provide employment to about 1,000 people over the past ten years and also train them to do quality work with a clear set of values. Many who joined us after

completing high school, pursued further education while they worked with us. Today, many have found jobs in prestigious banks in the country and hold senior positions.

5. We have been financially self-supported missionaries, training and overseeing pastors for districts in and around Lucknow. Our influence with the community at large has helped us to support pastors and Christian leaders when they face difficult times.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM OUR EXPERIENCE

Gestation

Doing business in India still needs licenses and government permissions. Our value system becomes a roadblock for moving forward because of the corrupt system, which we refuse to work with. This non-compromising attitude means time lost, effort and money being wasted and several labour laws being followed at a stage when you cannot afford them. Doing honest and clean business in India takes more time to set up and to reach break-even.

Funding

Investors willing to put in money always look for high and quick returns. Patient capital, put in by foundations or other Christian sources, may be the answer to the problem. But such sources would rather give it directly to missions since any business is seldom considered as an investment into missions. The values of commercial investors do not necessarily align with what is needed.

Values

Christian employees lack a work culture because they think of their work as independent of their faith life. Attending church meetings takes priority over following ethics at work, leading to a shabby work culture. A fast-growing organisation constantly needs new employees.

In a scenario where Christians are few, it becomes necessary to employ people of all faiths. To build a team with like-minded people adhering to the vision becomes a great challenge. There is also the challenge of building a godly team of leaders to whom we can be accountable. In some cases, the leaders may not even be from a Christian background.

Work Culture

The work culture in areas where there is little or no business brings to the forefront the hazard of training first-generation employees. In these areas, the work culture predominantly views employment as only a means of livelihood and views the employer as an enemy. Therefore, employees try to get away with as little work as they can. To create a culture of honesty, hard work and integrity without constant monitoring is a long and arduous journey.

Business Is Beyond Missions

Running a transparent business, where the details of salaries and finances are open to the employees, needs courage and character. You are constantly being watched. The testimony of your life becomes the living gospel.

Sowing and Reaping

Every business goes through the cycle of sowing and reaping. It takes a plan, strategy, money, effort and time for a business to become profitable and then to sow in missions.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we would like to say that this journey of doing business has changed us more from the inside and that the results inside us are more significant than what we have achieved through the business. God has taught us:

- To depend on God as our sole source of strength.
- To stay the course even if it means sacrifice and hard work.
- To be available for any and every work that comes your way.
- To know that you will never be understood and people may even say you are imagining things.
- To love people irrespective of their support.
- To remain humble in the midst of rejection.
- To focus on the process rather than the outcome.
- To build a team to carry on the vision.
- Above all, to look unto God from whom our help comes.

KACHHWA TRANSFORMATIONAL MINISTRIES

SHANKAR RAMACHANDRAN

Is it possible to transform communities from the inside, so that the whole of people's lives is changed? How do the different elements combine without competing? Here is one model.

Kachhwa Transformational Ministries (KTM) is a wholistic ministry catering to the spiritual, physical, educational and economic needs of various people groups in the Eastern region of the state of Uttar Pradesh (UP). Operating out of an eight-acre mission hospital compound, KTM is the story of God's faithfulness in the extension of His kingdom. An evaluation of KTM in 2015 summarised its findings as follows:

KTM is a remarkable move of the Spirit and testimony to strategic partnership by EHA, OA and SAC, [it] has achieved a

significant portion of its vision to see reproducing worshipping communities being transformed by the Word of God, with a goal towards leadership sustainability and impacting the poor with compassionate care, done through essential medical services, community health and development, education and vocational training.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Kachhwa is a small rural town eight kms off the national highway connecting Allahabad and Varanasi. It falls under the district of Mirzapur, in Eastern UP. Kachhwa Christian Hospital (KCH) is a mission hospital which is over one hundred years old. The story of the birth of KCH itself is a testimony to the sovereign plans of the Lord.

With the discovery of aniline dyes in the 1800s, production of indigo became uneconomical. This led to the closure of the indigo factory in Kachhwa. The premises and redundant buildings were handed over to the London Missionary Society to be used for medical work. Thus, in 1897 KCH was established. Dr. Ashton was the first doctor.

In 1922, the Bible Churchman's Missionary Society became the hospital's governing body. Under the leadership of Dr Neville Everard, a committed disciple from the UK, KCH became a popular mission hospital. In its prime, KCH was a bustling hospital with 120 beds and a nursing school. The doctors and nurses who served in the hospital were committed to demonstrating God's love. Patients used to come from across the state to have treatment and surgeries. Dr. Neville Everard was also instrumental in the formation of Emmanuel Hospital Association (EHA), a fellowship of rural mission hospitals in North India. Thus began the relationship between KCH and EHA.

Later in the 1970s, due to visa restrictions imposed by the Indian government, most of the foreign missionaries had to leave. This resulted in a lot of mission hospitals being orphaned. After the English mission-

aries left Kachhwa, the hospital had to be downsized. It kept running for many years amidst various challenges.

However, by the year 2002, it became increasingly difficult to keep the hospital afloat. There were staffing issues and problems from the surrounding community, some of whom were interested in squatting on the property. The hospital had already incurred a substantial loss, so a decision was made to close it. But God was not done with KCH, which had been a beacon of love and hope for thousands for over hundred years.

INDIA CALLING

Meanwhile, in another part of the world, God had called an Indian doctor and his Scottish wife to leave the comforts of England and to come and serve in the Northern region of India. It was the last place Dr Raju Abraham, a trained neuro-physician, wanted to come to after leaving his practice with the NHS in the UK. But he and his wife, Catherine, with their four children, chose to obey the call of God on their lives. Dr Raju, remembering those days said, “Catherine found it easier to adjust to the new environment than me. I had a reverse culture shock.” They moved to the hills of Mussoorie in the state of Uttarakhand and Dr Raju started his work with EHA.

After many years of work with the EHA based out of Mussoorie, the news of the closure of KCH, in 2002, made the Abrahams take another giant leap of faith. They decided to move from beautiful, scenic Mussoorie to the plains of rural UP. Dr Raju did not want to see the hospital shut down. He was convinced that it was placed in an extremely strategic location for gospel proclamation. He offered to run the hospital and they moved, in faith, to Kachhwa.

Amidst dilapidated buildings and overgrown flora, there were a few standing staff quarters, one of which became the temporary two room residence for the Abrahams. Apart from the fear of snakes and other creepy crawlies, fear of an uncertain future also lingered in their

minds. One of the first questions that came to Dr Raju's mind regarded the original intent of the missionaries who came and worked for years tirelessly in this remote part of the country. He realised the answer was in their vision which was twofold:

1. Fulfilling the Great Commission
2. Practicing the Great Commandment

With this vision in mind, the new core focus areas of the hospital became the following:

1. **The Gospel** – Gospel proclamation has been at the forefront of all that KTM has been doing. That really is the horse and the rest of it follows in the cart. The leaders have always been careful not to put the cart in front of the horse.
2. **Health** – The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health in the following manner: *Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.* The idea at KCH was to provide health in a wholistic manner and not just alleviate the disease burden of the community. A physically healthy person without spiritual health or without an education, a job or dignity in society is still under bondage. Hence, transformation of communities for Dr Raju and the KTM team went beyond providing medical care to a host of other initiatives to uplift the poor, oppressed and downtrodden.
3. **The Poor** – The health services of the hospital mainly caters to the poor in the community. The main catchment population around the hospital is very poor. In keeping with the EHA vision of serving the marginalised and poor, most of the work of the ministry is done amongst the poor. Given the asset-stripping costs that face the poor when they have a major health issue, the need for on-going care done in the spirit and

words of Christ is clear.

4. **Kingdom Ethics** – Coming to kingdom ethics, a lot of medical practice in the state of UP is unethical. With around 100,000 quacks (non-registered/non-qualified doctors) most of the first-line treatment for the poor in the villages are from them. KCH strives to practice ethical medicine in a cost effective way.

STAR OF DAVID MODEL OF TRANSFORMATION

As they saw the various needs around in the community, KTM spread out its roots deeper to meet those needs, through community health services, vocational training, education and leadership training. All of these things were done with an overarching emphasis on spiritual transformation. This passion and vision led to the Star of David Model of Transformation. The various spokes in the Star of David Model of Transformation are shown in the graphic below. (Note: this was not restricted to the work done by KTM. From the beginning Dr Raju was also keen on fostering partnerships with like-minded people interested in ministry in UP.)



Hospital Services

KCH has been serving the poor and marginalised for over 100 years. KCH is a twenty-bedded hospital with departments of general medicine, dentistry, ophthalmology and surgery. Each year, the hospital currently sees an average of 35,000 outpatients and 1,500 inpatients. Many patients requiring acute care are brought to the hospital. Well-known for its snake bite management in the district, the hospital is often called “the snake bite hospital”. Many victims, brought at the last stages, have recovered completely and gone away rejoicing.

The snake bite season at Kachhwa starts from around May. Owing to poor living conditions, open defecation in the fields and lack of electricity, many villagers are at a risk of snake bites. Due to ignorance even when bitten by a snake, they go to the local witch doctor who gives them a concoction made of leaves and other unknown ingredients. It is often at the last critical minute that they are brought to the hospital.

Kajal (name changed), a 12-year-old girl, was one victim of a snake bite who was brought to the hospital in a very critical condition. She was ventilated for a couple of days. By the efficient and timely management of our medical team, she recovered completely. The parents were so thankful for saving their young daughter’s life and renewing their hope. Kajal is just one example of hundreds of lives that the hospital saves every year.

KHC also provides restoration of vision. Each year, the eye department does cataract camps for the elderly. During these camps, around 300 surgeries are undertaken within a period of three months. The cost of the surgeries is subsidised considerably for the poor and needy. The hospital eye technicians go to villages to mobilise patients with cataracts and bring them to KCH.

A new initiative of palliative care has been introduced. With a vision of providing home-based care for terminally ill patients, the project is still in its nascent stages. But here is a huge opening to demonstrate God’s love and compassion in practical terms and offer hope to the hopeless.

The hospital, in partnership with the Indian Institute of Paramedical Training in Gorakhpur, also runs various para-medical courses for students who have completed high school. Courses are run for nurse assistants, dental technicians and lab assistants. The students get an opportunity to learn in a hospital environment with hands-on practical training. And being part of the morning devotions and other spiritual activities in the hospital, they get a chance to listen to the gospel. Many have given their lives to the Lord, by the time they finish their course. Some of them have also become staff at KCH or have obtained employment opportunities in other EHA hospitals.

Community Health & Development

Often in rural communities, the abject poor (or the “Mother Theresa” poor as Dr Raju calls them) do not access hospital services. Standing in queues, getting registered, waiting to see the doctor and going to the pharmacy to buy medicines are all foreign to them. They would rather go to a village quack and get loose medicines immediately in small packets. So, it was important to go into the communities and address some of the health needs at their doorsteps.

When Raju and Catherine initially came, they found many people in the catchment population suffering from water borne diseases. So, initiative was taken by KTM to dig tube wells. Over sixty wells were dug in the initial years, thus reducing incidents of water borne diseases. Also, a simple programme called WASH (just encouraging villagers to wash their hands with soap) was organised by the team to teach better hygiene and cleanliness. These two initiatives helped reduce a lot of diarrhoeal diseases.

A specific emphasis was given to mainstreaming disability in 2015-16. Following a conference called “Engage Disability” in New Delhi, the team at KTM was made more aware of the challenges faced by the disabled and the means of bringing them into the mainstream of the society, including the churches. The CHP team of the hospital has been instrumental in procuring medical certificates for disabled people

and helping them access various government schemes. The disabled people in the community are brought together for disability day celebrations every year. God's love is shared with them and they are told how precious they are in the eyes of God. In the local church on KCH's campus, there are at least five people with various disabilities coming to worship the living God. Recently, a toilet for the disabled was built with the support of various friends of KTM.

Another focus area for the community health team is tuberculosis (TB). India bears the highest burden of TB globally. The hospital has a partnership with the government in its project called Axshya, whose main objective is to provide universal access to quality TB care and community participation in TB care and control.

KTM, in partnership with the child sponsorship agency Compassion International, also has a child development project catering to 196 children in a village 18 kms away from the hospital. The project provides for the tuition fees, hygiene supplies, one nutritious meal, treatment costs, etc. of local children. In the new integrated model of Compassion, the child can be registered while in the womb of the mother and can continue with the project until the age of twenty-two years. The focus of the project is on four developmental outcomes: Physical, Cognitive, Spiritual and Socio-emotional.

As part of the rural education project, KTM runs literacy classes for groups of illiterate women. Women come from the surrounding villages for the class. Classes are held for half a day, three days a week and are taught by trained teachers. After a year of attending classes, all of them can read, write their names and do basic maths. As a follow-up of this, the women are encouraged to attend Bible reading classes to help them read the word of God on their own. The fact that they can sign their names gives them a lot of confidence. They are also not taken advantage of in the market as they can now count and calculate the balance money they should receive after a purchase.

Vocational Training

Another area that KTM saw was the need for employment for the local youth. Most of the youth in the surrounding communities are unemployed and unemployable. KCH campus started providing short term courses. They began in small ways. The KCH electrician offered early morning classes in electrical work, before the local boys went to school or college. Later, they expanded to include mobile repair, AC repair and other skills. Young boys come from the nearby villages, learn these skills and either start a business on their own or find a job in bigger cities. The courses were later linked with the Jan Shikshan Sansthan, a government scheme which gives official certificates. Through all this, the seeds of the Word are sown in their hearts and the hope and prayer is for it to sprout and bear fruit in His perfect time. KTM has been able to train over 1,000 youths in these programmes so far.

Rinku was one of those trained at Kachhwa in electrical work and AC repair. Following the training, he got a job in Dubai. He could financially support his family back home to even build a new house. After working for many years in Dubai, he felt he needed to come back to his village and do God's work amongst his people. Today, he is back working amongst young people, teaching them life skills and sharing with them the means of attaining eternal life.

For girls in the community, a camp is conducted every summer to teach different skills like doll making, sewing, pot painting, mehndi application, etc. Around 200 young women from the villages take part in the forty-day camp. An exhibition is held on the last day of the camp to display the items that are made. The girls are shown Christian movies, taught gospel songs and the gospel is shared with them during this period. Some of those who are trained as beauticians open their own salon and earn their own livelihood.

Education

In any transformation, education plays a pivotal role. Education does not just make a person literate, it enhances the capacity to think

and shapes the worldview of the individual. The KTM team realised this early in their work. With a lack of quality schools in the villages and the poor standard of the government schools, a desire was found to impart primary education to the children in the villages. The idea of Bal Shiksha Kendras was formed.

The Bal Shiksha Kendras started as primary schools, but they had to be converted into tuition centres with the introduction of the Right to Education Act by the government. There are now around 76 centres with 93 teachers and a total of over 3,000 children. Apart from basic maths and English, the children are taught action songs, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and other verses. Most of the centres are under trees or in the open. The teachers are all local village people, recruited and trained by KTM. At least forty percent of them have come to understand the true worldview and have committed their lives to Jesus. Today, 26 of them are part of the discipling programme called BILD.

Children who have been associated with KTM for many years are now being counselled to help choose an appropriate course for higher studies. Most often these children are directionless and have no one to guide them. The Class-to-Career initiative tries to fix this gap by helping the child see their skills and enabling them to make an informed decision on their career. In accordance with their choice, they are directed to institutions that offer suitable courses.

Leadership Training

For any organization or movement to sustain, leadership is more key than financial resources. Unless mature spiritual leaders are raised up, sustaining an organization or movement is difficult. Therefore, leadership training has been a key focus of KTM. The whole campus was upgraded to provide facilities with multiple areas available for trainings and conventions. The new kitchens serve thousands of meals each year and over 500 people can be accommodated in the dormitories. Over the years, an average of 1,000 people have been on the campus for

training each month, including church planters, tuition centre teachers and paramedics.

Every week, second line leaders from the community are trained in biblical exegesis and are mentored through the Shepherds' class. Both men's and women's SBT (School of Biblical Teaching) are conducted every year, where training is given in interpreting the scriptures and dividing the word correctly so they are enabled to teach others. Many of the staff from the hospital also take part in the SBTs. The leaders of KTM are also involved with the Ezra Theology Course. It is a formal theological course to train rural pastors and church planters who would otherwise have no opportunity to get formally trained in theology. The contact classes are held both in Delhi and in Kachhwa.

Spiritual Transformation

Through all the activities of KTM, the main objective is to proactively seek opportunities to clearly present the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through the power of the gospel, thousands of lives have been transformed in the last sixteen years or so.

The establishment of worshipping communities and the transformation of them and their society using God's word is the very DNA of the KTM and we saw multiple, overlapping, constant evidences of this... It is crystal clear that the last ten years have seen a monumental flow of the Spirit changing the hearts of people and restructuring their lives. This was seen over and over again in the stories of lives that were changed – and the interlocking way that the various initiatives of the KTM have lead to Kingdom fruit. (2015 Evaluation Report)

Kachhwa Bible Church that meets on the KCH campus acts as the spiritual hub for the block. Several house churches have been established over the years that strive to be the light and salt in the community. A well planned and organised Sunday school is conducted in the

campus every week, keeping in mind the significant role that today's children will play tomorrow in the communities. Every summer, a residential VBS is held for over 500 children from various villages. In the year 2015-16, over 800 children participated in the VBS.

Regular youth camps and ladies' meetings are held. The focus of the Church is to ground the Lord's people in the Word and help them build their lives on the Rock. Over the years, many of the staff have committed their lives to Jesus. Establishing a strong community of Jesus' followers in the block and surrounding places has been and will be the focus for the coming years. There are 252 house churches with over 4,000 members under the KTM umbrella.

"Yeshu Darbar" is a monthly gathering on the campus for prayer, worship and Bible teaching, which is attended by hundreds. These monthly meetings are important for new believers to build community and to encourage them to continue their meetings in the house churches. Some of the Yeshu Darbars also have times where marriage issues are discussed and other problems are solved and prayed for. The gatherings also offer opportunities from believers from different villages to meet each other.

WIDER PARTNERSHIP: THE 100 BLOCK STRATEGY

As mentioned earlier, a key aspect of KTM is the vision for wider partnership. From the beginning, Dr Raju came up with a 100 Block Strategy aimed at reaching out to 100 blocks in Eastern UP through cross-cultural missionaries. The idea was to have a block adopted by ministries or individuals to reach out to the unreached. KTM provided an introduction and infrastructure of common facilities such as health care and training. At the moment, there is work taking place in many of these blocks. See chapter 11 for a more detailed account.

The partners who are directly linked with KTM or who are pioneering work in surrounding areas through the 100 Block Strategy have described the vital support extended by the KTM network:

KTM is a place where they were inspired and could learn; a safe haven to relax and recoup; a set of relationships that stood by them when they faced opposition in their areas. The social work inputs gave them a powerful set of tools that they could use to augment their church planting work and strengthen their community acceptance. Dr Raju Abraham was a father figure who helped them go forward in troubled times. KTM offered many paradigm-shifting experiences where they learned and had their work expanded. (2015 Evaluation Report)

THE FAITHFUL HAND OF GOD

Over the years, the KTM team has seen the faithful hand of God leading the ministry through its ups and downs. The God of the mountains has been the God of the valleys. Through it all, He continues to sustain the work of KTM for the glory of His name. The core team of KTM is a cross-cultural team with members from different parts of the country and abroad. Each person brings a unique skill and talent to the table, with the common denominator being love for the Lord and a desire to see His kingdom expand and be established.

The focus of KTM in the next couple of years will be to anchor the community of disciples on the eternal word of God, established in faith and good works. Raising second-line leaders from the local communities will continue to be an area of focus for the ministry. This is with an expectation of having future local leaders who are equipped to teach and disciple others.

Expanding the medical services and facilities to cater to the needs of the community will remain a priority for KTM. Reaching out with the gospel to more villages, investing in the lives of children and women and partnering with like-minded individuals and ministries will all keep KTM busy for many more years to come.

As the father of modern missions, William Carey said, “Attempt great things for God, expect great things from God.” KTM will

continue to attempt great things for Him and will expect great things from Him even in the coming years.

APPENDIX: ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF THE KTM MODEL

From the 2015 Evaluation Report, below are seven essential interlocking components that make up the KTM model:

1. A base property with a clear institutional identity as a social service provider.
2. A visionary and committed leader who is able to foster and maintain partnerships.
3. Promotional activities of KTM model among the established churches in South and Northeast India.
4. A toolbox of activities which addresses Kingdom concern on social issues.
5. A lived-out commitment to incubating entrepreneurship and innovation.
6. Strategic data gathering and assigning ministry locations to partners for maximum kingdom impact.
7. Sustained fund flows in proportion to the vision.



South Asian Concern exists to help the Church build bridges with the South Asian community in the UK. We also partner with others in North India, other parts of South Asia and across the Diaspora.

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