



Inspired by LEADERSHIP

by JAMES EAGLES

“in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.” 2 Corinthians 11:26-28 NKJV



James Eagles
President

Journeying to India and then to Bangladesh in the spring of this year was a watershed event for me. It had been many years since I last travelled in India and I had never visited Bangladesh before.

It is always a profound experience to visit another culture, but even more amazing when you get to meet the Lord’s people—“over there”.

I think the experience that moved me the most was seeing the passion and dedication with which the Lord’s people serve their Saviour. And yet their situation is far from being idyllic. They are faced with difficulties and overwhelming challenges every day.

In these nations, welfare, health care, unemployment insurance, pension plans and the like don’t exist. Like the traffic on the streets, it is everyone looking out for themselves in order to simply exist.

But with the Christian people there, they live with humility and amazing grace. And it is in the indigenous Christian leadership that I found the heart of the inspiration. The people of God I visited are inspired by their Lord and by the tremendous self-sacrificing example set by their leaders.

Continuing With Perseverance

Take the widow of the late leader of the **Indigenous Mission of Bangladesh**, Elizabeth Debnath. Even though she lost her husband

tragically several years ago, and she herself suffered a debilitating stroke; yet she continues on, with perseverance and determination with the leading elders to continue in the steps of her husband to bring the message of Christ and His liberating Gospel to the masses of the Bangladeshi people.

She is undeterred by lack of finances, loss of her husband, needs of her maturing children, or even her own fragile physical condition.

And the same could be said of the other leaders of the missions we visited in South India.

We visited: Mrs. Jaya Thasiah, founder of **Bombay Revival Prayer Band**, now in her seventies, who just lost her husband. She has lived in the same humble, rented flat for the last 50 years. Assisted by her daughter, Bethela, and the Elders of BRPB, she continues to be the driving force to enable the message of the Gospel of deliverance to be brought to the prostitutes and slum dwellers of one of the largest slums in the world.

Her Bible College was an inspiration: Bethel Bible College—located in the heart of Mumbai’s Dharavi slums is where each year from 15 to 25 students from all over India take Bible College courses to enable them to return to their villages to bring the life-changing Message of Salvation in Christ Jesus. I was doubly impressed by the devotion and commitment of these young students and their teachers.

Total Devotion and Commitment

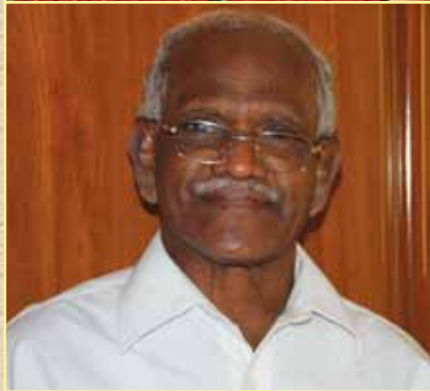
In Hubli, Karnataka state we visited the leader of **Bharat Evangelical Fellowship**, Rev. Jesuratnam Buraga, the founder of the ministry. Again, another example of total devotion and commitment. For 52 years this man of God and his devoted wife have weathered persecution, opposition and difficulties of all kinds to see the establishment of the Lord's kingdom in some of the most difficult states in India for the Gospel. Facing a hostile Hindu element, Dr. Buraga has never backed away out of fear or want, even though many times they were forced to continue on in the face of daunting needs. But God always made a way for them.

Leadership to be effective must be consistent and dedicated. Every one of the ministry leaders I met in India and Bangladesh showed these traits to the fullest. Tried in the fires of affliction, these men and women continue their assault on the kingdom of the evil one, liberating the prisoners and setting the captives free. Theirs is a story of running the good race and finishing the course the Lord has given them.

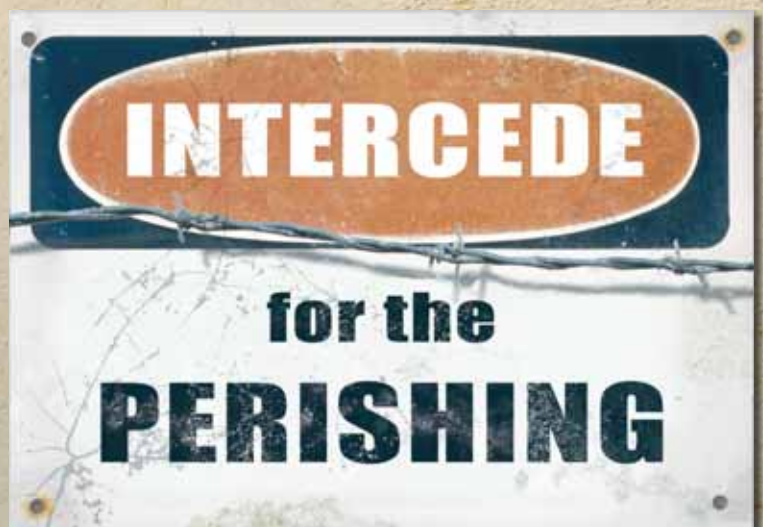
In Tamil Nadu state, I met and travelled with Rev. Peter Prakasam of **Tamil Christian Fellowship**—the devoted son of Rev. Job Gnanaprakasam and his late wife, Ruth Gnanaprakasam. Tragically, Peter also lost his wife of many years a few years ago, but has nevertheless been able by the Grace of God to carry on in the ministry, undeterred—to help spread the Gospel not only in Tamil Nadu but also in 14 other states of India.

Then in Hyderabad I met with Rev. Christopher Boda, leader of **Banjara Tribal Ministries**—a man like Paul, who came from a difficult background. In his conversion experience, he experienced the pains of total rejection by his family, was almost killed by his father, and lived an austere and painful life as a young Christian man, until the day the Lord sent people into his life who helped him, and sent him to Bible College. He has devoted his entire life to reaching the 30 million Banjara people with the Gospel. Thank God that he, like the other leaders I met in India and Bangladesh, was given “that unspeakable grace” that Paul spoke of so many years before.

Coming back home to Canada, I am more determined than ever to see a people for His Name established through the efforts of these indigenous missionaries who have sacrificed all for this goal. May the Lord help us to be faithful like them.



TOP LEFT: Elizabeth Debnath, leader of IMB. | TOP RIGHT: BRPB leader Jaya Thasiah with her daughter Gabriel Bethela. | MIDDLE LEFT: Founder of BEF Jesuratnam Buraga. | MIDDLE RIGHT: James Eagles with BTM's Christopher and Rambai Boda. | ABOVE: Peter Prakasam, Director of TCF's Bethel Christian School with schoolchildren



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