



Pastor's Conference in South India

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We just returned home from Coimbatore, India. There were 8 of us who traveled to the campus of South India Baptist Bible College to host a Pastor's Conference on February 3-6. At least 38 language groups from all parts of India were represented among the approximately 150 pastors and the 150 senior college students who attended. Dr. P.D. Cherian and his staff did an excellent job planning and organizing the meeting. The Lord blessed each session and there was great liberty.



Our desire was to stir the hearts of the Indian pastors to the plight of the unreached. No church is to be the end product or end result of the gospel effort. Every church is to be a Great Commission church with a worldview and a desire to spread the gospel where Christ has not been named. There was a very good response as some heard for the first time that one-half of our world has still never heard the name of Jesus Christ and that there are more than 4,000 languages still waiting for the Scriptures. One pastor commented, "This is eye-opening."

God has given us two faithful men who presently serve on the faculty of South India Baptist Bible College who will be traveling throughout India on behalf of FirstBible. We believe God has raised up Benjamin Christopher and Sathianesan Mathew for the purpose of continuing the momentum of this Pastor's Conference. Their goals will be to raise awareness of the unreached people groups and raise funding for Bible translation and publishing, particularly for the unreached people groups of India.



Please pray that what God started in the hearts of the Indian pastors will continue on. Their involvement in the spreading of the gospel is absolutely crucial to reaching the people groups of India and beyond. India is the second largest country on earth with a population of 1.1 billion and is growing at a rate that will soon make it the largest country on earth. It is a land of great diversity both culturally and economically. Some of the world's richest as well as the world's poorest live in close proximity within its borders.

Many believe that the Apostle Thomas introduced India to Christianity in the first century. Sporadic missionary effort took place down through the centuries until 1706 when the first Protestant missionary, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg arrived in India. Despite great opposition and even imprisonment, he began reaching the Indian people with the gospel. He also began the first Scripture translation effort into an Indian language, completing the New Testament in the Tamil language in 1715.

Troubled by ill health all his life, Ziegenbalg died in 1719 at the age of 36. In only 13 years of service, he left behind a dictionary and grammar book in Tamil, the New Testament and the Old Testament up to

the Book of Ruth and several gospel tracts. He built two church buildings, founded a seminary for the training of indigenous clergy, and left over 250 baptized Indians.

William Carey founded the Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen in 1792 and one year later sailed for India. He would become known as the "Father of Modern Missions." His service in Calcutta and Serampore is legendary for the impact he made with the gospel and the impact he made on many different facets of the culture. But he is best known for his impact in the area of Bible translation. In Carey's lifetime, his mission printed and distributed the Bible in whole or part in 44 languages and dialects. In 1812 a fire in the print shop destroyed hundreds of irreplaceable manuscripts, but Carey persevered. His life has inspired many missionaries to follow him to India.

Despite all the gospel effort and the church planting movement that has taken place since Carey, there is a desperate need. Today, one-third of the world's 6000 unreached people groups are in India. These unreached people groups number in the millions with the largest of them being over 60 million people.

The opportunity God has given FirstBible to impact these people groups has unlimited potential. We are in the process of establishing a translation training center on the college campus. Our goal is to teach translation philosophy and linguistics for the purpose of preparing the students of South India Baptist Bible College to translate Scripture for India's unreached peoples. Qualified faculty will be needed for both semester long and modular classes. We are also asking God to provide a man who will take the India Project as his own burden and life work.

Would you pledge your prayer toward this effort? Would you consider partnering with us financially to make this a reality?