

# Clifton News

No 256 January - March 2012

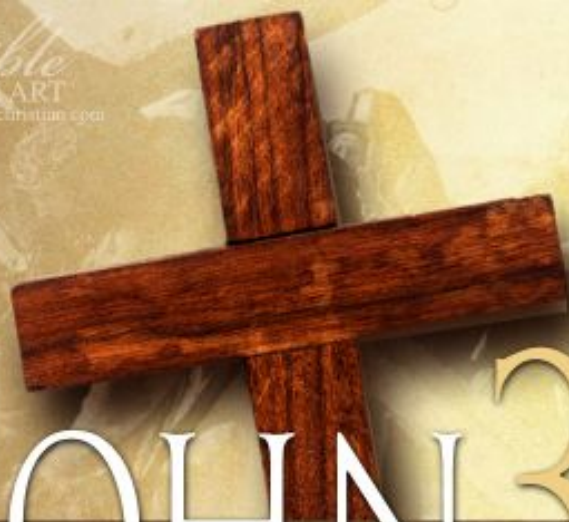
Published 1948



# JOHN 3:3

<sup>3</sup> JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD.<sup>KJV</sup>

Bible  
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# JOHN 3:16

<sup>29</sup> FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.<sup>KJV</sup>

# News

We would like to wish all our readers a very



“Thou crownest the year with thy goodness;  
and thy paths drop fatness.” (Psalm 65:11)

We thank the Lord for all His blessings this past year. The young people's work on Wednesdays & Fridays continues to grow in numbers. The Sunday school however remains small. Most listen well to the gospel message and ask questions. We have problems sometimes with too many attending which is a good problem to have. Please pray we do not lose any because it is sometimes too crowded. The believers have a number of plans for outreach this new year and value prayer for souls to be saved.

We received sad news of the home call of Missionary Violet Mackay aged 84 on 6th October 2011. Violet was commended by Clifton Hall to serve the Lord in Nigeria with her husband Hugh and they served the Lord there from 1955 to 1977. She worked as a nurse at the Ika Maternity hospital and was also involved in Bible translation work with Hugh. The Bible Society published a Bible in the Agatu language of Northern Idoma in 1984 which was the fruit of their labours. The editor fondly remembers their visits to speak to the Sunday school at Clifton Hall and tell stories of Nigeria.

Violet leaves behind her husband Hugh, four sons, Clive, Jonathan, Andrew, Jeremy and eleven grandchildren.

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# Meetings

## *The week at Clifton*

### *Lord's Day*

Breaking of Bread 11.00 am

Gospel Meeting 6:30 pm

### *Tuesday*

First Tuesday of month - Bible Reading 8.00 pm

### *Wednesday*

Seekers Club 6:30 pm (Term time only for under 10s)

### *Thursday*

Prayer & Ministry 7:45 pm

### *Friday*

Friday Club (Term time only for 10+) 7:30 pm

## *Sunday Evening Gospel Meeting*

### January

- |    |                                    |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 1  | Richard Catchpole (Family Service) |
| 8  | Norman Gibbons                     |
| 15 | Alastair Rodger                    |
| 22 | Mark Beardall                      |
| 29 | Raymond Reed                       |

### February

- |    |                  |
|----|------------------|
| 5  | Alf Taylor       |
| 12 | Len Bass         |
| 19 | Norman Gibbons   |
| 26 | Phil Briercliffe |

## March

4	John Aston
11	Alastair Rodger
18	Richard Catchpole
25	Norman Gibbons

## *Tuesday Bible Reading*

*Studying Paul's Epistle to the Romans*

January	Romans 1:1-7
February	Romans 1:8-17
March	Romans 1:18-32

## *Thursday Prayer & Ministry*

### January

5	Jonathan Black
12	Jonathan Black
19	Norman Gibbons
26	Norman Gibbons

### February

2	Nitish Patel
9	Phil Briercliffe
16	Phil Briercliffe
23	Richard Catchpole

### March

1	Nitish Patel
8	Alastair Rodger
15	Richard Catchpole
22	Martin Hayward
29	Martin Hayward



# Questions



*While speaking recently with Jehovah's Witnesses I was astonished to hear them say 'The cross is an illegal symbol, not recognised by most true Christians'. In support of this assertion they quoted Exodus 20.4-5 and Jeremiah 10.3-5. Can you please explain their strange assertion?*

Behind these remarks is a belief that only 'Jehovah's Witnesses' are true Christians. Contrary to that claim the members of this sect deny many fundamental doctrines of the Bible, amongst which is a denial of the essential deity of the Lord Jesus. There are many scriptures that clearly affirm the deity of Christ, scriptures which they either deliberately change in their own version of the Bible or choose to totally ignore, e.g. John 1.1; John 10.33; John 20.28; Titus 2.13; Hebrews 1.8; Revelation 1.8. This denial of the deity of Christ establishes that their profession to be Christians is a blatant lie the Lord Himself saying 'If ye believe not that I am (a Divine title taken from Exodus 3.14) he ye shall die in your sins', John 8.24.

Regarding their ideas about the cross, they claim that Christ died on an upright stake and this is depicted in their Watchtower Magazine with pictures of the Lord crucified with His hands above His head and one nail driven through both hands. They also maintain that the traditional shape of the cross was a symbol of pagan worship in many ancient religions and so conclude that Churches today which use the traditional shape of the cross as a symbol are idolatrous, hence the quotations given to you from Exodus 20 and Jeremiah 10 regarding the sin of making graven images.

It is sadly true that many in Christendom do venerate the symbol of the cross, using it in a superstitious way, even bowing down before it contrary to what the Bible teaches. We certainly believe that all such idolatry is wrong whether it is the worship of a wooden cross, a statue of a saint, or any other religious object. It has been rightly said that it is the WORK Christ did on the cross that saves not the WOOD of the cross. In light of our remarks we should perhaps just comment upon the words of Paul in Galatians 6.14 'God forbid that I should glory (i.e. boast) save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.' A careful reading of the verse will indicate that Paul is not glorying in the symbol of the cross,

but rather in what has been accomplished through the death of Christ upon the cross. The Bible teaches that through the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross those who believe have their sins forgiven, Ephesians 1.7, and have peace with God, Romans 5.1. While we must not venerate the symbol of the cross as though it has some saving virtue we should certainly believe in the One who died upon the cross, Acts 4.12; 16.31.

As to the shape of the cross, it is evident from the Bible and also from Roman historical records that the cross was not a simple upright stake, but also included a cross-beam upon which the victim's hands were nailed either side. The Romans called this crossbeam a 'patibulum'. The way this is depicted in the Watchtower Magazine contradicts the teaching of the Bible. The plural 'nails' in John 20.25 suggests the use of a crossbeam with His hands nailed either side. The superscription that was written by Pilate, 'This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews' was placed above His head, Matthew 27.37 and not above His hands as depicted in their magazines. Roman writers, early Christians and archaeological discoveries of images of crucifixion confirm this. One example is the Greek historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who lived at the time of the birth of Jesus, and wrote:

A Roman citizen of no obscure station, having ordered one of his slaves to be put to death, delivered him to his fellow-slaves to be led away; and in order that his punishment might be witnessed by all, directed them to drag him through the Forum and every other conspicuous part of the city as they whipped him, and that he should go ahead of the procession which the Romans were at that time conducting in honour of the god. The men ordered to lead the slave to his punishment, having stretched out both his arms and fastened them to a piece of wood which extended across his breast and shoulders as far as his wrists, followed him, tearing his naked body with whips. The culprit, overcome by such cruelty, not only uttered ill-omened cries, forced from him by the pain, but also made indecent movements under the blows. (DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS ROMAN ANTIQUITIES, Book VII, Chapter. 68)

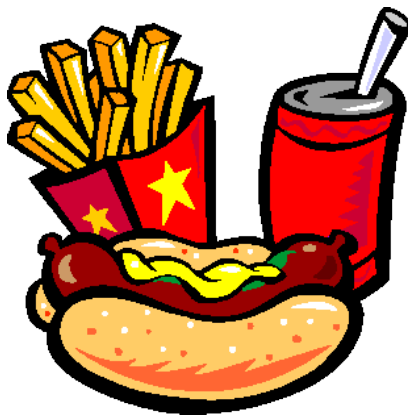
Dionysius uses the word 'patibulum' for the horizontal crossbeam. In 1857 graffiti was found engraved in plaster on Palatine Hill in Rome showing a crucified man on a cross with a head of an ass. Romans were known to mock Christians in this way and the depiction of the cross is the shape we are familiar with today, and early Christian writers, such as Justin Martyr; Hippolytus of Rome; Clement of Alexandria also make mention of such a cross.

- Richard Catchpole & Nitish Patel

# Bible Teaching on Fasting

*An examination of what the Holy  
Scriptures teach - part 3*

*by the late Charles Wigg (Tasmania)*



## **New Testament Teaching and Example**

Though there are other examples that we could cite from the Old Testament, let us now look at the New Testament.

Our Lord Jesus Christ: must ever be the supreme example, and we read of Him fasting only once, in Matt. 4:2, and that was the occasion of the temptations in the wilderness. He did not fast to obtain more power, because he already possessed divine power, and was filled with the Holy Spirit.

He fasted because of His hatred of everything sinful. He suffered being tempted, showing that temptation caused Him suffering. We are so different, because temptation gives us a certain pleasure, often more pleasure than the sin we are tempted to commit. He did not fast for a few hours, but for 40 days, this sapped His human strength, and caused Him to be very hungry. But He never yielded to any temptation, and the Devil was defeated, and had to leave Him for a time.

## **His teaching about fasting**

Never once did the Lord Jesus command us to fast. In Matt. 6:16, He tells that when we fast, showing that those to whom He spoke were in the habit of fasting, though they were doing it in a wrong way, as an outward sign of a devotion that they did not have. They were fasting, so that they might be seen of men, but He teaches us that if we do fast, then it is to be done secretly, and done to God, not to men.

It is interesting that He did command us to forgive men for their



transgressions, things done against us, but very strangely those who lay great stress and importance on fasting, are so often guilty of refusing to forgive their brothers and sisters, not just unsaved men in the world. In Matt. 9:15, He told that His disciples would not fast while He was with them, but only after He had been taken away from them. From what follows He seems to say the fasting, such as practiced by the Pharisees and the disciples of John the Baptist, was really only sewing a new patch on an old garment. Much of the fasting practiced today is just the same. An attempt to improve the flesh, by sewing a religious patch on to it. Even after the Lord Jesus went back to Heaven, we seldom read of the disciples and Apostles fasting.

### **His condemnation of hypocrisy**

Though the Lord Jesus never commanded us to fast, neither is it commanded in the Old Testament, yet He spoke in the strongest condemnation of those who practiced fasting as a religious show. Their gloomy face, their neglect of their outward appearance, so that they may appear to be undergoing great suffering, so that they might attract the attention, the sympathy, the admiration of men, was clearly very repulsive to Him.

He tells us the story of the Pharisee who prayed to himself, Luke 18:10-14. That Pharisee gave God such a lecture about what he considered were his own good points, or works, and amongst them boasted that he fasted twice in the week. However he only exalted himself, and failed to gain the power and approval with God that he thought he deserved, neither was he justified, but the despised tax gatherer was. All this is meant to be a warning to us, may we have grace to heed the warning. I fear that the Pharisee has many modern counterparts today, especially during the time of Lent, when misguided nominal Christians, deny themselves of so many things, which is not commanded in the scriptures, and are so proud of their self denial, though they continue in their sins, and reject the salvation that our Lord Jesus bought for all who trust in Him, with His precious blood.

## **Why do people fast?**

The idea in the minds of many is that fasting gives them power with God, or even power over God. This is often based on the words of the Lord Jesus in Matt. 17: 21, “But this kind does not go out, but by prayer and fasting”. The desire for the deliverance of those who are enslaved by sin, or Satan’s power, or his demons, is a noble and right desire, but the mere lust for power, even power over Satan’s mighty demons, comes only from the pride of man, the desire for fame, the flesh.

The desire for power in prayer likewise, is a worthy desire, so long as it is God’s glory alone that we seek. The desire to have power over God, emanates from the flesh. The false teaching of some, that we can command God to do what we want, through the so-called authority of prayer, is based on human presumption. I have heard people telling God that He must do this or that. Our Heavenly Father is Lord of heaven and earth, He will not take orders or advice from us. Such people also claim that it is quite wrong when we pray to ask, if it be thy will, claiming that this is the language of unbelief, it is nothing of the kind, but the humble acceptance of the fact that we do not always know what the will of God is in every situation. It is the realization that God who knows the end from the beginning, knows what is best in every situation. The Lord Jesus taught us to pray, “Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”

..... to be continued

# Good News

## The Black Bundle



Many years ago, in the Southern Indian state of Kerala, the river Pamba flooded, sweeping many villages into the sea. The villagers lost everything, as they kept most of their belongings wrapped up in a bundle of cloth.

As the flood was sweeping everything downstream, a number of men were taking advantage of the disaster. They were swimming into the flood to retrieve the black bundles that were floating on the water. When opened, they contained all kinds of money, jewels, and possessions.

One man saw what he thought was a very large black bundle, so he dived into the water and swam towards it. As he came near to it, he reached out and grabbed the bundle. To his horror, the black bundle grabbed him! It was a black bear which had been washed down with the flood. The more this man struggled, the more tightly the bear hugged him. His friends could see him in trouble, so they cried out to him "Let go of the blanket!". The man replied, "I have let go of the blanket, but the blanket has not let go of me!" Both he and the bear were swept down the flood.

How this story reminds us of the power of sin! Many enjoy sinful pleasures, but when sin begins to bring misery into their lives, they try to give it up, whether it's drink, drugs, gambling, or immoral living. To their dismay they realise that though they have let go of sin, but sin has not let go of them!

We are all by nature sinners and under its power. This is why religion, ceremonies or rituals cannot change anyone. If you stay this way, your sins will take you down to hell. The Bible says, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36) Only Jesus has the power to forgive and free those in bondage to sin because He alone died on the cross to pay the penalty of sin and redeem us from its power. His resurrection from the dead makes Him a living Saviour with power to deliver all who come to Him in faith. Trust the Saviour now and start this new year with new life from above.

## Happiness - Where can it be found?

**Elvis Presley** was once asked if he was happy with all his riches and fame. He said, "No, I am lonely as hell" (and hell is a lonely place).

**John D. Rockefeller** was asked the same question after he made his first billion. He replied, "I have made millions, but they have brought me no happiness".

**A woman** in the hospital was weeping after being told she was terminally ill with cancer. When a friend sought to console her she replied, "I'm not weeping because I'm dying. I'm weeping because I never lived".

Life does not consist in the abundance of things that a man possesses. It is only found in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ who has said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:11)



# Church History

by Mark Beardall

## *The life of Brownlow North*

Brownlow North was born at Winchester House, Chelsea on 6th January 1810. He came from a highly privileged family. He was the grandson of the Bishop of Winchester and the grandnephew of Lord North who served as Prime Minister under George III. His father Charles Augustus North was Rector of Alverstoke and Prebendary of Winchester and his mother Rachel was the daughter of Thomas Jarvis Esq of Doddington Hall, Lincolnshire. His cousin the Earl of Guilford had no son and his elder brother was childless, so when Brownlow was born it was assumed that he would inherit the Earldom.



Brownlow was sent to Eton College when he was nine years old. He was not an outstanding student but was a good sportsman who excelled in swimming. He had to leave Eton six years later following the death of his father in 1825. He was then sent to Corfu to live with his cousin Lord Guilford. It was hoped that North would study in the Theological College that his cousin had founded but he was soon sent home for bad behaviour.

After a grand tour of Europe, he returned home to Cheltenham to live with his mother. There he enjoyed the pleasures of dancing and riding. He proposed to nineteen women within a few months and every one of them accepted. His mother had a hard job turning them away as he was obviously not serious. North enjoyed racing his horses along the long straight road known as the Promenade. However, he was greatly shaken after one of his opponents died in a terrible collision with a carriage travelling in the opposite direction. After this North went to Ireland where he married Grace Anne Coffey on 12th December 1828. They had three sons Charles, Augustus and Brownlow.

Hard times soon came upon him. His cousin the Earl of Guilford had died

and was succeeded by his Uncle Francis. His uncle did not want Brownlow to be the heir. So he remarried after the death of his wife and produced a son. Brownlow's inheritance had faded away. He needed to think of a way to increase his funds so he turned to gambling. After losing a great sum of money, he fled to Boulogne because he couldn't pay his gambling debts. He didn't do any better in Boulogne so he went to Portugal and joined Don Pedro's army and sent his wife and children to live at his mother's house.

Brownlow returned from the war a few months later and took his family to live in Scotland. He was every inch a country gentleman. He enjoyed nothing more than shooting grouse and salmon fishing. One year, he shot 970 brace of grouse within six weeks. He lived for sport and was extremely competitive and often made bets that he would win, especially in long distance horse races.

The first time that he thought seriously about his soul was when he was having dinner with the Duchess of Gordon. He asked the Duchess what she would say to a man who had prayed to God all his life and had never been answered. She quietly whispered to him the words of James 4:3, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your own lusts." This made quite a deep impression on him. Soon after, when his son was sick, he sought to please the Lord in his own strength and reform his character. He even went to Oxford University and hoped to use the degree to become a minister in the Church of England. He received his degree in 1842 and was even promised a Curacy in Olney. But the Bishop of Lincoln refused to ordain him after hearing about his previous manner of life and considering his present spiritual state. He was convicted but not converted. His was a mere outward reformation. He later said, "I never apprehended Christ, I never accepted him as my sin bearer and my righteousness."

After a period of religious impressions North went fully into the world. Living for sport. Fishing on the Lord's Day, hunting, playing cards and holding all night parties. One day in November 1854 when he was playing at cards, a feeling of sudden illness as if he was going to die came upon him. He said to his son, "I am a dead man take me upstairs." When he reached his bedroom he fell on the bed and thought, "Now what will my forty-four years of following the devices of my own heart profit me? In a few minutes



I will be in hell, and what good will all these things do me, for which I have sold my soul? He wanted to get on his knees and call on the Lord but was afraid of praying in front of a maidservant who was lighting his fire. Eventually he did pray and trust the Lord. He came downstairs the next day and told his friends who were staying with him, "I am a changed man,"

Brownlow was saved but he lacked assurance for a few months, until he read, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe for there is no difference." Brownlow leaped for joy! He said, "If that scripture is true, I am a saved man! That is what I want: that is what God offers me: that is what I will have."

Within a year of knowing the Lord, Brownlow started to think about how he may serve the Lord. He wanted to give out tracts but was afraid that people would laugh at him. When he did give out tracts most people politely accepted them. He continued giving out tracts throughout his life. He also started to visit the sick He soon started to hold meetings in peoples homes and in some workplaces. It was not long before he was speaking at a cottage meeting every night of the week. The meetings were crowded and many had to be turned away as there was no room.

When his minister was unable to take the service and there was nobody to replace him, he told North that if he didn't preach there would be no service. He was uncomfortable about this, as he was not an ordained minister. He eventually agreed when he was pressed to do so. The people were greatly moved by his preaching. He even had to take two funerals while the minister was away. When the minister returned, he asked North to hold Gospel meetings. The building was so packed that people were crammed up upon the stairs. There was much fruit from that campaign.

Brownlow remained humble and was often almost apologetic about his preaching. "I am not an authorised preacher but I will tell you what I am; I am a man who has been at the brink of the bottomless pit and has

looked in, and as I see many of you going down to that pit, I am here to 'hollo' you back and warn you of your danger. I am here also as the chief of sinners, saved by grace, to tell you that the grace that saved me can surely save you."

Many people objected to North preaching because of his notoriety as a sinner. When he arrived at a certain meeting house to preach somebody gave him a letter and asked him to read it immediately. This letter listed many of the sins of his unconverted days and then said "How dare you, being conscious of all the above, pray and speak to the people this evening when you are such a vile sinner?" North started the meeting by reading the letter to the congregation. He told them, "All that is here said is true, and it is a correct picture of the degraded sinner that I once was, and oh how wonderful must the grace be that could quicken and raise me up from such a death in trespasses and sins, and make me what I appear before you tonight, a vessel of mercy, one who knows that all his past sins have been cleansed away by the atoning blood of the Lamb of God. It is of His redeeming love that I have now to tell you, and to entreat any here who are not yet reconciled to God to come this night in faith to Jesus, that He may heal them."

Brownlow North saw much blessing in Scotland but he was better known for his work in Northern Ireland during the 1859 Ulster Revival. Revival had already broken out when William Gibson, moderator of the Irish Presbyterian Church, invited North to Ulster. There were prayer meetings everywhere, pubs were closing and people were crying out to God for mercy. North arrived in Ireland at the end of June 1859 and stayed for two months. Many of the meetings were held in the open air as the church buildings were not big enough to contain the crowds. He preached to 7000 at Dunmull and a good number at Portrush. Many could not sleep as they were crying out for mercy. Some were so overcome with conviction of sin that they had no strength left in them. In August 1859, he preached at Victoria Market, in Londonderry, to about 5000 people. He held two open-air meetings at Newtonlimavady. There were about 4000 at the first meeting and 7000 at the second. A woman from the workhouse went outside to sweep the door down and heard Mr

North say, "Whosoever will, let him come." She was saved almost instantly.

Many Roman Catholics were saved during the revival and the priests were selling holy water to get rid of the "revival devil." One priest told a woman to beat her son until he submitted to the Catholic Church.

People were even crying out for repentance during Roman Catholic services and trusting the Lord and leaving the Church of Rome. Many new Churches were formed including what Ian Paisley says was the first Brethren meeting in Northern Ireland. The revival started when four men began to pray at the Old Schoolhouse in Kells. One of those men Jerry Meneely became convinced of the doctrine of believers baptism, by immersion. He was baptised at Lough Neagh and a number of others were later baptised. They met each Lord's day to break bread in a little cottage in Ferniskey in 1859. Some believers from Groggan also came to the same view and met with them each Lord's day. They sought a place convenient for both the Kells and Groggan people. They bought a house in Ballymacvea and converted it into a hall, that was opened in 1860. Another Church was formed after a pub landlord was saved in February 1859. He gave up his business straightaway and started to testify. He held many gospel meetings in local houses and crowds came to hear him. A number of believers got together and built a meeting place where Hugh Kelso, the former publican was the Pastor.

All evangelical denominations benefited from the revival. It is estimated that the Irish Presbyterian Church received 60,000 converts during the revival and over all about 100,000 people were added to the churches of Northern Ireland in one year. North was not responsible for the revival but he played his part, warning men to flee from the wrath to come.

North continued to preach with much blessing in England and Scotland. He also wrote a number of tracts and some of his sermons have been printed including some on the Rich Man and Lazarus and the Prodigal Son.

North died after a short period of illness on 9th November 1875. His gravestone was inscribed with the following words, "AFTER HE SERVED HIS OWN GENERATION HE FELL ASLEEP."

# *Report of visit to India*

*by Nitish Patel*

A three week visit was made to India in November 2011 to give help to the work in Gujarat, a state in India, which remains very hard to evangelise. However, a few Hindus and Jains have been saved in recent years who are going on for the Lord. We met again a young lady named Siddhi who was saved last year and through her witness her mother has been saved and baptised. She boldly witnesses to many of her faith. They are both in fellowship in the assembly in the city of Rajkot. Four villages were visited and a number of people gathered to hear the Word of God. Very few visit to preach to them. It was quite an experience to preach the gospel with the stars above your head and folks sitting down on the ground to listen. It is our prayer that they will be saved and be a witness to others in their village.

The small assembly in the city of Anand remains active and needs our prayers. Brother Sanjay Parmar is the full time worker there.

The radio program continues to be broadcast to Gujarat but there have not been any new contacts despite an initial response. There are still many who listen who do not write. It is hoped that the program will change to medium wave from short wave in the new year, a move which will greatly increase the audience and response.

In other parts of India, things are much better though persecution is not far away. A visit was made to the city of Pune to cut a ribbon and open a new hall above a widows home which was started by evangelist B. A. Tadke. At present they can financially only look after four widows but there is room for six more. An all day Bible conference was held on Saturday in the new hall and on the Lord's Day, we witnessed the baptism of eight believers before the breaking of bread meeting.

When I first visited Pune for meetings in 1997, there were around 5 assemblies, now there are 20 in the city. The work continues to progress in the state of Maharashtra but there are so many yet to hear the gospel. A similar all day conference was held at a new school purchased for camps and Bible conferences in the town of Nalasopara, north of the city of Bombay. There also we witnessed the baptism of five believers.



Asha widows home, Pune



Four resident widows



Lunch time



Medical room



Baptisms





Assembly in Anand



Meeting in Gujarat at night



A lady who is the only one saved in her village



Conference centre at Nalasopara & baptisms