

January & February, 2004

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Assam is located in the northeastern part of India and has an area of 30,285 square miles (78,438 square kilometers). It is bound to the north by the kingdom of Ghutan and the state of Arunachal Pradesh; to the east by the states of Nagaland and Manipur; to the south by the states of Mizoram and Tripura; and to the west by the state of Meghalaya, Bangladesh, and the state of West Bengal. Assam does not have the normal Indian hot, dry season. The average temperature is moderate, about 84 degrees F (29 degrees C). In this season, the climate of the valley is marked by heavy fogs and a little rain.

The Assamese are a mixture of Mongolian-Tigetian, Aryan, and Burman ethnic origins. Their official language, which is called Assamese is closely related to Bengali (Language of State of Bengal). The hilly margins of the plain are inhabited by the hill tribes of the Garo, Khasi, and Hajong. The Bodo are the largest minority group in Assam and are concentrated in the northern areas of the Brahmaputra River valley. About two-thirds of the Assamese are Hindus, and about a quarter are Muslim. The Muslims are mostly recent settlers from Bangladesh or converts belonging to the lower strata of Hindu society.

In the month of January I had the privilege to visit the State of Assam for 8 days by the invitation from three of our Graduates, Bro. David Kondpan, Bro. Theophilose Kakaria and Bro. Habel Tandy. I preached mornings and nights in several Churches and in a youth camp. Regardless of the cold weather, lack seating arrangements and electricity hundreds of people came hear the preaching. They came two hours early just get a seat to listen to the word of God. Christianity (Baptist Churches) came to Assam during the time of William Carrey, but very sad to say many of them are worse than non Christians. "Why do Pastors not teach these people about exemplary Christian life?" I asked our graduates. "How can they teach something that they do not know?" was the answer. Many people young and old were saved and committed their lives to God during my ministry there. I came back with a broken heart and a greater burden. I am praying that we can start Churches there with the help of our graduates; please keep this matter in your prayers.

Sri Lanka Missionary Terry Unruh, Evangelist Jon Withnow, Kansas and Pastor Ron Caudill, Chickasha, Oklahoma were the special guests at the 18th Annual Independent Baptist Conference held at Chathannor, Kerala, India on February 4th – 8th. Approximately 2,000 attended the conference. This five-day conference included Leadership Training Course taught by Pastor Ron Caudill, special meetings for Sunday school Teachers, Pastors and Ladies, Graduation of our Bible Colleges, and most importantly, evangelistic meetings at night. 41 students graduated from three of our Bible Colleges during this week. We were greatly blessed by the teaching, preaching and singing of these blessed servants of God. Also God enabled us to conduct some outdoor crusades without any interference from the police or government officials; God's hand of

protection was upon these meetings. Numerous people came to know Christ and many dedications were made in each meeting. Thank you so much for your prayers.

Your prayers and supports are extremely valuable to us as we labor for our Master. Thank you and May the Lord bless you.

For soul in India,
Sam Thomas
Missionary Sam Thomas & Family