

## STOMACH PROBLEMS CAN BE A GOOD THING!



Before the campaign in November, I traveled to various parts of Tamil Nadu to speak to the brethren regarding the importance of winning souls. It is an honor to be able to work beside of such mighty men of faith. It was during my meeting with the preachers in the southern-most part of India that someone suggested that Allagar should tell me of his most recent experience.

Allagar is one of the most zealous men of God I have ever met. After his conversion, this barber taught the gospel to men as he cut their hair. Until six months ago he, had baptized 24 souls. Now his shop is closed and he is the traveling barber/evangelist, going village to village.

Recently, Allagar had gone into a village to evangelize when some Hindu radicals approached him, taking away his Bible and tracts. While the men were debating whether they should beat him, Allagar explained how he was praying fervently. Finally, they kept his Bible and materials and chased him from the village.

It was likely because of some virus that 40 people in that village got diarrhea that night. We can only speculate as to the cause. Hindus are very superstitious people and they gathered together the next morning to discuss their very unpleasant dilemma, deciding it had happened because they had chased the man of God from their village.

The people called Allagar and apologized, inviting him to return. When he arrived, they anxiously gave him his Bible and tracts and also gave him another chance to preach. After preaching the gospel for some time, six more souls were added to the body.

My brothers and I had the best laugh after hearing the story. Waiting for my response, I told the brothers, "We should all be thankful for diarrhea!"

## BROTHERS ARE STILL SUFFERING From the Devastation of Cyclone Gaja!



It was beautiful to see the churches in India come to their feet, collecting more than \$3,000, a very generous sum among the poor brethren of that country. Their collection was to assist the brothers in Nagapattinam who suffered great loss during mid-November due to Cyclone Gaja. Storms are frightening even when living in a well-built house, and it is hard to imagine how one would feel who lives in a grass hut beside the sea, awaiting the oncoming storm. The storm's path had been difficult to predict and for most, there was no place to run.

In horror we heard the story of one young girl killed by the storm. Many Indians continue to honor an old custom in which a girl, when she becomes a woman, sleeps outside of the house for a few days in her own hut. In one family (not brethren) as their girl remained in the makeshift dwelling, a tree fell, crushing the shed and killing the girl.



Thousands of homes, like the one in the photo to the left, were destroyed. Food and other necessities were spoiled. Among our brethren, 445 households were strongly affected. I contacted the elders at Crossville and they agreed that we should spend \$15,000 for food and immediate assistance. Our brothers have a long hard road ahead as they work to put their lives back together. They are so thankful to their American brethren who helped. Some have said they simply do not know what they would have done without the provisions given so quickly.

Many of the brethren of Nagapattinam are fairly new Christians. This was the area that was so devastated by the tsunami on December 26, 2004. We had no congregations there at that time, but God has given us a marvelous increase and we now have 23 faithful churches in the area.

The Lord's church is compassionate. After hearing the need, many individuals and churches in America have come forward to help. As of today, \$15,770 has come in to cover the initial \$15,000 that was spent. The extra amount is still much needed and will be used in the continuing effort.



*Distribution of goods was dangerous as desperate people rioted – taking from trucks whatever was available. Our older boys from the DAI campus traveled south to help with distribution (photo). Interestingly, the boy on the left has taken the name, Karthi Iverson! We love these boys.*

The soul-winning campaign was strongly affected by the storm. Winds and heavy rains made the work of the brethren even more difficult. In some areas like the Nagapattinam region, the campaign was postponed. As of Sunday, 2,491 had been baptized and 10 new congregations had been established since the latest soul-winning effort started.

### RETENTION NUMBERS ARE LESSENING

Over the past five years, from the numbers we have collected, 90% of the more than 30,000 souls that have been baptized have remained faithful. The most recent calculations, partly due to so many being added, reveal that that number has declined to 86.5%. Soul retention will be the emphasis of our January planning meeting for 2019.

### TWO SCHOOLS CLOSED

In our schools, an evaluation of the students is conducted nine months after the school is started. In two schools the students fell below the requirement and those schools were closed. Two new schools are opening in June (Lord willing).



### New Septic Tank at DNI

Three days of our November trip were spent teaching and helping the boys and staff of DNI to build new septic tank lines. The new tank serves the new dorm on the left, in the background. The temperature

was very warm (above 90) even for November in India. At one point, as I was shoveling gravel, a cool shadow overwhelmed me. One of the boys, concerned that I was working in the hot sun, had found an umbrella and was attempting to keep me in the shade. I thanked him graciously and asked him not to try to shield me (after maybe 10 minutes). Who could have ever thought building a sewer could be such an affectionate and loving occasion? I enjoyed the working fellowship tremendously. God is great!

Traveling to all three campuses, Cathy enjoyed bonding time, teaching and making crafts with the children. She was also able to audit books, teaching the staff about bookkeeping and checking that everything is being reported accurately.



Another highlight of our trip was being able to see the first rice crop harvested on one of our campuses (photo left).



On the right, above, our boys are working in the field in our new drip-irrigation program. Growing our own food is a good experience and very helpful in saving funds.

God continues to bless this work and we pray that 2019 will be the greatest year ever. Thank you.

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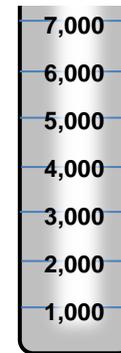
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# TAMIL NEWS

Goal for 2018

**9,000 Souls!**

**NOW 8,679**



*God has blessed this work richly in 2018. The goal of winning 9,000 souls was established in January. As of December 2, there have been 8,679 who have obeyed this year. Many new congregations have been established. Thank you for your continued prayers and support throughout this year.*

DECEMBER 2018