

DEADLY ELEPHANTS

On January 9, Selvam was baptized into Christ. On January 12, as he traveled home to the remote jungle area where we have been working, an elephant stepped into the road. Selvam ran, along with two other men, but the elephant caught our new brother, bashing his helpless body against a tree. His corpse remained there throughout the night, as the angry elephants would not allow access by authorities. This death follows the death of another man, the husband of a faithful sister, who was killed last year by the elephants.

The photo is a newspaper article published on January 24, showing the same elephant that killed brother Selvam. The elephant stood in the road again in an attempt to block the bus, frightening all passengers.

Continue to pray for our new brothers and sisters in the jungle area. I tried to visit last week to console the family and strengthen the church, but authorities would not allow me to enter the area. By the way, one man from among the jungle congregations is now being trained in one of our schools of preaching.



TEACHING INDIANS TO TEACH INDIANS

This is the commandment of the Holy Spirit in II Timothy 2:2, and as I travel through the southern part of India I proclaim to the students in their Tamil language "Atma, atma, atma," (souls, souls, souls). That's what it is all about, and each and every one is worth more than the entire world (Matthew 16:26). The men in the classes of the schools with which I am associated understand they have many different purposes, but like our Lord (Luke 19:10), first and foremost, their function is to save souls!



During February, I made surprise visits to many of the schools (photo). Ramraj (left) is the teacher, and I arrived at his school thirty minutes before classes were to start. I was delighted as one man was already in class and all others arrived before school was to begin. After checking the roll books, I handed out blank papers and instructed the students to write their required three daily memory verses. Students also have a morning exam over the materials taught from the previous day.

Later that morning, I pulled away, feeling good about the zeal of Ramraj and his men (I still have reservations about one), especially considering how many souls will be taught by them in coming years. I believe this work is pleasing to God and that is all that matters.

SCHOOL CLOSED IN CUDDALORE

I cannot say we always find things as described in the article above. Our schools have high standards as we must do everything "heartily, as to the Lord" (Col. 3:23). God

gave us His best and we cannot strive for anything less in our service to Him. Furthermore, my elders have expectations for the manner in which these schools will be conducted.

We were "perplexed, but not in despair" (II Cor. 4:8) as we found the school at Cuddalore to be poorly managed and attended by many students who seemed less than sincere. A stern warning was given from the scriptures, and we left. Several days later, I called the teacher and requested that he put his phone on speaker. After taking the roll count, Santhanaraj and I realized that nothing had changed and the students remained mostly without discipline. The school was closed immediately.

Leaving the school at Cuddalore, I also felt good. I believe God is pleased with our actions, as we strive to build "good soldiers" (II Tim. 2:3), and be faithful "stewards" (I Cor. 4:2) of what He has placed into our hands.

FUNERAL FOR GUNA



Guna was the second child we took into our care fifteen years ago. He was mentally challenged, and God has given us a wonderful opportunity to love and care for him. Guna died on Saturday morning, a week ago.

Arriving by ambulance at noon, our brothers took his body from the ambulance, placing it in the freezer box that you see in the photo. Guna loved our Bible camps, and as I caught my first glimpse of his lifeless body, I saw that he was wearing the purple t-shirt from our 2017 camp.

Guna became a son to Devakhani, the housemother for his cottage, and Gracie, the first child, always called him her "little brother." This campus loved and cared for this boy, and I often thought to myself, "Where would he be if not for the DAI campus?"

9,000 SOULS IN 2018

This is the new goal for the number of souls to be baptized in 2018. God continues to give us a bountiful increase. The goal for 2017 was 7,300. That number was surpassed as of December 31, and all praise and glory is given to God for 7,331 new brothers and sisters. Over the past four years, every goal has been blessed with an increase above and beyond what has been set, and the retention rate remains above 90%. Thank you, God!

Before our children and staff accompanied and laid his body to rest in the cemetery that same Saturday afternoon, we had a memorial service. I preached, along with other staff members and one of his DAI brothers.

Amidst the mourning I could hear in my ear the way Guna use to run to greet me when I came to the campus, yelling "Grandpa-Don!" He always imitated and wanted to be like the other boys, leading singing, preaching and leading prayers. But he was very limited. Still, I sat thanking God.

I am thankful for this place, Deva Anbu Illam (God's House of Love) and the wonderful affection Guna enjoyed here. I am thankful for our director, Karunakaran, who loves these children and who stood to preach like I have never seen him preach before, warning our children that they should also be ready. I am thankful to God that Guna has now shed the body that so constricted him and that he can finally sing greater than he could have ever imagined and with a chorus beyond human comprehension. God is so great!

UPDATE ON RAGIVAN

You may recall from the last newsletter how we asked for prayers for Ragivan as he needed a kidney transplant. For the present time, doctors are treating him with medication and we are watching him closely. Continue to pray.



NEW CONSTRUCTION AT DNI

The ground was broken and foundations are being laid for the new dorm space and multi-purpose building at DNI. This is being done in anticipation of new children to be taken in June.



The multi-purpose building will also be used as a church building, allowing our children and staff to evangelize through medical ministries in the local community. Pray fervently for these new efforts.

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TAMIL NEWS



It took thirty-minutes of pleading to get the officer-in-charge to allow me access to the 33 elephants in the annual elephant spa. I was blown away by these massive creatures of God and hope soon to do a simple painting. The sound of the depth and force of their breath is fearsome, though I was never in the presence of an elephant without a chain, unless his trainer was close by his side.

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