



FLASHES



The Pocket Testament League of Australia **OUTREACH WITH THE GOSPEL**

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International Conference of the Pocket Testament League

Six nations were represented at the Conference in January 2005: four from Spain, four from the United Kingdom, one from Germany, *Somchai* and *Saengthong* from Thailand, *George Glazier* and *Stephen Downie* from Australia, and between twelve and twenty from India. Seven young people from the Mennonite missionary group in Pennsylvania, USA, also attended. This group had been spending several months in India. There were at least ten Indian delegates at each session with others coming and going throughout the three days.

The overseas visitors met in Delhi over the first three days. Then, together with the first wave of Indians, they travelled north to the foothills of the Himalayas at a place called Dehrandun in a conference centre called Torchbearers, run by Capernwray. The accommodation was good and the food excellent.

Devotion on the first day was led by *Stephen Downie*. He gave an excellent message based on **Matthew's Gospel** chapter 20.



Stephen Downie

On the second and third days, devotions were given by V K Williams, Chairman of TPTL Board, India, and Dave Bennett, Evangelist from the United Kingdom.

The theme of the Conference was "*Moving Forward Together with a Passion for Christ and a Compassion for the Lost*". Prayer times centred around several aspects of this theme.



George Glazier

Each country, in turn, reported on the activities in their respective country. Australia was first, being in front alphabetically, and *George* had this task to perform.

The most exciting reports were from India and Spain, closely followed by the United Kingdom and the remainder in a "photo finish", so to speak.

India, being the home Council, had an advantage and showed us various aspects of their ministry, starting with the PTL Church in Sahibabad on Sunday 30th January where *Stephen* spoke mightily, and 20 decisions for Christ were recorded, mostly men. Then we saw the International Missionary School where converts, who want to go into service for Christ, and most do, study for three years before going out into a field of service. Prayer cells operate daily and it was obvious that these are power houses of the total ministry. The office and bookshop are other ministries shown to us.

I felt very strongly for the Spanish workers present, led by *Esther Rodriguez*. Their ministry to children and parents through the "*Bible Olympics*" is continuing, as was shown to us in Barcelona in 2001, but with the loss of about 60% of their income (from USA) amounting to approximately US\$1,000 per month, the workers are under more stress, while still endeavouring to reach as many as before. I would dearly love to be in a position to send help from Australia.

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Daniel Rezende of Portugal sent an apology. He is contemplating returning to his native Brazil and did not have the finance. Ondrej Franka of Yugoslavia also apologised because of a wedding at his home church. These warriors of TPTL were dearly missed.

The business session followed a brief meeting of the International Executive Committee (IEC) which noted the great changes to the International Family of the League since the 2001 Conference (*The IEC becomes the International body between conferences and George is its Chairman.*) The losses to the Family were caused principally by a large fall off of income, mainly from USA. Some Fields (*including Mexico, Philippines and Austria*) have moved to be under the umbrella of missions other than TPTL.

It was agreed that a "love letter" should be prepared and sent to all the Fields and Councils, expressing sadness at the apparent break up of the Family and the hope that this situation might be reversed in the future.

The date and place of the next International Conference were set for January 2007 in Thailand. This will present a challenge to Somchai and Saengthong and to their sponsor country, Australia. We believe all involved will be capable.

The Conference ended on a high note with a communion service led by one of the senior Indian pastors. All

taking part were thrilled at the joint fellowship with each other and with the Lord.

George Glazier, President

Easter Meditation

Colossians 2:13-15
Matthew 20:29-34

There are one billion people in India and 18 million in Delhi and counting. 250 million are the untouchables, 500 million in the service class, and the remaining 25% in the higher class. Hinduism has shown itself to be inadequate and failed the most needy in India.



Taj Mahal

While in Delhi, I watched in horror a man with no legs moving on his bottom like a baby in the middle of four lanes of traffic, begging for money.

The lower class can make the idols for the temple but are barred from entering the temple to worship.



A lower caste woman

An Indian philosopher walked out on to his street. He looked

up one end of the street and saw a hospital. He looked up the other end and saw a university. He reminded himself that these places came to India through the coming of Christian mission. He went to the Bible and learned that Jesus died for sins and showed concern for the lost and needy, and he became a Christian.

I passed on to Somchai, when I was in Bangkok for a few hours, a cheque for A\$700 given by a TPTL supporter for the victims of the tsunami. He will use the money where most needed and ask a local pastor to distribute the supplies.

This is how it is with those of us who have had a vision of the cross. We have seen the face of Jesus in that cross and we have learned to care.

*In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.*
(John Bowring 1792-1872)

Stephen Downie

Stop Press

Last year TPTL Australia sent 4000 Gospels of John to Swaziland. To date we have received 95 requests for the free correspondence course. Praise God!

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Celebrating 30 years as an Evangelist

A celebration will be held on Saturday 28th May 2005 from 2pm to 5pm at Thornleigh Baptist Church to recognise and thank God for the faithful ministry of *Somchai and Saengthong Soonthornturasuk* in Thailand. (Please refer to the insert for further details.)



Saengthong and Somchai

Somchai, our Evangelist, and his wife, Saengthong, will be in Sydney from 6th May to 13th June. Arrangements are being made for them to speak in different churches.

It was while he was recovering from a major surgery in a hospital in Bangkok over 35 years ago that this young man gave his life to Christ. He had been a Thai boxer and had received several critical kicks to his stomach, necessitating removal of part thereof. His Thai and Buddhist friends deserted him and he was alone and worried until he was befriended by a group of Christian young people, visiting the hospital, who also left with him portions of Scripture.

He entered the Bangkok Bible College, graduating in 1974. It was at that time that *The Pocket Testament League of Australia* was approached by

TPTL, USA, with the question, "would you share with the Americans in the purchase and distribution of the first 100,000 copies of the *Gospel of John in the Thai language*?"

These were delivered to the Registrar of the Bangkok Bible College, who called immediately for help. Rev *Walter Coller* of the Australian Board travelled to Thailand to organise an outreach in Bangkok, using students of the College. Prominent among these was *Somchai*, with his vision still of Thailand for Christ.

In 1975, *Walter Coller* again visited, met up with *Somchai*, and also *George Glazier*, who was there on a holiday. Back home the Board appointed *Somchai* as Evangelist on full Australian support, continuing to this day. Two years later *Somchai* met a young girl in South Thailand, daughter of a Thai Pastor. She also had (and still has) a similar vision and passion to reach her people; and so began a great partnership. *Saengthong* studied through *Bangkok Bible College*, with two brief interruptions when sons, *Sadudee* and *Sakon*, were born. *Somchai* furthered his studies to reach the equivalent of our ordination a few years later.

He continues preaching campaigns to the four corners of Thailand, including the tribal people in the northern hills. *Saengthong's* principal ministry centres on the follow up of the TPTL Correspondence Courses.

In recent years they have planted 5 churches at strategic

locations and appointed pastors, supported through Australia by *Christian Enterprises*. *Somchai* also conducts leadership and evangelism seminars around Thailand and Malaysia.

George Glazier

Urgent Appeal

TPTL is seeking to raise \$10,000 to print 100,000 copies of the *Gospel of John in Thai language*. Stock has all but run out.

Any donation as God enables you to give will greatly enhance this ministry in Thailand. The Board hopes to present a cheque for A\$10,000 to *Somchai* and *Saengthong* before they return to Thailand.

Tsunami

The place in Thailand most affected by the 26th December 2004 tsunami was **Phuket**, where many people lost their lives. The PTL Church there had been planning a special Christmas service for Friday 24th December but was advised to hold it on 26th December, the day after Christmas.

So it was that most of the Christians were in the church when the tsunami hit. But they were protected because the church is on slightly higher ground. Those whose homes were on the lower ground lost them and most of their belongings, but they themselves were safe.

TPTL Australia made no general appeal for financial help but some people sent gifts. When travelling to the League's International Confer-

ence last January, *George* (President) and *Stephen* (Field Officer) gave this money (approximately A\$1,000) to *Somchai* to use in Phuket, to where he was proposing to travel, together with a doctor, a dentist and a builder, in relief effort with the local PTL Pastor.

FIELD OFFICER'S REPORT:

It was a great privilege to represent TPTL Australia at the International Conference in India from 25 to 29 January 2005.



Stephen Downie, preaching

On the first morning, I addressed the Conference with a Bible Study from Matthew chapter 20. I spoke of the clear direction Jesus gave, the purpose of ministry, humility

in ministry and the compassion that was the outcome of the gospel.

On the following Sunday morning I was invited to speak at the Christian Fellowship Church in Sahibabad, India.

There were 400 people present which included the TPTL International delegates.



Packed congregation

Twenty people responded to the invitation to become Christians, mainly men. They will be placed in a cell group, offered baptismal lessons, and the opportunity to be involved in a Bible course for three years.

When a new Christian comes into the Church an affidavit has to be signed by the applicant for the baptism that states clearly that there has been no force placed on him by the church. The Christian Church must take care that it is not sued by the other religions

and does not provoke persecution.

I visited a prayer cell of 12 ladies who pray each week for TPTL Australia. On the same day I spoke briefly to the 26 Bible College students. I learned that after they graduate they would be sent into a community to plant a new church.

The whole experience was a great blessing.

Stephen Downie

Prayer Points:

Please pray for

- Preparations underway for *Somchai* and *Saengthong's* visit to Sydney and their speaking engagements while here.
- *Somchai* and *Saengthong*, as they evangelise in villages, towns, schools and shopping centres.
- *Saengthong*, as she looks after the correspondence course.
- *Stephen Downie*, as he visits churches and schools in Australia.
- *Linda Spankie*, our TPTL office supervisor as she carries our her work.

Donation Slip

Amount: \$ _____ [] *Printing of Gospel in Thai* [] *Thailand general* [] *Other*

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