



Confirming the Churches
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May - June Report, 2021

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, family, and friends,

The first day of May was the third anniversary of our move to Lincoln. As we recognized that anniversary we contemplated the events and blessings of these years. There have been many miles traveled and many encouragements among Christians. We have visited churches in 15 of these United States, 3 states in India, and 4 provinces in Canada for preaching Christ or promotion of our mission. Three books and eight new tracts have been published (two more books are in progress). One book has been translated into Telugu and another is being translated in Hyderabad at this time. Ten tracts are now in the Telugu language with untold thousands distributed in India. In these three years several dozen books and several hundred tracts have been distributed in the U.S. and Canada. Nearly 300 video Bible lessons have been produced. These have been distributed online, and to two countries by mail.

During these past two months about half of our time was again given to repair and cleanup on the farm. We have had to replace damaged doors, clean and paint cigarette-smoke-damaged walls, grade rutted places in the yard and driveway, and both stop and clean up after a heavy infestation of mice. We're still piling and hauling away junk, cutting and burning over-grown and dead trees and bushes. It is slow-going with only the two of us engaged in the work, especially as we have contended with oppressive heat on the one hand and persistent rain on the other. It looks like there is still more than a month's worth of work yet to do. We expect to have the assistance of an industrious granddaughter for at least one week in July.

Exhaustion crept upon both of us by mid June. We needed a vacation, and we benefitted greatly from a week in a camp in Wisconsin farm land. Through all of this, however, the mission has remained our passion. We have sought every possible way to encourage Christians even when we could not travel to them.

CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS

Lincoln. Thanks to the Lincoln church for sending an additional \$1,000 for the relief of the suffering saints in Ibrahimpatnam. Attendance in most of the Lincoln assemblies has been lower recently. David and Melissa Reeves moved to Missouri, decreasing our number of teachers by two and our number of song leaders by one. Harold and Nancy Barrix were absent for a couple of weeks due to his knee-replacement surgery. They and their daughter Carla Hutchison have been quarantined at home after suspected exposure to Covid-19 (but fortunately, none in the church have suffered the effects of the disease). Practically every member of the church has been away at times to visit with family in sickness and health. It is rare now that our attendance totals 20 souls on Sunday. Sybil and I, of course, have been away on those Wednesdays that find us at the farm. We are back in Lincoln for every Sunday assembly (except see next). She teaches the teen girls and I am leading the adult class study of the epistle to the Hebrews.

Mall City. The elders of the Mall City church in Kalamazoo, Michigan called upon me to fill in for their out-of-town preacher in late May and early June. You likely remember that I have preached four meetings there in recent years, including an extended series on prayer. On May 23 I used as a discussion text for the Bible class my tract "Why Should I Be a Member of the Church of Christ." The morning sermon dealt with the church's position and responsibility in the present social unrest and political shift in our country. In First Corinthians 7 Paul wrote of a "present distress." In Second Timothy 3 he wrote of "perilous times." Contemplating whether America is in a passing phase or an upheaval of identity I titled the sermon "Present Distress, or Perilous Times?". In the evening I preached from John 8:21-23 a lesson titled "Looking as Clean as We Feel." It urges all to observe their faith and practice objectively – to see ourselves as others see us, and as God sees us.

On June 6 we were again in Kalamazoo. The elders and song leader had all asked me to address cell phone and other distractions in the worship assembly. It was clearly a need. I preached "Why Are We Here?" in the morning worship hour. The Bible class was an expansion of a recent Confirming the Churches Bible Class lesson, "What is the Bible?". In the evening assembly I



continued the rationale for overcoming worldly distractions in the worship and work of the church. The lesson title was "The Church is Different." It is different from Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and from the Christian Church. The difference is that it alone is the family of God; it should be respected as such.

Ignorance of the nature and purpose of the church has been all too often demonstrated to us in our various travels. In the assembly of a church in another state recently we were subjected to two hours of political argumentation, and heard hardly a word of scripture, or even reference to it. Sybil and I pray daily for God to send preachers of sound doctrine into all His churches.

Ibrahimpatnam. In partnership with you we continue to support the teaching and benevolence work of this church near Vijayawada, the capital of the state of Andhra Pradesh in southeast India. Our support is not nearly enough to meet the needs where disease and hunger are amplified in increasing poverty. Responding to brother N. Vijaya Rao's description of their distress I wrote in part...

I have tried several times to write to you but words have not come to me. I simply do not know what to say to someone who is suffering the grief and hardships that face you every hour. We love you and we pray for you, but it is frustrating to sit here with nothing more that we can do...

If I could speak to all the Christians in Ibrahimpatnam and surrounding communities I would say that God has not forsaken you. He is not the cause of this terrible disease, but He is the answer. Never, never, never give up your faith in Jesus. He never promised you perfect health and prosperity in the world. He has promised you a home with Him where pain, suffering, and crying cannot enter. It is easy to be faithful when everything is going our way in the world. God wants us to continue to love and trust and obey Him when the world's evils make it difficult for us. Imagine Jesus being whipped on his bare skin, and then being nailed to a cross and left to hang there in severe pain for six hours while people laughed and mocked. When some Jewish Christians were discouraged in the world and thinking about forsaking Jesus, the Holy Spirit sent them a letter in which he said "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin" (Hebrews 12:4). We have not yet suffered as our Savior suffered for us. And after He suffered He rose to a new and perfect life with God in Heaven. And He will present us to God without spot (Ephesians 5:27) if we continue faithful to Him through all of life's obstacles. If we were invited to a rich man's mansion we would have to go through dirty streets and rough roads to get there. But we would overlook the obstacles while we kept our minds on the joy at the end of the journey. Always remember that, "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Corinthians 4:16 - 5:1). And so, my beloved brethren, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 1:21).

And we shall always be praying for you.

His reply to that letter will give you a view of some of their suffering, and will show you the sincerity of their appreciation and gratitude to even the smallest help we can send (punctuation and spelling edited for clarity):

My bro, I received your great encouragement email letter. Really it gives much satisfaction to us. My bro, really you and sis SYBIL had shown very great love towards us and the saints in India. It is not measurable, my bro, in that letter the words you written had console us very much. My wife told me that bro A L PARR was a serious preacher in teaching the Bible. Your lessons are very much easy to understand so that is why in India so many preachers and congregations are inviting you to their congregations

My bro, in India this COVID is spreading very dangerously and we are not in a position to explain to you. This COVID had damaged so many families in my village and in our church members. We have lost so many of our loved ones due to this COVID. So many preachers from different places are requesting me for prayers and some help. My bro, due to this COVID some of my co preachers and those preachers' families are in very critical position. My bro, your prayers and sis SYBIL'S prayers are much needed. The government was also in the hopeless position to serve the COVID patients. Actually, my bro, 1 KG of rice that had cost Rs50 (50 rupees -ALP) now is increased up to Rs65 and the oil price that was Rs110 now is increased up to Rs220. Every hour the vegetables price is also changing very much. Now it is very



personal greetings after class

critical period going on in our life, and in this critical period of our the daily needs the eatables are in high c o s t . R e a l l y it gives much sadness to us. Really, my bro, you and sis SYBIL help are helpful to so many people in India. We are not able to help the outsiders but to only are giving that relief fund to the Church of Christ. My two sons conducted the youth seminar, and in that seminar we had also distributed your great valuable tracts and Bibles



widows & orphans, attended in June

and song books to them.

Since that email exchange we have received reports of retail prices up 120% over the past year. That is laid against the fact that, due to assembly restrictions, people have not been able to work most jobs now in over 15 months.

Krishna River Preacher-Training School. On May 30 I taught the preachers and students how to teach the church about keeping faith through suffering. On June 27 the subject was on God's will for each person in the home.

Scenic Hill and International Bible Academe. T.V. Samson Raj has been struggling for weeks to comply with new government regulations. Because the two preacher-training schools and the three orphan homes are registered with the government, and because he receives foreign contributions for those works, he has to keep meticulous records and submit regular audited reports. As of the first of this year the government requires those contributions to be deposited into an account in a specific bank in Delhi, and all the reporting forms have changed. Local and intermediate bankers and officials have been uncertain how to file the forms and open the accounts. The necessity of meeting deadlines with all this has delayed most of his real work.

LITERATURE

Tracts & Books. There has been very little time to work on the translations book, and tract printing was limited to reprinting one title. We did order copies of four of our books to restock our shelves at home. As indicated above, *Introduction to Old Testament Books* has been translated and is with the printer, and *A Teacher's Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* is being translated into Telugu in Hyderabad. That printer has actually had the one book for a couple of months but both he and his wife have had serious cases of Covid-19. Both are recovering but it may be some time before he is strong enough to work a full day. He has been Samson's printer for a couple of decades. I met him in 2013 when we arranged for the first printing of the *Basic Facts About the Holy Spirit Compared With Common Modern Misconceptions* in English. He is knowledgeable and dedicated.

ONLINE TEACHING

Confirming the Churches Bible Class took time off the last three weeks of June due to our limited time for preparation, and our vacation week. As promised in a lesson before the time off, I have prepared a series on miracles to begin the first week in July. Before the break the lessons were "The Story" (an overview of the message of the Bible), "The Bible is the Words of God," "You Can Believe the Bible," "Faith Confirmed by Miracles," and "The Bible is For Today" (in 2 parts). These lessons are on our Facebook page: Confirming the Churches.

Bible Correspondence Courses have continued the slow-down. Three students sent seven lessons. Two of those students completed the last lesson and have been sent all their certificates.

Thank you again for your support. May God bless you every day.

In His service,

A. L. Parr

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www.acts1541.org

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Contributions received April 25 - June 30:

Lincoln Church of Christ	\$3,200.00
Egypt Church of Christ	\$200.00
Harrisburg Church of Christ	\$200.00
Mall City Church of Christ	\$400.00
Elizabeth Williams	\$100.00
Doug & Kathy Adams	\$400.00
Various who handed me cash	\$390.00
Book Sales	\$1.80

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