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December 2020

"...how you turned from idols to serve the living and true God."
(1 Thessalonians 1:9)



Church of Christ India Fund

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Thank You for Your Prayers

Last month I asked you to pray for brother M. Alisha and his family. I've heard from several of you (via email and phone) asking for an update on his situation.

Unfortunately for us and his family brother Alisha succumbed to his lung infection. The family still doesn't know if it was the Covid-19 or something else.

The family has told brother Charles (our administrator) to pass on their deep appreciation for your love and prayers.

I too want to thank you for your love and prayers for this great brother who's now gone to the reward that we're all striving for.

The Holiday Season In India

Here in the U.S. we're in the middle of our holiday season. But naturally the holidays are quite different in India.

The word "holiday" goes back to the idea of a "holy day" particularly as observed in western Europe where most of the settlers in America had their roots. As such, our holidays have centered around particular religious ideas, such as Christmas (which means "feast for Christ") and Thanksgiving, which means just what it's name says.

Our Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations usually center on our families, and of course involve taking a

day off work. Our national non-religious holidays often involve more community-based celebrations.

However, in India holidays are observed rather differently.

While at first glance India is a Hindu nation, India is really quite divided religiously. Hinduism recognizes literally thousands of different gods and goddesses. In addition they worship thousands more lower spirits and demons.

The result is that in India there are literally thousands of holidays that are celebrated locally in the various states, towns and villages. And there are some national holidays too.

In our work we need to constantly be aware of these local festivals or holidays. The whole village may shut down and the roads may be blocked, cutting us off!

These celebrations often make any kind of evangelistic or training program impossible for Americans. So we've learned to dodge them when we can.

However there are six large, holidays observed in India: Independence Day, Republic Day and Gandhi's birthday (which you'll note aren't based on Hinduism). There are two Hindu festivals that are nearly universal in India: Diwali (festival

of lights) and the New Year. Although Diwali is celebrated on the same dates everywhere, the New Year date varies because depending on which gods are worshiped locally.

And, of course, Indians throw in the western New Year and Christmas celebrations, because who doesn't love a holiday and a celebration?

So, in one way, the great number of these celebrations force us to plan ahead so that our campaigns, classes and travel plans don't run afoul where we want to work. It's just one more little way in which the work in India is quite a challenge.

Yet, in another way, all these holidays are used by our brethren to great evangelistic effect. It gives our brethren an opening to talk about the differences between Christ and the idols when the idolaters are most open to talking about their idols.

As always, I'd love to report to you and your congregation. And when you start holding gospel meetings again, please consider inviting me to help!

Dave Nance



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