

~Other Speakers S-Z: K.P. Yohannan:

One such village was Bhundi in Rajasthan. This was the first place I was beaten and stoned for preaching the Gospel. Often literature was destroyed. It seemed that mobs always were on the watch for us, and six times our street meetings were broken up. Our team leaders began to work elsewhere, avoiding Bhundi as much as possible. Three years later, a new team of national missionaries moved into the area under different leadership and preached again at this busy crossroads town.

Almost as soon as they arrived, one man began tearing up literature and grabbed a 19-year-old missionary, Samuel, by the throat. Although beaten severely, Samuel knelt in the street and prayed for the salvation of souls in that hateful city.

“Lord,” he prayed, “I want to come back here and serve You in Bhundi. I’m willing to die here, but I want to come back and serve You in this place.”

Many older Christian leaders advised him against his decision, but being determined, Samuel went back and rented a small room. Shipments of literature arrived, and he preached in the face of many difficulties. Today more than 100 people meet in a small church there. Those who persecuted us at one time now worship the Lord Jesus, as was the case with the apostle Paul.

This is the kind of commitment and faith it takes to reach the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

One time we arrived in a town at daybreak to preach. But word already had gone ahead from the nearby village where we had preached the day before.

As we had morning tea in a roadside stall, the local militant leader approached me politely. In a low voice that betrayed little emotion, he spoke:

“Get on your truck and get out of town in five minutes, or we’ll burn it and you with it.”

I knew he was serious. He was backed by a menacing crowd. Although we did “shake the dust from our feet” that day, today a church meets in that same village. In order to plant the Gospel, we must take risks.

For months at a time I traveled the dusty roads in the heat of the day and shivered through cold nights—suffering just as thousands of national missionaries are suffering today to bring the Gospel to the lost. In future years I would look back on those seven years of village evangelism as one of the greatest learning experiences of my life. We walked in Jesus’ steps, incarnating and representing Him to masses of people who had never before heard the Gospel.

I was living a frenetic, busy life—too busy and thrilled with the work of the Gospel to think much about the future. There was always another campaign just ahead. But I was about to reach a turning point.