

# Light and Dark Clash in India

The darkness may be oppressive, but the power of our God is stronger.



// For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. //

Ephesians 6:12-13

## Ruth's Story



Ruth, from Chennai

I always wanted to study and learn the Word of God. In 2016 I started attending a CBS study. Since I love to teach children, I requested to start a group in my home. I was trained and

started a class. We now have 14 children coming. ... The children actually pester me to hold classes even during summer holidays. Also, my cousin, who lives about 18 miles away from Chennai, heard about this and wanted to teach children in her village. So I travel to her home every week, and while I teach the adults, she instructs the children. Though I have studied only through the 8th grade, **God has given me wisdom through CBS training.** I shepherd and teach more than 50 children and adults each week. Praise God for CBS ministries!

**In India, spiritual warfare is on full display.** The struggle and contrast between The Light and The Darkness is not theoretical; rather, it is the believers' constant reality. In this edition of the CBS International Letter, participants and the leaders who serve them give examples of this struggle, along with the joys and the tensions this context creates. I trust that by entering into their stories — even if only in a limited way — you are prompted to greater prayer and praise for what is taking place in the great country of India.

### The Darkness

Our CBS Country Coordinator for India reports that for the last four years, the Indian Church has been going through a difficult time. There are frequent reports of persecution throughout the country. A notable number of our CBS leaders, classes and ministries have been affected. The following are given as examples:

- In Gujarat, a children's home operated by a CBS leader was alleged to be engaged in covert evangelistic activities. As a result of the false accusation against the home's purpose, the home was seized and the leader arrested.
- In Hyderabad, Telangana, a church run by a CBS leader was assaulted by a mob which came to physically harm the leader and put an end to the church's ministry.
- In Prakasam, Andhra Pradesh, a CBS Children & Youth class serving many unbelievers was forcibly closed by a Hindu fanatic.
- Two other CBS ministries have been shut down in Maharashtra and Coimbatore, and a CBS ministry in Delhi has been facing consistent difficulties due to opposition.

Clearly, the darkness is real and the enemies of God and the Gospel are active.

Still, as God's Word states in Isaiah 59:1, *Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.*

### The Light

When CBS participants and leaders in India saw these things happening regularly within their circles, they concluded that only God can handle these situations. So, they chose to hold to God's promise in Hebrews 1:13, *Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.* They initiated 100 hours of non-stop intercession in 55 CBS centers and in cooperation

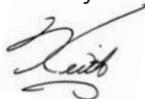
with other churches and ministries in India. God honored their prayer efforts in a number of the situations mentioned above. Specifically:

- God intervened in the Gujarat situation, and the CBS leader was released. Also, the presiding court has since dismissed the case.
- In the Hyderabad case, quite amazingly, the Lord moved a high-caste Brahmin Hindu neighbor to intervene against the mob seeking to harm the pastor and close the church—sending them away without doing harm.
- In the Prakasam incident, God providentially moved some new Christians to that village, who were able to negotiate the reopening of the CBS class.
- Many people who heard about the 100 hours of prayer inquired about it and have since joined CBS studies.
- CBS Country Coordinator reports that a church pastored by a CBS leader is thriving—with all its members being former Buddhists and Hindus.
- God has been giving insight to CBS leaders to strategically engage a particular town. As a result, they have been able to begin 12 groups with about 150 participants in that community. Believers are sharing the Gospel. Former Buddhists and Hindus are being baptized. The church is growing in numbers and in the knowledge of God's Word. And followers are learning how to teach God's Word and provide counseling.

***Transformation is happening. Darkness is being dispelled as The Light replaces it.***

Every prayer offered in behalf of CBS India and each dollar given to the South Asia Region is, in a sense, one more ray that helps to dispense light and dispel darkness. The opportunities in India and other South Asia Region countries are huge. We invite you to intercede on behalf of the region and to consider supporting the leaders there who face significant challenges in their efforts to make God's Word available to all.

Thank you!



Keith Spartzak, International Director

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## Did You Know?

India—the Indus Valley civilization—is the world's oldest and largest continuous civilization.

With a population of approximately 1.3 billion, India is the world's 2nd largest country. It is projected to surpass China within the next 10 years.

While still a caste-driven culture, India is officially one of the largest democracies in the world.

While "only" 14.2% Muslim, that number constitutes an Islamic population of more than 188 million. This makes it either the 2nd or 3rd largest Islamic country in the world—with Indonesia being the largest and Pakistan either 2nd or 3rd. Consequently, there are more than 300,000 active mosques, outnumbering any other country in the world.

Though some may effectively be dialects, a census of India listed the number of languages used in the country at 1,652, but only about 150 have a large number of speakers.

India is the 2nd largest English speaking country in the world—with 125,226,449 English speakers.

India produces more movies than any other country in the world. "Bollywood" is the nickname for the Hindi-language portion of India's cinema industry.

While being the 8th largest country in the world in regards to area, there is only one time zone across all of India.

India, not China, is the birthplace of Buddhism.

It is illegal to carry Indian currency, the *rupee*, outside of India.

Tea is the most popular beverage in India, and the country is the largest tea producer in the world.