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# International Update

SHARE GOD'S WORD WITH THE WORLD



## THE GIDEON MINISTRY IN INDIA

*"... Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest." – JOHN 4:35B*

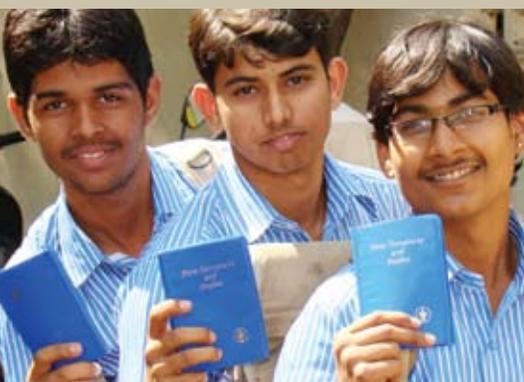
## INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE BLITZES

Each year, Scripture Blitzes are held in countries to assist local Gideons in distributing God's Word to large numbers of people. These men participate in long days of continuously distributing and placing Scriptures.

Gideons taking part in an International Scripture Blitz pay all of their own expenses. An International Scripture Blitz is never a vacation trip, but it is a life-changing experience.

## UPCOMING SCRIPTURE BLITZES

- » **Philippines**  
January 15-29
- » **Ecuador**  
January 15-22
- » **Mozambique**  
February 5-12
- » **Kenya**  
March 5-12
- » **Nicaragua/Guatemala**  
March 5-19
- » **Indonesia**  
March 19-26
- » **Netherlands**  
April 9-16



*"... THE THINGS WHICH HAPPENED TO ME HAVE ACTUALLY TURNED OUT FOR THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL." –PHILIPPIANS 1:12*

### TAKING GOD'S WORD INTO INDIA

India is predominantly Hindu (approximately 80% of the total population), with Islam being the country's second largest organized religion (12%). Religious conflict between these two major religious groups is creating an opportunity for Christian evangelism (2.4%) among Indian secularists searching for answers.

The Gideons first organized a camp in India in 1961. Since then, the ministry there has grown to include 545 camps with more than 13,300 Gideons and Auxiliary.

Earlier this year, an international team of 23 Gideons from five countries converged in India to team up with local Gideons to carry out a two-week International Scripture Blitz (ISB) with distributions in Mumbai, Chennai and Visakhapatnam.

The theme verse for this ISB was John 4:35, "... Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest." The team would discover that the hunger for God's Word was pervasive throughout the land. They would also find there were those who still oppose sharing Scriptures.

### GIDEONS ARRESTED AND JAILED

The ISB began in Mumbai, formerly called "Bombay." With a population of approximately 14 million people, it is the most populous city in India. And the Hindu population there is very zealous and active.

On Monday of the first week of the ISB, the team of Gideons began the day as scheduled: prayer at 6 a.m., followed by breakfast. Then the teams left for distributions.

One of the distributions occurred that afternoon at a school. Shortly after, some Hindu activists filed a complaint against the Gideons to the local police. The charge was that the Gideons were illegally distributing religious material without proper permission.

So the members of the ISB team soon found themselves detained at the police station. Identification papers and passports of the visiting Gideons were confiscated and the team's local Gideon counterparts were arrested and jailed.

Two men and the principal of the school alleged that the Gideons had deceived the principal. They said that the Gideons told the principal the book they were distributing was a philosophy book.

The assistant police chief asked the ISB leaders to make an official statement that they had deceived the school. They refused to make the statement as it wasn't true.

Word of the arrest quickly spread throughout the Christian community in Mumbai. Many prayers were lifted up in support of these faithful Gideons. The police eventually let the two ISB team members leave, while the local Gideons were detained overnight.

The following day, officials of The Gideons International in India met with the police to arrange for release of the Gideons. After much discussion, the chief of police agreed to release the jailed Gideons.

Through it all, God's will was being done. Prior to the arrests, the Gideons had made plans to visit the police station to distribute Testaments to the officers and prisoners there.

Launching an investigation into the case against the Gideons, the police inspector ordered each of his men to take a copy of the book in question (the New Testament), take it home and study it as part of the investigation.

"I need to know what this book says," said the inspector.

This resulted in more officers receiving Testaments than might have if this had been a routine distribution at the police station. Also, one of the police officers invited the local Gideons over to his house following their release so they could speak to his family and pray for them as well.

### **HUMBLED AND ENCOURAGED**

During the second week of the distribution, fourteen ISB Gideons participated in the blitz in the city of Chennai.

At a church presentation that Sunday, the pastor asked the congregation in each service to generously provide Scriptures through The Gideons International. The pastor even emptied his own pockets as well. It would be the largest Gideon offering ever by a church in Chennai.

Each day, as the ISB teams went out with the Chennai Gideons, they were encouraged and humbled by the dedication of the Gideons and Auxiliary in Chennai. Thanks to their preparation prior to the ISB, the Gideons were able to distribute and place Scriptures in 207 schools, 14 colleges, 13 hospitals and 16 hotels. A total of 176,152 Scriptures were distributed in Chennai.

### **DOORS OPEN WIDE AT A HOTEL**

In Visakhapatnam, the Gideons were warmly welcomed by the manager of The Hotel Supreme. It turned out that he was a Christian. He told the Gideons that years earlier, he had been hesitant in giving Gideons permission to distribute Bibles in his hotel, as his employees objected to the idea. But since that time, all of the Bibles had been taken from the rooms and many of his employees had received Christ. This news was a great encouragement to the Gideons as they saw the doors open wide for them to place Scriptures in the hotel. The ground work done by the Visakhapatnam Gideons helped the Gideons place and distribute 150,239 Scriptures there that week.

## **FAST FACTS ON INDIA**

- » **Population:** : 1,166 million
- » **Language:** English, Hindi and 14 other official languages plus local dialects
- » **Gideon Ministry Established:** 1961
- » **Gideon Camps:** 545
- » **Local Gideon Membership:** 8,525
- » **Auxiliary (wives of Gideons):** 4,809
- » **Total Scriptures Distributed:** 100,509,996

## **IMPACT OF THE GIDEON MINISTRY IN INDIA**

In the 2-week blitz, 459,861 copies of God's Word were placed. Bringing to total 100,509,996 Scriptures placed in India since the first Gideon camp there was established in 1961.

*All statistics are based on May 31, 2010 totals for Gideon ministry and Scripture distributions.*



# TESTIMONIES FROM INDIA

## SEE YOU IN HEAVEN

*During a distribution at the National College in Mumbai, one Gideon handed Scriptures to two young female students and asked if he could show them a few things inside the Testament. They agreed, so he showed them the help section in the front and then the decision page.*

*"If you were to die tonight, where would you spend eternity?" he asked.*

*Both of the young women replied that they didn't know.*

*He asked if they would like to be sure of where they'd go upon dying, and again, they agreed. So he presented them with the gospel message verses on the decision page and then asked, "Would you like to pray the sinner's prayer and receive Christ as your Lord and Savior? Both of the young ladies said, "Yes."*

*A short time later, both of the young women walked by him again. As they passed, one of them turned with a big smile on her face and said, "I will see you in heaven."*

## A DRIVER DECIDES TO LET GOD STEER HIS LIFE

*While the ISB Gideons were shuttling back and forth to the police station following detainment in Mumbai, the man driving them asked a Mumbai Gideon in Hindi, "Why do you spend so much time and money to distribute these Bibles?"*

*The local Gideon saw an opportunity to witness, and explained the plan of salvation. He encouraged the man to read the Testament he had been given and also instructed him to read the sinner's prayer.*

*The following day, the driver came back and happily told the Gideon, "This is a wonderful book, and people should not object to such distribution. All those who oppose it are crazy and evil."*

*On the last day in Mumbai, one of the Gideons led the driver through the sinner's prayer to receive Christ. Just another reminder that even through the prison detainments, God's will was being accomplished.*

## PRAYER NEEDS

Please pray for God's protection on the churches, pastors and the Gideon ministry in India.

## PLEASE HELP SEND GOD'S WORD

**Give to The Gideons International and help impact lives for Christ. For \$1.31, a copy of God's Word can be placed in the hands of individuals in International Outreach and Non-Qualified National Associations.**

- To pray for key needs of the Gideon ministry, or to make a donation, visit the [www.gideons.org](http://www.gideons.org) website and click on "How You Can Help." (To donate only, simply click on the red link, titled: "Give a Donation.")
- Or, call The Gideons International Headquarters at: **(615) 564-5000**.



## YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

On behalf of the many people around the globe whose lives have been changed through your gift of God's Word, The Gideons International says, "Thank You!"

Your ongoing support of the Gideon ministry likely provides the only opportunity that millions of adults, teens and children will have to receive God's Word. In more than 175 of the 192 countries where Gideons serve, the people cannot afford Scriptures on their own.

Through your help, and that of so many dedicated donors and members, Gideons distributed over 79 million Scriptures last year. And, as a result of your prayers and donations, we have also passed the milestone of 1.6 billion copies of God's Word distributed since 1908.

Please continue to support The Gideons International through your donations and prayers...and encourage others to do the same. Together, let's share God's Word with the world.

