

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with Nagaland which is a state in India. Depending upon the source, India is roughly 80.5% Hindu and only 2.3% Christian. The population of Nagaland is 1,988,000 of whom a remarkable 90.02% identify as Christian. Of the Naga people themselves over 96% identify as Christian. Some consider Nagaland to be the most Christian place on earth!

The Naga people were once divided into 16 savage tribal groups. All of them were infamous for taking the heads of their enemies as trophies. Outsiders referred to these Stone Age savages as the "Naked Nagas". The Naga people told me that in those early days the entrance to every Naga village was adorned with human heads. No Naga woman would even think of marrying a man who did not have at least one head to his credit. The women in the village even wove into their clothing colored symbols to brag about how many heads their husbands had collected. In those evil days the Nagas were proud of their savage cruelty.

Then came the Gospel! The first missionary to the Nagas is thought to have been Miles Bronson who arrived there in 1839. Of course it took time for the "Good News" to be accepted. The late missionary Dr. Garland Bare said that the song "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" was composed by a Naga warrior. He decided to follow Jesus even though no one else would do it. His courage was contagious as present statistics confirm. Our friends in the Morse family have also played a significant role in evangelizing the Nagas.

I will resist the temptation to deal with the subjugation of these noble people by the Indian Government and the Naga desire for independence. The point of this letter is to emphasize that even the most violent and primitive people can be converted to Christ. Jesus said that we could determine the nature of religious teaching by the fruit it produces. You may not be able to identify a tree by the grain of the wood, the nature of the bark, or even its leaves. It is easy, however, to identify a tree by its fruit. In this regard the fruit produced by the Gospel of Christ among the Nagas is unmistakable.

I remind you again of the words of Charles Darwin. When he heard people criticizing Christian missionaries he wrote: *"They forget, or will not remember, that human sacrifices and the power of an idolatrous priesthood – a system of profligacy unparalleled in another part of the world – Infanticide, a consequent of that system – bloody wars, where conquerors spared neither women nor children – that all of these have been abolished; and that dishonesty, intemperance, and licentiousness have been greatly reduced by Christianity. In a voyager to forget these things is base ingratitude; for should he chance to be at the point of shipwreck on some unknown coast, he will most devoutly pray that the lesson of the missionary may have reached thus far . . . The lesson of the missionary is the enchanter's wand. The house has been built, the windows framed, the fields plowed, and even the trees grafted by the New Zealander . . . The march of improvement, consequent on the introduction of Christianity through the South Seas, probably stands by itself in the records of history"* (Journals of Research pages 414, 425, and 505).

In this regard there is a day and night difference between Nagaland and other states in India. The difference is in their "fruit". Other states are predominantly Hindu, and Nagaland is predominantly Christian. For example, Seti is still practiced by Hindus throughout India even though it is against the law. Seti is the evil practice of burning a widow to death on the funeral pyre of her

husband. Or consider the dowry system which requires parents to pay a man to marry their daughter. This too is illegal but still very much a part of non-Christian India. As incredible as it sounds, a husband may kill his wife if he doesn't want her or if her parents stop payment on her dowry. Wikipedia puts it like this: *"Although Indian laws against dowries have been in effect for decades, they have been largely criticized as being ineffective. The practice of dowry deaths and murders continues to take place unchecked in many parts of India and this has further added to the concerns of enforcement."* This also explains why so many little girls are aborted, abandoned, or sold into prostitution. Some years ago I was in a major Indian city on the Bay of Bengal. A local pastor had rescued a dozen little girls from the streets who had been abandoned by parents. They apparently wouldn't or couldn't pay a dowry. As the pastor translated, each girl gave her sad and tragic testimony. On that occasion it dawned on me how easy it would be for these precious little girls to doubt the love of our Heavenly Father and how difficult for them to pray "Our Father which art in heaven".

Please note again that those who do not believe the Bible invariably choose to live where the Bible has been taught. North Korea forbids both Bibles and churches. South Korea encourages both. Some of the biggest churches in the world are in S. Korea. In which Korea would you rather live? Regarding India, the Christian Post points out that Hindu extremists in Orissa State murdered 100 Christians, ransacked 300 churches and 6,000 homes, raped Christian women and left 56,000 Christians homeless. Is that the kind of a place where you would like to raise your family? Thank God for Nagaland!

Please keep the faith! I love you!

Grandpa Boyce