

A volunteer goes to Mali-Wada-- Summer 78.

SPEAKING FARMER

Do they still have a shower in Mali-Wada? At the beginning of the project they didn't! This is a story about how they got one.

The Salmons returned to the local church for one of our local church assignments out of the Institute. The Kansas West bishop assigned us to a three-point charge we would name The Three Strongholds of Faith.

On the first Sunday, one of the rural churches provided a welcoming pot-luck. The food line began in the Sunday School classroom, snaked down the steps and into the basement fellowship hall.

Standing in line with me was Ed Giles, a man about my age. He said, "Pastor Bill, I'm a teacher and I have the summer off. Do you know anywhere in the world where I could be useful for about thirty days?" I tried to contain my obvious excitement, but blurted out that I knew of 300 places, and I would get back to him in a few days.

The telephone number at Chicago Centrum (769-6363) was still fresh in my mind. On the following Monday morning I called it. I'm not certain with whom I visited (perhaps Philbrook), but he knew of a little farm-transportation vehicle donated to the ICA that needed an escort to our project in Mali-Wada. The machine was a TRAG, a project of a United Methodist Men's group in Iowa who built the riding carryall and gave them to mission projects.

Ed Giles was recruited for the trip. Bev and I put Ed on the AMTRAK at Dodge City. In Chicago he picked up the TRAG and trained on to New York City. My Kansas man was about to become a global citizen. The taxi to the airport cost him \$40. This was an enormous sum, especially to one who had never been out of western Kansas.

The plan was for someone to meet him in Bombay. According to ICA tradition, this statement means different things to different staff people. For several hours, Ed was left in the airport holding about 400 pounds of TRAG and tools. Tired and jet-lagged, Kansas Ed stood waiting like an abandoned bride at the altar.

Eventually, someone showed up, took him to the Bombay offices, fed and rested the man, then entrained him for the eight hour ride into the Maharashtra state interior. Those who have ridden Indian trains will be sympathetic.

When Ed returned to Kansas after his missional excursion, Giles was filled with his experience; it was a life-enhancing trip-of-a-lifetime. For me, two stories held the significance of the work he did. He reported:

—Each weekend the American staff left the village and retreated to a nearby town for rest and relaxation. Translated this meant *to take a shower*. This situation put Ed's Kansas farmer-mind to work: why did the village staff-house not have a shower? Ed went to work.

On top of the staff-house was a water cistern, and Ed followed the pipes down to the ground and into an old, abandoned well. Asking for a rope and assistance, he was lowered into the well where he found an unused electric pump. But when it was connected, water filled the roof-top cistern, and it leaked like a sieve! The cistern was patched and refilled. Then, he located the old pipes previously installed for a shower, but it had no shower-head.

That weekend, Giles went to town with the rest of the staff. Did he *take a shower*? This is something to which he never admitted, but when he returned to Male-Wada he had a *shower head*

With a wry smile, he seemed so proud of his achievement.

—"Ed," I asked, "how did you get along in the village?" "Oh," he exclaimed, "that was easy."

"I walked the dusty streets until I saw a villager doing something that I understood. One sharpened a one-way plough, another repaired equipment. I would go over, squat down and hand them a pair a pliers, chewing gum, or a roll of bailing wire. Pretty soon we'd be working together."

"But Ed," I queried, "how did you communicate? How did you understand each other? One of you spoke Hindi and the other English."

"No trouble at all," Ed replied. "Working together like we did, we both spoke *Farmer!*"