

Chicago Base
November 15, 1970

T6

HOUSE CHURCH WITNESS: BISHOP JOSHI

Introduction

I've asked Bishop Joshi if he will give the witness tonight in the place of the one chosen to give the witness. This is the first time in our common memory that we have given this honor to anyone who is not a direct part of our Order. I think that says two things. One, the great honor that we bestow on Bishop Joshi, and secondly, that you can see the place that we see him being in history as part of the global movement.

Bishop Joshi

First I would like to thank you for giving me this honor of bringing a word of witness from India to this group. Although I'm not a part of your fellowship, I feel very much a part of it. I feel quite at home. I'm very much privileged to say one or two words to you this evening.

Let me bring to you greetings of Namastey from India. Normally in India when you greet each other you do like this: (bow with palms together) and say, Namastey." Say it with me, "Namastey." "NAMASTEY." This Namastey comes to you not only from people in India, from Carol and George Walters, who are in our home until December 2nd. It was a great privilege to have them in our home from May until the middle of August, and then again after the ITI. We found our home greatly blessed by their presence, our children greatly blessed, and our people in Bombay.

The Institute that we have just finished in Uti with Joe Slicker and George and Carol Walters and other people included some people from India who served on the faculty. We had tremendous blessings to our people. What was unique about the Institute was that it was planned by the people right there. You'll remember that last time I came here I had to leave my wife back in the USA and rush to Bombay in order to meet with Joe Slicker and others to plan the program for the ITI on May 15th. The people there took part in planning the Institute.

One more thing that I can give at this time is that the people there also took some financial responsibility for the world Institute. It was really a well representative, selective and ecumenical group. I think members of all the major denominations were present. And the Catholics were there in large numbers. A very selective group.

What has come out of this world Institute? What are our hopes for the future? This is what brings me to Chicago at this time, also to the leadership here. I think that now the time has come and sufficient enthusiasm has been built up in India to start a Religious House in Bombay. So I am discussing the possibility of having at least two couples from this Institute here for a year or two to come and stay with us in Bombay, along with the leadership there, to help us start a Religious House. The Institute that we have just concluded has built up so much enthusiasm that I feel we should capitalize upon this enthusiasm and let it not wane, otherwise we'll have difficulty. I'm hoping that maybe from January we might be able to start a Religious House in Bombay. I spent my day today with the Baggetts here visiting two Religious Houses today, North Shore and South Chicago, just to get some ideas for my people in Bombay.

Why do I feel that we should establish some of these things there? I feel that today in Bombay and in the large cities of the world the time has come for us to practice and proclaim the Christian presence in the world. That presence is

not to be proclaimed and practiced in religious terms--that is, the kind of worship and religious exercises which are isolated from the world. Many of us now feel that if we have to make religious values meaningful and relevant in the world in which we live today in Bombay and other large towns of our country and other areas, we have to practice these things not as separate from the world but one with the world. And I think the Religious Houses are to become tokens or signs of the Christian presence in the world. I am hoping that we can, with the leadership of some of the people here, together practice this presence in India in terms of our own setting, our own culture, to make Christ more meaningful and relevant in the world in which we live today.

We want you all to remember us in your prayers as you think about what is being done in India and other countries of Asia through the Institute here to make religion more meaningful to the whole of life rather than as something that is not related to our life as we live it in the world today.

So this is my brief witness. Let me say again how much I appreciate the welcome you have given me and the inspiration that I draw from you all as I come here and meet some of you.

Formal Introduction of Guests

Bishop Joshi comes to us from Bombay, India. His specific local and station is the Methodist Church of South Asia in the Bombay Episcopal Area. He is the kind of man when you first meet him you know that you have had a spirit colleague for many years. This outcrops in many different ways. He's already alluded to some of the things that happened. First, I would say that probably more than any one man he bears the load of the spirit movement in India in the sense to bringing form to it. He was the chairman of the host committee, for example, of the ITI. He sponsored the penetration teams and honored them and prepared the way for them previous to that. He would write letters on behalf of the ITI from many different facets: from money down to typewriters. He saw that at least four parts of the Methodist Church gave to the financial support of the ITI. So he has been this kind of direct and immediate friend. But he stands as a colleague and comrade in the Church of Jesus Christ whether we would have ever met him or whether we ever meet him again. And it is a particular honor to receive him today as a guest over this weekend. As he mentioned, he is here to talk about the Religious House in Bombay. From here he goes to the Council of Bishops of the Methodist Church meeting in Portland, Oregon, and from there immediately back to India.