



# Assignment: India

**Despite my solid educational and religious background, I had no idea I needed to have a personal relationship with Christ.**

**By Tillie Nelson**

My first night in India as a missionary I was told, □Pay no attention to the lizards on the ceiling, but be sure to shake your slippers in the morning before you put them on. Scorpions like to crawl into slippers to keep cool. And be sure to tuck the net in tightly around your bedding so nothing can crawl in beside you.□ There were not only scorpions and lizards crawling around, but also snakes, including cobras!

I went to bed that night wondering how I could ever stay there to fulfill my six-year teaching assignment. But I did! God was good to me when a scourge of cholera swept through the land. I saw many students get sick in the morning and die by noon, but God protected me, and I was not affected by it. In fact, I never had one day of sickness during my whole stay.

While there, I found what it was like to live in a land where God was not known. I saw the superstition and darkness that enveloped that land, and the suffering and sorrow that

accompanied it. All this caused me to realize the responsibility I had to teach the truth of God's Word.

## Quality Qualifications

I considered myself sufficiently qualified for this assignment. I had a good educational background. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin, I had taught high school for a number of years and then worked as a congressional secretary in Washington, D.C.



From the time I was a little girl, I had attended church. My family members were professing Christians, but we knew little about salvation. Still, I had taught Sunday school and been active in youth organizations. However, I was just as active in worldly amusements. Deep in my heart, I felt that a Christian should not do the things I was doing; yet I tried to justify myself. I loved those things so much, that for a long time I did not have the courage to say I would give them up. I didn't know that if I gave my heart fully to God, He would take the love for those activities out of my heart. One day, I decided to do what I knew was right. I gave up those worldly amusements in my own strength. I read the Bible and prayed. Surely now I was a Christian!

It was after this that I accepted the missionary call to teach in India. I enjoyed what I was doing, but I felt a great lack. At the end of my six-year term, I returned to Washington, D.C. on furlough. I was disappointed when the door of my return to India was closed. I thought it was because of my mother's illness, but now I know that God had a different plan for me. I accepted a position in my church as Welfare Secretary, and later I was employed by the board of missions to visit the churches of our denomination and arouse interest in missions. I also taught a Bible class and organized a Young Women's Missionary Society.

## News from the West Coast

My brother was still a member of Congress, and I took a position as his private secretary. About this time, two of my brother's sons who had been quite incorrigible, were out on the West Coast visiting relatives. While there, they attended an Apostolic Faith church service and were converted. My brother was so impressed with the sudden change in their lives that he urged me to attend an Apostolic Faith convention being held in Portland, Oregon.

During the time I was in India, I had heard from other relatives who told of their conversion in this same church. They said

that they had also been sanctified and had been baptized with the Holy Ghost-the enduement of power for sanctified believers. I knew that I needed greater power in my life, and it seemed logical to think that this experience was something every Christian worker needed.

That summer I attended the camp meeting in Portland. I decided to seek what I thought I needed—the baptism of the Holy Ghost—but I didn't get far in my prayers. Afterward, I heard a teaching on sanctification, a second work of grace that makes the heart pure and holy, and decided maybe that was what I needed. So, I began to pray for the Lord to sanctify me, but again there was no answer. After this, I heard that if a person is really born again, he knows it. That sounded reasonable, but I did not know when I had been born again.

## Reality Became Mine

I searched my heart and compared my Christian experience with the Word of God. What an astonishing discovery I made! The Lord revealed to me that I merely had a profession of Christianity. What was I to do? Should I confess that I was not saved, after having been a missionary and active in Christian work for years? How could I possibly admit that while I was trying to convert others, I was not converted myself? Yet, I knew I would be a coward if I did not do so.

After the service ended, I knelt at the altar of prayer and pleaded guilty before God, as a sinner. I could not keep back the tears. I asked His forgiveness, and He was gracious to me and saved my soul. I knew I was saved!

How good it was to have a salvation that I knew about! After I had that solid foundation on which to build, I soon received my sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Ghost for which I had been seeking.

My only regret is that I did not have this spiritual equipment while serving on foreign soil. God had a missionary work for me to do at home, though, and it would have a greater outreach than anything I had been doing. For many years I have had the privilege of helping in a worldwide missionary work in the editorial department of the Apostolic Faith headquarters office. There, the Gospel message is translated into many languages and mailed throughout the world. What a rewarding life it has been! Best of all, I can look forward with assurance to the prize of eternal life.

*Tillie Nelson worked in the editorial department of the Apostolic Faith Church headquarters office for many years before going Home to meet the Lord.*