

A CASE STUDY ON A GROWING CHURCH

**Submitted to Dr. David Fletcher in the partial fulfillment of the
Requirements of D.Min Programme**

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INTRODUCTION

It was a fine Sunday morning, listening to the ministry of the word in the church, when the end of a search of a long enquiry for a growing Brethren Church in a rural area in India came. The preacher mentioned a certain Mr. Darshan Singh from Rajasthan as an example to explain his thoughts on successful evangelism. This was the striking thought that led me to further investigate about him and his church.

BACKGROUND

A Brief Look at Rajasthan:

Known as the “Land of Palaces and Forts”, Rajasthan is situated in the northern part of India. It has numerous alluring palaces, magnificent forts, and a rich culture and heritage. The state encompasses most of the area of the Great Indian Desert (Thar Desert). Mount Abu is one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world. October to March is the best time to visit Rajasthan. The Thar Desert that is a part of the Great Indian Desert burns like a furnace even in early March, and is known as the “Maru-kantar”, the region of death. Rajasthan is the largest state in the Indian Union. Geographically, the land of Rajasthan is more varied than any other region. It is a region of lofty rocks, rolling sand dunes, of burning heat and freezing cold, of fertile plains and deep wild glens and jungles. The Aravalli range, which is the oldest fold range in the world, divides the area into two natural divisions, viz, North-West and South-East. The North-West area is a sandy and ill-watered tract, emerging gradually from a mere desert in the West and North-West to a comparatively fertile land towards the East and North-East in the neighborhood of the Aravallis and the track bordering Haryana. The South-Eastern division, which is more elevated and fertile than the North-West, has a very diversified character with extensive hill ranges, pockets of woodlands, several large rivers, fertile tablelands and stretches of excellent soil.

Some details about the state are listed below:

Area	342,239 Sq. Km
Population	56,473,122 (2001)
No. of Villages	33,305
No. of dev. Blocks	236
No. of districts	32
Density of population	128 persons/Sq. Km
Decadal growth rate	+ 28.07
Literacy ratio	61.03 %
SC Population	76.08 lakh
ST Population	54.75 lakh
Rural/Urban Population	77.12 % / 22.88 %
Area under forest	30,657 Sq. km
Air Cargo / Shipment	Jaipur, Jodhpur & Udaipur

The Aravalli range starts from the borders of Delhi and becomes well defined before Alwar. The forests of Alwar, Bharatpur and Sawai- Madhopur are the home of the tiger, the panther, the wild boar, the blue bull, and the more graceful and agile animals of the deer family.

Census reports that society in Rajasthan is divided into castes, sub-castes and groups under eight broad heads. The martial Rajputs not only belong to the well-known clans such as the Sisodias, Rathors, Chauhans, Kachawahas, Bhattis, Panwars, and Solankis but have-off-shoots known as Musalman Rajputs or “Musalman Sipahis”. The Bhatti Rajputs who were forced to embrace Islam between 1193 and 1684 were called Sindhi Sipahis and the Chauhans who were subjected to this conversion around 1383 formed the sizeable group called Kaimrhani in the Shekhawati and Nagaur areas.

Besides the Rajputs and the Musalmans, the western region of the state enumerates at least 34 castes and sub-castes of Brahmins and seven groups under the head “Bards and other communities” among them being the Charan - the friend, philosopher and guide of the Rajput and the Bhat, who maintains the family tree and other chronological records of his patrons.

Rajasthan has eight communities classified as “writers and chroniclers”. They are Kayasthas, Khattris, Orwals, Mohnots, Bhandaris, Singhis, Lodhas, and Mohatas, whose members are in the field of business, industry and administration.

The seven communities, namely the Dholi, Dhadhi, Hinjara, Jagri-Patur, Bhagtan, Kalawat and Bhand are grouped under “Minstrels and Instrument Players”. Among these the Hinjaras, Kalawats, and Bhands are the entertainers, jokers and jesters.

The trading and business communities generally called Marwaris include the Mahajans, Sarawagis, Porals, Shrimals, Shrishrimals, Agarwals, Maheswaaris, Vijayvargias, Sunlas, Bohres, Pheriwalas, Baldias, and Lohias.

Carpenters, barbers, tailors, blacksmiths, utensil makers, cloth-printers, dyers and tiers, patwaris, weavers, washermen, potters, cobblers, sweepers, stone-dressers, nats, sansis, badris, and scores of other workers, all belong to the artisan community.

Two prominent scheduled Tribes of this region are the Bhils and the Meenas. The total population is about 31,25,506 of the Scheduled Tribes in the State. The Bhils are mostly concentrated in the hill-locked districts of Udaipur, Dungarpur and Banswara while the Meenas are settled mainly in the Jaipur, Sawai- Madhopur, and Udaipur districts.

Other Scheduled Tribes are the Garasias and the Sahrias. The Garasias are concentrated in the Pali and Sirohi districts, while the Sahrias are limited to a pocket of two tehsils in the Kota district.

The Bhils form the most significant tribal group in the State. The most undeveloped tribal group is the Sahrias. All the Scheduled Tribes of Rajasthan are incorporated in the Hindu social order.

Rajasthan has an unending cycle of fairs and festivals throughout the year. They are perhaps the most colourful and spectacular in the whole of India. Besides the festivals born out of age-old traditions, there are others which celebrate the seasons, cattle marts which turn out to be enthralling fairs, and craft fairs that highlight the crafts of the different regions and so on. Rajasthani festivals give an insight to the colourful lifestyle of the Rajasthani people and are mesmerizing with their folk dances, music, drama and animal races. Some of the main fairs and festivals are Teej, Gangaur and the Pushkar Fair, Desert Festival, Elephant Festival and the Camel Festival, which are now known worldwide.

The enterprise of the Rajasthanis is evident in the large number of small-scale industrial units, which has sprung up all over the state. There are large deposits of zinc and copper and these are being exploited for the development of industries dependent on these metals. It has large deposits of gypsum and lignite and mica. It has a large production of cotton and textile industries have been coming up in several places in Rajasthan. Among the other private sector industries are cement, ball bearings, sugar, caustic soda and other chemicals.

There are mainly two crop seasons. The major crops sown during the months of June-July and harvested in Sep-Oct are bajra, Jowar, pulses, maize and groundnut. The main Rabi crops for which sowing operations start during Oct-Nov and harvesting is done in March-April include wheat, barley, pulses, and gram and oilseeds. Among oilseeds, rape and mustard are the most important. Fruits and vegetables are also sown throughout the state where the soil especially is suited to this type of cultivation. Fruit trees grown include orange, lemon, pomegranate, guava, and mango. The main source of irrigation is wells and tanks.

Rajasthan is a different world. Its colours, patterns and traditional skills of craft making are overwhelming. Rajasthan is well known for its traditional and rural oriented crafts, which are evenly spread over the state. The main crafts of the state are hand-printed textiles, tie & dye; hand knotted woolen carpets, art metal wares, leather wares, stone carvings, meenakumari, etc¹.

The magical land is set amidst desolate desert beauty. The land is synonymous with romance and chivalry, immensely rich in culture, history, and natural beauty. This brief description of this state gives varied insights of how hard the soil is for the gospel to take root. But Mr. Darshan had chosen a place from this state to sow the seed of the Word of the gospel and the place is known as Sri Ganganagar.

¹Sept. 13, 2008, Accessed Online at: www.google.com, History of Rajasthan.

A BRIEF LOOK AT SRI GANGANAGAR:

Ganganagar is a district located in the Indian state of Rajasthan. The population of the district is 17,88,487 as per the 2001 census. The town of Sri Ganganagar is the administrative headquarters of the district. Sri Ganganagar is about 430 km from Delhi, which is about nine hours by road. The countryside is lush green with well-cultivated fields, good enough to confuse anyone looking for sand dunes. Sri Ganganagar district borders on the Punjab and is well irrigated by canals originating the Sutlej river. Not only do the surroundings here, but also the people in some locales appear more similar in appearance to the people of the Punjab than of Rajasthan.

Location of Ganganagar district:

The district is located in the northern most part of Rajasthan and occupies an area of approximately 7,984 sq km. It is surrounded by the state of Haryana in the northeastern side, Bikaner in the south, Hanumangarh in the east and Pakistan in the northwest and west. This district lies in the Thar Desert of the state Rajasthan. Before independence it was part of Bikaner State, and is on the border of India and Pakistan.

Divisions of Ganganagar district:

Ganganagar District in India has 6 sub-divisions, 9 tehsils and 7 Panchayat Samitis. Approximately 2,839 villages of the district are inhabited by human population. The district has 10 towns in total and as many as 320 Gram Panchayats.

Divisions of the town of Ganganagar

The town is divided into small blocks. The town is well maintained and offers many parks and grounds for recreation and relaxation. They also provide spaces for playing cricket, football, and badminton etc. The main parks include Nehru Park and Indravatika Park. In the town, one will find one or two parks at every block. Most of the people are simple and one can see the older males wearing Kurta - Pyjama (traditional dress) and the older females dressed in saris while the youngsters are more modern in their dress sense and can be seen sporting jeans and T-shirts. Since the last two-three years, there has been a rapid increase in the population of the town, mainly due to migration of people from neighbouring small towns and villages. This has led to town expansion and has led to the rise of many showrooms of International brands of shoes and clothing such as Reebok, Nike, John Players, Cotton County, and Sony etc.

History of Ganganagar district:

In ancient times Ganganagar was a part of the Bikaner District, which was formed by Rao Bika in the year 1488. Thereafter, King Jaisingh started expanding the area of this district. During the 15th century a new Bikaner was formed. On March 30, 1949 the district of Ganganagar was created out of Bikaner District. It was named after the Maharaja of Bikaner, Maharaja Ganga Singh who established it. It is said that the Maharaja wanted a city based on the design of Paris to be established and hence the map

of the Old Ganganagar city will give you a glimpse of the map of Paris. It is one of the biggest military bases. This city boasts of great significance in terms of both agriculture and archaeology. It is also famous for the longest concrete lined canal in the world, which was built in 1927 by the Maharaja Ganga Singh.

Economy of Ganganagar district:

Agriculture and animal husbandry are the main economic activities of the district. Oilseeds, sugarcane, cotton and food grains are the main crops that are cultivated here. Besides these, there are a large number of small and large-scale industries too. It is a testimony to land transformation: Desert land was converted to a lush green town the credit going to the efforts of the Maharaja who built the Rajasthan canal. This canal carries the excess waters of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh into Ganganagar, making it known as "the food basket of Rajasthan."

Ganga Canal starts from the river Sutlej near Harike, flows downstream to the confluence of the river Beas, in the Punjab, and conveys into Rajasthan some 1,780 Mm³/yr, serving an area of 308 kha. The length of the Feeder Canal, from Harike to Rajasthan border, is 112 km. The headworks discharge capacity of the Canal is 77 m³/sec. The total length of the canal system, including the feeder canal is 1,363 km.

One thing this area is very famous for is Kinnu (a citrus fruit / variant of orange). For the past 10-15 years, farmers of this region are facing tough times. Their main cash crop, cotton has almost collapsed. Although you can still see the long queues of tractor-trolleys in the city in winter, yet the overall production of food grains has dropped considerably. The decline in the crops is mainly due to a very small insect, "Heliothis"(in local language - sundy). This worm has badly affected the cotton crops. There are other factors as well, like the trade rates of crops. Rates of cotton are still the same as they were in 1992-1993. Although the other crop, wheat, has seen a good hike in rates and has helped people recover to some extent, still, the overall sale result is not to the farmers' expectation. Another problem that affects the farmers of this region is the continuous tussle for water with Punjab (the neighbouring state).

There is something special about people of this area, which strikes you immediately - simplicity. You might meet a big landowner but you will hardly find any attitude problems or tendency to show off. Most of the families in this area are descendents of erstwhile landlords, so guns and horses are considered as a sign of power. Although their firearms are pretty common, there are hardly any incidents of shootout. That is because most of the people keep firearms as a sign of pride rather than a means of muscle wielding. So on a cold evening, if you see the people in a jeep (a utility vehicle) next to yours with guns and pistols, there is no need to panic. If one asks them for the nearest eatery it would not be surprising if they offer you a cup of tea themselves!

Tourist Attractions in Ganganagar District:

This town is famous for its many farms and fields. Tourist attractions are abundant in Ganganagar, thereby making the district a popular spot for excursions and tours. Some of the primary places of interest that are worth taking looks at are:

- Gauri Shankar Mandir
- Ram Mandir –These are the two famous temples and the main tourist destinations
- Samadhi of Dada Pamparam
- Hindumalkot - Indo-Pak border
- Laila Majnu ki Majhar
- Shivpuri ki Kagad
- Gurudwara Shri Budha Johad, just 50 km away is well known.
- Religious center - The Durga mandir, Balajee Dham and Hanuman mandir are very old and revered by both the locals and tourists.
- Anupagad ka Qila

There are many hotels in the town. You will notice that all of them are located near the Railway Station for the convenience of tired travellers. There are many restaurants and cafes, too, offering a variety of delicious food items and snacks.

Climate:

The climate of Sri Ganganagar is one of extreme type. This means that this region is very hot in summer where the temperatures reach almost 50 degrees Celsius. This region is the hottest in India. The temperature in winter is also quite low. The temperatures dip to almost below 0 degrees Celsius.

Getting to Ganganagar:

A good network of roads and railways connects Ganganagar District to the rest of India. Roadways are good. The BRO or Border Roads Organization is responsible for the maintenance of the district roadways. Here one has trains from Kandla (Gujarat) as well as from Pathankot (Punjab) to this place.

Demographics:

Quick Facts		Getting There	
State	Rajasthan	Nearest Airport	Jaipur
District	Ganganagar	Nearest Train Stations	Ganganagar
Coordinates	29.92° N, Longitude: 73.88° E	Main Highways Road	National Highway 15
Official language(s)	Rajasthani, Hindi and English	Best time to visit	September

Climate / Weather	Summers 24°-50°C, Winters 1°-28°C population
Population	210,788
Literacy ratio	71%

As per the 2001 India census, Ganganagar had a population of 2,10,788. Males constitute 55% of the population and females 45%. Ganganagar has an average literacy rate of 71%, higher than the national average of 59.5%: male literacy is 76%, and female literacy is 64%. In Ganganagar, 13% of the population is under 6 years of age².

THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH

The first Brethren assembly missionary to Sri Ganganagar arrived in the city with his family in 1970. He was Mr. C.L. Jose from Trissur in Kerala. He began his missionary activities by first contacting the South Indians settled there. He was able to establish a small gathering of South Indian believers within a few years' time. Some of them were baptized and the fellowship continued with the same members of believers for almost 12 years. The missionary could not draw the local people from the city into the church. The church went on with no growth and no loss, a sort of a static period.

Meanwhile, one local young man from a Punjabi background was reached with the gospel in the hostel where he stayed while pursuing his secular studies. He was from a village about 150 km away from Sri Ganganagar. The villagers had to send their children to the cities for any kind of further studies because such facilities were available only there. Mr. Jose shared the gospel with this young man and he was saved in the year 1971. As he received the call from the Lord to serve him, he discontinued his secular studies and joined a Bible college to equip himself for the service of the Lord. After receiving his bachelor's degree in Theology from Serampore University, he was married in the year 1977 and came to the mission field in Sri Ganganagar. He says "I have burden for my own people and community because I can understand my people and their culture and language better than any one else"³.

A CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP

The first missionary, Mr. C.L. Jose went back to Kerala with his family in 1981. Then Mr. Darshan Singh, the young local man, who was well trained in the Word, took over this ministry in 1982 with his family. He also continued with the same South Indian Christian group for another 12 years more.

² Sept. 13, 2008, Accessed Online at: www.google.com, History of Sri-Ganganagar

³ Quotation from a personal interview with Mr. Darshan Singh on Oct. 6, 2008.



At the same time the missionary also started to establish his contacts with the local people. Soon he was able to have a small gathering of local non-Christian people. The group included people from Hindu, Sikh and Rajasthani background. Though there was no growth among the group of the south Indians, the ministry among the local people progressed slowly.

GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

The South Indian group had a mechanical way of Christian living, depending on their own traditional background, with no concern for the missionary and his efforts and no desire for the spiritual growth of the church. They merely wanted to have a gathering in the place where they stayed because there was no church in the city according to the pattern they desired.

“Though I had to separate myself from this group due to these serious circumstances, today I can look back and say it was God’s leading in my life to enter into the ministry that God wanted me to involve in⁴.”

The missionary then stopped all his activities with the South Indian group. Thereafter he began to concentrate completely on his work among the local non-Christian people. Many turned to Christ and soon there was a small but joyful gathering. From the year of 1987 the church began to grow a little faster. And in the years that followed until 2000 there was spontaneous growth in the church. Concerning the growth, Mr. Darshan says:

“Church growth was slow in the beginning but later I had the joyful experience of seeing the Spirit’s move in the amazing growth of the church. Many were added to the body of Christ and they were motivated to introduce and invite their relatives and friends to the church⁵.”

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

The church was growing in quantity and in quality. The believers were equipped and encouraged to share the joy that they enjoyed. Many “unreached” were introduced to the church by the believers. Many of them were excited to see the wondrous works of God in the lives of the believers and they believed in the Lord. Though it was hard for them to come out from their religious background, once they actually came out they were so joyful and excited to witness Christ to the “unreached” community.

VILLAGE MINISTRY

Mr. Darshan extended his ministry to the villages. These villages were open to him and the villagers accepted him because of his local background. But the moment he entered the villages the first thing he had to encounter was many demon-possessed people. He comments about this:

It was a common sight seen in every village that people were demon possessed. Being a Brethren believer I was limited in my knowledge about these experiences and had never expected these types of situations. But I had to deal with them with much prayer and patience. And God answered our prayers and many of them were delivered and now enjoy the fellowship with the believers in the church⁶.

Thus, more and more people came to know the Lord and the church progressed very well, growing day by day. Though church growth had been on and off in the beginning, for the last six to seven years it was remarkably high. The average gathering on Sunday is about 60, although there are more than 100 believers in the church. In the Indian context a Brethren or any fundamental church with 100 members is a large gathering. Commonly many churches consist of less than 50 members. There are a good number of people ready for baptism in the church. A majority of the believers who turn to Christ are from the villages. Many of the believers are not able to be present for all the church activities because of the lack of transportation in the villages and also due the climatic disadvantages. Yet, they make great efforts to attend as many meetings conducted by the church. Some walk long distances and still others travel in tractor-trailers. Some statistics about the believers from the villages around Sri Ganganagar are given below.

⁶ Ibid.

Villages Around Sri Ganganagar Assembly

<i><u>Villages</u></i>	<i><u>Members</u></i>	<i><u>Distance</u></i>
Kalian	15	10 Km
Koni	5	15 Km
9y	5	13 Km
Lalgarh	15	17 Km
Darm check	2	16 Km
2G	4	12 Km
8Q	1	25 Km
Ratewala	1	25 Km
Abhor	3	40 Km
6F	4	16 Km
Jaloki	3	45 Km

Nature of the Ministry:

The main thrust to make contacts was through the distribution of Christian literature, which was followed by correspondence courses. These contacts would be further used to conduct gospel meetings in different villages and houses. These people would be motivated to invite their friends and relatives to get a wider range of contacts and then follow them up. In these meetings, people are led to Christ and then, with their permission the images of gods or goddesses, artifacts related to magic and witchcraft, various charms and threads are removed. The missionary says, “Then we pray for them and God in wonderful ways heals them from their spiritual sickness and physical sickness. God is doing wonders and miracles for the glory of His name.”⁷

Thereafter, these believers are visited on a regular basis and taught the word of God for their spiritual growth. Mr. Darshan says,

“Almost all through the week we are on move far and near. Mainly my own family forms the real team, i.e., myself, my wife and daughter and our eldest son-in-law, Mr. Barish Fransis, who is

⁷ Ibid.

working with us in Sri Ganganagar. The other two sons-in-law are also in the ministry and they often help us in the ministry.”⁸

The team is on move



The vision of the missionary to accomplish the task of reaching people with the gospel was started with the family team. It still continues with the same team and with the active participation of the believers in the ministry.

They also select parks in the city to meet people when they are calm, relaxed and free from their busy schedules. Apart from these there are also many radio listeners in different villages. Because of the lack of other facilities they use radios in the villages and many evinced interest in the Christian programmes. The missionary focussed on such groups and later many became the members of the church.

Believers also actively involve themselves in the growth of the church. They arrange for special meetings in their houses with the active involvement of the church. The unbelieving friends and relatives are invited to attend the meetings to promote opportunities to preach the gospel. These kinds of gatherings are regular with 10, 20 to 50 people. Many hear the gospel while some do find the Lord in their lives. Here the words of Wayne Cordeiro are applicable. “Knowing the vision and presenting it clearly are crucial to the success of any church or ministry.”⁹ The missionary and believers together

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Wayne Cordeiro, *Doing Church as Team*, (Regal publication: USA, 2001), p.151.

shared the vision and everyone did their part and this resulted in the progress of the church.

Activities of the Church:

1. Worship
2. Personal Evangelism
3. Home fellowship
4. Evangelistic meetings in believers' homes, almost every evening
5. Children's ministry
6. Ladies meeting
7. Fasting and praying
8. Distribution of the Christian literature, almost every day
9. Christian film shows
10. Emmaus Correspondence Course
11. Gospel meetings in the villages
12. Youth meetings
13. Camps in the villages
14. Bible studies
15. Ministry to the other states
16. Picnics

THE EXTENSION OF THE MINISTRY

He also had the vision to take the gospel to the remote villages. He first started with his own village; the missionary had a burden in his heart for the people of his own village that is known as 9LPM. The words of Max De Pree are significant here. "The leader must become a servant and a debtor."¹⁰ The missionary realized that he was a debtor to his villagers and decided to serve them with the gospel. This place is about 150 km away from Sri Ganganagar. Here the missionary was able to contact people and many were led to Christ, including his own parents and family members. The church was established and named the Bethesda Brethren Assembly. Recently they conducted a two-day Believers' Camp and 18 believers obeyed the Lord in the waters of baptism on September 12, 2008.

They also purchased a piece of land for the Assembly hall; there they constructed a baptism tank because it became too dangerous to give baptisms publicly. Here they invite believers from the surrounding villages. In some of these villages they have the opportunity to begin new Assemblies. Thus, his own village has now become the centre from where many other surrounding villages are being reached with the gospel. The details of believers from the villages around this church are given below. (Each family consists of more than ten members).

¹⁰ Max De Pree, *Leadership in an Art*, (Doubleday: London, 2004), p.11.

<u>Villages</u>	<u>Families</u>	<u>Distance</u> <i>from SGNR</i>
Baruwala	4 Families +Few individuals	100 Km
19PTD	1	100 Km.
Sameja	5	100 Km.
21APD	1	125 Km.
Bajuwala	2	100 Km.
Gharsana	1	150 Km.
4KAS	2	125 Km.
Khajuwala	2	200 Km.
76NP	2	120 Km.

With a beaming and joyful face, the missionary says, “In the coming week we are going to conduct worship meeting in two villages named Sameja Kothi and Beruwala, which God willing, will be the beginning of two new Assemblies.”¹¹ Many of these villagers have also responded to the call of the gospel and are delighted to have their own churches in their own villages. God is performing many great works through this missionary and his team in establishing new churches and reaching many families and individuals with the gospel.

The village of Bajuwala is also seeing the mighty work and care of God. One month ago they were able to conduct a baptism service in this village and ten believers were baptised. The missionary says, “Though they are poor and uneducated, they are rich and growing in the Lord. All glory to God.”¹²

Now people in more than twenty villages around Sri Ganganagar and 9LPM experience the awesome work of God and true peace in their lives. They have both small and large gatherings in all these remote and near villages. Village after village is added to their list of ministry and it clearly shows how the church is in the process of growth. This church is truly a church as Luis Cordeiro defines, “Life-giving, God-encountering churches are attractive, inviting, and irresistible; they bring a sense of rest as well as direction.”¹³

There are three young men who are of great help in the ministry and in the growth of the church. They are Mr. Barish Francis, Mr. Sukhchain Singh and Mr. Jonathan Sangel. The missionary always encourages the local brothers to be active in the ministry. As a result, there are now two young local brothers studying in a Bible college to prepare themselves to enter into the ministry. Max De Pree says, “Plato said that a society cultivates whatever is honored there. Let us make no mistakes about what we honor.”¹⁴ He was so careful not to make any mistakes about what he honored. He always looked forward for the ministry to grow and their church is always moving with many programmes and ministries.

¹¹ Personal Interview with Mr. Darshan Singh.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Luis Cordeiro, *Cultural Shift*, (A Leadership Network Publication: San Francisco, 2005), p.191.

¹⁴ Max De Pree, P. 108.

MINISTRY TO THE OTHER STATES

“We extended our ministry even to the other states because people are perishing without the gospel and we as a church want to use the God-given time to fulfill God’s destined purpose concerning us.”¹⁵

1. Abhor in (Punjab) – There is a family of believers where they sometimes go to conduct meetings; the gathering is between 15 to 20.

2. Dubwali in (Haryana) -130 km away from Sri Ganganagar. A family was recently saved and they were able to visit this place once. There is a good scope for ministry.

3. Bikaner- There is a small gathering in this district, in a place known as Khajuwala. They are praying to extend this area for the ministry. This is nearly 200 km away from Sri Ganganagar.

4. Jaisalmer - They were able to visit this district with a team two years ago and were blessed to make good contacts which were followed up by the Emmaus Correspondence Course. Through this effort a whole family was saved, and now the team is praying and planning to visit this place again as soon as possible ... This place is nearly 600 km away from Sri Ganganagar.

THE VISION OF THE CHURCH

Establish a Bible-centered church where the believers will:

1. Love and be true to the Word of God
2. Have a healthy fellowship
3. Be equipped for His service
4. Share the vision of the missionary
5. Be active in evangelism
6. Involve actively in establishing new churches

He says,

“I hope that the Lord will raise the godly leaders to carry on this ministry successfully before I step down. Even now God is going on opening new villages before us. We find it difficult to make regular visits to every village. But more local workers will be the answer to this need.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Personal Interview with Mr. Darshan Singh .

¹⁶ Ibid.

CONCLUSION

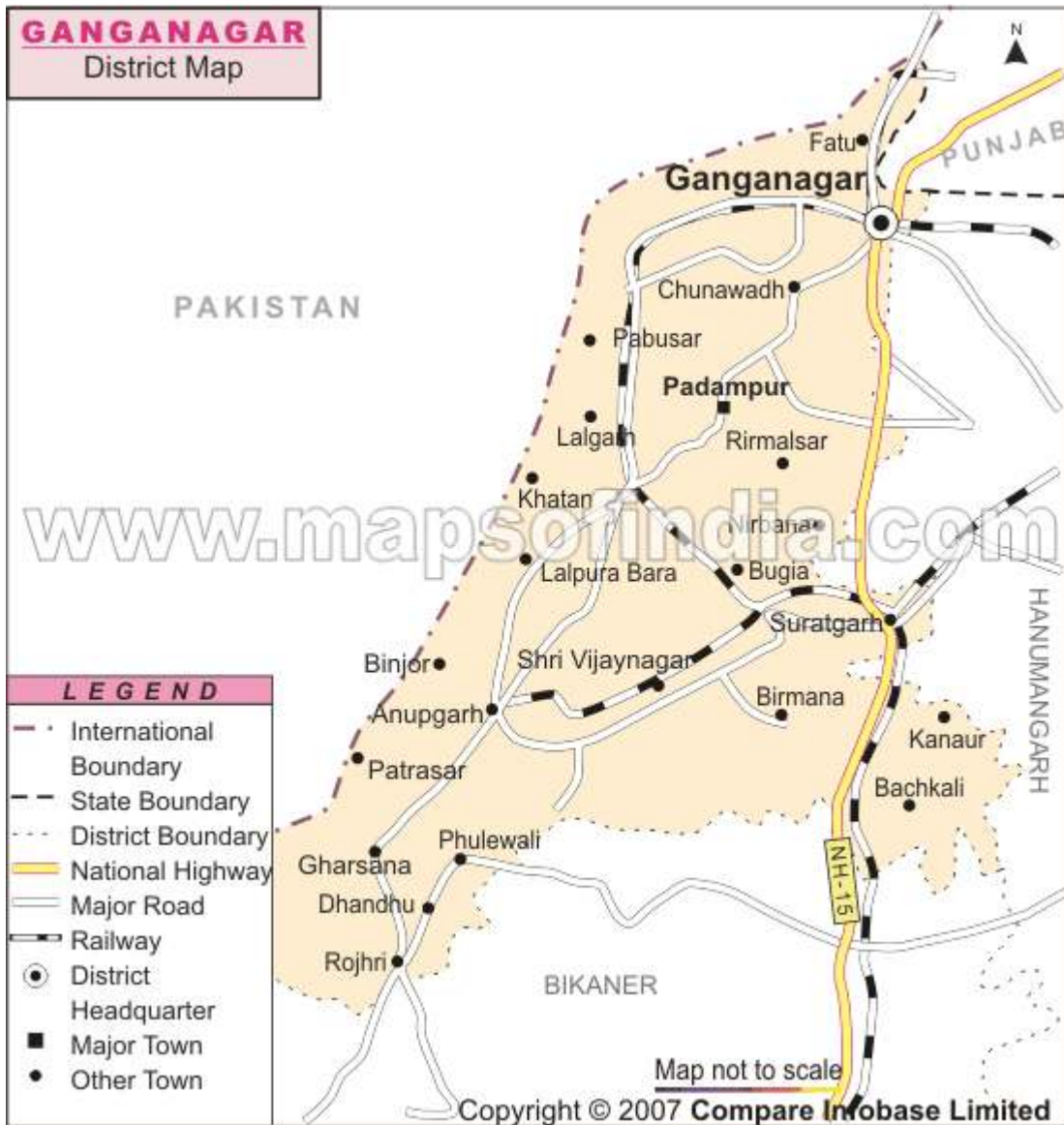
The heartfelt desire of the missionary is the need of the time. Though there was a humble beginning for Mr. Darshan's ministry, God extended the boundaries for his missionary work. Every opportunities were used by Mr. Darshan and that resulted in the qualitative and quantitative growth of the church.

Will his dream become a reality? Will there be labourers who share the vision of the missionary? Will they help keep the momentum of the growth of the church and reach people with the gospel in the villages that are open to them?

APPENDIX I- PICTORIAL VIEW OF THE STATE OF RAJASTHAN, AND THE PLACE, GANGANAGAR

A View of Rajasthan





Sri Gangasinghji Maharaja



Cultural View



BEAUTY OF THE DESERT LAND



A View of the Thar Desert



APPENDIX—III
QUESTIONNAIRE

I. LEADER AND HIS PERSONAL LIFE

What are your priorities in your personal life?

What have you done to arrive at your priorities?

How do you accomplish your priorities?

1. In the Family Front

How much are you a role model in front of your family members?

How well do you maintain your relationship with your family members?

- ❖ With your parents
- ❖ Wife
- ❖ Children
- ❖ In-laws
- ❖ Siblings

How well do you fulfill your responsibilities towards the above relatives and others?

How much does your relationship with these affect your ministry?

2. Society

How do people in the society esteem you?

Do they find you different from others?

- In your life
- In the way you talk
- In your friendship
- In your activities
- Character or any other aspect

What kind of acceptance do you have in the society?

That is, do they look at you with suspicion, reservation, hesitation or with their whole heart?

How friendly are you with the people in society?

How do you develop this friendship in society?

3. Moral Life

How orderly or disciplined are you in your personal life?

- In your thought life?
- In your speech?
- In your conduct?

How do you handle the temptations in your life?

How faithful are you to your spouse?

4. Personality Traits

How do you develop your character?

Which are the character traits you value most in your life?

(Eg. Love, humility, patience, truthfulness etc.)

Which of these are your strengths?

Which of these are your growth areas?

Which ones of these qualities are the strength of your leadership?

How do they come in handy in your leadership/how do you use these in your leadership?

5. Church

How do you relate to your church?

What do you see your church as?

How much do you love the members of your church?

Do you participate in all the activities of your church?

What percentage of the church membership actually loves to have you as their leader?

10%, 25%, 50%, 80%, 90%, 100%?

How much are you trained in the Word?

Do you think that you have a right understanding of the Word of God?

Do you think that you have the right application of the Word of God?

Do you think you can communicate/teach the Word rightly?

What are your spiritual gifts?

How do you make use of them in the church?

6. Spiritual Life

How do you evaluate your spiritual status?

That is; have you reached the spiritual maturity there should be for a leader?

If not, what percentage have you attained?

How much do you relate to the Word?

How much do you esteem it in your personal life?

How much time do you spend reading the Word, meditating, teaching etc.?

How well do you try to apply God's Word in your daily life?

What is your estimation of the importance of prayer life?

Where do you stand in your prayer life?

What progress have you made recently in your prayer life?

Do you recognize that great leaders of the Bible were great in the Word and in prayer?

II. MISSION OF THE LEADER

Do you recognize your gifts and aptitudes?

Do you recognize your God- given responsibilities?

How did you select the specific people group/place/community?

Do you have a clear understanding of God's purposes for this specific group?

What is your ministry philosophy?

Will it cater to the needs of the time?

What are your priorities in ministry?

- a. Constantly evolve different methods of worship
- b. Be true to the Word
 - Know it
 - Understand it
 - And follow it
- c. Healthy fellowship
- d. Equipping believers to service
- e. Imparting missionary vision
- f. Establishing new churches

What motivated you to be an evangelist?

- a. Love for the Lord
- b. A strong feeling that the Lord has called you
- c. Love for the perishing multitudes?
- d. Fame and popularity?
- e. Money?

Had there been any hindrance for your becoming an evangelist?

- From family?
- Society?
- Relatives?
- Church?

Do you believe that an evangelist can establish church/churches?

1. Church Planting

How did you select the field?

- Organization sent you?
- Church sent you?
- Guided by the Lord?
- Any other?

How was the reception by the people for the first time?

How did you influence the people?

What are the methods you have used to reach the people?

- Children's club
- Medical camps
- Literacy
- Charity clubs

Would you describe the effectiveness or otherwise of the methods you have used?

What are some of the problems you have faced in the beginning?

- From the community
- From family members
- Friends
- Politico-religious groups
- Other religious groups

- Any other

How efficient were you in establishing and maintaining authentic relationship with the unbelievers?

How do you describe the history of your church?

2. Activities of the Church

How do you value the activities of the church?

How do you plan the different activities of the church?

How do you describe yours and the believers' involvement in these activities?

- *Sunday worship*
- *Evangelism*
- *Weekly prayer meetings*
- *Youth meetings*
- *Sunday school*
- *Student ministries*
- *Home fellowships*
- *Outreach ministries*
- *Bible studies*
- *Women's fellowship*
- *Men's fellowship*
- *Any other*

Which ministry attracts more people to your church and why?

How do you improvise your ministry in order to make it more effective?

How do you make the people passionate about the activities of the church?

3. Leadership Qualities

Are you able to validate your message by your actions in the community?

What are the qualities you perceive as essentials for the success in ministry?

- *A Servant heart*
- *Character*
- *Love*
- *Sacrificial attitude*
- *Authority*
- *Submission*
- *A balanced life*
- *Faithfulness*
- *Empowering by the Holy Spirit*
- *Recognition of capacity*

Is there anything you see as not conducive to your growth in the ministry?

- a. Pride
- b. Egotism
- c. Jealousy
- d. Depression
- e. Popularity
- f. Any other

How do you handle those?

4. Ministry Experiences

Have you ever faced any crisis in the ministry?

- Threat of imminent death
- Personality clashes
- Sickness
- Persecution
- Criticism
- Rejection
- Conflicts
- Any other

How do you view the test and suffering in the ministry?

- ✚ As a warning
- ✚ As a challenge
- ✚ As a reason to avoid leadership

Have you ever faced failures?

How do you assimilate your failures?

How do you recognize the sovereignty of God in these situations?

5. Church Practices

How do you encourage God's people towards God's purposes?

Are they clear about your ministry philosophy?

How do you maintain an authentic relationship with God and fellow believers?

How do you value the different aspects of an intimate relationship with God and accountability?

What are your criteria for accepting a person to the membership of the church?

- a. Influence in the society
- b. Acceptance
- c. Baptism
- d. Salvation experience
- e. Any other

How do you measure the growth of the believers in number in every year under your leadership?

How particular are you about the spiritual growth of the believers?

Do you challenge members to be responsible in their obedience to God?

Do you recognize that each member has a special slot/function in the church?

What are your expectations about the members in the church?

Do they feel comfortable, accepted and loved in the church?

Are they equipped to practice spiritual disciplines and involvement in missions?

Are they capable of bringing in new believers to the church?

Are they taught about the importance of giving?

Do they recognize the importance of giving in the growth of the church?

Does the church have a vital prayer ministry, focusing on the mission concerns?

Do the people in the community see your church as vibrant?

How do you judge those who do not meet your expectations on spiritual maturity?

By your attitude of

- ❖ Indignation
- ❖ Condemnation
- ❖ Bitterness
- ❖ Resentment
- ❖ Anger
- ❖ Any other

6. Supernatural Element in Your Ministry

How do you value the role the Holy Spirit in your personal life and in your ministry?

How much do you experience the filling of the Holy Spirit on a day-to-day basis?

What are your experiences in your life and ministry when you were under the control of the Holy Spirit?

- Joy
- Peace
- Satisfaction
- Success
- Trials
- Persecution
- Any other

What are your experiences in your life and ministry when you were NOT under the control of the Holy Spirit?

- Loss of joy
- Loss of peace
- Loss of satisfaction
- Bitterness
- Failures
- Troubles

7. Long term Expectations/Goals

What are your plans concerning the future of the church?

How do you prepare the church for a leadership change?

How do you select the potential leaders?

- Send young people to Bible colleges
- Observe those whom the Lord has chosen and has been preparing

How do you mentor emerging leaders?

What is the key ingredient in the selection of the emerging leaders?

- Bible training
- Faithfulness
- Smartness
- Giftedness
- Wealthy background
- Any other

Are you successful in recognizing leadership qualities and gifts in new believers?

Do you delegate new believers to leadership responsibilities?

Is there any problem that you face in this process?
How do you like to finish your task?

- ❖ Well
- ❖ Good
- ❖ Average
- ❖ Drop out