

News from Asia International Mission

**Reflections from the President:**

My Dear Friends,

We were born by God's will and for His purpose. The purpose is to glorify God by knowing Him (Great Commandment) and making Him known (Great Commission). Often we forget this single purpose for which God has placed us on this earth due to our busy schedules at home and work, and due to the daily struggles of living in a difficult world. And so, the joy of heaven and the crying needs of a lost world are no longer given priority—and in turn, we slowly become passionless for God.

The reality is that approximately 14,475 people die every day in India without knowing the love of God and the claims of Jesus Christ. If we truly believe in the Word of God, then we know that we are accountable to these souls. We must carefully and strategically invest our resources to reach the lost and disciple them. We must act justly so that everyone will have an opportunity to hear the message of Christ in this generation.

I pray that AIM will continue to be used as a conduit to challenge you with what God is doing in India and around the world. Therefore, I hope that you will become a partner with us to reach the unreached. In this issue, we have listed several ways you can be a strategic partner with AIM. Please take a few minutes to consider the possibilities and respond to us today—to pray and partner with us. You will never regret your decision for Jesus' sake!

In His service,

Russ Sharrock

President, Asia International Mission

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Featured Child

Rajya Laxmi
Age 10

I am totally alone in the world. My father murdered my mother, and while he was out of prison on bail, he was killed. I was found standing alone on the roadway and in danger from being kidnapped by child labor gangs. Someone miraculously rescued me and took me to the Children's Home where I now have people to take care of me and teach me about Jesus. Please sponsor me so they can continue to provide for my daily needs and education—and give me a chance for a better life.



Street children are often snatched by predators and forced into lifelong labor or the sex trade. Girls are especially vulnerable—since they are not highly valued in a society where survival is tenuous and compassion is a luxury. Please help us to help these children!

Sponsor a child! Change the world one life at a time...

Your \$30 a month will provide everything Rajya Laxmi needs to become an educated adult. Less than the cost of one cup of "Starbucks" coffee....

A Teachable Moment

by Janie Downing

In the last newsletter I wrote about how my life has been changed since I first moved to China in 2003. One of the most obvious changes has come in the view of my life as a Christian. All my life I have been an American Christian working predominantly in the church world as a Minister of Music and piano teacher. When I arrived in China, I found myself outside of my normal church-world environment. Where I had always been surrounded by Believers in the work place and in my social circles, I suddenly found myself surrounded by non-Believers, and the majority of them had never even heard of Jesus Christ and knew nothing about God's love displayed in the gift of His Son. In addition, as a foreign expert, I was not allowed to tell them. How could I possibly be the witness for Christ that I so longed to be? The answer to that came in what I was allowed to do and say ~ I was allowed to answer questions when asked and to say that I'm a Christian.

One of my most precious memories in facing this challenge came in a classroom that first year as I was teaching a "culture lesson" about Halloween. I brought a bowl of candy and taught them about costumes, trick-or-treat and the traditions of the holiday. I also explained the origin of the holiday and talked to them about the two ways it's celebrated in my country ~ one way focusing on fear and death, and the other focusing on it as a harvest festival. After the lesson and sharing the treats I'd brought, we formed a circle. I told them that today's discussion question was this: "What do you think will happen to you after you die?" I heard things I had never heard before! In that discussion time, I learned more about the many belief systems of my students than I could have learned any other way!

As the last student finished giving his answer, he turned to me said, "What about you, Teacher? What do you think will happen

to you after you die?" I was stunned as this teachable moment tumbled into my lap! I breathed a quick prayer and answered the question by beginning with the words: "Well, I'm a Christian, so I believe..." It was that day that I began to ask God to help me to be a creative and wise teacher and to show me ways to encourage the questions that would allow me to share Him with them. I also began praying each day that I would "hear" every opportunity God presented to me to tell others about Him.

How can you be a witness for Jesus Christ in your daily life? Ask God to show you creative moments to speak of Him and to give you spiritual eyes and ears to see and to hear those moments when they come.

Many Blessings ~
Janie \o/



Janie is a certified English as a Second Language teacher with a Bachelor's degree in music. She recently returned from Beijing, China where, for the last six years, she has been teaching English to university students and assisting in the worship ministries of her church in Beijing. Her students often referred to her as their "American Mom". She has been a Minister of Music and piano teacher for more than 30 years, and is an inspirational speaker and teacher of God's Word. Janie has three children and three grandchildren.

Janie Downing
Tacoma, WA 98406
7tybzsth@securenym.net

News Briefs from India

Recent Incidents of Persecution

September 28 (Compass Direct News) – Suspected Hindu extremists struck a pastor with what appeared to be sharp-edged metal rods on Sept. 20 in Andhra Pradesh state, leaving him unconscious and profusely bleeding on a village road. At least three unidentified men attacked Pastor Vanamali Parishudham, 35, as he returned from Sunday worship in Yellareddygudam village, five kilometers (nearly three miles) from his home village of Narketpalli, in Nalgonda district. Nirmala Desai, deputy nursing superintendent at the Kamineni Institute of Medical Sciences in Narketpalli, told Compass that Pastor Parishudham sustained "a lot of blood loss" from the head injury. "He was brought to the hospital in time, saving him from excessive blood loss, or else it could have led to becoming fatal," she said. "The wound was deep." Villagers who visited Pastor Parishudham in the hospital told him that the attackers were members of the Hindu extremist *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* who oppose his preaching and the new prayer house he recently opened in Narketpalli, the pastor told Compass. Police have yet to make any arrests. Pastor Parishudham said a similar attack on another pastor took place three years ago in which Hindu extremists threatened to harm the leader if he did not stop preaching; the pastor left the village and never returned.

Untouchable

As you read this, you are probably surrounded by family, friends, your home and familiar possessions. Try to imagine a flashback to Jesus' time...you are a victim of leprosy. Unclean. Untouchable. No one will hug you, come near you, nor are you allowed to approach anyone or enter town. Alone, isolated, usually poor beyond description. And there is no hope of changing your situation.

Until someone named Jesus of Nazareth walks through your village—and **touches** you! We often skim over this word in the Bible, not realizing that the leper in question probably had not felt human touch in years.

Now, fast-forward to India today. The "caste system" was created more than 3,000 years ago by invading Aryan tribes to ensure domination by their race. Officially outlawed in 1949, the system has not really changed. Nearly 300 million Dalit live in India today—more than the entire population of Pakistan. Caste discrimination is justified by ancient Hindu religious texts such as The Laws of Manu, and also extends to Nepal, Sri Lanka and other countries where Hinduism is present.

There are four main "castes", or rigid levels of society, that people are born into. Their situation can never change. Higher castes scorn the lower ones. Cross-caste marriages can spawn murders and violence. Below the lowest castes live the Dalit, or Untouchables—considered subhuman, filthy, generationally unclean. The word "Dalit" literally means "broken" or "crushed."

The four main castes are:

Brahmins - priests and teachers
Kshatriyas - rulers and soldiers
Vaiyas - merchants and traders
Sudras - laborers and servants



Dalit are forced to live in separate settlements, prohibited from worshipping in temples, barred from using the village wells, and their children often denied education or made to sit in the back of the classroom. They are expected to perform menial, degrading tasks that include unclogging sewers, disposing of dead bodies and cleaning latrines. The average literacy rate among Dalit is about 37 percent, and in some Dalit communities as low as 10 percent.

The Indian constitution reserves nearly 25 percent of government jobs and university spots for Dalit. However, more than a million of these posts remain unfilled, or are filled by dishonest non-Dalit. While Brahmins comprise just 5 to 9 percent of India's 1 billion people, they control 78 percent of India's judicial posts, approximately half of the parliament and 89 percent of the nation's major media outlets. Even simple Dalit assertions of their lawful rights have touched off hate crimes against them by members of the upper castes. Every hour, two Dalit are assaulted, three Dalit women raped, two Dalit murdered and two Dalit houses burned, according to the Human Rights Education Movement of India, yet only one percent of those who commit crimes against Dalit are ever convicted.

Yet God always uses the worst of situations for His glory. Because they "have nothing to lose", the Dalit respond passionately to the Gospel of Christ. They are amazed to hear of a God that loves them as individuals, made them in His own image, cleanses them from sin and shame, and gives them hope and a future! Today, 85% of Indian Christians are Dalit.

Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? James 2:5

News Briefs, cont.

Flood Disaster!

Villagers around Tenali are slowly returning to their home areas as the waters recede from the early October floods. Many of them have lost their homes, livestock, crops, possessions—everything! Raging river systems overflowed when late monsoon rains finally broke the drought in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The worst floods in 100 years demolished over 1 million homes and 1/3 of India's corn crop. Pastor Johnpaul's ministry has lost ten churches; the first village where he and Russ held a Gospel Crusade in 2003 has been wiped out (Annarapulanka.)



Please pray for our Christian brothers and sisters, as they pick up the pieces and try to rebuild. If they had little before, many have nothing at all now. Some pastors live in their thatch churches; most of the churches are also shelters for destitute widows. **Please help us to help them with funds for rebuilding, food, blankets, cooking utensils and other basic necessities.** All donations for Disaster Relief go 100% to them. Rebuilding will take months—your help **now** will give Johnpaul, his pastors and churches continued opportunities to spread the Gospel to a hurting, desperate society.

Praises and Prayers

How to Pray Specifically for God's Work in India

The Nation of India: Pray that God moves the hearts of the people to follow the One True God.

Flood Disaster: Pray that the survivors will have the will and the means to rebuild after the devastating October flood. **Give** to help them restore their homes, churches, and daily lives. A few dollars go a long way in India—\$50 will fund a pastor and his family for a month.

Praise: Even though ten churches have been washed away, Johnpaul's headquarters and the Children's Home were not damaged in the flooding.

How You Can Help

Sharing the Vision at Gatherings

Here are several possible gatherings where you might be interested in hosting Russ and Alice...

Weekend Church Service - Invite Russ to speak at your church service (from 15 minutes to 1 hour) and take up an offering for Asia International Mission (or direct people to the AIM table).

Mid-week Large Group Gathering - Maybe your church has a large gathering of singles, married couples, or some other type of group who needs to hear about Asia International Mission.

Small Group / Bible Study - Invite Russ to share the vision, give people an opportunity to ask questions, and invite them to invest in the ministry.

Dinner / Dessert Party - Invite your friends over to your house to introduce them to Russ, listen to the vision, and invest in the ministry.

Prayer Night - Rally people to attend a "Pray for India" night and have Russ share the vision.

Key Contacts - Help Russ meet a "key contact" who might be interested in furthering the mission of Asia International Mission (pastor, key leader, or business person).

Your Next Step

If you're interested in hosting a "gathering" such as any listed above, please contact us so that we can discuss the opportunity and possibly book Russ to attend. Call 405-564-0616 or aimission@hotmail.com

God is using YOU to reach the souls of India!



ASIA INTERNATIONAL MISSION

PO Box 1597, Stillwater OK 74076

www.aimission.org