

# INDEPENDENT CHURCH IN INDIA

*Our Mission is to Find the Lost Souls and Lead them to Jesus...*

www.indchurch.org

*"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).*

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## FINDING LOST SOULS

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### The Promised Land For Lepers!

This special edition of Finding Lost Souls is written to keep you all up to date on how the leprosy community project is going. We have decided to call it a community or residence instead of a colony, because this will be a place where these hurting people come, not to be isolated from society, but so they can live the rest of their lives being accepted and as comfortable as possible. The exciting news is that the land to build the leprosy community has been purchased and is paid in full. The cost came to \$39,000 total, including registration fees. The land is majestic, with a scenic view, a beautiful eleven-acre tract nicknamed "the Promised Land". This property has good water, and many fruits and vegetables can be grown to help self-support this project. Land price had been increasing rapidly here in India, so the price was low for land as nice as this. The interesting reason the price was lower is that according to Hindu superstition of astrology, the boundaries are shaped wrong or oriented wrong somehow. The Hindus place enormous trust in astrology, so no Hindu farmer would buy this property! God turned their superstition into a blessing for the lepers! Every dollar that was donated by loving sponsors for leprosy was put to good use so that the name of Jesus is glorified!



*This promised land is paradise for those with leprosy. These flowers are growing on the land and can be sold for profit to help to provide for those living here.*

**Leprosy Victims Are Now Living on the Land!** - The great news is that there is a small house with three separate rooms already on the property. Independent Church in India (ICII) is very pleased to announce that three lepers are now living on the Promised Land in this small house. Each room in the small house now has a new bed, a chair, and personal supplies that are given to them at their arrival. Each day they will receive three healthy, balanced meals with snacks. Medical care will also be provided. Out of all those who are suffering it was a very hard choice who to take first, but by the Lord's leading, these three are the first who accepted the offer. One man named Noah and another named Paul (or Muthu) and a woman named Pakkiam who is the cook. Here are their testimonies:



*Muthu is very happy to come to his new home. He was so poor he didn't even own a shirt.*

**Noah: From Idol Worshipper to Servant of God** - Before Noah became a Christian, he was a Hindu, and his name was Nagupillai (which means "child of the snake god"). In the past, his family went to many Hindu temples to worship their deities, and he also did this practice. After he got leprosy, his family rejected him. As his disease got worse, he went to live at the government hospital because of the rejection by his family. While he lived at the hospital no one came to see him and he felt forsaken by his whole family because of his leprosy. Nagupillai suffered terribly with his disease. One day Independent Church in India came to visit him and the other lepers at the hospital. They shared the Gospel with



*Pakkiam sitting with her granddaughter, whom she brought to live with her at the leprosy community.*

him and this is where he gave his life to Jesus. After his conversion, Nagupillai received the new name Noah. He began coming to church and feeling new peace and hope in his life. Later, he also began coming to the "equipping the saints" classes so he could go out with the Gospel team to do ministry in the villages. Noah shares: **"Because of this ministry I now have the heart to love Jesus. Before this, I didn't even know who Jesus was. I am willing and ready to receive the Lord's blessings in my life. I am ready to go anywhere to preach about Jesus. I am so happy I can stay here surrounded by love. Here I can pray and I am willing to read the Bible to those who come here. I am so blessed to**



*Noah and ICII missionary Isaiah (also a leper) started this children's ministry in Isaiah's village.*

**America, a land filled with abundance, for four months, when I saw this man on my way home I was totally heartbroken to see his suffering".** When Pastor Britto and his brother Pastor Richard stopped and began conversing with the man, they learned that his name was Paul (nickname is Muthu) and he had suffered with leprosy for forty long years. Forty years ago, Muthu's family and his whole village had chased him out of their area because of his disease. Muthu now lived alone in an old, abandoned and damaged hut that stood dangerously close to the road. Muthu was a very lonely man, and he was so happy that the two brothers had stopped to talk with him. Muthu's only way to live was to go begging, and he could only eat if someone's rice was left over from the day before and was beginning to go bad and turning sour. Someone would give Muthu this for food as though they were giving it to a dog. That was Muthu's only way to stay alive. After Pastor Britto shared the Gospel to him, he received Christ. Almost four months later, Pastor Britto and Kathy set out to find Muthu so they could invite him to the new home at the community. After the second try of searching for him, they found him begging near a tea stand and he was very happy to see Pastor Britto again. Pastor Britto and Kathy invited him to come to his new home and he gladly accepted. They told him that they would pick him up the following week when the house he would live was ready to be moved into. When Pastor Britto and the Smith family arrived to pick him up the following week, Muthu had a bag holding his scanty belongings by his side as he anxiously waited by the road. When he saw Pastor Britto and Kathy he was smiling ear to ear ready to go with them to his new home. Even the neighbors were very glad when ICII took Muthu. They also shared, **"We cannot help him because we are also very poor, but we have seen how much he suffers here".** On the drive to the land, Muthu shared again that 40 years ago his son, daughter and wife had all forsaken him due to his disease. He was now 70 years old and had been suffering, starving, virtually homeless, alone and rejected for many long years. Each year, his disease-deformed his body more and more. Muthu never had anyone stop to say any kind words to him. Muthu shared that four months ago when he accepted Christ, things began to get better for him because of Jesus. Before this, he could not even sleep at night, but since he had begun praying to the Lord he could sleep again. Also Muthu shared when he was invited to come to the home, he felt a peace in his heart that he had been given a new family. When Muthu arrived at his new home he felt joy like never before, experiencing this kind of love in Jesus Christ.



*Muthu and Noah enjoying their stay at their new home.*

**Pakkiam: Jesus Has Answered My Prayers!** - ICII needed someone to cook for those who could not make their own food. They asked one woman named Pakkiam, also a leprosy victim, to be the



*Muthu receiving medical care at his new home.*



*Noah enjoying a piece of watermelon for the first time in his life!*



*Pastor Britto praying for Muthu outside the old, leaky, abandoned hut he had been staying in.*

cook, and she was very happy to have a home. Pakkiam's face and fingers still have no trace of leprosy, so she still can use her hands for cooking, but her feet are very badly infected. When missionary Kathy Smith put a garland around her neck to welcome her to the new home, Pakkiam was overjoyed and shared, ***"I am so touched in my heart to receive the garland. My son never honored me like this. Instead he would come home and beat me and his wife because he was drunk on alcohol. Since I came to church and accepted Jesus as my Savior I have been praying for a job to work for the Lord and to serve others with leprosy. I didn't know how I could get any job because of my disease. I have been starving and suffering because I could not afford medical care. Also my grandchild is suffering with no food. When you asked me to come to cook and live here I was very happy. Now I, and my granddaughter have a place to live, and I can work for the Lord here. Jesus has answered my prayers"***. Pakkiam's son is an alcoholic, and his wife many times will leave the house because of marriage problems. Pakkiam is often left alone to try to provide for herself and her grandchild. Pakkiam has brought her four year old granddaughter to live with her at the community since her parents have abandoned her. ICII felt this was a wonderful opportunity to help Pakkiam and her granddaughter to have a much better life.

***Nazareth Mary one of ICII's missionaries, who is also a nurse is putting on medicine and wrapping up Pakkiam's foot.***



***Pakkiam's feet are both badly infected with leprosy.***

**Making a Difference in the Lives of Lepers** - Since these poor souls have been rejected most of their lives, ICII wanted to do something special for them upon arriving at their new home. According to Indian custom, when someone puts a flower garland around the neck of another, it shows them great respect and honor. As each leper arrived, they each had a garland put around their neck and a warm welcome of love to their new homes. Everything ICII does at this project, we want to do differently than government-run leprosy colonies. We want all these special people to live the rest of their lives feeling as comfortable and wanted as possible. Sadly, most colonies in India are not well run, but are just existing mainly to keep lepers isolated. One ministry called "Rising Star Outreach", whose goals are to provide needs for leprosy colonies in India wrote this about two colonies they focused on to bring help:

***"The living conditions of those in the colonies we began serving in Southern India are quite pitiful. They are prohibited by law from working. Their only income comes from begging. They receive 300 rupees from the government each month (the equivalent of six U.S. dollars). That is supposed to cover all of their living expenses. Of course, it doesn't even come close to buying them enough rice to even subsist in a most basic manner. Each year these colonies have lost members due to starvation. Between their government allotment of 300 rupees and their begging, they simply can't get enough food. They live in very small rooms, usually with thatched roofs, which leak terribly. Most of them own only the clothes on their backs. Many of the leprosy affected persons in the colonies do not even have bandages to cover their open ulcers and wounds... It was shocking to see these people walking in the dirt with their open wounds.***

***Lots of fruits and vegetables will be grown to help provide needs of the lepers.***

***Many had open sores and ulcers on their bodies. Left untreated and open to contamination, these wounds frequently festered and became infected and abscessed, thus necessitating amputations... Almost all of them were either blind or going blind. They were despised by the other classes and completely socially outcast. Their suffering was unbelievable"...***

Independent Church in India's leprosy community will be far different than other colonies. We will provide their needs with three good meals a day, the comfort of sleeping in a bed, medicine for their sores, clothing and personal hygiene, and lots of love and appreciation. At their new home, they will feel special and appreciated. They have been untouchable, outcast from society, rejected, wounded, lonely, and hurting. But here on this promised land for lepers, a place of serene beauty, physical and spiritual care awaits those who are desolate and suffering. This home will be like a resort where they can come to live the rest of their lives with all their needs provided for. ICII needs your help to get these Homes of Compassion started. We feel that the Lord has answered our prayers in providing this piece of land. As soon as the Lord provides and permission is granted, we will begin to build Homes of Compassion so these victims of leprosy can begin to come to their new homes.



***Missionary Kathy Smith standing with Pakkiam after putting the garland on her.***



***Muthu waving good-bye to the team.***

ICII will also be taking sponsorships for each leprosy resident for \$30 per month. This sponsorship will provide for food and snacks we cannot grow on the land. It will also provide for their medicine, clothes, personal needs, and will help to keep the community running smoothly. As of now we know of very few ministries taking sponsorships for leprosy victims, but we wanted to do something different, something special. If you would like to be a big part of rebuilding the life of one person with leprosy, this will be a great opportunity. ICII's community plans are to make these homes a paradise for lepers. No longer will they have to suffer, be castaways, untouchables. No longer



*This leper named Kosangi (featured in our last newsletter) wants to come to live at the community, but the man for whom he tends a small herd of goats will not release him. Kosangi is treated so badly that this man who claims to own him threatens to kill him if he no longer remains a slave to him. Please pray for Kosangi that the Lord will make a way for him to come and live here.*

will they starve, or be rejected. We can not do this alone, but can only succeed with this project through the love, prayers and support of those who care. If you would like to sponsor a leper for \$30 per month this will give one leper the family that he or she no longer has since he or she became a castaway. You can write him or her letters of encouragement and adopt him or her as a family member by providing their needs. When you provide for one of these special people, you are lending to the Lord. **"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again"** Proverbs 19:17. We want to build more buildings bigger than this house because there are many elderly lepers that need love and tender care. So many are suffering needlessly because they are dreadfully poor. You can make life-changing differences in desperate lives. Thanks so much to all of you who helped us to purchase this Promised Land! God's richest blessings to you all for supporting and praying for this much needed project. (Please see enclosed flyers to get involved).



*The lepers are living in this house.*

**Leprosy Church Begins** - ICII is pleased to announce that the leprosy church service is now being held on the Land. ICII provides transportation for the lepers to come. Over fifty lepers have been coming to the church. They are very thankful for the beautiful Land

God has given them. Many of them are now waiting in anticipation for when the building of homes will begin so they can move here. They were very happy that ICII has started having a



*This man received a new pair of sandals for his toeless feet.*

separate service for them so they could have more focus and more time spent praying for them. Many shared that they are planning to come each week to church. After the service, each person receives an all-you-can-eat rice and vegetable meal which fills their empty stomachs, and basic medical treatment for their open wounds. The lepers also received sandals to protect their feet and blankets for the cool nights. This new service will be held each week on the Land for the leprosy victims. Starting a separate service for these lepers has made more room again at the Dindigul church. God's plan at this time was not to rent a bigger building but to start branch churches. Also, by separating these services, ICII can better provide the needs of these poorest of the poor people. As of now the leprosy service is held outside under a tent. As long as weather permits, we can hold the services like this, but we are praying that the Lord will provide a permanent church building on the Land, which we can also use as a dining and fellowship hall for social activities. Each week ICII is renting a small bus which is bringing these lepers by two trips to the land. This is costing the ministry \$100 per week for their transportation. ICII is planning to start making payments on a small bus for the ministry to own, so this money will be used in a fruitful way. A small bus will not only come in handy for the leprosy service each week, but can also be used to pick up children for ICII's children Bible camps, and other purposes. One hundred percent of every gift given for leprosy will go towards building homes, to feed and providing medical care, personal supplies, and transportation for those coming to church each week. Please prayerfully consider giving an extra gift for leprosy this month so this project can get started.



*The lepers are thanking the Lord for the Promised Land He has given them.*

*"And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed". Mark 1:40-42*



*The lepers enjoying a healthy meal after the service.*



*Lepers are getting ready to go home by bus after their dinner.*