



Independent Church in India

"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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Homes of Compassion For Homeless Lepers

Leprosy. Down through the ages, the most dreaded and feared disease of mankind. The sad fact is that leprosy is still thriving in the nation of India, and it has victimized hundreds of thousands of people. India is predominately Hindu, and many believe in reincarnation which is the belief that when someone or something dies that soul comes back in another body or form. In the law of Karma, good is rewarded in the life to come, and evil is punished. Many believe that everyone gets what he or she deserves in life, so there is no mercy towards the less fortunate. Society generally believes that a leper has been cursed by the Hindu gods because they have done something unspeakable in a past life. These unfortunate people are ostracized by their society, and are the poorest of the poor and are considered the most untouchable of the untouchables. Many lepers are made homeless by their own families, cruelly abandoned and cast out into the streets because of their horrifying disease, left alone to suffer and die in their terrible state, heartbroken and emotionally shattered, no one to love or care for them.



*A desperate woman
 with leprosy.*



Infected hand of a leper.

The Lord has put a great burden and compassion in the heart of Independent Church In India (ICII) to reach out to those with leprosy that are the most shunned and ignored throughout India. To many of these desperate souls, ICII is their only hope. As the Lord has provided, ICII has given out numerous leprosy compassion packs that contain a Bible, Christian literature, sandals made for lepers, a mat to sleep on, a blanket, soap and towel, toothpaste and toothbrush, bandages, eatables, and more. They also have provided food, clothing, eyeglasses for the nearly blind, and they pay the bus fare for those who are coming to church each week. Independent Church in India's goals are to keep making a difference in the lives of lepers. This ministry's goal is to build homes for homeless lepers. At their own leprosy colony, they can lead a normal life and even work. ICII's goal is to buy enough land so they can grow their own fruits and vegetables. At their new home, we can get medical provision for them and get them on a medicine that will cure their leprosy. They can live the rest of their lives here feeling wanted, live without starving or begging, and feel the love of Jesus in their lives. We want to build them a church here and have daily Bible studies so they can grow in the Lord and have the void in their life filled with the love of the Lord Jesus Christ.



US missionary Kathy Smith and Pastor Britto putting medicine on a sore foot of a woman with leprosy named Udaiyammal. Because of this act of kindness Udaiyammal and many others in this village accepted Christ. Udaiyammal is now bringing family and people from her village to church.

Jesus Turns Despair Into Hope...

The Lord had a divine appointment for these lepers that the Independent Church in India team met at the government hospital and preached the Gospel to them. Here are some of their heart-wrenching testimonies ...



Raj - Before he heard about Jesus he only had pain and despair in his life.

Raj never knew where he was born or who his father or mother were. He grew up as an orphan never feeling any love. Raj shares; *"I never knew my parents. From my childhood until now I am begging all of my life. I didn't get married. When I was thirty years old I got this leprosy disease. Before Independent Church in India's Gospel team came to me I could barely stand up or walk because I would get so tired. But now after hearing the word of God everyday I can walk long distances because Jesus is giving the strength and peace to me"*.



Raj receives a pair of sandals from ICII. Now the despair on his face has turned to the joy of the Lord!



Seniyammal

"One leper named Seniyammal shares; *"My children are feeling so uneasy to touch me, and even speak with me, it breaks my heart. My one son told me that I cannot stay with him because he doesn't care about me. He told me that he won't give me any food, and that I was to go anywhere and just die"*. Seniyammal is coming to church every week now and has found new hope in Jesus Christ.

When Thangaraj was six months old, his mother died. At age ten he got leprosy. Thangaraj shares; *"My father was taking care of me and tried to help me to get healed from this disease, but it began to grow worse, so my relatives began to hate me. Since my father died my relatives took my house from me. From that day until now, I am begging and providing for myself. Nobody has cared about me since then. If the hospital makes me leave here, I don't know where to go from here. But though your coming to us and through your prayers I have found I can ask Jesus to help me"*.



Thangaraj



Supramani

When Supramani was the age of twenty-three, he got the disease of leprosy. A year later he lost both of his parents. Supramani lost his parents because of some disease that was spreading through his village and they didn't have any hospital facilities. Supramani shares; *"If I would have had the medical facilities I could have saved my parents. I miss them"*. After this Supramani got married. Six years later his wife died also, but he had two sons left. As time went by, the leprosy disease continued to spread in his body so his sons told him to leave their house. Now he doesn't have any home. He eats only through begging. Supramani shared with tears; *"I didn't have anyone to care for me or show any love to me, but after Pastor Britto and Mother (Kathy Smith) from ICII came to me that day up until now, I feel someone loves and cares about me. I feel Jesus loves me"*.

Touching the Untouchables

Now that you have read and seen pictures of the misery in the life of a leper, will you have the compassion towards them, as Jesus did? Independent Church in India is ready and willing to reach out and touch the lepers that no one else desires to touch and to give them a new chance to rebuild their lives. But we cannot do it alone. We can only accomplish these projects through your compassion, prayers, and support.



The joy of the Lord is now his strength!

Look deep inside your heart right now and prayerfully ask the Lord how he would have you get involved to reach out to these lepers who desperately need your help. Is there anything in this physical life more rewarding than putting a smile on a face that once had no glimpse of hope? You can decide today to help, and change a life for all eternity. It's your choice.



Jesus has brought real hope to these lives that before only knew pain and despair.

Feeding the Hungry

After one of the October Sunday services at the Dindigul church, the ministry provided food for everyone. The Lord was moving among the people in a mighty way. The church was so full in their small rented room that some of the people didn't have a chair to sit. About twelve to fifteen lepers came to church that day. All the people were so happy to receive the free food and the lepers were warmly welcomed to eat with everyone. This is the only church in this whole area that would eat with lepers. Many churches do not even allow lepers to come inside the building, but at ICII churches all lepers and all castes of people are warmly received in the love of Christ. Throughout the church service the Lord was moving in the midst of the people and wonderful testimonies were shared. One woman named Nazareth Mary shared that when she came to church that morning her son had a very high fever and she could not find any doctor so she decided to come to church. During the time of worship and after her son was prayed for the fever totally left him. Her son was adopted by her because one day she found him left alone and abandoned in one of the villages, so she decided to take him in as her own and care for him.



Feeding the church. All lepers are welcomed to eat with ICII.

One day the Gospel team visited a very poor grandmother that has been trying to desperately provide for her two grandchildren. On a past visit the team had bought her some food because her family had not had any money to buy food. Both she and her grandchildren sometimes only eat once a day and the granddaughter is often sick. The mother of these children had committed suicide and the father does not provide for his children so this grandmother alone is providing for them. Because of the good works of ICII taking her food, everyone in her village knew about this act of kindness, and when they saw the team they warmly welcomed them and this opened the door to share the Gospel to them and many of them accepted the Lord! The team again bought her and her grandchildren some more rice, eggs, and vegetables. They were very happy to receive the food and to especially know that someone cares. The grandmother shared that no one ever comes to visit them, but that day their whole house was filled with people as the team shared the Gospel in her house.



Pastor Britto and US missionary Kathy Smith praying over Muthammal.

One day Pastor Britto had a divine appointment with a leper in desperate need. As he was driving he felt led of the Lord to stop his vehicle. As he parked his vehicle in the city, a poor old homeless woman with leprosy came walking nearby him. Pastor Britto began talking with this woman whose name was Muthammal and began to encourage her to come to church. The next week she came to church and heard the Gospel and accepted the Lord and he gave her food so she could fill her empty stomach. Her hands are so infected with open sores and the stench of infected rotting flesh was on her. A few weeks later Muthammal had a dream that Pastor Britto came to her and invited her to come to church. So that morning she came from a long distance to come to church.

Orphanage Update

The orphanage project is still going on and is turning out to be a very beautiful home for orphans. Unfortunately there have been some delays in the process of the building work. Due to not having enough laborers at the right times, and the increase of prices due to the tsunami last year the work may take a few more months to be finished. We hope to have children in the orphanage by early next year. We still need to provide a well water system. This will include a deep bored well and a water tank. Also still needed are a septic tank and a wall around the building for security. To those who are sponsoring a child or the orphanage, your patience is so appreciated right now even though you have not yet seen your child. Your support is crucial to provide beds and much needed supplies for the orphanage. We are beginning to search out orphans who are in the most desperate need so we can get the paper work finished so the children can come to the orphanage as soon as it is finished. Sponsors who will pledge monthly gifts of any amount are also greatly needed to keep the orphanage running and to provide for a cook and child care workers. Please prayerfully consider sending a love gift to help us to finish this urgent project.



Recent picture of the front of the building of the orphanage, taken on 10/24/05



Pastor Britto praying over the Pastor's at the Pastor's seminar.

Pastor Seminar

As part of Independent Church in India's mission to help and encourage local pastors, ICII held a pastor's seminar in Dindigul on Saturday 10/22. About fifty pastors were in attendance, and around thirty other believers. The seminar was designed to reach out to poor and struggling Christian leaders in the city and the surrounding villages. Admission to the seminar was free. U.S. Missionary Lowell Smith addressed the pastors on the subject of equipping their congregations to do personal evangelism. Afterward, Pastor Britto gave a very inspirational message about the faith and leadership of Joshua and Caleb in the Promised Land. Following the speakers, ICII presented five poor branch pastors, whom they have raised up and helped to plant their churches, with bicycles to help them to travel better to

do ministry in the remote villages. Most pastors are so poor they do not even have a bike to ride. Then, all of the other attendees received a Bible carrying case. Finally, a free meal was provided. ICII hopes to continue hosting events like this to strengthen and equip the local churches and their leaders, and to help increase evangelism in the villages. ICII's goals are to raise up sponsors for all their seven branch pastors so they will not have to work secular jobs to provide for their physical and ministry needs, but instead can concentrate fully on doing ministry in the villages.

The First Annual Banquet Results

Just imagine having to sleep outside with no place to call a home. The rain is pouring down, weakening and chilling your body, yet no one will even allow you under any shelter. You may not even have a blanket to cover yourself or sandals on your feet to protect your infected wounds. As the rain beats down, it creates large ponds of water, oozing with animal and human waste, that you can not escape from. Not only do you experience the extreme physical suffering but the painful emotional wounds of knowing that no one cares. Independent Church in India does care and they want to thank everyone from the bottom of their hearts for attending and supporting their first annual banquet. Without caring people that are praying for and supporting this ministry, many unfortunate people with the dreaded disease of leprosy would have never experienced the love and care of others and the chance to hear the wonderful plan of salvation that God has for their lives. Around seventy people came to have a buffet-style dinner and to learn about the next project of ICII



Mel Huyard, one of ICII board members, sharing at the banquet.

to build home for homeless lepers. We at ICII wish to give special thanks to Lonnie Brinkley and Louise Ludwig from Big Bear Candle Company in Intercourse, PA. We so appreciate their generous donations of banquet food and of the beautiful handmade candles that were personally auctioned by Lonnie to help cover the food cost. Lonnie also cooked some wonderful Italian food. The candle auction completely paid for all the food and more. Our special thanks is to the Fairland Brethren In Christ Church for donating the use of their hall for the banquet. We also thank the two Indian couples that cooked the Indian food. The funds raised at the banquet for the leprosy colony project was \$2,845. This will be a good start toward purchasing land to build the

colony. Not only is the ministry growing in India, but we thank God that the team has grown here in the US as well. On the newly organized board of directors are missionaries Lowell and Kathy Smith and Joann Hauer as the treasurer. This year the Lord added missionary Kristi Hackman to our team. She and her husband Rick have adopted two children from India. Kristi will be overseeing the child and orphanage sponsorship and other areas of the ministry. Also coming on board is Mel Huyard, who has been a missionary to India for 25 years. In the past, Mel has founded two leprosy colonies and two orphanages. He was a friend of the late Dr. Paul Brand, who was a world-renowned hand surgeon and leprosy specialist. He will be visiting India in November through December to help search for land for the colony. There are also some folks from other states that have an interest in helping to work with the ministry as well. We are expecting the Lord to do great and mighty things among the lepers in India. We hope to see everyone back next year at our second annual banquet. Please see the flyer included with this newsletter to get involved in supporting this urgent project.

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness" Psalm 41:1-3.