

# 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).*

## NEWSLETTER

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# FINDING LOST SOULS

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Lowell and Kathy Smith*

### Nearly One Thousand Leprosy Victims Receive the Lord!

Just imagine, a person who has leprosy... That person may have nothing in this world, except for the rags he or she is wearing. That person with leprosy feels hated, despised, and rejected, not just from society, but their own families. Most people in their society think they are a cursed person, so no one will help them. These people have no job or money, and no one wants to get near them because they are considered an untouchable person. This unfortunate person with leprosy feels intense pain, extreme loneliness, severe hunger and cold, tremendous grief and emptiness. They feel lots of pain from their disease, but no money to buy medicine or even wrap their many infected sores and wounds. Day after day they feel no relief emotionally or physically. They feel no purpose in life, and may even hope for death to come soon, but due to their Hindu belief, death to them is fearful and uncertain as to what may come next. They have been chased out of their homes and their villages, because their families and neighbors no longer want them around. They have been told to go somewhere else to die, so they may have wound up homeless on the streets or in a government-run leprosy colony or hospital. Wherever they are, they are not treated well. Their only means of survival is to go and beg each day, hoping that enough strangers walking by will have mercy on them to give them enough pocket change so they can eat that day.



*At many leprosy colonies, the patients are not cared for. This man is very weak, and near death.*



*Pastor Richard preaching the Gospel at a leprosy colony.*

If this leper lives in a colony or a hospital it may not be sanitary or a nice place to live. There may even be stress and fighting among other lepers in the colony because no one has any peace there. During the winter months and the rainy season the nights are cool and damp especially when there is no bed or mat to sleep on, nor any blanket to cover with. After this person contracted leprosy, he has not had one good day in his life... until the day the Lord sent Inde-

pendent Church in India to him. **This day was the best day of his life!** This day, he felt unconditional love, peace and joy like never before. He heard the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ for the very first time and he experienced the greatest gift of all... salvation in Jesus Christ! For over the past month, the ICII Gospel team has been visiting leprosy colonies and reaching the homeless and poor lepers in the cities with the Gospel. ICII's goal is to preach the Gospel in every leprosy colony, hospital and wherever leprosy victims may gather in Tamil Nadu, the southern state of India.



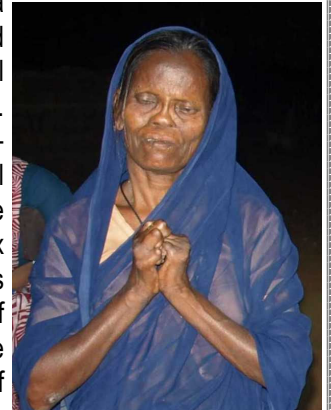
*This woman with leprosy was filled with joy to hear about the love of Jesus!*



*One hundred and seventy-five lepers accepted the Lord at one colony! They are praying to accept Christ!*

At every outreach, each leper will receive a blanket. Bibles and Gospel tracts will be given to those who can read. The team will apply medicine and wrap the wounds of those who have been neglected, and they will be prayed for. In the evening, a Gospel video will be shown through a video projector. This will give more lepers a chance to hear the Gospel if they were out begging during the day.

The ICII team will also travel around within the cities they visit, seeking to find lepers who have been forsaken and left to fend for themselves on the streets. When the Gospel team finds one or more lepers, they will ask them how to find more, and soon a small or large group of both lepers and homeless people will gather. Most will linger near public areas so they can beg. Through these outreaches, homeless people have also been hearing the Gospel



*This woman is praying to accept the Lord.*

and receiving blankets and Bibles. So far this project has had a tremendous eternal response, and nearly one thousand lepers have accepted the Lord! Over twelve hundred lepers have received blankets and over six hundred of those who can read have received New Testament Bibles. It is plain to see that the Lord is moving in a mighty way among the lepers. Jesus loves these forsaken people and has placed in the heart of a generous ICII supporter to provide the needs of this life-changing project. The Lord has placed a deep love and burden in the hearts of ICII's native Gospel workers to reach these lepers and show them the love of Jesus. At most all of these colonies, this was the first time these untouchable people have had the opportunity to hear the Gospel. Many of them shared with the ICII team that they had lived at the colonies for many long years but never has anyone ever come to visit them. This is the first time they heard about Jesus and his love. They were so happy to know about Jesus.



*Native Missionary Priya is cleaning and bandaging a leper's sore wounds.*

**The Happiest Day of a Leper's Life** - Below we have written some amazing and uplifting testimonies of lepers who have been reached so far, confirming that the Lord's blessing is upon this new leprosy project:

An officer who works at one of the colonies told the ICII Gospel team, *"I worked ten years at this colony, but I have never seen these people have any joy before. But now I could see they have happiness. I can also see something different in you. You have Jesus in you. So any time you can come to meet these people, you don't need any permission letter, you are welcome anytime"*. At this colony the lepers were so thankful to the team and were so happy to hear about Jesus. They were asking the team to start a church for them there. Some shared, *"this is the most joyful day of our lives!"*

A group of lepers came to the team at another colony and said, *"When we wake up in the morning we feel like we don't want to live in this world anymore because we are a cursed person. We go begging, but no one cares about us. When we come back here to the colony, we have fights with one another, and we never have any peace. Now you shared today that Jesus loves us all and he is not rejecting any of us. We are so thankful for the message of Jesus. In our place we have lots of mosquitoes biting us and we cannot sleep. Now, you have giving us nice blankets to cover ourselves"*.

**Other lepers shared,**  
*"We are so happy that now we have a Bible to read. We will read the Bible and pray everyday"*.

Some lepers at one of the colonies shared with the team, *"We were always worrying about how our lives were because we thought that God has cursed us. We even went to beg in front of Christian churches but we never heard that Jesus loves us because we were never invited to go inside the churches. But today you shared that Jesus loves and died for us. This is so very comforting to us. Today we asked Jesus to forgive us. We are no longer going to worry about our life because we now know that Jesus is with us because he cares for us. We are now going to pray and talk with Jesus everyday, because no one else is talking with us"*.



*Giving out blankets and Bibles to the lepers.*

At one colony the team reached one man and his wife through personal evangelism who were both very badly infected with leprosy. This man was 55 years old and had leprosy for 30 years. His right leg was completely affected with leprosy, and the flesh was raw.



*A young girl with leprosy.*

The doctor's told him that he cannot be healed and that he may die soon. The team went to him and shared the Gospel to him and told him about Jesus' love. That man received the Lord and the team prayed for him. The man said, "I was so scared about when I die because I was a Hindu and I didn't know what would happen when I die. Now I am so happy and I have hope I will go to heaven". His wife also accepted the Lord and shared thankfully, "No one would come to us or touch us before. This is the first time we ever knew that someone cares about us". They shared that their only son made them leave his home and he never came to see them in the ten years they had been in the colony.



*ICII's missionaries ministering to a group of lepers and homeless at a city outreach.*

**The Lord Works a Miracle to Open the Door to Preach the Gospel** - In two places where the ICII team went to get permission to enter the colonies, Hindu extremists were running the colonies. They would not allow the Gospel team to come into the colony to preach, because they knew they were Christians. But when the ICII team saw the hurting lepers in that place, they got such a burden for them that they did not want to leave without giving these lepers the Gospel of hope. The ICII team began crying and praying to the Lord to open the doors that these people with leprosy must hear the Gospel. After a city outreach that same evening, the ICII team went back to these same colonies to try

again. There was now a different officer overseeing both colonies, so they approached him and asked him if they could come and comfort the lepers. This officer allowed them to go into both the colonies! About 50 lepers were at each colony, totaling 100. Through this open door, most all of them accepted the Lord! The Gospel team was so joyful in how the Lord supernaturally opened the door for the Gospel where it had been closed before.



*10,000 blankets and 4,000 New Testaments have been sponsored so far to give out in the leprosy colonies and city outreaches.*

ICII's prayer and burden is that every leper will hear the Gospel in Tamil Nadu, and that not one leper would be forgotten. This is a huge project that consists of reaching tens of thousands of lepers. These leprosy colonies and communities are inviting the team to come again. ICII also has a vision to return to many of these colonies in the near future to disciple the new believers in Christ! We are praying and believing that thousands upon thousands of lepers will come to know Christ! Please join us in prayer for these goals and the will of the Lord to be accomplished.

**Future of ICII's Video Gospel Outreach Looks Bright** - ICII has long valued the effectiveness of video as a means of reaching masses of people in India with the Gospel message. Now, our projection for the future of video outreach is brighter than

ever! Through the vision and generosity of a loving supporter, ICII has been able to purchase eight new video projectors for use in village outreach. Thanks to advances in technology, video projectors have become less expensive and produce bright, high quality images. These new projectors are compact and lightweight for easy portability, and have low power consumption. Coupling a projector with a marine-type battery, an AC inverter, and a small DVD player yields a portable video system that the Gospel teams can easily take anywhere and reach large audiences. In the remote villages, curiosity attracts lots of residents and bystanders, who then receive the Word of God. Together with ICII's Word for Word Gospel of John video and our video tract called *Jesus Christ: The Risen Lord*, these projection systems will provide an effective and versatile set of tools for the ICII Gospel teams to use in evangelism and Bible study.



*Showing a Gospel video at a leprosy colony through a new video projector.*



*Giving blankets to the Lepers at a colony.*



*A generous supporter has sponsored this van for the sole purpose of reaching every leper in Tamil Nadu.*

**Missionary Beaten for Preaching the Gospel** - One of Independent Church in India's native missionaries was attacked by multiple assailants in the bus station near one of ICII's churches. Native missionary Peter, who led worship during the Sunday church service, was suddenly ambushed by several young men, who began pounding him with their fists, tearing his clothes, and at least one of the attackers apparently slashed him repeatedly with some kind of knife or blade. After wounding him and knocking him to the ground, they beat him further, then fled. Peter had to be hospitalized for several days. Peter identified the young men as a group who was watching him as he preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ a week earlier. They told a local group of Hindu extremists that Peter was preaching Jesus Christ, and the extremist leaders instructed the young guys to beat him. We thank God for sparing Peter's life and that he is well again. Peter is not deterred from his ministry even by this persecution, and he has again been preaching the Gospel as zealously as ever. He has stated that he is willing to die for the Gospel's sake. He is one of the native missionaries that is traveling to the colonies and sharing the good news among the lepers. *Please consider sponsoring a native missionary and be a part of reaching souls for Jesus!*



*Peter praying at a remote village.*



*Pastor Alex Alvarez from Victory Chapel sharing at ICII's third annual banquet.*

**ICII's Third Annual Banquet Results** - Independent Church in India wants to deeply thank everyone who came to our third annual banquet that was held this past September 15th. We were so happy to see that close to one hundred people attended this year. Again there was both Indian and American foods and delicious deserts. Through the silent and live auctions, and the generous gifts of donations for the food, everything was completely paid for! Through the meal tickets, the auction, and the gifts, we received around \$6800! This was almost double last year's \$3500. The gifts for the auctions alone raised over \$3300. ICII has decided to use the gifts raised from the auctions for the leprosy building project, for training and sending native missionaries, and to help provide for the medical and food outreaches for lepers, the poor people and children. The banquet ticket money will be used towards our general ministry fund. We want

to thank everyone who participated in this banquet and helped to make it happen. We first want to thank Fairland Brethren in Christ Church for freely hosting this banquet once again. We want to also thank Victory Chapel, Rick and Kristi Hackman, and Ruthanne Hollinger for cooking and donating most of the food this year. We want to thank the general supporters and businesses that donated things that were auctioned off and to everyone who helped to cook, serve and clean up to make this banquet possible. We appreciated all of your help. We hope to see everyone back next year at ICII's fourth annual banquet.

**Back to India** - As most of you know, Pastor Britto, the founder of Independent Church in India (ICII), was visiting the United States this summer for the second time, speaking in different churches, Bible studies, and other occasions. His ticket had been fully sponsored by a kind donor, and his trip was very worthwhile helping Lowell and Kathy Smith visit churches and share updates. Most every Sunday this summer, Pastor Britto and the Smith family visited a new church. We wanted to thank all of you who invited us to your church or Bible study and allowed us to share about the many needs in India. Pastor Britto has now returned to India, and Lowell, Kathy, and the children are scheduled to return the beginning of November. The Smith family will be staying in India until April. While they are in India, everything will continue as it did before. Please continue to send all gifts to the same address in Frederickburg as before, and your gifts will be wired over to ICII in India. During the time they are in India, ICII needs your support more than ever to keep functioning and also to accomplish the projects that the Lord has placed on our hearts. We are praying the Lord will raise up more team members here in the United States to continue sharing the vision in different churches while the Smith's are in India. Please join with us in prayer for these needs and that the Lord will make this next trip the most prosperous yet to build the kingdom of God.

**You Can Bring Joy to a Child in India this Christmas** - Last Christmas season ICII was able to give out four hundred children's gift packs to the poor children in the remote villages of India. This Christmas season ICII would like to double that and bless more children with these gift packs. These packs will be a great witness of Christ's love to both the children, and their parents. This will be the first time many of these children will have ever received a Christmas gift. These packs are only \$4 each and will contain a New Testament Bible, a Gospel tract, a blanket, a toy, cookies, a notebook and pencil, and a toothpaste and a toothbrush. *(Please see enclosed flyer for more information)*



*Happy children who received a gift pack last Christmas season.*