

# INDEPENDENT CHURCH IN INDIA

## TOUCHING THE UNTOUCHABLES



*Reaching out to those stricken with the dreaded disease of...*

## LEPROSY

*A Biblical disease many have thought has been long extinct. In India, there are hundreds of thousands of hopeless victims that have the dreaded disease of leprosy. Help us to provide homes of compassion for those homeless lepers in desperate need and help to change a life for all eternity.....*

***Leprosy – down through the ages, one of the oldest and most dreaded and feared diseases know to mankind. Was it only a disease in ancient biblical times? Or, does it still extinct today?***



***The only way many leper's can eat their next meal is by begging.***

In India, there are hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions that have the dreaded disease of leprosy. When this fearsome disease is left untreated, the end result can be permanent disfigurement and physical disabilities such as the loss of toes and fingers. The victims may develop poor eyesight and even blindness. This disease is often called the "living death" because of its appalling effects on the victim's body. These unfortunate people are shunned and are called untouchables by their society, and are regarded as low-caste people. These unfortunate men and women basically have no chance of getting a job and are what can be called the poorest of the poor, and have no hope of ever building a future for themselves. The only way they can even get their next meal is by begging and hoping that someone will have mercy on them to give them even a coin, so they can buy cheap and tasteless food to fill their empty stomachs. Many of them do not even know that there is a cure for leprosy, and if they did, they probably could not possibly afford to obtain the medicine to stop their disease.



***Infected hand.***

***This disease is often called the "living death" because of its appalling effects on the victim's body...***



***Many Hindu's believe that a person with leprosy has been cursed by their Hindu gods.***

Most lepers can't afford shoes to protect their feet causing more infections to spread. Many have even been tragically abandoned by their families and cast out into the streets or in other unpleasant situations because of their frightful disease.

India is predominately Hindu and many believe in reincarnation which is the belief that when someone or something dies their 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 and 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.



***Many lepers have no home and live on the streets. This unfortunate man died due to getting infections.***

Worst of all, many have never even heard that there is a God in heaven that loves them and died so that they could be forgiven and experience His hope and peace. Overall, the sad reality is that they are left alone to suffer and die in their terrible state, heartbroken and emotionally shattered because they have no one to love or care for them.



***Leprosy victim with oozing eyes and deformed hands.***



***Hands and feet of leprosy victims.***



***Leprosy deforms the victims face.***

## JESUS TOUCHED THE LEPERS



*US Missionary Kathy Smith praying with a leper to accept Christ. ICII invited a homeless man into their van to share the Gospel to him. After he heard the salvation plan he prayed the sinner's prayer to accept Christ with tears of joy.*

Whenever Independent Church In India's (ICII) Gospel team encounters lepers in the villages they let them know that Jesus loves them and values them greatly. Then they share the Gospel and many experience salvation in Jesus Christ. When possible, each leper will also receive a leprosy compassion pack. This pack contains items for their physical needs and a Bible. The Gospel team is not afraid to touch them, put medicine on their sores, give them hugs, and pray for them, because in the same way Jesus was moved with compassion to touch the lepers.

***"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**

*When I see those with leprosy I am crying to the Lord to provide for these a good home and food. But, most of all, that they will realize someone cares about them. They are longing to have the real love, and caring people in their lives".*

*...Pastor Britto*

## HOSPITAL OUTREACH

The ICII Gospel team began to visit one of the government hospitals. Unlike the cleanliness that we are used to in the hospitals here in our own country there was severe unsanitary conditions. Pigs ran loose around the building, and they didn't even have a bathroom. At this hospital, the lepers are not well cared for, and are talked down to, and harassed by the workers, and must even pay for the low quality medicine and food they receive at the hospital. The doctors themselves have become so accustomed to the bondage of the caste system that they will not

even touch lepers. Instead, the doctors keep a distance from them and will just ask them what their symptoms are and then the leper must put the medicine on his or her own sores. Since they don't have any money, then they must make their way to the outside and beg so they can buy medicine and food. Here the lepers may, or may not have a bed, and they have to live together in an unclean, foul smelling room. They can only stay a limited time at the hospital and then after this again; they have no home to go. Most of them will live on the streets, possessing only the old dirty clothing that they are wearing.

The team shared the Gospel, prayed for them, and began to build a relationship with lepers at the hospital that

thought no one

cared. Right before Christmas of 2004 year, the team shared the Gospel and gave each leper a compassion pack, which was probably the nicest gift they had ever received. Immediately after this, the Lord began to light a fire in these lepers' hearts and they became on fire for the Lord Jesus. When the team went back to visit the hospital, those with leprosy were very excited about the Lord. One leper that owned a cheap cassette player tuned in each morning starting at five o'clock am to a Gospel station and they all began listening to learn more about the Lord. ICII began to give them tapes with the New Testament on them so those who could not read could listen to the Bible instead.



*US missionary Kathy Smith and Pastor Britto from Independent Church in India sharing the Gospel to the lepers at the government hospital.*



*These leper's are asking Jesus to be their Lord and Savior.*



*Inside the foul smelling hospital room.*



*These lepers are diligently praying at a Bible study.*

Every day the lepers would listen to God's word and wait anxiously for the Gospel team to return each week for their Bible study. Even before the team returns back, those lepers who have trusted in Jesus are eagerly sharing about Him to the new patients coming to the hospital and more of them are coming to a personal relationship with the Lord. The Lord is bearing witness and bringing revival among them spiritually and healing their weak bodies. One leper shared, *"Within this six months since you have been coming to us God is comforting us and healing us through your*

*prayers. Every week you are coming and praying for us and we also are going to church and feeling God's presence in our lives. We believe Jesus Christ is giving healing to us. Because of your coming every week we feel so happy in our lives. Each day starting at five in the morning we are listening to the Bible tapes you gave to us. It is so nice for our hearts to hear God's Word. We listen to the Bible before we go to bed, and now the Lord is giving good sleep to us. Before this we couldn't even sleep at night".*

Even in these situations, the Lord is bringing revival to their hearts.

One leper shared with joy to the Gospel team; *"Because of you, we now have the heart to love Jesus. Before you came we didn't even know who Jesus was. But you came like a teacher, and showed Jesus' love to us. We are willing and ready to receive the Lord's blessings in our lives. Jesus Christ our Lord, our redeemer, save us from our disease".* Independent Church in India invites all lepers that they meet to come to church to worship the Lord and to fellowship. Another leper shared, *"In the past I've attended other churches, but when they saw me they asked me to go outside because of my leprosy".*

***"I read the whole New Testament that you gave me. When I read about how Jesus had compassion on the lepers it was so touching to me. When I see you, I think of you coming to us like Jesus to show us the love and compassion".***

***... a leper***

US missionary Kristi Hackman shares one of her experiences while visiting the lepers at the government hospital; *"Among the lepers that*

*day was a man we had met on the road the day before. We were driving in the town of Dindigul when we saw a man who looked to be about 80 years old but was probably more like 60. He had on a dirty white robe and had a wicker basket on his head. He also had a staff in his hand. Pastor Richard and Pastor Britto recognized him as a leper but they had never seen him before. He walked so slowly and laboriously, as if he hadn't a friend in the*

*world. We pulled over and called him to our van. They began to speak to him and told him to go to the government hospital on Sunday to meet them. So we were very glad to see he was among the people that day. We gave him a compassion pack and told him about the love of Jesus Christ. We also gave him new sandals for his toeless feet and some money so he could eat that day. He was not living at the hospital, but was living on the streets. When we finished speaking and handing out the packs, this man came to us with a glimmer in his eye. He said he would be back the following Sunday and he was so very thankful for all we had given him. When he walked away from us, there was almost a skip in his step. He had a new hope now, a hope he didn't have before. That hope is Jesus!*



*The leper's at the hospital are holding their compassion packs. Each compassion pack contains a blanket, soap and towel, bandages, sandals, toothpaste/brush, eatables, a Bible, gospel tracts and more..*



*US missionary Kristi Hackman and Pastor Britto from Independent Church in India giving a homeless man a compassion pack.*



*The lepers at the hospital are waving good-bye as the Gospel team leaves. Where sadness was, now the joy of the Lord is on their faces.*



*A glimmer of hope in a leper's eyes.*

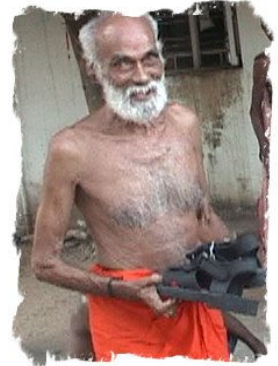
## JESUS TURNS DESPAIR INTO HOPE...



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

A person stricken with leprosy in India lives the most miserable and lonely life imaginable. 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 their heart wrenching testimonies ...

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 seen 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 worst, 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 Kathy Smith (mother) came to me that day up until now, I feel someone loves and cares about me. I feel Jesus loves me"*.

Chickana shares; *"Before you came to share about Jesus to me, I was a Hindu and I used to sacrifice chickens and goats. Even though I was deeply committed to Hinduism, I was rejected by the Hindus. But when you came to me, I felt the love of Jesus through you. Now I have stopped going to the idol temples and I want to worship only Jesus. I feel Jesus' love in my life now. I also had felt dizzy the last week and I fell down and hurt myself, but now Jesus is giving me strength again. Since you have been bringing me gifts, this is the first time in my life that any one has ever remembered me"*.



Chickana

## HOMES OF COMPASSION FOR HOMELESS LEPERS

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. Here they can lead a

**Partner today with ICII and make a difference in the lives of lepers. All gifts are tax-deductible and 100% of every gift you give will be used for the leprosy project in one of the following ways:**

- 1). Your gift will be used for reaching out to lepers in desperate need; to provide food, medicine, bandages, clothes, sandals, blankets, etc.
- 2). Your gift will go in a fund to begin saving for the leprosy colony project to purchase land, and build homes for lepers.

normal life and even work. Our 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 and 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.



*This leper is worshipping the Lord at ICII Dindigul church. Each week, lepers are coming to the church.*

## TOUCHING THE UNTOUCHABLES

As 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.



*US missionary Lowell Smith and Pastor Britto praying for a man with leprosy.*

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 help today and change a life for all eternity... It's your choice?



*US missionary Kathy Smith and Pastor Britto putting medicine on a sore foot of a woman with leprosy named Udayammal. Because of this act of kindness Udayammal and many others in this village accepted Christ. (See our video "Touching the Untouchables" to see Udayammal's life-changing testimony).*



*The joy of the Lord is now their strength!*

**"A person with leprosy lives a life that has been shattered by their disease and all they have to look forward to is a life of misery, rejection, pain and loneliness, unless they hear the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. When a leper hears the Gospel many times they will begin to weep because for the first time they are feeling that someone does loves them.**

**They realize that Jesus died for them and that they can have peace in this life and hope for everlasting life. When they give their lives to Christ they feel that they have a new purpose and meaning to their lives".**

*...Missionary Kathy A Smith*



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

# INDEPENDENT CHURCH IN INDIA

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## LEPROSY COLONY PROJECT FOR HOMELESS LEPERS

*Reaching out to those with leprosy with the love of Jesus...*

Independent Church in India wants to make sure that every leper they meet will know the love of Jesus and realize they are no longer an untouchable, but precious in the Lord's sight.



*A woman with leprosy named Udayammal accepting Christ as her Lord and Savior.*

**100% of every gift will be used for the leprosy project in one of the following ways:**

- 1). Gifts will be used for reaching out to lepers in desperate need; food, medicine, bandages, clothes, sandals, blankets, Bibles; etc.
- 2). Gifts will go towards building homes of compassion for victims of leprosy.



*You can help to put a smile on their desperate faces...*

***Each leper will hear the Gospel and have an opportunity to receive Christ into their life.***



***Give a gift that will last for all of eternity!***

[ ] I would like to give a love gift to reach out to those with leprosy \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500, \$1000, \$5000 other. Please enter amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

[ ] I would like to pledge a **monthly** love gift to reach out to those with leprosy of \$5, \$10, \$25, \$30, \$50, \$100, other. Please enter amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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Please send love gifts to: Independent Church In India

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Or to give an online donation please visit our website: [www.indchurch.org](http://www.indchurch.org)

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