

INDIA BLOGS - 2

Lessons Learned in India

2013 - 2016



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INDIA TRIPS SUMMARY

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2006-2016 TOTAL
Dates	Jan 8 – Feb 12	Jan 7 – Jan 28	Jan 5 – Feb 5	Jan 15-Feb 9	
Days	36	21	32	26	251 36 weeks
Places	AP Hyd, Vizaq, Vijay	AP Hyd, Vizaq, Vijay	Hyd, Vij, Bangalore	Hyd. Vijay	
Pastor Conf (1 day)	17	1	5	1	54
Pastor Conf 2 or 3 d	0	4	7	5	23
Leadership(2-5 days)	1	1	0	0	4
Leaders of Leaders 2	0	1	0	2	3
Pastors	750	675	1033	650	4,975
Wives	290	206	267	300	1,545
Seminary classes	0	0	20	0	20
Seminary attendance	0	0	60 x 4	0	240
Wives Conf (1 day)	0	0	0	60	60
Youth Conf (1 day)	0	0	0	60	60
Total days of conf	19	11	19	17	125
TOTAL PEOPLE	1040	866	1540	1070	6865
Marriage conferences	1	0	0	0	3
All day Ch conf	0	0	0	0	0
Sunday & PM services	10	4	9	9	168
Attendance Sun & PM	720	260	390	406	9,656
Baptisms	0	0	0	0	13
Costumes	2	7	15	1	75+
Miles in India	3,000	3,000	3,000	2,500	20,700
Places slept	6	7	5	6	61
Total lessons	90	43	100	44	647
Magic tricks	225	130	200	130	1430
Av per day	6	3	6	7	6
Airlines and stops	British Airways Philadelphia London Hyderaba (Newark)	United Luftansa Newark Frankfort Mumbai Hyd (Koch mi)	British Airways Phl to London to Hyd, back from Bangalore	British (American Airlines) Phil to London to Hyd (Dublin London, on way bak)	
Companions	Peter Brown 2wks	Nancy all	Alan Carlton	Nancy Leslie Wade	

BLOGS FOR INDIA 2013-2016



BLOG 159: PRAYER THAT CHANGES THINGS – THANKFULNESS

(1)

The sermon and blogs I present immediately before going to India are very special to me. I pray and seek God's guidance for several months because what He leads me to focus on becomes the theme for my trip, both for me personally and for those who pray and support me. This trip God has led me to Colossians 1:3-14, how to pray so that lives are changed.

We know the importance of prayer, and that God answers prayer, but often we don't really know just what to pray for concerning ourselves or others. We know prayer is powerful and touches the heart of God Who, in turn, touches the lives of those for whom we pray. The power is not in the prayer itself but in the God Who answers the prayer. Often our prayers become a series of directions to God, explaining how we want Him to make life easier for us and those we know. When those kinds of prayers aren't answered the way we think they should be we start doubting the power of prayer. Our prayers must line up with God's will for others if we are to see answers.

So just how are to pray in a way that changes lives? Paul's prayer to the Colossians, which was similar to his prayers for other churches and individuals, gives us the pattern. It is simple, yet profound. It shows us what God wants to do in our lives and the lives of others so our prayers can line up with His will.

Remember, though, our prayers to see peoples' lives changed should not be motivated by selfish reasons. We can't demand God change circumstances or situations, only that He uses them to work in the person's life. In fact, because of what you are praying, it may make situations worse than they were to begin with. That may be necessary in order for God to accomplish what you are asking Him to do. One more thing, this prayer will only be effect if you pray it on a daily basis for a long time. It is no quick fix, nothing that will change things over night. I encourage you to apply these truths to your prayers for yourself, others you pray for, me and the pastors and Christians in India.

Paul's prayer in Colossians 1:3-14 breaks down into 2 main sections: Paul thanking God for the believer in Colossae (3-9) and asking God to fill them with knowledge of His will (9-14). He thanks God for them because of the testimony of their faith, love and hope. He asks that they would know God's will so they can live a life worthy of Him and please Him in every way. Let's look at this passage and see how it applies to each of us today.

Paul begins by writing: "We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you." (3) All of Paul's prayers begin with thanksgiving and that's a good habit to have. It changes our attitude and greatly impacts how we pray in the rest of the prayer.

Every time you pray or communicate with God today, start with thanksgiving. Make it sincere, heartfelt appreciation. Think of new things to express gratitude for whenever you talk to Him. Don't rush through it but be sincerely grateful to Him. (Saturday, Jan 5, 2013)

BLOG 160: PRAYER THAT CHANGES THINGS – FAITH, LOVE & HOPE (2)

In my first blog on Colossians 1:3-14 I talked about the importance of starting prayer with giving thanks, as Paul did. Paul then explains why He thanks God for them. "Because we have heard" (4). Whenever you hear a good report of someone, including something from me in India, do not give

me or the ones involved the credit, thank God and give Him the glory for it wouldn't happen if it weren't for Him. I don't send blogs to draw attention to myself but so God can be thanked for all that is happening, so your faith can be strengthened, and so you can know how to pray. Paul thanks God because of what He heard about the Colossians. What did he hear? Did it have to do with how busy the church was or its size? Was it their budget, their music program or even their outreach program? It was none of these. What impressed Paul and brought glory to God was three things: the faith, love and hope of the people themselves.

We have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus" (4) is the first reason Paul is thankful. Evidently the story of their conversion went all the way to the prison in Rome where Paul heard of it. Their walk with the Lord began in faith and has continued on in faith as well. But that's not all.

"And of the love you have for all the saints" (4). Love is the fruit of faith, the evidence of God's Spirit at work within (Galatians 5:6; James 2:14ff; 1 John 3:14). When we experience God's love and are filled with His Presence the natural result will be love for others (Galatians 5:20). This is clearly from God for they have love for "all" saints, and we know not everyone is easy to love without His help. Only God can bring about unconditional love for all in us.

The third trait he is thankful for, hope, is mentioned next. "The faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about" (5) Faith rests on the past and looks up to God, love works in the present reflecting God, and hope looks to the future in confident assurance that God is in control of everything. This life may be difficult, but better things are stored up for us in heaven! We endure today with the assurance of what will come.

We know God is in control through His Word: "That you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth."

It is God's Word which is the only dependable source of truth in the universe. It alone produces changed lives, in the Colossians and those throughout the world. Knowing God's Word is the basis of our faith, love and hope. Having stated that his prayers always begin with giving God thanks for the Colossians. Pray God would give you and others a hunger and thirst for His Word, and a clear understanding of it.

"You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit." (Colossians 2:7-8)

Pray that, like Epaphras, I and the pastors in India would be able to clearly teach these things to the people in India. Pray for your pastors and leaders in the same way. Pray for yourself as well, that others would see faith, love and hope in you. Pray they would see it in me, and in the pastors and Christians in India. (Sunday, Jan 6, 2013)

BLOG 161: PRAYER THAT CHANGES THINGS – KNOWING GOD'S WILL (3)

It's very important to understand that this prayer concerning the Colossians wasn't just a one-time event, or something Paul said when times got hard for them. He prayed it continually, in good times or bad. "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you." (9) Paul prayed regularly, daily, sometimes hourly, for them. He also prayed for the Christians in Rome (Romans 1:9-10), Ephesus (Ephesians 1:15-16), Philippi (Philippians 1:3-4) and all the churches he heard of. Consistent, faithful, persevering, regular prayer for those God puts on your heart is a must. Pray for yourself, your loved ones, me and the pastors and Christians in India daily,

several times a day. A prayer here or there is OK, but it is when we “never stop praying” that God changes lives.

Having stated that he thanks God for them because of their faith, love and faith, Paul now gets to the heart of his prayer for them, how He prayed for their lives to be changed. “Asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will.” (9) We can’t do God’s will unless we know it! It’s not something we take a guess at, or just do what we want and ask Him to bless what we do. We can and must know God’s will so we can do it. Pray He will “fill you” with the knowledge of His will – give you total, specific, precise awareness of His plan and purpose for your life. We don’t pray to tell God our will but to know His will for us. “THY will be done, THY Kingdom come...” Prayer is not giving God instructions, but it is us reporting for duty.

Pray you would know and follow what God has for you to become the person He created you to be. His will for us starts with who we are, not what we do! Then He also reveals to us how we can best serve Him. Pray I would know clearly what He wants me to speak about each time I speak (an average of 4 or 5 times a day). Pray the words I use would be His words. Pray I would know His will as to how to pray for each person who comes to me after a session, asking me to lay hands on them and pray for them. Pray the pastors there would know God’s will for their lives, their family and their church. Pray Pastor Moses would know His will as he makes last-minute plans and decisions of where we will go and to whom we will speak during my time in India.

How are we to know God’s will? Paul says it is “Through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.” (9) Spiritual wisdom comes through knowing the Bible and spiritual understanding is provided by the Holy Spirit within. Be sensitive to God using His Word and His Spirit in leading you in all you think, ccsay and do. Pray that for us in India as well. Spend time reading your Bible while being sensitive to what God will teach you through His Spirit.

The key to seeing lives changed is continual, persevering prayer that God would reveal His will to the person through His Word and by His Spirit. This prayer is for those who are following Him and seeking to live for Him (“faith, love and hope” characterize them). For those who aren’t following Him allow God to use difficulties in life to bring them back to Him. Don’t pray for those things to be removed, but for them to be used to open their eyes to their need of Him. But for those living for Him pray they would fully know His will for them! (Monday, Jan 7, 2013)

BLOG 162: PRAYER THAT CHANGES THINGS – PLEASING GOD (4)

Having stated that he thanks God for the Colossians because of the testimony of their faith, love and hope, and that he prays they would know God’s will for their lives so they can continue to grow and serve Him, Paul concludes this prayer with two reasons for praying this.

The first reason is so they will bring honor and glory to God by their lives. “And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord” (10) If you carry the name ‘Christian’ your life must reflect well on Him. Pray you would live a life that would cause others to think better of Jesus because of you. Pray that for me in India, and for the pastors and Christians in India as well.

The second reason Paul prays they will know God’s will is so they can bring pleasure to Him by their lives. “And may please him in every way. (10) What are we to do that brings Him pleasure, that puts a smile on God’s face? How are we to do this? How are we to pray for others to do this?

1. “Bearing fruit in every good work” (10) We are alive to produce fruit for God, good fruit: love, joy peace, patience and the other fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24). Everyone produces fruit, for the Christian ours must be “good” work to bring glory to Him.

2. "Growing in the knowledge of God" (10) God wants every one of us to grow in our knowledge of Him. This starts with mental knowledge in our heads as we learn His Word and know more about Him, but it doesn't stop there. It means 'knowing' Him in a more intimate way, not just knowing about Him but experiencing a deeper personal relationship with Him (Philippians 3:7-11).

3. "Being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience." (11) He doesn't change circumstances and make life easy for us (so stop praying for that to happen in your life and the lives of others). But He does promise He will give us power and strength to overcome, to resist, to stay faithful no matter what. "Great endurance and patience" is required, though, because victory seldom comes quickly or easily.

4. "And joyfully giving thanks to the Father." (11-12) Paul started with thanksgiving, and now He concludes with it as well. We bring happiness to God when we joyfully give thanks, no matter what is happening in our lives. Paul concludes this prayer with his own personal words of thanksgiving to God because of His greatness to all of us. "Who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (12-14)

This classis prayer of Paul's, typical of how He prayed for all the churches and believers, gives us great insight into how we can pray to see lives changed, both here and in India. Pray for yourself, those God puts on your heart here, for me and for the pastors and Christians of India. Pray each one of us would be characterized by faith, love and hope. Pray we would have a clear and full awareness of what God wants us to be and do for Him so that our lives will bring glory to Him as others see us and bring pleasure to Him as He watches us. Pray we would bear good fruit in all we do, grow in our knowledge of and intimacy with Him, experience His power and strength over temptation and difficulties around us, and that we would continually and joyfully give thanks to Him. And don't pray this just once; make this your prayer daily, several times a day, for yourself and your loved ones as well as for me and the pastors and Christians in India. (Tuesday, Jan 8, 2013)

BLOG 163: NO GUARANTEES

I sit in the airport writing this, awaiting the departure of my flight to India. I've seen numerous signs offering guarantees: of cell phone reception if you purchase a certain company's product, of ease of flying if you travel with their airline, of satisfaction if you purchase this produce, and on and on. What I'm looking for is a guarantee, not from a phone company, an airline or a merchant, but a guarantee from God. I'd like a guarantee I'll make it safe and sound to India, that I'll be healthy while there, that my ministry will impact lives, that I'll be able to endure being away from family and loved ones, that the time will go quickly and I'll soon be home safe and sound. I'd feel much better if that was guaranteed.

But there are no guarantees from God, are there? Certainly if anyone could offer a guarantee about the future it would be He holds the whole world and all that happens in the palm of His hand. When one signs on to serve and follow Him there are no guarantees. Of course there are none for those who don't serve Him, either, are there? But they wouldn't expect any. The problem is that when I sacrifice for His sake I expect something in return. I feel that He owes me. I am doing this for Him. The least He can do is guarantee success, safety and an enjoyable time, right?

No, there are no guarantees with God. Or are there? Does living for Him and serving Him offer any securities? Do we have any assurances from Him when we live for Him? We may not be able to

write our own list of benefits, but that doesn't mean there aren't any. There are many, and they are out of this world. We may not call them guarantees but we call them promises. Same thing.

God makes many promises for me when I follow Him. He promises (guarantees) that He will never leave me or forsake me, never give me more than I can handle with His help, always be with me, use whatever happens for my growth and His glory and fill me with His Spirit and Presence. Pastor Tim in the Mitford series talks often about "praying the prayer that God always answers." What is that prayer? "Your will be done" is the prayer He always answers. He doesn't guarantee that my will be done but that His will be done.

What could be better than that? While I'd like guarantees that assure my safety and comfort, His promises focus on His will being done. And as I think of it, who am I doing this for, me or Him? If I want safety and security I should stay home. If I want His will to be done I need to trust Him as He leads and guides whatever may happen. If I truly want to live for Him and serve Him then I just report for duty and let Him give the orders, trusting He knows best and He will be glorified in all of it. That's what it means to be a servant.

No guarantees? Maybe not the kind I want, but I need to put my faith in His promises to be with me no matter what, not in promises to keep me from any difficulty that may come up. No guarantees? No, but yes, the best kind – that His purpose will be done and He will be glorified, and that He will be with me helping me no matter what happens. No guarantees? I think that's the best guarantee anyone could ever want! (Wednesday, Jan 9, 2013)

Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Is God calling you to do something, or has He put you in a place in your life, where you would like some guarantees from Him before moving ahead? What assurances are you expecting from Him to make it easier for you to trust Him? What promises has He given that you can rest on instead?

BLOG 164: "GOD IS EXPECTING TOO MUCH!"

The days before I leave for India are always very difficult because the time to say good-bye to family and loved ones draws closer. The magnitude of what looms before me expands to awesome proportions. When it is time to go I am tempted to say, "God, this is too much. It's too high a price you are expecting me to pay! I can't pay this great expense! It's too hard!" How many times do we tell God He is expecting too much of us, that the price He is asking is too high?

Immediately I am convicted, though. I can't help but think of the price Jesus paid for me. A mental image of Him on the cross immediately flashes in my mind and heart. He paid a much higher price for me than He ever expects me to pay for Him! He left His Father and loved ones (the angels) to come to earth for me, to face rejection, shame, mockery and pain beyond human imagination. He didn't say, "It's too much!" He submitted to the Father's will no matter what the cost. Leaving Pennsylvania for India is nothing compared to leaving heaven for hell! How can I not be willing to pay any price for someone Who would pay the ultimate price for me? (Thursday, Jan 10, 2013)

Mark 14:32-36 They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." 35 Going a little farther, he fell to the

ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

When are most apt to think God is expecting too much from you? Do you have a high or a low tolerance for emotional, physical or spiritual pain? How does the pain you suffer for Jesus compare to the pain He suffered for you? Pray and thank Him for His great love for you that mean that no pain was too great for Him to bear for your sake.

BLOG 165: DIFFERENT

All my life I've tried to fit in, to belong, to not draw attention to myself. How ironic it is that here in India it is being different that is my biggest advantage! I have a different skin color, language, home country and culture. Because of that I find I have a hearing, an immediate interest arises, and people will carefully listen to what I have to say. That is true of young and old, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, Christians and unbelievers. My difference is my calling card, my open door to speak about Jesus. They are all curious what this different man has to say, so I talk to them about Jesus.

Yet while I may be different, He is always the same. Any place, any culture, any time, any situation – He is the same. The Jesus I present on the other side of the world in India is the same Jesus we serve in America, the same the early church served 2,000 years ago. He is no different, He applies to all. 'One size fits all' is certainly true when it comes to Jesus.

Because I am different I have a unique opportunity to talk about the Jesus Who is no different than He ever was, Who is always faithful, Who always keeps His Word, Who loves unconditionally and saves eternally any and all who put their faith in Him. I may be different but He is not. His message is the same, so my message about Him is also the same. Speaking to Americans or Indians, rich or poor, men or women, young or old, the message of Jesus and about Jesus never changes. Even half way around the world it is true. All around us may change and be different, but never so Jesus. He is just as real and available, just as appealing and compassionate to the poorest of the poor in India as He is to the richest of the rich in America. He is the same as all of us. He is no different, ever. He never changes. He always remains the same. (Friday, January 11, 2013)

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

What does it mean to you personally that Jesus is always the same, that He never changes, that His Word is always true, that He can be counted on no matter what? Pray and thank Him for always being the same in your life.

BLOG 166: CHANGED LIVES

I awake to a new day feeling much, much better. Thank you so very much for your prayers – I depend on them more than you know. Yesterday is a bit of a blur since I was not doing well at all, but I feel like a new person on a new day. Pastor Moses' apartment is small and everything is crowded but they offer loving hospitality. The noise and smells of the city continually enter in. Windows are always open, temperatures will in the 70's at night, 80's in the day. It's impossible to forget where I am!

Yesterday was the first pastor's conference. About 60 pastors and wives attended. I spoke about what God expects of pastors, marriage and ministry, how to measure if you are growing spiritually and spiritual warfare. It went very well.

Today we go to Pastor Moses' church for a family life conference: husband wife relationship in the morning then parent child in the afternoon. In a culture where marriages are arranged, sons are valued much higher than daughters (and spoiled where daughters are often used as slaves) it is a challenge to apply Bible truth (minus 21st Century American culture) to the believers here. They are hungry and open for there is virtually no teaching about these things for Christians here.

They know the Indian culture is not correct but don't know God's way – haven't seen it in operation and don't know where to start in their own families. So my desire is to translate biblical truth into Indian culture with giving them a simple place to start. I don't want to just drop something foreign and large on them, they must start at the first step.

The gospel changes lives, there is no doubt about that. It changes marriages as well. Here in India, in America, in my life and yours – when the Spirit enters we are changed, different people. It's not something we learn from others around us but starts with God's new life within us. I see it across age and caste lines here in India. The believers here have a joy and peace, a smile and openness, that others don't have. It's even visible in their children. Light has replaced darkness, joy removes fear and hope overcomes the emptiness of all round them. A meaning and purpose come into life that cannot be given by Hinduism, Islam, education or government programs. It is Jesus in each one of us that makes the difference. Truly Jesus changes lives.

Pray God would use my words to help them be able to apply this change to their marriage and family, so they could reflect Jesus to each other and the hungry world around them. (Saturday, Jan 12, 2013)

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Take a moment to think of how God has changed your life. What would your life be like without Him? Try to imagine that, then thank Him for all the changes He has made in your life.

BLOG 167: ANSWERED PRAYERS

I don't have much time for it is very late and I must get up early for a long drive after church. I will be gone from Moses' home for 3 weeks. We leave after church (I'm speaking about spiritual gifts).

I must thank you for your prayers for they have made ALL the difference. After one of my worst days ever in India yesterday, today was probably the best ever! I felt completely better. We went to Moses' church where I was prepared to speak for 2 sessions. Instead I ended up speaking for 5! The people were very open and responsive – the first time I've ever had that in India. I know many of them personally from my many years and visits there. I've prayed with them, ministered with them, eaten in their homes, even been in touch with some through email and Facebook. They didn't want a break, nor to leave for supper, they just wanted me to go over various topics. They asked questions and I answered. They wanted a session on spiritual warfare so we conclude the day with that – very in depth and personally applied to them. I led them in prayer afterwards then prayed for them as a group, then individually as they came up to me one by one. It was very powerful and moving. God gave me the words to say throughout the whole day. It was the freest I have ever felt in thoughts and word-finding that I can remember – all God's Spirit answering your prayers so thanks so very much. Prayer does make a difference!

I don't know when I'll have internet again we have a very busy schedule of long drives, late nights and early mornings, with a conference in between. Monday night (Monday morning your time)

should settle down a bit for us. So please keep praying. It most definitely makes all the difference!!!!
(Sunday, Jan 13, 2013)

James 5:16-18 The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

Where have you lost faith in prayer? What have you given up praying about? What should you be praying about more fervently? Is there any unrighteousness in your life that may be hindering your prayer? Spend some quality and quantity time in prayer for this ministry in India as well as other needs God has put on your heart.

BLOG 168: MUSINGS ON A LONG DRIVE

I'm writing this in the car as we drive from Hyderabad to Vijayawada and then to Rajahmundry to stop for the night Sunday night – 10 hours of driving. Tomorrow we leave at 4 for the rest of the drive to Visakhapatnam where we will have our first pastor's conference of the week. The scenery is lush and green: rice patties, palm trees, a clear blue sky. Despite being on a modern interstate highway, a herd of water buffalo is slowly walking toward us spread out over both lanes. Just recently we had to navigate through a large herd of goats. We stopped for a break at a modern rest stop that included Subway and Baskin Robins while sacred decorated bulls paraded past the eating tables. Hindu shrines and signs of idol worship seen no matter where one looked. Moses' wife and son are with me in the back of the car while Peter is in the front with Moses who is driving. It's a bit crowded but we are all family and enjoying the time together.

I spoke in their church this morning. I've been attending that church several times a year since 2007 – the year it started and my second year in India. I think I've ministered about 40 times to and with them, maybe more. I've seen many of the children become teenagers and some even marry. On the other side, several of the older ones I have grown to love have gone on to heaven. I talked with and prayed for each family, one by one. I remember their situations and requests and it's great to see how God works. One family with a girl who had serious eye problems told me that after I prayed last time her eyes were healed. There are not many medical options, even for the few who can afford them. If Doctor Jesus doesn't heal there is no hope.

The people know me and love me, and I know and love them. They remember Nancy and ask about her. Teaching about marriage and child raising has been an enjoyable challenge. I'll be doing it about 20 times this trip. In summary, I told them husbands initiate in the relationship by showing unconditional, sacrificial love. Wives are to respond with a submissive and trusting hear which is manifested in showing respect in all she says and does. While that is very contrary to Indian culture they were very glad to hear it. When I dismissed them for a break after the first hour they said they'd rather stay and hear more, so we kept on going.

Our extended teaching and discussion times yesterday were very special and meaningful, perhaps the most I've ever experienced in India. At the end of the day they asked for an evening special session to go into more detail about spiritual warfare. I didn't have any of my notes but didn't need them anyway. I was wondering how many would come but they spread the word and we had over 70 on a moment's notice, twice what were present in the afternoon. The group and individual prayers for deliverance at the end were very touching. Coming from idol worship and living in a land dedicated to darkness has brought most, if not all of them, in contact with demonic forces. It is great that my book on spiritual warfare is available for them in their own language.

Christian love, which is a reflection of God's love, is not limited by distance, race or language. I thank God for the beautiful privilege of getting to know these special children of His! (Monday, Jan 14, 2013)

Galatians 3:28-29 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

John 15:12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

Who are some of the special people God has put in your life? Thank Him for each one of them by name.

BLOG 169: "I AM YOUR VERY GREAT REWARD"

One of the clearest ways God has chosen to minister to me so far on this trip has been through your emails. Some have written out their prayers, others send a special scripture, words of encouragement or something God has been impressing upon them that applied to me. Each one is greatly appreciated. I meditate on them and read them over and over. God uses them to touch and feed my soul. He brings them to mind throughout the day. Thank you so very much for sending your thoughts to me.

One comment that has especially burned into my heart is that God wants to reward me by allowing me to see more of Him. God's words to Abraham keep going through my mind. Genesis 15:1 After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." God chose to bless Abraham for his obedience, and the greatest gift He would give Abraham was more of Himself.

I've always know God rewards and blesses His people far beyond what we deserve. I've always seen these as physical or spiritual blessings. But the dear sister who shared this with me opened my eyes to something I never thought of before. God wants to bless me (us) with something far greater – Himself! He is not just the gift giver – He Himself is the gift. What greater gift could He give than Himself! That's what Jesus gave on the cross, and what God wants to give to each of us. So often we settle for lesser blessings but what could be better than a deeper revelation of Who He is. I am thrilled to think He wants to do that and eagerly anticipate it happening. It is something that won't happen unless He chooses to do so. Who can know anything about God without Him revealing Himself to us! Clearly there are varying degrees of that revelation.

For many, many years my goal in life has been to know Him better. Philippians 3:7-14 has been the passage that has most spoken to me as well as expressing my heart's desire over the years of my life. I've incorporated into the 'motto' of our church. Truly I want to know Christ – not just know about Him but to KNOW HIM. In fact part of that verse is my login to this laptop, something I type several times a day (sorry, I won't tell you the exact phrase, only my IT man knows that!).

So instead of rewarding me with blessings that focus on me, the Lord wants to reward me with allowing me a closer revelation of Himself. How that will happen I do not know. Through pain or pleasure? Sudden or gradual? With deep feeling or none at all? Through missing Nancy and loved ones or through enjoying their presence? I have no idea. I know it is something He wants to do for me, and for all of you as well. Even just realizing this has given me a greater appreciation of and closeness to Him. (Tuesday, Jan 15, 2013)

Philippians 3:7-11 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may

gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. 10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Pray I would be alert to what God wants to do in my life during this time in India. Pray for yourself, that you, too, would be desiring above all things, even above His other blessings, to know Him better. Pray that you would be open to Him being your great reward as well.

BLOG 170: RANDOM THOUGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS

DRIVING IN INDIA: Driving in India is exactly the same as the USA, except that there is no GPS coverage, no MapQuest and no internet help. Also there are no printed maps, street or highway signs, traffic signs, stop signs and virtually no stop lights. It's just like the USA except they drive on the other side of the road, very fast and very close together, the largest and fastest vehicles get the right of way, with virtually no traffic laws or speed limits, and you can drive on either side of the road. Also there are cows, ox carts, water buffaloes herds and hundreds of goats on all roads including the major highways. There are no sidewalks so everyone walks in the first lane of traffic. Where there are sidewalks the people use them for toilets so no one walks on them. And there is no car insurance like we have here, no seat belts and no state inspection. But other than that it's just like driving in the USA.

CAN I GET SOME SYMPATHY HERE? I don't suppose I can get any sympathy from you by complaining of the heat here? It gets into the lower 90's each afternoon. Humidity is low, but it would still be more comfortable were it only to go up to the upper 80's. It does hit the low 70's at night.

The lobby of our hotel last night was so large it took forever every time we walked across it! Isn't that terrible?

I finally ate my first meal since arriving here when I had breakfast this morning. Then I had a fresh, home cooked Indian meal for free at lunch. But they kept wanting to give me more food than I wanted to eat. Isn't that awful! Now I'll have to eat this great Indian food for the next 4 weeks! Any sympathy coming my way????

KEEPING THE SAME OLD THING FRESH We had the 3rd of 14 scheduled pastor's conferences today. They are virtually all the same for we hold them in new places to train unreached pastors. Only a couple of them are places and pastors we are familiar with. Sometimes I wonder how I can deliver 4 45+ minute sessions every day, and have it always the same, without getting bored or distracted. Last year God kept it fresh in me each time by giving me a special connection with and burden for each group of pastors and wives. Thus I could do every day as if it were the first day, therefore putting my best effort into it. This year God has convicted me of the importance of the material I present, deeply convicting me of just how excellent and important it is for pastors. I am deeply humbled at the privilege of being part of the tube (Moses being the other part) through which God has chosen to deliver these key truths to His people here. As I speak I am amazed and impressed at the wisdom and guidance being given. The 4 sessions dovetail perfectly, supplementing and building on each other. The 2 books given out afterwards take everything taught and give it more depth and personal application. It is truly an amazing package that has God's handwork all over it. Because of this I can focus and be fresh each morning no matter how many times I say the same thing or how physically tired I am. Having a front row seat to watch what God is doing is something I constantly thank Him for. (I wish it was a seat, everyone else sits all day while I stand barefoot on concrete 4 hours a day.)

BEAUTIFUL FEET Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" (Wednesday, Jan 16, 2013)

Romans 10:15 As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

I've seen the feet of hundreds of pastors in India and believe me, they are beautiful. Think of those who have had a good spiritual impact on your life over the years. Thank God for their 'beautiful feet' and ask Him to bless them this day.

BLOG 171: MAKING WAVES

At times I feel like what we do here is like dropping a stone in a lake. After the initial 'plop' the stone disappears. But then God reminds me that the ripples continue long after the pebble is gone. In fact, they get larger and larger as they move away from the pebble, until they touch every part of the lake. That's the assurance that keeps us moving ahead with our work here. What is invested in these men and women will grow in them and through them spread to others here and in following generations.. It's all about the pastors of India.

One of the many joys and privileges of being involved with the pastors of India is getting to know them and watching God work in and through them year after year. We go to new villages and have pastors' conferences in different places each year so we can train men who have not had the opportunity. That is the main focus of our ministry – train untrained pastors in India. So far we have had about 2000 pastors and 500 wives attend our conferences over the years.

But several years ago God added a new dimension to our work here – building in a deeper way into the lives of key pastors who train and oversee other pastors in their area. These gifted, influential men also lack training and resources, but find themselves in influential positions in the church structure in this part of India. In addition to attending the daily conferences year after year and learning there, we have the books I have written for them which have been translated into Telugu. They can use these and pass them on to other pastors who can never attend a conference. Each year we bring 40 or 50 of them together in one location for 2 full days of advanced training. We build on the individual conferences, as well as what we taught in previous years. It gives me an opportunity to go in depth with men I have gotten to know over the years. I have eaten in most of their homes and preached in most of their churches. They then take these truths and skills in pastoring and spiritual warfare and pass them on to other pastors, who will then do the same themselves.

Out of that group of 40 or 50 pastors, there are about a dozen we have chosen to help support financially. Some of you have been led to commit to sending \$25 a month for their support. Many people spend that much for coffee at Starbucks or Wawa each week, but for a pastor's family in India \$25 a month makes all the difference. Most of the pastors survive on \$50 a month and their families really struggle. The extra money allows them to have more time to minister, more funds to travel, provide an education for their children and makes it much easier for their wives to feed the family. For \$25 a month we help someone who is already on the field, knows the culture and language, has acceptance by the people, and who will stay on the field for life.

I have NO problem with missionaries who come to India from foreign countries. That is wonderful, and is a special calling from God. But when the cost in dollars, time and energy is compared to supporting a pastor who is already here for \$25 a month it's easy to see what an effective ministry this is. It doesn't just add, it multiplies. They will train pastors I never speak to, and they will follow up with them. These pastors will train others. The children of these pastors will be

trained as they grow as well. Beyond my lifetime, God will use this in a very special way to bring many lives from darkness to light in this part of India.

Pastor Moses stays in touch with these men regularly as he distributes the money. He visits with them several times a year holding follow-up conferences using materials we provide and paid for by funds you contribute. He is a great discipler of pastors and does an excellent job maturing them as Christian men and pastors.

A side benefit is that these pastors have someone in America committed to praying for them regularly as well. I keep those who give informed about needs and requests from these pastors and share pictures as well.

If this is a ministry God would lead you to commit to please let me know. There are many, many more pastors we'd like to include in the program. Dollar for dollar, I can't imagine a better investment in the Kingdom now and for eternity! (Thursday, Jan 16, 2013)

2 Timothy 2:1-2 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

Pray for me as I teach these men in our Leadership Conference on Friday and Saturday, January 18 and 19. Pray for Pastor Moses as he stays in touch with these men throughout the year. Pray for them regularly. I won't publically announce their names to protect them and their families in India, but can send you names and specifics if you email.

BLOG 172: TRAINING PASTORS THROUGH BOOKS, CD'S & DVD'S

It is a great joy and blessing for me when I enter the home of a pastor or church member here and happen to see one of my books among their possessions. Yesterday a pastor at the conference had a copy of my book on spiritual warfare, translated into Telugu, with him. It clearly showed the signs off being read over and over, with many notes I couldn't read inside. Throughout the year I receive a constant stream of positive feedback about how the book and truths in it really make a difference as churches and Christians find freedom from the stronghold Satan has on them in this dark country. The same is true of the book on what God expects of pastors. They have spread the main teachings of the pastors conferences to literally thousands of people for thousands of copies have been carefully distributed throughout a wide area. It was quite an initial expense to translate and print 5,000 each – about \$15,000. But it has been well worth it. That was done 2 years ago and many copies remain to be distributed as needed.

Our newest venture in our India ministry is through audio and video means. Last year the sessions were recorded in audio and video and with the help of those with much more technical ability than me we now have the 2 main session on what God expects of pastors and spiritual warfare on CD and DVD as well. I brought some copies to India to distribute and we will be putting both on our India web site so pastors throughout the world can have free access to them. This trip I am again making audio and video copies of my sessions with the hope of making more available and putting them on line. Once the initial time is given to making a master copy the reproduction and distribution cost of CD's and DVD's is inexpensive and on line it is virtually free.

I see this as an important part of the future work of this ministry. I will not always be able to do what I am now doing in India, but through this media any who know English or Telugu can watch and learn from conferences already done. Eventually I would like to have a full library of topics I have taught available, but it will take time from those with technological ability to prepare my raw audio and

video for production and use. While not many of the pastors in the villages have the ability to watch or listen to these, more and more are advancing to the point where this will soon be a possibility. Those with the necessary resources can have other believers and/or pastors join them in watching and learning. Pray God would guide and lead in this ministry as He would have it develop.

As to future projects, there is a desire to have my second spiritual warfare book translated and printed for it builds on the first and gives more advanced help to those ministering in this work. That would require more money than our India fund has, though, so it will have to wait until funds are available. There also is a great need for a third book, that on marriage and raising children for Christians in India, for there is nothing Biblical available for them here. Many have asked for it. I would enjoy such a challenge but again it depends on the funding. When God want us to go ahead with these things He will provide the finances. Pray for the truth to spread even without these means. (Friday, Jan 18, 2013)

Ephesians 4:11-13 It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Thank God for the multiple resources He has made available for you to learn His word and share it in your culture. Pray for those less fortunate. Pray for wisdom and guidance for me to lead this ministry as God would have it led.

BLOG 173: RANDOM THOUGHTS

Thursday's day off was a new experience. It was much needed physically and mentally. I found a small exercise room with a jogger, bike and hand weights – I spend an hour there each day now. Pastor Moses was able to locate some much needed medicine at a local drug store and I am thankful for that. On the down side, though, I got a few drops of water on my keyboard when opening a water bottle and thought I lost my laptop for the rest of the trip. I did some serious praying and later, when Peter returned, he was able to get it working for me again. It's not perfect in all ways, but definitely usable.

Peter left on Friday and I miss him. He was a great help, companionship, someone to talk to and a great friend. Now I am my own backup – well obviously God is and always has been my backup. I do miss Peter, though, and am very grateful for the time he was with me here. Thanks!

Reports from the pastors. Pastor Moses was sharing with me the notes he was mailed from some pastors who he didn't know but who came across our Spiritual Warfare book. One wrote about how he was delivered from that which was demonizing him by reading the book. He said he used it for sermons to teach his people. Other pastors who have received the book from friends said they, too, taught it to their people and the results are wondrous. One pastor we don't know got a copy and wrote asking more so he can give them to a group of pastors he is training. In the USA we have seemed to move past printed materials in our information distribution but in a culture where that has not happened, and where many places are without electricity most of the time, people love books to hold and ready. There are not many good books for the pastors, so we are privileged to provide this and the book What God Expects From Pastors to them for free. They are really well used.

Many thanks to those of you who have dropped me a line through email. They are greatly appreciated, a life-line back home. They are encouraging and greatly supportive. Thanks and keep

them coming!

Please keep praying for me. Normally I am a very good sleeper, but it seems every time I come to India I sleep for a few hours then lay awake the rest of the night. I can easily fall asleep sitting up in a moving car which is starting and stopping and bumping along with continual horns honking outside, by lying in a quiet bed seems to continue to be a problem. I brought 2 kinds of sleeping pills and neither makes a difference. Prayer does.

Pastors' conference results. The reports from all the pastors who come is overwhelming appreciation and gratitude for the things we teach them, things they say they have never heard and are hungry for: pastoring, marriage relationships and spiritual warfare. Pastor after pastor tells about how these things have changed them so very much. They are grateful beyond words. Thanks for your prayers and gifts that make this ministry possible.

Doing this ministry in India is privilege and blessing beyond what I can possibly imagine. The blessings of being the instrument for such a far-reaching ministry are beyond my wildest imaginings. Yet it is hard to get excited about what is happening because there is so much happening to me as well. It seems the price I personally pay gets higher each trip here. The price is physical, emotional, spiritual and social. Details aren't important. What is important is that, for whatever these things happen, God uses them to help me grow closer to Him. "Weak" is the word I keep thinking of when I think of myself – so very weak. Of course God brings Scripture to mind about when I am weak I am strong (II Corinthians 12:10). Every day I teach that our strength is in Him (Ephesians 6:10). Perhaps this is to help me better identify with the people here as well (1 Corinthians 9:22). I know God chooses the weak things of this world to work through (1 Corinthians 1:27). I know, too, His grace is sufficient for His power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). So if you are feeling weak today – look to Him as your strength and help. (Saturday, Jan 19, 2013)

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Do you feel weak physically, emotionally or spiritually right now? Look up the verses I referred to and ask God to speak to you through them. When do you feel the weakest? What is God trying to do in your life during these times?

BLOG 174: INDIA THROUGH MY EYES

By the end of this trip I'll have logged almost 6 months total time in India. While I'll never get used to the idea of being in India, I do notice changes in how it has impacted me over the years. Here are some observation, in case you are interested and have nothing else to do at the moment!

I CAN TELL I'VE BEEN IN INDIA BEFORE WHEN:

I no longer count the number of people on a motorcycles or animals on a bicycle.

A 10 hour plane ride sounds like a great opportunity to rest and read.

I can travel for 4 weeks with all my clothing, food, magic, teaching materials and personal items in one carry-on suitcase.

I can calmly ride in a car without even watching the traffic zipping crazily in front of us.

I know which spice leaves to not eat and which are OK in the food I'm given.

Converting dollars to rupees and vice versa becomes second nature, and so does figuring out the time back home.

The horrible poverty of the masses starts to look commonplace and loses its shock value.

The smell of the air in the cities no longer surprises me.

I can say common greetings in Hindi and Telugu.

I automatically clean my hands with sanitizer after shaking hands with a stranger.

I drop from taking 6,000 pictures a visit to 600.

Children and animals defecating in the road in front of me only cause me to veer a past and miss them without giving them another thought.

Open sewers are hardly noticed.

I don't take pictures of raw beef and chicken covered with flies hanging out in the sun all day.

I am no longer self-conscious about being the only white person within miles.

I'm more interested in keeping sand from between my toes all day than standing in the Indian Ocean.

It doesn't bother me that only one or two people within miles can speak fluent English, and even then it is their second language.

I can ignore cripple children who beg from me without being tempted to stare at their infirmity.

I no longer try to understand how or why people live in such awful conditions.

Traveling on the left side of the road seems natural.

I know what a food item is going to taste like by looking at it, without having to take a bite.

I can read while driving without having to look up every time a horn honks.

It seems more natural for people to go to the bathroom any time and place.

My body no longer expects food or sleep at preset times. It'll take either whenever.

I no longer reach for my camera every time I see cows laying in the road.

I automatically go by my rule: never pass up an opportunity to go to the bathroom, you never know when the next opportunity will be!

THINGS I DON'T THINK I WILL EVER GET USED TO (AT LEAST I HOPE NOT)

The hospitality and giving of the Christians in India just blows me away.

The vast numbers of people everywhere all the time is hard to grasp.

The great love, joy and appreciation of the believers in India.

The extreme amount of human and pain and suffering everywhere, and the hopelessness with it.

The amazing variety and beauty of the sari's the women wear for every activity.

The darkness that surrounds everything Muslim.

The privilege of coming here with a message of life and hope.

The wonderful feeling of going quickly through customs entering the USA, knowing it is my country and I am always allowed to enter! (Sunday, Jan 20, 2013)

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: 2 a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, 3 a time to

kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, 4 a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, 5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, 6 a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, 7 a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, 8 a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

How has your perception of the things around you changed over the years? Think of your surroundings, job, relationships, etc. Have they changed or has the way you look at them changed? How has your perception of God changed? We know He doesn't change.

BLOG 175: A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR MOSES

Today's blog is from Pastor Moses, the man I've been ministering with here since 2007. I asked him to say something for you. Here it is:

"I would like to come and see all of you who are praying and supporting us in India. I want to thank you for your prayers and support for the pastors here in India. I would like to talk to you and tell you about our ministry in India with Pastor Jerry. We want to support more pastors here who are doing a very good ministry. We are thankful to all the donors who are supporting the pastors here. The pastors all say, "Thank you very much for supporting us."

"The pastors and their wives have been blessed by the marriage conferences about how to live together with each other and the Lord. Having a book will bless them and help them teach this to their church members.

"The pastors who are coming to the conferences are very much blessed. They don't know how to treat their wives before but now they know and are very grateful. They wives are greatly blessed as well. They are blessed by the spiritual warfare teaching and the teaching about spiritual growth. They want to live as God expects them as pastors and husbands.

"Through the Leadership Conference many of the leaders come to be trained, like Paul, so they can train disciples like Paul trained Timothy and Jesus trained His disciples. There are 5 leaders who want to make more Timothy's in their churches and plant many new churches.

"I am appreciative especially to Main Street Baptist Church for the car. With it I can go places much better and get a lot more ministry accomplished. Thank you very much.

"I have a desire to go to Uganda, Africa, where I have been invited to come and teach pastors. I want to teach the pastors about spiritual warfare and What God Expects of Pastors. I will use the books that Pastor Jerry wrote and give them out to pastors there. The books are very helpful to the pastors who are ministering to the people who are suffering. The pastors who read the books are blessed. They are using them for their own spiritual growth and they are also teaching them in the churches. We would like to have the next spiritual warfare book, from Genesis to Revelation, so we can give that to the pastors as well. We would like a book on marriage, about how we can live together, as well." P. Karunakar Moses, Hyderabad, India

What a blessing and privilege to be used by God in such a special way. And to have the messages and books we use here now be used to teach pastors in Uganda is a real blessing. Books will be left there to spread as well. Since English is one of their national languages the English copies of the books will be great. During the past year several other pastors in various parts of the world have asked if they can use my books, especially the spiritual warfare one, for training pastors or seminary students. Praise God for that! (Monday, Jan 21, 2013)

Philippians 1:3-6 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you,

I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Thank God for the privilege of partnering with these fine Christians here in India. Let their devotion and commitment bring joy to you as it does to me. And remember God's promise that HE will carry it on to completion. Thank Him for that as well. Make your prayer a time a time of thankfulness to God as Paul says in this passage.

BLOG 176: MEET THE FACES

Today, Monday, we had the first of 6 pastor's Conferences in a row this week. It went very well – God blesses them all. I'd like to tell you about 2 of the people who attended, though, for that will help you meet the pastors of India, the faces you see in the pictures.

DAVID is a young man in his late twenties. He is of Gypsy background – they were the original inhabitants of India before the Hindu's moved in thousands of years ago. They are like our Native Americans, and have been treated much the same. They are looked down as below the lowest caste. David had a good factory job but was demonically oppressed. He tried cult remedies but nothing happened until a pastor prayed for him and he was delivered. His life totally changed. He was baptized and joined a church. He told his family about his new faith but to this day none have followed him. He helped his pastor whenever he could. Seven years ago he felt God calling him to leave his good paying factory job and start a church full time. People mocked him and said he should do both but he knew God's calling and quit. He has used the money he saved to start building a church building for his 2 congregations of 10 and 15 people to meet together. He lives in a tiny shack on the property while working on the building.

He has a deep burden for the poor community where he lives. (We had to park the car and walk across stones in a creek to even reach the village.) He calls his church Victory prayer Hall. He wants to build a room on the back for a home and is looking for a wife. We helped him a bit financially and will do so in the future as it is possible. If we have enough resources we'd like to include David as one of the pastors we sponsor.

MATTHEW & ESTHER took those names 25 years ago when they became believers. They grew up Muslim but didn't want their Muslim names any more. Esther had been severely demonized and nothing helped her. She tried Muslim healing techniques and special locations, then Hindu temples and some of the most popular pilgrimage sites for healing in India but nothing set her free. Then she was invited to a church and went. A Christian prayed for her and she was immediately delivered. She and her husband both became believers and were baptized. Ten years ago, in their early 50's, they built a house in their village with a second floor that could be used for a church. They have a small congregation of exHindu and exMuslim people coming. The local Muslim community has officially banned them and forbidden any of its people from having anything to do with them, but a small church meets regularly for worship and prayer. I first met them today when Matthew quickly hobbled up to take my brief case so I wouldn't have to carry it.

Several members of the church came by for prayer while we were there. A young mother started having eye and head problems as couple weeks ago. Doctors in the biggest nearby city couldn't help her. One eye ball is growing and moves about on its own, out of her control. The sides of her face are getting hard and numb. It is progressing fairly quickly. She asked me to pray for God to heal her. A woman in her 70's was also present. She suffers from arthritis and joint problems and can hardly get around. She is a fairly new believer but has faithfully told every single one of her

relatives about Jesus, and families in India are quite large! A man in his 30's was there asking for prayer for a lung condition. A 12 year old boy came for prayer also. It was quite a variety for a congregation, but Jesus clearly was with them. They are the church Jesus loves and died for!

These are the people and the situations we work with each day, multiplied many times over. Usually 50 pastors plus a dozen wives attend each day. Neither one of these 2 had any church background or any Bible or pastoral training. They work independently so don't have any resources or support. Still, they faithfully do what they can out of a heart of love for Jesus. Our teachings, books and fellowship with other pastors is a real lifeline for them. Thanks for your part in praying and giving, God answers your prayers and blesses all you do. Thanks! (Tuesday, Jan 22, 2013)

Matthew 18:19-20 "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

Pray for David, and for Matthew and Esther. Pray for the thousands of pastors and wives throughout the world who are similar to them. Pray for the faithful pastors God has put in your life as well.

BLOG 177: A TYPICAL DAY FOR ME IN INDIA

What does a typical day for me look like? Let's see if I can describe it. I usually am up by 6 at the latest, depending on if I am able to go back to sleep when waking up during the night. It does give me a good opportunity to pray for there are many things to pray about. There are certain Psalms and passages that God provides on each trip, often through what others like you share with me, which bring comfort and assurance. I often read through them as well, bed time or awakening.

After getting ready for the day I send the blog I have prepared the day before. If possible I IM with Nancy through our Google email account. That is an important way for me to start the day. We then have a free continental breakfast in the hotel restaurant: lots of fresh fruit and juices, bran flakes with milk (usually hot, for its all they have), toast, and various India breakfast foods (ones not too spicy).

Moses and I return to the room pray, and leave for the day. We leave about 8 AM (which is 9:30 PM the previous evening your time). We drive usually an hour or two, sometimes more, to the site of the pastor's conference for that day. Moses takes care of last minute details and I set up for the day. If there is time I stroll around the village and take some pictures.

After singing and testimonies I present my first message: What Does God Expect of Pastors. Then after a chai break I talk about Marriage and Ministry – what God expects of husbands and wives, and apply it to pastoring as well. We have an hour break for lunch, fresh home-made Indian food cooked right outside the door. I always eat whatever they make. I have a shorter session on How To Tell If You are Growing Spiritually, 10 questions for themselves and their churches. The final session, on spiritual warfare from Mark 5 and the demonized man in the Gadarenes, is our most powerful. It ends with all praying for themselves, their families, homes and churches to be free from anything demonic.

Each session is 45 minutes to one hour, depending on how the schedule is flowing. I use 3 or 4 magic tricks with each presentation and that is very well accepted. We do this 6 days a week. Usually one day a week we will be at a group of pastors who have come in the past. In that case I go over different subjects, depending on the group.

At the end of the sessions we give a certificate saying they have attended, copies of my books, and a small amount of money to help with their travel expenses coming and going. Many of them will come up to me afterwards, asking me to lay hands on them and pray for them. That is a great

blessing and privilege.

By then I am really exhausted. The four hours of standing and focusing so completely on what I will say next, culminating with the intense battle the spiritual warfare teaching and prayer always is, always really drain me. The heat doesn't help. I think of Paul's words about being poured out (2 Timothy 4:6) and understand a little better what he was talking about.

On the way home we often stop at one or two of the churches of the pastors who came so they can show us their ministry and have us pray over them and it. That's very rewarding, and humbling!

We then drive back to the hotel, arriving between 6 and 7. We used to have one or two church services in the evening with pastors who would invite us. That was very enjoyable, but it meant we got back at 10 or later so we have not been doing that this trip.

Driving back I'll download my pictures, audio and video recordings, organize and catalogue them. I'll write a blog, too, if possible. In the evening I'll use the 'exercise room' in the hotel if there is time, IM with Nancy if possible, and read my emails. That is a special time for me to refresh and reenergize. Many thanks to you who email; it is a wonderful link to all of you at home. I also unpack and repack for the next day, getting ready for what I will be doing. If it is new or different I'll review my notes as well.

We'll often go to the hotel dining room for supper, although I won't eat a lot. Big, late meals are traditional in India but not with me. I'll eat a little something or some of the food I brought from home. I try to get to bed between 8 and 10 at the latest, depending on what time we get back. Lying and reading for a few minutes is a great joy. Then I get up and do the same thing again. (Wednesday, Jan 23, 2013)

Lamentations 3:22-23 Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Think of your 'typical' day and thank God for it. Thank Him for His faithful love and compassion so that you are not overwhelmed. Thank Him for providing it anew every morning, if you notice and appreciate it or not.

BLOG 178: WHAT TO TEACH THE PASTORS?

Our Pastor's Conferences focus on the theme "What God Expects." We apply that to pastoring and to marriage. The two are woven together and complement each other quite nicely. Spiritual Warfare teaching and prayer always concludes the day, having victory over what would keep us from doing what God expects in these areas. It's pretty obvious that covering what God expects of pastors would be essential as basic material for pastors with no training. And why I always go over spiritual warfare is obvious as well. But some may wonder why, of all the things untrained pastors need to know, do I put such a high emphasis on what God expects of husbands and wives. Mainly, God has put that deeply in my heart and Pastor Moses' as well. Let me try to explain why.

God makes it clear that being a good husband is more important to Him than being a good pastor. In fact, if a man isn't a good husband he shouldn't even be a pastor (1 Timothy 3:4-5). If a husband-wife relationship isn't what it should be we can't grow spiritually (1 Peter 3:7). God's chosen way of showing the world His love for us, the Bride of Christ, is through marriage (Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

A godly marriage is our greatest witness to the world – a husband reflecting Jesus' unconditional, sacrificial love for the church and her loving, trusting submission in faith to Him. That is especially needed in India where women are poorly as anywhere in the world. Pastors' families must

reflect the difference Jesus makes to the world around them, to other Christians and to their own children.

Satan works hard to defeat the pastors in India, and attacking their marriage is one of his most successful tactics. He first used it in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3) where Eve was used to mislead Adam. Pastors need peace and support in their families. Encouragement and prayer at home is essential to face all they face in ministry.

The testimonies of those who attend bear this out. The material about pastoring and spiritual warfare is recognized as essential and ministry changing, but it is always the training about marriage that they say will change their life. Testimony after testimony says they never heard this teaching before but they see in the Bible it is true and want to live their lives in this way. It is what is most commented on long after the conferences and the reason they want me to come back and hold other conferences for other pastors in their area. It fills a great need they didn't even realize they had. It will change their marriages, lives, churches and help them grow spiritually in ways nothing else can.

Perhaps this shows, too, why we feel a small book on marriage is so essential. It will follow up on what is taught, add more details in information, be something pastors will use for sermons be something that can be given to those who weren't at the conferences. There is nothing like it in Telugu speaking India. Praise God for the opportunity he has given us of being pioneers in this much needed area. We'll also have video and audio copies of this session available on line as well as for free distribution in India.

God instituted marriage before sin even entered, long before He instituted the church. The church can only be as strong as its families. May God help the pastors in India lead the way to stronger churches through stronger families. (Thursday, Jan 24, 2013)

Ephesians 5:22-33 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. ... 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Is your marriage a good reflection of Christ and the church? Even if imperfect, is it moving in the right direction, more godly than it was last year? Is it your top priority or are you letting it drift? What can YOU do TODAY to help your marriage better reflect Jesus and His love for us?

BLOG 179: MEET THE FACES – 2

Naltau was considered an enemy of the state. He was part of a political group that used violence to further their cause. He was strongly caught up in the movement –it was his life. Then he was arrested and put in jail in Hyderabad where little justice is shown to political prisoners. While in his cell, though, he heard someone talking about Jesus. God spoke to his heart and gave him a thirst to know more. Before long he gave his heart and his life to Jesus. Eventually he was released from prison, a changed man. Like Simon the Zealot, one of the twelve chosen by Jesus 2000 ago, Naltau changed his cause from political overthrow to spiritual transformation. From battling India's government, he is now fighting against Satan's kingdom in India. His wife, **Ribca**, became a believer as well. They moved to the coast near Koduru and started a church among the fishermen. They call their little group the New Testament Church. The going has been rough but he remains faithful. He is not a young man and his face clearly reveals a hard life of crime, but when he smiles the love of Jesus in his heart is unmistakable. His is one of the faces in the pictures of the pastors' conferences.

One of the pastors we support and who comes to the Leadership Conference every year is **Sudhakar**. He faithfully comes to all the Pastor's Conferences that are near him to help with the behind the scenes work. He is one of the native peoples ('Gypsy') from the Arukala tribe. His mother worshipped Dorga, a female deity with a temple in nearby Vijayawada but when she couldn't find freedom from the demons who haunted her through Dorga worship she attended a Christian service on the invitation of a friend. There she found freedom in Jesus. She continued attending and took her son, Sudhakar, with her. He grew to follow the Lord and be baptized. They are the only believers in their family. His wife, **Yitamala**, is a Dalit who is a believer. They have a son and daughter. Five years ago, while reading Isaiah 42, God called him to be a pastor. He lives in a colony of Gypsies, a relocation project by the government who removed from their roadside huts to widen the road. This face is well known to me. This year he hosted a Pastor's Conference in his church on January 24. His church is very, very small and he wants to enlarge it and build a home in an adjoining room. Pray God provides for these needs. Sudhakar is a faithful behind-the-scenes worker and one of the who has come year after year to learn more and grow. It's been a joy mentoring him. He is one of the pastors we support financially as well. (Friday, Jan 25, 2013)

Ephesians 2:1-10 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

You may not have as dramatic a testimony as some of these people in India, but sin is sin. We are just as lost as them without Jesus. We are as dependent on His grace as they are. We are no closer to heaven without Jesus than the worst of them. Take time to thank God for your salvation for it is as truly miraculous as anyone else.

BLOG 180: GOD'S GPS

My Samsung Tablet has GPS capabilities, even without internet connection. It's interesting for me to use it to see where we are and where we are going. Roads in India have no pattern or clear direction. Very few even have names. Every road goes right through the middle of crowded village after crowded village. I have no idea where we are or how to get where we are going, even though I usually have a very good sense of direction. Often Pastor Moses isn't sure which way to go either. When that happens I turn on my GPS, wait for it to connect with its satellite system, locate where we are and the direction where we want to go, and then I can tell Moses if he needs to go right or left at the next crossroad.

God's Word is like my GPS. We need to open it, connect with God through His Spirit, and let Him show us where we are and help us move in the direction we need to go. Without His Word we are lost, adrift in a sea of darkness and confusion. The use of GPSs has changed the way we drive. Oh that the user of God's Word would change the way we live! (Saturday, Jan 26, 2013)

Hebrews 4:12-13 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Have you taken time to read God's Word today? This is a day you have never traveled so make sure you face it with the GPS of His Word clearly in your mind and heart.

THE 'INDIAN' IN ME

You'd have to trace my family tree all the way back to Noah himself to find any family connection between me and the people in India. However in some ways I fit in quite naturally and comfortably here. Below is a list of the ways I fit in nicely. The better you know me the more you'll understand the following:

Nobody thinks I'm short

Nobody thinks I'm Japanese

Gray hair is respected

Eating with your fingers is not frowned upon, actually its encouraged

You can deeply connect with someone, soul to soul, without having to say a word

A few hand gestures and the conversation is over – no need for small talk

Being shy and quiet is respected behavior

Women look up to me

Children are enthralled with me. One smile and they follow me everywhere.

If I say the wrong thing no one knows – no one understands me

My poor hearing is covered up by the fact I couldn't understand them even if I could clearly hear them

Sandals are the perfect footwear for any occasion

Yogurt is served with every meal

A simple magic trick makes the people think I am the best entertainer ever

Small feet are 'in'

No one comments about me having a dark complexion

Putting things off is an accepted lifestyle

A protruding belly is a sign of prosperity and good health

No long, cold winters – every day is perfect to get outside

Sitting on the floor shows good manners.

Long sermons are the norm

Singing doesn't have to be on key as long as it is loud

Women are always waiting to carry luggage or bring food

I can ride on the back of a motorcycle without causing any undue attention

A blank stare in response to a question seems perfectly acceptable

Men aren't expected to know how to cook or do anything in the kitchen, just how to eat

My confusion is covered up by all the people around me who are even more confused than me.

Dunking cookies (in chai) is done by everyone everywhere.

I'm not expected to smile for photographs – a straight face is the norm.

Fashions never change – anything is fine any time anywhere.

A simple "Hello", followed a few seconds later by a quick "Good-bye," constitute an acceptable conversation.

Maybe you are finding you have some long-lost Indian blood in you as well! Great! There's plenty of room in India for everyone!

BLOG 181: HOME, SWEET KODURU

If I ever had to choose a place in the world to make my second home, the choice would be easy – Koduru, AP, India. I've had pastors' conferences there for 4 years now. The first year I spent a week there and got to know the people and countryside very well. It's a very poor area. The huts only have electricity part of a day. Water, sanitation, etc., are worse than in most rural areas of India, partly because of the poverty of the people but also from lingering results from the tsunami that killed thousands of people there several years ago. What makes it special to me is the love and closeness I've developed with the Christians there.

It's the only place I go to every year, partly because of the closeness that has developed and also because it is **Pastor Barnabas'** home church. He and his wife, **Anasuya**, let me stay in their hut the first week I visited there. It was truly like living in a National Geographic magazine. He oversees the churches where most of the conferences are and of course wants those in his home area trained as well. After speaking there over 35 times I feel I have laid a good foundation of truth and have been able to build upon it. The pastors come back year after year, encouraged that I would return each to see them and teach them more.

A side benefit for me is that the church has one of the nicest bathrooms I have seen in any church. Understand in India this is very relative, but it still beats finding a bush by the road as is required in the other places we've met. Our India fund paid for its construction years ago so the women would be more comfortable when we had our week of meetings.

I have many, many wonderful memories of sessions and services there. They always honor me with a shawl and garland. My memories are of a hot, sometimes stifling, room packed with way too many people, and with the fans not working because there is no electricity. But it's the people that draw me back.

Jesudos is a big bear of a man with a continual laugh and wide smile on his face. He reminds me exactly of what Peter must have looked like. His wife, **Kumadi**, is about as big as he is. He is one of the most loving, friendly men I have met anywhere. Watching he and his wife interact during breaks and lunch touches my heart for they clearly have something very special between them – very rare in Indian marriages.

For years we have prayed for **Esther**. She is a servant, a sacrificial worker. One year she helped me hold an impromptu service for 100 local school kids who found out an American was in the church and stormed the place. We had an excellent evangelical service, her and I, working together like we've been doing it for years despite the fact we couldn't say anything in each other's language and didn't know we'd have it until they showed up. The difficulty, though, is that her husband, **Asuraj**, has a demonic anger problem and beats her and sometimes the children. His father is even worse. He wants to be a pastor but has never had victory over this. They came to me for prayer again after the conference today. and I prayed for deliverance the best I could. You can remember them as well.

It's rewarding seeing the young ones grow and marry. A wonderful young pastor who attends the leadership conferences each year is **Samuel**. He looks like a teenager, but introduced me to his young wife (who looks like a preteen) and their newly born baby. It's been a fruitful year for him.. The down side is seeing some of the older ones, like **Paul**, fade. He was a pastor who was a wonderful singer and took every opportunity to sing praises from his heart. Our fund helped him repair his church roof for it was unusable during the rain. There are many others I could speak of as well, men and women, young and old. Each one special in God's sight – and mine.

We have had wonderful times of praise, happy times of laughter, exciting children's programs, some tense moments of spiritual warfare when some demonized pastors started acting out, many serious times of teaching, and great times of prayer and fellowship amongst it all. And of course there is always food every time we meet.

It is always very wonderful to come to the church in the morning, but very sad and very hard to leave at the end of the day. I wish I had time to spend a week there, and so do they, but that doesn't seem possible again. They keep wanting me to bring Nancy, for she has never been there. This year they kept saying that over and over, finally insisting I promise to bring her next year. So I promised. I'm not sure she'd want to have a second home in Koduru, although you can easily get a nice straw hut for a few hundred dollars, one of the best in the neighborhood. As far as real estate goes, it's all about location, and Koduru is a very special location for me! (Sunday, Jan 27, 2013)

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. 12 May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. 13 May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

Who are some of the people God has put in your life to provide love, encouragement and comfort? Who are those you feel most comfortable and 'at home' with? Thank God for them. Ask Him to bless them. And ask Him to make you able to fill that role in the lives of others as well.

BLOG 182: SCHEDULE CHANGES....

My time here is half way over finally already. (Notice I have very mixed feelings about that.) Things have gone as expected and planned, except for a series of very annoying but not overly 'serious' physical ailments. Those weren't in the plan, but such is life. I and Moses as well, continue to be amazed at the continual stream of reports, both in person and on the phone, from pastors who have attended the conferences. They are unanimous in their praise about how very, very beneficial the sessions have been to them. God is using and blessing these conferences far, far, far beyond anything I ever imagined. It's not just a surface, emotional excitement. It's a deep in the heart sowing of seeds that will grow and produce for literally generations to come. "We never heard anything like this." "Now we can have a completed marriage." Over and over we hear this. By allowing me to a channel He uses to convey this to these people God has given me a privilege far beyond anything I could have ever imagined. The deep joy and complete humility at being chosen to be used in this way are something I can't find words to describe. Surely this is a tiny taste of what joy, peace and blessing will be like in heaven! These first 3 weeks have been difficult and draining but have been worth more than any cost.

While the first half of this trip has gone as planned, the second half will not. If you know me you know I am all about planning ahead, having all my ducks in order. Life has enough surprises without me adding to them! My original plan was to have Nancy along for part of the visit, and then a friend was to come instead but had to cancel at the last minute. Now the last week's travel has been changed as well. Instead of flying to Pune and then traveling to Ahmednagar to see the orphan children we support and speak to the churches there, I will be staying in Hyderabad with Pastor Moses. While I feel badly because I will not minister there or see the children, I know God is behind this and I feel great peace about it. It has come after much prayer and seeking God's will. I'm not sure of all God's reasons for doing/allowing this, but that is true of other plans changing concerning this trip as well. I know God wants us to do more pastors' conferences during that time, for that is the reason I come to India. I will have some free time to start writing the book on marriage which is so needed here and which will take some uninterrupted time to pray, think and plan. Pray for us to know and do God's will during this time. What other reasons for this we may or may not ever know.

I appreciate your prayers for God's will to be done in tis. Below is an updated prayer list. It is attached as a document as well. Please use this instead of the one I gave out before I left. Thanks for your prayers!!!! (Monday, Jan 28, 2013)

Acts 16:6-10 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

How do you respond when God changes your plans at the last minute, when He keeps you from doing something you wanted to do and thought was His will? Can you think of such times in your life? Is something like that happening now? How should you respond when it happens again?

BLOG 183: MEET THE FACES – 3

Solomon is not the typical Indian pastor. He is very much a sanguine temperament, loving to talk, smile and be in the center of every conversation. He loves action and always is in the center of it. He is of the tribal people (Gypsy) – Jagala tribe. For most of his life he was a committed devotee of the Hindu god who was worshipped locally. In fact, he became a Hindu exorcist, an expert in using Hindu rituals to free people from demonic oppression. For 9 years after marriage he and his wife were unable to have children, and she became greatly demonized. He tried everything he could to free her but nothing worked. Eventually they went to a church where the people prayed and she was delivered. They kept going to the church and became Christians. Within a year they had their first child. They now have 4 daughters and one son. God called him to the ministry several years ago and he pastors 4 house churches, including one in his own home. He oversees other works as well. He is a fine, faithful, hardworking servant of God. He is one of the pastors we have been supporting so he has more time to devote to his ministry. Remember him when you pray for the pastors of India.

Each year one pastor seems to step up to serve me: carry my things, bring me food, etc.

Baskar is the man this year. He is in his 30's, maybe 40's. He is a sharp dresser, usually wearing a motorcycle jacket and sunglasses. He has one of the biggest motorcycles I have seen any pastor have. Baskar grew up in a Christian home but never followed the Lord. He became a smoker, drinker, and critic of others when he became an adult. He loved to spend money and was deeply in debt. He earned his living painting Hindu temple and had a very well respected reputation doing that work in the Vijayawada area. His wife was a believer and sometimes he would go to church with her. One Sunday he visited Pastor Barnabas' church (he is Moses' father in law and right hand man, and one of the men I most respect in the world). God spoke to him one Sunday and Baskar wanted to change and become Christian, so accepted the Lord and faithfully attended church. He was a good student of the Word and after a year was baptized. He attended a training class on witnessing that Pastor Barnabas and Pastor Moses held in his church, and was challenged to start a church in a churchless village near where he lived. He still works, but paints churches and Christian homes now. He has several men working for him. Wherever he goes Pastor Barnabas takes him along, like Paul with Timothy, and disciples. I have seen him at numerous pastors' conferences for the last several years. His wife, **Jyoti**, is a nurse in the local hospital. They have no children and want to adopt. He is one of the next generation of pastors being trained in India and is a fine servant of Jesus.

Pastor Barnabas is a man I greatly respect. He is one of the finest pastors and men I have ever known any time anywhere. I have known him for many years. In 2009 I lived in his hut in Koduru for a week, drawing water from his well and shaving using a piece of metal tacked to a coconut tree. While he and his wife knelt on the stone floor of the church for most of each night, praying for God to bless my sessions the next day, I slept in their bed in their hut. He is Moses' father-in-law, a farmer who

grew up in a Hindu family. His mother became a Christian and then he followed. He entered the ministry in the later years of his life. He oversees more churches and entire church districts than anyone I know of, traveling hours and hours on his motorcycle. He is my age and we share several gifts/interests, ministering in spiritual warfare, mentoring and pastoring. He attends almost every pastor's conference since most are locally arranged by him. We work closely and well before, during and after the conferences despite the fact that he doesn't know one word of English and I don't know Telugu. Several years ago he knelt before me for me to lay hands on him and pray for him, which I did. Then I had him stand up and I kneeled before him, signaling him to pray for me in the same way and he did. I don't know what he said, but I feel the results of those prayers continuing today. I really look forward to many long conversations with him when we can finally freely communicate with words. (Tuesday, January 29, 2013)

Colossians 1:3-6 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel 6 that has come to you.

These people don't realize we are watching their lives and are greatly encouraged by them. Think of those who are watching your life and are encouraged by you? Is the change in your life visible to others so their faith can increase because of you? Commit to being a living witness for Jesus today.

BLOG 184: A PARTNERSHIP FORMED IN HEAVEN

I never stop being amazed at how perfectly God put Pastor Moses and myself together to form this team. We comment often about what an unlikely but perfect union it is. We are both independent men who work best alone, not with others. Yet we spend 3 to 5 weeks together every year, 24 hours a day 7 days a week: eating, walking, driving, sleeping and living in the same room. We are different ages, different cultures, different language, different backgrounds and different personalities, yet we have the same heart for this ministry to the pastors in India. We are, literally, worlds apart. We are complete opposites, but we fit together perfectly.

Moses is an idea guy, a big planner, an entrepreneur who gets things done. I am none of those. I work quietly behind the scenes studying and preparing lessons. We are opposites, but we have totally the same philosophy, goals, motives, reasoning, priorities and working strategies as each other. We continually feel the same about every decision, every problem, every challenge and every situation (and there are plenty of them). In this ministry here we are like the same heart in two separate bodies. That carries over to our almost daily communication through the rest of the year as well.

We never really planned it, it just fell together that I would do the teaching, sermons, books, etc. and Moses would take care of the plans and schedules as well as the money needed to do everything. He has never ever once asked me what I would be speaking about or told me what to say or not say. I ask his opinion often and he gives it, but he totally trusts that whenever I speak that I will say what God wants me to say to the people. These are his friends, his burden, his reputation and He trusts God to lead me.

I, on the other hand, send him thousands and thousands of dollars to use for this ministry. I let him plan the whole schedule and follow wherever he leads. I have never ever questioned him or demanded proof of the money use or what he does. Of course he starts with a budget and keeps records of expenditures. I get an overall summary at the end, but I have no way of checking out the accuracy of what He writes. I totally trust Him, for He is accountable to God. He does this because God has burdened Him to do it and it comes from his love for the pastors of India as well. He would

no sooner be dishonest with the money than I would be irresponsible for my teaching. I have seen many proofs of his total honesty and trustworthiness over the years.

Not only do we plan, live and travel together, but we teach together. He has been my translator for pastors' conferences starting in 2006. As often as I have taught these things he has translated. He's one of the very few Indians whose English I can clearly understand, and who can understand mine. I talk with him ahead of time about tricky phrases, theological points, and word comparisons so we can make sure he knows what is coming and can accurately translate it. He knows my material by heart, as well as I do. In fact, during the year when he goes to new groups of pastors he uses those messages himself. He will use them, too, in Uganda in August. We have been doing this so long we can read each other very well. We what the other will think and how they will respond when emergencies or interruptions occur. We both know the right timing for him to take over and apply a point or conclude a message in a way culturally appropriate for the specific audience. I back off and he takes over. Other times he lets me take the lead. Like me, he tries to make each session a little better done than the last one. Despite doing the same 4 lessons 20 times while here, we each audience as in need of the material we have to present and that keeps it fresh for both of us. I know his English skills and limits and stay within them. He knows what I am thinking even if I don't express it the best way and passes it on what he knows I want to communicate.

We have become best friends, sharing everything in life, talking about every subject imaginable, and laughing together long and often. I feel I really, totally know him inside and out, and I feel he knows me as well.

Only God could have taken this shy, stay-at-home guy from the USA and teamed him up with a fire-ball of an Indian and have it work out so perfectly. Not only are we efficient, but we enjoy each other. Our similarities bind us together; our differences balance each other out. Truly, this is a match made in heaven! (Wednesday, January 30, 2013)

Colossians 4:7 Tychicus ... is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.

Romans 16:3-5 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.

2 Corinthians 8:23-24 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you.

Who are some of the 'fellow servants' God has placed in your life to help you walk to path He has chosen for you? Think of them, thank God for them and pray for them one by one.

BLOG 185: WHAT THE PASTORS ARE SAYING...

After each conference a time is given for testimonies from the pastors and wives. This gives them a chance to share what God taught them, affirm the accuracy of what has been taught, and give us some feedback. There is lots of laughing, applause and looking at me (usually when they laugh). I can't understand a word of it, but in the car going home I'll ask Moses what they said. Here are some of their comments in their own words:

"Pastors wives have never been able to come to pastors conferences before so when I found out I could come today I wanted to come. It was 8:30 so I got ready quickly and we left at 9:30. I thought today was going to be special because a foreigner was coming so I thought I would hear a good message. I wanted to hear from God. I prayed for God to use it to speak to me and He answered my prayer. I was greatly blessed by learning how to submit to my husband and how we can have a good marriage in God's sight. I have never heard anything like this before. Now we know what God wants us to do as husband and wife. We will go home and do these things that God wants

and our home and marriage will be much better. I am very glad I came. I almost missed a great blessing by not coming. Thank you very, very much."

Her husband, Pastor Isaac, also shared a testimony about how this will help him know how to be the husband God wants him to be and make their marriage so much better. He said many pastors' marriages are not good. If we have a good marriage we can reach the world, if we don't have a good marriage we won't be good pastors. He also went into detail explaining how God's Spirit touched his heart during the spiritual warfare prayer after that session. He felt something change and God come into Him in a very special way. He said he is very grateful for the teachings.

"The prayer for victory over the demonic is a great blessing for the pastors. Now we can be free from the demons and help our people be free. No other conference ever had this kind of teaching. We are very blessed by it. The books are a wonderful help as well. Now we can read and study more. We can use them for sermons for our people. It was a wonderful blessing and we want you to come back very soon."

"The ten topics about spiritual growth were a special blessing. Now we know how to grow. We can measure our spiritual growth and the spiritual growth of our church. Thank you very, very much. We have had many gatherings of pastors but never one where we were taught like we were here today. Thank you very much for coming and please come back soon."

"We never knew our wives are to be our number 1 sheep. It is very eye-opening for us. We have never heard such things. Now we know how to have a marriage like God wants us to have. Please come again and teach us more."

"It is a great blessing to hear these things. No one ever taught us these things. Now we know how to submit to our husbands from our heart, not just in what we do. I now understand that when I submit to my husband I am really submitting to the Lord. I know God will use our submission from our hearts to change our husbands so they aren't angry and so they love us more." – a pastor's wife

"Now we know what God expects of pastors, how we are to lead and train others. Now we know how God wants us to preach, how we are to prepare ahead and teach God's Word to our people. It is wonderful to know these things. No one ever told us these things before."

Many wives said that they now have a chance to share among the women and with the children in the church. "Our husbands have not let us minister with our gifts in our churches. Now they are letting us talk and minister in the church to the glory of God. It is wonderful to be able to minister together and help each other. We did not know we should do this. Someone told our husbands that wives should not speak in churches so we were never allowed to say or do anything, even with the women and children. Thanks so much for speaking to us from God's Word and showing us these things we didn't know. We will do them and God will be honored and our church blessed by them." (Thursday, January 31 2013)

2 Corinthians 13:1-2 This will be my third visit to you. "Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."

Look for any opportunity you may have today to testify to the goodness and love of Jesus. It could be a short few words or an extended time of sharing. Ask God to give you opportunities to testify for Him and then be alert to when they come.

BLOG 186: A TYPICAL INDIAN CHURCH SERVICE

Sunday in India is no different than any other day for the Hindu and Moslem masses, but for the Christians it is the most special day of the week. They gather in homes, open public areas and church buildings throughout the nation. Sandals are left outside and the barefooted worshippers

enter and are seated, men on one side and women on the other. A time of private personal prayer to prepare their hearts for worship is observed by each one as they enter.

Seldom do people come to anything on time in India, and church is no exception. Very few people are present at the given starting time, but when a few arrive the singing starts. Women outnumber men in many Indian churches about 5 to 1, and the women lead out in the singing. Small drums played with the fingers or palms are the main instrument and when the singing starts the player picks up the beat. Tambourines of various sizes and styles are also used. Except in the very poorest of poor churches there is a basic, crude PA system which is set to maximum volume. Women will sing into the mike leading various songs. There is always a loudspeaker outside the meeting place blasting at full volume everything that is sung and said throughout the whole community.

Services usually last about 3 hours. Try sitting Indian style on a hard concrete floor for 3 hours and you'll find new reason to admire these people. If they have even one chair, it is given to me to sit on in the front. Children stay with their mothers the whole time, sometimes wandering back and forth between mother and father. Most churches meet in small homes and are packed so tightly one couldn't move if they had to. I barely have room to stand upright in front of the chair I am sitting on. People gather outside the open doors to hear as well. Sometimes a canopy will be erected right in the street for people to gather to worship. Rooftops are often used as well.

The services consist of lots of singing, announcements, a message, testimonies, and long times of prayers. Of course I can never understand the prayers, but the fervency and intensity of those praying tells me all I need to know. These people are talking to someone they know well and are very used to talking to.

The offering time especially touches me. To see these poor people sacrificially giving is very touching. I feel like Jesus watching the widow put in her 2 mites. Those without money to give will bring a cup or 2 of rice and leave that. Everyone gives something. Often they will slip a few rupees into my hand when they greet me as they leave. That is very, very touching. I give it all, along with a gift of my own, to the pastor when I leave.

Messages vary in style, length and content. Many of the pastors are recent converts from Hinduism, Islam or Gypsy animism. They have little or no knowledge of the Bible, no 'history' of how a church is run to fall back on, no precedent, and no examples, nowhere to go for advice or training. So they stumble along doing the best they can. In many ways the church here reminds me of the church in the book of Acts. Armed with God's power and a testimony of what God has done to change their lives, they move into the darkness to advance the Kingdom of God.

If I can come in the evening or some time word is quickly spread by word of mouth that a special meeting is being held and everyone will come at a moment's notice. No one has a day timer and they love gathering whenever possible. It is the highlight of their life!

Meals often follow services, a time of fellowship and enjoyment together. Women cook rice and whatever sauce they choose to add to it. Everyone helps and enjoys the time together. When they leave they are swallowed up into the masses of unbelievers. Their mission field is all around them. But for a few short hours on a Sunday they have a taste of heaven on earth as they gather with fellow believers to pray, praise, learn the Word and fellowship together. (Friday, February 1, 2013)

Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Thank God for your church fellowship. Don't think of its faults or shortcomings, but thank God for the good it provides for you and others. Ask God to bless it and use it, and you, for His glory.

BLOG 187: TRAINING LEADERS OF LEADERS

One of the many things Pastor Moses and I talk about when we drive, eat or are in the hotel room is how the ministry is going this trip and what changes we should make in the future. God always seems to give us both the same ideas at the same time. One of the things that is becoming clear as we look to the future is that we are moving more and more in the direction of training the leaders of pastors who can then train other pastors. For 3 years we've had multi-day leadership training sessions for key pastors who can influence and train other pastors. These have been our most expensive meetings for it requires renting a facility with rooms to meet, eat and sleep. All the food must be provided as well. Roman Catholic conference centers seem to be the best to meet these needs. Although it takes more money than the daily meeting in local churches, it is well worth it because we give in-depth training to the same men year after year who will go and train other pastors in their local area.

I have been able to mentor these men through the years they have been hearing me, in these meetings as well as in their churches. We are discovering that out of that group of about 50 there has emerged a dozen who have really risen to the top as far as leadership skills go. They organize the men in their area who come to the Leadership Conference, oversee the conferences in their areas and become in effect Moses' deputies to whom he delegates large amounts of responsibility. These are mature, gifted, godly men, excellent men of God with whom I consider it a privilege and honor to work. They are called and burdened to mentor younger pastors. Starting next year we want to have a second multiday conference just for them and a few younger one who we see potential of becoming like them. This would enable us to give even more in depth training. They have many questions they would like to ask me and subjects they would like me to cover. I won't be coming for 5 weeks every year, I do need to have Nancy come with me, and her time from work is very limited. So we must work smarter, not harder, and this is one way of doing so. These men are doing in their areas what I do overall, so to better help and equip them would be very practical. The ripples from the stone dropped in the pond will multiply and spread in more and more directions.

Local pastors' conferences would still be the back-bone of our ministry, and we will continue the 2-day leadership conference for the 50 or so who have been coming. But in addition we'll add this 2-day conference as well for the leaders of leaders, or Coordinator Leaders as Moses calling these men.

These 'Coordinators Conferences' are something we feel is a top priority for 2014. The men already are very familiar with my basic teachings and have my books about What God Expects of Pastors and Spiritual Warfare, and hopefully by then will have the new book on Marriage and Ministry to use as well. With these they can provide the exact same material I present, but do it multiple times over all year long and reach pastors I would need months and months to reach. CD's and DVD's of the sessions will also be available for those with the resources to use them. These men do desire mentoring and continued training themselves and would like me to work with them in this way. They are already doing these things on their own, in response to what I have been teaching them to do. Now they need more support and help. Clearly this is what God wants for He put the idea and desire in our hearts. Pray God will help us be sensitive to His will in carrying this out. Pray for these men, too, for stepping out like this is like holding up a metal pole during lightening – they will certainly draw more and more attacks from Satan. These are pastors we are helping to support financially and are in close contact with on a regular basis. (Saturday, Feb 2, 2013)

2 Timothy 2:1-3 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

Pray for these pastors regularly. They are the very front line forces in the battle for India. Pastor Sudhakar, Pastor Solomon, Pastor Barnabas, Pastor Titus, Pastor Anadarao, Pastor Espadayam, Pastor Isaac, Pastor Krupaiah, Pastor Babu, Pastor Vijay Kumar, Pastor Vhyaskar and Pastor John Babu.

BLOG 188: SEEING THE WORLD THROUGH INDIAN EYES

Many times as I look at the Indians around me, the ones who aren't Christians, I wonder what life looks like from their perspective. If I lived in their body, what would I be thinking at that very moment? Of course there is way of knowing for sure, but I'd like to give it a shot. It's impossible to stereotype 1.2 billion people, but as best as I can understand it here's a very simplified version of their view of the world and life.

In America we think in terms of individual privacy and achievement. We are upwardly mobile, trying to improve ourselves and our place in life. Challenges are to be overcome. We have support and resources to help us achieve our goals. To understand traditional Indian thought you must forget all that. Individuality is not emphasized. Independence is thwarted. Dependence on family is fostered from young on. Life is seen as hard and painful, but we get what deserve based on our past life (karma) so why fight it, why try to change it, why seek to improve yourself or others. What is, is. There is a new upper class of educated Indians who are more Western in their thoughts, but this is what has been the mind set of the masses for centuries. This is how they cope.

Daily existence is all that matters. They do it again the next day and the next until life is over. Life isn't meant to have meaning so they don't look for any. Life is cheap, of little value. There will always be another one, and it may be better than this one. Emptiness, meaningless and hopelessness are just under the surface. And driving all that is fear: fear of upsetting whatever gods there may be, good or evil, fear of what will happen next, fear of pain and loss. Appeasing the gods may cut down a bit on the suffering one is certain to face, but maybe not. Thus in these mindsets apathy reigns.

There are some, especially in the large cities, who are influenced by media and are more Western in thought, but they are the minority. By Western I mean materialistic (things, greed, power and prestige).

The Muslim world view is a bit different but equally empty and, if anything, even darker. Their religion only brings fear because Allah is capricious and without mercy or love. He is a god who judges and punishes, and there isn't much a person can do except try to obey in all things and perhaps avoid the worst of his wrath when one dies.

And if you happen to be a Hindu or Moslem woman, it's worse yet. You are seen as of less value than a man, a commodity to be used and discarded when finished. You are given no opinions, no needs, and no desires – just serve the opinions, needs and desires of men.

So you see the great difference that Christianity makes! The hope, the assurance, the empowerment, the meaning and significance that come only in Jesus are absent. What dissimilarity to a world system that rejects Him. The contrast between light and darkness is apt and true. No wonder the enemy tries to keep this great nation in darkness. No wonder he fights the light. But Jesus is the hope of all mankind, the hope of India. And the light is slowly but surely spreading and growing. Christianity is the fastest growing religion in India. India's population is 74.3 percent Hindu, 14.2 percent Muslim, 1.9 percent Sikh, 0.82 percent Buddhist, and 5.8 percent Christian, according to Operation World. 'Christian' includes Roman Catholics (a large number here), liberal Protestantism and all the cults and sects as well. (Sunday, February 3, 2013)

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 14 "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless." ... I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

Spend some time contemplating how much your faith has impacted your world view. Without Jesus or His Word, how would you see your life and future? Try to imagine facing each day without any awareness of Jesus or the Bible. How empty it would be! Pray for the billions throughout the earth who wake up to just such a world each day.

BLOG 189: WHAT GOD HAS BEEN TEACHING ME

I don't know how your mind works, but mine is always alert to what God may be teaching me, especially in a situation like this. I certainly don't want to miss anything and have to take the course over! It's never some flashing light bulb or new revelation in my mind. Instead, He seems to work in my heart, going deeper in some area where more depth is needed. I have been aware of two outstanding threads of truth God has been showing me since I've been here. The first has to do with Genesis 15:1. I'll preach about that my first Sunday back, then blog about it later. The other I'll write about now. I don't know if this will mean much to you, but it's important for me to write things down so I can process them. That's why I blog – it's done for me to put vague concepts into words, then I just let you peek over my shoulder at what I've written. This one is purely subjective, so I'm not sure how I can explain it in words, but I'll give it a try.

I've gotten a much, much clearer, deeper awareness of God's power and His love. That might not mean much to you, but for this German introvert that is big! I've always known in my head God is all powerful and loves me as much as He can, but I sort of felt He loved me on the group plan – I was a Christian and He loved all Christian. I've always believed in His power and love in my mind and they have been gradually seeping into my heart over the years, but God's Spirit gave that a major boost the last month. My desire for many years has been to develop a closer intimacy with God, to "know" Him better – not just know about Him but to know HIM. Philippians 3:10-14 has always been the closest thing to a 'life verse' I'm ever had. More than anything I want to develop a deep personal intimacy with God. For this relationally-challenged introvert that is unfamiliar territory – and sometimes it's a big scary to be honest.

I'm not given to emotional excesses; in fact I'm not given to much emotion at all. That's not the way God wired me to work. He works through my rational thought to touch me deeply, and that's what has been happening. It's not some dramatic, sensational event, but a deep inner awareness as His Spirit gently points these things out to me about God.

First, I am more aware of God's **power** in my life than ever. There is no way we should be doing this work here – Satan and his kingdom of darkness should be causing all kinds of havoc with us. Each conference his defeat is taught and through prayer and teaching many of his captives are set free and equipped to set others free. Books are given out to help the message spread. Only God's great power can keep us safe through all that, and He has. And I've seen answers to prayers, some for me but mainly for others, that are nothing but miraculous. God is revealing His power to me as never before.

The other aspect of His which He is revealing to me is His **love**. I've always been more impressed with power than love, but power without love is empty. Love without power is weak. They are both needed to form a whole picture of God. I think it's finally starting to sink in that He loves me for me, just for me no matter what I do. He isn't just tolerating me or loving me on the group plan. He's done so many things that I can explain in no other way than to say it's only because He loves me. The fact He would choose me to be the channel to pass on these truths to these men just is

more than I can grasp. This is so much just the very tip of the iceberg that we see. He is starting so much in so many ways, and He's using me as His human instrument to do it. The gifts and training He's given me over the years come together perfectly: teaching, spiritual warfare, marriage training, counseling, magic, mentoring pastors, etc. Teaming me up with Moses is something only He could do. It's way too much to be coincidental. A Master plan has been at work for some time, and He allows me to get a front row seat because He loves me and wants to bless me in this way! On top of that He shows His love by giving me the most delightful, loving wife I could possibly have. I can't begin to describe the enormity of His gift of Nancy to me as my wife. Then there are my wonderful children and their families. And He is letting me fulfill a lifelong dream, which I gave up on years ago, of writing books! I always felt the greatest privilege He could give someone is to be a missionary and I'm getting a taste of that, too. If you knew my past history, you would see there is no way I would ever in any way deserve any of this.

I still have a long way to go, but it feels good to be more aware of God's power and His love for me. It really feels great. I know I'm just scratching the surface and I look forward to more (Philippians 1:6), but I thank Him for this now. And if you've gotten this far this blog, I thank you for listening to me try and put this into words. (Monday, February 4, 2013)

Philippians 3:10-14 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Don't think this is something just for me because I am in India. I think God needs to take everything away so He gets my full attention and can finally show me these things. Hopefully you aren't such a slow learner! Spend time today thinking about how God has been in the past and is now revealing His power and His love to you. Thank Him for it. You might want to write it down, too, to help process it. If you'd like, send me a copy – I'd enjoy reading how He works in your life as well.

BLOG 190: WHAT IS THIS LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP I HAVE WITH INDIA?

In my typical way of analyzing everything and trying to figure myself out, I've long wondered about why I dread the pastor's conferences so much before they start but enjoy them immensely once they get going or are over. I hate them and love them at the same time! I think I know what is happening. When we minister for God, there is a battle that goes on that we are not always aware of. Our spirit is opposed by our flesh and by Satan's forces. So naturally we shrink back. I get very tired from ministering to these pastors, but it's more than standing and concentrating for 4+ hours a day. I'm reminded of Jesus' words when the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years touched Him: "Jesus realized that power had gone out from Him" (Mark 5:24-31). I'm not a power source like Jesus was, but when His power flows through me it takes a toll. I also think of Paul saying "I am being poured out like a drink offering" (2 Timothy 4:6-8). I often feel physically weary, totally drained, just poured out at the end – even though my spirit is soaring. It can take immense emotional and spiritual energy to minister in ways that are hard for us or where there is enemy opposition. But understanding what is happening explains a lot and helps me face it, knowing what is coming and why.

That doesn't just happen to me in India. I'm sure many of you have been having a very, very hard time being faithful and focused in your prayers for us here. It may be the hardest time you've

had praying in a while and it's easy to put it off or cut it short. You're facing the same battle for the same reason.

Or maybe there is someone God wants you to talk with but you find excuses, a Bible passage you should study but you keep putting off, something good He wants you to do but you dread it and aren't quite sure why. Our flesh rebels against sacrificing itself to serve, and our enemy opposes with his demons. This could be keeping you from taking time to worship, or helping someone in need, or encouraging someone who is struggling. Whatever it is, understand what is happening. "The spirit is willing but the body is weak" (Matthew 26:41; Mark 14:38). Don't be surprised that important things are not easy things. Paul says we are in a battle and when we serve we are attacked (Ephesians 6:10-18). Don't be surprised, as if doing these things that advance the kingdom should be easy. Expect opposition. Be ready for it. Commit to paying the price and moving ahead in God's Spirit and power no matter what. If your flesh and Satan try so hard to keep you from doing it, you know it must be important to do! Jesus paid a great cost to serve us; we shouldn't be surprised when we have to pay a price to serve Him! (Tuesday, February 5, 2013)

Luke 14:28-33 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? 29 For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. 33 In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

Luke 9:23-24 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.

Ask God to reveal to you how this applies to your life. What is it God wants you to do but you find hard and draw back? Recommit to move ahead with it today, no matter how you feel. Ask God to give you wisdom, commitment and power, then step out in faith and obey no matter what. If there is something specific you'd like prayer about please email me and let me know!

TODAY'S CONFERENCE: Today we had a conference for slum pastors in a mostly Muslim neighborhood, very poor men with small churches. These men aren't from this area but moved here from other towns and villages to start churches here (missionaries inside of India). It has been very hard, slow going for them. The conference was wonderful (so glad I am here instead of the original plan to go to Ahmednagar). One woman gave me back her travel money (100 Rupees, \$2) and said I should give it to someone else, she couldn't take it. In English I could understand she said I had given her words of life, golden words, words that are more important than any amount of money. She said she couldn't take money when she was already given such wonderful words. Another woman said "We have been waiting for this for a long time, a very long time. Thank you so much for coming." A pastor told me of how discouraged he had become but my words about staying faithful and not giving in to the enemy have greatly encouraged him.

BLOG 191: MARTYRDOM IN INDIA

I did not write this blog. It is copied from an internet news source. I send it to you because it shows a little of what Christians in India face, especially pastors and their families.

NEW DELHI (Morning Star News, Jan 30, 2013) – Four Christians in India died for their faith last year, but incomplete information obscured the anti-Christian hostility in three of the deaths, sources said. In Tamil Nadu and West Bengal states where the killings took place, area Christians assert that the murders were rooted in opposition to Christianity; specifically, radical Hindus viewing Christianity as a threat to Hinduism and Indian nationalism as a unified identify. In three of the four deaths, however, under-reporting obscured the acts or motives of the attackers. In India's eastern state of West Bengal, where two brothers were hacked to death, villagers suspected the men's wives were practicing witchcraft, according to local press accounts and area Christians. A mob in Palashpari village, near Malda, attacked 38-year-old Sonua Pahari and 32-year-old Baishakhu Pahari with swords, sickles, rods and stones as they lay sleeping in their homes on May 17 at 11 p.m. Area Christians and local press reported that the assailants believed the brothers' wives had used witchcraft to inflict illness on members of the community. Express News Service cited one police official as saying, "... they were killed due to belief in witchcraft," and another who said one victim's family "... believed in modern [medical] treatment, which made them unpopular in the village." In the version published by local press, the assailants were reportedly targeting their wives and ended up killing the men in the process.

Area Christians acknowledged that the two Christians' families were not consulting the village magic-arts healer, and that the indignant shaman therefore had incited the villagers by telling them that the brothers or their wives were sorcerers responsible for ailments in the community. The families had left the shaman and other local customs behind when they became Christians, they said. "Enlightened by the gospel of Jesus Christ, their lifestyle had also become different, which caused jealousy among the villagers," one source told Morning Star News. Out of fear of hostile repercussions, Christian leaders had kept silent about the brothers' faith as the primary cause of the mob's rage, so their understanding did not appear in local press reports, area Christians said. But they later told Morning Star News that villagers several times had told the brothers to leave Christianity, and as a result of their refusal to do so the families were socially and economically shunned and prohibited from fetching water from the public well.

The nature of the attack demonstrated that the men's faith was the root cause of the mob rage, they said. The mob dragged the brothers from their house, attacking their wives and children only when they tried to rescue them from the assailants, they said. One brother's wife was injured in the attack, while the other's escaped with her children. Sonua Pahari's son witnessed what happened. He told a Christian leader from the area that the mob mocked the two brothers. "The elder brother, Sonua Pahari, was kneeling and holding his Bible, but the extremists took it from him and threw it away," the Christian leader said, based on the witness of Sonua Pahari's son. "They first cut both his hands with a knife and mocked, 'Where is your God? Call your God to help you.' Sonua replied, 'It is my God's will that I will live or that I will die.' He did not run at all or seem frightened. Then they killed him and his younger brother." The mob struck the heads of the brothers with their traditional weapons, and they died on the spot, the Christian leader said. Since the attack, none of the area Christians has undertaken any ministry in the area, he added; fear that a similar fate may befall them has paralyzed active faith. The brothers' widows have since moved to another area. "It is truly a case of martyrdom," the Christian leader said. "Once when we filmed the 2008 Orissa anti-Christian violence, Sonua Pahari told his wife that he will also be killed in the same way for Christ, and that his death will draw people towards Christ. Both brothers were humble and strong followers of Christ." Most of the mob members have fled and are in hiding, but police arrested Bhola Bihari, Tofa Pahari and Fagu Pahari in connection with the murder.

There were 11 cases of religious rights violations against Christians in Tamil Nadu in 2012, according to the Evangelical Fellowship of India. That figure was the fifth highest behind Karnataka

with 37; Chhattisgarh with 21; Madhya Pradesh with 18; and Andhra Pradesh with 13. (***Andhra Pradesh is where we minister – Jerry***) (Wednesday, February 6, 2013)

Matthew 24:3, 9 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" ... "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me."

Revelation 12:11 They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

Persecution will become greater and more widespread as the time for Jesus' return draws near and the enemy increases their attacks. Thank God for the freedom He has given us to worship Him in the United States. Pray for Christians throughout the world who don't have this freedom, whose lives are in jeopardy because of their faith.

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BLOG 192: AND IT CAME TO PASS - 1

As my time in India comes to a close and I look back on the last 5 weeks, here are some highlights, and some lowlights a well!

BEST MEMORY: After laying hands on Pastor Barnabas and praying for he and his wife, I signaled for him to lay hands on me and pray for me. He is the only one I have ever had do that for me. The first time was in 2009. I don't understand what he prays, but I know their power goes with me. It is a very moving experience.

WORST MEMORY: Spilling a few drops of water on my laptop and watching it totally shut down and refuse to start!!! (It is working again thanks to Peter and a buying a new keyboard which I plug in.)

MOST TAKEN BY SURPRISE: The time a woman came to the front of the church during the service and handed me her newly born baby boy and asked me to name him. Actually this has happened to me a few years ago after church. I was taken by surprise this time, though. Everyone but me knew what was happening and was fine with it. God told me to name him Timothy, for Timothy knew the Bible from young and became a fine pastor. I also prayed and dedicated him to God. Then I asked the mother if I could keep him and bring him home with me. That lightened things up! (A few days earlier I had gotten to hold a one hour old baby boy – I haven't done that for 17+ years!)

MOST HUMOROUS: We do lots of laughing and joking all day. For example, Moses is trying to be more health conscious and lose his belly which many Indian men have because of the type and amount of food they eat. He is always pointing out and joking about pastors with big bellies, so one morning I put a big pillow under my kurta and told him I was now an Indian pastor. He still laughs about that.

MOST DISCOURAGING: Pastors who pretend to want to help me but in reality want to use "the rich American" for their own prestige by having me speak to their church, or who feel I should give them a large donation because I have a lot of money. Pastors who spend their time looking for free support seldom have effective ministries anyway. Unfortunately that is not uncommon, but God makes it easy to tell who those pastors are so we avoid getting trapped by them.

SADDEST: The spiritual and physical poverty of the people, the darkness and hopelessness is heartbreaking, and to think there are 1.2 billion in India alone! Also a good friend in Pastor Moses' church, his top elder, lost his wife this past year. Every year their wedding anniversary came while I was here so they would ask me to bless their marriage for another year. This year I prayed for him alone and it wasn't easy! He is very sad without her.

UNEXPECTED HELP: Usually things don't work out as well as planned and I must fall to my 2nd or 3rd backup plan, but one thing worked out better than planned. At the last minute I decided to bring my converter to power my laptop from the cigarette lighter in the car. It is bulky and I didn't know if it would work but it has! My laptop battery doesn't last long and we spend 4 to 6 hours a day in the car. I organize pictures, write blogs and keep records of what is happening. I would never have time in the hotel for all of it. It's quite bumpy but I manage.

MOST TOUCHING Watching Pastor Ezra's oldest daughter, who is 7 or 8, sing and worship in church when she doesn't know she is being watched. Clearly it comes from her heart. Watching her reminds me of why Jesus was so adamant about letting the children come to Him. I do think God gives the best children to pastors, but then I could be a bit prejudiced in that area!

MOST ENCOURAGING: Responses from the pastors in India and emails from people at home both have been extremely encouraging. Since verbal affirmation is my love language these go far with me. Lots of good things to think about and mull over (Luke 2:19).

BIGGEST FRUSTRATION: India adds new meaning to the word 'frustration.' The nation seems to take great pride in creating as much of it as they can. From animals sleeping in middle of the street to pastors arriving 2 hours late to conferences, from the non-committal head wobble when asked a question to all night hammering at the construction site across the street, from wasting my time under the guise of honoring me to waiting for the last minute to do what should have been done yesterday, India has made a science out of creating frustration. It is even becoming one of their leading exports, as anyone who calls technical support knows. If you want to work on your patience, come to India (Romans 5:3). (Thursday, February 7, 2013)

(I'll conclude the list tomorrow)

s 4:11-13 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Would you say you are a content person, or do you let the frustrations of life get to you? What would those who know you say? What would God say? What frustrations are you facing today that you need to turn to God and replace with contentment? Do so now.

BLOG 193: AND IT CAME TO PASS - 2

We had a great conference yesterday. There were 50 people crammed into a tiny room with no room to move, very hot and stuffy after almost 4 hours of sessions, when it was time to stop, eat and go home, they didn't want to go. They wanted me to do another session so I added one more! Those are the problems I love to have!

This is a continuation of some of the highlights and lowlights of the past 5 weeks:

MOST STRESSFUL: Some conferences are full of many distractions: a few men come late, talk with each other, walk around, sleep, talk on their cell phones, or just come before lunch and leave right

after. In addition there are schedule changes, even after I have started talking, extreme heat, the focus needed to say everything just right, and then teaching and praying spiritual warfare the end, all adds stress. Often I have digestive problems so I don't eat right. And I don't know what is said around me unless Moses translates, but he is usually too busy with other things to do that. If someone feels the need to be in control of their environment India is not the place to visit.

BEST SIDE BENEFIT: Fresh, homemade Indian cuisine every meal is a great added benefit.

Unfortunately my stomach has made me say no more than yes. But it does smell great. Also a nice, clean, safe hotel for 2 weeks was a great benefit as well.

MOST TENSE: Moses' new car was bumped twice while driving, once by car and another time by a motorcycle. Neither time was his fault, but he has two new bumps/scratches as a result.

GOOD SURPRISE: Samuel, a young pastor we support in Korduru who has become a good friend, has a wife and child. I'm thrilled for him. I knew last year he wanted a good wife and he got one – and a child already.

BEST PART OF COMING TO INDIA :By far it is being used by God to touch the lives of these fine pastors.

WORST PART OF COMING TO INIDA: By far it is being away from Nancy. Next is the extreme physical, emotional and spiritual continual drain which keeps me always feeling weak in myself but strong in Him (2 Corinthians 13:9).

UNEXPECTED BLESSING: The very positive to the responses to the blogs I send home and how God uses them in so many lives really touches me deeply.

BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT: Asaraj still beats his wife Esther, despite us praying for them for 3 years. God did show us what is causing the access so now maybe he will have victory

GROSSEST, MOST DISGUSTING SIGHT: I'm not telling you. Besides, I surprised you are looking for my answer!

GREATEST DIFFERENCE THIS YEAR AND OTHER YEARS: Because I come every year at this time the main leaders and pastors see me, not as a one or two time outsider coming, but someone who is one of them. Granted I am very different from them but we have established history, a solid foundation of respect and trust. They know my heart is with them and I will keep coming back to provide these things for them. We stay in touch through Pastor Moses during the year. We help support many of them financially and faithfully pray for us. I see the same thing with the men who are the leaders in Moses' church. I'm no longer a visitor, I'm a regularly returning friend! It's a subtle but very good difference and I really like it.

STRANGE WAYS GOD WORKS: I am glad God sent me to a warm climate with gentle people, but I wish He would have made it so I could learn the language. I have taught myself a working knowledge of Hindi but almost no one here speaks it, especially in the villages. Telugu, along with sister language Tamil to the south, are the fastest spoken languages in the world – more syllables pronounced than any other language. There aren't local people in the USA or internet programs to help. I'd really like to be able to communicate at least a little but this language is very, very, very hard to learn!

LITTLE THING WHICH MADE A BIG DIFFERENCE: That would definitely be Air Conditioning in the hotel and in Moses' car. At first it wasn't working Moses car and that was difficult. I'm not normally a big fan of air conditioning at home, but the heat can be oppressive and physically draining. The air is so very dirty its hard to breathe so opening the car windows isn't really an option. The AC is very refreshing and appreciated.

GREATEST DAILY AMAZEMENT: Each day is filled with numerous things that amaze and astonish me. But the fact that not one pastor in one conference knew that he had a special responsibility to his wife before his church amazed me every day. Twenty conferences, almost a thousand pastors and not one ever knew who his #1 sheep was when I asked!!! The good side of the coin is that when seeing that in Scripture every one believed and committed to be the husband God wants. That brought more positive comments and thanks than anything else I taught.

The other thing that amazes me more and more each day is that, although we are clearly in Satan's territory, God's protection has been complete. Each day we teach about Jesus' victory over Satan and demons, then lead everyone in a prayer of deliverance from anything working against them, their families or their church. Testimony after testimony tells of how God touched and delivered them while praying. One may share how a neighbor hated his church and told them he put a curse on the church. The church gathered and prayed. Three days later the man unexpectedly died and things are fine for them. (Friday, February 8, 2013)

Romans 8:37-39 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In what unseen ways has God been protecting you these days? What bad things could be happening in your life but aren't? Thank God one by one for all that He is protecting you from. Thank Him for His mercy.

BLOG 194: CHURCHES IN ACTS, INDIA AND THE USA

No church is perfect. The early church suffered from greed, pride and lack of faith (Acts 5:1-10; 112:14-16). The church in India has many of the same issues. The church in India is much like the early church in many good ways, but that is another blog for a different time. There is one thing about the church here, and in the New Testament, that can be a good lesson for us in the USA. At the risk of being guilty of always thinking the grass is greener on the other side, and thinking that the best authority is the one furthest from where we live, let me see if I can convey something I've been thinking about.

First, There are some lessons the church in India can learn from us in the USA. One is the importance of Biblical scholarship, learning and teaching the Bible to the people. They can learn lessons from us in organization and communication as well. But I think there is one important lesson we, or at least me anyway, can learn from them. The gospel has so changed the lives of the Christians here that they are convinced it is the answer everyone needs. The pastors are committed to the fact that Jesus is the answer and they want to make sure anyone who will listen knows so. Resources are almost nonexistent so not much time, effort or money is spent on buildings, programs, curriculum or other things that consume so much focus in the USA. These are good things when they are a means to an end, but when they become the end in themselves we are missing God's best for us.

The extreme difficulty of life here, and even more so for Christians, keeps most these people just trying to live from one day to the next. When you're bailing water like crazy, just trying to keep the boat afloat, you aren't thinking of new padding for the pews or redecorating the youth room. The biggest problem the church here faces is that it is survival mode, but that is also its greatest asset. The bottom line is: are they willing to sacrifice whatever it may take to believe in Jesus, live for Him, and tell others about Him? Or not. It's that rubber-meets-the-road simple. Not all Christians are 100% committed, some are in various stages of understanding and commitment. But the vast

majority of those who have put their faith in Jesus understand well the cost required to follow Him. They wouldn't do it if they didn't think He was worth it, for themselves and for others.

In a country with a corrupt, incompetent government, no human resources and unbelievable poverty, you don't find people with an entitlement mentality. "What's in it for me?" is not the question people are asking, but "Can I make it to tomorrow?" is what occupies their minds.

I can't speak for other pastors, and I'm not about to judge other churches, but I know I lack this passionate vision for my life and my church. Keeping status quo, juggling all my responsibilities and obligations each day, fulfilling my roles and their requirements – that was not what the early church was all about, nor is it what the church in India is all about. They aren't trying to use Jesus to make their life easier; they are willing to let Jesus use them no matter what it means to their life. Their church is not an end in itself; it is but a means to an end.

With all our blessings and resources in the USA, we should be seeing God's kingdom advance there as it is in India. I, personally, need more of their desire and commitment to see the light advance against the darkness in America. I've been focused and committed to training pastors and ministering in India these 5 weeks. I have a vision and clearly convey that to you. You respond with prayer and financial support. Pray I will be able to do this in my life and in my church as well when I return, and not just for India but for the people in my church and community. It's what the early church did and what churches in India have, and it's what I need as well.

The USA needs Jesus just as badly as India, maybe more! In India the church is growing stronger. I'm not sure we can say that about the church in the USA. You don't have to come to India to minister; the mission field is right outside your front door. The church in India knows why it is here, and that goal drives them on. They know they are in a battle and they know who their enemy is. It's easy to forget that in daily life in America. I need to refocus on the purpose God has for life and my church. My desire is that I will lead with a clear, focused vision when I return home, and that you continue to support your own local church and pastor as fervently and devotedly as you have supported this ministry in India. Why does God have you alive? What does He want to do through your church? (Saturday, February 9, 2013)

John 4:34-37 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.

If your gifts and calling is in the area of evangelism or in training disciples, ask God to help you reignite your first love if it has been fading (Revelation 2:4-5) and fervently pray for God to provide opportunities for you and your church to minister the gospel to those around you, whether for salvation or spiritual growth. Ask Him to give you His vision for your life and then do everything in your power to carry that vision out.

BLOG 195: PRAYING FOR HEALING

(Sunday, February 10, 2013) To be perfectly honest, I have a much easier time praying for God to physically heal or financially provide here in India than I do in the USA. I don't know if that is right or night. I don't want to judge anyone. I know the opportunity for medical or financial assistance apart from God's supernatural intervention here in India is not existence. If God doesn't provide there are no government, family or community resources to come to play. Praying for these needs for these people is often a matter of life and death, not convenience. I don't mean the people who ask for prayer for financial or physical needs in the USA don't have legitimate needs, please understanding I am not condemning or judging American Christians, of which I am one! I am simply saying that I can

come to God praying for their physical healing here for I know God is the only solution to their pain and suffering.

It amazes and humbles me how often God uses my prayers for healing here to bring healing. I never know when, if or how soon it will happen and always pray for God's will to be done and grace to endure if there is no healing, but I do have confidence to ask God to heal if it is His will. With the close connection between demonizing and healing in the Gospels I pray against anything demonic that may be behind that physical problem as well. Often when Jesus cast out demons the person was physically healed as well. So perhaps that is part of what is happening here as well. I do sense the battle when I lay hands on them and pray, and often am led to pray in a specific way. The ultimate result of what happens, though, is in God's hands. (Sunday, February 10, 2013)

Luke 11:14 Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed.

Luke 13:10-13, 16 On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, 11 and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. 12 When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." 13 Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. ... 16 Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

Pray for those you know who are in need of physical healing, but before praying for them to be healed asking God to tell you how He wants you to pray for them? Does He want them healed immediately by Him, gradually by doctors, not healed at this time, or delivered from something demonic that is causing this and other problems as well?

BLOG 196: GUESS WHERE I AM?

Every year when I come to India and speak in churches, fields, or wherever we meet I am amazed at the scene I am looking at while speaking. The things I see outside the doors and windows (if the church even has walls) are unbelievable. Here are some of the things I watched while speaking the last few days. I saw herds of goats and water buffalo paraded back and forth all day long. Ox carts carrying sugar cane, bags of cotton or various other materials go past in trains of 10 or 12. Women gracefully carry water, food, firewood or large bundles of clothes on their heads. Hundreds of colors of beautiful saris continually flow in all directions. Of course there are cripples, those with mental problems and half-naked children squatting in the road whenever the urge takes them. Wild dogs, chickens and pigs of all colors and sizes join the parade as well. In addition to all this there are merchants, peddlers, bicycles loaded with anything imaginable, children in school uniforms, emaciated sacred cows left to wander wherever they want, motorcycles of all kinds and sizes, cars and trucks. I never know what will come next. It seems all India passes by my line of vision while I stand and speak.

When I look at my audience crammed inside the building I see barefoot women sitting on the floor on one side, men on the other. The electrical power is usually not working so we don't even have fans to stir the hot, heavy air. Is there any chance I might, just for a moment, forget I am in India? Not a one! (Sunday, February 10, 2013)

Revelation 5:9-10 "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. 10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

Imagine the parade of people in heaven from every tribe, language, people and nation. What a glorious sight that will be. There has never been anything like it. Is there any chance you might, just for a moment, forget you are in heaven? Not a one!

BLOG 197: ON THE WAY HOME!!!

(Monday, February 11, 2013) I'm starting my trip home Tuesday morning 4 AM (5:30 PM Monday evening East Coast time). I'm scheduled to arrive in Philadelphia Tuesday, 8:20 PM. I hope Nancy remembers to come get me! Pray that everything will be safe, smooth and quick.

PASTOR'S CONFERENCES We had 19 pastors' conferences this trip for 750 men and 290 wives. Since we started we have had 72 pastors' conferences for 2,600 men and 770 wives! Remember we don't try to have large conferences so we limit the attendees to those who will most benefit and use what we teach. The average cost for a pastor or wife for all these years is still \$13 a person!!!!

WHAT I'LL MISS IN INDIA

Going barefoot or in sandals 7 days a week
Caribbean climate
Colorful saris
Indian food
Moses & Krupa
The Pastors and Christians here
Women whose dress is always both modest and feminine
Fresh bananas and fruit everywhere
Respect for my gray hair
Never having to convince anyone that Satan and demons are real
No phone calls
The children in the churches
Praying for people after the services
Being able to look at the tops of women's heads!
The way people are amazed at my magic tricks
Krupa waiting on me hand and foot all day
Spending hours a day teaching the Bible
Receiving encouraging emails from those reading my blogs
Total dependence on God daily – and His very real presence

WHAT I'LL NOT MISS IN INDIA

Living out of a suitcase and drinking out of a water bottle
Carrying my own spoon everywhere
Using hand sanitizer multiple times a day
Dirty feet, even after they are washed
Mosquitoes (& malaria) buzzing in my ears at night
Sleeping in different beds
Noise and smell of the city
Dodging traffic to dash across a street
Constant honking of horns outside (and heard inside)
Scenes of unbelievable poverty everywhere
White rice!
Not knowing what people are saying when they talk about me
Washing in a bucket of cold water
Carrying my Passport, credit cards and all important papers everywhere

Continual wailing from mosques in Moslem communities
Hindu shrines and idols wherever one looks
Not having to constantly make sure I step over or around stuff every step I take
Juggling my laptop on my lap while using an external keyboard

WHAT I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IN THE USA

Nancy
Nancy
Nancy (get the idea? Can I move on?)
My children and their families
Main Street Baptist Church
Sugar
A good long hot shower
Exercise, especially running
Salads and vegetables
Drinking from a faucet

Proverbs 27:8 Like a bird that strays from its nest is a man who strays from his home.

Proverbs 3:33 The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous.

What makes your home special to you? Thank God for your home and His provision of it. Thank Him for your heavenly home, the only place better than your earthly home.

BLOG 198: "DO NOT BE AFRAID" (Genesis 15:1 – part 1)

God always uses my time in India to show me special Bible promises or truths. Perhaps it is because I am more aware of my need of them during the times in India. Whatever the cause, I am very glad for them and depend on them. The ones that have meant a lot to me in the past continue to do so today. The verse that has been most significant in my thoughts during this trip is Genesis 15:1. "After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.'" This short verse actually has 2 promises as well as a significant point of theology which has really opened my mind in many new ways. Anyway, let's look at this passage.

"**After this**" refers to the events in Genesis 14: namely Abraham and his servants freeing Lot from the kings who had captured him after destroying Sodom and Gomorrah. Melchizedek, a local priest of God, came to encourage Abraham and Abraham gave him tithes to God. The rest of the spoils from rescuing everyone he returned to the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah.

It was then that God spoke to him in a special way: "**The word of the Lord came to Abram.**" This is the first of 105 times this phrase is used in the Bible, showing God was communicating with man in a very special way. Usually this was through an audible voice, like when God spoke to Jesus at His baptism (Luke 3:22) and when Jesus spoke to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:4-6).

It is "**the Lord**" who spoke to Abraham - Jehovah Himself, the eternal "I Am," YHWH – the most special, personal, redemptive name for God. It is a great, great honor for Abraham to hear from God.

Not only does He hear God, but God calls him by name: "**Abram.**" Can you imagine God speaking to you, addressing you by your name? How marvelous that God calls us in the Bride of Christ His personal, individual friend (John 10:3), and that He knows each of our names and needs (Psalm 147:3-4).

“Don’t be afraid” are God’s first words to Abraham. This is often how God, or angels, start when communicating with humans for our natural response when seeing their holiness is awareness of our sinfulness (Genesis 21:7; 26:24; 43:6; Exodus 14:13; Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:13, 20; Acts 18:9; 27:24). This is the first in over 100 occurrences of this greeting. God’s ‘fear not’ promises have always meant a lot to me personally for fear is something I have had to battle my whole life. It is a sin passed down in my family line. I have found great comfort in God’s wonderful ‘fear not’ promises such as Exodus 14:13; Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:6-9; Isaiah 41:10. In my counseling and spiritual warfare ministry I’ve found that fear is one of Satan’s most effective weapons. It causes man to deny his faith without realizing what he is doing. Fear is the opposite of faith. A person cannot have faith and fear at the same time, only one at a time can dwell in the human heart.

Here are some of the promise God has given me over the years which I have applied to my trips to India: (Monday, February 18, 2013)

Deuteronomy 20:3-4 *He shall say: “Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. 4 For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.”* God gave me this promise on my first trip to India and I’ve continued to lean on it and it almost daily since that time.

Exodus 33:14 *The LORD replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”*

Deuteronomy 31:6 *Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

Joshua 1:6-9 *“Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. 7 Be strong and very courageous. ... 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”*

Psalms 25:3, 5, 21 *No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame, ... 5 guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. ... 21 May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope is in you.*

Isaiah 42:16 *I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.*

Genesis 28:15 *I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”*

2 Corinthians 12:8-10 *For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

What fears do you most struggle with? What is that of which you are most fearful? You must be able to name them so you can recognize them. What promises of God best fit your situation?

BLOG 199: “I AM YOU SHEILD” (Genesis 15:1 – part 2)

In yesterday’s blog I started sharing the verse God most impressed upon my heart this trip to India, Genesis 15:1. “After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.’” God Himself is speaking out loud to Abraham. He calls him by name and assures him there is nothing which he should fear. Then He makes his twofold promise:

“I am your shield” is God’s first statement. It has accurately been pointed out that God’s “I am’s” are more than adequate for our “I am not’s.” I am not in control. I am not adequate. I am not

able. I am not. I am not. I am not. All these are very true. Yet over above them is God's more than adequacy to control, provide and protect – "I Am." "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Ps 84:11). "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33). "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

God first promises Abraham "I am **your shield.**" A shield provided protection. Perhaps Abraham was concerned that the kings he defeated would regroup and come back to destroy him. He was no match for them and without God's supernatural help would never have defeated them in the first place. God promises him that if this, or anything else, happens that He will protect Abraham. Notice what God does NOT promise – He doesn't promise they won't come back and attack! God never promises to change circumstances so we don't have to fear, but He always promises help when those things happen to us. I've had all kinds of things happen to me traveling and ministering in India. I wish God would have prevented every one, and He could have. He was not unable to do so. But His greater plan was to stretch my faith and show His ability to protect and provide. He was always with me whatever happened, and nothing was ever nearly as bad as it could have been! The problem is I'd rather not have to go through anything at all! We are all babies when it comes to pain and stretching, aren't we? But at least I have His promise I won't be going through them alone.

A shield comes between the person and the enemy. It is an analogy of battle, warfare. We are in a war (Ephesians 6:10-20). The shield protects us against that while would seek to destroy us. We have many substitute, man-made shields: money, weapons, alcohol, friends, education, insurance, etc. They all fail, though. We've all tired them and found them inadequate. Only God can shield us.

But here's the best part so far. God doesn't just promise to provide a shield; He promises that He Himself will be our shield! Think about that, make sure you realize the difference. God doesn't promise to provide a shield for us; He promises that He Himself is our shield!!!

Imagine going into battle carrying a shield for protection, and when you look carefully you see that the shield is God Himself! This is true all the time. The Hebrew grammar shows it is continually present, all the time. Every once in a while I have to stop, sit back, and take time for something new to sink in. Realizing this was such a time for me. God doesn't just send angels to protect me. He doesn't just manipulate things from afar. He Himself comes to stand between me and what is threatening to destroy me! How comforting is that! I don't know how I overlooked this before, for it is often stated in the Bible (Psalm 18:2; 119:144; etc.).

Think of an astronaut who lands on the moon. He is from a different planet and cannot survive on the moon without a shield which protects him. All the needed life-giving substance is provided within the shield – his air, his water and his food. He survives on a foreign planet because of the shield which contains his protection and life-supply and which is compatible with his own planet. The moon cannot provide him any of this and therefore without the shield (space suit), he will die. Now he does not belong there, he belongs on the earth. But he is able to do things as long as his shield is in place. He is sustained by means of a foreign life supply - not from the moon but from the earth. If the shield were to break, or were to be removed, it would mean certain death. That's certainly what would have happened to us with all the spiritual warfare teaching and praying we have been doing! God didn't just put a shield around us, He Himself became that shield. No wonder we were so safe!

As a born again believer filled with God's Spirit, we are foreigners in this present world. We are in the world but not of the world. The only way to survive, therefore, is to have the shield of God from which all the supernatural supply is provided. If there is no shield then there is no life-giving substance. The only way to survive is to have the shield of God in place. You are sustained by a

foreign supply - supernatural provision and protection by God Himself. This is vital for your spiritual survival

By now you should have gathered that God's shield is not just something on one side of you. It is a total protection – front, back, over your head, on your sides and under your feet. Perhaps we can deduce from this teaching that when God says “I am your shield,” that you are protected in a “cocoon” type enclosure. Because when God protects you, the devil cannot get at you, no matter at what angle he tries to attack you. (Wednesday, February 20, 2013)

Genesis 15:1 After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."

Think about this concept for a while. Maybe it isn't new to you like it is to me, but if it is new meditate on it a bit. Its great God promises to protect us, as God He is able to do that. But that He Himself would commit to coming between us and all we face is even more special. Thank Him for it. Think of all He has protected you from in the past. Thank Him that at this very moment He is between you and that which would destroy you today.

BLOG 200: “I AM YOUR VERY GREAT REWARD” (Genesis 15:1 – part 3)

We have been looking at a verse God used in a special way to minister to me in India, Genesis 15:1. “After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.’” God promises Abraham He will be his shield – that that He will provide protection and that He Himself will be the One who comes between Abraham and anything that tries to destroy him.

“**I am your very great reward**” is God's second promise to Abraham. “Reward” can be translated “salary,” “payment,” “compensation,” “benefit” or “wage.” Was Abraham concerned about giving back the vast fortune he returned to the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah? Was he thinking it might have been something he needed in the future, or even in the present? That Abraham was thinking in terms of material possessions is clear from the next verse, Genesis 15:2, where he asks about an heir for his possessions and God reassures him that he will have a son. But God's promise goes far beyond financial reward. God never promises to meet all our wants but He does promise to meet our needs (Philippians 4:19). He promises reward and blessing in the next life far beyond anything we can imagine (1 Corinthians 2:5). He also promises spiritual blessings for right now, in this life (Ephesians 1:3). It's all by His grace, nothing we can do to earn or deserve it (John 1:16).

The assurance from God that He would reward me for this work in India is something I still can't really grasp. I know the Bible says God will do that, but what can I possibly be rewarded for? I wouldn't be doing this if He hadn't really put it in my heart to do it. And clearly none of it would have happening if He wasn't making it all happen! I tell Moses we are like a hose that He uses to send His blessings to the pastors here. What can a hose take credit for? How can a hose be rewarded? For what? For allowing itself to be used? How can it not do that? How can it get any credit for that? Please don't think I'm being modest. If you'd be me you'd agree that none of this is any of my doing!

In fact, the privilege of being the hose, of being part of this, of having a front row set of watching God work, is more reward and blessing than I could have ever hoped for! It feels like something I should be experiencing in heaven, not on this earth. And yet the part of this verse which touched me most is still to come!

“**I AM** your very great reward.” The real blessing to Abraham was not just material blessings for Abraham, or even a son to inherit them – it was God Himself. He doesn't just give us spiritual blessings now and for eternity, He Himself IS our blessing – our “very great” reward/payment/wage/benefit. Awareness of that truth was the foundation of all kinds of good things

God has been teaching me these past few weeks. It is the first domino in a chain that is still continuing. God doesn't just give me a reward or blessing, He Himself is that reward and blessing!

Usually we think of God as a means to our reward. He blesses us with the fruit of the Spirit, He heals us, He provides financially, He restores a relationship, and He shows His love in many and various tangible ways. Unfortunately some people follow Him just for the purpose of receiving those things. Their entitlement mentality has them thinking "What's in it for me?" So they switch from church to church, waiting for the magic formula that will take away all their problems and make everything feel good. God isn't a magic gene we can rub and get Him to do whatever we want! He has something much, much better than promising to grant us three wishes. He promises HIMSELF!

I've given that a lot of thought and meditation, a LOT of it. It's an amazing thought that God is rewarding me by revealing more of Himself to me, letting me get to know Him better and more personally, experiencing Him in a fuller way! Not only is the concept great, but the fact He would do that for me is absolutely mind-expanding! He has been doing that in me – I blogged about experiencing His love and power in a much greater way and that helps me see Him in a far clearer light. I see His power in protecting us from any attacks despite all the training of pastors, especially in spiritual warfare and in how He answers prayers. I experience His love in the fact that He chose me to be the tube to be used to do this, to see how he's been working in my life all along to bring the right training and skills into place for this time, to be a 'missionary' for Him, and even to write books. I have always wanted to write but had given that dream up years ago assuming it would never happen.

He wants to reveal Himself to each of us, not just me. He doesn't just want to be part of our life, a dispenser of quick fixes when life gets too hard. He doesn't want us to use Him, but to let Him use us. Don't just have Jesus in your life. Let Him BE your life - not for what you get from Him but for Whom and what He is. Abraham's great reward was not the material blessings or the son he would get, but God Himself, his growing relationship with the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. God wants that with you as well.

And, finally, He doesn't just want to be your reward. He wants to be your VERY GREAT reward! If God says it is great, you can count on it being indescribable! (Friday, February 22, 2013)

Genesis 15:1 After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."

God doesn't just want to be my reward; He wants to be that for each and every Christian as well. Think about how He has been blessing you lately. Do you recognize His hand in all that is happening in your life? What new truths have you been learning about Him? How have you been getting closer to Him lately? What is He trying to reveal to you about Himself?

BLOG 201: THE GUILT-INNOCENCE WORLD VIEW

Each culture has its own individual way of looking at life: how they interpret what happens, set values and priorities and know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. This is their particular way of viewing life and the world. It is their world view.

It covers all areas of life: how we view suffering and pain, the way we handle what is unfair, our definition of success and failure, traits we look for in friends and mates, the value we put on money and possessions, choices and decisions we have to make, the way we face circumstances that are out of our control and how we view our relationship with God.

Traditionally those in their country have viewed life from a right-wrong perspective. We make value judgments on everything that happens. We view life through a **guilt-innocence** grid. When a marriage fails we wonder who was at fault. When a business fails we want to know who is to blame.

If we are swimming in a public pool and the lifeguard blows his whistle everyone looks to see who has done something wrong. In school when little Johnny is called to the principal's office over the intercom everyone wonders what he did that got him in trouble. When driving down the road and a red light starts flashing in the rear window, our first thought is if we have done something wrong. Then when the police car passes us we watch to see who was guilty.

When something unfair happens to innocent people we want to know whose fault it is, who is to blame. If we can't find a person who is at fault then we blame God. That's why we are often wondering how God can allow a child to suffer or something unfair to happen to someone. Our world view sees everything on a guilt-innocence paradigm.

We all want to be innocent of any wrong. "I'm OK and you're OK" is our rallying call. We tell ourselves that we are as good as the next guy. Speakers and books assure us we are fine just as we are. We're all about right and wrong, guilt and innocence.

This perspective of viewing life comes from our legal system, which is the foundation of our country. As Americans we are obsessed with fairness and justice, with the rights of the individual and everyone meeting their potential. This forms the backbone of our society.

It's not surprising, then, that we view salvation through the same colored glasses. We are guilty and God is innocent. He is right and we are wrong. We sin and are guilty before Him. Jesus took our sin and guilt on the cross and paid the penalty for it so we can be innocent again. Accept His gift of salvation and we'll be pure and clean again. We illustrate this with the story of the judge who must uphold the law and exact the penalty on a friend who has no means to pay the fine he owes. So the judge leaves the bench, takes off his robes, comes down and stands by the man and pays his fine for him. That is what God did for us. It can be seen almost like a business transaction.

We find this detailed in the book of Romans, the favorite Bible book of American evangelicals. From it we get the Romans Road and the Four Spiritual Laws – clearly legal terms explaining a legal transaction. It shouldn't surprise us that we identify so clearly with the book of Romans for our legal system and much of our government is based on theirs. Their world view is now our world view. When Paul wrote to them he explained salvation in terms they would understand – guilt and innocence.

But not all cultures see the world and life from that slant. Rome did, as do English-speaking and European countries today. The rest of the world sees life through other grids, though. Israel, for example, had an entirely different world view which is seen in most of the Bible.

Take the Gospels for example: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. We call them 'gospels' but can you find the gospel in the gospels? Can you use them to lead someone to salvation? It's very hard to find our legal right-wrong, guilt-innocence paradigm in them. Jesus doesn't talk about guilt, legal payment and innocence regained. Yet many people come to salvation just reading those accounts.

Jesus focused on living the Christian life, and that really isn't part of our guilt-to-innocence transaction. In fact, the church is often weak in countries with a guilt-based world view because it doesn't speak to the fact of what happens after salvation. Many Christians feel that once they have invested in their eternal life-insurance they have all they need and go back to life as they lived it before. Often we relegate living the Christian life to something unrelated to salvation, but Jesus talked about living for Him as being part of salvation. So what's the deal? (Monday, December 30, 2013, USA)

Next blog will look at another world view, the paradigm the Jews in Bible times used to view life around them.

Ps 38:1-4 O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath. 2 For your arrows have pierced me, and your hand has come down upon me. 3 Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my sin. 4 My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.

Think of a time in your life when you felt guilt. What did you do about it?

If it weren't for Jesus, what could you have done about it?

Is there anything you feel guilty about now? Admit it is sin and turn it over to God. Accept His forgiveness. Forgive yourself. If you need to make things with someone else do so right away.

BLOG 202: THE SHAME-HONOR WORLD VIEW

While the English-speaking world and Europe view life from a guilt-based world view, another large segment of mankind sees things through a **shame-honor** paradigm. The Jews in Bible times viewed life this way. The Bible talks about shame and honor four times as often as it does about guilt and innocence. Countries in the 10/40 window today have this world view.

Arab countries clearly are shame-based. Family and tribal honor comes above everything else. The pride of the tribal and national rulers is clear. Offense is taken for the smallest slight, which is why there is always so much infighting amongst the Arabs. It can be seen in the way those who are perceived to bring shame to the family are treated. Fathers and brothers are required to kill wives or daughters who bring shame on the family by their sex or morals. Their death restores the families' honor. The same is true of becoming a Christian. The shame it brings on those around them can only be removed by their death.

Asia, too, is shame-based in its perspective of life. China and Japan are all about honoring and showing respect to those who deserve it. Their society is full of bowing down, showing good manners and being respectful of those deserving of honor.

India is the same way. I am shown great honor in the way I am treated. To do otherwise would shame those in a position to honor me. I am showered with the best hospitality they have to offer, with shawls and flower garlands, with offers of help for whatever I am doing. God is honored in their worship by entering taking off their shoes and the women covering their heads.

Shame is to be avoided at all costs. If a wife disgraces her husband by something she says or does, by not producing a healthy male heir or by some other dishonorable activity she is often murdered by her husband and/or mother-in-law. Her sari will 'accidentally' catch fire while she is bent over a stove and she will burn to death. This is accepted by their culture for it is the way shame is removed. Babies who are born handicapped are often left to die for their imperfection brings shame to the whole family and often even the tribe.

If a student fails to get good enough grades in school to move to the next level they may take their own life. That is true in Japan as well as India. The pressure to succeed and bring honor instead of failing and bringing shame is very great.

Because there is no right-wrong grid of absolutes government officials are often very corrupt. They become rich at the expense of the taxpayers. This wealth brings them honor. However if they are caught and their corruption is exposed they quite often take their own life because the shame of being caught and losing their income is so great they don't feel they can go on. Corruption isn't shameful, but being caught is.

While our ethics are based on right or wrong which stem from absolutes in the Bible, their morality is context-sensitive. It is relative, depending on the circumstances. There is a growing belief

in relativism in America today. It exploded in the public arena as 'situational ethics' espoused by Playboy and other similar magazines.

It is very hard for us to think in terms different than we always have for we have no frame of reference built into us to understand and follow that philosophy. We can't imagine not looking at things through a guilt-innocence, right-wrong grid. They can't imagine looking at things in that way! Thus when we bring the Gospel to those with other world views but use our guilt-innocence paradigm, they don't respond. They don't understand it. It doesn't speak to their needs. They don't feel guilt like we do so why should they need a solution to it. They just don't think in terms of right and wrong. For someone else to kill their daughter would be shameful, for them to kill her if she is does something different than community standards brings honor. It doesn't make sense to us but does to them!

For us as evangelical American Christians guilt-innocence is the way we see everything, but even in America that framework is shifting with the younger generation and the unchurched. As our culture buys more and more into the lie that there are no absolutes, that right and wrong are determined by each person just for themselves, than the guilt-innocence viewpoint loses its hold. In America today we see it being replaced by a shame-honor system.

Perhaps this is most clearly seen in teen culture today. Things aren't evaluated by right and wrong but by cool and uncool. Certain dress, talk and actions are cool, thus they are honored. Others are not cool, they are uncool, and thus they bring shame. Everyone tries to fit in and be honored, not rejected and shamed. Their group of peers replaces family and tribe. Being part of a cool group is paramount. Rejection by ones chosen group brings shame and devastation. People today aren't asking "What should I do?" Instead they are asking "Who am I?" Am I acceptable? Am I all I can be? Am I getting all that is due me? This is all about being honored and not shamed.

The greatest shame in shame-based cultures comes from rejection. When a person is rejected by their family or tribe the shame can be overwhelming. To be sent out of one's home with nothing and have to beg naked on the street is a shame most cannot endure. Death is preferable.

Jesus Himself used the shame-honor viewpoint to explain salvation. The gospels are full of stories of Jesus healing lepers. There was no one more dishonored, no one more rejected than a leper. They had to walk around calling 'unclean, unclean' wherever they went. They couldn't heal themselves, only God could do it. By removing the same in their body and restoring them to honor Jesus was clearly showing He could remove the shame in our lives and give us honor instead.

All of Jesus' many miracles of healing removed the shame of the handicapped and replaced it with health and wholeness. The unworthy person is now worthy again. This was Jesus' calling card, proving to all who He was and what He could do.

He took away the stigma of Gentiles and removed their rejection, bringing them into a place of honor in Israel. He healed a woman with a 12 year issue of blood which made her unclean and unable to even enter the temple. He removed the shame of the woman taken in adultery and the woman at the well in Samaria. He gave them honor instead of disgrace.

So we have these 2 perspectives of life: guilt-innocence and shame-honor. Are you wondering which one is right? If so I hope you get the irony of that question. Only those in guilt-based systems would ever even think in those terms! But since that is the way we think let's try to answer that question in the next blog. (Wednesday, January 1, 2014, USA)

1 Peter 2:6; Romans 9:33 "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

How would you explain shame to someone?

When have you felt shame? Why?

Do you still feel shame? Why or why not?

What advice would you give to someone who felt shame as to how to get rid of it?

BLOG 203: THE FEAR-POWER WORLD VIEW

In the last 2 blogs we've examined to very prevalent world views today: guilt and innocence is one, shame and honor is the other. These are two different ways of perceiving truth and our relationship to God and each honor. But which one is right (only guilt-innocence followers would even ask such a question)? Let's look at the first sin in Eden and see if it brought them guilt or shame.

Genesis 3:7 says "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves." This clearly shows guilt. Their conscience showed them their guilt. A conscience will do that, but consciences can be silenced after a time of being ignored. So our guilt-based view must be right, right?

But look at the next verse, verse 8: "Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden." Now this is clearly shame they are feeling. So both guilt and shame were their responses to sin.

However those were the only responses, there is one more! "Adam answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." (Genesis 3:10) Now we see a third response, fear.

This brings us to the third paradigm in the world today, fear-power. This perception of life and the world is very aware of the power of Satan and demons in whatever form they may take in their culture. Their whole existence is one of trying to appease the gods around them so they won't make life worse for them. We see this in primal religions and cultures like Native Americans and those in the jungles of Africa, Asia, Central and South America. Those into the occult and horoscopes follow a fear-power perception of life. It is also seen in dictatorships and communism. Various religions use fear to control people. Many of the cults operate this way, as does a segment of legalism in evangelical Christianity. Many have also seen this in Roman Catholicism.

In India it is very evident, especially in the rural parts of the country. That is why my teaching on and ministering in spiritual warfare was so effective. It shows God's power as greater than any other force and set those in bondage free from their fear.

Thus we have 3 basic world views: guilt-innocence, shame-honor and fear-power. We can compare and contrast them like this:

GUILT – INNOCENCE	SHAME – HONOR	FEAR – POWER
Legal aspect, right and wrong, law broken	Embarrassment, unworthiness in relationship	Consequences of action (or no action)
From breaking God's LAW	From breaking God's RELATIONSHIP	From breaking God's TRUST
Answer: FORGIVENESS	Answer: HOPE	Answer: FREEDOM
2. Time: Greece, Rome into Europe	3. Time: Islam spread, defeated going west so went east	1. Time: Ancient times, before Greece
To the Greeks	To the Jews	To the Barbarians
Now: Western cultures	Now: 10/40 window	Now: Jungle Africa, Asia, So Am

Geog: West of Jerusalem	Geog: East of Jerusalem	Geog: South of Jerusalem
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We must understand all three of these in order to minister to people today. No country has just one; often there is a mixture of two or even three of these. We must understand the people we are working with so we can connect with them through their world view. We must start with people where they are, then move them in the direction of the truth of the Gospel. (Friday, January 3, 2014, USA)

Luke 12:4-6 "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

What are you most afraid of in life? Why?

What do you usually do to handle your fear when it comes?

What is God's remedy for fear?

BLOG 204: "BEARING ALL MY SIN AND SHAME"

As American evangelical Christians today we clearly understand the truth behind the **guilt-innocence** paradigm. We have been taught we are guilty before God and He has paid the penalty for us so we can be free (innocent). That is very true and clearly understood.

We are also fairly well versed in the **fear-power** perspective as well. We are taught about Jesus' miracles and God's power. We know and experience freedom for Satan and his demons. We are steeped in the awareness of God's awesome greatness. We know there is no power greater than Him.

Where we fall short is our understanding of the **shame-honor** view. We know our sins are forgiven and we no longer have guilt before God, but we go through life with tremendous shame, not realizing Jesus removed our shame on the cross as well. Let's look at the gospel from a shame-based perspective and see how that applies to us today as well.

We all stand in shame and dishonor before God. We have no worth of our own to earn His approval. We have been sent from His presence, as Adam and Eve were sent out of Eden. They couldn't return and neither can we. We stand naked and disgraced before Him (Job 1:21). We are poor and penniless beggars with no hope and no future.

Perhaps teens can understand this better for they are more affected by a shame-based culture. Suppose a teen was totally rejected by family and friends. They were mocked and hated, kicked out of their home and group with nothing – no food, no clothing, no shelter, nothing. They have no worth and no hope. A large sign is put around their neck which reads 'uncool' (or 'nerd' or something similar). In total embarrassment they have to sit naked in the mall begging for coins for food. They find scraps of paper on the floor and try to use them to cover themselves and hide their nakedness. How would such a teen feel? That is how we are before God and that is how we should feel in approaching Him on our own.

There is nothing we can do to change our standing before God, absolutely nothing. Only God Himself could remove our disgrace. Only He could clothe Adam and Eve in Eden, and He did so, making garments of skin for them to wear (Genesis 3:21). That is exactly what Jesus did for us on the cross. He hung there, totally naked, for 6 long hours. He was completely rejected by God and man. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me!" He cried (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). Feeling

the guilt of our shame in His sinless soul was beyond any shame we will ever feel. The rejection was beyond anything we will ever know, and it was all done for us.

By sharing and removing our shame He has given us honor. His worth for doing such a thing was passed on to us. That wonderful act was eternally honorable for Him and that is the honor He passes on to us. He removes our shame and rejection. He makes us part of His family and we are accepted by Him in heaven for all eternity. Isaiah writes: "I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." (Isaiah 61:10)

Let's go back to our teenage sitting naked and embarrassed in the mall, covered with pieces of litter and begging for scraps of food. As he sits there he notices the multi-millionaire owner of the mall walking down the hall. The owner spots him and changes direction, walking directly toward the teen. The teen pulls his scraps tighter around him but can't avoid the stare of the owner. He stops before the teen, and then does what seems unbelievable. He takes off his fine, tailor-made clothes and puts them on the teen. He takes the teen's place, covers himself with the pieces of litter and becomes the beggar the teen was. He gives the teen the keys to his office with its fine furniture and state-of-the-art entertainment center. He hands you papers stating you are adopted into his family and that everything he owns is equally yours. His family is waiting to accept you into an honored position and shower you with presents and love. Imagine how the teen would feel now! Imagine how he'd feel toward the owner who did all this.

That is the best way I can describe what God did for us from a shame-honor perspective. Like the father of the prodigal son, He clothes us with His best and puts us in a privileged, highly esteemed position (Luke 15:22). Best of all, there is nothing that can happen to have this honored position taken away (Romans 8:1). We need never live in shame or rejection again! We have respect and honor for all eternity! We have gone from being pitiful, naked beggars to honored and esteemed members of God's family for all eternity! We will rule and reign with Jesus forever (Revelation 20:6). Our shame has been replaced with honor.

There is no need for any child of God to live any longer in shame. Too often we are defeated by lies about our past, memories of things which God Himself has forgotten (Hebrews 8:12; 10:17; Jeremiah 31:34). There is no reason to live in shame. It has been totally removed forever. There is no shame for the child of God (Romans 8:1). The wonderful grace of Jesus is greater far than all my sin and shame!

So our guilt has been turned to innocence because Jesus paid our debt on the cross. Our shame has been turned to honor because Jesus took our shame and rejection and gave us His honor position with Him forever. Our fear has been removed because His power for us and available to us assures us that there is nothing more for us to ever fear. It's all taken care of – God covered all 3 world paradigms on the cross! He's got it all covered!

He has replaced our guilt with innocence. "The Lord has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy" (Zephaniah 3:15a). He has exchanged our fear with power. "The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm" (Zechariah 3:15b). He has traded our shame for honor. "I will rescue the lame and gather those who have been scattered. I will give them praise and honor in every land where they were put to shame. At that time I will gather you; at that time I will bring you home. I will give you honor and praise among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes before your very eyes," says the Lord" (Zechariah 3:19-20).

What a wonderful, marvelous, all-providing God we serve! We can only scratch the surface of His love and greatness. No wonder we will spend all eternity in heaven worshipping Him, for then we

will see His glory in its full magnificence. Worthy is the Lamb! He bore all my sin and shame, ALL of it. Worthy IS the Lamb! (Monday, January 6, 2014, USA)

Dan 6:21-22 Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! 22 My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king."

What are some of the wrong ways those who aren't believers handle their guilt and shame?

When are you most apt to be tempted to fear or worry?

What do you usually do when hit with fear or worry?

What is the way God wants us to handle them?

BLOG 205: SHARING THE GOSPEL IN A SHAME-BASED CULTURE

(With our January 7 trip to India nearly here, I thought I'd run some blogs about one of the most basic theological differences between Indian culture and ours. I have found this VERY helpful in knowing how to better communicate the Gospel to those from different cultural backgrounds.)

When I speak in India I use guilt-innocence illustrations and references to show the legal aspect of how God paid for our sins. That is true and important to know. But it isn't the only way, nor the main way, I convey the truth of God's grace and love.

I enjoy speaking of Jesus' might, of His miracles and power. It is a pleasure to show how He overcame the power of Satan and demons and how that power is available for us today. Many in India have been raised in a fear-power mind set, and virtually all of them have been influenced by that in some way. So seeing God's victory in Jesus speaks to their fear-power world view. That is always a large part of what I share.

More recently I have learned to speak to their shame-honor system as well for it is part of the very fabric of what it means to be 'Indian.' It's important for me to speak to all three and it's important for each Christian to understand all three. Not only does this enable us to be released from guilt, shame and fear, but we are able to share this freedom with others. There are millions in this country living with the shame of past actions. Muslims, Arabs, and Asians of many various cultures are living around us in the country now and we must be able to reach them as well. Then there are the young people in this country, and older ones who haven't been church-ed and have turned from absolute truth and a right-wrong world view. They then find themselves in a shame-honor system. We need to know how to minister to them as well. Paul says he became all things to all people so he could connect with them and reach them with God's truth (1 Corinthians 9:22). We need to be able to do the same in this day and age.

So how can we best minister to those with a shame-based value system? We don't have to convince them they are shamed, without honor or worth. They already know that, that's why they try to run from rejection to acceptance. The hope we offer is in Jesus, what the mall owner did for the disgraced teen. We need to let them know that God sees them as people of worth, that He respects them and wants them to be accepted as part of His family. He wants to shower them with honor and blessing for all eternity. They need to know Jesus took their shame and will share His honor if they let Him. They need to know that true honor and acceptance is only found in Jesus Who loves them so much He took their shame so it would be removed. There is a degree to which they need to understand the legal action of removing sin by His work on the cross, but their main response must be to His unconditional love and acceptance of Him.

As they allow themselves to have hope and belief in that truth, and as God's Spirit works in their hearts, they will open their hearts to His love and presence. They will seek His comfort and fellowship. They will want to know more about Him, and to know Him Himself. They will respond to His love with their love for Him. It may not be a once-and-done business transaction type of commitment like we often see it, a legal transaction made, signed and sealed in a moment of time. It more likely will be a growing awareness, a gradual shift in how they see their position and God's role in their life. It may take time for these truths to settle in and become part of their thinking, replacing lies that have been hammered in for many years.

But when the change does come it is complete. There is no question of how they will live. Living for Jesus is an honor and privilege, not something they will have to be coaxed into. There is no demanding things of God or questioning if what He is doing in their lives is 'right' or 'wrong.' He is God and they are not, of course He can and should do whatever He things best. We are not to question. He is above all things totally honorable so we don't question what He does.

That does not mean there is not much growing and learning to take place for there is. As with us from a guilt-based culture, we must change our whole mind set to view life from God's Biblical world view. That is not quick and it is not easy no matter the previous paradigm life was viewed from.

There is much in God's Word we can use to reach those with a shame-based slant on life. Adam and Eve in Eden were shamed and hid but God reached out to them and clothed them, removing their shame and dressing them in His righteousness. The Jews were slaves in Egypt but God brought them out and elevated them to great honor. We go from slavery to sin to being joint-heirs with Jesus.

The whole Jewish ceremonial and religious system was based on clean and unclean, being washed to be acceptable to God (Exodus 30). As we saw, cleansing lepers is a clear picture of having honor replace shame (Leviticus 13 and 14; Luke 5:12-14 and many accounts of Jesus' healings in the Gospels). There was the cleansing of the woman who was bleeding 12 years and was rejected from the temple (Mark 5:25-35). There is the shame of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11) who was rescued and restored by Jesus. The woman at the well (John 3) was too embarrassed to come draw water with the other women because of sin in her life. She was rejected and dishonored. Jesus showed her respect by asking for a drink, talking with her and ultimately restoring her honor by removing her shame.

Then there is the prodigal son (Luke 15:22), a clear story of moving from dishonor to acceptance and honor again as the Father forgave and restored him. We are sin-crippled illegitimate children rejected by the Father, but through Jesus our infirmities are healed and the Father accepts us as His own. The illustrations from the Bible are limitless when we look for them.

Make sure you apply these truths of God's victory over guilt, shame and fear to your own life, but use them and apply them to the lives of those you come in contact with. God is truth. God has it all covered! We have the privilege of sharing that truth and freedom with others. Ask Him for opportunities to do so starting today. (Wednesday, January 8, 2014 USA)

1 Peter 2:9-10 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

What does it mean when God says we are 'holy'?

Why is it so important to God that we be holy?

What can you do each day to help live a holy life?

(I'd be very interested in your comments, observations and experiences as they relate to what I've been writing about in these blogs. I'm still learning about these world views and would appreciate any insight you can share with me. Jerry Schmoyer jerry@schmoyer.net)

BLOG 206: BETTER THAN THE NEXT BEST THING

It's finally here – the day I have been anxiously looking forward to with joy and, to be honest, a lot of hesitation. We leave for India in a few hours. I'm not real big on situations where I am not in control, in fact where I am very much out of control. That seems to intensify as I get older. Traveling to and around India for 3 weeks certainly qualifies as something out of my hands!

So if I am not in control, what's the next best thing? Actually, there isn't a next best thing; there is something even better – God being in control. That is always the case when I go to India, but it is especially true this year because spiritual warfare will be the predominate topic at the pastors' and leaders' conferences. Speaking of victory over Satan seems to intensify the battle.

While praying with Nancy about this a few days ago a Bible verse I hadn't thought of in years popped into my mind strong and clear, obviously from God. **Isaiah 54:17 No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me," declares the Lord.** I've read this many times since then and think about it often. It brings me great comfort and peace. We stand on God's promises for they are 100% true all the time. I know the context for this passage doesn't apply to us today, but God is clearly showing me that the principle He is expressing will be applied to us in the coming weeks. I thank God for that.

Unfortunately the verse doesn't say weapons won't be formed against us nor accusations made against us. It assumes these things will happen, and we know that is so. Satan, the world around us, even our own sin nature conspires to oppose God's kingdom and people in every way possible. God does not prevent that, He allows it. But He uses it for His good. In Sunday's sermon we talked about how God doesn't direct us in the easy way but in the best way. All He does is for our growth and His glory. We do what is best for our children, not what is easiest, and our Heavenly Father does the same for us. Would we really want it any other way?

My flesh recoils from discomfort, from distress and from any kind of emotional or physical pain. But I move ahead trusting God's promises. He is in control no matter what. It's not the next best thing to me being in control, it's even better! (Doylestown, PA, Tuesday, January 7, 2014)

"I will never leave you nor forsake you." Joshua 1:5

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28

"Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:20

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 1 Corinthians 10:13

Are you facing situations in life you can't control, things that bring you stress or pain? What promises in the Bible speak to your situation? Meditate on them; think of them whenever you think of the problem situation. God is in control even when we are not.

BLOG 207: THE CREATIVE WORRIER

I seem to have developed quite a skill at playing the “What can go wrong game.” You know what I’m talking about – being able to find the black lining in any silver cloud. I can’t take all the credit for my creative ability to worry about things for I come from a long line of those who have played the game far better than I will ever be able to. It was a way of life for me growing up. And it’s a very hard habit to break for it is rooted in fear. I think if I can somehow anticipate what will go wrong I can in some way do something about it. Unfortunately that is not true. Ironically enough, usually what does go wrong is not something I imagined but something I never anticipated at all! So why do I still play the game? For the same reason we all play it as well – lack of faith.

In the months leading up to this trip it is easy to think of all kinds of things that can go wrong just in the trip here itself. I try to commit them to God in faith and trust His promises, but it sometimes becomes a battle. What is interesting this trip is that none of the many things I thought of which can go wrong did. Strangely enough several things did go wrong which I had never imagined happening. Of course God took care of them well enough, but it really reinforced to me that worrying about what could go wrong is a useless exercise. Worse than that, it is sin.

So anyway **we have arrived!** Our 32 hour trip is over. We are now at Pastor Moses’ new apartment, resting and preparing for the first pastors’ conference tomorrow. We visited the orphans, lepers and Dalits his church ministers to. Let me summarize what it took to get us here by the numbers:

- 11 time changes we traveled through
- 10 months of making plans and preparations
- 9 hour flight from Frankfort, Germany to Mumbai, India
- 8 hour flight from Newark to Frankfort, Germany
- 7 times I’ve been to India now
- 6 security checkpoints to go through
- 5 hours sleep, total, while traveling
- 4 airports to navigate around
- 3 continents to spend time on
- 2 business class flights instead of economy (thanks to God and the friend who donated his miles)

1 (and this is the best of all!) wife here with me this time!!! What an amazing difference it makes having Nancy here. I keep looking at her and touching her to make sure it is real – and it seems to be! I know it’s not a dream for we haven’t had much sleep lately!

Thanks for your prayers. They are greatly appreciated. Pray God would give me the words to say to minister to the pastors tomorrow, and each day we are here. (Frankfort Airport, Thursday, Jan 9, 2014)

Matthew 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Are you a worrier? What causes you the most fear?

Make a list of all the things you are worried/concerned/fearful about right now. One by one pray about them, giving them to God and trusting Him to do what He knows is best (not necessarily easiest) for you and for His Kingdom. Whenever worry tries to come again keep giving the situation back to God.

BLOG 208: THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

We had our first Pastors' Conference today. I would like to describe how I feel before leading these conferences but I haven't ever found the right words. It's a mixture of excitement, humility, oppression, God's power, and feeling responsible to make this time count for these men who receive very little other training. It is very exhilarating and totally draining at the same time.

This year is different in that all the conferences will be 2 days long. We are using larger buildings so more can come, and by having them come for 2 days I can cover twice the material. So instead of teaching 50 pastors and wives in one village today and 50 more in another village tomorrow we are bringing in 150 to a larger location. It doesn't take a math genius to realize we train more people and give them twice as much training. It does cost more to help them travel further and to give them more meals and a blanket to sleep in.

Knowing I had an additional day to teach them added to the responsibility of making the best use of the time, my own experience, and the prompting of God's Spirit, both led me to plan for spiritual warfare to be the main top of the first day. All believers are in a battle, but in some ways it seems even more real here in India.

I am going through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, tracing our warfare with Satan and his forces and how we are to have victory. An overview of the flow of the whole Bible is the basic framework for this study. (If you'd like this material it is taken from my book, Spiritual Warfare and the Bible, which is on my web sites. If you'd like a digital copy emailed to you just email me.). It's more like telling a story than anything else. But what a wonderful story! It's the story of God's involvement with mankind from the beginning. Despite man's continuing failure God stays faithful. It truly is the greatest story ever told. The best part is that I am in this story, and so are you. It's the most wonderful romance, mystery, and sometimes humor story ever. It's the most amazing love story of all time. And while there are some sorrowful parts, it has a great ending. The climax to this story is really just out of this world! (Hyderabad, Friday, Jan 10, 2014)

John 4:16 For God so loved the world that He send His One and Only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Think about the story God is writing about your life: where it's been, where it is and where it's going. Think what it would be without Him. There may be parts of the story line you don't understand, some you may not even like, but you know where God is going with your story and how it will end. Only it will never end but will continue on forever. Think about these things for a few moments and thank God for these truths.

BLOG 209: REMOVING THE ROUGH EDGES

Our first 2-day pastor's conference is over and it went very well. There are some rough spots to work out but that will come in time, I walked about What God Expects of Pastors, Marriage and Ministry, and Signs You Are Growing Spiritually. There were 200 pastors and 25 wives who attended –far beyond what I expected. They were very appreciative of the teaching and the 3 free books we gave each one who attended. They said over and over that it was 'deep' and 'practical.' I was pleased to hear that for it's what I wanted it to be.

They aren't the only ones being ministered to, however. God is using this experience to stretch and make me more like Jesus as well. The more I seem to make progress, the more I see needs to be made. He is using His Word and other believers to bring that about.

David is a great example of how this works. He wasn't born a hero. He became one when he killed Goliath. He didn't do it with his hands, but with a smooth stone and a slingshot. The stone was

God's instrument of choice to bring victory and deliverance. But it wasn't any old stone. The stone had to be prepared.

It wasn't just a common stone David picked up from the ground. He had to descend from the mountain to the valley where there was a creek. Humbleness is the first requirement in being an instrument God can use. David then chose 5 smooth stones. What made these stones smooth? It was what happened to them in the creek. The motion of the water against them removed their rough edges. When the water of God's Word moves against us and we let it form and shape us our rough edges are smoothed away (Ephesians 5:26). It can be a painful, time consuming process but God is working on that in all of us as we apply His Word to our lives. Then we become useful to Him.

What also smoothed the stones was friction with other stones as the force of the water tumbled them along (Proverbs 27:17). Our contact with mature believers helps smooth and refine us as well. Fellowship and friendship with others who are also being formed into useful instruments is a key part of our growth process.

I see God doing that in the lives of the pastors in India. I see Him doing that in my life as well. Do you see that happening in your life? It happens in humility, in the valley, not on the mountaintop. It comes about by continual exposure to His Word and contact with His people. It is a slow but steady process, but an important one. It's the way God prepares instruments for His service. (Hyderabad, Saturday, Jan 11, 2014)

Proverbs 27:17 as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

Ephesians 5:26-27 Christ loved the church and give Himself up for her, to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

Can you see God using the truths of His Word and the impact of godly friends to help make you more like Jesus? Make sure you stay in the valley of humility for this process to continue. Be available to be used as His instrument whenever and wherever He chooses to use you.

BLOG 210: PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD IS THE DEATH OF HIS SAINTS

Today we went to Moses' church and spoke to children, teens and the whole congregation. I've spoken to them 30 or more times over the years. I know most of the people personally and have been in many of their homes. I've watched the children grow, and some of the older ones die. I am truly at home there, and of course they love having Nancy with them! I feel very much at home and truly loved by them. What a wonderful blessing to be loved by two very special churches, one in Doylestown and one in India! That is a great blessing from God.

I am typing as we drive 6+ hours from Hyderabad to Vijayawada. When I finish here I must go over the lessons for the coming days. Circumstances have caused me to have to throw out many of my plans and come with new plans and lessons. If you know me you know I'd rather have it all dialed down 6 months ago instead of not knowing what I'm going to teach tomorrow! Pray for wisdom and guidance as I seek God's will for what is the best use of the time I have with these dedicated servants of God!

Thanks for the emails! Many of you have emailed me messages of encouragement and I greatly appreciate each and every one. I can't write back often, but look forward to reading them. Thanks!

On a more somber note, though, is the news that a pastor in Hyderabad was killed by a mob yesterday while giving out tracks. He is the third pastor who has been killed that way recently. We are in no danger, neither are those who keep silent. But the ones who stand up for their faith and

share it with others are often in danger. The reactions of Christians in Hyderabad is strong. They are gathering at this time in a public display to demand equal protection for Christians as others. These deaths are making them stronger in their faith. This just shows me all the more how important it is to do whatever we can to help support these pastors. They are truly on the front lines. Prayers are being requested for the family of this pastor. (driving from Hyderabad to Vijayawada, Sunday, January 12, 2014)

Psalms 116:15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

Revelation 1:17-18 "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. "

Thank God for the freedom and protection from persecution which you experience.

Pray for your brothers and sisters in the Lord who are not so fortunate.

Pray for comfort for those who suffer for their faith. Ask God to empower His people with courage to stand up for their faiths. Pray for the Christians in America for they, too, need courage to stand. Pray for yourself, to have courage to take advantage of the opportunities God will give you today to share His love with others.

BLOG 211: TESTIMONIES

We had our first Leader of Leaders conference today – the men we've worked with closest and longest. I've known them for years, been in their homes, preached in their churches and helped pay for new homes or churches. They are among the ones we support with \$25 a month as well. I feel very close to them and they to me. They have sponsored conferences in their churches, and they oversee our work in their area among the several churches they all oversee.

While waiting for lunch today some of them shared what God has recently been doing in their churches. Here are the highlights:

Pastor Isaac Vizaq (picture 1, man in light blue shirt and wife on right). A girl who had cancer came for prayer and was healed, believed in Jesus and attends church. An alcoholic man who beat his wife came for prayer and became a believer. Someone dreamed of he and his wife, then went and found them, asking for prayer. He was delivered from alcoholism and became a believer. They prayed for young man who hated Jesus. Before long he became a believer now his whole family attends church.

Pastor Prakash Rao, Bobbili (picture 1, standing on left in pink shirt) He oversees 4 churches and his wife 3 among the gypsy people. A women with AIDS came for prayer. She was healed and became a believer.

Pastor Sudhakar working in Repalli (picture 1, tan shirt, 2nd from left) A man with aids prayed and was healed and believed. A Hindu man sitting outside his house had an idol fall on his head and break his back. He was paralyzed and the hospital couldn't help him. He was dying so his family dumped him at the church because they didn't want him. The people prayed, he was healed, believed in Jesus and went back and testified to his doctors.

Pastor Das (picture 2, standing) A lady with swelling in her legs and stomach came for prayer, was healed, now is part of the church. A pregnant lady who wasn't able to deliver her baby was dumped at their church to die but they prayed and she had a safe delivery.

Pastor Sudhakar Rao, Bobbili (picture 3) A man with kidney failure was left at the church to die. They prayed, he was healed and believed; now he has part in their ministry.

What a joy and privilege to be involved with these men. Thanks for you who help support them with \$25 a month! (Vijayawada Monday, January 13, 2014)

Matthew 10:1 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

Matthew 10:8-9 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

Pray for these people and for the pastors working with them. Ask God to give them wisdom, courage, perseverance and protection as they bring the light into darkness.

BLOG 212: HERE'S THE DIRT ON INDIA

When one grows up in America and then visits India there are many aspects of life that, while making perfect sense to the Indian people, come across as really strange to us. One of these is the cleanliness/dirty quandary in India. The majority of the people keep themselves and their property meticulously clean. Some wash several times a day, and they are forever sweeping their homes and the area in front. But where do they put the dirt? They sweep it into the street, where wind and feet carry it right back to their homes. Their trash and garbage pile up just outside their properties.

Don't they realize that more is required than just cleaning up their own person and space? When will they realize that cleanliness as a nation requires more than that? How can they see so clearly the filth in their own space yet block out so much of it all around them? (Have you figured out yet where I'm going with this?)

While we as Americans look down on the India people for the way they handle the physical filth in their nation, don't we as Christians do the same concerning the moral filth in our country? We make sure our lives and personal space stay clean from it, but we can somehow overlook it as it piles up all around us: immorality, materialism, greed, addictions, abuse, profanity, etc., etc., etc.

How can Indians overlook the filth everywhere else in their nation? The same way we do. What would happen if all those who want personal cleanliness would work together to get rid of the filth piling up around them? The same thing as would happen if Christians in this country worked together to clean up the filth piling up around us. We can exert tremendous influence as we vote for those who share our values, boycott that which is ungodly and support that which is wholesome. We can talk to neighbors, write letters to manufacturers, turn off offensive programs and make a larger impact on our local neighborhoods.

It would certainly improve India as a nation if they would be interested in cleaning up national filth and not just personal dirt, and the same would be true here if we as Christians did the same. (Vijayawada, Tuesday, January 14, 2014)

Matthew 5:13-16 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Luke 14:34-35 "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. "He who has ears to hear let him hear."

You can't clean up the world, but you can impact your part of it. Make sure your life and personal space is clean of sin. But don't stop there. Make a list of things you can do (or stop doing) today to impact others for godliness. Who can you talk to, write, and/or pray for? What entertainment or shopping habits should change? Who do you know who is struggling with filth in their life? What can you do to help them clean up?

BLOG 213: YOU CAN'T WIN A BATTLE WITH JUST A HELMET!

Our 2-day Leadership Conference and our 1 day Leader of Leaders Conferences are now over. We had 80 pastors at the former and 30 at the latter. These are the men I know best and work with most often throughout the year. They take what we teach to the pastors and churches they oversee and pass it on to them. They plan and run the local conferences we have in their areas. These people are very special to me, and I to them. It is a joy and privilege to be involved with them. This is why I come.

I feel the conferences went very, very well. They say they were very meaningful to them. God blessed the sessions and touched all of us with His presence in a very real way. I talked about pastoring, leadership, spiritual warfare, family life and spiritual growth. Since these men have been listening to me for years (some since 2006 or 2007) I use new material each time and we can build on previous years. It's given me the opportunity to really build into their lives. Having these conferences is hard work but well worth the cost.

After the conferences we drove 6 hours further north, then tomorrow we'll get up early and go another 2 hours to the location for the pastor's conference for the next 2 days. We are traveling so far because it is a location that is especially neglected as far as pastor training so we want to help them. Pray God would bless the conference and each one who is present (that includes me!).

A couple days ago I spent a large amount of time explaining the armor we are to wear in our spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6). It struck me again how we need each piece, all of it. Salvation, of course, is key – that's the helmet. Unfortunately too many people stop right there and think that's the only equipment they need. Then they wonder why they are defeated and don't have joy and blessing. If a soldier goes into battle with only his helmet he will be defeated every time. We, too, need our breastplate (holy living), belt (telling truth from lies), sandals (peace from God), a shield (faith) and a sword (knowing and using God's Word). You can't defeat a skilled, experienced enemy with only your helmet! (Vijayawada, Wednesday, January 15, 2014)

Ephesians 6:10-18 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

What about you? How has your spiritual growth been in the last 3 months? Are you coasting on your salvation, and then wondering why you do not have the joy and victory you need? You have the helmet of salvation, but what about living a holy life, knowing and following God's truth and growing in faith? It takes more than salvation to win the battle you are in!

BLOG 214: YOU KNOW YOU'RE IN INDIA (Nancy Schmoyer)

Nancy wrote this blog – something she did while listening to me give the same talk to a different group of pastors for the umpteenth time. (At least she was awake!)

I KNOW I'M IN INDIA WHEN:

Jerry tells me 10 times a day that he's glad I'm with him.

10 boys run to carry my one bag.

Someone is trying to touch my blond hair.

I see a store selling "Repossessed Mattresses"

Rice is the main course for breakfast, lunch and dinner

Street food is cooked corn in a small cup or a 3" banana

They serve tea to me in a 2 ounce cup

There are dozens of shoes piled outside the conference room door

Jerry wears a dress over his trousers

There is no toiled paper – and often no toilet

Dogs are wild street animals

Grown men laugh hysterically at Jerry's simple magic tricks

86 degrees is winter

A herd of water buffalo cross a modern 4-lane highway

I see my next meal being cooked on a dirt floor

I pay \$.40 for sterling silver ear rings but \$3.50 for 2 small scoops of Baskin Robins ice cream

After 6 hours of driving at 60 miles an hour there are still continuous fields of rice patties

A hotel attendant works 12 hour days and earns \$6,500 a year

Jerry eats rice and spicy bony chicken and loves it

I really get excited to see Subway

The stories I tell from the Bible are new stories to the ones listening

We don't advertise the Christian conferences because too many people will attend and overwhelm the facilities

Multiple calendars are used for wall art

I see 4 people and a goat riding on one scooter

Drivers routinely drive north in the south-bound lanes

The car horn is used as a turn signal, passing alert and everything else

I hear the eerie whine of Muslim prayer horns at 5:30 AM

Women cover their heads and men remove their sandals as soon as someone prays

A 4 star hotel means I get 2 towels

I use a quart of hand sanitizer in 3 weeks

No 2 women ever wear the same dress (sari)

AV equipment means there is a mic as long as there is electricity

A head bob means yes, no or maybe – you are never really sure

I never pass up a bathroom stop

I arrive during the annual sewer cleaning season

Someone may offer me 2 water buffalo for my daughter

All chickens are free range (Vishakapatnam, Thursday, Jan 16, 2015)

Philippians 4:11-13 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

What have you been complaining about today that you probably wouldn't have been complaining about if you lived in India?

When have you last thanked God for your life in the United States instead of complaining about things? Thank Him now.

BLOG 215: PASSING IT ON

I find I feel very comfortable with these pastors in India, despite the fact that verbal communication is virtually nonexistent. In many ways it's like a mother meeting a mother from another culture. Even though they can't talk, they share a common experience that goes deeper than words. I feel a kinship with the pastors here because we've been through the same wars and fought in the same trenches. Some things don't have to be spoken; no words can really capture what is in the heart.

God has given me a greater opportunity for training than they have, but I don't see myself as superior to them in any way. They experience situations in everyday life I don't know if I could handle. Having more Bible knowledge doesn't make one a better person. Having lived longer and therefore learned some things through experience certainly doesn't make me superior to them in any way. In fact, there is much they can teach me about commitment, faith and sacrifice. We may be very different, but down inside there is no difference at all.

So why do I do this when, to be honest, I'd rather be at home? I must be a steward of what God has so graciously given me. Paul pretty much sums it all up: **So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.** (I Corinthians 4:1-2)

God has entrusted me with the truths of His Word, not to keep to myself but to pass on to others. Some of you have been entrusted with finances, and the pastor you sponsor is the recipient of what God has given you. For others it may be time to pray, or organizational skills or whatever God has entrusted to you. Remember the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-23)? Each servant was given a resource for which he was accountable. He couldn't just keep it for himself but had to use it by investing it. The more he was given, the more for which he was accountable. God has allowed me to gain a good understanding of His Word, not just to keep to myself, but to pass on to others. That's why I'm here. (Vishakapatnam, Friday, January 17, 2014)

2 Tim 1:13-14 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you — guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

What skills, training or resources his God given you? In what ways are you using them for others? Are there any ways you could use them even better?

ANSWERED PRAYER: For months I have been praying for God to empower our words (me and translator Moses) so that God's Spirit impresses them on the hearts of the listeners in a real and powerful way. Each day several pastors come to us and their comments reassure us that this is indeed happening.

BLOG 216: MEET THE PASTORS

Yesterday's conference was in an entirely new area, one that has been untouched by this kind of pastoral training, and their appreciation showed. About 120 pastors and wives attended the 2-day conference. It was draining but uplifting.

While in this northeastern corner of Andhra Pradesh, in Vizianagaram, we met with a group of pastors we support. These are wonderful men, very familiar faces and longtime friends. We have bonded closely over the years we have been working together. I stay in close contact with them throughout the year through Pastor Moses. These are pastors we send \$25 a month for. This accounts for 1/3 of their salary! We had a great visit. They filled us in on their lives and ministries. I pass it on to you to help you better pray for these very special men. They pass on deep gratitude for you financial and prayer support. Without it much of what they do would not be accomplished. The attached picture shows the men, so you can put a face with the name.

V. ANANDA RAO (older man far left) is 64, a pastor 45 years, the pastor of Hallalujah church in Vijayanagaram for 20 years. Pray for his ministry, and for his wife who suffers from migraine headaches and a lot of pain in her right knee.

YESUPADAM D (checkered shirt, 2nd from left) is our big helper in this area, along with his wife SHOWBHEGYALRALTHI. She is the daughter of V. Ananda Rao and a very close friend of Nancy. She got Nancy her first sari 3 years ago. They live and minister in Bogapur and have 2 grown sons, one in Bible College. They have a bad situation with their church flooding water around church. Recently they baptized 12 people. Pray for the water situation, and for the wife's bad back pain and sciatica in her leg. (A picture is attached of this couple and us)

G. ISAAC (brown shirt white stripe, 3rd from left) need a roof on one of the churches he pastors. The poor testimony of some local pastors is causing people to turn from Christianity in his area of Vizaq. A woman was recently healed of liver cancer and is now coming to church. He recently baptized 4 people and has 1 son and 1 daughter.

G. SUDHAKAR (white shirt, 4th from left), Bobbili, pastors churches in 5 villages, 2 of them need places to worship. He has recently baptized 21 people and has 2 children. His wife suffers from very bad health. 2 need places, 21 baptisms, 2 children, wife not well

R JOHN BABU (arms crossed, 5th from left) has started a new church and has a location to build but needs a building. He has recently baptized 3 people. He lives in Kaypurum, has 1 daughter, and his wife suffers from low blood pressure. She is often in the hospital.

G. PRAKASH RAO (checkered shirt, Jerry) has a big, bright smile that encourages me whenever he is in a group I teach. He pastors 6 churches, 1 needs a shed (building to meet) because theirs was

destroyed in the recent cyclone that made worldwide news. He pastors 350 believers, has recently baptized 30 people, and has 3 daughters. He lives in Bobbili.

G MADHU (white shirt & pants, Jerry's left) pastors 5 small churches near Kaypur, one with a leaky roof, another with foundation problems. He has baptized 12 people has 1 daughter

SRINU (PAUL) (checkered shirt, far right) from Kaypurum, has recently had 15 baptisms, 2 new village churches and needs a place of worship in one of them.

N RAJSEKAR from Vijayanagaram was unable to attend because he was sick in bed. There is much witchcraft and black magic in his area and he is often asked to pray for those who are demon possessed. He is a young pastor with no children.

ZECHARIAH from Vizianagaram also was unable to attend. He is married with grown children. His church has a foundation but no roof. (Driving from Vishakapatnam to Vijayawada Saturday, January 18, 2014)

Colossians 1:3-12 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints. ... All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. ... 9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. 10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

Print out this email and the picture of the pastors so you can pray for them every day. Pray for guidance, wisdom, protection and courage. Ask God to strengthen their marriages and families. Pray for others to help share the load of their ministry. Pray for faithfulness, holiness, perseverance and encouragement.

BLOG 217: MEET THE PASTORS - 2

(Sunday, January 19, 2014) We visited 2 churches today and spoke in each. Nancy shared her testimony. I preached about faith (Hebrews 11:1-7) and dedicated a church (Psalm 30). The first church was in the village Pastor Moses grew up in – Mellamarru, right by his old home place.

Born of a Hindu family, Poliseti Karunakar (who later added the Christian name Moses) was in a farming cast, fairly high in India's cast system. There were no Christians in the village and no one there ever heard of Jesus. His father died of TB when he was 3 and he was the only child. When he was 7 some Dalits came and invited he and his mother to church. He went, learned about Jesus, and believed. When he was 17 he left the family farm to his uncle and went to the city for seminary training. He never returned to live in the village. His uncle and family, still Hindu's, care for his mother, now 64 years old. He visits often and helps her financially. He says if his father had not died he would not have been a Christian but would still be a rice farmer. Romans 8:28!

After seminary he was pastoring a church when the parents of an 18 year old girl asked if he would marry her. Her family agreed. He had not spent any time getting to know her, just knew she had a reputation of a good, praying girl. So at 21 he married his wife, Krupa. Her father later became a pastor: Pastor Barnabas who is Pastor Moses' right hand man and is someone I admire greatly. A strong love started growing between Moses and Krupa. A year after marriage they had a daughter

Shekinah, who is finishing medical college, and 6 years later a son, Prabhu, just starting computer college. (A picture of his family and the church are attached.)

From there we went to the church of another pastor we sponsor, Joshua, in P P Palem near Machilipatnam. He started a church in his Dalit village in 2006 and recently built a church building for \$3000. We contributed a small amount to it, so they wanted us to do the dedication. It was a pleasure and honor to be part of this special day. These people are outcasts, not even in the cast system. They can only work as day laborers and street cleaners, the very bottom of the ladder. They are fine, loving, giving people and very, very committed Christians. Pastor Joshua has 3 sons and has started another church in a nearby village where they meet in a house. (A picture Pastor Joshua and his church are attached.)

Words cannot express the blessing and privilege it is to be involved with these fine men in even the smallest way. Thanks so much to you for your prayers and finances, for without them this wouldn't be possible. These people faithfully pray for us. I tell them at the end of every conference that I may not see them again in this life, but I will see them in heaven, and then we will have a long talk about all the Lord has done for us. You who invest in these men by your prayers or in other ways will also get to know them in heaven. What a special joy that will be!!!

3 John 3-4 It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

Spend a few moments now, and throughout the day, thinking about heaven and what it will be like for you. Think about the people you know who are there. Think about other believers you may not have met on this earth but will meet in heaven. What sort of things do you think you will talk about? You can have that fellowship now by talking about those same things with Christians you know. Start practicing what it will be like to be in heaven!

BLOG 218: A CHRISTIAN FUNERAL IN INDIA

(Monday, January 20, 2014) When we left Mellamarru yesterday morning we assured them we'd come back and speak there again sometime in the future. Little did we know we'd be back in 18 hours to bury Moses' mother, who died shortly after we left. Pastor Moses got the phone call while we were eating supper last night and was devastated. He wasn't expecting this at all.

She raised him as a single mother since he was 3 years old, 45 years ago. She died at age 64. She became the first Christian in their village after going with an untouchable to Calvary Church in the next village. She and her family were from a MUCH higher cast of farmers, but she went and received Christ. Then she evangelized the village and many are now Christians. She built a hut church on her property and recently rebuilt it with concrete, cinder blocks and a real roof. EVERYONE knows she is a Christian. Many were grieved.

The funeral and burial are soon after death, which often necessitates driving all night to arrive. Moses' wife, son and several elders from his church did just that. We left at 6 this morning to arrive at 8. There is no funeral director, no one pronounces the person dead, no death certificate. Families totally handle their own deaths. The body is laid in front of the hut on hay and covered in a white linen material from the neck down. Relatives and villagers stop by to cry and mourn. Men are hired to start digging a grave on her small farm land. A wooden box is made and they cover it with white cloth and flowers. Much time is spent praying, singing and crying. Clearly it is a time of love and devotion to a special woman.

I had a 30 minute message from John 14:1-6, focusing on bringing comfort to the believers as well as understanding of the gospel to the Hindu's present. Then there was more singing, others spoke, more singing, and so on for several hours while the grave was being prepared.

The men then left and the women lovingly washed her body and wrapped it in a new, pretty sari. They brought the coffin over and put her in it, put a lot of flowers in with her, and nailed down the lid. The casket was carried in a procession around the small village and to the burial place which was on some land she owned. A concrete block rectangular wall was built in the grave and the casket lowered into it. The coffin was open and salt was poured in until her whole body was covered except her face. Then the casket was again nailed shut.

I had the privilege of saying a few words at the burial. I used Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Then I prayed. We all threw some dirt and flowers in the grave and marble slabs covered opening. We went back to their home where everyone sat and talked for a few hours. We ate a nice Indian meal and walked around the village for a while as well. It's like walking around in a National Geographic's special.

This was certainly a day and an experience we will never forget. To watch this body of believers grieve together and support each other was a beautiful thing. To see what a difference the assurance of eternal life in Jesus makes was very moving. The Hindus have no such hope, and their grieving shows it. To be a part of this day was truly a humbling experience. I knew many of the pastors and people who came today from my visits here. The fine elders in Pastor Moses' Hyderabad church are good men of God and ministered to all of us in many ways. They are fine men indeed.

Psalms 116:15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

How often do you think about death? If a believer close to you dies, do you have confident assurance that you will see them again? Are you ready if God should choose to suddenly call you home?

BLOG 219: NANCY'S NOTES

We had a very good day at one of my very favorite places on earth – Koduru. I have many good friends there from my years of going there. Once I stayed there for a whole week living with Pastor Barnabas. Pastor Moses hasn't slept much, but is doing better. He still is suffering from the loss of his mother. Pray for peace for him and for a good night's rest tonight. We have 2 more 2-day pastors' conferences left. It will be hard to leave these fine people in less than one week! Please keep praying for us! The rest of the blog is from Nancy:

As filthy as the environment is, **women** are the opposite in cleanliness, strikingly colorful, meticulously groomed and manicured. The common woman doing her wash could just as easily be going to a prom. They are always adorned with perfect hair, neatly braided. Their smooth, flawless, chestnut skin makes their colorful saris all the more striking. They are always feminine, soft, gentle, soft-spoken and modest, oozing with femininity. Their femininity has nothing to do with sensuality. It is pure 100% beauty. Even in the poorest village they wear their saris - 6 yards of art. They are sleek and slender and move graciously, gliding effortlessly wherever they move. A few are very petite. I can't help but stare in envy at their grace and beauty. I hope India's movie industry called Bollywood, does not redefine such beauty with sensuality. But from the looks of their films, they already have switched to a male defined sensual beauty.

Normally cultures that are tied to Britain are obsessed with **time**. Somehow India has escaped that obsession quite well. Their culture is not structured around the concept of time. They don't save time, make time, be on time, lack time, have time, be ahead of time, lose time, gain time, run out of

time or have no time. They have few clocks and no watches and don't seem to miss them. They have the sun, so it must be daytime.

There are many **statues** in India. They can be broken into 2 groups. If they look like a man they are a political character. If they look like a cartoon character, they are an idol. Neither of which have any real character!

Driving in India is a continual game of chicken – the one closest to death yields. (Vijayawada, (Tuesday, Jan 21, 2014)

Psalm 51:10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Psalm 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Think about the women of India who manage to stay clean despite the filth all around them. Are you able to stay spiritually clean despite the greed, materialism, immodesty and self-centered focus all around you?

What source of uncleanness around you is the quickest to pollute you (TV, movies, advertisements, thoughts, influence of others, etc.)? What can you do to stay clean today? If there is anything that needs to be cleansed do so now.

BLOG 220: WE ARE NOT ALONE (JOSHUA 1)

(Wednesday, January 22, 2014) As I speak to these pastors every day, I often find I am speaking to myself as well. Sometimes it is conviction, other times encouragement. The conviction I'll keep private, but the encouragement I want to share with you.

One of the last-minute replacement messages I put together after the first pastor's conference was on Joshua as a leader, taken from his first battle experience as leader. He was totally overwhelmed with the seemingly impossible task of defeating impregnable Jericho in order to enter the Promised Land. Nothing in his military experience had prepared him for such challenge, yet God had led them to enter the land right where Jericho stood. So Joshua went outside the camp by himself to think and pray. Being alone was appropriate for he felt alone with the load of his responsibility resting only on him. No one else could share the burden; no one could really understand just how he was feeling and what he was going through.

I can identify with those feelings and I'm sure you can as well. Even when surrounded by many people, we can feel very alone in the challenge we are facing. I'm in a country of over 1 billion people, but in trying to fulfill the responsibility God has given me I feel quite alone. Having Nancy with me this trip is wonderful beyond words, but speaking and ministering and the many choices and decisions that go with it are mine alone.

You, too, face situations in your family or with friends, at work, in health or financial matters that are yours alone. No one who isn't in your situation can really understand, and even then each situation is different. No 2 are totally alike. So we feel alone. That's how Joshua felt.

What happened, though, was that God Himself appeared to him to reassure him that he wasn't alone (Joshua 5:13). God had promised he would not be alone (Joshua 1:5). He has repeated that exact same promise to us as well (Hebrews 13:5; Deuteronomy 31:6-8, I Kings 8:57). When I share this truth with the pastors God applies it to my heart as well. We are not alone. I am not alone. You are not alone. Yet our enemy would do all he can to convince us we are alone, God is not with us, he does not care about us. Remembering that we are not alone is absolutely crucial to moving ahead in faith. If not we will become discouraged and defeated. The truth of the matter is that we are not

alone. Never. God is always with us. He is in India with me every moment. He is with you wherever you are every moment. We never need to feel alone. Never!

Joshua 1:5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.

Hebrews 13:5 God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

When do you tend to feel most alone? Memorize one of the above verses today. Meditate on it all day. Remember it all day long. Share this truth with others.

BLOG 221: NANCY'S NOTES - 2

(Thursday, January 23, 2014)

When I was a new believer I was worried about surrendering my life. I thought God would call me to a mud hut in Africa. I was so wrong. The mud hut is in India.

The lower class is rapidly moving to a larger middle class. That is good. The middle class is rapidly embracing the worst of western culture...materialism and sensuality. That is bad.

YOU KNOW YOU'RE IN INDIA WHEN (part 2):

You wake up at 3:30 every morning, a side effect of your malaria medicine

You have your Passport strapped to your leg all day, every day

Stop signs are just for decoration

A 5 person rickshaw normally carries 11 people

You see strikingly beautiful, manicured woman in a silk sari behind 2 oxen in the middle of a field

You see children holding hands with those of the same gender as they walk

Laundry drying on the roadside guard rail means it's the shepherd's wash day

Men's shorts are a short piece of material wrapped around their waist.... Period.

The shoulder of the road is regularly used as a passing lane and often counts as a third lane

While driving in a car you wonder if you have enough life insurance.

Every curve in the road is a new opportunity to trust God

Food: Cold means room temperature and hot means you might need a trip to the Emergency Room

In a village you have to walk through someone's kitchen to get to the next house

You see 4 story high scaffolding made from bamboo or sticks

People in flip flops wear ear muffs

"To-let" means "for rent"

"STD available" means public phone

401K retirement plans are called schemes ... maybe they know something we don't.

A man riding a bicycle precariously balances a propane tank

My new friends in India are mosquitoes. (They never seem to bite Jerry !!)

It is hard to know difference between a preconstruction site, a completed site in use or abandoned site.

A Ford dealership has 15 letters in its name (Vishakapatnam Ford)

CONTRASTS IN INDIA

Large electric substation alongside an oxcart carrying chickens

A herd of water buffalo crossing a 4 lane highway

Domino's pizza being delivered on a rickshaw

Halal meats (kosher to Muslims) served in Subway

Vegetarian McDonalds

A cow lumbering across a speed bump
Cell phone store in the most remote village
There is a Lion's Club in every town... that is really strange!
A TV in a mud hut

1 Timothy 6:6-8 But godliness with contentment is great gain. **7** For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. **8** But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

Hebrews 13:5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Matthew 6:31-33 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' **32** For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. **33** But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

To what extent are you preoccupied with the 'things' of this life? Are your belongings serving you or are you serving them? No matter how much or how little we have, our possessions can easily possess us.

BLOG 222: WE ARE NOT IN CHARGE (JOSHUA 2)

When Joshua faced the first great hurdle as the leader of the Jews he felt alone, but God appeared to him to reassure him he was not alone (see yesterday's blog). He had a second truth to teach him, one which also speaks to me as I pass it on to the pastors here. It applies to you as well. That's why I share it with you today.

When Joshua went out alone before attacking Jericho God appeared to him to reassure him he was not alone. When Joshua asked who He was He said He was the commander of God's army (Joshua 5:14). He reassured Joshua He wasn't in the Jews army or Jericho's army. He was in God's army. In fact He was the head of the army because He was God Himself. You see, Joshua thought he was the commander of the army, but really God is showing Joshua that He outranks Joshua. So Joshua is not the highest ranking officer. God Himself outranks Him and is taking command from Joshua. Joshua only thought it was his battle when in really it is God's battle.

As I teach this I am reminded that I am not in charge of this ministry in India. On the one hand this is very evident! I can't even speak the language! Pastor Moses tells me when to talk and that is my only responsibility. But that part of it is a great responsibility. I have 4+ hours a day to impact up to 225 godly men and women in the best way possible. There are so many things to teach, continual interruptions and distractions and difficult conditions in which to minister. I must remember God is in control here, even over what I say even over what I say and how I say it. He puts the words into my mind and I speak them with my mouth. Then God does the same with Pastor Moses as he translated and the people as they listen.

I remind the pastors that it is God's ministry, His church. He is the Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20), the sheep belong to Him, not us. He promises that He will build His church (Matthew 16:18). It is His work, not ours. That is great reassurance for the pastors who listen as well as I who speak the words. I am not in charge. He is. I need not worry, get upset or try to force things. I am not alone, and I am not in charge. Neither are you. (Vijayawada, (Friday, January 24, 2014)

Joshua 5:13-15 Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for

us or for our enemies?" 14 "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?" 15 The commander of the Lord's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

Are you a person who wants/needs to be in control? If so, confess your lack of faith in God because it is a sin. Give God control of your life, especially what you fear and worry about. Don't think it is up to you. You are not in charge. Thank God for that fact!

BLOG 223: EACH MINISTRY IS A SACRED ASSIGNMENT (JOSHUA 3)

I've been sharing lessons with you from the life of Joshua, lessons which God spoke to my heart as I shared them with the pastors I was teaching. First, God showed Joshua that he was not alone. He reminded him that he was not in charge. God had another lesson for Joshua before He gave him instructions as to how to have victory over Jericho. He told Joshua to take off his sandals because the place he was standing was holy (Joshua 5:15).

God wanted Joshua to be sure he understood that the assignment he was being given was a sacred trust. It was sacred because it was assigned by God. Every ministry assignment God gives is special and sacred. We judge what we are given by God to do by comparing them to what others do. So inevitably we start thinking someone else has an assignment that is more important than ours. We feel they are better than us. And those who don't seem to be doing much for God we may look down on as not being as good as us. God was teaching Joshua that his assignment was sacred because it was from God and for no other reason.

If God has entrusted you with an assignment it is sacred. The duties of a wife and mother are no less special than those of a large church pastor. All are sacred because all come from God and are individually assigned. If I feel my contribution to the kingdom is less because I pastor a small church then I am denying the sacredness of what God has anointed for me to do. If you are a wife, a mother, an employee, a teenager or wherever you find yourself in life and God has given you opportunities to minister to others in any way in His name that is a sacred ministry.

The implications of this truth are astounding. Whatever God has given you to do for Him is important and special. There are no 'little' assignments. What you do for Him is as precious in His sight as what I do, and what I do is as special as the pastor of the largest church in the USA. So don't feel your work isn't important, or noticed, or appreciated by God. Don't judge or compare one Christian with another. And especially don't underestimate the value of the unique contribution God has given YOU in His Kingdom. (Vijayawada, January 25, 2014)

1 Corinthians 12:12-26 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those

parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

What is the unique contribution you make in the name of Jesus? Whose lives do you touch? What service do you do for Jesus' sake? Thank Him for these sacred opportunities. If you have not seen it as very important ask God to forgive you for devaluating what He says is special. Recommit yourself to doing the best you can in each responsibility He has given you in life.

BLOG 224: BY THE BOOK

It continues to amaze me how the books I have written make such a wonderful contribution to the ministry to pastors. "What Does God Expect of Pastors," "Spiritual Warfare," and "Marriage and Ministry" are the 3. We give them out at each of our pastor's conferences. Throughout the year they are being distributed. They are wonderful resources for those who have very little Christian literature available. The books help reinforce what we talked about and allows them to go even deeper. Books can be given to those who aren't at the conferences as well.

Almost daily I hear accounts of how the books have helped pastors, how they have changed their lives or ministries. It is a thrill to go into a church or pastor's home and see my books setting right there with the pastor's Bible. Throughout the year I hear reports of how helpful they have been to many. It's time to reprinting the first book for pastors for supplies are running low.

Now they are asking me to write other books. They want one on an overview of the Bible, a summary of each book and a flow of the history from beginning to end. It will be like a Bible survey book. After checking they found there is nothing like that in their language, and they would find it most helpful. They also want a short book on Bible Prophecy, for there is no teaching on it and pastors seem totally ignorant about it. These certainly sound like an interesting challenge for me, something I'd enjoy doing.

I've been thinking about working on another book when I had time. It would be about how to study the Bible and preach. It would take a pastor every step from when he opens the Bible until when he sits down after his sermon on that passage. I'd really like to develop that as well.

All that is needed is time and money, two precious commodities for all of us. New books have a one time for translating and preparing to print. Once that is done the cost is about a dollar a book to print them (if the order is for 5,000 or more). Pray that if God wants me to do this He would provide the time and money. If this is something God wants me to put my time into I know He will provide the finances for it. Thanks! (Vijayawada to Hyderabad, Saturday, January 25, 2014)

2 Timothy 4:13 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.

Think of which books have most influenced your life. Thank God for those who provided them for you.

Pray God would continue to use the books that are being distributed here. Pray He would provide the time and money needed reprinting old books and developing new books for the pastors in India.

BLOG 225: INDIA 2014 SUMMARY

(Sunday, January 26, 2014) Tomorrow we come home! It seems like the time has gone twice as fast this year, but that could be because I'm only here half as long! It's different for me to have a shorter visit, but it's worth it to have Nancy along, and having more conferences would have cost more so this worked out just right.

I'm VERY satisfied with how everything went. All was beyond expectations. Our theory of 2-day conferences instead of 1 day conferences worked very well. We trained 866 men and women, almost double the number if we would have had smaller one-day conferences. Plus we had them for twice the number of sessions. That gave me double the teaching time with each group, more time to get to know them and them to know me, and I didn't have to give the same talks every day (just every other day). The only 'negative' is that it cost more to feed and house the people overnight. But it was worth it!

One good way this trip was different was that I didn't get sick! I don't think I even lost much weight. Getting sick on Indian food for a week isn't a diet I'd recommend, but it is very effective if you want to lose a lot of weight in a short time! I'm glad I didn't need my personal nurse for that!

The highlight of this trip, the best and worst thing that happened, was Moses' mother dying. Clearly God wanted us here for this, and to be alone with Moses for the week after it happened. His mother had something to him the last time she saw him about us being like parents to him now. He doesn't really understand what she was saying, but God does. Talking at the funeral, burial, and then the sermon this morning on how we know we have eternal life and what it will be like was a stretching but rewarding experience, certainly one I'll never forget. I'll use this morning's sermon at Main St Baptist Church next Sunday. I'll be on the church web site afterwards.

This is my 7th year coming to India, and I've spent a total of over 6 months here and have spoken to 3300 men and 933 women during 84 days of pastors' conferences. I thank God for this privilege and opportunity, and you for your prayers and gifts that make this possible. It is by far the hardest thing I do all year, taking me to my limit and way beyond, but when I am weak then I am strong! I look forward to working on the 2 new books they would like to have. Pray God would provide the time and finances to do this.

Please pray for our trip home starting tomorrow! We leave at 3 PM our time (4:30 AM Monday morning your time) to begin our 42 hour journey home. Once we fly out of Mumbai things should go smoothly, but there are some major possibilities of difficulties before that happens. Pray God would have mercy on us and His angels would go ahead to prepare the way for us!!!

2 Corinthians 12:10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

What does God allow into your life to show you that you are weak? Are you learning to lean on His strength through these things? Spend some time now thinking and praying about this.

(weak/strong)

BLOG 226: WE HAVE ALREADY WON THE BATTLE (JOSHUA 4)

God has been teaching as he begins his service to God as the leader of the Jew (Joshua 5:13-15). As Joshua faced the impossible task of defeating impregnable Jericho God appeared to Him and assured him he wasn't alone, he wasn't in charge, and the assignment the Lord gave him was sacred. There is one more truth God will teach him – the battle has already been won (Jericho 6:1-2).

Joshua 6:1-2 says: "Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. Then the Lord said to Joshua, 'See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men.'" Not only is the battle God's but it has already been won! All Joshua had to do was listen to God's word and obey His orders and God would do the rest. They were strange orders, walking around the city, making noise and all the walls falling down and the soldiers dying with no casualties to the Jews. That's not the way you'd think a battle would be fought!

But God has strange directions for us to win our battles today: forgive our enemies, show love to those who hurt us, be kind to those who are unkind to us, in order to be first we must be last, etc. Yet God's directions are always right.

The battle belongs to God and He is already the victory, but that doesn't mean we don't have to fight. Joshua couldn't stay in his tent; he had to battle the enemy. All our battles will ultimately end in victory. Some may come quickly, others will take a lifetime. Jesus promises that He will build His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).

Our sheep are not ours but Jesus' sheep. He will fight for them. Ultimately He will have victory and the church will prevail. The battle can be long and hard, but we must keep fighting because we know there will be victory for us and for the church. So don't be discouraged, don't give up and don't fear defeat. The enemy cannot defeat us if we keep following Jesus. Only we can defeat ourselves. I must keep pressing ahead during good days and bad, when victorious or struggling. So must you. The battle has already been won. And we are the victors! (Hyderabad, January 27, 2014)

Deuteronomy 20:3-4 He shall say: "Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory."

This was a verse God gave me the first time I came to India and it still means a lot to me. Think about what battles you are fighting now. Write them down so you can clearly see them as battles. What difference does it make that God has already promised victory, even if it might not come for a while? How should that affect you in how you face these things today?

BLOG 227: WOMAN NAMED AFTER HINDU GODS TRYING TO FOLLOW JESUS

She hung to the back of the group of people as I laid hands on them and prayed for them one by one. Finally the others had wandered off and she came forward to 2 women friends. I easily put my hands on her head for she was very short, even for Indian women. A second later she started shaking and pulling back from me. Her friends expected this and held her upright but she soon collapsed to the floor anyway. She was moaning, shaking and holding her hands over her ears with more strength than her small body should have had. As we prayed for her full story came out.

She was named Naga Durga by her Hindu father. Naga is the Hindu snake god (one of the most powerful in this part of India) and Durga is a female goddess very similar to Diana that the apostles challenged in Ephesus. Because she was named after 2 Hindu gods the demons had a strong claim on her. She had been coming to church and is a believer in Jesus, even removing the Hindu idols from her home. But her Hindu husband brought one back in and won't let her remove it. She hasn't grown to the point where she will stop wearing her bindi dot, for it was present on her face. She has been encouraged to take a public stand by being baptized and taking a Christian name but

she is afraid of doing that without her husband's approval. She wants to wait until he is baptized as well. His name, by the way, is Ravi Kumar.

Nancy, some of the women and I prayed for her, anointed her with oil several times, and kept interceding until finally she settled down. Then she would start up again. After several episodes of this she finally came back to her normal shy, gentle self. She said the demons hadn't left for good but that the battle was over for now.

Pray for her. You can call her 'Martha' for when they asked me to give her a Christian name as an identity that is what God put in my mind. Call her what you will, God knows who you are talking about. Pray she would have the courage to be baptized and change her name. Pray for her husband to be softened as well, and to come to the Lord. (airport on the way home from India, Tuesday, January 28, 2014)

James 5:16 The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

James 4:2 You do not have, because you do not ask God

Matthew 7:7-8 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

John 16:24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you really believe in the power of prayer? Does the quality and quantity of your prayer life show that? This is an area where God has been convicting me and where I need to grow in the coming months. Pray I would. Pray you would as well.

BLOG 228:THE BIG ROCKS GO IN FIRST

Nancy wasn't just a great asset to me this trip, she was a wonderful blessing to everyone who met her. The pastors loved her, their wives were thrilled to have her, and children were naturally attracted to her. One of the ways she ministered was by starting off each conference by talking about Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42).

She explained how Martha was so distracted with being busy that she didn't take time to sit at Jesus' feet and fellowship with Him. The housework she was doing wasn't wrong or bad, it was just that there was something better she could and should be doing at that time. Indian pastors often have a hard time saying no to the demands of people, so this lesson about priorities was important for them. Pastors, and other Christians as well, can substitute business for holiness. Busy people are seen as important people. It's easy to stay busy, but hard to have an ordered life of godly priorities.

To illustrate her point Nancy had an empty jar and a pile of rocks of different sizes. She demonstrated that in order to get all the rocks in the jar the big rocks had to go in first, then those a little smaller and a little smaller yet. To partially or totally fill the jar with small rocks would mean there would be no room for the large rocks. Then she talked about the largest rock that must go in first or there won't be room for it – time with God. Other large rocks include time with their family, Bible study, being a good steward of their body, etc.

The jar stayed on our speakers table in the front of the room for the whole conference. I would often refer to it as I taught the pastors, emphasizing that quality time with God and His Word was the first and most important stone. Meeting their wives' needs was the second stone that had to go in, then their children were third. Studying and preparing nourishing sermons was a large rock, as was taking care of their health by proper diet, sleep, exercise and time off. Training their people to

minister and grow was also important (Ephesians 5:12). Doing things for their people that they should be doing for themselves was a small stone and not a top priority.

Nancy did a great job of explaining this and they listened attentively to the white skinned blond haired woman from America. It was a great way to start each conference and as I referred to it and applied it to each of my sessions it reinforced what she had said and tied everything together in a nice way. We really hadn't planned that, it just sort of 'happened' – but obviously God had it planned all along. (Traveling home ,Tuesday, January 28, 2014 – I think!)

Luke 10:38-42 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" 41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

If Jesus would speak to you, what do you think He would say you were putting before time with Him? Take time now, no matter how busy you feel, to 'sit at Jesus' feet' enjoying His presence and learning from Him. If you don't know how to do that ask Him to teach you, and spend time there every day.

BLOG 229: PRAYING THROUGH

Something God has been teaching me in the past year is the importance of perseverance in prayer. I used to think that sovereign God will do what He knows is best about my prayers and that repeating myself over and over is unnecessary. I've heard others say that the more often you pray something, or the more people who pray who pray for it, the better chance it will be answered. I am very grateful for the many people praying for this trip to India, but I don't feel that the more who pray the better chance we will have of everything going well. If so, why have many people pray? Why should I persevere in prayer myself?

I'm not sure I can completely answer that question, but I know that God wants us to express ourselves to Him, as a parent wants a child to tell them their needs. That doesn't mean nagging, but opening ones heart day after day and sharing it with our loving heavenly Father. So part of the answer to my question is obedience and intimacy. But there is more.

We must persevere in prayer because we have an enemy who perseveres against us. His forces of evil are always working, never give up and keep on opposing. If they continue to work against that which we are requesting from God, then we must continue to bring those issues to God. He is sovereign and His will is done, but in some way I don't begin to understand our prayers do make a difference. There is some kind of power in the prayers of God's people that does make a difference in the spiritual realm (James 5:17-18). Persevering in prayer is part of our battle, not growing weary but keep pressing ahead against our enemy.

Years ago the phrase "praying through" was used to describe perseverance in prayer until the answer came or God released one from the burden to pray for that particular thing. I think we miss a lot of God's blessings today because we don't "pray through."

Please pray for our work here in India, not because our nagging forces God's hand nor because we are trying to beg something from Him, but because our enemy keeps working against us so we battle by prayer. Persevere. Don't give up. The battle can get weary but keep going, for us and for other issues God has you praying for. Pray through! (Traveling home (Wednesday, January 29, 2014)

Daniel 10:12-13 Then the angel continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia."

Daniel kept praying for weeks even though it seemed his prayer wasn't heard. It was crucial that he did, for God used that to empower His angels to break through the demonic opposition. What would have happened if he had stopped praying? What have you stopped praying for because it's been a long time and it doesn't seem like God is answering? Make a list of these things and start praying regularly for them again – and don't forget to keep praying for us!

Blog 230: STEP TO THE FRONT OF THE LINE

My father died and was buried the week before my trip to India. We had his affairs to quickly settle, possessions to dispose of and lots of arrangements to make. At the same time a new pastor needed orienting to our church. And of course there was India to get ready for. As a result I haven't had time to think and process all that has been going on. So here I sit in the airport with a few hour wait and I can finally get my thoughts organized and put into words.

I have always been proud of being a Schmoyer. I remember learning my family's story when I was very little – the youngest Schmoyer. Everyone was older than me and there was great security in that. Now I am the oldest Schmoyer, all the others are younger than me. I remember the death of my great-grandfather, grandfather and now my father. So I step to the front of the line. I had been number 2 in line for the last 40 years and knew this day was coming, and I thought I was prepared (as much as one can be before the real thing comes). But of course the reality is always different than what was imagined. I will miss my father – he has been the one consistent in my life for my 68 ½ years. His passing will leave a hole in my life. I will grieve him more when I return and the finality of it sets in, when we have his memorial service (2:15 PM February 14 at Phoebe Home in Allentown PA), and at many times in the future. That is how I continue to grieve the loss of my sister and mother. That will unfold as it will in the future.

Now my thoughts are on what it means for me to step to the front of the line as the oldest Schmoyer. For many it would just mean they seem to be the next in line to die, but in God's eyes there is much more to it than that. There is a responsibility, a headship, a protection, an example, a prayer responsibility and much more that go along with it. I'm just trying to figure it all out, so I'd appreciate any thoughts or Bible verses that apply to this. Thanks!

For one thing, I have a responsibility to oversee my family, lifting them up in prayer in a regular and specific way. I also oversee by giving encouragement and assistance to them as they all continue on their journey in life. I have wisdom to pass on in the right way and at the right time. If I want them to or not, they look to me for an example. It's not a time for me to coast and become a self-centered, uninvolved old man. If anything, I must be even more giving and other-centered now. I have tried to teach my children how to start life and how to live as adults. Now I must teach them, mainly by example, how to finish life. I now of no magic key, no deep wisdom to pass on. All I can do is keep on growing in faith and obedience as I have tried to do in the past. It's a different feeling knowing I am being watched by others, even if they aren't really aware they are doing it. The example of my great-grandparents, grandparents and parents formed and molded me more than I probably know. Now it is my opportunity to step to the front of the line and take my turn doing the same. I don't know how long I will be first in line, but I do want to use every day of it for God's glory in

my life and the lives of those who know me. Pray God would help me do this, for its not anything I can do on my own! (Philadelphia Airport, January 5, 2015)

Proverbs 23:22-25 Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old. 23 Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding. 24 The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him. 25 May your father and mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice! (Proverbs 23:22-25)

If you have a father: do you pray for him to be a godly man who will guide and lead you in the ways of the Lord? Do you show him respect and honor and learn from his example and wisdom?

If you are a father: do you try to set a godly life for those who are in your family? Do you recognize your role as God's representative to pray, lead and guide your family in His wisdom?

Blog 231: I HATE SAYING GOODBYE!

I have never liked saying good-bye. I've done far more of it than I'd like to. However these last few days have been full of good-byes. December 28 I said good-bye to my 94 year old father, the last member of my immediate family. He has been part of my life for all my 68+ years. I have had to say good-bye to him, and also to my hometown where he lived for these is no more reason to go there.

Yesterday I said good-bye to the church I have pastored for 33 ½ years as we installed the man who will eventually replace me. Sure, I will be coming back to it, but not as the sole pastor but as one who is moving away from shepherding those sheep while helping Rev. Alan Travis work into that position. It is hard saying good-bye to that major part of my life.

Now today I say good-bye to my wife, family and this country as I fly to India. I will be back Feb 5, but now a month away from my wife seems like forever. Gratefully God has provided Alan Carlton to travel with me and I am most grateful for that. However todays good-bye will be hard, especially on top of the others. I really hate saying good-bye!

It will be nice to see many old, good friends in India. I look forward to that. Ironically as I get closer to them it makes saying good-bye when I return home harder there as well. Did I mention that I really, really hate saying good-bye?

As I stood in the cemetery on New Years Eve when we buried my father I looked at all the graves of those I new which were nearby: my sister, my mother, all my grandparents, aunts and uncles, great grandparents and more. I stood there to say good-bye to most every one of them. What was very comforting to know, though, is that the good-bye is only temporary. I will again see those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ. There will be no more good-byes! Never in all eternity will I have to say good-bye again! Never ever.

God didn't create us to say good-bye, only to be with Him forever. Sin changed all that, but then Jesus broke the curse of sin and made it so we won't ever have to say good-bye again. And another thing I fine comfort in, I won't have to say good-bye to God, never ever. Even when I travel to India He is right here with me every step of the way.

Yes, I really hate saying good-bye, but one day I will say good-bye to good-bye and what a glorious event that will be! (Monday, January 5, 2015, Doylestown, PA, USA)

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: 2a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, 3a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, 4a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, 5a time to scatter stones and a time to

gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, 6a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, 7a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, 8a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” (Revelation 21:3-4)

How do you handle saying good-bye? What if Jesus had never come and the good-byes we say would be permanent and forever? Spend some time thanking Him that you will never have to say good-bye to Him and that one day all good-byes will be gone forever!

Blog 232: IF YOU CAME TO INDIA

We're here – through London, to Hyderabad, into our hotel and connected to the internet – or you wouldn't be getting this. It's been a long trip but relatively uneventful – those are the best kind for me! Moses was let meeting us and we were stuck for awhile but he showed up. We arrived at 4:30 AM local time and got to the hotel a little after 6. We will get ready for today's conference, eat something, and leave at 8 for a 2 hour drive there. Now just because we made it here doesn't mean you can stop praying – it means now is the time to really start!

I'm trying to imagine what it would be like if you came to India with me – how would it look to your eyes? What would you notice most? This is what I can come up with:

WHAT WOULD BOTHER YOU MOST?

1. The stench and trash everywhere continually assaulting your sight and smell
2. The crazy, haphazard way people drive
3. The crazy, haphazard way people live
4. Hindu shrines everywhere, even in the middle of the road
5. Beggars tapping on your car window when stopped for traffic
6. Not being able to talk to people because of the language barrier
7. Lack of clean bathrooms – lack of any bathrooms at all!
8. Food that is very spicy and often unhealthy
9. Having to use bottled water always and only
10. Seeing life as having little value, especially for women and children

WHAT WOULD BLESS YOU MOST?

1. The kind, loving Christian people
2. The mild weather
3. The kind, loving Christian people
4. The beautiful women in Saris
5. The kind, loving Christian people
6. The sincere desire among people of wanting to please and serve you
7. The kind, loving Christian people
8. The wonderful fruits and fruit juices prevalent everywhere.
9. The kind, loving Christian people
10. The kind, loving Christian people

Clearly the best part of India, to me, is getting to know the loving, caring believers there. They stand out in contrast to the world in which they live, but in any culture they would be a light and a joy to all around them. And that is despite the awful conditions around them. They have every reason,

every excuse not to be kind, gentle and giving but they are not. They have let the love of Jesus change them. Have you? Is your love seen by others? Does Jesus get the credit for it? (Wednesday morning, January 7, 2015, Hyderabad, India)

John 13:34-35 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

I John 3:11 11This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

I John 1:23 3And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

What can you do starting today to be a more loving person, starting with those closest to you? How can you better show your family and friends the love of Jesus? If you are using your circumstances as an excuse, ask God to forgive you and commit to showing His love to all around you.

Blog 333: WORTH IT ALL

It's worth it all. We've been here 13 hours and I can definitely say that all I and some others have been through to make this happen has been worth it. In fact its worth it multiple times over. We had a one-day conference today. About a hundred pastors and 15 wives came. While teaching the first session God allowed me to see it all from a more distant, objective perspective and I was deeply touched by the way these truths of God impact these men. They equip, motivate, encourage and educate these fine men and women. I became aware of how a conference like this can change a man and his family, and as a result spread out to his church and even impact his children's children. All this was affirmed by the testimonies shared at the close of today's meeting as well. God made it clear that it takes someone from outside India to gain the attention of the people. A prophet is truly without honor in his own country!

When I looked at what we are doing from a more distant perspective I was impressed with how God brought all these sessions together over the years, even the exact wordings I have been using the last few years. Only He could do such a thing! It still impacts me each time I teach it,

While thanking Him for all of this He brought my favorite Bible passage to mind: Philippians 3:7-14, especially verse 10. “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.” It has always been my main goal to know God more intimately. The “power” part has come about often when I am involved in spiritual warfare and see God's might set people free. The “fellowship of His suffering” is something I never thought I'd personally understand or be involved in, but it all of a sudden hit me that that is what has been happening to me and those involved in this ministry as well. Please understand that I only see my part as a tiny scratch on the very surface of the suffering Jesus went through. But when we go through even the slightest suffering for Him He more than rewards us for it. “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

Words cannot express the joy I felt at what God was doing in the lives of these men and women, and the fact that He used me to be one small channel for that brought tears to my eyes. Then at the end, when I have the awesome privilege of giving each person 4 free books which I was allowed to write, I was touched and humbled beyond measure. I didn't expect God to show me any of this, much less at the very start, but He has. I pass it on to you because it is your prayers that are behind and underneath all of this. And to think it is day one and we haven't even been to bed yet (I know this because I keep falling asleep while typing this in the car driving to our hotel). But it is worth it all! (Wednesday evening, January 7, 2015, Hyderabad, India)

Philippians 3:10 “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.”

Romans 8:18 “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us”

Is your faithfulness to Jesus the cause of any suffering you are currently facing? Commit it to Him. Remember that one day you will say that it was worth it all!

Blog 334: “ARE YOU READY?”

This morning when it was time to leave the room for the day Alan said to me, “Are you ready?” I chuckled and said that it depended on what definition he meant for ‘ready,’ but assuming he was referring to if I had the things I needed to take with me for the day then, yes, I was ready. I went on to add though, that if Paul’s words “when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10) are still in the Bible then I can readily affirm I am ready to go in any definition of the word ‘ready.’ In fact, if the weaker we are than the stronger we are, I’m in very good shape!

I’ve been thinking about those spontaneous words since then, and they really are quite true. As we drive to this, our second pastors’ conference, I in no way feel ready, capable or competent to minister to these pastors and their wives. Despite yesterday’s wonderful assurances from God, it is still I, a frail human being, who must minister in places and ways that are, humanly speaking, beyond my ability. Yet, as long as “when I am weak, then I am strong” is still in the Bible, I can go ahead to a new place, a new group and new needs, but with the same God and same promises as have carried me in the past. (Thursday, January 8, 2015, Hyderabad, India)

2 Corinthians 10:12 “That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

2 Corinthians 13:4 For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God’s power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God’s power we will live with him to serve you.

I’m sure God is teaching you this truth as well, or at least He is trying to. In what area of life do you feel most incompetent? What seems beyond your control? Where do you feel overwhelmed? When it seems God isn’t answering your prayers to take away that which is beyond your human strength or talent, how do you respond? Seriously think about this truth today and apply it to every area or time where you feel weak. Let God transform your view of life as this foundational truth sinks into your heart.

Blog 335; I WON’T GET ANY SYMPATHY FROM YOU

I’ve been hearing about your cold weather there so I thought I’d tell you about the weather here – always in the 70’s or low 80’s. It’s perfect Caribbean weather: no jacket needed but you never sweat. I know I won’t get any sympathy for you over that. Here is a list of other good things that I won’t get sympathy over:

- Fresh homemade Indian food daily
- Beautiful women in beautiful sari’s everywhere
- Great Continental breakfasts in the hotel with an enormous selection of healthy, tasty foods

- Listening to believers sing and pray from their hearts to the Savior they love completely
- Giving 4 free books, which I had the privilege of writing, to pastors who are so grateful some almost some almost have tears in their eyes
- Hearing pastors say this is the best pastor's conference they have ever been to and will be come again soon (we don't, we always go to new places and pastors)
- Receiving encouraging emails from so many of you
- Quality time with Pastor Moses and Alan
- The inexpressible privilege of opening the truths of God's Word to those with open minds and hungry hearts
- Picturesque opportunities everywhere you look for someone who likes to take pictures
- The smiles and gratitude of the people who come and listen
- Hearing the laughs and applause every time I do a magic trick to reinforce a point I am making
- Being lifted up by the faithful prayers of all of you
- An abundance of tasty fresh fruits and juices
- Teaching about the Rapture, 2nd Coming and eternity day after day after day
- Leading the whole group (150 today) in a spiritual warfare prayer at the end in which God frees them from demonic activities which have defeated them and crippled their churches
- Knowing I'll see each of these new friends one day in heaven and we can talk together and share the things the Lord has done in our lives

See, I told you that you wouldn't feel sorry for me! Hopefully you'll want to join me next year. Then your friends won't have any sympathy for you, either! (Friday, January 9, 2015, Hyderabad, India)

Psalm 24:3-6 Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. 5 He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his Savior. 6 Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob.

This was a good exercise for me after several blogs referring to the difficulties of doing something like this. It would be a good exercise for you, too, especially if you tend to look at the negative side of things or feel sorry for yourself. In fact, send me the list you come up with and I promise to not give you any sympathy, either!

Blog 336: I HAVE NO PROBLEMS

Coming to India got rid of all my problems! We started the morning by going to the orphanage Pastor Moses' church sponsors. I see the 20 children there every year and they remember me as the man who does tricks. I talked to them about Jesus being our friend so we are never alone. The room we met in is where they put their floor mats to sleep. All their personal belongs are in a pigeon hole in the wall. They will live here until old enough to get a job and live on their own. I have no problems.

Then I spoke to the leprosy colony people again, as I do every year. We are also getting to know each other. I spoke about Jobs faith despite his suffering. Then I handed 60 of them bags of

flour. I had to carefully balance them on their palms for most have no fingers (or toes) and are crippled. No, I have no problems at all.

Our next stop was one of the sewing schools his church uses for outreach. I talked about Tabatha the sewer and how God brought her back to life to show that Jesus is the only God and He loves us. I was able to present the gospel very clearly to them. Fourteen Hindu girls were there, between the ages of 16 to 20. Most had one, two or even three children. Their husbands were chosen for them. Some have good men, many do not. They grew up in fear and darkness, not having been taught about Jesus, and as women they have little value. Nope, no problems here!

In the afternoon we had an unscheduled pastors' conference for men in Hyderabad, who had heard me before and wanted to get together with me. I spent the afternoon leading a workshop about how to study the Bible and develop a sermon. I was greatly encouraged by these familiar men who minister in the city that had the most pastors killed of any place in India last year. Absolutely no problems here!

In the early evening we went to visit some of the slum churches they lead. Words can't describe the total, abject poverty these people live in with no hope of ever having better. It's amazing people can survive like that, but they do, and the Christians have a smile and joy unseen among many others. No, I definitely do not have any problems, none at all! Do you?

When you get focused on your problems think about telling them to the orphan children, or the lepers, or the Hyderabad pastors or even the slum Christians here. That should help keep things in perspective. For a few minutes, at least, you won't have any problems! (Saturday, January 10, 2015, Hyderabad)

Philippians 4:11-13 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Write yourself a note and put it somewhere you'll see it often today that says "I have no problems today." When you start to dwell on your difficulties remember these Christians in India.

PRAYER REQUESTS

We are out of Spiritual Warfare books, too, now so pray we would be able to get another printing soon.

We have a LONG drive tomorrow. Pray it goes safely.

Pray I would finally get a full night's sleep. Pray we will have energy for each day (today we to be our day off).

Pray God would continue to bless us and the work here as richly as He has been doing.

Blog 337: LIFE'S TRANSITIONS

We had a safe drive to our new location - 5 hours. We are safely here and ready to start the first of 6 two-day pastor's conferences tomorrow. Thanks for praying!

Although my body is in India, my thoughts often default to home and Main Street Baptist Church. This time in India marks a major transition in my ministry at home. Rev. Travis Hart, a fine, godly young man who is the perfect man to take the church to the next stage in God's plan for it, has come and is working in the church. We will transition over the coming months and I will still be part of

the church in some capacity for at least another year and a half. However the time of me as the sole pastor of the church is over. God is taking the burden of shepherding these sheep from me and giving it to Travis. And I am ready for this to happen.

I am ready to let someone with more ideas and energy to take over the church. I am ready to focus on ministries where I can make the greatest contribution, such as India, World View Plus for teens, marriage counseling and retreats and spiritual warfare counseling and teaching. I am ready to focus on these. I am ready to spend more time with my family. I am ready to slow the pace at which I have been living. I am ready. Travis is ready. The church is ready.

Still, it is the closing of a large chapter in my life, the largest except for my family. The 33 ½ tears spent at MSBC have been rich, rewarding, stretching and immensely gratifying. I look back with joy and satisfaction. That doesn't mean there aren't regrets or things I wish I would have done better, but that will have to be the subject of another blog. This close will come gradually, but it has already begun. Starting the process of letting go of this church and letting Travis start taking over is both very easy and immensely hard. Yes, I am ready, but it is hard to let go of such a wonderful part of my life.

There is a reality of aging, of changing, of not being able to again do what I did. There is the solemnness that I have had my opportunity and that part of ministry is now over. It is what it is. There is the adjustment to finding my role in the new order of things. Mainly, letting go is sad because the past was so good. It's hard to see this chapter close, for I don't think there has ever been a nicer, better, easier church to pastor than Main Street Baptist Church, Doylestown, PA. If we wouldn't age I could keep pastoring there forever, but that's not God's way with things. Because the memories are so good I'm not running away in bitterness or hurt. This is my family, my life, and while this is a good, necessary, important transition, it is still a major transition, but one we all must make. (January 11, 2015 Vijayawada)

Ruth 4:15 He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age.

Psalms 92:14 They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green,

Isaiah 46:4 Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

How are you adjusting to the transitions God is bringing about in your life as you age? Are you able to thank Him for what He has done in the past? Can you trust Him for His future plan for you? Are you willing to keep serving Him in whatever capacity possible as long as you live?

Blog 338: THE 'TYPICAL' INDIAN VILLAGE PASTOR

While, of course, there is no such thing as a 'typical' Indian village pastor, nevertheless I will describe him to you. It's my way of getting you to better understand the men I speak to each day. I've spoken to about 3,500 pastors and about 1,000 wives in my first 7 years here and will speak to more than 1,000 men and 350 women this trip. Better yet, this year I will speak to them for two days, not just one.

We go to different villages each day and pastors come from miles around. They are fine, godly men and a real encouragement to me. Their commitment and sacrifice is top notch. Persecution, even martyrdom, is very real and all these men can tell stories about themselves or those they know/knew. Some have scars that are still visible. Their lives are filled with personal sacrifice, done with a smile and a deep love for Jesus.

The typical pastor who comes is a married man with children, no more than 2 or 3, who are still living in the home. He probably grew up in a Dalit or tribal family. These are the lowest groups in

India, the 'outcasts.' His family of origin may or may not have been Christian. There is also a chance he is from a Hindu background.

He can probably read, but there is very little chance he had any Bible training. He speaks only Telugu. He owns a Bible but very few, if any, other books. He is probably Baptist, though may be Pentecostal. Except for worship, there is little difference here. Whichever group brought him to the Lord is the one he stays with. There is no denominational structure, each church is totally independent.

God put a desire to pastor in his heart and he started evangelizing, then training those who responded. His people meet in his home for church. If he works hard he may have built a shed of straw or concrete block for a church building. He spends his time praying and going to villages in his area and evangelizing, as well as helping the people in his church and village. They have church meets Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. Every day the church is open for prayer or fellowship and people often come. To get around he either walks, rides a bike, or makes payments on a used scooter/small motorcycle. He lives on the equivalent of \$30 to \$100 a month, which makes it very hard on his wife to make ends meet.

His wife is a dedicated, committed believer, from the same social class as him. She is busy with her family and serving the people in her church in any way she can. She works side by side with her husband, often doing the jobs no one else wants to do. She is quiet, faithful, giving and a real support for her husband. He often ignores her needs and she accepts that, never having known anything different in her culture.

He comes to the conference not knowing what to expect but having heard good things from those who have heard of this ministry. He knows his travel will be paid, he will be fed and given a blanket and pillow at night. His wife receives these as well if she comes, and also attends the conference. He longs for fellowship with other pastors and some training to help him minister better. He finds both, more than he ever imagined. He is encouraged, better trained and equipped, motivated and finds himself part of a support group that will continue meeting for fellowship and follow-up training several times a year. He is given books on What God Expects of a Pastor, Spiritual Warfare, Marriage and Ministry and Prophecy, all topics he has heard. The books give more details and allow him to study these subjects in more detail as well as preach them to his people. He will pass the books on to others he knows who weren't at the conference. He may even receive \$25 a month if he is particularly needy. Some may even receive a bicycle, scooter or financial help for his church building, depending on his need and our resources. He leaves telling us how much he needed this and how very, very much it helped. He asks if we will come back again soon (we won't there are too many who have never even had one conference).

The cost for the conference is about \$15 a person/couple. The books are about \$1 each. So for about \$20 we can provide this. While \$20 each isn't much, when more than 1,000 come the price adds up. I thank you for your contributions, for without them this wouldn't be possible. We would like to do more as far as follow-up meetings, helping pastors and their families, making more books available, providing scholarships for their children to attend Bible college, helping them get bikes instead of walking everywhere, helping them erect building to meet, etc. Pray God would direct and provide as He would have us minister. (Vijayawada, January 12, 2015)

Romans 10:14-15 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Pray for these men and their wives. Pray often and in detail, especially now while we are here with them. They have an enemy who will stop at nothing to destroy them and the light they bring to the

darkness here. Pray for them as they attend these conferences. Demonic resistance is stirred up quite a bit when God works in these ways.

Blog 339: THE VIEW FROM AN INDIA NEWBIE

This blog is written by Alan Carton who is accompanying Jerry in India this trip.

I was excited when the opportunity came available earlier this year to accompany Jerry Schmoyer on his annual India trip. The first thing he warned me about was that this was a work trip . . . not a churchy vacation. I was fine with that, because it is also my philosophy when I have done missions trips in the past to Venezuela and Peru. Having been on more than 20 such trips, up to 6 weeks in length, I was comfortable with the month Jerry had planned. Truly, it is a working trip, especially for him . . . but I am finding it truly wonderful as well.

It is fun to watch a master teacher at work. Jerry has perfected the art of teaching the heart of complex biblical ideas on a level that poorly educated pastors can grasp and enjoy. Part of this involves the many magic tricks he integrates into his messages. He has adapted tricks we have all seen, but that the pastors probably have not, in ways that make the message he is conveying truly memorable to them.

India is a big country, so even though only 2 - 3 percent of the people are Christians, there are still 35,000,000 of them. In the Dhalit and tribal groups where Jerry works, the percentage is probably quite a bit higher. The churches are generally small, often house churches with 10 to 50 members. Because they are the lowest classes, it also means many of the pastors are poorly educated. They have been systematically denied education opportunities forever. Taken together, this means that Jerry is uniquely meeting the training needs of a huge number of pastors . . . critically needed training needs. As he trains pastors of all denominations, he will never run out of those needing his training.

My ministry is one of enablement, so that is the prospective that I have tended to view this work with. What do these pastors and church leaders most need in order to function more effectively? How can they be helped to reach the other 97.5% of Indians they come into contact with every day? Their needs are overwhelming. They are all poor. They have not been well educated or trained. Their congregations and those around them have incredible needs. Bibles are very hard to come by because they are expensive for poor families needing to eat. Many pastors lack even rudimentary transportation. Where should we focus?

Lepers are fairly common here. They can't work to support themselves in most cases. That is one huge way to reach lost people. Orphans are also common. That is an outreach that touched my heart deeply when we went to see a small orphanage supported by Pastor Moses, our translator, driver and overall project coordinator. How can your heart not go out to the 20 orphans being cared for at a cost of only about \$12,000 a year . . . \$600 a child . . . especially when you realize there are 20 more in the street on their waiting list. Another way to help is to promote the sewing training ministries that enable women to support their families. For about \$80 it is possible to teach a woman 2 hours a day, 6 days a week for 6 months. At the end, they are good tailors, able to feed their families.

We also visited a large tent city of slum dwellers. These are tribal people, the lowest of the low. We gave milk to more than 40 children . . . also a little candy. The slum, located on the banks of an open sewage canal, is prone to foul smells. This is public property, so they squat there for free . . . each family in a tent of 10' x 15' or so. They have nothing. The children's greatest wish, one they

prayed for while we were there, was for shoes and books so they could go to school. How can you not want to help these people? They make up about 20% of India's population.

A bicycle enables a pastor to be far more efficient . . . for \$100. Even better, a small motorbike allows him to bring his whole family, microphone and other things when he goes . . . for \$700. \$25 a month in support will hugely improve the lives of a pastor's family.

After thinking about it, my mind tells me that pastoral training and Bibles are, rationally, the greatest need. My heart however, keeps striking out in the direction of helping those who are so severely in need. For \$5 a Bible can be put in the hands of a new believer. For \$1400 a 2 day pastor's conference can be held, with each pastor given 4 valuable books to take home and study.

Long after I go home however, my heart and mind will be wrestling with what I have seen here and how best to help reach this huge treasure trove of lost people. I hope as you read Jerry's blogs, you will engage both your heart and your mind. This is one of God's greatest opportunities for us, His church, to touch lives. How is He telling you to help? Please pray about this.

God bless you as you pray for Dr. Jerry and his amazing work here in India. I hope you too have an opportunity some day to experience it as I am right now. Alan Carlton (Vijayawada, January 13, 2015)

Blog 340: THE DARKNESS FIGHTS BACK

Every day the news here carries stories about the upcoming visit of President Obama to India. It is seen as a good step in US-India relations and a positive action by everyone but the Christians. President Obama wants to strengthen ties with the new Indian government. Yet the man who now rules was denied entrance into the US several years ago because of his involvement in the persecution and death of many, many people here in India.

The new government has very strong national support as people react against a series of ineffective, corrupt governments which have not only held India back but have brought regression in many areas. However the new government is strongly, strongly Hindu and wants all India to be only Hindu. They are encouraging each Hindu family to dedicate one child to the advancement of Hinduism and another to the military to defend India. Each Hindu family that has more than four children will receive a financial reward.

Close watch is kept over the churches. Government officials recently visited Moses' church and asked if they received money from the USA (they don't, we give to a separate account Moses has access to), if they convert people, what all activities they have, how much money, etc. They watch all money coming into the country from the US and monitor all pastors and churches. They want Obama to come so they can get money for the government (and therefore for Hinduism), but want to stop US money coming to churches. They keep records of all churches, pastors, etc.

The new government wants to build Hindu temples in each Dalit village and give rewards to those who convert while persecuting those who do not. The vast majority of Christians are Dalit. About half of the states in India have strong anti-conversion laws which jail anyone who converts to Christianity. Other will follow soon. The central government is even working toward changing the Indian Constitution to eliminate the part about freedom of religion and make India a Hindu nation. Already they have stopped issuing permission certificates to pastors to perform marriages.

Remember this new government is just starting and will get stronger as it consolidates power in the months and years to come. Unfortunately the visit by President Obama will increase their power and wealth. The really sad part is that Christians in India no longer expect the USA to stand

with them against persecution. It is clear to the world that the USA does nothing when Christians and other minorities are eliminated in Muslim countries. Many have cried to the current administration to do something about persecution of Christians, Jews and others worldwide but America has not responded and the world, including the current administration in India, knows they can persecute Christians and others without reprisal by the USA. Nothing has been done about the persecution to this point so it will surely increase. Obama is seen as a supporter of Islam so perhaps the persecution of Muslims in India will not really begin until they feel Christianity has been eliminated.

In many states strong persecution against Christians has been happening for awhile. Beatings and murders of Christians are not followed up by police and destruction or taking of property is allowed. In the states where Vijayawada and Hyderabad are there is more freedom for Christians. Still, last year many pastors were beaten in Hyderabad, and more killed than anywhere else in the country. No arrests are made and the government turns its face even here. You didn't think Satan would give up without a fight, did you?

So when you read about President Obama visiting India, don't assume it is good for the church in India. Pray. Pray. Pray. And vote when elections come!!!!!! (Vijayawada, January 14, 2015)

NOTE: Be discrete in sharing details of this ministry, pictures of the people here, etc., especially on the internet (including Facebook). I never identify people or places, but with your prayer list you can figure it out. That is not for public information in order to protect these people. It is only my name and CTO that is published. I never print Moses' Indian name for that reason (he proof-read and approved this blog). This will not be on my web sites, either. I have heard of American pastors losing their Visa for doing what we do. Don't be fearful, but do be discrete ("shrewd as serpents, innocent as doves" Matthew 10:16).

Revelation 16:4-7 The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. 5 Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: "You are just in these judgments, you who are and who were, the Holy One, because you have so judged; 6 for they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve." 7 And I heard the altar respond: "Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments."

I think you know how to pray. Please do so!

Blog 341:THE BATTLE CONTINUES

After sending yesterday's blog last night (morning your time) we went to the hotel restaurant to eat. Before we ordered Moses got a call from the pastor of the church where we had our first conference, the day we arrived. A couple days after we left some American pastors came with Bibles to give out and went to the school in town and started giving them out. They were attacked by a large group of Hindus who tore up the Bibles, beat them up and had them put in jail. Some of the local pastors who had been at our conference went to the police later and ask to have them released so in the middle of the night, when no one would know, they released the American pastors.

In case you wonder about us, we never ever do anything in public. I quietly move from one church to another to minister. We like to walk through the streets like tourists (I am on a tourist visa) and talk with the children and people there. Since the outdoor baptisms I did several years ago we haven't done anything like that. At the same time another American pastor doing baptisms (but announcing them publicly) was removed from the country. We did ours quietly in a canal and small lake, but won't do that again, either. Everything is very discrete and out of the public eye. After all our purpose is to train and support pastors, not evangelize in public.

On the better side of the news, Moses also received a phone call from the pastor of the Dalit slum church we were at Saturday night. The children are still very glad we came – Americans coming to the slum to see them is more than they ever imagined!!!! Better yet, two of the women we laid hands on and prayed for have been healed. He thinks their ailments were demonic (very common here) and with the demons gone they were physically OK! Another victory for the Lord - Praise the Lord for that!

By the way, the pastor mentioned above, whose church we used for the first conference, said a lot about how blessed everyone was from the conference. All the pastors report that. Words like “best ever” an “life changing” are used to describe it. We start the first day with me talking about what God expects of pastors, closing with the importance of making their wife there #1 sheep. Alan then does the second session on Biblical marriage. I then do a session on the Rapture and then the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and our rewards. It is wonderful to teach those truths to hungry hearts hearing this for the first time. Day two I continue the prophecy theme by going over the Tribulation and Second Coming of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords in Revelation 19. The fourth prophecy session is about the millennium and eternity. What a joy and privilege it is to share these truths day after day – Jesus’ glory and victory ring out loudly in these messages.

Then comes the best part, the close of every conference. I use Mark 5 about the man in Gadarenes to teach about spiritual warfare, closing with a group prayer for deliverance and then my prayer for deliverance for all of them. All I can say is that it is powerful, yet that word falls far short. I feel God’s power so strongly I think I will explode if He pours any more of it into me, but He does. That shows me His power in setting these people free. It is thrilling, exhilarating, amazing, wonderful – just a taste of heaven inside me. Afterwards I am drained. My hands shake and I can’t even hold a pencil for awhile. What a privilege to be a channel for the victorious power of God Almighty! I am beyond tears at how wonderful and powerful the experience. And I get to do this at the close of every conference year after year after year! You should hear the testimonies of the people after the session is over! Moses translates them for me. What a time of praise and worship we all have! God is certainly the victor here! (Vijayawada, January 15, 2015)

Hebrews 11:35-38 Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

Continue to pray for the pastors and Christians in India as you started yesterday. Pray God would continue to use and bless our conferences. Certainly the enemy is well aware of them and it’s only God’s grace that sustains us in this area where Satan rules so strongly.

Blog 342: TYPICAL INDIAN CHURCH SERVICE

If there is no such thing as a typical Indian village pastor, there certainly is no such thing as a typical Indian church service. Nevertheless I will tell you what a typical worship service, as best as I know. I have spent almost 30 Sundays in India, attending multiple services each Sunday. Many times during the week we participate in services as well. Regular services are held on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. Some are for prayer and others for Bible Study, but the main worship service is on Sunday.

The people always take their sandals off before entering the place or worship. Women cover their heads with part of their sari. All but the old and infirm sit on the floor cross-legged, women on

one side and men on the other. Children go back and forth between parents. It amazes me how they can sit cross-legged for 3 hours! I used to sit on the floor with them but now I gladly take the chair they offer me.

In most Indian churches women outnumber men about 5 to one. Being a Christian brings great rejection and that seems to be harder on male pride than on the women, who have each other for fellowship.

Services start when a few people start arriving. Time in India isn't like the USA. We tell pastors our conference starts at 9 so that 2 or 3 will be there by 10. We start singing at 10:30 with a dozen, then when I start my first session 20 are there. By the time the 2nd session is finished and it is time to eat we are close to 100. Such is 'time' in India!

Services start with singing, with musical accompaniment on bongo-like drums. The players are quite skillful and it is a joy to watch and hear them. Singing can go on for 45 minutes, until a decent sized group is present. Then prayer time begins, some times with testimonies. Individuals pray out loud, one at a time, with great fervor and at some length. They are in no hurry to end this part of the service and it can go 20 to 30 minutes.

The pastor then begins the more formal part of worship. Everyone is welcomed and a few comments are made. Good news is shared and testimonies may be given. If the electricity is working they use a mike to amplify everything to an ear-splitting level. If the electricity isn't working they hook up their PA system to a large battery, like would be used in a car, and keep going. There is always a speaker or two to blast every word and note to the whole neighborhood, if they like it or not. Muslims and Hindus do the same thing and nobody complains.

Some of the large churches will have a short sermon (30 min) to start the service, then later the main sermon (45 min to an hour). Most churches just have one long message, though. People listen carefully to all that is said. Children of all ages sit with parents, there is no nursery and only the largest churches have a program for children during this time. All churches with children will have a Sunday School teaching time before the worship service.

The Lord's Supper is celebrated monthly or weekly. Some do it very much as we do in the USA, others pass one cup of juice which everyone sips, and still others will file past the elements and take one as they pass. An offering is always taken and everyone seems to give something, no matter how poor. Many people have no money so bring a cup of rice instead. To me, watching the people give is one of the most moving parts of the service. The service then closes with announcements and prayers, about 3 hours after it started. (Vijayawada, January 16, 2015)

Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Pray for the churches in India, that God would keep them strong and help them increase. Pray there would more men would come and they would bring other men so the church and families could be strengthened.

Blog 343: SH5 or I-5 . . . WHICH IS GOD'S TRUE HIGHWAY?

(this blog is written by Alan Carlton) For the past 3 days, we have travelled north and south from Vijayawada on India's SH 5. This is the major coast freeway for east India, much like I-5 in the western U.S. Both run the full length of the nation, carrying heavy traffic. The similarity stops there however, when it comes to actually travelling on each.

You know how I-5 is . . . straight, clean, well-maintained and well organized. You can make your trip in a minimum of time. Well maintained cars and trucks, most bearing only one occupant, isolated . . . alone and intent on only himself . . . or perhaps her music . . . perhaps something on the

radio . . . perhaps his problems or his 401K performance . . . or perhaps just on reaching her destination as quickly as possible with little interruption. Alone. Isolated.

Travelling on India's SH5 is an entirely different experience. The highway is obviously fairly old and not well maintained. Potholes are everywhere, and so is everything and everyone else. Small cars, motorcycles, bicycle rickshaws, tuk tuks (auto rickshaws), trucks of all possible sizes and shapes, ox carts, busses from luxury to scrapyard candidates, people walking, water buffalo, cows, monkeys, camels, chickens crossing the road (who knows why?), goats, bicycles, tricycles . . . they are all here in a stop and race dance . . . a constantly evolving and interacting stream.

The highway is dirty with people all along it selling and making everything you can think of . . . peanuts, papayas, bananas, flower leis, LPG tanks, cement, golden statues by the hundreds, sugar cane, bread, toys . . . one like a little man whose belly button lights up as his body spins wildly when you pinch his legs together. He makes as much sense though as does the wild, surrounding rush of sensations, constantly assaulting your eyes, ears, nose and body.

No one is alone. People are walking in groups. Motorcycles carry 2 – 5 people, tuk-tuks many more. Trucks carry loads that look impossible . . . stacked higher than the highest overpass, but there are none of those, so it works. It is a dirty, confusing, somewhat scary onslaught with never ending blaring horns . . . each proclaiming "I'm here . . . watch out!" Horn size seems to go with vehicle size, from tweety motorcycle chirps and bicycle bells to booming big truck blasts. Each large truck says "Please Sound Horn Please" on its tailgate, so the noise . . . the interaction . . . is actively encouraged.

Everyone is constantly darting and pushing his way to the front of everybody else. Two lanes become 3, 4 or 5 . . . with at least ½ inch to spare on each side. They constantly interact with each other.

I-5 is like today's American church – well organized, efficient, clean – and sterile. It is also similar to how we approach outreach from those churches . . . isolated from others, each on our own journey . . . mostly oblivious to the dying world around us.

For all its confusion and mess though, SH5 shows how we should approach reaching others God's way . . . careening bravely among all those who are facing death without Christ . . . constantly touching them with our presence . . . proclaiming loudly with our horn their need for Christ . . . "Death is Near . . . Watch Out!" God's plan is for us to "go into all the world", making disciples. All people need Christ. We can't reach them if we never leave our solitary, sterile comfort. Only when we enter the confusing maelstrom of all those lives around us . . . all of them . . . can we fulfill God's command.

We must travel SH5, and not I-5. We must change the sterility of our American church and outreach practice. Come with me. It's really scary at times, but it's God's way. SH5 is calling. (Vijayawada, January 17, 2015)

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Think about what you can do to get more involved in the lives of people around you TODAY. Pray and ask God to give you opportunities to do so, and to make sure you are aware of them. Get out there where the action is and where the needs are!

Blog 344: HALF WAY TO BENGALURU (BANGALORE)

Today is the half way point of our ministry here with Pastor Moses. Then we still have a week teaching in Bangalore. In the 6 two-day conferences we've held so far we've ministered to 577 men and 105 wives. I've preached 35 messages in 11 days, done almost 100 magic tricks, and given out almost 3,000 books (4 per person). I ridden in the back seat of Moses' car for 45 hours and prayed for innumerable people.

Today I preached in four different churches. Three of the four churches today I have been involved with for years. I know the pastors and their families, watch their children grow, and know more and more of the people in their churches. We help support these pastors monthly, have had conferences at their churches and stayed in their home, and have partnered with them in building their churches. I have bonded with many of these people and have 'history' with them over the years. I've watched them grow up, marry, have children, and bury their husband or wife. It amazes me how very close I can get to these people in a few hours when I can't even talk to them? And that was just today. Each day next week will bring the same since there are about a dozen pastors and places that are extra close to my heart.

It's always bitter sweet for me at about this time. I'm very anxious to get home to Nancy (for the rest of you, nothing personal, but she's the one I really really really miss), but it is hard leaving the people here. Have I ever told you I hate saying good-bye? Well, I do!

This time around, so far anyway, the battle has been stronger but the blessings deeper and more numerous. There is a price to be paid in order to be in position to receive God's richest blessings. But when the blessings come you realize how small the price is in comparison. I know God has something special for me this trip, I'm not sure what it is or how it will come about, but I know it is in areas where I really need to grow and improve. God isn't done with me yet – not even close!

With all the other transitions going on in my life, this trip marks a transition as well. I will be moving this ministry from Main Street Baptist Church and having it entirely under my non-profit, Christian Training Organization. This affects my base of funding for the people of MSBC have been very generous, sacrificial givers and prayer warriors. I know some of that will continue, but the church needs to be free to move in the new direction God has for it. In order to build a broader base of financial and prayer support, **Pastor Moses will come to the USA in June.** He will divide his time between us in Doylestown and Alan in Tulsa. Alan has contacts to help us expose this ministry in that area. So if you would like to meet him personally you'll have the opportunity. If you can connect us with a group who would like to know more about our ministry and may be willing to pray and/or give let us know. (Vijayawada, January 8, 2015)

John 4: 34-37 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true.

Please pray for the future of this ministry as well as our day to day activities here and now. There are so many needs here in India, so much we'd like to do, but we have so little time and resources. Pray for God to provide opportunities and finances for Pastor Moses' USA trip.

Blog 345: PASTOR BARNABAS' BEAUTIFUL FEET

One of my favorite people in the world is Pastor Barnabas, Moses' father-in-law. He is an excellent church planter and pastor of pastors. I've known him from the early years of my ministry here and

once lived in his house for a week. I would draw water from his well to stand and shave under his coconut tree while he'd knock down a coconut for us to eat (drink the milk, that is).

He is one of the pastors we started supporting in the very beginning and is Moses' right hand man, overseeing all our ministry east of Vijayawada. He is large as India men go. HE spent most of his life as a farmer before being called to the ministry late in life. His wife (mother of Moses' wife) died about 9 months before Moses' mother died. Both grandmothers died in the same year.

Pastor Barnabas is a great motivator and natural leader of men. He has great control of things around him, but exudes grace and gentleness. He is gifted in spiritual warfare and teaching the Word. He is about my age. I greatly look forward to spending a lot of time talking with him in heaven, for we can't communicate a word now! Yet we work together smoothly, reading each other's mind and anticipating each other's needs. We've done dozens of conferences together.

If I had to move to India I would live in his village among his people for they are wonderful long-time friends whom I know quite well. His is the only church we have a conference in every year, all the others are new places. The people there seem to think highly of me as well, at least they keep coming every time I speak there!

Yesterday after my sermon I moved among the people while they sat, laying my hands on their heads and praying for God's blessing for them. As I was finished Pastor Barnabas came before me and bowed his head for me to pray for him and bless him. What a humbling honor it was to pray for this great yet gentle man of God! When I was done praying for him I again what I have done every year for the past 4 years, I took his hands and put them on my head for him to pray for me and he did.

When he does I look down at his feet, very distinct because of a toe that was broken in the past and healed at an angle to the rest of his feet. I think of what Paul said about the feet of those bringing good news being beautiful, and his certainly are!

I have no idea what he says when he prays for me, yet I do – the same thing I pray for him. He is the only one here I have ever had lay hands on me and pray for me. When he prays for me I know I have been prayed for! I covet his prayers greatly. His praying for me is one of the very top highlight events of my time here. What a joy and privilege to stand with this man as we ask God's blessings on each other because of Jesus. All because of Jesus. Only because of Jesus. Always because of Jesus. (Vijayawada, Monday, January 19, 2015)

Romans 10:14-15 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Acts 4: 36=37 Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Acts 9: 26-27 When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles.

Pray for Pastor Barnabas today. Pray for God's blessing, protection, wisdom, guidance and comfort as he miss his wife who was a great, great woman of prayer. He is on the very front lines of the battle against Satan and the darkness that claims India.

BLOG 346: A TYPICAL DAY OF MINISTRY

While no two days are alike, they do quickly fall into a pattern that continues Monday- Saturday the whole time we are with Pastor Moses. We usually arise by 6 or earlier. I get things ready for the day and instant message with Nancy if she is home. I take my medications, including malaria pill, spray myself for mosquitoes, get my water bottles, hand sanitizer and plastic spoon, and gather any specific medicines I may need to see me through the day and I am ready to go. At 7 AM we eat a nice, healthy free buffet breakfast at our hotel and start our drive to the site of the day's conference. Most drive are 1 ½ to 2 hours each way. I review lessons for the day and maybe type a blog while traveling.

We arrive at the conference site to find a few pastors start showing up. When their number grows to 6 or 8 they will start singing and/or praying. Conferences scheduled to start at 9 seldom start before 10:45, and even then there are only about 20 pastors present. In two hours time, when we provide a free meal for them, there are a hundred or more present!

While waiting for enough to come to start, Alan and I will walk through the local streets 'talking' to people and taking lots of pictures. Everyone finds it an honor to be photographed. People are very friendly and invite us into their homes to sit, have chai or a chapatti, or even a meal. We always keep moving, for when we stop it is extremely difficult to get going again.

Our first session, "What God Expects of Pastors," goes from about 11 to 12. It is a good session which I have been using for many years and which is always very well received. I wrote my first book for India based on it. I end with a strong emphasis on putting their wife and children before the church. It is very motivational and is always commented on in their closing remarks about how God used the conference in their lives. This sets the stage for a second hour-long session, after a chai break, given by Alan about the husband-wife relationship.

By the time Alan is finished, announcements are made and lunch is ready it is almost 1:30. Everyone eats outside, but we stay on the stage from which we taught and our fresh, hot Indian meal is delivered to us. After eating we walk around the area and community, taking more pictures.

The afternoon consists of 2 shorter sessions, about 40-45 minutes each. During the first I dress as a disciple of Jesus who explains Jesus' return to them. He (I) shows the parallels between it and the way marriages were carried out in Bible times so prophecy becomes more clear to them. It's a wonderful joy and privilege to explain these great truths for the first time to hearts hungry to learn them! The second session tells about when we get to heaven, the 7 year Marriage Supper of the Lamb. I explain about the crowns we will be given and then laid at Jesus' feet. We look at verses in Revelation about the throne in heaven and the descriptions of Jesus, the lion-lamb, there. This leads to a great time of praise and worship focusing on Jesus. After we clean up we drive home. I use this time in the car to download and organize my pictures, audio and video files from the day.

The second day we are usually able to start earlier for we tell the men when we will be starting and they don't want to miss the third prophecy session which is a summary of the tribulation. It mainly focuses on the Second Coming of Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19). There is great rejoicing and celebration as they hear of the in the sudden and total victory of Jesus over sin and Satan. Another session of about 40-45 minutes follows after a short stand-up break. This concludes the prophecy series with a focus on the Millennium and then eternity and what it will be like. I've really enjoyed these sessions for it adds preaching to my teaching. What could be more enjoyable than talking about Jesus glory and soon return!

After a chai break on the second day we have our last session, also about an hour. It is about Jesus' victory over Satan and demon, taken from the Mark 5 story of the demonized man in Gadarenes. The magic in all the talks does a lot of emphasize and drive home truth, but that is especially true in this last session. It culminates with me leading all of them in a prayer to remove anything demonic working against them, their family or their church for any reason. It is very, very

powerful hearing 100+ pastors praying as loud as they can for God's victory over Satan's forces! I then pray for them, for deliverance from anything working against them for any reason. 'Powerful' is the best word to describe it, but you'd really have to come see it to understand it.

Following this various pastors or wives will come forward to share what God has taught them through the conference and what they think of it. "We've never had anything like this," "Best conference ever," "It changed my life," and "Please come again, and soon – we need this so very much!" are typical comments. Then we take a group picture and I hand out travel money and 4 books to each person. I enjoy shaking hands with each person present and giving them these things. We then eat the meal provided, clean up and head home. Many will come to have hands laid on them and have prayer for them. That is a very special time for me! I feel sad saying good-bye to these new friends. It always amazes me how close we can become in just one day when we can't even speak the same language. But that's what it is like meeting brothers and sisters in Christ I didn't know before! Oh the conversations I will have in heaven!!!!

When all is over we drive home. Alan and Pastor Moses go to a restaurant to eat. Sometimes I join them, other times I eat one of the tuna fish packages I brought for this purpose and work on getting ready for the next day's conferences. I also finish and post my blog from my hotel room. I enjoy reading the emails sent me in response to previous blogs. Then I talk to Nancy by instant messenger if we can connect at the same time. I get to sleep as early as I can. Then I get up and do it all over again, six days on and one (Sunday) off – but Sunday is as full as these days for we go to 3 or 4 churches each Sunday! And that's a typical day (month) in India! (Vijayawada, January 20, 2015)

Matthew 25:14-18 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 1To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

Pray we would faithfully carry out the assignment the Lord has given us, both here and when we get home. Pray you, too, will faithfully carry out His assignment for you. Do you know what it is? How are you doing in carrying it out? If I can pray for you concerning this send me an email and I will.

Blog 347: TYPICAL INDIAN VILLAGE PASTOR'S WIFE

One can no more define the typical pastor's wife than they can describe the typical American movie or song – there is just too much variety. However, to give you a clearer picture of these fine, godly women I will give it a try. Remember I am describing all of them, yet not any one of them.

The typical village pastor's wife in India comes from a Dalit background, one of the outcasts. She may have grown up in a Christian home, or she may have been raised in their animist religion and come to Jesus later. Her husband was chosen for her, probably before he became a pastor. She has been raised to willingly follow whatever direction her husband goes. She trusts him, serves him and submits to his wishes. She has developed her own strong faith in Jesus and spends meaningful time with Him each day. She reads her Bible regularly, prays often and intensely, and takes her complaints to God instead of others.

She is responsible for the running of her home, usually with insufficient resources and income. What she does have she shares with others less fortunate. She cares for her children, usually two, sometimes three. She walks everywhere she goes, starting with the closest water pump to bring

home water for household use. Every drop is carried home by her. She shops daily for she has no refrigeration and food spoils quickly in this hot climate. Most of her time is spent in washing clothes and making meals, which is a slow process as various grains and spices have to be ground by hand then blended and simmered together in diverse combinations to get the desired taste. Clothes are washed by hand, spread out on a bush to dry, then ironed with an iron heated in her fire. She cares for any animals or garden plots the family may have as well.

In addition to this full set of duties she actively and tirelessly serves the church. She works with the other women, individually and as a group. The typical Indian church is made of up 90 to 95% women. In addition, she uses her spiritual gifts when possible but usually finds herself doing the work no one else wants to do. She teaches the children before the main worship service and leads the singing. She graciously feeds or provides chai for every visitor to the church or her home. She probably lives far from her family and has few close friends because of her position in the church.

She comes to the pastor's conference because her husband tells her to. She quietly sits with the other women and listens patiently. When she hears that she is her husband's number one sheep her head snaps up. She smile and steals a glance toward her husband to make sure he was listening and heard. She doesn't understand what it means for her husband to meet her needs for she comes from a long line of women who never thought in terms of personal needs. But she thinks that perhaps now he will be kinder to her, spend more time helping at home, and maybe even listen when she wants to talk to him. What more could she possibly hope for?

She is a faithful, loyal, good, solid, godly woman who is the backbone of her family and church and she will be greatly rewarded when she gets to heaven. (Vijayawada, January 21, 2015)

Proverbs 31: 28-31 Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all." Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

These unrecognized women, who often aren't sure their only means of support will return when they leave the house to tell others about Jesus, need you. Remember them daily with regular and faithful prayers.

Blog 348: ALL THE DIRT ON INDIA AND US

(This blog was written by Alan Carlton)In the U.S., we have a near-phobia about dirt. Soap and cleaning supplies are huge sellers everywhere. Grocery stores, drug stores, specialty shops, Amazon, Target and Wal-Mart all have shelves full of an amazing array of such products. At Sam's and Costco they are available in industrial size and strength.

In India as well, the quest for clean in never ending . . . yet dirt remains . . . everywhere. Women here may often be seen along the highways and byways sweeping the dirt clean with a sheaf of tiny bound sticks. They diligently sweep the streets and their property in this way . . . yet when they are finished, the dirt is still there . . . only pushed around and rearranged, with much on their neighbor's property and less on their own.

The broom of choice, especially with the most stooped old women has no handle to allow them to stand erect. It's just a tied bunch of brush.

The quest for clean carries over to clothes washing too. Every day, at all hours, women can be seen along rivers and canals beating the dirt out of their family's garments. The people's clothes usually look clean, especially the beautiful rainbow of saris worn by the women. They even wear these when working in the fields or when spreading dirt as part of a highway repair crew. Even

though they appear clean, looking at all the filth and garbage on the banks of those same rivers and canals, you know much dirt must remain.

Jesus talked about dirt and uncleanness in Matthew when he said it wasn't the dirt on the outside that was our problem. Instead, it's the filth that remains in our hearts and comes out from us because we are sinful people. Soap can't touch this dirt . . . even though some of us had our mouths washed out with soap as children in an effort to reach it. This was for things that we said using foul language.

Although our passion for soap, cleansers, dirt sweeping, clean clothes, clean houses, shampoo and Swiflers has merit, it ignores our true problem. Falling moral standards, rampant immorality, foul entertainment, wars, greed, hypocrisy run amok, lying seen as simply normal behavior, alcohol and drug abuse . . . all these attest to the dirt within, yet few of us are really too worried about it. Instead, we largely just shake our heads, say "tsk tsk" and get along with our lives.

Only the blood of God's innocent Son can clean this dirt . . . in India or in us. How many of us spend as much time telling others of this free miracle cleaner as we do telling someone about the newest laundry pods? We need to have a dirt phobia as Christians . . . just directed toward the right dirt.

India has more obvious physical dirt than most of us deal with on a daily basis. It is also a land filled with idols and spiritual foulness. In its midst, however, the church and many dedicated Christians are living and growing. Persecution surrounds and threatens them regularly. They need our help . . . both our physical and spiritual help... both our prayers and our fiscal help . . . both teaching such as Jerry's and something from our checkbooks. They are filled with the love of Christ, but nearly all the Christians here are literally "dirt poor". What do they lack? Everything except Christ's love.

Ask God how you can help. Then listen . . . and act. Please. Alan Carlton

1 John 1:8-10 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

Take a moment to let God's Spirit bring to mind any sin you have in your life. Confess it and turn from it. Take time to do a good soul-cleansing!

Blog 349: TESTIMONIES FROM PASTORS

Several of you have asked for samples of the things the pastors say in their testimony about the conference after it is over so we wrote down some of the recent comments we have heard. The pastors come from the following denominations: Baptist, Pentecostal, Independent, Methodist, Lutheran, Salvation Army, Mennonite, Wesleyan, etc.

"The spiritual warfare session touched my heart and now I understand how we can fight demons."

"I now know how to deliver people from spiritual bondage and demons. I will go back and share this with my people. It will greatly help my ministry and my church."

"The Bible teaching touched me very deeply."

"I was touched by the fact that God used the Gadarenes demonized man even though he had no education. I thought God couldn't use me because I had no education but I learned that God wants to use me and I want to go home and be a great testimony for Him to my people." -Pastor's Wife

"I now deeply understand the value of the Bible. Now I want to get Bibles to distribute to others."

"Marriage and family relations touched my life." -Pastor's Wife (Many women say they are blessed by this as well.)

"We have never had a conference like this where the Bible is taught systematically."

"Pastors should please God rather than men by learning what God expects of pastors."

"The books are very, very good for pastors to plant churches and grow the churches. The books are the tools for us to grow spiritually. Thank you very, very much."

"I really was glad to learn about the authority and importance of the Bible. I enjoyed learning the technical information about how we know the Bible is God's inspired Word for us today. Thank you very much."

"I have been very much touched by teachings about the Rapture and Millennium and how we will be Jesus' bride in heaven forever. I never heard teaching like this. Thank you very, very much." – Pastor's Wife

"This is the best conference that we have ever had." (This is a very common statement made often at every conference.)

"The food was very good, the spiritual teaching was very good and we are thankful to you. We are satisfied with physical food and also with spiritual food. The magic tricks really helped me learn."

Several days after a conference a pastor called to say, "The conference has changed my life."

"Spiritual warfare has changed the young people who came with me. Now they want to grow more. They are eager to read the books we received."

"I learned that my church property was under a curse. Now I know how to pray for my land and church. There was no growth and no unity in my church and now I know why. I will go home and pray for this as I have learned to do."

"The teaching touched me and other pastors. We are encouraged to live faithfully and wait for the Second Coming of Jesus."

"The marriage teaching is really needed by pastors so they will keep their wife and children before ministry. Many pastors neglect their wife and family. Now we have learned we must respect our wives as our #1 sheep."

"The magic tricks are wonderful and help us understand the teaching so much. It is great teaching."

"Everything is wonderful, no one complained about anything, but best of all is that after it is over we get to take these wonderful books home to study and use. They are more of a blessing than you can ever know."

As I am typing this blog Moses is on the phone with a pastor who sponsored a conference at his church last week. He is going on and on about how the pastors are calling and so happy with it, and how they want it again, as soon and as often as possible. Can Moses provide 2 days training for them every month? Unfortunately we don't have time or resources to even go back one time.... (Vijayawada, January 23, 2015)

You can read or download the books from <http://india.christiantrainingonline.org/books/> Or email me and I'll send you a copy. They are "What God Expects of Pastors," "Spiritual Warfare," "Marriage

and Ministry,” and “Biblical Prophecy.” Let me know which ones you want. More money is needed to reprint books as well as write, translate and print new ones. Pray for that please!

Blog 350: TYPICAL INDIAN VILLAGE PASTOR’S HOME

When I tell you about the typical Indian village pastor’s home remember that there is great variety here. While I have been in hundreds of them, I certainly haven’t been in them all. So anyway lets begin. The typical home is very small, about the size of a small one-car garage. Houses surround it everywhere and there is no privacy. If they are so fortunate as to have electricity it will be just to burn one small bulb to light the whole house.

The home was probably built by the pastor who made it of mud, straw, grass or concrete, depending on his finances. He bought the property for more than it is worth because land in India is very inflated and commands a high price due to foreign investors buying up so much of it.

His door opens right on the street in front of his house. Dust and dirt from the street cover everything despite the wife’s continual cleaning. Inside is one main multi-purpose room with a small space partitioned off as a ‘kitchen.’ Everyone sleeps in the same room, with the children’s beds propped against the wall or slid under the parent’s bed during the day to make more room to walk. The parent’s bed double as a sofa during the day. There is probably a chair in the room for the pastor to sit and read or nap. As often as not, his church meets in this room, or at least it did when starting.

The room is dark even during the day, and especially so at night. The one bulb seems to do nothing but draw bugs. There is a clock on the wall but it only tells the correct time twice a day, for the hands don’t move. There will be a calendar from a bank or church hanging somewhere. A picture of Jesus will be found hanging in the room, often clearly Roman Catholic in origin. A toothbrush for each family member is stuck somewhere within easy reach.

Against one wall will be a small shelf and also a cabinet in which all the extra clothes and possessions of the family are kept. Needless to say, there isn’t much inside. The only contact with the outside world is the pastor’s cell phone, which seems to ring every few minutes.

The kitchen nook is small and dark, more a place to store things than to work. The actual food preparation is done sitting in front of the house where it is cooler and women can talk with each other. It is slow, tedious, time-consuming work. There are no appliances in the kitchen except maybe a small stove top with a couple burners which is fueled by propane and used when cooking can’t be done outside over an open fire. Without refrigeration, and because of the hot climate, food is bought fresh each day. All dishes, pots, cups, etc. are stainless steel which works well for sanitary purposes.

The bathroom, if there is one, is a small enclosed area barely large enough to turn around in. It is outside the main house and made of plastic, dried leaves or, if possible, concrete. It may or may not have a roof. In the floor is drain, or at least a hole going out to the ground alongside it. There is a bucket of water and cup with a handle to wash with. Baths are taken here from this bucket as well. There are no stacks of magazines to read for no one spends more time there than necessary. If a pastor comes from a caste or has more resource his home will show it, but the vast majority of pastors here are Dalit, outcasts, and live far below the poverty line.

Children live the same as the parents. They do not have their own room, not even their own space, and there is no such a thing as privacy for them. If they are fortunate to have more clothing than they wear or a few personal objects they keep them on a shelf in the living room. They help with the chores, especially watching younger children. They play with other children in the streets, rarely will any of them have a toy, if so perhaps they may have a ball for a group of them to play with.

Yet for all this they are grateful for what they have and proud to show off their home. They offer hospitality with love and openness. They share whatever they have when necessary. One of the reasons Christianity is growing so rapidly among the Dalits is because it is only Christians who reach out to help others in times of national or personal disaster. Neither other groups nor the government itself will help. Just Christians. After all, when they've been so richly blessed by God, how can they not share with those in need! (Hyderabad, January 24, 2015)

I Peter 4:9-10 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

What is your attitude to your things? Are you discontent, comparing yourself to others and thinking you should have more? Maybe you are comparing yourself to the wrong people, try comparing yourself to the typical Indian pastor's home and see if that doesn't improve your appreciation for what you have. God could have had you born into an Indian Dalit family, you know, and if it was a Christian family you would have been content there.

Blog 351: DR. JERRY'S AMAZING TRAVELING SEMINARY SHOW

TOP DRAWER QUALITY AT BARGAIN BASEMENT PRICES!!!!!!

(Written by Alan Carlton) As I have accompanied Dr. Jerry Schmoyer and Pastor P.K. Moses across India, it has become clear what a unique and valuable work is being done here by them . . . all on the cheap. As an engineer, I am all about efficiency; the best product for the best price. I like cheap . . . so long as the quality is there.

What Jerry and Moses bring to the poor pastors of south-central India is a travelling seminary . . . the only one like it I know about. They give studies the pastors need, presented locally so it's possible for them and their wives to attend. Courses taught include both practical things they need to know (What God Expects from Pastors, Leadership Lessons from the Bible, Christian Family Relationships and Spiritual Warfare) as well as Bible studies (Bible Survey, Heaven, The Rapture, Prophecy and Specific Bible book studies). These are all presented in a clear, well-structured manner, with the ideas all understandably and culturally translated into Telugu by Pastor Moses. They are also accompanied by neat magic tricks that provide visual images that help them to remember what was said.

Pastors and their wives comments afterward are unanimously very positive. "We have never had teaching like this." "I just returned from a conference taught by our denomination where I didn't understand the teaching . . . here I did. It was wonderful." "Pastors' families need this teaching." "I feel encouraged." "I learned how to become a mature Christian." "The books are great for studying." The only critical comment ever received was several years ago when a demon-possessed woman ran to the front and fell to the floor, raging and screaming "you can't teach them about casting out demons." She was talking about the Spiritual Warfare teaching just completed. The pastors all surrounded her, praying in Jesus' name and the demon left her.

All Christian denominations are welcomed and taught. This year, conferences were held at Baptist, Pentecostal, Mennonite, Church of South India, and Independent churches. Teaching more than 1400 pastors and wives this year, attendees were from Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran E&R, Independent, Church of God, Mennonite, Church of Christ and other churches. All teaching is basic Bible truth, with all pastors in harmony.

Fellowship between all the Christian pastors is a side benefit. Time shared eating, sharing chai and sleeping together facilitates joint work for God's glory in the future.

All of this benefit, given free to them, only costs about \$15 per person (a little more for 5 day seminars), including the books they are given covering the material taught . . . about what you pay for a movie, popcorn and a coke. Jerry's and Pastor Moses' time is a gift from them and their wives, as is airfare to get there. They are totally uncompensated. For free, each attendee receives:

- 2 days of top quality teaching in their native language (Telugu), delivered near their home
- All meals during the conference
- A small financial stipend to defray travel costs
- Books covering all subjects taught . . . in Telugu
- A blanket and pillow and space to lie down in the church on the night between the conferences
- Fellowship time with their wives and other pastors
- The ability to serve God and their churches better

Donors should know that both Pastor Moses and Jerry know how to pinch a penny hard enough to make it squeal. They are both frugal, Godly men with a passion for honoring God by training other pastors. If you are a financial partner in this ministry, rest assured this is being done with very, very good stewardship. When you get to heaven, you will meet many Indian Christians who will thank you for helping their pastor . . . and through him, them.

Gifts to support this work can be sent to: Christian Training Organization, In Care of Jerry Schmoyer, 252 W. State St, Doylestown, PA 18901. For a tax receipt at the end of the year make the donation out to Christian Training Organization. By Alan Carlton (Hyderabad, Sunday, January 25, 2015)

Matthew 25:16-18 The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

Pray God would provide for our needs to reach out and expand this ministry. Pray for us to have wisdom in how best to use what He provides.

Blog 352: LOCAL PERSECUTION UPDATE

“Only Christian Church in Indian Village Burned Down by Hindu Radicals; Bibles Torched” By Stoyan Zaimov, Christian Post Reporter, January 23, 2015; 12:19 PM (This happened near us in Hyderabad, not too far from where we had our first conferences. This happened just a couple days ago.)

The only Christian church in the Indian village of Tador in Telangana state has reportedly been burned down by Hindu radicals. Pastor D. Srinivas of Parimala Beautiful Church recalled the attack, and noted that hostility against Christians in the country has been on the rise. "I have been serving as the pastor for the last six years in this village. We used to meet at church members' houses, till last year we built a temporary structure," Srinivas told The International Christian Concern. "Prior to this incident, on number of occasions, right-wing activists have threatened me and warned me not to continue the church in this village. The Hindu radicals have snatched the Gospel literature from me and destroyed them a number of times in the past." The church hosted as many as 70 believers who met for worship services and prayer in Tador. The attack on the church occurred last week, when the building, along with Bibles, songbooks and instruments were torched and destroyed. Although the assailants haven't yet been identified, persecution watchdog groups have recorded numerous attacks on Christians by Hindu extremists in recent months.

The attacks have also reached the capital in New Delhi, with Archbishop Anil JT Couto revealing that at least four churches have been vandalized in the region. "A clear pattern of orchestrated attacks is emerging as more and more churches are targeted, vandalised and set on fire," Couto said, according to NDTV. "This is very disturbing and we request the authorities to take adequate measures to bring to book the miscreants who are threatening to weaken the social fabric of this great nation." Churches in the capital have had their windows and statues broken, and seen displays charred in fires.

Several other Indian cities and states have also reported anti-Christian violence, including the Mahabubnagar district where Tador village is located. ICC said that the minority Christian community is "gripped with fear" as the attacks are only increasing, while the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi fails to protect them. The Rev. Ronald John, state chairman of the Telangana Christian Joint-Action-Committee, said: "The attacks have increased since the BJP formed the government at the center last year. Christians here are living as second class citizens." Groups like the Catholic Secular Forum have claimed that as many as 7,000 Christians suffered some form of persecution in 2014 alone. Other organizations, such as Open Doors, have ranked India as the 21st country in the world where Christians face the most severe persecution for their faith.

"This year, and during the reporting year, India has become a more dangerous place for Christians, largely because Hindu extremists seem to think that the new government there will give them impunity when they attack Christian churches. The episodes of violence there from extremists are on the rise," Open Doors CEO David Curry told The Christian Post in an interview earlier in January. (<http://www.christianpost.com/news/only-christian-church-in-indian-village-burned-down-by-hindu-radicals-bibles-torched-133015/>) (Monday, January 26, 2015, Hyderabad)

Matthew 24:9-14 **“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.**

Keep praying for the pastors here! And all the Christians as well!

Blog 353: HELPFUL HINTS FOR YOUR NEXT TRIP TO INDIA

Never pass up an opportunity to use the toilet (especially if it has walls around it).

A smile is a universally accepted language – use it often!

Never ask what the food you are eating is made of,

Remember that words like ‘clean’ and ‘dirty’ are relative terms, very relative.

Never show shock, no matter what you see, hear, taste, smell or step in.

Always keep hand sanitizer, a spoon, mosquito spray, toilet paper and a full water bottle handy.

Don't ever put your fingers in your mouth, never ever.

Don't try to drink water in a moving car.

If you are riding in the front seat of a car, close your eyes until you arrive and the engine is turned off. If you are in the back seat only look out the side window!

Pay attention when you pray for God to bless the food you are about to eat. It takes on a whole new meaning in India!

Keep your camera handy at all times, there'll be something special to photograph about every 2 seconds (I usually take about 5,000 each trip).

Never pass up an opportunity to use the toilet (especially if it has walls around it). (this is not a type, it bears repeating often!)

Wash your feet as well as your hands at the end of a day, and wash your hands last!

Pray every time you get in a car, but, train or auto-rickshaw, and don't stop until you get to your destination.

Be on time, but don't expect others to be.

Let them serve you by carrying your suitcase, even if it does weigh more than the one carrying it.

Don't comment on the dirt in India – they don't see it.

When crossing a street look both ways at least a dozen times, then run as if your life depends on it (for it does!).

British English spoken by a native Telugu speaker is a language all its own!

Don't judge India by American standards, you don't want them judging you by Indian standards.

Write notes during the day and journal at night, every day is a totally new experience and you'll forget most of it if you don't write it down.

Take photos of the people, they consider it an honor when you do. Ask first and show them the picture when done, and you'll make their day, maybe their week.

The Golden Rule is still the best rule to follow, wherever you are. (Hyderabad, January 26, 2015)

Matthew 7: 12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Luke 6:31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Are there any relationships in your life where you aren't living by the Golden Rule? Confess that sin and do what you can today to correct that.

LOCAL PERSECUTION: Interesting parallel: same name, age and location as out Pastor Moses but a different man.

Pray for Pastor Mosses and Wife Brutally Attacked for Christian Faith

INDIA (Voice of the Martyrs)

A Baptist pastor in Andhra Pradesh, India, is in critical condition after he and his wife were attacked on Dec. 30 by a group of radicals wielding swords, knives and sticks. Pastor Namha Mosses, 45; his wife, Suvartha; and their 7-year-old daughter were asleep in their home when they heard a knock at the door at 1 a.m. When Pastor Mosses answered the door, he was repeatedly stabbed in the stomach and back, causing damage to his liver, kidneys and other internal organs. Suvartha rushed to help her husband, but then she was attacked, receiving injuries on her head and hands. Neighbors called an ambulance for the couple, and they were taken to a nearby hospital in Kamineni. Because Pastor Mosses' injuries were more severe, he was transferred to a hospital in Hyderabad. The couple had been warned to stop their Christian activities, but they continued to minister through prayer and their church, which includes 100 members and six house churches in the area.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PERSECUTION IN INDIA & LINKS TO STORIES:

http://www.persecution.com/public/restrictednations.aspx?country_ID=%3d3230

blog 354: GOOD NEWS – BAD NEWS

Good news: India has not changed much

Bad news: India has not changed much

Good news: Some of the people are changing

Bad news: The change isn't always for the better (persecution of Christians)

Good news: Jesus never changes!

Good news: I only had one stomach issue

Bad news: it's lasted the whole time I've been here

Good news: it isn't nearly as bad as other years

Bad news: I can't eat Indian food, and I'd really like to

Good news: a month's worth of stomach medicine here is just two USA dollars

Good news: Nancy misses me lot

Bad news: I can't be with her

Good news: I miss Nancy a lot

Bad news: she can't be with me

Good news: soon we'll be together again

Good news: the trip is almost over

Bad news: the trip is almost over

Good news: I'll be going home soon

Bad news: I'll be leaving India

Good news: I'll see Nancy and everyone at home

Bad news: I won't see all these wonderful people in India

Good news: I'll see them all in heaven and NEVER say good-bye to any of them

Good news: We go to a new area and speak to different pastors every year

Bad news: we can't return to pastors who want us to come back for more training

Good news: all we do, and more, is available on our India web site

Bad news: not even one pastor in a hundred is able to access our web site

Good news: The number of computer-literate pastors is slowly growing

Good news: God blesses me more than I can ever imagine or explain

Bad news: There always is a cost to be in the place where God's blessings will fall

Good news: The blessing makes the cost seem well worth it

Bad news: the cost comes first, so many believers end up missing it

Good news: God is very patient and gracious, giving us opportunity after opportunity

Good news: We've trained about 1200 pastors this year who will impact at least 20 people each so 25,000 lives have been touched.

Bad news: There are 40,000 times that number that we haven't touched

Good news: We've printed 29,000 books so far to help reach more pastors and churches

Bad news: We've still only touched a small portion of Telugu-speaking pastors, and there are 15 other major language groups in India.

Good news: We don't have to reach India alone, others are doing the same

Bad news: There aren't nearly enough to reach everyone in a hundred years!

Good news: God will spread His Word and it will be victorious in the end

Proverbs 15:30 A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones.

Proverbs 25:25 Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land.

How many "good news" items can you list which are present in your life right now? Don't do the 'bad news' part, just the good news. Then thank God for each and every one.

BLOG 355: 'SUCCESSFUL' SO FAR?

We finished our ministry in this part of India yesterday. Today we go south. It's gone quickly and slowly. I'm glad it's over and I'm sad it's over. It was very hard but very wonderful. I am very tired but also very invigorated. I am tired of India but don't want to leave it. About this time I always think of Paul's words about being "poured out like a drink offering" (Philippians 2:17; 2 Timothy 4:7).

Was it successful? Only God can truly define and measure success, but I feel very, very good about how things went and what has been accomplished. It is far beyond what I expected before coming here. We held 19 days of conferences (7 2-day and 5 one day) with 1300 pastors and wives in attendance (1033 pastors, 267 wives). This is my 8th trip since 2006. In that time we've held 110 days of pastors' conferences for 4325 pastors and 1245 wives. I've given 610 messages, we printed 29,000 Bibles and I've traveled about 12,200 miles. I've spoken 150 times to church gatherings. So is that successful? Only if it's what God wanted us to do.

Success is measured in terms of faithfulness (1 Corinthians 4:2), not statistics and results. I would be pleased indeed if God was able to say I have been faithful in the stewardship of what He

has given us to do. Knowing His patience, grace and mercy, I feel He would say so. I do know we try our best to be faithful.

So now its on to something I've never done here before: a week of seminary classes in Bangalore, in English, with Power Point and handouts! It'll stretch me in new and different ways, but that's OK if that's what God has in store. Life is to be invested, not stored away. After all, it does have an expiration date so use it well while you have it! (Hyderabad, Thursday, January 29, 2015)

Philippians 2:17-18 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me

2 Timothy 4:6-7 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

1 Corinthians 4:2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

So what about YOUR life? Is it successful in God's sight? If you're reading this then your life hasn't expired yet, so use what's left to successfully ("faithfully") serve Him!

I JUST RECEIVED THIS EMAIL FROM A YOUNG PASTOR:

Dear Pastor Jerry,
Greetings to you in the Name of JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth. I am XXXXXXXXXX, writing this letter from India. It's my immense pleasure and considered as a great privilege to be a part of pastor's conference that was held in xxxxxxxx, Andhra Pradesh. Personally I am blessed to listen from you and from Mr. Alon on 21.Jan.2015 & 22.Jan.2015. The topics you shared during those days were really touched my heart and empowered me to continue to do GOD's ministry. Thank You for proving that JESUS' Name is above all. I strongly believe that the Name of JESUS is strong and mighty tower. I thank GOD for giving you vision and passion for the lost souls in India. Really we need teachers like you who can teach us Bible in a systematic way using simple methods. I have read the books you gifted me, they were awesome and believed that the Holy Spirit led you to write them for the expansion of HIS Kingdome. I wish the conference would have been extended for another 3 days, but understood it's time for you to carry the Word of GOD to other places also. Thank you again sir. We love you and your family. We assure you that we are praying for you and ministry. Please Visit us again.
In HIS Service.....

Blog 356: LIFE AS SEEN THROUGH INDIAN EYES

In order to communicate effectively to the pastors and others here it's important for me to try to see life as they see it. I've been seeking to understand their world view since I started coming. I have a lot to learn, and I'm sure I'll never totally understand it, but I thought it might be good for me and interesting for you if I put some of it down in a blog.

For those who aren't Christians, their life is, for the most part, empty and meaningless, a day to day existence until they die and repeat it all over again, hopefully under better circumstances (depending on their karma). If they can derive some pleasure on the way fine, but setting goals and ambition for improvement are not strong drives in most of them. Life's driving motive is avoid doing anything dishonorable or bringing shame to their family, for the extended family is where their allegiance belongs. Approval by the family is the strongest motivating factor. Individuals exist to benefit the family, the family does not exist to benefit them. To do so brings honor, to not do so brings shame. Decisions are made by the family as to their career/job, who to marry, where to live,

etc. Independence, freedom and privacy are virtually unknown. Right, wrong, guilt, etc., are not part of their thought process, just bringing honor by avoiding shame.

Believers have hope in Jesus and a better future. Family, shame and honor are still strong, but individual faith and knowing a loving God who cares about them makes a world of difference. They have a strong bond to other believers and their church, often because of family rejection when they become Christians. They live under a double cloud of rejection and persecution, first because they are mainly Dalits or tribals and therefore below the caste system, often seen as subhuman. Also, even among their peers they are rejected and persecuted because they are Christians. They are not safe even in their own country. Like the Jews of Europe (and elsewhere), their being 'different' becomes a part of their everyday life and thought.

Despite this, these people have a joy and love others lack, a look in their eyes, 'life' in their hearts which is encouraging to see. They only have a very basic, rudimentary understanding of Jesus and the Bible, but they have a strong faith in Him. We often think we can depend on government, insurance, savings, friends, education, etc., to help us in time of need but they clearly know they have none of these things. And yet they are more content than those with all of the above. Many studies show people in third world countries are more content with their life than those in the USA or Europe. That is certainly true here. They will welcome you into their house and freely share whatever they have with joy and no embarrassment. To accept their hospitality or help shows them great honor.

Their church life is basic and simple as well. It reminds me of the early church in what they do, how they do it and why they do it. People are the central focus, not buildings or programs.

They are true servants of Jesus, both to Him and to others. That's the reason Christianity is the fastest growing religion in India. They are far from perfect, don't think they have arrived in their faith for they haven't. They struggle with the same temptations and sins that we do. But there is something to be said for their simpler life that helps their focus stay where it should be – on Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 13:5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Philippians 4:11-13 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Don't idealize Indian believers as perfect, for they have their struggles and failures like we do. But do try to from the simplicity of their lives and faith. It's something we long for, but don't take steps to achieve. When you pray ask God how you can simplify your life and faith. Listen to what He says and take steps today to put it into practice.

Blog 357: MY FIRST DAY EVER TEACHING SEMINARY

It's been a life-long dream of mine to teach in a seminary or Bible college. Today I had my first day doing so but it was much more difficult than I expected: no electricity (no PowerPoint), very hot dark room, students by nature totally unresponsive, fever and stomach pains, a magic trick that I messed up, etc. I talked about what God expects of us in order to hear Him say "Well done, good

and faithful servant,” what it means to be a godly husband and wife, leadership lessons from the life of Jesus (I dressed as Mark and did it first person from him) and 10 signs that we are growing spiritually. Afterwards pastors, teachers and even some students expressed profuse appreciation and said how it all spoke to them. So did the head of the seminary here. God used it as He promised He would. “When I am weak then I am strong.”

I came straight back to the hotel instead of staying for Alan’s first 2 sessions on heaven. I crashed for a few hours, and then started feeling better. Prayers for my health would be appreciated. Especially pray for my teaching: tomorrow focuses in spiritual warfare, Monday on an overview of the whole Bible, Tuesday on Bible prophecy and Wednesday a workshop on how to study the Bible and develop sermons. Alan will be talking about heaven for 2 sessions every day as well. Please pray for him and those important messages as well. He’s been a good friend, helpful coworker and all around great blessing this whole trip!

And many thanks for your prayers and emails. I really look forward to reading your emails. They are a contact with home and a real encouragement. Thanks for your faithfulness! (Bangalore, January 30, 2015)

Ephesians 1:16-17 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

RANDOM THOUGHTS

IF I COULD SPEAK TO THE PASTORS IN INDIA I would encourage them to remain faithful. They are not alone, other believers know and care, and they are a good example to the rest of the world.

IF THE PASTORS HERE COULD SPEAK TO ME they would thank for coming so far and how wonderful it is that others remember them and care about them.

IF WE COULD SPEAK TO EACH OTHER we would praise Jesus for being the majestic Savior of all

PRAYER REQUESTS

Plans and provisions for Pastor Moses’ visit to the USA: when to come, where to speak, who to visit, what to do. **If you have an opportunity for us to come so he can present the ministry please let me know soon. We must make plans so we can get his Visa, and that goes very slow in India!** If there aren’t opportunities for him to present our ministry we’ll put the trip off as we did last year.

CTO future development, growth – next step in this ministry

Help with CTO ministry, volunteer secretary to help track finances, develop documents, etc.

Me: transition at MSBC, what to do with things I must move from MSBC (place to store, give etc)

Time, focus, wisdom for new book(s) requested: Basic Guide for New Believers (“Discipleship”) and How To Study the Bible and Develop Sermons

Blog 358: YOU CAN’T WIN A BATTLE UNLESS YOU FIGHT IN ONE!

Spiritual warfare continues to be a very big part of our ministry in India. I didn’t plan it that way in the beginning but the needs here and the requests for training have made it so. It’s be the

culmination of each conference, when attendance and attention is the highest. It brings a new perspective on things they've been struggling with and give hope of victory over these things.

Today was no different, except that I had time for four sessions on spiritual warfare. We talk about how to recognize, take back access, and remove demonic work against them, their families or their churches. We end up with a powerful prayer for deliverance for each one present and give them a book to help them understand and grow.

These sessions bring great blessing to them and us, but they also bring focused opposition for this is not something demonic forces controlling the areas we enter want to have taught! That's the main reason these trips to India are such a continuing battle. We are dependent on the prayers of God's people to be able to continue with these things. So are the pastors and Christians we teach for they go home alone to use these thing and face strong opposition. We hear many testimonies of how wonderfully God works, but never without a battle.

The principle is: there is no victory without battle. The battle must come first, and must be won. It's not something we do on our own. God takes us out of our comfort zone. In India, ministering in spiritual warfare, is so far out of my comfort zone I feel like I am in a different galaxy. Yet nowhere else do I experience God's grace and power, His love and guidance and His provision for all our needs. His promise is always true: (Bangalore, February 1, 2015)

Luke 10:19-20 I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

So how are you doing with the battles you face in life? Maybe you are between battles and God is giving you a time to rest and learn the lessons He's been teaching you. Maybe you are just entering a battle, or in the middle or even coming to the end of one. Do you see it for what it is, an attack of the enemy to defeat and discourage you? Never think America is free from this same demonic work, it's just more subtle an hidden. But that makes it more dangerous and more effective. If you would like prayer or counsel please email me. For a free copy of my spiritual warfare books go to <http://sw.christiantrainingonline.org/> and click 'Downloads' or email me and I'll send an ebook. And don't stop praying for us, it's been a long battle over here. God brings victory but the battle isn't over!

Blog 359: PREVIEW OF COMING EVENTS

Pastor Moses and I have evaluated our ministry this year and make plans for the next trip. It is always amazing how we are both led in the same way at the same time. Next time we are actually changing our focus a bit. We have found some areas especially responsive to our ministries and really wanting more than what we give in a day or two.

So in 2016, in addition to several one and two conferences to new locations, we will have 5 three-day conferences. We will have larger venues so we can accommodate more pastors and because they will be staying they can come from a larger distance. Many will be new pastors but a good number will be pastors who want to come for more. We feel this is the year to do that. I'm looking forward to building on what we have done in the past and then going deeper then ever with these men. Three of these 5 will be for any pastors in the area who want to come, one will be for the leaders of the leaders, pastors who help with our work and oversee other churches in their area. They will also be at a 3-day conference in their area so I will be able to minister to these special men for 6 days! An additional feature, if it works out and Nancy can come with me, is for her to have an afternoon speaking just to the wives. That will be marvelous for them, a wonderful addition.

The 5th 3-day conference will be for youth (teens and twenties). We'll do a shorter conference for them in each of the 3 areas we will have larger conferences, but want to have one where those interested can come, learn and grow. I really look forward to that! World View Plus in India!!!!!!

I have other opportunities to minister and will see how God will lead with some of them. These plans are exciting for me. Believe it or not, but I can say I am actually looking forward to coming back to India in 2016! ("The spirit is willing but the body is weak" Matthew 26:41b)

First, though, is planning a trip for Pastor Moses to come to this country this summer to help expand our prayer and giving base for the future. New books are needed and these plans for next year will cost more for transportation and housing. I really hope if any of you know of an opportunity for Pastor Moses to speak and present our ministry you would let me know so we know if such a trip would be worth taking. Please pray for His wisdom and guidance. (Bangalore, February 2, 2015)

Jeremiah 29:11-13 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

The verses above remind us that God has plans for all of us, not just our work in India. Do you know what His plans are for you and your family? Are you following them? Don't think He doesn't have any, this verse guarantees He does, and they are GOOD plans! Take time to spend with Him, listening, writing down what you think His plans may be, and then follow them. If you don't your life will drift aimlessly – who wants that?

Blog 359: MUSINGS OF A RETURNING MISSIONARY

(written by Alan Carlton) As Jerry and I near the end of our India visit, my mind wants to step back and consider the significance of it all. As we began, I had no idea of what to expect. It was my first trip to India. Jerry and I had never met. I did not know what he really did on his annual trips to India. Pastor Moses was only a name, the first two parts of it being unpronounceable. I had never heard of the places we would go. It was an interesting sounding clean slate with the possible potential to Honor our Lord.

Every day, I give God my blank check. I tell Him, whatever you want me to do, I will do. Whatever you want me to give, I will give. Wherever you want me to go, I will go. Last year, God said "Go to India with Glory's dad, Jerry." . . . and here I am, nearly ready to return home. I can't say the trip exceeded my expectations, because my ignorance kept me from having any. It did, however exceed my fondest hopes.

Playing the part of Barnabus to Jerry's "Paul" was both interesting and enjoyable, though probably more for me than for him. The thorn in the flesh is a part of Paul's journeys that Jerry understands. Persistent stomach pain and occasional nausea, when combined with a serious dislike of travel and discomfort around strangers pricked him every moment we were here . . . yet he radiated the joy of teaching God's truths each day so brightly that the pain was hidden.

I taught a little, took over 5000 pictures and videos (so far) and helped however I could. For most of the trip, Pastor Moses was our rock . . . constantly driving, arranging, translating, answering questions, and making it all happen with few bumps in the road.

The needs and opportunities here are both phenomenal. This ministry is unique and I hope will grow. I am listening each day as I give God my blank check for how He wants me to participate, both now and in the future. You can too.

We are teaching in Pumza Tombing's Gilead Seminary during our final week here . . . Jerry, many topics . . . me, Heaven. Yesterday, I talked about Jesus' story concerning Lazarus and the rich man. At the end, the rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn those he loves, his 5 brothers. Clearly, it is too late for the rich man, but not for those he loves. God gives each of us the choice to follow him, but only while we live. Ultimately, our time for choosing ends.

If we truly care for our loved ones (and this should include all people, as it does for Christ), we need to warn and inform them while we and they are still alive. Life has an expiration date. It was too late for the rich man to warn his loved ones, but it is not for you and for me. We need to use each and every day for the Glory of God while we have it. One key part of this is sharing the wonderful gift He has promised us . . . through prayer, living in Christ's image, talking, or any other means we can think of. This is something that won't "keep". It's expiration date becomes irrevocable with our death.

As I return from a far and rich part of the Mission field, I am reminded that white fields surround us every day. In one sense, I am returning from a mission journey, greatly filled and satisfied that I was faithful in it. In another sense, I am returning to the mission fields that surround my home every day. Will I be equally faithful in those fields? I pray that God will show me how . . . show me what He wants done . . . what he wants me to give . . . where He wants me to go . . . that He will return my blank check filled out with my next mission . . . for His Glory. I pray the same for you. Alan Carlton, Former President -Samson Resources Company, Former Chairman of the Board – Total Compression Company, Former Chairman of the Board – Continental Drilling Company, Former Chairman of the Board - Goodwill Industries of Tulsa, President – G. Shepherd & Company, 20 years mission experience in Venezuela. (Bangalore, February 3, 2015)

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Missions starts in Jerusalem, in your neighborhood. You may never come to India, but you don't need to in order to enter the mission field. You enter it when you walk outside your door!

AN EMAIL I JUST RECEIVED FROM A PASTOR WHO DIDN'T COME TO A CONFERENCE:

Dear great man of God in christ. My name is XXXXXXXXXXXX from Telangana state in India.im a pastor.one year back i was doing job as a survey engeneer.by the grace of God nd His calling i left my job.now im doing God's work faith fully.i have wife nd 4 years son.now my wife is 8 th month pregnant.we are doing ministry in remote area since one year.almost 11 believers are coming to our sunday servece.our church costruction is going on pray it.remember us in ur prayer.one of friend has given me ur book i red it nd it is very blessed me.thank you all.My Lord Jesus Christ bless you all bundantly..amen..

Blog 360: LIFE LESSONS - 1

Recently my oldest son asked me to send him a list of 30 principles or life lessons that summarized what I have learned in life. That was an interesting challenge. I worked on it on the trip to India and came up with a few more than that. I'll share some of them in this blog and others later.

1. God doesn't need me to do His work, but I need Him for everything that I do
2. The more I grow spiritually, the further I see I still have to go. But that's OK.
3. Intimacy with God should be our #1 goal in life for only then can we become more like Jesus, which is His #1 goal for us.

4. You can't evaluate your spiritual worth by how well you use your spiritual gifts. Being able to function well in the Body is far less important than having a growing, intimate relationship with the Head of the Body.
5. Humility is essential for growth, but it doesn't come naturally or easily.
6. A good wife is truly worth far more than rubies, or anything else we might have.
7. Our first ministry is our family. To repeatedly meet the needs of others before our own family is sinful.
8. Pace yourself. Life is a marathon, not a sprint.
9. Persistence is more important than speed. Never quit, always keep moving ahead (like the tortoise and the hare).
10. The better you know the Bible the more you realize how much you don't know. It gets better every year!
11. I couldn't make it without the help of other Christians.
12. Investing time and energy in my health every day is an important principle of stewardship.
13. Learning to really worship is a life-long process.
14. Money is a great servant but a terrible master.
15. Never do anything once you aren't prepared to do the rest of your life. But don't use that as an excuse to not do what you should be doing.
16. My hope is in God, I can't use my family, life at home or things for security. Therefore I must make a conscious effort to stay close to God. I must make a mental choice to enjoy family and possessions but find security in God. I must pray about this regularly.
17. The weaker I am the stronger I am! I must stay aware of my own weakness. I can't function in my strength but His and I must pray for to always be aware of my total dependence on Him.
18. God's promises are totally dependable. I must continue to use, claim and depend on them. (Bangalore, February 4, 2015)

Habakkuk 2:4 The righteous will live by faith.

Nahum 1:7 The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him.

As you look at the first half of my list of life principles, what would you add? (Please send them to me, I'd like to see and learn from them.) Can you learn anything from them? Which ones sound especially true to you? I'd like your feedback on this.

Blog 361: LIFE LESSONS - 2

Recently my oldest son asked me to send him a list of 30 principles or life lessons that summarized what I have learned in life. That was an interesting challenge. On my trip to India I came up with a few more than that. I shared some in a previous blog and will finish the rest here.

19. Enjoy the moment. Live in the moment. It will soon be gone. We can't slow down or speed up time, we only have the present available to us, not the past or the future.
20. God uses my church and family to mature more than He uses me to mature my church and family!

21. The key to a healthy spiritual life is to spend time connecting with God through Bible reading and prayer each and every day.
22. God often allows us to be in humanly impossible situations to show us our need of Him.
23. Life is a series of stretches, stretching our faith, our love, our patience and our commitment.
24. Don't spend money you don't have! Keep your life style within your income. Don't choose a lifestyle and then try to fund it.
25. Temptations, trials, hurts and obstacles in life are really just opportunities to trust God.
26. Planning ahead is absolutely essential, but plans we make must be our servant, not our master.
27. No sin, however seemingly innocent or justified it may seem to be, is ever worth it. Satan baits his traps well, but they are still all traps.
28. You can only spend your money once so spend it wisely. Use it for the purpose God has given it to you.
29. Always let your mind explain reality to your emotions. Never determine reality by your emotions.
30. What God forbids us to do is always for our good, not to take away our fun. It gives us freedom, not takes it away. It is like placing markers over landmines which allows us to enjoy the rest of the field as we cross from one side to the other.
31. Prayer is our greatest privilege. It is impossible to pray too much!
32. Never compare how God deals with others with the way He deals with you. A good father has his own unique way of relating to each one of His children. He alone knows what is right and best for each at the time.
33. Forgive others immediately and totally, even if they don't ask for it, is totally essential to good spiritual and emotional health.
34. Delayed obedience is disobedience – with parents as well as with God.
35. God will get you out of your comfort zone to show you there is really only comfort in Him, not in any circumstances. (Bangalore, February 5, 2015)

Hosea 6:6 I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

Habakkuk 2:14 The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

As you look at the second half of my list of life principles, what would you add? (Please send them to me, I'd like to see and learn from them.) Can you learn anything from them? Which ones sound especially true to you? I'd like your feedback on this.

Blog 362: WELCOME HOME

Only those who have been abroad for a while, living in a difficult place, can know the feeling of arriving back in the USA and following the crowd leaving the airplane to Immigration. The walk down the corridor with all its bends and turns seems to take forever, but then there is the sign: "US Citizens Enter Here." The majority of the crowd continues walking but you are part of a special few who peel off and stand before an immigration officer who says "Welcome home!" while stamping your passport and allowing you to enter the greatest country on earth. You belong here. There is no way you will be

denied entrance. What a joy and privilege that is! How great it feels to finally be home! What could be better?

There is one day that I know will be better than that! When we enter heaven and Jesus says "Welcome home." We have our eternal passport provided by Jesus' work on the cross so we go straight to the short line that has immediate access. Nothing can keep us out, we are citizens of heaven. We are pilgrims returning home. We will have left the difficulties and pains of this life and this world to enter the greatest place in the universe, bar none.

Anticipating my return home through Immigration helps ease the struggles and strains of being away from home as well as the rigors of the trip back. As we anticipate our entrance into heaven and our welcome there our journey through this life can be a little easier and a lot sweeter. "Welcome home!" for us as Christians those words are something we look forward to and long for. Who knows how long the corridor will be until we burst through the gates of Glory. It could be right around the next turn. Just keep walking. You'll be there before you know it!

Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

1 Peter 2:11-12 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.

Ephesians 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,

Spend sometime thinking about heaven, the welcome you will receive from Jesus and others, what it will be like to no longer have to deal with the sin and evil of this world and of our own hearts. Meditate on this. As the song says, "I Can Only Imagine."

Blog 363: A LESSON FROM INDIAN CHRISTIANS

What stands out most in my mind when I think of India are the people, young and old, rich and poor. India itself is wonderful and terrible. It is beautiful and ugly, a joy and a nightmare. It's the people that really make India.

The most outstanding lesson I take away from the Christians is their lack of expectations. Alan and I talked about it often. How can they live as they do? Illness. Poverty. Persecution. No hope of any change while on earth.

Yet somehow, in India they don't expect life to be any different than it is. They don't assume God will give it all to them. They don't think they are exempt from these difficulties which we would see as impossible. They don't see these limit as the exception, but as the norm in life. It's all they know and its all most of the people around them know. They are not surprised and distracted by the harsh realities of their lives.

To them, these things are life. They happen to everyone, why should they not happen to them? God has never promised they won't. The Bible shows no one is exempt. Life experience shows everyone faces things. They don't expect or demand God makes things different for them. They thank Him it isn't worse. They appreciate the help He gives through it. They don't base their feelings about God on the ease or difficulty of their earthly life.

In the USA we are taught by the American dream that we can have it all, by media advertisements we need it all and by politicians and the government that they will give it all. So we expect it all. "What do you want for Christmas/your birthday?" "What do you want to be when you

grow up?” These questions are not asked in India. They can form mind set that says that life is all about me and my comfort and desires. For the vast majority of Christians in India life is about surviving the present day so they can try to survive tomorrow when it comes.

Our fixation with “improving ourselves” affects our spiritual life as well. We don’t pray to be faithful through the battle, we demand God make it so there is no battle. We don’t thank God things aren’t worse, we question what we did to deserve even this. We don’t ask how we can adjust and endure, we ask how we can better get God to answer our prayers and take any discomfort away.

I don’t want to glamorize or romanticize the Christians in India for they are sinners just like us. They struggle with their own failures, problems, weaknesses and disobedience. Still, in this are we can learn from them.

Many secular studies show that third world people are happier and more content than those in the west (USA, Europe). They studies conclude that the reason is because they accept life as it is and don’t expect that which will never happen. Despite all we have in the west people are less happy! According to western mindset, because we have so much more we should be happier than them. But clearly it’s not our circumstances in life but our attitude to them that makes the difference. There is never enough for a dissatisfied person. But a satisfied person is fine with very little.

How can we become more content with what we have instead of focusing on what is difficult in our lives? Paul said he had to learn to be content, so must we (Philippians 4:11-13). Yet that is very hard to do in our culture. And it is very hard to raise our children to be content. We have many expectations: of life, of self, of others and even of God.

But when God is our main resource, not the government or job security or family help, then we will trust Him more and depend on Him daily. Maybe that’s why it seems I’m closest to Him when I’m in India. I always need Him, but I realize it more clearly when I am there without my other resources and support systems. Then I learn God is enough!

Improving your situation in life is good, discontent is sin – there can be a fine line between the two. Have you found it? (Doylestown, PA, February 6, 2015)

Philippians 4:11-13 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

What are you expecting God to do for you now that isn’t happening? How else can you approach that situation? How can you change your prayer?

BREAKPOINT ran a great article about this same thing today:
<http://www.breakpoint.org/bpcommentaries/entry/13/26825>

Blog 364: EMAILS FROM INDIAN PASTORS

We are back to our regular activities now. My whole family came for my father’s memorial service and it was great being with everyone. There are many things going on in the India ministry as we make plans for the follow-up with the pastors we trained. Pastor Moses has already visited the areas we were once and we have received many messages of appreciation. I’ll include 2 emails I received in the last 2 days. We continue to distribute books and help financially support pastors each month.

I am moving closer to retirement and the India ministry is being separated from the church I pastor. Therefore we need to broaden our base of prayer and financial support. We are planning for pastor Moses to come for a couple weeks in early June. I would greatly appreciate it if each of you would approach your church to see if they can provide prayer and/or financial support for us. Christian Training Organization is a legal 501(c)3 organization. I will gladly send more information or meet in person (depending on the location) to help share our ministry with your church. This is very important for us as we move ahead in this ministry. Please pray for this need and speak to those in your church on our behalf. Thanks! (Doylestown, PA, February 21, 2015)

Dear Pastor Jerry,

Greetings to you in the Precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I'm xxxxx from India. Do you remember me? When you came to India we met in a pastors meet. We had a little chat for a couple of minutes and you gave me your card to write you. I've gone through your books. They are good. You brought good idea through your thesis in regard to marriage and the relationship between wife and husband. We often talk about your messages and about the books. They are really helpful to my father and some of our fellow pastors. They are very handy to them. I even gave to some of our relatives to go through. My mom and Dad are very happy to see the depths of the God's word. The book about end times are good and believers should know about this. I'm planning to teach our Church about the end times.

I have gone through your website and some articles of it. The article of Apologetics are good. Thanks Pastor Jerry visiting us and leaving His Word into our hands. I understand how much you spent to bring these valuable books into our hands. I see your heart for God and your mind in these books. After you leave this earth these books will witness you and His word. God bless you abundantly. I love to see you next time when you come back to India. My wife said her greetings to you. She is enjoying reading your books.

Yours in Him,

Praise the Lord

Greetings in Jesus name. How are you Uncle and I hope you had good travel and prayer meeting and now you are in home. Praise God. I believe your family and children fine by our God. Daily in our prayer praying for your family and ministry. God helped me and my wife attend your powerful Bible teaching. We are so thankful to God. From that day on God open our eye to read the Bible and pray more. Now we are your student. Now when I pray God speak in my heart to tell about the ministry do in India Slum village.

I come from Hindu Banjara Village and by Jesus blood I am new and I accepted Jesus as my personal God. Glory to God. I got marriage and God given two son. Forty day myself and my wife fast and prayer to God. He put in my heart to name the ministry Life in the Word. Poor children home. Slum village children. Please pray India Slum village ministry. Please sent email. My wife and my children and prayer group greet to you.

Thank you

Blog 365: SOME THINGS JUST TAKE TIME

In our fast-paced, time efficient micro managed production today we sometimes miss an important ingredient, one for which there is no substitute. That is time. Nancy and I have been married for almost 36 years. We raised a family, buried friends and relatives, pastored a church and built into more lives than we can imagine. But we did it over time. Our love for each other continues

to grow. I can't imagine how it is possible to love another human being more, yet I know tomorrow I will love her more than today. I know that will happen because it's been happening daily for all these years. Young love is new, exciting and overwhelming. But love that has been simmering awhile has a depth and resilience to it that only time can bring. Hopefully you know what I am talking about.

When I look at my relationship with God, and think back over where it has come over the same length of time, I see something very similar happening. The brand new thrill of a very recent salvation experience is gone, but its replaced by something much stronger, more personal and very deeply gratifying. Perhaps the mellowness and perspective of age helps, as well as the amount of water we've together watched flow under the bridge. Whatever causes it, its really nice – in marriage and with Jesus.

The excitement and freshness of first starting was wonderful, but I wouldn't trade it for the solid oneness I feel with both my wife and my God. Growing old may have some disadvantages, when one grows over with a long-time relationship with a mate and their God, it is good indeed. And it gets better all the time. Yes, some things just take time.... (Doylestown, PA, March 3, 2015)

NEWS: Emails from Pastor Moses

Pastor Babu from Mydukur had given 6 baptisms last month, and Pastor Mark with Pastor Sudhar had given baptisms for 3 people in his church, they are planning to extend the church ,so that they can accommodate more people to sit for worship. The church we went before Sudhakar s church. Please do pray for them. One of the woman had given a wonderful testimony in our church, when she worshiped Idols ,her eyes became blind, and could not able to see anything, but when she prayed to Jesus and asked us to pray for her, she was completely healed able to see and do things. Praise God for that.

Some of the Pastors in Guntur area called me today and said they were blessed by your teachings and by the books. They really like them. One of the Christian leader after he read in Hyderabad, asked me to give 30 copies of each for distribution to the Telugu Bible school students in his college. One of the Pastor Leader in Medak called me and said the local Pastors want more teaching ,so that they can be blessed more to reach more people for God. Praise God for that.

Blog 366: GROWTH SPURTS

To a casual observer it might seem like my India ministry is a one month a year involvement. That is not true. It is true that the almost 5 weeks I spend there are far more active and intense than the other 47 weeks of the year, but all are equally important. Living things seem to grow in spurts, but the times in between growth spurts are as important as the times of growth. Without these times of less concentrated action, that which was accomplished won't have time to be assimilated and applied. That is true in nature and in ministry. There cannot be a continual growth spurt or the organism will not be able to sustain itself and will perish.

The time when I am not in India is needed for the pastors there to assimilate and apply what they have learned. New friendships must strengthen and grow. New truths passed on to others. I, too, need time to refresh physically, apply all God has been teaching me, and prepare new lessons and books for the next trip. Many pastors receive monthly support from us, and that continues all year long. Local pastors' fellowships form and grow in the locations we had conferences. Books are read and studied, then passed on to others. The 11 months that I am not in India are as important as the one month I am there.

That is true in your life and mine as well. Spiritual growth hits us in spurts – times of great worship, fresh insights, growing faith, feeling God's presence in a very real and special way and

victory in challenging areas of life. Sometimes we think those times should last forever, but they can't and don't. The new growth must solidify and become part of our being, just like the growth rings that mark a tree's maturing. Don't be disappointed if you aren't always in growth spurt mode. It won't happen. And don't just coast until the next growth spurt hits. Until you integrate and apply what you learned during the last burst of spiritual progress you won't be ready for another round of advancement. Live faithfully now, between spurts, in the nitty-gritty of everyday life. That's where our faith really gets lived out. (Doylestown, PA March 17, 2015)

1 Corinthians 3:6-7 *I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.*

When was your last spiritual growth spurt? What have you been doing since to assimilate what you learned into daily life? Go back and remember what God taught you and think about how you can apply it to your life today.

Blog 367: BURNING BUILDINGS & BURNING HEARTS

While in India I blogged about a church near where we were that was burnt during the night of January 16 and the Bibles in it destroyed. This led to 2,750 Telugu Bibles being donated for Christians in India. A few days ago I received the following email from Pastor Moses, along with the pictures below:

Today (March 19) I went to Tador village where the church was burnt in January, met some of the believers and elders, went there to the church site and all the instruments and books, mats were burnt out, and now they are praying for the new church, slowly gathering material for construction of the church, which will cost \$8000. I will be going again to visit them end of March with our church elders to have meeting and distribute Bibles and song books to them. It is a Dalit church. They went to the police for help but have not found the ones who did it. The believers are very strong in their faith and are praying for a new church to worship. So one of the teacher from other village comes and helps them on Every Sunday, so they have some elders to run it. Church instruments were burned, chairs, carpets, and table, they bought some new carpets to sit, still they are worshipping there in the same church. I will return in a few weeks and bring Bibles and tracts to replace those which were destroyed.

It's very encouraging to see these poor believers pressing on, not running in fear but rebuilding. Persecution and rejection is making them stronger. In the book of Acts that is what brought the growth of the church. The same is true many places around the world today. Does that happen in your life when you face difficulties because of your faith? As things become more difficult for Christians in the USA we should see this as an opportunity for our faith to shine brighter to those in darkness. (Doylestown, PA March 24, 2015)

1 Peter 4:12 *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ... if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. ... 19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.*

When the enemy 'burns' something that was important to you, how do you respond? How are you responding today to the obstacles and difficulties you face? Do you know of someone going through difficult times? What can you do to reach out to them and encourage them in their faith? Do so today.

Blog 368: NO EMPTY RETURNS

As stated in the previous blog, our India ministry is not a one month of the year ministry but a year-round ministry. The Word is given frequently and intensely for a month at the start of the year, and as a result during the other 11 months of the year the seeds planted take root and grow. New truths are applied. Books are read and passed on to others. It may seem this ministry is not as active, but God's Word continues its very active work 12 months a year! The ripples spread out and continue, like throwing a rock into a body of water.

Sure, there are many behind-the-scenes activities for this ministry that keep me busy year round, but it is God's continual watering of the newly planted seeds of His truth that continues unabated all year every year. Truths taught nine and ten years ago are still bearing fruit in the lives of pastors and churches in India. Many have been passed on to younger pastors and children growing up in pastors' families. I may only teach His Word there one month of the year, but it never stops and keeps going on and on eternally.

Be encouraged in your life by this truth. When you share His word with others God takes that as well and brings in a harvest from it for years to come. Don't be discouraged by your current circumstances. Things you have said to others from His Bible even many years ago are still bearing fruit, and will continue to do so. Take every opportunity you have to day to share Scripture verses or truth with people who's paths cross yours in daily life. Continue to put His Word in the hearts and minds of others. God will take it from there. You may forget about it, but God remembers and uses it eternally for His glory. (Doylestown, PA April 6, 2015)

Isaiah 55:10-11 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Take a moment to pray for those with whom you have shared God's Word in the past. He promises to use it for His purpose and glory! Think of those in your life today with whom God wants you to share portions of His Word. Plan when and how to do so. Just plant the seed, God will take it from there.

Blog 369: GOD'S MYSTERIOUS WAYS

It's been said that God works in mysterious ways and we all have examples of that in our own lives – in big things as well as little things. One of the ways I see that in my life is little, but also big. When I was young my grandfather got me a little magic set. It didn't last long but it did start a spark of interest in me which later developed into the 'magic tricks' I now do in India.

I know that real communication must speak to several senses at once to really stick. In India I can't use Power Point or videos (no electricity). I can't even use pictures or flannelgraph – too hard to transport and too small for large audiences. So what can I use to hammer home a special truth from God's Word in a way everyone will pay attention and remember? That's where these tricks come in very handy. Surely God knew at the start they would develop into this wonderful too to communicate His truths and they have!

I'm know for my tricks, people expect them and talk about them, and I am remembered from other speakers as the man who does the tricks. The people applaud and cheer, they beg me to show them how they are done (of course I don't). I have a good assortment of tricks that are easy to do,

simple to transport, easy to be seen by large groups, understood by all cultures and really nail home the point I am making. Men remember them from year to year, and the truth they convey. But therein lies another problem.

This next year many of the men who will be coming have already heard me in the past, some many times. We are going much deeper in our training of those who have been the main ones to respond in the past. But that means new tricks to convey new truths! So I've been gathering a whole new assembly of tricks for next year. Most are using simple, easy-to-find objects. Others involve chemical reactions which amaze even me. I'm learned to be creative and innovative in this. I look forward to using these to emphasize God's truth to their hearts. These tricks are a small thing, but they really are big for they made a great difference in ministering to the people in India.

What's best about this is that I enjoy developing and using these tricks as much as the listeners enjoy them. And on top of it all I get paid a salary to do this! What a God! In what mysterious ways He works! But aren't we glad of it? (Doylestown, PA April 20, 2015)

Job 11: 7-9 “Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave—what can you know? Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea.

Can you think of a time and way God did something in your past that has brought fruit in your life today? Thank Him for it. Ask Him to make you more aware of His mysterious ways in your life today!

Blog 370: MAKING AN ETERNAL IMPACT

My grandmother died when I was in the 6th grade and my lonely grandfather married a fine woman and mate a few years later. She loved her new family and was very glad to be a part of it. She tried to capture every moment of it on film – slides to be exact. She took pictures of every one and everything and kept them neatly organized in dozens of trays in special cabinets she purchased just for that purpose. When she died her slide collection passed on to me, for I, too, loved recording family events on film and had started my own extensive slide collection.

Now we use her cabinets as our food pantry. The slide trays have been given away because we didn't have room to store them. I kept the best of her slides but disposed of the rest. Now, as we are cleaning out our home and cutting back in anticipation of downsizing, I am going through her remaining slides, along with mine, and scanning those worth keeping so we have them on our computer for future family use. That is if anyone wants to see them. And even if they do, other than the name on the folder, what will they know about the person? I am the last one alive who even remembers her, and that will pass with me. She who was once so alive and vibrant, full of life and seeming going to live forever, now is gone and nearly so her memory. Even if her precious slides are viewed by someone, they won't be more than images of an unknown person living in an unknown time. I can preserve and pass on some of her pictures, but that is empty.

What else I do preserve and hopefully pass on is her love of her family, her dedication to those around her, her devotion to her new grandchildren, and her pride in her family. Her total love and acceptance of me at a time in life when I needed it helped form me into the person I am today, and better enabled me to pass on some of those things to my children and grandchildren. So even if future generations should stumble across the pictures I am so carefully organizing and saving, and even if the images on them mean nothing to them, the love of God for family and others that has been passed on to me will live in them. Life is short. The things we do so temporary. But what we do for Him that impacts the lives of those around us endures forever. This motivates me to use the

opportunities God gives me in India, with the World View Teens and the families and individuals I counsel and teach. I thank Him for it! (Doylestown, PA May 6, 2015)

Ecclesiastes 1:2 "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."

Titus 2:7 In everything set them an example by doing what is good.

Are you leaving a godly heritage for those following you? Or does most of your time and effort go into accumulating things that will soon be gone? Are you building eternal truths and values into those around you, things that will last for generation after generation? What can you do to improve your long-term legacy to those who will follow you?

Blog 371: DRIED UP AND USELESS

A few days ago I decided to clean out my drawers and bins where pens have been accumulating for quite some time. I have too many so wanted to get rid of those which didn't work. Interestingly enough, I couldn't tell from looking at them if they worked or not. Some costly, beautiful pens no longer worked so I got rid of them no matter how pretty they were. Others that were not nearly so attractive were kept because they performed well.

I also discovered I have to make a long line to tell if the pen really worked, for some started well but soon faded. Those, too, were useless. A few were scratchy at first, then worked well. Those I also kept. I'm not trying to collect pens, so I know I best use my favorite ones – that's their whole purpose.

As I worked at this boring chore I kept thinking about myself as a pen. Outer appearance to others doesn't matter, but serving God faithfully does. And that means persevering at it, not just making a nice start but fading. I am created to serve, and I want to keep faithfully doing that as long as I can, wherever and however God allows me to serve. I don't want to just take up space in His Kingdom but be someone He can call on when He needs something accomplished, knowing I will faithfully do what is required. I appreciate a good pen that faithfully serves, and I want to be that way in my service for God as well. (Doylestown, PA, May 27, 2015)

Numbers 12:7 But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house.

Psalm 37:28 For the LORD loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever, but the offspring of the wicked will be cut off;

What about you? When kind of servant are you for God? Can He depend on you for whatever He wants you to do? Or are you more concerned about looking pretty than really being of service?

Blog 372: THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD SUPPLY LINES

I have a friend who is a supply officer in the US Navy. At first that may not sound like a very glamorous or even an important job, but it really is. The supply line is the key to every army's success. Many great armies have been defeated because of an inadequate supply line. That was a big problem for the British in the Revolutionary War. When there are no forthcoming supplies the army, no matter how committed or well trained, will suffer.

When Paul and Barnabas went on their First Missionary Journey, the church at Antioch supported them with prayer, encouragement, help and finances (Acts 13:1-3; 14:26-28). Paul needed his home base or he wouldn't have been able to take those journeys and most of the New Testament

would never have happened. An army is only as good as its supply line, and Paul's supply and provision from Antioch was what was behind the success of his ministry.

You are my supply line. It is your prayer, encouragement, help and financial support that keep our ministry in India going. If you are reading the blog, then this applies to you. Your part is just as important as the part of those who go to India and talk. No one is more important than the other, we both need each other equally.

Thanks for your faithfulness in prayers, support and giving. It is gratefully appreciated, by me, the pastors in India, and God Himself! (Doylestown, PA, June 24, 2015)

Acts 13:1 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 14:26 From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. 27 On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

Are you faithful to your God-given responsibilities to support your church, this ministry and others God has put in your path? Faithful, consistent prayer is the most important need we have and one everyone can meet. Please pray for this ministry, your church, and other ministries you know about.

Also thank God for those who are your supply line now, those who pray for you, encourage you and help you in your life for the Lord.

Blog 373: "WHEN," NOT "IF"

I had the privilege of spending some time recently at the bedside of a dying saint. He is a retired missionary who never really retired. He grew up on the mission field with his missionary parents, then spent his life ministering in the same place. Now his son and family are carrying on the work there. He is a greatly admired man: gentle, wise, accepting of all and helping wherever he can. Suddenly and unexpectedly his life is ending. They say today is the day he will be ushered into heaven. One can almost sense the angles in the room waiting for the proper time to escort him home.

How short life is! We never know, do we? Here one day, gone the next. The great part is I know he has no regrets and has lived his life, every moment of it, for his Lord, his family and others. It's a good reminder that I (and you) will one day leave this world and we don't know when that will be. All we know is that it WILL happen. How important it is to live for Him now, for today is the only opportunity we have. So make it count.

As I talked with his family it was clear his passing would leave a large hole in their lives. But that's a good thing. Who wants to leave this world and not leave an unfilled hole? That happens far too many times and is a real tragedy, doubly so for God's children. If God takes you home right now, would your passing leave a hole in the lives of others? It should. Live now so it does, so you are missed, so your contribution is important and so the world is a better place because of you.

I had the privilege of spending some time this morning at the bedside of a dying saint. I pray (and live) so that one day someone will say that about me! (Doylestown, PA July 3, 2015)

Psalm 16:15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints!

If you knew you might die in the next year, what would you do differently in how you lived this year? The thing is that we know we might die in the next year. Or sooner. Or later. Whenever it comes, ask God to help you live for Him now so there will be no regrets later.

Blog 374: RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES

Talk about taking a direct hit right between the eyes with a dose of reality! God does that sometimes. Every once in a while He dumps a bucket of ice water right on my comfortable, semi-apathetic soul. It is His way of giving me a much needed wakeup call. Yes, it's a shock, but a necessary one. I assume He does that to you as well.

This time it came through an email from a pastor in Pakistan with whom I've been corresponding. In addition to his other duties, he finds himself responsible for 30 orphans but had no beds for them. He received funds for 20 beds and sent pictures of the children rejoicing over their new beds (we'd call them cots). Seeing them so grateful for so little is what struck me. (picture attached)

Why didn't God have me born as an orphan in Pakistan? Why wasn't I one of those children sitting there? Being a child in Pakistan is unimaginable, especially an orphan. Being a girl is even worse there – about as bad as it gets anywhere. There is absolutely no reason I can think of that I would deserve to be born here instead of there – just God's choice for me. The fact that I, my children and my grandchildren, live in this country is nothing I can take any credit for in any way.

On top of that is their joyful appreciation for something so basic and simple as a cot to sleep on, something we assume and take for granted. May God forgive me for assuming and presuming on all the blessings He has given me, as if somehow they are something I deserve and have a right to expect. May He forgive me for any smug attitude of superiority I may have towards others who don't have all I have/ May He forgive my greedy demands, my complaints about inconveniences in my life and my lack of real, deep compassion for others.

Sometimes I need to be hit between the eyes with a dose of God's reality. It hurts, but in a good way. It resets my values and priorities to where they need to be. It reminds me that everything I am and have comes from Him. He doesn't owe me anything but I owe Him everything. (Doylestown, PA, July 14, 2015).

Philippians 4:11-13 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Ask God if you need a dose of reality in your perception of your life and circumstances or in your expectations of Him. If so, sit back and take the hit like a man (or woman).

Blog 375: THE GIFT THAT REALLY DOES KEEP ON GIVING

Many things claim to be the gift that keeps on giving, but I don't know of anything that fits the description better than giving a Bible to a person who can't afford to get their own. In 2015 so far

3,350 Bibles have been purchased for those in India who want one but have no way of getting them. That is a lot of Bibles!

You can give an Indian Christian a fish (tell him something the Bible says) but it is so much better to equip him to fish for himself (give him his own Bible to read any time he wants). Being given a Bible may not be a big deal to us who have more than we could possibly use, but for those who never have owned a Bible it is a treasure beyond anything they (or us) could imagine.

Many thanks to those who have donated the funds for these Bibles. In addition, 200,000 gospel tracts have been purchased for pastors to distribute to those who aren't believers. God is using these in a mighty way as many come to him and are baptized. New churches are forming as well. Lives, families and whole villages are changing because of the words on a simple piece of paper. What better gift can we give them than eternal life in Jesus?

All it takes is a few dollars, less than the average person spends on coffee each day. We here in the USA may not be able to communicate directly with Christians in India, but if we give them God's Word they can feed on that for the rest of their lives – and all through eternity as well. It certainly is the gift that never stops giving! (Doylestown, PA 18901; July 23, 2015)

Isaiah 55:11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Suppose you never owned a copy of the Bible and only knew a few people who did. What difference would it make in your spiritual life to not have a Bible to open and read? Thank God for having copies of His Word available to you your whole life and pray for those who don't have this privilege.

Blog 376: BEHIND THE SCENES

If you follow our India ministry you know about our pastors' conferences, books and financial support for some pastors. You've heard about the Bibles and tracts given out, the orphans we have supported and other things we've done. But what you don't hear about is all that happens behind the scenes to make these visible results possible.

I don't think a day goes by I'm not involved in this ministry in some way, and many days multiple hours are spent on this work. In themselves they don't seem glamorous, important or bring recognition, but in truth they are what makes the final product possible. Only the tip of an iceberg is seen, but all that goes unnoticed supports it and makes it possible.

I write this for two reasons, first to thank so many of you who serve behind-the-scenes in this or any ministry. You pray, help, encourage, give financially and support this, and other ministries, in ways that don't seem glamorous or bring recognition, but without your faithful contribution the ministry would fail. I thank you, others where you serve thank you and God Himself thanks you!

My second reason in writing this is to encourage each one of you to stay faithful in the daily, mundane, behind the scenes tasks every mother, father, wife, husband, employee or friend does every day. Most of it is unnoticed and seemingly unappreciated. There is only One Who knows how we faithfully serve, only One who fully understands and appreciates the sacrifice and loyalty we show. But when we are faithful in our duties, not seeking or needing recognition from others, then we can be assured we will one day hear "Well done my good and faithful servant" from God. And remember, in God's sight nothing is behind the scenes, all our service is of equal value in His sight because it is done out of love for Him. (Doylestown, PA Aug 4, 2015)

Matthew 25: 23 *“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’*

2 Timothy 4:7-8 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

The old spiritual song says, “Nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen, nobody but Jesus...” Are you OK with that? Is that good enough for you? Are you willing to serve behind the scenes with no one knowing or appreciating but God Himself? If so, there is limit to the way God will use you for you are above all others eternally valuable to Him and His work.

Blog 377: FULL HOUSE BUT EMPTY FIELDS

The title, and chorus, of an old Southern Gospel song I like is “My House is Full but My Fields are Empty” The words continue, “Who will go and work for Me today? It seems My children all want to sit around My table, but no one wants to go work in My fields.”

Clearly it is more enjoyable hanging around our Father’s home with our brothers and sisters in Christ. The fellowship with God and each other, the peace and joy, the worship and closeness are wonderful. That’s what heaven will be like and its fine to have a taste of it in this life. But this isn’t heaven yet, and hanging out with the Father and His family all the time is not the only thing He has for us. We also need to spend time working in the fields. That means work, toil, sweat and often pain and struggle.

Going into the fields to work doesn’t mean we have to be a missionary in India or Africa, but it does mean we go to where the needs are in our own family, our neighborhood and among those who don’t know Jesus. It can be dirty, difficult and often unrewarding work. But it must be done. If someone hadn’t done it for you then you probably wouldn’t know Jesus now.

In India the fields are everywhere and can’t be avoided. It’s becoming that way in the USA as the fields grow and expand all around us. Here, though, we can still become so involved in church and family activities that we don’t have to go into the field. So enjoy the Father’s house when you are there, but do look for opportunities to spend some time each day in the fields. The father notices and generously rewards those who labor for Him wherever we live. (Doylestown, PA August 11, 2015)

John 4:37-38 *“Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”*

Spend a few minutes in prayer. Ask God to show you the fields around you where He wants you to work. It may be preparing the ground, weeding, cultivating or even harvesting the crop. Listen carefully as He brings work assignments to your mind. Jot them down and commit to doing what you can this very day to serve. Like working in a garden, it takes a little work every day to produce the desired effect.

Blog 378: APPRECIATE THE WORD!

In Aesop's fable "the Lion and the Fox" a fox sees a lion and hides, but each time he sees the lion he ventures closer and closer for he has lost his deep respect and the lion is now commonplace. Aesop concludes with the moral, "familiarity breeds contempt." We see that same truth played out in our lives today, and, unfortunately, often in our spiritual lives as well.

Take the Bible for instance. In India I see many Christians who don't own a Bible and have no hope of ever having their own copy. If they have a friend who has one they may get to hold it for a few minutes, reverently feeling its pages and looking at a few of the important words it contains. When we give them their own new Bible for free they are very happy. They treasure it as their most cherished possession – and isn't that what it is for all believers?

Yet often we have so many copies sitting around the house, have the Word so readily available on radio, CD and in sermons, that we have lost our deep respect for it and it has become commonplace. There is absolutely nothing wrong with being very, very familiar with the Bible. We are commanded to be so, but the more we 'eat' the Word the greater our appetite should be for it. The longer we drink in His truth the stronger our thirst should get for more of it. It shouldn't take an absence of the Word to make us appreciate it more, because of our constant exposure to it we should be the most hungry of all peoples. Familiarity should not breed contempt, familiarity should breed a deeper love and appreciation for the Word of God. (Doylestown, PA March 30, 2015)

Mark 6:2-4 *"Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.*

How about you? Do you have a stronger desire to read and learn the Bible now than you did a year ago? Is your familiarity with the Word of God breeding apathy or a stronger desire to learn more?

Blog 379: MEET PASTOR MOSES

I'm sure you'd all agree that God works in strange but wonderful ways to accomplish His will. I am still amazed about how he brought me and an Indian pastor together in 2006 to bring about the India ministry we now share today. While completely different, we blend together very well and work in complete harmony. It's like we have the same heart (and head) for pastors in India – one heart in two bodies. With Pastor Moses coming to the USA soon I thought it would be good for you to know more about him.

Born in 1968, Pastor Moses (BTh, MDiv, MSoc) grew up in Melamaru, a small farming village in south-central India. His father, a practicing Mechanical Engineer died of tuberculosis when P.K. was only 2. The pastor of a Dhalit Baptist Church invited his widowed mother to visit his church so that he might help her. Pastor Moses excelled as a student in the school attached to the church, and he and his mother both became Christians.

Attending the Barata Bible College, and later Siloam Bible Seminary, Pastor Moses heard a call to serve Christ through helping the poor and outcast, and through training other pastors. This is still his heart today. Together with his wife, Krupa, Moses has a daughter, Shekinah, and a son, Prabhu. They are completing their education in medicine and computer science.

God called Pastor Moses into a series of jobs that have perfectly prepared him for the work of the Christian Training Organization, and Dr. Jerry Schmoyer. At AMG, he worked helping lepers Dalits and tribal slum people. His Calvary Commission work training pastors all across India is

invaluable. As the pastor of 2 churches, he became expert at church growth, increasing the first from 50 to 400 and the second from 100 to 700 each in 3 years. He is currently the pastor of the Bethel Prayer Fellowship and New Hope Ministries, in addition to being the trip and book translation and printing organizer, driver and translator for CTO. (Doylestown, PA September 1, 2015)

1 Timothy 1:2 To Timothy my true son in the faith:

Titus 1:4 To Titus, my true son in our common faith:

Who has God partnered you with spiritually? Do you pray for them, help and encourage them, and share your burdens and victories with them? If you don't have someone like this then ask God to place someone in your life to build into you and whom you can build into as well.

Blog 380: 'SELLING' JESUS?

I'm not a salesmen. I never have been. I hated having to sell Christmas candy for the Boy Scouts, even when my relatives begged me to let them buy some. I was never good at sales, and I never liked doing it. So why does God have me spending 3 weeks going all over 'selling' our India ministry to others? Why can't I just stay at home and prepare lessons and write books, then go teach in the conferences and come home again? Isn't that enough?

No, it isn't. Without prayer and financial support I wouldn't be able to write and teach. The needs in India are so very great, and we just barely scratch the surface in one small part of that great country. Without prayer and money we won't be able to reach more pastors and people.

I'm not begging, nor am I manipulating. I am presenting a legitimate, good work of the Lord, one among thousands of others. Then its up to God to move the hearts of those He wants involved, and its up to them to respond in obedience. It's not my ministry, it's His. It's not up to me to sell, just present the facts and then leave it between the listener and God as to what, if anything, happens next.

I'm sure you would agree with what I wrote, that's its right and necessary for me to present this great opportunity to others without apology, fear or excuses. But (and here's where I'm going with all this) isn't it just as important for us to offer an opportunity for those who don't know Jesus to come to Him? Isn't that the responsibility of all of us, even if it makes us uncomfortable? Even if we aren't salesmen? Presenting an opportunity for eternal salvation is much greater than an opportunity to get involved in a ministry in India.

I'm not a salesman. Maybe you aren't, either. We don't have to be. The product we represent is life changing! It's the difference between heaven and hell. Offering this to others is a privilege. (Tulsa, Oklahoma, September 9, 2015)

Romans 10:15 How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Ask God to give you an opportunity to speak to someone about Him today, believer or unbeliever, and use the opening to encourage and give hope in Jesus' name. You aren't 'selling' them anything, you are presenting a chance for them to come a step closer to the Lord Jesus Christ.

MOSES' USA VISIT: We had a very nice week in Pennsylvania and now are in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with a full schedule of people and groups to talk to. Pray God would give us the right words to use and that He would be glorified in all that is said and done. Thanks!!!

Blog 381: "SO HOW DID IT GO?"

Pastor Moses and I have 2 days left in Tulsa until we each head back home. This first trip together in the USA, sharing our India ministry with others, is almost over. I'm sure everyone wants to know, "How did it go?" And my answer would be, "Great, beyond our expectations!" That answer might be misunderstood to mean we have many more people signed up to pray for us and have received many large financial donations for CTO. But that's not what I'm referring to when I say it's gone very, very well.

We have received \$200 from a Christian school which took an impromptu offering after we spoke. A church we spoke at also took an offering for us and we will be receiving that in the future. Numerous people have said they'd pray for us and others have indicated possible future financial support as well. That is great. But the success or failure of this time doesn't have to do with those kinds of numbers. Unfortunately many American Christians, despite knowing better, still feel that larger is better in God's sight. The higher the numbers the greater the success. But God doesn't measure success by quantity, only by quality. His yardstick for measuring success is faithfulness.

I feel we have been successful in sharing our ministry, in learning from others far more experienced in these things than we are, in trying to encourage those we have been talking to, in lifting up our great God by bragging about the wonderful things He is doing around the world, in making new friends that will last for eternity and in showing how God can use anyone He chooses to do His work.

Success in God's sight is not about numbers (ask Jeremiah, or Isaiah or any number of Bible people). It is about faithfully following and serving. Who knows what comment was said that might have blessed or challenged someone, who will be rewarded by God for their commitment to pray for us or give to us, which child or adult has had a seed planted in their heart that will one day grow to become whatever God wants it to be.

So to answer your question, YES, it's been a wildly successful trip because we've felt in the center of God's will the whole time. And when we are there, God will take care of the little stuff like money in His own time and way. He is certainly faithful to us. Now it's up to us to be faithful to Him. (Tulsa, Oklahoma, September 16, 2015)

1 Corinthians 4:2 ² Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Does what you are doing for the Lord seem small and insignificant, specially compared to some of the things others are doing? God doesn't look at it that way. If He gave it to you to do then you are responsible to faithfully serve Him in any way you can. It's not small to Him! Are you being the best mate, the best parent, the best steward, the best friend, the best employee, the best servant of the Lord you can be with the things God has given you? Size doesn't matter with God, but faithfulness does. And each one of us can and must be faithful! Pray and ask God to help you be faithful in what He has given you to do this day, and do not compare your life with anyone else.

Blog 382: ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS...

Sometimes it can be easy to think that God isn't really involved in our world any more. It can seem like things have gotten out of His control. Where is He? What is He doing today? When we look at our little slice of the world we can start thinking the worst. But when we can step back and look at the big picture we can see He is clearly at work in many places.

I had that opportunity Sept 1 – 18 traveling with Pastor Moses from India. We met with wonderful people, churches and mission groups. It was very educational and extremely encouraging to listen to these greatly experienced, widely gifted and deeply motivated servants of God. Truly God is working throughout the world, calling men and women to follow Him and serve Him. The devotion of those we spoke to uplifting. Seeing how God is working in so many places, especially in India, makes us to be glad for the opportunity to be used by Him. There is so much for us to learn, but those with greater experience are more than willing to share. The small impact that Pastor Moses and I have seems insignificant when compared to the need, but when we see how many others are also called to minister to the people of India in different places and various ministries makes it clear God is still in control no matter how things may seem. It truly is a privilege to be able to serve Him, locally or in another country. There is no doubt that the church of God is moving ahead and His Kingdom is growing! (Doylestown, PA October 7, 2015)

Matthew 18: 15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be[d] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Does it seem to you that God is ‘losing’ and the world is slipping out of His control? Does it appear that His people are being defeated? Look more closely. Look beyond your limits and see what He is doing on the other side of the world. Be aware of the large army of missionaries and servants He has who are willing to sacrifice everything to spread His word wherever He sends them. Thank God you are part of His Army! Continue to spread His Word to those you come in contact with each day. “Onward Christian Soldiers.....”

Blog 383: SMALL BUT DEADLY

Malaria, filariasis, dengue, brain fever and yellow fever all have something in common. Do you know what it is? It's the mosquito. Each year in India 40 million people come down with one of these diseases. That's one in 30 men, women and children each year. So by the time one is in their early 30's each person has had at least one of these diseases. Mosquito bites are at the least irritating and annoying, but often deadly. Worldwide one million people die from a mosquito-borne disease each year. In India there is no way to escape their bite. Chemicals to combat them are not available. Therefore it's no wonder mosquito nets are so greatly valued for they allow for a much safer, healthier and less interrupted sleep at night, which is when most of the bites occur.

Recently a donation for \$2,000 was given to our ministry to purchase mosquito nets for India. The pastors we work with were able to give them out free of charge (see attached pictures). The simple provision of a net was a great blessing to many people. Knowing Christians in the USA cared about them enough to provide these was a wonderful witness and opened the door to many hearts. When they were made available everyone wanted one, no one turned them down for they all realized their need.

Mosquito-borne diseases are not nearly as much of a problem for us in the USA, but we are all afflicted with another bite, the sting of sin and death (1 Corinthians 15, especially 54-57). There is nothing we can do to avoid its deadly results. Yet Jesus provided a shield, a covering for us – His own blood shed to save us. Still, we must recognize our need and humble ourselves and receive the gift paid for and provided by Another. The death rate for sin is 30 out of 30! Yet there is protection available, 100% effective – the blood of Jesus. Are you covered by it? Have you humbled yourself to

accept the free gift provided by God for your protection from the sting of death? It's freely available to all! What a priceless gift just for the asking. (Doylestown, PA October 20, 2015)

I Corinthians 15:53-57 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

PLEASE PRAY for a pastor we work with in India, Pastor Babu, whose son has typhoid fever (from a mosquito bite).

Blog 384: TURN BACK THE CLOCK

Nov. 1 we turn back the clock one hour, ending Daylight Savings Time for another year. Don't you wish you can turn back your life a few years as well? I sometimes think of what it would be like to go back 35 years to when I first came to Main Street Baptist Church. If I could go back and do it again, with the experience and maturity I now have, how different I would be! I could have been a much better husband, father and pastor.

Lately, as the time for our next trip to India gets closer, I think of how different it would be if I could turn my body back 35 years. Then I had endless energy, great health and youthful enthusiasm. Instead of the whole India experience being such a physical drain, I could much better manage it all. I'd have more energy to do more things and do them better.

So why did God wait until I was 60, clearly way past my prime, to start sending me there? To be honest I don't know, but I suspect it has something to do with me now being aware of my total dependence on God for all that happens. He wants me to realize my own weakness so I have to depend on Him. That way He can work through me, and that way I can recognize that all that happens is His doing and He gets the glory for it. In addition, I also realize that when I was 35 I really wouldn't have been able to pass on to the pastors in India what they need to hear. While my physical energy has been fading over the years, God has been faithful to help me grow in wisdom and understanding of His Word and works.

Why did God let Daniel be thrown into the lions den when he was in his 90's? Or Moses lead the Jews out of Egypt in his 80's? Or call Abraham to leave his life-long home to go to an unknown land when he was 75? We might honor youth and feel that it is superior to age, but obviously God doesn't see it that way. In His eyes it is true: we aren't getting older, we are getting better! (Doylestown, PA, October 27, 2015).

Ruth 4:15 He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age.

Isaiah 46:4 Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

Psalms 92:14 They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green,

2 Corinthians 12:10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Are you becoming more and more aware of your increasing limitations and weaknesses? Great! That makes it obvious that you must depend on God more and more.

Blog 385: AS SEEN ON TV...

One of the highlights of Pastor Moses and my trip to Tulsa last month was being filmed for a TV show. Deborah Sweetin, President of Battle Cry Ministries International and Deborah Sweetin Ministries, interviewed us for 2 30-minute segments of her show which goes to 10 million viewers. Neither of us have ever experienced anything like this. It was all spontaneous talking with TV cameras right in front of us! Needless to say I was very, very nervous about the whole thing.

However, it turned out to be a great experience. Deborah's sincere interest and heartfelt support of our ministry was very encouraging. To be honest, I was touched in a fresh way as I again saw what God is doing through us as seen by the eyes of a very experienced world traveler. She has interviewed hundreds of people and traveled everywhere to see God in action. Her genuine enthusiasm for what God is with for us in India humbled me and helped me appreciate all the more the wonderful privilege I have of serving Him in this way. It wouldn't be possible without your prayers, help and financial support. Thanks so much! (St. Louis, Missouri, November 3, 2015)

The interviews can be seen in their archives at <http://deborahsweetin.com/shows.php/>.

1 Samuel 12:24 But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.

Joshua 24:14 "Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness.

Take a moment to sit back and let God remind you of all He has done in your life and of the good things He has done through you. Thank Him for that and commit to persevering in your service for Him.

Blog 386: SINGING IN THE DARKNESS

I stumbled on a bright insight in a somewhat obscure Bible passage this morning (isn't it wonderful how God does that when we read His Word!). The story is told in 2 Chronicles 20. Tiny Judah is about to be overrun by a vast army. King Jehoshaphat proclaimed a time of fasting and prayer and everyone joined him. God assured him that He would give him the victory. He took his small army and headed out to a battle he couldn't possibly win but which God assured him would end in victory. As they went they started singing praises to God, "Give thanks to the Lord, for His love endures forever" (2 Chronicles 20:21). As they started singing, God began working on their behalf by causing confusion among the enemy soldiers so that they started attacking each other. When Jehoshaphat arrived every enemy soldier was dead. The army had been so large that it took the Jews 3 days just to gather the plunder left in their camp. The word of this great victory by God spread and everyone left Judah alone after that.

What stood out to me this time, and I think you noticed it, is that they started praising BEFORE the victory. They didn't wait until it was over. It's easy to thank God then, but to worship before the outcome is known is very special to God. Understand, this isn't some kind of name-it-and-claim-it thing. It's merely recognizing that our sovereign God will ultimately bring total victory in whatever we face. It's as good as done. He is in control and does all for a purpose (Romans 8:28), so trust Him and praise Him for that assurance. Thank Him now.

There is power in praise, for the very moment they started singing God started working. God is blessed when we praise Him before the victory, and we are as well. My wife Nancy used to say, back in the days when they gave Green Stamps for food purchases, that God gave double stamps when we praised Him before the victory! (Doylestown, PA, November 10, 2015)

Acts 16:25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

Job 1:21 and said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.”

Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face.

Are you facing something that is a concern to you right now? Don’t wait until it is over to praise God, start right now. Pick a favorite hymn or praise song and start singing it out loud or in your head. Keep coming back to it all day. We don’t know when or how God will deliver, but we know ultimately He will. So see this as an opportunity to trust and praise! Face your battles today with a song in your heart!

Blog 387: THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Last week I asked those of you who want to stay on my email list to let me know. I don’t want to keep sending this email to people who don’t want it. I was really encouraged by those who have responded, saying they wanted to keep receiving these emails. Sometimes I wonder if anyone really reads these emails and cares about what is happening through our ministry in India. Clearly many people really do – I’m not alone! Thanks so much for your concern, prayers, encouragement and financial support!!!

When the Jews were fighting the Amalekites as they moved towards Mt Sinai Joshua led the fighting but Moses stood on the mountain praying (Exodus 17:8-13). When his arms were lifted in prayer Joshua and the Jews were victorious, but when he let down his arms signifying lack of prayer support they started losing the battle. In order to keep faithfully praying Moses needed help so Aaron and Hur stood by him helping him. Joshua needed Moses and Moses needed Aaron and Hur. They couldn’t have succeed alone. Imagine how encouraging Moses was to Joshua and Aaron and Hur to Moses.

That’s how you encourage me as well as the pastors in India by your support and prayers. Thanks so very much. You are much loved and greatly appreciated! This ministry could not happen without your faithful support. God will bless you in this life and reward you in all eternity for your faithfulness! (November 15, 2015, Erlanger, KY)

Galatians 6:2 Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

As Christians we all need to be encouraged and supported. Think of those who support you and stand by you in life. Thank God for them, and thank them personally. Now think about those whom you support and help. Who can you reach out to today? Who else that you know could use some encouragement from you? Do so today.

Blog 388: THANKSGIVING FOR AIRPLANE FOOD

One of the nicer parts of the long flights to India is the food they give me to eat: 2 meals and a snack each flight. Airplane food has a bad reputation. It is the butt of many jokes, and deservedly so. Yet some of my best meals and snacks have been on airplanes. That isn’t because they would have won any awards if I had been at home eating them. It is because I wasn’t at home, and nothing else was available to me. My thirst was quenched by orange juice that is common in my kitchen but

greatly relished and appreciated when one is thirsty mid-flight with no fluids in one's bag. Deep hunger makes the blandest food seem very special and tasty. It is all relative.

While in the army, they took away every bit of freedom I had in basic training, then, after awhile gave me a Saturday off. I still remember how grateful and appreciative I was for that free time. I guess airplane food works the same way. Take everything away and you are grateful for anything given back. It's too bad we have to lose something in order to really appreciate it, whether it be food or freedom.

In a country of plenty we don't appreciate all what we have as those do who live in poverty, and appreciate very little. That is a shame. We shouldn't have to lose something before we appreciate it, but this is often the case. It is this that brings guilt and regret at funerals. We do not fully appreciate a loved one until he or she is gone. We do not appreciate good health until we are lying in the hospital. We are a people who often appreciate what we have only after it is taken away from us. Let us try to be grateful for our blessings large and small, while we still have them, and can enjoy them. (Doylestown, PA November 23, 2015)

Psalm 100:1 Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

If you lost everything you had (wealth, possessions, family, health, etc.) what would you miss most? Send time this week thanking God for it. Appreciate all you have while you still have it!

Blog 389: WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES

In the last year or so my father, Nancy's father and Nancy's brother-in-law all have all died. Her mother moved from across the street to Florida. We got a new pastor at church and he has taken over. I am now his assistant. I went from leading the church and preaching/teaching many times a week to sitting in the pew and only speaking a couple times a month. Nancy, son Mark and son David finished their educations. Daughter Grace also graduated and is finishing her masters this year. Our son Dan moved to North Carolina. Tim and his wife are expecting twins. Nancy's job status had has changed drastically so she can travel to India and other places with me.

Next summer I will fully retire as a pastor after 35 years at MSBC. Grace will finish her education and she and Mark will begin their careers. We will have to make decisions about moving closer to our children and grandchildren so we can help them now and so they can help us as we get older.

Also, I will be transitioning Christian Training Organization to the next stage as I continue the ministries in India, World View for teens, spiritual warfare, and marriage and family retreats and counseling.

For some reason I thought retirement would be downshifting, settling into a slower pattern, stabilizing and solidifying life. Instead I find there are more changes and adjustments, more major decisions and more things up in the air than any time during the 35 years we have lived here. Instead of winding down, life seems to be winding up!

What is God doing? What is all this change and uncertainty all about? After all, I'll soon be 70 and finished pastoring. I've arrived – or haven't I? Could God not be done forming and molding me?

Is there more maturing coming? Does my faith still need stretching and my faithfulness still need to be deepened? Clearly so!

And don't I know it – I might not like the continual stretching and growing, but I am glad God, in His faithfulness to me, wants me to be all He created me to be before I enter His presence. I'm glad He isn't done with making me more like Jesus. The flesh may be weak, but the spirit is definitely willing. (Doylestown, PA November 30, 2015)

Philippians 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

How about you? Are you getting a bit weary of life's struggles? Are you failing to see daily difficulties as opportunities to trust God? Do you think you deserve a break, an easier life than you have? Then ask yourself if you want to stop growing in your faith and enter eternity as you are, or do you want to become more like Jesus? If this applies to you, it's time for you to have a serious talk with God. Do so now.

Blog 390: LIFE INTERRUPTIONS

Interruptions. No one likes them. They interfere with our plans and cause us to do something we didn't want to do instead of what we planned to do. Sometimes we respond with patience, but more usually with annoyance, even if we don't always show it. At this time of the year, when we are so busy with Christmas preparations, we have even less tolerance for interruptions, even small ones.

It's hard to imagine what Mary and Joseph felt when their plans for a quiet family wedding went out the window that first Christmas so many years ago. The whole direction of their lives was interrupted by Mary's pregnancy before they were married. God never asked their opinion; He just turned their lives in a totally different direction. Were they resentful? Afraid? Panicked? Did they complain? Question? Doubt? Despite how they felt, they responded in trust to God Who was in charge of their lives and in control of their future. They trusted Him and kept their eyes on Him through it all.

God interrupted our nicely planned lives one Christmas 20+ years ago when we found we would be having a baby when our youngest of four was 9 years old. Life was settling down. We could leave the children alone when we went for a run or shopping together. We were starting to have a 'life.' Nancy was near 40 and I was near 50. Starting over with little ones was not what we had planned, but God did. By the way, that little interruption in our lives turned out to be one of God's greatest blessings to us – Grace and, 13 months later, Mark. Mary and Joseph's interruption was a blessing from God as well.

In India God seems to change our plans quite regularly: a service interrupted by a screaming mother carrying a convulsing infant, a demonically influenced woman yelling at me to stop talking about Jesus, the death of Moses' mother in the midst of our busy conference schedule, plane schedules changing or cancelled, illnesses, cancellations, etc., etc., etc.

If you think God isn't fair or doesn't understand your interruptions, remember His time in heaven was interrupted by our sin so He left heaven and all its glory to come to earth as one of us to be rejected, tortured and killed for no fault of His own. Christmas was the start of a major interruption for Him as well, yet He did it for us. He does know what it is like. He does understand.

We all face interruptions. It's how we respond that is important. How do you usually respond when interrupted? What if God was behind it, and was doing it for a good reason? What if God needed you to do something unplanned because He knew it was best for your growth and His glory? Would knowing that make any difference in how you responded? If you put your faith in Jesus and

trust Him to lead you, if your desire is to serve Him and be used by Him, than any interruption, no matter how large or small, is from Him. Treat it as such. December 3, 2015 Doylestown, PA)

Luke 1:38 *“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.*

Proverbs 3:5-6 *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

How have you responded to the interruptions God has allowed in your life over the years? How are you doing with them this holiday season? Little interruptions are training for larger interruptions. Would you be happier if God never overrode your plans for something of greater importance in His will? Do you really want to do just what you want and not be available for opportunities to stretch and grow which He may provide? Talk to Him about how you have been handling His interruptions in your schedule and allow Him to do what He alone knows is best for you now and in the future.

Blog 391: PREPARATORY PRAYER

Thanks so much for being willing to pray for us each day. We need the prayer starting now and going through our time in India. We’ve had good prayer support in the past but God has really put it on our hearts to focus on it more this trip, starting now. There are two main subjects we’d like your prayer for now.

First, for the people and places in India to be prepared when we arrive. Let me explain what I mean. Nancy has a cousin, an ex-Marine, who works for a security company in Pakistan. When someone is coming they can hire his company to provide safety as they enter the country and travel to their destination. They move into the areas where the person/people will be traveling and staying and secure it the others arrive.

That’s what we are doing and need you to do as well. Pray God would send His angels to secure and prepare the places and people where we will be, as when the Jews entered the Promised Land behind Joshua (Exodus 23:20-30). This isn’t just for us, but for Pastor Moses and everyone who will be attending or involved in any way with our trip there. Not only do we want Satan’s opposition removed, we want the conditions to be ripe for God’s light to spread in the darkness and His word to be taught in a powerful and effective way so that lives are changed.

Second, please pray for our financial needs. We’ve had more given to our ministry than every this year. Everyone is very faithful and sacrificial in their giving and praying. Still, costs keep rising and rising in India. Our ministry keeps expanding and attracting more pastors and wives. Thus our expenses are growing rapidly. God knows all about it but I really feel He wants us to pray. So pray first that our expenses stay low, somehow we do all we have planned for far less than planned. And pray God puts it on the hearts of people who haven’t given before to give sacrificially and regularly. (December 8, 2015 Doylestown, PA)

Exodus 23:20-30 *“See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. ... My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, and I will wipe them out ... “I will send my terror ahead of you and throw into confusion every nation you encounter. I will make all your enemies turn their backs and run. I will send the hornet ahead of you to drive the Hivites, Canaanites and Hittites out of your way.”*

Take some time now to pray for our ministry, and any other ministries you are involved with. Pray for upcoming events in your life in this same way.

Blog 392: ANSWERED PRAYER

Recently I asked you to pray for God to prepare the way as we go into India (Exodus 23:20-30) and for God to bring in some new givers to our India ministry. God answered the second part of that prayer clearly and specifically. Money has been provided, and from a new source. I received enough to cover the extra conference costs and reprinting of the Spiritual Warfare book. I didn't think I'd have that much money until after the India trip was over, if I even received all of it by then! What an amazing answer to prayer – and the first week you started praying! If God so clearly answered the second request that soon we can be sure He is answering the first as well. I also know He is answering the first because of the kinds of opposition and problems I have faced this week – the kind that come when God is making progress into Satan's territory and he fights back.

So please keep praying for God to send His angels ahead and prepare the way in India, but also pray He protects us here as we prepare for this trip. Ask that it start here and now, not just when we land in India.

And please keep praying for others to give. We still have ongoing regular expenses, the cost of the new book, and costs after the conferences – follow-up work by Pastor Moses and others. God is expanding His work. I feel we need to keep praying for funds so we will have the finances to be able to keep ministering to more new pastors as well as those we have trained in the past. There is so much to do for the Christians in India...

One more request. I have started the next book, How to Study God's Word. It takes nearly a full year to get a book translated and printed in India, and I want to use this as the main theme of our conferences in 2017. So it needs to be written now. Pray I will have the wisdom in how to write this. These men have no education, no reference books or commentaries, no internet resources and no background in growing up with the Bible. They are newer believers with a Bible (no notes or cross references) and a desire to learn God's Word. Next year I want to follow up with a book How to Preach God's Word. These follow perfectly after this year's Bible Overview, which is still being printed.

Thanks for praying!!! (Prayer email, December 11, 2015 Doylestown, PA)

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Matthew 11:24

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. 1 John 5:14-15

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. John 15:7

Blog 393: WHY CHRISTMAS WOULD FLOP IN AUGUST

Christmas is more than a day. It is a season. The fact that it is in early winter has had a large impact on forming the holiday to what it is today. I don't think it would be nearly the great event it is if it were held in June, July or August. There's something about the summer being over and fall fading from view that leaves a void in life. We move back inside. The weather gets cold. Nights get longer and days shorter. Death replaces life in the world outside our window. We know a long, cold, winter

is on the horizon. And then Christmas pops up with all its lights and color, its decorations and joy, its gifts and family events.

Christmas gets our full attention and focus, for it takes weeks to adequately prepare for it. It brings out the best in us. It has no competition from nature or vacations. It arrives at the perfect time – just when we need a break and before the worst of winter arrives. Isn't that also true of the One the season celebrates? Didn't He, too, come at just the right time (Galatians 4:4), just when we needed Him and were longing for something to take us out of the coldness and death, the emptiness and hopelessness of life?

Christmas didn't just come once, it comes regularly, yearly, each time we need it. So does Jesus. Whenever we need Him, when things get bleak and gloomy, there He is to light up our lives and bring us joy. No, Christmas wouldn't work in August. It is needed in December. Jesus, too, works best when He is needed most. Maybe that's why some times He allows circumstances in our lives to remind us of our great need of Him! (December 18, 2015, Doylestown, PA)

Galatians 4:4 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

I won't ask you if you need Jesus for I know you'll say "Yes, of course." But do you REALLY recognize how desperately you need Him? How would your life be without Him? What can you accomplish or face without His presence and help? Don't let it take a time of darkness and gloom in your life to remind you of your need of Him, recognize it now – and thank Him for always being there when you need Him, no matter what time of the year it is!

Blog 394: CHRISTMAS PRESENT & PAST

Christmas is a time of reflection and memories, thinking of Christmas' in the past. As I compare my childhood Christmas' and the ones when our children at home with Christmas today it becomes evident that things keep changing. We can relive our childhood with our children and then our grandchildren, but we can't go back. Time keeps moving ahead. Pictures and memories become more precious as time marches on. Family traditions take on new meaning. They become something that transcends time and ties the years together – but even they change.

Why is it we want to go back more than we want to go ahead? If the 'good old days' were really that good, why didn't they seem so great at the time? Oh, yes, we vaguely recognized that the days with our small children were special, but we were too busy with too many things to really appreciate them. Then they are gone. I often thought I'd like to bottle up a day or two back then, especially the hectic days when it seemed my energy level wasn't what it should be. I'd love to open a bottle every once in a while now and relive it. But time doesn't work that way.

I guess that's why God created such a thing as time. It's something we won't have to mess with in eternity for there will be no such thing, but it does keep everything moving along in this world. In heaven every day will be Christmas, our best Christmas ever. Things will never change, they can never get better for they will already be perfect! For now, though, the truth is evident: things change. Christmas changes. We change. Life changes. It always will, until we make that final change from this world to eternity. Then there will be no more change.

In fact, there is a name for God that reinforces this truth: "Hua," "The God Who Never changes." God is immutable – that means He is unchangeable in His essence, nature and perfections. This unchangeableness of God was anciently represented by the figure of a cube, a piece of metal or wood framed four square; when every side is exactly of the same equality, cast it

which way you will, it will always be in the same posture, because it is equal to itself in all its dimensions. That is God – everything else changes but He never does, He always remains the same. You can count on Him! (December 21, 2015 Doylestown, PA)

Psalms 102:25-27 In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. 26 They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

What if God did change? What if one day He loved you and had mercy, then the next He didn't? What if some days He forgave sin and others He didn't? Suppose His promises were true some of the time but not all the time? Thank Him that He is Hua, the God Who never changes!

Blog 395: JAN-YOU-WEARY IS COMING!

How can we describe the days after Christmas? All we have focused on for several weeks is now over. "The Most Wonderful time of the Year," as the song calls, is now past. What comes next? Three months of cold and darkness. Going through our obligations and responsibilities weary day after weary day. What do we have to look forward to now that Christmas is past? Spring is too far away to get excited about. We just settle in and plod along. We have our Christmas memories but they often don't last much longer than the clean-up period we all face. Of course there's new bills to pay, so we must get up and go to work each day.

What contrast there is between the day before Christmas and the day after Christmas, between December 24 and December 26. On December 26 there are no parties are scheduled, no great celebrations are being held. Yet we accept it for we know that all good things must end, that everything comes to a conclusion.

But there is one exception to that rule – heaven! There the celebration will never end. There will never be a "day after Christmas" in heaven – never a letdown or a weary plodding on. Maybe in Narnia it was always winter but never Christmas, but in heaven it will be always Christmas but never winter. It will be December 25 all year long, and it will never get old or stale. Each day in heaven will be like our first day all over again. Each day will be as perfect as it can be, yet somehow better than the one before it. No, all good things must not come to an end. Christmas on earth may, but eternity in heaven never will. Imagine, always December 25 and never December 26! (December 28, 2015 Doylestown, PA)

Revelation 22:1-5 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

Why do you think God talks about heaven so much in the Bible? Because He wants us to think about it and anticipate all eternity with Him! That will keep things on this earth in their proper eternal perspective. Write the word "Heaven" on a not and put a not somewhere where you will see it several times a day to remind yourself as you go through this Jan-you-

weary time of the year and of life in general that this is temporary and will soon be gone forever.

Blog 396: PREINVASION BOMBARDMENT

It is a common strategy in warfare to use bombs and long range artillery to soften enemy resistance before ground troops enter the contested area. The success of this determines the success or failure of the coming infiltration. The same is true in our spiritual warfare. Your prayers for our upcoming ministry in India are softening the enemy's resistance and opening the way for the light to throw back the darkness that has been so prevalent for thousands of years. Think of your prayers as the bombardment that will enable our ministry when there to succeed in helping God's Kingdom to advance in a great way.

For an army's bombardment to be effective, though, it needs to be guided by information gathered by planes flying far overhead as well as first-hand information from those already in the area. These prayer letters are to pass on to you what we feel God above wants the focus of our prayers to be, and requests passed on from the pastors now serving in India. Your prayers are preparing the way for all God wants to accomplish through us. Their quality and quantity both have a greater impact than any of us can know. (Prayer email, December 28, 2015, Lynchburg, VA)

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Mt. 7:7

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know. Jeremiah 33:3

You will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will hear you. Jeremiah 29:12

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him. John 5:14:15

THANK GOD

For each one faithfully praying for these requests

For each pastor faithfully serving in India

For all good will be doing as the upcoming conferences spread His Word and truth to others

ASK GOD

For wisdom for each one praying to be sensitive to the Spirit's leading and know how to specifically direct their prayers for the maximum impact

For His holy angels to go ahead into the darkness preparing the way for God's servants to bring the light

For protection for God's people who live there as well as us who are going

That any plans or works of the enemy against God's Kingdom in India in general and these upcoming conferences in specific be thwarted and defeated immediately

Blog 397: HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO ME!

Ten years ago today I went to India for the first time. I was part of a mission team sponsored by a local church. Pastor Moses was one of the translators at a pastor's conference we held and, well, the rest, as they say, is history. But it isn't ancient history – it's living history still going on. In the ten years that followed our shared vision has grown and evolved. It has developed into what it is

today, a travelling seminary, teaching the poor pastors throughout Telugu-speaking India. We hold pastors' conferences and distribute books to help pastors in their ministry.

In 8 trips during these 10 years we have held 110 days worth of pastors' conferences. We trained 4,325 pastors and 1,245 wives. These 2-day conferences include transportation, food and housing and 5 free books for the pastors. We do all of this for just \$25 per pastor. We have written and distributed 40,000 copies of 5 different books. I have written almost 400 blogs about my experiences in this ministry (they are available in 2 free ebooks). We have supported 7 orphans for 8 years and we help 25 pastors by giving them \$25 a month. We have spoken at many churches over the years. In 2015 we provided over 4,000 Bibles and 220,000 tracts as well as being part of a team effort to provide a water well in a much needed India village (the next blogs will tell about this).

In 2016 we will add women's and youth conferences. We will write and publish another book (if we have the needed finances - \$20,000) in addition to what we are already doing. In the near future I hope to see this ministry to grow to include other USA pastors who can go to India at other times of the year to hold additional conferences. We also would like to greatly expand our teaching and training ministry through our web site when we have help to do so.

It's been a great honor and tremendous blessing to be part of this wonderful ministry. It has stretched me more than I ever wanted to be stretched but it has also blessed me greater than I ever thought I could be blessed. Without your prayers and financial support it wouldn't be possible. Thanks so very, very much for your support in so many ways. Without you it wouldn't be possible. (January 4, 2016, Doylestown, PA)

Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

Romans 10:15 And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

PRAY FOR this ministry, our upcoming trip to India, and especially the finances needed to do this work. As we move ahead and expand our ministry in this country of 1,300,000 people, 98% who don't know Jesus, we prayer, wisdom and continued financial support. We trust God will continue to provide for our need. (If you would like a copy of our 2015 expenses or our 2016 budget just write jerry@schmoyer.net) Donations to Christian Training Organization can be mailed to CTO, 252 W State St, Doylestown, PA 18901. Or you can go to India.ChristianTrainingOrganization.org and click on the PayPal button. Thanks!!!!!!!!!!!!

Blog 398: THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD

Nancy and I go running (jogging) together several times a week. Last week we were at our daughter's in Virginia and there is a dog in her neighborhood that barks and runs at anyone who comes on their property. Naturally we stay on the other side of the road when we pass that house. But suppose we had to enter the property for some reason?

Satan has had India in darkness for thousands of years and he wants to keep it that way. So when anyone intrudes onto his property he attacks to drive them off. There is a battle in India going on now that needs your prayers. The book, Bible Overview, is far from being ready for use with my sessions on that same topic. I sent it over a year ago and the English copies were printed in April, but the Telegu still needs 200 of the 250 pages to be type set and then printed and delivered. Pastor Moses wrote this to me just a few minutes ago:

“Christian Life here in India is not that is easy and things we do here are very difficult, but by God’s grace we are doing it for the advancing the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have lot of spiritual battle doing it so pray for things to happen, I am trying my best to do it on time, there is a lot of spiritual battle we are facing for doing that, since the book is a good one, so we also had the same problem in other books before, but God helped us making them to print them in time all.”

The attacks aren’t just against those in India or us who travel there but you who enter Satan’s kingdom through intercessory prayer or financial support of this ministry. Satan knows God honors prayer and it is powerful (James 5:16). Therefore you who pray regularly and faithfully for the light to overcome the darkness in India will attract his attention. Perhaps you’ve been experiencing unusual difficulties lately. Perhaps many things have been going wrong and unexpected obstacles have been appearing since you’ve been praying faithfully for India. Consider that is the enemies way of distracting you and drawing your attention away from prayer. Or it could be just his way of making you pay for the damage your prayers are doing to his kingdom of darkness in India.

I encourage you to see this as a battle. There is no greater battle than prayer. Remember, prayer is not preliminary to the battle, prayer IS the battle. Battles are won or lost in prayer, before they are actually fought. So pray for your own protection from attacks. Each believer has the right to pray for God’s protection against Satan’s attacks (Ephesians 6:10-20; Job 1:5, 9-10; I John 4:4).

You are not alone, others who are joining you in prayer for our mission to India are also being attacked – that’s why I’m bringing it up in this blog. Stand firm. Stay strong. Pray for God to protect all who are involved in this ministry – by going, giving or praying. Ask God to surround each one with His angels and forbid Satan’s demons to interfere in any way. Pray for God to fill you and each of us who are praying with His Spirit, His power and His glory. See yourself as a warrior in a battle. Stay true and turn from all sin. (Prayer email, January 1, 2016 Doylestown, PA)

Ephesians 6:10-13 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

THANK GOD

For each one faithfully praying for these requests, pray for their protection in this spiritual battle
For each pastor faithfully serving in India, pray for their protection as well
For all good will be doing as the upcoming conferences spread His Word and truth to others

ASK GOD

For wisdom for each one praying to be sensitive to the Spirit’s leading and know how to specifically direct their prayers for the maximum impact in India and for protection here as well
For His holy angels to go ahead into the darkness preparing the way for God’s servants to bring the light
That the book Bible Overview would be finished and ready to distribute at the conferences

(If you want to learn more about spiritual warfare you can download my handbook at <http://sw.christiantrainingonline.org/download/SpiritualWarfare/SW%20HANDBOOK%20-%202010.pdf> Or write me and I will email it to you as an attachment. Much information about spiritual warfare is available at my web site <http://sw.christiantrainingonline.org/>)

Blog 399: PRAYING LIKE PAUL PRAYED

The most powerful thing anyone can do for someone else is to pray for them. Because through prayer you and I can touch the heart of God who in turn can touch anyone, anywhere regardless of circumstances. The power is not in the prayer itself, but in the power that God releases in response to the prayer.

Prayer has nothing to do with your vocabulary. It does not matter if you use good grammar. And it has nothing to do with how well you feel about your ability to pray. Effective praying has nothing to do with eloquent we pray. Effective praying involves praying the scriptures mixed with faith that God will honor His word. When we pray the scriptures, we are in fact praying God's word. That is telling God that we are more interested in His will for our lives than we are our wills.

Often we don't know how to pray for others. Using a Bible prayer can be a good way to help us focus our thoughts in prayer. Two observations about Paul's prayer for the Colossians in 1:1-14 - this prayer will not change situations. In fact, because of what you are praying for, it may make situations worse than they were to begin with. That may be necessary in order to accomplish what you are asking God to do. Secondly, prayer is no quick fix, no magic one-two-three and everything is perfect.

Read/pray the following verses, applying them to yourself, Moses, Nancy, Les and myself and also the pastors in India. Take your time, think about what you are saying, use your own words, elaborate and let God lead you. You don't have to finish the whole prayer, either. You can use it part at a time. (Prayer Email, January 6, 2016 Doylestown, PA)

Colossians 1:1-14 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel 6 that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. 7 You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, 8 and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. 10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Blog 400: BLESSING FROM TRAGEDY

Laura McComb was on vacation with her husband, Jonathan McComb, and their two children, 6-year-old Andrew and 4-year-old Leighton for the Memorial Day weekend, 2015, when the home they were staying in along the Blanco River in Wimberley began to flood. The McComb family was staying with 71-year-old Sue Carey and her husband, Ralph High Carey, 73. The couple was also welcoming their daughter, Michelle Carey-Charba, 43, son-in-law, William Randall Charba, 42, and their 6-year-old grandson, William. All nine were present in the home when the flash flooding began.

Newly released 911 calls detail the horrifying moments before the home was swept from its foundation as the frantic callers inform dispatch that they are “running out of breathing room.” Eight people in the home died in the flooding, The only survivor was Jonathan McComb.

"I prayed quite a bit going down the river," he said. "Even as we were together, we prayed, and by myself, I prayed." The terrifying scene in the dark of night got worse when their floating house hit a bridge and then began to fall apart. "Not a day goes by that you don't think about it," McComb said. "At one point underwater, I just said, 'I am done,'" McComb told us. "I said, 'Take me home, I am going to Heaven,' and I just went limp underwater." Somehow, he held on. Badly battered, with broken ribs and a collapsed lung, McComb made it to a beach, scaled a cliff, and reached a house. "Where I got out was either 9 or 12 miles down the river," he said. They never found the body of his daughter.

His first dream about his family since he lost them was vivid. They were in a pastoral paradise when his daughter ran up to him. "She said, 'We didn't make it, Daddy. You did. We got picked up by a man in the river — and it was Jesus. And we are in Heaven.' And I woke up immediately and I looked for them and knew they weren't there, and tried to get back in that dream. That was a big dream for me. I pray to have that dream every night before I go to bed."

Jim has kept his faith strong through it all. The support and encouragement of fellow believers have been a great help. "That they started a water well in India on behalf of Laura, Andrew, and Leighton, is very meaningful," McComb said. That water well came about through the efforts of a mutual friend. I'll tell you about the water well and our part in it in the next blog. But isn't it ironic that a disaster from too much water led to providing a well for a place that didn't have enough water! (January 11, 2016 Doylestown, PA)

Revelation 22:1-2 Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Thank God for the life He has given you and your loved ones. Thank Him also for the assurance you have of those you know who were Christians and are now in His presence! Thank Him for being a God that brings blessing out of tragedy!

FOR MORE INFORMATION Google Jim McComb or go to <http://www.wfaa.com/story/news/local/texas-news/2015/10/22/man-who-lost-his-wife-children-and-close-friends-in-wimberley-floods-living-his-faith/74423012/>

Blog 401: LIFE-GIVING WATER

The last blog set the background for the water well in India dedicated to the McComb family. Their tragic drowning in too much water led to the gift of a well for an Indian village that didn't have nearly enough water. The cost, \$1,000, was donated through a good friend of the McCombs. His ministry and our ministries have partnered to make the well a reality. Pastor Moses chose the location and oversaw the work in India. Below is Pastor Moses' report on the well.

"Hope you are well and your ministry. I was in Andhra Pradesh for drilling the water well in a Dalits village. It took two days. Finally the water well was finished on Thursday and Dedicated on Friday in a Dalit Christian Community village. There are 1000 house with population of 10,000, but Dalit community have 300 houses and having population of 2000 people. They do not have a single water well pump, it is the first time ever they have since 25 years. They used to wait 2 days, some time 3 days a week to get the water from the local government. They have been suffering for 25 years

but no one has cared for them. Because of their prayers and God's help they now are happy for the water well. They had great suffering in summer for water for children and animals . Now they will have plenty of water at any time they want. They were abused by other high cast people to get the water. So now they are happy to have water and drink sufficiently. Every body in the village were so happy to have the water well. Some body says ,it is a ATW (Any Time Water) like a Bank ATM. Every one was happy ,and the Local Pastor was happy to have it so the people can come early to the worship service, so they have the water now ,they can use it without waiting for the public pumps. It was good that we could able to finish and help the Dalit Christian brothers and sisters in the village. Pastor Moses”

Providing clean water for needy people throughout the world is a great way to reach the people for Jesus. Like the Samaritan woman Jesus talked to in John 4, physical water is a great need for life. It is a picture of the even greater need all have for the spiritual water which only Jesus can provide. This well not only helps everyone in the village but opens the door for the Christians there to show the love of Jesus to others and is a very great means of evangelism. Pray God blesses the church there and uses the pastor to reach many for Him! (January 12, 2016 Doylestown, PA)

John 4: 10-15 Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?” Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

You have plenty of clean water, the H2O kind, available and need not thirst for that. But do you thirst for something more in life? For meaning? Purpose? Significance? Unconditional love? Assurance of value and worth? Forgiveness of all guilt, sin and shame? Guarantee of eternal life in heaven with God? It’s all available from Jesus, the Water of Life. Ask Him to quench your spiritual thirst, whatever it is, and He will do so.

Blog 402: JESUS, THE WATER OF LIFE

India is a land of darkness, but God's light is spreading throughout the darkness. India is a land of dryness, but the water of God's Word is bringing refreshment and hope to the people. Electricity is spreading and removing the physical darkness while water wells are being dug to bring much-needed clean water to the thirsty people. The last two blogs have described how we have been involved in providing a well for a needy village. Providing much needed and greatly appreciated fresh water so touches the hearts of the appreciative people that they are open to hearing about the One Who can provide even more needed living water for their dry souls. A cup of cold water given in Jesus' name opens hearts to hearing more about this Jesus is who so freely gives to those in need.

God can be called "the spring of living water" (Jeremiah 2:13; 17:13). Twice Jesus called Himself "living water (John 4:10; 7:37-39). The first was when He offered eternal, living water to the woman at the well in Samaria, which she accepted (John 4). The second time was when Jesus was in the temple following the priests who were bringing water into the temple as part of their ritual (John 7).

Water was scarce in Jesus' day, yet water was as much a necessity for life then as it is today. Just as the physical body needs water to continue living so does the spirit. Jesus is the water needed by the spiritual part of man. Without Him the soul will eventually die. The soul is thirsty and we try to quench that thirst with many things that satisfy for awhile, but eventually we get thirsty again. The only thing that can truly quench the thirst of the spirit is the living water, Jesus Christ.

Jesus invites those who know their need, those who are poor in spirit (cf. Matthew 5:3), to take the initiative and come to Him and drink (v. 37). Drinking refers to believing (cf. v. 38), which means aligning oneself with Him, trusting Him, receiving His teaching and obeying His commands. Such faith will enable one to receive the Spirit and enter an abiding relationship with Christ. All of this is based on who God is and what he has done for us. When we believe we open our hands to receive what His grace offers--we come and drink.

This is what we offer to the people of India. Water wells show we care about their physical needs so that local pastors whom we train can offer access to spiritual water, a living relationship with Jesus Christ. (January 13, 2016 Doylestown, PA)

O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. (Psalm 63:1).

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? (Psalm 42:1-2).

Thank God for the difference Jesus' living water has made in your life. Where would you be without it? Perhaps you still have unmet thirsts and needs – go to Jesus to meet them in His way and His time. Ask Him to give you opportunities today to share that living water with thirsty souls around you.

Blog 403: INVESTING YOUR TALENTS IN ETERNITY

This is my 8th trip to India. In the past I found myself looking forward all year to going back to India, but then the last few days my attitude would change and I no longer looked forward to it as I had been. I've been noticing that that 'dread' of going (for lack of a better word) has been growing until this year it has been with me all year. It's a very real awareness of the cost of doing this.

I hesitate to write these things, and may not ever publish this blog (I wrote this in September, 2014 but never sent it out), but its been in my mind so I'll try to put it into words. I don't want to seem like some kind of martyr or draw attention to myself, but there is a lesson God is teaching me that I want to pass on to you.

I know going to India for a month and speaking to all these pastors is a great privilege, but what weighs most in my heart is the drain it makes on me. Physically I get very tired from the time changes, different food, different beds, travel, standing all day and no time to exercise. Intellectually it drains me because I am hard all day, speaking 3 times a day (100x in the month I'll be there), adapting to a strange culture and adapting to a different audience daily. Emotionally it is hard because I am far out of my comfort zone, I miss my wife more than I can express, I am in overload from dealing with people all day every day. Spiritually I get oppressed by the darkness around me and attacks of the enemy to distract and discourage me, and that starts long before I get to India.

BUT despite all this God keeps showing me the privilege of doing this for Him, the honor of using the gifts and training He had given me and the responsibility of sharing what I have learned about pastoring and the Bible with others. I know writing books and sending them over is not enough. It's more than just the words, it's the encouragement I bring to them by being with them. Even though they aren't aware of all these things, they do appreciate the effort I make to come to them.

God continues to show me the importance of being a good steward of all He has given me in this country and as a Christian and pastor. He requires that I share these things and pass them on, even if it isn't convenient for me at the moment. I believe that is true of all of us. We can get so wrapped up in our own comfort and conveniences that we forget it is necessary to sacrifice to share with others. That doesn't just mean going to India, it means what we do for our neighbors in this country. It includes our time, our abilities and skills and our money as well. Wherever we are, a little sacrifice is necessary to share what we have with those in need. Look for opportunities today, God will provide them, it's up to us to take them! (September 2014, Doylestown, PA)

Matthew 25:14-23 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 15 To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17 So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. ... 19 "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' 21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' 22 "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'

What 'talents' has God given you (time, money, abilities, possessions)? What would He say about how you are using them for Him? Look for opportunities today to share what you have with others.

Blog 404: LIKE A MIGHTY ARMY

There are over 50 of you receiving this email because you have committed to pray for our work in India every day. That might not sound like a large army, but with God it cannot be defeated. Remember Gideon and God's victory through His small band (Judges 6). The key was that each one was hand picked by God. He hand picked you, too, to pray daily for India when He put the desire/conviction in your heart to do so.

In any army there are different roles and jobs for various people. Not everyone does the same thing. The commander makes assignments and the troops carry them out. As all of you pray, God puts different things on different hearts to pray about. His Spirit will burden some of you to pray for our travel and safety while there. Others will think of the pastors there and pray for their travel and reception of what is taught. Some warriors will engage in direct spiritual warfare, driving back the enemy so God's truth can advance. Whatever God puts on your heart, please pray for it. Write it down if you must and pray faithfully and regularly for it. What God puts in your heart is what He wants you to pray for. It may be finances, health, travel, the printing or distribution of the books, receptiveness to the Word, protection, pastors' wives and families, those in India who don't know Jesus, the pastors themselves who sacrifice all to serve Him, etc.

One thing each of you should pray for regularly is for each other. Soldiers don't fight alone, they protect each other's back. Satan will use whatever tactics he can to distract or discourage those who commit to pray. It is a battle, and when you attack Satan and his kingdom through prayer you know he will fight back. And he fights nasty! But remember, too, He is a defeated foe. God is greater and has defeated him (1 John 4:4). Don't fear him. Don't fall back in your faithfulness to God if life gets difficult. (January 10, 2016 Doylestown, PA)

1. Onward, Christian soldiers!, Marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus Going on before. Christ, the royal Master, Leads against the foe; Forward into battle, See his banners go!

2. At the sign of triumph Satan's host doth flee; On, then, Christian soldiers, On to victory. Hell's foundations quiver At the shout of praise; Brothers, lift your voices, Loud your anthems raise.

3. Like a mighty army Moves the Church of God; Brothers, we are treading Where the Saints have trod. We are not divided; All one body we: One in hope and doctrine, One in charity.

4. Onward, then, ye people; Join our happy throng. Blend with ours your voices In the triumph song: Glory, laud, and honor Unto Christ, the King. This through countless ages Men and angels sing. (Text: Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924 Music: Arthur S. Sullivan, 1842)

HOW TO PRAY TODAY:

1. Pray for others who are praying for India – for protection, for wisdom and guidance in what to pray for and how to pray and for faithfulness to stand firm for Jesus in life and in prayer.

2. Get paper and pencil, ask God to show you what He wants you to pray for (it can change each day). Write it down and faithfully pray for those things this day.

Blog 405: POWER IN PRAISE

(You are receiving this email because you expressed interest in praying daily for CTO's ministry in India. It's purpose is to help you better know how to pray for us and the ministry there. Please feel free to pass it on to anyone you wish.)

Remember that prayer isn't just asking God for stuff. How do you feel when someone just comes to you to talk and not listen. They have things to tell you but don't give you time to reply. Then on top of it they have a list of stuff they want you to do for them! None of us look forward to hearing from people like that! We don't want to be like in our relationship with God, either. So when you pray for India spend time listening to what He has to say to you to encourage you, guide your prayer focus, or just fill you with His love and grace. Remember that what God has to say to you is more important than what you have to say to Him!

Also spend time praising God and worshipping Him. I do this best when listening to praise music (Southern Gospel is the genre that touches me deeply). However you worship best, remember to include it with your prayer time. Thank Him for what He has done. Praise Him for Who and what He is. That is an important element in prayer. It isn't just empty words, either. The Bible tells us there is real power in praise. Sometimes it's natural to spend 100% of the time on our requests, but that shouldn't be all the time. There should be other times when 99% is praise and worship. The other 1% for requests won't be long, but it'll be powerful and effective. God says so in His Word: (Doylestown, PA, January 12, 2016)

Psalm 22:3 God inhabits the praise of His people

Acts 16:22-26 The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the

prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose.

2 Chronicles 20:22 As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.

Take time to worship and praise God before praying today.

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Blog 406: WHAT I MISS THE MOST...

If anyone should ever ask me what I miss most about pastoring a church I know exactly what my answer would be. Far far above everything else I miss the great joy and privilege of proclaiming the wonderful truths of God's love and Jesus' power. If it is in a sermon, Bible study, counseling session or private conversation, the opportunity to explain the marvels of His eternal truth and how it applies to us today. It is more glorious than I can describe in words to be entrusted with the life-changing truth about Jesus and be able to explain and reveal it to others on a regular basis. Paul himself expressed the same feeling (1 Corinthians 9:16).

Of course, I will still have opportunities to do this, but no longer several times a week to those God given me to shepherd. However in India I will be able to do this several times a day, seven days a week, for almost a full month! For a pastor/teacher that is heaven (although I don't expect to get India mixed up with heaven). I look greatly look forward to the privilege. It takes a great emotional, spiritual and physical toll. Paul experienced this, too, when He said he was being "poured out like a drink offering" (Philippians 2:7; 2 Timothy 4:6). Still, these times of ministering all day every day in India are among my sweetest memories, for there is nothing like experiencing His power while delivering His message to hungry hearts. It's something we only do on earth, for all will see and know Jesus in His completeness in heaven (1 Corinthians 13:12).

The more I am able to present God's wonderful life-changing truths, the more in awe I am by these things, and the more humbled I become at His allowing me the privilege to be a vessel He uses for this purpose! (January 14, 2016, Doylestown, PA)

1 Corinthians 9:16 ¹⁶*For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!*

Thank God for the times you get to present His truth to another. Ask for more opportunities to come and you to be aware of them. Pray for the wisdom to know what to say and the courage to say it.

Blog 407: YOUR WHOLE LIFE IN A SUITCASE

They say you can't take it with you, but when you travel you have to take it with you! When I go to India for a month each year I have to fit everything I needed into two suitcases. Try to put everything you want and need for living and ministering for one whole month into 2 suitcases. Medicines, first aid materials, clothing, reading material, food, lessons and teaching supplies – it all adds up. It's quite an experience to put your whole life into 2 suitcases – then to turn them over to minimum wage workers, and hope you'll see them again on the other side of the world! It is difficult, but it can be done – and there's something freeing and refreshing in knowing this.

We spend too much time housing and maintaining all our stuff. We house it, protect it, update it, and add to it. Before long we end up serving our stuff instead of it serving us. We need a larger house for all of it, and more time and energy to maintain it. Pretty soon the tail is wagging the dog, the means has literally become the end.

Most of the people on this earth couldn't come up with enough possessions to fill 2 suitcases, but for us Americans it is agony to limit what we own to that small amount. We count too much on 'things' for security and pleasure, for filling the voids in our lives. Better to cut back and have less so that we're forced to really look at what matters; at what objects actually fill our needs. Imagine that for the next month you can only use what fits into 2 suitcases. What would you put in to them? Of all the stuff you own, what do you really need? (January 15, 2016, adapted from April 2004, Doylestown, PA).

Matthew 6:25-27 *“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life[e]?”*

Is your stuff running your life? Do you serve it instead of it serving you? If so, confess your sin of materialism and wrong priorities. Ask God to help you change your attitude to your stuff. When you can, get rid of all you can – donating it or trashing it. Remember, though, it's not how much or how little you have but your attitude to it that really matters.

Blog 408: AIRPORT SCREENING: IT DOESN'T GET ANY WORSE THAN THIS

For me and many other travelers, the hardest part of flying is the security check-in. We go through lines like cattle to *be slaughtered*. Hats, coats and shoes must come off. Everything we carry is looked over. We have to walk through a device that checks *our bodies* as well. It would be one thing if we *could be* assured this process was actually bringing us safety and security, but news reports *remind us regularly* that many dangerous things slip *through unnoticed*. *Should we* carry weapons such as cranberry sauce in a tin can, a fingernail clipper, or a letter opener, we will be pulled aside, more thoroughly searched, and then the offensive object discarded. All of this happens in a rush, with people behind wanting us to hurry along, and people in front holding up the line. It is frustrating and humbling. The best part of the screening process is when you are *finished*. *Then*, you are free to proceed. On international flights it seems each country you enter feels it has to put passengers through their *version of this humbling process* one more time. When I travel to India I usually have to go through 3 screenings going and 3 more returning home.

Suppose God put us through that kind of *ordeal* to let us into heaven? What if we had to be sinless and perfect in *every thought and deed*, or else the alarm would go off, and we would be pulled out of the procession *line*? What if we lined up with fear and uncertainty, thinking we had met all the criteria but were never completely sure. *What if something we carried with us was misinterpreted?*

Fortunately, the security check into heaven is much easier than the one at the airport. God's mercy and love assures us that those who come by the way of the cross will *assuredly* enter. His plan to transform us and give us eternal bodies guarantees us full admittance without any holdup *or doubt*. There will be no pulling aside, no rushing to get through, no inconvenient questions to answer, no being taken out of line for more questioning. “Absent from the body is present with the Lord.” It *will* be instantaneous and complete... thank God for that! (January 16, 2016, adapted from April, 2005, Doylestown, PA)

“Absent from the body is present with the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 5:8

Do you fear death? Do you dread facing God? Are you concerned you may not make it into heaven? If you believe in Jesus you are as good as in – John 3:16 says so. Read the verse over and over until you have peace in God's assurance of your spending eternity with Him!

Blog 409: PLANET EARTH AS AN AIRPORT TERMINALS

Have you ever stopped in the midst of a busy airport terminal and taken a moment to watch the people? *They scurry* from one place to another, usually with luggage in tow. They *have all come* from somewhere and are headed somewhere else. Each one has a separate story. But all you can *tell* from appearances is a grim demeanor and a focused look. All are, at the moment, away from home, for no one lives at an airport terminal. *While within its walls*, we are all foreigners. We all went through the same sometimes traumatic experience with security. We all share some of the same obstacles and similar experiences as we proceed on our journey.

How like life in a nutshell *this is!* The planet earth is like a large airport terminal, *because* none of us really lives here. We are all passing through on our way to our real destination. We all entered through the trauma called birth. *We all love, hurt, try, fail and keep going.*

The one difference I notice is that *everyone in an airport terminal knows they are only visitors and are not at home.* Many people on planet earth refuse to acknowledge this truth. They live like they will be here forever, like *this is all there is.* How much *better it is to realize* we are all pilgrims. This world is not our home; we are just passing through. But that's OK – who wants to stay in an airport terminal forever, anyway? (January 17, 2016, adapted from April, 2004, Doylestown, PA

Grass withers, flowers fade away ... but the Word of our God endures forever. Isaiah 40:7-8

Is it time for a short reality check in your thinking? Is this life and world becoming too much 'home' to you? Are you disappointed because life fails to meet your expectations? It always will. In the army I learned a song that helped get me through those Viet Nam era days: "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through. My treasures are laid up, somewhere beyond the blue. The angels beckon me from heaven's open door and I can't feel at home in this world any more."

Blog 410: WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

"She said 'yes!'" "We are terminating your position." "It's a boy!" "The test says its cancer." Words have great power. They can bring tremendous joy or unbearable pain. We can lift others up or tear them down. Yes, words have great power.

Just going to India is no big deal. Thousands of people do it daily. They have a relaxing, enjoyable visit to an interesting, exotic country full of many new sights and tastes. That could be true of our visit here as well. The problem is that we open our mouth and out come words – not just any words but words which challenge and have the power to defeat the darkness and evil that have dominated India for centuries. It is because of the words we speak that we are oppressed and opposed. It's not because we visit the country, eat its food, travel its roads and admire its sights. What makes us different is the words that come out of our mouths for they are about Jesus and His power to change lives and free from Satan's power. Words have great power.

The words we speak are not our own. They are Jesus' words passed on by us. His words are the ones that bring light and life. He Himself brings light and life. He is called the Word. When we speak His words we are sharing Him with others. Words reveal, and our words reveal Him just as He reveals God Himself. The first name/description of Jesus in the gospel of John is as the "Word of

God” (John 1:1-14). Words communicate, and Jesus communicates God’s truth to us. It is our privilege and responsibility to pass it on to others.

What awesome words He allows us speak in His behalf – words of hope and peace, joy and blessing, truth and assurance, encouragement and love. Never underestimate the power of the words you can speak in His name to change lives. You heard and believed those words and look at the change it has made in your life. Pray the words we speak in India will be used to change lives for God’s glory now and long after we leave. (January 18, 2016 Hyderabad, India)

John 1:1, 14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Ask God to give you an opportunity to share words about Him or His truth with someone in need today. Pray for alertness to notice your opportunity, wisdom to know just what to say and courage to actually say it!

(A future blog will tell about the content of those words, the greatest story ever told.)

Blog 411: ready, set, GO

We had our first conference today and it went very well. Our trip here was perhaps the smoothest and most restful we ever had – thanks for praying. We rested more on the trip here and it went faster than ever. Still, we totally crashed at 3 PM Sunday afternoon, 44 hours after we got out of bed in the USA, and slept for 12 hours. We felt much better this morning when we got up, even though it was quite early. We hit the exercise room about 5 AM, something that won’t be happening again I’m sure.

Despite starting 3 hours late (something not atypical here in India) the first day went very well. I started off talking about What God Expects of Pastors, something we’ve started with for many years. I think I’ve used that talk at least 60 times here! It’s the subject of the first book I wrote so thousands of copies of it have been distributed. Each time I go through it I am totally satisfied with how it presents the ministry to these men. God still uses it to speak to me in many ways.

Then I began the main topic for this year’s conferences – Bible Overview. It is a walk-through of the Bible but the focus is on developing God’s plan of redemption from Genesis 3:15 to Revelation 22. The last blog talked about this. Future blogs will summarize the teaching for you. I did the first and second sessions today: Old Testament and Life of Jesus. Tomorrow I will conclude with the rest of the New Testament. Also I will have my spiritual warfare session – something I’ve closed with for many years as well. And the book on Spiritual Warfare book is also in its second printing with thousands of copies everywhere. I’ll also speak about how to tell if someone is growing spiritually.

The blessings are many and rich. The privilege of spreading these great words is beyond anything any human is worthy of. And the rich fellowship in Pastor Moses’ church, where I’ve spoken about 30 times now and where I feel more at home than in any church except Main St Baptist Church, touches me through and through.

But the battle is real, the enemy is active and the oppression is strong. The prayers of God’s people and the mercy of God Himself protect us and keep him and his demons from doing most of what they’d like. They are around us and working, but not succeeding as they would like. They still take a toll, though, so don’t stop praying! (January 19, 2016 Hyderabad, India)

2 Chronicles 20:15 “This is what the Lord says to you: ‘Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s.’”

Psalm 24:8 Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Are there any battles you are facing now? Maybe you haven't seen them as a battle because you've given in instead of fighting. How can these verses help you fight those battles?

Blog 412: SIDE BENEFITS OF MINISTERING IN INDIA

"I'll see you in heaven!" Those are typically my last words to people on the final day of our conference because I know there's virtually no chance I'll ever see them again in this life. There are way too many places to have new pastor's conferences for us to return to the same area. There are a very few places to which we return. At those places the friendships are deep and strong.

"I'll see you in heaven!" are solemn words, not just something said lightly or in passing. I mean them 100%. It's surprising how close I can get to some of these people after two days of opening our hearts to each other. Being in the same family, having the same Father (God) and Elder Brother (Jesus), brings an immediate, deep oneness that only believers can experience. Truly we are like long-lost family members just discovering each other for the first time.

I have never liked good-byes of any form. I really detest them, but it seems life is full of them – way too full! "See you later," sounds much better than "I don't know if I'll ever see you again." These people I know I will see again, just not in this life. And that helps mitigate the difficulty of leaving people I have just met and bonded with.

I do find comfort – no, what I find is great joy, in knowing I truly will meet these people in heaven when we can talk without a translator or time limit. We can share the glories of Jesus and what He has done in our lives. I see that as a real side benefit of being involved in this ministry. There are multiple hundreds of people I meet here but don't get to talk with until I get to heaven. Its one more thing I look forward to after this life. Imagine the large family you and I have in heaven! Everyone will be a brother or sister, every single person. And imagine the bonding and oneness we'll have with each other then! (January 20, 2016 Hyderabad, India)

"When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory!"

Write down a list of the people you will know in heaven. Include those you may have only met once. It can become quite a list, can't it? Thinking about that can make some of the day-to-day difficulties in this life much more bearable.

Blog 413: THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

Every time I visit India I see progress and improvement in the culture and life of the country. But I also see an increase in evil and emptiness all around as well. In fact, we can see that anywhere in the world. It can cause us to wonder if God is in control or if evil is overcoming all. But when I look at the depth of sin and hatred and evil and darkness in India, it affects me in a different way. It reminds me of how totally depraved the human heart is – and its not getting any better. I'm sure the depth of sin in us goes even far deeper than we can imagine.

That doesn't make me wonder about God's power and control – not at all! It shows me how great and powerful and loving and wonderful our God must be to love us so much as to provide for our sin. His love is greater than our sin. His power is great enough to take that sin on Himself and come out the victor. Not in control? If He is in control of human sin and evil He is in control of everything!

Seeing the power of the gospel to change lives here in India reminds me of the power of God despite all the wickedness the world throws against us. Less than an hour ago who stopped in a Dalit (“untouchables”) slum area we were driving by. Abject poverty doesn’t even describe the life conditions there. Imagine living on a dollar or two a week for your total income! Hopelessness and despair are everywhere in these communities. Alcoholism, abuse, disease and suicide are everywhere. But there was a group of people in this neighborhood who was quick to welcome us and show us around (see pictures below). There was life in the eyes of the children and joy in their voice – genuine, heartfelt joy. It didn’t take long for them to tell us they were Christians. The pastor of a local church has been coming around telling them about Jesus. The children sang song after song to us, all about Jesus. “Praise the Lord!” was the greeting we heard from their young lips over and over.

So what could be greater than the evil and darkness in India? The light and power of the gospel to change a life for Jesus is far greater! Does the increasing wickedness in the world today show God is weaker than we thought? No! It shows how immensely strong He must be to have conquered and paid for all that evil and wickedness, and it shows the power of the gospel to change a life. (January 21, 2016 Hyderabad, India)

Romans 1:17 “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.”

Has His power changed your life? In what ways? Think of as many as you can and thank Him for it. Praise Him for His great power to overcome sin in the human heart.

Blog 414: BAD NEWS - GOOD NEWS

I’ve seen numerous car accidents in India, the most recent was yesterday. We’ve been in many close calls. But I’ve never been in an accident – until today that is. A water buffalo herd was crossing the major highway on which we were traveling. The front one was spooked by a car coming the other direction and bolted across the median and right into us. That’s the bad news.

Now for the good news. Despite being hit so hard that damage was done to the whole front and right (driver’s) side of the car, the buffalo was able to scramble to its feet and run off. If it had broken a leg or been killed it would have been a major, major problem. It would have cost at least \$2,000 to replace, and we would have missed today’s conference – if not more. Having Americans involved would have made it much worse. He was good enough to run off and we drove right off. That’s the next part of the good news. Despite a lot of cosmetic damage, the car still drives fine. And we got to the conference on time.

The time Satan tried to drown the boat Jesus was in to keep Him from going to deliver the Gadarenes demonized men came to mind (Mark 4:35 – 5:13). Jesus got to the Gadarenes men in time to bring deliverance, and we got to the conference in time to minister as planned. I had to quickly set up during the last song and start immediately, but we were there to get things going. Clearly God sent His angels to prevent what could have been a disastrous situation – the cow could have been thrown upon the hood and gone through the windshield! So, all in all, the good news outweighed the bad news today.

Storms may hit but the boat won’t sink if Jesus is in it. Just make sure you invite Jesus in the boat with you! (January 20, 2016 Hyderabad, India)

Mark 4:35-41 A furious squall came up, and waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ... Jesus got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be Still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

Romans 8:28 We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

Take a moment to look for the good news in your bad news today. Could it be that Satan is trying to defeat or discourage you? That won't happen unless you let it.

Blog 415: TELLING THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

I am a teacher. That's what God has called and gifted me to do. I've been teaching His word since 1963 and I love every minute of it. I don't know how it all works that people learn from me, but I know God gives me thoughts to express and somehow they form into sentences and out they come. I also love study, research and planning what I will say. I work hard to have good introductions, smooth transitions, helpful illustrations and clear applications. I outline what I want to say and follow my notes so as to communicate as effectively as possible.

In India, when I give the same message day after day for 3 weeks, then repeat it year after year, I have refined the wording so precisely that I have the very sentences themselves written down. Teaching 4 times a day 6 days a week (and 2 or 3 on Sunday) takes a lot of concentration and energy and can be very draining, so the more exact the notes the easier the task. That's how I do it.

At least that's how I did it. The main focus of my sessions this year is an overview of the Bible in 3 sessions (Old Testament, Life of Jesus, New Testament). But instead of presenting it in straight lecture form, I'll be doing it in story form. Storytelling is a very effective way to communicate, the most effective way in many cultures whose history and tradition uses storytelling to pass on information. That is the case in India. I enjoy using stories to communicate God's Word, and do it regularly when I dress in costume and become someone in the Bible. But I've never done it on a scale of the whole Bible. Yet I know that is what God wants me to do. He wants me to trust Him with the actual words and sentences to bring His Story alive.

I have short notes, a couple pages for each session. They help me keep the major events in proper order without passing over any. They remind me which magic trick is used when. But the teaching itself will be in the form of a story I'll develop as I go. One of the most difficult parts is to cover such a large portion of the Bible in a short time. I feel like I am fighting the clock every minute of the way.

To help people learn I will make a simple drawing of each main event and hang it in the front where all can see it and can draw their own smaller copy with paper and pencil we will provide (see pictures attached). The current book, "Bible Overview," will add much detail to the simple outline they will learn. But it's more than an outline, it traces God's plan for salvation from eternity past to eternity future. It's the greatest story ever told – and I get to tell it over and over in each 2-day conference (in some I will have 3 sessions, in other conferences I will use 6 sessions to cover it all). What could be a better way to spend my time that teaching this glorious story to those who only have a small, incomplete understanding of it! (January 21, 2016 Hyderabad, India)

Luke 24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

John 5:39 You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me,

Think about that story, the greatest story ever told, and what it has meant to your life. Look for opportunities to share the story with those you know.

(A future blog will begin a short summary of that wonderful story.)

Blog 416: NOT GOOD!

Every time God created something in Genesis 1 and 2 He said that it was good or very good. Every time that is until man was created. Then His response was, "It is not good." What was this first thing that God said was not good? It was Adam being alone before Eve was created. "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18) in many ways became my most quoted passage when in India. Truly, it is not good for me to be alone! I don't like crowds, at least not for very one, and I don't need to have lots of friends and acquaintances, but I do need one special person with whom I can share my heart and life. God has given me the perfect mate to meet that need – Nancy.

If you've been reading these blogs during the past years you know how I miss her when I am in India. I feel like I am only partly here, like a big part of me is missing. There is a large, empty hole in my heart. Pastor Moses know how it affects me. When he introduced us to his church our first Sunday here he said, "Now Pastor Jerry is full!" He was right! It's absolutely completely totally wonderful having her here with me. I was a bit concerned I wouldn't have to be as dependent on God with her here as I was without her, but that hasn't been the case. I am more 'me' and able to relate better with Him than when I am alone.

I hope each and every one of you have another human being with whom you feel completely and totally secure, safe and open. We are made to need someone with whom we have unconditional love and acceptance, someone know knows us better than we know ourselves yet loves us without reservation. This isn't the romantic, 'happily ever after,' love we sometimes think it is. It takes history together. I means years of sacrificing, forgiving (without being asked), putting the other first and yourself second and learning how to meet your mate's needs. It takes years of hard work. There must be total commitment on the part of both to do this. Hurts must be forgiven and forgotten immediately. Nancy and I are nowhere near perfect in this, we haven't arrived. We still miscommunicate; still hurt each other (intentionally or unintentionally) and still struggle with sacrifice. As long as we have a sin nature that will continue – and our sin natures are still very much alive and active!

I encourage you to forgive quicker, initiate sooner, sacrifice more and be willing to pay the price to become closer to your mate or whomever God has put in your life to fill up your empty spaces. It's not easy – nothing worthwhile is. But growing in my relationship with Nancy has done more than anything else in life to help me mature and grow to become more like Jesus. As you grow closer to another human being your ability to grow closer to God with greatly increase.

It's not good for a man (or woman) to be alone. It's not good for me to be alone. I thank God I don't have to be. It means more than words can express to have Nancy with me in India! (January 22, 2016 Hyderabad, India)

Genesis 2:18-25 The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him. ... So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Is there anything between you and your mate that you need to forgive, or ask forgiveness for? In what ways can you initiate a closer relationship? What are your greatest fears in totally opening

yourself up to God or allowing another to open themselves to you? Pray about this. Write down specific things you can do to draw closer to your mate.

Blog 417: THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD BEGINS (Old Testament)

(Following is a short summary of the first part of the story I tell the pastors in each conference. I usually take one or two hours to develop what I've summarized below.)

The story I tell the pastors starts with God, who always existed. At some point in time several thousand years ago He chose to create the world in 6, 24 hour days. He spoke and it came into being. The high point of His creation was Adam and Eve, the first people. He created man in His image, which means we had a free will so we could voluntarily choose to follow God and not be forced to like robots. That was very important to God. Unfortunately that also gave mankind the option to reject God and thus be condemned to separation from Him forever. To pay for man's sin, so we wouldn't be separated from Him, the Second Person of the Trinity volunteered to enter time as a human being and take on the payment for all of our sins. This was first revealed to man in Genesis 3:15, a key passage in the Bible. Satan will wound Jesus but Jesus will destroy Satan. The battle between God and Satan, which started in heaven with Satan's expulsion, now is fought on earth.

Adam and Eve, Cain and Able and on it goes to the days of Noah and the flood when things became so bad God brought judgment on those who followed Satan. After starting to repopulate the earth with Noah's family, judgment again came on the tower of Babel and those who followed Satan's rebellion against God.

God then chose one man to make a nation in order to reveal His truth and His Son to the world. Abraham followed God, despite times of unbelief. He was even willing to sacrifice his only son to God but didn't have to because God provided a sacrifice. Through this even God is teaching more about His Son, the ultimate sacrifice for all, who will die near the very location Abraham almost sacrificed Isaac.

Following Abraham the story continues with Isaac, Jacob and Joseph who was sold into slavery in Egypt and provided safety for his whole family to move there. Four hundred years later God used Moses to lead the people out of Egypt and prepare them to enter the promised land. God continued reveling His plan of redemption by having the people sacrifice a young male lamb and apply its blood to the house where they lived. In safety from the angel of death, the found nourishment in the body of the lamb. John the Baptizer called Jesus the "Lamb of God," showing this as a picture of what Jesus would sacrifice to protect and nourish those who believe in Him.

Joshua, a picture of Jesus, led the people into the Promised land. They had to follow and fight but God provided the victory. After settling the land a series of Judges ruled the land, people like Samuel, Gideon, Deborah and Samson. Ruth lived during this terrible time. Boaz became her kinsman-redeemer, another picture of the coming work of Jesus who, as our near relative (being human), was willing and able to pay the necessary price to redeem Ruth and Naomi from their bondage and poverty and restore them to a privileged place of honor.

Things got so bad during the time of the judges that they insisted on having a king, like the other nations. Saul, the first king, had no heart for God. David, the second, had a whole heart for God but Solomon, the third, only had a half heart for God. At the end of his reign the nation split into two. The northern 10 tribes, Israel, continued to rebel against God and were taken into captivity by Assyria. Shortly thereafter the southern kingdom, Judah, composed of 2 tribes, also went into captivity, this time to Babylon. God had sent many prophets to warn the people to turn back to him but the majority failed to do so and experienced His judgment instead. They also gave many prophecies of the coming Messiah and His future Kingdom.

After 70 years in captivity God allowed some Jews to return from Babylon to Palestine, fulfilling promises He made to establish His Kingdom through David's family forever! The Old Testament ends there in darkness and misery, awaiting God to come rescue them as He promised. (January 23, 2016 Hyderabad, India)

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

Psalms 11:9 He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever— holy and awesome is his name.

Think about this greatest of all stories today. Keep bringing your thoughts back to this part of it. Meditate on it. Thank God for it over and over and over. Think where your life would be without it!

(A future blog will continue this short summary of that wonderful story.)

BLOG 418: THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD CONTINUES (Life of Jesus) (India Update)

(Following is a short summary of the second part of the story I tell the pastors in each conference. I usually take one or two hours to develop what I've summarized below.)

The story of Jesus begins in eternity past with God the Son, part of the Trinity. He volunteered to come to earth to pay for man's sin. It was the only way God could give mankind a free will so he could voluntarily choose to follow Him, yet pay for the sin and disobedience that was sure to be part of every person's life. This put Him in direct conflict with Satan and his kingdom of darkness.

That battle started in Eden when God said Satan would painfully would Jesus but that Jesus would be the ultimate victor and destroy Satan. Throughout the Old Testament God kept revealing more and more of His plan of redemption to man: a substitute provided for Isaac, the Passover Lamb being sacrificed, Ruth's kinsman-redeemer, blood sacrifices, Joshua leading the people to victory against their enemies, prophets who gave many prophecies about the coming Messiah and many others. So when Jesus came the stage had been set, the foundation laid, and all was in order for God's plan of redemption to be accomplished.

Jesus, the perfect One who was both God and man, was miraculously, born into a human family. He grew to manhood, facing all the temptations anyone faces, but never sinning. At 30 years of age He publically committed Himself to following God's will and beginning walking the path that led to the cross. He was baptized by John and tempted by Satan in the wilderness, a continuation of His battle with Satan which began in heaven and moved to earth in Eden.

Jesus used miracles to show He was God and had power over nature and even demons. If He could heal physical bodies He could heal spiritual souls. Slowly He gathered a small following of those who traveled with Him and learned from Him. He taught and trained them to carry His story to others who would pass it on to still others until it would reach everyone on earth.

Most, however, rejected His teachings because they didn't want to admit their sin and recognize their need of His forgiveness. This culminated with His crucifixion, a most horrible and painful death. While on the cross the battle between Him and Satan reached its climax. God the Father and Spirit withdrew their presence and Jesus, as a man, faced the penalty for all the sin of the world alone. As was prophesied in Genesis 3:15, though, despite being badly beaten, Jesus was the ultimate victor over sin, Satan and death.

His resurrection 3 days later followed by His ascension back to heaven concluded this part of the story of redemption. God is the victor, redemption is provided! (January 26, 2016 Hyderabad, India)

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Think about this greatest of all stories today. Keep bringing your thoughts back to this part of it. Meditate on it. Thank God for it over and over and over. Think where your life would be without it!

(A future blog will conclude this short summary of that wonderful story.)

BLOG 419: THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD CULMINATES (New Testament)

(Following is a short summary of the third and final part of the story I tell the pastors in each conference. I usually take one or two hours to develop what I've summarized below.)

The final part of the story of redemption, which started in Genesis 1:1 and continued through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, found its culmination in the rest of the New Testament. The disciples Jesus trained took what they had learned and spread the message of Jesus and redemption to whomever would listen. Peter, the first leader of the early church, was filled with God's Spirit and courageously preached the good news of the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

Despite great persecution and opposition, the church kept growing in quality and quantity. Stephen was martyred for his faith and many believers scattered, taking the gospel with them. The disciples scattered in various directions preaching and teaching about Jesus and the free redemption He offers to all who will receive it. Philip as well traveled and preached.

Even Paul, the great persecutor of the church, came to saving faith and became a great church planter traveling throughout the Roman Empire starting churches and writing letters which would later become part of our New Testament. In them he explains and applies all the aspects of Christ's saving work on the cross for us.

As the early church grew, so did Satan's opposition to it. Severe persecution broke out, driving the church underground in many places. Great numbers of believers were martyred, including Peter and Paul. But the truth could not be stopped and the gospel continued to spread. Even when the Roman Empire itself faded and fell the gospel continued to spread. Its effectiveness was slowed during the Dark Ages, but exploded out again following the Reformation. The growth, and persecution of the church, has continued to this very day.

The next even on God's program is the rapture, when Jesus appears in the sky to take His children, the church, home to be with Him forever. While we are celebrating in heaven with Jesus, the terrible 7 year tribulation will take place on earth. God will begin judging unbelieving mankind. It will be unbelievably bad, but also will be done in such a way as to show man his need of God's redemption so man will turn to Him and escape the judgment. Unfortunately very few will do so, and most of them will be martyred.

Then at the end of the seven years Jesus will return defeat and destroy Satan and all who follow him. This final battle will culminate what started in heaven before the creation of the earth and came to the earth in Eden. Jesus will assert His victory at the cross and reestablish His Kingdom on earth forever, as foretold so often by the prophets. We will live with Him in perfection forever and ever and ever. I could say that is the end of the story, but it really isn't for this story never ends, and neither will our time with Him! (January 27, 2016, Hyderabad, India)

Acts 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

Ephesians 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

Think about this greatest of all stories today. Keep bringing your thoughts back to this part of it. Meditate on it. Thank God for it over and over and over. Think where your life would be without it!

Blog 420: NO PLAN B

Every time I go to India I have a backup plan for everything. I have a place B Coe e everything important. The chance of the unforeseen and unexpected happening are great so I have another way to do everything from taking, downloading and storing pictures, audio recordings and videos. I also have alternate plans for my teaching notes, magic, health and backup food needs as well accessing finances. I have learned to be quite creative and innovative because I know I will need them. This trip I've had to use my plan B, even C in some cases. Teaching notes, magic and video storage has utilized my secondary plans.

Two days ago my voltage converter from 220 to 110 to recharge my laptop, Kindle, iPhone digital and video camera batteries burnt up. In order to keep going I have alternate ways to power them.

As I was thinking about how important all my backup plans are to the success of what I want to do here the thought hit me. God had no a backup plan for our salvation! There was no plan B if Jesus failed. That was it - it was all or nothing. And we have no alternate available if we reject Him. God put all His marbles in Jesus's basket. Praise God He came through in flying colors! (January 27, 2016 Hyderabad, India)

Acts 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

Pause for a few moments and thank Him that His A Plan didn't fail, and think of what that means to you!

Blog 421: WELL, WELL, WELL

A second (and third) water well has been drilled. Pastor Moses made the arrangements for these in Mellamaru, a village we visit every year. It is Moses' home village, where his mother lived until her death 2 years ago and where I had the privilege of delivering the message at her funeral. One hundred families (90 men, 96 women, 76 children) live there and they had no well. The old one was polluted and covered in mud. When they heard of the first water well that was dug they asked if they could have one in their village. Since the cost was far less than was donated, a second smaller well was dug on the other side of the village. These wells are provided by Mark Brister Ministries whom Pastor Moses and I met in Tulsa last September. We have a wonderful working relationship with this fine man and ministry.

Before this well the women had to walk very far to get water and bring it home to use. After long days in the field this was a great burden. They were very happy, just overwhelmed to have a well provided. The head of the village said he asked the government for a well 25 times and they always agreed but never did it. When Pastor Moses offered and oversaw the digging of this well (wells) this man said that there is a God and that is Jesus Christ. He said he wants to believe in Jesus as his Savior. Many others see this as a blessing from God and are much more open to hear about Jesus and salvation. Even the government is pleased and encourages us to dig more wells.

Pastor Moses said he has had requests from 20 other villages to also have wells. This is a tremendous opening for pastors and Christians to speak out to the people about Jesus. If Christians care about them enough to give them clean water when no one else does, then there must really be something special about Christians and the Christ they follow! Physical water opens the way to share about the spiritual living water that brings eternal nourishment to our souls through Jesus. (January 28, 2016 Hyderabad, India)

Revelation 6:16-17 'Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them,' nor any scorching heat. 17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; 'he will lead them to springs of living water.' 'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'"

Revelation 22:16-17 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." 17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

Thank God for meeting your spiritual thirst and providing His living water in Jesus. Pray for those you know who need but don't have this in their lives.

Blog 422: PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

Rev. Lesley Wade, pastor of Central Hunterdon Baptist Church in Flemmington, NJ, is along with us and a great help and encouragement. He contributes in many ways. He sends a blog to his supporters. I thought you'd benefit from a recent one he sent. What is written below is written by him.

Today was a most humbling experience. It's Sunday and after going to church at Pastor Moses' church, we headed out to meet and greet some of God's children living in abject poverty. We visited three churches in the "Dalit" communities. Dalit means "broken, ground-down, downtrodden or oppressed."

In my years as a federal prosecutor, before becoming a pastor, I saw some acutely egregious situations, but I have never seen anything so chronically horrific. The people live in oppressive circumstances. There seems to be no opportunity for them. They told me the government comes in from time to time and levels their homes. They are forced out for a time and then return to rebuild with what little they have left.

Still in these communities, there are faithful pastors who, together with their wives and children, minister to their communities. One pastor, his wife, daughter and son live in a 5 foot by 8 foot tent. Their bed is a piece of plastic laid on the ground. Still they love the Lord Jesus Christ. Their churches faithfully worship and follow Jesus Christ.

We were greeted with smiling faces and the words "praise the Lord!" Worship was just as it can be in the USA: singing and clapping, passionate prayers; and biblical teaching. What a wonderful time of authentic worship.

At each of the churches, I had the great privilege to speak. As I spoke to one church, they had no structure to cover our heads. So we sat in the sun. They honored us by giving us chairs in which to sit. Ants crawl out from under the tarp on which they sat. An 8 inch rat (not including the tail!) scampered through the nearby trash. I wish my terrier, Charlie, was here. He would have made

short work of that nasty rat! None of this mattered...we were worshipping our Lord as brothers and sisters...dressed different, speaking different languages, from very different backgrounds...but still family. This day certainly put into perspective some of the "first world problems," we face in our churches!

Yes, as I look at the photos below, my heart weeps. Nevertheless, I will look back on this day with joy as I met some of the folks with which I will share eternal paradise. We laughed together about the fact that one glorious day we would say (without the need for an interpreter), "I remember you. I met you when I visited India. It's great to worship with you again!"

Enjoy the photos. You will see those in which the people are waving. They are sending you greetings and love from their churches to ours. Rev. Lesley Wade (January 29 2016 Hyderabad, India)

1 Corinthians 12:26-27 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Pray for fellow believers throughout the world who don't have what you have. We are all members of the same body, brothers and sisters in Jesus, and will spend eternity together in heaven. Pray for them now and thank God for them. They are not perfect. They struggle and sin as we do, pray for them to live faithfully for Jesus.

Blog 423: LOOKING BACK - 10 YEAR PERSPECTIVE

The recent pastors' conference went very well. God blesses each one. No two are exactly, and some touch me more than others for various reasons. This recent one was specifically significant and touching to me. It was in the same conference building as my very first pastors' conference 10 years ago this month. In fact, 3 of the pastors with us for this conference were at that very first one. I've really been thinking about all the conferences since and the difference in me between then and now.

At that first conference I was totally inexperienced and without confidence or rapport with the men, but they accepted me anyway and God used what I tried to say. Since then I've had 120 days of conferences in India (over 400 teaching sessions) and taught over 5,000 pastors and 1,500 wives. I've written 5 books with almost 50,000 copies in print. I've spent a total of over 7 months in India. It's totally humbling to be part of what God has been doing during this time. I've changed and learned quite a bit in these 10 years. Not to mention that I've gotten 10 years older!

I've grown tremendously from the hard stretching I get when coming to India. I've also learned much about training pastors here. In the early years I worked must hard and put in longer hours. I'd teach 4 session a day to pastors, then visit several churches in the afternoon and evening. We'd stay in pastor's homes, using their bed while they slept on the floor. I eaten their food, drawn water from their wells and picked fruit from their trees, used their bathrooms (a bucket of water and hole in the floor) and extensively used every mode of travel in India. Those were wonderful experiences and rich times of fellowship and learning. I'm very glad I experienced them, but I'm just as glad I don't do ministry here that way anymore.

Now I teach 3 sessions a day, we drive in a car that has been provided for Pastor Moses, we have a well trained and very efficient cadre of pastors preparing our meetings in each place we go. We stay in very nice hotels with free continental breakfasts and we get to bed at a decent time each night. We have larger venues than in the past and hold 2-day conferences instead of one day. So we train a greater number of pastors and have each of them for twice as long without increasing the length of our time in India (always about 4 weeks).

I like to think we work smarter, not harder now. The quantity of what we do is not as great, but the quality more than makes up for that. And the influence of many thousands of books in many thousands of homes reaches far more people, and in a deeper way, than I could in 12 months of teaching and visiting all day every day.

From the bottom of my heart I say this is totally all God's doing, He makes all this happen and uses it for His glory. For 30 years He has been training and equipping me for this season of ministry. I am completely humbled, beyond words, at the end of each conference to be part this important effort. What a glorious privilege it is for me to meet and teach these pastors – the front-line foot soldiers fighting for God's Kingdom in India. What wonderful, dedicated, sacrificial but still sinful and in-progress men they are! Thanks so very much for your prayers and financial gifts, for without them none of this would be happening. (January 30, 2016 Hyderabad, India)

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all things that I have commanded them, and lo, I am with you, even to the end of the age!"

Blog 424: COMMENTS BY PASTORS & BY NANCY

Testimonies:

Things we hear repeated over and over after every conference. They call Pastor Moses and tell him these things after the conferences as well:

"We never had a conference like this in 20 years I have been coming. Please come back next year and stay longer." (Except for one village we visit every year we always go to new places every year. We can make the biggest difference here by going to new pastors, teaching them and leaving books with them.)

"Now I understand the Bible and about God's plan of salvation for me. I see how the whole Bible fits together and speaks of Jesus throughout. I want to use these pictures and teach these stories of the Bible Overview to my people."

"Now I know how to have victory over demons in my church. I am no longer afraid of them."

Almost every session someone comes to be taking they get attacked by demons at night, or in their body, every day, and don't know what to do about it Now they know!

"I have learned how to be a good husband. I want to be a better shepherd to my number one sheep." One man told us he made a vow that morning to never beat his wife again.

"Thank you so much for these wonderful books. We don't have anything like this. I will study and learn them, and I will preach them to my people. Thank you so much!"

Nancy's observations and comments:

You know you are in India when:

children come to church and sit for 3 hours, equipped with a bag of chips.

at 5' 4" I am the tallest female of any age here

women are clean and spotless but streets are not

women are gentle and quiet, and the men are exuberant

People think it is totally acceptable to ask a woman her age, her weight or her income

Goats stroll along a 4-lane highway medial strip by a shepherd talking on a cell phone

Lanes lines down the middle of the road are for decoration

Driving in India is best suited for those with serious thrill issues and a death wish

You can identify the type of vehicle behind you by the sound of the horn. (Pastor Moses would be safer with a fog horn !)

Women ride side- saddle on the back of a motor scooter, carrying 1-2 children and a goat

It is polite and expected to honk as you pass a car, on either side of the car or road

Cheese is really butter

Hot spicy curry chicken & rice is a breakfast item

Time is a fluid concept.... No one seems to wear a watch and there are no clocks in the rooms or stores, churches etc. Scheduling a time frame seems to imply "open house" approach.... "come any time between the start and finish time" ! (January 31, 2016 Vijayawada, India)

This is my short list.. more coming tomorrow !!!

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal.....

Look at your life in America through the eyes of someone from a different culture who is now in the USA. Pray for those you know who grew up in a different culture. Ask God to bring some into your life in the near future, then commit to reaching out to them in love and acceptance.

Blog 425: NANCY'S OBERVATIONS & JERRY'S UPDATE

FOOD

I saw a high tech reverse osmosis water filtering system in the home of a large church pastor. Others buy water coolers with filtering systems

Chai means tea, but it is strong tea with milk and sugar, or it can be more like coffee with milk and sugar

Tuna packs are my staple

Freshly picked roasted corn on the cob is a street food

Southern Indians love spices. They even add salt to their bottled water.

Coke and Pepsi are universal. "Thumbs Up" is the local brand

On one intersection in Hyderabad we saw a Pappa Johns, Dominos and Pizza Hut

In January there is abundance of watermelon, mini bananas, papayas, pineapples, tomatoes, apples, grapes and oranges

A crowd of children and adults quickly gathers when candy is passed out

Hot green chili peppers are disguised as green beans waiting to give you a chemical burn in your mouth (the voice of experience!)

I regret having brought only 5 boxes of Candy Canes. I could have used 100.

All candy is called chocolate.

SOME THINGS CHANGE

Noticeable decrease in mosquitos

More cars and scooters, less bicycles

More street food vendors, some selling things like helmets and face masks

More construction – all concrete

The villages are the same as they were hundreds of years ago except for some new wells(thank you, CTO donors)

Hindu temples dot the roadways, both small and massive

Stricter rules controlling evangelism and enforcement of those rules both result in a greater need for national pastors to be trained quickly

Cows and beggars are gone from the streets in the cities but water buffalo are still herding on the highways outside the town and cities

There are now roadside stops on large highways – with usable toilets

Prescriptions are now being required for some drugs

Christian persecution is increasing, freedom to evangelize is less (February 1, 2016 Vijayawada, India)

INDIA UPDATE: We have many nice things here, comforts you may not expect us to have. Our hotels are nice, clean, safe and have free continental breakfasts with healthy food we like. The wi-fi is very weak but usable. Laundry service is inexpensive and well done. Bottled water is plentiful. Pastor Moses' car gives us comfortable travel, lots of time to talk (and write blogs, organize pictures and audio recordings) and view beautiful India countryside. We eat some Indian food supplied for the pastors at lunch supplemented with out tuna packs and power bars. Our evening meal is at an Indian restaurant and consists of something we can find that isn't as spicy as Indians like. Last night we went into the very large very modern shopping mall across the street from us. Leslie ate at KFC and Nancy and I split a Domino's pizza. Pastor Moses ate Indian food at the restaurant. Life is good!

Psalm 23 The Lord is My Shepherd, I shall not be in need. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside still waters, He restores my soul.

Its easy to get in the habit of negative thinking. Instead, make a mental list of all you have to be grateful for today. Be as detailed and complete as you can. Thank God for these things, one by one. Try to keep them before you all day so you don't slip back into negative thinking.

Blog 426: SUNDAY IN INDIA

I don't know how your Sunday was, but I bet it wasn't like ours! We went to 6 different churches, each pastored by a man we help support financially and who helps work with our conferences in India. The first was a new church started by Pastor Krupia. They meet on a porch but are hoping for money to build a shed on the roof of the house. I spoke about Daniel and the importance of being faithful.

Next we went to Pastor Caleb's church where I talked about Esther and God's control of everything, so we can trust Him. An old man shared a testimony about how he had worshipped idols but got very sick, so bad he couldn't get out of bed. The doctor said he would die. Someone told him about Jesus and he believed, so a pastor came and prayed for him 2 times. Slowly but surely he got better and now he walks to church every time it is open. A young woman in a green sari said she had worshipped idols and someone put a curse on her causing her whole body to swell up. She heard about Jesus, believed and was healed. Others, including a Gypsie woman whose son is the head of their village (animistic beliefs) shared about her faith in Jesus. Many had idolatry in their back ground and demonic oppression was everywhere. We prayed for them against that before we left.

The third church was led by Pastor David. It was a church I had been out several times and had spoken and prayed at the church dedication. We had helped them with the construction of the church. There I spoke about Jesus healing the Syrophoenician woman's daughter, even though she was an outcast and rejected by all.

Then we went to Pastor Krupia's main church, another one I had been at several times before, including for a pastor's conference. I talked about the leper Jesus healed (I spoke about something different at each place for the sake of Pastor Moses, Nancy and Leslie who had to listen to me every time). I know the pastor there quite well. In fact I was part of an impromptu baptismal service he had 6 years ago and baptized several people in the local canal after chasing the water buffalo away. I didn't have anything to change into with me so he loaned me one of his pants. Anyway, one of the women I

baptized that day was in church and actually had a picture of me baptizing her with her in her Bible (which she received that day as well). I was touched beyond words! What a blessing to be part of the lives of these fine people! A man wanted me to baptize him but after that one year I have refused to do so. I don't want them thinking there is something extra spiritual about being baptized by the American (1 Corinthians 1:11-17).

Pastor Raj's church was next. It's on a porch in a Gypsie village where they catch snakes and sell the skins for a living. They also make and sell Gypsie jewelry. I spoke about healing the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years, even though everyone rejected her.

Finally we went to Pastor Rasad Rau's church. I had been here 6 years ago as well and remember it clearly for he was an old man with 11 women in his church, so I talked about Jesus only having 11 disciples for Him to train. Today there were almost 40 people there, most of them young men!

Praise God for Sundays like this – hope yours was memorable as well! (February 2, 2016 Vijayawada, India)

Psalm 100 Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness, come before Him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us and we are His. We are His people, the sheep of His pasture. Enter His courts with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name. For the Lord is good and His love endures forever. His faithfulness through all generations.

Thank God for Sundays. Thank God for His people throughout the world who worship Him in so many different places and ways. Pray for His people everywhere, especially those in greatest need at this time.

Blog 427: INDIA PASTORS, CHURCHES & CHRISTIANS by Nancy

PASTORS

Gracious, exuberant Christian men that love to praise the Lord
The average age of pastors is somewhere between 19 and 30.
Pentecostals pastors respond to all of Jerry's tricks easily. The Baptists- half and half. The Wesleyans are the toughest crowd to make laugh.

DRESS

It seems like married women wear saris, not unmarried women
The wedding color is red, not white
In the city, Jerry is one of the few men wearing India clothes
There are 600 million different saris, and no two are alike
People wear goose down jackets when it is 70 degrees

CHURCH & CHRISTIANS

The volume on the PA is always cranked UP high .
In church when the floor seating starts to get crowded everyone simultaneously, like a wave, moves closer to the side and front – usually under the prompting of the pastor's wife.
Singing in church goes from 1 to 1 ½ hours without a break
Many Christians know what they believe but they don't know why they believe it. Apologetics is weak here.
Men and women spontaneously take turns leading the singing
Women are not afraid of sparkle, glitz or color

If you ask someone to read a passage of Scripture three people start reading aloud in a seconds!
(February 3, 2016 Vijayawada, India)

Matthew 6:25-27 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about the body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food or the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air, they do not reap or store away in barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more important than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to His life?”

What observations about your life might others notice? We don't see the strange things in us. Try to look at your life today from the life of strangers. It will be interesting.

Blog 428: INDIA CULTURE & CRAZINESS by Nancy

CULTURE

As Western thought integrates into the Indian culture, so have blue jeans

Coconut oil effectively smooth's out the frizzes in ones hair & it smells good, too.

Decorative rugs made of plant leaves are easily hosed down and make excellent flooring

The famous Indian “head bobble” still confuses me. I think it means a noncommittal “OK” (not yes, no or maybe, just recognizing they heard what was said)

You can't tell the difference between ancient ruins and abandoned construction

Straight, heterosexual men hold hands or put their arms around each other to walk, but it is not culturally acceptable for a husband and wife to hold hands in public

Very few people smoke cigarettes in India

There are fewer people begging on the main streets of the big cities & towns

There is very little ethnic diversity in India. We still get starred at but nor as much as before

It's an interesting mix of Telegu and English with a British accent

GOTTA LOVE CRAZINESS

The hotel room does not have clocks so we use Jerry's Kindle. During the night I disabled it so it reverted to Eastern Standard Time, When I woke up later I thought it was 6:30 AM so I stayed up rather than take a chance of oversleeping. Turns out it was 5 in the morning

Time is a fluid concept. There are no clocks in the hotel rooms or in the churches. Most people don't wear watches. So if the sign says the conference starts at 9 then the singing starts at 10 and the speaking starts at 11. But we always finish on time.

MISCELLANEOUS

Shekina, Moses' daughter, is joyful, expressive, mature, confident and articulate. She leads the other teens.

Jerry's magic tricks still make me smile.

Goats eat the cotton in the cotton fields

In January its clear blue sides and a perfect 72 degrees.

The villages are green and the cities are tan

Scenic fields of rice and green pastures with herds of rambling goats fill the scenery

A sea of bright white smiling teeth in a crown of dark faced pastors is wonderful to see

There are fewer mosquitoes and bikes, but more motor scooters and cars (February 4, 2016 Vijayawada, India)

Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

As Americans we tend to think we do everything right, more so than those who do things differently than us. What can we learn from the wisdom of other cultures? What foreign cultures have been exposed to? What can you glean from them to make your life richer?

INDIA UPDATE We usually eat fruit and vegetables at the continental breakfast in the hotel. For lunch we eat some rice and India food supplemented with tuna packs and bread. For supper the last 2 nights we've gone to the mall across the street which I told you about before. We get egg omelets from a place that specializes in healthy food. Most of the places in the food court serve American or Chinese food with some Indian thrown in. Last night we saw a group of white young people and talked with them. They are here with YWAM spreading the gospel in various ways each day. It was very encouraging for them and us to have the instant bonding one has with another believer, especially doing the same thing in the same place in India. They are all from the US. I prayed for them before leaving. Tonight we met another group of white people there. The mall is the most westernized place in the whole town (size of Philadelphia). They are art students traveling through India and studying their various forms of art. One was from Eastern Europe, 3 from Germany, 1 from Canada and 1 from Lititz, PA. It was great talking with them in English and sharing impressions of India. They said they were very encouraged by talking to us, especially by Nancy's happy smile!

Blog 429: RANDOM LESSONS & BLESSINGS by Jerry

COMFORTS & BLESSINGS

Nice hotels and hotel rooms with (mostly) good healthy food and Wi-Fi

Pastor Moses' car to travel, good conversations while driving

Emails of encouragement and support from people at home

Plentiful bottled water

Beautiful scenery in the country-side we drive through

God's multiple blessings unexpectedly showered on us over and over and over and over

I get to wear comfortable sandals when traveling and go barefoot all day teaching!

The weather is great – no coat or jacket when going out, in fact most places don't have windows (some not even walls) so we enjoy the nice weather in the villages all day

After each conference, each one comes forward, I give them travel money & books, look them in eye, say "Praise the Lord" and shake their hands. I think about how each one is loved by God, special to Him, unique, called, gifted but faced with their own sin struggles. I feel a great oneness with these men and wives and know I'll spend time with them in heaven!

HOW LONG WILL I KEEP DOING THIS?

How long will I keep doing this? As long as God wants – leaders here say long time, 10 – 20 more years. A pastor prayed fervently for God to extend my years so I can keep doing this important work and it was if God said to my heart that He would be doing that. He's said that to me on my 60th birthday as well. Still, almost since the beginning we have been praying for the right pastor to come along to help with the work now and take over in the future. We keep praying that. It's God's ministry, He will provide when and if He wants.

DON'T IDOLIZE CHRISTIAN CHRISTIANS

Don't see them as more perfect, committed, right in God's sight, etc. They have the same sin nature we have, fight the same enemy and world, and give in to the same flesh. They struggle with pride,

immaturity, greed, self-promotion, bickering, jealousy, lust, adultery, etc. as we do. We see it every day. They may have far less than us, but they are used to it – its all they know. They may have a higher price to pay to follow Jesus, but that isn't a bad thing. We are to be pitied, not them. Someone once said that the church can stand anything but success, and the church in the USA has been very successful. (February 5, 2016 Vijayawada, India)

YOU KNOW YOU ARE IN INDIA WHEN

Fast food takes 30 minutes, and that's with no one else in line

VERSES THAT HAVE SPOKEN TO ME WHILE HERE

“Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart”. Galatians 6:9

“To this end I labor, struggling with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me.” Colossians 1:29

What are some verses that God is using in your life now to minister to you? If you can't think of any, ask Him to point you to some. Read your Bible and listen to His Spirit as He ministers His truths to your spirit.

Blog 430: STRETCHING COMES BEFORE BLESSING

STRETCHING COMES BEFORE BLESSING

Great blessings come, but only AFTER stretching, never before. There is no shortcut for us. There was no shortcut for Jesus. His stretching came before His blessing. That's how it is for the pastors in India. It's how it is for me, It's how it is for you as well. There are no exceptions. Stretching comes before blessing.

GOD IS MORE INTERESTED IN THE PROCESS THAN THE PRODUCT

We are more interested in the product than the process, it's the opposite with God. We want quick answers, bottom line guidance from Jesus. God is more interested in the process than the product. God uses the process to stretch us, teach us to listen, motivate us to obey, help us learn patience and develop greater trust and faith.

GOD NEVER WASTES ANYTHING

He never wastes the time we spend waiting. He uses it to grow patience and sensitivity in us. He never wastes the obstacles confronting us. He uses them to strengthen our faith. They are opportunities to trust Him more. God never wastes our anxiety and stress. He uses it to bring us closer to Him for peace and rest. God never wastes our tears and pain. He uses every bit of it for His glory and our growth. God never wastes our sin and failure, He somehow works to bring good from it (Romans 8:28) as we learn and grow spiritually. (February 6, 2016 Vijayawada, India)

VERSE GOD HAS USED TO STRENGTHEN ME THIS TRIP

“Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:22-23

What has God allowed in your life to stretch you in the past? What have you learned from it? What is He trying to teach you through the stretching you are going through now? How has God used the truth of Romans 8:28 in your life? How has He used things that aren't good to bring something good for you or others.

Blog 431: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

It's time for a quick summary of our trip.

THE GOOD: It's been the easiest trip for me yet. Having Nancy makes all the difference, plus we are learning each year how to be more effective while better pacing ourselves. The topics covered have been the most effective so far and the response has been overwhelming. The books are so very, very important and minister in thousands of places all year long. None of us have had any long, serious illness – little stuff on and off but nothing big.

THE BAD: The worst part is that there are so very many pastors who want us to come to their area for a conference, and we can only go to a small percent of them. Every place we go they beg us to come back again, but we can't do that if we want to reach new pastors. Perhaps one day I can go twice a year, and God will send some other experienced pastors who are willing to come and lead conferences as well. Also it was a disappointment we didn't have the Bible Overview books to give out. Eventually a copy will find its way into the hands of many of the pastors who came.

THE UGLY: Persecution increases in India, faster than anywhere else in the world (Chuck Colson Ministries statement). It is noticeably evident. We must be ever more careful, so must pastors and Christians. They still boldly proclaim the message. It is harder for our organization to get money to India and harder for those here who receive it. All indications are it will continue to get worse for the next 5 years at least. I must renew my Visa this year, pray that goes smoothly! Sometimes USA pastors are denied Visas, or if they have one, denied entrance into the country.

THE FUTURE: Books are a great way to spread the word here, even if we can no longer come. All year long they minister. For most pastors they are the only ministry books they have besides a Bible. I have written "How to Study the Bible" and will soon complete "How to Prepare and Deliver Sermons." We hope to have them read for next year. I have been asked to prepare a book on apologetics (how we know God exists, the Bible is true and Jesus is God). I have taught that often but it isn't in a format for pastors here. Also books on discipleship, counseling, and more detailed book on spiritual warfare are requested. I'll have more time to prepare these as I retire but we need the money to translate, type set, print, ship and store these books. The new books will be \$15,000 each, more if they take long for prices are rising quickly here. My main prayer request is for money for these books. The amount of material they contain for pastors is way beyond what I can teach in a conference. I think they are the greatest ministry we have here, and they will continue producing until Jesus comes! Many US Christians are now giving money for water wells in India (\$1000 each) and, while that is definitely a worthy project, providing spiritual water for their eternal souls is the greatest gift we can give them. (February 7, 2016 Vijayawada, India)

John 4:13-14 Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

It's not only India where this living water is needed. Jesus said to start in Jerusalem, in our own neighborhood. Ask God to show you how you can share His water with thirsty souls today, then be alert to opportunities to do so.

Blog 432: NO ENTRANCE WITHOUT A BOARDING PASS

From the moment you enter an airport to *the moment* you get off the plane, there is one piece of paper that takes on great importance. It is the 'Boarding Pass.' It seems everybody wants to know

if you have one. Person after person looks at it, looks at you, and then looks at the pass again. Finally they nod their head, return your pass to you, and *allow you to proceed* to the next person and does the same thing.

'No admittance beyond this point without a boarding pass' the signs all say. We with passes move ahead, *but* the rest cannot enter. You can't pick up a pass on the way; you have to *attain* it before entering – and there is a high price for purchase. *Passes* don't come cheap!

I can't help but *be reminded* of our boarding pass into heaven: the blood of Jesus. It certainly didn't come cheap or easy to us, either. And it is the only ticket in. God will look at our *pass*, and *in we will* go. He will not criticize us, how we are dressed, how much we own, our education, and/or our accomplishments. It is all in the pass. The blood of Jesus is our pass. *It was* shed on Calvary for us. It will get us right into heaven. *The ticket* has been paid for and is available to anyone who desires it. This means humbly recognizing your need of God's forgiveness and gratefully accepting this free gift. *Upon acceptance*, you have it and cannot lose it. It's your guarantee into heaven. When it's time to board, you'll be ready. Do you have your pass? Do you thank God for it? Please do so – and don't leave home without it! (February 8, 2016, Hyderabad, India, based on a blog written in 2004)

I John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.

Do you have your boarding pass all ready to go? You don't have to wait until 24 hours before your flight to get your boarding pass from God. Make sure you have it now, then there'll be nothing to worry about when the time comes that you need it.

Blog 433: PASSENGER PICKUP –THE END OF THE LINE

What a joy and relief it is to get off a flight, gather your luggage, and find a loved one waiting for you there! We search the sea of faces in joyous anticipation of seeing the one we know, the one who has come just for us. There is a happy reunion with someone special whom you haven't seen in a long time. There's much to talk about and a lot to get caught up on. No matter how difficult the flight was, it is all over, it is in the past, and it is quickly forgotten because of what lies before us.

I think that is how going to heaven will be. It will not matter whether the transition is quick and easy, or long and difficult. When we cross over, we will be greeted by the familiar faces of lost loved ones. The past will be forgotten in the excitement of finally having arrived. There will be so much to talk about, so much joy. Never again will there be a good-bye.

Not only will our loved ones be there to meet and greet us, but the One Who paid for our ticket will be there as well to welcome us to our eternal home. What a joyous arrival that will be, overshadowing anything we have experienced on earth. Coming home to loved ones. To Jesus. (February 9, 2016 Hyderabad, India, based on a blog written in 2004)

Revelation 22:1-5 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

Do you long for heaven like you long for your destination after a long and difficult flight? Do you have as much joy in your anticipation of seeing Jesus as you do in your anticipation of seeing your loved ones when you travel? Spend some time thinking about what that reunion will be like. Picture it in your mind, when Jesus grabs you and hugs you, assuring you of His love and eternal life with Him.

Blog 434: AIRPORT DELAYS – A WAY OF LIFE

We made it home safely – on the second try! The first flight from London to Philadelphia was diverted back to Dublin when a woman had heart attack symptoms. Actually it was Nancy who took care of her and made the decision to turn that gigantic plane around and go back. From Dublin we flew back to London. 28 hours after getting up we got 2 hours sleep in a nice London hotel (provided by airline) then headed back to the airport for a second attempt at a trip to PA. That turned into a 25 hour day from when we got up to when we got to bed in PA, although we did sleep on and off in the airplane. This is why we don't want you to stop praying yet!

The following blog was written before all this happened on our trip home but certainly applies!

When was the last time your plans were disrupted because your flight left too early or arrived too early? *No, that* doesn't seem to be a problem we have to deal with. *But* leaving late and arriving late, *now that* is all too common. We rush to get to the gate on time only to find we must sit for 2 or 3 hours because the flight is delayed. I've had delays of up to 5 to 7 hours. Plans change. Connecting flights are missed. Our carefully *designed schedules must be reworked. Everything is totally out of our control*, so we sit patiently and wait.

However, in life when plans are changed or delays arise, we react much differently. Adrenaline starts to flow, our blood pressure rises, we plot and plan *tenaciously to regain control*. We become consumed with the need to get everything back to our predetermined schedule. Really, we have no more *control over our lives* than we do over *airline schedules*. Actually, we only think we can fight the delays that come our way in real life.

How much better off we would be if we realized that usually there is nothing we can do to make things better, but any number of things we can do to make them worse. Has God changed the timing of something in your life? Are you battling unexpected delays? There's usually a good reason for them: icy runway, problems with the engine, etc. Do you really want to force yourself into an unsafe situation? Be patient. Wait. Accept that you are not in control. Trust those who make the arrangements. Trust God. He'll get you where He wants you to go – but it will be in His timing, not yours. (February 10, 2016 somewhere over the Atlantic Ocean coming home)

Ecclesiastes 7:8 The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride.

Colossians 1:11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,

James 5:7 Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.

Would you say you are a patient person? Would your family and friends say you are patient? What about God, would He say you have enough patience? If not, confess your impatience and ask for the fruit of His spirit – patience (Galatians 5:22-23).

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Water wells for India: Jesus, The Water of Life (Psalm 63:1; Psalm 42:1-2)

Water, physical & spiritual: Blog 401: Life-Giving Water (John 4:10-15)

Water, physical & spiritual: Jesus, The Water of Life (Psalm 63:1; Psalm 42:1-2)

Weak and strong: Blog 334: Are You Ready? (2 Corinthians 10:12; 13:4; Ephesians 6:10)

Weak, strong: Blog 173: Random Thoughts (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

Weak/strong: Blog 225: India Summary 2014 (2 Corinthians 12:10)

Weakness: Blog 334: Are You Ready? (2 Corinthians 10:12; 13:4; Ephesians 6:10)

Well, water: Blog 421: Well, Well, Well (Revelation 6:16-17; 22:16-17)

What God Expects, faithfulness: Blog 381: "So How Did It Go?" (1 Corinthians 4:2; Matthew 6:33)

Wife need Husband: Blog 416: Not Good (Genesis 2:18-25)

Wife: Blog 347: Typical Indian Village Pastor's Wife (Proverbs 31:28-31)

Witnessing, importance of: Blog 377: Full House but Empty Fields (John 4:37-38)

Witnessing, what it is: Blog 380: 'Selling' Jesus (Romans 10:15)

Witnessing: Blog 201-205. Guilt/Innocence World View (1 Peter 2:9-10)

Witnessing: Blog 343: (Alan Carlton) SH5 or I-5 – Which is God's True highway? (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)

Witnessing: Blog 359: Musings of a Returning Missionary (Acts 1:8)

Word does not return void: Blog 368: No Empty Returns (Isaiah 55:10-11)

Word, appreciate it, appetite for it: Blog 378: Appreciate the Word! (Mark 6:2-4)

Word, Jesus as: Blog 410: Words, Words, Words (John 1:1, 14)

Words: Blog 410: Words, Words, Words (John 1:1, 14)

World View: Blog 188. Seeing the World Through Indian Eyes (Ecclesiastes 1:2, 14)

World View: Blog 356: Life As Seen Through Indian Eyes (Hebrews 13:5; Philippians 4:11-13)

World view: Blog 363: A Lesson From Indian Christians (Philippians 4:11-13)

Worship: Blog 186. Typical Indian Church Service (Hebrews 10:25)

