

INDIA BLOGS

Lessons Learned in India

2006 - 2012



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Main Street Baptist Church

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INDIA TRIPS SUMMARY

	2006	2007	2009	2011	2012	TOTAL
Dates	Jan 4-20, 2006	June 29 – July 28	Oct 18 – Nov 17	Jan 5 – Feb 9, 2011	Jan 10-31, 2012	
Days	17	30	31	36	22	136 19 ½ wks
Places	Hyderabad	AP, Ahmednagar, Lucknow	Lucknow Hyderabad AP	Hyderabad, AP Lucknow	Hyderabad Andhra Pradesh	
Pastor Conf 1 day	0	0	2	18	10	30
Pastor Conf 3 day	1	2	3	1	0	7
Leadership (3-5 days)	0	0	1	0	1	2
Total days of conf	3	6	16	21	13	59
Pastors	50	57	200	1000+	560	1867
Wives	0	0	50	350+	82	482
TOTAL	50	57	250	1350+	642	2349
Marriage	0	0	0	0	2	2
Sunday & PM services	13	41	40	30	32	146
Attendance Sun & PM	1900 child 700 adults	1500	1500	1500+	1500	8,600
Baptisms	0	0	0	13 people	0	13
Costumes	6	5	5	3	3	
Miles in India	200	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	12,200
Places slept	3	11	9	15	6	44
Total lessons	20	63	95	100+	92	370
Magic tricks	30	125	250	200+	150	755
Av per day	1+	3	4	5+	5+	3
Airlines and stops	Luftansa Philadelphia Frankford Delhi Hyderabad	Air India Newark Paris Delhi Hyderabad	British Air Phila London Delhi Lucknow, Hyd	American Air Newark direct Delhi Hyderabad	British Airways Phila London Hyderabad	
Companions	B.'s Buxmont Bapt	B. there & back only	Alone	Nancy 1 wk	Jim Hodges	

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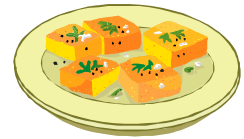
1. Quick Prayers Won't Win the Battle (Luke 6:12 prayer, spiritual warfare)
2. Little Kindnesses Go a Long Way (Matthew 25:34-40 little things, kindness, treating others)
3. Big Doors Swing on Little Hinges (1 Corinthians 5:6-7 little sins, little things)
4. Our Victory Giver (Deuteronomy 20:4 Sunday worship, God fights for us)
5. Lay on Hands (Matthew 8:3-4; Luke 22:51 pray for others, lay on hands, touch others)
6. The Barking Lady (Acts 16:16-18 spiritual warfare, deliverance)
7. Pass it On (2 Timothy 2:2 evangelism, training pastors)
8. Stewards of Our Bodies (1 Timothy 4:8 physical exercise, stewards of bodies)
9. A Man with Beautiful Feet (Romans 10:14-15 godly pastors, godly men)
10. Orphans (James 1:27 orphans)
11. The Privilege of Serving (Romans 15:5-6 servanthood, privilege of being used by God)
12. Their 'Problems' Are Our Dreams (1 Peter 2:2 church growth, training pastors)
13. Rejoicing in Heaven (Luke 15:7 evangelism, witnessing, those who never heard)
14. God Uses Less Than the Least (Ephesians 3:7-8 servanthood, humility, availability)
15. Will I See Her In Heaven? (John 11:51-53 evangelism, those who never heard)
16. Doing Church in India (Acts 2:42-43 church service, fellowship)
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18. Praise God for What Doesn't Happen! (Hebrews 1:14 angels, God's protection, prevention)
19. Looking After Orphans (James 1:27 orphans, children)
20. A Demonized Girl (Matthew 17:14-16 spiritual warfare, unanswered prayer)
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22. Indian Food and Daily Life (Romans 14:5-7 judging others, we are all different, prejudice)
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WHY A BOOK OF BLOGS?

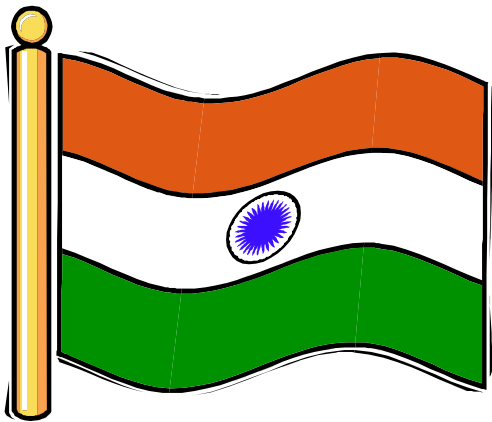
The book has been put together at the request of those who asked for copies of all the blogs I have written about India and my ministry there. My purpose in writing them was to help others better know how to pray, but mainly to help me keep my own head above water. I best put emotions and feelings into words when I write. It helps me process and remember all that goes on. If not I'd be mentally and emotionally swamped. I feel like I am fighting to keep my head above water, and writing things down makes just enough different to keep me afloat.

I am always totally amazed at the response I get from others who read these. Clearly God is taking these words and using them for His glory. That's the purpose they are written. They are available in digital form through the Internet or in a printed book with a plastic binder if you so desire. I included blogs with spiritual lessons, not those which were just about my daily events and activities. Those others are available if you want them.

My desire is that you read these blogs not just to learn about India, but more so to learn about God and yourself. I see them as devotions more than anything else. Read the devotionals and ask God to use them to bless and stretch you as you read. Take some time to pray after each one, talking to God about what you have read. They will mean much more to you that way.

I've kept these the same as they have been written, prayer requests included. Please keep praying for India and God's people there, especially the pastors and their families. I have these in the same order in which they were written. If you'd rather go through them thematically, there is an Index of Scripture passages used as well as an index of subjects. You can read about subjects that are of the most interest to you. You can also use them as illustrations or examples when you prepare talks or devotionals.

God has used India to get me out of my comfort zone, to stretch me and to help me grow closer to Him. It is my prayer that these devotionals will produce the same effect in your life. I'd love to hear your comments, observations or thoughts concerning what you read. Please feel free to write me at jerry@schmoyer.net.



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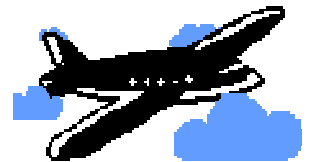
JANUARY 4-20, 2006

My first trip to India was with David B. and a group from Buxmont Baptist Church. We spent 17 days in Hyderabad. I taught at a 3-day pastor's conference. We also ministered to many local churches and did a lot of work with children. We had several Vacation Bible Schools and visited an orphanage numerous times. Everything was very new and totally enthralling. God put a deep love for the Christians of India in my heart and I knew I had to return.

Blog 1: QUICK PRAYERS WON'T WIN THE BATTLE

One of the good things about the long travel time is plenty of time to read, pray, meditate and worship. I kept a list of things God was showing me.

1. I don't like being away from my family. Of course I already knew that. The ONLY reason I would do such a thing, since I have no desire to be away from my family and no real interest in travel or seeing the world, is that I know God wants me to do this. I knew this from the first, walking down the aisle after church to tell David B. I was willing to go along on the trip to India he has mentioned during his report to the church. That is what keeps me going – God wants me to do this! That's the only reason – but then that should be the only reason I come, shouldn't it? Whatever God has in store for me or though me or for the family at home, His will be done.



2. I've been reading TOTAL TRUTH by Nancy Pearcey. It's a great but deep book about world view. I was struck again with something God has been trying to show me: whatever He calls us to do in life is equal to whatever He calls others to do.

3. The book WAKING THE DEAD by John Eldredge clearly makes the point that God gives us the abundant life now. Satan is defeated, but this life is not all it should be! We must fight the battles to gain the ground God has won for us on the cross. When the Jews went into the land they left some Gentile nations for the next generation to fight so they could learn warfare as well. A lioness will let her cubs kill weakened prey so they will learn to hunt and fight on their own. Japanese soldiers in the Philippines were still fighting even after the strength of Japan was broken. They were a defeated nation but mop-operations had to be won to remove all of them. That's what we do spiritually, fight defeated demons in order to learn warfare. God is the victory but we must do the fighting.

4. Related to this is the truth we are at war. We shouldn't expect things to be smooth and fine. We are constantly under attack. A lot of the negative things that we say are "God's will" (like not seeing my other children all these years) is part of Satan's attack to get us down on ourselves or God. Our wounds are not accidental. They come from Satan. We are not exempt. The loss of time and money with the recent cello event is another example. Satan tries to get us to become discouraged, to believe his lies that God doesn't care, to feel sorry for ourselves, to believe that this is just the way life is and forget God has more and better. We have great worth in God's sight. We do evil but aren't evil. We have God's glory in us and Satan wants to diminish that any way he can. We must trust in God no matter what the battles bring us or what we don't understand.

5. Also related to this is the fact that quick prayers won't win the battle! I need to pray longer and deeper – better quality and quantity in my prayers!

6. John Eldridge says that when going on a new mission he asks God for 'advance words' about it in order to hear Him more clearly before things get busy and to let him know what to watch out for. This is something I want to do before counseling, teaching, trips, etc. I prayed and thought about his while on the plane and these are things God told me about this trip:

- just be 'me' – open, vulnerable, not some pro from afar
- identify with them, encourage them
- talk from my heart, not from my head
- don't compete with others for popularity (my own jealousy, insecurity, etc.)
- listen to God (through HS) speak to my heart within and follow that as I teach



I look forward to seeing what else God will be teaching me during the time here. That is a very exciting part about this whole trip. (Friday, January 6, 2006)

Luke 6:12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

What does the statement "quick prayers won't win the battle" mean? Why won't they get the battle done? Obviously it's not just how the long the prayer is that gives it power, so what else must there be for longer prayers to be more effective? Would you say your prayers are too quick?

Blog 2: LITTLE KINDNESSES GO A LONG WAY

God has really convinced me that by little things like being open, friendly, and nice to the Indian people of any age we can in some way make a positive impression on them. Perhaps they will sometime, somehow associate us with Jesus and Christianity. That's God's part to bring that about, but my part to be a light in the darkness here. I see that as my primary role here so far. (Saturday, January 7, 2006)

Matt 25:34-40 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

What 'little' things have you done to help others today? Do you think of doing these things as a testimony to others of God's love? What little things have others done to make your life nicer today? Thank God for them. Ask Him to give you opportunities to show His love to others today.

Blog 3: BIG DOORS SWING ON LITTLE HINGES

Today we went to Fort Golkonda. It was started on a hill about 850 years ago as the palace of the line of kings who ruled this area when it was its own kingdom. It is west of

Hyderabad and the city grew because of the palace. When it came time to modernize Hyderabad, instead of destroying the old city and improving it, they wisely started a new city to the south of the old. Thus there are two Hyderabad – although I don't see much difference between them anymore!

Golkonda was started 850 years ago by Hindu kings who built a temple along with their palace. The place was well known for its excellent diamonds. In fact, Marco Polo visited there to see the diamonds. Imagine being at a place Marco Polo was at! We stopped by the graves of kings who lived in the palace on our way back. What huge buildings they are! They have temples and shrines all over the place. Moslems took over for a while and built a mosque, and then it reverted to Hindu again. About 500 years ago the current king brought in thousands and thousands of black Africans as slaves and totally rebuilt it all in a massive undertaking. It is on the highest site in this whole part of India (we climbed the steps to the top, and then went up on the roof of the building – what a view). It took 63 years to build it and make it totally impregnable with 3 huge walls and moats, a water system inside, etc. Three years after it was completed the Mongols came and bribed the gatekeeper to let them in so everyone was killed and the whole place torn down and destroyed. What a lesson that is in watching out for the little sin that will destroy us no matter how well defended we are against other sins. (Saturday, January 7, 2006)

1 Corinthians 5:6-7 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? 7 Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast — as you really are.

What sins you struggle with do you consider 'little' sins? What makes them 'little'? Think of some reasons why the temptation to do 'little' sins can be more dangerous than temptation to do 'large' sins? Ask god to make you aware of 'little' sins in your life today.

Blog 4: OUR VICTORY-GIVER

Church usually goes from about 10 to 1:30. They start off singing for ½ hour, and then there is the short message focusing on the upcoming time of worship. That is 45 minutes. Mine was on the prostitute who knelt at Jesus feet to wash them because she was forgiven. It was less than 45 minutes for they got started late. Preaching with an interpreter helps you have time to think about how to word what you want to say next, but it's hard to get a good flow and easy to forget your next thought as well.

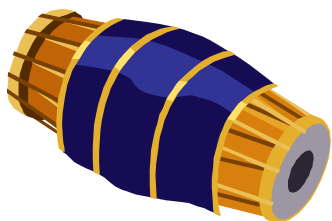
The worship time consists of them praying for 45 minutes. First a man prays, then a woman, back and forth. Men and women sit on opposite sides of the church, women on the right. We all sit on pads on the floor (the rheumatism in my left hip made it hard for me to bend it as I needed to). The women all use the top of their sari and wrap it over their head as a head covering to show respect. Men and women leave their shoes at the door and are barefoot the whole time as well. The prayer time was quite moving. Even though I couldn't understand a word of it, it was easy to sense the emotion and often tears in it.

The main sermon came next. It's about an hour or a little more and is to exhort the believers and lead into the Lord's Supper. I spoke on John 1:1-14, much the same as the sermon I used at church recently on Christmas day. Then was the Lord's Supper for ½ hour. They passed a plate with soft, sweet pasta and each one took a pinch. Then they passed a cup with a sweet-tasting juice in it. Actually they have about a dozen of each going for there were



about 250 people in the room and another 50 or more outside by the open windows. It reminded me somewhat of the church we went to in Antigua.

During the Lord's Supper prayers were said for those requesting them. That whole thing took almost 45 minutes. Then were announcements and we closed. At the end they had baskets of paper strips they said were promise cards for 2006 and those who wanted took one when they filed past the offering plate to put in their offering. Then they read it and that was their promise for the year – no changing or exchanging it, that was it. Really felt I should take one so I went to the men's basket and one immediately caught my eye as if God said take it. They offered me one in English but I refused it, wanting to keep the one in Telugu for that is what the service was in. They told me it was Deuteronomy 20:4. I looked it up and was absolutely, totally thrilled! It was obviously straight from God. "For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you the victory." I'm not too keen about having enemies, but that was no surprise. I take that especially in light of the spiritual warfare that has been and will be going on. (Sunday, January 8, 2006)



"For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you the victory." (Deuteronomy 20:4) - God's verse for me for 2006 (and I hope forever after that as well)

Why doesn't God just remove our enemies so we wouldn't even have any? Couldn't He do that? Then why doesn't He? What are some of the greatest enemies you face in life? How does God fight them for you?

Blog 5: LAYING ON HANDS

When church was over the blessings continued – the best was still coming. People came up to me in the front of the church and David B. was there because they couldn't talk to me. I thought it was to welcome me but it turned out it was for prayer. They wanted me to pray for them, one by one. What a privilege and joy that was! I felt like Jesus praying for the people who came, for I felt His power in the prayers I prayed and His touch going into the people as I laid hands on them and prayed for them one by one. The first two were old men needing healing in their feet or legs. Several had fevers that needed healing, mainly young children. One little girl screamed at night and wouldn't sleep. I rebuked anything demonic working against her. A young girl who couldn't have been more than 14 asked me to pray for her husband who was sick. Many just wanted to be prayed for in general, blessed and committed to God's service. What a privilege to lay my hands on these, especially the young ones, and with 100% confidence I was praying what God was leading me to pray, dedicate them to God to be special servants of His the rest of their lives! I enjoyed that more than any other part of the service for God was obviously in it. It's one of those rare times when one feels swept aside and the Lord totally takes over and works through him without him doing anything but going along, sort of like a puppet for God! It was great! (Sunday, January 8, 2006)

Matt 8:3-4 Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.

Luke 22:51 But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him.

Why did Jesus touch so many people when He prayed for them? What difference does it make if you touch someone when praying for them? How often do you do that? Remember to try that next time you pray for someone, even just holding hands is a start.

Blog 6: THE BARKING LADY

After the afternoon youth service today some people came for prayer again and that was nice. At the end they brought an old woman who had come to the youth program for some reason. I noticed she was barking, especially when I prayed with them to commit their lives to God. They told me she got an evil spirit in her about 5 years ago and it was making life miserable for her. I laid hands on her and really went after it, feeling great boldness and power from God. She growled and growled when I commanded them to be gone but didn't seem to go. Then I looked right in her eyes where they were clearly visible but, totally filled and controlled by God, I had a holy boldness to aggressively go after them. David B. was in a hurry to leave and felt we had prayed for her so we should go. Unfortunately I didn't see any change. They growled the second time as well. I'll keep praying for her and possibly see her next Sunday when the whole group comes here for a children's rally during the worship service. I pray God will continue to work in her. One thing that hit me really hard is this session on spiritual warfare I'll be doing tomorrow. I was wondering how applicable it would be for them and how believing they would be in demons. This episode clearly removed any doubt about that! (Sunday, January 8, 2006)

(The next week) After teaching the children this morning I joined the adult service at the close of the service and prayed for some people afterwards. The lady who was barking came and asked me to pray for her. I did, thinking I knew better how to approach it this time – go for the ruler (death, then darkness and suffering). I did but they barked and growled anyway. The pastor said she has been this way a long time but always comes faithfully every service. She is very, very poor and lives in one of the 'slums' we see. I gave the pastor 100 rupees to give her. It's only \$2 to me but a week's wages for her. (Sunday, January 8, 2006)



Acts 16:16-18 Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. 17 This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." 18 She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

What would you do if confronted by someone who was demonized? Would you remember that God is greater (1 John 4:4) and you have authority in His name to command the demons to be gone (Luke 9:1; 10:19-20)? Of course the person has a free will and if there is sin in their lives that allows the demons to remain they will stay.

Blog 7: PASS IT ON!

A truth that has been foremost in my mind all day is the awesome privilege of being used by God to be part of this. Nothing like this has ever happened for the pastors in this area and it puts them on a new level for now they are encouraged, better trained, know they are not alone in what they face, and have contacts with other local pastors. They are very excited and committed to keep this going and build on this from here. What's so great is that God put this issue on David B.'s heart a long time ago. It has nothing to do with David's ministry here but is a call God gave him. He has been wanting it and praying for it for some time. I remember various trips to our church asking if I'd come and teach pastors. This was God's timing for He



prompted me to say yes and to have Box-Mont come at the same time. That God would choose and use me to be part of this is more than I can imagine. It is very humbling and encouraging. God chose to share this great blessing with me! And it isn't even over.

Thursday through Saturday I get to present the gospel and lead the children in prayer at the end of their Children's Rally (like VBS).

What a great, great honor and what a way to bring light into darkness! It most definitely is worth coming half way around the world for! Yet I think of early missionaries like William Carey and Adrian Judson who came to this part of the world on a 6-month boat ride and stayed their whole lives with very little to show numerically for their work. We are definitely reaping where others have sowed! (Wednesday, January 11, 2006)

2 Timothy 2:2 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

Who can you pass God's Word on to today? It doesn't have to be a formal class, just words of truth and encouragement. Be alert all day for opportunities to use a Scripture to apply to someone's life.

Blog 8: STEWARDS OF OUR BODIES

I slept from 11 to 5 last night – 6 hours. That felt good. I also realized something out of the clear blue. My continual headache and my sleeping problems (although I fall asleep in the van and immediately when in bed) could be from those tiny cups of Indian tea I have once or twice a day. My jaw is still very, very sore when I open my mouth all the way and the headache is on that side so that could be the problem as well. I'll stop all tea and see. To not drink tea with them at tea time is not good, but the times I have had to do that are over so no more tea! I ran with my Walkman this morning, that helps the boredom of running in the same ½ mile area. I haven't missed a morning running yet. (Thursday, January 12, 2006)

1 Timothy 4:8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

Are you a good steward of your body? Is your sleep, diet and level of exercise keeping you in good physical shape? God gives us one body – make it last!

Blog 9: A MAN WITH BEAUTIFUL FEET

My sermon at the start of their service was about the widow's 2 mites and how it's our motive God looks at, not the outer appearance of what we do. He wants us to serve Him out of a heart of love. I used some illustrations to make the point and he started crying while translating one. He led in prayer as well as adding some things to make the sermon better apply to them. He told me later he was going through a tough time personally and God used this to touch his heart. He really is quite a man – Brother Andrew. He is responsible for 70 churches and is seen as a spiritual giant in this area. Pastors here don't get paid, they are expected to live by faith and to be poor – that shows their spirituality. Sermons have to have 7 points. They are long enough to do that. Seven is the perfect number and that's what they expect to hear. (Sunday, January 15, 2006)

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? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Which Godly pastors has God used in your past to influence your life? Thank Him for them and pray for them. Pray that the pastors who minister to you now would be used by Him for His glory and your growth.



Blog 10: ORPHANS

We went to the Good Shepherd School this morning. That was a very enjoyable experience. We met the children who stay there in the home and some of their parents. Most are new believers and can't have the children home with them because it isn't safe or they aren't healthy. One single mother said she had to sleep outside with her girls for they had no home and she had to hold them and stay awake as much as she could to protect them from men. With tears in her eyes she said how she gets up at 4 every morning to pray for the school and how grateful she is to David and Abigail. She realizes there is nothing she can do to repay them but is overwhelmed with God's love through them. Several of the families were saved out of Hinduism and are the only Christians in their family. They give up having the children with them so they can learn the Bible and have a better life. One mother said she wanted her children to have a better life than she had. It was very moving.

We spent time doing things with the children. The women brought lots of games and puzzles for them so I spent awhile doing some puzzles and alphabet games with 5 little boy's kindergarten age. They knew a few words of English and we had a good time together.

I met Deena, a 3rd grade girl who lives at the school with her younger sister. June M. supports her. Her father tries to raise them alone so he has them live at the school. He is a very kind, giving man who does any little thing he can to help at the school. If he gets 2 fish he brings them to the school. He is deeply appreciative of the school providing for his daughters. (Monday, January 16, 2006)

We spent the rest of the afternoon with the children. I spent several hours overall with Deena, June M's girl. She doesn't know June M. pays for her, though. They let the sponsors know but not the children because then it's hard and confusing if a sponsor drops the child. Deena's little sister, who is about 4, named Ester, and was with us all the time, too. She's more outgoing than Deena and has really taken an attraction to me. It's easy to play with children even if you can't communicate with them, but with adults if you can't communicate (like with the workman I was working with) then nothing happens at all. I wish we had sponsored a child so I could meet him/her, but I didn't even know about the program. \$25 a month to change a life is worth it! I told David we'd sponsor one when he had room for another child. Either us, our family, or some person or group at the church can come up with less than a dollar a day! They have 11 girls which fills the room they are in. It isn't a large room. They have a cubby hole for their clothes and lay mats on the floor to sleep at night. The boys room has a little space for there are only 6 boys in it. They need funds to pay and support the house parents as well. It's very each to get attached to the children! (Tuesday January 17, 2006)

We spent lots of time with the children again and that's fun. I like playing games, doing puzzles and doing art work with them. It's easy to get to know them, they are all so different. I end up mainly with Denna and Esther, although Esther is one of the most extroverted ones there despite being one of the smallest. They call her Rania which means 'queen' – Queen

Esther. She looks like she's 4 but she's 7. She's been so malnourished from only eating white rice that she hasn't grown like she should. Her mother is too sick to take care of the girls and the father brings them here for their benefit. You can tell he misses them but wants what is best for them – getting them grounded in the faith and ready for a better life than he had!
(Wednesday, January 18, 2006)

James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Do you know children who do not experience the love and protection of parents as they need it? There aren't many in the USA who are true orphans, but many, many children lack secure love and proper training. Think of children you know like this. Pray for them individually. Look for something you can do to show them love.

Blog 11: THE PRIVILEGE OF SERVING

Tomorrow I go home from this, my first trip to India. I really do thank God for the privilege of coming on this – for putting it on David B.'s heard to invite me to speak to pastors. He said he liked my teaching and organization of content and also the way I connected/related personally when teaching and talking so he wanted me to come. I thank God for the many experiences and blessings of being here – so many stand out: Sunday's at New Jerusalem, the pastor's conference, speaking to the children in the Children's Rally's and many more. Contacts with the people: pastors, adults and children, will stand out most of all. It's something I will never forget and that will always be with me. While so far from home and in such a strange place, still there is a peace and power of being in the center of God's will, of being prayed for by many people at home, and of being loved and accepted by those in the body of Christ in India. It's still very hard to believe I'm actually in India! On the other side of the world! I know they want me to come back. Moses and David both mentioned that. At this point in a missions trip people always say they want to come back but I do feel God wants me to come back both for their sake (teach and encourage them) and my sake (stretch and grow me while greatly blessing me). (Thursday, January 19, 2006)

God blessed us and used us in ways far beyond anything we could have imagined. The pastor's conference was attended by 50 pastors. Others were turned away because of lack of space and funding. Many children and teens accepted the Lord as Savior in the Children's Rally's we held. That was most rewarding. Seeing a Hindu teenage girl raise her hand to accept the Lord and then come and tell me afterwards, in very broken English, about the great joy she now has is a memory I will never forget. That kind of blessing was repeated over and over. Almost a thousand children came to some of the rallies – and the church didn't even publicize it for lack of space and resources. We spend lots of time at the Good Shepherd School and home. What a great difference that is making in reaching Hindus and other Indians for Jesus. It is great to see children growing at Christians – what a light they will be for future generations! The sad part is that so many are turned away because of lack of space and resources. Here we have resources but the response is low. There the response is high but many must be turned away because of lack of resources. Pray for David and Abigail B. as they lead these important ministries. David will soon be in the USA to raise much needed funding for the ministries there. If you can contribute or if he could come speak to your church about his work and ministry in India please let me know. We have so much in this country, more



than we realize. Our brothers and sisters in Christ elsewhere have so little and are so appreciative of anything we can give them.

Pray God would continue to use the work that was started there. They would like to have another pastor's conference as well as something to minister to pastors and their wives. The need and interest are there but, again, there are no resources. Pray God would provide and ask Him if He wants you to help with that. I'd definitely take Nancy, Grace and Mark along next time. When that is depends on lots of things, especially finances for us to go and for the conferences and rallies there. Pray for this, please. (Friday, January 20, 2006)

Romans 15:5-6 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

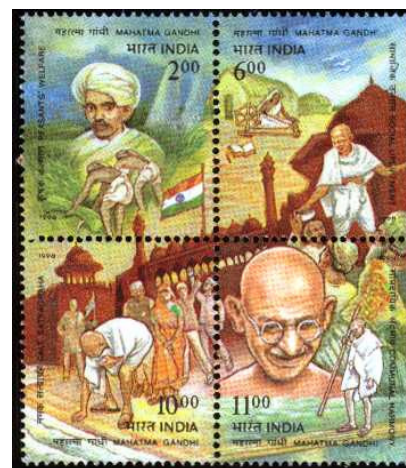
What ways has God privileged you with the ability to bring glory to Him? What do you do in life that matters for eternity? Whose lives do you touch for the good? Ask God to make you extra sensitive today to following Him and service Him in all you do.

Blog 12: THEIR 'PROBLEMS' ARE OUR DREAMS

As David and the others share their ministry problems here it is very obvious that they are the exact opposite of ours at home. We have plenty of resources but, try as we might, lack response. Here there is plenty of response but they lack resources. David is paying for this conference with his own money. He pays for the room, the places for the men to stay overnight, their meals, etc., all himself because they couldn't come if he didn't. He uses his own money. He doesn't even have a home for his family. Abigail stays in the states with the girls and he rents a room from her sister. He's had to turn men away from this conference. In fact, he didn't even invite anyone from the larger churches in the area. He's tried to keep the word quiet for he can only have 50 but the word has spread and every day new pastors who have heard show up. It's like that for most of the church programs and events here. When is the last time I had to keep things quiet because of not having enough room? When is the last time I had to turn anyone away because of lack of space????? Our frustration is the opposite of David's frustration, but they affect us the same – we aren't able to do the ministry we feel burdened to do. (Wednesday, January 11, 2006)

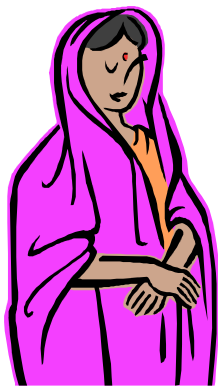
1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

Who do you know that has a hunger and thirst for spiritual things? What can you do to encourage them? Do you pray for them? Do you have a deep appetite to lean God's Word and grow? If not, ask God to develop that into you.



JUNE 29 – JULY 28, 2007

My second trip to India was quite different than the first. I traveled there and back with the B.'s and had 2 pastor's conferences with them in Hyderabad, but then traveled to other parts of India by train without them. I spent a week in Ahmednagar (near Pune) and another week in Lucknow. This was total immersion in India as those who live there know it, and I really enjoyed experiencing India at ground level.



Blog 13: REJOICING IN HEAVEN!

I had a wonderful privilege this past week. I met a Hindu woman from India. She and her husband, who is also an Indian Hindu, came to this country for college. The woman then earned master's and doctor's degrees. She was very sharp! We talked about India and I was able to develop a good rapport with her in that way.

I asked about her Hindu upbringing and we were soon talking about Christianity. She had found Christianity very appealing and believable. God had been revealing Himself to her in a lot of ways. She was praying and reading her Bible regularly.

We talked about the unique claims of Jesus as being God, the only God, and the only way of salvation. We went through the plan of salvation and she understood and believed it all in her head. Her Christian home school friends had done a very good job of explaining salvation and Christianity to her. The problem was getting it from her head, where she believed the facts, to her heart. That step was confusing and had no parallel in Hindu or in anything else in her life. I told her it was like accepting a free gift. I offered to help her when she was ready by praying with her. I could say the words, although it wasn't the words themselves but believing them in your heart that made the difference. I told her to tell me when/if she was ready, for she knew what a change this would make and was committed to following Jesus 100% when she made the commitment.

The next morning the very first thing that happened was that she told me, "I'm ready." We prayed together and she opened her heart to Jesus as the only God and her only Savior. When done she prayed privately for some time, for she knows what a major change this will make in her life and she is committed to following Jesus completely. What a great blessing and privilege that was! With all the time and expense involved in going to India, and there the language is a problem so I only minister to believers through an interpreter, here God gives me the honor of speaking to a Hindu Indian woman and praying with her to accept Christ! I know her life and her family will be changed forever. I know what she said she really meant and it was very real. I look forward to staying in touch with her and watching her grow. What a great and awesome God we serve to allow such a privilege in such a way! (Saturday, April 28, 2007)

Luke 15:7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Think about those you have led to the Lord, or spoken to about their need for salvation. Thank God for the privilege of sharing His message with each of them. Pray for them one by one.

Blog 14: GOD USES LESS THAN THE LEAST

One thought keeps overpowering me. It is the realization that God chose me for this honor and privilege. The men who left yesterday were greatly helped and affected by the pastor's meeting - they have nothing like it here. It's like Promise Keepers and a basic Bible college course all rolled into one. They want and need more. They really have taken to me it seems. All say they have a great love for me and that I am a wonderful teacher. How one can be a wonderful teacher through a translator (different ones, each needing to have my vocabulary adjusted to them) and no Power Point is beyond me! The magic does help. I can see God using this in their lives, families and ministries for years to come, even impacting those they disciple. They feel that way, too. In fact, they like it so much they want to have a month-long Bible institute here taught by me. It would be for pastors and for those studying for the ministry. Its strange how my ministry in America doesn't rate as a 'success' according the general definition of success there, but here it is fine! If may be that my so-called 'failure' there (and I know it isn't that in God's sight) prepares me for this.



So here I am, on the one hand counting the minutes until I can get home and wondering if I over committed myself on this trip, while at the same time feeling a God-given excitement to be involved in a Bible institute and train pastors. That's what I've always wanted to do, but I never thought it would be in India! On the one hand God is totally silent about why I miss home so much and why I battle so hard to sleep, why I don't have an excitement about being here, while on the other hand He gives me an excitement and all kinds of ideas about future trips! I still don't want to be here, but I know I'm coming back. Go figure out God - and let me know when you do. (Thursday, July 5, 2007)

Ephesians 3:7-8 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. 8 Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ

Do you feel incompetent for the work God has given you to do? Does that cause you to trust Him more than for something you could do without His help? Are you willing to let Him use you for whatever brings Him glory, even if you don't feel able to do it yourself? Tell Him now that He can use you for anything that will honor Him.

Blog 15: WILL I SEE HER IN HEAVEN?

I get closest to real Indian culture is during my morning runs. I go as soon as it gets light (and it's still way too hot). I don't interact with the people nor take pictures of those who see me. That can seem very impolite, especially to women. I'm sure I am quite often the topic of conversation - an old white man running (I've never seen anyone run or exercise in any way). Sometimes children will be curious about me and the camera and seem open and friendly so I will approach them and ask if I can take their 'photo.' They are all polite and agreeable so I do, then show it to them. They are always astounded to see their picture for they've never seen a picture of image of themselves before.

Earlier this week I was exploring a side street and saw children by a side road so I followed it and took a few pictures. She was a very old gray woman who had a stand selling something for breakfast in front of her house. She gave me a big toothless smile and motioned for me to come over to her yard. She had the typical thrown-together shack that the

untouchables live in - well below poverty, more like bare existence. But those are the people who I see when running for they are everywhere and getting their day started at sunrise.

What she wanted me to see was another chicken, and she was thrilled to show it off - great riches for them! There was a young woman in a green dress there, too, flashing the biggest smile you can imagine. I've never seen anyone but Christians smile here. They were both very proud to have me stop by their place and take a picture of their chicken so I signed if I could take a picture of them. Some understand the word 'photo.' So I took a picture of each of them. Something in my spirit really was attracted to the young woman and I couldn't stop thinking of her all day.

This morning I went by there again and when they saw me (who could miss me!) they smiled a welcome, obviously glad to see me again. I had brought some rupees along to give them if it seemed appropriate for obviously they had nothing and any little thing was great for them. I gave them several dollars' worth of rupees, a vast sum to them. They were greatly pleased just to see me and astounded that I would slip money into their hands. So many poor Indians are expert beggars but they hadn't thought of that.



As I left I couldn't forget the young woman's face and smile. Something in my spirit just bonded very closely with her. Then God put His thoughts in my mind as strongly and as clearly as I have ever heard Him speak - "She's a believer. You'll see in heaven. The two of you will sit down at Jesus' feet one day and have a great talk!" I knew immediately that's what was bonding with my spirit. I'm sure that's happened when you've met someone who was a Christian.

Now I don't think this woman ever heard the name of Jesus, but I'm sure she's accepted and responded to what knows of the true living God as He's revealed Himself to her in nature and her conscience. Despite her Hindu culture she's accepted all about God that she knows - and that's what it takes for any of us!

I don't know how God will use my presence or gift in her life, but I know it was no accident. I'm sure no other white person has ever gone down that alley.

I'll jog by tomorrow, my last day to run here for I leave on Sunday. I'll slip them some more money, speak God's blessing over both of them and see her radiant smile once more. Then I wait until God gives me recognition of her in heaven. What will she think when she recognizes me? I don't know how many people there she'll know, but there will be one for sure!

Pray for her when you think of her. Any smile she has despite the way she is living clearly comes from within! (Friday, July 6, 2007)

John 11:51-53 As high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, 52 and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.

Can you think of a 'God appointment in your life when He clearly put you at a certain place and time? Be alert to those today. You don't know who you see in your daily life needs a smile or encouraging word, who may be a fellow believer you won't get to know until heaven. We pass people all day without giving it a thought, pray for those you pass today.

Blog 16: DOING CHURCH IN INDIA

I spoke at the New Jerusalem Prayer House, a place I spoke at 2 times last year. I love the pastor and have been in touch with him since last year. We are definitely kindred spirits, make from the same mold. Preaching with him is great - I say just what he wants said and then he applies it to his people in ways I'm not aware it needs to be applied. Brother Andrew oversees 80 other churches, most pastored by men he has trained.

People start arriving about 10 AM. People sit on the floor, men on one side women on the other. About 250 come, all are barefoot in respect, and women cover their heads with their sari. About 10:30 the service starts with prayer and singing. I had the opening message preparing for worship and talked about lessons we learn from worship from Job and Abraham. They worship for an hour. The children went upstairs and I went with them. I dressed as David and talked about courage and fear. When it was over I went down stairs and had the main message (1+ hour) about John 11 when Jesus didn't show up to heal Lazarus. I talked about what to do when Jesus doesn't answer prayer. The Spirit was clearly and deeply working in all of us through the whole morning. The Lord's Supper is observed. We were done a little after 2:30. No one falls asleep but are all very involved all the time. Perhaps sitting on the floor helps with that. I wonder if it would help if I took the pews out? (Sunday, July 8, 2007)

Acts 2:42-43 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

Has church attendance become just a formality to you, a weekly ritual you automatically go through? Do you truly participate in the worship, concentrate on the message, and take time to have fellowship with other believers? Having a godly church to be part of is a blessing but also a responsibility. We go to give, not just take. Ask God to help you give to as well as take from your church.

Blog 17: MY HOPE IS IN THE LORD

I am still in awe at the wondrous privilege and honor I've had last week in touching so many special lives in such great ways. It was truly life-changing and ministry-changing for those pastors, most of whom have had no training and direction. It's given them the basics to pastor and live and will affect them and those they minister to for generations. That God reached to the USA and chose me to do this is most humbling. And yet I am growing more than they. The stretching and depending on His promises has been very good for me. I'm learning to put my hope in Him for there is no one or nothing else here to put it in.



I find myself more dependent on God and His grace than I have ever felt in my life. Paul's words about God's grace being sufficient because "His strength is made perfect in my weakness" have taken on new meaning for I find myself weak in all areas. Physically my sleep is improving greatly but living and sleeping conditions make it quite difficult. Finding safe food to supplement my tuna and peanut butter is difficult. The restaurant has omelets and tomato soup, things I ate in Hyderabad. My water supply is almost gone and we need to find safe drinking water. With the heat and no AC water is important (as per my blog). Emotionally I am totally dependent, too, for in this rural area populated by untold thousands of Indians is definitely not a place where tourists or western business people come. I must be the only non-Indian in hundreds of miles. Contact with you at home is very limited. The only internet access I could come up with is very, very slow and laborious. It takes forever to load one page – but the page

eventually does load and I am grateful for that. Spiritually I feel my weakness as well. I see myself as more needy as ever. I feel the need of prayers others more than I ever have in my life. Your giving has made this work possible, now your prayers feel like my very lifeline through this. How I will ever speak to these fine Christians for 3 hours each day is beyond me. They are such gracious, appreciative people I'm sure they would be glad for just anything, but I didn't come all this way to give them 'just anything.' Again, as with the pastors, it has to be what God gives them, not what I give them.

Psalms 25 has become something I hang onto, especially the part about "my hope is in You," for He has removed all substitutes from it. It's both a wonderful thing and a terrible thing at the same time. I'm sure when it's over it will have been wonderful. Now I get to experience His grace in a deeper way than ever before. I feel like a turtle that has had its shell removed - and at the last place and time he would have wanted it gone! (Tuesday, July 10, 2007)

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

Where do you turn when life seems hopeless? Do you fear, panic, try to take things in your own hands, or trust God to lead you each step of the way? Hope ("confident assurance") in Him is something we will always have. Do you have it? Do you use it?

Blog 18: PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT DOESN'T HAPPEN!

I remember an old missionary story from several years ago about new missionaries who went to a previously unreached people. The people were very glad to have them come and had a great celebration for them. They went out of their way to be hospitable. They even prepared their very favorite drink for the missionaries, a real honor to share with an outsider. Women would take a special leaf and chew it to a pulp, then spit it and their spit into a glass. When the glass was full the drink was complete. The missionaries were confronted with drinking this and accepting the honor of the people or rejecting it and putting a major stumbling block in their way to reaching them. They drank the drink.

Now I've had nothing as dramatic as that, but I do think of it often, especially in this place where Western people and ways are so unfamiliar to them (by the way, I'm in Maharashtra now). Many times a day I have to ask where I draw the line between danger to me and honor to them. There is no one way to decide, I just take it on a case by case need. I do try to be sensitive to what God wants. It usually has to do with what I eat and drink, although other customs enter in as well. One of these is riding on the back of a motorcycle (more like a motor bike). That's the main means of transportation other than biking or walking. Traffic is horrendously chaotic with virtually no limits or rules. Everyone just goes wherever they want, constantly cutting each other off and cutting in and out. Of course there are no helmets. But I've never seen an accident. Everyone is used to this chaos which drives us Americans crazy. That's why someone else is driving the van I rented to get me around with my luggage and things. But other times it is necessary to ride on the back of the pastor's bike with him. And I find I really like it! The dust and exhaust fumes are terrible, but other than that it's great fun. I do



look forward to a return to what to me is more of a 'civilized' life style, but that is still a ways off. I wonder what great adventures await me in the meantime. (Wednesday, July 11, 2007)

Hebrews 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Sometimes we only think of God's protection when something goes wrong, but how many things has God prevented from happening in your life? How many times has He kept you from being sick, injured, in an accident, etc.? Spend some time thanking Him for the things that don't happen

Blog 19: LOOKING AFTER ORPHANS

One of the families in the church I am speaking at HERE IN Maharashtra is shown in the attached picture before her home with her children. Her husband died a few weeks ago from AIDS and she thinks she has AIDS. The government is testing her children and it seems some of them have AIDS also. The husband contracted it before becoming a Christian. Because they are believers their caste will no longer help them and their Hindu family rejects them. We visited and prayed inside and the woman was in tears wondering what would happen to her and her children.



Stavan said he has been looking for funding to help her. I told him sponsorships might work better. He said he'd need \$50 a month to house, feed, clothe and send the children to school (something rarely done for those in her level of society, but the only way they can get a better job and rent a home. God laid it on my heart to support them from my India fund so I told him I would do it. Today after church the church gave financial gifts to many of the needy and she was told she'd be receiving the money she needed. What joy overcame her! How great to see the love of God working as Christians help each other. I was able to give the first month's money so this could get started, but I'd like to see her (family name is Bujabal) supported by all of us so we can all pray for her and her family. I have enough in my India fund for this, but by the time this trip is over it will be depleted. Pray God will continue to provide, and if He leads you to give you can send it to me directly or to Main Street Baptist Church and mark it for the India fund. (Thursday, July 12, 2007)

PS It is now 2012 and we continue to support these children, along with 2 more from another family. It has been great watching them grow and mature. The oldest girl has married a young pastor and the oldest boy plays in the worship team. It's very gratifying and humbling to see how God has used this small (to us) amount of money to change lives.

James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

You may not be in touch with any orphans where you live, but there are plenty of children who are spiritual orphans and/or emotional orphans. A kind word, a small present, a listening ear can go a long way to filling a void in their life. Ask God to bring some such children into your life and be alert for them.

Blog 20: A DEMONIZED GIRL

With coming to such a dark place as India, especially northern India, I wondered if I would get involved in spiritual warfare in any way. Personally there are many battles for my own protection and much spiritual warfare praying in that way, but would I minister to anyone else in that way? Last night I got my answer – in a very dramatic way.

After 3 intense days of meeting together in a very confined area I have felt extremely bonded to these people. Only one knows English but their love and devotion is very real. They respond enthusiastically to my teaching and magic (7 messages, 9 hours of teaching in 3 days). Tears flow when they praise the Lord. They have loved me and I love them greatly. We have become one large and strange family in Jesus.

One of the ways this is best expressed, and one of my favorite parts of ministering in India, is their practice of coming to the pastor after the service and asking to have hands laid on them and to be prayed for. Sometimes there are specific ailments they want to be healed from and other times it is for a blessing in general. They especially seek the white-skinned American pastor who has come so far to speak to them, so I do a lot of that after church and love every minute. I feel God leading me in what to pray for each one. I know He blesses those I bless in His name. And I pray for healing in a more powerful way than at home for there is no medical help available for them. If God doesn't heal them they suffer and die. I've prayed for many eye and ear ailments, pregnancies, kidney stones, cancer, AIDS, a broken back (I prayed for him on the phone) and many suffer from great head pains.

I noticed one young lady that would ask for a blessing. When I touched her she started shaking and could hardly stand. I figured it was a Pentecostal thing, for there was a young lady who sometimes fell down during the services, writhed on the floor and screamed at the top of her lungs. Everyone moved out of her way and ignored her. The pastor, who uses my camera and takes more pictures with it than I do, took several pictures of her. I thought it was someone being 'slain in the spirit' or something. I have been rebuking anything that wasn't from Jesus that was working there, but more than that left all the other stuff for God to sort through.

Last night everyone there wanted a blessing (250 of them) so I went very quickly through them one by one. When I got to the girl the same thing happened. So this time, despite all the other people crowded around me waiting, I asked the girl to look me in the eye by pointing her head toward me and opening her eyelid. Immediately I saw evil and hate deeply entrenched in her. Immediately she screamed a very shrill, very high and extremely loud scream. She tried to pull away from me but I wouldn't let her. The battle was on!

If there is one thing God has given me in spiritual warfare it's a great dislike for demons and their intimidation. A strong righteous indignation rises up inside me to see something like this. So for about an hour we battled. (Actually the pastor took some pictures so I can show you some when I get home!). Everyone backed away but I didn't let go of her. She kept trying to choke herself so I grabbed her hands. By the time I was done my arms and shoulders ached more than after a workout at the gym. She was really strong. She kept pulling away and soon was writhing on the floor. I grabbed her head as she was banging it on the concrete.

Her mother and another pastor grabbed one each. Evidently they are gifted in spiritual warfare and it was great to work as a team, something I haven't done in that way



before. I have no idea what they were praying but they were both there supporting me in the battle and that was greatly appreciated.

Every time she would get free I would touch her again to regain contact with the demon. She would let out a terrible scream as if my touch brought great pain. And when I forced a look in her eyes it was even worse. No matter what I said or did the demon would not stop tormenting her. She was obviously in terrible pain and kept writhing all over. I sat by her head and held it to protect her. I just could make no progress, though. I did everything I could think of. I could gather no information since my interpreter pastor was gone.

The experience reminded me of the woman last year that barks in church who I prayed for. I asked about her last Sunday for I was at the same church and they said she still barks, but doesn't come to church as regularly any more. That can be annoying, but this is totally destructive. I guess if local pastors aren't able to minister deliverance I shouldn't be surprised if I face the same opposition.

She kept trying to hold her ears as I spoke so she wouldn't hear me. She closed her eyes and turned her head. I knew the demon was aware what we were doing because of the way he fought back and resisted. I wondered if he tried to claim to not understand English so I prayed about that. He certainly heard the others there praying, too. The people just stood around watching, so I finally got them to understand they should sing and they did.

Evidently the hold this demon or demons have is great. As I prayed I really sensed the battle going on. I kept thinking, though, that it must be difficult for angels to come carry out the commands. India is covered with darkness. You can feel it everywhere. Idolatry is rampant. There are 4 Muslims and 32 Hindus for each Christian. The rulers over India have a strong, solid hold. I could understand god's angels having a real battle trying to get here and battle what was in her. Daniel talks about this when he prayed and I thought of that.

The battle would fade and I'd make her look me in the eye and we'd start again. Finally the others wanted to leave and they wanted me to finish blessing the others so I quickly did that and then got back to the girl again.

Finally my interpreter returned and I was able to piece some information together. As it turned out she was the same girl who fell and screamed during the service. When it was over, or mostly over, I was able to find my interpreter who was gone for all of this and piece things together. Her name is Rani (pronounced 'Rrr-Annie'). She was to be married this year but 8 months ago someone put a curse on her through witchcraft and she has been this way since. It used to be when she came to church the demon would not enter but would leave her and wait outside to reenter her when she left, but now he never leaves. Her marriage has been put off. Her mother is one of the leading women in the church, as fine and godly a woman as I have met. Her husband is so sick he can't do anything so the family is in her care. Her older son no longer wants anything to do with the church. Yet this woman is one of the leaders in the church and worships the Lord with all her heart. Many pastors have prayed for her, have prayed and fasted, but she gets worse.



We prayed some more but the whole thing just came to a stop. I was able to break the curse and quote scripture, but I have no idea how much got through. She was totally exhausted, as were we. God just said, 'that's enough' and we were all done. Her eyes became normal and she was very grateful (she remembers it all) and humble before me. I don't know if we achieved some measure of victory (hopefully total victory) or if it was ended out of mercy to Rani. It could have gone on all night but we can't quit. It was very late when I finally left, though, and I leave early this morning for Pune and the train.

What a farewell experience that was to a group of very special believers that I have nothing in common with but really have everything in common with. Pray for Rani and pray for her mother. Demons cannot make a mockery of God's authority and power right in a church. This poor girl must be set free. (Friday, July 13, 2007)

Matthew 17:14-16 When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. 15 "Lord, have mercy on my son," he said. "He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water.

What times come to mind when your prayers weren't answered? How do you handle it when it doesn't seem God answers? What might be some reasons? How has that affected your present prayers?

Blog 21: AN INDIAN TRAIN RIDE

So, you say, what's an Indian train ride like? Let me try to explain it. Have you ever seen a travelogue about a train ride in India, or anywhere else? If you have, just forget it. It's a nice ride but nothing romantic or adventuresome.

The whole railway system looks pretty much like it must have when the British left India. It gets you safely from one place to another, and compared to prices in America is quite cheap. It's just that as Americans we look for luxury and convenience but it seems most of the rest of the world looks for practical and efficient.

The hot, crowded cars where the masses ride are nothing I want to experience. My rides have been in the best cars (the term is very relative over here). There is air conditioning, although over hear air conditioned places don't really seem much cooler, but they do seem far less humid. It's comfortable.

The car is broken up into compartments of 2 bunk beds facing each other. Four people share this cubicle and sit on the bottom bunks during the day, and then each has his own bunk to sleep on at night. No food is provided but vendors hawk their wares each time the train stops at a station so food is plentiful for those who want to buy it. Most seem to bring their own food.

I have peanut butter bread, packs of tuna, my ever-present bottled water, bananas and a granola bar for desert.

At 8 PM people start going to bed. Mine is all men, but several contain families and little children. I've had some of my best nights sleep on the train - no plans, nothing to think about, no time to have to get up, just rest and sleep.

Waking up is a joy for when the sun comes up I can look out the window by my seat and watch the Indian country side. It's so different than the cities I've been in and looks like something in National Geographic Magazine. It just never ends!

I wake up and listen to praise songs on my mp3 player for a long time. It's a great time to think and pray. I write notes of things I'm thinking and what God is teaching me. Later I type them and blogs I've thought of on my PDA. I read, look out the window and think. I write down sermon ideas and outlines for when I get back, jot notes of plans for the next trip and relax. It's a great break from the very busy, intense activity load I carry when not traveling. It's not a 'waste' of time at all but is very refreshing mentally, spiritually and physically.



I've always wondered what it would be like going on a bus ride and just having time to sit, think, and relax. This seems to be a lot like it. Of course here everyone chains their suitcases to their bunks, and I can't understand what anyone is saying. But that's fine with me for I'm not expected to make small talk and that's a great blessing when I want to relax. And the bathrooms are just barely adequate - if you can hold your breath long enough.

So all in all it's been a much more enjoyable experience than I expected, at least so far. The trip has been stretching and challenging, but the train ride is nice and boring - and sometimes boring is just what the doctor ordered! (Sunday, July 15. 2007 Lucknow, India)

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven,

How have you been doing in keeping God's required Sabbath REST? There's a very good reason for it – He knows our body and mind needs down time. What must you change to keep this command of God's?

Blog 22: INDIAN FOOD & DAILY LIFE

Every meal seems about the same to me: white rice with some kind of sauce and, if they can afford it (and they get it even if they can't afford it when the American comes), tough little chunks of meat: chicken, beef, goat or sometimes mutton. I guess someone would say our menu is always the same: a piece of meat, a couple vegetables and a salad.



Everyone loves white rice. Each house seems to have several 50 pound bags of rice sitting in the corner. The sauce is always bit different, sometimes mildly spicy and other times very spicy. It seems much spicier in Hyderabad than other places but they also serve homemade yogurt with it. I really love that, it's just like the kind we used to make. It immediately cuts and removes the spicy taste in your mouth.

Indians don't use utensils. They use their fingers to ball up the rice and gravy with the meat and eat it that way. I always use a utensil. Some areas serve flat, round bread, which is quite tasty. They tear off chunks of it and use it to pinch up rice and gravy. That's less messy.

Indians eat their evening meal late – 9 or 10 PM. During the hot summer (which is now, the peak of summer having been in June) they then go out on the streets shopping and visiting until 2 in the morning. It's just too hot, even for them, to do it during the day.

The women, except the very poor who have absolutely nothing, have small 2-burner stoves that are hooked up to a propane tank. They cook on them. Except for their tea cups (and Indian tea, a left-over of British occupation, is a very special part of their day) which are quite tiny and are china, all their cooking, eating and storage dishes are stainless steel. It's cheap to buy, durable and easy to clean. They only rinse off dishes, usually at a local stream or public water spigot. They don't wash with soap and hot water. I guess stainless steel is helpful for no food can be absorbed into the surface of the plate or dish.

Virtually everyone lives in a one-room home about the size of an old, small one-car garage. 95% of the people are poor. The middle class is almost non-existent but growing as western industry starts to provide jobs. The very rich are the other extreme.

In the typical home one wall contains the cooking stove and work area, second wall metal shelves with their stainless steel dishes on them. The other walls will have beds. There are no

chairs. They sit on a bed or on the floor. Women sit for hours 'Indian-style' on the floor listening at church or doing their food preparation, gardening or whatever work they have to do.

Everything is made of concrete or masonry, even the bed stands and shelves. Evidently termites can be a real problem. Homes are very Spartan, nothing for decoration or pretty. But they are extremely neat and spotless, even when the floor is packed dirt.

Women always and only wear saris. They are a beautiful, colorful site. Despite the dreary surroundings they live in, they are bright and clean in their dress. Even working the fields or construction they wear their colorful saris and seem to keep them clean and neat.

Men wear long pants and usually long sleeve shirts. They are usually white or a light pastel color. Men and women wear sandals if they can afford them. If not they go barefoot.

It's very interesting seeing a different culture. We tend to judge them by our standards, as if we are right in all things we do. But clearly God wants and loves diversity in the universe. He loves variety – that's why He made so many colors, sounds, smells, tastes and people groups. (9 AM Monday, July 16, 2007 Lucknow, India)

Romans 14:5-7 One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. 7 For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone.

Do you tend to judge and look down on others who do things differently than you do, as if you are the perfect standard for all mankind? Thank God for the variety you see around you and accept those who are different as equally special to God.

Blog 23: CLIMATE AND WEATHER

It seems the monsoons haven't been too bad this year, at least where I've been when I've been there. That's not good news for the farmers, though - and most people are farmers.

It's in the 80's and 90's I think, although no one has a thermometer. It can get quite humid. Most places have fans and there is often a breeze so unless one is physically exerting themselves it's not too bad. I've tried running at first sunrise, 6 AM, but it's way too hot and oppressive to get a good workout. I certainly don't want to have a heart attack here! Long brisk walks have been an enjoyable way to start the day.

The hot season is April and May and then they say people sweat just sitting in the shade. Now understand in this present weather many wear jackets for they feel it is a bit cool, so they are really acclimated to the heat. So if they get hot....

The 'cold' season is October or November. The way they describe it sounds like it's in the lower 70's in the morning, perhaps taking a rare dip into the 60's at night. It's uncomfortably cold for them.



A relatively rain-free summer may seem be a blessing, but the long term consequences often mean starvation and even death for those who depend on the rain for their crops. Often we, too, want God to provide continuous good weather in life when it is really the times of storms and rain that bring spiritual growth and prosperity. (9 AM Tuesday, July 17, Lucknow, India)

Ezekiel 34:25-26 "I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert and sleep in the forests in safety. 26 I will bless them and the places surrounding my hill. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing.

Are you guilty of complaining when showers come into your life, or do you see them as God's necessary provision in order for you to produce future fruit?

Blog 24: THE MUSIC CULTURE

Music is a big part of Indian culture, as it is in Latin America. Most music is done by female voices in a very high, almost whiney tone. It sounds wonderful, though, and I love to hear it. It has a special quality about it that just says 'India' to me.



Bollywood, near Mumbai (Bombay) is their movie and music capital. They make more movies there than Hollywood does. It's a big part of Indian culture. The leading singers and entertainers are all Indian of course but with skin as light as an American. Just as we see darker skin beautiful and work on our tans, they see lighter skin beautiful and look for it.

Everyone sings here. During the pastors' conferences before each session one or two pastors would stand in the front and sing. They love to do it and all seem to be good singers. They sing on key without accompaniment. If they can, a keyboard player and drummer (large bongos like are seen in Africa) try to catch the beat and play along.

In church all will sing enthusiastically for an hour or more. Songs seem to last about 10 minutes each with many repeats. All are lively and spirited. I really, really enjoy hearing them sing. It's one of my favorite memories I'm bringing with me. I recorded and even videotaped some of it.

There is nothing immodest or in any way suggestive in Indian entertainment or advertising. They totally avoid anything like that. With the majority of the people being Hindu standards are very strict.

As Christians we have something worth singing about. We have the best news ever over which to rejoice. Christians of all people should be people of song, for we have the most to sing about! (9 AM Tuesday, July 17, Lucknow, India)

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

When is the last time you had a really good time of singing praises to God? Why not put a little more Christian music in your life today!

Blog 25: ALCOHOL, ABUSE AND AIDS

One would wonder where they get the resources to indulge in things like alcohol and smoking, but somehow evil finds its way into every culture. It can be a real problem in many nonChristian families. Adultery and wife beating are not uncommon, either. Indian people are

very quiet and gentle, very unassuming. Yet somehow abuse shows the underlying frustrations among some of the men.

AIDS is a growing problem in all areas, especially among the very poor. It is spread sexually, often by homosexual activity.

Every culture has its sin, and even without resources those who so choose to go that direction can find the means to do so anywhere. No one has to go looking for sin – sin will find you wherever you are. Only in Jesus' power can we have victory over it. (Wednesday, July 18, 2007, Lucknow, India)

Romans 7:14-25 I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

What sins are following you these days? Are they successful at making any inroads into your life? Before doing anything else confess them and ask God to give you a plan to keep them from slipping into your life.

Blog 26: HINDUISM AND KARMA

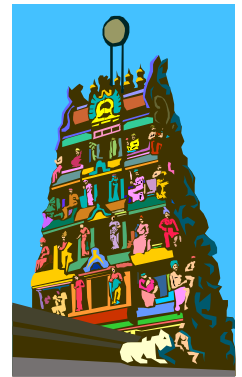
The underlying philosophy of India is karma - the basis of Hindu and Confucian thought. Karma means things are as they are, they can't be changed, that's the way it is, so just accept it. That's how a very rich person can ignore a poor family starving in a hut by their front door, and the poor family doesn't expect help from the rich family. Karma means accepting your lot in life as it is. But instead of their being a contentedness, instead there is a passive giving up, not caring, not trying, not wanting to improve or change things, assuming life is painful and that's all there is. Perhaps the nextarnation will be better, and if not the one after it. The best one can do is accept their lot in this life and perhaps in so doing pay off some of their bad karma and hope for a better lot next time around.

At least they didn't come as a cow or another animal. Although it seems to me most cattle and water buffalo roaming around have a better life than the poor.

There are thousands of cattle everywhere, and their 2 or 3 foot horns are intact. At first I walked carefully past them but soon discovered they are so used to people they are no danger. I stopped taking pictures after the first day because they are just constantly everywhere.

Hindu temples also are everywhere. Some are large, exquisite works of beauty with hundreds of full-time priests. Others are small 3 foot square concrete boxes by the road or in a field. Each family has its own god to appease in any way it can. The large ones have been around awhile and have built up a larger following. There are more gods than people in India - and each one has one or more demons behind it being strengthened by the praise and worship it receives.

Pilgrimages regularly block roads. Every day is some kind of Hindu holiday to some god or other. Life is self-imposed suffering so perhaps ones gods will not bring about more of their suffering on the person.



What darkness and emptiness reigns here! What great demonic strongholds have been established! May God bless and protect those few who call on His name in their place!
(Wednesday, July 18, 2007, Lucknow, India)

John 3:16-19 "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. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. 19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."

Thank God for the light in your life. Throughout the day think of all the blessings you have because of God's light shining on you.



Blog 27: EAST AND WEST - CONTRASTING WORLD VIEWS

Have you ever wondered why there is such a great difference in the quality and duration of life in the West and the East? Even now, when the advancements of the West are available to those living in the East, they seem to reject them in favor of an inferior lifestyle. Why is this? In order to understand it we must understand the basic world view that underlies the mind set of the East. In understanding that, we find our answer.

Where the gospel has been accepted and the Biblical world view incorporated into society the quality of life has improved. Where it has been rejected life has remained in darkness. In India Christians are in a very small minority. 'Christian' refers to Roman Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, liberal Christians and evangelicals. Even so, for every one Christian there are 4 Moslems and 32 Hindus. The Biblical world view has not impacted the culture and the results are obvious.

In order to understand the Hindu world view, let's see how it would answer the 3 basic questions all world views answer. First, **Who am I?** Hindus would say they are a life form going through many carnations and they are at the mercy of distant and uncaring gods. Second, **What is my problem?** To the Hindu, the problem in life is that they are now suffering for mistakes and failures in previous lives (carnations). They are paying for the past. Then third, **What's the solution?** The solution that has been developed over the centuries to deal with this is called 'karma,' what you have is what you have. Life is as it is. Accept it, it's your lot. Don't question, try to change or improve, just live it. Perhaps your suffering may appease the Hindu gods and things won't get even worse. Self-imposed suffering in the form of Hindu rituals, pilgrimages and other things may help appease the gods as well, but who knows? One only has the next carnation to look for; perhaps it will be better, perhaps worse. After a million or more reincarnations one is finally reabsorbed into Nirvana and then ceases to exist. That's all there is to hope for.

Remember that beliefs affect values and values determine actions. These **beliefs** form **values** that are seen in how the people live. Life has little value. Therefore health, sanitation, safety and so forth aren't important. One's own life and happiness isn't important. There is no responsibility to help others in need or society in general. All this is seen in their **actions**. People simply exist for today and that is all. Life is hard but little or no changes are made. The

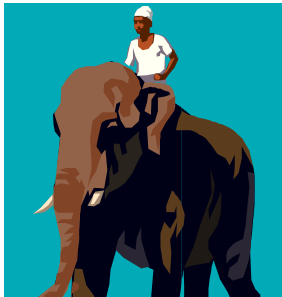
rich see no responsibility to help the poor or even contribute to the improvement of their culture. The poor don't feel responsible to provide a better life for themselves or their children. There is no joy and no hope.

So what makes our civilization and outlook so different? In having accepted the Bible as truth through the centuries our world view is entirely different. We believe God has a plan for man (Romans 8:28) and that He will bring that plan about in our lives (Philippians 1:6). We know we have an obligation and responsibility to help others and improve the world around us (parable of the Good Samaritan). In addition, we aren't functioning in a system of fear for God is not a God of fear (1 Timothy 1:7). Everything we have is by God's grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). God is motivated by love and we are to be as well (John 3:16). Light drives our darkness (John 1:5, 9).

So what's the big difference between East and West? It comes down to world view, for ideas do have consequences! (Friday, June 20, 2007, Hyderabad, India)

Romans 8:28-30 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. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Think for a few minutes about the tremendous difference it makes for us as Christians that God uses everything for our good!



Blog 28: THE ANIMALS OF INDIA

The first thing a visitor to India notices is the poverty and filth. The second would be the colorful dress of the women everywhere. But the third thing would have to be the animals. Animals are everywhere.

Oxen pull carts and plow fields. Cattle and water buffalo roam everywhere. Their large horns intact, they are gentle and docile. They can cause major traffic problems when they just lay down in the middle of a busy highway, though. The milk used here is from oxen and water buffalo. While Hindus are strict vegetarians, Moslems and Christians do eat beef.

Chickens are eaten as are their eggs, although eggs are never refrigerated. Very, very few people even have refrigeration, and the ones that do don't use it for much.

Horses and donkeys are also used to pull carts and carry loads. Goats run wild everywhere. They are used for milk but mainly meat. There are even a few sheep for meat.

An occasional camel can be seen, dressed up and ridden or carrying a burden. If you watch carefully you can even see a monkey or two here or there.

I have heard some places use elephants but I haven't seen any except at the zoo. He wasn't in a cage, just roaming around for people to touch and climb up on his back for pictures.

In India you don't have to go to a farm or zoo to see animals, the animals come to you wherever you may be. (Saturday, June 21, 2007, Hyderabad, India)

Genesis 1:24-25 And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each

according to its kind." And it was so. 25 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

When is the last time you thanked God for His creative touch in making so many and varied animals for our use and pleasure? How much duller life would be without animals. What a special gift from God they are!

Blog 29: WHAT I MISS - AND WHAT I DON'T MISS

So what do **I miss** the most? I miss Nancy. And Grace and Mark and all of you. I miss feeling clean. I miss a hot shower, or even a cold shower, or even hot water in a sink. Having only cold water and a sink in a very hot climate is tough! My deodorant has been holding up well, though!

I miss vegetables and fruit. To be honest I'm very tired of spicy starches and very spicy meats. They have some fruits and vegetables but since they are washed in local water I'm told not to eat them. I miss them more than chocolate, though! Actually I don't miss chocolate - I don't even think about it. I do wonder what the first signs of scurvy are, though. So far no teeth have fallen out - I guess that's a good sign.

I miss being able to exercise. I go for a long, swift walk as soon as it is light enough but it is already too hot for that. I miss the cleanliness of the US: its streets, bathrooms and smells. I miss not having to disinfect myself continually. I miss using spigot water to drink, brush teeth, etc.

By the same token, there are things in the USA **I don't miss**. I don't miss talking on the phone. For someone dependent on reading lips most of the time, talking on the phone can be difficult. Also I don't miss the overt sensuality of the US. Except for an occasional billboard that wouldn't even be noticed in the US, the dress, pictures, advertising, etc., is totally modest. It's refreshing to not have to keep moving my eyes from what I see and wiping the images out of my mind. That I like a lot!

I don't miss the seemingly endless and very time consuming chore of keeping electronic gadgets working: computer, PA system, projector, PDA, car, DVD player, etc. I seem to end up being the computer guru problem solving what goes wrong here, but it's far less than at home. That I certainly don't miss.

Now, **what will I miss here?** I'll miss ministry on the cutting edge, where so much is at stake and every opportunity is a rare privilege. I'll miss the challenges of being totally out of my element with nothing but God's Word to give people and finding that is enough. I'll miss the great hunger and thirst for the Bible and for Jesus, not just in Christians but in the Hindus and Moslems to visit church as well. I'll miss the opportunities to make such a great difference in so many lives in so little time. I'll miss being able to impact pastors so their whole life and ministry improves and they pass that on to future generations.



I'll miss the way women dress. It is very colorful, very feminine and very modest. Enough said!

I'll miss the new, good friends I have made here. It seems especially easy to bond heart to heart and soul to soul when ministering

together under these circumstances. Sharing the same foxhole seems to break down all walls and pretense. I do look forward to getting to know them better in heaven, when we can actually carry on conversations together as well!

I'll certainly miss the children - the ones in the churches and orphanages. Their eyes are so full of trust and openness. Their hearts are so hungry for the truth. Their smiles come so readily and light up their whole face. Their trust and respect is freely given. They just give you their heart the first time you meet them. Seeing them a second time is like reuniting with a child you've known your whole life. They are quiet and obedient. They are deeply grateful and appreciative of anything and everything. They don't assume anything is due them. They are a joy and I'd love to bring a few back with me! (Monday, July 23, 2007, Hyderabad, India)

Mark 10:13-16 People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." 16 And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.



What is so special about children that God wants us to be like them instead of trying to make them like us? What good traits of children do you still have and cultivate? Try to find some ways today to show that little child inside of you to someone you love.

Blog 30: PROMISED PROTECTION

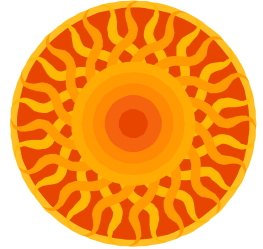
With my trip to Asia just a few days away I've been leaning on a couple of Bible promises to help me through everything coming up. As you probably have found out yourself, God always seems to leave a few loose ends in our plans, ends we just can't pull together, so we have something for which to trust Him. That certainly is the case with this trip as well. Two promises have stood out to me today. **"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."** (Isaiah 42:16). I'll be doing a lot of traveling to various spread-out locations, and I'm not sure how the transportation will work out. Not knowing the language or the culture doesn't help. It's like I will be blind, traveling unfamiliar paths. Thus this verse is a real help.

Another promise I have been thinking about is **Genesis 28:15**, given to Jacob but certainly applicable to my trip: **"I am with you and will watch over you wherever you do, and I will bring you back to this land."** A month away from family and friends and by myself in a foreign country is starting to sound like forever. It's good to be reminded I won't be alone, He will be with me, and I will come back here. What comfort there is in God's Word. I must keep my eyes on Him and not circumstances. We all must. (Monday, June 25, 2007)

Psalms 119:9-11 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. 10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. 11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Think of a Bible verse that speaks to the situation you are facing today, be it a challenge, heartache or time or praise. Write the verse down and carry it with you, reading it over and over throughout the day. It's guaranteed to improve your day.

Blog 31: PROMISED PRESENCE



Today is the day I leave on my mission trip. I'm been realizing all week how much I totally depend on God's grace for everything involved with this. Saying good-bye is the hardest part. Being able to fulfill all the speaking and ministry opportunities also takes God's grace. He promises **"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."** (2 Corinthians 12:9) I provide the weakness and He provides the grace. I can do my part of that easy enough. And I know He can do His part.

Other verses speak to my heart this morning: **"I will never leave you or forsake you"** (Hebrews 13:5) and **"My Presence will go with you and I will give you rest"** (Exodus 33:14). The only thing I have to cling to is His Word, but that is sufficient. His promises are true. It's been said that His will will never send us where His grace will not sustain us. And we all know that the safest place to be is in the center of God's will. I know because of God's grace that which He wants to accomplish in me and through me will come about. He promised. (Friday, June 29, 2007)

Galatians 3:21-22 Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. 22 But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

What is your favorite promise in the Bible? Why? What would your life be like if God never made or kept that promise?

Blog 32: BUT DON'T DRINK THE WATER!

At home we take water for granted. We give it very little thought. It is a part of life. Here water is a subtle but very potent enemy to be avoided. Drinking even a small portion can cause days of terrible stomach agony. No drinks can contain unprocessed water. Even bottled drinks cannot have ice for it will melt and pollute the drink. Utensils and dishes must be washed in pure water. Fresh fruits and vegetables (except ones that are peeled) cannot be eaten. One can't rinse their toothbrush, or their mouth, with tap water. Even when showering the water can't be ingested. This takes constant and unending vigilance. I can't let down my guard for a moment. A mental lapse can be very costly. One becomes preoccupied with not allowing any of their water to enter one's body. It almost becomes an obsession. The stakes are high - that's what feeds and motivates this. Now why can't I be that serious and consistent about not letting any sinful thought enter my mind? If I can do it for water, why can't I do it for sin? (June-July, 2007)

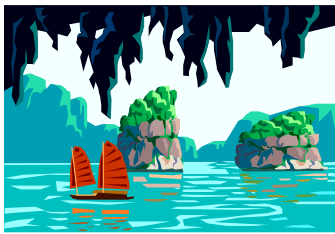
Psalms 24:1-6 The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; 2 for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters. 3 Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. 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.

What does it mean to have a "pure heart"? Is that humanly possible? How does David describe what this means in verse 4? Pray and ask God to give you clean hands and a pure heart. Confess anything unclean that is in your heart.

Blog 33: THE CHILDREN

One of the first things one notices here are the children. Long after leaving it is the children that stay in ones mind. There are millions of them. They are everywhere. They are quiet, peaceful, gentle, hardworking, polite and appreciative of anything and everything. Some are born in unbelievable poverty and never leave it their whole lives. A few grow up in extreme luxury and are waited on hand and foot. But it's their eyes that capture your heart. The longing and emptiness is heart-wrenching. A flicker of hope still burns in them, something not seen in the eyes of adults any more. They accept their lot in life with stoic indifference. They aren't spoiled, rebellious, and full of themselves and their own culture. They take their place alongside adults and live their lives of quiet desperation. What else can they do? They have so much less than the children of America - and yet in some ways they have more.

There is a maturity that settles on them early and, while life is hard, they don't make the life-changing mistakes many children and teens in America make for they just don't have those options. What really strikes me is that they had no choice in where they were born or in what level of this society they would find themselves. No one has that choice. That belongs to God alone. I don't understand and I don't question, but I do thank Him for the tremendous blessings He has provided or me and my children by placing us in the time and place He has. How can we ever complain about life? Never. Just look at the children. (June-July, 2007)



Philippians 4:10-13 I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 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.

Are you content? Would your family and those who know you say you are content? Or do you always want a little more? In what areas do you have the greatest struggle with contentment? What can you do about it?

Blog 34: 4th of JULY IN INDIA

It is very strange to celebrate the 4th of July in India. In the USA it is celebrated everywhere. Here it is just another day. Independence Day for the USA? So what! No big deal. But for US citizens it is big deal. And we assume it is a big deal for the whole world. We think the world revolves around us and can't imagine anything else. I first realized this on my trip last year. We left the first week in January, the same night number 1 and 2 were playing for the college football championship. I searched every European and other newspapers I could find. You'd think an English language newspaper would cover the game of the century - even just having the score in small print somewhere but nothing. It wasn't until I returned home that I learned Texas had won.

So what am I learning from this? We as Americans aren't the center of everything to other countries - just to ourselves. That applies to individuals as well as countries. We tend to think everything and everyone should revolve around us and when that doesn't happen we don't understand. It's more than an American thing, it's a human thing. There's nothing like getting out of the center of our world to show us we aren't the center of the world! (Wednesday, July 4, 2007)

Romans 12:3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

Do you think of yourself more highly than you should? How can you really tell if you do or not? What standard can you use to keep yourself humble? When are you most guilty of expecting everything to revolve around you? Why?

Blog 35: GOD'S LIVING TRANSLATION - US

I've had 5 different men translate so far, and usually don't know who it will be or how he does until I start talking. Having a translator for everything has its advantages as well as disadvantages. There is time to think ahead and choose the exact wording I want to use. However if the translator is limited then that becomes a disadvantage. A good translator takes what I say and communicates it in a way his listeners can understand. He takes it from my culture and applies it to theirs so it becomes real and understandable to them. A poor translator, though, makes it much more difficult to communicate. My vocabulary is cut in half or even more.

I can only get across the basics, nothing deeper. We are God's translators, taking His message and making it understandable to those in our culture by what we say and do. We make God understandable to the world around us. How good a job are you doing translating God's message so it is understandable to those around you? Are you getting the message across? (Thursday, July 5, 2007)

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? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Make a mental list of all the people who see you in a typical day who aren't Christians. What kind of impression do you make? If all they knew about Jesus was what they saw in you, what would they think of Him?

Blog 36: POWER OUTAGE

Periodically, without warning, the electricity stops working for an indefinite period of time. It's easy to tell when it happens for the lights go off and fans stop working – it gets dark and uncomfortable quickly. That's what happens when God's power, the Holy Spirit, is grieved or quenched in our lives. We can tell it has happened because we start finding ourselves in darkness. Life gets uncomfortable. That's a sure sign the power has been interrupted. But we don't have to sit in darkness and misery – we can turn back to the source of power, reconnect with God, and again enjoy light and comfort. After all, why sit in the darkness when you can be in the light! (June-July, 2007)

John 3:16-21 "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. ... Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."



What are some of the early warning signs in your life that God's Spirit is not speaking or working as He should be? What do you usually do (or not do) that grieves Him? What must you do instead so He is always shining in your life?

Blog 37: IT'S NOT THE SAME!

I've worked with 8 different translators so far this week. I often don't know who will be translating, or how well they will do, until I start speaking. I must adjust my vocabulary to their ability to translate. Still, I am glad to have them. The Bible colleges here teach in English because there are no commentaries or Bible reference books in Telugu. So they learn English quite well. The problem is they learn it literally, without any of the nuances, slang or expressions that are such a part of our language. They use the literal words, but run them through grid, their world perspective.

Since I am usually the only non-Indian in a group I gravitate to those who know English. Then I start thinking they think like an American, but they don't. We can convey information, but not connect heart to heart. I can remember that when with Indians who don't speak English, but can be fooled by those who seem to know the language. There are people who seem like Christians – they know the 'talk' and we can be taken in by that. But inside they are different from us so we can't rally connect. So watch out – don't let the talk fool you! (June-July, 2007)

2 Peter 2:1-2 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — bringing swift destruction on themselves. 2 Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.

Satan counterfeits God's truth with sugar-coated lies in order to deceive God's people. When have you been misled by Satan's lies? What can you do to prevent it from happening again? How can you help others who are being misled?



Blog 38: "DRINK WATER!"

"Drink water!" "Drink water!" "Drink water!" I'm constantly telling myself to drink water. In a hot and humid climate we lose a lot of water through our skin each day. It's not always noticeable, but it needs to regularly be replaced. So, along with several other things, I carry a large bottle of water everywhere I go. I need to do more than carry it – I must remember to drink it. If I wait until I am thirsty to drink I have waited too long. "The Word!" "The Word!" "The Word!" I also need a constant, fresh influx of the Word of God. I can carry it around but unless I apply it to my life it does no good. And waiting until I notice the need means I've waited too long. The living water of the Word of God is as essential to our soul as water is to our bodies. So make sure you keep up. You need a constant, fresh supply. Remember, "The Word." June-July, 2007)

Ephesians 5:25-26 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

How long can you go without a drink of water? How long do you go without drinking from God's Word? If you don't have a healthy thirst for the Bible, ask God to give you one, and spend some time reading it now. Psalm 1 is a good place to start.

Blog 39: CLEAN ALL OF IT UP

It's always ironic to see someone meticulously cleaning their driveway when just to the side of it lay heaps of trash and garbage. Yet that is a common sight. Walkways are spotless but trash lies in large mounds right beside them. I'm sure they somehow rationalize that in their minds, though. "There's nothing I can do about that." "It isn't my fault." "I'll do it later." "I'll just focus on what is easy to clean and pretend the other doesn't exist." "Everyone's home is the same way." Excuses abound. Could our lives be in some way similar to those homes? We keep some parts squeaky clean and spotless. Those are the parts we so proudly show to others.

But just beside them are heaps of trash and garbage in our life which find excuses to ignore. How can they be so blind to the trash beside their house? How can we? Lord, make us alert and sensitive to that which appears repulsive and disgusting to you, and help us make every effort to remove it with your help." (June-July, 2007)

Psalms 34:14 Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

What sin appeals most to you and is hardest for you to turn from? Why does it seem so attractive? Ask God to help you see it through His eyes, as something that caused Jesus pain and misery on the cross.

Blog 40: MOSQUITOES

They're tiny, they are hard to see, and they are no threat against anything – except for their bite. Even that is more annoying than serious or deadly. Yet their sting can cause serious illness, even death. That's why we take strong anti-malaria drugs to avert any harm they can cause. And it's why I cover myself with sun tan lotion that has mosquito repellent in it several times a day. There is to be avoided if at all possible. They are just as bad in the house as out – they are everywhere. We hunt down every one we find and destroy it.

They remind me of little sins (if there is such a thing as 'little' sin). Some sins seem harmless enough, not too bad, and certainly not deadly. But it is often those very sins we need to be most careful of. They seem harmless and weak, but can cause terrible harm. Only by ample applications of prayer and the Word of God can we protect ourselves. And if you do get bit by the sin bug, apply the blood of Jesus as per I John 1:9. Always keep a healthy dose handy! Don't let them fool you; they are more deadly than they look! (June-July, 2007)

Song of Solomon 2:15 Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom.

What 'little' sins have a way of attacking you if you aren't very careful? Why are they so effective against you? What can you do today to protect yourself against them?

Blog 41: I LEFT MY HEART IN AHMEDNAGAR

I arrived on a Monday and left on a Friday. I came not really wanting to be there and I left not wanting to go. In 3 days of meetings a very close bonding developed between me and the people of the Church of God there. It is an older, established church that has birthed and oversees many other congregations in a fellowship called 'Jesus Loves Me.' We experienced intense worship, teaching (crucifixion and resurrection really





came alive by Peter, Barabbas and Thomas) and joy. They laughed and clapped for all the magic tricks. We battled the enemy together and praised God together. They immediately took to me and I to them. Our hearts flow in the same channel. They live in one-room, unpainted masonry huts with dirt floors. Their sewage flows through the gutters. Animals are everywhere. It seems the less they have the more they praise the Lord. Their physical difficulties are something we can't possibly understand without living it. We cannot hold a conversation, or even exchange the simplest words (other than 'Jesus' and 'Praise the Lord'). I have nothing in common with them, but I have everything in common with them.

Stavan, the 21 year old pastor who translated and took care of me, is 1/3 my age. But we connected like long lost brothers. I will greatly miss him as well. We will be in touch. We are supporting an extremely needy family there and will continue to pray for the demonized girl we battled for. I spent each afternoon visiting with many of them in their homes, a real thrill for them but even more for me. They won't forget me and I won't forget them. I took part of their heart with them when I departed but left part of mine there. It was only 3 full days, and it went far too quickly. How much like life it is! In a few short days we love and laugh, we cry and praise, we learn and fight together. Then it is over too soon. Time is too short. I guess God knows that for He gave us eternity to continue what was started on this earth. And I really look forward to being able to talk to the believers from the Church of God in Ahmednagar, India. (June-July, 2007)

1 John 4:11-12 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Who is your closest Christian friend? Have you talked to them recently? Why not give them a call or write a letter or email? Let them know you love them and appreciate their friendship. In fact, contact several close Christian friends....

Blog 42: WE DON'T HAVE TO TRAVEL ALONE

These train rides have me completely out of my element - but that's not surprising in India! Since I don't know the language, and I don't know of anyone on the train who knows English, it could be a difficult and dangerous situation. Fortunately I am not traveling alone. Joseph, Abigail B.'s brother, accompanied me on the first trip and now Prakash, the founding pastor who oversees numerous churches in the Ahmednagar region, is sitting beside me. Both are experienced travelers who know the way and have traveled it often. They are here to see me safely to my destination and do anything they can to help me on the way.

How much is that like the Holy Spirit? God sends Him to guide us on our way, to accompany us through our travels in life. He knows the way and what is coming, and He is committed to seeing me safely to my eternal destination. I would be foolish indeed to not heed the advice and follow the guidance of these men who have sacrificed their time to accompany me. I would be even more foolish to ignore guidance and help of Him Who accompanies me through my daily trials. May I be as thankful to God for His Spirit as I am for these dedicated guides. (June-July, 2007)

Proverbs 1:5 let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance —

Proverbs 9:9 Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.

Are you struggling with a decision? Is there an area of your life that isn't going well? Think of those in your life whom God has used in the past to give you good advice. Contact them and ask for their suggestions. Also, make your wisdom available to those who many need a word from you.

Blog 43: RIDING BACKWARDS THROUGH LIFE

So here I am again on a train. It's my second train ride. The first was a 600 mile, 12 hour ride from Hyderabad to Pune. This is a 24+ hour 1000 train ride from Pune to Lucknow. I'm in the best car (best by India standards only). There are 4 of us in a compartment, 2 on each side facing the other 2. There are bunk beds on each side. The good news is that I've had a window both trips. The bad news is that I'm again facing backwards. I don't see where I'm going, only where I'm at. Then I see that fade into the background. At night when it is dark I don't see anything.

Yet this is exactly how we go through life, isn't it? We don't see where we are going, only where we are. Then the present quickly rushes past us and into the background. If we watch it too closely we miss the present. But the present seems to move too quickly to take it all in, so sometimes we must watch a bit longer as it fades in the past.

Then there are the trials and difficulties we all pass through, the dark nights of our souls. In those times we can't see the present clearly. Everything is dark. It's easy to loose all perspective. So here I am riding backwards through the Indian countryside thinking about my life. It seems this 24 hour trip will last forever, but I know it will pass and end. Then it will seem to have gone too quickly. So it is with life. Enjoy the ride, it'll go quickly enough. (June-July, 2007)



Ecclesiastes 3:1-9 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die,

Spend a few minutes today thinking back on your life. What are some of the highlights, the best memories and best times? Think through each one, thanking God for what He has done for you. Don't be so busy today that you aren't able to enjoy the scenery as you pass through.

Blog 44: WE'LL SEE THE PICTURE LATER

The morning I left for Lucknow I got up early to pack. I had gotten to bed very late after the encounter with the demonized girl the night before. I was distracted and off my schedule. I didn't realize until later that I forgot to pray for a hedge of protection. I forgot to pray for the room I slept in once and won't make that mistake again! Anyway, the morning was full of strange and frustrating events: things lost, things broken. The worst was a freak 'accident' that broke the display panel of my digital camera. I think it still takes pictures, but they can't be seen, nor can any of the settings. I take a picture sight-unseen then must wait until I download it onto my laptop to see what it is like.

That aptly describes how I often feel going through life. I give it my best shot but don't really know how effective my efforts have been. I won't see the results until later. (Not to fear, I do have my old camera and am using it - there will be pictures!) Paul says we see dimly now

but will see clearly later (I Corinthians 13). I won't see the complete picture of what God is accomplishing on this trip, or in my whole life, until I see it downloaded and displayed in heaven. I don't know what it will all look like - but I have confidence that it will be wonderful to see for God does wonderful work. (June-July, 2007)



1 Corinthians 13:12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

What is it you are looking forward to most in heaven? What are some parts that will really bless and please you? When you are in heaven and look back on this life on earth, what will be some of your thoughts and impressions? Live your life today in the realization that one day soon it will be over, so make what time you have today count.

Blog 45: A LONGING FOR HOME

As I enter my second of three weeks here without any contact with non-Indians I already find myself longing for anything American. I look at the people around me, hoping for a white face. I listen to the conversations going on, hoping to hear a familiar word. I search the advertisements, the cable channels, the stores, the signs - everywhere. But I find nothing. I'm getting hungry for what is common and familiar to me. I long for 'home' in any shape or form. Yet it isn't anywhere to be seen, nor will it be for 2 more weeks. Oh how great it will be to get on the plane and hopefully see American travelers!

But just thinking of this bothers me, for I must admit I don't long for my Heavenly home with the same intensity. I should. Nowhere in this world, even the United States, is really 'home' for the Christian. We all look for a better place. The problem is that sometimes we don't look very hard for it. We become familiar and comfortable where we are. I suppose I could eventually feel somewhat 'at home' in India, even now a familiarity and deeper connection with the country is developing. I guess that's what happens to us and the world we live in. We adjust. We acclimate. And it doesn't seem too bad. But may we never forget we are indeed citizens of another Country. May we never feel too much at home anywhere but there. May our hearts never feel totally at home until we reach our Heavenly home! (June-July, 2007)

1 Peter 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,

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.

What is there in this world that most attracts you, that draws your attention from spiritual things? What is there in this world that you are looking forward to leave when you go to heaven? If you don't feel at home in this world, that's great – God has a greater home awaiting you in heaven. If you feel comfortable here and don't think of heaven, ask God to draw your mind and heart to your future home.

Blog 46: GOD PROVIDES AN OASIS

Lucknow was the furthest and most remote place I've been. I didn't know anyone when going there. The man I was to be with wasn't able to be there, although I still stayed in his home. It seemed things weren't very planned or organized, like I was an afterthought and they quickly tried to find something for me to do with the children. That was the purpose for going

there but it didn't develop as it could have because of the monsoons. It was the darkest city and place I've visited. The northern India Ganges River Valley is reportedly the hardest place in the world for the gospel to take root, and the Ganges goes through Lucknow.

Yet in the midst of all that, when I needed it most, God provided a real oasis. Just a few houses from where I was staying were a Southern Baptist missionary couple whom I knew when back in the states! And they are home schoolers. Even finding out they were here came about in the most random way that only God can produce. But being able to talk to someone with English as a first language, someone with so much in common, was a real light in the darkness. Sharing and praying together were special. Thank you, God, for providing what we need when we need it most - even before we are aware of our need for it! (June-July, 2007)

Isaiah 65:24 Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

Think of a time in your life when God provided for your needs before you were even aware of what you would require. Thank Him for it. Look for ways God is currently providing in your life, meeting needs you haven't yet asked to be met.



Blog 47: STRONG AND WEAK

Paul's words to the Corinthians have taken on new meaning to me this trip. Explaining some of his own struggles, he concludes with "for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:8-10). That has to rank among one of the main lessons God has been trying to teach me during this time in India. It started before I left and has just grown over the weeks. I have never been 'weaker' - in all ways.

I am totally unable to pull this off. I need help with everything for I don't know the customs or the language. I on my own am totally incompetent to meet the needs of the hungry people who come expecting this white man from America to tell them out to make sense of their lives. I myself have nothing to say. I can't even take care of me, how can I take care of them? Physically I am the mercy of any kind of bug that may decide to enter my system. Exercise is impossible in the heat. Diet is way off. Sleep is sporadic. Spiritually I am entering enemy-occupied territory and seeking to set the captives free, not something Satan will let happen unchallenged. Socially I am without the kind of companionship I've always had and am used to.

So I guess saying I'm weak isn't a stretch by any imagination. Yet somehow through it all I feel much more deeply connected to and cared for by God than I ever do when I'm more in control of my life and circumstances. There is a depth, a sweetness, an intensity and a realness in my walk with God that I haven't had since I've been in India last time! And yet this certainly isn't heaven on earth here. This is as far as you can get from the kingdom of God. So what's the key? Weakness. Or I should say being aware of my weakness. It's true, the weaker we are the stronger we are! Try it for yourself! (June-July, 2007)

2 Corinthians 12:8-10 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 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.

What exactly does it mean to you that when you are weak you are strong? Think of some examples in your own life of when this was true. In what ways are you weak right now? Are you taking advantage of the strength you have in Jesus to get through it?



Blog 48: THE IDOL OF SECURITY

Perhaps the first lesson God showed me during my India trip was that I was making an idol of my life at home. I was finding my security in it and not in God. That is idolatry. I've been trying to learn to take my fears and insecurity, my loneliness and discomfort to the Lord. I'm trying to make a conscious effort to turn to Him for security. He's shown me how my comfortable and safe life there with family and friends has been meeting my need for security.

Now with that crutch gone I've had to turn to Him instead and have Him minister peace and comfort to my spirit. The good news is that it's been working! I have more peace and security here where I have to totally depend on God than in my wonderful life at home where I don't! So I challenge you: ask God to show you if you are using your life, your family or your friends to provide the security that He should be providing. Remember, He is a jealous God and He hates idols! (June-July, 2007)

Psalms 33:22 May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you.

Where do you turn for peace and security? What do you think about when falling asleep, when waking up? Does anything other than Jesus satisfy your needs or give you security? Thank Him for being everything you need for all the needs in your life.

Blog 49: ENJOY THE MOMENT

I don't know if I can really explain this to you, but I'll give it a try. One of the by-products of being totally out of control of anything going on here is that I don't have to be concerned about what to do next. Nor does it work to try to plan for the next contingency. It's out of my hands. The future is completely out of my hands. So why not just relax and enjoy the present moment. That advice was given to me and it really struck home. Sometimes I want time to move much more quickly, other times I want it to slow down, even stop for awhile. I can't cause either to happen. Time just keeps going at its own pace, no matter what I try to do.

So I've stopped trying. If I'm in an uncomfortable situation and want time to move quickly, I may as well forget it for I can't change things. I can adjust to what is happening knowing time will keep moving and it will soon be over. As to slowing it down for the more enjoyable moments, I can't do that, either. So I might as well savor the moment for its all I'll have and then it will be gone. It's been a nice experience, this just focusing on and enjoying the moment. I hope I'll learn this lesson well enough so I can keep some of it when I get back home and my life and schedule is once again handed back to me. In the meantime, it's kind of cool just sitting back and let life happen. (June-July, 2007)

Ex 14:14 The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much would your friends say you try to control things? How good are you at sitting back and enjoying the moment? Make a real effort today to do just that!

Blog 50: WHEN JESUS DOESN'T ANSWER

Before coming to India when I was seeking God as to what messages to use for different occasions, He put it in my heart to use the account of Lazarus' death in John 11 for my

message. It gets more powerful each time and I never tired of delivering it. Every church I speak in Sundays or during the week, when asked to bring a message, I talk about this. I've given this same message five times so far. Everyone can identify with Mary and Martha when Jesus didn't come to help Lazarus but waited until it was 'too late' to even show up. He helped others, why not them? He knew Lazarus died, He loved them deeply, He was able to do it had He so chosen - but He didn't.

Why? He had a greater plan in view. He was using it to stretch their faith and help them grow, and He was using it for His glory. He never gave the disciples, Mary or Martha an explanation. He just simply called on them to trust Him. He has more than proven Himself trustworthy by taking our eternal punishment so we can spend eternity with Him. And that's what He expects of us, too, when we wonder why He doesn't seem to come and help us in our need. It's a message we all need to remember. (June-July, 2007)

John 11:1-44 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ... So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." ... Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. ... On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ... "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. " ... 32 When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ... "Take away the stone," he said. ... "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out.

Think of a time when your faith struggled. What did you learn from that experience? Is there anything you are having a hard time trusting God with now? Think of the story of Lazarus and turn it over to Him.

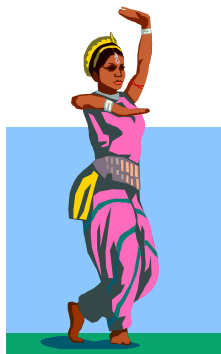


Blog 51: THE 'REAL' CHURCH

As I get to know and interact with the pastors and churches here I am surprised by 2 things: how similar we are and how different we are. Let me explain. We are the same for we have the same enemy (our sin nature, the world around us and Satan), the same resources (the Bible, prayer, fellowship, love and God Himself) and the same goals (to grow spiritually and glorify Jesus, to spread His Word, to live for Him in all we do). Churches struggle with people problems, weak believers being enticed to believe lies and even competition among churches.

Yet we are so very different. If these churches have a building it is a simple shed to keep the sun or rain off them. The focus is on house churches where a local man who has been called to pastor becomes their teacher and shepherd. There is little or no training for pastors or other leaders. Services are simple but several hours long. No one is in a hurry for this is the highlight of their week (of their life!). Prayer, worship and learning the Word are the focus.

There are no programs, ad campaigns, expectations on worship leaders to produce a certain result, no youth groups or financial campaigns. The focus is on the people having their spiritual needs met, not on a church structure or environment. The church is the people. It does not exist apart from the people. They are the church, not a building, structure, program or leadership team. 90% of what we do as 'church' just doesn't exist here. It's all about everyone praying, praising and learning the Word. Their lives and struggles motivate them. Believe me, it's refreshing!!!! (June-July, 2007)



Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Why do you go to church? Do you judge churches by their external appearance or programs? If Jesus came to your church, what would be attractive to Him? What can you do to help your church be more like God wants it to be?

Blog 52: WHITE MAN IN A DARK WORLD

Since the first week, when 3 people from Glenside stayed in the same home I was staying in, I've only seen one white-skinned family – the missionaries in Lucknow. Being the only white person in a dark world isn't as uncomfortable as I thought it would be. Everyone is polite and gentle. There is almost no antagonism. They are curious about me as I am about them. We both study each other while pretending to not notice. In the churches the presence of a white man has been tremendously encouraging and very well received. The oneness we share in Christ is much more evident than lack of common knowledge or skin color. My presence at any church activity or event makes it very special to them. However there are some events I haven't attended because of being white. I've been careful not to be too obvious in their communities, especially in outside daytime events. Some of the more 'religious' Hindus or Moslems will forever see the local church as tainted by the presence of a foreigner, as if they are disloyal to India and somehow connected to American interests.

Others in the local community will assume the presence of a white person means that they are receiving much money from the rich American. There will be greed and jealousy that results. So I am careful to not be seen too much in some of the communities, but my presence is always welcome in the church. As Paul says, in Christ there is no male nor female, no slave nor free, no Indian or American – we are all one in Christ! (June-July, 2007)

Galatians 3:26-28 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

When do you find yourself the most prejudice? Is it about a certain race, social group, economic income, physical appearance or those from a particular part of the world? Honestly search your own hearts and confess any sin that is there. We are all one in Christ!

Blog 53: ENCOURAGEMENT

The one word that clearly summarizes my contribution to the people of India I have met is 'encouragement.' I heard it continually the first week from the male pastors, the second week from the female church members (men of the men couldn't get off during the day to attend the meetings), the third week from the children and the fourth week from all those groups. They say I encouraged them. They didn't say I educated them, or trained them, or entertained them, or even equipped them. They say I encouraged them. They felt tremendous encouragement by my coming. Just being there said more than anything else I could do. The lessons and messages were icing on the cake. I encouraged them.

Obviously that is their greatest need. Not training or entertainment. They need those things, but they need encouragement more. Just the fact that I cared enough to come meant everything to them. My presence encouraged them. They need encouragement. We all need encouragement. We all can be encouragers. It's so easy to do. Just care. Show you care.

That's not hard. We can all do it for someone, for everyone needs encouragement, especially us! (June-July, 2007)

Isaiah 1:17 learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

Think of a time when someone encouraged you. Thank God for that persona and time. Make a list of those you know who could use some encouragement and call, visit or write (letter or email) them today. A little encouragement goes a very long way!

Blog 54: IT'S ALL RELATIVE

I see these people living in their poverty and squalor and, despite the fact they work hard to stay neat and clean, wonder how they can stand living like this. At this point in my life I could never adjust to it! Then I remember that this is all they know. I know the higher standards in the USA and use that to compare what is here. They have no such standard so they are content with things as they are. They don't know it can be different, better. It's all relative. You know, as citizens of heaven, we should never allow ourselves to be content with the living conditions we find on this earth. We have a higher standard and should long for it. We must not be content with the things of this life but must long for the ultimate perfection of heaven, for that is where our real citizenship lies. (June-July, 2007)



Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 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.

How often in a day or a week do you think of heaven? Is it real and special to you, or are you so caught up in the things of this world that you often forget about the place you will spend eternity? Spend several minutes meditating about heaven and what it will be like for you to be there.

Blog 55: STAYING CLEAN IN A DIRTY WORLD

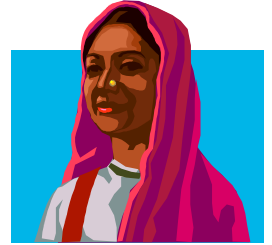
One of my very favorite parts of India is watching the women. Even those living in squalor with virtually nothing, whose huts have dirt (or mud) floors, are always neat and clean. I've not seen a dirty sari yet! Even women sweeping the streets and working construction have on bright colored silk saris and they always seem spotless. How they can maneuver through such a dirty world yet stay so clean and fresh amazes me. I would like to know their secret. Evidently it is possible to achieve.

Yet if they can do it with their physical dress, I should be able to keep myself spiritually clean as I daily encounter the evil and sin of this world. I need to keep my spiritual garments clean and spotless so that the One who is watching me is pleased with my purity as well. Staying spotless in a sin-stained world, is it possible? If these women can do it, so can we! (June-July, 2007)

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. 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.

Take a moment to check your spiritual life. Is there any dirt that should be washed away by the blood of Jesus? Confess your sin (1 John 1:9) and He will cleanse you. Ask Him to show you any thought, attitude or omission in your life that needs to be confessed.



Blog 56: PERSECUTION

I just came from visiting the one-room home of a pastor and his family in the outskirts of Pune. He had come up to attend the 3 day meetings I had in Ahmednagar. In fact, he is the pastor who joined in the spiritual warfare praying for demonized Rani there. He built a shed on the side of his home to provide protecting from weather for those in his church. There are 2 other one-room homes attached to these. His 2 brothers, their families and their mother live in them. The government in his area has outlawed Christianity. He and his people are no longer allowed to evangelize or baptize. They must travel to another district, to the church I spoke at 3 hours away, to have baptisms for there is still freedom there.

Yet these brothers, their wives and their children have a warm glow and great peace about them. They are committed to spreading the gospel to their lost neighbors. They will use tact and be careful, but they will stay faithful. Prakash, the founding and overseeing pastor of the churches I ministered to and who accompanied me on the train from Pune to Lucknow has ugly and deep scars all over his right arm from being attacked and beaten because he is a Christian. So now, what are the big, terrible problems our churches are facing? Want to trade? (June-July, 2007)

Matthew 5:11-12 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Do you know of anyone who is suffering because they are a Christian? Pray for them. Pray for your brothers and sisters in other countries who suffer for their faith. Pray for God's protection and peace, and that He use these things for His glory.

Blog 57: HINDU DARKNESS

As you travel anywhere in India you quickly notice that the nicest buildings are the Hindu temples. In very poor, poverty-stricken neighborhoods there still are intricate, well-maintained, large and beautifully colored Hindu temples. They are everywhere. At almost any place you can look around you and see several. The temples are ornate and elaborate, but the people live in poverty. It reminds me of the large Catholic cathedrals in the poverty-stricken Central American countries.

These temples are supported by the money of the people, given in fear of their millions of gods. Perhaps if the gods are appeased they will not make life so hard. But it is obvious these gods haven't done anything for the people. Yet isn't that just like Satan? He promised the world but delivers only bondage. He demands everything but gives nothing in return. If anyone doubts the truth of that they need only to visit India. (June-July, 2007)

John 3:19-21 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

Thank God for the light that has been shown to you. Think of those you know who still walk in darkness. Pray for them. Ask God to open a way for you to show them the light of Jesus. Be alert today for any opportunity that comes your way to show the light of Jesus.

Blog 58: COVER-UP SPICES



Unless one enjoys very spicy food at every meal in every dish, one can quickly get tired of Indian food. I eat because my belly is hungry, my body needs nourishment and my hosts are trying to please me. They love spices because they have become accustomed to them. Yet the whole purpose of spice in food in a hot culture, like in Mexico, is to cover the taste of decay in food that is going bad. While that may not be the case any more in the cities, among the poor and in the villages it certainly is still true. Spice covers decay so it goes down better.

The application is obvious, isn't it? Satan 'spices' up our sin so it goes down better and we don't realize how much decay we are swallowing. We spice up our lives, thinking we are adding flavor, when we are just covering over what is rotting and unhealthy. What 'spice' are you allowing to cover the sin in your life? (June-July, 2007)

Jeremiah 49:10 "I will strip Esau bare; I will uncover his hiding places, so that he cannot conceal himself."

Is there any sin or unholy practice you are justifying in your life? What excuses do you use to allow it to remain? Ask God to shine His light on anything that is unholy in your life.

Blog 59: INDIA'S 'FREE' CATTLE

Cattle roam free everywhere. They wander up and down all the roads, in train stations and buildings - anywhere they want to go. Oxen, cattle, water buffalo - they are everywhere. After the first day I stopped taking pictures for they are everywhere. I pass within a few feet of a dozen or more every morning when I go for a walk. Each one belongs to someone but they are given free reign. Believing they may be reincarnated ancestors means no restrictions are placed on them.

Yet when you watch them carefully you see this 'freedom' isn't good for them. They are very thin, emaciated usually, because they have to eat from garbage dumped on the street. The water they drink is absolutely filthy - when they can find some. Many limp from accidents or from being on concrete all day. They have no place to rest. Cars and motorcycles are constantly rushing by them. If they were in a fenced in field with adequate water and food they would be much better off.

Total freedom isn't always a good thing. The same is true for us. Were we totally free to do anything we wanted as Christians we would not be as healthy and whole as we are now. Thank God for the restrictions He puts on our freedoms - they are for our own good. (June-July, 2007)

Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Be careful you don't take advantage of your freedom in Christ. Living under grace does not mean we can indulge in anything that is unholy. Sin can be tempting, but wrongly exercising our freedom can lead to spiritual illness and defeat.



Blog 60: WHAT DO OTHERS SEE?

Although I don't understand a word of it, to hear these pastors sing and pray is quite an experience. They do both long and loud. Every one takes turns singing in front of the group, and they all pray out loud. They are full of enthusiasm and emotion. Obviously what they are doing means a lot to them. They always wear sandals or loafers because whenever they lead in prayer or song, whenever they pray or worship, they do it barefoot. Moses was told to take off his sandals because entering God's presence was holy ground, so they do the same when entering God's presence. Men and women do this.

I remember one time I forgot to take my shoes off and stepped inside a church. Immediately a little girl ran over to me to signal me to take off my shoes. It could be just a tradition, a meaningless ritual for them. I'm sure it has become that for some of them. But for these fine pastors that certainly doesn't seem to be the case. It touches me to see their bare feet on the floor, praying or worshipping God. I hope others can tell our love of Jesus from our singing or praying. I hope we can encourage and uplift others as these pastors have uplifted me. They aren't doing it thinking anyone is watching, but they are being watched. So are we. What do people see when they watch us? (June-July, 2007)

1 Corinthians 11:1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Who has been a good example of Christ in your life? Thank God for them (and thank them personally if they are still alive). Who is it who watches your life? Pray that you would be a good example of Jesus for them. Ask God to show them what you can do to better represent Him.

Blog 61: US CITIZENSHIP

I've gained a whole new appreciation for being a US citizen by traveling overseas. There's not just the privilege of living in such a land of freedom and plenty, there's the assurance and confidence one feels of being a citizen of such a country. With 'US Citizen' on my passport I know I have the authority and power of the country behind me, protecting me and available to me. It's a privileged to be a citizen of this country. It opens doors into other countries, and makes reentry back to the United States simple, for we are simply returning home.

As I went through immigration and customs going into and out of India I kept thinking about my citizenship in heaven, which is even more special than my citizenship in the US. What doors the passport of salvation opens! Even greater power and authority is mine! Ministering in India as a citizen of God's heavenly Kingdom assures me of God's protection and provision for me. And the best part, entry into that Kingdom at death or when Jesus returns, is assured for we will finally be entering our home territory. What a grand homecoming that will be! (June-July, 2007)

Philippians 3:20 Our citizenship is in heaven

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. **12** Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Thank God for the citizenship He has given you in this special country. Thank Him all the more for the even better eternal citizenship you have with Him in heaven. As a citizen of heaven, how should you live in this world today?

Blog 62: BIBLE PROMISES

I've always believed in and used God's promises, but starting the week before I came here they have been a real life-line. I and read them every morning. I think of them during the day. My life is completely dependent on the truth of them. If they aren't true, I'm in major trouble with no way out! Let me share with you some of the promises God has made come alive in my life on this trip.

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.”

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.

Pick any one you want. They all work. I've put them to the hardest tests and they stand firm! (June-July, 2007)

Which verses has God used in your life over the years? Write them down so you don't forget, and so they are handy when you need them. Ask Him to show you more Scriptures that apply to you as you read His Word.



Blog 63: LESSONS I AM LEARNING

My hope is in God, I can't use my family, life at home or things for security. That just brings pain and misery. Therefore I must make a conscious effort to stay close to God. I must have meaningful daily devotions. I must make a mental choice to enjoy family and possessions but find security in God. I must pray about this regularly.

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 this comes about.

God's promises are totally dependable. I must continue to use, claim and depend on them.

Enjoy the moment. Live in the moment, it will be gone. We can't slow down or speed up time, we only have the present. Don't spent present always preparing, working for future. I must put Nancy first and not let business take over. Life must be simplified.

For me to lead my church and the world view teens is a privilege, but I'm going through this in part for them, for they will go through it and more so I must know it to start preparing them.

I am much more full of pride than I thought. I take credit for what God does and crave affirmation way too much. I explain it away saying it is natural, I give the credit to God, He allows it for my faithfulness, He wants me to feel good, too – but now I realize it is just pride and I need to get rid of it. It is self-centered, me taking credit for what He does, me wanting/needing approval way too much.

I find myself in a strange place where I am totally dependent on God and others for everything. I can't get food, travel or talk to anyone without the help of believers here and God opening the way. It's a good feeling, down to solid rock where a good foundation can be built. I know it will go when I return home and I'll miss it. I pray some of it will stick with me forever.

At the same time I have no responsibility other than to take care of my own clothes and stuff. No one is dependent on me, I have no responsibilities except what others plan - and I don't mind that at all! (June-July 2007)

Philippians 3:10-11 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.

What lessons has God been teaching you in life? Write them down so you can clearly see what He is doing. Pray that you would be open to His work and continue to grow as He would have you.



OCTOBER 18 – NOVEMBER 17, 2009

On this, my third trip, I went to Lucknow first. After a week there I spent 3 weeks in Andhra Pradesh and its capital, Hyderabad. This was my first trip alone, although Moses met me and traveled with me in India. We started having numerous pastors' conferences in different places this trip, something that continued in all subsequent trips. We stayed in homes and lived with the village people this whole trip.



Blog 64: STANDING ON THE PROMISES

I used to be afraid of many things but God has helped me have victory over my fears. One fear that has persisted is fear of travel. There are so many things that can go wrong, so many things that are completely out of my control. I've always dreaded and avoided travel. Now here I find myself traveling to India. Of course traveling to India and in India magnifies all my insecurities and apprehensions. The first two times I went to India I always had someone to travel with. In fact, finding someone to travel with was sort of a condition I set for returning to India. However fall I will be returning to India and there is no one to travel with. I will be going alone. Or will I?

God has made it quite clear to me that when I think I will be alone I am ignoring His very real Presence. He has taken away all hesitation of travel 'alone' and given me great peace about it. He has assured me He will always be with me in a very real and effective way. What ever made me think I would be alone? How can I possibly be alone when the God of the universe will be right beside me every step of the way? What better traveling companion could I possibly have? Who can better handle the challenges and change in plans that come with travel better than Him? Will I travel alone – no! Do I ever travel alone? Never! None of His children ever travel alone wherever they journey in life. He's always with us. You can count on it wherever you go.

Hebrews 13:5 "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

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."

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 1:5 No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

Psalms 37:28 For the Lord loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever,

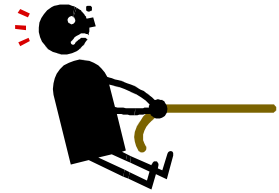
Isaiah 41:9 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:16 "The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the Lord will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.

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

What promises from the Bible would you use with someone who was facing a new challenge? Write down several and keep the paper in your Bible so you have it when you need it.

Blog 65: HOLD THE ROPE!



I was great fan of cowboy westerns when I was growing up. I listen to them on the radio and watch them on TV. I had a stack of comic books about cowboys. I loved how the good guy always won the day and made everything right. Sometimes he handled the situation alone, other times he had some who helped him – but he always succeeded to do what he set out to do.

One of my favorite scenarios involved a young child or fair maiden who wandered away from safety and fell over a cliff. Part way down the cliff they managed to hang onto a ledge or small bush while waiting for help to come and rescue them.

The only way to get to them was by going over the side of the cliff. Of course it was the hero who went down. He couldn't do it alone, though. He would take his rope off his saddle and tie one end around his waist. The other end would be secured to his horse or held by a group of people who had arrived to lend assistance. They slowly let him down and then gently pulled him and the person rescued back up to the top. If he failed they died – but I never saw that happen.

While the hero got the credit, it was those who let him down and pulled him up that had as important a part as he did, maybe even more important. They were the unsung heroes but they were absolutely crucial to the success of the mission.

So what does this have to do with my imminent departure for India (Sunday afternoon)? I feel like I am going over a cliff and I need you to hold the rope! If you don't hold the rope firmly I'll never accomplish what God wants me to accomplish.

Don't get me wrong – I'm certainly not saying I'm some kind of hero for going over the cliff. I didn't volunteer for this. God made it very clear I was to do this. There was no alternative. If there had been I'm sure I would have taken it. It's purely a matter of obedience on my part. It has nothing to do with courage, 'spirituality,' or any desire to be a hero. I know how miserable it is to disobey God – I've gone that route too often already. Inner peace and fellowship with God disappear. It's much better to obey and do what He asks. So there's no hero here today, just me trying to do God's will.

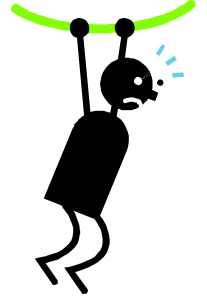
And this is no glamorous adventure of trying to save the heathen and become well known. It's a rescue attempt, short and simple. There are people lost in darkness about to go over the edge into eternity. If God can use me to bring them to safety in Him I'll go down. There are pastors and church leaders in seemingly impossible situations. If I can encourage them and help them find stable footing then they in turn can rescue others. Rescue attempts are hard, difficult and not always successful. But the attempt must be made.

However this isn't about me. It's about you holding the rope for me as I go down. If you don't I won't succeed. What does it mean to hold the rope? It means to pray. And then pray. Then pray some more. It means to keep the situation and need before the throne of God, asking for His guidance and blessing, His protection and provision.

So I beg you – hold the rope!! Hold it firmly, strongly, consistently. Put all your strength into it. Don't be distracted or discouraged. Don't give up. Pray, pray, pray and pray. Pray without ceasing. Keep on praying. Remember, I'm on the other end of the rope. Don't let go! Keep praying until I get back up on familiar ground again. And by the way, **THANKS!!!!**
(Friday, Oct 16, 2009)

1 Kings 13:6 Then the king said to the man of God, "Intercede with the Lord your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored." So the man of God interceded with the Lord, and the king's hand was restored and became as it was before.

Who is depending on you to pray for them? Who do you know that have few people, maybe even no one praying for them? Whom that you know is going through a particularly difficult time now? Take some time to pray in detail for each person mentioned. Keep a list so you can remember to pray for them daily.



Blog 66: THE ROPE OF PRAYER

In my last blog I stated that I feel like a rescuer going over a cliff to save someone in dire need. I can't do it unless I have a good strong backing to hold my rope. That means you pray for God to be glorified in all that is said and done. Prayer is a command, not a suggestion. It is imperative, not optional. As certainly as God is calling me to take this trip to India He is calling you to pray for me. Unless you do your part in holding the rope I won't be able to do what God has for me on the other end of the rope.

I know each one of you believers this; the problem is that it's easy to just assume someone else will hold the rope. That isn't true! A doctor in a small village was planning to retire. The people wished to do something in honor of his services. They proposed that on a given day each person would bring a pitcher of wine and pour it into a barrel on the village square and present it to him as an expression of their gratitude. The day arrived, and all day long the people came with their pitchers. Then they presented the gift to the doctor. At evening time the doctor was left alone with his memory of love. He drew off a bit of wine and sat comfortably by the fire to enjoy it. The first sip was a shock. It was water! He called the mayor and the people together. After a hurried consultation, the truth was revealed. Each one had reasoned, "My little pitcher of wine won't be missed; I have so little for myself. The others will take care of it." It is a tragic story. It may never have happened. Yet it is happening every week in the church. Don't expect someone else to carry your share. Don't assume someone else will hold the rope God assigns to you to hold!

Maybe you aren't good at rope-holding. Just do your best and you will improve. Don't assume Nancy, my wife, will do all the praying. She can't hold the rope all by herself. Besides, in many ways she is going over the cliff as well. She'll be alone and also have to carry a double load. She'll be a 'widow' for a month so hold the rope in prayer for her as well.

I represent you when I go. In that way we all go. You make it possible by your encouragement and financial support, by your help and assistance, by your prayers and your love. You will be blessed now and rewarded in eternity for it. We share the blessing and reward because we share the challenge.

I can't do this alone. No one could. India is a nation in darkness, under the control of Satan and his demons. Who am I to try to make even a dent against any of that? How can I bring any light to that immense darkness alone? When I attack the darkness – it will fight back with all its power. Satan will do all he can to make my efforts ineffective and to defeat me in any way possible.

Only prayer can change that. Only prayer can bring victory. Only prayer will bring accomplishment and protection.

John 14:13-14 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

John 15:7 if you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

Jeremiah 33:3 'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'

Matthew 7:7-11 "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.

1 John 5:14-15 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.

What should you pray for? The same thing Paul asked prayer for from those who were holding the rope for him. **"Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel" (Ephesians 6:19).** Pray for protection, strength, wisdom and guidance for me. Pray for open minds and hearts for those who listen. Pray that whenever I open my mouth words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel. Pray that I would connect heart to heart with the pastors so as to encourage them as well as educate them. Pray that when I speak God's Spirit would use the truth of the Bible to work with power and authority in their lives. Please pray! (Sunday, Oct 18, 2009)

Pray for those you know who are ministering for God, either those in full time Christian service or who have ministry opportunities while pursuing other careers. Pray for those in other countries as well as here. Pray God would give them wisdom to know what to say and courage to say it. Pray He would open the hearts of those listening to respond to God's truth. Pray He would use you to speak His truth to others as well.

Blog 67: SO FAR SO GOOD

So far so good! The flight to London last night took 7 hours. I was able to sleep 3 of them. I'm now flying to Hyderabad (10 hour flight) and hope to get more sleep tonight (Monday night).

The London airport, Heathrow, was interesting. I spent 6 hours there between flights - too much time to wait and think. I seem to suffer a good case of homesickness each time I travel like this, and today was no exception. London was an easy place to be because everything was in English - but it wasn't home. In fact, there were 2 flights that took off for Philadelphia while I was waiting. I must admit I really wished I was on them going in that direction. I will be in 4+ weeks, but in the meantime He was work for me to accomplish. How great it would have been to be able to turn in the rest of my ticket for a quick trip home.

But then I got to thinking - how anxious am I to leave this world and go home to my heavenly home? Like London airport, this world is comfortable and has some good things going for it. But we're here for a purpose and fulfilling that purpose isn't always easy. In fact it's never easy. Still, sacrifice and service for Him comes first, then the flight home. In 4 weeks when I'm going home to Philadelphia I'll be glad I faithfully



carried out my responsibility here. I want the same thing to be true when I have completed the work He set for me and calls me home to heaven. After all, this life isn't all about us, is it?

Heathrow Airport isn't bad. In fact it'll get worse (in India) before it gets better. But one day at a time we stay faithful and when the work is done He'll call us home. What a great day that will be! I look forward to going home to Philadelphia, but great as that will be its nothing like going to heaven! (Monday, Oct 19, 2009)

2 Peter 3:13 In keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Often we pray for this world to be so perfect for us that we won't long for heaven, but God won't answer those prayers. What is God allowing in your life now to wean you from this earth and make you yearn for heaven? Thank Him for those things!



Blog 68: I'M HERE

(Tuesday PM, I think) I'M HERE! We arrived in Lucknow at the Maugers a little while ago. Finally no more airports, check-ins, etc. Tomorrow I start the first pastors' conference. This will include various church leaders as well and is being held locally instead of in another town. So I can sleep in in the morning and we return here each evening. Pray God will give me the words to teach these truths to such an audience. I will talk about church leadership and equating it to a shepherd leading sheep. Then I will talk about how to study the Bible, starting with observation. The afternoon will include 2 sessions over viewing the Old Testament. I will dress up in costume for one of them and use various magic tricks, especially in the afternoon. We will be leaving for the town where this will be held about the time you go to bed. Also pray for my health – I've only had 6 hours sleep since Saturday night. Plus I inadvertently drank from a water fountain at the Hyderabad airport, forgetting I was in India and shouldn't drink the water.

God has given me promises that have been carrying me through. There are 4 special Bible verses that keep coming to mind, promises to claim and to sustain me. I'd like to share them with you - you can claim them as well!

Deuteronomy 20:4 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."

Deuteronomy 20:1-4 is a promise from God that we have nothing to fear because He will fight our battles and give us victory. That became very special my first trip to India in 2006 and has continued to be so ever since.

1 Kings 17:14 For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land.'"

1 Kings 17:14 is a passage God spoke to my heart during Sunday School the week before I left. God promises the widow that every time she used up the remaining food in her pot God would replenish it when she next needed a meal. God used that to promise me that no matter how tired or physically, emotionally or spiritually empty I get with all the upcoming teaching and preaching, He will give me what I need the next time I minister.



Joshua 1:3 I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ... 6 "Be strong and courageous, ... 7 Be strong and very courageous. ... Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:1-9 was quoted to me by several of you who wrote in response to my 'Hold the Rope' blog and God caused that passage to jump off the page at me. He promises victory wherever He sends us if we faithfully follow Him.

Philippians 4:4-6 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Philippians 4:4-6 was given me by my daughter Glory just today as I a letter she wrote for me to being along (everyone in my family wrote a letter as well). There Paul reminds us to rejoice and not be anxious but instead to pray. I've spent hours readying about 'Praying Hyde,' and early missionary to India, last night and today. God has used his witness to challenge me to go much, much deeper in prayer.

So there are 4 verses I share. You can mix or match, use any or all of them. They all work - and they never run out! (October 20, 2009)

Which of these verses speak to your life as you read them? What promises in them do you need at the present time? Read the promise several times. Then read it as a prayer. Write it as a prayer and carry the paper with you all day. Use it whenever you struggle.

Blog 69: THE BEST AND THE WORST OF TIMES

"It was the best of times and it was the worst of times" must have been written for me in India. I don't know of another ministry experience that has been harder than being here, but neither do I know of another ministry experience (except perhaps the World View week when they all come to me) that brings more blessing and satisfaction to me. The very difficulty of being here is the foundation for the very great blessings that come in contrast.

Here I can't have one without the other. I take them both or neither one. If I choose to reject the troubles that come then I can't have the blessings. I know many could do what I am doing without facing the battles I face in doing so. But I know it is my very unsuitability for this which causes me to depend entirely on Him for everything.

As Paul said, "When I am weak I am strong!" And truly His grace is sufficient. He doesn't promise to take the stretching away but to keep me going through it. Take a moment to think about your life and apply this to yourself. You'll discover some very interesting and helpful truths. (Thursday, Oct. 22, 2009)

2 Corinthians 12:10 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.

When do you feel the weakest? What do you face in life that is hardest for you, that you can't do without God's help? How does God's help make you strong at those times?

Blog 70: A MULTI-COLORED HEAVEN!

Last night we went to the house dedication ceremony of a neighboring Christian family. They invited about 100 people and had a very nice ceremony followed by a wonderful meal. The ceremony consisted of their family testimony, prayers, a short devotional and music. Their 2 sons, about 9 and 10 years old, sang "Showers of Blessing" in English. It was slow, sweet and very clear. The words left a wonderful impact.

A group of about 25 teenagers from northern India then sang. They looked more oriental or Mongolian than India because of the part of the country they are from. They sang perhaps the most beautiful arrangement of George Beverly Shea's old classic, "The Wonder of It All." The harmony was out of this world!

I was seated in the front of the room facing everything that was happening (American are honored guests in Christian homes here). The chorus ends with the truth that the greatest wonder of all is that God loves me. As I sat watching, listening and worshipping it hit me how much like heaven this was. But for the first time I really saw God's people in heaven around the throne as coming from all nations and languages.

I realized that I always pictured heaven with us Americans populating it, but the realization that we will be just a minority there and all nations and ethnic groups will be there together worshipping and praising was really inspiring. And yellow, black and white, all are precious in His sight..... I guess its one of those things where you had to be there to appreciate it, but I thought I'd try to explain it to you anyway. (Friday, Oct 23, 2009)

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Think of the Christians you know, or know of, who are from different ethnic backgrounds than you. Thank God for them, praying for them one by one. Think of what it will be like to be in heaven with "every nation, tribe, language and people" (Revelation 14:6).

Blog 71: GETTING TO 'KNOW' HIM

Now for something on my heart. If you'd rather, just skip ahead to the prayer requests in the last paragraph. For the last 35 years of my life I have made Philippians 3:7-11 verses that expressed the desire of my heart. Especially the phrase "I want to know Him" (repeated twice) sums up my main goal in life. I don't want o just know ABOUT Him but to develop a close intimacy with Him. Gradually over the years I can see God bringing that about in my life. Verse 10 has always been my focus: "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." I really do want to know Christ and His power in my life, but I sort of skimmed over the second part of the verse, the part about sharing in His sufferings. Paul may have wanted that, those who moved to monasteries may have wanted that, but I can with all honesty say that part of the verse was not the desire of my heart!



While lying awake during the night (a regular occurrence for me here) it all of a sudden hit me that God is recently applying that part of the verse to my life. My life to this point has been very pain free, at least from physical pain. I've had some times of intense emotional pain but that was usually a consequence of sin – mine or someone else's. For the first time I can just in the smallest way begin to scratch the surface of understanding a tiny bit what Jesus went through for me. The oppression, the aloneness

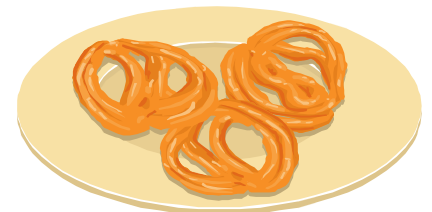
(different than loneliness), the tremendous burden He bore and which sought to turn Him from the cross are only just starting to become real to me. And I thank God for that. I'm realizing that the first and best part of the verse, 'knowing' Him and His power, is dependent on the second part of the verse, the privilege of in some very small way sharing in His sufferings. It's not that we add to His sufferings but to really 'know' Him means to understand better what He went through for me.

I am the world's biggest coward and intensely dislike pain. However I realize I can't have the produce without going through the process. And God knows I can't go through the process alone so He becomes closer and more real – and as a result I really do get to know Him better.

Since I mentioned the awake at night stuff let me explain it a bit better. I'm starting to feel like David who said in the day he wished it was night and at night he wished it was day. I fall asleep OK at night but awake in a few hours to battle waves of oppression that keep me from falling back to sleep. Sometimes I'll doze again later, other nights not. It's nothing rational, but that's how the enemy works. The best I can describe it is feelings of inadequacy, fear, loneliness, feeling overwhelmed, etc. I battle with spiritual warfare, quoting God's promises and worship but the battle continues. I even tried sleeping pills a couple nights but they made the oppression worse at night and I felt like I was in a fog all day. I have discovered the sweet comfort God can give (the Holy Spirit is often called 'the Comforter'). Sleeping here isn't easy in good circumstances for dogs bark all night and the Mosques start a continual wail from their sirens at 5 AM. I do have lots of time to pray and even get in a good run early in the morning. However the battle gets very weary (as many of you know!). Please **pray** however God leads you with this: for me to learn what God is wanting to teach me, for me to have patience and trust with this (God keeps His promise to give me energy to minister when I stand to speak although I am drained between times), for Satan's oppression to be bound, for God to use this to help me to better understand what others and Jesus Himself went through, to help me get to know Him better through it – however you feel led to pray. When it is 12 noon in Pennsylvania it is 9:30 PM for me so pray in the afternoon and evening please! I understand Nancy isn't sleeping well, either, so pray for her as well. (Saturday, October 24, 2009)

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.

How well do you 'know' Jesus< not about Him but know Him personally? How much better do you really want to know Him? What price are you willing to pay for that to happen? Can you tell Him you want to know Him better no matter the cost?



Blog 72: NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS

Last night I had a surprise **visit from an Indian family** that traveled 4 hours by bus to get here. They are friends of a friend. We had emailed a few times but never met. Frederick Paul

had been a church planted until God led him to start The Truth Mission School in Fatehpur. The school has 450 students and is their way of spreading the Gospel with the children.

One of the interesting parts of the conversation was his wife's testimony. Her father was the leader of their Hindu village growing up. When she was in 6th grade her mother got very sick. Doctors nor Hindu healers could not help but the father tried everything to save his wife. Someone told him to find a Christian and ask them to pray to their God to heal her for the Christian God could do that. He found a Christian and the Christian prayed she would be healed. When he got home from the prayer he found his wife totally well and completely **healed**. He gathered up all his Hindu idols and things, and despite being the head of the Hindu village took them outside and buried them. The next day the whole family went to church and was baptized. They have been serving the lord in various ministries ever since. This kind of testimony is not unusual. One of the men at our pastor's conference was a high-ranking and very well educated Moslem. He had an illness that couldn't be cured and in desperation prayed to the Christian God and was healed so he is now living his life for Him.



Another way God spreads the gospel here, especially when there isn't a Christian nearby to talk to, is through **dreams**. It is not uncommon at all, in the most unreached areas especially, for someone to dream about a person talking to them about Jesus. This person shares the gospel with them. Dreams are highly respected and seen as a great privilege so they are accepted and followed by the receiver. It is not uncommon to hear in a testimony that a person's first or main exposure to the gospel was in a dream. (Sunday, Oct. 25, 2009)

Romans 10:17-18 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

How was it that you first heard of Christ? Thank Him for those who spread His Word to you. Thank Him, too, for having copies of the Bible in your own language so you can read and hear from Him directly. Spend some time reading His Word and thank Him that you have this very clear revelation from Him.

Blog 73: GOING TO THE DOGS

DOGS IN INDIA are not like at home. They aren't pets and aren't cared for. They roam free in the streets and must scavenge to stay alive. They are grossly mistreated and often eaten. There're nothing like 'man's best friend' which we pamper and bond with in America. It's that way in most eastern countries, including Palestine in Jesus' day.

When Jesus was challenging the Syrophoenician woman about her request for him to heal her daughter, Jesus answered by comparing Gentiles to dogs (Matthew 15:26-27). Now remember dogs in Palestine were like dogs in India. They are rejected, have no home, are constantly kicked and mistreated. Their life is seen as worthless. That is how we are without Jesus. But think about it: when Jesus made that statement He was actually describing not just Gentiles but He Himself as well for He became like us to take our place. That means He became a dog like that as well - not a pampered pet but a homeless, rejected, abused and mistreated dog!

Try and imagine what kind of love that must have taken for Him to do that. It's impossible to imagine, but it is worth thinking about over and over. We can't begin to comprehend the depth of what He went through for us, and because we are so familiar with the story it often doesn't sink in. But when I see how these dogs here are treated and think that He became that

for me it adds new meaning to His sacrifice. Imagine loving someone so much you would become that kind of a dog for them. (Monday, Oct 26, 2009)

Ephesians 2:11-13 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men) — 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

Thank God for spreading His love and redemption to Gentiles as well as Jews. Think of what your life would be like if you weren't allowed into God's Kingdom because you weren't a Jew, if you had no salvation, no hope and no future except hell. Thank Him, worship and praise Him for including Gentiles in His plan.

Blog 74: SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN INDIA

Yesterday we had a very interesting visit with a distinguished Indian gentlemen named M. David. He ministers to Christian families through seminars, counseling and retreats. Since that is dear to my heart we had a good talk about it. I asked him what were the **biggest problems Indian Christian families faced**. He said first it is men who feel their wives are inferior human beings and treat them that way. Next is husbands who are too busy and don't give their wives and families enough time. Third he said was a lack of Biblical teaching about marriage and the family. As long as the man makes enough money to pay the bills that is all he needs to do. Sounds familiar...

Since he and his wife are also involved in a deliverance ministry (**spiritual warfare**) we also talked about that in detail. We talked about the bindi dot Indian women wear and how now some Christian women from Hindi backgrounds keep wearing it as a social custom and to not offend family. I told them I heard it was an entrance point for demons and they heartedly agreed. It began as a way of showing worship to Shiva, a female goddess who was to bless and prosper them as wives. They told of one Hindu woman who became a believer, was convicted and stopped wearing the dot. She was demonized by ancestral demons that went back 8 generations but they prayed for her and she was freed. A few years later she was going to a special family event, a wedding I think, and she put the dot on. She said she immediately felt the demon return. When she returned for prayer and they prayed to find out why the demon returned they were told, "She put my sign on her forehead." He was cast out and she never wore the dot again.



These people do a lot of ministry among the very poor Dalits and others. They try to provide clothing and other things to help them but it is a very difficult, frustrating ministry. They gave a bed pad and new clothing to one very appreciative woman who told them the next day that it had all burnt during the night. When they prayed and asked God why all these things would be destroyed He told them that without Jesus nothing would help these people. God showed them how a **strong demon of poverty** is in control of all of them here in India and his purpose is to keep them in poverty. Only Jesus can set them free. How ironic, I thought, that the **demon of materialism** has America in bondage while the demon of poverty has India in bondage. Opposites, but not really. Bondage is bondage, whatever form it comes in! Only Jesus sets us free. One of the young girls I prayed for in the village church on Sunday was **demonized**. The demon would put her in a trance and have her go places and do things during the night which she wasn't aware of. As you can easily

guess, demons are very active and strong here. They don't try to camouflage themselves as they do here. (Tuesday, Oct 27, 2009)

1 John 4:4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Are you aware of when and how you are most attacked spiritually? Where are you most susceptible to defeat? What should you do now to get ready for today's battles?



Blog 75: SPEAKING HINDI

For the last 2 years I've been trying to **learn Hindi**. I have CD's, books and web sites that have been helping. I haven't been able to find anyone to help me with pronunciation so, while I've done a lot of memorizing; I haven't had experience putting it into practice. Also I'm not sure if I am learning the pronunciation correctly. It has been pleasantly pleasing to me to realize that I am further alone than I thought. As I've been venturing out and doing some basic speaking in Hindi I find that it is going better than I thought. People love that I care enough about them to try to learn their language. Many people I couldn't talk to at all without the little Hindi I do know. I work some into my talks as well. Of course by actually using it I am learning lots more and really solidifying what, up to this time, has just been theory for me.

In realizing this I see a parallel between it and learning to **walk by faith**. I can about it, study how others have done it, and learn much about the whole process, but until and unless I get out and get started living by faith myself I won't really know where I am or how strong I am spiritually. Then theory becomes reality. That's when I learn and grow much faster than just by studying it. So here I am putting to practice my weak Hindi knowledge at the same time I am putting my weak faith to practice. Both are growing and stretching. Both need this practical application. Learning and studying is good, but now its time to get out of the boat and start walking on the water!

What about you? Is there a situation in your life now where you should start putting your faith into practice by applying what you have learned about trusting God? You don't have to go to India to do that – god gives us opportunities wherever we are. Just get started! (Wednesday, Oct 28, 2009)

2 Corinthians 5:7 We live by faith, not by sight.

Where in your life is God teaching you to walk by faith? Why is it so hard? What steps of faith does God want you to take today? Pray and ask God to give you the courage to do so.

Blog 76: HELPFUL HINTS SHOULD YOU EVER VISIT INDIA

I am often reminded of **the words of Paul** when he said he felt like he was being poured out like a drink offering for the Lord (Phil 2:17; 2 Tim 4:6) – nothing left, all given for the Lord to take and receive as His own. I often think, though, as I teach, talk to or pray for these special people that which we can't have much time or communication now, there will be time in heaven to sit down for a long wonderful talk with each one of them. How I look forward to that! Anyway, it's on to Hyderabad today. The next few days will be relaxing – visiting ministries and doing some speaking, but down days compared to what is to come starting Sunday. Then will begin the major push to the end.

Here is something lighter if you care to more: **HELPFUL HINTS SHOULD YOU EVER COME TO INDIA:** (I understand they apply in Africa and other third world countries as well)

1. **Smile and nod** when people talk to you and you don't understand. Never reach for your wallet or they'll get the wrong idea and be offended. When they stop talking and you know you are supposed to respond say 'Thank you' several times as if know what they said. They won't know what you are saying, either. Keep this up until one of you finds a gracious way out. Remember that talking louder or slower doesn't enable them to understand English any better!

2. **Sari's** are beautiful to look at but often very impractical, especially for women working in construction and other manual labor work. Often a woman's bulging abdomen is exposed but that's OK with them as long as a woman covers her upper arms. These are considered very sensual and will never be exposed. So be careful about exposing your upper arms, ladies – but you can let your belly hang out if you'd like! Men, pretend you don't notice the bellies.

3. When you **brush your teeth** spit the second rinsing on your tooth brush to rinse it off. Bottled water is expensive. If you only rinse once use that to rinse off your toothbrush. You'll save water and also tooth paste for you won't have to put as much toothpaste on the next time you can use it – recycled toothpaste!

4. Carry a **spoon, hand sanitizer** and a couple **tissues** with you at all times. Hardly a day will go by without you needing all three of them. If you're traveling with other Americans bring extra for you'll have to share. You know what the spoon and hand sanitizer are for. You'll find out what the tissues are for the first time you go to the bathroom. Instead of toilet paper there will be a bucket of water. Be glad if there is a commode and not just a hole in the floor.

5. Trust me, you really **won't get run** over crossing the street if you just give the cars and motorcycles a chance of missing you. If you throw yourself in front of them and they can't swerve you lose. But if you give them a half chance of swerving to miss you 100 times out of 100 they'll do so. Trust me. I know.

6. Never ever use your **left hand** to touch someone or to eat. The left hand is used to take care of cleanup in the toilet so it is seen as unclean. Feet are seen the same way because of the filth they walk in so don't touch your feet or stretch them in front of you but keep them discretely tucked away. If you are left handed you'd better get some practice eating with your right hand before coming here.

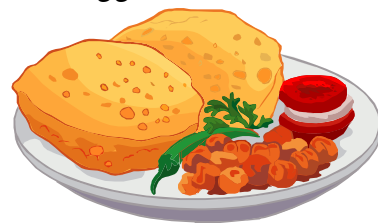
Thanks for holding the rope! I'm leaving the home of an American family and won't see or speak to anyone but Indians for the rest of the trip. So as I go further down the cliff into India keep holding on! Keep praying Ephesians 6:19. (Thursday, Oct. 29, 2009)

Ephesians 5:15-16 Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

What advice would you give to someone from another country that was coming to live in your neighborhood? What advice would you give to a new Christian who asked for suggestions as to how to live as a Christian in today's world?

Blog 77: PRAYING FOR REVIVAL

One of the first impressions everyone gets of India is the large amount of people everywhere! To give you an idea of **how many people there are here**, India has over 1 billion people yet it is 1/3 the size of the United States with its 300 million. That means there are 3 ½ times as many people in 1/3 the space. In other



words, for the space every American takes up in this country, 10 people in India occupy the same space in India. That is true of the cities and well as the countryside. Philadelphia has a population of 2 million, Lucknow 4 million and Hyderabad 8 million. The population density in these cities is 4 times that of Philadelphia and its suburbs. Imagine making another 6 million people join the 2 million in greater Philadelphia and you'll have an idea about the massive amounts of people everywhere here. I keep seeing them and thinking about how much God loves every one of them, how His heart reaches out to the people of India.

However very few are Christians. For every one **Christian** (all denominations, Catholics and cults) there are 40 Muslims and 160 Hindus! Where the Indian Christians are weak, though, is more in unity than in numbers. There are enough of them to really reach this country should God work through them. But they don't seem to have a heart for their own country. One Indian woman told me of a dream/vision she had which sums up Christianity here. It was of Jesus with a beautiful crown, but someone grabbed the crown from him, then several people all started fighting over the crown.

That summarizes it well. The churches try to take His glory for themselves and compete among themselves. Until there is love and unity among them with a focus on glorifying Jesus and not themselves there won't be revival here. So if you are **praying for revival in India** (or anywhere) pray for the believers to get their focus on Jesus and not themselves. (Friday, Oct 30, 2009)

2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

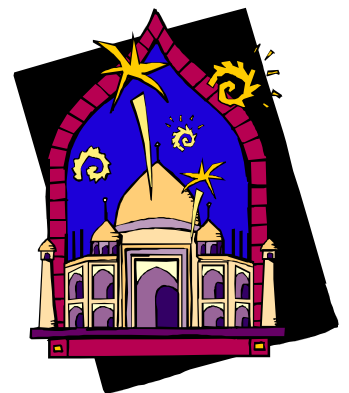
Who do you know that needs reviving in their lives? Would God say you need reviving in your life? Use the above verse to pray for others, and yourself. Pray for your country as well.

Blog 78: A DAY TO REMEMBER

Every audience, no matter the size, age, religious or cultural background, is enthralled with the **magic tricks**. They sit up, lean forward, focus their attention and are amazed at the result. Inevitably they start applauding after each trick. They talk about them afterwards and tell others about them. What a simple but very affective teaching tool they are! They provide entertainment as well and a mental break from the lecture presentation.

In America the response is interest, mild curiosity and mainly trying to figure out how it happened. Perhaps we have so many fantastic visual and entertainment opportunities we have lost our appreciation for something simple. No matter, using these tricks is fun for me and a valuable teaching tool. They will remember the trick for years, long after forgetting the lecture. But along with the trick they will remember what it taught for the lesson and the trick are completely molded into one in their minds. By remembering the truth of the trick they will also remember other parts of the message. I never realized these simple tricks would be so extremely effective in communication here, but I bet God thought of that when He first put it in my head to start using them!

PRAY God will use me to minister to these people in any way I can. Today is a 'day off' to prepare for the coming pastor's conferences and Bible college. We'll be leaving Wednesday and on the road the rest of the time. Pray for me as I speak to the children then the congregation tomorrow and as I prepare for these important pastors'



conferences. Thanks!!! (Saturday, Oct 31, 2009)

2 Timothy 2:1-2 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.

How does God use your life and example to speak to others? Who is watching you today? What can you do to be a good witness and example to them?

Blog 79: INDIAN PRAISE SONGS

Singing is an important part of Indian worship. They do a lot of it and really put their hearts into it. Since I have been trying to learn Hindi I can pick up on phrases and parts of it, although they use uncommon words to make things rhythm and be more picturesque, as we do in English. All Indian music is captivating and catchy, but I have found some of the Christian worship songs especially so. The last time I was here one in particular caught my attention. I took a video of it and have watched it over since. I've heard it several times since I've been back so asked for the words. It is 'Prabhu ka Dhanyard' – 'Thank the Lord.' It repeats over and over and the song grows in enthusiasm. I've heard them sing it for 10 minutes and even I wasn't ready for them to stop. The words go something like this:

CHORUS:

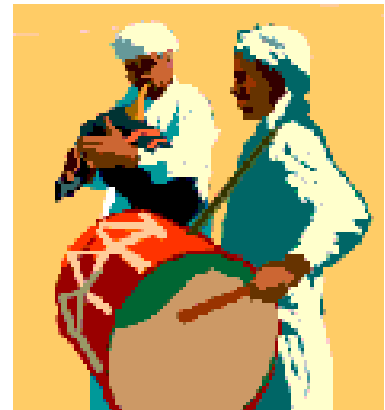
I will thank the Lord
I will live in His company forever.
I will go to be with Him.
He will certainly receive praise.

1. He will not give me the world all the time,
Just some happiness, peace and rest.
I will always find happiness
in Jesus' blessed company.

2. there is always trouble in my life.
This opens the door to hope.
I will never be frightened.
I will never turn away
Even if I must give my life.

3. How good it is!
How blessed my life is with only Jesus.
He does all to meet my needs.
I do not lack anything.

4. I will worship you
all the days of my life.
I will live like a burning lamp.
Your glory is my desire.



The words take on new meaning when you hear them sung by men and woman who have terrible scars on their bodies from beatings they received for being Christian. All can tell stories of persecution and of those they know who have died for their faith. Watching the young ones who are moving up to take the baton to the next generation sing is equally moving. Being a pastor, even being a Christian here means something. Truly there is a heavy yoke to carry. It

goes beyond what we in American can understand. To hear them sing these words in praise and worship, eyes closed and hands raised, is the next best thing to being in heaven already! Make them your prayer as well. (Sunday, Nov. 1, 2009)

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

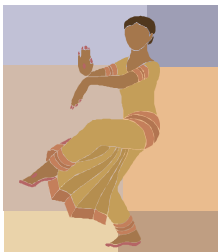
What choruses, hymns or Christian songs have ministered to you over the years? What are some of your favorites? Sing or say the words, making them your praise to the Lord.

Blog 80: JESUS EYES

It's so easy to quickly **bond with the believers** here in India. Upon first meeting them it is clear they are different. They have **Jesus in their eyes**. Instead of the emptiness and darkness that others have there is peace and joy and love. It's clear from the time you first arrive. They are open and loving and so very accepting of others like me. Speaking a little Hindi with them bonds us closer for it tells them I care about them and their life. We meet on level ground – at the foot of the cross. There is no rich important white American and poor black poverty-stricken laborer. We have Jesus in common. God is our Father and that makes us brothers and sisters in the Lord. And that's what it feels like whenever I meet someone who is a believer – like I'm meeting a long lost brother or sister that I haven't had the opportunity to meet before. I really want to get to know them better but time and language make that impossible. So I tell them I will look for them in heaven and we will sit down and have a long, long talk about what the Lord has done in our lives. I think often of all the people I meet now but will spend time talking with in eternity – what a joy and blessing that will be! (Monday, Nov 2, 2009)

Galatians 2:9-10 James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews.

Think of a time when you were away from home and met another believer you didn't know before. Why do we have such a natural bond with other Christians, even more than unbelievers we have known for years? If that is true here, think what it will be like in heaven. Ask God to put the names of some Christians in your mind or on your heart so you can reach out to them in fellowship this day.



Blog 81: LOVING THE WORD

One of many subtle results of the difficult times I have faced here is a **love of God's Word**. I always had a respect and admiration for it. I trusted it, learned it and taught it. But I have grown to love it in a new way. It has become more real and richer to me, both individual passages as well as the book as a whole.

During the early days of not sleeping someone said they held their Bible when they went through such a night. I started doing that and have done it ever since. It gives me something solid to touch and anchor to, as my soul anchors to the content of the Book. It shows in the darkness that I am connected to God's Word. It encourages me to think of and quote appropriate passages as I lay in bed at night. It brings peace and comfort, encouragement and strength. I cherish and hold onto the words in Nancy's emails to me, and I find I do the same with God's words to me as well.



If you have trouble sleeping, or going back to sleep at night, let me pass this suggestion on to you. Keep your Bible nearby and when awake grab hold of it and don't let go! (Monday, Nov 2, 2009)

1 Peter 2:2-3 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

If you had to list everything you will do today in the order of importance, where would God's Word be rated? Can you honestly say you 'love' the Bible, not the paper and ink, but the content of it? Spend some time reading it, asking God to give you His love for it.

Blog 82: MARRIAGE, THEIRS AND MINE

One of the biggest differences in Indian life compared to home is in the marriages. There is a similar problem to what China has in that there are only 860 females for every 1000 males. That means 1 in 10 males can't get marriage, and that growing number of single males is causing a problem. The growing disparity is because families prefer sons for the same reason as in China. Thus often when a baby is born a female it is killed or allowed to die. Even for those who get married life is different because most **marriages are still arranged by parents**. That practice is fading in the big cities but still common. In the countryside it is the only way. When parents choose a mate the partners usually don't know each other before the marriage. The focus, then, is on fulfilling duties and roles. Emotional love isn't seen as a component. It can develop to some extent, but often Indian husbands see their wives as servants and treat them accordingly. Meeting their needs, spending time with them, showing love – these are not expected by women and often never considered by men. Acts of service seem to be the only love language they are taught, and obligation often overrules love in the acts anyway. Sad....

Several Bible verses have taken on new meaning for me here and I've already shared them with you. One I haven't, thought, is Genesis 2:18, "**It is not good for the man to be alone.**" I faced much loneliness last time I was here and learned to lean on God through it. This time God hasn't taken it from me as He did before. He is showing me how bonded I am to Nancy, how much a part of me she is, and how much is missing when I am without her for an extended time like this. We have become one in so many ways that to function alone really shows me all the parts that are missing without her. God created Eve to fill up Adam's empty spaces and Nancy really does that for me. I've always known I've needed her but this goes beyond that. She is an essential part of me and I am incomplete without her. God is helping me better appreciate the special gift I have in her, that we all have in our mates. I hope you won't have to be separated from your mate to appreciate them as you should. Take a few moments to thank God for that special person He has put in your life. (Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2009)

Proverbs 18:22 He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord.

If you have a mate, do you regularly pray for them? When is the last time you thanked God for them? What would you miss most if separated from them for a long time? Spend time now praying for them and thanking God for them. Then make sure you tell them today how much you appreciate them.

Blog 83: GETTING OUR ATTENTION

I joke here with Moses about how an expert is anyone who comes from far away. A local person isn't seen as an expert until he travels to a different state to speak. Coming all the way from America, therefore, makes me an expert. In fact, that is how they bill me in their publicity, 'Expert Bible Teacher.' But we know we are no different now than when we were at home. What we have or can do is totally a gift of God. I don't have to come half way across the earth to teach. Neither do I have to come halfway across the earth for God to stretch me and make me more like Him. That can happen at home as well. God gets me over here, not to be an expert Bible teacher, but to **get my full attention**. He wants me completely dependent on Him



and away from my substitutes and supports. He blesses me through the privilege of teaching, but He could accomplish that just as well any number of other ways. What is He doing in your life to get your full attention? Coming to India isn't the only way, you know: health, finances, relationships, any number of things can be used by Him to get our full attention. Nancy sometimes wonders what she needs to do to get my full attention. I think God has found out – send me alone to India! What does He need to do to get your full attention?

Foreigners among Indian Christians are rare. It seems Americans especially draw promoters and 'doers' like sugar draws flies. Even among Christians there are always those who assume I have money to hand out to whoever I meet. They want to 'sell' me on their ministry and enlist me to come and hold a conference or service for them. I want to go where God wants and do what He wants so I am open to anything, but I know many of these would not be the best use of my time. I want to go where people want to learn the word and grow, not have an American to show off and gain attention through my being there. I don't want a situation where they make me feel important while I make them feel important. I just want those who have a hunger and thirst for God's Word, not for American money! I have had several future opportunities presented which sound very promising. They would be in the area of training pastors but also working with families and leading a spiritual warfare conference. That would be quite something – and talk about opposition then! Fortunately God has blessed me with a pastor here, Moses, who has the exact same philosophy of ministry and heart for service that I have. I trust him totally with my money and time, and he trusts me in the same way. It would be very hard otherwise. (Wednesday, Nov 4, 2009)

1 Peter 5:5-6 Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

What methods has God used to get your attention in the past? Why did He have to resort to them? Could He be trying to get your attention now? Spend several minutes sitting quietly, listening to whatever He wants to tell you or show you.

Blog 84: IN THE MINORITY

As I travel in India I am often reminded about how in the minority I am. While I don't stand out at home, here it is clear I am not from here. People notice and watch me while not obviously staring. I stand out. I am different. I can't change that or get away from it. It's the way it is. It's good in that it helps me realize that I represent another country so I must be careful in all I do and say. Others are judging America by me. The same is true of us who are Christians living in this fallen world. We are different. We don't fit in. We are watched by

others. We must be constantly aware of how we represent our real home country – heaven. We are ‘pilgrims and strangers’ here as Peter said. We must never forget this is not our home, we are just passing through.

When I do run into another American somewhere (it’s rare but happens in airports, etc.) there is an immediate bond and level of comfort for we talk the same language and are going to the same home country. It is encouraging and uplifting to not be totally alone. So God gives us other Christians to connect with as we together travel through this foreign land. Having Moses with me and now being with Chris and Debbie Mauger really helps. Traveling alone is something God wanted to face, but I certainly see why He sent His followers out by twos and threes. Where 2 or 3 are gathered.... It makes a great difference.

Do you often feel out of place in this world, like there is something better somewhere? Great! Who do you walk through this life with that understands and shares your same concerns? Who helps you in your journey? Who can you reach out to today to offer a little help along the way? No one likes to walk alone – and we don’t have to. (Thursday, Nov 5, 2009)

1 Peter 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,

When do you most feel out of place in this world? Why doesn't God want you to feel too comfortable here? Do you long for something more and better than this world offers? Thank God that you are made for more than this life and that you are made to live forever with Him!

Blog 85: ‘INDIAN TIME’

We often talk and joke about things being done on ‘Indian time.’ Everything is invariably late starting. Our first pastors’ session started at 3 in the afternoon instead of 9 in the morning. Last time I was here a wedding scheduled for 10 AM didn’t start until after 2 because the parents of the groom didn’t arrive until 1:30. Are they better off than us because they are casual and not rushed while trying to cram too much into a day? Or are they inconsiderate of others and poor stewards of their time as well as ours? The jury is still out on that one, but when the verdict comes in it’ll probably find the truth somewhere between the 2 extremes.

One thing I do know from this, though, is that the ‘success’ of my ministry here isn’t measured by numbers for they depend on efficiency and skillful use of resources. While I speak many times a day, for the most part things aren’t organized well. That gives me flexibility to finish whenever I want. No one watches the clock or times my messages. If I feel I could do something better as far as planning or time usage, I remember I am here for one reason only. That is because God wants me here. So it’s up to Him as to what does (or doesn’t) happen. That is out of my control. I obey by doing my best when given the opportunity to minister arises. You would think that after pasturing a small church for 30 years that I would learn God is more interested in quality than quantity. I am here to be available and let the rest go as it may. I remember an early missionary (I don’t remember exactly who), said we who serve God must be ready to preach, pray or die at a moment’s notice. That pretty well describes ministry in India, especially for the local pastors.

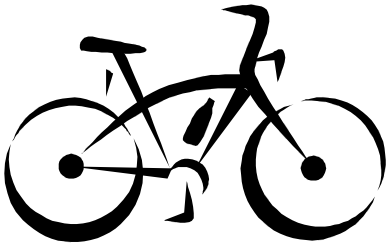
Surprisingly, I find each day when I do my blog; I find I barely have an idea as to the day of the week. The date I have to look up. Time is so different and the structure of my day and week so changed that it really doesn’t matter. Living in the present consumes all my focus. I do



try to enjoy each moment for itself and not be looking back or ahead too much. I learned that last time in India – the richness of fully appreciating each experience as it plays out in life for it will be gone and over forever. (Friday, Nov 6, 2009)

Ephesians 5:15-16 Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

What percent of your time is spent thinking about the past or the present? Do you think this is a good, healthy percent? Are you enjoying and living in the present t as much as you should? If not, why not? What can you do to appreciate the moment you are in instead of looking back or ahead too much?



Blog 86: GIVING BICYCLES, GETTING MUCH MORE

We went to a tribal church tonight to dedicate one of the 5 bicycles that you gave money to purchase. The pastor and the young man he is training came to the Pastor's Conference today. The area was one of the worst places in the city: drinking, gambling, violence and crime everywhere. Through this pastor's work the church has taken hold, grown, and totally transformed the whole neighborhood.

Tribal people are those who come from a more uncivilized, pagan background. They dress somewhat like Hindus but their religion is different. They are outside the caste system and don't believe in caste. They are **Animistic** in their beliefs. That is an old, crude pagan belief system that sees gods and powers behind everything in nature. It is very demonic in practice, and that contribute to their being less civilized than others here. What a change Jesus has made in these lives! Some shared wonderful testimonies of being healed n their death bed and idolatry replaced by Jesus. Very moving, seeing their faces as they talked....

After a long time of singing I spoke to them and then prayed for them. Instead of praying one by one when they came to me afterwards I walked through the room touching their heads one by one as I prayed for them. The room (their 'church') was 12' x 12' with about 25 people (mostly women) in it – no windows or air circulation either. As they sat with their heads down and I touched and prayed for them. It's the only way I ever touch a woman. While I was doing this several of them reached out and put their hands on my feel. I cannot begin to tell you how humbling and moving that was to me!!!! It's a meaningful way to show respect and honor to a spiritual leader. It's the only way women ever touch men. "How lovely are the feet of those who bring good news," I thought – what a privilege to share this good news, especially with those who are our brothers and sisters in Christ and with whom we will spend eternity!

We were able to give a donation to a young lady among them who can and wants to buy some books to start teaching the children there. What a perfect example they are of the church in operations. And thanks for contributing for the bikes – they are greatly needed and appreciated! (Saturday, Nov 7, 2009)

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!"

Who first proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ to you? Who else has God used to help you grow spiritually? Pray and thank God for each one. Ask Him to bless and be with those who are still alive. Now ask Him who He wants you to impact for Him today? Who can you share His good news with this very day? Ask for opportunities and alertness to notice and use them.

Blog 87: GOD'S SPECIAL TOUCHES

1. When I first planned this trip to India I was very concerned about traveling alone. Too many snap decisions, changes, things to go wrong, language difficulties, etc. But it wasn't possible to travel with anyone. God convicted me that He'd be here with me, I wouldn't be traveling alone. I wrote a blog about that. He's shown that in a very real way. In each of my flights, to London and then to Hyderabad, the seat alongside me has been vacant. It's as if God kept it open saying 'I'm sitting there with you, you just don't see Me.' The second flight had over 500 people and I only saw one other empty seat.

2. Perhaps the most dreaded part of traveling to India for me is going through customs entering the country. I've had some very time-consuming and 'challenging' situations in the past: unpacking, explaining, etc., and all without good communication because of language differences. Trying to understand their quiet mumbling and provide what they want on the spur of the moment is not fun for me. So I've prayed God would have mercy and make it easy. Like he sent His angels to go ahead and prepare the way for the Jews to enter I prayed He would send His angels ahead of my checking out and make customs easy. It couldn't have been easier! When it was my turn the guard waved me through without looking at anything or checking anything. He just waved me through. That was great!

3. I write this at 5 AM from the place I have been at 5 AM every day since I arrived in Lucknow, sitting on the floor of the bathroom with my laptop. I don't lie in bed any later than 5 for the wailing sirens of the mosques calling people to prayer are eerily dark and empty. I can't fall back asleep with it playing no matter what. Our bathroom is in the back of the house so I leave our bedroom so as to not wake up Moses and it is quieter here. What I have been hearing instead is a sweet female choir faintly singing uplifting and soothing songs. I can't understand all the words but clearly they are praising God. What a difference from everything else I hear here. I found out there is a small catholic convent in back of where I sit and I hear them sing in the mornings. They sing for over an hour. Now they are singing 'How Great Thou Art.' **BEAUTIFUL!!!** It is a great reminder God is still here in the dark and emptiness of the place. The youth choir I heard at the house dedication practices sometimes during the day and hearing their English words to familiar hymns is very encouraging. They practice for hours at a time. They are here to sing at a 3-day Billy Graham crusade which that organization sponsors here each year. How great the timing I get to be at the place they are staying during the time they are here to hear them sing as well! Light in the darkness..... (Sunday, Nov 8, 2009)



Psalm 23:1, 5-6 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. ... 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,

What are some of the 'little things' that God does to show you He loves you and is caring for you? What are some special touches He is performing in your life right now. Have you thanked Him for them? Do so now. Ask Him to help you be alert to all the 'small'; blessings we usually overlook in life.

Blog 88: RESPECT

Rodney Dangerfield built a career on claiming "I don't get no respect!" He should have come to India and he would have gotten plenty of respect. Maybe it's because I just came from a country that shows very little respect for anything, but I really notice and appreciate the way Indians show respect for many things.

Older women are on the top of the pile when it comes to respect. In America they are on the bottom of the stack. Despite everyone living on top of each other in poverty or semi-poverty, there is a respect for property and personal 'space' that at first might not seem evident. Conversation and terms of address are also very respectful. There are numerous ways in the Hindi language, including a whole set of pronouns and form of verbs that is designed just to show respect.

I am shown great respect wherever I go. At first it made me uncomfortable to watch a 40 lb girl haul by 50 lb suitcase for me, but I soon learned that to deny her that honor would be an insult and put shame on her. It does take some getting used to, though!

At home I am uncomfortable being referred to as 'Doctor' because feel it is often a source of pride and puts distance between people. In India I don't mind the title at all for it is seen differently. They greatly admire learning and those who study so here the title is one of respect and actually helps close the distance between them and me. I don't know if I explained that right but I have always sensed that.

What has most impacted and influenced me, though, is the way Christians show respect for God and their faith. Everyone goes barefoot into a place of worship as a sign of respect (sandals are dirty, and Moses took of his at the burning bush – when God demanded it! Women cover their heads with part of their sari in an additional way to show submission and respect. Everyone wears their best clothing to church and for special occasions. For men this means long sleeved white shirts and dress pants.



Indian Christians are careful about their Bibles, too. While we throw ours around like another piece of junk, they are very careful when they handle it. They will never set it on the floor and they will never set anything on top of it. This shows respect for the contents of this special book and gives it an honor and reverence it deserves. When they the Bible in private devotions they usually stand as a way of showing respect to its contents. Imagine standing each morning as you several chapters of the Bible!

I've always like the idea of being barefoot whenever I teach God's Word, which means every time I speak here. It helps me remember Who I represent and keeps me in my own humble position. It didn't take long for me to pick up on the careful protection of the Bible when I carry it or set it down. I haven't stood yet to it, but my level of comfort in sitting down is decreasing rapidly.

To most of us respect is a trait from ages past, an old dinosaur we admire and wish were still around, but don't do a lot to resurrect in our own lives. These downtrodden and struggling people who barely eek out an existence from day to day have taught me a lot about respect – and I respect them for it. (Monday, Nov 9, 2009)

Exodus 3:5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

Do what you can right not to show God the respect He deserves. Take off your shoes. Kneel or lay on the floor. Reverently hold and open your Bible. Read His Word out loud in awe and respect. Ask God to show you what you can do regularly to show more respect to Him and His Word.



Blog 89: CONSEQUENCES OF THE INDIAN WORLD VIEW

Some nationalities can be identified with certain temperament characteristics: Italians as fiery, Germans as methodical, Irish as not keeping things inside, etc. I have spent many hours among Indians, getting to know many quite well. They seem to have the full range of temperaments and emotions. But one thing I do notice that is different from people in America: I have never seen any display of anger by any Indian. I know they have them but they don't show them in public. The down side of this is that they never show any kind of physical affection in public: to their mates or children.

However I have never heard a harsh word, never seen an act of violence, never even seen someone get critical or harsh with a child or another adult. It happens, but not as overtly as in America. They keep even tempers even when driving. Their driving is crazy, wild and very erratic. We Americans can't stand to watch it for it is so dangerous. Horns constantly honk to warn others to get out of their way. To get anywhere you need to cut others off and force your way ahead. But I have never seen road rage or anyone acting in anger.

I would think people living in these deplorable conditions would have lots of hidden rage. However that isn't so. They are basically gentle, accepting people. Maybe they should be more motivated at times to improve their society as well as their lot in it, but passive acceptance seems to be the prevailing attitude. Of course Hinduism teaches that we get what we deserve in this life and that we have to endure it patiently in order to improve in the next life. That world view certainly affects much here.

I miss seeing even the smallest displays of affection in public, but it's nice to not see displays of anger or rejection either. Perhaps our world view in America, where we feel we are owed everything and must have it immediately, leads to a lot of our discontentment. Perhaps not expecting more is better. Studies show people in third world countries are happier than those in America or Europe because they just don't expect more than they have. They know things will never change and no one will give it to them, so they make do and appreciate what small blessings come their way.

While hopeless poverty certainly isn't the way to learn contentment, neither is endless materialism. Let me close with Paul's words: (Tuesday, Nov 10, 2009)

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. "

Would God say you are a content person? On a scale of one to 10 where would He rate you? Why is discontent such a bad sin? What can you do right now to become a more content person? Pray and confess that which you complain about and don't think is fair for you. Trust Him to give you what is best for you and thank Him for it.

Blog 90: MY DAILY LIFE IN INDIA 1

I thought I'd let you know a little about my daily life in India.

I SLEEP on a pad on the floor with a pillow and sheet (it is very comfortable). Homes and rooms are small in India and I currently share a room with Moses as I will whenever we travel.

I DRINK only bottled water. I like the chai (very milky tea) a lot but because of the caffeine in it don't drink it.

I WASH in a bathroom totally tiled on all 6 surfaces because the shower is in the middle, not in a stall. This one has a commode (I bring my own toilet paper) but most in India just have a hole in the floor and a bucket of water.

I TASTE food rich with a very spicy sauce and some type of spicy over-cooked vegetables every meal (sometimes just the sauce for breakfast). The flat bread (roti, like thick pita bread) is always good. It is used to scoop up food for they eat with their fingers. The rice and sauce are formed into a small ball and put into the mouth. Bananas are plentiful and I eat them often.

I TRAVEL on the back of a motorcycle or in an auto rickshaw – a 3-wheel golf-cart type vehicle that goes very fast and is driven in reckless abandon.

I SMELL hot air, spice, dust, people (sometimes pleasant, sometimes unpleasant), urine (always unpleasant), cooking food and decay.

I HEAR birds, horns honking, wailing calls from Mosques announcing prayer time and dogs barking. (Wednesday, Nov 11, 2009)

Ecclesiastes 3:1-5 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,

Pray for the pastors and Christians in India. Ask God to bless them and use them for His glory, to protect them and be with them, to encourage and teach them. Thank Him for these special people who give up so much to serve Him.

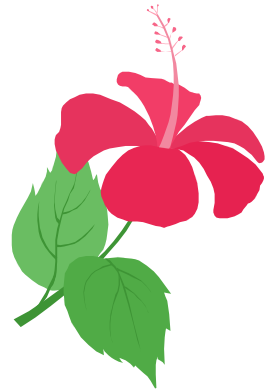
Blog 91: MY DAILY LIFE IN INDIA 2

I SEE people and animals everywhere, dirt, green vegetation, buildings of all kinds and sizes, colorful saris by the thousands and a continual whirl of activity everywhere.

I ENJOY going barefoot almost all the time, mild weather, no telephone calls (I have a hard time hearing using just one ear), zipping through traffic on the back of a motorcycle, the friendliness of the people and getting to do a lot of teaching every day.

I MISS Nancy and my family and friends, fresh vegetables, football, Phillies playoff games, American food and snacks, drinking water from a spigot, not having to watch where I take every step outside, being able to run anywhere any time, food that doesn't burn my mouth so I can't even taste it and ice cream!

I DON'T MISS TV, phones ringing and blatant immodesty everywhere.



I GET FRUSTRATED BY everything being late, the electricity suddenly going off for hours at a time without any notice, the continual loud noise everywhere, and limited communication because of the language barrier.

I GET ENJOYMENT FROM the cute children everywhere, the polite, mannerly people, the colorful dresses the women wear, being able to use my very limited Hindi to communicate better than I had in the past.

I FEEL SAD thinking of home, seeing how the people live (physically and spiritually), hearing the wail of the mosque sirens calling people to prayer and knowing there is very little I can do to help the awesome need here. (Thursday, Nov 12, 2009)

Ecclesiastes 3:5-8 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.

Pray especially for the Christians in India who are suffering for their faith, who are undergoing physical or emotional persecution, who are losing family and friends for the gospel, who don't have homes or food because of their commitment to Jesus. Pray for God's protection around them and presence in them, and for Him to be glorified through them.

Blog 92: PRAYING

Praying before meals takes on new meaning here when you realize there could be something in what you are about to eat or drink that would make you very ill. Praying is more than routinely giving thanks, it is asking for God's protection as well. I know things aren't anywhere near western sanitation conditions (and even they lack sometimes).



At our first pastor's conference the translator opened his hand and showing me several small black beans in his dirty palm. He was showing me great honor by offering me one of his precious treats. How could I do anything but take one and put it in my mouth (it was very bitter and took forever to dissolve). Yes, we don't forget to pray before we eat and we don't take the matter lightly! Neither should you. (Friday, Nov 13, 2009)

1 Timothy 4:3-5 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. 4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

How regular and faithful are you in praying before you eat? How close attention do you pay to what you say? Do you really mean your thanks from your heart? Thank God now for all the food He provides for you and ask Him to help you be appreciative when you pray before eating.

Blog 93: SIFTING

It's not unusual to see an adult or child sitting near a construction site with a wire screen nailed to a wooden frame. They put handfuls of course sand onto it and let the fine quality sand fall through, thus **sifting** out what isn't as good for making concrete.

I can't help but thinking how that screen is like the Bible. We must sift every idea and thought through its standards. Only what is found in the Word will come through and can be counted on to be valuable and true. As I teach the Indian pastors, I want to run all I say and do through the sieve of god's word and only pass on to them what is true to the Bible.

So much 21st Century Western culture has attached it self to Christianity that it is often hard to separate the 2. But I'm not here to teach them how to minister as we do it in the west. I'm here to teach the basic truths of God's Word and then let them apply it to their own culture. The truths of the Bible are above and beyond any culture and I want to make sure I convey it that way. (Friday, Nov 13, 2009)

Hebrews 4:12 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.

Psalms 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.

What is God teaching you right now from His Word? Where is He working in your life at the moment? What does His Word have to say about what is happening? Ask Him to use His Word to cleanse you and make you more like Him. Spend some time reading it and listen to what He has to say to you.



Blog 94: BACK IN HYDERABAD!

I have always gotten a kick out of the **names the Indians use for their schools**. Their schools are still patterned after what the British did centuries ago, complete with uniforms, education in English, and important-sounding names. Here are some of the names I came across and jotted down in the last 24 hours: Brilliant Grammar School, Genius Student School, Blossoming Buds K thru 8, Wonderful Learner School, Little Stars K thru 8, Marvelous Scholars School, New Brilliant High School and my favorite, Master

Minds School (I wonder if they were aware of the play on words with that one). It is humorous to these names for they are anything but humble. I guess its all in the advertising here as well!

Americans are greatly admired and respected here in India. I see that everywhere I go. Someone asked me if Indians were seen that same way in America. The answer struck me hard. No, we don't look up to Indians. In fact, I told them, **Americans don't look up to anyone**. We feel we are on the top of the pile and everyone should look up to us. Except for admiring a British, Australian or sometimes southern accent, we aren't impressed with anyone. Hmmm Didnt someone once say that the first shall be last and the last shall be first?

Thanks for praying. My health and energy level has been fantastic for an old man in a strange culture. I eat everything they eat just the way they eat it (but with a spoon!). This is Gods grace in response to your prayers. It isn't time to stop yet! (Saturday, Nov 14, 2009)

Matthew 20:16 "So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Where do you see the common American superiority feelings showing themselves in your thinking? When do you look down on foreigners, those who are different or those who are poorer than you are? What can you do to show them the respect they need?

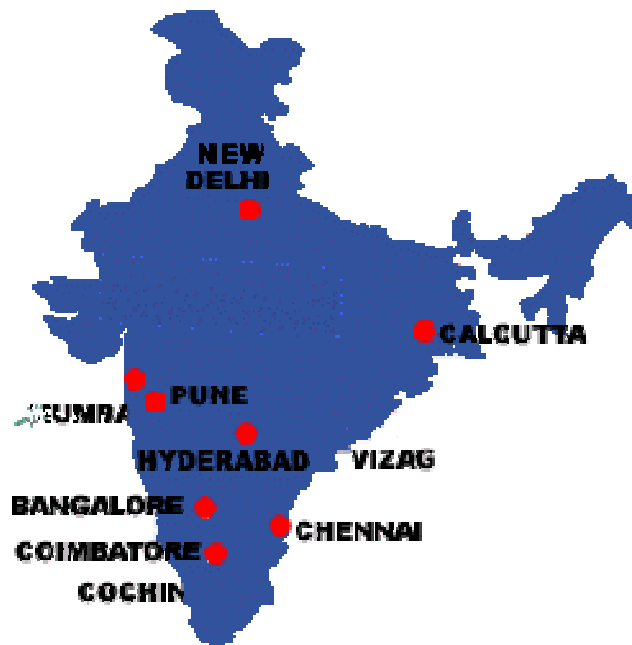
Blog 95: LESSONS FROM GOD

What have I learned? I have learned that God is so much greater than I ever even imagined. I have learned that His plans are greater and more perfect than I ever thought possible. I learned that His plan for me and love for me is far, far greater, deeper and more perfect than I ever expected. His blessing of me and joy inside me is far greater than I thought possible. How wonderful heaven must be! **When Jesus is all you have you find that Jesus is all you need.**

I go to the airport at 6:30 PM tonight your time. I arrive in Philadelphia 10:35 PM tomorrow night. Don't let go of the rope now!!!!!! Getting over the edge and back on solid ground can be tricky so don't let go! Pray I find a dependable ride to the airport at 5 AM. Pray for all to go smoothly with check-ins, security checks, customs, flights, meeting Nancy, drive home, etc. (Monday, Nov 16, 2009)

Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

When have you been able to be or do more than you thought? Did you give God the credit for it? What do you need His help for now, something you can't do without Him? He gives us impossible things to face so we will turn to Him, are you doing that now?

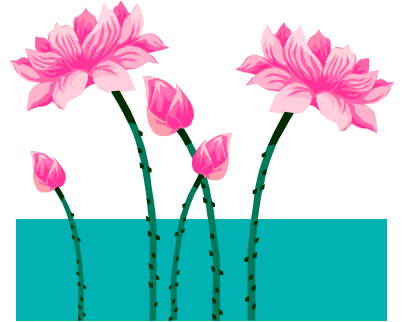


JANUARY 5 – FEBRUARY 9, 2011

Nancy came with me on my fourth trip to India and stayed the first 2 weeks, one in Lucknow and one in Hyderabad/Andhra Pradesh. We had 18 one-day pastor's conferences, all in different locations. I even baptized 13 people. This was the longest, hardest trip yet. I got very sick from food poisoning half way through but recovered and kept going. Each trip gets harder and stretches me in a different way.

January 5, 2011

Last Sunday in church I preached about how God wants us to be willing to get out of our comfort zone and take risks in following Him. It was about Peter getting out of the boat and then walking on water! If you, like me, want things safe and comfortable then the attached blog which summarizes the sermon. You can listen to the whole thing on the church web site at <http://www.mainstreetbaptist.org/current/>. It's called "**Walking on Water.**"



Thanks for your prayers!

Blog 96: WALKING ON WATER - 1

When I lived in Dallas in the late 60's and early 70's I collected a full set of drinking glasses with the Dallas Cowboy logo on them and the years they were Super Bowl champions up to that time. I bought one a week at the gas station near me. When you filled up with gas you could buy another one. I took them home, carefully wrapped them up, and kept them safe in a box. Whenever I moved I carefully moved the box. It was valuable, irreplaceable to me – the gas station no longer sold the glasses!

One day after we were married several years Nancy discovered the box. I told her all about it. You'll never believe what she did! She took the glasses out of the box and put them in the cabinet with our other glasses! She made some excuse about wanting to enjoy them and use them. But what was she thinking!! They could get chipped, lost or even broken! Can you feel my pain?

I know, some of you are identifying with Nancy – 'go sister!' you're saying! It's not that I mind using them, but first I must guarantee that they will be safe. I don't want to risk anything happening to them. If she could guarantee they would be finem, OK. It's the RISK I want to avoid at all costs.

You see, the way I was with my Dallas Cowboy drinking glasses is the way I LIVE MY LIFE. I don't like to take risks; I want to play it safe. Of course I don't enjoy life to the full that way – but it avoids pain and loss. Only God didn't give me life to hide it away somewhere safe, to go through it without taking risks and never really use or enjoy His gift to the full

I could end my life with those glasses still safely stored away, no good to me or anyone else. I could end my life the same way – safely stored away from all risk. But that would be a waste of life.

I've always liked what John David Thoreau said in Walden Pond. He said He didn't want to live his life in a way that, when he came to die, he realized he hadn't ever really lived. I've always liked that and wanted to follow that, but also stay safe & risk-free. They both can't be done. It's one or the other!

Peter faced a similar dilemma in Matthew 14:13-33. The disciples were alone in a boat in a terrible, life-threatening storm. Jesus came to them but not in the way they were expecting. He was walking on the water! Peter was willing to take a risk and walk on water as well in order to get to Jesus, but first he had to make sure Jesus wanted him to do that so he asked Jesus to tell him to come (Matthew 14:27-29). It's important that we only take the risks God wants us to take. Doing something foolish or impulsive without His definite leading bring disaster.

However when Jesus told him to come he got out of the boat and started walking to Jesus on the water! It was a great risk – but Jesus was with him. The greater the risk we take in following God the greater we experience His presence and power in our lives. But we must take the risk first.

Peter couldn't have done it on his own without Jesus' help. What in your life are you doing that you can't do on your own? Where are you so dependent on His power and protection that if He would withdraw them you would absolutely crumble? These situations come in our lives in many ways. Perhaps you're trying to love a person who has hurt you, or forgive someone who doesn't deserve it. It could be you're trying to live a life of honesty and integrity. Or maybe you're struggling to put the needs of your family before your own needs. Possibly you are struggling with an unfair situation at work and you don't want to get bitter, or you are trying to stay on the victory side of a sin that keeps pursuing you. Then, too, it could be God wanting you to make a major change in your career or life in order to better serve Him. There are many actions in the life of a Christian who is following God that are risky.

Remember, if you want to walk on water you must get out of the boat. The disciples were safe in the boat, like I like to be safe. Getting out can be embarrassing, even dangerous! Peter was willing to risk that to be with Jesus. Will you? (Friday, Dec. 31, 2010)

Matthew 14:25-29 during the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

Does God have you in an impossible situation at the moment? If not, do you see one coming soon, or have you been in one in the past? Why does God allow these things? How are you responding so far (or how did you respond in the past)? List several areas where you totally need God's help in your life. Ask Him to help you with each of them right now.



Blog 97: WALKING ON WATER – 2

Peter was willing to risk getting out of the boat to walk on water because that was the way to get closer to Jesus. Jesus called him from the familiarity of the boat to the impossibility of walking on water, but when Jesus calls He enables as well. Still, the challenge for Peter was getting out of the boat! Staying was very tempting.

What's your boat? Where do you hide for safety and security? What substitutes for going all out in obedience to God? Where do you flee for protection from the fear in your life? Is it in a relationship, someone you have faith in to care for you? Is it in your money and possessions? It could be your job or even some 'secret sin' you run to when you want to escape stretching.

Peter wanted to be like his Master, no matter the cost. So he was willing to get out of the boat and trust Jesus with the rest. And for awhile all was great! He actually walked on water, something humanly impossible for him. As long as he kept his eyes on Jesus he was fine. But soon something happened. The terrible conditions around him caught his attention and he got his eyes off Jesus.

Actually the storm and the waves around him weren't a bad thing. They provided an opportunity for him to trust Jesus all the more! When we play it safe we don't have to trust for we feel we have everything under control. Then we never see His provision or feel His presence in that very special way. When I am all about being safe I don't stretch and grow. It's all about me and keeping away from opportunities to trust.

The most common command in the Bible is "fear not." Fear disrupts faith and becomes our biggest obstacle to trusting and obeying God. It's great that God created us with the ability to creatively imagine things, but when we use that to enlarge potential difficulties and then respond with fear it is all wrong.

Living in fear means loss of self-esteem, joy, intimacy and availability to God. Walking on water means keeping our eyes on Him as we risk everything to draw closer to Him. Walking on water happens one small step at a time! It takes you out of your comfort zone and little by little moves you further and further from your 'security' until all you have left for security is God Himself. And that's the whole purpose of it! Your faith grows as you see God provide. Your spiritual comfort zone widens. Believe me – I know by experience. I'm a stay-at-home person who now spends a month in India each year. The process is very difficult for me, but the product makes it well worth it. I have to keep my eyes on the product, not the process.

Where God asks you to get out of the boat and walk on water is right at the point of your fear. I've always feared traveling, especially alone. I've feared the unknown, being away from my family, having to speak to groups of people I didn't know and being in a totally different culture. So what does God do? He gives me a burden to minister in India so I have to confront those fears. He doesn't remove the obstacles but shows He will overcome them. He won't remove them but He will help me through them, one by one, as I face them.

Where are your greatest fears? What is God asking you to do that gets you out of your comfort zone? Where is He asking you to walk on water?

Henrietta Mears, the great Bible teacher and wonderful Christian woman, was asked on her death bed what she would do differently if she had to do it all over again. Her response: "I would have trusted Jesus more." I'm sure we will also say that when we get to heaven. Now we have a chance to do something about it, though. We can start trusting no matter what, and then we won't have to wish we'd have done it differently. (Monday, Jan 3, 2011)



Matthew 14:25-29 During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's you,"

Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

What do you fear most in life? What are some of your other fears? Why is fear sin? What does God want you to do to overcome your fears? What are some scriptures that promise victory over fear? Pray those scriptures now and ask God to help you recognize and overcome your fears today.

Blog 98: WALKING ON WATER - 3



Peter got his eyes on Jesus and stepped out of the boat. He actually walked on water – something impossible for him to do but quite possible when God tells us to do it. However Peter did what we often do – got his eyes off Jesus and onto his circumstances. He looked at the waves and the storm around him and his fear came back. It's only when we stay focused on Jesus that we can have victory over our fears. When he looked at Jesus the storm was just as strong, God didn't change his conditions. The circumstances around him didn't change, but Peter's perspective of them did change.

Did he assume God would stop the storm for him? Do we expect that? No wonder we are disappointed when it seems He doesn't 'answer' our prayers. He doesn't stop the storm but He helps us through it! Sure there is risk. That's where our opportunity to trust comes in. We won't grow without taking a risk. Our physical muscles grow when stretched, and our spiritual muscles of faith grow the same way.

Of course it is dangerous outside the boat, but it's more dangerous in the boat if that isn't God's will. There is no place safer than in the center of God's will! Perhaps the fact that the boat was about to sink helped motivate Peter to take his leap of faith. So, too, God shakes us up so we feel uncomfortable and are willing to risk trusting Him. After all, being in the storm with Jesus is safer than being in the boat without Him!

This process of stretching and growing is a slow, gradual process, not a once-for-all giant step. When I was a young boy I feared our Sunday afternoon car rides with my family. I thought the car would break down away from home and then what would happen? Now I am traveling to the other side of the world, living in a strange culture with no one who has my skin color or native language. God has brought it about gradually. My first trip to India was with a group of a dozen others. The second trip with a very small group and my third trip I went alone. God gradually stretches our faith muscles so they are strong enough for the next challenge. God worked with my fear of speaking to people as well.

Peter did walk on water, but he did start to sink. Then he did the right thing, though – he got his eyes back on Jesus and was restored. Don't quit when you fail. Like a baby learning to walk, get up and try again each time you fail. We try, we stumble, we try again, and we do better next time. We can't sit around waiting to get it perfect the first time, that will never happen. Sir Edmund Hillary made several unsuccessful attempts to climb Mt. Everest. It had never been done by anyone. Each time he failed he tried again. One time he stood at the mountain and said, "I'll defeat you yet, because you're as big as you're going to get but I'm still growing!" He learned from every failure and finally he made it to the top!

Why should we risk getting out of the boat? Because God calls us to it, it's the only way to real growth, it's the way true faith develops (there are no shortcuts!) and the alternative is boredom, stagnation and no growth. That's what happened to the disciples. They stayed in the boat. They became 'boat potatoes.' They played it safe, or so they thought. But did they really? Look at what it cost them – an opportunity to grow and get closer to Jesus. Would it be

safer for a baby to never try to walk, to stay in a crib its whole life? Forty three years old and still bottle fed and diapered? Is that really an option? Yet for many Christians, this is what they choose. They never use their spiritual gifts to the full, never see victory in their lives, don't know Jesus in a deeply personal intimate way, don't do anything for the kingdom, don't touch any lives for Jesus, have no satisfaction or accomplishment, and there are no special rewards or blessings to look forward to in heaven. They never get out of the boat, yet they wonder why the Christian life is so boring and unsatisfying, why God seems so far away and prayer doesn't 'work' for them.

My glasses are safely wrapped and packed away. But for what? They are safe from risk, but that's it. One day it will be too late to use them, too late to go back and make them count for something. We only get one chance at life so we better use it well.

In the parable of the talents the one who played it safe and buried his talent to avoid risk ended up losing everything. When Jesus returns and asks how you have used the opportunities He has given you, what will you say? Will having played it safe seem so important then? It's time to get out of the boat and stop making excuses. Don't wait for a better time; the present is all we will ever have.

Suppose God offered to mail you a DVD of your life as it would have been if you had taken the risk of trusting Him in tough situations? Suppose you had made your decisions based on what He wanted instead of what was safest? How would your life be different now? What would your relationship with Him be like? In the parable of the talents the master gave the faithful steward charge of many more things – he was blessed and rewarded for all eternity.

When God calls you to get out of the boat He will give you the power to walk on water. The storm won't stop but His presence will be with you. It takes faith to take that first small step. It means you have total trust in Him. It demands you keep your eyes on Him, not the storm around you. It's safer in the boat, but if you want to advance towards Jesus you must get out of the boat! (Wednesday, Jan 5, 2011)

Matthew 14:30-33 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Is there an area in your life where you often fail? Why do you fail? In what way do you take your eyes off Jesus? What can you do to keep your eyes on Jesus when going through these things in the future?

Blog 99: IT'S COLD! (PHYSICALLY & SPIRITUALLY)

We took another couple of small steps on water today and God held us up! We had our first teaching sessions – spiritual warfare conference which lasted all day. We had 2 morning sessions and one long afternoon session (combined 2 into one). We did that because it is quite cold and that makes everything harder for everyone. It is in the 40's and 50's (mid afternoon only). It's very foggy and gloomy. They are setting record low temperatures at night. The problem is that no one has any source of heat in their homes. All buildings are concrete or brick with concrete or stone floors. There is no carpet anywhere. And we didn't come prepared for weather THIS cold. Others suffer more than us because we are more used to the cold. Everyone, including us, wears 4 and 5 layers trying to stay warm. I don't think my feet will ever



feel warm again! Its even cold sleeping at night. I don't know what we'd do without Nancy's hot flashes!

The first time I was in Lucknow (this is my 3rd time) it was July and therefore up to 120 during the day. The monsoons would cause terrible downpours and massive flooding everywhere. The people, especially the poor people (which are about 90% of them) suffer greatly in either extreme of weather. How thankful we are for the blessings God has given us in Pennsylvania!

The spiritual warfare conference went very well. It's a deep subject to start with, and talking through a translator to those in an entirely different culture doesn't help make it any easier. I went through the Bible tracing the development of the conflict between God and Satan. I applied that to us and how we can have victory in the battle. The end was an extended time of prayer leading them through deliverance. There were about 35 or 40 people there – very good considering the weather and how everyone tries to stay home and not go out. We made some new friends and have a great time of fellowship as well as prayer with some of them. God's presence was with us and He used it all for whatever He chose. We thank Him for His faithfulness!



Tomorrow I will be speaking in a church about spiritual warfare. We will be doing visiting and other things in the afternoon and evening. Last night we slept from 7 PM to 4:30 AM – not quite on India schedule yet!

Thanks for your prayers, please keep remembering us. I'll attach some pictures for you to see. (January 8, 2011)

The cold continues to be the major factor we face these days. Schools have been closed and many activities cancelled. People don't venture outside unless absolutely necessary, although staying inside doesn't really make much difference. Temperatures in the 40's and 50's aren't bad for us at home, especially this time of the winter, but here homes are open to the elements and there is no source of heat. Thus homes are as cold inside as it is outside. Everything is concrete and stone, so floors and walls hold the cold. The dampness is strong as well – garments left to dry take days to air dry. We wear 3 pairs of socks, 2 pants (Nancy wears 3), 4 layers of shirts and then a jacket and a hat. To sleep we add another layer and get totally under the blankets. About 3 PM if the sun is out and you can find a sunny place with no wind the temperature gets into the lower 60's, but that doesn't last long and it doesn't penetrate the homes. At least I don't have to be barefoot to teach, although socks (even 3 pairs) don't seem to do a lot of good standing on cold concrete all day. And to think I was looking forward to a break from the winter cold at home! (January 10, 2011)

An interesting sidelight that sheds light on things is that several perceptive mature believers here feel there is a **spirit of stress** (pressure, burdens, etc.) that is the opposite of peace and relaxation and that works against those in this town. It is clearly something demonic. That would go a long way to help understanding what I felt last year and this year when here. I thought the first week was transition and by the time I got to Hyderabad I was better adjusted, but this helps me better understand how to pray. Please pray against this for us. It is worse during the night, when we awake after 4 or 5 hours of sleep. It is very, very difficult to relax my mind and to get back to sleep. (January 11, 2011)

PRAYER REQUEST I just found this out. Please pray! One of the more sold exMuslim believers at our 2-day conference in Lucknow brought his 16 year old son to the conference. They traveled almost 24 hours by bus to get here. The father had another stop to make on the way home so the boy went ahead with a friend but disappeared when they stopped to switch

busses. He hasn't been heard from in a month and is assumed kidnapped. Please pray for the boy and his family. (February 16, 2011)

Revelation 3:14-17 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. 15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm — neither hot nor cold — I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

How would you say your spiritual temperature is? Are you lukewarm, or even cold? How can you tell when you begin to get cold? What are some of the first signs? Ask God to convict you if there is anything between you and Him or if you have drifted from Him. What did it 'look like' when you were really, really close to Him? How does that compare to now? What needs to happen for that to be evident again?



Blog 100: INTERESTING INDIANS - 1

Since India is all about people (1 billion of them) I thought I'd introduce you to some of the ones we have met. We come because of the people, not for the sights, smells or sounds – just the people. I don't have much time with them, and communication limits hinder what time we do have, but God always reminds me that each believer I cross paths with is someone I will be able to sit down with in heaven. Then we will have wonderful, deep fellowship. This just set the groundwork for that.

RACHEL is a young Indian woman who uses her time serving the Lord at OM (Operation Mobilization) instead of developing a career of her own. She comes from a village an hour away and visits her family each month. She is quiet and reserved. She attended the day long spiritual warfare conference and ate lunch with us. You can see on the picture of us eating. She is sitting across the table from Nancy and wearing gloves to eat. She told me that everything I said was if God was speaking directly to her.

LUCY became a friend of Nancy's at the conference. She is a very pleasant Indian woman who works in child evangelism in Singapore. She was greatly impressed by the effectiveness of my magic tricks in communicating truth to children. I showed her some simple ones she could make and use. When home I want to buy some to send to her. She is sitting alongside Nancy in the dining room.

My translator at the day long spiritual warfare conference was **RAKESH**, a young Indian man who came to the Lord as a teenager. He has been serving the Lord ever since, first with Campus Crusade for Christ and now as a pastor. He has a MBA and earns his own support so he can minister without a salary. He has a great, great love for the Word of God. He reads and memorizes as much as he can. He likes reading and memorizing in English because he says it is closer to the original than the Hindi translation. He was impressed with my limited ability to quote Scripture in Hindi. He is on the picture of me at the conference, standing by me in the front.

ANANT JEEVAN (A.J.) is a very friendly, talkative young man who made us feel welcome from the time we arrived. He is from the highest class and works with Southern Baptist Missionaries whose focus is to reach that class for Christ. They are the hardest ones to reach but are key because they are the leaders and property holders in India. They are the main force trying to keep the caste system in place and oppose Christianity because some many Dahlits (untouchables, so far down they are considered way below the lowest class) are

turning to Jesus. He is in part supported by a church in South Carolina which allows him to have time to minister. After the conference he asked for prayer to have victory over doubts demons keep putting into his mind. (January 9, 2011)

1 John 4:19-21 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Why is it that we can't love God if we don't love each other? What is there about not loving each other that keeps us from loving God? Does loving God make it easier to love each other? Why? When you aren't right with God, do you have a harder time being nice to others? Why? If you use how you love others as a gauge of how you love God, how are you doing right now?

Blog 101: INTERESTING INDIANS - 2

SANJAY (ROBINSON) is the pastor of the Salvation Army church in Lucknow. It was started by his father who has since retired and died. His whole family is involved in ministry. His brother works for World Vision. He and his wife showed us great love and hospitality. We bonded very nicely with them and had a great time of Christian fellowship. They are a couple we could become very close to if we lived near them (that will have to come in heaven). His wife also grew up in a Christian home. Both families have been Christians for generations, a rarity in India. Her family lived in a predominately Muslim area and suffered much persecution through the years. That is not rare in India.



ANIL (PORTER) is a middle age pastor at whose church I spoke last time here and with whom I have been in touch since then. We visited in his home Sunday evening. He, his wife, and his children are well educated and very intelligent. He and his wife are school teachers with various degrees in history and English literature. He pastors without a salary. His testimony is interesting. He grew up in a nominal Catholic home, although his mother was Hindu. His sister was paralyzed until her 20's when she had a dream that Jesus spoke to her and said she would be healed. Three days later she was totally perfect again. That so impacted the family that they became believers. Anil was working on a master's degree at the time.

Before we met he had introduced a young man and woman to each other. The young woman was from a family that recently became Christian. As a result no one they knew would marry their daughter, and now they wanted a Christian husband. So they asked the pastor (Anil) to find a Christian husband (all marriages here, even among Christians, are arranged). Anil asked other pastors if they know of a strong Christian man looking for a wife. Coming from a Muslim background, like her, was also important. Not only would they have that in common, but if her extended family thought she was marrying someone other than a good Muslim there would be extreme physical danger for her and her family. A young man with a Muslim name would cover that. So without extended family or caste support the church becomes their only family and support. Anil found such a man and introduced them this afternoon. They are never alone so he sat with them. He said the girl was shy and wouldn't look up or say anything the whole time. They will have several weeks to see if they want to continue. Either one can end it at any time, but unless there is a strong reason to do so they trust those who make the match to know what is best. (January 10, 2011)

Mark 12:29-31 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all

your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

This, the Shema, is the heart and core of Judaism. Why is it as important to love each other as it is to love God? What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself? Do you do this? How can you tell if you do or not? Are you as patient, forgiving and tolerant of the mistakes of others as you are of your own? Where do you need improvement today? Pray and ask God to help you now.

Blog 102: INTERESTING INDIANS - 3

MAXWELL (DAVIS) is another man I met last trip and have stayed in touch with. I was even invited to his son's recent marriage. He lives in the same building as Anil. He is very highly educated and teaches, counsels and ministers in many areas. Mainly his ministry is in spiritual warfare and marriage teaching/counseling. We share those interests in common. He is a refined gentleman about my age, very easy to talk to and very knowledgeable about many things. I always learn much when talking with him. His wife has a special testimony. Her mother was the second wife of her father and he much preferred the first so ignored the second and wouldn't support her or her family. He even tried killing her at one time. She found peace and hope in Jesus but faced many dangers herself in trying to follow Him and letting those around her know about her faith. It was a difficult life she lived but has matured her in Christ and gives her a special spiritual glow when she speaks.



NOMAN is a very friendly, outgoing young man whom we met in the airport when the flight we were all to take from Delhi to Lucknow was delayed because of fog. We spent a couple of enjoyable hours eating breakfast and talking with him. He is a young Indian man who works for a computer company which contracts with major American car manufacturers and other companies. He spends several months with a company writing technical software for them, and then moves to another assignment. He has lived in virtually all the major US metropolitan areas and finds Americans very friendly and the country a wonderful place to come to. Noman is Hindu and finds a temple wherever he is to worship. Since Hindus have many thousands of gods the ones his family worships are different than the ones worshipped in the temples he visits, but he goes anyway. In a few years he will tell his parents he is ready to marry and they will find a young woman who is Hindu and of their caste and area that they think would make a good match. He trusts his parent's judgment and can reject the woman if he isn't satisfied. She can reject him as well. He will spend a couple months getting to know her, probably by phone since he will be in the USA. Then he will ask his company for a transfer to their Lucknow office and settle down here with her. (January 11, 2011)

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."

What is there about loving each other that shows others we are Christians? What is so special, so unique about that? How does God use that to draw others to Him? Do unbelievers who know you say you have a reputation as someone who loves everyone? Or do you get jealous, do you gossip or criticize, do you complain about others, are you less than loving to anyone you deal with?

Blog 103: INTERESTING INDIANS - 4

PAUL (Sadeek) was my translator last time here and this time as well. We really bonded closely and have been in touch through the past year. We went to his mud and straw hut in the village of Maholie. It is clean but very primitive. Yet he is a scholar in several languages, including Urdu and Arabic, and fluently speaks at least 5 that I know of! He has been a believer the longest, about 15 years, and is responsible for numerous churches and believers in his area. He has personally led hundreds of people to Christ. He has 100 baptized believers in his church and another 100 who are believers but not baptized yet. He comes from a Moslem background and was befriended by a believer who led him to Christ. A little while ago he was giving out Bibles and preaching and someone attacked him and started beating him, Chris Mauger was nearby and rescued him by quickly driving him away in his car. A little while later the man who attacked him was saved by reading one of the Bible Paul had been giving out.

Paul's wife, **SARAH**, is a sweet, loving woman. They have 4 boys and one young daughter. She helps everyone she can and is often feeding and sharing with the poor. About 4 years ago when Paul was away a Hindu imam came into their home and hit and beat her. Her children were young and watched it happen. They have grown to courageously serve the Lord.



The oldest, 15, started a Bible study in his public school. The next brother speaks often for the Lord. There is a good ending to the Imam story. He later came to accept the Lord and so did his wife. We met her today at Paul's house; she is a fine Christian woman.

Pray for these fine people who live and serve on the front lines for the Lord. They are doing a great job but really need our prayers! (January 12, 2011)

Proverbs 31:29-31 “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.

Who do you think of when you think of a good, faithful wife? What traits make her that way? If you are a man, what can you do to help your wife develop these traits? If you are a wife, what can you do to help your wife develop these traits? Pray for the women you know who are wives.

Blog 104: INTERESTING INDIANS - 5

ANNISE is one of the finest young pastors I have met in India. He has little training but has started a church of 35 believers in Delhi. He has been shunned, beaten, kicked and beaten up for his faith. He wasn't always a Christian, though. Annise has dropsy on one side of his face and it was paralyzed. Paul had given him a book when he was distributing literature one day, he it and called for Paul to talk and pray. He was healed and came to the Lord that way. His spiritual growth has been great. He led his whole family to the Lord, 5 sisters and 1 brother. He grew up Moslem and his family is the only Christian family in a town that is totally Moslem. It has 68 mosques and is called “Little Pakistan.” We quickly went from the car to his house and just as quickly back so as to not arouse attention by our presence. Annise has grown greatly and is a real source of spiritual power for many. He was at the conference and we ate a meal in his house. He now lives and ministers in Delhi, he makes garments to support himself financially.

AYYUB (JOB), also of Muslim background, was totally paralyzed 4 years ago. He went to doctors and healers but no one could help. One night he heard someone calling him, saying he would be healed. This went on for many nights. This Voice told him he needed more than

physical healing, though. It said “You need to meet the eternal God Who can heal you and give you salvation as well. The peace giver is Jesus Christ who alone can give you salvation.” He started searching in his mind, callout out to God. He had been friends with Paul in college many years ago and God brought them together again. Paul told him about salvation and prayed for him. He was healed and saved! He came to the pastor’s conference and was at Annise’s house today as well. He has led many to Christ, including Izhar, who was also at the conference and Annise’s house. He teaches school in their village, which is all Moslem. Pray for courage for him to take a stand for Christ.

In 2008 **IZHAR** was very sick in Delhi with a blood infection from which they said he would die. Annise came to him and prayed for him. God assured him he would be OK and he was! Annise taught him the Scriptures and he quickly grew spiritually. His whole family became believers. He asks us to pray for him and his ministry. He, too, is from a Muslim background.

SHAKEEL is an outstanding Christian pastor we met at Paul’s home and the pastor’s conference. He was converted from Islam 3 years ago and is very, very faithful. He has donated land for a church and earns his living by farming. His wife glows with joy. She is known for hugging and loving everyone and for being quick to cry for any reason (sounds a lot like Nancy!)

Pray for these fine people who live and serve on the front lines for the Lord. They are doing a great job but really need our prayers! (January 13, 2011)

John 15:12-14 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

Why does Jesus say that dying for someone is the greatest way of showing them love? Do you agree with that statement? Which people in your life would be willing to die for you? Pray and thank God for them one by one. Go out of your way today to say something nice for them? Who in your life would you be willing to die for? Ask God to help you show your love for them in a tangible way today.

Blog 105: INTERESTING INDIANS - 6

In 2006 I met a Southern Baptist Missionary to Hyderabad named Norman. I also started writing to another SBC missionary named Henry. During past visits it never worked to meet and so we planned to meet the night we arrived in Hyderabad. The plan arrived so late we moved it back to the following morning. We had breakfast with them in a very fancy hotel. They are 2 of the 3 SBC missionaries in the area I visit, and area that has 85 million people! Here is their story:

NORMAN is from Colorado. He came to Hyderabad in 2001 on a 2 week mission trip. He said the excitement and danger was a great adrenalin rush, like being at 6 Flags for 2 weeks straight. He wanted more. On the plane ride home he was praying for God to send people to India to meet the great need there. God clearly laid it on his heart to go. He got home and God had been telling his wife the same thing. They and their 3 children have been here 6 years. When asked what message he would have for you in America he said he’d encourage everyone to take a mission trip here some time. That way they can see the need and be better motivated to pray, and that way God would touch the hearts of some to come back to serve.

HENRY is a single man in his 40’s from North Carolina. He grew up a Methodist but didn’t hear the gospel. He graduated from North Carolina State and was an architect. In a wood shop class a board was thrown by a machine and cut off 4 fingers on his left hand. The



accident saved his life, though, because when treating his hand injury they found a large brain tumor and operated immediately. Had he not been in the hospital he would have died from the tumor very soon. He ended up in a coma for 5 days. When he came out he was in great, great pain and knew his life was greatly threatened. He was afraid to die so called out to help him. God gave him peace about it. A pastor friend came by and led him to the Lord. When he got good enough to leave the hospital he started going to Bible studies. He grew spiritually and went on mission trips with the group. Several years later more tumors reappeared in his brain. He became very angry at God, but God brought a rainbow into his life at the perfect moment and again he has peace. A little while later while on a spiritual retreat God called him to be a missionary. At first he said no because he didn't want to leave his comfortable life, but then he submitted and followed God's leading for His life.

It was nice meeting these men after the years of email contact we have shared. There is one more who works in the area I will be traveling to for pastor's conferences but he is away at the present. I will be in touch with him through email. Pray for these men and the difficult, demanding work they do. (January 15, 2011)

1 John 3:18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

Think of examples of how those who love you show it? What can you do to show them love today? Notice God never says we must 'like' everyone, but we must 'love' them? What is the difference (think carefully, this is a very important question)? How do you think it makes God feel when we don't love fellow Christians, when His children don't get along?

Blog 106: THANKS TO GOD and NANCY!

Things are going very well as far as the teaching and ministry goes. I speak 4 or 5 times a day and Nancy shares her testimony and other things as well. It makes for long, tiring days, though.

We don't have to endure the cold here – it is in the upper 80's and lower 90's – fully 50 warmer than last weeks record colds.

Nancy has made a wonderful impact on everyone here, especially the women and children. They are always flocked around her asking for prayer, medical advice, or just enjoying her company. She enjoys them as well. She's liked it here better than expected. Some of the places and people really touch her heart in a very deep way. I wish she was here with me the whole time!

God gives me what to say when I speak. Often the circumstances are far from ideal and much, much flexibility is needed, but I know I have been teaching what He wants and in the words He wants used. As to results only He knows hearts and long-term impact. The magic tricks are very, very popular but I want to do more than entertain. Pray God would continue to use me as we move into the pastor conferences stage of this trip.

All that doesn't mean there isn't spiritual oppression for there is. It attacks me mostly at night and keeps me from falling back to sleep. (That's when I am typing this.) I am entirely out of my element and comfort zone. For all I've been here, as well as I know the place and as much as I love the people, it is a continual struggle for me. But I guess that is where God is stretching me and working in my life. I'd appreciate your prayers in that area. Thanks!



We have changed our travel plans for today. Instead of riding the train for 13 hours we are flying – 2 hours. The accommodations we were assigned on the train would not have been accommodating for rest nor would comfortable for Nancy as a woman. This will work much better. (January 15, 2011)



1 Peter 4:8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

What does it mean that love covers sins? Just how does love cover over sin between people? Why does He say love covers a MULTITUDE of sins? What does that word mean? Does that mean that if you don't love someone if you haven't forgiven them for something? Who haven't you forgiven as you should? Ask god to give you His love for them now.

Blog 107: NANCY'S REFLECTIONS (2011)

Overall the trip was amazing; mostly because of what you see God doing there. The "beauty" there is the women. Their clothes are gorgeous colors and fabrics, although they are in the same style. No two women have the same fabric, not even close. The designs and handwork, beads, etc. are over the top beautiful. The women themselves are very beautiful too smooth dark skin, flawless and silky long hair. They are very Innocent and shy and timid.

The rest of the landscape tends to be street dirt, trash, tacky monster size billboards with distorted images of Indian people in western clothes and advertisements. Also there are millions of posters and billboards advertising the current political leadership and all their "accomplishments" (which include concrete parks!!) Like election season here only WAY worse and all year.

The shops are little cubicles, dark cluttered lined up side by side, complete with trash outside. You don't "window" shop. There was a nice small mall in Lucknow and we had PIZZA...it was sooo good

Lucknow is dark (spiritually and environmentally), bleak, dirty, trashy, cluttered with ...stuff.. and the worst traffic ever. No Mexican or European traffic compares. They play "chicken". No one yields. Debbie stopped driving .It's too much. She had accident. No one got hurt really, but a crowd gathered. They stare and don't DO anything t .help but can get aggressive...it was very intimidating to her. Consequently, she stays home mostly. Mostly, men shop for everything women stay home.

Hyderabad is clearly influenced by the LIGHT that Christ brings. This city is cleaner, more updated and shows signs for moving forward. Even the drivers are more courteous. People seem a little more friendly and open.

I love the villages in both cities. It's like a National Geographic come ALIVE. The people were very curious about me. I seem to be entertainment where ever I go, one very young couple with their new baby was very welcoming and shared soda with us and coconuts right from their tree. I even held their baby! Pretty trusting .Jerry said this would not have happened if it was just him (male) there. Women ARE that way always relating even if we CAN"T talk to each other!!

Anyway, more later. (After arriving at home.) glad to be home - sleeping, drinking tap water, eating. anything!!

Spiritually, God is using the "team" and HUNDREDS of local pastors to do an amazing work. I love the local pastors (and their wives ... they are strong, directive, organized and committed-----How does God DO THAT ...in every culture - very funny LOL)

I was especially happy to see first class when I got to the airport--!!When I saw the first

row seat with the reclining /flat bed option, I started to cry quietly. I was EXHAUSTED! All I WANTED TO DO WAS SLEEP. I EVEN POSTPONED THE 5 COURSE GOURMET MEAL TILL 04AM SO I COULD SLEEP...QUIETLY, IN THE DARK WITH no mosquitoes!!
Wait till Jerry sees that. He'll cry too LOL

Missing Jerry already...he's got a crazy intensive schedule this week. I tease the Team Leader that he is a slave driver and doesn't waste a minute. The overnight train rides are tough and long and very unreliable

Jerry is doing an AMAZING job and the pastors are loving' it!!

I got to speak to 20-30 young men at a Hindu Conference Center...crazy uh?? They were very receptive, mostly because I am an American and that's entertainment right there!!!!!! Some were new believers and some just learning about Jesus. This tops my list of "Craziest things I've ever done in my Life" list...it even trumps marrying Jerry--- LOL !!

..LAST NIGHT I HAD A large CHOCOLATE MILK SHAKE AT THE AIRPORT IN DELHI...IT WAS SOOOO GOOOOD

Seriously, continue to pray for your pastor...he really needs it. He is making a major impact. Crazy things I saw a goat on the back of a scooter ..!!!

Jerry seems to be getting small emails on his new Kindle. Yeah !! WIFI is VERY limited, but it's his life/love line to family. He seems to have eaten a bad egg and decided not to eat to settle his stomach. He is also just getting over a "cold" ...maybe sinus infection ...So glad I packed every imaginable drug he would need. The trick is now. Does he know which one to take????

They are still doing conferences - morning afternoon and evening. The evening ones are the ones that make it so exhausting. Because after -there is still travel. Thanks for continued prayer. He needs it desperately. ..Thanks Nancy

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.

Who is a good example to you of godly Christ-likeness? Whose life lifts you up and encourages you? Pray and thank God for them, and then thank them in person. Ask God to make you that kind of person that can be a good example and an encouragement to others.



Blog 108: THE DEVIL FIGHTS BACK!

Hello! It's been awhile. The ministry here has been wonderful, but it's been very difficult. Each year seems to get a bit harder as God stretches me more. In addition, I ate some bad food and for several was as sick to my stomach as I can remember being. An India doctor gave me a shot and some pills and things have been improving. The infection hit my throat as well and I am only now able to talk anywhere like normal. We continued the conference schedule but came back to Hyderabad last night for a few days rest. We haven't cancelled any conferences, just combined some.

The morning sessions are about what God expects of pastors, priorities for time and ministry. The afternoons are the spiritual warfare sessions, followed by group and individual prayer. They are given spiritual warfare handbooks to take and use (the ones translated into Telugu last year). I didn't know what to expect from these but it's been interesting to say the least. Showing them the power and authority they have over the demonic is great, leading them

in a group prayer for deliverance is thrilling. However we have experienced Luke 4:31-37 a couple times.

Two days ago a pastor fell to the floor and shook all over, he moaned and cried out. It was right after the deliverance prayer. This had been happening to him for awhile. Then yesterday while I was talking a young lady on the woman's side started pointing at me, screaming and pushing towards me while I was talking about Jesus commanding the demons out in Mark 5. I later found out she was screaming "Don't tell them that! That can't know that! Stop talking! Don't be letting them know these things!" She really went wild!

The women tried to hold her and stop her, people started praying against what was happening. One of the larger men pushed through the woman, grabbed her by a large handful of hair on the top of her head and physically dragged her to the center isle and then down to the front where I was standing. He dropped her and she hit her head on the concrete pretty hard but never seemed to notice. Everyone was gathering around crying out to Jesus. I knelt by her and put my left hand on the top of her head and my right on the side of her head for she was jerking and shaking and I didn't want her to hit her head again. She stopped screaming and was moaning and jerking. I tried to open her eyes to look at her and better command the demons but she kept closing them. Others were touching her and everyone praying out loud. They call on Jesus for help and mercy and are just learning the authority then have to command the demons to be gone. I held her and kept praying for awhile. Finally she calmed down and lay still.

When I stood up I noticed a deep red blotch the size of a quarter on my palm, thinking it might have been from some makeup she had on her hairline (not uncommon here). But later I realized it was my blood. Somehow I had a scratch there and it really bled. Strange.....

She went back to her seat, obviously drained and dazed. She barely seemed to be with it at all. I combined the last 2 sessions so we could get to the prayer for everyone and that went well. Afterwards I sought her out, played hands on her head and prayed for her again.

I was surprised to see her stay afterwards. She was one of the 7 from the church who I was to baptize that afternoon. Moses talked to them; I said a bit but couldn't talk much. She clearly was a new believer who wanted to follow Jesus in baptism. We drove to the river, chased some water buffalo out of the way, and went in to baptize. She was the 6th one baptized. It felt very right having her take that step of faith and public commitment.

The woman after her, the last one, put her hands over her face when she came up out of the water. She started shaking and screaming as well. Falling down in deep very rocky water is not good so we prayed and got her to the shore. She came out of it quickly then.

Back at the church we talked, took pictures, a special meal was served to those baptized and we had more group and individual prayers. Pray for these young women. Ramulamma is the name of the first and Mangamma the second. I won't send pictures but will show pictures when I get back. (Or I can email you some when I get back). For a white person to do public baptisms here is very unacceptable and will probably lead to arrest. A large bribe is expected in order to be released.



So please pray for me and these people. It's not uncommon for someone to start shaking when I lay hands on them to pray. Demonizing is so much more out in the open here. It's not like at home where they put on this culturally acceptable veneer to stay unnoticed. It is really a land of darkness with generations of those who have

welcomed and wanted their powers. Pray for the Christians here to grow and have victory and for the Spiritual Warfare Handbooks and the pastor conferences teachings to take root and spread. Pray God raises up men here who are gifted in this area to minister and train in powerful ways. Thanks! I'll write more prayer requests tomorrow – don't stop praying!!!
(Wednesday, January 26, 2011)

Luke 10:17-20 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." 18 He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

Does it scare you to think about spiritual warfare and praying against demons? Do you struggle with fear (worry, 'concern' or whatever you call it)? That is one of Satan's biggest tools to defeat us. Our only defense is to quote Scripture, as Jesus did when tempted and as Paul says we are to do with our sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). Here are some you can use: : Proverbs 3:25; Isaiah 14:3; Psalm 34:4; Joshua 1:9; 10:8; 23:9-11; Leviticus 26:8; Exodus 14:13; I Samuel 17:45-47; II Samuel 22:33-35, 40-41; Philippians 4:6-7; 4:13; 2 Timothy 1:7 Exodus 14:13;

Blog 109: PASTORS' CONFERENCES 2011

The **results of the pastors' conferences** are very encouraging. In addition to spiritual warfare conferences and speaking in local churches each evening and Sundays, there have been 12 pastors' conferences so far. 600 men and 250 wives have attended. That total could well double before we are done. The response of the pastors and their wives is very positive. The worship, fellowship and encouragement are much needed. Mainly, though, they really appreciate the teaching. They soak it up and all reports are that it makes a tremendous difference in their lives.

In the morning sessions I talk about **what God expects of them as men and pastors** – what they should be doing and not doing to be godly pastors. Priorities in ministry are covered. It's not how they are to do things, but what the Bible expects them to do (and not do) so they can apply it to their own individual Indian culture. The afternoon is in depth teaching about **spiritual warfare** and ends with them praying as a group to be free from any access to demons. They have never had any training in either of these areas and share testimony after testimony about how this teaching is totally changing them and their ministries.

Pastor Moses has been traveling to these areas for months finding the **neediest places** to meet. He has men trained in each area to set up the conferences and we go from one place to another each day. A noon meal is provided, and at the end of the day each participant is given a certificate, money to help with their travel expenses, a wooden cross ornament I made and 2 copies of the spiritual warfare handbook in Telugu. One is to keep the other to give to another pastor.

It is thrilling to be the one to hand these to the men. It is very humbling to be part of this. **I continually thank God for your prayers and giving**, for it is your finances and prayers that make this possible. There are no resources in India to help, everything is provided by your giving and prayers. It may seem we in America who sponsor this are a small group, but God is using this in a great way in large area in India.

The only real 'problem' is that many **more are coming than expected**, and that means more cost for food and travel. Over attendance is not a problem in the USA but often is here. We planned for



about a thousand pastors and wives and that figure may almost double. Food cost inflation in India is about 18%, with some basics doubling in certain areas. Also the Spiritual Warfare Handbooks have been tremendously helpful. They are spreading the message to many places and supplement what I speak about. Of the 6,000 copies we had printed only 800 are left so we need to have another printing of them as well. Please pray God provides our financial needs for these extra expenses.

Please pray specifically that I would have the words to speak which these committed young men need to hear. Knowing that for many this is the only pastoral training they will receive means I want every word to count. Pray God speaks His truth to their hearts through me and that He teaches them through His Spirit as I speak. Pray for energy and health for me as speaking 5 or 6 times a day is very draining. The focus and energy required drain me. Paul's words about pouring himself out as a drink offering come to mind. There is no better cause and no more needy place to do that, though. "Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel." (Ephesians 6:19)

Thanks so much for your prayers and support. Knowing you are there praying makes all the difference. May God continue to bless you and use you for His glory! (January 26, 2011)

Ephesians 6:18-20 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. 19 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Write down a list of all the pastors who have had a good influence in your life. Pray for them one by one, that God would bless them and continue to use them for His glory. If at all possible contact them by email, mail, and phone or in person to thank them. This will be tremendously encouraging to them!

Blog 110: INDIA 2011 MINISTRY SUMMARY - 1

I'm **back in Hyderabad**, back to the same bed for the next 3 nights! I've traveled about 4500 miles (8 plane flights, 50+ hours driving in a car, auto rickshaw, motor cycle and walking). I've slept in 15 different places, spoken to about 30 church groups and had 4-session training conferences for over 1000 pastors and 350 wives. All that in 32 days (plus 2 coming and going = 36 total). We had 22 days of pastors' conferences in 19 different locations. I've done well over 200 magic tricks and baptized 13 people. I've prayed personally for at least a thousand people who came to me after services. That pretty well sums up the activity side of things here.

The big story, though, can't be told in numbers and it's not about me. It's about **the pastors and their wives** who came every day to the pastors' conferences. Without exception their testimonies are that they were deeply touched, greatly encouraged and highly trained to move ahead in their ministry. Teaching them what God expects of them as pastors was very helpful for most had no real idea. Showing them how to measure spiritual growth in their lives and their churches was extremely helpful. But the real power fell in the afternoon when I taught about spiritual warfare from Mark 5. I applied it to their lives and ministries and taught them how to use the authority and power has given all of us to have victory over Satan and his forces. The sessions concluded with something I have done at every pastors' conference, last trip to India and this time. I lead them in a group spiritual warfare prayer to take back any access any



demons have and be free from any impact against them, their families or their churches. As you can imagine in a dark, idol-worshipping place like India, they have confronted demons many times, often in their own lives. Being free from their impact and learning how to pray for freedom from others was something they were most grateful for. Many said that when they prayed at the end, and then when I prayed for them, they could feel God's Spirit fill them in a real and glorious way. They felt freedom from bondage and a real peace in Jesus. They sang, praised God, and tears ran down their faces. Numerous ones asked me to pray for an illness or area of pain and the reports they sent back afterwards were that they were healed. I always prayed against anything demonic that was causing it.

We gave each participant 2 copies of my **spiritual warfare handbook** in their own language – one for them and one to give to another pastor. That is a great tool to help them to the next step in learning how to have victory. You can't imagine the thrill of being able to train, pray with and for, and equip (handbook) over a thousand young highly committed and very gifted young pastors. What a tremendous honor and privilege!!!

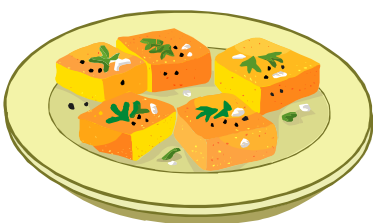
Every place we went to they **begged us to stay** longer, come back the next day and to come again next year. Pastor after pastor pleaded with us to come to his area to speak to the pastors there. Many really desired more training like this and asked if we couldn't start a training program for them (more about that tomorrow). They are very hungry for God's Word and how to minister. Several pastors came more than one day, traveling great distances to hear the exact same conference for the second time because they were so very blessed the first time.

It was emotionally, physically and spiritually draining as you can imagine. But God has carried me through in **splendid shape** (there was one bout of food poisoning, but we kept going even then). He has given us clear direction about where we go from here in this ministry, for clearly He is doing something very special in bringing light into the darkness here.

I'll be showing a slide summary at church this Wednesday evening, then on Sunday mornings I'll show more slides and preach about topics pertaining to them. I'll break it into 4 or 5 parts and do some each Sunday. I'll put the sermons in blogs on the web site and I'll also put lots of pictures on the church web site – just without specific names or locations.

Its utterly amazing what 2 small churches, one in America and one in India, have been able to accomplish for God in this place. We just see the tip of the iceberg, so much is happening we aren't even aware of. Its like throwing a stone in a lake and watching the ripples travel to the shore. God is using us to sow seed that will produce many times over for generations to come. Thanks so very much for praying and giving. You have made this possible and God will bless you for your faithfulness in praying and giving. Thanks so very much!!! God bless! (February 5, 201)

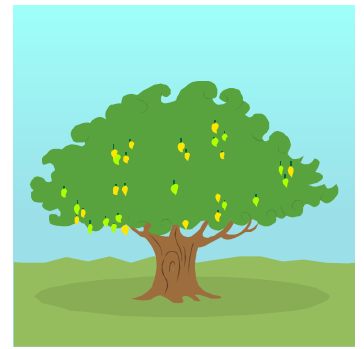
2 Timothy 4:6-8 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.



If your life would end now, what would have been some of the spiritual highlights? Where will your impact continue to be after you are gone? What is the highest price you have had to pay to serve Jesus? Has it been worth it? Ask God to use the rest of your life even more than He has used you so far. Commit yourself to Him and His use.

Blog 111: INDIA 2011 MINISTRY SUMMARY - 2

Traveling 4500 miles and speaking for 22 days in 19 locations is **very draining**. It's not a pace we can keep up for long. We ministered to 1000 pastors and 350 wives this time, compared to 120 pastors and 35 wives last trip. But that still falls very far short of meeting the need to reach the 85 million people in this area. Their desire to have this teaching could keep me occupied in this state year round, and that would only scratch the surface. We've met a lot of fine men and learned a lot about Indian ministry through this, but we need to multiply this information faster than I can do alone.



The **spiritual warfare handbook in Telugu** is a tremendous tool, spreading everywhere and taking God's truth to many thousands of pastors who spit to their people. God has given me a deep burden to write another book this coming year, this one about what God expects of pastors. It would add details to what I taught in the morning sessions and can take that message way beyond what I could ever do personally.

We do plan on going to a couple prime areas to hold conferences next year, but the main thrust will be bringing in prime **leaders to train and go back to their areas** to train others. We hope to bring in 40 or 50 pastors who are leaders of leaders, pastors who train other pastors in their locations. We'd like to have a 3-day training program for them in which I'll teach them how to lead others, how to communicate the material I have written about pastors and spiritual warfare, and how to help other pastors in their area. That way they can go to 50 places and have monthly meetings with pastors there. This will multiply much faster than my marathon conference schedule.

I'd also like to **bring one or 2 pastors with me next time** to help me with the teaching, show them first hand the ministry here, and hopefully put on their hearts to come and do the same thing I am doing. It would be a much easier 2-week trip. I can't do all of this myself and I can't do it forever, but if I can train American pastors and many Indian pastors the work will multiply. It's a dream that has me very excited. I teach them Biblical principles and then they apply these to their own particular culture and needs. I teach them what to do, then God shows them how to do it in their own individual setting.

The biggest problem, as you might image, is **money**. Because of the larger than expected number of participants this year we overspent what we expected by \$3000. It costs about \$5 per person for transportation, one good meal and several snacks. That isn't much at all. But multiply it by almost 1500 people and it adds up! Plus there is travel, food and hotel costs for Moses and myself. There are other expenses: paying people to make the meals each day, contributing to the church we use to help pay electrical and other expenses and many other things.

In addition, we've about used up the 6,000 spiritual warfare handbooks we printed last year and need to print more. To translate, set up and print 6000 copies of the new book (professionally printed and bound, glossy multicolor cover and back) will be \$7000 to \$8000. Then there is travel and living expenses for those who come.

Moses is praying for a **permanent training center** in Hyderabad where these young pastors who have no opportunity for training can come for a few days or even weeks to study and learn. Pastoral education in India is very lacking and often very ineffective – and only a few can afford the time and money anyway. He tells me a ministry center would cost \$15,000 to \$20,000 to rent for a year. Buying is preferable but that costs even more. Moses 'would meet there as well so they would help with the cost. His daughter is studying to become a doctor and

wants to open a clinic for poor people as a missionary doctor. They also want to train nurses. So the building would have many uses.

Moses goes back monthly and follows up with those we spoke to and in past years we have helped him with those expenses as well.

Another great need God has put on my heart is helping **sponsor some of the poor young pastors** who have a strong ministry but lack support. They live on about \$80 a month, so giving \$25 a month would be a tremendous help to them. They live in shacks and hold church in their one-room homes. One man was telling us his group outgrew his hut so now they meet under a bridge. We have gotten a few of these men bicycles (\$100 each) but don't have much money for that. If anyone wants to sponsor a pastor for \$25 a month let me know. You'll receive information, pictures and updates about them.

So right now the big need is money. I'm no fund raiser, but God has really put it on my heart to ask you to pass this need on to others who may be able and willing to give. We need those who are willing to invest money in the young pastors of India. India will be a leading nation in the world soon and impacting it for Christ is key at this time. There's no better way than supporting and training those God has called up here to lead their own people. We know what God wants us to do but we need the money to do it. God bless! (February 6, 2011)

Philippians 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.



Do you sometimes wonder why God doesn't supply your needs in a quicker and more abundant way? Why does He sometimes let us struggle with what seems like not enough money? What could be His purpose for this? What is He trying to teach you now through the things He doesn't seem to be providing for you?

Blog 112: LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT WALKING ON WATER - 1

My last sermon, and blog, before going to India was about Peter's example of taking a risk and walking on water. As I said, that was meant more for me than anyone else. I thought about that often while in India, even preached that same message a few times in various churches there. As I meditated on the truths of that passage I would write down things God was teaching me about walking on water. Here are some of my observations:

- walking on water is never easy, it's not meant to be
- it's never something we really want to do, just know we should do it
- as soon as we start getting even a bit comfortable at one place its time to take another step to a less comfortable place
- we don't have to cover the whole distance in one leap, just take one small step at a time
- storms may increase or fade. Sometimes they are stronger, other times not as strong.
- there's nothing glamorous about walking on water, its just lots of hard work
- the first key to walking on water is to be committed to doing it
- don't look more than one step ahead, take it one step at a time (I couldn't keep thinking about the day Nancy would leave, it came soon enough on its own)
- learn what you can from each step so you can apply it to the next – you'll need it

- sometimes we walk in the dark of night, but remember Jesus is the Light!
- each step is a new faith experience, each time we trust anew that the water will hold before your foot becomes comfortable its time to move it again
- after taking a few steps you know going back is harder than going on so you continue
- you soon learn to keep moving ahead or sink!
- it never gets easy, even when making progress for there is always more ahead
- each step takes total focus and concentration or you'll start going down!

The main lesson that kept playing in my head was the importance of keeping my eyes on Jesus. But as I talked about this for the first time in India I realized I couldn't get away with using that nice easy phrase. I'd have to define and explain what it meant. What does it mean? How do I teach it? Even more so, how do I do it?

What lessons have you learned about walking on water? I'd love to have you email them to me (jerry@schmoyer.net). Writing them down is a good way to remember and apply them to your own life.

Give this some thought: what does it mean to you to "keep your eyes on Jesus"? I'll tell you what I've been learning in the next 2 blogs, but try to write down a definition of your own. (Mon, Feb 14, 2011)

Matthew 14:25-29 During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

What are some lessons you have learned about walking on water in your life? Write down some principles God has taught you about how to respond in faith in difficult circumstances? How does this apply to your life today?



Blog 113: LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT WALKING ON WATER - 2

Last time I shared some lessons I've been learning about walking on water, and my own desire to know just what it means to "keep your eyes on Jesus."

As I was thinking and preaching about this in India I also preached on Heb 12:1-2, running with perseverance by keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. (I spoke to church groups 32 times as well as 70 times to pastors groups, so I had plenty of opportunities to talk.)

Hebrews 12:1-2 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

The analogy here is of one running a race. They must keep their eyes on the goal for if they look in any other direction it will affect their progress. We must look to Jesus throughout all of life. Pleasing Him is our goal, but looking to Him is also the way to reach that goal. That's very /true, but it still doesn't pin down just what it means.

David said that when his enemies threatened to destroy Him he kept his eyes on God, meaning he put his full trust in God, not himself. Nor did you focus on his enemies but on God's coming provision. ***Psalms 25:15 My eyes are ever on the Lord, for only he will release my feet from the snare.*** and ***Psalms 141:8 But my eyes are fixed on you, O Sovereign Lord; in you I take refuge — do not give me over to death.***

OK. So looking to Jesus means trusting only in Him, not depending on ourselves or giving in to the enemy by fear or panic. That helps, but is still very general. We know we need to trust in God and not ourselves, don't we?

That's what Jehosaphat did when attacked by the Moabites and Ammonites: ***O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you."*** 2 ***Chronicles 20:12***

The Jews sung a Psalm as they marched up the mountain toward Jerusalem at the top. In anticipation of seeing God's special city they sang: ***"I lift up my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth."*** ***Psalms 121:1-2***

So the act of physically looking up is the same as spiritually turning our spiritual eyes to Jesus for protection and deliverance. It's a figure of speech, not something to literally do. (Wed, Feb 16, 2011)

When do you find yourself most keeping your eyes on Jesus? What interferes and causes you to get your eyes off Him? Ask yourself throughout the day if you are still 'looking to Jesus' in whatever you are facing. Next blog will conclude this topic with a verse that gives clear meaning to the phrase "keep your eyes on Jesus."

Blog 114: LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT WALKING ON WATER - 3

The best definition and description I found of keeping our eyes on Jesus is in ***Psalms 123:1-2*** (also sung by pilgrims marching up the mountain to Jerusalem on its peak). ***I lift up my eyes to you, to you whose throne is in heaven. As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till he shows us his mercy.***



Now we have something concrete to build on! "As" and "like" show there is a similarity. This writer tells what looking to God is *like*. It's like a slave looking to his master or a maid looking to her mistress. It's the same as peter looking to Jesus. The object of their look is the main focus of their hope and dependence. They don't look in guilt, anger, blame, fear or pride. Instead they look in confidence, knowing the master or mistress will provide for their needs. They have a heart attitude of dependence. It is a patient, persevering trust that is displayed. It's a picture of total faith in a time when circumstances don't seem very supportive.



As a child looks to, waits for, the parent's provision, so too the Christian waits and looks to Jesus for deliverance from that which binds and defeats him. The hope is for complete provision and deliverance, but in the meantime any relief or help will do thank you.

So keeping our eyes on Jesus means to recognize our total dependence on Him and in faith wait for and trust in what He provides. It means to totally trust in Jesus, to make depending on Him our first and only choice no matter what happens. That's our only way through, and that's what He expects of us.

Clearly He expects total faith and dependence without any guarantees or proof. It's expecting a lot, but is it expecting too much? Certainly not. He is SOVEREIGN and can do anything. As with Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael and the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:17-18), He may not always be willing but He is always able. He does what is best for our growth and His glory. He is sovereign. That is clearly evidenced in Job's life, in Lazarus' life, and in your life and mine as well.

But sovereignty alone can be a bit cold and impersonal. God is also LOVE. Everything He does is guided by His love. It's been proved for all time by the cross and can never be doubted by anyone. Love alone can be weak, but when we combine love and sovereignty we have a winning combination we can always trust. That is why we need to keep our eyes on the fact that God is sovereign and God is love.

When we don't understand why He allows us to go through painful situations we must keep our eyes on Him by remembering we can't judge His character by His acts. We have to judge His acts by His character. His character is unchangeable love and sovereignty, always doing what is best for our growth and His glory. His character was proven by the cross. We can't use a circumstance we don't understand, especially when we don't have all knowledge like God does, and somehow pronounce Him as unfair or not right, just because we don't understand!

So keep your eyes focused on Him, your faith resting in Him, your dependence on Him only. Think only of His proven love and sovereignty. Don't pay attention to the storm; it will be there in one form or another as long as we live on this earth. We have enough with taking one small step forward at a time. Rain and wind will hit us, but we won't sink in despair if we learn to keep our eyes on Jesus.

Keeping your eyes on Jesus isn't something you can learn from reading a blog about my experiences, not that I claim to have arrived or have all understanding of it. Keeping your eyes on Jesus is something you only learn by doing. So get started. What are you waiting for? Get out of the boat and walk on water but KEEP YOUR EYES ON JESUS. (Fri, Feb 10, 2011)

What obstacles are in your life now that cause you to look to Him? Is that your first option, or do you look elsewhere first? Think of the challenges and situations you are now facing. Turn each one over to Him and leave them there.

Blog 115: THE NEED OF HUMAN COMPANIONSHIP - 1

An ongoing sub theme in my India sagas is my struggling with being away from Nancy. She hurts at home the same as I do in India. I keep being torn between the importance of putting God first and being willing to sacrifice all for Him and His words in Genesis 2:18: "It is not good for the man to be alone." Yes, we make it through and get back together again. But is

this way God is stretching us, or are we making things harder on ourselves by trying to be alone when God says that isn't good?

No doubt He directs some to leave no many He gives grace so the separation is doable. I guess you'd have to say it's doable for us because we do it. And I can't say God doesn't supply grace to get us through – I'd hate feel what its like without His grace. Still I wonder.....

Whatever the answer to our personal dilemma, though, the truth remains: man is made for companionship. God alone isn't enough! When Nancy was here with me it made a world of difference for both of us. When she left I asked God to take her place, to be my companion and friend, the one I bonded with and shared all with. Did He do that? I can't say He didn't, but it certainly wasn't nearly as clear or special as I thought it would be. I wondered if I was expecting too much or something, then He reminded me of Eden. All was perfect. Adam had it all; he even walked and talked with God. But God Himself, for the first time every, said, "It is not good....." That was God's evaluation, and it was before sin and when man walked with God.

Genesis 2:18 The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Why wasn't God enough for Adam? Why need another human being when He was closer to God than we will ever be this side of heaven? God made us that way, that we need intimacy with another human being.

I know some people are specially gifted to be able to life and function well by themselves. ***I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. (1 Corinthians 7:7)***. Clearly that is one gift God never gave me! I know there are many advantages of being single when it comes to serving God, but those who are gifted in that way are in a very small minority.



Paul definitely recognizes the right of Jesus' followers to take their wives with them. ***Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Peter? (1 Corinthians 9:5)*** Evidently the practice for the majority was to take their wives along. That only makes sense because man is made for companionship.

Let me say that again. Man is made for companionship. I'm not focusing on the husband-wife relationship here, although that is certainly part of what I am talking about. I want to be more general though. We all need companionship: children, widows and widowers, singles and married people. Life is made for sharing with another human being, one whom we trust and feel bonded to. God didn't make us to be independent but dependent. We need other people! That also causes us to need God and companionship with Him.

But there is a problem that makes us draw back. We all have scars and pains from past relationships that didn't work out. That causes fear of taking a chance and being hurt again. So we hold back, we build walls for protection; we keep others from getting too close.

That's why loneliness is such a big problem in our culture today. People substitute with business, control of others, acquiring materialistic things, sex and other addictions. Animals and pets are getting more and more popular as a 'safe' substitute for companionship! (Monday, Feb 21, 2011)

Where do you rate yourself on the human companionship scale? Are your needs met 100%? 50%? 10%? What is the biggest hurdle you face in close companionship? What can you do about it?

Blog 116: THE NEED OF HUMAN COMPANIONSHIP - 2

We started talking about our God-given need for companionship. But it is risky to be open to another human being. We can be hurt. True, ultimate perfect safe companionship will only happen in heaven. Then we'll have it with God Himself and with other believers. 1

Corinthians 13:12 says: *Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

In heaven we will be fully known by God and others, and we will fully know others. There will be no shame, guilt, fear, rejection or insecurity. All, including us, will be perfect so there'll be nothing to reject in another, nor any way we can be anything but unconditionally loving.

Until then, though, we still need intimacy on this earth. We have it with God, but many back away from Him because of fear of it with Him. Yet He knows us completely, yet loves and reaches out to us: ***But the man who loves God is known by God. (1 Corinthians 8:3)***

Paul's life goal was to grow in intimacy with Jesus. ***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. (Philippians 3:8-10)***



God has built into us a natural desire for intimacy with others as well as intimacy with God Himself. It's that God-shaped vacuum that only He can fill. Companionship with other and with God seems to go hand in hand. One helps us get closer to the other. It's sort of like leap frog: get closer to people and you find yourself getting closer to God, grow in intimacy with God and you can grow in intimacy with others. If you want greater intimacy with God don't neglect growing in intimacy with others.

Everyone needs intimacy and companionship. Yet everyone fears intimacy and companionship. Yes, there is a risk to take, a price to be paid. It shouldn't be, but that's the way it is in a fallen world. The ideal would be to experience perfect, unconditional love from parents so we can find some share that kind of love with as we mature. Unfortunately sin keeps that from happening.

I find the majority of the people of India distant, lacking joy and busy with their own lives. They don't seem angry or like they have a chip on their shoulder, they are just remote, polite but distant. The Christians stand out in stark contrast. They are happy, full of joy and smiles, with love overflowing. They are very open and accepting. They have a childlike faith and innocence about them. They assume I will love them and be kind to them. I don't find that in America except in the very youngest children. Still there is often a hesitancy or fear in them.

Because of this openness of theirs it is very easy to get extremely close to them even in a single day. Talking about pastoring, spiritual warfare and other matters opens doors from my soul to theirs. Eyes and smiles communicate what words cannot. And that makes it hard to say good bye day after day. I console myself with the thought of how wonderful it will be to sit down in heaven with each one of them and talk and share without limits. I have many friends I want to get to know better!

The children especially are very open and playful, very quick to give eye contact and flash a big smile. I've reconnected with a number of them that I met on previous visits and it's a

joy and pleasure to pick up where we left off and build right from there. That's true with adults I met previously as well. It's like the time apart didn't happen and we pick up right where we left off. Actually we start off even closer because we share good common memories, trust has already been established, and we have missed each other while apart.

It seems in each place I visit God has a couple adults and a child or two who take special interest in me. Invariably there is a boy or girl (sometimes both) who assign themselves to me and follow me everywhere. They often know just a little English from school so we can communicate in the most basic way. They fan me with their scarves to keep the flies away, carry by heavy backpack and water, and fill my glass if I take a sip or plate if I eat anything. They take my hand to help me walk and direct me so I don't fall. In India boys commonly and openly hold hands with boys and girls with girls, never boys with girls. So it's not unusual for a boy or man to hold my hand when we walk, a real privilege and show of love. (Wednesday, Feb 23, 2011)

Who has God put into your life to show you some companionship? Do you utilize that as fully as you can? To whom does God want you to provide companionship? Pray and ask Him, then start reaching out to that person. Next time we'll talk about how to do that.



Blog 117: THE NEED OF HUMAN COMPANIONSHIP - 3

Indians are very big on showing honor and respect to others. I have received garlands, scarves, always have by backpack carried by someone, am given a chair in the front as soon as I arrive and am waited on head and foot. They come and bow their heads before me for me to lay hands on them and pray for them. Some will kneel or bow before me and touch or kiss my feet, a very meaningful way of showing respect. It is humbling for them to do, and even humbling for me to receive. But it is a wonderful way of showing honor and respect, and of bonding as human beings.

It makes me wonder about how we show honor and respect in America. We give gifts, but that is more to say thanks than to show honor. There is no money for gifts here. Perhaps we could learn something from them about putting others first instead of trying to get to the top of the pack ourselves.

I am aware this is easier with strangers we don't to live with or depend on. We don't see each other's weaknesses or sin nature so much in a short visit when everyone is on their best behavior. Still I sense that these Christians are genuine and authentic, not just doing what they have been taught is proper behavior.

The immediate companionship and bonding with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ is beautiful. We have the same father, we are closely related. We are family that just hasn't met before! We all have experienced God's mercy and grace. We share the same hope for the future, the same desire to live for Christ, and the same eternal destiny in heaven. I can look in the eyes of a pastor and know he understands, and he knows I understand. It's like being soldiers in the same army, fighting for the same cause against the same enemy. An instant brotherhood is established. We recognize someone who has climbed the same mountains and struggled through the same valleys we have.

We recognize we are called to walk the same path following the same Savior. A few here and there are older than me, a bit ahead of me on the path, but I know what they have already gone through. The vast majority are much younger and are a bit behind me, but I have been where they now are and I know what is coming. I have made it through and so will they. We

carry the same burden, share the same commitment, use the same tools and look for the same victory. How wonderful it will be to rejoice with these precious warriors one day in heaven!!!

So my challenge to you is to draw closer to Jesus and have a deeper intimacy with Him. Also come closer to others who are walking the same path in life you are. It's easier to travel when walking with someone going the same way! But that means taking a risk, sharing more openly, affirming and accepting others more quickly and building them up in any way you can.

If you are married this starts with your mate. If not God will provide others to meet your need for companionship. Be more open with each other. Pray together. Talk of deep things together. Encourage and complement each other. Your emails to me have really, really helped while I was in India. I've kept them because they mean a lot to me. We all want to go a step deeper with each other but are hesitant. If we all take that step at the same time it'll be safe for all. (Friday, Feb 25, 2011)

Reach out to someone this week, today! Call them, send an email or letter. Get together for lunch; ask what you can do to help them. Take communication to a deeper level. Remember, we all need companionship. God has provided it; we just need to make it happen.



Blog 118: THOUGHTS WHILE PASSING THROUGH THE OUTSKIRTS OF HELL – 1

I'll never forget lying in a bed in a dingy hotel room in Kakanada, India, thinking the road to heaven must sometimes go through hell on the way there. I was as sick as I ever remember being in my life and didn't know how I could possibly make it through the next days activities.

At first I thought my thought about the road to heaven going through hell must be blasphemous, but I quickly remembered that it certainly did for Jesus. And we who follow walk the same path He did in some way.

James and John asked if they could sit at Jesus' right and left hand in heaven. Jesus asked if they were ready to drink of the same cup He was going to drink and they said they were. Then Jesus said something surprising (Mark 10:38-39): ***"Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with."*** (See also Matthew 20:22)

Clearly in some way those who follow Jesus must taste in small way of that which He fully experienced. Somewhere our road to heaven must pass through something that clearly resembles a suburb of hell. Ten years after this James was killed with the sword (Acts 12:2) and later John was banished to Patmos (Rev 1:9). They passed through what seemed like hell on their way to heaven.

Each trip to India gets harder and harder for me. This has been the worse, even harder in many ways than last year. It was an experience of persevering and enduring to the end. Lacking were the emotionally fulfilling times, the peaceful experiences in the India countryside, the deep bonding with special people of God. The road was uphill all the way. It was persevering from one day to the next. During the day I look forward to the night and then at night to the sunrise.

In America we assume life will be great, easy and fun. We feel it is our due and anything less is unacceptable. But Jesus never promised that. ***John 13:16 "I tell you the truth, no***

servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. That certainly doesn't seem to guarantee will be exempt from what Jesus went through.

John 15:20 "Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.

Luke 6:40 "A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher."

The Bible is full of examples of those who passed through the outskirts of hell, some much nearer to the center itself: Job, Daniel in the lions den, Abraham taking his son to kill, Mary and Martha when Jesus let Lazarus die, the list can go on and on.

Paul had something to say about this. I'm not sure what it all means but it certainly sounds like its referring to what we are talking about. ***Col 1:24 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.***

That's been the experience of many of God's people through the ages: ***Hebrews 11:31-38 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. 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.***

Sounds like their road followed closely to Jesus. (Monday, Feb 28, 2011)

I'll write more next time, but what do you think about my saying that we sometimes have to pass through 'hell' on the way to heaven? Has that ever been your experience? What have you learned?

Blog 119: THOUGHTS WHILE PASSING THROUGH THE OUTSKIRTS OF HELL – 2



I started blogging last time about how I felt like I was passing through the outskirts of hell when I developed food poisoning on top of everything else in India. I have been reading a long but excellent book while here about the underground church in China. Talk about going through immense suffering, unfairly inflicted, and with no end in sight! It's like nothing we every face in our lives here.

Make sure you understand that I am only talking about going through these things when obediently following Jesus. We don't need to be perfect, but we do need to be committed and to confess our sin when we fall short. Many go through hell in this life because of consequences of their own sin. I'm not talking about them. There is no benefit, no growth, no blessing, no reward, no victory and no glory to God in that.

It would be easy to think that I'm doing all this for God, why doesn't He keep me from this terrible sickness? He could – He healed others of it when I prayed for them, why not heal me? In the USA we are very quick to ask 'why' then we suffer. We come up with this image of a God who is like us and who wouldn't want anyone to go through any pain. So when we do we don't understand it. We try to come up with a good reason so we can understand and still trust God, but often we can't. Then we turn from God because He doesn't act according to the way we assume He should act.

Our entitlement attitude in this country teaches us that we are owed a nice, easy life. Advertisements, the government and even the church tells us that. So we assume God owes us peace happiness and comfort. When it doesn't happen we want to know whose fault it is and who will fix it. But God isn't a gene we keep in our pocket to pull out and rub when we get in a bind. We can't put Him in a box and predict His every move, then question Him when He doesn't act as we would expect. As Lucy says in the Chronicles of Narnia, "He is not a tame lion!"

While we in the west ask 'why?' when faced with suffering, those in the east (China, Asia, India, etc.) ask 'why not?' Why would we think we are exempt from suffering? Did God ever say we wouldn't face trials and difficulties? No, just the opposite, He said they would happen to all those who follow Him. He is sovereign and can do anything He wants. He is not answerable to us, nor will he conform to our expectations. He is the potter, we are the clay. He will not jump through hoops to please us. If we cannot understand everything about Him, that should not bother us. After all, He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. How can we expect to understand even part of Him?

When we create a false God according to what we think He should be like, what we'd like Him to be like, we miss seeing Him as the sovereign, all-powerful, all-knowing God He is. We know He is in control of everything and we know He does what He does because He loves us. He proved that by going through hell for us. If there are some things about how He acts we can't be concerned. He is Who He is. His character never changes. Don't try to change the character of God to try to explain your circumstances. Evaluate your circumstances by the unchangeable sovereign and loving character of God. That means trust Him with what you don't understand.

Yes, we will have to go through suffering in life. We won't always understand why. But remember that He went through much more for us than we'll ever go through for Him! We barely skim the outskirts of hell but He was paraded downtown and spent eternity there while on the cross. (Wednesday, March 2, 2011)

Spend some time thinking about what Jesus went through for you. Thank Him for it. Praise Him for His love for you that motivated Him to do it.



Blog 120: THOUGHTS WHILE PASSING THROUGH THE OUTSKIRTS OF HELL – 3

Hebrews 12 certainly implies the Christian life is not a downhill cake walk: ***“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”*** (Hebrews 12:1-3)

endured the cross = word 'endure' kept coming to my mind as I woke up each morning, stood to speak throughout the day, traveled from one place to another and prayed for many people each day. That's what it was – enduring. And you don't have to go to India to have to endure life! Many of you face each day the same way, don't you?

So we endure as Jesus endured, following His example. But there's more to that phrase in Hebrews 12:3: **who FOR THE JOY SET BEFORE HIM endured the cross**. He didn't focus on the cross but on the results at the end. Peter didn't walk by looking at the storm but keeping his eyes on Jesus.

While it's not enough motive to have us go through these things, it is nice God reminds us He knows and appreciates our faithfulness, and He will richly reward it one day.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

1 Corinthians 2:9 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"—

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

Eternal blessing proportional to faithfulness now – God pays great dividends on our faithfulness

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

Light & momentary: relative to all eternity, how they'll seem when we are in heaven

1 Peter 4:13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

We endure by focusing on His Word and His promises to us in it. For the last 2 trips to India I have slept clinging to my Bible at night. It is a constant reminder God is with me and the promises in His Word are true.

Don't assume you are exempt from suffering. Don't remake God in your image, a tame God you are comfortable with and can control. That is not what God is like. His purpose is to make us more like Him. His purpose is to make us more like Him, not give us an easy life. Suffering is a necessary part of that process.

Think of Jesus asking you these questions: "If you never felt pain, how would you know that I am a healer? If you never fought battles, how would you know that I am a deliverer? If you never had an obstacle, how would you call yourself an overcomer? If you never felt sadness, how would you know that I am the comforter? If you never sinned, how would you know that I am a forgiver? If you know it all, how can you know that I can answer your questions? If you were never in trouble, how would you know that I will come to your rescue? If you were never broken, how could you know that I can make you whole? If you never had a problem how would you know that I can solve them? If you never went through fire, how would you become pure? If I gave you all things, how would you appreciate them? If I never corrected you, how would you know that I love you? If you had all power, how would you learn to depend on me? If your life was perfect, what would you need me for? If you never had any suffering, how would you know what I went through?" (Friday, March 5, 2011)

Look at each of the verses above. Slowly read them and think about them. Pray them, applying them to your own life situation. Pick out one that speaks most to you and write it down somewhere where you can see it often.

Blog 121: THOUGHTS WHILE PASSING THROUGH THE OUTSKIRTS OF HELL – 4

These recent blogs have talked about some of the more difficult times I've had in India, times which God allowed and has a purpose and reason for. I don't know what it is, but there is much about Him I don't understand. That's OK. He is God; I am but a speck on a speck of a planet in His vast universe. Yes, there were some very hard times in India.

So who wants to come with me next time?

One night when very sick and couldn't sleep, Moses and I talked about our God-given vision for the future of our joint ministry to pastors. Needless to say, we both had the very same idea. It's time to bring 2 or 3 (along with Nancy) to expose others to the ministry and have them help. I need especially pastors who can share the teaching load with the pastors and who can help pray and speak in the churches in the evenings. I need to start training my replacements as well as preparing some who can go to different places in India doing this same thing.

How can I think about going back to India when this sick and home sick as well? How can I expect anyone to want to join me after what I said? Because any who come for a pleasant vacation aren't what is needed. We need some who have a God-given burden to build into the lives of struggling young pastors, those God has called to go because He has called them and for no other reason. Going for our own ease or benefit is not the motive, but fulfilling a God-given call is.

America is on the decadency, we all know that. India is ascending at a tremendous rate. It is the largest democracy in the world. A larger percentage of people vote in India than do in the US! Soon it will be the most populous nation in the world. Its untapped resources are phenomenal. Unless Jesus comes back first, it will become the most powerful nation on the earth. It is so very important to help encourage and equip local pastors to grow the church of Jesus Christ. The potential is awesome. What a privilege it is to invest a part of this short life in something so eternal!

It's utterly amazing that two small churches, one in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India and another in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, USA can join together and accomplish all that has been accomplished. It is truly a work of God. Your prayers and a few thousand dollars contributed by you and those on my email list have impacted in a great way over a thousand pastors who will pass that on to their churches and other pastors. The Spiritual Warfare Handbook carries the message far beyond that.

God has also burdened me to print another book in Telugu to be distributed there. My morning sessions on what God expects of pastors are very greatly needed. The young men have good hearts for God but virtually no training as to what they should be doing as pastors. I want to write a book based on my morning sessions and have it distributed as well.

Sound difficult, even impossible? Sounds like walking on water, doesn't? But if God says to do so then we better get out of the boat and walk! So pray for God to move the hearts of 2 pastors (one can bring his wife) to be burned for the pastors in India. Keep your eyes on Him and you can walk on water. (Monday, March 8, 2011)

Hebrews 11:1-2 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Pray and ask God what you can do to help: Pray? Give? Share the need with others so they can pray and/or give? Maybe even go yourself?????

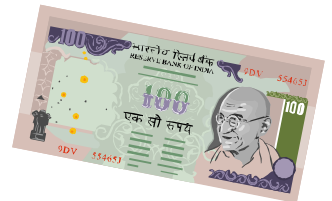


Blog 122: SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN INDIA (THE BATTLE BEGINS) - 1

When I started pastoring 40 years ago I never imagined I'd have a ministry in spiritual warfare. I didn't even know what spiritual warfare was until about 25 years ago. I knew some Christians who struggled with sin and didn't seem to have victory no matter how hard they tried or how much they trusted God. No amount of counseling helped. It seemed like something greater than them was controlling them. One of my own children was being influenced by something evil. God in his mercy brought some men into my life who taught me about spiritual warfare and deliverance from demonizing.

Paul says "we are not ignorant of Satan's devices" (2Corinthians 2:5-11) but I was very ignorant. Since that time I have been ministering to those in need of spiritual warfare counseling. I have many books and talked to lots of people. God has been teaching me and helping me learn how to help those who are attacked by Satan and his forces.

As I learned about and ministered in spiritual warfare and deliverance over the years I never imagined that God was preparing and training me to be able to share what I have learned with pastors in India. Clearly He had that in mind all along. Spiritual warfare ministry and training has always been part of my pastors' conferences in India, but this past year it took on a major role. I led several 1 and 2 day spiritual warfare conferences and spent half a day on it in each of my 16 pastors' conferences. It was challenging, draining but very rewarding.



We (Nancy, my wife, was with me) spent the first week in northern India where the darkness and demonic are very strong. We had a one-day and a two-day spiritual warfare conference there and prayed with those present for deliverance at the end. We were all expecting some demonic manifestations, something to get stirred up or fight back – but nothing happened. Perhaps it will take more work there before God's power really breaks through. The hold of darkness is very great.

From there we spent a few days in Andhra Pradesh and taught on spiritual warfare again, then went to another town for pastors' conferences and to minister. After the second week Nancy left and then things started happening there. For the first of many times, I felt a believer start to shake almost uncontrollably when I put my hands on their head and prayed for them. The person would often try to pull back from me but I held them in place and prayed against whatever was causing this until they calmed down. This happened to a young man and a young woman in the same church. They I learned to expect it wherever I went. I prayed for about 1000 people individually this way during the 5 weeks there and experienced this shaking about a dozen times.

After traveling to a few different towns and villages we went back to a place I had spent almost a week on my previous trip to India. It was very good to be reunited with many believers to whom I had grown very close during my first visit. I had taught on spiritual warfare and led them in a prayer for deliverance last time and did so again this time as well. Here is where the first overt manifestation took place.

After the session on spiritual warfare, as everyone was leaving to take a break, an elderly pastor in the back started shaking and moaning. Some men near him helped him lay down on the floor so he wouldn't hurt himself falling. He was shaking, yelling and moaning. Those near him knelt by him and started praying for him. They knew it was a demon and had seen this happen many times before. Now they knew they could exercise their authority in Jesus. The man would be OK for a while then start shaking and yelling again and we'd pray for him some more. After several episodes of this he finally stopped.

Later in the day he came to me and asked me to lay hands on him and pray for deliverance and of course I did so. The whole episode reminded me of the first time Jesus taught in the synagogue when a demonized man shouted and shook (Luke 4:31-37).



There was a young pastor and his wife there whom I got to know well last time. We have been praying for them because there was a demonic issue of abuse that was destroying their marriage and ministry. God has intervened and they have moved beyond that. It was good to see them together and doing well. Spiritual warfare can be done from half way around the world – God’s power knows no limits! This was a full, draining but exciting day. Little did I know that it would be nothing compared to what the next day would bring! (Monday, March 7, 2011)

2 Corinthians 2:9-11 The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. 10 If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven — if there was anything to forgive — I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, 11 in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

We don't want to focus on Satan or demons, nor do we want to give them any unwanted attention, but we must be aware of their tactics and work so we can defeat them and move on to victory. We can't blame them for our own sins of the flesh, but must know the subtle tricks and traps they use to capture us. What 'schemes' does Satan use against you, your family and your church? What must you do to not be defeated? Pray for wisdom, strength and faithfulness.

Blog 123: SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN INDIA (SATAN COMES TO CHURCH) - 2

Tuesday, January 25, started like all the other days in India, with an early rise and a long drive to another village for a pastors' conference in a local church. My voice was still very weak and my stomach still sore but getting better. Finally I was getting over a bad case of food poisoning (I guess there is no such thing as a good case, is there?). Then it happened.

While I was talking about Jesus power over demons a young lady on the woman's side started pointing at me, screaming and pushing towards me while I was talking about Jesus commanding the demons out in Mark 5. I later found out she was screaming "Don't tell them that! That can't know that! Stop talking! Don't be letting them know these things!" She really went wild!

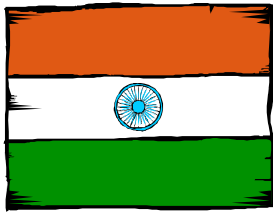
The women tried to hold her and stop her, people started praying against what was happening. One of the larger men pushed through the woman, grabbed her by a large handful of hair on the top of her head and physically dragged her to the center isle and then down to the front where I was standing. He dropped her and she hit her head on the concrete pretty hard but never seemed to notice. Everyone was gathering around crying out to Jesus. I knelt by her and put my left hand on the top of her head and my right on the side of her head for she was jerking and shaking and I didn't want her to hit her head again. She stopped screaming and was moaning and jerking. I tried to open her eyes to look at her and better command the demons but she kept closing them. Others were touching her and everyone praying out loud. They call on Jesus for help and mercy and are just learning the authority then have to command the demons to be gone. I held her and kept praying for a while. Finally she calmed down and lay still.

This was the second experience in 2 days of a believer in a church service being demonized. When Jesus spoke in Capernaum (Luke 4:31-37; Mark 1:26) a regular attendee started shaking and screaming. Some think believers can be demonized but that is not true.

When we become a believer we receive a new nature, where God's Holy Spirit lives. However we still have our old sin nature, it doesn't diminish or leave. We can still sin as much after salvation as we did before. We don't have to sin for now we have a greater power in us, but we still can sin if we choose. It is in the area of our old sin nature that demons can have and keep control of believers as well as unbelievers. That is what happened with the pastor on the previous day and the young woman on this day.

The woman eventually went back to her seat, obviously drained and dazed. She barely seemed to be with it at all. I combined the last 2 sessions so we could get to the prayer for everyone and that went well. Afterwards I sought her out, layed hands on her head and prayed for her again.

I was surprised to see her stay afterwards. She was one of the 7 from the church who I was to baptize that afternoon. They were all Dahlits, the untouchables who are so low in Indian society they are below the caste system. Moses talked to them; I said a bit but couldn't talk much. She clearly was a new believer who wanted to follow Jesus in baptism. We drove to the river, chased some water buffalo out of the way, and went in to baptize. She was the 6th one baptized. It felt very right having her take that step of faith and public commitment. I really believe God did a great work in her that day.



The woman I baptized after her, the last one, put her hands over her face when she came up out of the water. She started shaking and screaming as well. Falling down in deep very rocky water is not good so we prayed and got her to the shore. She came out of it quickly then.

Back at the church we talked, took pictures, a special meal was served to those baptized and we had more group and individual prayers. Pray for these young women. Ramulamma is the name of the first and Mangamma the second. I am not able to know what really happened afterwards, if the demons were totally gone or tried to attack them again, but God knows and will take care of them.

These women came from Hinduism with its millions of gods, many superstitions, pagan sacrifices and strange traditions and rituals. Any of these can open a person up to demonic possession. Once a demon has access to a person he claims the whole family and their children. When those children have children he claims them and moves from generation to generation. It's easy to see how Satan has so much control over so many people in a place like India. Without Jesus no one is free!

As I thought more about Jesus' experience in the synagogue (Luke 4:31-37; Mark 1:26) the many parallels came clear. Believers can be demonized, and often not know it. It didn't seem like the man in the synagogue knew he was demonized, nor did his friends and family. When exposed to the power and truth of Jesus, though, demons must bow and yield. This demon reacted to Jesus' presence, but had to leave when commanded by Jesus. The demon spoke through the man and then threw the man down, shook him violently, and screamed. All this happened in these 2 instances.

I also had an experience of a woman rushing into a church while I was speaking. She was screaming for help while holding a young baby boy that was convulsing and crying. She was a new believer and knew it was a demon for it had attacked her baby before. I thought of when a man brought his young son to Jesus and said he had seizures and often fell into the fire or water. Jesus rebuked the demon and the boy was healed (Matthew 17:14-18).

It was very strange to be living out Bible events, especially ones about demonizing. Knowing the end of the story, who wins the battle, certainly helps! When those kinds of things

happen God's power and presence is so overwhelming and awesome that the whole event becomes a worship experience! It is physically, spiritually and emotionally draining, but there is a tremendous spiritual 'high' that comes from witnessing God's power displayed so clearly and convincingly. What a marvelous God we serve! (Wednesday, March 9, 2011)



Luke 10:18-20 He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions (i.e. Satan and demons) 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."

Thank God for the authority and power Jesus has given you over spiritual forces that would work against you. Use it for the furtherance of His kingdom. But don't become proud or careless because of it. Focus instead on the fact that you are a child of His with your name written in heaven and your eternal destiny being assured.

Blog 124: SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN INDIA (PASSING ON GOD'S BLESSING) - 3

About the middle of my 5 weeks in India I needed to take a couple days off to recuperate from food poisoning and to let my voice heal and return. I could barely speak loud enough for the translator alongside me to hear me. I don't know if this was an attack by Satan or just me experiencing what others experience in India. I am in no means exempt from the 'normal' things others go through in life. The rest was good, though. We didn't cancel any pastors' conferences, though, but we did combine a couple. I still ended up with 15 conferences in 20 days (2 days being Sundays).

We started this second phase off with a large pastors' conference and an evening service which 300 attended. This was the largest group I spoke to. The smallest was a group of 9 people. Most were 40 to 60. I got to baptize 6 tribal women, the first in that area to come to Jesus. Only 3 were to be baptized, then 3 more joined them. The tribal people are from an entirely different ethnic background than the Indian people and are often seen and treated as if they are barely human. The huts they live in are thrown together from scrap paper and plastic they find in the gutters. They have a very poor life.

To make things worse, 3 of these 6 women were widows, a very difficult condition to be in in India. Another had been married but her husband left, something not uncommon among the unbelievers. He will go elsewhere and marry again but she will never be able to marry and have a husband and family. It was a real joy and privilege to baptize these women and pray for them. God will use them to spread the gospel to their family and friends and that will be the beginning of the first church among tribal people in that area.

What was most touching was buying and giving them Bibles. They never imagined having a great treasure like a Bible of their own. Tears of joy ran down their cheeks as I gave them out one by one. Several knelt down and touched or kissed my feet – the greatest way of showing respect in India. Having them do that to me was extremely humbling and very moving. I look forward to spending time with each one in heaven, talking about how God used them and what He did in their lives. I know Satan won't give them up easily, but with God's Word and a spiritual warfare handbook they have tools to have victory in Jesus.

My rough statistics show I spoke to over 1000 pastors, 350 plus wives and over 1500 people in evening and Sunday church services. I spoke about 100 times, and after each time

people would come line up before me asking me to lay hands on them and pray for God to bless them. Jesus did that many times in the Bible, and so did the apostles when they sent others out to new mission fields. Praying individually for these precious people is one of my greatest privileges in India. It is time and energy consuming and comes when I am already tired, but it brings a joy that goes beyond any physical discomfort.

After the baptism and evening service where 300 came everyone wanted to be prayed for so they all stayed seated and I walked through them praying out loud and laying my hands on each head as I passed by. Usually, though, it is a one on one experience. The picture is of Jesus in me connecting with and filling them. It's not that I am anything special, I never feel that. I do feel that I am God's chosen instrument, all by His grace, of coming to give them some of God's truth and compassion. To them I am a visible reminder that God loves them and reaches out to them in their need so in praying for them I feel I am the channel by which God's blessing flows from Him, through me and into them.

I don't pray the same thing for each one but something different, something I feel God would have me pray for each. Seeing them gives me an impression of what to pray for, or God puts thoughts and ideas into my mind. I pray for protection and blessing, but the rest is different depending on how God leads me. If I sense something particularly strong from the demonic realm I pray against that, and that is often the case. I want to be sensitive to pray for what He wants to do in their lives.

In asking God to 'bless' them I am not asking for material or financial things, although that can be part of what they need and what God provides. That isn't what they are thinking of when they want me to ask God to bless them. It isn't a culture that is materialistic and their minds don't think in those terms as our do. When I ask God to bless them I am asking Him to make them spiritually prosperous, to fill them with His presence, to help them grow in Him and to use them for His glory.

Often they will have a little container of coconut oil and hand it to me. They can't speak to me and they don't understand a word I pray, but I know the oil is to anoint them. It is a picture of God's Spirit filling and using them. I put some on their head and then with my finger draw a cross in oil on their forehead. Every time I do it I get a powerful feeling from God – the cross is what it's all about. That's where our hope and power lie. As the song says, the cross says it all. (Friday, March 11, 2011)

Luke 4:40-41 When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. 41 Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.

Try this today: pray for people who come into your presence or pass you by. A short, silent pray for blessing or whatever God puts into your heart to pray for them is very important. Be aware of others around you and the great privilege we have in prayer. In fact, don't just do this today, make a habit of it!

Blog 125: SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN INDIA (THE HEALING GOD) – 4

I've been blogging about some of my experiences in spiritual warfare in India. They are the highlight of this trip and its ministry. In a country filled with darkness and idols God's power shines in stark contrast. While America is full of various shades of gray, in India it's all black or white.

I've never gone into a shrine, temple or mosque. I have no desire to. The enemy lives and controls there and I want nothing to do with that. You can sense that evil presence when you are in the vicinity. Temples and shrines are everywhere. Many are small, just a few feet square. They are outside people's homes, in fields and even in the middle of roads where traffic has to swerve around them. Some are quite large, though, like Tirumala Venkateswara Temple near Tirupati.

We drove around it one evening but didn't go inside. The temple is for Lord Vishnu, the most popular of the millions of Hindu gods. Tirumala Venkateswara Temple is the richest and most visited temple in the world. The only religious site in the world that receives as many visitors is the Vatican. Five and a half million dollars a day or donated at the temple, and that in a country where the majority work for two or three dollars a day. One hundred thousand pilgrims visit the temple daily. One half million visit on holy days, many more than visit even the Vatican. We can only imagine the oppression felt by Christians who try to grow churches any near these places. The power of Satan is extremely great in these concentrations of demons.

God keeps showing His people that His power is greater. He is known throughout India as the healing God, the One to go to when all else fails. Each time I am in India I meet person after person who came to the Lord because a Christian prayed for them when there was no hope for them to live. Because God healed their body they know He can heal their soul as well.

While some parts of India have modern medicine as we know it here, most places have little or no medical care. Crutches, shriveled hands, missing legs, crooked fingers, eyes blinded by cataracts, fevers, aches, pains and every ailment known to man walk around everywhere. Not a day goes by that I don't see or pray for those needing physical healing. Often it is closely related to demonic activity as well.

In one town I prayed for a Christian woman who was in terrible stomach and back pain. Some time ago someone who wanted to cause her harm touched her with the purpose of transferring a demon to her. The demon caused extreme weakness and awful pain and fever. They didn't know what to do or how to get rid of it. I spend a couple hours in her home, praying for her several times. A short time later I heard she was all right, that God had healed her.

One of the pastors invited us over for breakfast and while there asked me to pray for his teenage son who came to the conference with him. They said the boy had 'fits' (a common term to describe falling, shaking and screaming or moaning). The demon made him very weak with fever, so he was hardly able to function. I prayed for him at home and at the conference.



During one conference a pastor's wife came to me during the first break and, with Moses interpreting, said she had terrible head pain and couldn't concentrate on what I was saying. It seems the pain was something she often had. I prayed for her right then, rebuking anything any demon was doing and asking God to heal her. Later that day I found out God immediately healed her of the pain.

I heard of a man who had back pain and after I prayed it was gone. Numerous accounts of God healing in response to prayer came back to me, many more to Pastor Moses as people talked and shared with him in Telugu.

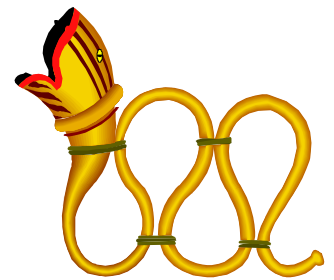
I have no problem praying for God to heal people there. If He does so or not is up to Him. He doesn't always heal. I wasn't able to pray for myself to be healed, but others I prayed for with the same thing were healed. For these people, their only hope is for God to heal them. If not they will suffer until they die. It's not like then can run to the drug store for an aspirin to

help their pain. Many of the situations are even beyond the help of medicine in this country. Praying to rebuke and stop anything any demons may be doing is certainly something we can and should do. Praying for God to be their Great Physician, have mercy on them and heal them is definitely doable for me. He gets the credit and glory when they are healed, and no one who isn't healed complains or asks why. They are glad for those He does heal, not questioning God because of those He doesn't heal. That's a mindset we all could use! (Monday, March 14, 2011)

Matthew 4:24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. (See also Matthew 12:15; 15:30; 19:2; 21:14; Luke 4:40; 14:4)

Pray and ask God whom He wants you to pray to be healed. Pray for them. Is there any healing He wants you to pray for yourself? Ask Him first, and if He shows you something to pray for go ahead and do so. Keep praying for these things for yourself and others as long as He keeps leading you to do so.

Blog 126: SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN INDIA (THE BATTLE FOR INDIA'S PASTORS) - 5



In India I never once had to address the question of whether Satan or demons were real and if they could attack us or not. In this country I often spend most of my time addressing those issues. In India they have experienced the evil side of Satan, not the 'angel of light' side we see in the USA.

Pastors especially are attacked. They have deserted Satan's army and are now in God's army opposing Satan's Kingdom. That makes them prime targets for demonic oppression. Because they are pastors they play a very key role in the growth of God's Kingdom in India. Stopping them stops the church. They come from backgrounds of Hinduism or Islam and have generations of ancestors who worshipped these demonic gods. The places where they live and worship have been given over to demonic forces many times over in the past several thousand years so when they live or worship there these spirits rise up and fight for what has been given to them. Not surprisingly, many people around them hate Christians and the church. They have evil thoughts toward these men and their families. Their deep desire is to see them destroyed and gone from the land of India. These thoughts and desires are prayers which empower demons to act to bring them to pass. Being a pastor in India definitely puts you right on the cutting edge of the battle between God and Satan.

Having ministered to 130 men and 35 wives last time, we set our sights much higher this time. By having a different pastors' conference in a different place day after day we could go into unreached areas and help rural pastors who have never had any opportunity to have any pastoral training. They are thrown right into the hottest part of the battle without even knowing what their weapons are, much less how to use them! Thus we were able to train over 1000 pastors and 350 wives in 18 total locations. All day every day was a pastors' conference – 4 sessions a day.

In the morning sessions I spoke about what God expects of them as pastors – what it means to pastor God's sheep. I also focused on the importance of their own spiritual growth. Currently I'm writing a second book for India which is about the basics of pastoring – what God expects of pastors. This will be a great way to reach many more pastors, and give them more

information than in a one day conference. What we need is money to translate and print this book.

The afternoon was given over to spiritual warfare training and ministry. From Mark 5 I taught the basics of deliverance from demonic oppression and possession. I showed how God's power is great enough to provide freedom from bondage to anything demonic. I taught them how this power and authority was available for them and how to use it in their lives as well as for their family and church (Luke 9:1; 10:17-19). I worked in numerous magic tricks to reinforce key points and these were very well received, usually with loud applause.

Needless to say, they were very motivated to learn how to have victory in these areas! I ended each afternoon the same way I did last time in India – with a group prayer for deliverance. I prayed a sentence, Moses translated it into Telugu phrase by phrase and the people repeated each phrase after him. It was the most awesome experience I can imagine! God's power was so strong and evident each time we did it – 18 times this past trip! The walls shook with the volume and emotion of their prayers renouncing anything demonic and claiming Jesus freedom and victory. I can't imagine a greater emotional high than I experienced each time we concluded the day that way. Each one could feel God's presence in a very real and powerful way in the room. Arms were raised, tears streamed down cheeks and lives were changed and demonic power was broken and God's people were set free! No wonder the demons didn't want them to hear about that!!!

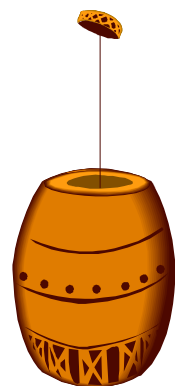
I closed by raising my arms (something I've never been comfortable doing, but at this point I couldn't keep them down!) and praying for their deliverance, detail by detail. I committed them to God and prayed for them, their ministries, families and churches. I felt like I was pouring out my very soul in that prayer, that it was something God wanted me to pray because it was a prayer He was going to answer in marvelous ways.

Every day when we were finished pastors (and wives) would share a public or private testimony of how they felt God's presence come into them, how they felt delivered from the bondage of Satan and how wonderful and glorious it was. Time after time they said that they no longer have to fear demons for they know what to do when facing them. Days and weeks later reports were still coming in from each and every place about how God used and blessed them that day. Some even took off the next day to travel great distances to come to hear the same conference again in another place!

Literally hundreds of them begged us to come to their area to teach these things to the pastors where they lived and ministered. Of course we had to turn down every one of these requests. Many asked us to set up a training center where they could come for days at a time to learn more about these things. That would be a wonderful thing to do, and if enough money is donated we will do it. Next time we will have some of these pastors conferences, but we will bring key pastor leaders we met to one or 2 locations and there teach them how to take these truths to the pastors in their area. We'll teach them to train others so those men can go out and train still other pastors. We can't be adding we must be multiplying. That's the only way to reach so many very committed and gifted young pastors. How can we not do everything within our power to help them advance God's kingdom there?

India will be a key nation in the world in not too many more years. I think it will replace the USA as the leading democracy in the world. That makes it even more important to assure that this sleeping giant wakes up to serve the Living God!

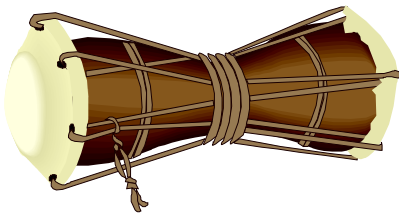
To make sure this wasn't a one day affair that fades in their minds as time goes on we gave each participant 2 copies of my spiritual warfare handbook in their



own language – one for them and one to give to another pastor. That is a great tool to help them to the next step in learning how to have victory. I kept thinking of how God will use these sessions and these books to spread His truth throughout this part of India. It's like throwing a stone in a lake and watching the ripples go out until they hit the shore. We threw in the stone and the ripples are just starting, but they'll keep going until Jesus returns!

You can't imagine the thrill of being able to train, pray with and for, and equip (handbook) over a thousand young highly committed and very gifted young pastors. What a tremendous honor and privilege!!! Some of them are gifted in spiritual warfare beyond what God has gifted me. This will be the start of their developing their gifts. They will take these truths and teach them in India going way beyond anything I could imagine. What a great privilege and blessing to be part of this!

(If you would like a free copy of my Spiritual Warfare Handbook, in English, email me and I'll send you an electronic copy. If you'd like to donate to help print more copies, for we have used up our first printing of 6,000, send your donation to me or Main Street Baptist Church. Please keep praying for India's pastors and our ministry there.) (Wednesday, March 16, 2011)



Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Write down a list of spiritual leaders you know personally. Pray for each one, that God would bless them, protect them and use them for His glory. Be sensitive as you pray, asking God specifically what to pray for concerning each man. Jot it down by their name

so you can remember to pray for that for them again in the near future. Prayer is powerful and makes a great difference, don't take it lightly or rush through it.

Blog 127: SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN INDIA COMPARED TO THE USA - 6

What a contrast between doing spiritual warfare in India and in America. I've shared many of my personal experiences. There are more but I think I've said enough for now. What I was aware of was the contrast between ministering in spiritual warfare in the USA and in India. I kept a list going when I would think of something else. Here is a summary of what I wrote:

AMERICA	INDIA
IGNORANT, SKEPTICAL of demonic activity	AWARE, CONVINCED of demonic activity
Demonic LAST RESORT	Demonic ALWAYS CONSIDERED
USA founded in LIGHT, turning to DARKNESS	In past DARKNESS, now LIGHT coming
SUBTLE, HIDDEN work of Satan	OPEN, OBVIOUS work of Satan
CAMOUFLAGED activities, GRAY to hide it	OVERT EVIL evident, DARK clearly shown
Christians UNTRAINED, FEARFUL of demons	Christians UNTRAINED, FRUSTRATED by evil
Demons, Satan GROWING STRONGER	Demons, Satan slowly LOSING GROUND

Because of our 'Christian' heritage and culture, even to today, Satan's work in the country is far more subtle and underground. Few even recognize that he exists. He works behind the scenes and in more "socially acceptable" ways. Yet is bondage is just as great and in many ways he is more dangerous here because he does work unrecognized. It's harder to deal with a sneaky, sly, hypocritical child who pretends on thing but really is another way than it is with an in-your-face rebellious child; at least I certainly think so. That's the difference between demonizing in the USA and in India. Any disease that isn't recognized is more dangerous than one whose symptoms are clear and obvious.



Paul says we should not be unaware of Satan's ways and traps (2 Corinthians 2:5-11). In this country most Christians don't recognize Satan's tactics and work; many don't even believe he exists. There is no way they are prepared to fight against him. At least in India they know he exists and what he can do. They may not know how to fight either, but they know they need to learn and want to learn. In that they are ahead of many in this country.

The most sobering observation I made is that in this country Satan's power is slowly growing as we turn further from Jesus while in India his power is slowly fading as millions are coming to salvation every year. While demons are losing ground little by little in India they are gain it little by little in America. No one can deny the direction our country is going. I thank God for the privilege of taking a little of what He has shown me here and being able to transplant it into India. May God continue to bless and use His Word as it brings fruit for His Kingdom.

(If you would like a free copy of my Spiritual Warfare Handbook, in English, email me and I'll send you an electronic copy. If you'd like to donate to help print more copies, for we have used up our first printing of 6,000, send your donation to me or Main Street Baptist Church. Please keep praying for India's pastors and our ministry there.) (Friday, March 18, 2011)

Proverbs 14:34 Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.

Where do you see sin increasing in this country and righteousness fading? What must happen for those things to be changed? Pray specifically for each one you think of. Then pray and ask God what YOU can do to make a difference in those areas.

Blog 128: ARE YOU GROWING SPIRITUALLY? HERE'S HOW TO TELL - 1

(The following series of blogs is taken from a very popular talk I give in the pastors' conferences in India.) The standard we use to judge the success of a company or business today is the bottom line, the numbers that show how much profit they made. Unfortunately we carry that standard over to the church as well. Many feel that the more people who attend a church and the larger the church budget the greater the church. That is not how God evaluates churches though.

I have been pastoring the same small church for over 30 years. There were several times in the early years when I wanted to quit, when I thought we weren't successful because we continued to stay small. God taught me that the way He evaluates the health of a church has nothing to do with the number of people who attend or how much money it has. After all, we don't know the size of a single church in the Bible. We do know if they are healthy and growing spiritually, but we don't know their size because to God that isn't important.

What does God expect from a healthy church? How can we tell if a church is healthy and growing? How can we tell if we as individuals are healthy and growing? We are commanded to grow (2 Peter 3:18), but just what does that mean? How can we measure our growth?

When my children were young we measured their growth every 6 months. We would mark on a chart how tall they were and we could see how much they had grown since the last time. We don't have that kind of measuring stick to tell if we or our church is growing, but we do have some standards in God's Word which can help us measure growth. I want to give you 10 of them. See how you are doing compared to them, and see how your church is doing as well.

1. Do you yearn more and more for heaven, think about it, etc.?

Philippians 1:21-24 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

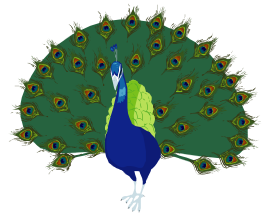
Titus 2:11-13 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men ... while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

As you grow spiritually, you will think more about heaven and look forward to it more and more. When we are new Christians heaven is a nice but vague place, but the closer we get to God the more we look forward to being in heaven with Him.

As we become more like Jesus this world and the things of it are less important. The sin and suffering become more and more distasteful to us. We think often of heaven and being in perfection with God for all eternity?

The things of this earth fade but our heavenly home becomes more and more real.

Do you yearn more for heaven than you used to? That is a sign you are growing spiritually. (March 25, 2011)



Blog 129: ARE YOU GROWING SPIRITUALLY? HERE'S HOW TO TELL - 2

(The following series of blogs is taken from a very popular talk I give in the pastors' conferences in India.) We have been looking at ways to measure our spiritual growth. Last time we talked about yearning more and more for heaven as a sign we are growing spiritually. We'll look at 2 more signs this blog:

2. Are you becoming more loving in how you treat others?

Matthew 22:36-40 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" 37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

1 John 4:20-21 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Do you find you re becoming kinder to people, more patient and compassionate that you were? Are you more sensitive to the needs and hurts of others? Does your heart ache for the trials and difficulties others face?

Do you find you are genuinely interested in others? That you are more willing to do what you can to help those in need?

As we become more like Jesus we love others as He loves – totally and unconditionally. That's how He loves us. It's only natural that as we grow to become more like Him we find ourselves loving people more like He does.

Are you becoming more loving in how you feel about and how you treat others? That is another sign that you are growing spiritually.

3. Are you more aware of God's work in your life?

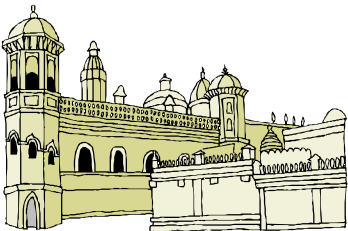
Philippians 3:10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

As we grow we will recognize God's hand in our life more and more. At first we see the big things He does, but as we grow closer to Him we start noticing that everything that happens is because of Him.

Do you give Him credit for the little things as well as the big things in your life? Are you more aware that He is in control of all that happens, the difficulties as well as the good things? Are you less willing to give yourself credit for what you accomplish and quicker to give God credit?

As we grow we become more aware of how much we need God. He doesn't need us to do His work; He can get along fine without us. We could do nothing without Him, though. If God withheld His grace and help from your life, what would it be like? What could you accomplish for Him on your own, without His help?



Are you becoming more and more aware of God working in all areas of your life? That is a sign of spiritual growth. (March 26, 2011)

Blog 130: ARE YOU GROWING SPIRITUALLY? HERE'S HOW TO TELL - 3

(The following series of blogs is taken from a very popular talk I give in the pastors' conferences in India.) We have been looking at ways to measure our spiritual growth. We talked about yearning more and more for heaven, being more forgiving of others and becoming more aware of God's work in our lives as signs we are growing spiritually. We'll look at 2 more signs this blog:

4. Does God's Word have a greater place in your life than it used to?

1 Peter 2:2-3 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Psalms 119:9-11 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. 11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Hebrews 4:12 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.

Do you find the Bible is more important to you? Do you appreciate it and turn to it more than before? Do you remember God's promises and think of them during the day? Do you have an increasing number of favorite Scriptures you turn to in difficult times?

Is the time you spend reading the Bible more and more precious to you? Are the truths you in the Bible having a greater influence in all areas of your life? Do you find your life changing to conform to what God says in His Word?

As we grow so does our appetite. That is true of children, and it's also true of Christians. All growing things need a source of food, and the Bible is the food source for our soul.

Do you find your love of the Bible growing? Is it more influential in your life than it used to be? If so, that is a sign of spiritual growth.

5. Is your worship more God-centered and frequent than it used to be?

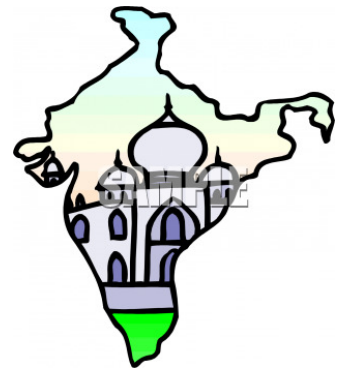
Job 1:20-21 Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised."

Psalms 100 Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. 2 Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. 3 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. 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. 5 For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations

Do you find yourself worshipping more than you used to? Does praise to God naturally come to your mind throughout the day? Do you feel closer to God than you used to when you worship?

When we are new Christians we enjoy worship because it makes us feel good. Praising God is great and very enjoyable for us. But the purpose of worship isn't so that we feel good. It's so that God feels good! Worship is all about God, not all about us! As we grow our worship focuses more and more on Who and what God is. We worship when walking outside, sitting at home or lying in bed. Worship becomes a part of our everyday life. It isn't just something we do when singing on a Sunday morning.

Do you find yourself thinking of God and His greatness more than you used to? Does worship naturally flow from you throughout the day when you think of His love for you or all He has given you? Do you feel more closely connected to God when you worship than you used to? This is a good sign you are growing spiritually. (March 27, 2011)



Blog 131: ARE YOU GROWING SPIRITUALLY? HERE'S HOW TO TELL - 4

(The following series of blogs is taken from a very popular talk I give in the pastors' conferences in India.) We have been looking at ways to measure our spiritual growth. We talked about yearning more and more for heaven, being more forgiving of others, becoming more aware of God's work in our lives, growing in our appreciation of the Bible and having our worship become more God-centered as signs we are growing spiritually. We'll look at 2 more signs this blog:

6. Are you more sensitive to sin than you used to be?

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. 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.



Romans 7:14-19 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

As young Christians we are aware of things that are sin, things we shouldn't think or do. But as we grow closer to God we begin to see sin in more and more areas of our life. We start recognizing that our selfish motives and prideful attitudes are sin. We become more and more aware of how far we fall short of God's perfection. Instead of becoming more and more like Jesus we feel less and less like Him.

When Paul was a new Christian he wrote that he was the least of all apostles. Later he wrote that he was the least of all Christians. Toward the end of his life he wrote he was the least of all people. Do you see the progression? As he grew he became more and more aware of his own sin and failure.

Are you more sensitive to sin in your life than you were? Are you more aware of when you sin and more bothered by it? Are you less apt to give yourself credit for things you do? Do you thank God more and more for His grace in your life? Are you more appreciative of His free forgiveness than you used to be?

Becoming more sensitive to sin in your life is a sign you are growing spiritually.

7. Are you quicker to forgive others who hurt you?

Matthew 6:14-15 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Mark 11:25 And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Do you find that you are quicker to forgive people than you were a few years ago? Are you less likely to argue or seek revenge against those who hurt you? Do you forgive people as soon as they hurt you and not wait for them to apologize first? Do you forgive them as soon as the offense takes place?

Jesus is our perfect example of forgiveness. He forgives us immediately and totally, even before we ask Him for forgiveness. As we become more like Him we will find ourselves being quicker to forgive others. They may hurt us on purpose or accidentally, but our first response is getting to be to quickly forgive them.

Do you find yourself quicker to forgive than you were in the past? That is a good sign that spiritual growth is taking place. (Monday, March 28, 2011)

Blog 132: ARE YOU GROWING SPIRITUALLY? HERE'S HOW TO TELL - 5

(The following series of blogs is taken from a very popular talk I give in the pastors' conferences in India.) We have been looking at ways to measure our spiritual growth. We talked about yearning more and more for heaven, being more forgiving of others, becoming more aware of God's work in our lives, growing in our appreciation of the Bible, having our worship become more God-centered, being more sensitive to sin and becoming quicker to forgive others as signs we are growing spiritually. We'll look at 2 more signs this blog:

8. Are you becoming more aware of how great and powerful God is?

Psalms 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Isaiah 64:8 Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

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.

Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Is God 'growing' in your life? We know God doesn't grow, He doesn't get bigger. He is as big as He can possibly be and He has always been that way. But when we grow in our faith we become more and more aware of what a wonderful, awesome, all-powerful God He is! As we see evidence of His sovereign control day after day our concept of Him gets larger and larger.

Does God seem greater to you now than He did in the past? Are you continually seeing more and more ways He controls everything? When God gets bigger in your life your faith and trust in Him grow as well. We have big faith in a big God, but only small faith in a small God. Is your faith and trust in God growing as well? That shows that God is becoming greater and greater in your life.

If you are more aware than you used to be of how great God is, you are growing spiritually.

9. Is your prayer life becoming more personal and stronger?

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



Jeremiah 29:12-13 *Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

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.*

Do you find yourself talking to God more than you used to? Is prayer more natural, something you do throughout the day without even realizing it at times? Does talking to God about things come naturally to you, something that automatically happens? Are your first thoughts about asking God for wisdom or taking to Him about the problem you are facing?

Do you find yourself talking to God about all kinds of things, not just asking Him to do things for you? Is your prayer more centered on God Himself instead of what you want Him to do for you? Do you feel more comfortable praying than you did in the past?



When a relationship grows people learn to communicate better. Do you find your prayer life becoming more personal and stronger? If so, you are growing spiritually. (Wednesday, Mar 30, 2011)

Blog 133: ARE YOU GROWING SPIRITUALLY? HERE'S HOW TO TELL – 6

(The following series of blogs is taken from a very popular talk I give in the pastors' conferences in India.) Today we conclude our series on how to tell if we are growing spiritually. We talked about yearning more and more for heaven, being more forgiving of others, becoming more aware of God's work in our lives, growing in our appreciation of the Bible, having our worship become more God-centered, being more sensitive to sin, becoming quicker to forgive others, becoming more aware of how great God is and our prayer life becoming stronger and more personal as signs we are growing spiritually. We'll look at the 10th sign this blog.

10. Do you find yourself better able to recognize His voice when He speaks to you?

John 14:26 *But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

John 10:4, 16, 27 *When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ... I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ... My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.*

Acts 9:11-15 *The Lord told Peter, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.*

Do you find yourself more interested in listening to God, in wanting to hear from Him, instead of just being interested in telling Him what you want Him to do for you? Do you

recognize that what God has to say to you is much more important than what you have to say to Him?

Are you better able to recognize when God is speaking to you? Can you better tell His voice from your own thoughts and from Satan's counterfeits? Do you have a stronger and stronger desire to want to hear from Him and listen to what He says?

Do you give God credit for the thoughts and ideas, the wisdom and guidance, the conviction and comfort He speaks to you each day?

If you are better able to recognize when God speaks to you then you are growing spiritually.

These 10 standards can help you see how and where you are growing. Look at each one carefully, pray about where you are at and if you are growing in this area. If you find one where you haven't been growing as you should than you can focus on that so you can grow in that area.

Remember, it is God who brings about the growth in us as we allow His Spirit to work in us (John 15:1-8) and produce His fruit in our lives (Galatians 5:22-26). Just as a parent oversees the maturing of his child, so our heavenly Father oversees our growth. His promise is that He will work in us as long as we are on this earth so that we continue to grow more and more like Jesus (Philippians 1:6). What a blessing and what a privilege that is. God expects us to grow, but He doesn't expect us to do it on our own. He will bring that about as we follow Him. (Thursday, March 31, 2011)



JANUARY 10-31, 2012

My fifth trip included taking a friend, Jim Hodges. It was great having someone to share all the experiences with and to help me. Being responsible for someone other than just myself was a first for me, though. We continued our pattern of pastor's conferences in different places each day. We added marriage conferences and a 3-day conference to train pastor'

Blog 134: PUSHING BACK THE DARKNESS

The following is a summary of this past Sunday's sermon, encouraging everyone to pray daily for the light to push back the darkness in India. Following it are some suggestions to help you pray for the people of India. You can listen to the sermon on our web site:

<http://www.mainstreetbaptist.org/> Thanks so much for praying!!



India is a nation in darkness. This is seen by blindness, sickness, pain, suffering, great oppression of women and children and early death for many. Spiritually it is dark as well. Hinduism, Islam, Animism, and Sikhism – all bring more darkness to the people there. Satan and his forces are strongly entrenched and have been fighting to keep the darkness in place. But the light is gradually growing. Christianity is the fastest growing religion in India. Still for every Christian (by any definition of the word) there are 6 Muslims and 40 Hindus.

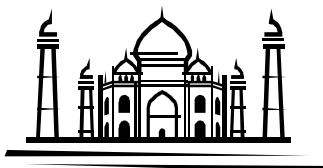
The spread of Christianity is bringing more and stronger opposition by people as well as spiritual forces. Laws against 'conversion' are being written and persecution is growing. Social and physical oppression is strong. Many suffer beatings, torture and even death because of their faith in Jesus. This continual oppression can be discouraging to the pastors and Christians in India.

Despite these difficulties the light is slowly but steadily gaining ground. This is important, not only for those living in India, but for the rest of the world as well. As the USA loses power and influence on the world scene, India and China are gaining. One of them will be the next world power, and China seems doomed because of its Communist restrictions and extreme persecution of the church. India is poised to become the largest and greatest country in the world. As such it's even more important it become a Christian nation.

India is a nation in darkness, but light breaks darkness. A little light can remove an unlimited amount of darkness, but no amount of darkness can remove the smallest light. Light consumes darkness but darkness can't consume light. They both can't exist in the same place (Genesis 1:2-4) so darkness must flee when light enters. In fact, the darker the darkness the more positive impact light has.

Jesus came into a dark world, bringing light for everyone (John 8:12). His "light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:15). "Overcome" is a compound Greek word, katalambano, meaning to hold something down. It is used of a demon taking possession of a person (Mark 9:18) and a thief capturing and robbing a person (I Thessalonians 5:4). This verse assures us that darkness cannot and never will be able to defeat light! Light is stronger than and superior to darkness.

Darkness speaks of sin, deception, bondage and death but light brings salvation, truth, freedom and life. Darkness deals with fear,



defeat, discouragement and hopelessness but light brings faith, victory, joy and hope. It is God's desire for all to live in light (Isaiah 42:16).

Yes, **India is a nation in darkness**, but God has given us weapons to help the light spread to the over one billion people who live there. He gives us His truth and promises in His Word (John 1:5). He promises His power, His Spirit and His angels to fight the darkness (Romans 1:16). He wants us to pray for the light to drive back the darkness in India.

Before the Allied forces landed on Normandy Beach in France on D-Day, June 6, 1944, they battered the shore with heavy artillery so the advancing soldiers would have an easier time moving ahead and claiming the land. Huge guns on the ships pounded the enemy strongholds mercilessly up to the moment of attack. Without this softening of opposition the foot soldiers wouldn't have been able to advance. God's foot soldiers in India, the pastors and other Christians, need our long-distance prayers to continually pound the strongholds of darkness that oppose them. Without us providing this assistance they won't be able to advance against the strongly entrenched darkness. With it the ultimate victory of the light over the darkness is assured.

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you". (Matthew 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 15:14-15) These promises certainly assure us that prayer makes a difference. Satan knows that as well – why do you think he makes it so hard for us to find time and keep focused when praying?

Gunners preparing the way for the D-Day invasion were alerted to targets from airplanes above and infiltrators on land who sent back requests. God above, Who sees and knows all, will lead you as to how to pray. If you would like requests from fellow believers living there who have infiltrated the darkness let me know and I'll send you a weekly email with specific requests.

One more thing, you should know that our brothers and sisters in India pray for us faithfully and specifically. They know you are part of our ministry to help train and support them so they pray for each of us. We provide resources they need: training conferences, special meetings and printed literature to help them in their daily battles. Out of appreciation they do a lot of praying for us. Wednesday is their usual day of fasting and gathering at the church to spend hours in prayer. Daily they pray in their homes, usually by a husband and wife starting the day standing together (in respect to God) and praying for quite a while. Group and individual times of prayer are a daily occurrence. They may not have anywhere near the financial and material resources we have, but they have definitely discovered how to tap into the greatest resource of all, one we often neglect – God's power through prayer. As they pray for us, let's join in and pray for them every day. Pray for the light to push back the darkness. (Monday, Nov 7, 2011)

John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 1:15 John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'"

Where do you see darkness creeping into your life? Into your family? Into your church? Into our country? Pray against each of these individually and specifically, starting with your own life. Ask God to show you what He wants you to do today to work against this.

Blog 135: GOD'S VESSEL

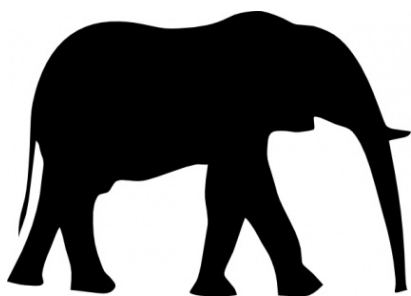
Before going to India each year I 'arm' myself with Scripture truth which God wants me to learn and apply. That helps me know how to pray for the trip and where God will be stretching and growing me. Last year it was Peter's example that I have to get out of the boat to walk on water. The trip before it I asked others to 'hold the rope' in prayer for me as I went to India. In seeking God's focus for this trip I have been thinking of the word 'vessel' over and over. That's not normally a word I would use, much less think about, but God has been putting it in my thoughts. So I looked up what the Bible had to say about 'vessel.'

When we hear the word 'vessel' we think of a boat, a blood vessel, perhaps a pot or bowl or even a drinking vessel. While these may seem quite dissimilar, the common denominator is that they are all used to carry something – they are containers. A ship carries cargo or passengers, a blood vessel conveys blood, and dishes are made to hold food or liquid. These are created to be used for something else. The focus is really on the thing contained, not the container. Daily life is filled with containers – wrappers, jelly jars, water battles, wallets, medicine bottles, tooth paste tubes, etc. All are just vessels; the container without the contents is nothing.

The Hebrew word translated 'vessel' in the Old Testament, *kel-ee'*, refers to something that has been prepared. A vessel must be prepared for use. The Greek New Testament word for vessel is *skyoo'-os* and has the root idea of something useful. A vessel must also be useful. If I am to be a vessel God uses to minister to others I must be prepared. That means I must be empty and clean. I also must be useful (whole and available).

Thus this trip to India is not about me – I am just the container for God's Spirit and message, the channel He chooses to work through. I must be empty and clean, trained and available. That is my challenge in order to serve Him, and it is God's challenge for all of us as well. (Monday, January 2, 2012)

2 Timothy 2:20-21 In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. 21 If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.



Think of yourself as a container prepared for God's service. Why has He created you? What is your purpose in life? What is your purpose in your family, your church, and your relationships at work? Ask God to help you fulfill that for which He created you.

Blog 136: AN EMPTY VESSEL

God has been showing me that my focus this trip to India is to be on being a vessel He can use. I must be a container, a channel that is empty so He can fill me. Elisha directed a poor widow who was about to lose her 2 sons to creditors to gather all the empty containers she could and let God fill them so she could sell them and use the money to pay off her debts. Each and every empty jar was completely filled. When there were no more empty jars to fill the provision stopped (2 Kings 4:6). The lesson is clean: God filled every empty vessel she made available. If a vessel already had something else in it then it couldn't be filled by God. That's how He is with us as well.

If I am filled with myself, with pride, ego or self-centeredness then He won't fill me with Himself. If I allow fear to be present I won't be filled with His Spirit and presence. Even if I fill myself with things that are good and fine, but keep me from being open to His presence, they must go. Work, career, children, home, exercise, food or possessions all are OK on their own but if they fill places and needs in my life that God should be filling then they are wrong. I must empty myself of them all.

Peter was limited in what he could do for God because he was filled with himself. His pride and ego kept him from being empty so God could fill him and use him. When he humbled himself after he denied Jesus three times then he was filled. We see a different Peter from then on, one who was filled with God's presence and not himself.

How do I empty myself? I ask God to search me and show me anything that shouldn't be in my life (Psalm 139:23-24). Reading the Bible and meditating on God's truth acts like a mirror and shows me sin in my life (James 1:23). Be sensitive to the Spirit's conviction (John 16:8-11). I must admit my sin to myself and God, and confess it (1 John 1:9). Then I need to ask God to fill me with His presence and power (Ephesians 5:18). That is my current goal – to be empty so He can fill me. (Wednesday, January 4, 2012)

Jeremiah 51:34 “Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devoured us, he has thrown us into confusion, he has made us an empty jar.

Vessels, jars, are not made to be empty. They are to be filled. But in order to be filled with God's presence we just empty ourselves of anything that is not from Him. Ask Him to show you anything that is filling you that is not from Him, anything you put before Him or turn to to meet needs He should meet. Confess them as sin and recommit yourself to be filled only by Him.

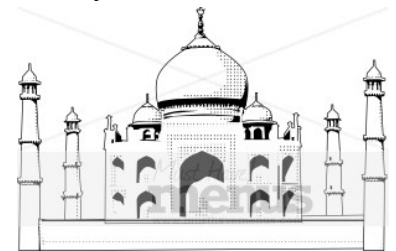
Blog 137: A CLEAN VESSEL

My challenge as I prepare to leave for India is to be a vessel, a container, a channel for God to use so His Spirit and His message can be carried to those in need. It's not my message I carry, nor do I convey it in my own strength. I am just the container. He does the rest.

But to be a good container I must be clean. In India all I drink is bottled water because any other water is contaminated no matter how clear it may be. I can only drink pure water which is put into a clean bottle. Anything else and I will get sick. For God to use me I must be a clean vessel (2 Timothy 2:21). I must ask God to cleanse me of each and every sin so there is no contamination within me. If there is His Spirit won't be able to dwell in and minister through me.

David is an example of a man whose sin kept him from being used by God. After his sin with Bathsheba and the attempted cover-up with Uriah, David went through a time of darkness and misery. He had no peace or joy and suffered from emotional and physical misery (Psalms 32 and 51). It wasn't until he confessed his that his joy returned and God was able to bless and use him (Psalm 32:1-2). 3

To be used by God in India I must be clean in all I think, say and do. My motives must be clean. If I am to be used by Him to minister to the pastors there I must be a clean vessel. So must all who seek to serve Him. (Friday, Jan 6, 2012)



1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way

that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God.

1 John 1:9 if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Ask God to show you any sin in your life. Sit still and let His Spirit convict you. It could be something you think or do, something you don't do that you should, or something good you do out of selfish reasons. Ask God to forgive you for each one and He will. Ask Him to make you a clean vessel.

Blog 138: A WHOLE VESSEL

When I look for a container to use to hold something I look for one that is empty and clean. These are essential for me, and they are what God looks for in a person he uses as well. But I also have to be sure the container is whole and not broken. A ship, blood vessel or pot that is broken, even if it is clean and empty, is useless (Psalm 2:9; 31:12).



We can be broken by pain and sorrow when we feel sorry for ourselves and quit being open and available to God. When problems and trials distract us and we become discouraged then we are broken and unusable. Worse of all, when one rebels and disobeys then one is broken and can't be used. Samson is an example of a man who had unlimited potential to serve God but instead gave in to sin and self-centeredness to the extent that he didn't try living victoriously for God. He lived in disobedience and rebellion and was unavailable for God to fill and use.

I personally have to watch I do not become distracted by difficulties and hardships and therefore disqualify myself by discouragement. A broken vessel, or one with cracks, cannot hold that which it was created to contain. If you don't sense God's presence and Spirit filling you as He once did, perhaps you are not whole spiritually as you need to be. Ask Him to mend and fix you, and become a useful vessel once again. (Monday, Jan 9, 2012)

Proverbs 25:4 Remove the dross from the silver, and out comes material for the silversmith;

If you need any repair work from God in your life, ask Him to do so now. If there are cracks in your holiness, your faithfulness or your relationship with Him invites Him in to heal and restore. Ask Him to make you whole and complete, the person He created you to be in Him.

Blog 139: AN AVAILABLE VESSEL

My final lesson from studying what God has to say about vessels in the Bible is about the importance of being available. A vessel can be whole (not broken), empty and clean, but if it isn't open to being used in the way the owner desires then it is not fulfilling its purpose.



One day Elijah went to live with a widow who was to feed him, but had only a small amount of oil and meal. She was going to use it for a final meal for her and her son before they starved to death. Elijah said if she used it for God's service first, then He would make sure there was always enough for one more meal in the jars. She did and there was (1 Kings 17:15-16). She gave what she had to God until there was nothing left, trusting He would fill it for

the next meal. Each time the jars were empty God filled them. That's how I often feel in India. I will be speaking an average of 6 messages every day I am there. While I love teaching and speaking God's Word, it does take a lot of physical and emotional energy. Constant travel, strange food, time changes and sleeping in unfamiliar places as night will also drain my energy. But He has proven faithful to fill me when I get empty just like He did for this woman in Elijah's day.

We are to make ourselves available; He will fill and use us. He created us for the purposes He planned (Isaiah 64:8); Jeremiah 18:4; Romans 9:21; Isaiah 29:16; 45:9). Paul was created, prepared and chosen by God for his unique role in the kingdom (Acts 9:15). He saw himself as God's container, the one to carry His message. God chose Paul for this work, Paul didn't ask for it. God chooses different people for various responsibilities. To us some roles seem more 'important' than others, but all are necessary for the Body to properly function. There are no 'unimportant' parts of our physical body; each has a function that is unique to that portion. God doesn't ask us what we want to be, nor does He explain to us why He chooses as He does. God just wants us to be available vessels. He is more interested in our availability than our ability.

So as I prepare for, travel to and minister in India I will be keeping this picture of a vessel in my mind. It reminds me to stay empty of self, pride and ego. I must watch for fear, a long-time enemy of mine, as well as business. I must always be clean from sin in all I think and do. I must stay whole – no discouragement or distractions. And I must be available for Him to us. I must give all that is in me trusting He will fill me each time I am empty. That's my goal, to be a useful vessel. It should be your goal as well. (Wednesday, Jan 11, 2012)

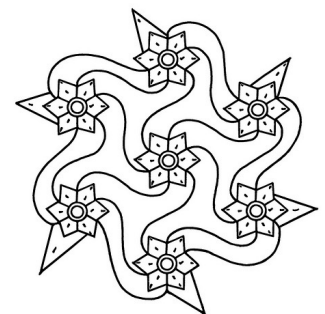
Jeremiah 18:1-4 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 2 "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." 3 So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. 4 But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

Is there anything God is calling you to do but you are resisting? Is there someone He wants you to speak to, something to do, and something to give to someone? Commit to doing whatever it is He wants.

Blog 140: WHAT A COMMUTE TO WORK!

(10:45 AM London time, Heathrow Airport, Wednesday, January 11, 2012) What a commute to work this is! 10,000 miles, 24 hours, 10 ½ time difference (ahead of USA) – 3 security checks, lines, small seats in crowded airplanes and no contact with those I love and miss. Somehow I, and I think many Americans (I can't speak for other nationalities), assume that when we obey and serve God He will honor that by giving us a smooth path and easy road. Perhaps it is our American entitlement mentality that feeds that misconception. Certainly it doesn't come from even a cursory reading of the Bible or a study of church history, or from reading about the persecution and difficulties believers in other countries face. Indeed, all these clearly show the opposite is true.

After pleading, begging, praying and trying everything I could to make the pain of leaving my wife, family and friends easier, I have come to accept that won't happen. It really is "not good" for a man to be alone. But after the last trip God quietly spoke to my spirit assuring me that there are some things that those who want to follow Him must



face – there is a price to be paid. It is nothing like the price He paid for me, nor like the price many others have paid or are paying now. After all, having such a rich array of loved ones to return to in 3 weeks is something many would call a blessing, not a price to pay!

I suppose the problem is that none of us like pain, me included. Especially me. Yet is the road of obedience lined with riches, prosperity, ease and gain who wouldn't take it? Yet for what reason? Surely it would be a selfish one, at least on my part. And yet isn't life as a Christian, when we follow in Jesus' footsteps, full of difficulties for each one? The price we each must pay is different – popularity, ease, denying the flesh and its lusts, physical ailments, strained relationships and many more. The price is different for each one of us, but there is always a price. After all, we are called to follow the One who paid the ultimate price for us. How can we expect to be exempt from any small price He calls us to pay for following Him.

On we must go, one day, one hour, even one minute at a time, knowing He won't remove the burden but that He promises His grace is sufficient to help us through it. How else would we know and experience His grace if we didn't need it, if we could somehow get by on our own without it?

What price are you willing to pay for Him? What price has He called you to pay? Are you paying it, or are you looking for a way out, holding back in your obedience or complaining and feeling sorry for yourself because God doesn't remove it and give you a smooth, easy road? Are you willing to take up your cross to follow the One who carried THE cross for all of us? (4 PM Hyderabad time, Thursday, January 12, 2012)

Genesis 2:18 The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Who in this life do you need the most? How do you adjust when separated from them for a long period of time? Why doesn't God remove the pain of that separation, especially if we are serving Him? Do you think He misses you that way when you are separated from Him??????

Blog 141: EVERY ROUND GOES HIGHER, HIGHER

Each trip to India is different from the previous ones. As I gain the advantage of hindsight I can see a pattern unfolding. In 2006 I came with a group from a local church. I just followed everyone else. In 2007 I came with a native Indian, but for much of my time here I was on my own. In 2009 I came and traveled on my own, but local India pastors always accompanied me as I traveled in India. Then in 2011 I traveled in India on my own, but had someone else I was responsible for in addition to myself – my wife. Now I come with a friend (Jim Hodges), but the planning and responsibility falls on me. He now follows me as I did others my first trip. We won't have the comfort and familiarity of staying in Pastor Moses' home this time. We will stay in a hotel on our own. And to look into the future, I somehow feel there will be even more coming with me next time, more to organize, plan and be responsible for.

To be honest, I'd much rather follow the group, let someone else tell me what to do, where to go and take care of all the plans and arrangements. It is easy for me to follow; I'm much more uncomfortable leading. But isn't that the way the Christian life works? At first we just follow others, do what they say and do. Then we have to start making decisions and traveling a path that is unique to us. And before we know it we have others looking to us for guidance and direction in life. Should I be surprised when I have to be responsible for someone accompanying me to India? Aren't I also responsible for those accompanying me in my family, church and daily life? Aren't you? How many lives do you touch, how many are impacted by your example?

It's not just taking someone along to India, is it? We all touch and influence many others. We all are responsible for those who follow us: mates, children, friends, neighbors, co-workers, neighbors and many more. As we grow in our faith God increases our responsibility to Him for those around us. He moves us ahead, just as He is doing with me and my India trips. He progressively stretches and uses each of us. There is no plateauing, not coasting, no arriving – all of us are still in process. And while we go through these things others watch, others are influenced, others depend on us. They entrust their journey to us until the time when God uses them, too, to go on their own and then take others with them.

May God bless you on your journey and may He use you for His glory! Keep going. He's got a plan and purpose for you as long as He has you on this earth! (Friday, January 13, 2012, 10 PM, Hyderabad, India)

2 Peter 3:18 Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

Look back over the last few years – where have the most changes been taking place in you? Where do you see God working in your life at the present? What can you do to help grow in the areas where He wants growth in your life?



Blog 142: YOUR PRAYERS AT WORK

The work here is going very, very well. It's an honor and privilege to speak for Jesus here, or anywhere. I've spoken to several groups of Hindu's, some Moslems and a good number of animists (the tribal people – Gypsies). It makes me feel very serious about presenting the claims of Jesus in a way they can understand. Hearing an American draws them out of curiosity. Sprinkling in several magic tricks entertains them and communicates truth. But only as the Spirit work in their hearts will they come to Jesus. Please keep praying for those who don't know Jesus.

Ministering to the Christians here is just as special. Life is very hard, but they faithfully witness to their neighbors about the love of Jesus. They are criticized and rejected because of it, and life becomes more difficult, but seeing these small lights placed everywhere in the darkness can be very encouraging. They so remind me of New Testament Christians growing and spreading the Word. They don't know much, but what they know they share with others. They don't demand god change their lives or ask why things are as they are, they just thank and praise Him for what He has done for them. I heard today that one of the first women I baptized last year died a few months ago of some unknown disease. What a joy and privilege to encourage and touch these lives in the smallest way! Please keep praying for those who do know Jesus.

I am doing well. I always face much oppression, discouragement, loneliness and feelings of total inadequacy when I come here. Gradually that lifts as God answers your prayers for me. I find that the worse things are the more I lean on His grace. Like Paul, in those times it is clear that "His grace is sufficient, for his power is made perfect in weakness" (Philippians 4:13). While I turn from pain as much (or more) than anyone else, I cannot deny that God uses it to bring me closer to Him in a way nothing else does. Like a scared, sick, hurting child, I run to my heavenly Father with an intensity I don't have at other times and I throw myself into His arms in a deeper way than when things are not so bad. Please keep praying for me.

Your prayers are needed and appreciated. These Christians in India pray. Their dependence on prayer is inspiring. For us it often becomes a last resort or a formality, but here

prayer is often their first and only resort so they start where we sometimes end up. They pray for us. I think one great reason God has blessed our ministry and church is in answer to the faithful prayers of His children in India. They truly know the power of prayer, and I feel its power here in a greater way as I pray for wisdom and guidance, for strength and energy, for blessing and healing of those who come asking for prayer. Please keep praying for India. Please keep praying. (Saturday, January 13, 2012, Hyderabad, India)

2 Corinthians 1:10-11 On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

What prayers have you seen answered recently? Have you thanked God for His answers? What prayers are you praying that have not been answered yet? Keep on praying them; starting right now, trusting God will answer in His time and way.

Blog 143: MISSING GOD'S BEST?

I like to thoroughly plan ahead, so does Jim who was with me. We planned in detail what food we would bring, thinking we would be staying in a private home to start and would get breakfast there. Too late we learned we were staying in a hotel instead. So I quickly purchased some oatmeal and tea bags. Making hot water, I drank some tea and used the rest to mix with a cup of oats (to give them some little taste at least). Jim had some extra beef jerky and he ate a piece for breakfast each day. Not great, but we were please we were resourceful enough to come up with something anyway.



Then upon checkout and leaving for church today we found out a free Continental breakfast had been included in our room price. Various fruits and fruit juices, breads, cheeses, yogurts and a variety of breakfast foods perfect for our American diet were available but we didn't even know it! What a shock to find out about it too late!

No sooner did I start feeling sorry for myself than God than God gave me a clear spiritual parallel. What a waste for me to not take advantage of the food that was available, but what an even greater waste when I don't avail myself of all the spiritual blessings God has made available to me! An empty stomach is one thing, but an empty soul is far worse. What resources does He have for me that I am passing up? How many Christians go spiritually hungry, feeding themselves on scraps that don't provide proper strength or help for what they face? What a shame for a Christian to get to heaven and realize all the blessings and helps God had available for them in this life but which they found out about too late!

What spiritual resources are available of which we often don't tap into? What should I be availing myself of which I am not? One thing which immediately comes to mind is God's Word. The guidance, encouragement and nourishment available there is limitless. Take as an example the promises in the Bible which are for us in this life. How many of them do we know? How often do we turn to them as a foundation for our faith and trust? We are quick to ask God to change our circumstances instead of trusting His promises through them. God's Word and its promises are definitely an overlooked supply of help in our Christian life today.

Other untapped means available to us include leaning on His grace, learning to listen to God, walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, connecting closely with other believers, and I'm sure many others you could probably think of. The point is, though, are you passing by God's free banquet of all you need to better navigate through this life, or do you keep going back to it

over and over again. Try to be aware of the resources God has given you as you face the events and activities of this day. And pray I won't miss any of it myself! (Sunday afternoon, Jan 15, 2012, on the road from Hyderabad to Vijayawada)

Ephesians 1:3-10 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment — to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.



Take a few moments to meditate and thank God for all the blessings He has made available to you. Then think about the ones you may not be taking full advantage of: prayer, peace, wisdom, power to overcome temptation, self-control, knowing His will, etc. Ask Him to fill you with the fruit of the Spirit and to provide all He has for you. Thank Him for it!

Blog 144: I LOVE TEACHING GOD'S WORD

I love teaching God's Word. I have since God called me to serve Him in ministry. There is nothing like feeling His Spirit work within to give me the conviction and even the words to convey His truth to others. I love it! I could do it all day! And here it seems I do! At home I speak several times a week, but always for limited time periods. Here I speak an average of 6 times a day, and time isn't an issue. What a joy and blessing it is for me to be able to do so much of what I so greatly enjoy!

Oh I still get nervous before it's time to speak. I wonder if I am adequately prepared, if I've chosen the right passage and the best magic tricks to illustrate the truths I want to present. I wonder what I could possibly have to say to these people who have experienced so very much in life. I wonder if I will do a good job representing God and if I will give them something to truly meet their needs. But then I remember that God's truth is the best information to pass on, that He will use it as He sees fit, and that He wants me to be here doing this. I am totally sure of the later, I know this is not my idea or desire but what He has put into me!

Then once I get started talking, though, I feel alive in a way that doesn't happen at other times. That comes from His Presence filling and using me for God's plan and purpose. What a joy and a privilege it is to be the instrument, the vessel He forms and uses for His glory! There is definitely nothing like it!

But I'm not just talking about myself here. What's true of me in teaching is also true of you in using whatever spiritual gifts and abilities God has given you. It doesn't have to be teaching the Bible in India, it can be sharing encouragement with a neighbor, giving food to someone in need, praying for extended periods of time, driving a sick friend to a doctor's appointment or any number of things. Do you feel that joy when using your gifts to serve Him? Do you consider it an honor and privilege to be used by Him in such a special way? Do you thank Him for using you and then blessing you greatly at the same time? Try to be more aware of that today. Find ways to use your gifts to serve Him, for He'll greatly bless you as He uses

you. Remember, you can't out give God. But go ahead and try anyway! (Monday evening, Jan 16, 2012, Vijayawada, India)

1 Corinthians 12:1-6 Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. ... 4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

What are some of the spiritual gifts god has given you (how does He use you to minister to others)? How well have you been using these gifts? What stands in the way of fully using them for His glory? Write down some ways you can start better using them right now.



Blog 145: TRICKS AND TRAPS

Everyone loves my magic tricks here in India. They look forward to them and come to see the 'man who does tricks.' The right visual demonstration at the right time can bring home a truth in a special way. I have about 30 tricks with me and use them in various combinations and for different lessons. I estimate I do about 250 or more tricks in my time here. I enjoy doing them, except when they don't work right (which is

always my own fault).

When I perform a trick correctly what I am doing is deceiving the people. I trick them into thinking one thing while I am really doing something else. They assume something is happening when I just make it seem that way, it really isn't. Actually it's not hard to fool people if you can get their thought processes to go in the direction you want. In effect, I like to the people. I get them to believe a lie, assuming it is the truth. When that basic principle is understood performing magic tricks becomes much easier. For me, and those watching, it is entertaining and a lot of fun. People actually like being tricked by me.

That, however, is the same way Satan works when he tricks people into sin. He is the master deceiver, a liar through and through (John 8:44). He takes our thoughts going in the direction we want them to go, that this action will really be beneficial for us despite the fact that God says it won't. He deceives us into believing his lies, "It's not really that bad," "It's no big deal," "No one will know," and an all-time favorite since the Garden of Eden, "God is withholding something good from you but I can help you get it!" My tricks are innocent and fun, but Satan's purpose is to bring misery and destruction. He's quite good at what he does, as can be attested to by the millions who have ruined their lives by sin. He never says "I want to destroy you" but "I want to please you" and we buy that lie. We buy it because we want it to be true.

You can look carefully at my tricks and train your mind to not go in the direction that seems logical, and then you can avoid being tricked. But it's much more crucial that you train yourself to be able to pick up on Satan's lies and deceptions. He's good at hiding his intent, but with the Spirit's help you can become alert to his lies and avoid them. What lies does he most commonly use to get you headed in the wrong direction? Which tricks will he try to use against you today? Will you fall for them? Make sure you don't! (Tuesday 10 PM, Jan 17, 2012 – Vijayawada, India)



John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

What are some of the lies Satan uses to deceive and mislead Christians today? Which of those work best against you? How can you overcome being influenced by those lies? Write down some of the main lies that defeat you and then cross it out and write God's truth behind it.

Blog 146: PASTOR'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE RESULTS

I have been greatly anticipating this leadership training class. The opportunity of speaking to almost 60 pastoral leaders for 3 days has been a great joy and also a solemn responsibility. The idea behind it is sound – teach those who can teach others. When I train pastors it is like throwing a pebble into a pond. The rings go out affecting those in their church. But when we train pastors who oversee and train other pastors it is more like throwing a bolder into a pond – the ripples have a much broader affect.

Knowing what to speak about for those 3 days (12 one-hour sessions) takes prayer and listening to God. There is so much that could be covered. Foremost in my thinking is to prepare them to pastor in their culture so I teach Bible principles, never American ways of doing things. There are many subcultures within India so they must apply what we teach to their own people group. I do much reading and research, talk to many who minister in India, and draw on my own previous years' experiences to see what God would have me teach.

This year I gave them an overview of the whole Bible (4 sessions) using by Bible overview visuals, magic, talking in costume as Paul, group interaction and review. The session on Jesus is a highlight in worship and praise. I dressed as Nehemiah (2 sessions) and told them lessons of leadership from his life. We talk about what God expects of pastors (2 sessions) and give copies of my book by for them to use and give out. I taught them how to study the Bible (2 sessions) and we used Mark 5 where Jesus delivered the demonized man in Gadarenes as the passage we practice on. This leads into our closing sessions on spiritual warfare, concluding with prayer for deliverance from anything the enemy is doing in their lives. We also give copies of our Spiritual Warfare handbook for them to use and distribute.

In order to cover all this material we bring them together for 3 days. They have no resources so we pay for transportation, housing, all their meals, and give them a small financial gift to help with other expenses. They stay up at night and get up in the morning, fellowshiping, praying and singing. They stay in a large dorm room at the Catholic retreat center where we meet. The fellowship, support, friendships, sharing of burdens and blessings, group prayer and group worship starts at 6 in the morning and goes to 10 or 11 at night. It is a great benefit and blessing to them, well worth the cost (it is by far our greatest single expense but well worth it).

I'm never sure going into a conference here what the response will be but this was greatly received and the pastors were very positive in all their participation and evaluations. It is physically draining on me but very rewarding and a great blessing. They want to have another next year, but want it to be a marriage conference and bring their wives. A husband and wife training conference sounds great!

Thanks for your prayer support and financial gifts – that is what makes this possible. God will bless and reward each one of you for your part in this special event. Thanks again! (Wednesday, Jan 18, 2012, Vijayawada)

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy



Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Pray for those who are your shepherds, they can never get too much prayer! Pray, too, though for those you shepherd – children, mate, and friends, anyone whose life you influence or who looks to you for guidance or an example. Pray that they would see Jesus in you. Pray that you would set a godly example for them. Thank God for the privilege of setting an example for Him.

Blog 147: UNSPOTTED BY THE WORLD

To me, one of the great mysteries of India is how the women stay so clean and their sari's so neat and clean despite the extreme heat, awful living conditions and terrible filthy everywhere! They cook, clean, work construction, farm, and sweep the streets – yet seem to stay as fresh and spotless as if they just came out of an air conditioned spa. And their hair is always flawlessly kept as well. I saw a woman in a beautiful, beautiful red sari with silver sparkles and fantastic trim – and she was in the middle of the road bent over sweeping the street. It's true of little girls as well. That's not an unusual sight here, but it certainly gets our attention!

Men, on the other hand, show the signs of their circumstances – dirty shirts, disheveled clothes and hair, and very often body odor. But not the women. Never the women. Never even once in all I've been here.

When I see them **James 1:27 always comes to mind. “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being spotted by the world.”** KEEP ONES SELF FROM BEING SPOTTED BY THE WORLD! What these women do physically we must do spiritually.

I don't know how they do it, expect that they make it a priority, wash often, and spend the needed time to be and stay clean. I guess that's the key for us as well – make it a priority and be willing to pay the price. We must do all we can to stay clean in our thoughts and actions. We must clean ourselves quickly whenever we sense some dirt on us. We must keep our eyes on Jesus and confess sin as soon as we are aware of it (1 John 1:9). It is so easy to be polluted by the world and not even recognize it at first, especially when we are much immersed in things of the world. Being IN the world but not OF the world is the trick. Still it is very possible. Jesus expects it so He knows it is possible. If these women can remain unspotted and unpolluted by their world, we can from ours as well! It just has to be something we want as much as they do! Do you? (Thursday, Jan 19, 2012, in the car driving from Challapalli, India)

Where are you quickest to pick up 'dirt' from the world? It is a place you go, a person you are influenced by, a TV program, a returning thought or attitude, a discontentment or greed? Whatever it is, make sure you cleanse yourself from it as soon as it attacks!

Blog 148: A 'TYPICAL' DAY

While there is no such thing as a 'typical' day, our time has followed the same pattern from the first. We wake up between 6 and 7 (sometimes much earlier) and get ready to leave. I review my lesson notes for the day. We used to eat some of our food but now we go down to the continental breakfast the hotel has. It is a real blessing! A nice, mosquito free hotel and a

comfortable, dependable car and driver make living and traveling conditions here much easier. I thank God for them!

We leave at 7 or 8, depending on the drive, and have 2 sessions with pastors in the morning and 2 in the afternoon. There is a tea (chai) break between sessions. We try to be finished by 4 PM. The sessions are mainly my teaching but also they love to sing, pray and share testimonies. The sessions are 1 to 1 ½ hours in length. Sometimes I dress as Nehemiah, Paul or another Bible person to convey my message. Of course the magic always greatly communicates.

We then have a bit of free time for ourselves for an hour or so. Jim and I go back to our hotel if we are close enough, but usually we are quite a distance away so we walk around the neighborhood, meeting people and taking pictures. Then we drive to the home of the pastor where I will be speaking that night and we have supper with them. Several nights we then go to a second evening service before we are done.

Most homes are just one room so we sit on the bed and eat on our laps. The cooking is done in a corner of the small room. The women serve the food, standing by us ready to fill any cup that we take a drink out of or any food that starts going down. Jim brought his own food and doesn't eat any Indian food, but I do. I have rice and a curry sauce with chunks of chicken (meat and bone), plus some form of their thing bread. I have that for lunch and supper each day. I enjoy being part of their family and eating their food, and I have gotten somewhat used to the spices.



The evening consists of a church service in the village or neighborhood where we ate. It is held in the pastor's home, in the middle of the street by his house, or sometimes in a special room that is decorated as a church. The service starts with an hour or so of singing, which usually begins before we arrive. There are some testimonies and prayers, and then I speak. Moses interprets. It is a privilege and honor to speak to these people. The flock around me afterwards asking me to lay hands on them and pray for them. That is one of my greatest joys and privileges in India. We quickly bond with them and it is always a big sad to leave them, for they are so open and loving, so giving and genuine. Sometimes it just doesn't seem right that we get to leave but they must spend their lives in the poverty and difficulties they face.

When we get back to our hotel, about 10 or 11 (depending on how far away the church is from our hotel), I unpack everything from the day and gather the messages and magic I need for the next day. I try to keep notes of everything that happens and all we do but it is sometimes hard to keep up with it all. I audio record all the pastors sessions and Jim video records them. I download them and recharge batteries for the next day. The plan is to make CD's and DVD's of the material for pastors to use and also to make them available on the India web site.

We get to sleep between 11 and 12, usually closer to the later. Then we get up the next day and get started again. This is very typical for Monday thru Saturday; Sunday consists of being gone from one church to another all day. I can tell more about that later. I lay in bed and thank God for the wonderful privilege of allowing me to be part of this, to know these wonderful people, to be a channel of His blessing and to see firsthand the power of His light over the darkness. His grace is overwhelming. That He would prepare, choose and use me here makes no sense to me but I am deeply, deeply thankful for this awesome privilege!

Thanks for your prayers – they are what makes all this possible! (Friday, Saturday, Jan 20, 2012, Vijayawada, India)

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.

When are you most discontent in life? What is the hardest for you to adjust to? How do you handle it when others have things you would like to have? How does the promise “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength” help you?

Blog 149: MARRIAGE CONFERENCES RESULTS

A major project of mine for the last year has been learning about Indian marriages, not just cultural practices but mind sets, values, perspectives, expectations and emotional involvements. Basically for them marriage is all about duty, not relationship. If love happens, fine, but it is not expected or even needed. These arranged marriages are all about duty, duty, and duty. American marriages are the opposite. But I didn't want to try to impose an American standard on them, and our marriages aren't always that great anyway. We don't seem to have the last word in husband wife relationships!



That means teaching what the Bible says, Bible principles, and having them apply it to their own marriages. I focused on the husband being a loving leader and showing unconditional love to his wife. The wives' session was about a submissive spirit, submission being an inner attitude of trusting God and respecting husband, not an outer duty. Then the children's message was about showing them unconditional love and using consistent, loving discipline and using natural consequences. Their child raising ideas are very different than ours and the Bible's as well.

The last sessions was an exposition and application of I Corinthians 13 about love and what it really is. It all helped me refocus on what really matters in my life and family as well – giving unconditional love. It sounds so easy but definitely is not! It's how God loves us, though, and to be like Him we must show it to others, especially those closest to us.

Anyway, both conferences went very, very well. They want more next time, and numerous other pastors want their pastors' conference next year to be a marriage conference with their wives. Moses and I agree that would be good and what we'll do. I look forward to that, especially if I can bring Nancy along and have her involved as well.

So anyway, thanks for your prayers about these marriage conferences. And make sure you focus on showing unconditional love to your mate today. I don't want to have to come back home to a lot of marriage counseling right away! (Saturday, Jan 21, 2012, Vijayawada, India)

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 Love never fails.

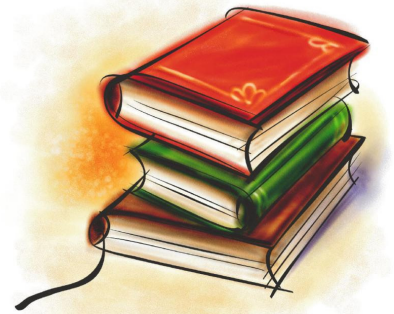
What are some of the ways your mate or friends show you love? What are some ways you show sacrificial love to others? When do you have the hardest time showing unconditional love? Why? What can you do to change that?

Blog 150: INSTANT RAPPORT

I'll admit that I'm not the world's greatest 'people person,' but I do love the people here. Moslem communities have a dark aura about them, often with an undertow of evil not far from the surface. Hindu children are full of life but that is greatly faded by their teen age years and usually completely gone by the time they become adults. They are like walking dead people – spiritually dead. But Christians, now there's the difference! They shine beautifully in stark contrast to the others around them. They are polite and many are reserved, but they are always smiling, friendly and looking for ways to help and to serve. There is a joy and peace, a love and gentleness about them that is wonderful to behold. There are no strangers, for when meeting them there is an immediate connection, a bond is formed. Their hearts are open and they reach out in love. I'm not saying they are perfect by any means, but I am saying I feel totally accepted and completely safe whenever I am with them. No matter the district, the caste (or even being below caste); the language or local culture, there is an immediate attraction.

I know part of it has to do with the Holy Spirit in them and in me drawing us together, but it seems to go beyond that. Despite horrible living conditions and daily difficulties we can't imagine, there is a joy and hope that is truly attractive. Because they are Christians their lot is often worse than for others in India, but that just seems to make them glow all the more. I feel very accepted by them and very comfortable with them, and not just as some rich American. I know they would be the same if I was from the lowest segment of Indian society and had nothing to offer. Truly the love of Jesus is present in their lives and flows from them to any who come in contact with them. They are truly giving, selfless people.

So I am convicted – do people who first meet me get that impression? Do I convey warmth and openness, a hope and joy, a love and gentleness that draws others? Do I reach out to others with compassion and sacrifice like they do? You don't have to answer these questions about me, don't send me your answers about if I do this or not for I already clearly know the answer! But if you would, ask them about yourself. It's not them, it's Jesus in them. Jesus in us can shine forth the same way if we let Him. Look for someone today whom you can love in Jesus' name! (Sunday, Jan 22, 2102, Macherlia, India)



Matthew 5:14-16 “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 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. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

What first impression do you leave with people? Do they feel safe with you? Are you a good representative of Jesus' love for others? Think of someone who makes good impressions on others – what can you learn from them to apply to your life?

Blog 151: TYPICAL CRAZY DAY

I haven't shared personal experiences from this trip so I thought I'd do so today. One is about when the police showed up and the other I about a demonized pastor. So now I hope you want to on!

Last year it was my joy and privilege to baptize 13 people in 2 separate locations. They were don't in local rivers but without drawing attention to them for not too long before some



foreigners had been arrested for public baptisms. They are legal, but they raised a fuss among local Hindu's so the people were held in prison for several days until large enough bribes were made. This year I was again asked to baptize at the same place, but turned it down. I didn't refuse because of the arrest situation, but because of the conviction the local pastor who whole be with them should have the honor and they should bond with him. Also I don't want some thinking their baptism is somewhat 'better' because an American performed it. I prayed for the candidates before the baptism and stood by the pastor as he did it to show support and approval. As he started I saw a police officer drive up and get off his motorcycle. His uniform reminded me of pictures I saw of dilators of third world countries. He was quite stocky. As he headed toward out group Moses, who was on the side nearest him, shouted to me, "Jerry, he's come to arrest you!"

He came over to me and shook my hand. It turns out his elderly mother was being baptized and he came to see. His sister was there as well, also a Christian and church member. He was also a Christian! I must say God gave me perfect, total complete peace the whole time! But don't tell Nancy about this, she will probably miss the humor in the whole thing!

We went back to the same church for out pastor's conference today, a 4 hour car ride each way (on extremely bumpy roads, many not paved). Here is where the demonized woman started screaming at me while I was teaching about spiritual warfare. The demons violently threw her to the concrete floor and we prayed for quite a while until she came around and was baptized. The women being baptized after her did the same thing when I put my hands on here to baptize her in the river (after driving the water buffalo away).

Well, it happened again today! A pastor who everyone said was demonized came up for prayer afterwards. He looked awful! I laid hands on him and kept forcing his eyes open so he'd look at me. Demons hate to be touched or let a believer look into their base of operation. God gave me courage, holy anger at them, and the right words and before long he slumped to the floor. He went down gently and I felt assurance the demons left, but kept touching him and praying until I felt everything was covered. He opened his eyes while I prayer and peace and gentleness was all that was there. I smiled, said "Praise the Lord," and finished praying. He said it as well. After that he was fine. All pastors in attendance get copies of my Spiritual Warfare and What God Expects of Pastors, so I was able to communicate to him to the book. What a wonderful tool those books are and how very, very glad to pastors are to have them. They them and pass them on. I was able to communicate to him to the book.

What a wonderful tool those books are and how very, very glad to pastors are to have them. They them and pass them on, and what they impacts them and their ministry for the rest of their lives. I think of all of you when giving them out, for without your sacrificial giving they wouldn't be possible. Translating and printing 11,000 copies cost \$14,000. Thanks so very, very much! Your gifts make all of this possible or we wouldn't be able to do any of this. (Monday, Jan 23, 2012, on the bumpy road from Macherla to Vijayawada, India)

Mark 5:15 When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind;

When do you need courage to take a stand for Jesus? What are some fearful times when it is hard to stand up as a Christian? Pray about what you should do in those situations. Ask God to give you courage when you need it.

Blog 152: DEGREES OF FILTHINESS

The first thing people notice when they come to India is the filth. People keep themselves and their homes very clean, but public property, streets and every space that isn't someone's home gets cluttered full of trash. Streets are swept and hosed down every night, but the dirt accumulates and grows. It's something you never get used to seeing, and tends to color a person's whole opinion of India and Indians – and how could it not? They see it but they don't do anything about it. After a home is constructed the left-over building supplies are piled against a wall and half in the street where they are left for years, until someone takes them for their building project. Dumpsters are overflowing with trash knee deep for many yards around them. Cattle and poor people compete as they go through it all looking for anything to salvage or eat. The filth is incomprehensible and we look down on them for not noticing it and doing something about it.

Having said that put yourself in the place of an India Christian who comes to the United States. He'd be impressed by our cleanliness, or would he? He wouldn't see much dirt anywhere, but what about the moral filthiness everywhere, which is totally absent in India? What about the bill boards, female dress, movies, TV programs, books and magazines? We get so used to these we don't seem to notice, any more than he notices the dirt on the sidewalks around him. We, like him, grow up with these things and so take them for granted, "That's just the way things are!"

But is our moral filth any better than his physical filth? If we are offended by physical dirt, shouldn't we as Christians be just as offended by moral dirt? God reminds me of this every time I start to look down on this culture for not being as clean as mine. And when God looks at them both I bet He is more offended by our moral filth than their physical filth. Ask God to make you aware of it so you can clean up your own home, life and mind! (Tuesday, Jan 24, 2012, on a bumpy 7 hour drive from Vijayawada to Vizaq)

Matthew 5:19 **Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**

Are there people you look down on and consider yourself better than them? It may not be obvious, but inside you look down on what kinds of people? Ask yourself how God sees them? How does how He sees them differ from how you see them? What can you do to see them more like He does?

Blog 153: READY TO PREACH, PRAY OR DIE

I remember reading that John Wesley once said that a servant of God must always be ready to preach, pray or die. For some reason that saying comes to mind every time I am in India. It's not that I plan to die, but one does think about that possibility more here than in the USA. It's the first two that really set the groundwork for my approach to ministry here. I often don't know when I will be called upon to get up and speak for anywhere from 10 to 60 minutes.



So when told to stand and speak I always ask 'how long.' I am always aware of what God would have me speak of to a group in case I am asked, and I don't remember never being asked. My Bible, notes and magic tricks are always within an arm's reach.

Praying, too, is often at a moment's notice. "Pray for this sick woman." "Pray for this home, there are many problems here." "Pray for this

man's ministry." "Pray for this girl as her parents look for a proper husband for her." "Pray for this boy who is crippled." "Pray for this woman. Her husband beats her (or he left her for another woman)." "Pray for this ministry." Pray pray pray pray. I must always be ready, close to God, listening to His voice, sensitive to what He wants me to pray. Sometimes the prayer is translated for all to hear, sometimes not. I don't know until I pause after the first sentence to see what they do.

In India I must always be ready to preach, pray or die. But that should be true in the United States as well, shouldn't it? And it should be true of each Christian, not just missionaries or pastors. Are you ready to speak about Jesus, pray to Him or sacrifice even your life for Him at a moment's notice? You don't have to come to India to do that. You must be ready to do those this day. Are you? (Thursday, Jan 26, 2012, on a dark highway somewhere in India)

John 13:37 Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

Philippians 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Are you always ready to speak for Christ, to pray for someone in need or to make whatever sacrifice is necessary for Christ? Which of those is the hardest for you to do? Ask God to give you opportunities to do them for Him, and to make you alert to the opportunities so you don't miss them,



Blog 154: "ONLY EVIL ALL THE TIME"

Paranoid might be too strong a word, but always alert and extremely careful would certainly describe how I am about anything and everything that goes into my mouth. I carry hand sanitizer with me at all times and use it regularly throughout the day. I use it to clean eating utensils, the skin of apple slices, anything and everything that enters my mouth. I only use bottled water, even for brushing my teeth, etc. I turn down any and all food unless I am certain it has been prepared well, heated beyond boiling for a while. I am very sensitive as to what I touch and I never put my hands anywhere near my mouth. I've always been careful here, but since getting so very sick last year I am even more diligent. I don't think I could have prevented that, but I do want to prevent anything I can. It has become second nature, a part of my daily habits and life style. It is automatic with me.

If only I would automatically be so careful about every thought, every image, every emotion that I allow to enter my mind and heart! How wonderful it would be to be so diligent about even the least bit of sin that comes near me. Why are we so careful about health issues but careless about sin issues? Perhaps it's because I don't fear sin as I fear sickness. Clearly I don't crave holiness like I crave health. In my mind I know better, but my heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). What I want to do I don't but what I don't want to do I do (Romans 7:7-25). Truly every inclination of the thoughts of our hearts are only evil all the time (Genesis 6:5). Pray I would be as committed to stay pure from sin and I am committed to stay free from sickness. Pray that you are as well! (Fri, Jan 27, 2012, Vizak, India)

Genesis 6:5-6 The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how awful is sin to you? Why does some sin seem so attractive and appealing? Read Romans 7:7-25 and apply it to your own life. Make this passage your prayer to God?

Blog 155: MOTIVATED BY FEAR

There are shrines everywhere in India. There's hardly a place you can stand that you don't see a shrine or some religious symbol or activity in some direction. Yet life is full of sin and darkness. Some say Indians are very spiritual people, in touch with the forces around them. I say they are deeply fearful people, trying to grasp any straw that might somehow appease an angry god who could make their life even more difficult than it is.

There is no love in their relationship with their gods, no faithful service and no worship in response to their awe of their god's greatness. They experience no grace, no mercy, and no personal relationship with their god. They are simply trying to do the only things they know to do in order to cause whatever is making their life so difficult to leave them alone for this day. In fear they try to appease their gods so they will leave them alone!

What a stark contrast that is to our love relationship with a God who cares and wants what is best for us, Who promises to be available for us and provide assistance in all we do. We know there is a plan and purpose, a meaning and significance, and a help and assistance for us. We also know this is as bad as it gets, then we have eternity with God in heaven. Seeing these people relate to their gods, which are really demons, greatly helps me appreciate the wonderful blessing we have in our personal relationship with the one true God. Think about it. It'll help you appreciate what you have as well. (Saturday, Jan 28, Vizak, India)

Romans 3:18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Living in terror of God's anger and living in awe and respect to His majesty are two different things. Do you have any of the wrong fear of God ('terror') in your life? Do you have enough of the respect kind of fear in your life? What can you do to have less terror and more respect?

Blog 156: FILLING THIS EMPTY VESSEL

Before coming to India my message and blogs were about being an empty, clean available vessel for God to fill and use. That is the focus He put on my heart as I prepared for this trip. I think of it often. I am empty much of the time. The constant physical, mental, social and emotional demands drain battery. Many times I sit before speaking not knowing how I can again rise and present God's truth to the people, so I rely on His promise to fill and use an empty vessel. Each time He gives me words and strength to minister. Sometimes I sense His empowering and feel great physically and spiritually, other times I continue to feel empty and drained but know He is speaking through me anyway.

Yet weary as I sometimes am, He enables me to go on each day, to present a good message to those who are open and waiting. I don't always feel I've done a good job but they assure me God uses what I say anyway. Like the woman with the empty oil jar which God filled every time she needed some more, God faithfully keeps His promises as I trust Him to provide when I need it. He doesn't provide early, but neither is He ever late.



For me this is over after 3 weeks. I know for many of you your situations continue, sometimes for years. You have health problems, financial concern, relationship issues and inner struggles. I don't claim to have gone through anything near what you do, but I do want to remind and encourage you that His grace IS sufficient! (Sunday, Jan 29, 2012, Hyderabad, India)

Psalms 81:10 I am the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.

Where do you feel empty? What would it take to fill that particular need? Ask God to fill you up with what you need. Think of those around you who may be empty as well and pray for them. Ask God to give you an opportunity to share with them about His filling power.

Blog 157: OUR NEED FOR GRACE

It seems we as human beings have a natural propensity to take credit for what God does. Take away His power and work in your life and what would be left? That's what you can take credit for, the rest is His doing! Yet remembering that isn't easy. So God in His wisdom used pain to get and keep our attention. The more He blesses and uses us the more pain is necessary because the more we will steal His glory and give ourselves acclaim for what He does. Paul is a prime example of that. He recognizes that God gave him a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble and to better experience God's grace (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

It is strange that we feel pride for those things over which we have the least control and to which we have the least right. There is no greater humiliator than constant pain. Paul's pain was caused by a demon which God did not remove. The greater Paul was used by God the more tempting it was for him to become proud of it, so the more necessary it was for God to show Paul his total dependence on God. God's tool was a 'thorn.'

When I was growing up we had rose bushes in our yard. One time a thorn broke off in my finger, under the skin. It quickly got infected and caused me great constant pain. That's what a thorn does. A thorn is a small, sometimes almost invisible cause of suffering. It causes incessant pain which can't be forgotten or ignored. There is no 'one size fits all.' God personally tailors each of ours for our particular personality and needs. The common denominator is that the pain cuts through our feelings of self-centeredness and self-sufficiency and causes us to depend on God instead of ourselves.

God uses my time in India to remind me of my total dependency on Him. What painful situations has God used in your life to get you to depend on Him more? Is anything now happening that is drawing you closer to God and making you more dependent on Him? Not all things are good, but God uses them for good (Romans 8:28). Especially pain. (Monday, January 30, 2012)

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 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. 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.

When are you most aware of your total dependence on God? What circumstances most drive you towards Him? What does God use as a 'thorn in the flesh' in your life? How should you respond to it?



Blog 158: HIS PROVISION OF GRACE

Grace. Where would we be without it? We write poems and songs about God's grace. We ask Him for it, talk about it, and proclaim its greatness to others. We are so taken with grace because it better than anything describes God's workings toward us. He gives us what we do not deserve (Mercy is not giving us what we do deserve). Grace refers to God's unmerited favor acting on our behalf. The greater our need to more aware we become of His grace to meet that needs. Sometimes that's why He lets the pain get so bad, to show us how effective His grace can be. That's why God gave Paul a "thorn in the flesh" (II Corinthians 12:7-12). Paul's experience, like ours, is that God's grace is sufficient.

2 Corinthians 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." 'Sufficient' means adequate in the sense of providing contentment. Paul quotes Jesus as saying that His grace is sufficient for every need Paul has, especially the painful and distracting 'thorn in the flesh.' Actually the Greek word order puts the emphasis on God's sufficiency: "SUFFICIENT FOR YOU is my grace." A thorn can be a great hindrance, but His grace is more than able to get us through any and every painful experience in life.

His grace is sufficient. It is right on time, never early so we learn patience and trust, never late so we have to face things alone, never more than needed so we need to trust Him every day, even every hour, and never too little even though we often feel we need more than we receive. We have His promise, though that what He gives will be sufficient.

So we must stop asking God to remove painful circumstances and instead thank Him for His promise of providing sufficing grace to make it through. I used to beg God to take away my longing for my wife while in India, but God showed me He won't do that. Instead I must lean on His grace for it is always just enough and always right on time. Truly His grace IS sufficient. (Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2012, Doylestown, PA)

List some times in your life when His grace was sufficient? How many times can you count? Now make a list of times His grace wasn't sufficient, when He let you down when you needed Him (He may not have done what you wanted, but He always helps get your through it). Is there something in your life now that you are asking Him to remove when you should be asking for the grace to endure it instead?



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