

Breaking down Barriers



“For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall.” ~ Eph 2:14

Every day, many South Asians find their way to a neighbourhood ‘Mom & Pop shop’ to have tea with friends. They often gather together, in the middle of the day, for a tea break, where they share stories and converse.

From time to time, an ‘untouchable’ man arrives, approaches the stand, and attracts stares from the others who are enjoying their tea and conversation. This man, unlike the rest, brings his own glass to be filled with tea. This is because he is from a low caste.

When this man first arrives at the Mom and Pop shop, the owner prepares tea for him just as he would for any other person. When the

owner pours the tea, however, everyone can tell that this person is from a low caste; because the host holds the tea pot up dramatically high to pour it – demonstrating how far below him this “untouchable” is. The “untouchable” brings his own glass for tea, because it would be considered unthinkable for a low caste person to drink from the same glass as the rest!

Even after a person comes to Christ, these cultural delineations can plague the Church. How then do “high caste” and “low caste” people relate to one another in love?

A group of churches in South Asia has decided to boldly address this issue in their congrega-

tions. In contrast to the table of the world, which segregates people, they have discovered that Christ’s table breaks down the barrier of the “dividing wall” (Ephesians 2, cited earlier).

Pastor “Salma Boaz”, our local Director in South Asia, has decided to hold communion with a shared glass. This is a huge paradigm shift for many of the believers, because to share a glass with someone indicates being at the same level as them. To conclude communion, Salma chooses, in fact, to take the cup last - demonstrating that as the leader, he is one with everyone else!

“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” ~ Micah 6:8

1. In the month of May, the Congress Party of India was re-elected in India with an increased representation (to the relief of the believers who have suffered grievously of late). Pray for this government to continue to take a moderate stand toward Christians. Please pray specifically for the state of Orissa as many believers endure significant persecution.
2. Please join us in prayer for the Lord to daily bless our staff & volunteers with a spirit of unity, wisdom and humility as we labour together with those labouring abroad. Praise God that Del Duffield will be joining the AIM part-time staff in September following his retirement.
3. Pray for the ongoing training of Church Leaders in Bangladesh. Praise God for the existing Bible School for MBBs, and join us as we pray for finances to complete the building and for the support of the students attending.
4. David Robbins, Al Friesen and Travis Thiessen are preparing to go to Nepal and India in September / October 2009. Please pray for wisdom and provision as they plan for the three Family Life & Mission Leadership Training Seminars.



Advancing Indigenous Missions

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What part can we play in reaching those desperately lost without the Gospel?



Summer Newsletter

To prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. (Ephesians 4:12 NIV)

The State of the Gospel

By David Robbins

What could be more Newsworthy?

The situation or position of the Gospel in the world today is quite surprising. Contrary to what we see in North America, the Evangelical church is growing rapidly in many parts of the world. In his article, “The State of the Gospel,” in Perspectives 2009, Jason Mandryk highlights a critical truth: the unreached people groups are largely concentrated in five countries, wherein grinding poverty and unjust political systems are rooted in an overall lack of the Gospel.

Over the past ten years, as leader of Advancing Indigenous Missions (AIM), I have served in three of the five countries that Mandryk highlights – India, Nepal, and Bangladesh (the other two are China and Pakistan) – where Evangelical growth and development is unprecedented. This transforming revival may not be aired on mainstream news. Yet, to Christians, what could be more newsworthy?

Reflections from three Countries

Here are a few reflections on the progress of the Gospel in these unreached, needy countries:

India: One-third of the entire population (1.2 billion) is accurately described as either lower caste or tribal. Many of these disregarded and overlooked millions have been responding to the claims of Jesus Christ. God has sent them missionaries. Many of these missionaries were, ironically, converted from the upper-caste

priestly segment – and have poured their lives into this fruitful missionary work.

Nepal: As in India, a vast percentage of Nepal’s population lives in remote and out-of-the-way places. Nonetheless, missionaries are multiplying here, too. Considerable percentages in Nepal now name Christ as their Saviour. Rapid growth, thousands of indigenous missionaries, and increasing political favour, are setting Nepal apart as an ideal example of effective native missionary activity.

Bangladesh: Bangladesh is home to a growing but small number of “Muslim Background Believers” (MBBs), who are mobilizing to reach their own country. A Bible school has emerged to train such MBBs, villages are providing sites for MBB Churches, and converted Imams, or priests, are joining the growing army of indigenous ministers.

Reaching the Lost

What can we do? What part can we play in reaching these waiting masses, desperately and utterly lost without the Gospel?

Gleaning from the conclusion of Mandryk’s article, there are four ways we can be a part of bringing the Gospel to these unreached peoples. First, in order to get the job done, we must make it a priority. We must determine to meaningfully take hold of the Great Commission, and do what we can to help reach these people groups, who, until now, have largely been neglected.

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Second, we must be willing to pay the price necessary to reach them. Working with indigenous missions challenges us to hold nothing back, because, for example, when Muslims come to Christ, they face persecution and relentless opposition. How can we do anything but stand with these believers, as well as such believers from many other backgrounds? Our cheque books need to reflect our willingness to sacrifice. Our prayer lives must be characterized by persistent intercession for these unreached people groups, and for the army of missionaries God has enlisted to reach them.

Third, we must collaborate in Biblically based, strategic initiatives. Responsible planning includes both indigenous and expatriate perspectives; but, indigenous voices often go unheard. Yet India is seeing such a dramatic response to the Gospel, that there are numerous and intricate issues to contend with. Serious, deep consideration and collaboration are required to avoid catastrophic collapses from heresy and false doctrine. It is dangerous, even potentially lethal, to prescribe overly simplistic solutions to such complex matters.

Fourth, it is critical for us to encourage the indigenous missions in their more visible, lead role. The internationalization of the Evangelical movement is so thrilling because we as Canadians can fit into the movement humbly, yet strategically, in countless support roles. Without our confirmation and encouragement the growth and progress of the indigenous church will be impeded and restricted. Therefore, we need to promptly assume our roles in helping our National brothers and sisters to turn their corner of the world upside down (and, by all means, we need them to provoke us to do what we can here at home).

God is working

The magnitude of what God is doing around the world is breathtaking. Our part is (yet again) to assist, humbly, through the means at our disposal, in providing depth and sustainability; and, by the Spirit's power, through fervent prayer, to help break down the towering spiritual strongholds in the unreached nations.

Leadership Training in Bangladesh

"The Church is growing. We need to train more leaders who will be able to shepherd the flock of Christ."



Bangladesh, South Asia

In early March, 550 indigenous pastors and missionaries gathered together for a four day conference focused on unifying and encouraging the 'mission force' in Bangladesh. Together with national leaders, Advancing Indigenous Missions coordinated the conference to provide several days of clear, focused Biblical training for the young, emerging leadership. A member of AIM's Council, Dr. Grant Richison, was the keynote speaker for the conference. Keith Peters, from our office in Winnipeg, also attended the conference, and spent a second week travelling to different parts of the country to encourage and train believers in the Word of God.

The Leadership Conference was a breakthrough for the Bangladesh Church, as 46 denominations / mission groups united together. It was exciting for the National Christian Leaders to witness so many groups coming together, with the focus of reaching Bangladesh with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The conference highlighted the hope of the Gospel for Bangladesh, even though the need in this populous country is yet great.

AIM is planning other similar Leadership Training Seminars this Fall. A team from Canada will be travelling to India and Nepal to conduct conferences for emerging Church leaders in three locations.



Captivated by Christ

"One might summarize the history of Christian mission as the way in which people in thousands of cultures and languages have come to know Jesus, the way in which the name of Jesus has been proclaimed and honored from country to country, from culture to culture, from language to language, from century to century."

- Samuel Escobar, The New Global Mission, p. 98



Brother Babu with his family in their home village

The dusty village roads of rural Bangladesh eventually led me to a humble home in a small Muslim town. The Dalim family welcomed me in and honoured me with fresh coconut milk, tea and biscuits. In this country, the Dalim home is not considered ordinary because the name of Jesus is honored as highest priority. My host and brother in Christ, Babu, enthusiastically proclaimed to me: "God loves me. Jesus has saved me from all my sins."

What an encouragement it was to spend time with this family. The Dalim's are a bright light in the spiritual darkness, as they share Christ with their community and in the surrounding villages. In spite of significant persecutions they are planting churches. Babu is a Pastor of four local churches, and the church in their own village has now become a family of 66 Muslim Background Believers.

In a similar posture as the Apostle Paul, the Dalim family have "... resolved to know nothing while I was with [them] except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2). It is this position that will make the difference in the unreached corners of the earth. God will not share His glory with any other, but will use those who unswervingly hold to the hope that is in Christ alone.

"AIM made a strategic contribution to the history of Christian Bangladesh by sponsoring meetings in March 2009. [One of the key Christian leaders] indicated that the country is on the crest of a great movement. The unity and enthusiasm for reaching the nation was patent. I believe that God is going to work in His own inimitable way in months and years to come."

Dr. Grant Richison

Monthly Prayer Meeting in Winnipeg

AIM would like to invite you to a morning of prayer...

- **WHAT:** Praise and Prayer for our indigenous brothers and sisters serving the Lord in difficult places. (Coffee and muffins will be served.)
- **WHERE:** Mission Baptist Church, 771 Sargent Avenue, Winnipeg
- **WHEN:** 2nd Saturday of each month; next meeting is on June 13th.
- **WHO:** Everyone is welcome!