

Reaching and Serving the Persecuted Church

IN TOUCH MISSION

international

Monthly

1 September 2012

"With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it?" Mark 4:30

A Preview of the Kingdom

"Because of her blindness, she'd been told and treated like she didn't matter by her family and society for so long that she believed it."

The meager change landed next to her with a short clang. Twenty-two-year-old **Magashwari** had just finished washing the clothes of an upper caste family in Southern India in exchange for a few coins they tossed her way. Because of her blindness, she'd been told and treated like she didn't matter by her family and society for so long that she believed it.

As for her lower caste family, it wasn't that they didn't care for her, but they had been swimming in the waters of their caste-based society for so long that they'd accepted the lie that as lower caste members, they have lower value and that blind Magashwari had even less. And they'd treated her that way - maybe without even considering the hopelessness she'd been driven to. Rejected. Isolated. Hopeless. Blind.

Purposeless. This was the theme song of her life. Then one day there was a knock at the door.

ITMI's **Paul**, whose last name we don't disclose for security, had been led by the Spirit to plant a church in the area. On this day he and one of his disciples were knocking on doors, looking for those who might need the hope of the Gospel. What they found

was someone who was more in need of it than they could have known.

As their story of a coming kingdom where all have value as God's image bearers unfurled, Magashwari began to hope again. As Paul's family and the community of believers lived as a preview of that kingdom, treating her as a fellow citizen of it, that hope grew. As she learned about its forever King and His

(cont. on p.4)

India's disabled
are neglected
and overlooked
as members of
the lowest
caste.



Catching Up with Paul

Walk us through the different aspects of your ministry in India?

I am called to be a church planter, so there is a mother church and two daughters, a sports ministry, tutor centers, pastor training/discipleship for local pastors, and of course, our girls.

Describe life for the people of your church.

We meet (and most live) in the slum, an area full of refugees. The older generation isn't educated, but the younger one is. The church body is made up mostly of first generation Christians. Many are secret Christians whose husbands are non-believers, often drunk and abusive. Our church members are good prayer warriors. They are uneducated, poor and as lower caste members they don't have the idea that they can accomplish things. They just ask Him to work - and He does. I consistently preach about what Christ's family looks like. We provide opportunities to live that out in six cell groups and three services on Sunday. We also fast together, pray together, and learn together in Bible studies. The room where we meet is open 24/7 and someone is always there praying.

How does discipleship happen in your sports ministry?

In a nutshell, our sports ministry has 14 centers/cell groups in different slums. Each one reaches about 25-30 teens, so the ministry overall reaches about 350 players a week. They have weekly morning or evening soccer coaching sessions and a weekly Bible study. Each cell is coached by 2-3 shepherd/evangelists who receive weekly training. Some live far away and have day jobs, others live right in the community. The sessions are open to all who want to come. The cell groups' best players feed into two major competitive teams, but we also have mini-tournaments between the cell groups followed by a teaching



time. Every six months there is a camp that attracts about 70 players. From the teaching times, the interactions with the coaches and the Bible studies, they hear they are valued and unique bearers of God's image, and that Jesus broke the caste system. Some go to the next level of being a disciple and even become coaches.



Are there recent developments/fruit from the pastor training Steve and Chad did last fall?

Pastors call every week asking for follow up. But we have a full plate and we just can't handle it. But it is so crucial and needs to be done. There are lots of opportunities still there. We need more workers to be able to follow up with them.



Tell us about the tutoring centers.

There are six tutoring centers. The locations are believers' homes, our church building and we rent space for two of the centers. The kids that come are orphans, from single parent families, some have abusive parents or parents that don't value education or help with it - maybe they are too busy drinking or watching TV to provide environment for learning at home. Many live in one room homes where the TV is on too loud to study. Each session starts with prayer and the Gospel is shared. The kids can join a weekly Bible study if they want.



For awhile, we couldn't pay our tutors, so we shut the ministry down, but the kids came to us and said, "This is so helpful, our lives have been changed." They offered to give what pocket change they had to keep the centers open, so

the teachers are basically working for far less than a fair amount because they are compassionate and love the kids. To pay them a fair salary, we should be paying them each \$80/month, which would be \$400/month total, but right now we have \$250/month available for the teachers' salaries.



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Newsbites

Zambia

Steve Evers, Mark Burritt and Tim Keller recently joined John Jere in Lukulu West, where they saw the digging of the first ever fresh water wells in this area, donated by ITMI supporters. See John's photos on our website!

Joyce Jere's father went to be with the Lord this month, leaving a legacy of dedication and faithfulness to Kingdom work.

Timothy and **Ashley Keller** were privileged to serve alongside **President** and **Laura Bush**, renovating a clinic in Kabwe. They report on their experience on their blog - don't miss this story!

India

Paul and **Molly**, in the US for extended time to gain a citizenship for Paul, just left for Chicago, where they'll be for the rest of 2012 as Paul completes a unique pastoral internship, returning to Arizona just in time for the birth of their third baby!

Poland

The Gorski's and Gospel Joy went on the road to Romania this month, sharing the joy of the gospel through the performance of Gospel Music and testimonies.

South Africa

Earlier this summer, **Charl van Wyk** and **Mark Parris** travelled to remote western Zambia to serve, preach the Gospel and encourage local missionaries.

Steve Evers and Mark Burritt's visit with the **Le Roux family** at **Onseepkans Mission** yielded the opportunity to lead two local goat-herders to the Lord after helping inoculate 100+ goats from some unknown disease that had struck one of these herder's ewes.

Kelly and **Cherise Smith** recently welcomed **Andile** - a 5-year-old Zulu boy who was in a rough family situation - into their home. Andile was born with Spina Bifida and is paralyzed from the waist down. Cherise says, "His big beautiful smile melts your heart."

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'Twas Blind, But Now I See

This month's story has me thinking about blindness. As the beloved hymn reminds us, we were all blind. So blind, we couldn't even see our own rebellion against our good Creator and Provider. So blind we thought we could earn our own salvation. So blind, we had the audacity to crucify the promised "seed of the woman" that was sent to make everything right. And yet, in our uselessness and rebellion, Jesus lays it all on the line to save us.

In a recent update, **Paul's** wife, **Molly**, writes, "In India, being a Christian means putting it all on the line." It reminded me once again of our ITMI partners

who have followed Jesus' example and laid it all on the line to see people saved. Whether it's the comfort of going with the flow in their own culture, knowing for sure when their next paycheck is coming, or the safety of their own culture to serve quality nationals overseas - they lay it on the line every day. And while we're thinking about it, many of you lay it on the line every day, sacrificing to send treasured resources to places you've never been, to see the Kingdom of God demonstrated and declared for His glory.

Until that Kingdom comes fully, we all still have our blind spots...places we can't see that Jesus wants us to turn over to Him. Is there a blind spot the Spirit is trying to shine the light of the Gospel on in your life? It can be scary, but He is faithful, good, and waiting to restore our sight, make us useful tools and show us His glory and beauty!



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mission, she began to see a purpose for her life and a passion to give others the good news she had found.

Magashwari still works for pocket change for the upper caste families who take advantage of her. She says, "I'm doing the same things, but I'm a different person now."

She walks two miles - no small feat for a blind woman - to the bus stop in order to get to the church gathering and services on Sunday. She rarely misses an opportunity to be with them. Her loving devotion to

Jesus is inspiring to the other believers, and they are praying with her about how they can help Magashwari find a better source of income.

Magashwari began to talk to the women she came across as they sat in public together chatting. At least 10 people have been added and baptized into Paul's fellowship through her. Her own mother and aunt were among those who came to Christ when they saw the transformation of God's work in her life.

While Magashwari's story exhibits these things in a more physical way than most, the reason she has found a place to belong in a family of believers is that we were all once blind, lost, rejected, hopeless and purposeless. Jesus, in His compassion, redeems us, gives us a family to belong to, a purpose to live for, and a place in a story that is bigger than our own; the story of the *Missio Dei* - the God who is on a mission to redeem and restore His broken, yet beloved creation.

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

(cont. from p.2)

We want them to be equipped to lead and they need education to do it. What kind of leaders will they be? Our goal is that they'll be gospel driven, Christ-like leaders.

How are [the girls](#)?

When I think about today, I am happy, but when I think about their whole life, I am scared. I'm a church planter - I never thought I would have this many children. I am not a softy. I am a "hard" person, but the girls changed my life. They soften my heart. But God cares about them even more than me and Molly.

Since they are all about the same age, they all hit school age at once and we were scrambling, but God provided a really good school and a good price; they even got uniforms, books and bags with the deal.

But the school is 45 minutes away, and we don't have a vehicle that can fit them all in one trip. The best thing would be to buy a van that holds them all, but until we can do that we had to hire a couple vehicles to take them to school and that made our monthly expenses shoot up.

What are your greatest funding needs right now?

We would need \$24,000 for a large van for transporting the girls that I mentioned before, but the most immediate and important need to us right now is the girls' monthly expenses, which totals \$2700 a month. Someone has been generously covering our monthly expenses for the girls, but that will run out in a month or so. It's common when you have a building project - all eyes are on the building

and people forget about the monthly expenses.

What's the status on [the building for the girls](#)?

We are still fundraising for the girls' building. We need \$500,000 which takes care of everything: water supply, paperwork, workers, housing for watchmen, wall, landscaping, finished and furnished. We are at about \$170,000 so far.

As we concluded the interview, Paul expressed a deep and heartfelt thanks for ITMI supporters and their sacrifice.

For Praise...

1. Poland - the [Nungesser's](#) baby Max continues to grow and thrive after the scare during his newborn days.
2. Zambia - the completion of five wells in Lusaka West, Zambia helping prevent crocodile attacks and disease.
3. USA - ITMI financial officer **Mark Burritt's** safe return from Zambia, where he connected with and served ITMI partners.
4. India - Magashwari's inspiring faith and service in her church and community.
5. Africa - the salvation of several new family members over the course of Steve Evers' travels.

For Prayer...

1. Eastern Europe/Africa - Steve Evers as he recovers from [five weeks of travel](#) and tells the stories of God's work on his trip.
2. India - Support for daily needs and expenses for Paul and Molly's 19 rescued **Ashraya Daughters**.
3. India - provision for the transportation challenge of getting 19 Ashraya Daughters to school each day.
4. Poland - for baby Max to continue healing from his lingering cough under the care of a pulmonary specialist.
5. That God would continue to bless His faithful servants putting it all on the line to see people come to faith in Jesus.



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