

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.

Daniel 3:17-18

ITMI

Monthly

1 OCTOBER 2024

intouchmission.org

Arrested in India:

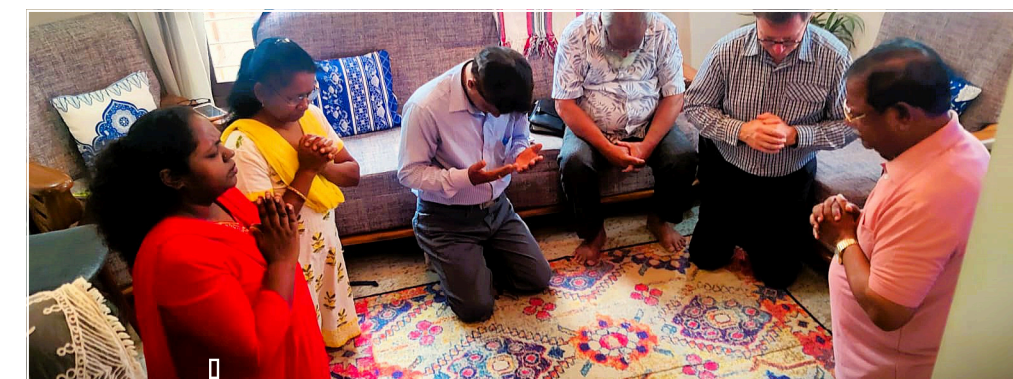
How God allowed Steve to be arrested as he was leaving India.

INDIA

There is probably no better way to say it than, "I was arrested." No one wants to be arrested in any country, and being detained and arrested in India is something that is best to be avoided if at all possible.

Being arrested last month as I was trying to leave India was a first for me. I have been detained in South Sudan twice, once because they thought I was someone who they really wanted to imprison. This missionary, which the South Sudanese security misidentified me as, was living outside of South Sudan and under a wealth of false accusations. This made capturing him a reason to be highly rewarded by the military superiors. Only by God's intervention did I not get locked up in a very undesirable detention facility.

The second time, I was detained and later escorted to the South Sudan security facility to be interrogated and, at a minimum, have all my camera, video, and audio technology confiscated, and



most likely even further incarceration. This was because I happened to be interviewing **ITMI's Vicky Waraka** on her property behind a high elephant-grass privacy fence. Again, fear and suspicion were driving factors. God sent a South Sudanese angel who was able to bring clarity to this excessive overreach of investigative license by angry and misguided security personnel with God's help.

The Indian version of "...we will mess with you because we can..." began at 12:30 a.m. as I was trying to get to my 3:20 a.m. flight to Sri Lanka, which would then take me to Pakistan to visit and mentor Abid, our

partner, who has shown much growth since ITMI became involved in his life and ministry.

My two large bags were cheerfully checked at the Sri Lankan Airline counter just as soon as it opened at 12:30 a.m. on August 22nd. They didn't even charge me for excess baggage, which they had the right to do. I believed the Lord was giving me favor as the overweight items were mostly things that Abid needed and would greatly benefit his ministry.

Next came the process of getting through immigration, which required my passport to



be reviewed and “exit-stamped” as I was now officially leaving India. This also went well, and I just had one more process to get through and then I could with gratitude and gratefulness wait for my flight to board.

My history with leaving the Bangalore airport has conditioned me to realize I will most likely have a mental, emotional, or even physical tug-a-war with the security personnel who check all carry-on baggage. I later was reminded by a well-respected Indian national that the current government of India is very anti any religion that is not Hindu. Muslims, Christians, and any other “religions” are very much looked down on, if not openly persecuted. Some states in India are very aggressive at attacking anyone who is not part of them or their belief system.

When the security officer who was hand-checking my camera bag asked with an expressionless face, “...what is this?” The item he held up was a single AA battery. I explained what it was with as much sincerity as I could muster. He then asked me, “...what is it for?” I explained it was to be used for flashlights and photographic flash units. The interrogation continued with three to four more simple and everyday items. In hindsight, his purpose was not to ask what the items were or what they were for; he was testing me for what I would find out much later.

When he lifted up and inquired about my Garmin GPSmap 64s GPS, I casually explained that this was a GPS, and I have used it for 22 years of international travel to locate and record where I visit so that I can get back to a village, the guest lodge, our partner’s home, or a church meeting location. This is when everything escalated.

My GPS was confiscated and almost immediately handed off to one security guard after another until I lost sight of it. I firmly asked for it to be returned to me and that I be allowed to proceed to my boarding gate. The security supervisor arrived and escorted me to the central security part of the airport terminal we were in. At one time, at least ten to fifteen various plain-clothed security, uniformed security, airport officials, and Sri Lankan airline personnel surrounded me, asking me for my documents and asking me the very same questions, with varying degrees of intensity and directness.

I was finally told that it is against Indian law to bring a GPS into their country. Since I had broken their law, I was being charged and would be taken to the police for them to investigate this case and then go before the Indian courts.

They required me to hand-write a confession that I did indeed bring this GPS into the country and that I was throwing myself at the mercy of the court system. This confession was supposed to be presented to the courts at some point in the future, and it was supposed to help me find leniency with the judicial system. The Sri Lankan Airline representative quietly told me “...you are not going to make your flight.”

My baggage was removed from the airplane, and after about three hours of this process, four men escorted my luggage and me through the airport, past security lines, past immigration, out the front entry, and to a waiting local police transport vehicle.

Almost an hour later, I was ushered into a small office at the police station near the Bangalore International Airport. The very official-looking policeman showed me where to sit, and he then, with a very grim face, asked if I had read the case documents. My response was that I had not, and he presented me a folder with very official legal case documents that listed Steve Evers as “...the accused.” His matter-of-fact statement told me that the Indian court system moves slowly and may be “one to three months” before I get a chance to appear before an Indian judge.

He then offered to try and get me a court appearance within “a week.” I began to see where and how this was going to go. I looked him in the eye and asked this question, “...if I was your brother, and you knew what you know, what would you advise me to do?” He softened ever so slightly and told me that when I went to court, I would ask for forgiveness, admit my crime, and pay a fine. The next question I presented to the officer was, “...is there anything I can do to speed this process up?” He responded, “...you can pay the fine now.” “How much is the fine for bringing a GPS into India?” “R\$25,000” “Indian Rupees or American Dollars?” “Rupees.” In US currency, that was about \$297 USD dollars. I, without emotion or exposing my hopefulness, asked, “So, I can pay the fine right here and now?” “Yes.”

The fine was paid, and a receipt was requested. The receipt was denied.

In America, I believe the term “shake-down” would be later used. This belief was confirmed by several Indian businessmen that I counseled with after I was released by the police. These Christian businessmen were apologetic and deeply frustrated with this type of security activity in their country. Yet they then told me, “...the safest place for you to be now is to get back to your own country.” They also informed me that, most likely, I had been followed by government undercover security since my arrival in India and that the fact that I was staying at a Christian guest house and that I was scheduled to go to Pakistan next were

NewsBytes - Zambia

DEAR Team:

Challenges of Missionary Work in Remote Areas: Caring for Those Who Care

In the remote and desolate **North West Province of Zambia**, two people have been pouring out their lives and health for more than two decades. They have seen mountains and hearts moved in this extreme and rugged environment with its scorching heat and drenching rainy seasons.

They have learned to do much with little, often bearing the brunt of desperately little access to the things we take for granted: clean water, electricity and medical care.



As missionaries in a remote area, **Johan and Lesley Leach** have shown tremendous dedication and commitment to the people the Lord laid on their hearts. While they have tirelessly cared for others, their health has suffered with various bouts of malaria and other ailments. Johan was diagnosed with serious gut inflammation, after weeks of diarrhea, thought to be related to contaminated water sources. This has not only affected them but also the outreach teams that visit.

Take a couple of minutes to consider having a ‘runny tummy’ in a remote area. There would be no restrooms in the desolate field as you travel for hours, slowly making your way through the thick sand between villages or on un-mapped ox-cart trails. When you finally reach a village, it would only have a coarsely dug, uncovered hole in the ground, surrounded by a few reeds for some privacy. The stench would reach you a few feet away and several flies would be buzzing about when you step inside the makeshift structure, only to realize there is no toilet tissue. Can you imagine this kind of physical and emotional fatigue while having to maintain a strong spiritual focus?

And yet, despite this condition, sapping the very energy that he so selflessly pours out, Johan has done a stellar job in overseeing the installation of the most recent 20 boreholes, funded through your generous donations, providing both physical and spiritual sustenance to the least-reached and unreached Luvale people.

It’s heart-wrenching to think about Johan and Lesley Leach’s selfless dedication to serving the Luvale people in Zambia and Angola, enduring significant hardships. They are currently dependent on river water being pumped via a big black storage tank on top of a steel structure to their home for daily use such as washing dishes, brushing teeth and flushing toilets. A home purification system is manually filled to filtrate this river water so that it can be consumed and yet this is insufficient to maintain good health.

As the installation of the last three boreholes are underway, we would love to install a borehole for the Leach family as well, minimizing costs with contractors already on site. This would be a crucial step in helping them access clean water and alleviate some of the immense challenges they face. We cannot do this without your financial assistance as well as your prayers and intercession for the work and well-being of this remarkable couple, as they share the hope they’ve found in Jesus.

- Annemarie de Greeff, Steve Evers

PS. Please consider how you can help the Leach’s continue to impact Zambia by training and discipling the rural pastors and leaders. \$100 or a \$1000 would go a long way to putting in a clean water system for Johan.

all the reasons needed to disrupt and complicate one's life and ministry. It cost the Lord's work about \$2700 total when you add up the cost to stay until a flight could be purchased, lost tickets to Pakistan, the loss of my GPS and 30 years of valuable data, and the "penalty fee" paid in the police station.

You may ask, "Why put yourself through these potentially harmful situations?" Well, because God has called ITMI to serve the needy and many persecuted believers around the world. This particular trip saw exceptional Kingdom benefits.

The discipleship material, SALT, was taught to **David and Taru**, their **Deepam School staff**, David's ministry partner, and a pastor from the Indian state of **Odisha**. You might have heard that Odisha is one of the most radical sections of India. The disdain and hate for Christians in this state is unmatched anywhere else in India. Yet, **Adsukanta** (name changed for security) is now planning to translate SALT into the local language and, with David, organize the first of many SALT conferences in Odisha, with the goal of training key leaders who will then reproduce the SALT training with the next wave of leaders.

Brother Walter, David's partner in ministry, and David have committed to taking SALT to the hundreds of rural pastors in the state of **Karnataka**. They too are working on translating this so they can print the material and distribute it freely in their Bible conferences.

This is why we go to the ends of the earth. This is why we put our lives and ministry in God's hands. This is why we are deeply grateful to each of you who faithfully pray for ITMI and each of our team members around the world, as many of them experience similar excessive and destructive treatment. Please consider helping us help David and Adsukanta with the cost to translate into two state dialects the 28 SALT lessons, print them for the many conference attendees, lodging and food for the conference and basic travel expenses to help with these precious and faithful pastors and leaders that have so little to spare at the end of each month. Any gifts over the current needs will be applied to the continued growth in reaching and disciplining India. Thank you again for all your help, prayers and support. We do this with God's help and with your help. Blessings!

- Steve Evers



FOR PRAISE

1. India - David and Taru Kumar - God's blessing the obedience of Taru and the Deepam staff as they grow their home group Bible study.
2. Zimbabwe - Charl van Wyk - Good start to raising funds for drought impacted community.
3. Zambia - Johan and Lesley Leach - Twenty of the twenty-three boreholes now drilled and casings installed. Pumps to follow.
4. Poland - Piotr Zaremba - K5N Church - Successful K5N church growth both in numbers and spiritual maturity.
5. ITMI - God's continued blessings and provision allowing us to accomplish more Kingdom work as the needs grow day by day.

FOR PRAYER

1. India - David and Taru - Continued protection, provision and guidance through challenges in difficult ministry locations.
2. Zimbabwe - Charl van Wyk - Provision for a much needed water borehole to enlarge the Kingdom sharing truth in difficult times.
3. South Sudan - Lazarus Yezinai - Provision of health for him and family, wisdom and strength to minister to the deeply troubled area.
4. All ITMI - wisdom, guidance, integrity and clarity for our partners making weighty decisions around the world.
5. ITMI USA - We need help with desk top publishing, content media, story telling, and website management.



PO Box 7575, Tempe, AZ 85281 (480) 968-4100 (888) 918-4100
intouchmission@intouchmission.org | fb.com/intouchmission
@intouchmission | instagram.com/intouchmissioninternational



A higher standard.
A higher purpose.



Scan to Donate