

Chapter 11 The Power of One.

The 2004 trip evolved to have an over riding theme. Throughout it I continually witnessed how a single person, or very small group, has positively influenced the lives of thousands.

While the rest of the group went directly to Mizoram I made a side trip to Manipur to visit the ministry of Ro and Maawi Pudaite. You can follow much of the Pudaite family's many activities on www.biblesfortheworld.org. About 1910 Ro's grandfather heard about Christianity's growth in Mizoram and he and his son went to Mizoram to witness it for themselves. This resulted in a Welsh missionary, Watkin Roberts, traveling to Manipur and starting a ministry with the Hmar people.

After Roberts retired he brought young Ro to North America to study theology. The Hmars have largely converted to Christianity, are highly educated and have become a very progressive tribe. Ro remained in the US and developed a multi-disciplined ministry.

His organization bought the William Carey University, located in Serampore, north of Calcutta. Regulations in India make it very hard to open new Christian schools, but there is no law against branches of existing schools. There are now dozens of branches of the William Carey University, catering to Dalit children, all over Northern India. They have also been involved in many health and farming projects in Manipur and beyond. However their most ambitious is a commitment to attempt to send a bible to every telephone subscriber, in the world. While this may be an everlasting project they have already sent out millions of bibles to every corner of the earth.

Ro has graduated to heaven and must have been received by Jesus saying, "Well done good and faithful servant". Maawi and their son John are carrying this wonderful work forward. Four generations of dedicated Christians have influenced the lives of millions.

The time in Mizoram is covered in chapter ten. A son, touched by his father's early death from malaria, has started a movement dedicated to defeating malaria worldwide and hopefully to greatly reduce the suffering from both AIDS and cancer. This ministry has already touched many hundreds of thousands and has the potential of even greater things.

From Mizoram we flew to Delhi and then took the train north to Dehradun. The trip on an India train was an experience for all of us. We rolled through many miles of farming country and villages, punctuated by stops where hordes of hawkers came on board peddling a huge variety of goods and food.

We timed our trip to Dehradun to coincide with a visit by David Manuel and his wife. Norlynn does a weekly television program with David out of Abbotsford BC. David introduced us to the Sharp Memorial Blind School.

This was the first blind school in India and while there are many more today, too many blind people in India receive no education. In the Hindu religion it is considered that they are being punished for wrong doings in a previous life.

This school is a great example of Romans 8:28 and the power of one. As a child Miss Hewitt, who became an Anglican missionary in India, became blind for a year, as a result of measles. This gave her a lifetime concern for the welfare of the blind.

I can very much relate to this. When I was twelve years old I was playing goal for a peewee hockey team. I was at a game of 15 and 16 year olds when a goalie was injured so I put on the equipment and went in. We were playing Prince Albert and their star was Metro Presti who went on to star with the Chicago Black Hawks.

Well Presti got a breakaway and I managed to stop his first shot but left a juicy rebound. By this time I was on my hands and knees and stopped the second one with my nose. He scored on the second rebound. They took me outside and managed to get the blood stopped and put me back in. Luckily it was the third period but if I remember right they scored another three goals in the dying minutes.

An hour later my eyes were swollen completely shut and I was blind for three days. This has stuck with me and was certainly a contributing factor in my many years of volunteering with Operation Eyesight.

Back to Dehradun. Miss Hewitt got her friend Annie Sharp to take a course in educating blind and in 1887 she opened India's first blind school in Amritsar. In 1903 the school was moved to Dehradun to take advantage of a much better climate. Unfortunately Annie Sharp died of cholera only 16 days after the move. Members of her family moved to India and ran the school until 1930.

From 1930 to 1986 the school was operated by several different ministries. There were only 17 students when JM Samuel took over in 1986. He is still principal and the enrolment has grown to well over 100. I found it was a happy place and was amazed how well the students cope with their handicap. A student, in her late teens, became my guide taking me all over the campus with never a hint of hesitation. These students receive an excellent education and often pursue higher education in sighted schools.

I am told you will find alumni working all over India, some with blind schools of their own.

We went back to Delhi and made the short side trip to Agra and the Taj Mahal. A beautiful building but also a gigantic tourist trap with the sole purpose of separating tourists from their cash.

The rest of our group left for Canada and Ro Pudiate's group took me to a newly constructed slum in Delhi. This slum consisted of 50,000 homes only 10 feet by 10 feet. Each a home for an entire family. There were communal bathrooms scattered throughout

the slum, The people I met had only been there for a short time and felt they were better off living on the street. With this mass of poor people living side by side there was no one to beg from, or to give them work. Also it cost one rupee to use the bathroom.

I was back in Delhi one year later and the same guide took me to the same houses. This time the story had changed. They told me how much having a door you could lock changed their lives. When they were living on the street their time was consumed protecting their meager possessions, now while they had to take a bus to work, or beg, their possessions were safe. Also while it cost a rupee to use the bathroom, it was clean and their health was greatly improved. They felt it was great step forward.

India is removing millions from the streets by building these huge slums. I have now been traveling to India for more than 20 years and have seen huge changes.

From Delhi I embarked on a 15 day ‘fly anywhere is India’ adventure. The first stop was the Rajasthan Bible Institute in Jaipur. The founder, Anand Chaudhary, had a very interesting past. Anand was born in a high caste Hindu family and was being educated to become a Hindu priest. However in university in Bombay he became involved with the communist movement and had a university debate with a Christian debater, who convinced Anand of the truth of Christianity. The two met a year later and Anand told him of his conversion. The other man was shocked – Anand had convinced him that communism was the way and he had become a communist. I found this an amazing story!

Anand’s family rejected him, however several years later he had a good talk with his father, who was just leaving, with his wife, for a huge Hindu festival. His father’s last words to him were, “We must talk further when I return”. Unfortunately it was not to be. There was a stampede to get into the “holy” waters of the Ganges and his mother and father were among the many who were killed.

A Christian school took Anand in and in 1974 he founded the Rajasthan Bible Institute which has graduated hundreds of church planters. Anand was genius of finding ways to plant churches. One was for a bible student to go to a village and teach literacy through biblical songs. Hundreds of churches were planted through this. Anand has since graduated to heaven, however his legacy lives on in the lives of hundreds of thousands of Christians.

Next stop was the Ramabai Mutki Mission in Pune. Pandita Ramabai opened this impressive work in 1898. It provides shelter and an excellent education to more than 500 orphans and abandoned children, mostly girls. They also have another five smaller campuses across India. As the students grow they look after the younger ones. As a result many go on to the nursing and educational professions. Today many thousands of Mutki graduates are working in hospitals and schools all over India. What a mission work!

Again Pandita was born into a high caste Hindu family, however her father saw the value in educating girls and Pandita became the first female to be fluent in Sanskrit, the sacred language of Hinduism. Her father's advice was always to seek truth and both Pandita and her brother went to great lengths to become the perfect Hindus. To their horror they found much of Hinduism was founded on deception. You can find books and much information by googling Pandita Ramabay.

She married and moved to England and taught Sanskrit to many rich women who were exploring eastern spirituality. Her husband died and she found the Gospel of Luke in his possessions. She read it and discovered she had finally found truth. The rest is history. Again many thousands, if not millions of lives have been changed through the vision and hard work of one woman.

On to Bombay, which is now become Mumbai. I stayed with a lovely couple. He was writer for both print and video media championing the cause of laborers mainly from Bihar.

Bihar is located north of Kolkata and is one of the poorest states in India and it seems all of India exploits the cheap labour from this state. My landlord took me to world class shopping mall in Mumbai, then took me to a squalid outdoor living area where the workers, who built it live. 15 laborers from Bihar were killed during the construction of this mall, for a wage of \$1.00 a day, so that rich Indians could shop in luxury.

This couple's ministry is travelling throughout India writing articles aimed at improving the lot of the laboring class.

On to Kochi the capital of Kerala. Kerala, in SW India, has the highest number of Christians of any state in India. They trace the Christian heritage back to doubting Thomas who arrive there in 54 AD. I spent most of my time in a wonderful museum dedicated to Thomas and early Christianity. I also visited a prayer tower where healing prayer is conducted 24 hours a day. This Christianity is under attack. I saw incidents where Hinduism was creeping into churches, while Moslim countries are spending millions building Mosques throughout Kerala. Please pray for the protection of truth in this Christian state.

From Kochi I flew across to the east coast and Chennai, formerly Madras. After establishing a Christian community in Kerala St. Thomas move to Madras and was martyred there. I just spent an afternoon at a museum dedicated to Thomas and at a world famous ophthalmology hospital. The entrance of this hospital is in the shape of an eye. Ophthalmologists from all over the world come to study at this hospital.

I then went 75 miles west to the Vellore Christian College and Hospital. This hospital is one of the largest hospitals in the world and also one of the best. It serves over 8000 patients per day. Its history is very interesting and another example of what God can do with a life.

Like Sharp Memorial Blind School and the Rambai Mutki Mission this hospital was founded by a woman in the late 19th century.

The founder was Dr. Ida Scudder a third generation medical missionary to India. Ida's parents had a medical ministry in southern India and Ida was going to college in the US. When she was asked if she intended to follow her parents footsteps her standard answer was, "No way, I am a party girl". Her mom was ailing and she went to India to be with her father. One night, while her father was away on a medical call, three Indian couples arrived with the woman having delivery complications and looking for medical aid. As she had no medical training she could not help and all three women died in child birth. This incident changed her life – she became a doctor and dedicated her life to helping Indian women. She opened a small medical clinic in Vellore in 1899 – through several steps this clinic has morphed into a magnificent facility. See www.cmch-vellore.edu

Just south of Vellore is a leprosy hospital and community, which operates under the Vellore Christian Hospital. This is where Dr. Paul Brand did his ground breaking research on leprosy. I knew of Paul's work in leprosy but not until I visited this facility did not know of his skills in horticulture. The India Government had given the hospital a barren, rocky desert hill to build a leprosy center. By employing the same fertilizer tree that is the basis of Sloped Agricultural Land Technology (SALT) in Mizoram, Paul transformed this barren hill into a tropical paradise. Paul's is another life which has benefitted tens of thousands.

Next stop was Bangalore where I spent two days with Esther and Jeevan Nair. Jeevan's story is eerily similar to Anand Chaudhary's. Like Anand he was born into a high caste Hindu family, in fact one of the richest families in India. He also planned to become a Hindu priest. While in university he and a buddy became heavily involved with alcohol and drugs. Then one day his friend quit booze and drugs and told Jeevan he had become a Christian. Jeevan heaped contempt on his friend and declared he would be back on the booze and drugs within three days.

To Jeevan's amazement and disappointment this did not happen. Then as he was walking down the street a man handed him a Christian tract. Jeevan took one look at it, crumpled it up and threw it in the man's face. He shouted, "You are just like my friend" and blurted out his friend's name. The man laughed and told Jeevan that if he had thrown a pamphlet back at him earlier he would have beat him up. He had been the head of the local Communist party but had become a Christian and had renounced violence,

This man and Jeevan's friend got together and for the next several weeks continually tried to tell Jeevan about their new found faith. Jeevan told me he felt like a rat in a trap, every time he turned around there was one of them. One night he was with the ex-communist who challenged him. He said, "Jeevan you admit you have tried everything and have no peace. I challenge you to ask Jesus if he is real and alive".

Jeevan got on his knees and snarled, “Jesus I don’t believe in you but if you are real prove it to me now, not when I am twenty, forty or sixty, right now’! A wave of peace went through him and when he got up he knew he would never be the same again.

He been living with an uncle who now threw him out and his family refused to support him. God miraculously provided for him and he attended theological college. He and an American missionary, Bob Crow, spent several years in a small room writing the first study Bible, in India, since William Carey. It was written in English and Telegu and now has been translated into other Indian Languages, including Hindi. He offers a digital copy, at no charge, to anyone wanting to translate it into any other language. See www.graceministriesindia.com for further information.

When his father died he left several millions of dollars in Jeevan’s name on one stipulation – Jeevan reject Christ and reconvert to Hinduism.

Jeevan and Esther live in a modest house and he has no intention of receiving this inheritance. A powerful, principled man of God.

Next stop was Hyderabad and a visit to Operation Mobilization’s India headquarters. It is said that 25% of the world’s missionaries have received some of their training though OM. Again their start is very interesting.

George Verwer and a friend were always getting into trouble, they were real problem kids. They went past a house every day on the way to school and a woman living in that house prayed daily they would be reformed and start a Christian ministry. In 1957 that prayer was answered and they started Operation Mobilization which has grown to a team of almost 7000 operating in 118 countries. What an innovative ministry which came into existence because of the prayer of one dedicated woman, who saw potential where her neighbors only saw problems.

If you are looking for real adventure, or just want to be inspired, visit www.om.org. It could take you around the world and your life could make a real difference. Or maybe God’s plan for you is to pray for one troubled youth.

My last stop was in Nagpur, which means the place of the snakes – I visited Prem Sewa Siskshan Sangh (Ministry of Love Education Society) which was founded by Frank Juelich in 1982. Frank wanted to help underprivileged Indian Children. It has grown into a boy’s and a girl’s home and school, with the kids coming from all over India, plus two smaller schools for local children. A place where over 1000 children received an excellent education in an atmosphere of acceptance and love. I spent three wonderful days here.

The second day Bapu, the administer, was showing me around the boy’s home when a huge snake suddenly raced right in front of me. I thought it was a python so my only thought was to get a picture. Bapu started yelling in Hindi while the snake went up a drain pipe and onto the roof. I then learned it was not a python, but a giant cobra, fully

20 feet long. I had no idea cobras could be anywhere near that big, so didn't realize the danger. Whew!

As I said at the beginning this whole trip showed me, time and time again, just what God can accomplish through one individual, or small group. I was inspired and I hope you are to. Who knows what God can accomplish through the power of one.