

May 2015

Meeting Heroes



Pastor Gopal and family in front of the church building next to his house.

I must confess that I was a bit conflicted emotionally about Bangladesh. I had not ever visited a place like this and was concerned on several levels - spiritually, emotionally and physically. But then I got to meet people like Gopal.

Faith that will not be silenced

When Pastor Gopal took his place for the interview session, I wasn't sure what to expect. I had heard that many of the believers and leaders had experienced some sort of "persecution" but I didn't know the details. What would he be like? Would he be a tough, John-Wayne-type figure who is "bigger than life?" Or would he be a hesitant victim who still carried obvious emotional or physical scars from his trials?

He was quiet, but not shy as he began to answer our questions. "I come from a conservative Hindu background. The

day that I received Lord Jesus as my Savior, everything changed. My family and I were mistreated by the Hindu people who lived around us. They prevented me from going to the pond to wash. They wouldn't allow me to bring water home from the pond. Some vendors would not sell to us. Our children are denied government education scholarships because we are Christians. And now that I am a pastor, I carry the burden of those I serve. For example, we do not have a place to bury our dead. We don't want to follow the Hindu cremation customs but we have no property for a graveyard."

What we saw in his eyes

Love. God has stirred Pastor Gopal's heart to love those who have mistreated him. Like the other pastors and leaders we interviewed, he told us that love is both the message and the means for sharing the gospel with his Hindu neighbors. Some who used to hate him have become followers of Jesus because they have both seen and heard the message of love.

You could see in his eyes, and in the eyes of other disciples of Christ, that there is a deep joy in his heart that comes from an unshakeable faith in the One who loves him.

Jesus is the answer. Really!

These stories from the mission field are a powerful testimony to the reality of our faith and of the resurrected Lord Jesus who is it's Author and Finisher. He is not just the God of the Bible Belt. He is not the Savior of a certain demographic group. He is followed by punk rockers and politicians, doctors and day laborers, artists and astronauts, burger flippers and belly dancers, cops, carpenters, salesmen, seamstresses, tax collectors and fishermen. He is a living Savior to Navajo, Czech, Belgian, Tlingit, and Ditsea. Every people group, every tribe, nation and language will appear before His throne on that Great Day.

People like you

I got some very positive feedback from someone recently. They said, "I've watched all your videos because they are so encouraging. The missionary stories have shown me that, really, anyone can do missions!" I agreed that there really is nothing "special" about any of us. Then I hastened to add, "However, not everyone is called to be a foreign missionary." (Just as not everyone is called to be a teacher or a mechanic.) God does have a say in this after all!

But our videos affirmed an important truth that we all need to keep in mind: God wants to use you. Yes, even you! Sorry, but you aren't special. But **God** has something for you to do that will make some contribution to the work that He is doing, so that others can be saved. You can do anything God calls you to do.

With His call, you could even be like Pastor Gopal.

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