



May the goodness of the Lord be evident to you and your loved ones  
as you enjoy the summer and the happy traditions it brings!

July 1, 2015

Dearest Ministry Prayer Partner,

I saw your love. I witnessed your compassion, your commitment to the Harvest.

Because of what God is doing through you . . . India was amazing.

I'm back now, with a heart full of joy and anticipation for the work the Lord is accomplishing, and will accomplish, through us there. . . . Once again, India lived up to great expectations and yet also revealed many sad realities. But the bottom line is this: God's people are brimming with enthusiasm and eager to do more Harvest work than ever!

And in this country of one-and-a-quarter-billion people, God brought me to one man. One man, with an astonishing story. A beautiful, living, walking illustration of the power of God in the extraordinary land of India. . . .

I'll call him Rajiv. He's an older man. To look at him, you might not find him exceptional. But then you learn the truth—beginning with this surprising fact:

Rajiv cannot read or write.

Yet he is one of the most powerful and effective pastors in the Bihar state of India!

How does it happen? Through his faithful wife. She does all the reading for him every day, and as he speaks, she does his writing too. It's an absolute partnership of Bible study and sermon preparation!

But of course, while an illiterate pastor is extraordinary, Rajiv is not alone in his illiteracy. This is commonplace in many parts of India. He grew up in a tribal culture where education was not a high priority. Life itself was his training ground (which works, in a way, because today life itself is the "playing field" where he contends for the faith!).

From his earliest childhood, Rajiv learned to relate to forces both natural and supernatural. He became a good farmer . . . a good shepherd . . . and ultimately, a good witch doctor! Eventually he found himself a respected leader in his tribal circle—a tribe of more than 350,000 people! In fact, he is a star of Bihar, the largest and fastest growing province in India—more than 105 million people, and growing!

Rajiv became what the Indians call a "spiritual man." He could literally walk on fire and not get burned. He could stir a large boiling pot of rice with his hands and arms. And he could teach these practices to others.

But there was a lot of sadness and darkness to life. It was oppressive. It was harsh in its treatment of people. Ultimately, even though he was a "spiritual man," he was spiritually empty.



Then one day, by the grace of God, Rajiv heard someone talking about a man who had lots of powers: power over water, power over nature, power over life and death.

There was no literature to read about this strange phenomenon—and if there had been, Rajiv couldn't read it anyway. But he wanted to learn more about this man—and about His followers. The more he explored, the more impressed he was. Until finally one day he decided to give his life to Jesus Christ as His personal Savior and Lord.

From that day to this, Rajiv says he has found those original stories to be totally true: Jesus is everything he heard about . . . and much more!

And he has devoted his life to helping others hear the story of Jesus. Rajiv and all his family are involved in ministry. He pastors a church, but his heart beats for the multitudes of his tribe who don't yet know Jesus—and couldn't read a Bible if you gave them one.

There's a way to reach them, though—a way to share Jesus with them: through video.

As I talked with Rajiv, God stirred a passion in my heart for reaching India's illiterate multitudes with his story and the story of others who are being transformed by the power of God's Word.

A few friends who have dedicated their lives to producing Christian video will help us. They'll record Rajiv's story and a number of others—giving them an opportunity to tell their story personally to countless hundreds of thousands across India and beyond.

People will hear, for the very first time, the amazing Good News about Jesus.

They'll learn He's real. He's alive. He's the Son of God. He's all-powerful. He's all-loving. He's totally available to give the gift of abundant life—and eternal life—to anyone who comes to Him!

Rajiv is not the only beautiful story in India. I met more than 60 people at our training school for church-planters who have amazing stories of God's miraculous touch in their lives. We will not simply swoop in with cameras, shoot a few stories and swoop back out. Our plan is to set up an ongoing video recording project to tell each of these stories powerfully.

Some of them took my breath away as I listened to them share, with thrilling passion, what God has done in their lives. These are true heroes—people doing the work of the Lord in the midst of India's vast pool of humanity with almost nothing in the way of personal comforts or even basic tools and resources.

I wish you could have met Vinod. He's just 21, but he is already an indispensable partner in Rajiv's ministry. In his youth, you wouldn't have predicted this for him. He had given up on education—in fact, specifically on Christian education—because a couple of friends who went to Bible school were transformed into pompous, self-righteous know-it-alls! They seemed to despise the very people they were trained to serve!



But by God's grace, Vinod connected with our ministry in India. As he listened to the teaching during my visit, he was so moved by the Spirit of God, tears flooded his eyes. He was filled with a new, desperate passion for study. As we left, he was pleading for us to return—and often!

What a joy to see men and women drinking in God's Word, being dazzled by it! Their hearts are ablaze, and they are determined to hang on to what God has given them! They don't want to use Bible knowledge to become superior to others; they are zealous about taking the Good News to their countrymen and seeing God's love transfigure their country! They are fervently seeking to grow in their own spirits even as they reach the lost masses around them.

How can such a nationwide transfiguration take place? Hebrews 11 holds the clue.

Here, the biblical writer begins to describe the exploits of faith in the history of God's people, starting with Noah and the patriarchs. Soon he seems to realize that this is going to take a very long time—so he switches to somewhat of a “bullet point list” of the heroic achievements of faith:

“And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah of David and Samuel and the prophets.”

Now look at the one-liners he uses as “epitaphs” for the heroes that follow: By faith, he says, they conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

What a mix! The Spirit places our ordinary, everyday opportunities right next to great heroics! Simple “acts of righteousness,” humble “obtained promises,” and “from weakness were made strong” appear right alongside the colossal achievements: “conquered kingdoms,” “shut the mouths of lions,” “quenched the power of fire”!

Why are they all together? Because they all are exploits of faith! Some may seem to us to be mild and lowly, but to God they are all equally important, equally heroic!

But God still isn't finished. He goes on to feature the seeming “defeats of faith” right along with the exploits! Others were tortured, he writes, not denying their convictions. Still others suffered mocking and scourging, chains and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; the list goes on!

The point is powerfully made! Everyone described gained approval through their deeds of faith” (Hebrews 11:39)!

When I look at India . . . when I look at the patriarchs of Hebrews 11 . . . when I look at you and me . . . I find myself asking, What exploits of faith will we do? How great is our faith? And how powerfully can God use us in the Harvest fields?



We may never have the opportunity to shut the mouths of lions, or quench the power of fire. But we can “do acts of righteousness,” and “obtain promises.” We may not be sawn in two, but we have been tempted, and we can resist temptation!

Our faith is as golden as the faith of the Hebrews 11 personalities in the eyes of the Lord! So is the faith of our brothers in India, in Cuba, in Spain, in Ukraine, in China, in Liberia and everywhere else we march in faith!

However great the heroics . . . however uneventful the obedience .  
. . . however painful the seeming defeat . . . if it is of faith, it is solid  
gold in the light of eternity.

What act of faith does God call us to today? Reaching vast expanses of lost humanity in India through video is a beautiful place to start. But it is only one small component of the great work God has graciously raised up through you and us together.

So I warmly urge you to give as generously as possible today. Help us reach India—and so many other nations where God has divinely opened the door and presented the “faith-exploit opportunity”!

Sincerely in Christ,

Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. When I saw what God had begun through those 60 ardent church-planters in India—how dedicated they are to the work of the Lord in their country, but how lacking they are in the resources they need—I made a faith decision, which I pray you will approve: I committed our ministry to support them. Our modest contributions will be like treasure to them—empowering them to finally devote themselves to the work that God has called them to!

Your generous gift today will help us reach India through these devoted men and women and through our new video outreach, in addition to all of our work together worldwide. Thank you again!