



touching lives, transforming communities



Gift Catalog

Dear Friends,

"...he felt compassion for him..." Luke 10:33

As a Samaritan approached the beaten, almost-dead Jew, he could have kept trudging along. No one would have blamed him, for in that time Jews and Samaritans didn't associate. He could have ignored the wounded man's plight; he could have kept up his journey's pace.

But this was a Good Samaritan. A man who was willing to reach outside of his own culture, his own comforts and his own schedule in order to give compassionate aid to a broken soul. The Scripture explains that he "soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.'" Luke 10:34-35, NLT.

And in that simple parable Jesus gave us an example to follow. Our lives should be defined by compassionate, joyful and even sacrificial generosity to "neighbors" – even if they live in a culture very different from our own.

Certainly, you can find such opportunities around the corner – perhaps in your own community there are people who need love, joy and attention. But in the pages that follow, I'd like to invite you to think globally as well – to extend your Christian compassion to souls half-a-world away.

From the need for church buildings in thatch-roofed villages to the printing of Bibles for poor farmers, from the care of unsponsored children to the digging of clean water wells – I see this as a catalog of opportunities for global Good Samaritans.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these opportunities!

Gratefully yours,



Samuel D. Stephens
President, IGL



BEGIN HERE

This catalog is fundamentally different than most gift-giving opportunities! Instead of ordering what you like and having it show up on your doorstep, the India Gospel League Gift Catalog allows you to "order" things you care about for the people who need them most. That means, instead of having a box shipped to your home, your "order" is really a donation that purchases the item for someone in South Asia. Then, you'll receive three things in return for your gift:

- 1 **The satisfaction of knowing that your gift is changing lives across the world.** What better way to celebrate the love of Christ than to share His blessings with others?
- 2 **A tax-deductible receipt.** All gifts given through this catalog (or generally to India Gospel League) are tax-deductible for income tax purposes, as we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
- 3 **To our friends with gift orders totaling \$75 or more,** watch for a special thank you gift to arrive in the mail from IGL!



There are three ways to place your "order":

- ➡ Tear out the form in the middle of this catalog and fill it out, then mail it in.
- ➡ Call 888.352.4451 (our U.S. office) and make your contribution by phone.
- ➡ Visit www.IGLWorld.org and select the projects you wish to support.

Mailing Address:

India Gospel League / Gift Catalog
1521 Georgetown Road, Suite 305
Hudson, OH 44236

"THE LORD IS NEAR TO THE BROKENHEARTED AND SAVES THE CRUSHED IN SPIRIT."

- PSALM 34:18

The following testimony is brought to you straight from the field. Pastor Abel's testimony is a powerful testament to the Lord's ability to change lives and transform communities.

"BECAUSE OF HIM, I AM ALIVE!"

WAS GOING TO END MY LIFE IN JUNE OF 1992.

In India, there is a sub-culture that believes life is determined in a sort of "fixed timeline" – which means that if a person is born at the wrong time, they will have something tragic happen in their lives. This was my situation.

My parents had been told to kill me as an infant because, "if you allow him to live, he will bring something bad to you!" Thankfully, my parents, even though they believed the omen, were unwilling to kill their child. The author of my "fixed timeline" calendar told my parents there was no remedy for me, no hope. In fact, the man told them I would die at age 16.

I attributed all of the problems in my life to the calendar, to its inescapable prophecies. When I was three, I was beside my mother one night and she suddenly sat up, coughing violently. Then blood started coming out of her and she collapsed on top of me, dead.

From that point, my father started to drink, and in order to buy alcohol, he sold everything our family owned, including my bed.

And the trouble kept coming. I fell into a furnace. My stomach and hands had severe burns, and a doctor told me I should not have survived. Another time, I was electrocuted, which paralyzed me and after a month of being in a coma-like state, I awoke without any memory. It was six months before my memories came back and I was fully aware of who I was, and what had happened to me.



Other people started to attribute their suffering to me as well. Two of my close friends committed suicide, and their families blamed their actions on me. One of my teachers sustained significant injury after scolding me. My uncle invited me for a visit, and within a half an hour his mother-in-law passed away. Friends and family started rejecting me, neighbors wouldn't even let me enter their homes.

By the age of 15, I was starting to agree with the author of my calendar. This life needed to end. No one could help me. No god would help me.

**This life needed to end.
No one could help me.**

On the 18th of every month, a water dam is flushed near my village – so I figured if I committed suicide at the dam, my body could wash away – and no one would know what had happened. I would just disappear from their lives forever. My plans were set.

(Abel's testimony is continued on page 30.)

"Lord, our Savior and Redeemer, we pray that many more like Abel would be saved from the darkness and oppression devouring this world. We pray that those who are held in captivity to this world system would be set free by Your redeeming grace. We pray Your message of salvation would spread far and wide throughout South Asia, changing hundreds of thousands of lives. Please help us to be diligent in the work you have laid out for us to advance Christ's Kingdom.

Amen!"

EVANGELISM & CHURCH PLANTING



SHARE
JESUS WITH UNREACHED VILLAGES

BAREFOOT PASTOR SPONSORSHIP

You can join the ministry of a native church planting pastor for two years, as he establishes local churches in multiple villages that need a gospel witness. After two years, the pastors become self-sustaining, supported by their new church. Then they continue to carry the message throughout the region!



\$100

barefoot pastor sponsorship

**two-year commitment*

bicycle for pastor

motorcycle for pastor

**\$100/mo or \$2,400
for two years**

**\$100
\$1,000**

You will receive a profile, testimony, and picture of your sponsored pastors, along with quarterly updates on their ministry work.

WOMEN WITH A MISSION

The Women with a Mission (WWM) program is focused on raising women leaders in South Asia, to strengthen local churches and help in their outreach to the community. You could support this movement by sponsoring one of the WWM organizers. Your monthly support will help cover the costs of time and travel as the area organizer trains, equips and encourages women leaders in surrounding villages.



\$50

WWM organizer sponsorship

\$50/mo

TOOLS FOR CHURCH PLANTING

For the average villager in India, the cost to purchase a Bible is equal to three days' wages. Your gifts can help church planters grow and multiply their ministry impact through outreach materials and worship aids.



\$75

LITERATURE

bible w/study guide and notes	\$5
discipleship training material	\$5
leadership training material	\$15
gospel tracts	\$8

*1,000 pieces

WORSHIP AIDS

worship/prayer mat	\$10
gas lantern	\$60
musical instrument	\$75
p.a. system	\$460

BIBLE STUDENT SPONSORSHIP

With your sponsorship, young adults who love the Lord and have shown particular promise in their Biblical studies will continue their training at a post-secondary Bible college. Your gift provides this student with tuition, room and board, books and supplies.

bible student sponsorship

*one-year commitment



\$50

\$50/mo or \$600 for one year

CHILDREN'S GOSPEL CLUBS

Children attend clubs that resemble "Vacation Bible School" but are organized into small groups that meet to study the Bible and pray for an entire year. In 2016, IGL is working to reach 800,000 children through gospel clubs. How many of them can you help?



\$1

club materials

\$1 for one child for one year

CHURCH BUILDING

Once a group of believers reaches twenty baptized adults, a new church is formed. A Prayer Shed is often a first meeting space and ministry facility for a new village church, and a "Life Center" is a building that can be used not only for church services, but also for a variety of community helps, such as skills training, after-school care for children, and medical clinics.

prayer shed life center

**\$2,650
\$8,000**

TRAINING CONFERENCES

FOR PASTORS, WOMEN, & YOUTH

Many village pastors live in remote locations and have little or no access to fellowship, training or Christian resources. IGL provides conferences for pastors, women's ministry leaders and youth workers to help them network with each other, find encouragement and do intensive theological and practical ministry training.



\$55

conference costs for one attendee \$55

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



LOVE
CHILDREN IN NEED

SPONSOR A CHILD

As a child sponsor, you have the unique opportunity to change the life of a child forever. You will be personally connected with a child living in one of IGL's 22 children's homes. They will write to you and pray for you by name. Your child's care includes family-style living, Christian house parents, nutritious meals, medical care and an education.



\$30

child sponsorship

\$30/mo

You will receive your child's profile in the mail upon receipt of donation.
Questions? Call the IGL office at 888.352.4451.

GIFTS FOR SPONSORED CHILDREN

bible	\$5	soccer ball	\$5	*boy
water bottle	\$5	cricket set	\$10	*boy
stationery	\$5	necklace	\$5	*girl
snack box	\$5	hair accessory	\$5	*girl
board game	\$15	jump rope	\$5	*girl
new outfit	\$20	craft kit	\$10	*girl
birthday party	\$50	doll	\$15	*girl
Christmas/Easter dinner	\$15 per child, \$275 for entire home			
house parent chooses gift	\$20			

When you donate one of these gifts for your sponsored child, please include their name or ID# listed on their profile or any recent letters you have received from the child.

EDUCATION

Your gift toward the education of a child will literally change his or her future. IGL provides education in a number of settings and your gift will educate children in IGL children's homes, day care centers and after-school study centers as well as in the IGL community college and nursing school.



\$1200

school supplies
community college fund
day care center facility
benches and desks

\$15-25
\$100
\$1,200
\$2,500

HOME FOR CHILDREN OR FAMILIES IN NEED

Millions of families and children live in dilapidated huts made of a thatched roof and mud floors that are easily destroyed during monsoon season. Your gift will provide refuge for these people in the form of a durable, concrete home that will house them for years to come.



\$4200

family home
children's cottage
children's home

\$4,200
\$45,000
\$350,000

CLOTHING FOR CHILDREN

When children come to an IGL home, they come with just the clothes on their backs which, in some cases, are just tattered rags. You can provide an outfit for a child that he or she will receive upon arrival and, what's more, the comfort and security that comes along with being fully clothed and cared for.



\$20

clothing for one child

\$20

OTHER CHILD CARE OPTIONS

Unable to commit to sponsoring a child at this time? Give what you can to support the unsponsored children living in IGL homes.



unsponsored children fund

any amount

CREATIVE WAYS TO USE THIS CATALOG

- ➡ Give your children an allowance to “spend,” so they can select and pray about the projects.
- ➡ Set up a family matching gift for kids/teens who contribute their own money.
- ➡ Share a project from the catalog with your Sunday school or small group.
- ➡ Sell one unneeded possession to turn “junk” into “treasure.”
- ➡ Honor a friend or family member by making a gift in his or her name!
- ➡ **Share the vision to reach India by passing this catalog along to a friend.**

GIFT CATALOG ORDER FORM

To order, fill out the following pages, remove them from the catalog and return them, along with your donation, in the enclosed envelope.

WHY RECURRING GIFTS MATTER

A monthly donation toward IGL's most urgent needs is a lifeline that IGL relies on to meet very specific, timely needs.

We understand that each resource entrusted to us has the potential to touch a life and help transform a community. We optimize gifts and distribute them where they are most needed and base this decision on prayer and the constant, first-hand evaluation of our indigenous staff.

IGL monitors each initiative with care and ensures that donations go specifically where requested or most needed. We also do all we can to keep our overhead costs low. In fact, 85 percent of all donations is used to serve the men, women and children of India. This means that only 15 percent is used for administrative and fundraising costs combined, which is lower than the industry standard by about 3 percent.

recurring gift

(any amount)

check the 'recurring gift' box on the enclosed form and fill out the appropriate information or call the IGL office at 888.352.4451 to speak to someone about your pledge.

ABOUT INDIA GOSPEL LEAGUE

India Gospel League exists to holistically and indigenously embrace and empower the people of India, regardless of caste, through the power and love of Jesus Christ. IGL, NA is a registered 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible. Financial accountability is maintained through careful monitoring by both India and U.S. staff, our Board of Directors as well as the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.



“WHERE THERE IS NO VISION THE PEOPLE PERISH.”

Proverbs 29:18



SHARE

EVANGELISM & CHURCH PLANTING

Gift item	Qty	Cost	Total
barefoot pastor sponsorship	_____	\$100/mo	\$ _____
bicycle for pastor	_____	\$100	\$ _____
motorcycle for pastor	_____	\$1,000	\$ _____
wmm organizer sponsorship	_____	\$50/mo	\$ _____
<i>tools for worship</i>			
bible w/study guide and notes	_____	\$5	\$ _____
discipleship training material	_____	\$5	\$ _____
leadership training material	_____	\$15	\$ _____
gospel tracts (1,000 pcs.)	_____	\$8	\$ _____
worship/prayer mat	_____	\$10	\$ _____
gas lantern	_____	\$60	\$ _____
musical instrument	_____	\$75	\$ _____
p.a. system	_____	\$460	\$ _____
bible student sponsorship	_____	\$50/mo	\$ _____
children's gospel clubs	_____	\$1	\$ _____
prayer shed	_____	\$2,650	\$ _____
life center	_____	\$8,000	\$ _____
training conference costs	_____	\$55	\$ _____

LOVE

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

child sponsorship	_____	\$30/mo	\$ _____
<i>gifts for sponsored children</i>			
my child's code is: _____			
bible	_____	\$5	\$ _____
water bottle	_____	\$5	\$ _____
stationery	_____	\$5	\$ _____
snack box	_____	\$5	\$ _____
board game	_____	\$15	\$ _____
new outfit	_____	\$20	\$ _____
birthday party	_____	\$50	\$ _____
soccer ball	_____	\$5	\$ _____
cricket set	_____	\$10	\$ _____
necklace	_____	\$5	\$ _____
hair accessory	_____	\$5	\$ _____
jump rope	_____	\$5	\$ _____
craft kit	_____	\$10	\$ _____
doll	_____	\$15	\$ _____
holiday dinner for child/home	_____	\$15/\$275	\$ _____
house parent chooses gift	_____	\$20	\$ _____
<i>education</i>			
school supplies	_____	\$15-25	\$ _____
community college fund	_____	\$100	\$ _____
day care center facility	_____	\$1,200	\$ _____
benches and desks	_____	\$2,500	\$ _____
clothes for one child	_____	\$20	\$ _____

home for children or families in need

family home	_____	\$4,200	\$ _____
children's cottage	_____	\$45,000	\$ _____
children's home	_____	\$350,000	\$ _____
unsponsored children fund	_____	any amt	\$ _____
general fund	_____	any amt	\$ _____
urgent needs fund	_____	any amt	\$ _____

CARE

MEDICAL OUTREACH

nursing student sponsorship	_____	\$50/mo	\$ _____
nursing school textbooks	_____	\$55	\$ _____
wheelchair	_____	\$85	\$ _____
Sharon Hospital fund	_____	any amt	\$ _____
medical camp	_____	\$550	\$ _____
surgery	_____	\$250	\$ _____
<i>leprosy care</i>			
shoes for leprosy victim	_____	\$25	\$ _____
meal for leper colony	_____	\$400	\$ _____
housing for leprosy victim	_____	\$4,200	\$ _____

SERVE

RURAL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

sewing machine	_____	\$120	\$ _____
adult literacy training	_____	\$5	\$ _____
micro-credit loan	_____	\$150	\$ _____
<i>livestock</i>			
goat	_____	\$85	\$ _____
25 chickens & coop	_____	\$100	\$ _____
cow	_____	\$600	\$ _____
nutritious meals for a month	_____	\$10	\$ _____
clean water well without overhead tank	_____	\$1,250	\$ _____
clean water well with overhead tank	_____	\$2,500	\$ _____
skills center training	_____	\$3,500/yr	\$ _____
share of skills center training	_____	\$25/mo	\$ _____
adopt-a-village (5 yr. commitment)	_____	\$1,250/mo	\$ _____

☐ give this gift where it's most needed on the ground in India. \$ _____

☐ give this one-time gift specifically toward _____ \$ _____

☐ I'd like to give a monthly recurring gift. \$ _____

*designate an area of ministry
or specific item (optional): _____

Fill out your personal and credit card
information on the next page.

total \$ _____

MAKE A GIFT IN SOMEONE'S NAME

Please send me _____ personalized gift cards that I can send to the gift honoree(s) to notify them that I have purchased a gift from this catalog in their honor.

(Use a separate sheet for additional names)

*Must be received by **December 10** for the cards to arrive by Christmas

Gift Honoree Names	Gifts
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

FILL OUT YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____ Email _____

- ☐ I would like to receive email updates from IGL.
- ☐ Please send me additional information about IGL in the mail.
- ☐ I would like to pay for my gift catalog donations with my credit/debit card.
(IGL accepts Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express.)

I, _____ (name as it appears on card),
authorize India Gospel League to charge my credit card for the amount
of \$ _____.

Card Number: _____ Exp Date: _____

Authorized Signature _____

Make checks payable to India Gospel League.

PRAYER POINTS FOR INDIA

1

That Christ's name would be exalted, so that every Indian would hear about Him.

It is still a sad reality in India that vast numbers of people – millions in fact – have never been introduced to Jesus Christ. Furthermore, some language groups have no translation of the Scriptures.

2

That God's kingdom would extend into every village through a local church.

India boasts more than 600,000 villages, most of them rural and poor. Most of these villages are dominated by idol worship and organized according to the caste system.

3

That God's servants would be strong in the face of persecution.

Even though India is the world's largest democracy, there are many places in India in which residents are hostile to the advance of Christianity. Our barefoot pastors sometimes face threats and violence.

4

That the Spirit's power would continue to be present in the lives of believers.

The growth of the churches is mostly due to the one-to-one evangelistic efforts of the average Indian believer. Pray for continued passion and boldness as they witness.

What About Sri Lanka?

We often reference the work in "South Asia" rather than just India. This is because our efforts expand beyond India's borders! Particularly in Sri Lanka, the island nation off the tip of India, IGL mission bases have been established and hundreds of churches have been planted. There, IGL is known as the "Island Gospel League."

MEDICAL OUTREACH



CARE
FOR THE SICK

NURSING STUDENT SPONSORSHIP

Some adults in the villages IGL reaches have lived their entire lives without ever meeting a nurse or doctor. Your sponsorship will train one young woman to return to the villages and give basic medical care, immunizations and preventative care.



\$50

nursing student sponsorship

**two-year commitment*

**\$50/mo or \$1,200
for two years**

NURSING SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks and professional journals are needed to support new curriculum in all areas of nursing practice including medical, surgical, OB/GYN, pediatric, ICU and community health nursing.

medical textbooks

\$55

WHEELCHAIR

Your gift toward a wheelchair for an IGL patient is literally a life-changing tool —many disabled Indian villagers are relegated to streetside mats or stuck in their homes, for lack of any sort of medical help or tools.



\$85

wheelchair

\$85

SHARON HOSPITAL FUND

Historically, missions in India have neglected and ignored the people IGL lives among. Seventy percent of India's population—the rural villages—receive only two percent of India's total mission resources.

In light of this, IGL offers free or affordable health care providing a full range of medical care in rural India. Your gift will build diagnostic centers across the country and provide care for patients at Sharon Hospital and Cancer Center including critical immunizations, maternal and pediatric care and general treatment for otherwise life-threatening illnesses.

Sharon Hospital fund

any amount

MEDICAL CAMP

For people living in the most remote parts of India, the nearest health care center may be more than 100 miles away on foot! Your gift will provide on-site clinics in rural villages where adults and children receive care, some for the first time in their lives. Your donation for one medical camp will bring aid to hundreds of villagers.

medical camp

\$550



Any Amount



\$550

SURGERIES

Right now, hundreds of victims of polio, cancer, cleft lips and palettes and more have no access to a surgery that could easily help them. Your gift provides corrective surgery and rehabilitation for those who cannot afford it.

surgery



\$250

\$250

LEPROSY CARE

Once a person with leprosy receives medication, it only takes two weeks until they are no longer contagious. But in India, when someone finds they have leprosy, their own family members disown them, consider them cursed and send them away from their homes. Your gift will provide food, special shoes, housing and other needs for victims who are denied the most basic of human rights due to the disease.

shoes for a leprosy victim

\$25

meal for members of a leper colony

\$400

housing for a leprosy victim

\$4,200



\$25

RURAL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SEWING MACHINE

Due to the immense amount of work it takes to run a home without electricity, running water or a sufficient income, many rural villagers spend all their time dealing with life's necessities, making them unable to "get ahead." Your gift will enable a family to not only tailor their own clothes, but even to start a personal business out of their home.



\$120

sewing machine

\$120

ADULT LITERACY TRAINING

Illiteracy has been pegged as one of the main causes for the socio-economic degradation many villages suffer. Your donation will provide materials and training for one man or woman to learn to read and write.



\$5

literacy training

\$5

SEW
THE POOREST OF THE POOR

MICRO-CREDIT BUSINESS LOAN

Enable a woman living in extreme poverty with a small loan and the support to start a business that will sustain her and her family. When the loans are repaid, they are recycled to other women. Your one-time gift could be given hundreds of times!

loan



\$150

\$150

NUTRITIOUS MEALS

India is no stranger to the devastating effects of ravaging hunger. "A child raised in India is far more likely to be malnourished than one from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe or Somalia, the planet's poorest countries," UNdata* found.

Sanitation and malnutrition are major problems in stunting the growth of nearly 50 percent (or 65 million) of children in South Asia under the age of 5, even affecting one third of the children from the country's wealthiest families. We need your help to meet the most basic needs of those who cannot find even one substantial meal a day. Your gift will provide warm, nutritious meals to families and children without.

**UN Statistical Databases*



\$10

feed one person for one month

\$10

LIVESTOCK

Livestock does much more than feed the families who receive it. The animals provide the family with additional income by providing offspring and dairy products that can be sold for a profit.

goat
25 chickens and a coop
cow



\$600

\$85
\$100
\$600

CLEAN WATER WELL

Roughly two-thirds of the population of India does not have adequate sanitation. Largely for lack of clean water, 1.3 million children under the age of 5 die each year. But they don't have to.

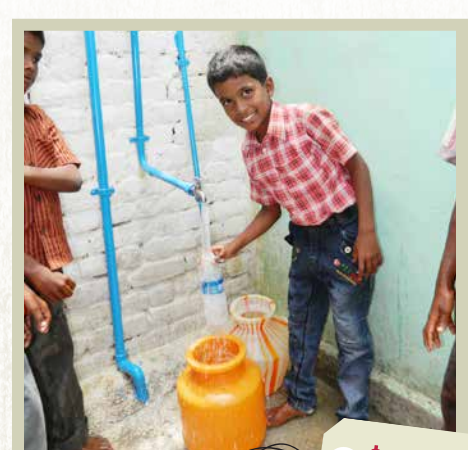
Your gift toward a clean water well will cut a village's child death rate in half and eliminate the need to collect infected, polluted surface or stream water.

clean water well

**without overhead storage tank*

clean water well

**with overhead storage tank*



\$2500

\$1,250

\$2,500

SKILLS CENTER AND TRAINING

For villagers with little or no access to education or the opportunity to learn any income-generating skills, the inability to support their family is almost unbearable. Your gift will provide skills training, supplies, materials and ongoing support to help villagers learn a trade such as sewing or tailoring, dairy farming, construction and more.

skills center
share of skills center



\$25

\$3,500/yr
\$25, \$50, or \$100/mo

ADOPT-A-VILLAGE

Adopting a village is an “all of the above” approach to IGL’s projects. Through an AAV partnership, you provide the means for a new church and its pastor to bring a host of transformative changes to their community; including skills training, medical care, children’s ministry, evangelism, nutrition and lifestyle training, women’s ministry groups, clean water, housing upgrades, a Life Center and more. Each AAV program is based on a detailed five year plan tailored to that particular village. Detailed reports, testimonies and pictures of progress are sent to sponsors quarterly. Also, AAV supporters are invited to visit their adopted village during the five year partnership, depending on accessibility and security considerations.

monthly AAV sponsorship
five-year AAV sponsorship



\$1250

\$1,250/mo for 5 years
\$75,000

ADOPT-A-REGION

Adopt-a-Region is a large scale commitment that touches countless lives. “Regions” are roughly equivalent to “counties” in the United States. Due to India’s high population, many unreached regions are home to hundreds of thousands of people – perhaps even a few million.



India Gospel League’s leadership team carefully considers where God is directing, and when a partner comes forward with interest in adopting an entire region, the leaders put together a specific proposal. This could involve a mission base, numerous barefoot pastor sponsorships, church buildings, rural development projects, direct evangelism efforts and children’s ministries, homes for needy children, training conferences for nearby pastors, material printing and distribution – whatever is needed in that particular place to bring the light of Christ and a sustainable, lasting Christian presence.

Most Adopt-a-Region projects involve between \$250,000 - \$750,000 over a three to five year period. For donors interested in learning more about IGL’s Adopt-a-Region program, we recommend beginning with a call to our Hudson, Ohio office, where we can get you the most up-to-date information about available opportunities.

Some of our Adopt-a-Region projects to date have been sponsored by individuals, businesses, churches and even multiple churches working together.

Despite the rapid church growth in South Asia today, there are still hundreds of regions with little or no Christian influence.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. – Acts 1:8

THEN, EVERYTHING CHANGED

A WEEK BEFORE I INTENDED TO END MY LIFE, an IGL pastor, Sundardas, came to my village and began ministry work. I knew he was praying for people, and I didn't want to talk to him. But one afternoon I was waiting in a crowded bus station and ended up standing next to him. I tried to avoid conversation at first, but he talked to me anyway. I remember three phrases he said: **"Jesus loves you, has a bright future for you, and you need to accept Him."** I wasn't interested, and we parted ways.

But that night I couldn't stop thinking about those phrases. I tried to drown them out with Hindu songs, but all night long, the words just kept repeating in my head. I knew I needed to speak with the pastor again to find out what those phrases actually meant.

A few days later, I waited for him at the bus stop, knowing he was due to return to our village. The moment he saw me he smiled and said, "I knew that you would come." I was shocked! I asked him, "How did you know I would be here?" He said, "Because from the moment I shared with you about Christ, I have been praying for you."

I was very surprised to hear this, and I asked him to explain the three phrases to me. He said, "If you want to get a full answer, you need to come to my church." I said, "I cannot come. I won't come." He answered, "If you won't come, I cannot explain these three phrases clearly, because we don't have enough time right now."

I reluctantly agreed. The pastor gave me some pocket money to be sure I could get to the church. And even though I didn't really want to go, because he had given me the money, I felt obligated. I remember thinking, "I don't want him to think I'm a thief!"

I took a chair in the very last row. I listened to the whole sermon and afterward the pastor saw me in the back, and invited me to his home. There they spread a table and seated me in a place of honor. It was so beautiful - I had never seen such a nice table and chairs in my life. And the food was so delicious! I had never tasted things like that before. The pastor and his family shared so much kindness with me.

All the while I had still not received specific answers about those phrases, but upon returning home, I came to this conclusion: from my childhood, no one had ever accepted me and loved me or given me food in such a way. And I imagined that if a human who claimed to follow Jesus was able to love like that, how much greater is the God they follow.

According to my life calendar, **I was supposed to die at age 16. But instead, that year I started following Jesus.** My suicidal thoughts changed! Previously I'd always felt like a voice inside of me was telling me how bad of a person I was, how much I needed to die and that no one wanted me. That voice was gone! But what should I do with my life? I asked Pastor Sundardas for advice. He

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suggested I go to Bible College and learn how to be a pastor!

I had basically no possessions - not even a bed. So I took my Bible and headed to India Gospel League's Sharon Gardens (at that time there was a Bible College operating there). They tried to turn me away when they saw how young I was, but after explaining my testimony (and after they saw that I had no food or money), they let me stay.

For three years I studied. I apprenticed under different pastors for an additional five years. Then in 2000, I spoke to Sam Stephens about my vision regarding two unreached villages - places with no known believers. For three years I worked in those areas - and had no fruit. Not even one person became a believer.

I started to question my calling at that point and even made up my mind to return home and start over. But that very same week, five young people came to my church. And because of them, I knew I had to stay in the village and keep sharing Christ. For fifteen years now, I have been here. And today, 300 people attend church every week. We have started conducting services in four nearby villages, and I now have three assistant pastors working with me.

My heart fills with gratefulness when I think of how God has brought me to this point. He made something out of nothing. Because of Him, I am alive!

**Because of Him,
I am alive!**

Please pray for Pastor Abel and his wife Esther, as they continue to work among the unreached villages of India. And pray for Abel's church, which has set a goal to reach 1,000 people with the gospel by 2020.



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