

MISSION UPDATE

DECEMBER 2017

INFINITE EMPATHY

TY GIBSON

EMOTIONS ARE A MYSTERIOUS phenomenon. Think about it. A person's smile has the power to make you feel something pleasant inside. A person's tears can throw you into tears with them even before you know why they're crying. The mere fact that another human being is happy or sad somehow impacts your own state of being. Emotions are invisible links of identification with the experiences of others.

How strange.

Or maybe not.

Actually the fact that we are emotional beings tells us something astonishing and wonderful. We can reason it through like this: If God is love, and if love is the capacity to empathize with others, well then, we are most like God when we feel the feelings of others. It is also true, then, that we are least like God when we are insensitive to what others are experiencing.

At this time of year, we are thinking about the most astounding thing that has ever happened in all of universal history: God "became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). What was the incarnation of God in Christ but the most infinite display of empathy imaginable?! In the person of Jesus Christ, God revealed that He is in complete emotional solidarity with the hurts and woes of the human race.

Describing the empathy of God in Christ, Scripture says that He was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:15, KJV). Then, pulling aside the veil to show us what He went through in Gethsemane, we are told that He "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears" (Hebrews 5:7).

But when God became a human being in the person of Jesus Christ, this wasn't merely a one-off event, before which and after which God was impervious to our feelings. The incarnation was, rather, a revelation of God's essential and eternal character. By coming all the way down and entering into complete union with us, He was simply and profoundly following through with who He was all along and ever will be. Yes, the incarnation was a new event in the history of the universe, but it was a manifestation of a reality as old as God Himself: "God is love" (1 John 4:8).

See God in Christ, feeling the hurts and struggles of every person He came into contact with, and you see God as God is. Watch God in Christ fall facedown to the ground, weeping in prayer, and you see God accurately.

Behold, God incarnate!

Behold, the infinite empathy of a God who feels all the feelings of every person in the world!

Merry Christmas! 



DOORS OPEN IN INDIA

IT WAS NOVEMBER OF 2001—November 5 to be exact. Sixteen years ago!

That was the last time and the only other time that Light Bearers managed to get a container of gospel literature into India. Now God has again prevailed, this time through a group of super committed believers who went beyond the call of duty to make it happen. One man left his work and home for three weeks and basically camped out at the port of call to get this container full of gospel literature cleared. The custom officials brought up one issue after another, even complaining about the fact that we had sent them used Bibles instead of new ones. (Light Bearers ships donated Bibles that are still in good condition to supplement our literature, so please keep them coming.) Finally, after

much prayer and work on the part of our brothers in India, the container was cleared and now the precious gospel literature is making its way into hearts and homes throughout this great country where God's Spirit is at work. Here is our latest report:

Dear Light Bearers,

This is the update of what has happened with the distribution of materials received.

Vellore in Tamil Nadu is famous for its Christian Medical College, a medical educational institute for undergraduate and post-graduate students. It was started by the famous American missionary Dr. Ida Scudder and is run by Protestant churches. The students who attend our church are taking sets of study materials and distributing them at the local schools to their friends, classmates, and roommates. Three of the students are doing weekly studies with them. The most popular series is the *Steps to Christ* series. Every week

approximately ten sets of study materials are taken from the church for distribution.

Another famous educational institute is Vellore Institute of Technology. Many African students are studying there. Last week one African came and took one box of Bibles and one set of concordances to take back to the college to share.

... my aim is to finish distributing the entire load in one year's time.

The city of Hyderabad is in Andhra Pradesh, where there is a dynamic youth church that already has a regular literature distribution program. They have included Light Bearers literature in their materials to be distributed on a regular basis. They are distributing them in homes for the elderly, orphanages, and in public evangelism efforts.

Ernakulam is an industrial town in Kerala, where the young people have an organization called GO Ministry. They have regular distribution programs in churches and in health camps and they are sharing the literature you sent. They have already finished distribution of one series of studies and they are now distributing the second series. They are eager to study with those who are interested.

Bangalore is the capital of Karnataka, where two lay persons have gotten a group of churches involved in devotedly distributing Bible studies. Last week we gave them another set of the entire three series of studies, plus two boxes of Bibles and Spirit of Prophecy books for them to hand out.

One dentist in Bangalore has provided space to keep the studies in his office, so patients can read them while they wait for their services. He has arranged to print covers for each of the tracts, so they can be given out as booklets. He has also put an advertisement in a Protestant magazine called *The Forerunner*, which has wide coverage in the city of Bangalore.

Ottapalam, a town in Kerala, has a Seventh-day Adventist hospital, as well as nursing educational institutes. The Bible studies are used to educate the students and patients. Last month they were planning to do health camps in nearby

schools, offering the studies to those who are willing to take them for further learning.

Another series of boxes were sent to Nagercoil, near Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu, the Southernmost point of India. Here the youth and church members are distributing them.

We have started a church visitation program in which we visit the neighboring churches and take the entire service to distribute sample copies to the members and invite them to order more. I have started a Light Bearers Ministry-India page on Facebook to collect photos of this ministry. This way others will be encouraged to distribute as well.

Our Seventh-day Adventist school in Vellore has invited me to present to the students (approximately 5,000 in number) the Bible studies and to encourage them to take them to their homes. Approximately 500 boxes have already been distributed, and they are requesting more.

Personally, my aim is to finish distributing the entire load in one year's time. So far this looks feasible and is going as per expectations.

Closing gratefully in prayers for continued blessings upon Light Bearers Ministry.

David M. 



PAPER MISSIONARIES

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SPEAKING SCHEDULE

DECEMBER 2

Fall Creek Adventist Church
Fall Creek, OR
fallcreekor.adventistchurch.org
James Rafferty

JANUARY 7-10

Southern Union Conference
Pastors Conference
Orlando, FL
www.southernunion.com
Ty Gibson

DECEMBER 16

Fall Creek Adventist Church
Fall Creek, OR
fallcreekor.adventistchurch.org
James Rafferty

JANUARY 25-28

Carolina Conference
Evangelism Impact 2018
www.carolinasda.org
Ty Gibson

see more events at lightbearers.org

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