

Women in Focus Evangelism

Prayer Points

Media ministries development and education in India.

Sneha's Father (one of our ministry workers). Her Father's healing of Kidney Failure. His name is Pradeep.

Terri Novini's thyroid disorder

India's 5 Regional Women's Leadership Conference in May/June 2007

Greg & Terri Novini Missionaries to India

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Greg and Terri (Brelsford) Novini, Missionary to India, Account #2280907

Issue 21

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Portrait of an Indian Woman: A Catalyst for Change An interview with Rebecca Jaichandran



She is a leader in her own right, a woman with a myriad giftings - preacher, teacher, writer. A devoted wife and mother, she is an inspiration to her family, the community and the church, a catalyst for change. She is *Rebecca Jaichandran*, Dean of Distance Learning at Southern Asia Bible College (SABC), Bangalore. Talking to her is an experience. She is effusive, empathetic, positive. (Ask her what her husband's name is. She'll smile and write it down for you. Out of deep respect for her culture and her husband, she has never, till date, said his name). There is much to learn from this graceful, gracious woman. In this excerpt from an interview with her, she shares her hope, her perspectives, her vision and her story.



Q: Over the years, there are laws that the Indian government has passed to ensure that every Indian child receives at least basic education. But we've seen these laws crumble in the face of issues that the girl child faces. What are the factors that render the laws ineffective and hinder the education of the girl child?

R.J: Most of the people in India live in villages and so at the grassroots, they are not even aware that such laws exist and that the government provides free education with free books and lunch as incentives. Many people in villages do not send their girl child to school because that would rob them of an extra hand at work in their homes, and in some homes rob them of an extra income. Moreover, to many parents in villages, it is the boy child who will work and take care of them in their old age because they cannot depend on their girl child.

Although it sounds selfish, many families do not educate their girl child because later only her husband and his family will stand to

benefit from her education.

Q: How far do you think issues like child labor and the mindset of the Indian society affect the prospect of education for the girl child?

R.J: Due to extreme poverty, little children are forced into the streets to work and support their families. As long as there are families that push their children out to work and people that employ and exploit them - children are paid less than men and women who do the same work - there will be hardly any prospect of the girl child getting education.

Moreover, the mindset of many people is such that if a foetus or a new born is a girl, they either abort the girl baby, kill her or abandon her at birth. As long as these strong anti-girl child attitudes persist in the minds of Indian people, the girl child has little guarantee of life itself leave alone education!

Q: With regard to education, what do you think will transform the destiny of the Indian girl child?

R.J: The only thing that can transform the destiny of the Indian girl child is the **transforming power of the Gospel**. It is only when people respond to the gospel message and walk in communion with God that their lives and their mindset will be transformed, and learn to love, care and respect the girl child. Another thing that can improve the situation is **literacy**. People need to be educated about the worth of the girl child. Such education will soon dispel ignorance, superstitions and selfishness that rob the girl child of living life to the fullest. **The church**, the people of God, should be the role model to help the girl child find and fulfill her true destiny in life, by educating families within the church,

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www.terribrelsford.org

Passwords to enter:

Userid: saveindia
Password: WIFE
(Note: Words are case-sensitive)

Please note that the articles 'A Catalyst for Change' and 'Is there a heaven for me?' featured in this edition are excerpts. The complete articles are available on the



Above: A picture of 'Olga', a hermaphrodite who underwent surgery for total sex change to become a woman

A Catalyst for Change... (Contd.)

and by giving opportunities for the girl child to develop her talents and abilities.

Q: Please share with us your story - the experiences that have shaped your life, and how your family has been instrumental in seeing you rise as a powerful minister of the gospel?

R.J: After years of growing away from God, betrayed by my closest friend and having attempted suicide several times, I fell into severe depression and lost faith in the people around me. In 1983, God encountered me at a care-cell meeting I had reluctantly accompanied my parents to. God came down in a special way washed my sins and saved me that night.

After God confirmed His call on my life through a series of events, I joined Southern Asia Bible College in 1984. After my graduation in 1990, God orchestrated every detail of my life so well. In 1991, I met my Prince Charming (Mr. Albert Jaichandran) and we were married the following year. God has

blessed us with two charming daughters, Fedora (13) and Praise (8). My husband and my children have been a great support to me, without which I know I will not be able to do all that I am doing. In 1992, the same year that I got married I was accepted the invitation to join the faculty at SABC. During 1998 - 2000, I worked on my Master of Theology in Church History. Those were years when God sharpened my academic skills and taught me time management and the importance of discipline.

God also drew me closer to him during two specific occasions - the first time in August 2002, when I was diagnosed with bi-lateral pneumonia and the second time in October 2005, when I had to undergo a surgery to prevent complete paralysis. On both occasions, I saw God's miraculous hand. Today, I cannot express how grateful I am to God for every breath and every step. I feel so excited about all that God is doing in and through my life. And my prayer will continue to be "Just a closer walk with thee, Grant it Jesus is my plea ..."

'Is there a heaven for me?'

The day dawned, but there is only darkness in the heart of the 11-year old child.

Darkness, questions, and anxieties. Why was I born, the little heart rages. Why can't the darkness cover me, consume me? Why must the light of day dawn around me, making me visible to the world, the child asks.

Such intense questions for a young, normal child, you may wonder. The child, though, feels anything but normal. The child falls outside the purview of gender—a hermaphrodite, neither a man nor a woman.

Sadly, there are more than 500,000 such people in India alone. They question their very existence. They are the objects of scorn on the streets. They are sneered at, laughed at, insulted. Some fear them, some mock them, and some pity them.

Ostracized by the society, they fall into a deep despair and experience overwhelming loneliness.

To survive, people with similar orientations

join together and form a community having its own deity, rituals and traditions.

In Tamilnadu, such a community is called 'Aravaan' or the community of eunuchs.

To bring about a feeling of normalcy, the community often chooses its members to be aunts, mothers, daughters, and granddaughters, through a series of rituals.

Aravaans hold a once-a-year, special festival in Koodavaagam in Tamilnadu, where eunuchs from all over the world gather. During the festival, they perform rituals to symbolize their experiences of rejection and isolation by tying the thaali (a thread signifying marriage) around the neck of the deity and then divorcing themselves by breaking the thread, a symbol of their isolation from the rest of the world, and probably even from the gods themselves.

Is there hope for them?

(Excerpt from the Tamil article by Saltina Alan John in the 'Women in Focus' April 2006 edition. Please visit the website for the complete article).

Novini Stateside Update...

CBC RiverCrossers Missions Mentorship Ministry

Greg and I have the privilege of serving as the Missionaries In Residence at Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri this year. It is our chief responsibility to develop and implement a new missions mentorship ministry on the campus of CBC. This is a key place of ministry, building bridges for missions students to the field and also cultivating a missions mindedness among the whole student body.

We have kicked off fifteen RiverCrossers Teams this school year. These teams meet once a month with a Community Investor (Missionary or Specialist in their area) to learn from a practical level about missions. Also the teams partner with area missions conventions enriching their missions program of the local church. The following missions teams have begun:

RiverCrossers "Men in Focus" Missions Team
 RiverCrossers "Women in Focus" Missions Team
 RiverCrossers Missions Builders Team
 RiverCrossers China Focus Missions Team
 RiverCrossers Teen Challenge Missions Team
 RiverCrossers "Muslim Focus" Missions Team
 RiverCrossers Deaf Ministries Missions Team
 RiverCrossers Latin America Missions Team
 RiverCrossers "India Focus" Missions Team
 RiverCrossers "Europe Focus" Missions Team
 RiverCrossers "Asia Pacific" Missions Team
 RiverCrossers "Running to Win" Missions Team
 RiverCrossers "Thailand Focus" Missions Team
 RiverCrossers "Africa Focus" Missions Team

We have helped CBC establish a new RiverCrossers Student Executive Committee to provide leadership. On a weekly basis we train and mentor these students in their new leadership role. A student leader and assistant leader have been appointed to lead each of the above team with the executive committee overseeing their work. RiverCrossers has very quickly sprung up on campus with a strong missions mentorship focus.

Greg and I want to leave a long term impact so RiverCrossers continues to be a blessing on the campus of CBC, even after we have returned to the field.

Prayer for Terri's Health

In September Terri had to report to St. John's Hospital to take a radioactive iodine drink to help correct her thyroid problem. We teased her that she truly had a "glowing

personality." The radiation treatment was to help shrink the size of her over producing thyroid which was causing her a number of health problems.

Twice a month she is meeting with her endocrinologist to watch the thyroid levels. Please continue to pray that the thyroid will be completely healed and it won't be necessary to repeat the radioactive iodine treatment or for Terri to take long term medication.



Budget Busted

Terri raised a missionary budget for a single person. Now it is imperative for the Novinis to raise a missionary budget for a couple. Greg has been added to the monthly insurance and other very necessary monthly budget needs. It has increased our budget expenses beyond our monthly budget income.

Please pray that the Lord will add monthly missions partners to our team.

Itineration

Besides serving as MIRs at CBC, we have had a number of missionary itineration services. We have had the joy in participating in the following missions conventions this month:

Tiffany Fellowship, Kansas City, Missouri
 Hesler Assembly of God, Owenton, Kentucky
 Christian Chapel, Columbia, Missouri
 First Assembly of God, Columbia, Missouri
 Mexico Assembly of God, Mexico, Missouri
 First Assembly of God, Fulton, Missouri
 LFTL Section 2 Missions Banquet, Columbia, Missouri

Please contact us for a service in your area.

Immigration

Greg has submitted his immigration paperwork to Homeland Security. Please continue to pray with us that Greg's paperwork will move through the system in record time. Greg cannot return home to Canada or go on a missions assignment until he has moved through the process. We covet your prayers very sincerely. One can put a thousand to flight, but two can put ten thousand.



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