



Serving the suffering church around the world



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## A Little Bit of Honey-Helps the Medicine Go Down

By Rev. Ron Warren, Executive Director

*"Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."*

Prov 16:24

How many times have you had a difficult time dealing with a situation and you just gave up because there seemed to be no solution. In this country, just finding a place in the mall parking lot at Christmas time is considered a difficult task and many get very frustrated dealing with just such issues. In countries that are closed or restricted to the Gospel, "difficult situations" usually refer to ones in which your life is at risk. Those who deal with such situations in these places do so because love overcomes the fear and frustration.

Such is the case in the remote mountains of a nation whose government is openly hostile to evangelical Christians, especially those who belong to minority groups. Here, a young man with a wife and two children, wanted to be able to encourage those who love the Lord as he does. He knows how difficult it is for them to get any help and how difficult it is for those who try to get help to them. He did not let the difficulties of others stop him. He did not let what had happened to others stop him. He did not let the knowledge of what could happen to him stop him. He loved with the love of the Lord and that love was displayed in his willingness to come up with a way to regularly get encouragement to his brethren.

A well known secular song provides the verse "A little bit of sugar helps the medicine go down...", and this brother knew the ticket he needed to travel in a restricted area was a commodity that all used. It would be a heavy burden for him to carry, since he had to hand carry the bucket. However, the need for honey by the remote villagers created a path he could use to reach them. So he filled his bucket and headed for the remote villages. Only walking trails were available for him to travel and he did not even have a bike to make the travel faster. He had to walk the entire way there and back. He would encounter police and military officials who challenged his purpose for being on the trail. The commodity he carries is one they know is needed in the village, so they let him go.

Original photo significantly altered



Encouraging others can be an arduous task and it is not for the faint of heart. This young man risks his life taking the "sweetness" of encouraging words to remote villages in a country hostile to evangelical Christianity. The path is narrow, dangerous and long. He was walking this walk long before we learned of his faithfulness and dedication. Thank God for the opportunity to sow into this man's field of ministry.

When he arrives at the homes of the Christian villagers he regularly visits, he brings pleasant words of encouragement and hope. Many receive their partner's gifts because of his faithfulness. He asks nothing for himself, but his goal is only to see the smile on the faces of those he visits. This is the epitome of self-sacrifice. His bucket of honey brings a lot more sweetness than what is poured from the bucket. It is God bringing those pleasant words which bring spiritual healing to their lives, His own honeycomb of love, through a man willing to give himself in service to others.

I can't count the number of people in a year who tell me they just want to make themselves available to God. Then, in the next breath they tell me how busy they are and how little time they have to get involved in their local church. They will usually add they just don't know where their time goes. When God uses someone like the man who walks through the jungles taking honey to others, He is just using the one who is willing to give himself. God uses those who are willing to be used. Willingness

comes in availability, not discussion forums. God already knows the real desires of your heart. All you have to do is hold out your hand and say, "O.K., I'm ready to do what you have for me to do!" Then let go of what you have for yourself and give it all to Him. When you ask for bread, He will not give you a stone.

*"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."*

*"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."* Matt 7:9-14

This very poor man, who carries a few gallons of honey down a narrow and dusty road for days on end, has found it. He is, most certainly, a good and faithful servant.



Community Church of the Valley members (from left to right) Jim Flecker, Bob Richmond, Vietnamese pastor, Sandy Richmond, Vietnamese House church youth leader, and Gloria Flecker traveled to Vietnam to meet with members of their sister church, Vietnamese Community Church. Sister church partnerships bring a focused effort to house church movements and allow both sides to concentrate on specific prayer needs as well as strategic operational needs.

## Sister Church Blessings

By: Jim Flecker,  
Community Church of the Valley  
Partners with Community Church of Vietnam

My wife and I just returned from our second trip to Vietnam. The trip was successful, enjoyable, tiring, but most of all, enlightening. We had the opportunity to travel quite a distance out of the city visiting with Christians in more rural areas. We cannot get into the mountain areas but in-country indigenous ministers can do so, with considerable difficulty. We spent time listening to many of our brothers and sisters, and it is clear that they all live a very difficult life.

Persecution is a way of life since the government of Vietnam considers Christianity to be a "western religion" that is a threat to their communist government. Consequently, arrests, harassment, beatings, and confiscation of personal possessions, is a reality for them. It is a daily threat to Christian families throughout Vietnam. They know quite a bit about what it costs to be followers of Jesus. However, the persecution just makes their faith stronger. In spite of the government persecution, the church continues to grow.

This exponential increase in new

believers requires more teachers and pastors. That opens the opportunity for more involvement in the Indigenous Minister Assistance Program (IMAP). Praise, Inc. is looking for Christians here in America whom the Lord has burdened to encourage their suffering brethren. The I.M.A.P. program provides \$25.00 per month assistance to a poor indigenous minister. This only helps to feed and clothe their families, enabling the minister to better focus on doing the Lord's business he is called to do. *The entire \$25.00 goes directly to the minister* (no administrative costs, expenses, etc. are withheld). I have personally watched this distribution take place and it amazes me how God has provided for this delivery to be accomplished! As a businessman I consider this to perhaps be the best "bang for the buck" in mission's giving today! Your entire gift is delivered so that every dollar you invest in your minister partner is returning an eternal dividend to you. The stock market never had it so good!!

A couple of years ago our church in Boise, Idaho decided to become a "sister church" with one of the underground churches in Vietnam. There are several interesting things that God has done with this relationship. First, we raised a small amount of money to start a sewing

business in Saigon. The idea came to a member of our church in the middle of the night. A minister's wife in Vietnam, whom we had met on an earlier trip, had some sewing experience. So, we contacted her and discussed the possibilities. How could any of us have known that her 21 year old daughter had always wanted to be a seamstress? She had prayed for this since she was a little girl but her parents had no intention of letting her become "just a seamstress".

They wanted her to learn computers and English so she could get a good paying job, but her heart was in sewing! I believe God woke a guy up in the middle of the night because of a young girl's prayers! I don't believe that coincidence accounts for something as remarkable as this. So, now they have 5 machines, counters full of buttons and yarn, as well as other supplies to sell to customers. We watched as the daughter made some very well made pajama sets. She had designed and made them entirely by herself.

Secondly, the money to buy the sewing equipment got to them at the same time a business opportunity came their way. God knew exactly when they would need it! On this trip I had the pleasure of seeing the joy on that young girl's face as she worked on her sewing machine. She said, in her broken English, "I am so happy"! Her sister told us she can do many things her Mother cannot! I see this kind of thing all the time with computers, but never thought about it with sewing machines! God has so many surprises. This girl now has a future she had only prayed for before. To me, this is a perfect example of the saying "give someone a fish and feed them for a day; give them a pole, and teach them to fish; feed them for a lifetime."

The sister church partnership has turned out to be a blessing on *both* sides of the world. *Blessings never go one way.* God insures that blessings go both ways. In Genesis 12:3 (from the Amplified Bible), He promises, "I will bless those who bless you (who confer prosperity or happiness upon you)..." I have personally witnessed this promise in action. I have seen how my Lord blesses me and my church at the same time He blesses our sister church in Vietnam. If your church has a heart for missions and wants to touch an entire nation as a church, consider partnering with one of the house church movements in a restricted nation like Vietnam or China.

## God's MERCY or His Blessing You Decide

By Rev. Ron Warren, Executive Director

On December 26, 2004 many of us woke to news that nearly 2,500 people had been killed in Indonesia by a massive wave. It didn't take too many days for that total to rise to nearly 100 times that initial number. Many of us who work in that area of the world saw the hand of God bringing judgment to places that were saturated with the blood of martyrs. Islamic religious leaders also saw God's judgment but with a very different twist. They felt God had judged the land so severely because Christians were still living there and their worldly rituals brought God's judgment upon Muslims that had not removed them. You decide.

In Aceh, the hardest hit area, Christians had asked permission of the local Islamic leaders to hold Christmas services. They were told if they wanted to hold services they would have to do it far from the city. So the Christians, about 400 of them, left for the mountains in the distance. It would mean they would have to spend the night away from home. They did so. They woke up on the morning of December 26, still



How do Christians gather in places where the government watches every move they make? They go for a walk in the woods. In most cases, it is a long walk to a place where they know they can gather and worship together. Police have moved into the villages to monitor Christians, so the villagers leave the village. Their desire to learn more about Jesus and the Good News leads them to create ways to fellowship.

alive in the mountains while their neighbors and neighborhoods were washed away. Was it a coincidence? You decide.

In India, along the eastern coastline, the waves wiped out entire fishing villages. Many of the ministers we partner with live along this coastline. While all of them lost virtually every material thing they had, not a single church member lost his life. As one pastor said, "We don't even

have a spoon to eat with, but we all have our families with us." In Sri Lanka and Indonesia, Muslim militants complained about Christians sharing their faith as they shared food and clothing with those who had lost everything. Most of the incoming aid was coming from Christian run organizations who are geared up to respond to such catastrophes. Where were the millions of Muslims who could have helped with an equally impressive presence? Should Christians give of their resources and not be expected to share the love that prompted them to give in the first place? You decide.

As an organization, we made it clear to anyone who called or wrote that 100% of all gifts we received for tsunami relief would be sent on. However, it would only be sent to local churches in affected areas, so all of the relief we provided would be given out by those familiar with the faces they were giving to and who would be there long after all of the rest of us are gone. We take the position that we should stand with our local brethren in their time of need first, then help them to reach out to those around them. I have seen projects where hundreds of fishing boats were bought for Muslim and Hindu fishermen by Christian donations. In the meantime, Christians in the same town are simply given a bag of rice and a serving set to eat



FROM FRONT PAGE STORY - This brother not only carries food for the spirit and mind, but brings food for the body and support for additional food and clothing for the needs of our brethren there. He was doing this very same thing before this ministry learned of his efforts to encourage others with greater needs than his own.



Rather than holding weapons, these men hold the foundations to their new church building. They are building this new church in a very remote area of the mountains on Mindinao Island, the Philippines

### WHAT DOES ENCOURAGEMENT ACCOMPLISH?

A minister on Mindinao Island in the Philippines recently wrote to his I.M.A.P. partner, "I thank God through the Lord Jesus Christ for the blessing that He has given to me through you. I am very happy because God heard my petition ..." He adds details of his ministry, "...I walked almost 20 kilometers (about 11 miles) every Saturday and then returned home every Monday. I sacrifice to walk for the ministry of the Lord because someday I know that God will help me and hear my prayers. When I start to climb the mountain (on Saturday) I start to sing the song 'Go tell it on the mountain...' that song makes me happy to go forward and walk with the Lord."

The area this pastor works in is full of communist rebels and people are killed everyday by rebels and criminals on the hillside trails. Yet, he continues to walk for hours to minister to the rural villages. His perseverance paid off. Just a few months ago, one of the tribal leaders, also a rebel leader accepted Christ. When he came to Christ, the whole village followed with him. Now, rather than bury those who die from conflict, they are raising up poles to build a new church for the village. The villagers are noticeably happier and the tribal leader

### A FAREWELL TO ARMS

We regret to inform his partners that Rev. Michael Nanda passed away this past week. He founded over 50 churches in East India, as well as a nursing school, and children's home in Andra Pradesh state. He was a dedicated servant who gave his entire life in service to the gospel. He will be greatly missed. Please pray for his family during this time of loss.

enjoys seeing the villagers happier.

Scores of pastors on Mindinao Island recently joined with Mike Silva Evangelism and conducted crusades in an area where Christians always live under threat of attack by radical Muslims. Tens of thousands attended and hundreds came to Christ. The local ministers are encouraged with so many coming to Christ. Baptisms of many of these were recently held in the sea nearby. God has not forgotten His faithful servants and your support made it possible for us to participate, in a small way, in this crusade.

with. Is it right to raise up the adversary who persecutes our brother and restore him to a position of strength, while at the same time just giving our brother his food for a week? You decide.

First comes knowledge of what the situation is, then responsibility for what you know, then accountability for what you are responsible for. This spiritual law applies to all we know and do. You first learned of the sacrifice Christ made for you. You learned about your choices. You will be responsible for making your own choice. No one else can make it for you and you cannot blame someone else for the choice you make. It is your responsibility. Then, after we leave this earth and stand before the Lord, we are held accountable for how we handled our responsibility. This is clearly shown in the parable of the talents. When you make your investments, and come back after a period of time, you expect a return on your investment. If you find none, you would most likely be surprised at first, and then you would probably be upset! You would demand an accounting of the one you entrusted your wealth to. As you consider your spiritual investments, are you checking the returns? Are you comparing the options available to you? You decide. It's your responsibility.



THANK YOU for helping us to purchase clothing for the children in the mountains. Even though the county is tropical, the nights are cold (to them) in the winter. Many children will be spared sickness due to your gifts that allowed us to purchase this clothing. This project is on-going. Just \$5 buys and delivers a jacket for these children.

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