COMPASSION: WHY WE ARE LEAVING INDIA, BUT STILL HAVE HOPE

‘Frustrated’ CEO Explains How shutdown of 589 Centers serving 145,000 Children will Affect Staff, Sponsors, and Churches

Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra/ MARCH 1, 2017

In two weeks, Compassion International will be out of India.

The child development ministry confirmed today that after 48 years, its final day of operation will be March 15.

That means shutting the doors of 589 Indian-staffed development centers caring for more than 145,000 children, more than any other of the 25 countries where it works.

“I feel frustrated,” president and CEO Santiago “Jimmy” Mellado told CT.

That’s because Compassion has worked every angle to try to stay open in India since last February, when India’s Ministry of Home Affairs put it on a list of organizations needing prior approval before transferring funds into the country. Then the government refused to grant such approval.

The government’s move can be traced back to 2011, when it changed its Foreign Contribution Regulation Act so that it could regulate NGOs it disagrees with philosophically, Mellado said. The move was seen by many as another step toward Hindu nationalism since 2014.

Since then, attacks on Christians and Muslims have increased. India is now No. 15 on Open Doors’ list of countries where it’s hardest to be a Christian, up from No. 31 in 2013.

“In the middle of all this, we were pouring significant resources into local evangelical Christian churches,” Mellado said. “You can see where we would hit the radar screen.”

Compassion channels about $45 million into the country every year, more than any other charity. And unlike World Vision, which also helps children in India but breaks up its funding across different humanitarian entities, Compassion’s donations all went to local churches through two offices, making the amount stand out.

Increasingly desperate to be able to continue providing food, clothing, health care, and education for the children, Compassion leaders pulled out all the stops.

They talked to Indian lawyers and accountants. They testified before the US House of Representatives’ Foreign Affairs Committee. They asked then-Secretary of State John Kerry to mention them to his counterpart in India. (He did.) They asked sponsors to write their members of Congress. (More than 35,000 did.) They asked everybody they knew in positions of power both in the US and India for help. “All along, both Compassion and its local offices remained committed to addressing the concerns raised by the government, but to no avail,” Mellado said.

There have been whispers of hope. One Indian official told India Today, an English-language news magazine based near Delhi that the government was willing to reconsider Compassion’s case, but nothing came of it. Another Indian newspaper floated the idea that the government might ease up on Compassion if the US would be more lenient with visas granted to Indians.

But nothing concrete has materialized to save Compassion in India. Thus the March shutdown.

Still, Mellado has hope.

Cond. on pg no 3...

Compassion International

“THE EARLY CHURCH WAS MARRIED TO POVERTY, PRISONS & PERSECUTIONS. IS TODAY’S CHURCH MARRIED TO PROSPERITY, PERSONALITY & POPULARITY?”

-Leonard Ravenhill

For Private Circulation, within the Church

MISSION: TO LINK THE FREE CHURCH OF THE WORLD WITH THE PERSECUTED CHURCH IN INDIA
AIM: FREEDOM TO WORSHIP JESUS CHRIST IN INDIA
MOTTO: SERVE PERSECUTED – LOVE PERSECUTOR
The Most-Watched Film In History, “Jesus” Reaches Its 1,500th Language Translation

By Michael Ireland

Published Mar 3, 2017 : Assist News Service

“The completion of the 1,500th language translation of ‘JESUS’ is an incredible milestone.” — Josh Newell

(Orlando, FL) — [Assist News Service] The “JESUS” film, envisioned by Bill Bright, co-founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, now known as Cru, and produced in cooperation with The Genesis Project, has completed translation of its 1,500th language. (Photo Credit: Assist News Service/ The Jesus Film)

Attendees of the annual National Religious Broadcasters Convention, Proclaim 17, held this week in Orlando, FL, heard that the “JESUS,” film — the most watched film in history according to “The Guinness Book of World Records” — has completed translation into the Dazasannach language, which belongs to an ethnic group inhabiting parts of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Sudan.

Since 1979, Jesus Film Project’s resources and strategies have been utilized in 7.5 billion Gospel presentations in more than 230 countries, and for many individuals in remote areas around the world, “JESUS” is the first motion picture they have ever viewed. The powerful impact of seeing the story of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection in their heart language has resulted in more than 490 million indicated decisions for Christ following a film showing.

Those lives changed reflect Jesus Film Project’s dedication to spreading the Gospel not only through its own direct outreach but also through partnerships with hundreds of ministries and churches that have utilized Jesus Film Project tools; including an app, Bible studies, additional films and other tools, which are readily available at http://www.jesusfilm.org. (Photo Credit: Assist News Service/ Jesus Film Project)

“The completion of the 1,500th language translation of ‘JESUS’ is an incredible milestone,” said Josh Newell, Jesus Film Project’s Director of Marketing and Communications. “This marks a critical advancement in reaching those who have never heard the Gospel. ‘JESUS’ has long been one of the most effective ways to reach people in a way they can immediately understand the message of salvation, and now our reach can go even further.”

This translation is another step in reaching the unreached people groups as part of Jesus Film Project’s Mission 865, an initiative to reach the remaining 865 language groups in the world with 50,000 speakers or more representing roughly 323 million people who have not heard the Gospel of Jesus. Mission 865 represents Jesus Film Project’s commitment to reaching those groups with Jesus’ story in their language by 2025.

“While the Gospel has gone to every modern country in the world; when Jesus commanded His followers to ‘make disciples of all the nations’ in Matthew 28:18-20, He was not referring to modern nations. Countries that exist today did not exist when Jesus gave the command,” Newell said. “In the Great Commission, Jesus commanded His followers to make disciples from every ethnic people group, which is why achievements such as the 1,500th language translation of ‘JESUS’ makes such a broad impact on this mission.”

“JESUS” is available on Blu-ray, DVD and digitally through Jesus Film Project app, available on IOS or Android. In addition to “JESUS,” Jesus Film Project offers additional tools such as “Magdalena,” a film that specifically addresses Jesus ministry toward women, and “The Story of JESUS for Children.”

Jesus Film Project continues to carry out Bright’s vision of showing this film to people in every country of the world. For more information on Jesus Film Project, go to http://www.jesusfilm.org.

Saint Stephen, (died AD 36, Jerusalem; feast day December 26), Christian deacon in Jerusalem and the first Christian martyr, whose apology before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7) points to a distinct strand of belief that the care of their elderly widows was neglected. The apostles presented the matter to the congregation and, charged with speaking against the Sanhedrin, spoke for the temple cult as illegitimate part of it. An influential view in current exegesis proceeds from Stephen’s position: Moses was “both ruler and deliverer” (Acts 7:35); he had delivered “living oracles,” the true law; and he had promised that God would raise up another prophet (Jesuses) as he had raised up Moses (7:37). Stephen seems to think of Jesus as the “restorer of Mosaic religion.” He sets Aaron over against Moses, the temple over against the tent, and Solomon over against David, who was persuaded not to. For Stephen the building of the temple was a bit of idolatry, comparable to Aaron’s golden calf; “the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands.” (7:48).

Stephen’s feelings about the Temple seem to have been more completely negative than those of the first Christians generally; the latter, including Paul, continued to frequent it. Its sacrificial rites served in many ways to shape the theological interpretation of salvation through the death of Jesus. There is no hint that Stephen regarded doctrinal significance to the death of Jesus. On the other hand, it has been suggested that he may have been the first to anticipate the return (Second Coming) of Jesus; in a moment of rapture, at the close of his apology, he saw the heavens opened and “the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” The title “Son of Man,” with its intensely eschatological-apocalyptic connotations, is used in the New Testament only by Jesus himself, with this single exception from the mouth of Stephen. For Paul, Jesus had brought deliverance from the “curse of the law” (Galatians 3:13). For Stephen, deliverance still awaits the return of the Mosaic tradition in its purity. Though an intensely committed follower of Jesus, his faith may have rested as much on the old basis as on the new. Stephen, to whose fate Saul assented, spoke for a pre-Pauline Christian movement, overwhelmingly Jewish, the precise outlines of which are not easily recoverable because they have been covered by layers of great change. The discernible legacy of Stephen in the ancient church is slight.

St. Stephen, ... Photograph by Trevor Little. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, bequest of Gula V. Hirschland, 1980 (1981.57.2)
Who Crucified Christ?

Matthew Henry

The angels frequently attended our Lord Jesus: at His birth, in His temptation, in His agony. But upon the cross we find no angel attending him. When His Father forsook Him, the angels withdrew from Him, but now that He is resuming the glory he had before the foundation of the world, the angels of God worship him.

The angel came, rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. Our Lord Jesus could have rolled back the stone Himself by His own power, but He chose to have it done by an angel to signify that having undertaken to make satisfaction for our sin, He did not break prison, but had a fair and legal discharge, obtained from heaven. He did not break prison, but an officer was sent on purpose to roll away the stone and open the prison door, which would never have been done if He had not made a full satisfaction.

But being delivered for our offences, He was raised again for our justification. He died to pay our debt, and rose again to gain our acquittal. The stone of our sins was rolled to the door of the grave of our Lord Jesus (and we find the rolling of a great stone to signify the contracting of guilt - 1 Samuel 14:33), but to demonstrate that divine justice was satisfied, an angel was commissioned to roll back the stone.

The angel did not raise Him from the dead, any more than those that took away the stone from Lazarus’s grave raised him, but by this He intimated the consent of Heaven to Christ’s release, and the joy of Heaven in it. The enemies of Christ had sealed the stone, since this was their hour, but all the powers of death and darkness are under the control of the God of light and life. An angel from heaven has power to break the seal and roll away the stone, though ever so great. Thus, the captives of the mighty are taken away.

The angel’s sitting upon the stone, after he had rolled it away, is very observable and shows a secure triumph over all the obstructions of Christ’s resurrection. There he sat, defying all the powers of hell to roll the stone to the grave again. The angel sat as a guard to the grave, having frightened away death. He sat, expounding the word, and ready to give them an account of Jesus’s resurrection.

Adapted from Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible (Luke 28).

Why Did an ANGEL Roll away the Stone?

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The Christian delegation’s memorandum says.
BJP spokesman Deen Dayal Banwar criticized the Christian delegation saying that they were not interested in tribal welfare.

The memorandum was prepared during the first national consultation of India’s tribal bishops at Ranchi on February 23 and 24. The meeting set up a think-tank team to address issues affecting the indigenous peoples of the country. All the bishops of the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand, including Cardinal Toppo, attended the consultation.

It also prepared the memorandum for the governor.

The participants stressed the need to meet with laity in every diocese to educate them about changing laws and how they affect their lives. They also decided to prepare a write-up on the tribal issues in the diocese with statistics and relevant data. The consultation was held in the backdrop of the state government revising two key issues affecting tribal people in the state. Tribal observers warn the changed laws will seriously impact the functioning of the Church in the state.

Benjamin Lakra, former Accountant General of Jharkhand and West Bengal, told the consultation that the situation of tribals in India is not good. “It is the Church’s responsibility to work for the betterment of the people and to bring awareness among them.” He also said it was wrong to view only industrialization as development.

The laws revised by Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das are the Chhota Nagpur Tenancy (CNT) Act and the SanthalPargana Tenancy (SPT) Act. According to the amended Act, 26.3 percent of the population is tribal and over a third of the seats in the assembly are reserved for Scheduled Tribes.

The new provisions allow tribal owners to form business partnerships with government or private players for agricultural land use while keeping ownership of the holding inalienable. The amended provisions could significantly benefit impoverished tribal landowners if they are implemented with care and caution. Before this, without the financial wherewithal to plan ventures, tribal owners also found it impossible to get the girls to New Delhi.

“They sell them at around 50,000 rupees (US$74). So the traffickers are earning ten times their investment. That is why the poor states of India like Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand are becoming hotbeds of human trafficking,” he said.

According to a five-year study (2009-2013) released by the National Crime Records Bureau, 2,848 cases of human trafficking surfaced in 2009, while in 2013, the total registered cases were 3,940.
However, the numbers should be much higher as government records only show cases registered with police.

“With trafficking comes sexual exploitation. Even if the girls are being brought for domestic work, they are vulnerable and become easy victims of rape. Some 90 percent of trafficked girls are sexually exploited,” Gaurav Kumar Tomar, legal officer of Chetnajana’s Domestic Workers’ Forum, told ucanews.com.

Tomar said that trafficking agents spend some 5,000 rupees (US$74) to get the girls to New Delhi.
“They sell them at around 50,000 rupees (US$746). So the traffickers are earning ten times their investment. That is why the poor states of India like Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand are becoming hotbeds of human trafficking,” he said.

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Workers in the national capital New Delhi, has registered some 5,000 domestic workers.

Initially, they worked to empower women working as housemaids by making them aware of their rights and encouraging them to raise concerns. “As we progressed, we felt the need to rescue people as we came to know of several cases of trafficking victims,” said Father Savari Raj, director of Chetnajana.

“We have a dedicated team to conduct rescue operations with support from police,” he added.

The forum also has a strong network in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Assam where most of the victims come from.

Their rescue team, carrying out operations in February, in and around Delhi, rescued three girls, including Muskan and a boy, in the age group of 17-21 on the basis of police complaints filed by their families in Jharkhand.

Neeraj Karketta, a program officer, said that police act on the complaints of victims’ families. Their volunteers also help because the Juvenile Justice Act of India stipulates the presence of such people during police operations to counsel children who are rescued, Karketta said.

“We, in collaboration with local partners, go to remote villages and spread awareness about human trafficking and ask young children not to get persuaded by agents,” Karketta said.

Karketta said that poor tribal families encourage young people to migrate because they have no way to continue their traditional dependence on the forests because of an increasing population, "If they want to migrate, they should tell us first and we will guide them," he said.

Women are trafficked from other areas too. One example is Anjali, 21, who was rescued on Feb. 25. She comes from Jharkhand state in Uttar Pradesh. Anjali, who dropped out of school, said that she wants to go back to her family and continue her studies. “This past year had been a nightmare and I hope that the future holds something good for me,” she told ucanews.com.

Another rescued woman, 20-year-old Neha, said her employer sexually exploited her several times. “I was not allowed to talk to my family and had to work till midnight,” Neha, who belongs to the Lohar tribe, told ucanews.com.

Police also arrested Teresa Lakra, a tribal woman who was part of the tribal delegation led by Cardinal Toppo on Feb. 27. “The accused had been absconding” for the past two years said M. Haque, investigation officer at Simdega police station.

“Given the sensitivity of the issue, real names are not being used. The pseudonyms are given by the sources.”
Lawmakers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Feb. 29 unanimously passed a resolution against the harassment of Pashtuns in Punjab after police alleged telling people to watch out for terrorists who look like Pashtuns caused outrage.

Donnelly wrote. "But things have not gotten better for homeschoolers.”

Penal code provides sanctions for a person who ‘leads a minor to abandon his home, be absent from school, refuse educational work that is inherent to the system of education, or fail to fulfill his duties related to the respect and love for the homeland.”

Donnelly said this stance violates “the right of people to establish and be part of the global community."

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"The stereotyping that makes suspects of entire Afghan national group is basically used in countries with capitalist foundations,’” according to the memorandum. “Our policy is designed to support Cubans’ ability to exercise their universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, with the expectation that greater commerce will give a broader segment of the Cuban people the information and resources they need to achieve a prosperous and sustainable future.”

"Ramón wants to be able to stay in Cuba to pastor his congregation. But it is no wonder that Ramón and his family, after being treated like this simply because they homeschool, have expressed a desire to seek refuge in a country that would respect their rights and let their children be children,” wrote Donnelly, who called on the Cuban government to respect parents’ rights and the U.S. government to hold it accountable.

"A government that is unwilling to trust its citizens to homeschool is not worthy of trust from its citizens,” Donnelly wrote. “We hope that members of Congress have an interest in this case and take action on behalf of the family.

"We want the freedom to give our children the education that we, the parents, have chosen,” Ramón said. “As Article 26.3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says, every parent has the right to give his children the education that he chooses.

“Ramón Rigal and his wife Adya, who were arrested on Feb. 29 unanimously passed a resolution against the harassment of Pashtuns in Punjab after police allegations telling people to watch out for terrorists who look like Pashtuns caused outrage.

FatherEmmanuelYoussafMani,national director of the Pakistani bishops' National Commission for Justice and Peace, urged careful reporting amid ongoing rumors following terrorist blasts in the country. “This is what our enemies want: hatred and division within provinces and ethnic groups,” Father Mani said.

Donnelly also cited President Barack Obama’s 2016 memorandum that said normalizing relations with Cuba would help human rights.

"OurvisionforU.S.-Cubanormalization reflects my Administration’s support for broad-based economic growth, stability, increased people-to-people ties, and respect for human rights and democratic values in the region," then-President Obama wrote in the memorandum. “Our policy is designed to support Cubans’ ability to exercise their universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, with the expectation that greater commerce will give a broader segment of the Cuban people the information and resources they need to achieve a prosperous and sustainable future.”

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Shepherds after God’s own heart

Written by: Zac Poonen, CFC, Bangalore.

In Jeremiah 3:14, 15 the Lord promises saying, “I will take you one from a city and two from a family and I will bring you to Zion. Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding.”

“Zion” represents the true church of the living God. God brings one from a city and two from a family into His “Zion”. And when we have come to Zion the church that the Lord is building - He promises to give us there “shepherds after His own heart”, who will feed us on a knowledge of Himself (and not just a knowledge of the Bible) and on understanding of His ways (and not just an understanding of doctrine).

One primary identifying mark of the true church of God is this: It has shepherds after God’s own heart, and the primary characteristic of love is that it does not seek its own. So, shepherds after God’s own heart are those who do not seek their own. Such shepherds will not seek for anyone’s money or honour.

They will seek neither to please men nor to impress them. Instead they will see to build up the believers in order “to present them perfect in Christ” (Colossians 1:28). Wherever God can find a man with such a longing - in any town or village of the world - He will build His church.

On the other hand, we have seen many cases of believers who leave the mainstream denominations and who seek to follow “the New Testament pattern”, who have their doctrines all correct, but who love money and seek their own, and who yet imagine that they are building the Body of Christ. Confusion and chaos are always the result of their labours and what is finally built through their labours is always Babylon.

Only where God can find a man who does not seek his own, can the Lord build His true church. One man like that, who shares the concern of God’s heart for people, is far more valuable to God than a thousand believers who seek their own.

To be a shepherd after God’s own heart will involve sacrifice, inconvenience, and suffering. It will mean being willing to suffer misunderstanding, opposition, ridicule and slander joyfully. And if such a shepherd is blessed enough to have a wife who also does not seek her own, so that their home is open for the Lord to do whatever He wants, then there will be no limit to what God can do through their lives.

I am not talking now about gathering many people. Numbers are not a mark of God’s blessing. Many of the well-known cults gather more numbers of people than anyone else. That does not prove anything. I am talking now of quality - the building of the Body of Christ, where every individual member comes into a personal knowledge of God.

Without such a development, any group will only be a place where one blind man has led a whole lot of other blind people into the ditch. All their prayer meetings will be in the ditch, their Bible-studies will be in the ditch and their conferences will be in the ditch too!!

In Jesus’ time, He looked around and saw that people were like sheep without a shepherd. It is the same today.

The great need everywhere is for shepherds after God’s own heart. I am not talking here about just being an elder in a church. No. A large church needs many shepherds - those who have a heart that cares for God’s people. Such people may not be elders at all. But they will feed and encourage the sheep - serving them gladly.

20 Christian Women Who Died as Martyrs

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“For me to live is Christ; to die is gain,” says Paul (Phil 1:21), who was beheaded for the faith in Rome. In fact, all the disciples were violently killed except for John. Still the message spread. And martyrdom never stopped.

Today, 322 Christians are killed for their faith every month, not counting the other violent acts perpetrated on Christians (according to Open Doors).

What follows are just over 20 women martyred for the Gospel. We hope their stories will inspire you to “live a life worthy of the calling you have received” (Eph. 4:1) and to be renewed in taking up your cross daily no matter what it might cost you.

Before the conversion of Constantine and his Edit to stop persecutions in 313, and with the ultimate adoption of Christianity as the formal religion of the Empire by Theodosius I in 381, Rome was vicious toward this new faith. Certainly, this starts with the hope of killing off Jesus and stomping out the Gospel and their incredible stories.

Cecilia (~176)

Cecilia was a noblewoman in Rome who vowed with her newfound faith to a life of celibacy. That was not her father’s plan and she was forced to marry instead. Her martyrdom came under Emperor Marcus Aurelius. First, both her brothers were arrested and killed for refusing to sacrifice to the gods. After Cecilia was found to have converted more than 400 people, she was condemned to die by heat (or suffocation) in the Roman baths. The fires were struck and after a full day she didn’t even sweat. An executioner came to behead her.

He tried three times but could not complete it. After three days she breezed to her death but never recanted her faith.

We will feature 2 women every fortnight who were martyred for the Gospel and their incredible stories.

Felicitas (101 – 162)

Her life is celebrated on November 23 by both the Roman Catholic and Ort. Churches. She and her seven sons were all martyred in Rome. Her tremendous conversion efforts were noticed by the pagan priests who then notified the Emperor. Before being martyred, she witnessed the death of each of her sons. The authorities gave her the opportunity to recant her witness after each son’s death, but she refused.

written by Zac Poonen, CFC, Bangalore.
Mirror, Mirror on The Wall: The Decision to Live Your Life For God's Glory

By Nancy Demoss Wolgemuth

There’s no question about it. The decision to live your life for God’s glory will require some tough choices. It will probably take more time to shop, and your clothing may actually cost a little more. You may not look as cool or “in” as you would like, and sometimes you just might have to stand out in a crowd as someone who is different. But remember, you are different. You have a different citizenship and you were bought with a costly price!

As you evaluate your wardrobe, you’ll need courage to ask specific, practical questions, like these:

• Is there writing (or picture) on my clothing that emphasizes private parts of my body?
• If someone were to look me, where would their eyes naturally go—to my face, eyes, hips, thighs, breasts, etc.?
• Where do I want men looking when I come into view?
• Is the fabric that I’m wearing too sheer?
• Could someone see through it to private parts of my body?
• Am I wearing tight, form-fitting clothes?
• Do my pants fit correctly?
• Are my pants too tight? Do they cling to the hips, thighs, etc.?

• Am I wearing anything provocative?

As you examine individual items in your wardrobe, stand in front of a mirror. Bend forward and ask yourself, “Can I see private parts that a man (other than my husband, if you’re married) shouldn’t see?” If the answer is “yes,” you are dressed immodestly. Look from all angles—front, back, sides—while walking, sitting, moving, stretching, and bending.

Remember, we often bend over to pick up packages or children, or to get into and out of a car. Ask yourself, “What will others notice and see? Where will others’ attention be drawn—towards breasts, hips, thighs, etc.? Why do I want to wear this outfit? Why do I like this style?”

Your heart attitude is key here. Ask the Lord to help you represent Him well. Ask for a teachable, open, obedient heart.

If you’re married, ask your husband to help you understand what your clothes and appearance communicate to men. Ask him if your clothing is modest. If you’re not married, ask your father or older woman these same questions.

Modesty Resolutions

Prayerfully consider, “Am I truly modest—according to God’s standard?” Then determine to be a woman after God’s own heart. Do you desire for your appearance to reveal a modest, godly heart? If so, here are seven choices I’d like to challenge you to make:

1. Resolve to live to please God and to bring Him glory.
2. Yield (dedicate) your body to God. Say, “Lord, this body belongs to You.”
3. Resolve to be modest because that’s what pleases God.
4. Resolve to be pure (inwardly and outwardly).
5. Resolve never to dress in a way that could tempt men to have lustful thoughts.
6. Be willing to stand against the culture, whatever the culture is contrary to the Word and ways of God.
7. Be humble and open to the input of others.

Remember that it’s possible to have a modest outward appearance while having the heart of a Pharisee (critical, self-righteous, and judgmental towards those who do not see things the way you do). Modesty doesn’t mean that you have the corner on truth. Give God room and time to work in the lives of other people—don’t say, “Because I see it that way, that’s how it should be.” Remember, you’re not the Holy Spirit.

Ask God to help you communicate modesty to others in a winsome way. Speak truth with a tender heart, compassion, and love. Make the truth as attractive as possible.

The Blessings of Modesty

Modesty is something good, desirable, and precious. There are many blessings you can experience as a result of modesty. They include:

• Peace: You’ll know that you are obedient to God.
• Power: You’ll be free from enslavement to fashion, fads, and others’ opinions.
• Protection: You’ll be guarded from the wrong kind of attention from the wrong kind of men. (Dressing modestly doesn’t guarantee that “the wrong kind of men” will never give you unwanted attention, but it sure helps!)
• Purity: You’ll attract the right kind of attention from the right kind of guys.
• Privilege: You’ll experience greater freedom in marriage as your body is reserved only for your husband.
• Praise: You’ll be valued for spiritual and heart qualities more than physical characteristics.

“Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.” (Proverbs 31:30)


Fate of Indian priest remains unknown one year after abduction

March 7, 2017

T. K. Devasia, Kochi, India

A year after an Indian Salesian priest was abducted by suspected Islamic militants in the strife-torn Yemen, Catholics in his home state of Kerala are losing hope for his release.

Father Thomas Uzhunnalil was taken by a group of armed men who stormed a home for the elderly run by the Don Bosco congregation at Ernakulam town hall on March 4. Several such programs were organized across the state, marking a year since they first started campaigning for the priest’s release.

The cardinal referred to a video circulated on social media in which a man who looks like the priest accuses church officials and the Indian government of not doing enough to get him released.

Cardinal Cleemis said a priest, “who went to the trouble-torn country on the call of God” would not blame the church.

“We cannot blame the government as the situation in Yemen is still volatile and India has no fully-beded diplomatic mission there. What we can do at this juncture is to pray to God to give strength to a priest to face the situation,” he added.

Cardinal George Alencherry of Ernakulam-Anagamaly, who is based in Kerala, said that the abduction of Father Thomas was part of God’s plan. “The torture he suffers will definitely deepen his faith and strengthen the church,” he said.

Cardinal Baselios Cleemis, president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India addressing a public meeting in Kerala about Father Thomas Uzhunnalil who was abducted in Yemen in 2016 and whose whereabouts still remain unknown (Photo by T.K. Devasia)

“The suffering of Jesus Christ was God’s plan. It led to the repentance of many and the growth of the church. Similarly, Father Tom’s suffering will force evil forces to repent and result in the deepening of faith,” the cardinal said.

The anniversary was also marked by prayers and protests in various parts of the state, where Christians account for six million of a total population of 33 million. Hundreds of people joined the priest’s relatives at his ancestral home at Ramapuram in Palai Diocese for a day-long fast and public meeting.

Father Thomas’ brother, David Uzhunnalil, said that the family was aware of the complexities of the issue.

“Nobody has been able to speak to him directly since the abduction. We don’t even know what his condition is. We hope the government and the church will step up efforts and we are able to see him back in the country,” he said.
Pray against female infanticides in India.

Pray for the rise of hooliganism in India against confusion against identities.

Pray that the Churches of God would fulfill the great commission of Jesus Christ with renewed vigor and prayer.

Pray that God’s rule and peace would reign upon all the States, Districts and Union Territories.

Pray for education, hospitals etc. will be built in villages, providing education, hospitals etc.

Pray for the protection of Churches and Christian Organizations working in the nation.

Pray that the Churches of God would fulfill the great commission of Jesus Christ with renewed vigor and prayer.

Pray for female infanticides in India.

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Pray for crimes against women – which has increased by 7.7% since 2010 according to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) i.e. – Rape; Dowry related violence and deaths; domestic violence; Sex trafficking.

Pray against marriage within family members for the sake of tradition wealth and caste, family members for the sake of tradition wealth and caste.

Pray against all the natural disasters that India faced – earthquakes, floods, river erosions, cyclones and tsunamis, landslides and avalanches.

Pray also for India who is vulnerable to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) emergencies and other man-made disasters.

Pray against the 20 million street children in India – to be able to dwell at peace with our neighbor’s peace with our neighbor’s godliness and Arunachal Pradesh.

Pray against all the natural disasters that India faced – earthquakes, floods, river erosions, cyclones and tsunamis, landslides and avalanches.

Pray against female infanticides in India.

Pray against all the natural disasters that India faced – earthquakes, floods, river erosions, cyclones and tsunamis, landslides and avalanches.

Pray for India which has the highest number of suicides in the world. Student suicides over 25% in 5 years, education system blamed. In other words, 20 students killed themselves every day.

Pray for the protection of Churches and Christian Organizations working in the nation.

Pray for the rise of hooliganism in India against confusion against identities.

Pray against all the natural disasters that India faced – earthquakes, floods, river erosions, cyclones and tsunamis, landslides and avalanches.

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