



Releasing the Presence and Knowledge of Jesus Christ among unreached people groups of South Asia

DECEMBER, 2022 NEWSLETTER

A CHRISTMAS STORY FOR OUR
SHEPHERDS

ISOM EMPOWERING WOMEN
PLEASE PRAY...

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A CHRISTMAS STORY FOR OUR SHEPHERDS

"It seems shepherds are important in your religion?" my friend asked. We were sitting on the floor with a few of our shepherds in Kashmir drinking chai and talking. Over the course of my visits here I would tell stories about Jesus being the good shepherd, how Jesus laid down his life for His sheep, about David being a shepherd who became King, how he killed the lion and the bear and several other stories. (I do love telling a good story.) My friend's question opened the door for another one. "Yes", I replied. "Shepherds are very important to God. In fact, when His son Jesus was born, shepherds were the first ones to hear the good news as God sent angels to appear to them in the night sky as they were watching over their flocks."



For the next several minutes I told the story of how the angel appeared to Mary, a young virgin, and told her the Holy Spirit would come upon her and place the seed of the Son of God in her and that she would give birth to the Savior of the world. I told of Joseph being visited by an angel to tell him to stay with Mary and that the baby was sent from God. How they had to travel while Mary was very pregnant, but all the rooms were full and the only place they could find was a barn, and that the Son of God was born in the presence of cows, sheep, and donkeys. The shepherds sat and listened intently to every word I was saying as I made the story as dramatic as I could (with my friend interpreting). In this culture most of the adults are illiterate so they love stories, and I was really enjoying telling them this one.

I continued to tell them how the shepherds were on the hills watching their flocks at night and the angels of God appeared to them. That the sky was shining bright with the glory of God and the angels told them that the Son of God, the Savior of the world, had been born in a barn. I emphasized to them that the first people to hear this good news were not the rich people, or the King or the government leaders. The first people God wanted to tell about the birth of His son were shepherds.

And now 2000 years later I had the privilege of sitting with my shepherds in the mountains of Kashmir and telling them this same good news. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world has been born! "Yes," I told them. "Shepherds are very important to God and that is why He has sent this man 10,000 miles from America all the way here to tell you of His love for you."

I cannot begin to explain the joy that was in my heart to be the first person ever to tell them of the virgin birth of our wonderful Savior! May you, also, be filled with joy as you ponder once again the incredible, humble story we celebrate at Christmas – the birth of Jesus! And when you think about those shepherds 2000 years ago on that Holy Night, please pray for our shepherd friends high in the mountains of Kashmir to also be visited by angels and experience encounters with the Son of God...that He would reveal Himself to them in a very personal way.



For more information visit www.5riversinternational.org or email info@5riversinternational.org

Donations can be made online or sent to: 18204 N 6th Dr, Phoenix AZ 85023 (new 1/21)

ISOM EMPOWERING WOMEN



She stood about 5 feet tall and probably didn't weigh 100 pounds. She was quiet, almost shy. At first glance you would almost overlook her but as I looked closer, I could see the fire in her eyes and a determined look on her face. My first thought was "This woman is a warrior!" She stood in front of a group of 37 pastors (6 being women) that represent 14,000 churches in North and Central India. All of them are leaders of at least 100 to 1000 churches.

She began to speak, and in her soft voice she began to tell a powerful story. She and her family are very poor. Her home is a hut with a dirt floor. In India a woman is considered second class, especially if you are a poor village woman from a very low caste.

Over the course of one year she had made the 23 hour train ride to Delhi five times to finally finish all five levels of the International School of Ministry (ISOM). The anointed teaching of the Word of God changed her life. She went back home and began to share the ISOM training with pastors and believers in her network. She said that through ISOM women are gaining dignity and purpose. Women are now looked at as being important and valuable and they are gaining honor by becoming powerful leaders.

"When I first began", she said, "I was despised and very few people wanted to come to the classes. They would gossip and spread lies about me but there were a few women who wanted the training, so I began with them. When others began to see the difference in their lives, they began to come to me and ask for the training. The women who have received the training have become better wives and mothers. Some have started small businesses and are beginning to prosper. They walk different, look different. They carry their head high and are not ashamed or downtrodden. The Word of God has changed their identity forever. This training is changing our lives and our culture. For the first time in our history women are being looked at as being important and valuable. Now I have 390 students that have finished three levels of the training and many of them are men. Men are now coming to a woman to receive training. In our culture this is a great miracle."



Thank you to all of you who have helped us spread ISOM in India. We are now able to give this training in four different languages. It is changing lives. It is changing culture and it is equipping people to do great things for God. Strong spiritual leaders are being multiplied by the thousands in north and central India!

PLEASE PRAY...

- For our village in Kashmir. That there will a great move of God amongst our Muslim friends.
- That ISOM continues to multiply through Josh's network. That all 10,000 house church pastors will be trained in these next three years.
- For Ashish and Kalpana, our directors of ISOM in North India, for favor, wisdom, and endurance as they expand the training in two additional languages – Punjabi and Nepali.
- For the persecuted church in India as violence against Christians is on the rise. Pray for the believers to be fearless and wise, and that the Kingdom of God will advance during these times of suffering.



We want to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a very blessed Christmas season. May singing (or listening to) the words of the carols never get old - "Joy to the World...Let Ev'ry Heart Prepare Him Room" "Silent Night," "O Holy Night...O Praise His Name Forever" "Mary Did You Know?" "O Come Let Us Adore Him...Christ the Lord!"