



NEWS FROM THE FIELDS



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Turning Point

By Steve Liversedge

Each year the directors of our Schools of Evangelism (SOEs) submit progress reports and testimonies from current students. Last week Odisha director D.B. Hrudaya sent in his report and 50 testimonies, each one a clear and simple witness of God's grace and love. In every case students referenced wonderful turning points in their lives.

Interestingly, exactly 50% of these students came from Christian homes

and 50% did not. This is a change from nineteen years ago when I first began traveling to India and a clear majority came from Christian backgrounds. I believe this turning point is a result of our emphasis on reaching the unreached and indicates significant inroads into Hinduism and other religions in India. Students from non-Christian backgrounds have come to the SOEs through Portable Bible Schools, Great

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A Women's Discipleship Movement

By Lisa Fowler

Sunali, a young woman, declares with confidence: "Jesus is our healer who gives hope to the hopeless." She became a follower of Jesus after Baijayanti, a School of Evangelism (SOE) graduate, visited her family

in compassionate response to Sunali's mother's severe chest pain. Baijayanti remained steadfast in meeting with Sunali, sharing the gospel, her testimony, and praying for Sunali's mother. After a week of her visits, not only was Sunali's mother's health restored, but Sunali and her family became followers of Jesus. Since then, Sunali has embarked on a transformative journey of discipleship, taking part in the Women's Impact Network (WIN) and Portable Bible School. These programs helped enable her to plant a house



church in her village and encouraged her to follow in Baijayanti's footsteps by enrolling in the SOE this year! Sunali's story is a glimpse into the thousands of stories of how thousands of women across five nations have been led into taking part in WIN, a discipleship movement for women. WIN was envisioned to encourage women to pursue biblically based spiritual formation in small

groups with one mentor and three trainees. Each trainee is encouraged to become a mentor to three more women upon completion of the discipleship training. Many women are also led by their mentor through the program online. One of these online discipleship groups begins at 9:00 pm, after the women's daily work and home responsibilities are complete, and even carries on into the

early hours of the morning! Sunali, the online WIN group, thousands of other women, and the house churches that have been planted because of their faithfulness to Jesus demonstrate how WIN revolves around following Jesus in ways that are both deep and wide. Discipleship is "wide" when it's vastly accessible, stretching out across a variety of cultures

and people worldwide, adapting itself while maintaining fidelity to Scripture and purpose. Discipleship is "deep" when it sinks down deep into the hearts of followers of Jesus as they come to know more about who God is and who they are in Christ. This deep and wide discipleship bears spiritual fruit not only in their own lives but also in the lives of all those whom they mentor.

As I conclude, this discipleship movement compels me to echo the Apostle Paul, praying not only over the WIN women, but over each one of us: "And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:17b-19).

By God's Grace: Overcoming Difficulty in Myanmar

By Caleb Pfeifer

Rev. James Lian Sai has served the people of Myanmar (previously known as Burma) in full-time ministry for 33 years. During this time his country has seen the rise and dissolution of one military junta, only to face another that fomented renewed unrest in early 2021.

Still, Rev. Sai exuded joy and a restful trust in the Lord when we sat down with him (virtually) to ask how the ER family could pray for his ministry. Before sharing about their needs, he assured us that "by God's grace [they] overcome difficulty and challenges, one after another."

ENCOURAGING NEWS

Since 1995 Rev. Sai has established three
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Turning Point

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Commission Challenging Camps, and the Women's Impact Network, which have been focusing on the unreached. Nineteen years ago, many of those recruited for SOEs, whether from Christian or non-Christian backgrounds, met Christ after divine healing or being delivered from evil spirits (especially among the non-Christian families). Out of the 50 in this SOE, only 15 had had such an experience. Most of the students were converted through the personal testimony of a friend or family member, others from reading or hearing God's word, and still others through the teaching of faithful Christian parents. These turning points give proof of a more

pervasive Christian presence and a loosening of Satan's grip on India.

Of course, the greatest turning points are those which have taken place in the hearts and minds of people. Rejoice with us over two of the SOE testimonies shared by Brother Hrudaya:

K.B. grew up worshipping many Hindu gods and goddesses. He suffered from a heart defect and doctors told his family that surgery was his only hope. Lacking funds, they sadly returned home. However, K.B. had a relative studying at a Mobile School of Evangelism (MSOE). She shared with the family from God's Word and prayed for K.B.

After one week, K.B. was totally healed! What a wonderful turning point for K.B. as he confessed his sins and accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior! Now an SOE student, he is preparing to plant churches among his people, the Pano, an Unreached People Group (UPG).

R.S. was born into a first-generation Christian Bhumij family. (The Bhumij are another UPG.) As a child she hesitated to attend church and Sunday School. However, one day a friend, who was an SOE graduate, visited R.S. and explained the importance of Christian worship and fellowship. R.S. listened attentively as her friend shared the "Wordless Book." A turning point came as she recognized

her sin and understood what Jesus had done for her by His crucifixion. Her heart was broken, and she asked God to forgive her, surrendered her life to Him, and accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Lord and Savior.

Over the past twelve months Odisha SOE alumni and current students have reached 1,580 people who have decided to make Jesus their Lord and Savior. Seven hundred and sixty-one have been baptized and 70 new house churches have been planted. Praise God with us for all the turning points He has ordained. May today be a turning point for us too, as we commit to do more than ever before, to complete the Great Commission.

Memorial Gifts

Contributions were received in memory of:

Jim and Roma Keller of Mansfield, OH, from Kaye and Bob Dome, also of Mansfield;

Rev. Gale Thomas Wetzel and Mr. and Mrs. Owen Gumm, from Mrs. Gale (Nancy) Wetzel, of Franklin, KY.

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SOEs. Together these schools have sent out 936 pastors and evangelists, and 100 more are in training. In addition to SOEs, Rev. Sai reported on a recent Mobile SOE with five students from the Pa-O people, a staunchly Buddhist UPG. He also mentioned an ongoing PBS of 27 students among the Kayan people. In between class sessions, these future pastors have already begun winning neighbors to Christ as they go about their normal lives.

Another opportunity for outreach has come from his ministry's orphanage, which

currently houses 164 children. As these kids make friends at public school, ministry partners have been able to visit the schools and share the gospel. Over the years, some orphans who grew up under their care have even become church planters among UPGs.

Rev. Sai emphasized that hardships have not only failed to quell their ministry but have also created new opportunities. "Even though there are many adversaries," he said, "the Lord has opened a great door for us; so in one way or another, we are able



Rev. Sai and his wife, Ngun

to share the gospel." Amid widespread suffering, the Church has stepped in to meet physical needs. Such practical displays of God's love have paved the way for sharing Christ.

Even the antagonistic government has been unable to stop them. After his ministry distributed 700,000 gospel tracts, the military summoned Rev. Sai to a local office. According to the law, he could have been sentenced to 15 years in prison. But the colonel who received Rev. Sai recognized him—they had been high school classmates! Instead of facing punishment, he was greeted warmly, offered food, and sent home with goodwill.

PRAYER REQUESTS

This is not to say, however, that the church has escaped suffering. In Thangtlang, a town near the Indian border, more than 1,000 homes and buildings were burned by the army, including one of Rev. Sai's ministry's churches. Between this city and another in the nearby Kalaymyo area, around 2,700 believers belonging to their church network have fled their homes and need support.

Rev. Sai encouraged us to pray for these believers, as well as for God's provision so that relief efforts can meet their needs. He also asked for intercession for the whole nation, that God will end the fighting and bring peace.

In addition to these requests, we ask that you would lift up the teachers and students in Rev. Sai's evangelism and discipleship programs. As these brothers and sisters prepare to win Myanmar for Christ, let's stand with them and join their efforts through prayer.

