

Title: A Few More Immanuel Stories from India

January 17, 2014

Greetings all,

Just wanted to send a quick note with a few more stories from the India trip.

As most readers probably remember from previous notes, most of the stories we have shared have been from e-mails Mark sent from India or stories we heard from Mark after he returned. And as most readers probably also realized, most of Mark's stories were big picture, overview stories, since Mark was always floating from one group to the next in order to provide supervision for the whole team, and so was only able to observe small pieces of many different individual sessions. However, last week two of the women from the trip were at one of our training groups, and so I finally got to hear more details, especially regarding Immanuel sessions with the girls at the safe house.

In case you haven't seen previous notes about the India trip, these are girls between the ages of 11 and 24 who were rescued by the anti human trafficking team. Some of them were sold into the human trafficking system as early as 5 years of age, and a common story was that the young girl would initially be trained and used as a beggar, and then sold to men for sex when she was older (but not much older). The women on the ministry team spent a morning with the girls, just loving on them in practical ways (like painting their nails, singing with them, and giving them lots of hugs), and then in the afternoon the women on the team facilitated Immanuel approach exercises in small groups.

The exercises started with positive memories and appreciation, and then the girls were invited to simply invite Jesus to be with them and ask Jesus to help them perceive his presence. There were a number of Hindu and Muslim girls in the group, but they also wanted to participate and were willing to try this simple prayer and invitation. Note that the girls were not told that they had to be Christians in order to participate and they were not told what to expect. The ministry team women simply explained the exercise and then invited the girls to participate if they wished to do so.

And even though the ministry team was familiar with the Immanuel approach, and had seen many of the people they prayed with connect with Jesus, they were still amazed by the results. Out of about 20 recipients (15 safe house girls and then some of the staff), all but two had profound, beautiful experiences with Jesus. One of the most interesting parts of the experience was that many of the girls (including the Hindus and Muslims) started to describe vivid mental imagery of a man in a white robe who was gentle and kind. And even though they had spent most of their lives being abused by men who used them as beggars and then forced them into prostitution, they immediately felt safe with this "man in a white robe." With tears streaming down their faces, they described being held, comforted, and encouraged. They reported that this man in the white robe held them in his lap, hugged them, stroked their faces, told them he

loved them, told them that they were good and beautiful, and that he had good plans for their lives. And again, amazingly, they all felt safe as he held them, and felt that his gentle touch as he stroked their faces was safe and good and life-giving. Furthermore, all of these girls (including the Hindus and Muslims) somehow came to realize that this man in the white robes was Jesus.

Interestingly, Jesus did not take the girls to traumatic memories.¹ He just spent the whole time holding them, loving them, comforting them, and encouraging them. At first this puzzled Mark and I and the ministry team, since we knew that all of these girls desperately need healing for their many traumatic experiences, and we assumed that Jesus would start right out with emotional healing work. But then we realized that Jesus actually knew what he was doing. Those who know about working with trauma know that the first thing you do is to establish a safe place of connection and trust, which then serves as the context and foundation for the healing work. Sometimes this can be established very quickly, especially when the recipient already knows Jesus and already has a relationship with the facilitator. But as we thought about the sessions at the safe house we realized that these girls would understandably need some extra time, just being in a safe place and building trust with this “man in a white robe.” I expect that Jesus will lead them to do healing work when the time is right, but I’m glad that he had better clinical judgment than the rest of us, so that he knew to start with an entire session of just loving on these girls.

I hope this encourages you as it has encouraged me.

Blessings,

Dr. Lehman/Karl

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¹With one exception. The oldest of the girls did recall a traumatic experience, apparently spontaneously, after she had been laying in Jesus’ lap for a while. Unfortunately, the translator wanted to move on to the next person so the facilitator only had time to coach the girl to go back to her safe, positive place in Jesus’ lap, and didn’t get any other details regarding the traumatic memory or about what happened once the girl got back to Jesus. The good news is that the girl was at a joyful, peaceful place by the end of the exercise, so I’m guessing that Jesus took care of the situation in one way or another.