

Trip to Sri Lanka
Tuesday March 15, 2016
Day Five

This morning I woke up at 5 am feeling compelled to pray. I prayed that I would have the same passion for my city and certainty of the power of the gospel as the pastors I have been meeting here. The Scripture which the Lord pressed on me was Matthew 9.35-38. I read and prayed accordingly. Afterward I lay back down and slept for a bit more — until the children's school bus rang out at 6:15 am. They were all dressed and pressed in their school uniforms.



Once we were up and ready to go we went back to the other location and joined the “Heart” course participants for breakfast. After breakfast we had a time of worship together which was mainly singing and prayer and then we had the second half of the course focused on Free Methodist doctrine. At break time my friend who had promised me a song delivered. I got a recording of it and was honoured to receive a written copy of it.

After lunch we came back to the residence where I tried, and failed, to have a sleep. I did get some rest though and then got up to read. Shortly after getting up one of the course participants, Reginald, came in; he was waiting until 7 pm to take a bus home. The length of the ride is 7 hours, so he was in for a late night. Fortunately, he had some english skills so we were able to share in some conversation. Along the way he shared a bit of his story.

Reginald is currently blind in one eye and has only slight vision in the other. It seems he has or had a slow degenerative disease which initially took the vision in both eyes. Through prayer however, partial sight was restored in the one eye. This happened later in his life and because he had the potential and passion to pursue Ph.D studies he was quite devastated. In his sorrow he attempted suicide three times. It was at that point that his sight was partially restored. Following that he met and married his wife and they have since had a daughter 6 years old. He appreciates God's grace in his life.



With renewed hope came renewed energy. Reginald began doing pastoral work which culminated to him obeying a word to plant a church. He and his wife began their work in her home village. Initially his ministry started with her parents and sister and as he went door to door with the gospel his church grew; currently they have 52 members. This has not been a straight forward success however.

His story has been like others I have heard here — marked with persecution. Both he and his wife have been beaten, imprisoned, and stoned. This is because the village is predominantly

Hindu and the Hindu priest does not want a church worshiping there or anyone preaching Jesus. Despite this they have faithfully pressed on. They felt the call to build a church building on their compound site but didn't have the funds and so prayed. Two years later a man came who was a Christian, found out about their church and told them he wanted to help them build a church building — they let him know they had been praying that way too.

After laying the foundation for the church building, amid stoning they were stopped by a government agency. A petition was signed by the majority of the village and the agency stepped in. So, he and his wife went to the foundation at noon and midnight everyday to pray about it and after a few months he began working on it again as wasn't stopped. And, instead of physical violence continuing the village began to shun them instead. So, now, the posts are in place, a roof is on, and they are using women's sari's as walls. They have begun to worship in the space and because of their numbers are already thinking of the next building. They have begun to pray for some land to purchase!

One of the terms they use in their church conversation is 'branches'. Reginald proudly told me he now has four branches. This term seems to indicate a multiplying aspect of ministry. In this case it is leadership he is preparing to do church planting down the road. It seems to me that his lack of sight is not a problem for the calling that God has laid on him. In fact, he said to me that, thanks to Jesus, now he sees!