



Center for Medical Missions

I met with Susan this morning in our weekly meeting here at the Center for Medical Missions. Do you know one of the things we did was pray for you? It is my joy to be able to do so. What I really wish is that I could sit with everyone who receives “*Your Call*” this month and talk about medical missions. I am often asked where the greatest needs are in medical missions. One thing that is clear to me is that there are growing cities all over the world, especially in those areas where the gospel message is yet to be shared. And those cities need us to be the bearers of the gospel message of love.

While not diminishing the role medical missions needs to have in rural areas, we need to be thinking about reaching the great cities of the world through medical missions! More than half of the world’s population now lives in the city. Yet, most of us still dream of serving that unreached group in a rural isolated area. Today we have access in the city to people who are lost, overwhelmed, lonely and isolated. And these growing cities are right in the middle of the most difficult regions of the world to enter as a traditional missionary. Nevertheless, we have access through healthcare. Read the article included below about Hyderabad, India, a city of 10 million people but it’s only the sixth largest city in India. Could you be called there to serve?

But before you read about Hyderabad, do you want some great thoughts on the city? Google Tim Keller and City. Here is an excerpt from a summary of a challenge he gave in South Africa. [Click here](#) to read the entire challenge.

Keller, founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan told attendees of Lausanne III that if Christians want human life to be shaped by Jesus Christ then churches need to go into cities.

Cities are where churches can reach the next generation (young adults want to live in the city); reach more unreachable people (people are far more open to the Gospel in the cosmopolitan city than in their hometown); reach people who have a big impact on the world (filmmakers, authors and businessmen); and reach the poor (about one-third of city dwellers live in shanty towns).

“Human beings, according to Genesis 1, are made in the image of God and reflect God’s glory more than anything else in creation,” said Keller, whose Redeemer City to City has planted more than 100 churches around the world. “In these cities you have more image of God per square inch than anywhere else in the world,” he said. “So God makes the numbers argument.”

Daniel Tolan

[Hindus & Muslims converge in Hyderabad, India](#)

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EDITOR'S NOTE: With more than half of the world's population now living in cities, Baptist Press is taking a multi-part look at a number of the world's major metropolises, such as Hyderabad, India. The series by International Mission Board writers, which is appearing each Wednesday in BP, will highlight the multiple people groups living side by side in the cities. Many come from hard-to-reach places but now, as city dwellers, they are more accessible than ever before to share the Gospel.

HYDERABAD, India (BP) -- Construction is everywhere in the city of Hyderabad, India's sixth-largest city, with nearly 10 million people.

A baptism reflects the Christian presence in Hyderabad, India's sixth-largest city, yet more workers are needed to carry the Gospel to nearly 10 million people in the region.

"The city is changing so fast -- it's a completely different place to live than it was when we first came," said Abigail Downey*, an International Mission Board worker based in Hyderabad with her husband Ben*.

Hyderabad, the capital of the Andhra Pradesh state, is a unique city, with a high percentage of Muslims -- rare in this Hindu-dominated nation -- and few slums, unlike other large Indian cities such as Mumbai.

As the second largest information technology center in India after Bangalore, Hyderabad has earned the nickname "Cyberabad." Other industries include biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, along with the Telugu film industry, or "Tollywood," a moviemaking hub akin to Mumbai's "Bollywood."

Located between northern and southern India, Hyderabad has developed its own unique culture, reflecting a very young population, many of whom migrate there in

search of jobs and education in one of the warmest climates in India, where temperatures sometimes reach 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

Though Hinduism is the predominant religion, accounting for about 55 percent of Hyderabad's population, there is a high number of Muslims -- about 40 percent. However, Christianity has a fairly strong presence in the city compared to other regions in India, with Ben Downey estimating the city's Christian population at about 5 percent. Some churches in Hyderabad are more than 100 years old, dating back to the influence of William Carey, pioneer Baptist missionary to India in the early 1800s. Persecution of Christians is minimal compared to some Indian states.

"The Gospel is here, and there are workers here, but in the city especially, people's hearts are just really hard," Abigail Downey said. "Pray for the Holy Spirit to work in them to break down the bondages of Islam and Hinduism. The people here really live in fear a lot."

Though numerous churches are located throughout Hyderabad, Ben Downey said many struggle with a legalistic mentality, imposing "extra-biblical" requirements on those who become believers, such as having to change their name to "Moses" or "Paul." But Downey and other national partners are encouraging churches to focus instead on discipling believers into a close relationship with Christ.

Although Downey spends much of his time in Hyderabad and has a few national partners who work in the city, rural areas of Andhra Pradesh state are his primary focus. He travels throughout the region training people to share the Gospel and start new churches, working with local Christian leaders and house church networks.

"We try to always keep before [the nationals] the different people groups in the state that are unreached and encourage them to try to specifically reach out to those groups," Downey said.

However, an additional IMB couple is needed in Hyderabad to focus on ministering to the city as a supplement to Downey's work.

"When I work out in the village and I talk to parents, I say, 'Where are your kids?' And they say, 'They're studying to be an engineer so they can get a job in Hyderabad. They're studying to be a doctor, they're going to school in Hyderabad.'

"So the village is moving to the city, just like many places in Asia," Downey said.

"There are just so many lost people," Abigail Downey added. "Sometimes, it's overwhelming."

The Downeys are asking [you] to pray that someone will answer God's call to witness among Hyderabad's masses. Pray that God will change the national churches' hearts to focus on His Word and discipling others rather than legalistic practices. Also, pray for the health of the workers in this area -- that they will stay strong so they can continue their ministries.

More on the City

From the journal of a healthcare missionary who moved from the United States to a large city in the Muslim world in 2011.

“We made it through the Eid (feast) of Ramadan when we arrived in August and in November we experienced Eid al Adwa.

This is largely done by slaughtering expensive sheep. It is an extremely bloody event as thousands of these animals are sacrificially slaughtered in one morning - one for each family and it gave us a little sense of what it was like in the days of the temple.

We rejoice that God did provide a lamb for Abraham and now has provided us all a Lamb through the advent of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In this unique exchange of eternity for time, glory for poverty, the need for blood was quenched in the suffering of God's own son. Praise be to God!

We are talking teeth

We're excited to announce the growth of the Dental Ministries, CMDA's newest outreach ministry. Dr. Jeff Amstutz recently joined CMDA as the Vice President for Dental Ministries, Peter E. Dawson Chair of Dentistry. With this new ministry, CMDA has a great opportunity to influence many more dentists across the country to better integrate their faith into their professional and personal lives. In the coming months, Dr. Amstutz will be focusing on greatly expanding our ministry, services and resources for our dental members, as well as intensifying our outreach in dental schools across the country.

Are you looking to get involved? Are you interested in more information? Do you know any dental professionals or students that would greatly benefit from our new, enhanced resources? Visit www.cmda.org/dentist and stay tuned for more information. Email dental@cmda.org if you'd like to get involved or have any questions.

Keep reading for an in-depth look at Jeff's work in medical missions.

Impact Story by Jeff Amstutz

As a dentist at our family practice in Ohio, I was just learning what it means to really follow after Jesus. At that point my life seemed pretty much planned out – a good practice, family, a home church, community service – with the college funds established and retirement savings begun. In those early days of my new walk – and in the early hours of seeking God before heading into work – one verse kept sticking with me. “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails” (Proverbs 19:21, NIV 1984). It seemed to permeate my other reading and much of my quiet time.

As I began to walk, God began to show direction. Before long our family found ourselves in the jungle of Gabon, Africa, at Bongolo Hospital. I was given the opportunity to establish a dental clinic and train national nurses in dentistry, so that they in turn could provide dental care to southern Gabon. Soon after our arrival, we started attending the local fellowship of believers; within weeks, I was appointed the “vice president for outreach.” Wow, what an honor. Or so I thought. As it turns out, this was simply a direct result of having a vehicle large enough to transport 10 people to remote villages where churches were beginning.

On my first Sunday of outreach, I traveled into the jungle over a muddy road that would make any off-road lover jealous. I dropped off two people at each village we came to and I ended up in the fifth village to help lead the small service with the few believers from two nearby villages. At the end of the service as I was greeting people, I took a deep breath of humid, jungle air and felt pretty good. Here I was - answering God’s call and training dentists, deep in the jungle with a muddy truck for a Sunday service. Then I got a tap on the shoulder and one of the village leaders said, “Doctor, they need to see you back in the church.” They told me about an older woman from the village who had been cursed and was now quite ill. Wow, what an honor – was not my thought this time. Instead, I was thinking, “Wait a minute, I’m only a dentist, let me get someone who can help.” But in that moment I was reminded of the many plans that I had for my life, and not one of them had to do with this older woman. So with fear and trembling, I walked back into that small hut of a church, trusting in the Lord’s purpose.

As the new guy at CMDA in charge of the Dental Ministries, I can say I never thought I’d be sitting in an office in Bristol, Tennessee. And I’ve got to admit that this new opportunity is a bit daunting from my seat. But hopefully I’ve learned that God equips and provides as I walk with Him. While I have plans for CMDA’s Dental Ministries and am excited about all the possibilities, I desire to trust in the Lord and see His purpose prevail. And I’m hoping we can walk this “new” road together.

Jesus Had a Fool

By Michael Johnson, MD

It is a common saying that “the man who chooses himself as his own attorney has a fool to defend him.”

This describes the Lord of glory. He chose to defend Himself, and in doing so, He remained silent before all of His accusers. He knew very well that everything He said would be held against Him, so He chose to just be silent before His accusers. No matter what He said, He would be found guilty.

We live in an era of increasing demands for human rights. Children demand rights. Husbands and wives demand rights. Citizens demand rights from their governments. All of these are completely antithetical to the Bible as I read it.

What I do see is the demand to be a fool. To be silent before our accusers and let God allow us to be crucified to our agendas so that His agenda will be fulfilled.

Jesus stated his case with His life. Here it is in John 15:25, “They hated me without a cause” (ESV).

Now to be truthful, I have given many people many reasons to hate me. I have offended, disappointed, hurt, fallen short of expectations and even intentionally hurt many people. I confess that I did so with what seemed like completely legitimate, justifiable reasons that were rational within my rights and I would defend myself even in God’s great court against anyone who would say otherwise.

The problem is that if I am to truly model Jesus, the sinless one (so noted by all who recorded His life, even Pontius Pilate three times), then I have no defense that is true. I lie to cover my offenses against others. I enjoy my sin so much that I am willing to use my “rights” as a justification for my wrongs against God.

Jesus chose a fool. He defended Himself. He lost His case before men, but won it before God. He had every right to declare Himself innocent of any of the charges against Him. He replied, “Suffer it be so, so that the Father’s will be done” (Luke 22:42, paraphrased).

In this increasing age of addiction to our rights, Christ would bid us to be addicted to our responsibilities. I am responsible to minister to those who are hungry, in pain, lonely, naked and the host of things which I know nothing about as I peruse the safety net of family, friends and unlimited resources of prayer.

Get addicted. Get the right addiction. Get addicted to your responsibilities to meet the needs of those around you. Be a fool that is accused rightly of doing things that honor the Father. That pleases Christ and in pleasing Him, you please His Father whom you will meet one day soon.

Jesus had such an addiction. “And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29, KJV).