



PARTNERS

THE NEWSLETTER OF INDIA PARTNERS

APRIL 2006

20 YEARS OF WIDOWHOOD

Widows are vulnerable in many cultures, particularly in developing countries like India. Dr. Iris Paul, the Director of Reaching Hand Society, one of our partner organizations, has herself been a widow since 1986. Iris grew up in an educated home, and yet her life as a widow in India has been one of struggle. Here is her story.

When Paul and I got married, my husband, a missionary working in the jungles of Orissa, knew the place and the people and the language, as he had been in this mission field for five years before our marriage. As a dutiful wife, I let my husband manage everything. As a qualified medical doctor, I started to take care of the patients who came home, with my husband doing all the translation and also all the lab work for me. I was so dependent on him for everything that when he went to be with the Lord, I did not even know where the post office was! This is terrible for a woman, as most married woman [in India] are totally unfit to face a world without a husband, even though they may be educated and working before marriage.

My husband and I had made a pact before he died that, whoever died first, the other partner would continue the work in Orissa. It is really amazing how my awesome God has led me step by step these past 20 years without a husband.

In India losing a husband is considered evil. People believe that something bad will happen to a person who looks at a widow early in the morning. Naturally, for all important functions like birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, and New House ceremonies, the widow is not usually invited—but even if invited, she is not to come and sit in a prominent position.

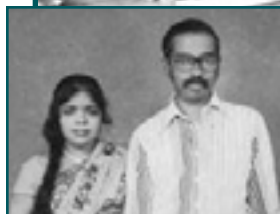
In India, 95% of the men will never marry a widow, but a widower oftentimes marries within a short time—even a month or two. But it is only one in a million when a widow marries again, especially if she is past the child-bearing age.

The widow should not dress up in style and attract men, but wear sober clothes, preferably white and dull shades. She should think of Jesus only and serve others all the time, and never think of taking any enjoyable trips. She should think of Jesus as her bridegroom. I

think the Bible teaches that Jesus is the bridegroom of all of his human creation and not the bridegroom of the widow alone. One of the volunteers told me, “Iris, when someone tells you all this, to dress simply, to wear dull clothes and consider Jesus

as your bridegroom, tell them bluntly, ‘Jesus will not come now and sit beside you and hug and kiss you and pray with you every night as your human husband did.’” I do not know how a women who never marries feels, but for a woman who has tasted the sweetness of human touch in the form a husband, it is very precious and the loss is much. To add to that, if the woman is considered evil and a burden to her children and relatives—this is really hard to take. My own children are different, but the loss for me is very much indeed.

The only motivating factor that has kept me going all these 20 years *Continued on page 2*



Dr. Iris Paul tends to a young patient
Inset: Iris Paul and the late Dr. R.A.C. Paul in 1979



India Partners

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Mission Statement:

Partnering with the people of India in ministry by cultivating relationships, sharing resources, and encouraging self-sufficiency through the compassion and wisdom of Jesus Christ.

India Partners is a Christian international development and relief organization committed to supporting self-help ministry projects in India.

We believe in helping the people of India help themselves, with God's grace. All are served regardless of caste, religion, gender or creed.

Activities include orphanages, church support, Bible training, schools, disaster relief, literacy, livestock loans, vocational training, medical ministry and agricultural projects.

India Partners also manages short-term teams, speakers and sponsorship programs.

India Partners pledges to use your gifts in the most efficient way possible to help suffering people, and to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

Our annual report and independently audited financial statements are available upon request.

India Partners is a 501(c)(3) charity. Donations are tax-deductible according to law.

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REFLECTIONS ON MARRIAGE

Last week, Monica and I celebrated our 15th wedding anniversary. We dropped our three little ones off at the grandparents and spent an evening at a posh hotel in Portland. We relaxed, talked, and ate too much for dinner and brunch. We drove by the church we were married in, and it looked like it was 15 years older, or more! But it seems like just yesterday that I married my best friend and wife.

Marriage customs in India are very different than in the USA. Most Indians are married with the help of their parents in arranged marriages. In the socially structured traditions of India, one's status, caste, religion, and cultural roots are all considered in an arranged marriage. In the socially un-structured non-traditional USA, some get married—and then divorced—in a single day without any family

input! In India, divorce is very rare, but it is becoming more common as India continues to be influenced by Western culture.

Last December, Monica, our children, and I traveled to India and attended the marriage of Remo Paul and Susan Sunalini. It was a grand event with thousands at the reception. Remo is Iris Paul's eldest son who is laboring with her in the jungles of Orissa. Susan is a medical student who has a heart to become a missionary doctor in Orissa. Their marriage will be a blessing to the work of Reaching Hand Society, the ministry founded by Iris and her late husband, R.A.C.

As you read the articles in this newsletter, consider supporting Iris Paul's ministry. The fact that she is a widow carrying on this work in India is a miracle! She is truly a woman full of God's vision. Or, pray and consider helping just one widow in need, for \$30/month, (\$1/day). Your help will bless her and sustain her in ways you may not realize.

20 Years (continued)

since being a widow is: Jesus chose me in the midst of millions of people to be His daughter. Why should He suffer on the cross for me? What can I do to thank Him, but to keep going in the place that He has placed me and keep telling others of His love until my dying day? It pains me to be a widow. But I am extremely happy doing the village work here. All Praise be to Him who sustains me.

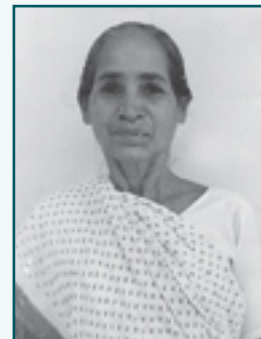
You can help sustain the ministries of Reaching Hand Society, led for more than 20 years by this remarkable widow. Your donation in any amount will help us support Reaching Hand's ministries, which include medical clinics and literacy training in remote tribal villages, public health education, prisoner rehabilitation, and water resource

management, among others. Designate your check or online donation at www.indiapartners.org to "RHS." God bless you.

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress. —James 1:27

Remember Sathamma

As we have read (see cover story), life as a widow in India is difficult—even for an educated woman like Dr. Paul. For uneducated



Sathamma

widows, life is even harder. Sathamma lost her children as well as her husband, so she is utterly alone in the world. What is more, this woman in her late 40s suffers from diabetes and a heart condition. To provide the barest daily living, Sathamma, a Christian, cleans and prepares her local church for Sunday services. She asks us to remember her and pray for her health. Your sponsorship of just \$30 per month will sustain life for Sathamma. She

and other widows are awaiting your help—of \$1 a day.

Please consider sponsoring a needy widow today. Your monthly donation will make a life-changing difference in her life—and yours! To help a widow now, or to request more information about widow sponsorship, return the enclosed envelope. Blessings to you.



Double Your Vision for Ministry

Our Spring Matching Fund Drive is in full swing. Every gift you give to our "Where Most Needed" fund between now and May 31 **will be doubled and matched dollar for dollar.** In addition, *all donations received by April 30* will be increased by the Feinstein Foundation. That means your "Where Most Needed" gift received this month will be **more than doubled!** Of course, online donations count, too. Whether you are giving for the first time or are one of our twenty-year donors, please give generously today. Your gift will help the needy in India. Thank you!



Team Members Find Blessings in India

An India Partners volunteer team served in India, January 6-16, 2006. The team members felt blessed in many ways, and that they were served by those they came to serve. Here are highlights of their trip.

The team traveled to Chennai, India, to serve at Agape Rehabilitation Center, the ministry of Daniel and Avitha Victor. The focus of the team's service was threefold: provide physical therapy for the disabled students of Agape, teach English as a second language, and provide computer training.

The first day was spent getting to know the students and staff of Agape. The students practiced their conversational English while the team members worked on their listening skills! Each of the Agape students had had to pass English tests to complete their 12th year of school, but not all of them had gotten much of a chance to speak the language. Classes at Agape are taught in English, with the instructions repeated in Tamil, the regional language.

The following two days, team members Debbie Van Velzer and Shae Hastings began physical therapy sessions for each of the students. Debbie and Shae said, "We were amazed by how courageous the students were, the strength they had and their willingness to try anything. They were full of smiles!" While the physical therapy sessions were going on, team leader Donna Glass taught PowerPoint to other students.



Debbie provides physical therapy to Agape student



Donna teaches PowerPoint to Agape students

The students worked hard, learning how to use the software to build a presentation in English.

On the fourth day at Agape, Debbie and Shae taught an exercise

class for all of the students. The women demonstrated several simple stretching exercises that could be done while sitting at the computer to relieve tension and improve posture. After practicing the exercises, one student exclaimed, "Thank you! You have delivered me from my back pain!"



Avitha and Daniel Victor lead Agape's Monthly Get-Together

Agape's Monthly Get-Together coincided with the team's last day in India. All Agape graduates and current students were invited to this event. On this day, over 50 persons with disabilities attended! Debbie and Shae worked hard to provide individual physical



Shae enjoys mehndi, traditional body painting

therapy sessions for 25 graduates in just three hours. All were given individualized exercises they could continue to do on their own.

The team left Agape with tears and laughter, feeling blessed beyond comprehension for the opportunity to serve God among the people in India.

Do you have a desire to share your talents in India? Whether your P.T. is Physical Therapy or PowerPoint Training, or anything in between, you can put your background and skills to good use on an India Partners team. For more information, contact Brian Stark at DELTA Ministries International: brians@deltaministries.com, or toll-free at 800-533-5822.

India Partners

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Dr. Iris Paul: A Widow With Vision

Position Opening at India Partners



Development Associate.
Starts June 26.
Go to indiapartners.org
and click on “Employment.”

India Partners Speaking Schedule

India Partners staff members will be speaking as follows:

- **Lynnwood, WA; Rotary Club:** April 13
- **Eugene, OR; United Lutheran Church:** April 23
- **Eugene, OR; banquet:** April 29
- **Ontario, CA; So. California Missions Fest:** May 19-21
- **Eugene, OR; Central Lutheran Church:** May 21

To request an India Partners volunteer or staff member speak at your church, club, or event, email info@indiapartners.org

The Gift That Keeps On Giving

Have you considered including India Partners in your will? Your gift will help India Partners save and change lives in India. For more information, contact Brent at 1-888-870-9085.



Frequent Flyer? Donate Your Miles



Did you know that you can donate your frequent flyer miles to India Partners? You can! Call toll-free for details: 1-888-870-9085.

Free Book and Video



Learn about our ministries through our free book and video. The book, *Pioneering on the Pinda*, describes the ministry of Reaching Hand Society and its founders, Drs. R.A.C. and Iris Paul (see this issue's cover story). And our video, *Love One Another*, describes all of our partners' ministries, highlighting the work of Agape Rehabilitation Center. Use the reply envelope to request your copies.

To give online now,
go to indiapartners.org

Eugene Banquet, April 29, featuring Jim Torrey, former mayor of Eugene, and Dave Farquhar, Mission Increase Foundation.
Contact India Partners to attend.