

Missionaries Sold Out to Christ: The Persecution Is Worth the Cost

The mobile ministry teams I worked with—and often led—were just like family to me. I began to enjoy the gypsy lifestyle we lived and the total abandonment to the cause of Christ that is demanded of an itinerant evangelist.

We were persecuted, hated and despised. Most nights we slept between villages in roadside ditches, where we were relatively safe. Our team always created a stir, and at times we even faced stonings and beatings. Yet we kept going, knowing that we were blazing a trail for the good news in districts that had never before experienced an encounter with Christ.

I Want to Come Back

One such village was in Rajasthan. This was the first place I was beaten and stoned for preaching the good news. Often when we were there, our literature was destroyed.

It seemed that mobs were always on the watch for us, and six times our street meetings were broken up. Our team leaders began to work elsewhere, avoiding this village as much as possible. Three years later, a new team of national missionaries moved into the area under different leadership and preached again at this busy crossroads town.

Almost as soon as they arrived, one man began tearing up literature and grabbed a 19-year-old missionary, Samuel, by the throat. Although beaten severely, Samuel knelt in the street and prayed for the people in that hateful city.

“Lord,” he prayed, “I want to come back here and serve You. I’m willing to die here, but I want to come back and serve You

in this place.”

Many older Christian leaders advised him against his decision, but being determined, Samuel went back and rented a small room. Shipments of literature arrived, and he preached in the face of many difficulties. Today there are hundreds of precious brothers and sisters worshipping the Lord.

This is the kind of commitment and faith it takes to reach the world with the good news of Jesus Christ.

A Risk Worth Taking

One time we arrived in a town at daybreak to preach. But word had already gone ahead from the nearby village where we had preached the day before.

As we had morning tea in a roadside stall, the local militant leader approached me politely. In a low voice that betrayed little emotion, he spoke:

“Get in your vehicle and get out of town in five minutes, or we’ll burn it and you with it.”

I knew he was serious. He was backed by a menacing crowd. Although we did “shake the dust from our feet” that day, today a group of people meets to worship the Lord in that same village. In order to plant the message of Christ, we must take risks.

For months at a time, I traveled the dusty roads in the heat of the day and shivered through cold nights—suffering just as many are suffering today to bring the good news to those waiting to hear it. In future years I would look back on those seven years of village evangelism as one of the greatest learning experiences of my life. We walked in Jesus’ steps, incarnating and representing Him to masses of people who had never before heard the good news.

I was living a frenetic, busy life—too busy and thrilled with

the work of sharing Christ to think much about the future. There was always another campaign just ahead. But I was about to reach a turning point. {eo}

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