

# The God who cares

A follower of Islam may repeat the phrase 'God, the merciful, the compassionate' millions of

times in his or her life, yet view Him ultimately as distant and uninvolved, a Master who is concerned mainly with the fulfilling of religious duties, a God who sends difficulties merely as 'tests' to see how His servants will bear up under them. There is hope that He may one day extend mercy, on the fearful day of reckoning. But there is little or no expectation that He is the God who sees, who cares, and who is near, the God who redeems,

and who willingly took on flesh and dwelt among us to do so.

*"He is the God who sees, who cares, and who is near, the God who redeems."*

The outworking of this view of God is especially and painfully evident among the slums and shanty towns of one of the poorer countries where we work. These communities, commonly referred to by other locals simply as the 'slaves,' comprise the poorest and the lowest caste of people in this society. Those who work are mostly street sweepers and garbage collectors, a huge percentage of the men being unemployed, many

**A Partner in the Arab World, tells of a young life saved**

*'Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.'*

Acts 4 vv 29-30

*It's hard to believe that this happy girl was once only hours from death*



of the women and children begging for coins and food. More than half of their monthly salary may go directly into their supervisor's pocket, the inevitable 'cost' of keeping their job. Born into this class, they are basically denied the possibility of advancing or moving out of their station in life. They are despised and looked down upon by the rest of society, so much so that people frequently ask why anyone would waste time working with them, when everyone knows that they are 'happier the way they are' (and besides, this is just what God has 'written' for them anyway). Visitors are often overwhelmed by the overcrowding, lack of sanitation, malnutrition and grinding poverty that are everywhere you look. And there is a pervasive sense of hopelessness, oppression, and resentment that shapes every aspect of life in this community.

God has opened a wonderful opportunity for these people to learn of His forgiveness and love through various health and community development projects. He very graciously demonstrated His nearness and His grace recently, in answer to a prayer for healing. The child of one of the community health workers had been ill in the spring, and had basically stopped eating (though none of us were aware at the time). One day her mother brought us the results of a blood test done at a local hospital, showing that her daughter was severely anemic. The doctor had given her a blood transfusion, but we learned later that he had basically told the parents to take her home and keep her comfortable until she died. When I



*She is now a playful young girl*

went to see her, I was surprised and totally shocked to find an emaciated 2-year-old, weighing less than 14 pounds, feverish and moaning with a chest infection, lying motionless on the floor, refusing even sips of water from her mother's hand. Her mother quietly wept, her father sat silently blinking back his tears each time he looked at her. I heard later that all the neighbours, too, had told them to 'just let her go.' I was overcome myself by the hopelessness of the situation, as I explained to the parents that the baby was too far gone now to just start eating again. But with the mother's permission, I prayed for her in Jesus' name, and then ran off to consult with a doctor on my team

as to what, if anything, might be done.

*"Her mother quietly wept, her father sat silently blinking back his tears each time he looked at her."*

We both felt that she had little chance of surviving a stay in a local hospital, if a local doctor would even agree to admit her. So instead he worked out a high calorie formula of mostly sugar, oil and milk powder, which I quickly mixed up in bottles at home, and brought to the family. I explained how they should attempt to give her the formula, gave her the first of many injections of antibiotics, and then prayed again for her life to be spared, in the name of Jesus. This time the Lord directed me to ask specifically that He would miraculously restore her appetite. God graciously did just

that, and in such a remarkable way that the neighbours are still talking about the miracle they saw with their own eyes! From the moment we first put the bottle to her lips, through weeks of 3-hourly feedings and high-calorie formulas, injections and iron supplements, and eventually on to solid food, she never stopped asking for more to eat!

Her mother is so grateful, and gives 'praise to God' for bringing her daughter 'back to life,' though she does not yet understand what it means to call on Him in Jesus' Name, or that she herself may become His beloved child. Please join us in praying that she and her family will come to know the Lord in all His goodness and grace, through Jesus, and that He will glorify Himself as He brings others to faith in Christ through her testimony. ■

### Prayer pointers:

- Please pray for all our partners facing opposition as they go about their work
- That they might have wisdom and boldness as they spread the good news of Jesus.

### Opportunities to Go

*Do you have skills and abilities that could be used to make a genuine difference in the lives of people in Asia and the Arab World? Interserve has many opportunities in several countries, both long term and short term, for people with a heart for mission and a sense of God's calling.*

*Why not get in touch with your National Council (see page 15) to find out what the options are?*