

## Running Our Own Race



After recently reading Philippians 3:13-14 I can easily picture a race in progress with participants pushing themselves and straining toward the finish line. Some looking tired others look like they could continue for a long time. As they struggle through the race each will face their own challenges.

I can relate to these runners in this race as I feel I am very much in a race each day and am pressing on to the finish line. Constantly moving to the next thing – meetings – schedules – plans. Everyone has things that are required of them every day – some are busy raising kids; others are deep into work, and some are in the retirement stage.

Each of these stages has its own challenges. How we handle these challenges and weather the storms that come our way is really where the rubber meets the road. We each have to handle the challenges sent our way individually. Some will require more of ourselves where others will not be as hard to handle.

In the end we want to be the people that God has called us to be, but we still need to handle the day-to-day struggles.

Knowing that we are not alone in this process is a great comfort to me. I don't want to be looking back wishing for things to be different but looking ahead to what is to come. I want to be pressing on toward the goal that God has for me in the future.

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:13-14 NIV



The Catalytic Ministry I would like to highlight in this letter is AidsLink. They are working in a number of counties see the story below from South Asia

A STORY FROM SOUTH ASIA

## Honoring God, blessing others

It was almost 13 years ago in South Asia when Dinesh's\* family was devastated by the sudden death of their youngest child from an AIDS related illness. Amidst the grief, Dinesh, his parents and his older brother were told to take an HIV test. His father and older brother tested negative, but Dinesh and his mother were both informed they were HIV positive.

At the time, Dinesh wasn't aware of the effects of HIV, but he obediently took the recommended treatment twice a day as instructed. Dinesh continued with his schooling, but as he learnt more about HIV from a Catalytic team, he started to better understand what his treatment was for — and he was full of questions. In answer to Dinesh's worries, the Catalytic team provided invaluable support and council, walking alongside Dinesh, and helping him confront his fear, confusion and questions. They offered him their time, their testimonies and their care.

Instead of complaining about his lot in life, Dinesh instead considered others who would suffer like him:

"What could I do to help them?" was often his question. Having seen the impact that the Catalytic team had had on his life, Dinesh recently decided to join them after he finishes his education.

His aim is to honor God through his efforts, blessing others through his service: "If I am worthy, I will try and lead this ministry. I may be weak physically, but I am strong in Christ," he declares, confident that God can use him in the future to bring hope to so many others, who like himself, desperately need it.

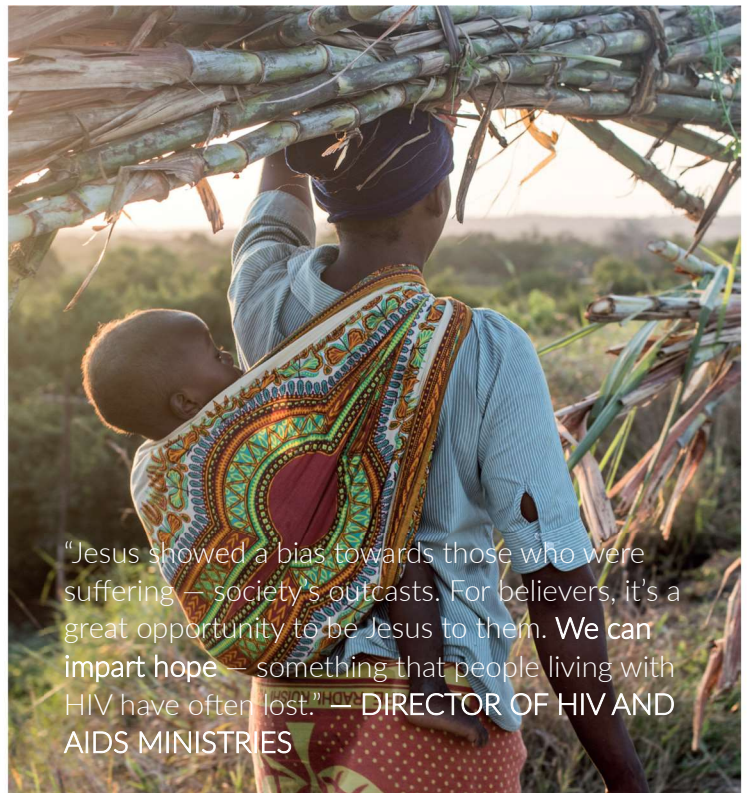
*\*name changed*

### CHANNELS OF HOPE

Available in both Russian and English, Channels of Hope Facilitator Training is an intensive program for people working with the vulnerable, marginalized or those affected by HIV and AIDS. Participants are challenged in their thinking, come away with changed perceptions, gain the skills to present Channels of Hope workshops themselves and have the ability to make a real difference in the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

### COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMMES

Teams reach out to local communities, showing the compassion of Christ to people living with, or vulnerable to, HIV. Programs vary from place to place but often include HIV prevention sessions in schools and prisons, workshops in churches to raise awareness, mentoring vulnerable children and youth, partnerships with local healthcare services and support for individuals living with HIV.



"Jesus showed a bias towards those who were suffering — society's outcasts. For believers, it's a great opportunity to be Jesus to them. **We can impart hope** — something that people living with HIV have often lost." — **DIRECTOR OF HIV AND AIDS MINISTRIES**

## A Word from Tom

This past Sunday in church we had time to honor the veterans in the congregation. The choir sang the anthem of each of the branches of service and those that served stood to their song. This is all good and appropriate, especially given the significant number of Veterans in attendance. It got me thinking that there is no song to honor those who serve faithfully as missionaries or pastors. In the last 40 years (and even prior to that) we have met and worked with some amazing people who have answered a higher call than that of serving in the armed forces. Yes, I know that God will one day give His reward to each one according to their service, but is that any reason for withholding our thanks today? So, if you know a pastor or missionary, why not drop them a note, call or text and tell them that you appreciate what they have done or are doing for God's Kingdom. You might even receive a blessing out of it too.



**Abby** – has been working very hard in the first half of her senior year of college at Kennesaw State University. One of her electives (Film) has taken a significant amount of time. She is enjoying the class but finding it challenging. She continues to work for Country Fried Creative, so her weeks are full. **Pray** for continued good health and good focus to complete her classes.

## Family Update

**Janice** – I have been quite busy working through many projects. Some are short and others more long term. Our fiscal year runs Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> through Sept. 31<sup>st</sup>. We are beginning a new year and have many projects that have significant due dates. **Pray** that our team will be working on the most strategic projects to keep the office running smoothly.

**Tom** – work has been going well. Things had slowed down for a short time and now are back to busy again. Each week produces new challenges and continues to push him to learn new things. **Pray** for continued strength each week as his body grows more tired with all the physical work.



**Amanda** – is in her fourth year at Stephen F. Austin working in the Athletics Communication Department. This year she has a new younger boss who has taken a lot of stress off her plate and made work more enjoyable. She is now entering the fall crossover season, which is a very busy time, she will be back home in Georgia for Thanksgiving which will give her a little bit of a break. Amanda spent the first week of November in Beaumont, Texas with the women's soccer team for the Southland Conference Tournament. She drove herself there and back twice to get back to Nacogdoches for a women's basketball game in between the semifinal and championship matches for soccer. Sadly, soccer did not win their championship, but football and volleyball both have a chance to win conference regular season this weekend! She will be traveling to Commerce, Texas for volleyball's Southland Conference Tournament the weekend before Thanksgiving.

Please **pray** for endurance for her to get through this year and continue to find a work-life balance.



## Support Update

My last letter made note of how I had been serving with OM for more than 40 years. Over the years Tom and I have written about a wide range of topics from the ministry that we were involved in. One thing we haven't written much about is support money. Over the past few years, the amount of support being given to OM for our/my ministry has been decreasing. It has decreased to the point where OM is funding 47% of my salary. That is redirecting finance that could be used in other areas. To be completely transparent, any additional money that comes in will not increase my salary, but it will free up funds for other purposes. If God lays it on your heart to begin or increase your giving, we trust that you'll be obedient. We have always trusted God to meet our financial needs, and He has never let us down. There is much Joy to be experienced in both giving and receiving gifts from Our Heavenly Father.

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