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# *OM In Step with OM India OM*

*News for Partners of the India Group of OM Ministries from Joseph D'souza  
May 2009*

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## *In Step With and Personally From Joseph D'souza...*

It has been two months since our first Dalit Education Center graduation, but I still feel an immense sense of joy in my heart when I think about that day. I have written a separate letter on that first graduation ceremony which was held on February 28. If you have not received it let us know and we will send it to you.

One of the important points mentioned in the letter was that we were able to celebrate that day because all our different entities within India and our partners from around the world worked together. The beauty of our international family of ministries is that each one complements all the others in important ways. Each ministry is significant before God and for the people we serve.

Since the beginning of 2009, we've had a huge emphasis on advanced leadership development and capacity building. Since I last wrote to you, we finished one of our two National GSCC seminars planned for 2009 and we are pressing forward in constructing GSCC church buildings wherever we have reasonably sized churches. Our senior pastors report growth in their churches despite continued persecution in a number of states.

In our leadership sessions, I have been emphasizing one of OM India's core values: Brokenness. Brokenness is one of the character traits the Spirit of God wants to build in our lives. While it is true that we are infinitely valuable to God and we are made in the image of God, it is also true that we are sinners who need to be saved. Christ's salvation for us involves taking care of our past, present and future sinfulness. No one is perfect this side of eternity.

Because we are sinners being saved by grace, we need to learn to carry a broken spirit before God each day of our lives. God does not despise or reject a broken spirit. But he does resist the proud in heart. Pride is nothing but not being willing to accept our real, honest position before God.

I want God to cultivate a spirit of brokenness in the hearts of my leaders in India. I trust that as you work in the uncertain global environment today that God is reaching you in your time of need and carrying you through times of both victory and grief.

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## *International Leadership Summit – A new way forward*

April 13-17, 2009, was a fantastic week as we began the first ever batch of the International Leadership Summit (ILS). The ILS is a new initiative we have started to create a learning community within OM India which will constantly stimulate growth and innovation in the work that we do for the nation of India.

The current batch is comprised of 27 people from all six streams of the India Group of OM Ministries – Good Shepherd Community Church (GSCC), International College of Cultural Studies (ICCS), Healthcare Initiatives, Economic Development, All India Christian Council (aicc), and Communications and Financial Development. The program is designed as a three-year course with classroom-based sessions to be conducted twice a year. A wide range of books is being provided to the participants during the course of the program to facilitate their own learning, as well as to initiate group discussions during the classroom-based sessions. Sessions were held at the OM India headquarters, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

This program is started in with partnership Elmbrook Church, USA. Dick Robinson, Senior Associate Pastor, and Tom Keppeler, Associate Pastor of Harvest Outreach, were the resource people for our first set of sessions. It was delightful to see the program create an open forum where ideas and perspectives were shared and dialogues on community, life-time learning and biblical principles of leadership were encouraged. I was amazed at the experience and potential that came out of this first set of sessions.

One of the main outcomes we eagerly wait to see emerge from this learning experience is an indigenous theology of the church in India. We are absolutely certain that much will be achieved through this learning initiative.

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## ***Advanced Pastoral Training – Equipping Leaders***

A team of 13 Good Shepherd Community Church (GSCC) pastors arrived at the OM India headquarters, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, for an advanced pastoral training program conducted by River Life Church from Singapore.

During the two-day course, April 20 and 21, 2009, the GSCC pastors spent time accessing their individual church growth in the light of the church framework they were shown in the last training program.

Our GSCC pastors are doing a wonderful job and we see the fruits of their work in the increased number of our church members and the strengthening of the church members' faith. On Sundays, many of our GSCC pastors conduct multiple church services for church members who are scattered across a District/province. Throughout the week, they are engaged in making home visits, counseling and praying with men and women from the local community and conducting Christian meetings.

We have no doubt that as these men and women pour into the lives of their church members, their own skills require continual replenishment and their capacities as pastors must be widened. We are committed to do this. Twice in a year, all our GSCC pastors gather for a pastoral training program where they are taught biblical principles for pastoral responsibilities and leadership. However, we are thrilled that apart from this basic training, we can make high quality international training and resources like this one available to our pastors.

This is to be the first of many mid-term advanced coaching sessions in which we would like our GSCC pastors to participate and develop for the building of their own churches and finally for the glory of God. With the passion and commitment our pastors show for the work they do, we consider it an honor to invest in their own lives.

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## ***Women Leaders' Annual Retreat – Fulfilling His Purpose***

I cannot underestimate the role our women leaders and workers have made to the work of OM India. They have shouldered equal responsibilities and I dare say, in several occasions outshone their male counterparts in the work that they do in the Good Shepherd Community Church Ministries, Urban Slum Ministries, Women's Empowerment Ministries and Health Initiatives. This is why I am always thrilled to receive news of their time of retrospection and assessment because it brings encouragement to my heart.

This year, the Women's Ministry Teams (WMT) gathered for their Annual Retreat in April 2009. These teams of women leaders mentor and coach the women who work on GSCC's Film and Literature teams.

While these women had an awesome time of spiritual renewal and recommitment at the retreat, they were also eager to assess the results of their work in 2008. The outcomes were outstanding. All WMT teams achieved the team visitation targets they had set for themselves. Many of the WMT team members even visited some of the Film and Literature teams multiple times to check on their performance and welfare. They reported that each visit boosted the morale of the Film and Literature team members and challenged them to persevere in spite of challenges.

Even as she works in her field area, each Film and Literature team member is required to complete her Bachelors in theology course which is offered by our International College of Cultural Studies (ICCS). Our WMT team members have played a significant role in counseling and encouraging these team members in their course material so that they excel in their own learning abilities while sharing God's word and encouraging new Christians.

I am impressed with how our WMT team members invest in the lives of our Film and Literature team members and I am also thrilled that we have an able group of senior women leaders who take time to mentor our WMT women. We want to see each individual in OM India grow and reach his or her full potential. I can say with confidence that we are well on our way to making this a reality.

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***THANK YOU FOR YOUR FRIENDSHIP, PRAYERS AND SUPPORT.***

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*For other reports and news on the India Group of OM Ministries, please feel free to contact me at [joseph.dsouza@ind.om.org](mailto:joseph.dsouza@ind.om.org)  
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