

REACH OUT AND TOUCH

Here we go again. I hope you remember the last message about the touch of Jesus. In fact I really wanted to write about an incident that happened in the life of Dr. Paul Brand and I wanted to use this scripture portion as an intro. But the scripture pulled me deep into it, that I thought I'd write the incident for the next letter.

Let us go back in time. Those were the days when missionaries came from England. Do you know today England is one of the most unchristian nations of the world? Most of the churches are converted into community halls, hindu temples and mosques. Guess it's time for us to go taking the Word.

Jesse Brand was a strapping young man, full of zest and vigour yet with a sensitive heart which was so moved by the plight of the weaker ones. He worked in Kolli Malai. Went home and won over the heart of Evelyn Brand. She came to India, they were married here and the very first day Jesse took his bride to the Killer Mountains. It was 1913. Life was too good to be true, despite the snakes, black death and so many dangers. Two darling children were born, Paul and Connie. They grew up climbing every mountain and eating exotic fruits. Paul's early influences were all the tribal folks from Kolli Malai and he loved them. When they were grown, the children had to be sent to England for their education. It broke the hearts of the parents and the children.

Yet the worst was still to come. Suddenly without warning, in 1929, Jesse fell ill and died. It devastated Evelyn and she returned to England for a brief while. Paul remembers that after his father's death, he could not recognize his mother. She had become so old, her hair completely gone white. Yet she returned to the Kolli Malai and served there till she was 95 years old!

Coming to Paul, he studied to become a physician and India was more home to him than England. So he returned to CMC, Vellore after his studies to serve as a missionary doctor. So moved by the plight of the leprosy patients who could only beg, Paul started to treat them. He could not do so in the general hospital, so he

went to Karigiri and started a leprosy sanatorium. Even to this day this is functioning.

Paul is highly acclaimed by the medical community, for it was he who first propounded that leprosy is not the cause of sores and rotteness, but because of the numbness caused by the bacteria, a patient slowly loses sensation. In the book, *Ten Fingers for God*, he writes about feet of lepers being nibbled by rats, while they were blissfully sleeping.

Word spread far and wide, that at last there is a doctor who treats leprosy patients and people started pouring in. Paul's wife, Margaret a surgeon too, writes that patients use to sleep in their verandah.

On one such day, a young man came to see Dr. Paul and the doctor with his customary cheerfulness, put one hand on the shoulder of this young fellow and with another hand he cupped his face to see the damage of the disease on his face. Simultaneously, he remarked, "Hmm not bad, after some months young man you'll be ready for marriage." But already this young boy started to weep and by now he was sobbing uncontrollably. Paul Brand was mystified and he asked the nurse whether he had said something hurtful and asked her to ask him why he was crying.

Amidst broken sobs, the young fellow said, " At the age of 10 when my parents came to know I had leprosy they turned me out of home and I'd lived in the streets begging. And today after many many years I have been touched. No one has touched me for such a long time."

More healing happens with the human touch more than anything else. This so beautifully illustrates the Touch of Jesus. Paul Brand, records this incident in the book, *The Gift of Pain*, co authored by Philip Yancey.

Reach out and touch, there are so many who need a touch of love, a touch to wipe away a tear, a touch to comfort and heal.

Let us reach out and touch in Jesus Name.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=la0aZWrAd1c&playnext=1&list=PLB65BA870E41A2A18&feature=results_video

The sound quality is not so good, but this is a very lovely song, sung by the African Children's Choir.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TA48qM04XJM>.

The song is very good in this clip.