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Exclusivity of the Gospel in Real Life

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Your Bequest Your Legacy

Exclusivity of the Gospel in Real Life

by Clem Boyd

Editor's note: The names of the young women in the story were changed so they may return to India in the future without scrutiny.

They were six years old when their faith was put to the test.

Two Cedarville students who grew up in India to missionary parents learned firsthand how different the Gospel was compared to the majority Hindu religion of their peers.

Their school put mandatory yoga in the curriculum. Unlike the United States, where yoga is more likely viewed as exercise, it's a means for worshipping the gods in Hinduism. The sisters declined taking the class and suffered for it. On day one, they were made to stand up in class and extend their arms above their heads for 40 minutes. On day two, the school principal made them kneel in front of the whole school — all of the students, teachers, and administrators. Embarrassment, shame, rejection. And they were only six.

"We knew yoga was wrong," Bethany commented. "Our parents went to the principal and asked if we could sit out of the yoga lesson. Instead, they kicked us out of school."

While being expelled was a blow, the girls have no regrets. "We knew in first grade that our faith and the Gospel were worth fighting for, even if it meant losing all our friends and losing a learning environment we were comfortable with," Julia said. "We would do it again."

They were accepted midyear to a Christian school — Christian because the principal and other administrators were followers of Christ. About 10 percent of the students were also believers in Jesus, but the other 90 percent were Hindu.

Some of their friends came to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. "They would look at our family and wonder how we got along

so well, or look at our relationship with our parents and wonder, 'How do you have that?'" Bethany related.

"They'd see us forgiving those who were mistreating us or getting grace from our parents," added Julia. "In India, if a child misbehaves, they are punished by parents and teachers. But they'd see our parents extend forgiveness to us, and our friends didn't understand. We would tell them, 'We show grace because Christ showed grace to us.'

"We introduced them to the concept of sin, that Christ is the Savior, and He died for us. Hindus don't understand why God would die for you."

The lower castes of Indian society cannot marry upper castes, and they are

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sidelined and marginalized, Bethany related. For these reasons, the Gospel struck a chord. "Jesus was poor," she shared. "He was marginalized by His own people, and He loved them and died for them."

Those coming to faith from the lower rungs of the caste system would go through personality changes when they came to know Christ, the girls explained. "They learned they were all equally brothers and sisters in Christ in the family of God," Julia said. "They became bold and fearless. One of our friends is now one of the best evangelists in our church (in India). She's passionate, and she hadn't been like that before. 'Jesus loves you' is huge in a society where you are not loved."

Clem Boyd is Managing Editor of Cedarville Magazine.

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