



I loved ICCM even before I stepped into the role of director. After all, what's not to love about an organization that is steadfastly clear in its commitment to do exactly what Jesus told us to do? "We dream of a world where every child is loved, safe and fulfilling their God given potential." My love for ICCM grew as I stepped into the Central Office, began to connect with field personnel, and had opportunity to "look under the hood" of the organization. Yes, it has a few spots of wear but overall, it's a beautiful, powerful machine moving in the right direction.

During my November trip to India, I absolutely fell in love with ICCM. Unexpectedly, I was completely swept off my feet. I witnessed, firsthand, the grace-filled dance of ICCM and the Free Methodist (FM) Church BEING and DOING exactly what we say we are and do.

My heart swelled as:

- ♦ I heard young teenagers sharing their stories of tangible salvation from vulnerable, at risk situations of poverty into the love and safe nurturing of the hostel. Each one articulating, by name, gratitude for the generous gift of empowerment from their personal ICCM sponsor. They know, firsthand, the power of a sponsor's commitment.



- ♦ I watched the two teen boys mime their testimony, dancing to the English song "Trading My Sorrows," fist pumping their commitment to Jesus; "Yes Lord, yes Lord, yes yes Lord!" then circling back to a bench at the corner of the "stage," as if to share their story and invite other boys into this beautiful life.
- ♦ I admired this same group of young men as they applauded their female colleagues upon completion of their dance and skit about the power of educating girls.

- ♦ I was deeply touched as I watched the older children actively nurturing the younger children (knowing this kind of nurture can only be given if it has first been personally received).

And so, I fell in love, with the gentle, kind house parents who serve Jesus by serving these dearly loved, once at risk, now brought to safety, children.

I was humbled, struck with admiration, as I:

- ♦ Heard Vaibhav, an ICCM alum, tell of his childhood treasuring of the daily peanuts in the afternoon snack mix, his deep sense of safety as a hostel child and his adult passion to give back; to pay it forward. (He was recently a guest speaker of the U.S. Global Leadership Summit – highlighting his innovative, fruitful leadership in the continued struggle for social justice.)
- ♦ Listened to FM and ICCM leaders tell the stories of call, passion, strategies to move with the love of Jesus into the vast unreached pockets of people.



- ♦ Witnessed their organizational movement planting new churches seemingly every day.
- ♦ Requested the opportunity to walk through the slums of Mumbai, and was ushered in through the sheet metal barrier, at the sight of the FM superintendent's office and the home of two FM pastors' families.
- ♦ Witnessed their excellence in financial record keeping and stewardship practices; all in line with kingdom values that compel them to dream of doing yet more – reaching more people, loving more people, providing safety for more children. I was captured by their recently established model for “local child sponsorship.”



I love that ICCM India receives sponsorship support from Canada, Japan and the U.S. I love that they are actively contributing their own funds. What a powerful, kingdom partnership. It's incredible! An invigorating example for us all.

During my time of fellowship with our leaders in India, I experienced a full brain clash of paradigms. It's so obvious it's almost embarrassing to mention: “We (U.S. people) think about what they (our sisters and brothers in India) are doing, in the category of *World Missions*. But for them, it's **local ministry**! Missions is local ministry. Local outreach is missions.

My newly formed love also propels me to grief and burden. I am struck by:

- ♦ The powerful, anti-Christian culture of paganism
- ♦ The extreme, wide-spread, severe poverty of the general population; while the wealthy have access to all the education, services and amenities of a developed country

And, in the face of this dark backdrop, The glory of God **SHINES**, through us! The followers of Jesus up-end the oppressive political and social structures. We raise the last, lowest and least. .

We **ARE** who we say we are, and we **DO** what we say we do. Ahh ... yes. I have fallen in love, again.

~ Alma ~

