

Hope for the hopeless

June 30, 2010

At first, she simply said, “hope.” Then, she paused and seemed to consider the meaning of the word more. “In our language it is deeper; it means more than just hope.” She stopped and looked me straight in the eye and said, “abundant, flowing hope.”

Man with leprosy.

Those truly are the perfect words to describe this place. Everyone who comes to the clinic is either getting tested or treated for HIV/AIDS. These are people without hope, people who get up every day and look death straight in the face. Here in South Asia, they face rejection from their families and communities. They are shunned. They are outcasts.

One man comes into the clinic every day. He humbly limps in with his cane gripped tightly and with a bag over his foot. Underneath is the infirmity he carries—leprosy. It has eaten away all his toes and only half of his foot is left. The flesh of his foot is rotten, and the bones of his foot thrust out. I look at him with pity. My nose is filled with the stench of his flesh, and I have to step back. The doctor just smiles as he cleans the wound. There is peace and understanding between the two—a relationship. The doctor is healing not only this man’s foot, but also his soul.

The leper—who also has AIDS—was turned away from the local hospital. Like many here, he was rejected—considered unlikely to live and not deserving of medical care.

But Nireekshana opened outstretched arms to this man. When there was no hope for him, the people here gave it freely. Through free medicine and

counseling, this man has been given back his life.

Praise God for these doctors and people here helping the broken. They truly are being the hands and feet of Christ. I have no doubt when they enter heaven, God will say, "Well done my good and faithful servants."

Kandace is a student at Howard Payne University serving with Go Now Missions in South Asia. Her last name is withheld for security reasons.