

The Lovelight Stories

PODCAST

Ep: 11 | Testimony Story: Following Your Heart to Love "The Least of These" with Tracy Alin |
Founder, Amistad Worldwide SHOW TRANSCRIPT

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00:01.51

lovelightstories

Tracy. Thank you so much for joining me on the love light stories podcast today. It's just such a pleasure and an honor to have you here with us today.

00:09.50

Tracy

Oh thank you so much I'm honored to be here too. Stephanie.

00:17.15

lovelightstories

Yeah so um I already gave everyone a little insight on my intro that I know you well because you're my relative. You're my husband Sam's aunt um and so I've gotten to know you and um, Amistad Worldwide over the last multiple years which we're going to dig into that more later but 1 thing that.

00:37.10

lovelightstories

I hadn't taken the time to fully understand was your own story of how you got into this work and so this conversation is really exciting for me but also going to be so insightful for the listeners. So um, help us just understand what it was that led you to do the work that you're doing today. Take us to that moment that beginning place.

01:03.60

Tracy

Okay, yeah, so I'm thinking back to my growing up years. Um, you know I grew up in a pretty average family. We did not travel a lot. We really didn't take vacations and I think from a young age I began to long to see other parts of the world. That was kind of a small thing that was was happening in me but it really wasn't until I got into college um and I was living with Christian roommates and we began searching for a church that we all wanted to attend together and we began visiting a series of churches over the period of a couple of months and it seemed like every time we went to a church it was mission Sunday for this season of time and that meant that there would be a missionary in the service telling their story and for me, it just touched my heart

every time I heard a story it opened my eyes. It just affected me in such a deep way like it just drew my interest. It was almost like a spark that got lit inside of me the first story I heard and um, we'd we'd get done with a service and I would want to keep talking with my roommates about what we'd heard and we did for a while but then they were ready to move on with the day but I was just pondering um that with the whole situation. Whatever it was that that missionary had talked about. And so this went on for a period of a few months and you know prior to that growing up I was part of a very large church but sadly I was not exposed to anything related to missions or overseas work at all and so for me, it was really my first time hearing about this work and just broadening my vision for.

02:38.54

Tracy

What the world was and all these different people and all the different issues they face and so during my college years. My summer after my sophomore year I thought I'd like to use a summer maybe to take a missions trip. So I went to my pastor at the time and I asked him. If he knew of any good music missions organizations because I'm really into music and I play the violin and he told me about a group called celebrant singers and anyway long story short I auditioned then I got on the team and we had to train in Visalia California and then we spent the summer traveling in Bulgaria. Putting on concerts and talking with people sharing our testimonies and then we traveled around the United States as well and so that really opened my eyes to actually being in another culture and I loved it and I had the opportunity to stay on for long term with that organization. But. Felt I should come back and finish college. But at that point I really knew missions was going to be part of my life in the future I didn't think necessarily at that point that I was going to be a full time missionary. But I knew for sure there was just there was a fire in me and it was just it was just growing. It wasn't it wasn't diminishing and even with. that summer you know it wasn't easy. We rode a bus without air conditioning all summer. We stayed in host homes throughout the us and Bulgaria and we had to ride sometimes eight ten hours a day on a crowded bus. Um, but even with those struggles I loved the idea of going to another culture and.

04:09.18

Tracy

Being able to share. Um the love of god with people that may have never heard of that before. So yeah, that's kind of where it began and then I just started taking trips after that I went and worked I have most of a nursing degree as well. So I went and worked in hospitals in Mexico and Ecuador. And I love that aspect of hands-on helping people with basic physical needs. The humanitarian aspect you could say and then I went to Africa after John and I got married. We led a team to Africa and that was extremely eye-opening because we were in the middle of Bush country and. Ah, Muslim area and many people there had never heard of had never heard of Christianity or Jesus and our church was hoping to plant missionaries within that group so we were to be the eyes and ears and to go and pray and look and search.

04:48.44

lovelightstories

Yeah.

05:02.99

Tracy

And a wonderful result came of that there was a couple that was placed in that group and spent 20 years establishing the church there. so um so yeah and then just from there went on to become involved in a deeper way with establishment of Amistad.

05:07.38

lovelightstories

Wow.

05:15.60

lovelightstories

Wow, Yes, and we'll get into Amistad in a little bit and you mentioned that the fire just continued to grow in you can you describe like how that felt or what things you were experiencing. Were you getting messages from God or what was happening.

05:33.77

Tracy

Um, yeah, and you know I was growing a lot in my faith at the same time as this was happening because I had these wonderful Christian roommates who they really they love to study the bible they love to. Um. To prayer meetings and they were so joyful about their faith and you know I'd grown up in a very conservative quiet Lutheran home where we didn't really talk a lot about our faith and they were actually assemblies of god so it was like kind of opposite ends of the spectrum.

06:00.12

lovelightstories

Yep.

06:04.19

Tracy

But I couldn't get enough knowledge I was just soaking I think I was just open at that point in my life to knowing about life I was curious I was searching and I wanted significance and meaning and of course I found that with God but then I wanted to know God What do you want me to do with my life and as this passion just kept growing in me. It was just something I thought about a lot. Was on my mind and heart I got excited about it I couldn't quit thinking about it if I tried and the way I would describe it now is if I didn't act on it I'd be so miserable like it would be far pricier for me not to act on this and even when this began growing in my heart I thought okay.

06:29.91

lovelightstories

And.

06:39.88

Tracy

It's true I haven't traveled much so is this just ah is this more yearning for adventure and travel than it is to really spread the gospel to other nations. You know what is this I was trying to figure it out myself. So I thought I should be doing more here first if this is really my desire to serve god in this way and so. I worked at um salvation army for a while with homeless and then I worked with native Americans out on the white earth Indian reservation and then I worked with Hispanic kids here. Um just did a variety of different outreaches just to kind of get my feet wet in ministry to cultures that are even here. And then I spent of course the last twenty five years working in nursing homes which that's really its own culture too and I realized that my calling I became more and more aware doing that work as well as work here that I have I had a huge heart for not just people abroad in particular. But. People that are marginalized people that are forgotten just I felt so sorry for people that their life just isn't any fun I mean they're just put off to the side often through no fault of their own whether it be through illness or disability. Um.

07:43.90

lovelightstories

Um.

07:46.24

Tracy

Or in cases overseas of poverty and discrimination and bad governments and bad choices of other people and so I began to really see this calling unfolding in my life that maybe it's not just here or there Maybe it's both places and that's really that's really what it's been for me is. You know, focusing on the least of these here which I do believe are people in our nursing homes. It's easy to drive by and not even know what's going on behind the door of that place and there's a lot of suffering people that are kind of forgotten. So. So yeah I just wanted I wanted my heart to be real I wanted to be in missions for the right reason but as.

08:13.28

lovelightstories

Um.

08:21.23

Tracy

As I got involved here I still continued to be so fascinated and interested with stories I would hear and I was sort of reading a lot of books attending classes I Just couldn't get enough I Guess that's how I would describe but it was almost like a drug for me. Um, just couldn't get and as I saw that people around me didn't necessarily have that I thought.

08:30.66

lovelightstories

Um, yeah, yeah, yeah, this.

08:40.19

Tracy

I would just pray and I said God I think you're I think you're calling me to do something about this because I can't seem to it doesn't go away. It's just growing more and more. It's like a fire that's being fanned into flame more and more.

08:45.77

lovelightstories

Um, right I Love that too that you were so open that you allowed yourself to explore what was here and serve here but also serve overseas because you hear people from different camps. You know.

08:57.23

Tracy

Um, yeah, yeah.

09:02.52

lovelightstories

Being more passionate about different things and I think we're all called to different places of the world whether it's local or not and so I think it's all wonderful and I love that you explored all of it and it sounds like because you had this open heart God allowed you to continue.

09:08.31

Tracy
Right.

09:21.20

lovelightstories

Yearning for him and longing for him and what he had called you to do and um I think it takes an inner awareness to and really that spiritual discipline to be able to listen to that seek that and then continue to follow that because.

09:31.10

Tracy
Um, and.

09:38.91

lovelightstories

Some people are open but they get lost along the way and that didn't happen to you. Um I want to say something really quickly Tracy and I'll cut this out but I'm hearing um, pounding like when you touch the table which is so hard to do. But it's coming through on the audio. Um, just when you're talking with your hands. It's okay, but it's hard for me I can't really cut that out. Um, so but yeah, but just you totally use your hands but like the the shuffling and stuff is a little loud but it's fine. We're good up until now.

09:59.32

Tracy
Um, okay, okay I'll back up.

10:12.60

Tracy

Okay I didn't even know I was doing it I must just be a happy I Just have a little table and I must be bumping my knee sorry okay and.

10:15.83

lovelightstories

Yeah I Yeah I think that So anyway, it's fine though. It's fine. Um, so yes I Just love that about you and how you've just followed your heart continually with the goal of trying to help. People and those that are really struggling in the margin. So Thank you for that and okay so now with your story tell us how you ended up starting Amistad Worldwide What led you to that connect us to that point.

10:49.87

Tracy

Yeah, so through this process of exploring other cultures and just wanting to learn as much as I can I took a class which came to our community. Um, it's a graduate level class but it was put on by a pastor that I knew. And you invite seminary professors and different people to come and speak every week and anyone could take the class you could take it for credit or just for certificate or just for enjoyment. It's called perspectives on the world Christian movement and if you haven't taken that class anyone listening i. Highly recommend that class. It really opens your eyes to. Just so many things. But anyway so I took that I helped bring the class to Fargo and then I also just was a student in that class and I remember hearing just so many so many pros of

wisdom from the different speakers but 1 in particular released couple things stood out and 1 of them was he. The professor the one night said I need 10 volunteers and I came up with 9 other people and they put 9 of them on one side of the stage and then I was by myself on the other side and that professor said do you know that 90% of the missionaries go where the church is already established and where a lot of work is going on. And they just join that force 1% of our missions force goes to the hard places to the place where there's persecution to the place where the church isn't yet established or is it's very slowly being established that got my attention and then also.

12:17.43

Tracy

He said if you can't go as a missionary yourself send 10 in your place and he was talking about being a mobilizer inspiring others to get on board or just somehow working from your home country to help others and so that that. Came back to me, not long ago and I'll explain more about that later. But basically after that class I love taking that class so much that I started working for a master's degree just because I wanted to study I didn't even know what my degree was going to be in but I applied to. Columbia International University in South Carolina and I completed a master's degree in 2010 and we had had a speaker come to my church and speak on human trafficking in India and wow that just ripped my heart all to hear about children being sold for sex at age 7 at age 10.

13:06.76

lovelightstories

And.

13:10.90

Tracy

Um, being promised jobs in the city. But then being taken passed around and you know sometimes 20 men a night coming to them and oftentimes losing their life before the age of 26 as average age that they survived till and I couldn't believe at that point in my life that I had never heard of human trafficking.

13:21.41

lovelightstories

Wow.

13:27.60

Tracy

You know I was in my thirties I think at that point and so anyway, um I went on then to do a thesis in human trafficking and I served with reach global for 3 years where I traveled around in educated churches business groups on human trafficking and we established 1 sewing center. Up in west Bengal because that's where reach global was working exclusively was India and I took my first vision trip to India and my heart began to really see what it's like in a place like India the huge amount of needs everything from complete lack of water lack of education. The trafficking issues. And um, I came back and um I started really thinking about wow what if I started my own charity and I had people in my life I was blessed to have people in my life that I thought were so smart and smart with finances smart with business and I knew I needed those kind of people to start a charity.

14:15.98

lovelightstories

And.

14:24.30

Tracy

But I just began thinking what if I just had all this fire and drive in me and I'd been a part of reach global and that had been a positive experience in many ways. But I also I was just longing to lead something myself because I had my own dreams and my own things that I wanted to do. And sometimes things can get bogged down when an organization becomes huge and I knew I wanted mine to be different I wanted it to be where 100% goes overseas 100% of the funds just just so focused on helping people that nothing is going to get in the way of that. Um, anyway, long story short then I established Amistad. Um.

15:00.30

Tracy

I found some of these people around me to help me and we wrote up bylaws and within four months we were accepted in North Dakota and that was amazing. It usually takes a year um and you get you have to rewrite your laws so many times we didn't even hire a lawyer. Um, so it shows how smart these people were that were helping me because.

15:03.88

lovelightstories

Wow.

15:12.10

lovelightstories

Um, wow.

15:15.86

Tracy

They knew that we looked at another charity a friend of mine. He had a charity and we looked at his wording we kind of tried to follow that because he had a similar vision that we as we did. Um, yeah and we ended up having it established so quick.

15:25.17

lovelightstories

Yep yep! Wow incredible. Yes, you had the foresight to surround yourself with the people that knew how to do the work that needed to be done and that's just incredible. So help us understand a little bit. Then the more of the why behind Amistad and maybe it was back then or what it is today but help us understand your organization a little bit. Um and why you exist in India specifically.

15:48.69

Tracy

Cut.

15:56.60

Tracy

Yeah, great question. Um, and so yeah, when I was thinking of starting a charity I thought I didn't have any plans to be super unique or reinvent the wheel. Obviously there's a ton of charities out there. But I knew that I had been blessed because of my travels and because of being involved in Missions boards at my churches I knew a lot of people on the mission field and I saw how they

were working so hard they were like the unsung Heroes. Whether it's rescuing kids from trafficking or um, establishing churches Or. Just any host of amazing works being done but they had no time to go fundraise. They had no time to even go and speak about their work So I wanted to be that friend and Amistad means friendship I wanted to be the friend to the missionary just stop just find out from them. What do you need? not not me coming and deciding I think you need to do this and we need to do this.

16:36.39

lovelightstories

Um.

16:44.66

Tracy

But coming in as a learner and saying how can I serve you? How can we help with poverty long-term sustainable solutions for poverty. Not just a handout sometimes we have to do handouts. But how can we um, bring out the dignity of people and bring out their talents and abilities because. People are so talented all around the world and they do have potential and so often they've been made to believe they have nothing to offer. But um, our focus is on the poorest of the poor. So. That's people a dollar a day or less um people who make a dollar a day or less and the reason India that was the country I was working in with reach global and I became educated on that.

17:06.28

lovelightstories

Yeah.

17:21.52

Tracy

And believe it's a country god led me to but also I see now that the needs there are. It's what it's a I would say it's a country with the greatest needs on so many levels I mean there's more orphans in India than any other country 37000000 and there's more trafficking of children and women than any other country. There's more unreached people groups meaning.

17:34.89

lovelightstories

Um.

17:40.93

Tracy

All kinds of languages and people that have never even heard of Jesus don't even have a church there yet and not only that but the poverty situation. Um a lot of that's related to the caste system which is the Hindu they Hindu is a main religion there and they believe in 3 333000000 gods and they believe if you end up as an orphan a widow or and a low caste which they have different social levels of importance if you end up in any of those categories that you've done something very wrong in the earlier life so they believe in reincarnation and so they think well now the gods are punishing you because of your.

18:05.92

lovelightstories

A.

18:18.45

Tracy

Bad behavior in the life before so because of this mindset they have. They can easily look at an Orphan a street child who's just living in the garbage dump and they can just turn away from that because they think who am I to interfere with what the gods are doing and so I see that these people who are so um.

18:30.58

lovelightstories

Um, wow.

18:37.19

Tracy

Talented I mean in my in my city here. We have so many Indian doctors we have Indian professors The Indians are so motivated and they're very smart and if they're given an opportunity in their hand they will run with it and so when I saw all of these things. Um.

18:48.50

lovelightstories

Yeah.

18:54.70

Tracy

I knew that India was my calling and I had done my thesis so I'd learned already so much about it for 3 years I wrote my thesis and read books and studied and plus I didn't mention um, in college one of my roommates was from India. So now you know you can look back on your life and see god's hand how you just pushing you a certain direction.

19:05.48

lovelightstories

Okay.

19:11.53

lovelightstories

Yes.

19:13.52

Tracy

And I was also really enamored with mother Teresa starting in college I was just fascinated with her work. So I think I started reading about India even way back when I didn't know anything about it. So yeah, that's some of it.

19:22.83

lovelightstories

Yeah, yeah, Wow Ok getting back to the caste system. That's something that unless we ascribe to that. It's hard for us to understand I think like.

19:36.46

Tracy

This.

19:38.83

lovelightstories

Turning away from an Orphan child that's knocking on your door that needs food or needs shelter or something and turning away. Um and I guess hearing you say that these people just it's their religion and they're truly believing that the gods are. Creating this fate if you will I guess in some way gives a little more understanding to it. But how have you reconciled all of that in your head have you have you thought about that more and like what are your thoughts on that.

20:15.14

Tracy

That's a deep and good question. It's actually caused a crisis in me sometimes because like I've always believed that the human being every human being has a conscience and I've even I've talked with people about this and I've talked with my mission partners about this.

20:27.25

lovelightstories

Yeah.

20:29.68

Tracy

Because I think even here in America like even if a person isn't a believing Christian if ah, if a child came begging at our doorstep I would say the great majority of people would want to help would be moved to do something even if it's just bringing the child to um, a foster home or you know a place that can help children like that.

20:40.71

lovelightstories

Um.

20:48.66

Tracy

But to just shut the door on their on their face and leave them out in the cold you know or out in the heat. Whatever wherever they are it just seems so harsh and so cold to me and so that has been an inner struggle that I've had of like I Love this culture but I hate this I hate this I Hate what I see here I hate this cruelty. This complete lack of understanding or value of human life and dignity and even how they discard female babies that still goes on where you know if ah if a boy is born an infant boy celebration occurs. But if an infant girl comes there's mourning and crying.

21:20.51

lovelightstories

Are.

21:26.40

Tracy

And even my mission partner he lives close to a river and he's told me for many years when he walks by that river he often sees the body of a baby in that river and it's just so hard to comprehend because we think that's so barbaric and here you know people are arrested for those things. But.

21:33.83

lovelightstories

Wow.

21:42.96

Tracy

Think you just have to you have to study the culture and you have to you have to realize this is just so ingrained from years and years and years. Ah, it's been It's been pushed upon them in school I mean and it's subtle. But it's there and you know when I'm quick when I'm thinking judgmental thoughts on them though. Then I think of myself and I think okay. We have a caste system here I thought that one day do we have a caste system here and I always try to pride myself on being like not judgmental and thinking everyone's equal and all this. But then I thought what if somebody came to me today or better yet when my son was really young and said we want to build a halfway house on the end of your block.

22:05.18

lovelightstories

Um.

22:21.40

Tracy

Are you? okay with that would I be okay with that and knowing my son is going to walk by there every day and he's going to be out playing and there's going to be people that are struggling with alcoholism in and out of that house. That's 1 example and I think caste is very subtle. But I think it exists actually everywhere in the world.

22:23.39

lovelightstories

Ah.

22:31.43

lovelightstories

Yeah.

22:38.40

Tracy

But what's just so hard about India is um, you know it's just nationwide and it's you know it was taught just in such a systematic way for years and now they say it's illegal. Um, however, it's still it's still ingrained in people and I'll give you 1 more example of that like.

22:54.41

lovelightstories

Yeah.

22:57.23

Tracy

Orphans and widows. Um I told you they're really considered the lowest of the low and if a person sees a face of a widow before noon I think it is they have to run back to their home and like do this ceremonial watching the Hindus do because they think they're going to be cursed. Bad luck is going to come.

23:07.91

lovelightstories

And.

23:13.76

Tracy

Or if a widow is in a village and someone dies there. Calamity happens. She's often beaten and thrown out of the village thinking she brings bad luck and there used to be a practice years ago called Sati and that means widow burning and what would happen is when a husband when a man would die. His wife would be tied to him. As his body is burned on the funeral pile right by the River and she'd be burned along with him and on her chest. There'd be a sign that said Worthless they're equivalent in Indian and that was called sati and it was a very it was a common practice because what good is a woman without a man that's her thinking.

23:40.75

lovelightstories

Oh my goodness.

23:48.20

lovelightstories

Wow.

23:51.43

Tracy

And even though that is outlawed it may still occur in isolated places. The mindset is there like today still the widow. She's bad luck can't have her around and so even sons and daughters will abandon their mother because they feel so scared. They're so scared and about this and so.

23:57.42

lovelightstories

Um.

24:09.43

Tracy

You know sometimes I think okay our job is to really with missions nowadays is to just empower but let other people handle that let the that let their own people handle that. But I think in a situation like India there has to be outside help because within the country. There's just all this discrimination and so who's going to help them.

24:26.91

lovelightstories

Write.

24:28.98

Tracy

And then the Christians even like my mission partner. He's a wonderful man but he faces so much discrimination because he's ministering and helping such people. Um, so that's why that's why we're working in India you know? yeah.

24:37.20

lovelightstories

Um, yeah, yeah, right? And and there's also just so much corruption outside of the caste system in India too I know you were talking about that and so it really creates this layer of fact.

24:44.94

Tracy

Yes.

24:51.21

lovelightstories

That makes it really difficult and like you said you need um outside support to walk together to create this this system of so stability essentially in what you're doing So okay, you mentioned your mission partner um can you share a little bit about um how you support.

25:00.16

Tracy

Absolutely.

25:10.88

lovelightstories

Your mission partner in India and just the types of people groups that you actually work with.

25:17.51

Tracy

Sure so I'm not going to use his name for security reasons he faces a lot of persecution and um, even death threats I'll just call him. Um RK and um, so yes, Rk is just an amazing man. Um, he basically. He's a church planter at heart and um, yeah, over the last twenty five years I would say he has planted started 72 regular churches which are anywhere from 200 to 2000 members throughout Southern India and then he's also started about 4000 house churches and these are ranging from. Anywhere from 6 to 200 members and so as he goes through these areas and he's preaching about a god of love a god of forgiveness a god where everyone is equal where everyone has a purpose I mean you can imagine these outcast people who can't get a job even though they want a job. They're just doomed to sweeping toilet sort. You know, doing the most menial of jobs. This is the best news to them to hear that wow really I'm not being punished There's not I'm not hated by everybody I'm not hated by god and I'm created by a loving god and so many people embrace this message and in the process if he and his pastors. He's raised up many. Youth leaders and pastors over the years and so they're working in many different areas and if they find an orphan or a widow a handicap person you know homeless people just marginalized people. Um, he will bring them into his sponsorship programs which I run from here. So.

26:48.60

Tracy

We have a sponsorship program for orphans widows and people with leprosy and we do I think one of the things that makes us unique is we really keep our costs low and when I say low I mean like bottom of the barrel low like to sponsor an orphan. It's \$15 a month.

27:02.28

lovelightstories

Are.

27:04.25

Tracy

And 100 % goes to the child and a widow. It's \$2 and fifty cents and a leopard \$6 and all of those all of those costs or fees I guess you could say cover you know food clothing shelter education spiritual um knowledge. And then job training for the future for the children and so yeah.

27:26.53

lovelightstories

Um, yeah, but how do you keep the cost so low. How do how do you do that.

27:31.24

Tracy

Well I will credit Rk because well we both have the same heart and that is how can we remove barriers from people giving to charity because when I started off with this I realized how many people had been hurt by charities where nothing was reported back. Like when they gave money. No story was told no report came back to them so they didn't even know if their money was used wisely and then a lot of people were having a lot of overhead costs for things and I know we have to do that sometimes and I'm not at all criticizing if charities have to do that.

27:50.81

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

28:06.73

Tracy

But I think sometimes there's been an abuse of that as well and not good communication back I know I myself have been hurt by that a number of times not getting you know the reports that I would really ideally like to have when I give my hard earned money and so um, Arc K in particular is very.

28:20.75

lovelightstories

Um.

28:24.56

Tracy

He has a same understanding that I do we but we want a child to be able to help in some way we want a person in nursing home to be able to help I mean charity shouldn't just be for the rich person. You know that's 1 thing and also our k is just so clever. Like for example, um I was with him around Christmas time a few years ago and we were.

28:32.44

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

28:43.10

Tracy

Trying to buy clothes for the all the orphans and at that time he had 875 kids that he'd rescued over like 17 different homes of pastors and he always takes some shopping for Christmas he goes shopping for them for Christmas and buys them clothing but he had asked me since I was in India he said. Tracy would you be willing to come and let the kids pick out their own clothes. They've never once had that opportunity and I said yes, sure that'd be great and they were so happy doing that I mean overjoyed to get to pick out what they wanted to wear and so I got to the

counter and I had the sponsor money and we had all the. Clothing and I was really happy with the price. Um, it was at a store called easybuy but it was good quality but it was it was cheap but arc k comes up and he says no wait wait wait wait wait wait my sister and he is so funny the way he barbers with everybody but he starts this chattering back and forth with a store clerk.

29:22.55

lovelightstories

Yeah.

29:35.35

Tracy

And I'm just smiling watching this and I can't understand the language of course but I know exactly what he's doing and by the time he finishes he said he said so I told this man that these are 75 of my 875 kids and that they're all going to get an outfit for Christmas and if he gives you 40% off I will bring the other.

29:54.96

lovelightstories

Wow.

29:55.14

Tracy

Ah, rest of those kids shopping here and so the man was discussing with the other owner there and they came back and slashed my ticket right in half and so it was even lower than it should have been and another example of that is we? Um, we do a books project for kids in the slum. So this is this is not our orphans.

30:04.23

lovelightstories

Wow.

30:14.38

Tracy

Of course, go to school but we also there's so many kids in India that want to go to school I mean they're out there drawing in the sand and they're drawing on walls. They want to learn and they're just idle and their parents can't afford to send them because there's a book fee or uniforms and different fees for school and.

30:30.50

lovelightstories

Um.

30:32.88

Tracy

Parents might make fifty cents a day driving a rickshaw you know working so hard but not making anything and so we've had a goal of sending. Um the first year we started a few years ago 20000 kids to school in the slums buying books for them. But when I got that report from arcade. He said we had paid for 50000 and I said I don't understand you know I'm not good at math. But I know we only gave money for 20000 to go to school and he said yes, but he said I looked at the books from the year before and the kids only used half the pages so we cut the size in half then I went to the booksman and he's just overjoyed because we're giving him so

much business and. He's poor too. But now he's rich because he's getting all this this income and so he cut our price in half too just to give us a discount because he was so overjoyed with us but arc k builds relationships with people and he has a way of guiltting them in a nice way like he'll say you know this is ministry. We're doing here together.

31:13.11

lovelightstories

Yeah.

31:29.90

Tracy

This is for the good of all these people think of how many more will benefit. He's just convincing I haven't seen anybody say no to him I mean he just yeah, he can convince. Anybody.

31:34.35

lovelightstories

Um, yeah, wow. Yeah, he's giving he's giving them more and more business which supports them and their families and their lifestyle.

31:43.48

Tracy

Ah, right? yeah.

31:45.75

lovelightstories

And yet he's giving them a sense of purpose through their work in allowing them to participate in this this partnership with all the people that you're serving together. That's just really amazing and then on top of it. The people that are donating on the other side of things are then.

31:49.13

Tracy

Um, yeah.

31:55.80

Tracy

Um, hates.

32:04.27

lovelightstories

Their money is able to go even farther. So really, you've kind of tapped into this economies of scale if you will by swimming Upstream you're doing things a little bit differently and it's just it's really neat and it's amazing too I've seen you do the same thing with water wells you.

32:05.15

Tracy

Try it.

32:20.95

lovelightstories

Build Water Wells tell us about that tell us about the water wells.

32:21.37

Tracy

Yeah, yeah, that's been so you know in the gospel it often talks about multiplication principles. You know like you know when Jesus was standing with the 5000 people who needed to eat and the disciples said how are we going to feed these people and of course they had no idea. But a little boy comes with faith and says here's my fish and loaves which of course any of us would think well that's not enough but Jesus took it and he made it enough. He made it overflowing even and this is what has happened with so many of our projects and I can only honestly give god the glory because um, you know we're not that great but on our own at all. But you know god. God will when you have when you have your hand open and you're willing to give to him what you have even if you think it's not enough he can make it more and you have faith that he can he will and so with these wells in 2014 I was in India and RK sat down with me and he was he was kind of emotional and he said Tracy we have a real problem here in India.

33:05.60

lovelightstories

Yeah.

33:16.50

Tracy

And he went on to tell me how many people lack clean drinking water and how many people die because of it children die of diseases preventable diseases and he said if you were to walk out here in my neighborhood. You'd see so many where they're drinking. They're drinking from the river filthy ponds and he said i. Do you think you could help me um and go back to the United States and ask people to donate for clean water and at that time he had a man named James and James had just turned from Hinduism to Christianity and James was a well worker he was placing wells just independently in villages for three hundred and fifty dollars each just hand pump wells.

33:50.22

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

33:53.10

Tracy

Raj said to him. Okay James now you're part of my ministry team. We need to do this as a ministry. He said if Tracy can go back to the United States and we can find people to give will you lower your price from three fifty to 52 if we can do 10 wells at a time. Well James thought of the math and he said yes because. He hadn't had a lot of business. He was like an untouchable poor man and it was hard. It's hard for him to get work and so and he had a wife and 2 kids and they were living just in squalor complete squalor at that time and so I came back here and because of the amazing community we live in it didn't take a lot of convincing to ask people. Do you want to give. 220 for a well and you can have your name on the plaque you can dedicate it to anybody. It's personalized so you even know you know that you have this village that you're taken care of and then he told me too that each well helps a thousand to 3000 people and that's a thing about India too is It's so populated. It's soon going to pass China as the most populated country. So.

34:42.89

lovelightstories

Um.

34:48.62

Tracy

Anything you do there is going to affect so many people I've seen that and so on so people responded and our goal. Our first year was 100 wells for 2014 and we did that and then it just kept escalating and then he lowered the price from 20 to and of 25 to 22 and then to one ninety and because you said the lower we have it the more people will help the more wells we can get so as of today we are at three thousand five hundred wells so we've placed in 4 different states in Southern India and talk about.

35:06.65

lovelightstories

Wow.

35:23.24

Tracy

Multiplication I mean we're doing a hundred wells faithfully every month and we have been now for about 2 years so we went from a hundred a year to a hundred a month and this James a literate man. He can't even read or write and so he started with him and 2 other men and they would go and this is hard work. You know you're in the Sun. You're. I've helped place these wells. It's hard work but they're strong I mean it's physical labor and then they pretty soon it was 5 men pretty soon it was 10 now. There's a crew of 50 and yet 5 teams of 10 and they go all over Southern India they're they travel miles now we're going way out to get these wells and.

35:49.30

lovelightstories

Wow.

35:59.66

Tracy

On the well you know you can have your like I said it's personalized and then our case phone number is on there and he always has 200 requests for wells 300 requests for wells and we had a meeting the other day and he said I hope to do 10000 more wells Tracy and I thought wow we're dreaming big now but praise god.

36:15.65

lovelightstories

Ah, yeah.

36:17.66

Tracy

You know and I think of the numbers. Um, it still seems like a drop in the bucket when you think of the millions of people in India but you know it's been our k tells me we've helped a minimum now of 3000000 people and it's anywhere from 3000000 to five million probably six million so I don't know, but when I heard when I've heard and read so much about. Just the simple gift of water I mean you know girls had have to walk 3 to five miles a day to fetch water and often they're raped on the way. Um, they fall down. You know they hurt themselves. They can't go to school because of the time fetching water every day and any of us like I get up in the morning I'm thirsty right away I take a shower I cook everything is with water.

36:51.51

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

36:57.12

Tracy

Everything it's just a foundational thing and if you don't have that it just affects your quality of life in a thousand different ways and so yeah, that's a huge part of our ministry and creating jobs. That's what's been such a blessing is seeing these men benefit in their families because even when we went to India James wanted to invite our whole team to his house and he now has a.

37:05.57

lovelightstories

Yes.

37:16.62

Tracy

Still a small house. But even as Ac and their air conditioning which most people don't have and he had us sit ah around his little room and we had our we had our plates on the bed but this is luxury to him I mean his kids are in a good school. His wife is doing well and right above the door. He has a picture of Jesus and he and he credits.

37:26.13

lovelightstories

Yeah.

37:35.35

Tracy

God with blessing his life in this way Just it's just a blessing that comes from following God and he just felt like this is my blessing of just giving my skills and joining this Ministry team. So it's just been a win-win.

37:37.50

lovelightstories

Um.

37:45.90

lovelightstories

Yeah, right, right? and you mentioned that it's a drop in the bucket because there's so many people in India but when you say three million to five million people that. Adds up so quickly that is not a drop in the bucket you know and just to think how god has placed each of you in this web if you will to create this system to allow you guys to partner and work together because without any one of you. The job couldn't get done. And all of yeah, all of these people that are benefiting from the orphans and the lepers and the widows and just people in poverty and the list goes on and these families and in so many ways it's just really encouraging and exciting to hear that this is happening and I also just love.

38:18.75

Tracy

That's right? yeah.

38:38.19

lovelightstories

Your organization and this work that you do too because it does feel so grassroots like in a good way like we're able to hear these real stories. It's not overproduced. It's just hearing it from the field and like you said cutting the cost down everything goes 100% to the Mission. Um, it's just um, like you said I think it's really something that's unique. Um, and so I Love I Love that so much. Okay, so just quickly before we wrap up I I know that there's some Well you mentioned that our K has how many children 80 children.

39:03.16

Tracy

Um, thank you.

39:16.66

Tracy

Well, he's had so since he started I think he's taken care of probably 1300 kids and you know they're always graduating and moving on. So it's hard at any given time to know. But yeah, right now I believe he has like 800 that are living in his homes as a bunch of graduated this year too so

39:16.90

lovelightstories

Or 800 children

39:24.10

lovelightstories

Okay, yeah, you Ah yeah, Wow right? And he's housing these in his orphanage right? All of these children.

39:34.85

Tracy

But.

39:39.65

lovelightstories

Or how does it work.

39:40.11

Tracy

Yep, there's yeah, they're spread out over. Um I think it's 17 different homes of pastors and their wives have these kids um and during covid they had to go into the village and be split up into groups of 4 or 5 So this huge network of pastors and youth leaders have taken in these kids during covid but now they're back at.

39:43.38

lovelightstories

Okay.

39:49.29

lovelightstories

You hear.

39:56.17

Tracy

Coming back to those homes again those original orphanages. Yeah.

39:57.15

lovelightstories

Yeah, okay, okay so I just want to get a glimpse into the lives and hearts of these children because I think you shared at least 1 story with me that was just so touching and just.

40:05.21

Tracy

Um, yeah.

40:11.55

lovelightstories

Still encouraging to see the transformation that is it occurring from the love and support that they're receiving through our K and the other pastors.

40:20.95

Tracy

Yeah, yeah, oh wow I could tell you 10 stories but no time for that. But um, so there's one boy named Mahesh and I just Mahesh is so precious. His smile could light up a room. It's like the sun big white teeth. You know out of this tan face and I Mahesh was three years old

40:25.90

lovelightstories

Um.

40:38.62

Tracy

Living with his mom and his dad had been an alcoholic and used to beat his mom a lot and he abandoned the family so it was mehes and his brother and his mom and mehes even at age 3 knew my mom's a widow this is a problem so he went to look for a job and he. Went three doors down where the man had a buffalo and he offered to clean the man's buffalo stall for thirty cents a day at h three and that's what he was doing and then he would go and beg outside the bakery because he was so hungry all that every day he was hungry. They would eat. Maybe once a day and.

40:59.76

lovelightstories

And.

41:11.70

Tracy

Unfortunately, that man at the bakery would just slap him away and say get out of here you street Rat not help him never give him anything and one day arcade was coming down that street and he saw him and he'd started talking to me. He said how long have you been standing here and mehes said my whole life I shouldn't laugh. It's so sad. Um.

41:27.44

lovelightstories

Ah.

41:30.82

Tracy

Anyway, a short time later his mom died and mehessh was brought to the orphanage along with his brother and grew up there and I can remember hearing his voice I've been to India 8 Times with teens and every morning at five Zero a m I'd hear maheshsh's booming voice. He'd be helping get. You know the rice ready for the day. The stuff we had to do for our outreaches to the widows or to the lepers or wherever we were going. He'd be hauling it outside and hard hard worker and he always had a dream um of starting his own bakery to help kids that were in trouble like he was or on the street just for a discount. And then bring food to the hospital there too because the hospitals don't provide food for the patients. So the families have to bring food if they have a family and so anyway and anytime arc k would go to the big city to get supplies Mehesh. He'd ask some of the kids. What do you want me to bring you back and mehesh always said bread bread bread bread for many years.

42:22.00

lovelightstories

Um.

42:22.16

Tracy

Anyway, so arcade had said okay, you can start this bakery but I want you to go to college first and just get some skills and so he um mahesh is now about 22 and so he headed off to college and in the meantime he started a job over like an electronics cell phone type shop.

42:39.23

Tracy

Well, he's now been promoted over 5 shops. He's over a hundred employees at age 22 and his boss wants to send him to Dubai for more training like leadership training and stuff because he's so such a hard worker and so awesome in what he's doing and then one other quick story is a girl named chaloni.

42:42.38

lovelightstories

Wow.

42:57.50

Tracy

Chaloni remembers her mom walking away from her in the village at age 5 and saying I can't care for you any anymore and chaloni remembers shifting her mind from. Okay, my mom fed me but now I have to feed myself I have to find food somewhere every day and so her life was so hard and she was rescued.

43:12.24

lovelightstories

Um.

43:15.47

Tracy

Grew up and she's wanted to become a nurse. Um and these older kids myhas and chaloni are some of the oldest ones now and they have been so amazing. They've been trained to be leaders in our case programs and one day he told Rocky was so happy he's like. Something really great

happened today and this was probably 3 four years ago he said um, he named the kids and it was my husband chaloni and some others he said they organized an outreach to the lepers all by themselves and they took food without me they went and he said when they came back I asked them? Um, so did you touch the lepers and did you.

43:46.17

lovelightstories

Um.

43:50.46

Tracy

Feed them and you know did you actually touch them and they said well of course we did. We've seen you do that for years and we've seen Tracy from the United States and her people she brings and all these people why wouldn't we touch the lepers and so seeing how this mindset of giving to the poor is just completely translated down to these kids and. Now Chaloni became a nurse and the other day she got a wonderful job at a staff position staff nurse at a hospital in viji wada and she's been working there I think for over a year and arc k got a call from the administrator and he said I want to praise your daughter Chaloni. He said she comes in all the time when. Other workers. Don't show up she fills in for people. She works 12 hours shifts she's so calm and patient if there's any crisis and anyway they then promoted her and so she's also 22 and she's over all the nurses at the hospital and so I just I look at this and I think um, you know it says in the bible. How god.

44:38.89

lovelightstories

Wow.

44:46.91

Tracy

The last will be first and the first will be last and you know god really raises up the humble and I think he raises up these kids that have just been thrown away by society you know society says you're nothing and god says just just wait. That's not that's not my economy. You're gonna be the leaders in your culture and I see that happening.

44:55.23

lovelightstories

Yeah.

45:06.20

Tracy

And they're being. They're being transformative in their workplaces and I think our case' is very proud of these kids. Um, yeah.

45:10.39

lovelightstories

Yes, yes, it's just a beautiful testament too of these children grew up or were born into a society that was very stigmatized like we talked about in the caste system right yet through this.

45:23.85

Tracy

Um, yeah.

45:27.86

lovelightstories

Love and nurturing that they've received and the example of our k and others that they've seen they're now following the ways of Christ and even if it wasn't the ways of Christ. Whatever you may call it they are loving people well and they're serving. People that are untouchable in their society and being so successful themselves like you said and um, you know, even if your work didn't touch as many people as it does just the few testimonies that you've even shared today right.

45:46.61

Tracy

Um, come.

46:04.20

Tracy

Um, just.

46:04.52

lovelightstories

Is so meaningful like that life is invaluable in God's eyes and the human dignity and um I just hope and pray that God continues to bless you and the ministry and our K and everybody. Um, especially and for the sake of these people that you're serving. Um, it's just yeah, it's just really Beautiful. So.

46:25.46

Tracy

Thank you so much.

46:30.89

lovelightstories

Okay, before we wrap up I want to ask if there's any way people can follow you get involved any of that that you'd like to point people to.

46:39.36

Tracy

Yeah, so I don't do a lot with social media simply because again our partners I also have partners in Nepal and Uganda that they face persecution and I always want to be so careful that I don't jeopardize their safety. But if anybody wants to either reach out to me an email. Um, it's just amistadworldwide@gmail.com. I'm in my email every day multiple times a day or you can text me at 701-388-0178, or you can go to our website which is just Amistadworldwide.org, and there is a page there that you can. Um, that will take you right to my email and you can fill that out and say I'm interested in sponsoring an orphan or a leper or a well or whatever it is that you're interested in. Um and then I receive that and I email you back directly. We don't do any online donations simply because we're trying to keep our costs low. You know I pay all my own trips and printing of brochures etc. So we're always trying to keep our costs down so that we can just keeping as effective as possible with getting funds overseas so we have not gone the electronic payment route yet. But that's a pressure to do that. But.

47:39.22

lovelightstories

Um, right right? Yes, yes, well it's in keeping with the the focus that you've tried to do and keeping the cost low and like you said 100% going to the mission. So Um, if people want to donate they can get in touch with you those multiple ways and they can easily send that donation shouldn't be too much of a barrier for anyone. Um, so thank you so much Tracy this has just been so wonderful I'm just delighted that people can finally meet you um and hear your personal story and. And how god really placed experiences people in your life to lead you to to what he has called you to do and how you've really harnessed that and partnered with people around the world that have the same calling that you can work together for his kingdom and bring glory through all of that. It's just incredible. So Thank you so much and I really hope everyone listening has really gotten a um, ah good piece of your heart because it is so pure.

48:40.90

Tracy

Oh thank you so much Stephanie and thank you for what you are doing giving people like me a platform because yeah, it's nice to have a place to tell our story and you're doing something very important. So thank you for that truly who.

48:49.17

lovelightstories

Um, yeah, yeah, thank you, Thank you so much. It was wonderful to talk with you.

48:58.57

Tracy

Yeah, you too. Thank you Steph.