



PARTNERS

THE NEWSLETTER OF INDIA PARTNERS

JULY 2008

A Living Partnership

Third in a series of articles on church partnerships

Porterville is a farming community of 45,000, located in the Central Valley of California. Grapes, olives, nuts and tree fruits are among the local exports. We mention Porterville not because it was voted an All-American City in 1994, which it was. Nor because the county's World Ag Expo draws over 100,000 visitors from 60 countries annually, which it does. But Porterville is the home of Living Word Fellowship, a church that discovered the needs of India's poor in a roundabout way and then has responded in many direct ways. We'd like to share some of their wonderful story with you.

Craig and Jodi Bowser, members of Living Word Fellowship (LWF), had a heart for missions. In the mid-1990s, their church wanted to support a new mission, but didn't know the best place to turn. Mark Tindall, then also at LWF, had heard an Indian pastor named Parishudha Babu speak at a church in Eugene, Oregon. When the Bowsers mentioned their missions desire to Mark, he introduced Babu to them. Like Mark, the Bowsers were so impressed by Babu's sincere passion for his ministry, called Orphans Faith Home,

that in short order they put themselves on a plane to India, in order to experience the OFH ministries first-hand and report their findings back to their church.



Bead bracelets relate the gospel story in India

In 1997, the Bowsers arrived at OFH during a regional pastors' conference. They helped mentor pastors during the day and took in the open-air gospel conventions at night. The Bowsers have many great stories to tell, but the bottom line was that they were mightily impressed with Babu, his wife Vijayasree and all of OFH. They eagerly reported their experiences when they returned to Living Word Fellowship.

Based on the Bowsers' glowing report, the church added OFH to their mission budget. At the same time, church families also adopted the OFH community more liter-

ally. Before the Bowsers left India, Babu asked if Jodi would find sponsors at their church for over 20 local widows. Jodi shared the widows' needs during morning worship. You guessed it: every last widow was sponsored that day.

Since then, LWF's involvement has branched out. We mention just two items here: partner hosting and volunteer teams.

Partner Hosting. Hosting the directors of our partner organizations when they come to the U.S., says Bobbi Beech, cofounder of LWF's Missions Department,

develops the face-to-face relationship that their church so cherishes. Learning about a partner's ministry direct from the source gives their church a sense of the ministry that written reports and statistics cannot fully convey.

And, notes Bobbi, the hosting and financial support of a partner agency is an efficient use of mission funds. For example, she says, \$40,000 annually could support one American missionary abroad, or it can support one entire indigenous ministry in India, directed by dedicated leaders who know the local needs and who already speak the language. (Continued ☞)

Yes, I want to provide Tools for Teams. Here's my gift.

- Gospel Bracelets \$20
- 5 EvangeCubes \$30

- 30 Reading Glasses \$14.60
- 150 Reading Glasses \$73.00

My Gift _____

One-time Gift

- Enclosed is my gift
 - check is enclosed
 - credit card information below

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Please charge my donation to my Visa/MC:

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India Partners is a Christian international development and relief organization committed to supporting self-help ministry projects in India.

Our annual report and independently audited financial statements are available upon request.

India Partners is a 501(c)(3) charity. Donations are tax-deductible according to law.

Tax ID#: 93-1164757



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In fact, says Bobbi, LWF families are so blessed through their hosting that there is friendly jostling among them for the privilege! The one-on-one time with the partner fosters mutual understanding through dialog and encouragement through prayer.

Volunteer Teams. In addition to hosting, members of LWF have traveled to India on volunteer teams,



Bill and Keith in Chennai

Recently, Pastor Keith Hansen and member Bill Stevenson, while preparing for their trip, shared with the church that they were going to use colored bead bracelets to share the gospel story in India. Hearing

their plan, the congregation used the bracelets to share the gospel locally.



Pastor Keith prays for young souls

Your Church Can Help

Travel on a Volunteer Team. People from your church can form a team or apply to serve on an India Partners team. Returning team members say that they come home renewed with an expanded perspective of their faith. So consider supporting people from your church on a team trip to India, or pray whether God is calling *you* to serve in that capacity. Learn more at IndiaPartners.org.

Adopt a Project. Your church could befriend a sister church in India as Eastside Faith Center did (see our May issue); perhaps, like Central Lutheran Church, it could help fund a kindergarten for the underprivileged (June); or like Living Word Fellowship, your church could include India Partners in its missions budget. We would be happy to discuss ways in which *your church* can get involved.

Tools for Teams

Many tools are available to help volunteer teams minister effectively. Here is a sample of tools for the gospel and for service.

Tools for the Gospel

Colored Gospel bracelets come in a variety of styles. The beaded bracelets that the Living Word team members used in India are available from ChristianFarmers.com.

A colored gospel wristband is available from E3Resources.org. Perhaps you want to use them in your own Sunday school or Vacation Bible School.

Or you may donate for India Partners team use. Suggested donation of \$20 is appreciated.

EvangeCube. This clever puzzle cube unfolds the story of the gospel in pictures. Purchase one for yourself from E3Resources.org,

or donate \$30 to India Partners for the gift of five cubes to use in remote churches in India.

Tools for Service

Reading glasses to the poor.

India Partners teams have helped thousands of Indian adults by providing low-cost, high-quality



reading glasses. The easy-to-make glasses are assembled onsite by team members.

GlassesForMissions.org provides materials to assemble 150 reading glasses for \$220, including setup materials.

That's just \$1.46 each. Each additional set of 150 reading glasses is \$110, just 73¢ each!

Your donation of \$14.60 to India Partners will provide clear eyesight to 30 people. \$73.00 will help 150 people—bargains anywhere. Thank you for your support!



India Partners

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Partnering with the people of India in ministry by cultivating relationships, sharing resources, and encouraging self-sufficiency through the compassion and wisdom of Jesus Christ.

Spring Fund Drive Success



The contributors to our Spring Matching Fund Drive gave a total of \$51,000—the best in three years! This support will help sustain and strengthen the work of India Partners.

Thank you!

Team Up



With Us

Consider having your church team up with a Christian nonprofit to serve together in ministry.

If India is your area of interest, India Partners can be your partner in ministry. India has tremendous social and spiritual needs that your church's support and our expertise together can help to fill. We invite you to get to know us and our partners better. We are here to help you and your church help the disadvantaged of India with the love of Christ.