

Seeds on the Wind

NEWS FROM BETHANIA KIDS • NOVEMBER 2012

The Road Less Traveled

BY AUSTIN FARINHOLT

For the past 25 years, Bethania Kids has been on an exploration of love, which has certainly led us down roads less traveled. Just this year, love led us to a place of bleakness, hopelessness, and despair. Our staff in India heard the sighs and the sorrows of the people in a north eastern state of India called Orissa. This state, consistently rated as one of the top five most impoverished states in India, is home to some of the most poor and undereducated individuals in the world.

Two Bethania Kids staff members, Dr. Gnanakan and Godfrey, visited villages in Orissa, and what they witnessed confirmed the poverty of the people living there. Each village consists of twenty to fifty families living within a one-mile radius of each other. They are in such remote areas that the only way to access them is either by foot or in a four-wheel-drive vehicle. The languages vary from village to village. Even villages as little as fifteen miles apart are unable to communicate with one another.

While talking with a fourteen-year-old boy during his visit, Godfrey was shocked to learn that the boy had never heard of the Indian Prime Minister. But he was even more troubled when he discovered that this boy had never heard of a country called India, nor even Orissa—his own state! The education system is virtually nonexistent. While there may be school buildings in some of the villages, they remain void of education and learning as there are no teachers to teach.

Modern health and hygiene are foreign concepts. The closest “bathrooms” are the nearby fields. They have no doctors; rather they have what they call a “witch-craft man.” He attributes illness to demon possession and his way of fixing the problem is by casting the demon out, leaving the real problem untreated. Poisonous snakes and mosquitoes also pose a threat to the people of Orissa as the snake population is very high and many mosquitoes carry malaria. Unfortunately, villagers have no medicines or knowledge of how to treat these issues.

Malnutrition is widely prevalent among the children because their knowledge of agriculture and proper dieting is very limited. The children’s bellies swell up like balloons due to insufficient food, vitamins and minerals. Their lack of food will, in many cases, lead to weak immune systems, skeletal deformities, impaired memory, and even death. Besides being malnourished, many villagers create an intoxicating drink out of crushed flower petals. Everyone, young and old, drinks this brew and remains in a state of perpetual numbness.

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Bethania Kids



(Continued from front cover)

As we listened to Dr. Gnanakan and Godfrey recount stories of the children and their struggling families, there was no question as to if we were going to help, but the question became when we were to help. Today, as you read this article, Bethania Kids has already set up two care centers which offer services to a total of one hundred children. These children are receiving an education for the very first time, which will open countless doors for their future. Their ailments are being properly treated. The swelling of their bellies is decreasing as they eat nutritious food and clean water. They received toys for the very first time in their life. Their physical and emotional needs are all being met. But more importantly, so are their spiritual needs.

Today, children in Orissa are learning of a God who loves them unconditionally. His message is being brought to them through the words and actions of our Bethania Kids staff. With each day that passes, their future becomes brighter and brighter. These kids will grow up with opportunities and choices their parents never knew existed. We have you, the supporters of Bethania Kids, to thank for allowing us to walk down this road less traveled. Orissa, India—home to some of the world's most impoverished—has now become a place of hope. This is where love has led us.

“What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has the eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.”

—AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

Consider the Path of Vetrivel

BY TODD HEIDELBERGER

Vetrivel began his life in the small agrarian village of Vilpatti located high in the Eastern Ghats of southern India. These mountains, punctuated by soaring ridges and sweeping valleys, are cool, wet, and loaded with dark, fertile soil. It is a picturesque place where one could imagine living a peaceful and idyllic life surrounded by plenty. Unfortunately, this was not the case for Vetrivel.

Home life for Vetrivel was extremely unstable; his father was an abusive drunk who frequently beat his wife and children, finding fault with them at every turn over the smallest issue. When Vetrivel was five years old his mother, unable to tolerate the abuse any longer, committed suicide by drinking pesticide. After his mother's death, Vetrivel was left in the hands of a negligent father and received none of the love or care that a child needs to grow and thrive. For example, often unsupervised, Vetrivel was only seven years old when he sustained serious eye injuries after a firecracker exploded in his face.

A few years later, Vetrivel's father was involved in a fight in the village, arrested, and thrown into prison. The young boy had neither father nor mother at home; he was an orphan with no one to care for him or about him. Vetrivel was sent to live with his uncle in a different village about 50 kilometers from Vilpatti. He was lost in this new place, his education was virtually forgotten, and he roamed the village unattended—a hurting, lonely boy.

Through God's divine providence, a teacher from Vetrivel's original village heard about his plight and called his uncle, asking if he would permit Vetrivel to move to the Bethania Kids home in Kodaikanal. The uncle was only too glad to free himself from responsibility of the child, and so Vetrivel came to live at Bethel Home in 2005, where he has been an important part of the home and shining light ever since.



Children attending a
Bethania Kids Center in Orissa



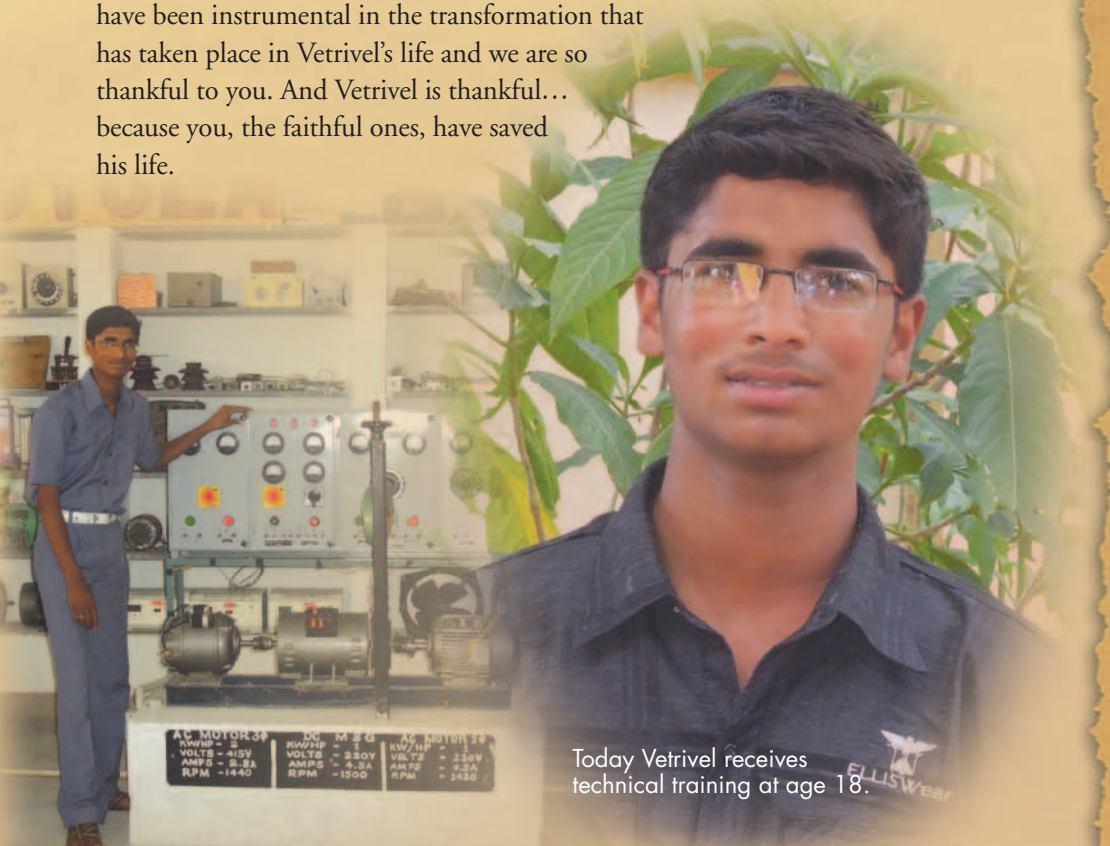
Vetrivel as a young boy

When Vetrivel arrived at his new home, he was missing the love, care, structure, and sense of belonging that every child needs. He had never known what it was like to belong to a real family, one in which family members support, encourage and help one another. The routine at Bethel Home, the nurturing he received from his house parents, the love and friendship of his 30 new “brothers,” and the stable environment enabled Vetrivel to begin anew and experience a life he never thought possible. Finally, Vetrivel could thrive and grow while feeling cherished and protected.

In the seven years that Vetrivel has been living at Bethel Home, he has excelled in so many ways. He is a friendly, loving, and well-behaved young man who shares a special bond with his brothers at the home. He has become a wonderful influence for good among them. Having come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, he attends church regularly and participates in church activities. When visitors come to Bethel Home, it is not uncommon for Vetrivel to approach them, asking if they will pray for both his spiritual and physical wellbeing. In return, he feels blessed to be able to pray for them as well.

At 18 years old, Vetrivel now attends Loyola Technical Institute in Madurai, Tamil Nadu where he studies Electrical Engineering. He has completed his first year of study, pleasing his professors with both his performance and attitude. His goal is to graduate and to support himself and other children at the Bethel Home once he begins to earn a living, giving children similar to himself the chance to thrive and become strong men of God.

Within Bethania Kids are so many stories like Vetrivel’s. God’s abundant grace has been poured out upon him and other children through this ministry. Your prayers and gifts to Bethania Kids have been instrumental in the transformation that has taken place in Vetrivel’s life and we are so thankful to you. And Vetrivel is thankful... because you, the faithful ones, have saved his life.



Today Vetrivel receives technical training at age 18.

In Honor of:

- 25th Anniversary of Bethania Kids
- Prem Anand (Birthday)
- Andrew Andersen
- Sahaya Regila Augustin (Birthday)
- Lindsay & Kendall Bicknell (Wedding)
- Jim Braaten
- Darlene Brown
- Carla Claussen
- Alyssa DeVries (College Graduation)
- Sam & Faith Ensogna
- Austin & Clair Farinholt (Wedding)
- Clair Farinholt
- William & Ellen Frenk (50th Anniversary)
- Dawn Frye & Staff, Summit Community Bank
- David Granner
- Stefan Granner
- Angie, Katie, Aaron, & Paul Haecker
- Bill Hagstad (60th Birthday)
- Madeleine, Olivia, & Millicent Hawks
- Gene Hennig
- Polly Hennig
- Mrs. Gnanamba Lazar
- Craig Morgan (College Graduation)
- Amy Pitts
- James & Shiela Roberts (50th Anniversary)
- Siva Shanthi Robin
- Mark Saunders (Birthday)
- Barbara Sierp (60th Birthday)
- Mark Spitzack
- Rebecca & Lee Stilwell (Anniversary and Birthdays)
- Glen & Janice Vogel (50th Anniversary)
- Grace & Anna Wegenke
- Herbert & Dorothy Zorn
- Stephen & Eva Zorn (Anniversary)

In Memory of:

- John Bates
- Gerald Victor Beer
- Anna Beyer
- Charlie Bowan
- Dayavu Dhanapal
- Douglas Gamble
- Dr. Jack Lee Giles
- Lois Hennig Graham
- Don Groen
- Doris Hagstad
- John Hanlon
- Al & Bob Hennig (on Bethania’s 25th Anniversary)
- Bob Hennig
- Michael Heusel
- Dustin Lemke
- Nicholas Lovecchio
- Ratna Angel Mungamuri
- Peter Nekola
- Harold & Velora Pollert
- Nate Rawhouser
- Phyllis Reardon
- Nell Rowan
- George Schroeder
- Betty Swavely-Granner
- Harvey Whittington
- Douglas Gamble



Bethania Kids is a Christian mission bringing wholeness and hope to poor, abandoned and disabled children in India, equipping them to share God's love.

We channel 100% of every penny donated into direct ministry for children.

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Filled with the Holy Spirit



Twenty-five years ago, Bethania Kids came to life through the vision of three families. Dayavu Dhanapal was a member of one of those families. She was an Indian woman who had a vision to bring orphaned children into her home. After a fruitful conversation with Dayavu, the other two families, the Hennigs and Granners, came back to America filled with the Holy Spirit and excited to support her vision.



Pastor Dave and his wife Anne, members of the Hennig family, belonged to a church in Maryland called Our Savior Lutheran Church (OSLC). Upon their return to Maryland, Pastor Dave told his church about his conversation with Dayavu, describing it as a "mountain-top experience" because it transfigured his heart. The Holy Spirit moved through the entire congregation and they made a commitment right then and there to help Dayavu build a home for orphaned children. However, they did not stop at just helping to build that initial home.



From the time they first supported Bethania Kids until today, OSLC has provided thousands of dollars to the children in the Bethania Kids Homes and Care Centers. Bethania Kids told OSLC of the funds needed to open a new care center in Orissa, India, and asked the congregation if they would be willing to contribute. Filled once again with the Holy Spirit, the people within that church rallied together and pledged to help the children. Less than two months later, Bethania Kids received a donation of \$5,335.00 from OSLC to sponsor one of the Orissa Care Centers!



Bethania Kids would like to specifically thank Our Savior Lutheran Church for their faithful generosity and support of our children's ministries in India. Their willingness to serve and support in whatever ways they can has made a resounding impact on the lives of countless children. Without faithful churches like OSLC, many children would not have the quality care and support which they now receive. Thank You!

If you or your church would like to learn more about sponsoring a Bethania Kids Care Center, please contact our Bethania Kids office at 800-993-5179.