

# Seeds on the Wind

Fall 2006

News from Bethania

## To Whom Can the Children Turn?

In a nation of 1.1 billion, 800,000,000 Indians earn less than two dollars a day. Packed into crowded neighborhoods of unclean water, improper sanitation, and meager medical resources, India houses more people with HIV than any other country in the world. Struggling for even the most basic necessities of survival, families are easily broken by poverty, disease and malnutrition.

### *To whom can the children turn?*

Before they finish elementary school, fifty-four percent of Indian children will drop out, forced to help their families through labor in dangerous factories or backbreaking service sectors.

One of these kids, Joshua, wanted to become a pastor. Unfortunately, his income was needed by a relative to purchase a property. Instead of being allowed to have his vision mature in our Bethania Kids Home, Joshua was forced into an exploitive working situation—not going to school and working long hours. We are working to intervene for Joshua.

### *To whom can the children turn for help?*

With a nationwide literacy rate of about fifty percent, many Indian women are forced into marriages where they are tormented by spiteful in-laws and controlled by abusive husbands. In numerous communities, mysterious “kitchen fire accidents” frequently leave young wives dead and are uninvestigated by police.

A young girl from Chennai visited her home for a traditional “coming of age” celebration. Although under a relative’s supervision, she was raped and eventually forced to have an abortion. Ostracized by the community, she will feel the shame of this tragedy the rest of her life. But greater than this shame is the love that Jesus has for her. Though we weep when we hear the name—‘Dheepa’—we know He hasn’t abandoned his child, and we extend ourselves to her in prayer and love.

### *To whom can the children turn?*

A new affluence is indeed enjoyed by a growing middle class in India; however, hundreds of millions still live below the poverty level. Forty-seven percent of children under age five are malnourished, and over 750,000 die each year from preventable diseases. Many children simply roam the streets, susceptible to gang influence and sex traffickers. Others are trapped indoors by abusive home environments.

In the rural village of Mannavanur lived 10 year-old Bhanu Priya—a name that means “beloved who lovingly gives light.” A hauntingly beautiful girl, Bhanu was on the verge of joining a Bethania Kids Center. Advisory Board member Tina Hodges remembers the still, quiet gaze captured in a sudden snapshot: “Looking back, it’s as if Bhanu was crying for help, and to my great shame, this cry was not heard. The effect of that experience will be with me for life.”

Six months later, Bhanu Priya was dead. The cause, reported Mannayanur villagers, was suicide, arising from distress over ‘verbal chastisement’ from her grandfather. Public health workers, however, suspect domestic violence as leading directly to Bhanu’s death. Bethania staff are resolved to develop a strong identity in this village, praying that potential abusers will know how deeply God, their loving Father, cares for each child at risk.

*To whom can the children turn for help?* Read on to find out how your support of Bethania Kids is extending a life-saving answer: the children can turn to you.

Bethania Kids

Bethania



## Bethania Kids In Motion

“The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” These words from John’s gospel remind us that it is God’s love and power that bring light to dark places. What a joy it is to see the vision of Bethania Kids move forward in the light of God’s love!

In the United States, Schools and Sunday schools are teaching the importance of a global mission through Bethania Kids programs. More and more people are sponsoring children through our website. Opportunities to speak about our important mission at church services have been abundant, and new people are getting involved every day.

Here are some updates from India:

In Kodaikanal, many tsunami victims now live at the new Bethel/Shalom home. Here, children are able to redevelop a sense of identity as they leave behind a tragic past. Prem and Ruby Kumar, house parents in charge of the program, are developing criteria for selecting gifted kids to attain higher educational levels and to empower every child to develop a skill which will help them to be a contributor to society.

“Mabel’s Care, Joshua, Nathanael & Deborah Bethania Kids Centers all offer literacy training for mothers of our kids. Gethsy Jayapalan, director for the Kodai Kids Centers writes, “At all of the literacy programs, the women are learning reading and writing, as well as sewing, embroidery, basket-making, knitting and other crafts. There are only two sewing machines, so only a few women can be taught at a time, though many more have shown interest in joining.” At these centers, we often have far too many children apply than we can enroll. According to Nazema, caretaker for Nathanael Kids Center in Kodaikanal, the number of applications at the center this year was 80, out of which only 30 could be accepted.”

Our outreach program for the disabled is pushing into the upper hills to villages like Poombari. Paramadas, coordinator for this program writes, “In Poombari, the number of physically or mentally challenged children attending has increased from 4 to 10 over the past 4 months, after conducting house visits and counseling of parents.”

From Rajamundry, down the coast to Chennai, up the old ghat roads to Kodaikanal and along the dusty highway to Nagercoil, Bethania Kids is offering a safe haven where children can experience physical, emotional and spiritual healing, a community of love and belonging, as well as education, vocational training and a vision of service to help others.

Mother Teresa’s beautiful words come to mind: “Intense love doesn’t measure, it only gives.” Bethania Kids is on the move, and you’re a part of it! Think about it, friends—we really have a life-changing ministry.

## Parthiban’s Progress

BY ALAN LULL, *Advisory Board Member*

(Special Thanks to PARAMADAS, *Director of Bethania Kids Upperhills Outreach Program*)



During my recent visit to the Bethania homes in India, we drove two hours to a poor country village called Poombari. There I was introduced to the Dorairaj family, and to their son, Parthiban. Parthiban is a joyful and affectionate boy of fifteen whose development has been challenged by autism. At once I sympathized with this family’s situation, as our own five-year-old son, David, is autistic. But unlike the supportive, loving home we strive to provide our David, the Dorairaj family treated Parthiban with denial and shame.

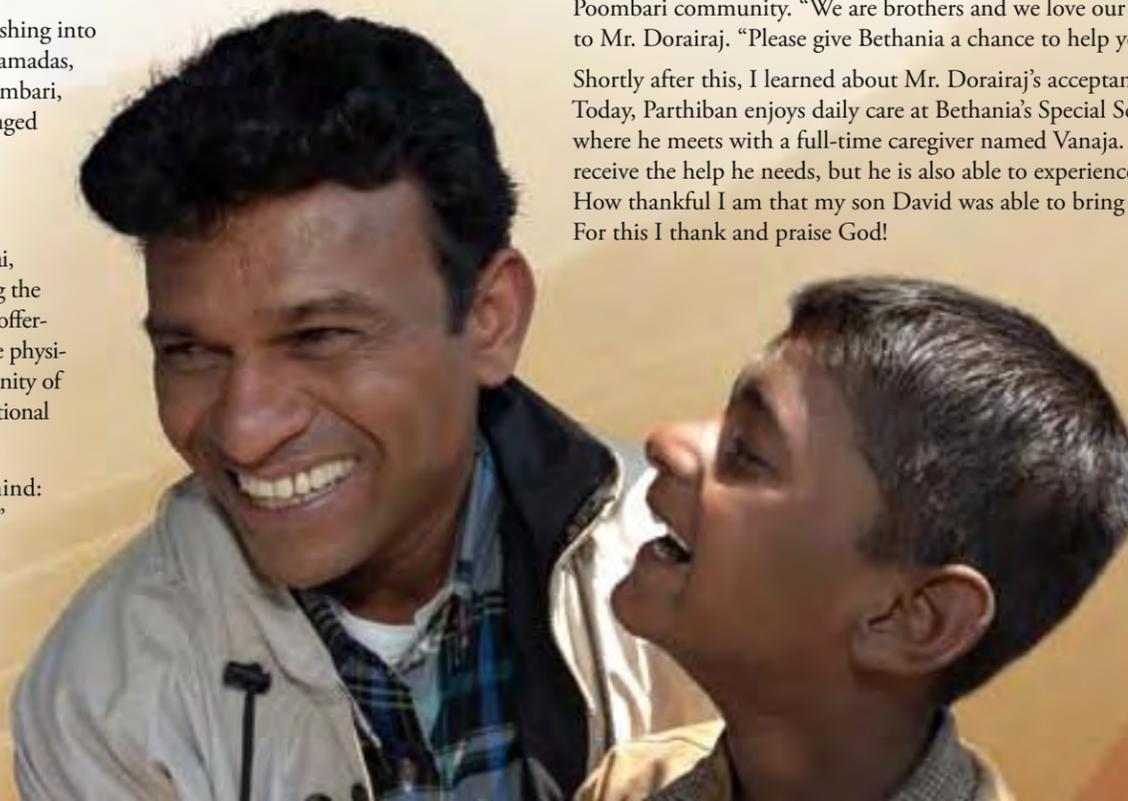
Parthiban’s grandfather had tied the boy to a bedpost with three feet of cloth rope. This was done, he explained, to prevent Parthiban from running away or burning himself on the stove. While these were legitimate concerns in caring for an Autistic child, we could also sense the grandfather’s fear that knowledge of this disabled child by the Poombari community—of which he was a prominent member—would be a continual embarrassment to the family.

“When he was younger, they took him to Chennai several times,” writes Jay Elias, caregiver at Bethania’s Bethany Respite Centre. “The doctors said that he was not going to improve. So they gave up on Parthiban. He has never been trained in any kind of activities of daily living.”

For more than two years, several of Bethania’s caregivers had been working to convince Mr. Dorairaj to allow Parthiban into their specialized care. “You can’t do anything for Parthiban,” the grandfather had said repeatedly. “His is a hopeless case!”

During my visit, however, I shared my own son’s journey with autism. Using balloons and other tools to demonstrate, I described some therapies available, imploring the family and sharing about God’s personal love for Parthiban. I told them that God has prepared a bright future for him as a member of the Poombari community. “We are brothers and we love our children,” I pleaded to Mr. Dorairaj. “Please give Bethania a chance to help your child.”

Shortly after this, I learned about Mr. Dorairaj’s acceptance of Bethania’s offer. Today, Parthiban enjoys daily care at Bethania’s Special School in Poombari, where he meets with a full-time caregiver named Vanaja. Not only does he receive the help he needs, but he is also able to experience the love of Jesus. How thankful I am that my son David was able to bring others to Christ! For this I thank and praise God!



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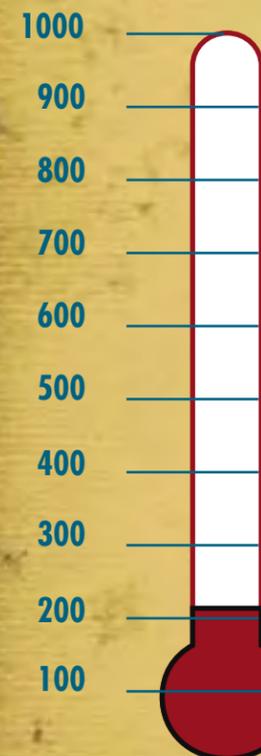
### In Honor of

Andrew and Bates Larson’s family  
Robert and Eleanor Cunningham’s five children and their spouses  
Betty Swavely and Bob Granner’s wedding  
Polly Hennig’s recovery from surgery  
Mary and Jud Wallace’s birthdays

### In Memory of

Harold A Bauers  
John (Flap) Edwards  
Janice Trautman  
Peggy Whitten’s father

### Number of Bethania Kids Sponsored



Participate in our life-changing ministry by sponsoring a child! Please visit [bethaniakids.org](http://bethaniakids.org) and select ‘SPONSOR A CHILD’ for new options in automatic monthly giving!

### From Top Down:

Children at the brand-new Bethel/ Shalom Home in Kodaikanal, Children gather in Poombari near our Bethania Kids outreach and Special School, Sewing instruction at the Joshua Home Literacy Program

## Having a Ball While Giving

While swinging the sticks, the difficulties of others on the far side of the world are often furthest from our minds. But it's amazing what a huge impact a golf outing or other fun activity can have when organized as a benefit to help the helpless. One successful event was held at the Rock Harbor Golf Course in Winchester, VA. Supporters from two Lutheran churches, Bethel and Grace, gathered to enjoy the summer sunshine and manicured greens, while smacking the little white ball with a passion to help improve the lives of children in India.

There is no greater blessing than a cheerful giver! It was an exciting summer of fundraising at Bethania Kids. We had many "cheerful givers." Examples include Vacation Bible School programs supporting Bethania, as well as bake-sales and other children's activities.

As autumn leaves begin to fall and a season of thankfulness envelopes the country, Bethania Kids wants to acknowledge all who give with a cheerful heart. Thank you for your kindness, generosity and creativity.



**Bethania**  Kids

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

*100% of your contribution will be used directly for children's ministry in India.*

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