

Seeds on the Wind

NEWS FROM BETHANIA • WINTER 2009

Has Not God Chosen?

BY DAVID GRANNER

Godfrey Immanuel looked affectionately at the children studying at the Bethania Kids center. They worked so hard, and yet he couldn't help thinking that he'd like to see them have more fun—more time to just play together each day. He spoke with the manager and arranged for a change in the schedule. Do you think the kids were happy about this change? They have so little, but the smallest things fill them with joy!

Each of our Bethania Kids homes and centers has a unique history with its own strengths and weaknesses. At another home, Godfrey noticed that the children were very gifted in spiritual matters, but he felt a greater emphasis needed to be given to exercise.

As the national administrator for our ministries in India, Godfrey is systematically visiting each site and evaluating the care given in four areas: physical, spiritual, educational and social. He writes, "I want to help the ministries learn from each other and establish norms for care so that we can have consistently excellent development of the children. While ensuring

quality care, we also want to establish per-child cost controls to enable us to have very good stewardship of our resources."

Godfrey continues, "All glory to God! He has placed Bethania Kids where we can bring about positive changes in the lives of these neglected and underprivileged children.

True, our children are quite poor, but as James 2:5 says, 'Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?'

Let us pray and work to be good stewards of the gifts God has graciously given us, 'encouraging the oppressed and defending the cause of the fatherless.' (Isaiah 1:17)

"While ensuring quality care, we also want to establish per-child cost controls to enable us to have very good stewardship of our resources."



Bethania Kids



Wants? Needs? It Depends On Your Perspective.

BY REX RITCHIE

It's a long haul from Virginia to Chennai (Madras), India, about 18-19 flight hours and 8,777 miles, according to my flight itinerary. It's also a big change in culture from America to this developing and populous country. Four of us from Bethel Lutheran Church in Winchester, Virginia, spent the better part of ten days visiting Bethania Kids facilities in Chennai, Rajahmundry and Kodaikanal a few weeks ago. This was my first trip to India but it was preceded by recent mission trips to Ethiopia and Tanzania giving me some context for comparing needs and effectiveness of programs. Our travels took us to boy's and girl's homes, day care centers, handicap/rehab facilities and women's empowerment centers. Others have written articles—even books—on the poverty and suffering of India's kids and adults.

During the great depression, we had very little, but we never lacked the essentials: a loving family, food, and a place to sleep.

As a retired business executive who spent much of his career focusing on needs/actions/results, let me offer a different, perhaps more optimistic, slant on what I saw. After a few days, one of my fellow travelers asked me what I thought. I said it reminded me somewhat of my upbringing on an Ohio farm in the 1940s. Still recovering from the great depression and dealing with WW II rationing, we had very little in material wealth, yet we never lacked the basic needs: a loving family, food, and a place to sleep. We had very little but were happy. As a typical kid, I wanted more. A friend had a "Whizzer" motorbike and I wanted one badly. Dad, in his typical no-nonsense way, said, "No, we can't afford it." Mom, the loving diplomat, said, "Our wants are many but our needs are few." Both responses meant the same thing—no "Whizzer" motorbike.

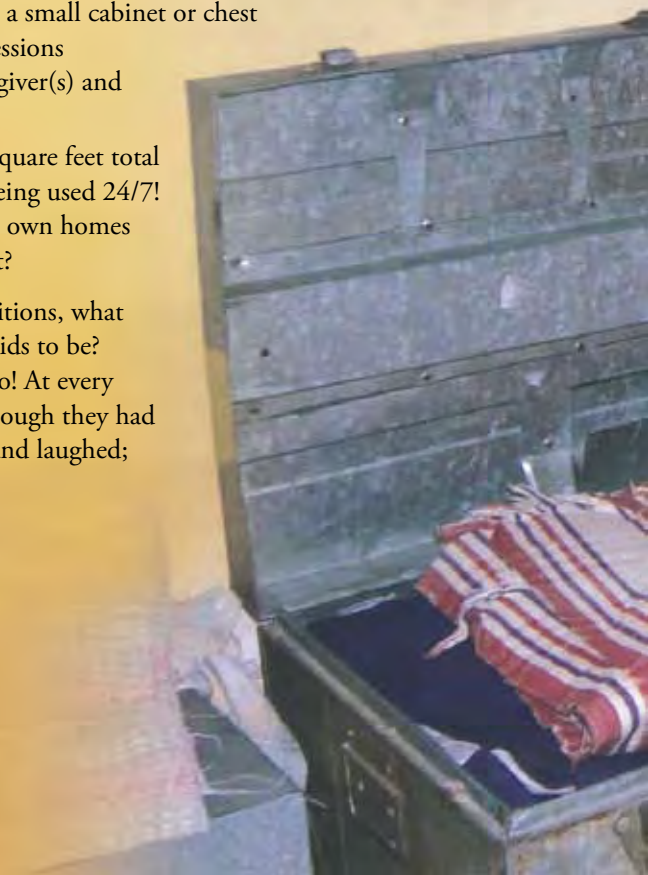
Mom's response was used often with all three of her children, and I have never forgotten it. It is especially relevant during these troubled economic times. It seemed to me that the Bethania kids might have turned Mom's phrase around to, "Our needs are many but our wants are few."

Let me paint a picture; each facility was different but typically consisted of:

- One room for eating, sleeping, school and recreation
- A small kitchen to prepare food for 40-50 kids several times each day
- A storage room where each kid had a small cabinet or chest to keep his/her entire worldly possessions
- A small bedroom for the adult caregiver(s) and some storage

Hey... I'm talking about 1500-1800 square feet total for 40-50 active kids plus caretakers being used 24/7! Gives us a different perspective on our own homes and our kids school facilities, doesn't it?

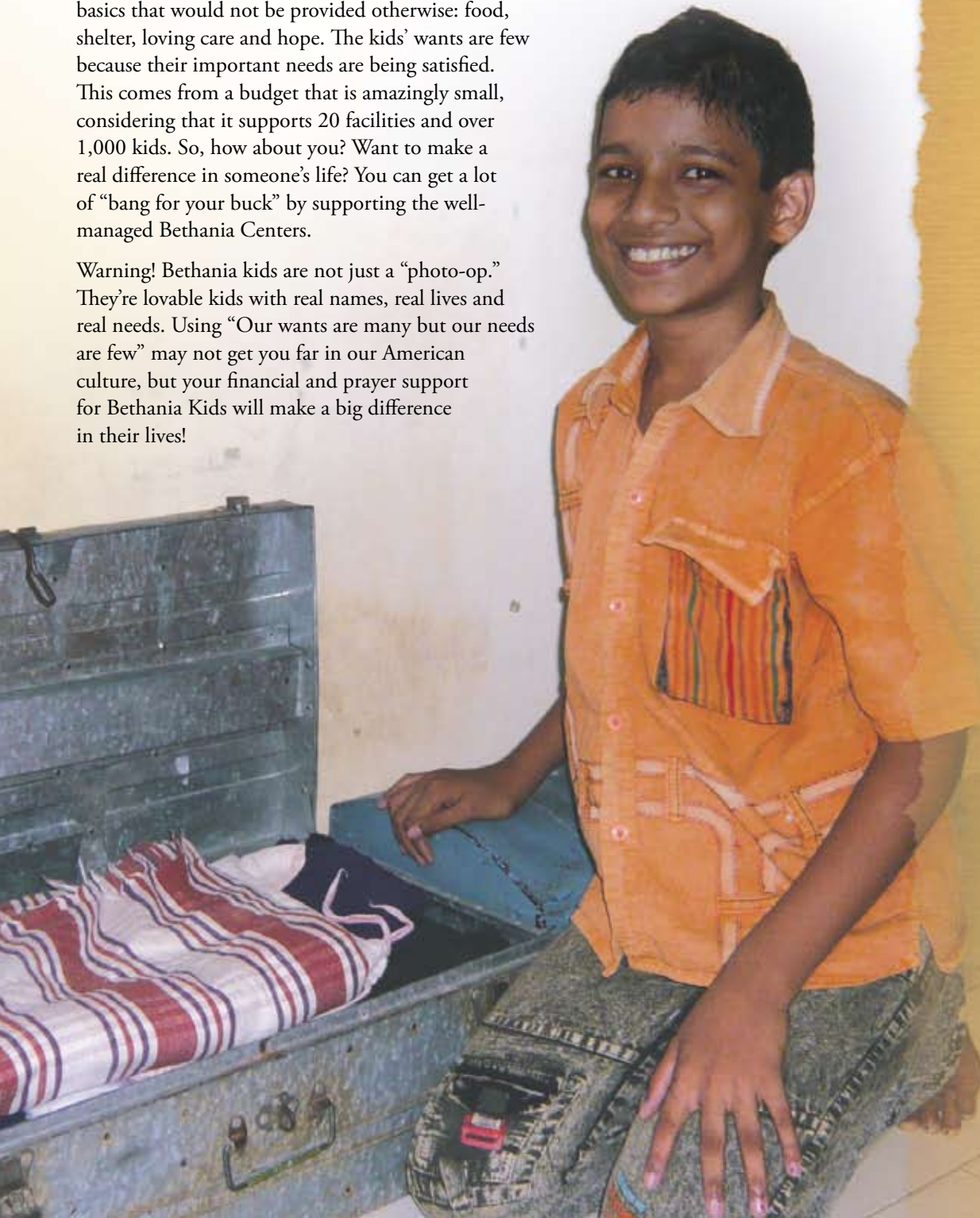
Just given these barebones living conditions, what would you expect the attitude of the kids to be? Discouraged? Unhappy? Angry? Not so! At every facility the kids looked and acted as though they had everything they needed. They smiled and laughed;



they hugged us—even picked us up and carried us. They sang songs and recited scripture passages. They romped and played with all the vigor and enthusiasm of their American counterparts. They had no bed (just a mat), no TV, no cell phones, no electronic games, no bicycles, no you get the picture. And yet, they asked us for none of these, just our time, our hugs, our prayers and our blessings. We were quickly dubbed “Father”, “Uncle” or, in my case, “TaTa” (Grandpa), befitting my years. I’d like to see you handle that without a tear or two!

Here’s my view: In an ocean of need, Bethania is providing basics that would not be provided otherwise: food, shelter, loving care and hope. The kids’ wants are few because their important needs are being satisfied. This comes from a budget that is amazingly small, considering that it supports 20 facilities and over 1,000 kids. So, how about you? Want to make a real difference in someone’s life? You can get a lot of “bang for your buck” by supporting the well-managed Bethania Centers.

Warning! Bethania kids are not just a “photo-op.” They’re lovable kids with real names, real lives and real needs. Using “Our wants are many but our needs are few” may not get you far in our American culture, but your financial and prayer support for Bethania Kids will make a big difference in their lives!



In Honor of:

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Susan Armstrong
Rev & Mrs Charles Beyer
Elaine & Thor Boaz
John & Patsy Bruenger
Ken & Angie Bruenger
Jeanne Burger
Siri & Sonja Dorsch
Kermit & Barbara Finstad
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Geva Lou Severinson
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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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Bethania Kids is in Desperate Need! Will You Help Us?

BY TODD HEIDELBERGER, PRESIDENT

Good people, last year had its share of troubles, no doubt, but as the Lord said to his people in the book of Isaiah, "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!" What a message of hope for us all.

We have always been frugal as an organization and we manage money carefully. Because of a dramatic downturn in year-end giving, at this time we are very short on funds, and *for the first time in our history we may have to turn children away*. We need to raise about \$100,000 by March 31st.

The economy has hit many people very hard, and yet, one generous small-business owner has pledged a \$50,000 Challenge Grant. If Bethania Kids can raise an equal amount by March 31st, 2009, we will have \$100,000 to make up our budget deficit. Friends, please help us reach this goal by making a generous extra contribution this first quarter of 2009.

You cannot make an investment that will appreciate in value more than this one! Consider...

- An immediate 100% return through a doubling matching gift (up to \$50,000)
- An investment in taking children off the streets and giving them a home
- An assurance that 100% will be spent on direct ministry to children
- An eternal dividend stream as Christ's love is shared with hurting children

This is the first challenge grant in the history of our organization and we are hoping that you, our faithful donors, will have hope as you invest in Bethania Kids.

The Psalmist writes "Surely God is my help; the Lord is the One who sustains me." The ministry before you belongs to the Lord. He will help it; He will sustain it. Will you take what He is offering and commit to being a part of his work in 2009?

