

FEED ORISSA

An Update by Mr. Thomas Livingstone, Missionary, Bargarh, Orissa

Our Beloved Friends of Feed Orissa,

You must be surprised to know that FEED ORISSA has completed five years this July. We remember our humble beginning against many odds and God's grace that has been leading us through marvelously. We had a simple function in which some of our beneficiaries shared their testimonies. At this juncture we would like to congratulate and thank all our staff, friends and the well wishers of FEED ORISSA who had been with us through thick and thin.

Some of our staffs are eager to share their experiences with you.

Nibedita Barik: By the grace of God I completed my M.Div. in 2005 and I was praying for a place where I can really do something for God. I applied to many organizations but did not get proper reply according to my prayers. It was God's plan that I should join "Feed Orissa" here in my own place. I praise God for this project gives me real practical experience and joy of my study. Through this I have learnt to feel closely the pain and suffering of the people. Really, "Feed Orissa" is a good beginning for my future ministry.

Sanjeep Deep: During these five years in "Feed Orissa," I met so many spiritually gifted God's servants from BYM and learnt great lessons from their lives. Through this project we have evangelized 47 villages in 5 years. 30 people have obeyed the Lord and very soon 30 more will be obeying from the places I visit. God has performed many signs and wonders that people are coming into the knowledge of salvation. The number is growing that we are in need of worship sheds in many villages. Praise the Lord.

Deepa: January 2005 I joined Feed Orissa with zeal to do something for God. I met Lakhmi, a 12 year old girl whose eye balls were protruding out. I asked Lakhmi if she could see. Her mother who walks with the help of a stick said, "She cannot see or

she cannot see." When I asked about Lakhmi's father, she said that he has broken his hip bone and cannot do any work. Lakhmi was stinking badly and her hair was not combed for days (perhaps for months). When I cut her hair and gave her bath, I realised that God wants me to respond to the social needs of the people as well. I do not have brothers or sisters by birth but I thank God that I have got many brothers and sisters in "Feed Orissa."

Sylvester John: Hi Frenzd! Sylvester here, working in "Feed Orissa" since January 2006. In this short period I have many memorable experiences. Here is one for you. In a village, we came across a family with five children living in a small straw hut that would leak everywhere. When we started to build a small house for them, sometimes I would go early in the morning to see the construction work and return in the evening. One day it started to rain. The family took shelter under a big tree for sometime and then went to ask their neighbour for some place. Those two days they suffered a lot. I still remember the tears of joy in the old lady's eyes when we were putting asbestos roof. She came running to me and said. "I've never dreamt of a house all my life. This house is a gift from *Jesu Bapa*."

Extreme conditions like drought and flood criss-cross Orissa every year and this year it is flood. Though it is the Mahanadi delta region that is worst affected by the floods,



the untimely heavy rain experienced by the western districts has affected the agriculture to a great extent. Everyday we hear news of collapsing houses, people going without work for weeks and numerous deaths due to Malaria.

The big family (8 members) of the poor old lady Hansa had a safe shelter during this monsoon. Earlier, when we visited them in June, they were living in a partially broken mud house that had only three walls. Whenever it rained they snuggled in the corners that don't leak. This July, we built



a new shelter for this family that depends on daily wages. The mud house in which they were living collapsed completely in the August rains while Hansa and her family were peacefully sleeping under the new roof.

At Sukernabhata, an old couple came shaking all the way. The man is too old to beg and so his wife begs to feed her husband. Pareswar of the same village is sick and old. He lives in a small hut that can hold the small cot on which he sleeps and nothing else. Pareswar neither has the money to buy food nor the strength to beg. He eats when somebody in the village remembers him. How often do people remember Pareswar is the question. At a certain village, we came across one of the worst cases of starvation when we were taken to the house of Sapuri. To peep into her house one has to bend as if to two double himself. Sapuri's husband has deserted her with her 12 year old daughter. The trauma of hunger has driven Sapuri to insanity. Her helpless daughter couldn't force a smile out. We promised them that we will be back to meet them and returned back to Titilagarh.

In spite of the heavy showers of July, God enabled us to carry out the *Rice and Dal Distribution Programme* in Balangir. In Korma, we met a widow who has four children and all the four affected by sickle cell anaemia. Sickled cell anaemia is a fatal disease that is very common in Orissa and for which there is no remedy. Many such people who are sick, old and lonely were provided with rice and dal. In a particular village, the widows could not get their pension for they could not pay the bribe demanded by the Sarpanch. If corruption is a monster yet to be tackled, ignorance is a curse. Thorni Hansa is a young widow with four children and expecting another. Her husband was worshipping a snake and feeding it everyday. The same snake killed him one day. They had to close the hotel run by her husband for want of money. She was standing in a helpless condition. We have helped her with the basic provisions to run the hotel.

We came across an old woman lying naked and sick in a shed outside a house. Her son was beating her with a stick for he didn't want to clean her excreta. We were broken. Didn't the Lord say, "I was hungry...I was naked ...I was



sick"? We talked to her son, gave some help and asked him to take proper care of her. To start with, we have opened an office and have appointed a staff. We are hoping to intensify our work there in the coming days. Pray for us.

With the sun spitting fire and high humidity sipping out our energy, the VBS this year was another success. One day training was given to our staffs who conduct VBS. Last year we brought the children to Diptipur, this year we moved to the children in Budhimal, Charpali, Gudherpali, Jhunungapali, Kuchipali and Telmohul. It was

conducted from 9 to 17 May and 144 children attended! The Sevabharat syllabus was quite tough for the new Christian children but the teachers did a good job. The final day programme was conducted at Diptipur. The children sang, acted and recited what they had learnt. Praise be to God who has raised new generations of Christians!

It's good news that all the children who attend our slum tuitions have passed this year. We had some children who had failed last year, before we started conducting tuitions. Rajeswari, daughter of a bus helper and a house maid had failed in 8th standard last year. Her mother wanted to stop her education but brought her to us for a last try. This year Rajeswari has passed with flying colours. Deepak, son of a rickshaw puller and Akshaya, son of a jobless father and a house maid mother have been qualified to appear in the scholarship exams. Many children who are denied the opportunity to attend school have started to come to the tuition centers. 11 year old Ballaby's mother died of AIDS last year. The child has lost all her interest in studies. Ballaby's elder brother has run away from the house. Ballaby lives with her drunkard father who is a rickshaw puller. This year we are trying to put her in school once again. Remember this child in your prayers.

In Bargarh, medical camps were conducted for the children in our slum tuition centres. Nearly 400 children were treated in two days. Since these children come from poor socio economic conditions many are malnourished. During the camp, two children were identified to have leprosy patches and put under treatment. Deepak, a 14 year old boy got a crack in his humerus bone and was going to school, supporting the broken arm with the other hand. Even parents do not bother when their children get fractures, leaving them to the bounty of time and nature. Now Deepak is recovering fast after the treatment. Nearly 40 children were on the verge of losing their eye sight due to vitamin A deficiency. All received a shot and pills. Susanto Harpal (6 yrs.) and Nirmal



Harpal (4 yrs.) have two elder brothers but no father. Four year old Nirmal weighs only 10 Kg. When we asked Susanto what his elder brothers were doing, he promptly said, "Chori kaam" (thieving)! God help India.

Every year we celebrate Christmas by distributing woolen blankets and clothes for the poor. Our children have never heard about Santa bringing gifts or Christmas trees but they certainly know that they can expect those small presents we give them during Christmas. We have nearly 600 children in our Sunday schools and slum centres. You can share the joy of Christmas by sending small presents for 25 or 50 children. Have a great run and a perfect finish of 2006! f

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Money Orders, Cheques, Bank Drafts to be sent in favour of BLESSING YOUTH MISSION, VELLORE.

Any relief material may be sent by TCI Lorry service to **TITLAGARH**, Orissa and the waybill to— Mr. Peter Nag, Bundupalla village P.O & Desil, Via Titlagarh 767 033, Orissa. Contact person for Feed Orissa, Mr. P. Thomas Livingstone, Asish Sebasadan, DAM Colony, Bargarh 768 028. *Mobile: 9337311560* <feed_orissa@yahoo.com>