

Vision For Asia
Reaching the Unreached
 2428 LaSalle Road, Monroe, MI 48162



Bhutan on the move!

Dear Friends,

Vision For Asia recently was honored to host the first Bhutan Conference at our international headquarters in Edelsfeld, Germany. We were encouraged by the fellowship and participation of those who love this nation. Recently the new King of Bhutan was crowned in the midst of great celebration in the streets of the nation. Coincidentally this was the theme for the conference. "A Celebration for Bhutan!"

As we begin 2009, We pray that the year is filled with the hope and peace that only the message of Christ can

offer. Thank you all for your prayers and financial support for this work. Without you it would not be possible.

For the harvest,
Your VFA Teams

AFGHANISTAN

"Emmanuel, God with us."

The international community was stunned by the news that an employee of a Christian NGO was shot and killed on the morning of October 20, in a section of Kabul that was considered to be secure. Co-workers and friends have openly mourned the loss. They write: "Yesterday, a small group of us visited the place where she was killed and laid bouquets of roses on the site... an act of faith in defiance of fear, and also an act of identification with her. One woman wrote out a prayer of forgiveness and another tied her photo to a tree. I tied 2 banners, one proclaiming "Emmanuel, God with us." One person in prayer had a picture of these bouquets of roses growing into a mound a meter high. Today I will also go out to my yard and cut as many of my roses as possible to add to the growing bouquets. May love conquer acts of violence and death in this country."

PHILIPPINES

Increasing Violence

In August the Supreme Court intervened to postpone the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The MOA would have given the MILF jurisdiction over a de facto Islamic state in Mindanao, a province in the south. When the signing ceremony was cancelled, Muslim militants who were aligned with the MILF attacked Christian rural areas of Mindanao, murdering and wounding dozens, and displacing many thousands. In October, the Supreme Court ruled that the MOA was unconstitutional, increasing tension among opposing factions. Some Islamic elements are threatening to wage jihad, and although the political situation is temporarily calm, the Muslims and Christians of Mindanao could see more conflict.

Peter and Fe Nitschkes, working among the poor and destitute in Manila's slums, were forced to move out because of the growing violence. A man was shot in front of their house; soon after, a woman was assaulted and robbed. Violent crimes are happening in every neighborhood.

In spite of the violence, their ministry continues. The kindergarten is running smoothly. The price of rice has gone down, and the farming Co-Op is also developing. The recycling project is struggling to survive because the price

for scrap metal has remained stagnant. Solutions and strategies need to be found in order to make this small business profitable.

Pray that through these projects relationships will grow, and that many will come to Christ.

**ORISSA, INDIA:
KANDHAMAL GENOCIDE
PROGRESSES UNCHECKED**

The Indian state of Orissa boasts a sad history of persecution of Christians. In 1999 the nation was shocked by the cruel murder of missionary Graham Staines and his two sons. Staines, along with his family, served peacefully among the lepers of Orissa; he and his two sons were burned to death in their jeep. Following the killing, his widow declared her forgiveness for the murderers on national television. Then, on Christmas 2007, riotous mobs attacked churches, killing 4 people. A main instigator of this violence was



Christian Homes Destroyed

the Hindu leader Swamiji Saraswati. In August 2008, Saraswati was murdered, and although Maoists immediately claimed responsibility, gossip swept through the region

PRAY FOR...

AFGHANISTAN: Pray for peace, for safety for aid workers, & effective relief projects.

BHUTAN: Pray for the 38 students who recently graduated with a Certificate of Theology. Pray for the new king.

CAMBODIA: Feuchts: Pray for a complete healing for Martin, and that he will be able to return soon. Pray for healing for several sick children in the home. Pray for the Tadics success in their language study and little Terezija, as she grows up learning 4 languages.

CHINA, XINJIANG: Pray for Bozi's perseverance with her language study, and for physical and spiritual strength.

GERMANY: Pray for the VFA Mission Training from Jan 16-Feb 21

INDIA: Pray for Helga, she and several others from Harvest Now are in New Delhi for discipleship training. Pray for the Lord to work deeply in each life.

ISRAEL: Praise God that Margrit's visa has come through. She still needs a miracle to find an affordable apartment.

MONGOLIA: Pray for the Bergmanns as they are back in Ulaan Bataar and Paul is working at the university. Pray for new relationships with the Tsaan to grow and flourish.

PAKISTAN: 20 suicide attackers spread throughout Pakistan resulting in a wave of violence especially in Peshawar. Pray for a major breakthrough in the war against the Taliban and Al-Khaida. Pray for the team, as they are all restricted to their homes under imposed curfew.

GMT: Keep praying for Josephine's healing.

SRI LANKA: Margaya Fellowship: Construction of an extension for their church building resulted in a cruel slander campaign. Join us in praying for the "mouth of the accuser" to be stopped. Their situation was reported in a TV documentary by "No War Zone", a program seeking to promote tolerance and end ethnic conflict in this nation in turmoil.

THAILAND: Bowers: Pray for their next discipleship training school, Feb. 6 – April 29. You can contact them at <http://dst-asia.org>

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www.vfasia.org**

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“Israel? No, our vision is for Asia!” This was our first reaction when the request came to sponsor someone working on an assignment in Israel. Surely there are enough organizations reaching out in the Holy Land; we have our hands full concentrating on the more “unholy lands.” But the Lord spoke: “Look at the map.” The obvious fact stood out: Israel is indeed located in Asia. Suddenly a real joy at the prospect of being able to invest spiritually in this nation started to grow in our hearts. The original “open door” did not pan out, but 2 years later, Margrit Stebner requested to go to Israel, and our joy returned. Vision for Asia’s German roots makes this ministry all the more meaningful. Margrit will be working with STEP International, a ministry that reaches out to both Arabs and Jews providing English and computer courses. Margrit has been serving faithfully with our mission for many years. We are rejoicing to stand behind her as she launches out in this exciting new direction. Your prayers for her are valued as her new responsibilities started the first of October.

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her skill. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Ps. 137:5-6

Cambodia

Dorcas Project



Dorcas is a ministry of the Samaritan Project, an NGO lead by Martin and Elisabeth Feucht of Germany. This sewing project uses exclusively local silk. Here Elisabeth is on a silk purchasing tour.



Through the Dorcas Project, local seamstresses like Chamnan (photo) find work with fair pay. This year a shop was opened in Phnom Penh.

blaming Christians, saying that they were taking revenge. The false accusations spurred Hindu radicals into inciting mobs of villagers to attack Christians and their property.

More recently, in the Kandhamal area of Orissa, reports are that 51 persons have been killed. 180 churches and 4,500 homes have been destroyed by violence. Over 50,000 Christians who have fled their homes are now living in relief camps. They are being prevented from meeting for prayer and being pressured to go home. The displaced are given one blanket per family, and remain in conditions with no sanitation and no counseling services. The emotional and physical health of the women is deteriorating.

Hindutva

Meanwhile, a campaign to “cleanse the land” is under way with Hindutva gangs physically removing all evidence of a historical Christian presence. Efforts to forcibly convert Christians to Hinduism under threat of death have gathered momentum. Despite the deployment of law enforcement troops, the violence has spread to Karnataka, South India, and to 5 other states of India. Those perpetrating “Hindutva” preach that to be Indian is to be Hindu, and their goal is to establish a purely Hindu state. The BJP political party has “Hindutva” as its political agenda.

The political situation remains tense, as the central government appears paralyzed and unable to act. The BJP-ruled state governments continue to blame Christians and justify the

Hindutva gangs that respond with extreme violence. These radical Hindu cadres have confidence that they are guaranteed impunity by authorities. The situation is extremely serious and unlikely to improve significantly before the May 2009 general elections as the Hindutva forces escalate their efforts to advance their ideology and gain power.

Relief Efforts

Before an appeal for help was made, donations started coming in for the persecuted Christians in Orissa. Believers in Varanasi came together to pray and seek a strategy for providing aid. By faith they set the goal of assisting 100 families. Dipesh (VFA) was chosen along with another brother to travel to Orissa to oversee this work.



Dipesh helping to distribute relief

Dipesh writes: “For me it was one of the most tragic moments of my life. It was so humbling to meet these families and to hear their stories of how the mobs came, burnt their houses and killed their loved ones. The Hindu radicals did not spare even the children or the old or handicapped people. Any Christian they caught had to denounce

Christianity or face death. Their houses were burnt and those caught were cut into pieces or thrown into the burning houses. One man, with tears in his eyes told me how his elderly mother was dragged and then thrown into the burning house. Another young man told me that the mob came shouting slogans against the Christians and then looted and burnt their houses. He said that even though the Christians in that area outnumbered the Hindu radicals, they chose not to fight but to run away into the jungle. Even women who were pregnant were not spared. The worst of all things is that the police and the government did nothing to stop these things. They just watched how Christians were brutally killed even in front of their eyes. These people have lost faith in the government and in the police.”

Several local pastors in Orissa met Dipesh and his colleague to help with the distribution. In the camp where they worked there was a total of 1600 families. In the end they were able to help 180 families and had funds left over to buy 6 plastic tents.

As the number of people in the camps decreases, the central government is asserting that the situation for the refugees has improved. The reality is vastly different. If some have been able to leave the camps, it is because they have found shelter with relatives and friends, or they have fled outside the state and to larger cities. They are not returning to their villages as the

fear for their safety is too great. In areas where churches or Christian houses are still standing, orange banners now wave over them, declaring that these buildings have been “cleansed and retaken” by brutal and malicious Hindu fanatics.

Future Help Projects

Pastor David (VFA) writes: “After carrying out our first Orissa project, we were able to see the situation for ourselves. We realize that the need is very great and what we could accomplish is only a very small contribution. Daily I get phone calls asking for help; people are sleeping under the trees without even a change of clothing. Now the winter is starting.” For a second relief outreach the Christians of Varanasi have been collecting clothes to take to Orissa. Once the situation is stable enough to visit the affected areas, the greatest need will be for housing. Almost all the affected persons have no house to go back to as their homes have been burned down. At the moment the situation is still so tense that one can only offer emergency relief, such as food, clothing and temporary tents.

SRI LANKA

***Geevana Diya*
KINDERGARTEN PROJECT**

Devapriya and Beena Hunukumbura lead Jeevana Diya (JD), a church-planting ministry in Sri Lanka. Along with providing theological studies and

leadership training, they are working in social relief projects that contribute to the community’s needs and promote friendships. In one village called Galwellaaya, where also a church has been established, they have administered VFA funds to support educational programs for children.

Galwellaaya is an undeveloped area near Mahaoya, a city in the eastern province of Sri Lanka. The aboriginal Veddas were living here in the mountainous jungles, but during the British rule they were forced or persuaded to settle in the village that is now called Pollabadda. Galwellaaya is a part of this village.



Beena, Pastor Deva’s wife, teaching the children songs

The Veddas gradually had to leave their original hunting and gathering lifestyle to become farmers. They also suffered during the last 20 years due to pressure from LTTE terrorists, Tamil factions fighting a vicious war against the Singalese dominated central government. Recently appointed village guards have slowly made life safer for the residents. The area where they live belongs to the dry zone of Sri Lanka, and so the farmers

depend on timely rains for their cultivation season from October to February. Too much rain causes the crops to be destroyed by flooding, and too little prevents them from succeeding. The Vedda farmers are constantly challenged by the need to provide sufficient food and income for their families. JD first started working among these people by helping them with seed and agricultural tools. Soon this village was touched with the gospel, and now a kindergarten has been established for disadvantaged children. From a total of 20 students, 9 will leave the JD Kindergarten at the end of this year to continue at the government school for their primary education. The parents are unable to provide stationery, textbooks, uniforms, shoes and other basic needs. The funds which come in from outside, such as those from VFA, make it possible to sponsor these children to attend the school for their education.

ISRAEL

