

"What Are We Supposed to Do?"

Review:

- Mission month - Abba's Children
- Last week - challenges in the 4-14 window
- Spiritual - 85% accept Christ before their 15th birthday
- Mental / Cognitive - our perspective on the world forms young the challenge is to provide a world and life view in synch with a developing world view
- Physical / health - AIDS orphans are increasing in epidemic numbers around the world.
- 35,000 children (under the age of 5) die every day as a result of malnutrition or starvation [World Vision].

More challenges

1. The Economic Challenge - poverty

The Poor and the 4/14 window graph

Poverty causes hunger and then hunger perpetuates a cycle of poverty (malnutrition, underdeveloped mental capacities, inability to do more than menial work).

Bryant Meyers (Vice president for International Program Strategy with World Vision), in his book, *Walking with the Poor*, Meyers says that poverty is the "result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable. Poverty is the absence of shalom in all its meanings".

Family Disintegration & Abandonment:

There are at least 100,000,000 children who live or work on the streets of our cities.

Sexual Exploitation, Rape and Abuse:

There are at least 10,000,000 children currently suffering the oppression of forced prostitution.

Ill. Nepali girls - promised a job - trapped for survival

OXFORD STATEMENT ON CHILDREN AT RISK

In 1997, Christian leaders from 38 nations met in Oxford, England

"Scripture clearly shows that God is outraged about what is happening to children. Over and over again God's warning throughout the Bible is 'Don't touch my precious children!'

- Exodus 22:22-24 - Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry.
- Psalm 68:5,6a - A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families,
- Deuteronomy 24:17,18 - Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this.
- Matthew 18:6 - And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

What are we supposed to do?

For starters, let's get beyond shrugging our shoulders and saying, "Not my fault, not my problem."

2. The Social Challenge

There are social structures in place (everywhere) that abuse, oppress and destroy the lives of children.

III. Joseph D'Souza is the International director of Dalit Freedom Network. He describes the transformative moment that caused him to turn his attention to India's Dalit children. "It was in the year 2000 that we ended up in a major meeting with the Dalit leadership. They encouraged us to do Jesus' mission among them and not to be on the defensive in the light of the attacks on the Christians by the extremist Hindu forces.

"When I asked them what mission of Jesus would they like us to do among the Dalits, they said, 'Free our children. Free them by giving them quality English-medium school education with a biblical worldview that teaches about the equality of human beings, their value as humans, and the fact Jesus loves them.'"

"When probed further they asked whether we were aware that there were more than 40 million child laborers in India, whether we knew that of the 15 million children who were in some form of bondage the vast majority were either scheduled caste or scheduled tribe children, whether we were aware again that the vast number of children trafficked in the sex trade were again from the Dalit and 'backward caste' backgrounds."

"Finally they pointed out that to break the cycle of slavery among the Dalits we had to break it before the children began to think of themselves as slaves, as untouchables, as criminal tribes, as forsaken and punished by God in this life and as being worthless."

"I was already in mission work for 25 years when this encounter happened in my life and in the organizations I lead. I clearly saw that the key to Dalit transformation, the key to transformation of India, and the key to Kingdom impact in India was to free Dalit and other low caste children."

"Thus by 2010 we will have the first 100 schools. This has resulted in my involvement in the justice issue for the Dalit people. The Dalit leaders in the nation of India believe us because we responded to their cry for freedom, which began in their cry for the freedom of their children."

"Thus the vision of 1000 schools was born— seeking to provide access to education for every Dalit. The English language would allow them access to all jobs, not just the most menial jobs. The biblical worldview would help all Dalits to discover their true identity as children of God made in His own image. It would enhance the likelihood that religious freedom would be practiced in every place throughout India."

Jesus gave us a gospel that proclaims "release to the oppressed".

"What are we supposed to do?"

3. The Ministry Challenge

"What are we supposed to do?"

Mannu to her staff of pastor's wives, school teachers, - volunteers who have a vision and passion to reach the most vulnerable children

Bunu, her mother is a destitute woman. She has AIDS and is so sick she couldn't take care of Bunu anymore. Her father is not in the picture. She now has found her home at "Ghar Aangan"

"What are we supposed to do?"

I saw head shakes of affirmation; the quiet confidence of a shared vision.

Her question was not aimed at us, it was a teachable moment for her staff. But I came home with that question bothering me.

Obedience that is simple, single-minded

OBC's outpouring of generosity allowed for the expansion of the home for girls. There are now 10 girls like Bunu there; each with a story of God's grace. By year end we believe there will be 25. Thanks to the generosity of many here and a matching gift from a generous employer, we will be able to expand the home. Decisions were made this week that will allow for more ministry to go forward.

But the question is bigger than that. It goes back to Abba. "Abba changes everything." Your love for your children, the children next door, the children of OBC, and the use of the resources God has put in your trust. What we practice here we earn the right to take with us to other parts of the world.

Tonight: Ghar Aangan: Home for Girls