

Bridge of Hope Discussion, Part One

by K.P. Yohannan

Gospel for Asia's ministry has expanded to include caring for the physical needs of children and families, which has led to many people coming to Christ.

Duration: 25:57

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 9:37, Luke 10:2, John 4:35, Acts 16:9, James 1:27

Topics: "Benevolence"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a strange dream he had that became a turning point in his life. In the dream, he saw a vast golden wheat field, symbolizing the harvest that Jesus talked about in John's Gospel and Matthew. He also saw a little girl named Meena standing in sewer water, representing the desperate need for the gospel in India. The speaker felt a sense of urgency to reach out to the harvest and was comforted by the image of a bridge filled with children, symbolizing the potential for many to come to Christ.

Transcript

Building a bridge of hope, love, and mercy, next on The Road to Reality with Brother K.P. Yohannan. Welcome to The Road to Reality with Brother K.P. Yohannan, President of Gospel for Asia. Today we're going to bring you a special in-studio roundtable discussion about a revolution within Gospel for Asia.

You know, we tend to think of that word revolution in a bad light, but the word revolution is defined as a monumental or sweeping change. And that word perfectly describes something that is taking place here at Gospel for Asia. Our host today is Brother K.P. Yohannan.

We'll join him now as he speaks with Heidi Chupp, the Managing Editor of Send Magazine, and John Beers, the Chief Development Officer of Gospel for Asia. Here's Brother K.P. When I first read these statements, I hardly could believe it. 90 million children go hungry in South Asia every single day.

130 million between the age of seven and 18 have never been to school. Then listen to this. Up to 150 million child laborers in India, the largest number of working children in the world.

They start as laborers from the age of four and five. They go to work when the sun rises and end their work when the sun sets, makes nine or 10 cents for the whole day. Unbelievable.

Hi, my friend. This is K.P. Yohannan with Gospel for Asia. Today, I just want to talk to you about the crisis we have to deal with on the mission field, especially with the children and the children of the Dalits.

To do that, I have invited two people to join me in our studio because they are very much part of this burden. First of all, here is Heidi Chubb. Hi, Heidi.

Hello. Heidi is the wife of Dave Chubb, and they've been with us in the ministry for the past, what? Almost 20 years. Almost 20 years.

And Heidi actually was my secretary for five years until that boy came and stole her away. But she's very much active in all of the ministry, and Dave Chubb is one of our senior leaders in the ministry, head of the IT department. And if you notice our CENT publication, you will see Heidi's name as the editor of the magazine.

Then I have with me John Beers. Hi, John. Hi, Brother K.P. Hi.

Well, John was a banker in Seattle, Washington, a beautiful place, and 15 years ago, he happened to read one of my books, Revolutionary World Missions, and the Lord called him to give up his job, sell his house, and pick his wife and kids and move to Dallas, and he's, again, one of our senior leaders in the ministry, and many of you heard him speak in meetings. And what a joy it is to have John also in the studio. So, you know, we just wanna talk about the journey we made as a ministry.

And to me, you know, I talk about these children and all these things, but, you know, when I think about it, Revolutionary World Missions, now the book, 1.5 million copies in print in several European languages, and that made history. One of the reasons was the strong argument I had about social work. In my reading and research, or 200 books I realized those days, my goodness, in the name of mission, 90% of our resources, people are simply doing social work and people are going to hell.

And this is where I became convinced that Gospel for Asia as a mission, we should give ourselves completely for preaching the gospel, seeing people repent and be baptized and be disciplined and the churches grow. And that's what we've been doing for quarter of a century. Now, just in the last three, four years, we began to, you know, get involved with apparently doing the same thing I seems to have said we shouldn't do.

That is, feeding the poor, leper colonies, you know, tsunami victims and earthquake victims, now, you know, dealing with tens of thousands of children taking care of them. What is all about? And I'm sure questions asked by people. And we just want to talk through this process and what the Lord did in our hearts and how he led us and what happened to us.

And I'm sure, John, you get asked by people the same question, I imagine. All the time. In fact, you know, we had a real struggle here if you recall when the idea first came up, even amongst our Cedar leadership, deciding, you know, is this something we should be doing and how can we do it? And, you know, would it threaten, you know, our support of native missionaries? And we had some major discussions ourselves just trying to count the cost before we decided to do this.

Yes, I think there was some real concern that we communicate how the Lord was leading us in a clear way and an effective way to show that we weren't straying away from the original calling that God had given us to plant churches among the most unreached. Yeah, I mean, as a matter of fact, I'm sure Heidi and John, you remember, you know, for, I don't know, at that time, we had 120, 130 people gathered in the prayer

meeting room when I began to talk about it. But John, I think prior to our staff meeting where I explained this, we had our leaders meeting in the boardroom, remember that? Yes, I remember we had some very serious discussions regarding the Bridge of Hope, and we haven't really announced it, but the Bridge of Hope is the child sponsorship ministry that we have, and we had some major, major concerns, if you recall, a serious discussion of whether or not, you know, taking on a child sponsorship ministry would threaten the native missionary sponsorship, whether it would take us in a totally different direction than what we've been doing in the past.

And there was some resistance, I remember, a very strong resistance to begin with. And actually, I remember that discussion very well, because you stopped us in the middle of this discussion, looked us in the eyes, there was probably six of us in the room, and said, brothers, let me ask you a question. How are your children doing? And it was a very short question, but incredibly powerful.

I remember thinking, you know, well, my kids are doing fine. I have four daughters. You know, they have clean rooms.

Some persecution, they have to share rooms with each other, but, you know, they have everything they need. And I remember during that discussion, as I started to think about it, I remembered a little girl whose story I'd heard several years ago, and her name is Meena. One of our staff members was in India, and while he was waiting to go to the airport, he went to our ministry in Bombay.

As he sat in this room, he was looking at a notebook full of missionary pictures, and each one had a picture of a missionary. When you turned the page, it had this testimony how the Lord had used this man powerfully to plant the church. And then you turn the next page, and there's a beautiful picture of this little, she's about a four-year-old girl, probably the most beautiful little girl you'll ever see.

She has these gorgeous, gorgeous eyes, and she's standing in about three or four inches of sewer water, and it was so different. It was David. David said, now, what's the story? I have to know what this girl's story is.

And the leader said, well, this is Meena. We found little Meena walking on the streets. Her parents had died, and she was living out of garbage cans to stay alive, begging for food.

She actually was sleeping on a grate outside of a factory at night to stay alive, to stay warm. And these brothers fell so in love with this little girl, they thought, we've got to help her. So they went to all the different orphanages trying to find some place where they could have somebody to take care of her, but all the orphanages were full.

Finally, they found a family who had probably 10 or 15 children they were taking care of, but they just loved this little girl so much, they decided they would take her in. So they left the girl with her, and they went on their way. Well, this family, as good as their intentions were, they just didn't have the resources to take care of this little girl.

And so she wound up back on the streets. And they had said, you know, about two weeks after this picture was taken, before they could locate little Meena again, she became so desperately hungry, she ate a handful of the sewage-infested dirt from the Bombay streets. She went into a coma and died.

And I remember when I heard that story, it was kind of one of those moments in your life that are kind of a transitional moment, because this little girl, if she was alive today, would be exactly the same age as my

twins. And I began to think in this meeting, how would I feel if little Jenny, or little Emily, were walking the streets of Bombay lost, so desperate? You know, what would that do to my heart? And then I began to think, what would that do to the father's heart? Because he loves this little girl with an everlasting love. And the Lord just really powerfully convicted me in my own heart that, you know, I was missing a part of God's heart for these little kids.

Yeah, I remember, you know, first of all, trying to explain to our leaders here the whole transition we are going through. And, you know, I'm sure, Heidi, from your background, born and raised in South America to Wycliffe parents, I think you had no difficulty relating to deep commitment to evangelism, church planting, scripture distribution, all those things. Right, right, yeah.

And, you know, so that we can get back to the real issue. Of course, you know, the Mina and the kids I talk about, you know, that I've met on the streets and I cried and all those things. You know, the problem for us, some of us, especially some of our staff and our friends out there, they're saying, yeah, I mean, there's lots of organizations are going after little kids and poor people and they're feeding all those things.

That's exactly what you talked about and against, you know, in your book, in your communications. That's a very reason we gravitated toward Gospel for Asia because this is one ministry that stayed true to the authentic great commission of preaching, discipleship, church planting, and the book of Acts. So why on earth we would now go into something like this? Are we becoming like anybody else? I think maybe it is good.

Let me explain what I had explained the leadership and also to, you know, the staff. You're hearing it again. You see, about five years ago, I had the opportunity to meet with the Dalit leaders of India.

Now, Dalit means the untouchables. But India today with 1.2 billion people, almost one third of the country, nearly 300 million people are the untouchables. 3000 years of poverty, illiteracy, incredible suffering.

I don't think here in the West, we can even begin to understand it. Yeah, I know in Europe and America, we had slaves and all these things, but the condition of the Dalits today for these millions of people, it's 100 times worse. Many times they are brutally murdered for drawing water from the well that belonged to the upper caste.

And their children are abused and raped. And when you talk about 150 some million children, child laborers, who are these kids? If you really want to know, the answer is only one. They are the children of the Dalits.

They're the poorest of the poor. As a matter of fact, you can go to the website and places you can see these kids are tied down to these steel post in the carpet making factories, brick making factories, firecracker making factories. They work from morning till night.

And then you have landlords who would loan you \$10 as parents. And the agreement, you let your little girls and boys go and work in his field. This guy owns 200, 300 acres of land and then he owns these kids.

And they are the bonded laborers. These poor people have no way to escape. Now, this whole caste system has to do with the Hindu religion where they believe and teach for years and thousands of years that these Dalits are made, created by their God to serve the upper caste.

They are not even human beings. They have no value for that. They cannot even go into the temple.

Think about that while they claim to be Hindus. And by the grace of God, just about five years ago, the leaders of these people, different parts of India, they began to say the only answer to our dilemma is to escape from Hindu caste system, give up Hinduism. And their option, number one, to become Christians.

And then some said they can become Buddhists also because there's no caste in their religion. Now, as I began to dialogue with many of the leaders along with some of other Christian leaders, one thing I learned all of a sudden, they say, you know what, we may have no hope, but our children should have some hope. And I was kind of curious about it.

And I remember a late night meeting in a hotel as 22 of us went inside the leaders of this movement. And we couldn't carry any paper card or camera, nothing. It was very confidential, very deep level talk.

And they said to me, one guy said, I have 61 million people, which is one of the large Dalit group. And he's the leader of that. He said, among my people, 90% illiteracy.

Our children are lost. Would you please come and start schools? And then he said, oh, by the way, you can teach about Jesus. Then he said, make all of us Christians.

We want to be Christians. You come and help us. And Heidi, John, I just sat there and said, am I hearing this or is this an illusion? I remember when you came and shared that with the staff and how overwhelming of a thought it was that so many thousands and millions of these people were so open to hearing the gospel.

It was incredible. Yeah, and you know, of course, I gave my life to serve God when I was 16. And all I know is to preach the gospel, get people saved and baptized and plant churches.

And then by the grace of God, we have now 21,000 churches in 10 Asian countries and we keep doing it. But when I heard these things, I said, oh no, they want me to start schools. They want me to take care of their kids.

They want me to teach them. How on earth I'm going to adjust this without thinking? This isn't what we're about, is it? I really got scared. I mean, thing is, I mean, my reputation is at stake.

You know, I became the champion of anti-social gospel. And I mean, I still am convinced if we do social work at the expense of preaching the gospel, we are missing the boat. But this was not the issue here.

I'm looking into the eyes of 22 people that represent nearly 300 million people saying that our hearts are wide open. Please come and help us. Now, here I get confused what I'm going to do.

Now, here's something I had to confess, which I did it before, you know, all my leaders and our staff here, which is kind of not the glorious thing to say. You know, I thought at that time, you know what? I can play the games. I just do something to kind of make them, you know, believe I am on their side.

And we will do, you know, some little things here and there, you know, maybe a few schools, and then they will send the communication to the whole grassroots that, you know, we are there for them. And then we can go and, you know, kind of preach the gospel and get them saved and all those things, you know. And quietly, remember, long before we went public, we started quite a good number of simple schools for the Dalit children in different parts of the country.

If I remember, it was almost 100 schools that first year. Exactly, and we never went public with that. But you know what happened, though? I say kind of smiling now, God tricked me into this whole thing.

As a matter of fact, as the schools began to, you know, be established, little children, and I heard stories of children coming to our school from these Dalit communities, totally naked. You're talking about four, five, six-year-old little boys and girls having no stitch or cloth on their body. It's hard to imagine.

It's hard to imagine. But then we give them uniform, give them a decent, nutritious meal, and a medical checkup and books. And the teachers teach not only education, but here they learn about Jesus, Bible verses, choruses.

And all of a sudden, I began to hear stories of kids going home and telling their parents about Jesus and singing songs. And then parents begin to hear the gospel, read tracts, whatever else, this and that. And all of a sudden, everywhere, people are coming to Christ.

For example, in Tripura, if you remember the story, we start 50, you know, small schools. In one year, we have 37 churches planted. And I think it's important to remember, too, if I remember the stories correctly, our missionaries had gone into that area year after year after year.

Every time they'd gone there, they had been beaten. Their tracts were destroyed. They were kicked out and told not to come back.

And then as we came and started these schools, suddenly all the villages were wide open to hearing about the Lord. You remember the story of Naboon? Oh, yes, I remember it very clearly because I was involved in working on his story for one of our SIN magazines. Yeah, that to me, you know, of course, people use exceptions to make big deal out of it.

But honestly, that is not an exception. That is a normal event. You know, this little boy, I think he was seven or eight, I think.

Yeah, he was in first grade at the time. First grade, and first time in his life he's coming to a school. By the way, that is the first school ever set up in the entire community.

And he learned about Jesus, Bible verses and choruses. And he goes home and sing and so excited. And carry his book bag and all these different things.

And I think it was the day when he came home and told his father, said, father, there is a Jesus who can heal mommy. His mother was dying. And of course, you know, they do all the mantra, all these things, you know, the witchcraft and all those things.

She had malaria. Yeah, something and nothing, nothing helped. And she was laying there on the floor on the mat, you know, losing her life.

And the father actually believed there is a Jesus at the school, a doctor who can heal his wife. So the next day he comes to the school with his little son talking about if Jesus can come and heal his wife. And that's when the missionaries went with him and explained the gospel and prayed for this dear lady and the Lord healed her miraculously.

Praise God. Yeah, and the whole family gave their life to Christ. Plus, that became the reason for the first church to be planted.

That's incredible. In the community. Now, here it is.

I'm hearing all these things. Now, I'm scared to death. Why? Because my whole reputation at stake and Gospel for Asia's future, I just can't see we are going to get into dealing with poor children and all these different things.

And here, it may be good I tell you the story that really became the turning point in my life. One early morning hours, I had this strange dream. Now, I'm not a dreamer.

You know, I mean, I'm not one of those spooky guys looking for weird stuff, you know, but I tell people I'm basically a hamburger, french fries, chocolate shake man, you know. And it's a strange dream. In my dream, I was standing and looking at a field.

Have you seen this golden color wheat field? Wheat fields, millions of acres. Millions of acres. I mean, I grew up in a home where my people are rice farmers.

I can just imagine this. I mean, in my dream, as far as your eyes can see, just vast, huge field ripe for harvest. And in my dream, I realized this is what Jesus talked about in John's Gospel chapter four and Matthew chapter nine, the harvest is now.

And I realized, wow, this is it. And again, in my dream, the realization came to me, this is the harvest that God has prepared among the Dalits, the untouchables. Because I've been going through this up and down, you know, emotional struggle, what to do with this whole, you know.

So you must've got pretty excited seeing that. Yeah, I mean, yeah, in my dream, I was, I remember I was so excited with the realization, wow, the Lord has given this to us, just to me. You know, it is like, you know, I mean, if you have a business and China says, you are the only individual, we are going to have the market of China open for you.

I mean, can you imagine what that means? Nobody will have the share. Kind of, I was so excited, I was running with such excitement and joy toward the harvest, saying, this is mine, this is mine, this is ours. What a thrilling experience.

But all of a sudden, I came against a river, a river so wide, so deep, it's a strange thing that a river that is as deep as ocean. In the dream, you realize it's deep, there's no way you can get across, it's so wide. And I remember standing on the bank of the river on this side, looking at the harvest on the other side, just weeping, saying, oh no, what am I going to do? Because, you see, I remember when I was growing up, when the harvest time comes, I mean, our people are like, in America, we say, chicken with the head cut off, you know? You don't take a rest, you don't go on vacation.

I mean, just night and day, because right after the harvest season, within two, three weeks time, the monsoon start, rain comes, it's all finished. I mean, it's a terrible loss. And I was so desperate.

And at that very moment, instantly a bridge gapped the river from this side to the other side. And it's not a tiny bridge, it's a huge bridge, but all of a sudden, children began to be filled. I mean, just the bridge was completely filled with children, all colors.

And I woke up, I sat on my bed, shaking, said, this is the most strange thing. What is this? It was also the Holy Spirit very gently spoke to my heart. Yeah, the harvest is yours, but the way to get to them, go and

embrace the children.

And then Mark, I think, 9, the Bible verse there, Jesus took a little child and held him up and said, all those who receive this child in my name receives me. And not only me, but my father. And I realized, wow, this is God dealing with my heart and giving me an opportunity.

You've been listening to The Road to Reality with Brother K.P. Ohanian, President of Gospel for Asia. We've been listening to a special in-studio discussion with Heidi Chupp, the managing editor of Send Magazine, and John Beers, the chief development officer of Gospel for Asia. The topic today was the new outreach arm of Gospel for Asia called Bridge of Hope.

It's a child sponsorship program that gives children food, education, and hope. A sponsorship of just \$28 a month will cover the cost of one child's tuition, books, uniforms, one or two meals a day, and a yearly medical checkup. But Bridge of Hope is unique.

First, 100% of your sponsorship is sent to the mission field. Nothing is taken out for administration or fundraising. Second, your child, his family, and community will hear the gospel.

Often churches are planted in unreached villages this way. And third, your child will learn English, the language that will open the doors of opportunity and help him or her break the cycle of poverty. Please, won't you consider this work that brings so much hope to children otherwise left to factory work or worse, life on the streets? To sponsor a child today or to just learn more about Bridge of Hope, visit our website at gospelforasia.org. That's gospelforasia.org. Or call us toll free for more information, 866-WIN-ASIA.

That's 866-WIN-ASIA. May we thank you in advance for your help and your prayers for this ministry. The Road to Reality is sponsored by Gospel for Asia.

Join us next time for the rest of this in-studio talk. Until then, may the Lord richly bless you.

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