

# Asha Kiran Newsletter

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*Dear friends,*

*We at Asha Kiran wish you a blessed New Year in 2009, one filled with the deep joy that comes with walking along side our Lord Jesus Christ.*

## TESTING TIMES FOR THE CHURCH IN ORISSA

Save the hyperbole for when you may need it. Ever heard that phrase before? As I write these words I think of the hard times Asha Kiran passed through over the last couple of years. We thought those were testing times for us—financial difficulties, lack of personnel etc. Well, now we wish that's all we had to worry about! 2008 was a tense year for us in Orissa. The riots in Kandhamal and closer home in Jeypore made it clear to us just how unsafe and temporary this world is as our home.

Two children from among our staff went to be with the Lord. One was a sudden, unexpected drowning death at 14 years of age. One child was born with an incurable liver defect and deteriorated slowly. Two lives lost to us... And we had no time to mourn them properly for within a week Orissa was in the grip of fear and tension as anti-Christian riots swept through the various districts.

For most of us this was the first time that our lives, indeed our family's lives were put in physical danger because of the faith we profess. Till now it was just a faintly acknowledged possibility always in the background of our lives. Although never assuming that we lived in a land friendly to Christians, we never thought about the possibility of being hunted down because we were Christians. How do we respond to the challenge? Do we make clear our calling and then stand our ground? Do we fly in the face of needless provocation and violence? Isn't it strange? Time and again Jesus warned His disciples about the probability of being hated by the world because we belong to Him. And yet we never really imagine it could happen to us. Are we not loved by the people we have come to work for? Did we not give up all the world holds dear just to spread the love of Christ through our work? So then should not the Lord protect us His beloved children? Times to make us introspect...

And yet, these are also times that separate the wheat from the chaff. The staff all got together and decided to hold fast. We would not run away, yet would offer no violence in return if attacked. If there was a way to keep our children safe we would take it but there was no nearby place of refuge. And we continued in prayer—praying for God's will, praying for the courage to accept whatever he deemed best, continuing to minister to those He sent to us. And this time He kept us safe. Not so for so many all over Orissa...

An intelligent man once said—if you do not want Christianity to spread, just leave these Christians alone. Luckily for us, people do not heed his words. And so we are certain that through the horrific events in August 2008 God's glory will begin to spread through this state. We are blessed to be a witness and a part of this. Join us in thanking God for His blessings.

Romans 8:35-37—Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution.... Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

## Projects in brief

### HOSPITAL

Since the return of Viju and Molly in August, there has been a significant increase in the number of surgical patients. As we are now a good number of doctors, plans are on to increase our involvement in the community department as well as to make available our specialties to other nearby hospitals when requested.

### SEC

As more children graduate from

the 10th and 12th stds we need to have more options to offer those interested in pursuing further studies.

### MLE

13 functioning schools and the demand for them from the villages just keeps increasing. We need more funding to cater to these needs.

### CSU

Health and development—An external evaluation was held.

The program was found to be very useful. Suggestions on making more of a difference in the community were also discussed. Agriculture—Awaiting an external evaluation.

### BONDO

Work carried on in the hills with brief breaks at the time of the riots. A worrying development is the increasing number of naxalites entering

He said not,  
Thou shall not be  
tempested,  
Thou shall not be  
travailed,  
Thou shall not be  
afflicted,  
But He said,  
Thou shall not be  
overcome.

JULIAN OF NORWICH

the Malkan giri area. Although our staff have not been bothered yet, pray for their continued safety and protection.

### LITERACY

Desiya language is being promoted in self help groups

### OTHER

Our doctors and counselors helped in the refugee camps, youth camps and pastors counseling camps in Kandhamal.



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## HAPPENINGS HAPPENINGS HAPPENINGS

**Births:** A daughter to Nabin and Bina.

**Welcome:** Bina (nurse), Sanjita, Dharjyalina, (nurse trainees), Sudhanshu (records trainee).

Welcome back after further studies: Viju, Molly and family from CMC, Vellore. Kishore, Geeta and family from CFH, Oddanchatram and Mary from CH Bissamcuttack.

**Deaths:** Samuel Moharia (age 14) beloved eldest son of Dilip and Basanthi Moharia.

Manish Khandapani (age 8 months) beloved son of Naresh and Mamata Khandapani.

Mourned by the entire Asha Kiran family.

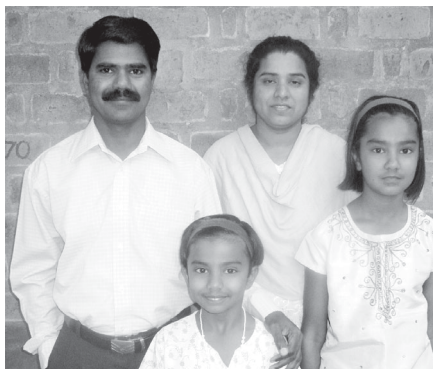
**Farewells:** Sujan and Geetha, Prathibha Boipari, Arun, Nibedita, Lalitha, Arjun and Revathi.

We would like to record a word of appreciation here to our partners in the various projects.

A special word of thanks to all our friends and supporters who stood by us, ran up huge phone bills and prayed for us during our times of distress.

We especially want to tell our board members that we feel privileged to have such a special lot of people on our board.

## Meet our staff



K.C. Shaji and Somini joined the AKS in 1994. Shaji was employed as a civil supervisor at the time of building the hospital and current residences. Somini trained in medical laboratory technology and also underwent IEM missionary training before joining here with a vision to serve as a missionary through her work in the hospital. They met each other in AKS where their wedding was arranged. (For those of us who believe that marriages are made in heaven) then this confirms that AKS is a little piece of heaven. They have been blessed with two daughters—Tirezah (11) and Milcah (7). Shaji now works as an assistant administrator in charge of construction, purchase and maintenance. Somini is a coordinator of diagnostic services in the hospital. She did a diploma in counseling in 2008 and has now started up a much needed counseling unit for patients of the AK hospital.



Uday Challan belongs to Sargiguda village in the Lamtaput Panchayat. He joined the AKS in May, 1996 as a Community health organizer and IEC trainee. One of the first members of the infant Community Services Unit, Uday was trained initially in community health and development. In 2003, a new branch of community health was started in line with our vision to facilitate holistic health and development. As we serve a community whose whole life depends on their agriculture, Uday was then trained in new and sustainable methods to improve agriculture. He now works as an agriculture extension officer in the CSU.

Uday and his wife Sunitha have 3 daughters—Sailaja(8), Rosemary(5) and Niharika(3).



Bijanti Karjee joined the AKS in June, 2000. She hails from West Bengal. Bijanti is in charge of the hospitality extended to AKS official guests. Trained by Grace, her culinary skills are a byword among our friends. Many of our guests remember her and her hospitality long after they forget the rest of their stay in Asha Kiran. Bijanthi also helps out in our pre-school as a nursery teacher when time permits.

