**INDIA ANTI-INFANTICIDE PROJECT: IMPROVING THE STATUS OF THE GIRL CHILD**

Trinity Presbyterian Church (TPC), in Birmingham, Alabama, USA, has been working with Gamana, an NGO (humanitarian organization) in Andhra Pradesh, India, concerning the problem of female infanticide among a particular vulnerable community. This summary provides background and contact information as we seek donations for this project. This collaboration between TPC and Gamana has been ongoing since 2007 with the project growing to the point where it is increasingly relevant to seek additional donations.

**MISSING GIRLS OF INDIA**

 India shares in a broader phenomenon, prominent particularly in some Asian nations as well as elsewhere, in which over 100 million females are “missing” from the population. Sex-selective abortion, infanticide, abandonment, and discriminatory allocation of food and medical care are the causes of this sad demographic reality. Infanticide and prenatal sex identification are both illegal in India, but such laws have not been effective. Generally, middle-class families are more likely to practice sex selective abortion, while very poor and marginalized populations are more likely to practice sex selective infanticide. This problem of the “missing girls” of India is a part of a broader set of issues concerning the equality, education, empowerment, and treatment of girls and women.

**PROJECT DESIGN**

Gamana, a non-sectarian Indian humanitarian organization, began the anti-infanticide project in response to reports of female infanticide among a certain marginalized community in India. The danger of infanticide is greatest among families with newborn daughters who already have girls in the family. Community staff members of Gamana have been successful in tracking families at risk of female infanticide, and intervening to prevent infanticide. The intervention includes counseling to try to encourage the family to keep and raise their daughter. The project also makes families aware of the option of placing the child in the government orphanage (Sishu Vihar) in Hyderabad, India, from which she would be placed for adoption within India. (Intercountry adoption is not a legal option in Andhra Pradesh, India, due to repeated scandals involving baby-buying and other corrupted activity, leading the State to ban intercountry adoption in 2001.)

 In order to elevate the position of girls and women in the community, the project provides financially for the education of girls within affected families and communities. The average cost is substantially less than $100 per school year per child. In some instances, merely providing suitable clothes and books is sufficient to enable students to attend a government school. In some instances the project sends children to private school, but the tuition costs are quite reasonable, in part because the schools are cooperating by discounting fees for the project.

 The project plan envisions a transformation of the culture of each local community so that families keeping and raising their girl children, even in families with many daughters, becomes universal. The practice of taking children to the government orphanage for adoption within India is viewed as a transitional phase which becomes reduced over time as the community comes to better value their girl children. The first phase of the project was successful in sharply reducing infanticide in one Mandal (group of settlements) , as well as providing for the education of a significant number of girls. Gamana is expanding the program into other locations, and wishes to continue to expand it to reach more impacted populations.

**ROLES OF GAMANA AND TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

 The project is controlled and run by Gamana. This is an Indian project controlled by an Indian NGO. Trinity Presbyterian Church supports the project financially because it is supportive of our Christian values, including especially the value of each individual human life, and the equal dignity and worth of girls and women. Trinity Presbyterian Church receives regular reports on the progress of the project, and one church elder (David Smolin, a law professor) has personally visited the project and reviewed its work. TPC has a relationship to the project through the work of David Smolin on issues of child rights and adoption in India and elsewhere, which gave him the opportunity to make the connection to Gamana and this project.

**CURRENT SCOPE OF THE PROJECT**

 The project plans in the 2012-2013 school year to be financially responsible for the education of about 100 children, as well as hoping to prevent a substantial number of infanticides. The work of the project has been ongoing for over five years, and as the project is able to receive more funds it will be in a position to expand its successful model into new locations.

**HOW TO DONATE**

 All funds donated to Trinity Presbyterian Church, for purposes of this project, go to assist the project in India. Donations for the project can be made by writing a check to “Trinity Presbyterian Church,” with a notation for “India Project” on the check. Donations can be mailed to: Trinity Presbyterian Church, 3251 Greendale Rd., Birmingham, Alabama 35243. Please include a note indicating that the funds are being sent for the project.

 For questions or further information, please contact David Smolin: dmsmolin@gmail.com; 205-937-6812.