

Parents' last resort decision turned around with faithful giving by Southern Baptists

By Name Withheld

Correspondent

SOUTH ASIA (IMB and local reports) – The devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic had left them hungry and hopeless. Desperation took over as the mother and father prepared the last bit of food they had for their children, and then did the unthinkable. They mixed poison into the food, believing it would be better to serve their children a final meal than to see them starve to death.

“Let’s just wait a little longer,” the father said. The waiting would save the children’s lives. Just a short time later, Christ believers who partner with a Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) missionary team arrived at the home with a package of food from Southern Baptists’ Send Relief ministry. The bag contained rice, beans, wheat flour, chick peas, oil, coriander and lentils – enough food to feed a family for about seven days.

As the believers entered with the food, the starving mother and father could not stop crying and thanking them. “It’s ok! This food is really for you and your family,” the believers continued to repeat to the overwhelmed couple, before hearing the startling revelation about the parents’ intent to end their children’s suffering. “My husband told me not to give them the food right now,” the mother said. “Then you came with the food!”

IMB’s South Asia Affinity Group encompasses Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. With the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping the globe, millions in South Asia

have found themselves without work and therefore without food and life's other daily necessities. Many have been forced to leave the cities and return to their village homes.

"Praise the Lord for Southern Baptist partner churches that gave sacrificially for the distribution of packages of food with a week's worth of rations through national brothers and sisters," said Keith and Morgan Rawlings (names changed for security reasons). The Rawlings serve with IMB in South Asia. Unable to be in the country during much of 2020, they listened to and read reports of the continued work of their faithful friends.

"As these believers entered home after home, they saw people fall to their knees crying, being so thankful that someone had brought food for their families!" the Rawlings recounted. The story of the desperate parents receiving food shortly before serving poison to their beloved children especially touched the hearts and made them "so thankful to be His hands and feet during this time."

The South Asian family was not only given food. The believers faithfully shared the Gospel with the husband and wife, and both prayed to believe in Jesus. When the lockdown in their city ended, the family went to their home village to reconnect with family. Now they are back in the city and believers have contacted them to start discipleship. The Rawlings continue to pray for this family and that discipleship can start soon.

Will you also pray for this family and thank God for His provision that day? Praise God that He chose to bring glory to His name by sparing the lives of these children, feeding a family through the gifts of believers and saving a mother and father from eternal hopelessness.

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Are you and your church ready to connect with personnel in South Asia, like the Rawlings, and partner with them to reach the multitudes of lost? Write southasia@imb.org for more information and for current opportunities.

Your generous giving to Send Relief continues to make a difference as the effects of the global pandemic continue. In 2020, of 407 total COVID-19 ministry projects worldwide by Send Relief, 113 projects were in South Asia, one of the world's hardest hit areas. Your giving will continue to provide food bags like the one delivered to this desperate family.

For more information on IMB's nine affinity groups, visit <https://www.imb.org/people-and-places/>.

Editor's note: The author's name is withheld for security reasons.