

Rob and Rebecca Gaebler - serving at Gospel for Asia

SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM



But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ~ Matthew 6:33

Merry Christmas, Y'all!

Well, okay... it's a little early for that. :) But at GFA, the Christmas "season" starts in the middle of the year with development plans and Christmas gift catalog design jobs, and then doesn't wrap up until mid-January of the following year when Donor Services finishes processing all the gifts we receive. It's a lot of work, with almost every department involved in some way, but we know it is well worth the effort. Last year we helped over 200,000 families in Asia with gifts given through the catalog. It's exciting to know that whether it was an impoverished family receiving some kind of income-generating gift, or a national worker being blessed with tools he needed for ministry, all of the gifts were given in the name of Christ.

This year we are increasing our efforts to spread the word about the catalog, so that more people here in America will have the opportunity to bless more people in Asia. We've also spent much time in prayer for these efforts, because we know that just working harder by itself isn't going to produce fruit.



Stuffing party!

Both of us have had IT responsibilities related to producing and mailing thousands of Christmas catalogs. As usual, we helped with selecting the accounts from our database who should be included in the mailings, and there have been some additional tasks this year as we are communicating to more people. We also had the opportunity to help with a non-IT part of mailing catalogs. The majority of the catalogs are mailed through a vendor, but for a couple of groups we were mailing we did the stuffing in-house. Those who were able got to join the stuffing party!

We'll be sharing the catalog at our church, as we did last year. And if you didn't get a catalog in the mail already, or would like to have some more to give to family and friends, just let us know! We'll be happy to get you as many as you would like. There is also a dedicated webpage for giving Christmas gifts, which you can visit at www.gfa.org/gift.

To those who joined us in praying for and giving toward the relief effort for flood victims in Kerala – **thank you!** By God's grace and through the generosity of His people, we raised a substantial amount of resources to assist those affected by the monsoon flooding. The people of Kerala still have a long way to go in rebuilding after the devastation that took place, but thanks to your prayers and support many have received both physical and spiritual help.

Other IT Projects

Another project that has absorbed much of Rob's time was related to our Christmas campaign. He, LaMott, and Jonathan have been working with a couple of other departments to create a better follow-up series for new donors. Through the new functionality they built, we will be able to communicate more specifically to new donors relating to what they donated. The goal was to get this process in place before the Christmas season, because we typically gain many new donors as people receive the Christmas catalogs from their churches and friends.

Of Weddings and Babies...

This has been quite the year at GFA for building families: we have joyfully celebrated 4 staff weddings and 6 births! Rebecca was privileged to play the piano as part of the worship team at the latest wedding.

Another wedding we will be attending this year is that of Rob's youngest brother, who is getting married in early November. We'll be traveling to North Carolina for the wedding and will also spend some time with Rob's family.

Field focus: Bridge of Hope

Both of us were blessed to grow up in stable, godly homes. Poverty is not something we have experienced first-hand, but for thousands of families in Asia a life of poverty is all they know. This was the case for Bijay. His father Kuwar worked in the rice paddies around his village, which only provided an income that barely enabled the family to subsist. The shame of poverty caused Kuwar to turn to alcohol, but of course that only exacerbated the problems in his family – he would come home in a drunken rage, and Bijay would cower in the corner trying to escape the physical abuse.

Praise God, there was a GFA-supported Bridge of Hope (BOH) center in the area, and when staff members visited Bijay's home they responded to the family's need by making it possible for Bijay to enroll as a student. That was a huge blessing, but Bijay still struggled in his studies. The stress of the situation in his home hindered his progress in school.

The BOH staff noticed his struggle and began to visit Bijay's home on a regular basis. During these visits they prayerfully counseled Kumar about the problems his addiction was causing. Bijay prayed for his father, too. Bit by bit, things started changing – Kuwar stopped drinking, which improved their financial condition as his whole income could go toward supporting his family's needs.

That's one of the amazing things about the BOH program: not only are the children able to receive a quality education and improved lives through a nutritious meal each day and hygiene training, but their whole families are transformed through the care given by the BOH staff. Will you join us in praying for God to continue to work mightily through BOH? Visit <https://www.gfa.org/pray/bridge-of-hope/> to see specific ways you can pray.

Bijay's story is condensed from the report you can read here: <https://tinyurl.com/HopeForBijay>



Thousands of children in Asia, like Bijay, live in poverty and hopelessness



Bridge of Hope staff make a huge difference for the children and their families

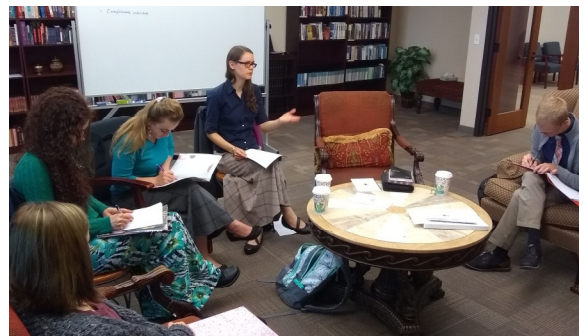


Thanks to BOH, these kids have the opportunity to hope and dream!

Discipleship Classes

We both have the privilege to be part of the team that facilitates classes for the School of Discipleship students. Rob led class a couple of times for the previous group of students, and now both of us have led class for the current group.

Facilitating class involves reading or listening to the material the students are studying, preparing a short time of instruction about the material as well as questions to stimulate discussion, and then guiding the discussion during class time. It takes both of us a substantial amount of time to prepare, including much time in prayer, but it's been valuable for our own lives to study this discipleship material, and we love to encourage the spiritual growth of the students. Currently the students are going through the GFA Core Values, and before that they were reading a book called Liturgy of the Ordinary.



With love in Christ,

Rob & Rebecca

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Praises

- **Praise** God for providing so many resources for us to send to aid in the relief work in Kerala!
- **Praise** the Lord for giving wisdom to our development team about how to share the Christmas catalog with more people and new audiences!
- **Praise** God for helping with the major projects we've had in IT over the past few weeks, and for good teamwork!
- **Praise** the Lord for coming up on three years of being married! :) We are both so grateful for the tremendous gift God has given us in each other.

Prayers

- **Pray** for all the people who will be receiving the Christmas gift catalog, that they will be excited to partner in providing life-changing gifts
- **Pray** for Bridge of Hope students and teachers, and that many families will be transformed by Christ's love
- **Pray** for us in our role facilitating School of Discipleship classes, for God's wisdom and leading as we study and share
- **Pray** for safety in upcoming travels we have planned to visit family and friends
- **Pray** for renewed vision and passion for us and for all the staff as we serve behind the scenes



Thank you for your prayers

"...be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints" (Eph. 6:18)