



# The Bangla Banner

July 2008

*Troy and Faith Bierma, missionaries with CRWM*

I (Faith) saw a beggar in the market place yesterday- or rather, she saw me. She looked like she was 100 years old, but she was probably not even 70. Her wet, rheumy eyes looked like little light found their way past her cataracts. Her toothless gums made her look silly- like an old baby. She was pawing my arm with her arthritic hands, inciting Allah's name to remind me of my duty to give alms.

She was persistent. She followed me from the fruit stand to the rice and lentil stand, to the meat stand, and to buy vegetables!

I admit it, I was annoyed. Especially when she started grabbing my arms and lunging for my money purse. I forced myself to look her in the face and into those wet eyes. "Moph Koren" I said (Forgive me). "I am not giving tips today." This fell on deaf ears and as she grew louder and bolder in her attempts, I felt myself getting more and more weary.

I eventually boarded a rickshaw and she didn't try to keep up anymore... but her image stayed with me a long time.

Because Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries in the world, and because the Islamic faith condones giving to beggars as a way for the rich to enter heaven, begging is an alternative lifestyle here. Everywhere you look in Dhaka city, there are beggars. Loitering on street corners, running up to cars stuck in traffic, sleeping under the trees that line the expressways. Children beggars, mothers with tiny infants slung on their hips, disabled and able-bodied beggars... It is often too overwhelming

to respond like I feel I should.

Though, to be honest, some beggars are easier to love than others: The clean ones, the ones who smile at you (with the aid of teeth), the beggars that don't touch you or make you feel uncomfortable for being so rich.

I sicken myself acknowledging this, because it betrays an unloving heart. A heart that says: I would rather you go away than have to deal with your needs.

Yet Christ calls me to be like him. Jesus did not come only for the healthy, rich, and privileged... he came for the least and the last. The real work to be done is in my heart- the place the Lord sees and judges. What will He find there? Compassion? Respect? Mercy? Or a selfish desire to keep His good gifts to myself and not be bothered by the crushing weight of other people's burdens?

These thoughts are hard, but they are the things we deal with every day here in Bangladesh. It is impossible to ignore, and very easy to grow weary of. Our continued prayer is that we would be so filled with the love of Christ that is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:8), that we would be able to respond in love to the least of our neighbors.

The next time I see that beggar in the marketplace, my prayer is that I will respond with a kinder word, a genuine smile, a few coins given in Jesus' name, and a prayer that the Lord will fill her eyes and heart with the same light that He has given me. After all, we all are just beggars before His throne in need of His grace.



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**Left: the proud parents on a rickshaw**

Although most of you received the email announcing the birth of our son, we wouldn't want any of you non-emailers to miss out! Yazzie Philip Bierma was born on May 18, after an unexpected C-section. Thank the Lord, there were no complications. Yazzie is a Native American name meaning 'little tree.' It is our prayer that this little tree grows into an "Oak of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of His splendor" Is. 61:3n



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## WORLD MISSIONS

### *Prayer Requests and Reports:*

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1. We continue to make progress slowly but surely with Bangla. Thanks for your prayers in this regard and for Bangla-speaking friends.
2. Please pray for more Bangla friends and people to show us how to navigate the cultural transitions.
3. Pray for the Lord to provide a principal for CCTB (the seminary) sometime in the near future. The former principal has returned home to Kolkata and the board will be looking for a qualified person.
4. Thank you kindly for all the prayers for and responses to Yazzie's birth. Faith is healing well and we are adjusting to the sleepless nights that a newborn affords.
5. Praise God with us that our co-workers, Jeff and Melissa Bos, also had a healthy baby girl one month before Yazzie was born. This is a busy time for our field, and we appreciate your continued prayers that we would balance home life and ministry well.
6. Praise God that Mom Hogan's visit was so timely (she arrived two hours before Faith was admitted into the hospital), and that the time she spent with us was so precious.

Our love and thanks for your partnership in the gospel,  
**Faith, Troy, and Yazzie Bierma**



**A  
happy  
Granny**