

# Doing MUCH with Little

by JAMES S. EAGLES

**“In that time shall the present be brought to the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the Mount Zion.” Isaiah 18:7 (NKJV)**

ABOVE:  
A typical scene  
in the slums of  
Mumbai.

BELOW:  
James Eagles  
(right) and Richard  
Krawczyk (left)  
of Intercede  
International meet  
with Jaya Thasiah,  
leader of BRPB.

*Four indigenous Christian ministries in southern India are serving the Lord with perseverance, devotion and commitment. In this and the following three stories, Intercede International President James Eagles tells of how he was inspired by seeing these ministries and their leaders in action during his recent visit to India.*

Bombay Revival Prayer Band is based in the largest slum in India—with more than two million inhabitants. In these dark, dreary and disease-ridden slums, BRPB has chosen to plant our Lord’s Gospel and His church.

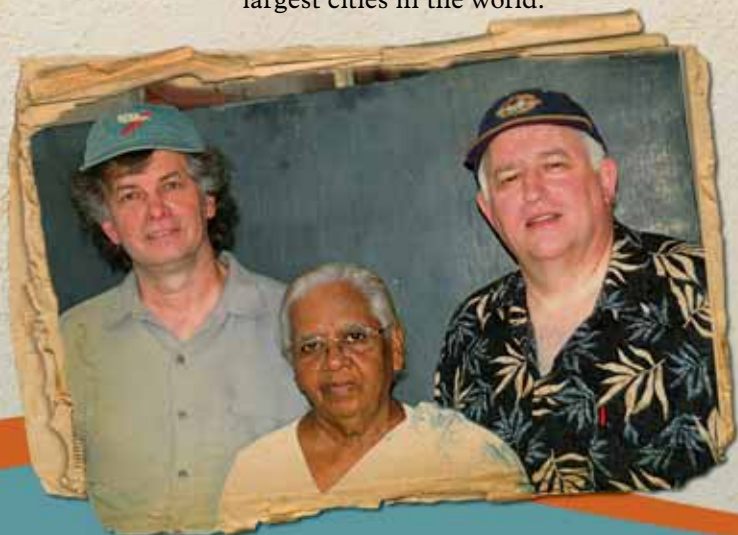
We visited the Dharavi slum—the largest slum in India—with more than two million inhabitants. The Greater Mumbai area (formerly known as Bombay) has a population of more than 18 million people—making it one of the largest cities in the world.

We had several meals in the home of BRPB’s founder and leader, Sister Jaya Thasiah. I noted that this was the same rented unit she lived in with her husband when I visited her in 1983. She and her husband had lived in this apartment unit for more than 50 years. Sadly, for her, her husband passed on to glory earlier this year.

## SURROUNDED BY POVERTY

We had a very moving experience as we walked through the slum alleyways—corridors of broken concrete, dirt and exposed pipes and open latrines bearing sewage in plain view. The alleyways, not more than three feet wide, had on either side eight-by-eight foot or smaller cement cubicle homes on each side covered with galvanized steel roofs. In these cubicles and in the open corridors with open sewage drains, filth and dirt and garbage, sit young children and baby infants—unaware of the menacing risk to life all around them.

Dharavi, with two million people, is the largest slum in the world. Poor tribal people, experiencing drought or other agricultural problems—or hoping for a better future and education for themselves and their children—are drawn to big cities like Mumbai, hoping to find work and a better life. Because they come with nothing, and India has no safety net for these numerous peoples, the slums are where they end up—or worse, in squatters camps on the side of roads and



highways: in makeshift tents, with absolutely no sanitation nor electricity. In some cases, young women are lured from the countryside, and are promised jobs in the city with training, only to end up being locked up in “sex trade dungeons,” where they are drugged and sold into forced prostitution, till it seems to be the only option for these unfortunate women.

BRPB for years has worked to bring deliverance to young women caught up in the sex trade. Mumbai is estimated to have one of the largest cartels of brothels and prostitution in the world.

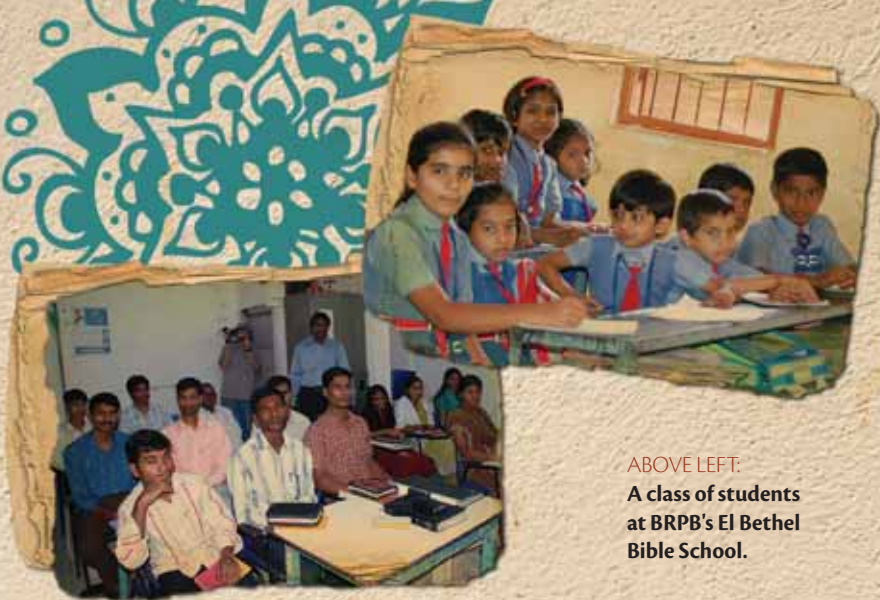
Families and individuals coming into these slums from the countryside often face dire health threats in the unsanitary city situations that they would not face in the countryside. They also are often exploited and work as simple labourers for as little as \$1 per day or even less. Some, however, manage to get their children enough training and education to get better jobs and their hope is that these children will help to pull them out of the slum-dwellers’ wretched existence. And, indeed, with some, this has happened.

It is in these slums that BRPB has chosen to plant our Lord's Gospel and His church. They also conduct their Bible School in the heart of these slums. We visited their Bible School classroom, church hall, small office and prayer room. BRPB is doing so much with so little.

BRPB’s Shelter Ark Orphanage and school have been constructed on the outskirts of Bombay in Panvel. The school currently educates about 53 students, of which about a dozen are orphans who live at the orphanage. The rest of the students come from poor families in the area.

## SMALL BUT EFFECTIVE BIBLE SCHOOL

BPB’s office is very small—about five by five feet—and the Bible school classroom holds up to 25 students in an area about 12 by 15 feet. I was very impressed with the dedication and spirituality of the Dean of the Bible school students—a young man by the name of Noel Freeman. He also had excellent English and communication skills. He introduced all 15 students to us one by one and had several share their testimonies of how they got saved and how the Lord brought them to the Bible School.



ABOVE LEFT:  
A class of students  
at BRPB's El Bethel  
Bible School.

ABOVE RIGHT:  
Students at BRPB's  
Sharon English  
School.

One of the students was 58 years old. He was going to commit suicide when a Christian worker witnessed to him and told him to get a Bible and read certain passages. He had never read the Bible before. By reading it he got saved and later he wanted to share and felt a call to ministry. He heard about the Bible School and applied and was accepted. When he finishes his year course he will seek to work as a Gospel worker in the slums of Bombay.

Many attending this Bible school come from all over north India. BRPB raises the funds to bring them and to house and feed them for a year. Upon their graduation, they return to their states and regions and start to plant churches in their locales. BRPB often will try to find support to send to these new church planters until a church is planted and becomes self-supporting. Some of these students will go on to plant new churches. Some of the students at El-Bethel Bible School are husband and wife attendees.

In addition to the Dean, other Pastors in Mumbai are invited in to teach various subjects to the students. Every year a new crop of students arrives. Full support for the one year for each student is about \$50 per month.

Students who've graduated have gone on to establish churches in such diverse states as: Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Bihar.

This ministry needs your prayers and assistance as its missionaries minister to the poorest of the poor in the Mumbai region.

*For more information and a quarterly Field Report from this ministry, contact Intercede mentioning this project code: 637BPB.*