

2) The second reason is that widows, who are so cruelly discriminated against within their culture, and are often despised by their families have heard of the love of Jesus, which is extended to all, no matter their color, caste or lowly station in life. You may, as we, have wondered how well the sisters who received the livestock in the past are doing. We would like to know if they are steadfast in their faith and if the help we gave them has made a real change in their lives. In light of this, Peter exhorts them to share their first fruits with another in need. He is preparing a list of those who received help in 2013 -2014 that we might send a brother and his wife to check with them.

**THE CALL FROM GOD’S THRONE:**

*“Blessed is he who considers the poor; The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, And he will be blessed on the earth; You will not deliver him to the will of his enemies”* (Psalm 41:1-2). As it is written, *“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world”* (James 1:27); and *“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith”* (Galatians 6:10).

**THANKSGIVING TO GOD**

May God bless you for your participation in this work. We need to buy 590 goats (118 widows X 5) at \$60.00 each. There are also 225 sisters who have asked for a cow (221) or buffalo (4) which costs \$480.00 each. If a cow costs less, the balance is handed over to the widow. I do hope your young people may get involved; if so let them present their gifts before the church that all might rejoice with them.

God willing on November 4th I will begin the 80th year of my life, thus at this point I want to thank all who have helped us since we went to Pakistan in 1967, and especially in these recent years when God has blessed this effort so immensely. My next trip overseas will begin the day after Thanksgiving. Thanks to Him my health is such that I see no time in the next 20 years for retirement! If you would like me to visit your congregation please send a note to P.O. Box 1010, Crossville, TN 38557.

In Christian love,

*Jim E. Waldron*

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# WALDRON NEWSLETTER

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**THE PLIGHT OF WIDOWS IN INDIA**

VRINDAVAN

The city of Vrindavan lies about 70 miles southwest of India’s federal capital, New Delhi, and about 30 miles northeast of the city of Agra, where the famous Tag Mahal is located in the state of Uttar Pradesh. I mention Vrindavan because it is known as the "city of widows". Sati (the burning of widows upon the death of their husbands) was outlawed in 1829, due to the influence of British missionaries. Yet, even in this the 21st century Hindus look down on widows who remarry, and

*India’s widows are considered to be cursed after their husbands die and are often shunned by other members of the community.*

they are often ostracized by their own children and other relatives.

Generally when a woman marries she becomes a member of her husband’s family, but if the spouse dies she may be blamed by the in-laws for her husband’s death. Property that ought to belong to her is taken away. Many more flee their homes voluntarily fearing they'll be abused, if they stay, by the denial of daily food or being raped by someone in the household. Thus thousands of them flock to the asylums, called ashrams in Vrindavan and other large cities. In these places they sleep crowded in the rooms of the institution, where they are provided with the daily rations of a cup of rice and 7 cents for other needs. It is estimated that as many as twenty thousand widows can be found in Vrindavan at any time where they exist on the cup of rice and handouts on the streets.

VRINDAVAN, India, by Arwa Damon (CNN): *"Ostracized by society, thousands of India's widows flock to the holy city of Vrindavan waiting to die. They are found on side streets, hunched over with walking canes, their heads shaved and*

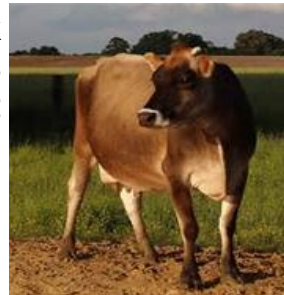
*their pain etched by hundreds of deep wrinkles in their faces. These Hindu widows, the poorest of the poor, are shunned from society when their husbands die, not for religious reasons, but because of tradition -- and because they're seen as a financial drain on their families. They cannot remarry. They must not wear jewelry. They are forced to shave their heads and typically wear white. Even their shadows are considered bad luck. There are an estimated 40 million widows in India, the least fortunate of them shunned and stripped of the life they lived when they were married. Thousands are believed to live on the streets of Vrindavan, a city of about 55,000 in northern India."*

Note by Waldron: I have taken the space above to give a report of the excruciating poverty of widows in India. As noted there are millions like them all over that country, who are often thrown out of their homes to abject poverty by their own children and family members. Many are reduced to a life of begging or prostitution in order to exist.

They are shunned by many and loved by few; but I am thankful to say that many are responding to the story of love of our Lord Jesus. When they obey the gospel we let them wait two years before we help for two reasons; 1) If we helped them immediately others would come for the aid instead of salvation; 2) The Indian constitution has an amendment that gives a right to an individual to change their religion, but it frowns on enticements for one to change. Thus it is expected that those who obey will give proof of their sincerity as a Christian by zealous participation in attendance and other activities of the church.

### **REPORT BY PETER WILSON ON WIDOWS' REQUIREMENTS FOR 2015**

In the fall of 2014, we provided a milk cow or goats for 228 indigent sisters and their 163 fatherless children. That livestock was delivered to them in the months of October through December. This year we set September 30 as the



closing date for applications. By that date 379 widows and abandoned sisters had asked for help, and were approved. This does not include requests for a cow or goats by those who were not approved because their applications were not complete. They may apply in 2016.

Here is the breakdown of the requests by the 379: 221 want a cow, 4 want a milking buffalo, 118 want goats, 15 want funds to open a "petty" shop, 2 want sewing machines, 14 want to open a cloth shop, 3 want to set up a shop to sell rice, 1 wants to sell vegetables and another wants to sell sandals.

As these requests indicate, most widows live in rural areas and are able to develop themselves in the agro-business of selling milk or growing goats for meat. Speaking of selling meat, about 60% of India's Hindu population, which is about one billion will eat meat; that is pork, fish, chicken, duck or goat; not beef. Those asking for capital to open a shop live in cities.

The breakdown on the costs, a cow that is with calf or pregnant costs, \$480.00; goats costs \$60.00 each and each widow gets five pregnant goats for herself and one for each child under 19. The five will cost \$300.00. Peter suggested last year that it was not necessary to buy a male goat as they mingle with many other goats as they feed along the road or in a field. The buffalos are not like our buffalos (bison), but are what we call water buffalo. The cost for one of them with a calf is about the same as that of a cow and calf. For those requesting a sewing machine and items to sell we will give them \$300.00; we expect that a bill of sale will be presented.

Women such as our sister Sara Swathi, who has four children, shown here, has by obeying the gospel risen from being a despised widow to being on a higher plain in Christ; and with her goats she has gone from being a common coolie (field laborer) to being an entrepreneur in agro-business.



### **REJOICING WITH YOU IN THIS WORK OF FAITH AND LABOR OF LOVE**

The Holy Spirit stated by Paul,

*"For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!'"* (Romans 10:13-15).

The points made by the Spirit in these three verses hold the clue as to why so many widows are responding to the gospel. My judgment, based on that passage, is that there are two reasons for the increased number of widows and abandoned women who are obeying the gospel. 1) One is the great number of individuals young and old, who have obeyed the gospel in the campaigns for Christ conducted over the last few years, which means more widows have heard the gospel with its message of hope and true friends.

The brothers conducting those intense efforts are faithful native preachers trained in the Bible Schools that many of you have supported over the years. Don Iverson and I have been conduits through whom your gifts of love are being sent to aid sound native gospel preachers to conduct Bible Schools.

Besides the large numbers of Indian brothers who have already been trained there are presently 99 evening Bible Schools being conducted in three states with 749 brothers enrolled three evenings a week. This has come about because you have supported this work through the grace of God and through your excellent response to fulfill the need to obey the command that says,

*"The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also"* (2 Timothy 2:2).