

THE BRICK FACTORY

Pakistan



International Missions Director, Paul Hudson, recently went to Pakistan and was able to meet the children who attended the party and still work in the brick factory:

“In August 2017 I had the privilege of being with the children that experienced the joy of Christmas in 2016, seeing the brick factory in which they work and having a glimpse into what it is like to live there. To actually visit a ‘brick factory’ in Pakistan is a sobering experience. In the UK we are familiar with the term ‘loan shark’ and we understand the debilitating lifestyle of debt that people get into. It’s the same in Pakistan, but the situation there is even more crippling because of the severe lack of any kind of benefits and the means to meet the kind of human need that we find as a right and the norm.

The worst affected are the children. They live a miserable existence of bonded labour that is a reminder to the Old Testament times of the Egyptian Hebrews held under the power of Pharaoh. Last year the Christmas appeal helped to give the children a happier Christmas than they had received the previous years as your giving was able to fund two Christmas parties which saw all the children receive gifts and hear the Christmas message that Jesus was born for them and he loves them.

I met a Grandmother who had to flee her community because her husband had broken the law. They took out a £200 loan from the brick factory owner to hire the services of a lawyer. As with all the other situations they moved into the factory, they were given a below basic accommodation and food, but all these bills were added to the loan with its extortionate rates of interest. That was many years ago. It results in being trapped and not just for their lifetime. I met the daughter who, along with her mother, works 12 hours a day making bricks to pay the loan of her father.

Then I met the grandson, a 6-year-old boy again working 12 hours a day for the decision his grandfather took all those years ago. The day starts at 3am and they work until the sun rises and becomes too hot during the mid-day hours and then they return late afternoon to work into the evening. These are children, they should be in school, but they are making bricks all day, every day. We announced we had brought gifts and the children burst into tears and became embarrassed because these were tears of joy. The gifts were only a packet of crisps and a carton of juice. But they held on to them for hours later not wanting to see them disappear.”

