

An Alternate Universe - The Brickyard Children

by Chris Chaney

The Shocking Truth

At 6 in the morning Fraz wakens. Surrounded by his "brothers and sisters", he rubs his eyes and realizes another day has dawned. He probably would have slept longer, but the hunger woke him as much as the sunrise. They are all in the open field next to the brick factory where they work. The lucky ones have a mat and a blanket strung over them to keep the dew off at night. He slept in his clothes--the only thing he owns--1 pair of pants and a dirty shirt, no underwear, no shoes, no socks. Breakfast is not awaiting him. His first meal won't come until midday--a bowl of rice with a little something on it to color it. But work begins at 9 a.m. on an empty stomach. Hauling and stacking freshly made bricks and doing whatever else they force him to do. At 5 p.m. work ends for the day. He walks outside the fortress-like brick factory--complete with angry men watching from the walls like prison guards at a gulag. He walks a few hundred feet and plops down in the dust and the dirt with his "brothers and sisters".

This is where he lives, if you can call it that. This is where he "works", if you can call it that.

Here is Fraz. Fraz is 9.



Fraz is a child slave! They all are!

**Fraz and his "brothers and sisters" (around 50 children) are held captive against their will
They are forced to work 6 days a week without wages, accommodations, or anything civilized
They are the enslaved children of a cruel and broken society--alive only to be exploited
Their society has turned its back on the plight of these little ones
They will never be allowed to leave!**

The Dynamic Duo

"M" and "M" are a brother and sister team that come from a solid Christian family. They have jobs and studies that pull on them like anyone else. But these 2 are different. They love Jesus. They could not allow the suffering going on around them to go unmet. Despite their own poverty and suffering, they have conducted a children's outreach for over 5 years. In fact, they have poured their lives into this ministry. They have 2 main groups of children. The more fortunate orphans live around the city in which they have their family home. It is a Christian village. It is extremely poor. It is persecuted. So everyone suffers. Seven days a week M and M feed the children, teach them to read and write, and disciple them to love the Lord. All "their" kids have all given their hearts to Jesus.





The less fortunate children are the brickyard children. Fraz is one of them. Some 2 years back M and M secured permission (yes, that is the right word, permission) from the local government and police to begin feeding the children on Sundays and teaching them to read and write. It just so happens that the Bible is the book they use! All too have accepted Jesus as their Lord and savior. Fraz loves Jesus too!

On better weeks, M and M come on a weekday and spend extra time with the children at the factory during the evening. Since it is a long journey for M and M, they cannot make many extra trips. Transportation costs too much, even in a little mechanical rickshaw or a motorbike.

The Christmas Season

Fraz and his companions have been told Christmas is a special time of year, that Christians exchange gifts and hold festive gatherings and sit down for special meals. M and M are asking each of us to consider helping just a little so that Fraz and the other children can experience a Christmas blessing too. And let's not forget the orphans M and M serve in the village. They are hoping for a blessing too.

The brickyard overlords and local authorities don't object to Christians bringing in a little blessing during Christmas. M and M will take care of the rest. They are fearless and undaunted. They are committed. They are ready. You can shine a little light into the life of Fraz and his companions given in the name of Jesus--a little gift, a better meal than the usual. And they will thank God for you.

Please remember to pray for M and M. Their ministry is difficult. It is dangerous. Many in their country are hostile to any Christian outreach of any kind, to anyone--even child slaves. So pray for their safety, their lives, their ministry. And pray for the children. Pray that the practice of slavery would end. Pray that this outreach will continue. And pray for Fraz. Pray that he will be set free. Pray that he will serve God all the days of his life. Pray that he lives.

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me." Matthew 25:40