



MISSIONARY PROFILE

Graham & Gladys Staines – Missionaries to Orissa

Dr Graham Stuart Staines was an Australian Christian missionary, who was born in 1941 at Palmwoods, Queensland, Australia. He visited India in 1965 for the first time and joined the Evangelical Missionary Society of Mayurbhanj, working in this remote tribal area, with a long history of missionary activity.

Graham married Gladys and they had three children, a daughter (Esther) and two sons (Philip and Timothy). Staines took over the management of the Mission at Baripada in 1983. He also played a role in the establishment of the Mayurbhanj Leprosy Home as a registered society in 1982. Graham was fluent in Oriya and the local Santhali dialect. He began his outreach into villages with the message of cross, lifting up Jesus among the tribal people of that area. He assisted in translating a part of the Bible into the Ho language, including proofreading the entire New Testament manuscript.

When the couple was working in Orissa, there was fire in Baripada leaving at least 100 dead and scores horribly burnt. The local hospital failed to cope and the Staines couple – Gladys, a trained nurse, spent nights nursing the injured. The couple took part in Pulse Polio immunization drive. Graham distributed the leaflets while Gladys drove the jeep in Baripada to create awareness.

Graham was never into controversies. All he did was – spreading the message of the Lord. Orissa is a devout Hindu state but Graham as a Christian preacher worked among the people who suffered from malnutrition and illiteracy. Graham used to visit jungle camps to instruct tribalson a range of subjects from public health to the Bible. On the night of January 22, 1999, Graham had attended a jungle camp in Manoharpur, which is a tribal area. He was on his way with his sons, who had come back on holiday from their school in Ooty. They broke the journey for the camp to sleep in the vehicle due to severe cold. His wife had stayed back in Bripada. A murderous crowd, who were not happy with Graham as around 22 families had converted to Christianity, set fire to the vehicle in which the father and the two sons were sleeping. The three of them were burnt alive. The missionary had worked in India for more than 30 years. More than 10,000 people attended his funeral.



Gladys Staines, the widow of the slain missionary, said that she had forgiven the killers and had no bitterness for them. She sang the song ***“Because He lives”*** at the funeral of her husband and two sons.

In her affidavit before the Commission on the death of her husband and two sons, Gladys Staines stated: ***“The Lord God is always with me to guide me and help me to try to accomplish the work of Graham, but I sometimes wonder why Graham was killed and also what made his assassins to behave in such a brutal manner on the night of 22nd/23rd January 1999. It is far from my mind to punish the persons who were responsible for the death of my husband Graham and my two children. But it is my desire and hope that they would repent and would be reformed.”***

"I have forgiven the killers and have no bitterness because forgiveness brings healing and our land needs healing from hatred and violence. Forgiveness and the consequences of the crime should not mixed up," said Ms Staines. She also said, **" God has forgiven me and expects His followers to do the same. The Bible says:"To whomsoever you forgive their sins will be forgiven. Therefore, in the light of eternity we all need forgiveness of our sins to enter heaven."**

Ms Staines and her daughter stayed back in India till 2004 to finish the work that God had called them to do inspite of all that she was going through. ***Her forgiving the assassins sent waves across the world and Christ had been proclaimed on the front pages of the newspapers in India. In the face of persecution, many have come to Jesus from families that have rejected the gospel for years.***