

INDIAN GOV'T OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZES QUICKLY-GROWING ORTHODOX MISSION, ASKS ITS HELP TO SUPPORT STRUGGLING FAMILIES



Last February, a missionary team of clergy and monastics from America, Canada, and Russia traveled to India to catechize about 1,000 Protestant pastors at their request. Hundreds of people were baptized during the mission trip, led by Fr. Athanasius Kone of the Holy Theotokos of Iveron Russian Orthodox Church in Honolulu.

Since then, the Mission has been expanding rapidly both in terms of activities and of the number of people becoming interested in holy Orthodoxy.

In April of this year, a literacy project was launched in 12 villages, inspired by missionaries of the Russian Empire. The ability to read increases the people's

ability to find work and understand the tenets of the Orthodox faith. The project spread goodwill and helped many more people come to Orthodoxy, Fr. Athanasius reports on his site Orthodox River.



Thanks to the goodwill built by the literacy projects, the Orthodox Mission has been officially recognized by the Indian government, which is “a miracle in itself,” Fr. Athanasius writes, as the current government is strongly Hindu and officially limits the activities of many other religions and churches.

And last week, the local government of the southeastern state of Andhra Pradesh officially appealed to Fr. Athanasius, as the head of the Orthodox Mission, to provide more resources during this time of crisis. People are dying from lack of food and medicine and the COVID outbreak in India, Fr. Athanasius writes.

In particular, the government asked the Mission to help provide direct food support for 1,000 people at \$75 a month per family. “Without our assistance, these families will be in dire straits from a basic lack of food and medicine,” writes Fr. Athanasius.

The Mission has several other needs as well, including the publication of the first Russian Orthodox calendar with a selection of the lives of the saints, an important step in establishing the Orthodox faith in the region. The translation and publication of the calendar will cost \$2,000.

So far, the Mission has translated materials for Orthodox catechism, and the services of Baptism and Typika. There are many more books that need to be translated when resources allow.



The Mission also spends \$1,000 a month to run the literacy program, and it needs \$250 a month for miscellaneous expenses, such as distribution of food, fuel, and the administration of the Mission.

Through the generosity of the Holy Theotokos of Iveron parish, the Mission has provided several bundles of food during the COVID crisis, but the parish is small and cannot singlehandedly sustain the entire Mission.

To make a much-needed donation to the growing Mission in India using a credit card, visit www.orthodoxhawaii.org/donate and indicate that the donation is for the India Mission.

Checks can be mailed to:

Holy Theotokos of Iveron Russian Orthodox Church
201 N. Kainalu Drive
Kailua (Honolulu), Hawaii 96734

