

# Little India, eh?

“I want to get out of this addiction. I have two young kids and a wife, and I need help.”

The man looked at John in desperation. His wife had seen John’s ad in the Punjabi-language newspaper, an offer of hope and help to those with addictions, and had arranged for them to meet John.

John had come to Christ out of a drug addiction many years ago. Now he and his wife serve with InterAct in an evangelism and discipling ministry with Punjabi Sikhs in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

After counseling with the couple, John handed them a Punjabi Gospel of John and gave directions to a local detox center. He later visited them in their home and gave them a DVD about addictions and how Jesus can rescue them from their hopelessness.



**Sikhs celebrate Vaisakhi, the birth of Sikhism, begun 300 years ago by Guru Gobind Singh Ji.**

Greater Vancouver’s growing population of Punjabis has earned it the nickname “Little India.”

One Sikh doctor posted online: “It will not be an exaggeration to state that the Sikhs in Canada are the most important center for the Sikhs outside the Indian subcontinent.

Vancouver, B.C., is now the leading center of the Sikhs and Punjabis in North America.”

In Surrey alone, a Vancouver suburb and the second largest city in B.C., Sikhs comprise 30 percent of the population. Over 130,000 people in Surrey identify their heart language as Punjabi. A Punjabi market includes hundreds of stores with street signs in both English and Punjabi.

Some Canadians may view their turbaned neighbors with fear or resentment, but the Sikh community is well established. The many Punjabi neighborhoods, markets and temples (*gurdwaras*) enable Sikhs from India to thrive without becoming westernized.



**Vancouver-area Sikhs worship at beautiful gurdwaras like this.**

Surrey boasts nine larger gurdwaras and several smaller ones which provide a place for worship. A large “Khalsa” school teaches children the Sikh religion, as well as Punjabi culture and traditions, and a second Khalsa school is currently under construction.



**The entire Sikh holy book is read aloud in the gurdwara every weekend.**

But the established look of the Sikh community often hides the deep spiritual hunger in people's hearts.

John is known in the Punjabi community as someone who cares for the Sikhs. His relationships with men fighting addictions has developed into a weekly meeting which includes a meal, prayer, studying God's Word and learning to care for one another. He acts as a liaison between a Punjabi Christian church and the evangelical church where they meet. John works hand in hand with the pastor, a Sikh-background believer; both desire more workers to help them.

Another InterAct couple has spent many years forging relationships with Sikhs. They have made inroads into the community that result in personal counseling sessions, as well as Sikh-background believers standing firm in their new faith, in spite of persecution from their extended families and community.

This couple is committed to reaching Sikhs, but they need help to impact this large community. "We are called to the Sikhs. We want to be known as people who love Jesus and love the Sikhs. We're ready to invest the rest of our lives

in this, but we need other people to come here and build relationships with other Sikhs."

Meanwhile, John has had about 30 responses to his newspaper ad. He and the local Punjabi-speaking Christian pastor are praying for harvesters – people who will invest their lives impacting Sikhs in Canada.

"We have second-generation Punjabi Canadians who are key people to reach," says John. "They speak English well. We need to mobilize churches to reach out to the Sikhs around us. We need people with passion to reach Punjabi youth. We also need others to go to places where there is no established work right now, like Vancouver Island or Williams Lake or ...."

Maybe you are one of those?

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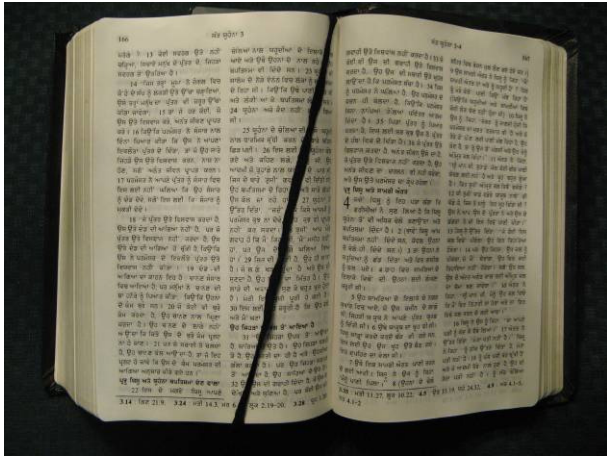
## **Punjabi-Language Study Bible Project**

Some 158,750 people living in British Columbia are most likely to speak Punjabi as their first language in their home. Thousands more are Sikhs by religion, indicating a significant number of second generation Indo-Canadians.

InterAct Ministries has placed servants in this population. Now we have opportunity to make the Bible available to people whose religion and culture hide them from most gospel witness.

In 2001, InterAct secured 1,200 Common Language Punjabi Bibles for distribution to Punjabi speakers. That supply is almost gone. A new Punjabi-language Study Bible will correct the inaccuracies of the Common Language version as well as provide study

helps for heightened understanding and application of the Scripture.



InterAct is partnering with Punjabi Christians in India who will be producing this Study Bible, which will translate directly from the original biblical languages to Punjabi. They are currently in the process of training translators and securing publishers for the New Testament.

**This year, they need \$3,117 to train three translators for three months.**

You can help. Come alongside our team in this first step – preparing translators for a Punjabi Study Bible – and be a part of His harvest!

To contribute to this project online, choose “Punjabi Study Bible” as your designation at our Web site ([www.interactministries.org](http://www.interactministries.org)).