

WHERE HE LEADS...

FOREIGN MISSION OF THE APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

The Communion of Saints

BY GABBY SALGUERO

As the six of us team members sat at the very front of the church in the village of Kapileswarapuram, India, for the prayer service, I had no idea what the Lord was about to do in my heart. It was our third night in this village, and we as a team had grown very fond of the children and the workers within the ALC Home, for whom we were holding this prayer service. The pastors had been teaching at the seminar all day, and we women had been working at the clinics. After eating supper we walked across the courtyard to the church.

We knew that the service would be beautiful, but the Lord really blew all of us away that night. The verse in Ephesians (3:20) about God blessing us abundantly more than we could ask or even think was tangible that night. Now prayer in India, just like in America, is a very beautiful and powerful thing. As we looked at the congregation before us, the women were sitting on the church floor on the left and the men were sitting separately on the right – it was a sight to see! At the front of the church were those beautiful kids we had fallen in love with. At last the service started and a child came before each of us, kneeling, eyes closed and with their little hands placed together in the humble position Jesus taught us. My heart began racing as together we cried out to the King of kings. As the women, men, and children came before us over and over to receive prayer, the communion of saints became sweeter and sweeter to me. I felt so unworthy to lay my right hand over their head in prayer, but simultaneously I felt beyond blessed that God had given me this opportunity. Tears began streaming down my cheeks as I continued in prayer; tears of joy filled my heart.

During my time in India these moments of communion were countless amongst my team members and me, moments when fellow believers came together in thanksgiving for the gift of faith, and moments where we carried one another's



burdens to the God of heaven. There wasn't a schism within the body; the members cared one for another. And when one of our brothers and sisters suffered, we suffered with them. When one member was honored we all rejoiced! (1 Corinthians 12:25-26) I can only hope to someday return to that very special village in India, in between miles and miles of rice fields, where the presence of God filled my heart and the hearts of many others. But for now I will hold those sweet memories close to my heart as long as I can.

From the Foreign Mission Administrator Desk

The Foreign Mission of the ALCA
John Ruotsala, Administrator
63 Poor Farm Road
New Ipswich, NH 03071
Email: foreignmission@comcast.net
Phone: 603-878-9878
Website: www.themissionsite.com



The word persecuted or persecution often leads us to think about the type of persecution that perhaps you can read about in the Fox's Book of Martyrs. Persecution exists in so many different forms in probably every country.

Often times on mission trips around the world, we are asked to pray for people. It is such an honor to pray for someone in Jesus' name, since we know that Jesus is alive and is our intercessor before the Father with all of these prayers. During a particularly busy time in India, while we were conducting pastors' seminars and medical clinics, I was riding with our host pastor on a motorbike. As we passed by a particular place of business, the pastor suddenly slowed down and told me that we should go pray for the lady in that store. He had noticed her standing there alone and felt that we should stop and pray.

As we approached the store, I was told very briefly of her circumstances. This lady confesses Jesus Christ as her Lord, but has a very strict, unbelieving husband, who will not allow his wife to worship in any way. He will not allow her to own a Bible, to go to church, or even to pray if he catches her doing so. Can you imagine a life such as this?

It was an honor to pray for her that day. It felt so special to be in her presence and to be able to share this stolen moment with her. After leaving, the pastor told me that the lady will most likely be beaten by her husband that night, because some neighbor will tell him that we came and prayed with her. The lady said, *"The beatings are worth it, in order to be prayed for in Jesus name!"* What faith, what courage, what strength in the Lord!

Lord, be with this woman, and the millions of others suffering persecution in this world today. We know that YOU know this woman's pain. We know You have come and paid the price for her and all the rest of the persecuted church! Lord, we also ask that the heart of this woman's husband would be touched and broken, so that he could stop rejecting the grace that is available for him! Lord, we thank you for being so patient and long-suffering. We know that in your wisdom and providence, You are allowing the world to continue on, despite all the sin and corruption, so that the last of the lost ones can be found. Lord, allow us in some small way to share Your love with the unbelievers this day.

The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. Matthew 9: 37-38



LOVING Hospitality

BY BRUCE SARKELA

On our recent mission trip to India, we met three wonderful Christian young women in the village of Injaram where Pastor MP lives with his wife and family. They were such a joy to be in fellowship with, along with all who gathered for services. In the picture from left to right their names are Nissy, Blessing, and Annie, who is Pastor MP's daughter. Nissy and Blessing came to hear the Word of God with their families at the convention services which included 500-600 Christians and Hindus. Five new Christians were baptized at these services by Pastor John Ruotsala. Thirty lepers came to hear the Word and we laid our hands on each one in prayer; they were so thankful for this.

Nissy, Blessing, and Annie, along with the others, served us with warm hospitality, so willingly attending our needs. They carried the backpacks for Pastor John Ruotsala, Pastor Andy

Whitten, and myself as we walked to and from Pastor MP's house to where the services were held in a nearby large tent.

Our mission team, including sisters Leona Matson, Gabby Salguero, and Tina Weiss, stayed at Pastor MP's house for two days of services, where we were graciously received. When we sat at the table for meals, these three young women served our food with joy, which was evident on their faces. They stood nearby to quickly respond to anything they could possibly do for us. The food was prepared by Pastor MP's wife and other women in the kitchen. All this was done in true Christian love.

Nissy, Blessing, and Annie explained to us the persecution they received at school and in the village

because of their Christian faith. We encouraged them to continue in faith, for great is their reward in heaven. This is a culture and society where almost all people are of the Hindu religion, and worship millions of false gods.

We experienced this same love and hospitality in all the areas we visited in India. The Gospel of the Good News of Jesus Christ was graciously received in the churches and street services, with large numbers of believers and many Hindus attending. Please pray that many more would hear and believe the Gospel and receive the gift of faith and the joy and peace of sins forgiven. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ came to bring salvation and give eternal and abundant life to all nations. kindreds, and tongues.



A WILLING SERVANT

BY TINA WEISS



Speaking Telugu isn't easy. This is the first trip I've been on where I wasn't able to communicate with the locals without translation. At first, this frustrated me. I asked the Lord, "How can I proclaim your Gospel without talking?" And as always, He was faithful to answer.

While we were in Rajahmundry, staying at a native doctor's home, we rented a vehicle to transport us to each ministry site. Every morning, one of the doctor's friends and trusted Christian brother, would wait for us on the stairwell leading down to the garage where the van was parked. He would silently watch and ensure that each of us was accounted for.

As one of the nurses on the trip, I had the blessing of serving the lost through medical aid. At the clinics we would take patients' blood pressure and medicate them as needed. At one clinic where I was given blood pressure duty to an almost overwhelming mass of Hindus, this same Christian brother jumped in, wrapping and unwrapping the blood pressure cuff on each person appropriately, saving me time and allowing me to help a larger amount of people. I didn't have to ask him. He had no medical training, but saw a small task he could perform and took advantage of the opportunity. On another occasion, he watched a cashier ring up some items my team had purchased, adding the total in his head and supervising the change given back. He consistently guarded over us as we walked through the streets of India, guiding us along by safe routes. He

was quick to bring us bottles of water, open doors for us, and be a trusted presence.

Throughout it all, he didn't speak one word to me. He never asked for recognition. Many times he was easy to miss. Yet, I felt the love of Christ in his actions. I watched him preach the Gospel in what he did. In my frustration, the Lord showed me this servant. I am inspired by his unwarranted, unconditional love. While words have their place and are necessary for a heart to believe, there is a great influence in living out one's faith. Christ tells us in John 13:35: *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* Because of this man, I am encouraged



to live this out daily. What a blessing to behold such a servant and to know that we, too, can be an impact!

SERVING false Gods

BY LEONA MATSON

The largest house in the village of Kapileswarapuram is the landlord's house. None of the landlord's family live in the village any longer; they've all moved to the city. The house is still maintained, however. It is kept cleaned and polished just in case someone decides to return. Every morning before six, for example, fresh flowers are placed near the photos and statues of the many Hindu gods depicted in the house. It's easy to see that the landlord's family is both rich and devoted to Hinduism.

The family is not just moderately rich, they are very well off. They actually own a substantial amount of land in the area as well as the bottling company that distributes Coca-Cola in India. The money from their substantial holdings allows them to keep their large house in the village, as well as maintain homes elsewhere. However,



the money they use to upkeep the house is small in comparison to the money they use to propagate Hinduism in the area. As devoted Hindus, they are happy to spend money to spread their religion. Much of their money, for example, supports the Hindu theological college, which is just down the street from the house. At the college, young boys can study to be Hindu priests. Attached to the college, is a school where young girls can study to become storytellers of the Hindu god stories.

THE Leper

BY JOHN RUOTSALA



While in India this year, one of the things we participated in were three days of special services. On the first evening, I was required to give a sermon. I began to pray and search for a text, but was having a really hard time finding one. Finally, not long before the service was to start, it seemed like God laid this text upon my heart: *When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.* (Matthew 8:1-4)

About ten minutes after I began thinking about this text, our host pastor came and told me that there will be people with leprosy coming to the services in the next day or two. I

thought, "Wow! It is strange then that God would give me this text at this time." The thought then came to me that perhaps God wants to teach us from His Holy Word about the lepers before they come to the service.

When the message was over, around 50 people stood up in repentance, wanting to be assured of their salvation. All three of us visiting pastors wove our way through the crowd of people to personally lay hands upon and bless each of the people standing. Many people were openly weeping over their sins and most had tears rolling down their cheeks. Each person was assured that because of what Jesus had done on the cross, their sins were forgiven in the powerful and precious name and blood of Jesus. They were encouraged to believe this by faith for the saving of their souls.

As I got to the back of the throng of people and approached a certain man, he looked up at me through his tears, with his deformed hands in a prayer position, and said in broken English,

"I am a leper, sir!" I had thought that the lepers weren't coming until later, but this man came early to the services. Jesus cared so much for the man in our text, and he cared just as much for this leper in India that night, who had come to hear the message of His love for him. Oh what total joy it was to be able to lay hands on this man who is rarely, if ever, physically touched and assure him that Jesus died for him, that Jesus shed His blood for him, and that by the power of that blood and in the precious name of Jesus, all his sins are forgiven!

As I was laying hands upon and holding that man, I thought, "There is nowhere in the world I would rather be and there is nothing I would rather be doing than to be here telling this man that Jesus died for him and that he can believe this by faith." I shall never forget that evening, and I pray that God would give each of us times such as this to see God working in the hearts of man! God is good.

Amen!



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Visiting with girls at Hindu school.

I've never visited the boys, but I first visited the girls at the college four years ago and have been able to visit them most years since then. I'm always glad when I get a chance to visit and talk with them. It is wonderful to listen to their singing and watch them tell their stories. They are so talented! Even though they tell/sing the story in Telugu, the essence of the story still comes through. What a shame, though, that their God-given talents are being used to praise false gods. These girls have been on my heart ever since I met them. Since they study for five years, many of the girls have been there every year that I've visited. Unfortunately, the language barrier and the cultural situation kept me from sharing deeply, but they know that I am a Christian and that I love to visit. I am also able to pray for them silently as I visit! This year they asked for my contact information. I was excited and more than happy to give them phone numbers and email addresses. I hope and pray that they will contact me and give me a chance to share more about the one true God who loves them!

My visits to these girls always make me think... Where would I be if I had been born into a Hindu family? Would I be one of these girls: full of faith, devotion, and earnestly trying to serve gods which don't exist? Would I be like one of the many other Hindus

in Kapileswarapuram: working day by day just to get by, drawing lucky designs outside my home each morning in hopes that the god of luck and money would bless me? Would I be like the landlord: using my finances to support the spread of my religion throughout my town and country? Statistically, I probably would be one of these people, if I had been born in India...especially if no one came to tell me of the Truth.

There are many people in Kapileswarapuram and throughout

India who don't know the Truth. Who will tell them? There are people in our hometowns who don't know the Truth. Who will show them? There are people all over the world who don't know the Truth. Who will love them? God has called His church to spread the Good News to the world. How and where is He calling you?

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. (Isaiah 6:8)





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Editor:

Kris Matson
14009 NE 239th Street
Battle Ground, WA 98604
Tel: 360-666-0154
krismatson2@gmail.com

Co-editor:

Alvar Helmes
1717 SW 25th Avenue
Battle Ground, WA 98604
Tel: 360-687-7088
ironbelt@integrity.com

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The Greatest of These is Charity

BY PASTOR ANDY WHITTEN

When asked to write a short blog-style article, based around a photo or two, my mind raced as to how to limit this incredible mission trip to India to one picture or 500 words. How was I to write about the things we saw and experienced, the time we shared as a team, as well as all of the “be still and know I am God” moments we had individually. If only I could implant in any reader the wonder and thankfulness and awestruck feelings I’ve been blessed with from this trip, then perhaps just one picture could suffice.

This not being possible, and after reviewing all my pictures and short videos countless times, I felt drawn to share this one picture from our last morning in India. The thought was to take a short walk down

to the Bay of Bengal, and look down the coast to see a 50% replica of the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro. This replica is visible on a clear day, but you can see by the picture that it was far from a clear day. But we walked anyway, enjoying the fellowship with Annie, the daughter of our host, Pastor MP, and two of her cousins. As we got to the end of the road, we looked down the coastline and joked about how easy it was to see the statue. (We could literally barely even see to the water, the fog was so thick!) A flood of thoughts overcame me in that moment, as I thought of all the incredible events of the previous two weeks, and the scripture from 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 came to mind:

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

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13519 NE 181st Circle
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continued from page 7 – The Greatest of these is Charity.

The whole reason each member of the team had put aside life at home, left friends and family and the comforts thereof, to fly over 6000 miles away and live with strangers for over two weeks, was LOVE (translated as “charity” in the KJV). We don’t see everything we will eventually see while we dwell in this fallen world. We can’t trust in our vision, but only in our hope, even as we pray for and wait for the day our faith will be sight! We don’t perceive clearly the things of this world, or even the wiles of the enemy, but we know that our Savior is there, perhaps just beyond our eyesight...too far into the fog to grasp with our senses, but “blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed!”

We believe and we trust, as God grants grace to do so, because of the promises He has given, and because of the victory of the resurrection! We believe because we are loved...

so loved that God’s love moves in and through us, pouring out of us and into this love-starved world. Brothers and sisters in Christ, be comforted that though we see now as through a foggy window, God is with us, working all things for good for those who love Him. And we give thanks to God for His Son, who first loved us!

Please remember to support the Foreign Mission in your prayers and also financially, if you’re able and led to do so. It’s exciting and amazing how God is working around this world, and we are truly blessed to be part of His work, teaching and preaching



about Christ, His crucifixion, and His resurrection. and who is calling for all to repent and believe their sins forgiven in Jesus’ name and precious blood!

I can’t wait to go back to India, God willing. Pray that perhaps you’ll be with us on the next trip.