

India Mission Team Notes

Monday, January 24

A little summary of the Sunrise India Mission team's day:

6:30 pm - Arrived by overnight Train in Salem

- we were met by Pastor Kirubakaran and some FPTL staff
- took a Travelor (12 passenger bus) to Namakkal (1.5 million people)

8:00 am – Arrived Nala Hotel in Namakkal to eat a south Indian breakfast.

9:00 am – Left to find CARE – Women and Children's health center (sponsored by UMC Center for the Church and Global Aids

- With Pastor K and local "guide"
- Found a government hospital center - asked directions
- Stopped half dozen people on the road for additional directions
- Ended up at Roman Catholic St. Xavier Rural Tuberculosis and Aids hospital - sponsored by Fransiscan Missionaries of Mary Ooty Province and a local Catholic church.
- Visited hospital center and prayed with the sisters
- (Never did find CARE)

10:45 am – Left for the Koli Mali Hills

- 70 hairpin turns to the top
- Heard the stories of Pastor K's calling to minister in Kolli Hills
- told about the highest prevalence of AIDS in the state of Tamil Nadu right here in Namakkal due to center for truck drivers.

12:30 pm – Arrived Star Hills Resort Holiday – Inn (not the franchise)

- met Pastor Kirubakaran's wife, Rosantha with 4 other ladies
- Spent time with them to hear their stories and testimonies
- One was led by the Spirit some time ago to knock on Pastor K's door
- led another to Christ, two more joined team of women to do evangelism daily
- One is a tribal convert from Kolli Hills. She is deeply passionate about sharing Jesus to prevent witchcraft in the region and the killing of babies.
- One asked for our prayers for boldness to keep confronting evil in the hills and the opposition of local religious "witch doctor type" leaders
- Another asked for prayers for safety on long walks through the jungle to individual villages and frightening walks back in the dark.
- Final prayers that God will provide the resources, health, safety, and community to carry on the work in the hills.

1:30 pm – Lunch – Chicken curry & rice (Chicken purchased live this am!)

2:30 pm – Trip to a local store to buy towels (Hotel does not supply), Then on to a short hike to several local water falls.

4:00 pm - Along the jungle road visited several church families from Kirubakaran's church. Stopped by the grave site, still maintained, of missionary Paul Brand's parents. Mother lived to 101. Moving reminder of commitment of early missionaries who left home (Britain) never to come back.

5:30 pm - Return to hotel for rest and renewal

7:30 pm – Dinner- Mutton Curry – Chapatee & Dosa!

8:15 pm – Conversations/stories with Kirubakaran and Mano. Pastor K. shared his desire to provide for education of the children as long a possible. Still praying about what happens to the children after they leave the orphanage.

9:15 pm – Head for bed...write...journal....reflect...pray....sleep!!!!

TUESDAY, JAN 25, 2011

After a restful night, we were up for breakfast and a drive back down the ‘hill’s’ 70 hair pin turns. We took the time to stop for pictures of the beautiful scenery (and some monkeys).

Our day was dedicated to seeing the New Life orphanage and visiting with/playing with the children. Currently, there are 22 children (infants to 15 year olds). They were all waiting for us at the site of the new orphanage. They do not live there yet, because the building is not finished. Work was going on while we were there (amazing to see people carry bowls filled with bricks on their heads). Part of the playground equipment had been delivered so Denny, Mike and Stacie helped cement the legs of the swing set, the slide and the teter-toter. The rest of us tossed balls, flew kites, and just played with the kids. At mid-day it was pretty hot, but that didn’t seem to stop anyone from have fun. The kids all warmed up to us very quickly. They call the women team members ‘auntie’ and the men ‘uncle’.

Lunch was brought to the site for all of us (our team, the kids, and all the Indian pastors & their wives). Some items were very hot, some not so hot and the dessert bananas were a welcome, mild finish to the meal. We were served first, followed by the men, then the women & children. There was plenty of food for everyone!!! Our team has become very accomplished at eating with our hands.

The day felt like a big family reunion with lots of talking, laughing, eating, taking photographs, and playing games. Just before leaving the site, we all (Americans and Indians, adults and children) walked the perimeter of the land to pray for safety and blessing to all who will live there.

At the end of the day, we went to the house where the kids currently live. All of those children and their adult caregivers, live in a small 5 room house. The kids sleep on mats on the floor. The mats are picked up in the daytime so the rooms can be used as living areas. We sang songs together (they quickly pick up the words to songs...even in English). We prayed and then left for our hotel and much needed showers. Playing in the dust and heat left us all pretty sticky and dirty. It was hard to leave those beautiful faces behind. But we know God is watching over them!

Thank you for praying for us and the children!

Subject: Update from New Delhi

Dear Praying partners,

The Sunrise India MIssion team arrived Thursday night in Delhi(old and new) and is staying at the YMCA hostel in the center of Old Delhi.

Today, Friday, is the completion of the second Treasure Training event for about 100 pastors. The team will again participate in their graduation ceremonies.

Mote to come tonight!

Thanks so much for praying!

We're praying for all of you also during our devotional times together. What a blessing to be part of the family of God!!!

Jerry Vreeman

For The Sunrise India Mission team

Subject: Sunday in Delhi

Dear Prayer Partners,

A quick note from Delhi, India on Sunday morning....

Our team made a memorable 9 hour bus journey yesterday to the ancient city of Agra to see that Taj Mahal and the surrounding craftwork establishments. It was the tour of a life time to actually enter the Taj, touch the jeweled walls, and stroll the intricate courtyards and gardens. We were overwhelmed at the craftsmanship and artistry. What a powerful example of the Creator's gifts to his creatures.

In a few moments we will get on the bus and head to two different churches. Mano Daniel, Director of FPTL will be with half our team at one church, and Jerry and the other half will be at another. Both leaders will be preaching through translation.

This afternoon we hope to visit the Ghandi memorial and then celebrate Diane Underwood's birthday with a dinner at the home of one our regional pastors.

Thank you for praying.....

We love you,

J Vreeman

For the Sunrise India Mission Team

Subject: Update Sunrise India Mission Team 1/26/11

Wednesday, January 26

Dear Prayer Partners,

The wheels on the bus (and auto rickshaw) go round and round, round and round, round and round. Today was almost totally a travel day. We started out at 6:15 with quick cups of coffee and tea and then took off in our colorful 15 passenger bus from Namakkal nearby to the hostel. The visions of beautiful children and spirit filled Leaders in Obscurity occupied our minds and waves of emotion filled our hearts. The drive from Namakkal to Chennai was beautiful passing through rich farmland and many small villages and towns. Our original plan was to take the train, however today is Republic Day in India when they celebrate their constitution. Hence, the bus trip. Traffic wasn't too bad because of the holiday and many celebrated at home. The school children had a holiday from classes but they did all dress in their colorful school uniforms and go to the school for a flag-raising ceremony and a party with sweets. We saw many groups of these kids as we passed through. We stopped for breakfast in a typical Indian roadside franchise restaurant at 10:00 am, then another several hours before we had lunch in a very nice dining facility at an engineering university. En route, we learned a new song, "I Believe, I Believe, I Believe, I Believe in Jesus". The Sunrise Chorale was awesome, if I do say so myself. Into Chennai at around 5:00 pm and back to the Breeze Hotel, our home away from home in south India. We braved the traffic at 5:15 as our group boarded three autorickshaws to go to the main part of the city to make some purchases. Again many people stopped to ask us where we were from, why we came to India and where else was on our itinerary. They are so friendly, happy, and very open to foreigners. God has blessed us to open our eyes to the beauty of these wonderful people and their country. Dinner at the hotel and an early night to bed so we are ready for our transition from South India to Delhi tomorrow. Thanks for your support and keep lifted up in prayer the struggling people we have come to serve.

Denny Underwood
For the Sunrise India Mission Team

The Sunrise Mission to India Team

Hello family and friends,

We are now in Delhi where it is much cooler. The city is more like western cities, probably because it is the capital and there are many people here from all over the world. The traffic seems to be as crazy as in Chennai, although we have not seen a water buffalo drawn cart in Delhi. There are cars, trucks, buses, bicycles, auto-rickshaws and motor cycles all competing for space on the streets. We have not figured out if there are any standard rules governing the use of roundabouts but we do know that the most important part of a vehicle in India is the horn!!

As we drove to the pastor training session this morning, we saw lean-to housing under the bridges and people around fires keeping warm and cooking along the highway. There were gypsy children begging at a couple of the intersections. Those scenes tug at our hearts.

The training was at a small church in the center of Delhi. When we arrived, it had been underway for a day and a half. We participated in the last half day of the meeting. It was great to be able to spend time talking with the pastors, their wives, some of their children and other church leaders who were attending the training. More of the people we met today speak English so we were able to communicate without translators. It was inspiring to hear them tell about their churches, their experiences, and their dreams for growing the church in northern India. Some people had traveled as far as 300 miles to attend the training. Tonight they will return home via motorcycle, train, bus, car and on foot.

Here as everywhere, we have been inspired by the faith, the dedication and the joy of the people.

We thank you all for your continued prayers. We know that God is at work in India and is guiding our trip.

Brenda Miller
For the Sunrise India Mission Team

Subject: Update from Delhi

Dear Prayer Partners,

We had a great Sunday!

For the first time, the group was split up for Sunday services. After arriving at the first church, the Jerry's group departed to another church. Both were Lutheran-affiliated churches with some of the rituals that Lutheran churches in the U.S. do. The Jerry group sang Zaccheus (sp!) as the sermon was with that topic. The sermon was longer as every 1-2 sentences, or a fraction of a sentence, was translated into Hindi. The Bishop Mano sermon was the same, as his language is Tamil and he didn't speak Hindi, therefore his sermon was in English and had to be translated into the local tongue.

Each group received the traditional tribal ritual of feet-washing done via hand washing. The Jerry group received garlands and the Mano group received bouquets. Both congregations were very open and welcoming, humbling us all as their love, acceptance and generosity exceeded what any mind anticipated. Their love of Christ and willingness to live and share in His manner were exhibited constantly.

The services may have started around 10:30, but they ended nowhere in comparison to American services. It was well after 1:30 when we departed each church. We took the recommendation of a local pastor and ate at a nice restaurant with reasonable prices. Interestingly enough, we walked past a McDonald's on the way. Some of the items were identical, some were not.

We headed for the Gandhi Memorial, and, actually arrived. But, we did not depart the bus. Seems the president was due to speak, hence only those with prearranged passes were allowed into the complex. Not even Jerry had such connections to get us in! We can still say we at least saw the area, just not inside the concrete fence. A second visit to the India Gate honoring WWI deaths was next, providing a different image than at night. Being national holiday time it was shy of a zoo, filled with excitement and adventure.

Our day concluded with a visit to the home of Pastor Ekka and his family. Their generosity with food, hospitality, sharing of their lives and love was a wonderful experience.

With one more day to go here in India, we are already reflecting and talking about next steps for our mission when we get home. Thank you so much for your prayers and support. We are blessed.

-Margaret Engler

The Sunrise India Mission Team=