

HI MISSION TRIP TO INDIA FROM OCTOBER 8 - 14, 2009

"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." Matthew 9:38

Team members: Patrick Ong (Team Leader), Judy Ong, Jim Kawi (2 I/C), Farida, Jenny Kwa, Chong Woo Tai, Lee Chie Gee, Tan Kim Mui, Toh Yock, Tan See Mui, and Richard Leow.

Mission Trip Report by brother Richard Leow

Thursday, Oct 8

A sending off party was at Changi Airport Terminal 2 comprising team's family members, and church members: Henry & Nat, Eric & Li Li, William Wong, Winston & Hong Ngee, KC & family, Mimi, Eileen, Peggy, Siew Gek, Caroline, Sharon, Henry Tang, Jason and Charmaine. We departed Singapore (after a 2 hours delay) for Chennai via Air India Express at about 11pm.



Friday, Oct 9

We reached Chennai around 1:30am (Chennai is 2 and a half hour behind Singapore time). Brothers Roy Knight, Ubert, Joel and several member of Chennai COC were at the airport to welcome us with garlands. Brother Joel took a 10 hours train ride from his home town in Kakinada to join us in Chennai. Their warm welcome, love and

patience were greatly appreciated by us. We exchanged pleasantries and loaded our luggage onto the church van.

We were chauffeured to YWCA International Guest House where we stayed for a day. Our check-in was slow due to the hotel logistic problem. By the time we hit our pillows, it was almost 4am. We had about three to four hours of sleep.

At 10:30 am, Brothers Roy, Thulasi and Anand came and fetched us to the Orphanage Home which was an hour ride by car. It was our first morning sight of Chennai – the number of people and traffic in the city were awesome and chaotic. As we travelled towards the village, the surroundings became laid back. We turned off from the main road into a narrow mud road leading to the Orphanage Home. We were given a warm welcome with garlands there. There were about 70 kids in the Orphanage Home. After a briefing by Brother Roy, we walked up to the rooftop (two storey building) where the HI mission team performed a skit from the parable of the soils followed by song session led by Brother Jim using sign language. We thank God for providing a good weather for our outdoor activities.



We returned to the hall below and the HI mission team distributed gifts for the orphan kids. They were very happy and delighted with the gifts. We noted that they had poor living conditions. We learned from Brother Roy that he had recently bought a piece of land about a 1km away from their present location which is on lease. The new home is scheduled to be ready by next January with better hygiene and improved living conditions.

After lunch, we visited Brother Roy's parent home. We met up with his parents, Brother R Dhayalan and Sister Janet Dhayalan and other family members. We had tea and

fellowship till about 5:30pm. We crossed the road to visit Chennai Church of Christ. The congregation had a widows' ministry and there was a women's bible lesson at that time of our visit. We exchanged greetings and shared our experiences and encouragement to them. We walked up to the second floor where Brother Roy did a short sermon followed by encouraging words from Brothers Patrick, Jim, and Richard. The fellowship ended with the Chennai brethren singing two songs in their native language.



We returned to YWCA to pack for our next day departure to Kakinada. We skipped dinner as we had a late lunch and were not hungry. We had debriefing followed by a light supper of Singapore Barbeque Pork. Brother Joel had his first taste of it and he loved it ... he became a new convert of this delicacy.

Saturday, Oct 10 - We departed Chennai early morning for Vishakhapatnam airport via Kingfisher Airlines domestic flight which took about 2 hours. We arrived there at 1.30 pm.



We were warmly greeted with garlands by Brother Joel's twin brothers – Brothers Paul and Johnny. The car ride from the airport to Hotel Royal Park in Kakinada was about 3 hours. It amazed us seeing buffaloes, cows and oxen sharing the road with the vehicles (unlikely to see this happening in Singapore). We also saw beautiful scenery along the expressway (Brother Joel commented that some scenic area reminded him of his stay in Scotland). We reached the hotel about 3 pm (our hotel check-in was smooth this time) and had our lunch there.

We paid an informal visit to the Deaf Children Home and School. We were given a very heartily welcome by the deaf students with a flower each. Brother Paul A, the founder of the Deaf Children Home and School, showed us around the premises and introduced his staff (8 in total). He gave us a short briefing on the Deaf Children Home and School. There were currently 77 children in this Kakinada School which started on 21 December 1991 by him and his wife. It was inaugurated by Brother Tony Tyson from UK. Our briefing was cut short by a power failure (our first experience and counting ...).



Sunday, Oct 11 – We attended two morning worships assembly.

The first was at Agraharam Church of Christ where Brother Paul A serves as the minister. We were shown around the premises and also the Old Age Home which was next to the church building. Before the worship service, the HI mission team gave gifts to the children that were at the Sunday school and they were all delighted with it. There was also a song signing session by Brother Jim with the kids. There were about 40 children at the Sunday school and youth class. Brother Patrick shared a sermon on the transforming process of boiling water on carrot, egg and coffee bean. Brother Joel translated the sermon in Telugu language to the congregation. There were many children, women and men at the worship service and they had a full attendance on that Sunday.



After the worship service, we rushed over to Gollaprolu Church of Christ (Brother Joel's home congregation) which was about 15 minutes away by car.

The worship service at Gollaprolu was held back by an hour as the congregation there waited for us to join them. The worship service was packed and they had more women and children than men. Brother Patrick did a repeat sermon and in the midst of it,

there was a power failure (our second experience). Nevertheless, Brother Patrick was

undeterred by it and continued with the sermon. After the sermon, Brother John Thyaga Raju (Joel's father) commented that he was very encouraged by it on the message of Christian faith and perseverance. We joined the congregation in celebrating the birthday of Brother Joel's brother-in-law and his son (both on the same day). We returned to the hotel for lunch and came back for our skit performance on the parable of the soil, song signing session and also the handing out of the goodies gifts to the children at Gollaprolu church.

We visited Bethsaida Children Home where Brother Joel is the overseer. This was the all girls' home and there were 37 girls staying there. Brother Joel gave us a briefing and the girls sang songs to us. We reciprocated by song signing and presented gifts to them. There was a blackout again (our third experience) but fortunately emergency light and power were available at the Children Home. We noted that the facilities at the Kakinada Deaf Home and School and the Bethsaida Children Home were in better conditions than the Orphanage Home in Chennai.



Brother Joel's parent home was our next destination. We met up with all members of his family (three generations living under one roof seem to be the norm in India). We have a pleasant fellowship before returning to the hotel for our late dinner and debriefing.



Monday, Oct 12 – We spent the morning at the Kakinada Deaf Children Home and School. We were briefed on the deaf school activities by Sister Rose (Brother Paul A's wife). We had discussion on the needs and problems faced by the Deaf Home and School. Brother Paul A shared with us that financial assistance was an urgent and critical needs to their survival as donations and contributions from UK were irregular and reducing in amount. Brother Paul A suggested a few options that we could considered in helping them through this difficult period. Sister Jenny observed that

their teaching method for the deaf was through oral which was a difficult learning process and might not be helpful. Also, their equipments were old and obsolete.

The HI mission team performed the skit on the parable of the soil and also acted on 5 scenarios of moral lessons with participation from the deaf students on the correct answers of right and wrong to each scenario. Brother Jim did some song signings and the deaf students find it interesting and enjoyable. The HI mission team then distributed gifts to the deaf students and also a gift was presented by Brother Patrick to Brother Paul A.

We returned to the hotel for lunch and were pleasantly surprised by the visit of Brother Immanuel and his family (wife, son, daughter and sister-in-law). It was very thoughtful of

him who came all the way from his home town which is 70km away and gave us each a box of the local foodstuff.

It was our last day in Kakinada. We hosted dinner for Brother Joel and his family members including his parents, siblings, uncle, and their wives, as an appreciation to them for their kind hospitality extended to the HI mission team. Brother Joel also gave us each a gift in return. It was a wonderful dinner cum fellowship on that night. Brother Joel requested for our props which we gladly obliged him. He also requested us to send interns (girls only) to visit Bethsaida Children Home for VBS.

Tuesday, Oct 13 – We departed Kakinada early morning by car to Vishakhapatnam airport. Brother Joel together with his wife and son joined us also for the flight to Chennai where they spent the next few days there for a family holidays. We arrived at Chennai around 2pm. Brother Roy and the brethren fetched us from the airport to hotel Ambassador Pallava for our final night stay in Chennai. After our late lunch, Brother Roy accompanied us to the nearby Spencer Mall where we had our one and only shopping in India. Our shopping was done at a gift shop and the supermarket, all within an hour. We returned to our hotel to pack our luggage for our return journey to Singapore. We encountered our fourth experience of power failure for more than an hour on that evening. At the time of blackout, some members of the HI mission team were having their bath (a reminder to have torchlight around in blackout prone area).



Wednesday, Oct 14 – It was unbelievable to experience another two brief power failures at the hotel in the morning. We did our hotel check-out after breakfast and while waiting for our transportation to the airport, Brothers Philemon and Edwin came to the hotel to see us off with a small gift for each of us. Brother Roy fetched us to the airport and upon arrival there, we were surprised to see Brother Ubert and other brethren waiting for us. Brother Ubert gave the HI mission team a large shawl each. They were indeed wonderful and loving brethren. We are touched by their warm heart and faith in Christ Jesus despite their difficult environment in spreading God's words.

Our flight via Air India Express departed Chennai around 2pm and reached Singapore at about 9pm.

This ended our one week of exposure and experiential memories in Chennai and Kakinada.

OUR THANKS

We are thankful to God for blessing HI's maiden mission trip to India. We are also thankful for the brethren in India for all their love and encouragements. A special thanks to our gracious hosts, Brothers Roy and Joel for assisting us in our schedule and arrangements of hotel accommodation, meals and transports. This trip has opened our eyes, our hearts and our respect for our brethren in India. May God continue to bless His kingdom work in India.