

March 5, 2007

Dear praying friends,

We are so grateful for you! It has been about three weeks that we have been back from India now and as I was sitting here thinking of what to write I just felt so, so grateful for your prayer and care for us and for all that the Lord is doing through SERVE India. It just could not happen unless we all work together each being obedient to the part the Lord has called us. We are so grateful for you!

We had a really wonderful trip. We were able to visit many Pastors and their churches to encourage them and the work of the ministry there in many ways. The team was great and although most of us had at least a day or two of rumbling tummies or more, everyone was a trooper and the trip was full of joy. It is always amazing and wonderful to see how the Lord brings each member of the team and directs each step of the trip in ways we cannot imagine would happen and it works out so wonderfully, to His glory. That is what we pray for and we are so thankful for your prayer, too! ☺

One of the highlights for me this trip was being able to see a few of the children that I had loved the first time we lived in India 15 years ago. They are in their 20's now, happy and living successful lives. The Lord let me see that the love I had for them in those days and the love they had for me was still there so strongly! I know that the Lord uses everything for good, but it was so encouraging to see it in real life before me. What little I felt I had to give to those children, because of the Lord, made a big difference for the rest of their lives. What a blessing, and so humbling, and encouraging for us all! It is true that as we walk in that next step of obedience that He is putting before us, He will make good of it, whether we ever see it or not. Sometimes He lets us see it so we can be encouraged to keep stepping on! /Thank You, Lord!/ ☺

We always love to let you hear some of the perspectives and experiences of those who have been there so I tried to include some excerpts here but I just couldn't decide which excerpts to include! What I have received so far from the team is all so good I have decided to put it all at the end of this e-pray. I know that more of the team also wanted to send their thoughts so I will include those next time, too!

Also, we are planning an appreciation **SERVE India Dinner and Presentation** and we would love for all of you to come! You will be able to see pictures as well as hear more stories from the trip and you can enjoy a good Indian meal, too! It will be at **Faith Community Church in Hudson on Sunday, April 15th, at noon**. We will be sending another email about it soon with more information and a chance for you to let us know if you will be coming so we will know about how much food to prepare. **Please mark it on your calendars now because we would love a chance to see you, too!** ☺

One more happy bit of news is that John arrived home just a couple days ago! We are so happy to have him home. He will be here until the middle of April. **Thanks for praying that we can accomplish much while he is here and that we will have some good quality family time together.**

Thank you, again, for your prayer and care for us!

His peace and blessings,
Love, The Nanda's ☺

Thoughts & Experiences from the team

From Cassidy's letter to her family & friends ...

I got back from India on Friday (9th) evening and I've been enjoying a little post vacation vacation since I'm not scheduled to go back to

work until tomorrow. It was nice to have these few days off since I've been in a sort of depression coming home... I didn't want to come home and have life take over when over there I felt so much peace and awe. India was so amazing and life changing, I'm finding it hard to accurately describe it to friends because I don't feel like I do it justice. I met such amazing people, saw such amazing things, it was so humbling yet empowering at the same time.

We flew into Hyderabad and then took another domestic flight to Visakhapatnam where our 'home base' was. Throughout the trip we also took a train down to Tuni and then traveled up to Salur. The gist of what we did is we traveled to a lot of villages and towns, some very remote and some just outside the outskirts of larger cities, where we met and encouraged fellow Christians and churches. Often, after meeting these people we would set up medical camps and offer medical aid to people who, often, this was their first time ever seeing a doctor.

These villages and churches of persecuted (and they really were persecuted) Christians would be so excited to see us, often waiting all day for us to arrive and then greeting us with cheers, flowers, and smiles. They would seat us in places of honor, give us soft drinks they couldn't afford and then ask us to pray over them.

John Nanda, the pastor who leads this mission and lives over there, and who all around is an inspiring Christian, remembers when he was a child and having a white person pray over him. He said when it happened it was such a big deal and he remembers it to this day.

It was so humbling to have anyone excited to have me- ME! just as sinful as everyone else, me- pray over them, yet so empowering to know that it could be something really important to someone. It was actually at times like this that I was grateful that they were not looking to me for this prayer and strength rather looking at Christ through me.

The medical camps were sometimes chaotic but always entertaining. We would get some very serious complaints along with complaints of "when I run I get short of breath." The main ailments were body pain from a lifetime of hard labor and stomach pain from a lifetime of dirty water and spicy foods. These camps really called on the basics of nursing and while at times I felt like I could be doing so much more I was still reminded that what I was doing was enough.

India was dirty, and crowded. I slept with bed bugs, usually had cold showers, and endured more spicy food than I've had thus far in my life. But I also met amazing Christians, saw beautiful country, and most important saw God's amazing, unfinished work in India.

From Susan...

It has been a couple weeks since I landed back in modern times. The uncomplicated drive home from the airport only further diminished the surreal adventure I had just been through. Driving in India is always an adventure where I found it best just to close my eyes at times. All cars are diesel, and whole families of 4 or 5 can ride on a small motorcycle. A cart pulled by oxen is as common in a city of 2 million as in a rural village that had never seen a white person before.

It was pure pleasure doing mission work under the leadership of John Nanda. He has the heart of a servant whether he was peeling potatoes and cutting onions with the cook who prepared our breakfast, or expending his boundless energy with all the arrangements and plans, or showing unflinching patience with malfunctioning automobiles. He is reverently respected by his workers, pastors, local citizens, and me. Our days were started with devotions and then sleeves were rolled up as we ventured out to encourage and meet a new nation that has been put here on the earth by our heavenly Father, which was planned and placed in this time before the world was created. My prayerful desire is for the mission field in Western Wisconsin to be as Spirit filled for me as the 2 weeks in India.

The hospitality that these people shared was very humbling. They would bring out their cots or beds for us to sit on. These consisted of a slight wooden frame with a hemp woven 'box-spring'. Or if there were 15 molded plastic chairs available, the only chairs that I ever saw, they were vacant for us to sit in, while they sat on the ground. We were served bottled soda pop, hot tea, cracker like cookies, coconut milk, whole meals, and treated like we were doing them a favor to partake in their generous gifts.

At one medical camp we were waiting for the doctors to arrive, so we told flannel stories. Although the kids were seated in front of the flannel board, it was the undivided attention of the local men watching

the story that I enjoyed seeing.

The most memorable experience was when we visited the leprosy colony. The elder of the village was on fire for God. Whether he was singing and beating his well worn drum, or praying, every cell in his body was praising our One True God. This village had so little, even in India standards; yet there was so much love and joy present.

It is very difficult for me to put into words my experience in India. I sit here with my head in my hands wondering how to express the wonders that God showed me and allowed me to feel.

"Indescribable, uncontainable . . . you are an amazing God."

From Rick H...

I was trying to think of a story or something that really stood out, and there wasn't just one that did. I reflect back to the trip and think of all the fun and joy I had in India. The way the whole team came together as a group from the ones that have been there before, who are all just awesome and great friends, and then getting to know the new ones was very special. We are all so different and unique, but God brought us together for 2 weeks loving each other, no arguing, working side by side, doing devotions, singing, praying together and for each other, laughing. For me that was a special thing to be a part of and I will always cherish those memories.

As I was looking at some photos, I came across a picture of the pastor of the mountain village standing in the middle of the church that had been burned. I was so saddened for him and the village, to see the broken and charred remains of the church and the sort of empty stance of the pastor with his hands in his pockets looking straight ahead. I wondered his thoughts? I think that is all of us "broken and charred", but by God's grace we are mended. The church is people not that building. We need to pray for those who set the fire, they are afraid and don't know this Jesus. They need to know! We need to pray for this pastor and for all the pastors to know that there is hope through these trials. ----1 Peter 1:3-9 "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade~kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is

ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”