

31 October 2019

CPAC MISSION TRIP TO MERCY MISSION, INDIA:

6-20 OCTOBER 2019

Background

A team of nine people travelled from Wellington, New Zealand to Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh, India to visit the Mercy Mission Welfare Society. Mercy Mission is a Christian organisation which integrates social transformation, education, welfare and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This report will not attempt to convey all of the work being done by Mercy Mission. More information about the work of Mercy Mission can be found in Hannah Korsgen's book¹ and on the Mission's website.²

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the support and assistance of the Anglican Missions Board, Churton Park Anglican Church, Mercy Mission NZ, Mercy Mission India, the Anglican Diocese of Wellington, and spouses and friends who supported this visit in prayers, finances and encouragement. Of course the team involved also made some sacrifices – time apart from spouses and families, adjusting to a new home with different language, culture and cuisine, giving up annual leave holidays, and covering most of the financial cost of flights and accommodation.

We especially give thanks for Pastor Charly Tom, his wife Liz, his daughter Jessica and son-in-law Jefry John who exemplified generous hospitality and care for us. Most of all we thank our gracious and loving God who guided and protected us throughout the journey and brought us home from Vizianagaram as changed people compared to those that left Wellington two weeks earlier.

Summary of visit

The team had been preparing for the visit for several months prior to departure. Visa applications, fundraising and saving for the flights and accommodation all took time. We left in two groups from Wellington for Singapore on 5th and 6th October. After regrouping in Singapore we flew out to Visakhapatnam on Monday 7th October.

We were based at Pastor Charly Tom's home at Vizianagaram. From there we visited the hostel, the school and the Bible College. We also saw the site where Pastor Charly is planning to add a desperately needed new school classroom block. We noted that the existing opportunities for offshore funding of such classroom facilities may not always exist. Now would be a good time to provide funding for the additional facilities required by Mercy Mission school. This would make an excellent fundraising project for a church or group of churches in New

¹ Korsgen, Hannah "The Mercy Mission: True stories of Jesus' power in rural Andhra Pradesh"(2015).

² www.mercymissionvzm.in

Zealand. Several child sponsorships are also being arranged by individuals and families through Mercy Mission NZ as a consequence of this visit.

As we met with Bible College students we were very impressed with the commitment and enthusiasm of the young pastors being trained at the College for future ministry. This should provide a good theological foundation for the future growth of Mercy Mission. We shared with them on topics such as "Fruit of the Spirit", Gifts of the Spirit" and "Armour of God". We also shared with the children and other Mercy Mission people in daily worship evenings and two church services on Sunday.

We also visited other new training centres in remote rural areas and schools, the rice field used to feed the children, a baptism ceremony, a coastal fishing village, the beach and park at Visakhapatnam with the children.

During our recent Indian mission God was at work in each of us - in the way we worked together as a team, in the way we interacted with the children and other people we met and in our own faith journey as individuals. Our key message to those we spoke to was "you are loved and you have a purpose"³.

We were reminded that faith and actions must go together. A faith without works is dead⁴. During the whole visit three values inspired the mission: Love, Faith and Peace.

- *The Love of God*, his love for us and our love for other people. Unless we understand the height, width and depth of God's love for us then we will find it hard to love others. (John 3: 16 and Ephesians 3:18)
- *Steps of Faith* he asked us to take along the way - beginning with Matthew's exhortation in the pre-Mission meetings that Faith is spelled RISK. Sometimes we need to step out of the boat in order to walk on the water. During the visit each of us was called on to step out and take a risk. Through those experiences God stretched our faith. Faith and actions must go together (James 2 and Hebrews 11).
- *The peace of Christ* is promised to those who devote themselves to Christ through prayer and petition with thanksgiving. Through that he helped relieve and remove anxieties. (Phil 4:6-7).

These lessons from God were encompassed in our team song / waiata: "Te Aroha".

³ John 3:16 and Romans 8:28

⁴ James 2:26



The CPAC team (Linda Burnside, Roger Ellis, Roger Peel, Marie Ellis, Kishore Govind, Philip Simon, Gita Dayha, Sam Daysh and John Daysh) visiting the coastal fishing village and accompanied by local villagers.

Additional comments from our team members:

"I was privileged to lead the CPAC team to Vishakhapatnam to help Dr Charly Tom at Mercy Mission. In the two weeks I developed a greater personal belief and trust in, the character of who Jesus is and what he can do in and through our lives as we step out in faith. This became evident to me as I grew in confidence in hearing the voice of Jesus with the confirmation of the quickened rhema's of His word. This was displayed in many ways, in the teaching of Bible students, preaching and through the evening worship meetings we participated in. I will never forget the way God wove the special abilities of each team member together to bring His blessings amongst the orphan children and staff of Mercy Mission. The strengthen of unity in working together was evident in our love for each other and the faith developed to pour out God's love and purpose to all who we ministered to. I will also never forget seeing and hearing the transformation of the lives of the children at Mercy Mission through the vision and sacrifice of Dr Charly and Liz Tom over many years in serving the Orphans and Widows. The challenge going forward is how we change our personal rhythms of life. With the experiences we have had in personally connecting with God and the privilege of ministering His grace through us". – **Kishore Govind (Mission lead)**

"Wow! What an incredible journey we have been on during the last two weeks. God has blessed us very much through the people we met at Mercy Mission in Andhra Pradesh, India. The smiles, laughter and joy of the children and young people were a real encouragement in our faith. Their commitment to prayer and praise challenged our own commitment to spiritual growth. In their hospitality Pastor Charly Tom and his family together with the school, hostel and bible

college demonstrated a sincere faith and shone like stars in the universe with the love of Jesus. This visit to Mercy Mission is something I will never forget. I now also have a much better understanding of the challenges and hopes of the Church and the people in that part of India. The young people and children of Mercy Mission impacted me greatly through their kindness, love and gracious hospitality. They reminded me of the childlike faith Jesus taught us all to have. Our team song, which we shared with the children, was "Te Aroha" which speaks of love, faith and peace. These were also the qualities that God spoke to me about during our visit." – **Roger Ellis (Parish Chaplain)**

"Coming to India on mission was a huge step of faith for most of the nine of us who came. But all of us found that God stretched our faith. Under the encouraging supportive and wise leadership of Kishor Govind, a very experienced mission leader to India, each of us found ways we could contribute. Most of our ministry on several days and many evenings was to do with the 100-300 wonderful children and teenagers who the Mission has adopted. I was personally most blessed and strengthened with Roger Ellis and Kishor in teaching over four days to the 36 Bible College students, 29 men and 6 women. We taught through the nine fruit and the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit. The students received this well and we were assisted in translation into telegu and ministry by Pastor Jefry John, the son-in law of Pastor Charly Tom – the Founder and Director of Mercy Mission.

Visiting the new campus in the hills amongst the tribal people one day was a highlight where we witnessed Dr Charly Tom baptising ten new believers. Seeing the new school and Bible School there was really inspiring. Real frontline mission. Leading, preaching and testifying at the 3 hour Telegu-language Sunday service was another challenge, pleasure and honour. – **Rev John Daysh.**

"My mission trip to the Mercy Mission Society in India has been a most enriching experience which has included: Interacting with the children which has included blessing, praying for healing and chatting with the children. Going to the tribal area and interacting with the students there as well as being at the baptism of 10 students in a nearby river. Taking the orphan children on a picnic and seeing the joy and excitement on their faces. The wonderful kindness and hospitality of Pastor Charly Tom, Liz, Jeffry John and Jessica as well as the other women preparing our meals. I can honestly say it has been the most wonderful enriching experience I have ever had." - **Philip Simon**

"What a blessed time I've had in India. The people, the food, culture and especially being a passenger in a car!! – eek! The food was lovely, and made by hands of love. Delicious. I loved your trees and flowers, all so very pretty, Tigers!. The children, are like stars in the summer night sky, their eyes all shine. Thank God for people like you looking out for these youngsters. For unselfish love and sacrifice. All to the glory of God." - **Linda Burnside**

"This visit has fundamentally changed my view of India. The kindness and generosity of the people we met will stay with me always. I will not forget the children we met and we continue to pray for them now we are back in New Zealand. It was a privilege to be with the children and to see their joy and faith. I also learned how to make authentic vegetarian curries. But most of all I was reminded of the kindness and generosity that Christ works in and through those who are devoted to Him. – **Marie Ellis**

"India has changed me. I have grown as a person for the better. The beautiful smiles. The kids have given me so much. To see them having so much fun at the beach. Visiting the homes of the poorer areas has changed me for the better. The poverty is very confronting. They have so much less than the poor in New Zealand. Playing cricket – learning home pitch rules. Charly has driven us everywhere which is so kind. The food has been amazing. A different dish every meal. Seeing Indian tigers in India – fantastic! I am now a more confident public speaker – as the go to guy for readings. Herds of cows everywhere. Fishing village – hadn't changed in hundreds of years. India is very beautiful. Things we in the west take for granted like stable electricity supply and Internet access are inconsistent in India. Health & safety regulations not so apparent. The driving – the tooting of car horns for every traffic manoeuvre. Marie's description of "beautiful chaos". - **Sam Daysh**

"What a great privilege to visit India and learn more about Mercy Mission in Vizianagram. India is an amazing country with so many colours, contrasts and questions. Our hosts were extremely hospitable in their care for us. We received so many different varieties of meals and fruit. Our main focus while we were there was to minister to the children, teenagers and Bible School students. Their hunger for God's word and a deepening of their faith were clearly evident. We were inspired by their joy and laughter, by their caring love for each other, and for us and for God. "We came to India hoping to impart some things to help them but they have given us so much more in return. – **Roger Peel.**

"I am happy to be here. All I wanted to do was to visit an orphanage in India and the way they live. It was nice to see you all and other children. And you all call me Aunty. God bless you all. And one day I will visit you again. God shine upon you all. " - **Gita Dhaya**