

Andhra Pradesh, India An Outpouring of Love! November 2011

It is impossible to describe the wonder of our mission to India. Words are simply inadequate! Our first tentative team meeting took place in April, just six months before our departure. Over the ensuing weeks, God put a diverse team of ten together from five local churches. In all, we raised over £20,000 and amassed an abundance of gifts and medicines. Our team meetings were full of challenge, prayer and fun - preparation became a pleasure. We thank God for His abundance, especially at this time of competing needs and economic uncertainty.

Although we were ten in number, only seven arrived on the scheduled flight to Chennai. Let me try to explain; for personal reasons Julie was unable to leave with the team on 25th October but thankfully she was able to fly out a day later.

Julie travelled alone; a very courageous lady, especially as it involved two flights and a seven hour train journey. Trains are always packed to overflowing and stations thronging with people purposefully knowing where they are going. This is a challenge to westerners, but we thank God that He linked Julie with some courteous

and extremely helpful people. On top of this, we had to leave Lukas and Amelia behind in Dubai; a passport had been inadvertently left on the plane on the first leg from Gatwick. The passport was eventually recovered but it meant that they had to re-book on the next available flight to Chennai. Fortunately, this incurred a delay of just 12 hours but it was too tight for us to keep our original overnight train connection to Eluru.

Pastor Ebenezer and his two sons waited patiently for us outside Chennai Airport while forlornly we waited inside for Roger's luggage to appear only to learn it had been taken off the aircraft along with Amelia and Lukas' bags! Having said all this, our troubles evaporated in the joy and warmth of our welcome. How wonderful it was to be reunited with such dear friends. Nothing was too much for them, without fuss Pastor Ebenezer reorganised travel arrangements and helped to gather our little flock together. Our take on all this was human error aligned with Satan's concern about what was to come!



We arrived at Eluru railway station shaken & stirred by our rumbling overnight sleeper. The team shared the same hotel landing; our room became 'mission control'. Morning team meetings were a source of blessing throughout. No matter what time we were to be ready, we made sure our day always started with 75 minutes of worship,

prayer, fellowship and exhortation from a Psalm. On the second day Florence found two men in her room, hiding from the police. Evidently they had been reported for illicit gambling on the premises!! Florence denied involvement!!

On the first morning we were joyously welcomed at Carmel by Pastor's family, the church and lines of children throwing petals and presenting us with garlands. We shared in the dedication and opening of the new church extension which increases capacity by 50%. Where ever we went we saw church expansion; evident in growing congregations, new buildings and fresh ministries. Lukas and Amelia led the day long Youth Conference. Because of numbers, perhaps over 500, the meeting was held in the open air, shaded under canvas! It was blessed; Lukas and Amelia both did so well considering they had to hit the ground running after such a challenging journey! Everyone was blessed and happy. The Bible College students took part in worship – they were a constant



source of inspiration; full of joy, enthusiasm and boundless energy!!

In the evening we went to an open air crusade in a town about 20 miles away. We arrived c. 9 pm with things in full swing. Before us sat 2,000 expectant faces. It was amazing – the presence of God was tangible throughout. Pastor does not call people to Christ in open meetings but invites them to link with local churches where they can be taught and understand commitment before coming to faith. He does however challenge Christians to be baptised. Many, many people stood for prayer for healing and breakthrough. We were humbled by God's amazing grace, earthen vessels used for noble purposes!

Friday saw us visit six of the 12 Koya churches that Pastor Ebenezer has planted in recent years. The Koya live in the forests, plains, and valleys on both sides of the Godavari River in Andhra Pradesh. The journey took us through the countryside, verdant in variety. We travelled

1½ hours on roads littered with herds of buffalo and goats, somehow forcing our way through without incident. Far removed from the smoke filled, noisy fire-cracker atmosphere of the Dewali celebrations in Chennai,

Pastor seeks to plant churches in tribal villages where there is no Christian witness. Carmel Church will pray and then hold a crusade. If several families come to Christ then an embryonic church will be formed and a Pastor allocated to the church. As it becomes established a church building will then be constructed, initially from thatch and then brick. Most of these pastors are ex. students from the Bible College, who have the responsibility for one or two churches. They are dedicated, joyful men living with very little material benefit but each full of zeal and the Holy Spirit.

At every church we found an enthusiastic group of believers waiting patiently, some for over two hours. The meetings were joyous with opportunity to worship, preach and pray. Doctor David dispensed medicines/vitamins and gave

advice – in these areas health care is poor. We met a dear lady who came to us with four young children all of whom were suffering from the ravages of polio – in this day and age this simply should not happen.

In the afternoon we visited Pastor Emmanuel, a Godly man blinded by Hindu extremists for preaching the Gospel. He continued to preach and now 250 people come to worship at his church each Sunday and over 1,000 to the once a month healing service! How wonderful is this? The building constructed four years ago is now too small. At the next church the Pastor (John Knox!) asked that his son, perhaps a year old, be given a name! There is now a little 'Gideon' in Bedadanu!

At other places we were asked to pray for newly constructed buildings or over the Pastor's home. The final church at Baburao, met on the veranda of a member's home. Irrespective of venue, we had a great time. Afterwards we prayed over an adjacent plot of land (currently a melon patch) on which a new church is to be built.



The church in Andhra Pradesh is well, healthy and growing in very difficult circumstances. It is full of energy and spiritual life. The children are an inspiration, their smiling faces light up the heaviest of hearts. We may have encouraged and blessed the people but it's nothing compared with what we have received. The long, long

day which started at 9 am ended at 9 pm with yet another wonderful meal prepared by Pastor's wife, Mani. It was hard to cope with the constant stream of love which we were shown; disarming and overwhelming.

Although the team came from five different churches and our backgrounds were diverse, the oneness we experienced was very special. Our fellowship was precious, open and always edifying. On Saturday, after lunch we took part in our first medical clinic. Dr. David, along with three other doctors and



Medicines purchased for the Medical Camp

a dentist offered their services. The camp had been set up earlier in the day by Bible College and Nursing Faculty students from Carmel's Vocational College. The YSR Colony of Pohangi is home for 2,000 poor people. It is a recently built local authority development, some 5 km from Eluru. Employment is restricted to low wage, day work - perhaps road sweeping, refuse collection, field or construction work. The medical camp, a first for Pohangi, was opened by a Government official, the City Commissioner who arrived with a 'minder' in a slick white car. We were told to address him as "Your Excellency". Carol unknown to this fact, engaged him in conversation asking him why a man as big as he (he was rather rotund) needed a bodyguard?

Undone by such a disarming question, they soon became buddies – he said his role was to bring compassion to the people. Now that's something!

The medicines for the camp were purchased through donations from the UK.

Several hundred men and women received treatment. Though at times it seemed a little chaotic, everyone with a need was given attention. Carmel has a newly planted church here, one of its members invited us to her humble home where we enjoyed papaya, apple and banana and a refreshing drink.

In the evening we went to a Crusade about 15 km outside Eluru. It was in full swing when we arrived in the balmy heat of an Indian evening. The village had a small Christian witness which belied the number of people that had gathered in the open air. It was another special night, Lukas preached with passion and the Lord came and touched many, many people, including ourselves. The worship

was so uplifting; the students set such an example in zeal and service; a tremendous witness to all. We arrived back at 11.30 pm, tired but exhilarated.

After our team fellowship on Sunday morning we left in two vehicles, once again travelling through picturesque countryside negotiating cattle, goats, bicycles and motorised rickshaws stuffed to overflowing with people and goods of every sort. Our first port of call was at Surraopet, a village we first visited in 2005 to lay the foundation stone for their first building. The petal strewn welcome was heart rending – we had to tear ourselves away because we had three other village churches to visit. At each, despite being delayed, there was an enthusiastic welcome. We shared a greeting, preached, sang and prayed with the people. At some of the churches, bowls of rice with the odd egg thrown in were part of the offering for the Pastor and his family. Often we felt out of our depth when faced with children suffering with the affects of polio or

seeing the people's generosity flowing out of abject poverty. Here the Gospel is seen as much as it is heard!

Sunday evening saw the second crusade at Pedapadu. The evening was full of insects and the roads littered with traffic. Everyone drives using their horns incessantly. Strange really, because no one seems to taken any notice or get upset! The cacophony of noise is a constant background to a kaleidoscope of colour and activity.

We arrived to find even more people at the venue. The women and children sat together on matting, the men stood in the background and local Pastors gathered expectantly near the platform. Carmel students had been busy long before we arrived. The prelude to the message was vibrant, participative and uplifting worship. We thank God that local pastors saw increased attendances in the morning (following Saturday's Crusade). The message of God's grace was joyously received and culminated in waves of exuberant worship.



Recent Lady Converts
at a Village Church

What a day Monday, turned out to be! It was largely spent at the Bible College where we worshipped together with the students and then broke into teams. Lukas and I spent time with the students, David & Florence taught at the Nursing Faculty and the rest had a 'wild' party with 23 children from the home in Carol's

Children's Home in Khandavalli. The Bible College site had been developed further since we were there two years ago. A second building is in the process of construction to house the Vocational College for IT, Lab Technicians and Nursing students. It is an amazing project – Christianity in action! This 'holistic' approach to Christianity is refreshing.

The children from Khandavalli, sponsored by families in UK and France,



Khandavalli Children's Party
with new clothes & Gifts

arrived crammed like sardines into a small taxi/bus. They had a wonderful time: games, a party, teaching and then a meal and gifts from sponsors. What joy and fun! Pastor said he had never seen the children so confident and free!

David and Florence had prepared over 20 teaching modules with notes for each student. What an inspiration they are to me as I face retirement; their energy and enthusiasm are boundless. I think it is better I stay 'working'! Lukas and I

had a wonderful time with the students – sharing thoughts about walking with God and being a life example to others. It is amazing to think that first year students, who arrived less than four months ago without any knowledge of English, can now communicate and receive teaching in this English-speaking College. The students come from all over India with different native tongues some from Nagaland and even Nepal, a 2½ day journey by train! In the evening Lukas and I returned to the College,

while the ladies led a women's Home Group which saw 30 ladies crammed into a small dwelling. The Holy Spirit fell on both meetings!

The next day saw eight of us taking a ten hour adventure, travelling almost 200 miles to visit six Lombardi Tribal churches. What an amazing work this is. The churches are new-

ly planted. The first was birthed just two years ago in a small village and now numbers 150 believers. They have a new, partly built church which I fear will soon be too small. In each church we were welcomed with joy, often with dancers in colourful tribal dress accompanied by drummers. The third church once again in the process of being built, is young and already has over 60 believers in a village of just 300. Here a woman, proudly carrying a one year old son, reminded me that we prayed for



Lombardi Tribal Dancers Welcome

Within a matter of days, from nowhere a conference venue was put together, rain protected to seat up to 700 delegates. This was no simple marquee but rather a venue with drapes, ceiling, staging, lights. The delegates were provided with three meals each day and overnight sleeping accommodation. When asked for the theme Pastor Ebenezer said, "Whatever God lays on your heart"; we

just that two years ago! We were invited to a garden where a church elder lay, in the shade, suffering with cancer. It was so advanced only God could save him; we prayed and Dr. David gave some pain relief.

We were showered with petals everywhere we went. The journey was amazing passing through verdant fields of all types of fruit and cotton. Where ever we went we gave gifts to excited children, prayed and left medicines. By the time we arrived at the sixth church they had been waiting for more than three hours. Even then they overflowed with limitless joy.

Wednesday saw the start of the eagerly awaited Pastors' Conference. For security reasons it was in Carmel's compound – away from the enquiring gaze of authorities!

went with "The Preeminence of Love".

The start of the conference coincided with Pastor Ebenezer's 40th birthday. The word about the unrelenting love of God was joyously received. The Pastor's conference ran for three days/eight sessions, Wednesday to Friday with 400-500 delegates. Much of the work to provide three hearty meals and overnight accommodation has been done by Bible College Students along with Mr.



Pastors' Conference
Eluru



One of 30 Pastors Ordained

Ebenezer seemed very happy with the way things went. For me, seeing that number of men from across Andhra Pradesh (a state larger than the UK) integrating together and having fellowship between the sessions was so uplifting. On the final morning of the conference 30 men were ordained into the ministry of Pastor. This was so special – the anointing oil is presented in a bowl and used liberally, for those with beards Psalm 133 became a reality!! This

Rao, Raju and a team of ladies from the church. Raju, a man whom pastor has mentored since he was a boy, seemed to be able to do anything/everything with a permanent, face-splitting smile.

Once again the worship was passionate and vibrant; the only problem for those of us sitting on the platform was the fact that we had to contend with the world's largest fold-back speaker which carried the sound far across Eluru!! It was wonderful to see how the Holy Spirit had linked the messages that Lukas and I had prepared without collaboration. It is difficult to assess the impact, but Pastor



Cement for HIV Community Centre

wives were invited. In the afternoon, Florence led a woman's only session which was blessed and hilarious! The Conference closed with praise, worship and dance. Here it's the men not the women who overflow with dance.



Food for HIV Children

Following the conference, we went to a community project for HIV sufferers and orphans; HIV/AIDS is still a very big problem here. Carmel provides monthly food parcels for 25 children. We were warmly welcomed despite being late once more! We arrived as dusk fell to a

Roger Teaching at Suresh's School



three sides. It is a magnificent building and a testimony to faith and God's grace. The women stayed to lead a ladies' conference while the men left for a one day Pastor's conference in Nuzvid (an hour's journey away). The ladies had a great time with the whole team making a contribution.

The men arrived very late to a conference led by my friend, Suresh. The conference under the banner of

partly built community centre – parentless children ran to meet us, leading us by the hand into the complex where we received smiles and garlands. From the money raised in the UK, Pastor had donated many sacks of cement to help finish the project and also bags of food for the children who need good nourishment in order that the anti viral drugs (given free by the state) are effective. We sang and then listened to the Director explain the extent of the challenges they face and their hopes for the future. Once again we returned home tired but elated.

BKG (Blessings of Kingdom of God) was held in a mango orchard, a lovely setting at which 100 pastors came. It was very special and blessed by the Holy Spirit. After a lunch, which proved to be quite spicy, we left to see the school which Suresh had founded. Regimented files of children stood waiting in the playground to greet us in English and with flowers.

Our morning team fellowship continued to be a source of blessing and key to keeping us together as a unit. Saturday was yet another busy day starting with a 45 minute journey to Pastor Moses' newly built church complex. Two years ago we prayed over a plot of land and held a crusade there. I was reminded of a prophecy made two years ago that has now been fulfilled! Thanks to the generous donation from a man Moses met in an airport lounge, a triumphant, three story church/home/45 bed orphanage stands surrounded by paddy fields on

Carol with a Leprosy Victim



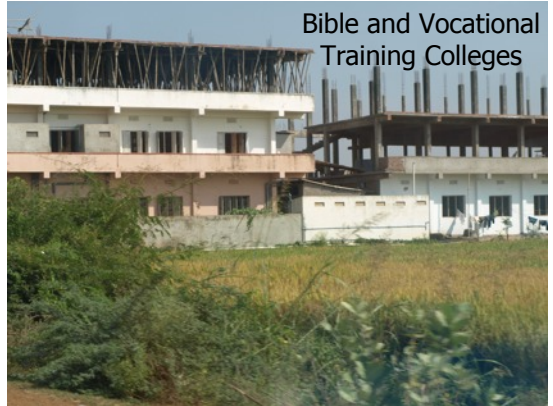


Bible College Students
Worshipping

The day ended with a cultural evening given by the 53 residents of Carmel's children's home, Eluru. The children sang, danced, recited passages from the Bible and performed some funny but poignant dramas. It was the perfect way to end the perfect day.

I started by saying that words could not adequately express the wonder of this mission. It seemed that each day surpassed the previous one! Despite the local police becoming interested in our activities, the mission continued without interference.

This Christian school attracts Hindu children, this underlines its excellence. We each had a chance to 'teach' a class – what joy! We met up with the ladies in the early evening at the Leper colony in Eluru. Here we were greeted like long-lost friends with smiles, songs and prayers. Many of the Lepers remember us from previous visits. We gave each resident ten kg of rice and some fruit. Pastor Ebenezer's students visit the colony once a month with food. David and Florence left a supply of medicines and administered first aid – such was the demand they agreed to return on Sunday.



Bible and Vocational
Training Colleges

Sunday started with a baptismal service for seven believers, including Issac, pastor's 17 year old son. For me this was a highlight, having seen this young man grow in stature over the last six years.



Issac's Baptism

It's amazing how well behaved the young children are - they sit, sometimes for over two hours, crossed legged on the floor without complaint. After lunch Julie & Janie organised a wonderful party for the orphans that Pastor's wife Mani cares for at Carmel. David and Florence went back to the lepers to

treat wounds; that is until they ran out of dressings. Finally, we had yet another evening Crusade at which Pastor Lukas spoke.

There was no let up on our final full day: we returned to the Bible College for a time with the students while David and Florence continued their lectures at

the Vocational College. Lunch was spent with Pastor Moses and Shaleam celebrating their daughter's birthday and their fifteenth wedding anniversary. In the afternoon David and Florence, together with other local doctors held a second medical camp in a poor area of Eluru. Our time in India culminated in one final, blessed crusade and baptismal service with five more candidates, two couples along Mr. Rao's daughter.



Bicycles to get Senior Girls to School

Fighting back feelings of unworthiness, we were publicly thanked and given gifts of saris, kurtas and shawls of honour

The homeward journey had its moments. At the check in desk at Chennai we were shocked to find that Julie's ticket had been cancelled. All attempts to secure a seat failed, so we were left with little alternative than to leave Julie behind. Typically, Pastor Ebenezer remained with Julie until she was able to fly home next day.



Julie praying for Children

In conclusion, there are several things I need to say:

1. Thank you to everyone who gave gifts and prayed – you are the unsung heroes.

2. Thank you, Pastor Ebenezer and everyone in Carmel for the opportunity to serve God and the people of India for 12 of the most exhilarating days of our lives.
3. Thank you team for unselfishly and wholeheartedly being committed to the purposes of God.
4. Thank you Father, Son and Holy Spirit for opening the door to India and graciously multiplying the loaves and fish we had to offer.

"Consider carefully what you hear," Jesus continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you - and even more." Mark 4:24



Pastor's dear
Wife, Mani

"We thank God for bringing Pastor Ian Moore and team to India. Words cannot explain how blessed we are - revived pastors, enriched churches and overflowing joy for our children in orphanages and for my family. What can we say other than, 'Thank you so much'. Please continue to pray for us."

*Pastor Ebenezer
8 November 2011*



Vinay, Pastor
Ebenezer & Issac

We are holding a Thanksgiving Evening at 7 pm Sunday 11 December at Elim Ingatstone to which you are welcome. It will be an opportunity for us to thank you personally.