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The pictures that I chose as an introduction are some very special moments along our journey.

1/ The women in photo number one walked for many miles to collect wood to sell for a pittance and they might do it up to three or four trips per day to help to feed their children.



2/ We had a beautiful moment at sea when we were travelling on a boat to minister to a village that is situated on an island, just a few miles off the east coast of India.



3/ These women in this picture suffer from leprosy, and they have no fingers, so after we helped to teach them, they were so proud to show us that they can now write.



4/ This elderly married couple were so honoured when we had chai with them in their grass hut. We are told by the young Pastor, who accompanied us and translated for us, that the 2 of them will boast about it to others for many years to come, how humbling.



5/ This beautiful man who suffers from leprosy insisted on praying for me and it caused me to shed a few tears.



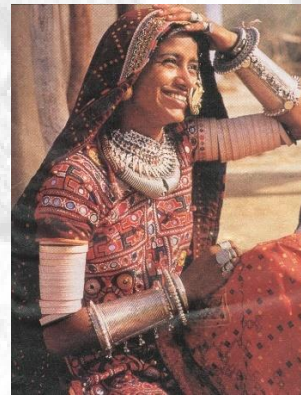
6/ The sweet little girl in photo number seven was to become another resident in one of our orphanages and what a joy she turned out to be.



7/ This family was one of many that we fed after they had not eaten for five days due to a cyclone. The photo was taken a week after the event and what you see in the picture is everything they own. They are squatting on some sand dunes that the government owns, and the grass hut is home for them. Despite all of this they are happy, and they accept their situation as being quite normal.



8/ A proud woman in traditional dress.



9/ When you live on an Indian island, this is the school bus.



10/ This is a boy at the Sharon Cancer Hospital, who only yesterday, was blue and close to dying. We visited him the next day and what a joy to see. His mother can finally stop crying.





# A Jar of Vegemite, My Walk of Faith

by Brother Craig Steven Walsh

From Sydney, Australia

Officially launched on Sunday the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2024 in Rajura, India

## Forward

**It is important to read this page, so please indulge me.**

For well over a decade Rose and I have been asked many times to write about the things that we have encountered on our journey of faith throughout our Christian ministry. So, I finally got around to acting upon that a few years ago, therefore, I will share of the miracles, of the funny stories and the amazing things that we have witnessed along the way. However, we acknowledge that only God could do any of the miraculous things that I tell you about, because we are merely instruments of God's greatness. For some situations I will not mention names because, I do not want to speak of negative things and lay any blame onto any person, so, in some situations, names will be omitted for that very reason.

There are two reasons why I waited so long to start writing and that was that I was too busy to find the time to start it. However, the main reason was that I could not stop thinking that maybe some people might think that I may be bragging or exaggerating, but I finally decided that if some choose to think that way, so be it! God knows the truth. There are also some people who could quite easily find that the many things that are proclaimed in this book, be nothing but a work of fiction and I could understand that because it would be far too easy to exaggerate. The last thing I would ever want to do, is to blow my own trumpet, if I want any praise at all, I rely on hearing any at all from my Lord and Saviour and that is only if I am worthy of it. While I am also aware of this quote from Jesus, Mark 4:21-23 *Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? 22 For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. 23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."*

I will begin by saying something that I will repeat in the last chapter as well, because I feel that it is that important: - "Why me, who am I to have been so very blessed? Why did God allow Rose and I to see so much of His power at work? Why did God use us in such a dramatic and powerful way? Why did God allow us to see so many miracles?" I have put these questions to God so many times and have never received any answers. I am just an ordinary man who, having been healed in such a miraculous way myself, was then called by God to step out in faith to serve the least of these. I also question why some are healed by God, and yet thousands many more are not, especially those who appear to be more deserving. However, I know God's will must be done and He has everything planned out for ultimate perfection for His kingdom, here on Earth and in Heaven.

Nothing that has happened during our ministry from God can be achieved through our own efforts and the fact that some people have said in the past, that we have achieved much and that is not correct. Because anything that has been achieved or turned out to be successful is purely by the

power and grace of our Lord and certainly NOT our own efforts. So please do not think that this book has been written, so I could brag or say, look at me! It took me a very long time to finally decide to write it and it has been nearly four years to finish it. I have put in many hours of prayer to even decide to start and to even decide what to include. We are so grateful for the travel diaries we both diligently kept by writing down each day's events, otherwise we would not have been able to remember it, especially in the early years.

A jar of Vegemite, yes, a strange title, I know, but the reason I chose it, will become clear when you read this story of my faith journey.

As I mentioned on the web site, this book has not been professionally proofread or checked for bad punctuation, misspelled words, or other mistakes, it is simply an account of God's glory at work in the world.

This book is primarily an account of my life, however, as my beautiful wife, Rose, is my partner in marriage as well as in ministry, it is about her part in my journey of faith from the time we married.

It has been a privilege for me to work for God, to be used in His ministry. Therefore, when we first set out, we were unsure whether we were qualified or even trained enough to be able to help those in need of our ministry and to be totally honest, we were quite frightened as we started off. However, as I look back, I can now realise that Jesus, Himself, took a dozen simple and untrained men to lead His church well into the future and beyond. I also realised that it was true, I was not qualified, but as long as I kept remembering that I would always need God to lead me and show me, success would always follow. I know that I can do nothing without God at the helm, nor could I ever think anything was a result of my own efforts and therefore I can only ever give God the glory.

After we stepped out in faith and the further, we travelled along the road of our ministry journey, we soon realised the more blessed we were by God. There were so many times that we had to keep reminding ourselves and those around us, that we could do nothing without the power of God, as it was tempting to think otherwise.

All the miracles that are mentioned in this book can be verified by other people, some who either received miraculous healings themselves or those who were actual witnesses. During many of our trips we had other people from Australia to join our team, there were also the local Indian pastors, who always accompanied us in India as well. Therefore, we can contact any of them for verification of what is written in this book concerning miraculous healings.

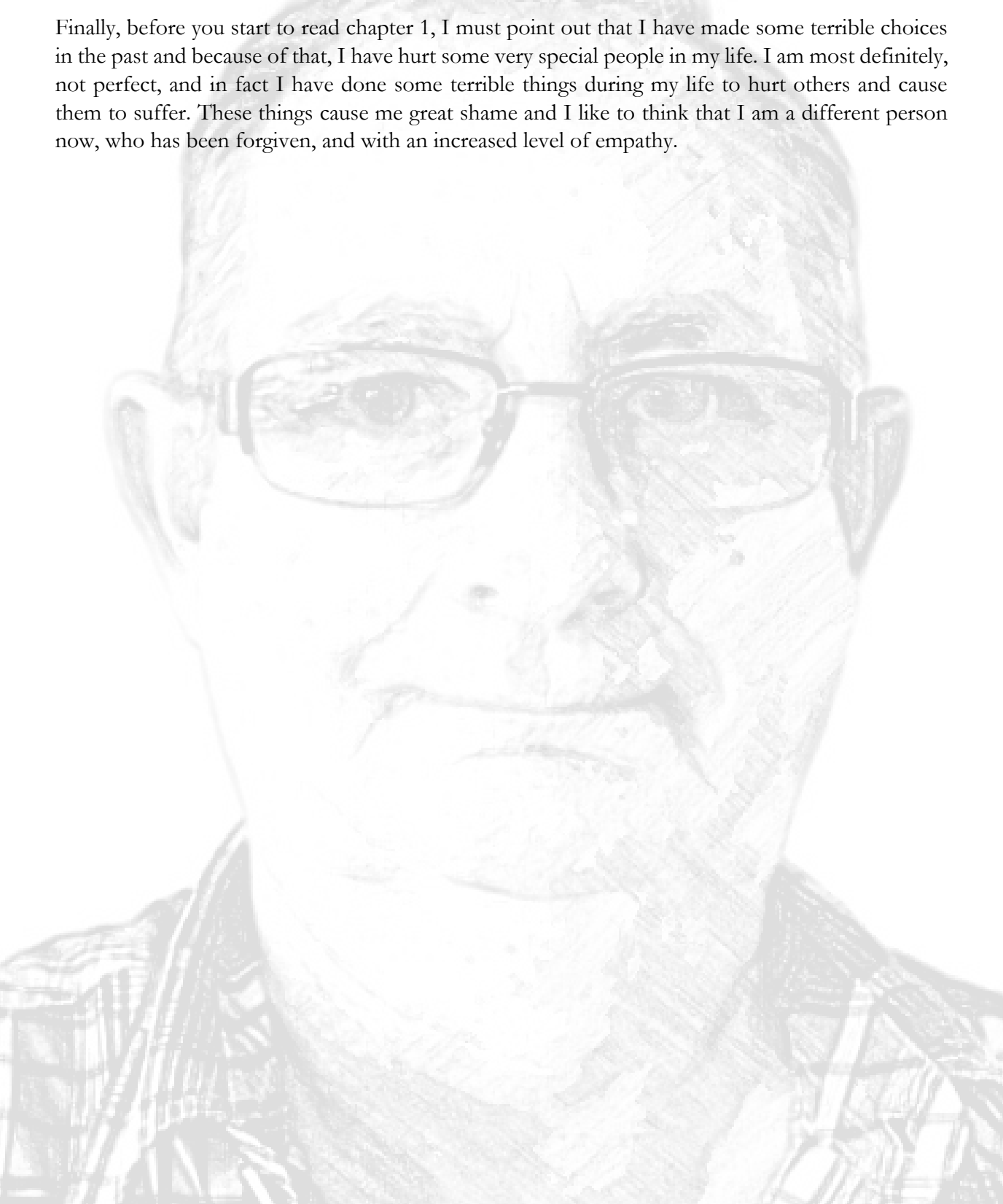
For some of our missionary trips we kept diary accounts of our day-to-day activities, so those trips will be laid out in more detail. However, for some of our later trips, I had to rely on photos, letters and emails to remember some of the details. This was due to my own laziness and sometimes just not having the time to spare for the task of writing diaries. I also hope that this book about my journey of faith becomes a legacy for my descendants. So, dive right in and I hope this testimony of our Lord's greatness is both encouraging and faith building for you.

I have been blessed with a great variety of experiences through many different responsibilities from organizational and leadership roles. As a result, I have developed or improved some skills of my natural empathy and listening abilities. Although, I can be very impatient, hard on myself and I continue to always attempt perfection, and these issues continue to drive me to repentance.



I have always seemed to be overlooked for many tasks throughout my life, however, by standing back and by not pushing myself forward, it always resulted in being approached for even greater responsibilities. My preference is to remain in the background and to minister to individuals.

Finally, before you start to read chapter 1, I must point out that I have made some terrible choices in the past and because of that, I have hurt some very special people in my life. I am most definitely, not perfect, and in fact I have done some terrible things during my life to hurt others and cause them to suffer. These things cause me great shame and I like to think that I am a different person now, who has been forgiven, and with an increased level of empathy.



## Chapter 1

### The Beginning of My Life

18<sup>th</sup> of August 1952 to 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1989

I was born Craig Steven Walsh on 18 August 1952 in the Royal Women's hospital in Darlinghurst, a suburb of Sydney Australia, to very loving parents. Their names are Keith and Joyce Walsh, and I must say my blessings started from a noticeably young age. I have three sisters older than me, Rose, Sandra and Pauline, and I have two sisters younger than me, Jacqueline and Patsy. Another sister, Carol, was born the year after me, but sadly she died on the day of her birth. During my early years, we lived in a town called Lawson in the Blue Mountains. Lawson is about eighty-eight kilometres west of Sydney. My parents were never very well off financially because a lot of the time my father could not find work, so there were some rough years when I was a child. However, I can remember more good times than bad. I can particularly remember a few times when my mum and dad could not afford to pay the electricity bill and the power company would disconnect our electricity supply. During these times I have fond memories of my mother cooking on the small kerosene primus stove for our dinner. Our light was provided by candles, and we would all play "I spy with my little eye" for part of the evening along with other rather silly games, they were good times.

My mother's sister, who is my aunty, and her husband were unable to have children and just after my sister, Pauline, was born, my mother became very sick, so a decision was made to let my aunty care for Pauline. She stayed with my aunty for a long time and when it was time for Pauline to come home again, she became very distressed. So, after much pressure from the rest of the family my mum and dad allowed my aunty and uncle to formally adopt Pauline.

My parents, being good Christian people, sent us all to Sunday school at the local Church of England parish church, known as Anglican these days. We were taught all about the bible and what God stood for. Having four sisters was so good sometimes and not so good at other times. I can remember particularly when my older sisters would play tricks on me, yet I knew that they loved me dearly. As I was the only boy, I had *my* own room while my 4 sisters had to share one room and I used to spend much of my time pulling things apart to see how they worked. Sometimes I would build things, like crude alarms using clocks and other parts to warn me if my sisters tried to enter my room. Well, that became a great challenge to them, so they would try even harder to get into my room and I would try to improve my alarms to stop them. So, my years through childhood were tough sometimes but good most of the time. Another of my fond memories is when I would carry my baby sister around our house and yard, I would explain everything to her and teach her all that I knew.



My Dad and Mum with my five sisters and myself.



I was born cross eyed in one eye, that eye was turned inwards so it was always looking across my nose bridge and I would see double all the time. My mum and dad investigated the possibility of whether anything could be done surgically to fix this problem, but they soon realised that they would never be able to afford it because in those days it would require radical microsurgery to fix my crossed eye. It turned out that the muscle that should move my eye was damaged. But eventually a truly kind specialist at the Sydney eye hospital offered to do the operation for free and all they had to do was to get me there. My parents took me down there when I was three and the doctors tried to fix my eye but unfortunately it was a failure, but they offered to try again when I was a bit older. During that stay in hospital, my eyes were bandaged for a few days and a lady who was visiting somebody else took pity on me and she gave me a teddy bear who I called Steven. Poor Steven has had his hands chewed by me as I laid there and not able to see anything. His hands still show the damage to this day but as a toddler he was my favourite toy.



I was taken back to the Sydney eye hospital when I was 10 and I remember laying in the hospital bed with my eyes bandaged, but the surgery was a great success and my eyes have been straight ever since, what a great blessing. When I look back, I was blessed by God from a very young age. One of the greatest things that came out of that was knowing that my father had walked from Katoomba to the Sydney eye Hospital just so that I would have a visit. My parents couldn't afford the fares, so my father tried hitchhiking most of the way, but he did not get many rides and those he did were very short, so it turned out that he walked most of the way, what a great sacrifice. That was a walk of one hundred- and fifteen-kilometres to visit me, and of course I never knew he walked most of the way there and back until I was in my twenties.

Before and after my eye surgery, my mother and I had to travel into Sydney to visit my eye specialist quite a few times. I have fond memories of those trips down to Sydney by train and when my parents could afford it, we would eat at the Woolworth's cafeteria, and it felt so very posh to a country boy from the blue mountains. I remember one trip, because not only did my mother and I eat at the Woolworth's cafeteria, but she also took me to Paddy's markets to buy me a pet turtle, which I called Tommy, wow what a treat. However, by the time we got home and settled Tommy into his new enclosure, he finally appeared from out of his shell and only then discovered that two of his legs were missing. He only had his front left leg and his right rear leg, but amazingly he could still walk. From that time on, I called him Tommy Two Legs and I loved him.

During my time at Lawson primary school, I remember with great fondness my best friend Bruce whose father owned the Lawson cake shop, which was right next door to our school and many times he would share a pie with me during our lunch hour, it was a great treat to a boy from a poor family.

Despite the various rivalries between my sisters and I, I always felt incredibly loved by them all and I had a particular fondness for my youngest sister Patsy. I think I felt more protective of her, and I

would be constantly carrying her around and showing her my things as well as the knowledge I had learned.

My mother's parents, my grandparents, also lived in Lawson and we would visit them on most Sundays after attending church and I remember them both fondly they were generally good godly people. We even lived with them a couple of times when my parents could not afford to pay rent any longer. Overall, we spent quite a bit of time with my grandparents, and it was my grandfather who grounded me into what it was to become a good man, a good husband and a good father under God's direction. He taught me many things like how to treat women, how to be a good and just man, a fair man, a man of honour. He had served in the Australian Army at Gallipoli and came home a hero because he had charged a machine gun nest single-handedly to save his mates. The result of that was that he was shot right down one side of his body by a machine gun, so he had a limp and a crippled arm for his efforts. When World War II started, he fronted up to volunteer to fight once more and they sent him home, saying you have already done your bit for this country, go home.

Because we lived so close to the railway tracks, I loved to watch the steam trains going past our house. My best friend, Bruce, and I would often stand on the railway station overpass as a steam train passed under us.

After a few years of living in Lawson, we moved to the next town up the blue mountains, called Bullaburra and we were there when I started high school at Katoomba. Bullaburra is only about another kilometre further up the blue mountains from Lawson, while Katoomba is a further twelve kilometres up the mountains.



My grandparents with my mother, my aunty Margaret and uncle Tom

When it snowed in the Blue Mountains, we would all play out in the snow until we could not feel our feet and then crying in pain as they thawed out by the open fire to get the feeling back. Bruce and I would play in the bush with homemade bows and arrows to play cowboys and Indians. We also explored the bushland around our neighbourhood, and we were often joined by other boys. We would build ourselves a billy cart so we could race down the many steep hills at frightening speeds, and we crashed many times.

By the time I was attending high school I would have to travel up to Katoomba by train from Bullaburra. I remember the journey home on cold winter days and if any one of us boys had a few pennies in our pocket, we would buy hot chips wrapped in newspaper with vinegar and salt, sharing them with our friends.

I had a dog named Digger and he was a dachshund/terrier cross breed who followed me everywhere. Every day he would meet me as I walked home from Bullaburra railway station after coming home from school. We only lived about two hundred yards from the station, so it was not a long walk.



One day I remember hearing a dog yelp loudly as my train approached Bullaburra railway station and I had a bad feeling about it. As I walked home, I expected my little mate to suddenly come running along towards me. When I got home, I asked my mother if she knew where digger was, and she did not know. I told her about the yelping I had heard, so we both climbed onto the railway lines across the road from our house and there he was. He must have finally worked out that I must come home on the train, and he had decided to get to me earlier and he was killed by the train's wheels.

About halfway through my high school years we moved down off the Blue Mountains to a place called St Mary 's, which is about forty-six kilometres west of Sydney, and I attended St Mary 's high school. During those years I had joined the senior scouts and we had a scout leader who was in the Royal Australian air force and we had a really good time on our many camping trips. During my years in the public school system, I excelled at the subjects that I could work out myself like, mathematics, physics, chemistry, science and calculus etc. However, at the memory subjects like, English, history and geography, I was lousy and I either failed or barely passed. For that reason, I did not like school or learning things purely by memory at all. Although, I became so good at Maths that I was taught separately and occasionally I could even correct my teacher. But, by the time I was in my third year of high school, which would now be called year nine, I felt I needed to leave school as my parents could not afford to keep me in senior high school anyway.

During the previous years of my growth towards becoming an adult, yes, they were hard years and poor years, but they were years filled with love. They might have been hard times, but we were so well off in the more important things like love, in spiritual things and in the solid lessons of life.

After leaving High school I applied for a job to become a telegram boy for the local post office, and I successfully got the job. A telegram boy was someone who delivered telegrams by bicycle after the telegrams were printed out on the post office's teletext machines. The telegrams would be sent from other post offices in Australia or even from other countries. At any one time there were three of us working for our local post office but we were kept very busy for most of the day, telegrams were not delivered at night. It was a great job, and we would often meet at the local shops for a coke or a snack, but only after we had delivered the telegrams.

Now that I have left school my two older sisters no longer try to bother with coming into my room to fiddle with my things. However, it seems that my two younger sisters have taken on that role instead. Now that I have employment, I can afford to buy some of the latest records after I had purchased a record player. My younger sisters particularly enjoyed playing my records when I was not around to stop them.

After about a year and a half I felt that the position didn't have good opportunities for my future, so I decided to look for something better. I then went looking for an apprenticeship and I found a position as an apprentice butcher but the hours were long and the pay was minimal so after about another year and a half, I felt that I needed something with better prospects for my future. Then I remembered my old senior scout leader and how he had told me how great a career in the Royal Australian air force could be, so I applied to join.

I travelled into Sydney and went to the defence department recruitment office to fill in application forms to join the Royal Australian air force and I gave them all my particulars and they said, we will be in touch.

After a few weeks I was called in to the defence recruitment office to sit for an IQ test, some other general exam papers and to have a medical examination. After a few more weeks I was told that I had been chosen to enlist and they gave me a date to report to the recruitment centre on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April 1970 to be sworn in and then to travel by train to the Edinburgh RAAF recruit training base in Adelaide in South Australia.

My grandfather was so proud of me to be joining the Air Force and when he had a stay in hospital due the heart problems, he requested that I visit him before I left for recruit training. He gave me his blessing and told me how proud he was, plus, he also insisted on giving me some travelling money as well.

Before I left to travel to Edinburgh, I gave my little sisters my record player and all my records. I found out much later that they felt guilty about sneaking into my room to play my records after I had given the collection to them to enjoy.

So now I am seventeen and a half years old and what a great time this was travelling by train to new places in a different state to start my Royal Australian air force training. A very exciting time but also a little bit scary and uncertain, but I arrived safely, and I soon came to know our drill instructor, now he was scary. We were instructed in what to expect, what to do, how to act, how to sleep, how to keep our things neat and tidy. Basically, we were taught how we were expected to live for the next three months of recruit training. We were given new uniforms short haircuts, and we were taught how our sleeping cubicles were to be kept and our instructor told us that we would be inspected twice daily. If everything was not found to be perfect, we always received punishment duties. In Edinburgh it was winter when I had joined up and we were told to be up at 6 am in our singlets and shorts for our morning training runs. We were freezing cold standing there, lined up in formation, shivering and stiff as a board. However, by the time we finished our run we were not cold anymore because the run had made our bodies much warmer. It was tough but at the same time I soon realised that it was necessary to mould us into good and fit soldiers. Each intake of new recruits was formed into a group called a Flight and each flight had a different drill instructor, plus a different flight name and number. My flight number was 1057 and my drill instructor was Corporal Sheedy.

During my air force recruit training they were looking for drummers for the band and having done a little drumming previously for fun, I volunteered, and I eventually became lead drummer. We would play for the weekly parades on the parade ground and for any of the previous Flights who had their graduation parades.



Towards the end of our 3 months of training, we had to do a 10-mile run in full battle dress with heavy boots, a full pack on our backs and of course our rifle and we had to do that in closed formation. We had to successfully complete that as a whole group if we were to graduate and pass out successfully from our recruit training. This meant that all 32 of us were running together in a column of three lines, 11 of us in the 2 outer lines and 10 in the middle one. If any one of us broke



out of the formation, stumbled or stopped the entire group would have to attempt the 10-mile run again on another day before we could graduate as airmen. Recruit training lasted for 3 months, and we were taught physical fitness, shooting rifles, firefighting, safety, first aid and much more. You could quit if you decided it was not for you, but before you could quit you had to finish the whole 3 months and if we chose to stay, we were officially sworn in to serve for 6 years.



I am second from the left on the bottom row.

The women recruits were trained at the same air force base as us but in a different area and there was strictly no contact between the male and female recruits. However, we would sneak in over the fence and watch the women train until we were caught one day, and we were given kitchen cleaning duties for a whole week in the airman's mess for punishment.

At this point of my life, I am slowly falling away from my faith and the things my grandfather had taught me about being a good and upright man. Please don't get me wrong now, I was only taught basic faith issues as a Church of England boy, and you could not say that I was a born-again Christian at this stage of my life. However, I would never ignore somebody in need or who was desperately hurt, as I feel that is a gift that I was given from God as a toddler and if somebody near me is in physical or emotional pain, I have always been able to genuinely feel their pain myself. What I am saying is that in the rough, tough life of military men, I am drawn to the heavy drinking, swearing, bragging and rowdiness that goes along with so many men thrown together for a purpose. In those days in military life for example, if you did not drink alcohol with the rest of the gang, you were labelled as an anti-social outcast. These days, thankfully, I believe this issue has been dealt with much better in the armed services and the habit of heavy drinking monitored much better. So along with my firm belief in God, my previous moral standards were also in a huge decline.

After I graduated recruit training and was sworn in as an Airman, I was posted to the RAAF base at Wagga Wagga in New South Wales because that was where the technical training took place. It was at Wagga Wagga that every new Airman or Airwoman would be put through a preliminary training course to grade us to indicate what each airman's aptitude was. At the completion of this course there would be an exam that would show the officers what grade of trade we would be most suited for, so if you got a higher grade, you had a bigger selection of what vocation you could take up. Some of these courses from lowest to highest were a clerk, motor transport driver, airframe mechanic, aircraft engine mechanic, radio technician, weapons technician and electrical fitter. Only the first two did not involve working on aircraft and someone who chose motor transport would be trained in car mechanics as well as driving.

I chose to be an aircraft electrical fitter because I achieved a high score in the preliminary course exams and that was what I had wanted from the outset. So I was to commence my training as an electrical fitter with quite a few other new Airmen. The course would run for six months after which time I would become an electrical serviceman, I would then be posted to a RAAF base and practice

my new training for a further 6 months. I was posted to the RAAF base Richmond in New South Wales and whilst I was there, I was working on the C130 Hercules aircraft but for some of the time I was in the aircraft battery room. At this stage I must tell you that aircraft batteries are much larger and heavier than a car battery, usually 2 to 3 times heavier. Being, in charge of the aircraft battery room had its perks, as I was alone, my own boss, however it also meant I had to lift all those batteries by myself all day long. After my time at Richmond, I was sent back to Wagga Wagga for the final six months of training to become a fully trained aircraft electrical fitter, after that I would be posted to another base.

During my time back in Wagga Wagga, I looked up a girl, named Pauline, that I had met when I had been a butcher and eventually, we got married and we moved into married quarters just outside the RAAF base at Wagga Wagga, because previously I had lived in the men's quarters on the base.

When I graduated from my aircraft electrical fitter's course, I was posted to RAAF base Williamstown which is north of Newcastle in New South Wales, and this is where I started as an aircraft electrical fitter, and I was working on the mirage jet fighter aircraft.

In 1973 my wife and I had a beautiful daughter we named Sharron, and she is always a joyful presence throughout my life.

The work on the mirage jet fighters was going well and when Sharron was 11 months old in 1974, my son was born, we named him Craig after me, and I am so very proud of him as well. They both grew up to be very fine and successful adults.



During my service at Williamstown base, I was asked to join the badminton RAAF team and although I had been moderately good at rugby, cricket, tennis and golf, I had never played this game before. Despite that fact, I agreed under pressure, and I could not believe how fast a shuttlecock could travel when hit with a racket. After a few months, I became the base champion of this super-fast racket sport.

When my six-years of service time was nearly up, I was asked if I wanted to sign on for a further 3 years of service in the RAAF, so I did.

By the year 1979 I had been hospitalised several times because I had developed spinal damage and they thought it may have been caused when I used to carry the aircraft batteries. Later in that year I was checking the wiring up in the nose wheel well of an aircraft when a very heavy box full of electronics fell on top of me, it had not been bolted in correctly. As a result, I could not walk, so I was sent to the RAAF base hospital in Williamstown where I was put into traction. Traction is when the doctors attach weights to your legs, so they hang down from rollers at the beds base and they raise the end of the bed slightly. The general principle is the weight pulling on both legs will gently pull the spinal disks in the lumber spine and therefore release any tension of pinched nerves. The

main problem was that my three lowest vertebrae had been damaged along with the disks of liquid filled sinew between them and I was no longer able to stand or walk.

After I had been in hospital for around 1 month, the talk around the wards from the RAAF patients, nurses and doctors was that I was a malingerer, that I was faking illness, but gladly my own assigned doctor believed in me. He wanted to send me by helicopter to Sydney for a discogram, but he was frightened that the vibration would make me worse. So instead, he sent me by ambulance with a nurse and instructed them to not go more than 60 kilometres an hour for the one hundred- and seventy-five-kilometre journey and I was kept topped up with morphine. I ended up at the Sydney Adventist hospital which was apparently the only hospital at that time that conducted discograms. A discogram is where they pump dye into your spine, then take pictures while probing the nerves in your spine with a needle to simulate the pain you normally suffer from. You cannot have pain killers until after it is finished, and you cannot move. Apparently, I ripped the thick linen sheets with my fingers during the procedure. The result of the discogram showed I had two ruptured disks and fractured vertebrae in my lumbar spine at L4, L5 and L5S1 and after I was returned to the RAAF base hospital in Williamstown with the proof, I was no longer considered a malingerer and then I was treated with respect.

I was told it was possible that I may never walk again but that I would need surgery at Royal Newcastle hospital. I was sent there to see a renowned professor of orthopaedic surgery, Dr Gabriel. He operated on me for seven hours and apparently my blood would not clot very well so they gave me five pints of blood, during the surgery. Dr Gabriel had shaved bone from the back of both my hips to fuse my damaged spine together which would hopefully hold up the damaged area so it could not collapse onto my spinal cord. By the time I came around I was lying flat on my back and the surgeons have cut me right across my lower spine from my left to my right hips. Dr Gabriel stopped by my bedside to tell me that my spinal disks were so badly ruptured that instead of cutting them up to remove them, they were shattered into tiny pieces that he simply picked out the tiny bits with tweezers. He then presented me with a screw top jar with the small pieces of my disks swimming in surgical alcohol. I now have quite a few stitches and I am not allowed to move; I must stay completely still except for my arms of course. I was in Royal Newcastle hospital for about 4 weeks then sent back to RAAF base Williamstown hospital. After many more weeks I was allowed to try to get up, but before I did, they fitted me with a specially made full body surgical spinal brace around the whole of my spine like a corset only much heavier. I was a little bit frightened that maybe I would not be able to walk but praise God walk I did. I was very weak because I had been in bed nearly ten months up to now. Then after many more months of physiotherapy and rehabilitation I was discharged from hospital, and it had been fourteen months since I fell. After such a long time in hospital it was good to be home and I would have to wear a back brace for the next two years. I was classified permanently incapacitated and was put on ultra-light duties and any time I felt weak or in too much pain I could go and lie down at the base hospital.

It was a miracle that I could walk as they had said that I may never walk again, however I could walk, but badly. I would describe it like a duck trying to waddle along with 2 broken legs, I was to get used to being a semi cripple.

I was told around this time that the young airman who had failed to install the mounting bolts into the heavy box of electronics that had fallen and crushed me, was charged with dereliction of his official duties and he was to be made responsible with a criminal conviction.

There was so much I could no longer do, I could not lift my very young daughter or son, I could no longer play sport, I could not even carry a shopping bag, it affected my sexual relations, I could not drive a car and there were so many other areas in my life that were affected, especially my future employment. From that time on, I received a compensation payment of \$5 per fortnight because I had suffered the injury at work, wow, how generous. I also knew that this ultimately meant that my career in the Air Force would be finished because of all this. But the worst thing of all was the pain, I was in acute chronic pain every hour of every day. This constant and severe pain became a part of everyday life, and no quantity of medications could stop it or allow me to sleep.

Soon after joining the Air Force, I was ignoring God to focus on a fun life of drinking, swearing yet still caring for my young family. But now, after what has happened to me, I hate God because look what He did to me. That is of course, even if He exists, is He real? I have lost almost everything! Much later in time, I had to get used to some people staring at me as I shuffled along and even worse still, some young foolish teenagers who would make fun of the way I now walked.

After a short period at Williamtown after the surgery, I was posted to Richmond RAAF base where I would be assigned to help programme the Hercules flight simulator as an ultra-light duties' airman. During this time, I had to learn to fly the C130 Hercules in the simulator so that I could effectively programme the simulator itself so it would perform more authentically. Then we would fly the real Hercules aircraft to purposely fail things like the hydraulics while we were flying so that we accurately log how fast the pressure would drop and then go back to programme the simulator to do the same. In this way we did the same in-flight failures with all the other flight systems. Because of these flights I was presented with my honorary set of wings from the Hercules pilots. By now having been previously promoted to the rank of Corporal, I am now filling the role of acting Sergeant.

About 10 months before my medical discharge was due, I was told to report to our commanding officer at Richmond and I had never been summoned before to a base commander's office during my twelve years of service. Therefore, I was a bit apprehensive and could not even guess what the reason was, as it usually meant you had done something wrong. By the time I waited outside his office, I was a bundle of nerves and when he finally sent for me. After entering his office, I correctly saluted him, and he saw my nervousness and he reassured me that nothing was wrong. The Wing Commander went on to say he called me in to see him to both congratulate me and to also apologise to me. Wow did that confuse me, what is this about, I was thinking. He continued, "you were chosen from all the aircraft engineers on the entire base from every field, including, engines, airframes, electrics, weapons and radio techs for a special purpose due to your superior skills and proven record. But sadly, nobody bothered to inform me of your current medical condition and physical limitations on permanent ultra-light duties, due to your accident in Williamtown. So therefore, I will be forced to choose my second choice for this new vital role instead, so that is why I must apologise to you because I preferred you for the position. I can see the confusion on your face now, so I would like to describe the position that I had chosen for you so that you at least always know that it was you who was chosen because you were the best aircraft engineer on this entire base."

At this point, I had not even considered on interrupting him, but I was even more confused. But the Wing Commander continued, "it was decided that an airman from any of the aircraft engineering fields of discipline would be chosen from each Air Force base in Australia who had risen in promotion, who showed extreme expertise in his field, had the best technical and resourceful abilities, and has a clean record. Each chosen candidate from each base across Australia were then



to be sent to university to be trained in all fields of aircraft engineering for 3 years, to become supertechs. These new supertechs, would then be called in to solve technical problems of greatest importance or those problems that may even to be unsolvable to the average engineer. On completion of university, the chosen airmen will be immediately promoted to Flight Lieutenant. So, what do you think of that young airman?" "I am not sure sir," I replied. He responded, "young airman, you are a promoted corporal and despite your medical status an acting sergeant, your technical skills and resourcefulness are extremely high, and you have a clean record." Then he stood up and pointed at me and said, "you alone were chosen for this honour and for that you should always hold your head up high, never forget." "Thank you, sir, I won't," I replied. After he sat down again, he said, "I was not going to even tell you because of your possible disappointment, however, I thought you should always remember to be proud that it was going to be you who was chosen, do you understand?" "Yes sir, thank you sir." He then stood up and said, "I am bitterly sorry but congratulations Craig," he said as he shook my hand, "your dismissed." I saluted and thanked him again. As I was walking out, I was thinking, he called me by my first name and I felt ten feet high, I was chosen from thousands of men on this base to be the very first supertech.

A few months later and after twelve years of service in the RAAF I was discharged in 1982. During my service I had completed 15 trade diploma courses in digital electronics, aircraft electrical systems, aircraft simulator systems, computer systems, computer programming and more, I had graduated them all with distinctions. You see a complete turn around here because, my hatred of learning in school turned out to be a passion for learning after all.

The worst part of leaving the air force was that I had always assumed that it was my lifelong career, and I would reach retirement age before leaving. Also, I was a very good at my job as an electrical and computer engineer, and I know that I had always given it my best efforts. I also knew because my superiors would also give me glowing reports about my work skills and quality, because as airmen, we were assessed by having reports written up about our work and attitude, twice per year.

I attempted to work and function normally in civilian life, in fact before my discharge from the RAAF, I had received 3 different job offers and none of them were aware of my medical disability. I initially worked for an arcade games company where I built some of the old frogger, pac man, galaxians, dig dug, donkey kong and many other arcade games machines. My employer gave me the job, despite my obvious handicap because I bluffed him into believing I could handle it. The only way I could continue to show up for work each day, was to lie down in my bed as soon as I returned home and for weekends, I needed to remain in bed for both days to recover enough for another week. However, my doctor told me that if I continued to hold down any normal employment, I would put myself back in hospital, so I had to stop.

Soon after that, a local millionaire who I had met through some friends asked me to run his amusement centre in Manly. All he wanted from me was to supervise the operation and oversee the building of new video game machines, so I accepted. During that time, I was the first person to organise the building of stand-up video games machines for the amusement centre. Prior to that time all the existing video game machines had been sit down versions. Sadly though, I was unable to cope with that activity for too long either and I was forced to accept my inability to physically cope with holding down any position, so that too came to an end. My doctor told me that I had to consider myself to be medically retired.

Our savings were soon eaten up and we were living in an expensive area in the northern beaches near Manly. We applied for a council house in Penrith in the outer western suburbs of Sydney and we were approved. So, we moved there and waited for the government to decide which department was responsible to pay me, Centrelink (our public welfare organisation), the department of veteran's affairs (the military welfare organisation) or the commonwealth employment authority (welfare for government employees). It took them 12 weeks to sort it out and, in the meantime, we owed money to relatives, the local grocer, the fruit and vegetable shop and many others, so we were very frustrated. In the end the commonwealth employee's compensation board decided that it would pay us. We were now on welfare payments from them, despite what many other servicemen were saying, you hurt yourself on the job so veterans' affairs should be responsible. You see under veteran's affairs we would receive many other benefits besides money, like all medical, dental, pharmaceutical and optical needs. By this time, I am very angry, I lost my career, my ability to provide for my little family and there were so many other things I could no longer do, so yes, I was angry with God, with the defence force and the government.

I was now in acute chronic pain all the time and the medication I was given did not touch it. I reached the point where I would go to 2 and sometimes 3 different doctors to get more pain killers. It became an addiction to pharmaceutical medicine, but it did not give me effective relief, so I tried other ways to distract me from my intense pain as well, like alcohol and gambling. I even flirted with the occult, as I would dare Satan to come and stand before me, but I did not realise how dangerous and stupid that was.

It is hard to describe the pain that I suffered as it was almost like a living thing that never left me. I was in various degrees of acute chronic pain for every minute of every day and although the medication dulled it a little, it was never enough to bring effective relief. As I became more used to my pain medication, it seemed that it was less affective over time. So, then I had quickly learned how to doctor shop, to get more pain killing medication. I would eventually visit up to 4 doctors to secure more pain relief.

Eventually, I decided to visit one of Australia's leading compensation lawyers to find out if I could force the Defence Department into paying me a compensation settlement. On the day of my first appointment, one of the company's senior lawyers asked me why I was seeking a lump sum compensation payout. After I had described my situation, I asked him about the possibility of success. He said, "Oh believe me, we will win, and it will only come down to how big the payout will be. So let me investigate all the legalities and when I have formulated your case, I will ring you for another appointment. But don't worry, young man, you will receive a massive payout." After a few weeks went by, the lawyer rang me for another appointment. When I arrived, he explained that we did not have any grounds to receive compensation. After he apologised, he explained that he had never had any cases involving the defence department before now. He then continued to explain that they are so protected by ACTS of parliament, that they are almost untouchable. I then asked him, "why did you say a big payout was possible?" He said, "If you had the same thing happen in any other industry or company, I could easily have said that you would probably become a new millionaire and I was initially excited for you."

I am now only 30 years old, and my life was now a continuing battle to deal with my acute chronic pain and make sure my little family did not suffer because of it. I am now in very deep depression and there is no way out.

## Chapter 2

### The Beginning of My Faith Journey 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1990 to 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 1996

Following all that had happened to me, I decided to go on a search for God. Was He real? Is He just a figment of people's imagination? Or was He just a huge lie? In my quest to prove His existence or not, I visited almost every major denomination over many months and then I settled for quite a while at a Baptist church, and I completed theology and bible study diplomas as well as being baptised by immersion. There was one denomination that I did not even consider visiting and that was the roman catholic church because I was always taught that they were Mary worshippers. I eventually decided after many months of church attendance that God was for weaklings and fools, and I discarded all I had learned as worthless. But looking back, I went into my search for God with wrong motives and had made up my mind before I had even started, due to my anger over what had happened to me. I eventually just accepted my situation as I could not change anything through my anger. It was not always easy as I could not do the normal things that most men take for granted, I could not even walk properly, just shuffle along. There was one strange habit that I had formed though, I could never denounce God in front of my wife or children during my time of my disability, I kept my lack of belief a secret.

By now I had been going to my main doctor, Dr Mark Strangways/Dixon, for several years and he would always keep trying to convince me to go to different Christian meetings with him and would try to quote scripture to me. It became a kind of banter between us because I would always quote Bible verses back to him from what I had learned, but it meant nothing to me, just a game.

My beautiful first grandchild, Nathan, was born on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 1993 and I had the great privilege of supporting my daughter, Sharron, through the caesarean. I was the first person to hold this beautiful boy in my arms after the doctors had delivered him by caesarean. In early 1994 my wife left me and by this time, both my son, Craig, and my daughter, Sharron, were young adults and my son was living elsewhere but my daughter still lived with me along with my grandchild, Nathan. Nathan's father turned out to be a very dangerous man, so my daughter, Sharron, left him. The father kept threatening to kidnap Nathan, to the extent that the police became involved, and they arrested him. For his first couple of years, Nathan used to call me his daddy and I considered that as a great honour. Eventually, Sharron changed her address and organised a new silent phone number with the help of police, so that Nathan's father would not be able to find her again.



On one visit to Mark's surgery in early 1994, he invited me to a Christian men's breakfast, and he finally wore me down, I accepted. I had stressed to Doctor Mark, I will only come as long as you promise not to ask again. When the day came, I went along not knowing what to expect but I had a good time, nice men, but what's with the name of their church, "the Servants of Jesus", very weird, never heard of it. Then my doctor Mark in cooperation with my daughter Sharron, now in her twenties, talked me into going to a Christian live-in retreat weekend. The retreat weekend went from Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of June 1994 and it was called He's

Alive, it was put on by the Servants of Jesus. By the time I had arrived at the retreat centre and apart from my normal acute pain, I had a migraine headache which I normally do not get. As I walked around the retreat centre over the weekend, I remember sensing that God was everywhere in this place but not in me. Doctor Mark hung around me the whole time I was there, like a mother hen and despite his efforts, he could not help me get rid of my migraine headache. I took in all the talks delivered by very qualified Christian teachers, and I enjoyed the fellowship, what a wonderful weekend. I felt God all around me and I so very much wanted God to be in me as well, so I could feel His presence deep inside. During one of the refreshment breaks, I received a Scripture reading from a person that I had never met before, and it was: -

*Ezekiel 34: 11-16,*

*“11, For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search My sheep, and seek them out.*

*12, As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so, will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.*

*13, And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.*

*14, I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.*

*15, I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God.*

*16, I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.”*

I remember thinking, wow that is me that the Scripture verse was talking about, a lost sheep.

I reached the point where I wanted to give my life to the Lord, so I was guided through the prayers of confessing my sin, rejecting Satan and giving my life to Jesus.

Something else touched me deeply and it was seeing this beautiful lady running around the conference all weekend and it seemed that she was one of the leaders. She was organising all the administration, and she was overseeing many areas of the retreat. I was really touched by her presence, and I could not stop thinking about her. By the time Sunday afternoon came, the conference had concluded, and I still had the migraine.

By the time I arrived home, I remember thinking, what a great time I had considering the migraine and my normal pains as well. When I got up from bed the next morning, I still had the migraine, I thought about breakfast but decided not to have any and I got ready to travel into Penrith to do some shopping and when I checked my mailbox, there was a bill for over two hundred dollars which was apparently overdue, and I had not been aware of previously. I then started to become worried about where I would get enough money to pay the bill because I only had a few dollars on me, and it was due to be paid quickly.

When I was in the middle of a very crowded Penrith mall, I was walking along and suddenly I was compelled to stop. I was just standing there with my arms raised slightly with my eyes closed, and it turned out that I was being baptised in the Holy Spirit. To this day, I do not know how long I had



stood there like that and do not know what the many people around me must have thought, nor did I really care. All I know is I had got my wish now God was in me, and I suddenly realised that my migraine headache was gone. The first thing I did was ring doctor Mark from a public phone to tell him and he was just as excited as me. One of the benefits was that all the Bible study and theology training was now very important, and that knowledge went straight from my head to my heart. By the time I finished shopping, I headed for home and when I arrived, I noticed another letter in my mailbox, this is not possible, mail is only delivered once per day and I had already received the morning mail, the earlier bill. This new letter had been posted because it had stamps and post office marks on it, so it was not dropped in by hand by somebody else plus it was addressed correctly. The letter contained a cheque from the government which I had not expected, and it was enough to cover the bill I had received earlier, praise God, my first miracle. After a few weeks I realised that there was another great benefit because somehow the Holy Spirit was making it easier for me to deal with the acute chronic pain of my back and legs. The pain was still there but somehow, I was coping much better.

From this point on, I stayed close to the Servants of Jesus covenant community and in fact I went to every meeting that they held, many of them for leaders only, but nobody seemed to care that I was there. The main meetings that the Servants of Jesus have is called the general gatherings and they were always on Sunday, it was at these and all other meetings that I would see this English lady again, I remember thinking that she was most definitely out of my league. The servants, that they were often simply called, put on many meetings from the gatherings, home support groups, prayer meetings and social functions, just to mention a few.

The Servants of Jesus community is a large group of like-minded Christians from all denominations, who choose to come together for biblical teachings, fellowship, worship, prayer and support regularly. Most members will go to their various denominational church on a Sunday and then meet later in the day for a general gathering. Most members will commit to taking a covenant which states their commitment to the body. At an average general gathering there would normally be between 400 and even up to close to 500 members present.

It was at a 50s and 60s social night in early October 1994 that I met the lovely English lady, sort of, her name was Lesley Fossey, and she was dressed in a 1950s dress with a flair. Apparently, she suffered from migraine headaches so badly, that she would often pass out and she had passed out at the social function. She had to be helped to the car of another man I had previously met; Pastor Greg and he asked me to help him to support Lesley. At one point she groggily asked Greg, “who is this guy?” Greg simply answered, “oh he is a new member who took pity on you to help me take you to the car.” I found out that Lesley worked at the Servants of Jesus office because she was the secretary and personal assistant for the leader of the community. During the following week I called in at the office to find out how she was, and we talked over some coffee. She assured me that she was ok now but said she suffered from the headaches often and she had since she was a child. I asked her when she finished and she said, “I am staying back tonight because it is the leader’s birthday tomorrow and I will decorate the office tonight so he won’t know, I could use some help if your free?” “Sure,” I replied, “what time?” I returned at the appointed time, and we decorated the office, but she had another migraine and I had to hold her up, so she would not fall, when it had passed, she was very grateful. Soon after that time, I invited her on a picnic, which she accepted. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of October 1994 I took her up to a waterfall I used to play at when I was a boy, up in Lawson in the blue mountains and she had offered to supply the food for our outing. It was a little

exciting especially when she would stumble and grab my offered hand to steady her, I felt like a young boy on a first date again. Lesley and her husband had moved to Canada to live but they returned to England because they did not like it in Canada. Soon after that they immigrated to Australia from England with their children.



After hanging around the office a few times to see Lesley, I asked the office manager, who was one of the elders of the Servants, if I could help and he said, “we are always desperate for people to copy audio teaching tapes for distribution among the covenant members.” As it turned out that became my ministry and eventually, I was asked to give it a name and after a week or two I came up with “Faith Builders audio and video”. That involved recording every large gathering, conference or seminar and sell the tapes to whoever wanted them. Occasionally Joseph Chircop, the leader of the community, would request me to make hundreds of copies of a particular tape to distribute to all the members of community. Those type of tapes were deemed to be covenant building for all members. I was to learn quickly that the Servants of Jesus covenant community was a group of around 500 Christians from all over Sydney from Emu Heights to Manly and from Windsor to Campbelltown, most of the members lived in cluster groups like Emu Heights or South Penrith, but a few lived in isolation. I believe that by 2021 they have clusters even further away. The clusters were made up of members who chose to live in a certain area to be near each other and each cluster has an assigned pastor, the isolated members relate into their nearest cluster. All the members are from various denominations, so the community is also ecumenical, and all their teachings were strictly bible based with no denominational twists or inferences. Each member takes a covenant to follow the directions of the leaders and agree to attend all required meetings as often as possible, they make a covenant with each other and with the whole group.

I became a permanent fixture in the office with my new ministry and the romance with Lesley blossomed until we were talking about an engagement. Lesley had been born in England and had migrated with her family to Australia in 1976. She has 4 children, Julie, Anne, Stephen and Angela but her husband left her to bring up her children alone, she had been alone for over ten years.

The leader of the servants, Joe, decided one day quite suddenly that I was to be allowed to take full covenant, which was a great honour, he said, “because you help in so many areas of the community it needs to happen.” You see by this stage it was my job to keep order for the general gatherings and many other tasks he asked of me apart from faith builders, so it was a great privilege. I would end up spending a great deal time with Joe as I would often be at his house fixing things for him or accompanying him on speaking engagements and of course at the office. It was a great privilege to be so close to him and to learn from him, I felt like his disciple, and I was a sponge who absorbed his every teaching or guidance.

The next major event was so huge it defies all logic, there was a special prayer meeting put on to be held in a three-bedroom, two-storey house in Emu Heights, one evening during the week. Over 120 people turned up that night and it was so crowded that we were like sardines in the upstairs area and some people stayed on the ground floor.

The leader of the Servants of Jesus, Joseph Chircop, prayed over me that night and I came before the presence of God. The aura all around me was so dazzling and I was standing before the throne of God, and I immediately kneeled in His presence. Do not ask me how I knew it was Him, I just knew, I could not clearly see Him, He was simply a blur, I could only see His aura. He was so glorious in His splendour and His love poured into me like a sponge. Then I looked to His right, and I saw the risen Christ sitting with Him and the love I received from Him also was so immense that I was overwhelmed by it. All this time the Holy Spirit was being carried around me like a windy current that was never still and ever-changing direction. The Holy Spirit was so dazzlingly white and appeared to have gold and silver flashes through Him, like miniature lightning bolts, it is so hard to describe, and words cannot do it justice. I must have fallen under the influence of the Holy Spirit, (slain in the Spirit), and to this day I do not know if it was for a minute, an hour or even longer, but it felt like a very long time. Even after asking other people during the days following, nobody could recall how long I was slain in the spirit on that evening.

When I became aware of my earthly surroundings, I sat up with my legs crossed and I remember thinking, I have not been able to sit like that since my accident. I then stood up and I said to Lesley, I feel strange, but I am not sure why and after a few more moments I realised what it was. I had no pain for the first time in over fifteen years. My hands immediately went around to feel my lower spine, expecting the scar across my lower back to be gone. I also felt for the wall of bone that was shaved from my hips to be fused to hold up the rest of my spine, expecting that to be gone as well. But the scars were still there, as was the wall of bone, and then I tried to walk, and I could walk properly for the first time. It was a miracle and Mark, my doctor, was there to confirm the miracle, he confirmed that I had been crippled for all those years. After that those who were at the prayer meeting were empowered with greater faith, after having witnessed my miracle. What a night and as I walked home to my own place, I even attempted to run and I did but my legs were so weak from shuffling around for years as a semi cripple, that it wasn't a long run. Wow, what a great journey I have been on since I gave my life to the Lord Jesus Christ a few months ago. Over the next 29 years my testimony would be used to tell many other people about what God can do and it would lead many of them to give their own lives to Jesus Christ. The scars and wall of bone remain but God had healed the nerve damage, the pain and the disability I had lived with ever since my accident.

I would soon learn that God can heal instantly, like He did to me, but over the next few years I would learn God's other ways of healing. Like God healing during sleep or after many days or weeks. He will even choose to heal through medications or surgery through the giftings of our doctors. You may be healed after intense prayer or having been slain in the spirit. Another way might be through the intercessory prayers of others or from a prophetic Word of God. So, from my observations, there are many ways and maybe a way I have not seen yet for myself.

Lesley, having been a Catholic from a young age, invited me to join her at a catholic healing Mass at Corpus Christi catholic church in Cranebrook at the request of catholic members of the Servants. Remembering that this is the first time I have ever been to a catholic church because of my previous bias about Catholics. I remember being incredibly struck by the reverence of the Mass and of the

Body and Blood of Christ being venerated. When it was time for the prayers of healing, I was watching a group praying for a man who had apparently always had one of his legs shorter than the other. I was amazed to see one leg grow by an inch or two, but then my doubt set in, and I thought he pushed his leg to make it appear to grow. When I left, I felt good because of the reverence, but I felt bad because of my doubt. On the next Sunday, at the general gathering, a woman approached me and said, “you were at the healing Mass, weren’t you?” “Yes,” I replied, “I was there”. Then she said, “then you must have seen my husband’s leg grow? You know the man with one leg shorter, I am his wife.” “How incredible,” I replied, while I felt guilty about my unbelief, even more. Then she said, in her strong Irish accent, “you know I did not believe that it was true, until I saw my husband standing naked in the bathroom with his back to me the next morning. For over 40 years, I have been seeing him with one of his bottom cheeks lower than the other and now they are level,” I was desperately trying not to laugh at this strange lady, but I kept a straight face and I felt even more guilty for doubting. This was the first healing miracle I witnessed apart from my own, how could I doubt God’s power after what He did for me?

Sadly, after a very long battle with a mental health issue my sister Sandra took her own life on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 1995 by hanging herself, as she had been having a severe nervous breakdown and despite all our family’s efforts, we could not help her, we were all devastated.



In June of 1995, the seminar where I had previously suffered from the migraine was due again as it was an annual event, called He’s Alive, and Lesley and I both went along. She was to man the registration desk, handle all the money plus the administration, while I was to record all the sessions and sell tapes. It was at this weekend retreat weekend seminar that I had organised to propose to Lesley to marry me. After having arranged everything with the leaders, I went on stage called her up, got down on one knee and asked her, will you marry me? All the congregation were clapping and cheering because of the proposal, especially after she had said yes.

The community put on an even larger conference each year and it was called the Share the Holy Spirit conference which was then held at St Joseph’s boys boarding college at Hunters Hill. This was one of a small number of venues that had a main hall that was capable of seating up to 2000 adults and with all the other facilities that were required. This conference was for up to 2000 delegates, it would invite 3 or 4 international speakers, as well as 6 or 7 Australian speakers. It was held over 5 days and nights, it offered live-in accommodation, dining room meals, an expo plus food and drink stalls. As well as a workshops, teen conference, a children’s conference, a tot’s conference and a crèche, all running in unison with each other. The conference was ecumenical having both delegates and speakers from many different denominations. Lesley would be there to supervise the registration desk, handle all the money and administration. I would be there to coordinate my ministry team to do audio recordings of every speaker as well as video recordings and man a stall for selling the audio and video tapes from this conference and previous ones.



After my exposure to the reverence of the Roman catholic Mass when Lesley had invited me to the healing Mass, I regularly accompanied her on many Sundays to other Masses at Corpus Christi catholic church in Cranebrook, near Penrith. Considering my previous anti catholic attitude, I was happily enjoying the reverence and sanctity of the Mass. After months of prayer and discernment I decided to join the Right of Christian Initiation of Adults to the catholic church, RCIA, at the Cranebrook catholic parish, which is a programme to prepare adults towards coming into full communion rights within the catholic church. In other words, to become a fully-fledged catholic and after many months of preparation, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 1995 at the Easter vigil Mass at Corpus Christi parish in Cranebrook, I was welcomed into full communion with the catholic church, and I received the Body and Blood of Christ.

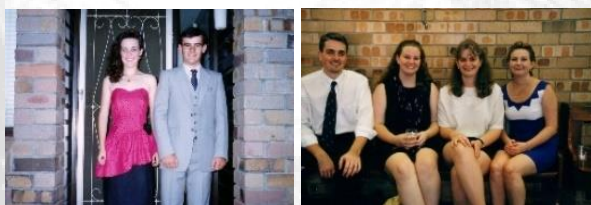
Julie, Lesley's eldest child was to marry her fiancé, Clark, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 1995 and as Lesley's fiancé, I was honoured to have been invited.



On the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 1995, I married my English beauty in the presence of our families and most of the community members were there also, it was a huge wedding. We were married by a Protestant minister at the South Penrith primary school gymnasium. We are both catholic through our own choice and we would have preferred to be married by a catholic priest. However, as we had both been previously married, the Catholic Church required us both to go through a marriage annulment to be conducted by the church before we could be married in the catholic faith. As that process was to take more than two years to be fully processed, we were not willing to wait that long to be married under the law.

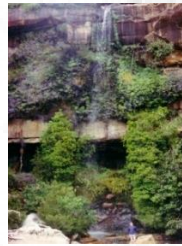


Included in our new expanded family are my children, Sharron and Craig while Lesley had her four, Julie, Anne, Stephen and Angela, so now we have 6 children between us.



Sharron, Craig jr, Stephen, Angela, Anne and Julie.

We hired a houseboat for our honeymoon, and we spent a week going up and down the Hawkesbury River. During that time, we cruised from Brooklyn at the start of the Hawkesbury River, all the way to Windsor and back again. We stopped at many places along the way and anchored at night. In the pictures below, Lesley is in the rowboat with a view of the houseboat in the top right-hand corner. The other photo is one of me standing at the base of Refuge Bay waterfall and that was one of our earlier stopping points along the way.



Another wedding was for my daughter, Sharron, who married her fiancé, Adrian, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 1995.



The manager of the Share the Holy Spirit annual conference was leaving the community to take up another ministry position. So, I was asked to become the conference manager of the Share the Holy Spirit conference for the next year, so now I had that job as well as Faith Builders. It turned out that I would end up being responsible of all other conferences, retreats and seminars for the Servants of Jesus community and the Bread of Life Catholic Fellowship for the next couple of years. I also was put in charge of a healing Mass celebrated by a Catholic priest named Father Peter Mary Rookey and he had a huge gift of healing. He was from the United States of America and whenever or wherever he celebrated a healing mass, you could expect over 2000 people to attend. He was 84 when he came to Australia, he only ate once per day and never prior to a Mass and at the conclusion of Mass he would pray individually for every person who attended. He was on a national tour of all major Australian cities, and he had been invited to come to Australia by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and they had allowed the Servants of Jesus to host his Sydney visit.

Then there was another wedding, it is for Anne, Lesley's second eldest was to marry her fiancé, Michael, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 1996, wow weddings galore.



By this time in my new walk with God, I have come to a true understanding of why I was injured, why was I a semi-crippled for so long, why was I in so much chronic, acute pain and why did I have to lose my career? In other words, why did it all come about in the way it did?

Well now I know because when I was young, I was brought up to believe in God through the teachings of the Church of England Sunday school for many years and I carried those strong beliefs with me into my late teens. But then, with the influence of military life, I either ignored much of those beliefs or simply rejected them. Yes OK, I still could not ignore a person in need or somebody who was hurting but I was so busy with the high life and the peer pressure that it influenced me to change. That change was not good and, sometimes, it was extremely bad. However, I know that many times during those years, I remember that God kept trying to settle me back down. In fact, He kept on calling me and God continually kept putting mature Christians across my path to bring me back into the fold, but I wanted no part in that, so I ignored it every time.

I understand now that God is a gentleman and if you don't want Him around, He leaves your presence. To that way of understanding, you either have His blessing or not and you either have His protection or not. So, if you do not want God in your life, He may not be there to protect you when trouble comes along. Don't get me wrong, if God wants to intervene for His own purposes, He still might, because God's will, will always be done.

The best way I can explain this better is, Billy Graham, who is possibly the USA's most famous evangelist, has a daughter who is now an evangelist herself. She was interviewed on one of USA's radio stations just after the 9/11 tragedy when aircraft had been flown into the twin towers that killed so many. The announcer asked her, "why do you think God allowed such a tragedy that killed thousands here in America, when we are a Godly country?" Her answer was swift and appropriate, she said, "well, that statement is very arrogant because we Americans asked God to leave parliament when prayers were banned. We banned God's name from TV and Radio. We banned prayers in our schools and many other areas of our lives. This was all done because of pressure from minority groups. God is a gentleman, we asked Him to leave, so He did. If God is with you, you are blessed and can expect protection, but if He is not, you can't expect His protection, we can't have it both ways.

I found out much later that they even banned the television series called, "Touched by an Angel," because some minority group complained that God's name was offensive to them, and I know it is hard to believe such pettiness, but it is true.

What I am saying is, God did not cause my accident because God cannot do bad things, God is perfect love. It was just that, an accident, because a young airman made a mistake and he did not attach the bolts to keep the huge box of electronics secured, so then it fell on me. But God could have stopped the accident from happening, if He had chosen to. However, because of God's perfect plan and because He uses ALL things for the greater good, my accident followed by my great suffering, followed by a greater miracle, which in turn is used as a mighty testimony of His power for many others was the Almighty's perfect plan.

You will soon learn that as I go deeper in my Christian walk with God, my own physical and mental suffering experiences will be used in Christian counselling sessions by me to help others. As I become more and more able to empathise with others who also suffer. It also helps me to relate in a small way, to the suffering of Jesus Christ, which paid for my sins. While the miracle itself testifies

to others about the power of God and the need for faith and overall, this entire episode in my life has helped me understand that God always has a plan, He turns everything around for the greater good and nothing is wasted, because there is always a purpose for every situation.

Apart from having the ability to occasionally feel other people's pain, I had always been a very serious person. However, since I had given my life to Christ, I was slowly but gradually learning how to lighten up and be able to learn to laugh at myself. Of course, now that I know God's love is endless and unlimited, what is left to worry about or take too seriously. I still often think though, why me and sometimes I feel like pinching myself as they say, is this real?





## Chapter 3

### Going Deeper 4<sup>th</sup> of March 1996 to 7<sup>th</sup> of February 1999

In early 1996 I successfully completed a Pastoral Care and Ministry Leaders course presented by the Life Restoration Centre.

During my time of managing the Share the Holy Spirit conference, one of the regular speakers was Bishop Sundar Clark from the church of south India and over the next 3 years, I met up with him 4 times. Each time we met, he said, “I would like you to come to India and share your testimony with some of my people at a conference that I am planning, will you come?” The first 4 times I simply replied each time, “thank you, but no I do not feel that I should.” However, I had not given it much thought and because I did not even consider the idea of travelling to India, I was quick to reject the idea.

Another couple of favourite speakers to attend the conference was Father Tom Forrest from the USA and Doctor John Bonicci Malia from Malta. Doctor John has a world-renowned healing ministry and he said to me once, “you are always running around looking after people all the time, so please just stop for a minute and so I can pray for you.” During the prayer he said to me, “just as you have been healed, you will be used by God to bring healing to others.” I felt very honoured by his prophetic words, but I soon forgot all about it, as I was so very busy.

Father Tom Forrest was appointed by the Pope to organise evangelism 2000 on behalf of the Catholic church in preparation for the approaching millennium. He presented me with a bottle of healing oil that was originally from Our Lady of the Olives. He had blessed it for me to use in my ministry and he taught me how to use it properly. Then he went on to say that I would receive much more faith than most men and to use the oil with wisdom. After he told me that, I asked him, “what does that mean”. He answered by saying, “well, most men and women receive a certain amount of faith and then they can use that faith to make it grow even stronger. But I believe that our Lord has given you a mightier measure of faith than most other men”. He went on to tell me that the oil is perpetual, because as the oil gets low you only need to top it up with more pure olive oil, so the blessing would last for all time. Since that time, I have used it as often as I could whenever I was asked to pray for anyone. I would never be able to believe just how powerfully anointed this oil would become.

Our second grandchild was born to my daughter, Sharron and her husband, Adrian, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1996 and his name is Peter, wow what a blessing.



In late 1996, Elijah House ministries presented a Counselling and Prayer Ministry course that we were attending, and one day during the ministry lessons, Lesley was given a new name in prophesy from God, her new name was to become Rose, and it really touched her deeply. To this day most of our friends and acquaintances call her Rose.

During my very blessed and whirlwind days of having the great privilege of serving with the Servants of Jesus Covenant community, I remember so many great blessings of those years. It seemed to be such a long journey but in fact it all miraculously happened in only just over four years, wow.

One moment I was lost and the next I was born again, then I was renewed but still a semi cripple and then just as quickly I was healed. One moment, I had no purpose, then I was a ministry leader and conference manager.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 1997, our third grandchild, Matthew, was born to Anne and Michael, what a blessing as our family grows even larger.



One night in November of 1997 we were given a word from God that we were too bogged down by our possessions. If God called on us to ever go out, we would be too weighed down physically, mentally and spiritually, to be able to obey. So, it was obvious that we would have to de clutter ourselves. We threw away, sold or gave away anything that we had not used within 6 months. This rule would eventually become our general rule and we now do it twice per year. The mental and spiritual de cluttering was a lot harder but eventually we believe that we achieved even that as well.

A couple of months later, in January of 1998 I remember coming home from our duties at the office and later in the evening with both of us sitting up in bed reading, suddenly a great stillness came over me as if there was only God and myself there. God said, “I want you to go out, minister to my people one on one, live by faith and go wherever you are invited.” That really left me stunned and I did not speak to Rose about it. The words from God did not leave me and I kept thinking, was that why He had told us to de clutter? Does God really want us to go elsewhere and live by faith? Probably not, it is more than likely, just me getting it wrong. Six weeks later, we were once again, sitting up in bed and Rose quite suddenly said to me, “you know what, I think we are going to be living like gypsies.” I looked over at her with a scary feeling and asked, “what made you say that?” She went on to explain that a few weeks ago, she felt that God told her, we would go out to help those who needed it, we would be invited to different groups, be always moving to different places and we would live by faith. She also said she was too scared to say anything and when she showed me in her prayer diary, it turned out that she had heard from God on the same night as me, we were both too scared to say anything to each other before now. We went on to ask God for confirmation and we both agreed not to tell anybody else about it yet.

On the very next Sunday at the general gathering, one of the members of the Servants of Jesus named, Andrew, who has a proven gift of prophecy came up to Rose and I as soon as we had arrived. He said to us, “I do not know if any of what I am going to tell you, means anything to you, but it might be relevant for the future, OK?” We both just responded with, OK. He then continued, “God told me to tell you that He will be calling you out to be involved in personal ministry, you will travel to where He calls you and you will live by faith.”

Over the next two months we received 6 prophetic confirmations, 4 verbally, a prophetic letter from the USA and the other one was a prophetic letter from London, they all confirmed what we must

do. We were mildly alarmed before but now we were terrified, though this was mixed with feelings of honour and excitement. We were called by almighty God, what a privilege. We also placed our calling before the elders, our peers and our families, and we received blessings and encouragement from them all.

So now we prayed, “OK God, what about the practical side. How would we travel? Where would we go? Where would we sleep, eat or rest? When should we leave?”

We soon decided to start our missionary journey to help churches, prayer groups or communities at the beginning of 1999, that would give us a year to be ready. So, then we tossed around ideas of how we would live. As to where would we go, would have to be addressed later as we were told to go wherever we were invited and within the next year we were flooded with requests. These came from the many people from all over Australia that we knew because of the conference. When the word spread about our calling, the invitations flooded in from prayer groups and other small community groups.

The next questions were, how will we live and where will we sleep? Would we stay with the community groups we would be helping? But for very practical reasons we decided on a much more practical solution, a caravan, also called a mobile home.

When the Share the Holy Spirit conference was finished in September 1997, I worked for the servants of Jesus until the end of the year to help the 3 new people who would take over from me when I stepped down from my positions as conference manager and Faith Builders in early 1998. Rose stayed on in her position whilst I would be staying at home to prepare everything that we would need.

I had ended up managing 3 Share the Holy Spirit conferences and a few seminars as well. That had involved inviting many international speakers and all the other requirements of large gatherings like these. While another thing that I had introduced to the Servants was to start playing African hand drums at our worship services and many people told me how much it made a difference. I was a little bit too passionate about it all and for that reason, some people made fun of me. It was usually behind my back, but not very Christian either therefore, I simply ignored it.

It soon became obvious that we were truly walking in the total blessings of God, no matter what we did, it was blessed. Everything we touched was blessed, no matter how big or small and nothing was too much for Him. So, we prayed, “Lord help us to not do anything that will cause us to lose your blessing and help us to walk in your strength and understanding.” It seemed the more we listened and obeyed, the more He blessed us.

The blessings started from the moment we had obeyed God’s call on our lives and that has not stopped to this very day. Even the way we were directed to where we purchased our second-hand caravan and for its amazing condition for such a low cost. Our available funds were limited so we decided we needed to sell our boat, a twenty-six-foot, river cruiser with a small kitchen and sleeping berth. We had purchased this amazing wooden river cruiser for only two hundred dollars because it had been very neglected and rundown. The engine was not working, and the general condition of the boat was not good. But it was nothing that some cleaning, some paint and a little mechanics could not fix. By the time it was ready to travel in, we had it moored near Lane Cove and whenever we needed a break we would cruise around. We slept on board many times and enjoyed being on the water to see the night sky. At that time, we also had a beautiful long haired German shepherd

dog named Samson and he would always be with us on our boat. When we first set off to start the repairs, it took us two or three trips in our aluminium runabout to ferry all the paint, cleaning gear, tools and other items to the river cruiser. The last time I went back around the cove to the boat ramp, where our car was, Rose and Samson stayed on board the river cruiser. When I arrived at the boat ramp, which was around the next bay, I loaded up the last of the supplies and tools. When I travelled back to the bay where our larger boat was moored, I was looking out for Rose, but it appeared that she was not on board. Then I spotted her and the dog on the shore, so being very confused, I went to the shore to find them both dripping wet. It turned out that Samson had slipped and fell into the water and Rose could not lift him back on board with the weight of his dripping wet long hair. After a while, Samson started to panic, so Rose swam to shore with him and on the way, Samson had apparently kept trying to climb on her back.



The need to sell our boat was twofold, we needed the money and if we were constantly travelling, we would not be near enough to care for it properly. So, with those funds we started to shop around for a caravan to be towed behind our car, but we soon learned that it would involve more than we expected. When we went to caravan sales yards, we were always asked what type of car we would be using to tow a caravan. Our current car was a Subaru station wagon, and we were informed that the towing vehicle had to be much heavier than the fully loaded caravan. Oops, our car was not heavy enough, it could only tow the smallest type of camper van. We then knew that we also had to sell the Subaru car that we currently owned and then purchase a much heavier vehicle.

After the boat was sold, we started to shop for a caravan, we soon realised that we would get a far better one for our money by choosing one from the private market. After looking at many caravans, we finally found a 4 berth Viscount caravan in excellent condition for an extremely low cost. Even the way we found it was miraculous because we only found it by a friend mentioning that they knew a man who wanted to sell his caravan.

As we were still waiting for the Subaru to be sold and after a great deal of searching, we found a 4 litre, 2-ton, Nissan Patrol 4-wheel drive and incredibly it was sold by a man who lived next door to where we had purchased the caravan. We did not have enough money to buy the Nissan Patrol so we asked the man if we could secure the purchase by leaving a two-hundred-dollar deposit and he accepted. However, we only had 2 weeks to pay the rest, but we had believed that our Lord would make it possible. By that afternoon our Subaru was sold, and we could pick up the Nissan Patrol.





As we were very conscious of weight, we thought long and hard about what we would need for ourselves, and for ministry. The caravan's fridge was so small, we removed it and in we purchased a taller, thin electric fridge. When we considered what television to carry, we decided that if we used an overhead projector, we could also use it for the ministry. We then purchased a roll up screen for the caravan and we also bought a small set top box to connect to the overhead projector. We purchased a new mattress, 2 bicycles along with a bike rack to go at the front of the van and of course a caravan television antenna. Having done all this, we were amazed at how far our money had lasted and it seemed that everything we purchased was at low sale prices.

My elderly mother's sister, my Aunt Margaret, was put in hospital to have her leg amputated because of very severe leg ulcers caused by diabetes. These leg ulcers were very large and despite the doctor's efforts to heal them over many months, they were becoming gangrenous. So, Rose and I went to the hospital on the evening of the day she was admitted, and we were told amputation of her leg would be early the next morning. She was very upset about losing her leg and she asked us to pray for her, so we anointed her with the healing oil then we laid hands on her and prayed for a speedy healing and recovery. We had promised to come back just before lunch time the next day to see her after she had been operated on, only to discover that she had been discharged. The nursing staff told us that when the surgeon came to see her very early that morning to talk her through the procedure of her operation, he had also inspected her leg ulcers. To his great surprise and delight, the ulcers had completely healed over, and she was discharged so she could go back home. When we visited her at her home, she was so delighted that God had healed her leg, so she was able to keep it. She kept thanking us, but we simply said, "it was God, we were only used as His servants to deliver the prayers." As I thought back in time, it was then that I had remembered that the prophesy of having been given the gift of healing, came to mind, wow, God is good! I also remembered the special healing oil that we had used to anoint my aunty and it would take many more years to realise how much of it would spread around the world and how many thousands would become healed by its use with prayer.

From the beginning of 1998, I started to strip out the caravan and install all the new things that we had purchased plus all that we would need for ourselves and for ministry.



By the end of 1998, we had received so many offers from people who would travel interstate and across New South Wales to attend the conference. We soon realised we would have enough

missionary work to last for at least 2 years and now we would have to pray about what order to place them in.

Many people from the community said to me, “how can you give up your privileged positions in the community?” And added, “you are both very brave.” My answer was along these lines, when God gives you a mission like being a conference manager, you must hold onto those things with light fingers as God can call you to something else in a heartbeat of time. While also I said, “I am not brave at all as it takes more bravery to disobey God.”

Long before it was time to leave, we were approached with 2 very tempting offers as to why we should not leave to go into the mission field. However, we had been warned about this through another prophesy some months prior. The first offer came from our leader, and he said, “I do not want to lose you both, you are a good conference manager and if you agree to stay on, I will send you both to start a new cluster for the Servants of Jesus and officially make you both pastors of the new cluster.” The second offer came from the head of the Catholic charismatic renewal, Michael Van Ommen, he said, “if we stay in the Sydney region, he could offer us both leadership positions in the CCR and it comes with a flat at the CCR office site plus salaries.” We immediately knew that we were being tempted not to go, so we told them both that we were very grateful, but no thank you, we must do what God is asking of us.

Many of the Servants of Jesus members pointed out to us that we were fulfilling a prophesy that was given in the early years of community. Apparently, the prophesy said that once the community was established that those mature enough would go out to spread the good news and give help to the poor and the needy, both physically and spiritually.

As we spent the remainder of the year to fit out our caravan with all that we would need, we soon realised that the available space was precious because we had to carry all our remaining possessions with us on the road. Therefore, we had to dispose of a lot of our personal things, like clothing, shoes and bric-a-brac.

At the end of January 1999, Rose stepped down from her position at the office of the Servants of Jesus Covenant Community.

The Catholic Church had finally approved both our annulments, so we were re-married in the Catholic Church at Our Lady of the Way parish in Emu Plains on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February in 1999 with a simple ceremony followed by morning tea in the hall. The annulments also meant that we were both once again in full communion with the Catholic Church.



By the time we had finished setting up the caravan and car, our money had completely run out but that was ok as we did not need anything else and besides, we had a full tank of fuel plus we are now living by faith.

## Chapter 4

### The Missionary Journey Begins – On the Road

8<sup>th</sup> of February 1999 to 30<sup>th</sup> of December 1999

We set out on the road a couple of days after our catholic wedding on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1999 and our first stop was only about 40 minutes' drive time away, it was with the Evangelical Sisters of Mary. We had met the sisters through the Share the Holy Spirit conference as they were regulars and they would run an expo stall there to sell their Christian literature, I always gave them free entry as they permanently live by faith. The sisters were formed just after World War II and came out of the Lutheran church, but the sisters now come from many denominations and nationalities. Anyway, we had promised them that we would stay for a couple of weeks to help them in their outreach work, and we parked our caravan on their property at Theresa Park near Cobbity in the state of New South Wales. This couple of weeks was spent in putting in a PA system in the sister's Chapel, repairing various other equipment and updating the tapes and videos. We were very sorry to leave when it came to Saturday 6 March, the sisters had been so good to us, and we had really fitted in to their way of life. The consistency of their life of prayer, praise, worship and faith in God is hard to leave behind. They prayed over us and sang as we left. God also provided for our very first 40% shortfall of income through their generosity.



So, we were on the road heading to our second point of call, Morisset, near Newcastle in New South Wales. On arrival we met Father Kevin Bates, priest, musician and composer, Fr Brian, local parish priest and Fr John, his assistant and we spent the week, Monday to Friday, doing a Seminar with Fr Kevin. The sessions in the mornings were held at the Conference Centre, in the same grounds where our caravan was parked, then the mid-morning sessions were held in a parishioner's home. A bit like our cell groups only you never quite knew who was coming, but it was a more informal time of sharing and fellowship. The evening sessions were held in the Church, either the local one, or another Catholic Church just up the road and always included Mass. Rose and I led the worship for each session and that was made trickier as I had broken my little finger a few days prior, so playing the African djembe hand drum and the bongos was a bit tricky. We generally helped Fr Kevin with these sessions and provided input for the home groups. Saturday night found us teaching the local Prayer Group on ways to run a "Life in the Spirit Seminar", which they are thinking of running in April.

Once again, the Lord provided all our needs, when he put it on somebody's heart to bless us. We should never be surprised at what God does but He still blows our minds away when we received a cheque for the exact amount of our shortfall. He never forgets. Wow!

On Sunday 13 March we are on the road heading to Moree in the far north of New South Wales. This was quite a journey, over eight hours, but the car went well, and the roads were good. When we arrived, we were rather exhausted and after putting up the caravan and annexe we were ready to



drop. We were then told we were going to the local Spa Pools. “Oh no, this was the last thing we wanted to do,” but we went so that we would not offend our hosts and as soon as we put our weary bodies in the Artesian Waters at forty degrees, we felt all our muscles relaxing and we felt great. From the hot water spa, we then dived into their normal swimming pool at twenty-four degrees, which is forty-degrees bore water mixed with town water, and it was so good. Naturally we spent most of the next week going to the pools. The artesian waters come straight out of the ground at that forty-degree temperature, and it is laced with so many minerals. Many people travelled from all over Australia to relax and sometimes be healed by relaxing in the beautiful spa pools that are fed from deep underground. In the early days of the settlers who made Moree their home, they drilled for bore water to supply drinking water for their cattle and sheep. However, when they found out it was heavily laced with minerals and was very hot, they rejected that idea. But it did not take too long to realise it was so great for humans to relax in. On the Sunday we were taken out to an original artesian bore in the middle of nowhere, 100’s of miles from anywhere, just a pipe with a hole in the ground. It was so hot that we could barely get in and stay in, but boy, it was so refreshing.

Whilst we were in Moree, we were invited to address the combined Moree church clergy. We also had the privilege of visiting the Happy Day Church, which is the local Aborigine Church, for their prayer night. Wow! Were they on fire! On another evening we led a Women’s Evening at the Salvation Army Hall and Rose, spoke on “Being Women of God”. I led a Men’s Breakfast on a Saturday morning for approx. 44 men. In the evening Rose and I combined to give a talk in the Uniting Church Hall to several people from the different churches in the area. There was a sit-down meal supplied afterwards and once again it was a very promising response for the Kingdom. On the Sunday evening we attended the Church Service of the Calvary Chapel, and their praise and worship was the best we have had since leaving the Servants of Jesus General Gathering on that last Sunday. We were asked to give our testimonies and a short talk on Faith and Healing. Ministry followed this for those who wanted it, and it was very well received. Because of the many testimonies of healings because of our ministering, we were asked to come back.



We sadly had to leave Moree and those lovely people and head on to our fourth point of call, in Beenleigh, a suburb south of Brisbane in the state of Queensland. But wait a minute we nearly forgot to share about the blessing of the Lord once again. He blessed us with exactly the amount of money needed to get us by. He did it again! Bless Him! He is a good God!

The journey from Moree to Queensland was extremely blessed, we made good time, had good weather and the car went very well.

We received a very warm welcome in Queensland from the prayer group in Beenleigh. We were shown to our new caravan parking spot on a one-acre property behind one of the prayer group member’s houses. This prayer group is called the “Breath of the Spirit”, the same group that has been attending the share the Holy Spirit conference for the last few years. This year they are bringing



a 57-seater bus full of people and are busily fund raising to assist in the fares etc. and we are helping in as many areas as we can.



We attended a Palm Sunday service at the Emmanuel Covenant Community in Brisbane, to Beenleigh Parish church for memorable Easter services and to Christian Outreach Centre in North Brisbane to hear a man from Pensacola who has a prophetic ministry.



As for the Prayer Group in Beenleigh we have put on Video Nights, Special Days of Teaching, Nights of Praise and Worship as well as input at every scheduled prayer group meeting.

In between all of this we have travelled to Maroochydore for three weekends running doing much the same for the Prayer Group there. It all culminated with a Life in the Spirit Seminar on the Anzac Weekend with 35 people attending over two full days. David McDonald came up to help with this Seminar and the Holy Spirit came in power as we prayed over everybody who wanted it. During the prayer time a woman approached us, and she asked us both if we would pray for her wounded leg, which she showed us. She had a very large ulcer on the calf of her leg, and she said that everything the doctors had tried to heal it had failed. So, we prayed over her to ask our Lord to heal her leg and we told her that it would be her faith that would bring about a healing. At the conclusion of the seminar a celebratory meal was prepared for us all. While we were sitting at the tables to eat, that same woman whom we had prayed for was exiting the ladies' room and she was yelling. As she approached us, we could hear what she was yelling, "I am healed, I am healed." She showed us her leg and there was no sign of any ulcer. I am truly ashamed to admit that my first thought was that she was showing us the wrong leg, however, as she spun around there was nothing on either leg. I still really needed to work on my unbelief and after all, God healed me in a mighty way and did I not receive a prophesy that our Lord would use me as an instrument of healing, wow.



Ironically, one of the most powerful tools has been our testimonies, but of course it is the best way to preach of the risen Christ by saying this is what He did for me.

At this point, I would like to say that my favourite Scripture is Matthew chapter 5: 1-16, the Sermon on the Mount or the Beatitudes. It has been said by some learned men that they are the greatest words ever spoken or that they are the recipe for life and that is so true. The next is Matthew 28:

18-20, the great commission of Christ and the mission statement of our calling. The next would have to be Matthew 25: 31-46, the Least of These which teaches us all, how we should function in ministry. Finally, in James 1: 22, he is making certain we are doers of the Word of God, not just spectators.

We had lunch with Brian Smith the leader of Emmanuel covenant community as he was interested in our ministry work.

We were invited to visit the “Tribe of Judah” Ministries, for “a simple barbecue”, which was cooked every weekend for the poor and under privileged. When we got there, there was at least 200 street people lining up for a feed and what a feed it was, these people really know how to put on an outreach. The Tribe of Judah is basically a Christian Motorcycle Club/Ministry who go to places that you or I wouldn’t or couldn’t go, like outlaw motorbike gangs and prisons. They are all motorbike riders themselves and even have their own club patch for their leather jackets. They had a service after the “barbecue and there was standing room only.



Around this time, we arranged a Lord’s Day Celebration at the local Parish Church Hall. It was something they had never heard of before. A Lord’s Day Celebration is a variation of a Jewish Shabbat, a way of celebrating the Sabbath day for Christians. The best of the best was laid out for the Lord, and everyone came dressed for the occasion. The very best drinking glasses, the best china, a fine linen tablecloth, the best serving platters and beautiful candles as well. A few tables were butted together so that we all sat at one very large table and about 30 people attended. It turned out that although we had specifically said it would be a light supper, everybody turned up expecting a full dinner to be served. After we toasted the Lord and broke bread together, the platters of cheese, grapes, cabanossi and other snacks started to be passed around the table. Most people soon started to think, “surely the platters will not come around again, so this is all we will have to eat tonight.” As it turned out the platters just kept on going around and around this huge table until everybody was filled to satisfaction. We had experienced our very own version of the loaves and fish miracle, and our Lord was with us all. The parishioners were all so touched by the ceremony that it was the talk of the parish for some time.



The next morning in our caravan, we woke up and prepared ourselves for another prayer group teaching session for that day, the first thing to do was to have breakfast. My usual breakfast was Vegemite toast, my favourite since childhood, but when I opened the jar of Vegemite, it was empty and I thought “oh well, when we have enough money, I will buy some more.” As the day moved forward, I had not said anything about the empty Vegemite jar to anybody, and Rose did not even

know about it as it was not that important. For those of you who may be reading this book but are not from Australia, Vegemite is made from yeast extract, and it is very dark brown in colour, almost black in appearance and very salty. It is used as a spread for sandwiches or toast and most Australian children are used to eating it. In fact, many of my generation remember taking vegemite sandwiches to school for lunch or having it on toast for breakfast. These days, many cooks use it to spice up some stews or soups.



When we had finished ministering at the prayer group, we headed back to the caravan for a break and after some time one of the prayer group ladies, knocked on our door. When I opened the door, she said rather nervously and hesitantly with a worried look, “you probably may think I am crazy, but God told me to give you this” as she raised her hand, she handed me a jar of Vegemite. I said to her, “no that is not crazy at all” and I went on to tell her how I had run out of vegemite that morning. After we shared a pot of tea and she had left, I said to God,” Thank you, so much, but with all that is going on in the world, with wars, famine, refugees and all the other problems, You spent time to send me a Jar of Vegemite?” This miracle absolutely flawed me and to this day I am still amazed by it. Such a simple little thing, but He loves me that much, who am I?

Whenever I think about the Jar of Vegemite miracle, I always remember what Jesus said about, not worrying about our needs in Luke 12:22-34 and in Matthew 6:25-34. Also, that our Lord cares for us so very much, that He has even numbered every strand of our hair, Matthew 10:30.

During one of our visits to the Evangelical Sisters of Mary in Theresa Park, a special meal that the twelve Sisters had, and the cook had placed a small plate of dessert at each place setting. It seemed that when some food supplies had been donated to the sisters, and one of the items was a jar of vegemite and the cook thought it must have been chocolate. Remembering that all the sisters were from different countries and had never seen vegemite before now. So, as they all sat to the table and started their meals after thanksgiving prayers were said, all of them were looking forward to enjoying the chocolate. When it was time for dessert, they all took up their teaspoons and dipped into the chocolate and had a bite that resulted from many comments about why this chocolate tastes so awful. When the sisters told us about the episode, we explained to them that vegemite was more suited to be spread on toast or flavour a stew and that it is a yeast extract.

During our time in Queensland, we were invited to meet the leaders of Joshua Ministries, which is the governing body for all the Southern Queensland Prayer Groups. It was a very fruitful meeting with invitations extended to us to minister to any of the groups under their umbrella. Wow! At the same time, they were very interested in the Servants of Jesus Community and what the Holy Spirit is doing in the Sydney region. We were also invited to meet the Catholic Charismatic Renewal chairperson of Queensland, Mary Jones, who expressed similar invitations and views.

Near the end of our time at Beenleigh in Queensland we helped with two more celebrations. The first was a Men’s Breakfast which was very well attended by over thirty men. A local restaurant



provided a hot breakfast for \$5 per head. How about that! The other thing was an honouring day for the Leader of the local Prayer Group who was about to undergo major surgery. She was so shocked we were scared for a minute or two that she would pass out, but we got the impression that everybody in attendance was touched and blessed.



Time to leave Queensland and boy was it hard. We left with much sorrow, to many cries of “please return soon.”

Our first stop on the journey South was Inverell as we were invited to attend the Wedding Vow Renewals of a couple who are close friends. The journey down was as blessed as all our others had been and we arrived under beautiful sunshine. Inverell turned out to be one of our busiest times, but boy was it good to see the Lord work in so many ways and with so many people. While we had the privilege of being God’s instrument in the process.



We had an opportunity to share our testimonies, some teachings, and a healing service. While one of the more memorable occasions was our time with some Aboriginals at a small nearby town called Tingha. A crippled lady was sent to us with the promise of hearing the testimony of my back healing and what a great honour that was. She had heard of my healing from her friend who had been to one of our local outreaches.

Then a large bill had arrived, which had been redirected from our old Emu Heights address and it amounted to three hundred and seventy-six dollars. It was for a fee that we did not expect and were even unaware of. We immediately looked to the Lord and said, “You have provided everything so far down to the smallest detail, we certainly haven’t got this much money so we stand in Faith once again that you will provide it”. Well, you wouldn’t want to know, He did it again. The very next morning a cheque arrived, redirected once more, it was sent from the USA, and it was from a couple we hadn’t heard from for many years. They only wrote a few a few words on a scrap of paper, it said “the Lord put it on our hearts that you would need this at this time”. The cheque was for three hundred American dollars, Praise God, this might be nearly enough to pay the bill of three hundred and seventy-six dollars.

We went to a branch of our bank, and they said, “you need to deposit the cheque into your account, and we will convert it from American dollars to Australian. Once it is converted, we will deduct a conversion fee of ten dollars then deposit the balance into your account and it will be cleared for withdrawal in one week. So, if you wait here for a few minutes, we will give you a deposit slip to show you how much will go into your account.” When the bank teller came back to give us the



deposit slip, she said, “three hundred and seventy-six dollars was deposited.” Our Almighty God has done it again, wow. If you think about all the variables, like the date the bill arrived, the date the cheque followed, the Lord speaking to our American friends, the conversion rate for that day and the fact that were unable to pay the bill otherwise.

While we were staying in Inverell our mail was still being redirected to us and on one day, we received a letter from Compassion Australia. It was a request to sponsor a little girl from India and her name was Sree Kumari Murrigan for \$40 per month. In the envelope there was her photo, a full description of her life, a map of where she lived and a few other pages as well. When I looked at her photo, I was drawn to her image but when Rose and I discussed the possibility, we both decided not to sponsor her. So, with that decision made, I put the material back in the envelope and put it in the rubbish bin. About 4 days later after a lot of other rubbish had been added to the bin, we put it out on the road for rubbish collection the next morning. The next day when I went out to the roadside to collect the empty bin, there were papers littered on the roadside. When I went to pick up about 9 pieces of paper, they were all the papers that had been in the Compassion Australia envelope and there were no other pieces of paper on the road except those. It was every single piece of the Compassion material including the envelope. There could be no louder indication that our Lord obviously wanted us to sponsor young Sree from Karela in India, so we did.

When it was time to leave Inverell, we set out for Coffs Harbour to visit a man suffering from depression as a favour to one of our relatives in Sydney. We had an enjoyable evening and morning with him even enjoying a walk on the beach and collecting shells with him. When we left, he seemed to be in much better spirits, praise the Lord.

We had been asked by the leader of the Servants of Jesus to organise a national tour of Father Peter Mary Rookey. The same priest that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal had brought out to Australia for a national tour in 1996 and I had managed his Mass in Sydney. When we were due to return to the suburbs of Sydney to catch up with our family and prepare for Father Rookey’s visit, our 4-wheel drive car that pulled our caravan had a huge problem. The lower gears no longer worked, so we could only drive in third or fourth gear all the way from the far north of New South Wales to Camden in Sydney’s western suburbs. So, for six hundred kilometres we could only start to pull the caravan in third gear, and it was very hard to do but at the same time we had to prevent the clutch from burning out. We had to keep up a good speed going downhill so that we had enough power to climb the next hill. If we had stalled the engine on a hill, we would never be able to get going again. By the time we reached the suburbs of Sydney, we were forced to start in third gear after stopping at every red traffic light. The only way to get started again was to rev up the engine and ever so slowly let out the clutch a millimetre at a time. By doing it that way we could get started again, but only on flat ground or downhill. I will say this though, it was great for our prayer life!

On our way down we had an overnight stay at Toronto to pick up equipment that I had promised to repair. Next stop HOME!! When we got back to the sisters, we had to trade in the 4-wheel drive for another vehicle as the gear box was too expensive to repair.

The Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary at Theresa Park where we were warmly welcomed back and where we set up our caravan and annexe. We quickly got back into the routine of the Sisterhood and managed to spend the next week or so catching up with all our family. It was great to be back to see our ever-growing family, our brothers and sisters in the community and to attend a General Gathering again.

One of the other reasons that we were back was because we needed to do some forward planning for Father Peter Mary Rookey's visit. For this visit the Servants of Jesus Community has invited Father Rookey back to Australia again. The leader of the Servants of Jesus, Joe Chircop, asked me to manage Father Rookey's national tour as a special favour to him. Father Rookey was to celebrate healing Masses in every state capital in Australia, except that in New South Wales there were to be three, Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. I was to personally oversee all three of his New South Wales services and for the other states I contacted different Christian groups in each state to manage their own services in exchange for paying a share of all the expenses involved in his national tour. In most of the states of Australia, it was the various branches of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal that took control of his healing Masses. Rose and I had organised his international flights, from and back to the United States of America. We also organised all his different flights to each state capital in Australia. We booked his accommodation in Wollongong, Sydney and Newcastle, but we allowed each state to organise his accommodation while he was with each of them.

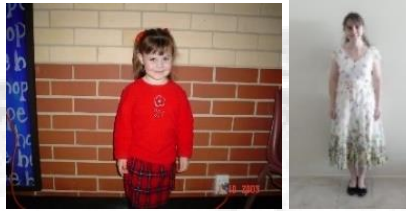
So, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June we left for two weeks in Wollongong, without our caravan this time, as we will be put up by the local prayer group leaders. We had received an invitation to visit some of the local prayer groups, promote the SHS Conference and do some of the forward planning for Fr Peter Rookey's visit. While we were there, we visited 5 prayer groups sharing our testimonies and our miraculous calling to our current ministry.

Because of Father Rookey's ability to attract very large numbers of people to attend his Catholic healing Masses, each venue needed to seat over two thousand people. So, we secured a venue for Fr Rookey's Wollongong visit and we met with the Bishop of Wollongong to secure his permission for the visit. For the Bishop's visit, we were driven there in the prayer group leader's car and on the way, Rose and I looked at the Wollongong beach with longing. We had looked at each other while thinking how we would love to stop and walk on the beach, but we knew we did not have the time to spare. There is no way that the leader could have known our thoughts and despite that, she suddenly said, "we all need a break, so why don't we walk along the beach", wow, what a God we serve. We also organised and appointed a Core Group for Fr Rookey's visit in November as we needed a small army of volunteers to make it flow smoothly. Our job in Wollongong and Newcastle is to train a small army of people to help the healing Mass to flow smoothly. After the Mass itself has concluded, Father Peter will pray for each person individually before he will leave the venue. So, we need many ushers and other helpers to keep it flowing smoothly. For his Sydney healing Mass, we will use members of the Servants of Jesus to provide the help needed.

We returned to the Evangelical Sisters on Thursday 1st July and back to our little home, our caravan.

God has been so faithful in our travels, both financially and spiritually; His blessings are so great when you are doing His will. We pray daily that we will not walk out of His will or start thinking that any of this is achieved by our own efforts, for we do not want to lose His blessings. As we go out and return from each trip, we feel our own hunger and faith growing. It has been really good to be able to flow so smoothly back into the routine and ministry of our very dear sisters.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of July in 1999, our 4<sup>th</sup> grandchild was born, who was our first grand daughter, Jessica, and she was born to Sharron and Adrian, how beautiful and sweet she is.



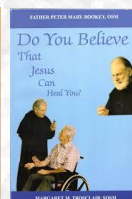
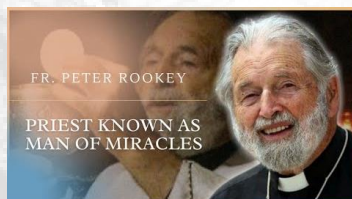
We spent much of our time preparing for the Father Peter Mary Rookey's visit to Australia and of course we assisted the sisters in their Ministry of producing Christian media in many different languages. I was working pretty flat out repairing a lot of the sisters electronic equipment and electrical appliances and one job in particular was to rewire the sound system in the chapel.

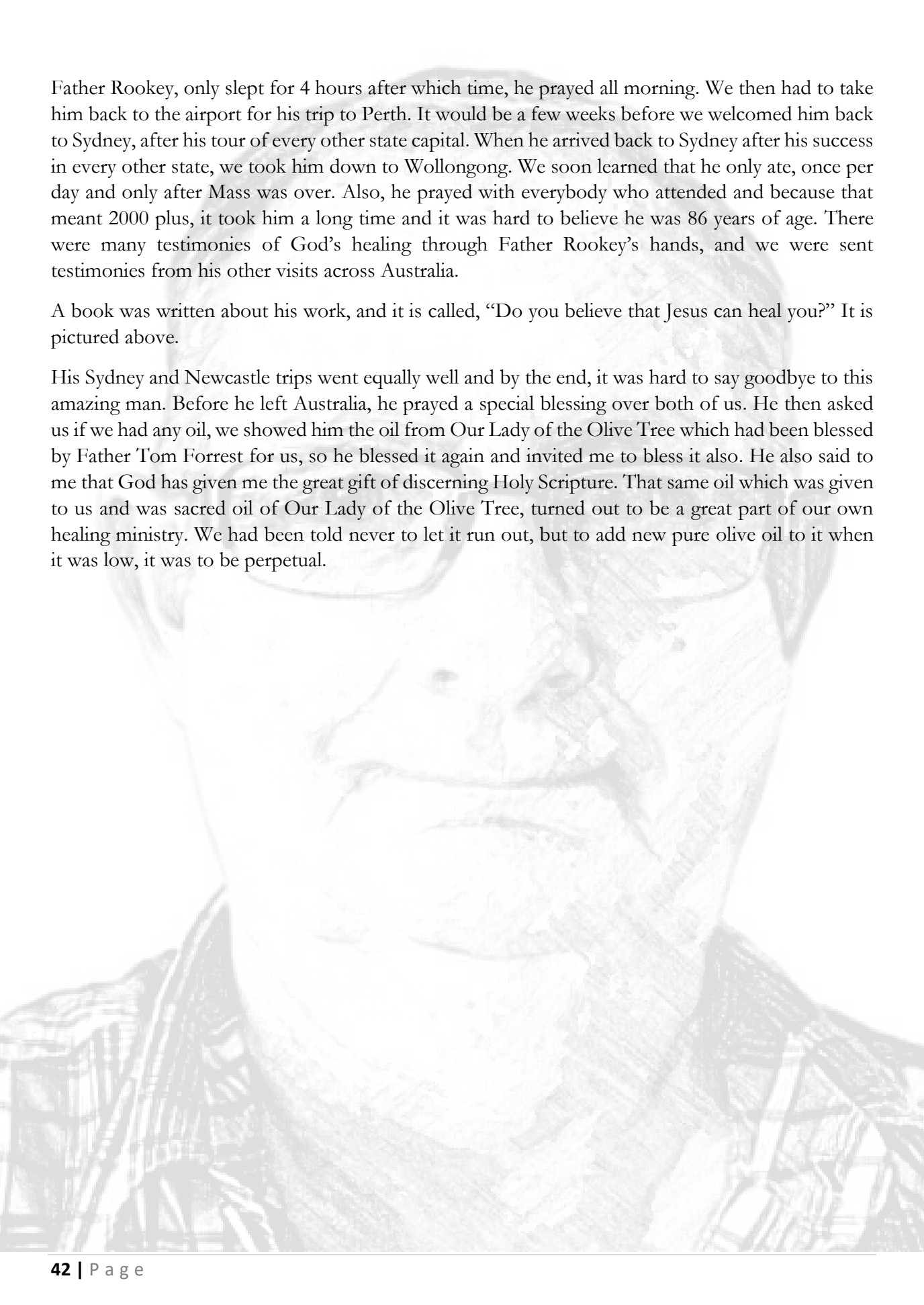
When we attended the Share the Holy Spirit conference as advisers to the new managers and we also met up with Bishop Sundar Clark from the Church of South India again. He had been a regular guest speaker at the conference, and he had asked us 4 times if we would come to India, but we had quickly rejected the idea and said no. But when he asked us once more, I said, "you are a really persistent man, Sundar, we will pray about it". When I think about it, that was foolish because I should have prayed about it sooner. Anyway, no sooner did we pray about it, and we received confirmation that God did want us to go to India.

Then after talks with Sundar, we realised that he was organising a Holy Spirit conference in Chennai in India for the middle of January in 2000. So, we promised him we would fly to Chennai on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and be his guests at his residence in Chennai.

In October we needed to return to Morisset to follow up with all the old and new friends up there and to conduct one more outreach programme.

When it was time for Father Rookey's arrival into Sydney, we had to drive back down to meet him. His arrival time was around midnight, so I dropped Rose off at the international arrivals terminal whilst I booked us all into our hotels for the night at the Novotel. I would have preferred to wait at the airport, but Rose did not drive while we were towing the caravan. The hotel was very busy and when I asked, "why was there so many people milling around," they told me that there was a business seminar running over a few days and all the people were now socialising and drinking before retiring. When Father Rookey arrived well after midnight, he was not cleared through customs until after 1am. Rose then brought him to the hotel by taxi and after he checked in, it was nearly 2am. After that Rose accompanied him to the lifts to go up to our adjoining rooms. Despite the late hour the lifts were full, and this was due to the seminar people going up to their own rooms after drinks at the bar. So, there is the eighty-six-year-old Father Rookey, dressed in his brown cassock, with Rose and around a dozen others in the lift. Then in the very still silence, Father Rookey says, "maybe we should take up a collection". After the startled looks from most of the lift's occupants, one of them asked Rose, "has he been to a masquerade party?", and Rose said, "no he is the real thing, and I am taking him up to bed". According to the looks on some of their faces, it seemed that the delegates of the seminar were treated to some different entertainment.





Father Rookey, only slept for 4 hours after which time, he prayed all morning. We then had to take him back to the airport for his trip to Perth. It would be a few weeks before we welcomed him back to Sydney, after his tour of every other state capital. When he arrived back to Sydney after his success in every other state, we took him down to Wollongong. We soon learned that he only ate, once per day and only after Mass was over. Also, he prayed with everybody who attended and because that meant 2000 plus, it took him a long time and it was hard to believe he was 86 years of age. There were many testimonies of God's healing through Father Rookey's hands, and we were sent testimonies from his other visits across Australia.

A book was written about his work, and it is called, "Do you believe that Jesus can heal you?" It is pictured above.

His Sydney and Newcastle trips went equally well and by the end, it was hard to say goodbye to this amazing man. Before he left Australia, he prayed a special blessing over both of us. He then asked us if we had any oil, we showed him the oil from Our Lady of the Olive Tree which had been blessed by Father Tom Forrest for us, so he blessed it again and invited me to bless it also. He also said to me that God has given me the great gift of discerning Holy Scripture. That same oil which was given to us and was sacred oil of Our Lady of the Olive Tree, turned out to be a great part of our own healing ministry. We had been told never to let it run out, but to add new pure olive oil to it when it was low, it was to be perpetual.



## Chapter 5

### India 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1999 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2000

After finding out that we were travelling to India, quite a few people said to me, “I hope you like curry and rice?” My response was always the same, “no, in fact I hate curry and I do not particularly like rice either, so I guess I’ll have to get used to it.”

As we prayed and planned for our Indian visit, we had decided that if we were going to pay all that money to fly so far, we would stay in India for 3 months. So, the plan was to stay as Sundar’s guests during his conference, then travel into different parts of India to experience more of the life of the country.

When we had prepared for our trip to India, our flight would leave Australia on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December and arrive in India on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January. When some of our family and friends found out, we were told by many that we were crazy because the millennium bug might cause the plane to fall out of the sky. This millennium bug was supposed to cause anything that was computerised to crash or fail, but I simply responded by saying “all that talk is nonsense, nothing will happen”. People were even paying good money to purchase anti millennium bug software for their computers, what a huge hoax and con it all was.

During our prayers to prepare for our trip, we felt very positive that we were doing what our Lord wanted of us. At that time, we were healthily nervous as we were going into unknown territory, physically, mentally and even spiritually, but we also felt that it was ok because God was with us.

Another factor that we prayed about was whether we should continue to wear our crosses around our necks while we were in India. This was because of the sometimes-savage persecution of Christians in that country. We decided after prayer, that because the wearing of them were the reason that some people approached us, was reason enough, and beside that it felt wrong to hide our faith in God. The fact that we were confident in God’s protection was also a big reason to continue to wear them in India.

We were also travelling with Bill Fabry who is a member of the Servants of Jesus, and he will be with us for about two weeks before he needs to return home.

We arrived to a truly fine welcome by Bishop Sundar and his wife Clara with flower leis placed around our necks along with morning tea after which we were shown to our rooms for a rest.

Sundar was a fine host as he took us to many famous landmarks of the city of Chennai, which was previously named Madras. One of these was to a very large Catholic Church that has a statue of Mary, which many believe to bring about miraculous healings. There were people lined up for two city blocks to have a chance of a healing when they touched the statue. We commented to Sundar, “wow, that is a large number of Catholics that are waiting in line”. Sundar responded, “oh no, they are not all Catholics, there a Protestants, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and every other denomination lined up. You will quickly learn that the boundaries that limit people of various religions in western countries do not exist here. If a Hindu for example thinks that a statue of Mary in a Christian church can offer healing, they will not hesitate to cross the fence to receive it”.

Well India is everything we expected and were told of plus much, much more. The press of humanity combined with the poverty is to be seen to be believed. Whole families live on the footpath, along

both major and minor roads, exposed to both the elements and passers-by. While the beggars range from 3 years of age to young pregnant mothers with nursing babies in their arms and even some people, we would call senior citizens, plus of course the lepers and the crippled all of which are dressed in what look like rags.

At Sundar's Holy Spirit conference that lasted for 5 days, I was honoured by sharing my testimony and presenting a teaching. The bishop also remembered that I used to play the hand drums during praise and worship in Australia, so he asked me to play a set of three Indian hand drums, called trios, at his conference. So, for all the Praise and worship, I would play the drums and at the conclusion of the conference he gave the trios drum set to me as a gift. After that we stayed a couple of days and then after fond farewells, we left his residence to travel into deeper parts of India.



Sundar had arranged for us both to meet up with a lady named Esther who was running many outreach programs for lepers and orphans. There was a separate programme for poor young ladies to learn sewing to enable them to gain employment. They were taught on the old treadle sewing machines that I remember from my childhood.



As one of our first stops was to a leprosy village, I have enclosed below a short summary of what leprosy is as most people do not know much about it at all and neither did, we before then.

#### Leprosy or Hansen's Disease

*It is a chronic disease caused by the Mycobacterium leprae bacillus, characterised by lesions of the skin and superficial nerves; the disease also may involve the eyes, testes, and mucous membranes of the nose and pharynx. Destruction of the peripheral nerves by the bacillus leads to a loss of sensation, which, together with progressive tissue degeneration, may result in the extremities becoming deformed and eroded.*

*Leprosy is one of the most feared of diseases, a dread that stretches back into antiquity, the leper being considered as "unclean." Yet it is not a highly infectious disease, prolonged intimate family contact being needed for its spread from one person to another. Most adults in areas in which leprosy occurs appear to be immune, but children are very susceptible. The disease has almost disappeared from most temperate countries, but it is still common in Asia, Africa, and Central and South America. At least 2,000,000 people are known to have the disease, and the actual number of infected people may be as high as 15,000,000. In sheer numbers, leprosy presents a serious problem, not lessened by the fact that it is a disabling, deforming disease, slowly progressing throughout the life of the leper but not usually cutting that life short. Management of leprosy involves social, vocational, medical, rehabilitative, orthopaedic, and reconstructive surgical services.*

*The disease is caused by the leprosy (or Hansen) bacillus, Mycobacterium leprae, and has two principal forms, the tuberculoid and the lepromatous. How the bacillus gets into the human body is not clearly known. It can be discharged in enormous quantities from the nose or broken-down sores of an infected person and, therefore, can be inhaled or spread from skin to skin.*

*The biggest problem with treating leprosy is twofold firstly there is no permanent cure, while secondly the medicine which can stop its progress is expensive and needs to be taken regularly. Therefore, if a missionary organisation just hands out the medication without any policing, the recipient will more often sell it to get money for food for family or children. The other problem is with the children, most children who are born to a leprosy couple is usually born healthy. However, because they are born to lepers, the baby will still be considered to be a leper according to society so they will be forced to remain in the leper village, they will of course catch it anyway over time.*

We were informed that there were still over one million leprosy sufferers in India, and we soon came to realise that they were treated by most people as unclean, just like in Bible times.

One of the most memorable moments I experienced was when we visited the first leper village where we were handing out blankets for when winter arrived, and we were also giving out food. After a short teaching they were told that if they wanted us to pray for them, they just needed to come forward. Many of them seemed reluctant at first, but one very brave lady started to walk forward. She was walking awkwardly, so I looked down at her feet, I saw that she had no toes on her feet, no fingers and part of her face was missing. I observed this as she approached me, and I was determined to treat her with respect and love. When she came up, she knelt in front of me. I tried to get her to stand up and to tell her that she should not kneel to me, but she stayed put, so I knelt with her, face to face. At this point I lifted my hand in prayer to place it on her head and as soon as I made contact, she grabbed my wrist with both of her fingerless palms and hung on tightly. As I prayed the tears poured from her eyes in joy, gratitude and healing and despite my efforts to hold back my own tears a few snuck through. Of course, she was not able to understand what I was praying, but that did not matter because she felt the love of God through my touch.



This is that beautiful lady with the photo taken on her good side.

It was explained to us afterwards that these “unclean”, “untouchable” people are so used to being rejected and shunned by both Indians and westerners alike, that for a white Australian, who symbolises status, authority and wealth to them, to not only pray for them but to literally touch them in an act of Jesus’ love was a moving and healing experience. An experience of simple recognition of her as a human being who only wanted to be touched and loved. Afterwards the lady and I hugged and shared a couple more tears. What a privilege it was, what a truly humbling experience for we who are so unworthy. Thank you, God. This was one of many moving experiences and spiritual lessons I would receive, but being the first of its kind it will remain etched in my memories and have that special place.

The worst thing is that children that are born to leprosy sufferers are born quite normal but as they grow up, they catch the disease anyway.





Previously, when we knew we would be helping and praying for leprosy sufferers, we had asked God to give us the strength to not show any shock or revulsion to any that we would encounter. It turned out that we did not need to worry about that because all we felt for them was love.

We are also taken to a polio treatment centre, and it is sad to see that polio is still quite common in India.



Bill is in the second photo, standing behind Rose.

After our visit with Esther, Bill caught his flight from Chennai that will take him home to Sydney.

After we had prayed, given blankets and other essential supplies, we left for Salem, a city about halfway across India. Sundar had arranged for us to visit Reverend Samuel Stephens of the India Gospel League and his headquarters were in Salem. He had a very large ministry centre with guest accommodation, a large school, a cancer hospital named Sharon and a supply warehouse for church building supplies. Sam was a very humble man with great leadership and discipleship skills, who had a powerful vision for his ministry. One of his projects was to build churches for poor pastors all over India.

After we had been welcomed to the guest accommodation, we were taken on a tour of his facilities, and we enjoyed a couple of days before he invited us on a trip to the northern states. Reverend Samuel Stephens and his wife Prethi are incredibly humble and loving people. Their ministry is so very massive, and many would be affected in negative ways because of its success but Sam and Prethi are great examples of humility and caring.



It was at around this time as we had arrived in Salem that it had rained, and we found out later that it was unusual for that time of year. As the years rolled on though, we started to see a pattern over the next 10 years. This pattern was that whenever we arrived in a new area, it would rain and, on



most occasions, not for long. This happened in India and Australia as well and on some occasions, it would be noted by locals as miraculous or out of season.

We were accompanied by 3 young men who worked for Sam, and we were taken to board a train. Our train trip was for 44 hours, and the train travel was an education as the windows had no glass but did have bars and we could not work out if the bars were to keep us in or keep others out.

We arrived at a place called Tatanga in the state of Bihar at 11am on Wednesday the 16<sup>th</sup> of February. There was originally our three young men, Benny, Wiggy and Rajesh, Rose and me, but suddenly we had picked up 2 more. So, 7 of us, along with our luggage are crammed into a Land Rover and driven for about an hour before we reach Bethel House, School for Orphans at Mosabani. We were shown to our room after a warm greeting, which turned out to be the Director and his wife's room. It was very basic, just a bed with an attached bathroom and toilet which was just a hole in the ground, while the shower was just a jug of cold bore water to tip on our heads. For most places in India there is no toilet paper, you simply wash your bottom with water from a pail but only with your left hand because your right hand is for eating.

The states of Bihar and Orissa are commonly known as the graveyard of missionaries and many Hindu extremists are proud of the fact. In fact, Graham Staines, a famous Australian Missionary, and his two sons were burned alive in their Jeep one night in the previous year.

After we had taught the orphans some new action songs and generally played with them, we stayed for one night before setting off again.

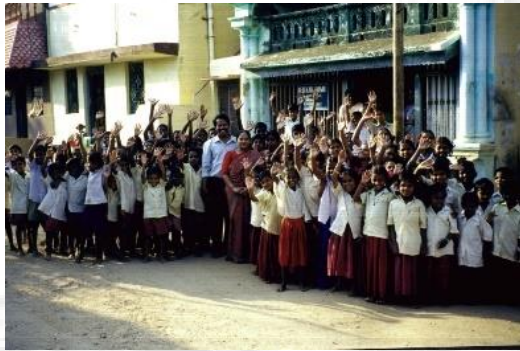


Somehow our numbers had swollen to 26, we were in a car while 20 others were in a Jeep and consequently, some were on top. So, we arrived at the newly constructed church on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February and I was given the honour of officially opening the church with a prayer and cutting the ribbon. Afterwards we all walk to a local small dam where the local church minister baptises a few new Christians, all this while the congregation stand at the edge while singing hymns. It was so very biblical that I expected John the Baptist or Jesus to come walking over the nearby hill.



We then headed back to the Orphanage for one more night and on the morning of Friday the 18<sup>th</sup> of February we set off to head for Ranchi. This time back to 7 of us in the Land Rover and along the

way we stopped for petrol and while we stretched our legs Benny warned us to stay close to the car. We thought there was a political rally going on in the field behind the petrol pumps but the next day we read in the papers that many Christians were killed there that day. Obviously, Benny knew and was watching out for our safety and after speaking to him, he said, “you would have been easy targets with the crosses that you wear”. He went on to say, “there is only one thing they hate more than an Indian Christian and that is a white Christian”.



When we arrived in Ranchi, we booked into a hotel that would probably be a 1- or 2-star hotel, but it had a comfy bed and that is all we needed. The next morning, we headed to the station once again. The train came in immediately, our tickets have been pre-booked but there is no 1st class on this train. Get into a 2nd class carriage, Wiggy throws a few men off some seats and said, “you sit there we will get the right seats later.” It is so packed, there are supposed to be one person per berth but there are far more than that. So here we are in these two seats facing each other, these pull down at night to make bunk beds, the boys have the same, but there are three of them, it is a bit of a squeeze. Across the aisle there are two sets of three berths for six people. At every stop along the way, the men all pile out and walk up and down the platform, on comes the chai man, the coffee man and the eats man, the beggars come to the windows. The whistle blows and everyone hurls back on to the moving train, it is quite funny to watch. At 5.30pm we pull into Raurkela, which is just over the border in the State of Orissa, it was here that they split the train in half. Well, they cut off two coaches and the luggage van and put us into a siding to await the Express train coming from Tataranga. Benny, Wiggy and Rajesh went off to see how long we would be here; they were told the express train would arrive in 40 minutes. So, we got up walked up and down and 40 minutes later no train in sight. Back they go to find out what is happening now; train is running two hours late. Now here we are stuck in this siding, no tea, no coffee, no eats and you know the saying, “Please refrain from urination whilst the train is in the station”, well that was not strictly adhered to, in fact not at all. No news, so we sat and walked and sat and made our beds with bags for pillows and towels for blankets and settled into bed. At 11.30pm the train comes in and there was supposedly an accident on the line, we never heard about it though, we are shunted onto the back of the train, but because we have a luggage van between us and the other carriages, no one can get through to us, so no tea, no coffee, nothing. We had a newly engaged couple in the six-seater opposite us and there were about twelve men that had to accompany them. She was not even allowed to go to the toilet without being escorted by one of the twelve men. Anyway, they all hung around this area and if you dared to get up, they would sit in your seat and not give it back very willingly.

So now it is Monday the 21st, people are sleeping on the floor in the aisle, in the corridor outside, at the toilet door, anywhere there is room and they even slept in the luggage racks that were above us. At 8.00am we pull into Raipur in the state of Madhya Pradesh, only one more state to go. We

managed to get a cup of tea and we had biscuits with butter on for breakfast. We pulled into Nagpur at 3.10pm after passing some very poor areas, there were slums, but worse than you could possibly imagine. Now we come to the haggling for a porter to carry our luggage, Benny tries to get them for less money, in the end they agree to a price. Eventually we get two auto rickshaws and stuff all the luggage and all five of us plus the two drivers into them. Got to Ammah Hotel, now we are posh, we have a tiled bathroom. Had a shower and put on clean clothes boy did that feel good after that journey. We even ordered “Finger Chips” wondering what we might get and guess what they were delicious, not quite like Aussie Chips but near enough to be good.

Now it is Tuesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> and we had a day off from travelling or doing any ministry for a change. That day as we walked around the village shops, we could not believe what we found, a tin of baked beans and after eating curry and rice for many weeks, we were excited. It was something we found in a tiny general store, and it was on a shelf amongst all the Indian foods. It was quite old, and it did not have any recognisable brand but boldly written on the label was the words, Baked Beans. We were looking forward to having baked beans on toast for our meal. Therefore, later that evening, we rang for room service and asked the waiter to heat the baked beans and serve them on two pieces of toast each. About half an hour later, he came back with cold baked beans on stale bread, and I asked him once more to take it back to heat the baked beans. By the time another 40 minutes went by, we thought that we would be having nothing. However, the waiter returned with the most beautiful, hot baked bean jaffles that you could imagine, and we gave him a generous tip. We felt like a king and queen sitting up in bed eating our hot baked bean jaffles.

Got up at 7.00am on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> showered and packed and ready to go. Went down to Foyer at 9.30am. Car came at 10.10am and after a ten-minute drive we were at the Conference Centre called “Die Arche”. We are here for two nights for the Vision 2000 Pastors’ Conference. There is no shower, so we are back to pouring cold water over our bodies with small plastic jug. The Conference went very well, and I gave some teachings while it was translated to Hindi. We went for a walk around the grounds and there is a hospital on the same site. It is so old and rundown that we thought it was an old unused ruin, but as we were walking and watching the wild pigs running around, we suddenly saw some women dressed in pure white saris. They turned out to be nurses and the hospital was fully functional, I would not wish to be a patient in this hospital.

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> February up at 6.30am, showered and prepared for the last day of the conference. At 7.30pm we left the Conference Centre and 8 of us with all our combined luggage piled in the Land Rover. We dropped one person off and picked Sam up, so it was a very packed journey. Now we are travelling south to Chandrapur, which is a three-hour car journey. Stopped for petrol, stopped for cuppa, arrived at Hotel Sushika at 10.30pm. Waited to book in, then for our bags to come up to the room, it was 11.30pm.

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> of February and we wake up for a cup of tea, followed by showers and pack our bags ready to leave. Shayam, one of the Regional Co-ordinators who has been at the Conference for the last few days, meets us on the road. He leads us to a block of land somewhere in the middle of nowhere where the India Gospel League are thinking of buying the land for a new Christian centre. We all pile out of the car to stand in the middle of this block with the cows, goats and goatherders, to pray. Then we pile back into the car and follow Shayam to a church that is to be dedicated today. Arrive and given tea, it was at this point that we were informed that we would be opening the church in the village of Rajura. So, as I prayed a prayer of dedication, Rose cut the ribbon. We were then



asked to unveil the plaque, so we pulled back the curtain that was covering it, we discovered that my name was inscribed on it. Now we are leaving our name in India forever to be remembered. The plaque had the names of who donated the Church along with the person who officially opened the church, Rev Craig Walsh, it was a brass plaque that was engraved with the names, so this must have been pre planned. What a shock, what an honour and what a wonderful surprise.



The decorations on the outside of the building were great but when we got inside, they were even more splendid but so simple. We could take lessons on decorating with paper and string and making it look so effective. Inside the church the prayers and talks went on in Hindi and the local dialect then we were ushered into the Pastor Paul's humble straw hut for dinner. Reverend Samuel Stephens, Shayam, Benny, Wiggy, Rajesh, pastor Paul, Rose and I were seated on western chairs, obviously pre-arranged, while pastor Paul's wife was serving us all with mountains of curry and rice served on traditional large banana leaves. It is a tradition that the men are always served first by the women and then they would always eat afterwards. The trouble with our meal was that as soon as we started eating, the women would keep piling more on our leaf and in the end, we had to insist on, no more please.

We soon learned during our three months in India, that whenever we would be welcomed to a village, the first thing to happen was usually a meal at the village leader's house. Rose and I, along with our interpreter would be seated with the leader while his wife would serve us our meal. But it took us by surprise when our interpreter, told us the first time it happened, that what we had just eaten was probably the head man's entire quota of food for his whole family for a week. Of course, when I found this out, I immediately said to him, "well, I will give him some money to buy more food". He said, "you would do him so much dishonour that it would be as bad as hitting him with a lump of wood". After some time, I worked out a system, where a few weeks after such a visit, a 20 kilogram back of rice would be delivered which was fictionally provided by some obscure branch of the government.

We leave at 1.45pm and once again, Shayam meets us on route to escort us to his church where a wedding will be held. It is his daughter who is getting married. We are ushered into his lounge room and given tea and "sweets" while the poor bride is trying to get dressed in the next room. The Anglican Bishop of the state of Andhra Pradesh is officiating with Rev Sam Stephens and us. So, into the church we troop to attempt to sit at the rear, but our hosts insist that we sit up the front, facing the congregation. We are positioned right opposite the bride and groom, and they will be facing us throughout the service. The bride comes in in a beautiful white and gold sari with a long veil held by two little girls all in white. They all looked so beautiful. The bride and groom do not look at each other, touch each other, smile, laugh or show any emotion whatsoever, their eyes are always looking downwards. There is a special pendant on a chain, which the bridegroom gives to the bride, and this is in the place of a ring, I expect she will always wear this. The service goes ahead, and we are invited to pray for the couple and at last get a bit of a smile from them. Then we are rushed off back to the lounge room while the bride runs in and gets changed into a blue and gold



sari. Then we parade behind them, with the bishop and Sam, to the outside where it has been transformed into a multi lit, decorated courtyard with people sitting in chairs. We process to the front of area and the bride and groom sit on thrones and we sit on their right along with the Bishop and Sam. We are waited on like kings and a queen, it is such a great honour and a little embarrassing. After we finish, the boys go in to have their food and then we go back to the hotel by 8.30pm.



It is Sunday 27th and Shayam has arrived to take us to the station and at 6.45am we leave, or we will miss the train. Now seven of us pile into a Land Rover with an open back, along with all the combined luggage and off we go at full speed to Bahlshah railway station to catch the 7.30am train to Salem. It is 7.10am great we have made it with time to spare, only Wiggy is coming with us as the other two are waiting until 10.00am for their train.

We are now seated in an air-conditioned first-class carriage, and we pulled into Salem at 3.00am. Our lift was coming at 5.30am to pick us up but nobody was there. After much wrangling with the taxi drivers Wiggy managed to get us a Taxi that would drive us out to Reverend Samuel's Sharon Christian complex for 200 Rupees. We pile in with all the luggage, as it is now 4.00am. The Taxi is breaking up and the driver can't even drive properly, and he does not even know how to change gears. We manage to get through the town, but the driver has no idea where first gear is when we come to a very rough road, so he tries to pull away in whatever gear it is in at the time. Now we are getting into the even rougher roads where it has been raining the holes are huge. He carries on driving and grinding gears until we are in a large hole and the car stalls. The driver tries to pull away in third gear, car protests, he revs it up and we eventually get going. Now he hits the holes at a fast speed, and we get thrown all over the place. Suddenly the lights go out, it is pitch black and we have no lights. This is fun. Now we hit a huge pothole and the car dies, he restarts in fourth gear and revs and revs until smoke is billowing out from under the engine and we haven't moved one inch. We are trying hard not to giggle too loudly, and he gets out lifts the bonnet says "um" and gets back in; he has no idea what he was looking at because it was the clutch that was burning. Now we are going but so slowly, we cannot make it up the slightest hill, will we get there? Now he hits yet another hole and the car gave up and we sit there, laughing, Wiggy gets out and shuts his door, which immediately sprung open again, he does it again and it does the same. We are now doubled up in the back. We did eventually get home, but at least it made our day.

It is now Monday 28th February, and we are having the day off after all that excitement. I will be going on another journey with a bus load of Americans that Sam is entertaining and who will be shown some of his projects. So, I will leave next week while Rose stays at Sharon to do some office work for Sam. My journey with the 7 ministers from the USA was a real eye opener for me because most of them were very selfish. The reason I say this is because they refused to blend into the culture around them and often were openly critical of the simplistic lifestyle around them. Also, they refused the Indian's hospitality and insisted on having more western style food wherever they went and this meant always staying at the most expensive hotels.

The next month passed by quickly as we travelled to many other small villages. Some were exclusively for leprosy sufferers; others were simple low-income farming communities, and some were filled with the Dalet class of Indians. In the Indian Hindu caste system, there are 5 main castes of people where the highest and most exclusive caste is the Brahmans. While the lowest caste is the Dalets and the people of that caste have long been considered the servant caste and some Indians consider Dalets to be non-human, outcasts, untouchables or below the feet. In other words, to be treated not much better than lepers. The other things that had a huge impact on us were the endless number of orphans and the plight of the widows. When a woman in India is widowed, she has no status and for many, they are even shunned by their own families. So many widows in India are homeless and more often unemployable. Then there are the desperately poor, the major cities of India, some of the largest in the world, are filling with people whose farms have failed through drought and other factors and who have then journeyed to the major cities only to find no work and more poverty. The poor line the footpaths of the big cities to live under cardboard, plastic, tin or old wood scraps to beg for handouts.

We were asked to preach in a small village church where the language spoken in that village was unique to only that village. You see, there are two main languages spoken in India and they are, Hindi, that was spoken in north India and Tamil, which is spoken in the south. However, there are many more regional languages and some unique languages that were only used by one village, but these are few. The language used in this current village has no written form and is handed down from parent to child. The problem was that only one man in the village could translate to this village language from Hindi. Then there was only one man to convert Hindi to Tamil and one of the team who could then translate English to Tamil. When I was told all of this, I just said to leave out the team members, I do not need to speak at all, because three interpreters is ridiculous. But they said that many people have waited many hours to hear me teach, so it must go ahead.

Well, the church was packed with many people sitting outside and as I would say a few words it was translated from English to Tamil to Hindi and finally to the village language. I was left wondering what was said by the last person and was my teaching being laid out accurately. It was quite funny to hear it and by the time the last man would speak, I had to remember where I left off.

After we had been on many more India Mission Trips, I often wondered is my teaching being accurately translated and in one of our later trips I was able to ask two young men who had followed us on many of our trips to India and they were able to remember most of the subjects that I had taught about and that was reassuring.

It was so very hard to leave these beautiful people but after some tears and a heavy heart we left India on Friday 31 March at 8.30am, but what a performance to get out of the country. First, we went to have our bags weighed and found that we were 30 kilos overweight. Oops! So many gifts from these wonderful Indian people who gave so generously to us, this included my new set of Trio Indian drums, a set of three on a stand. So, what do we take out? The drums will have to stay in India, but then God intervened because after all our bags had been passed through, I approached the check-in manager and was given the all-clear to take the drums back to Australia at no charge.

On we go into the in-flight area, we were searched many times both physically and electronically by guards with loaded 303 rifles. By the time we got onto the plane we had been searched and scanned eleven times, this included three full body searches. On the last scan our hand luggage was put through and alarm bells went off. It turned out to be one of my belt buckles for my jeans.

At last, we are off and out of the smog of Chennai to beautiful clean Singapore airport. Hot showers, clean water what a luxury, normal food, clean floors, toilets with toilet paper, wow! Now we get onto Qantas bound for Sydney, Australia and guess what they served us for lunch. Yes, rice and curry, I felt like throwing it at them.

After these last two years have passed, we have become aware of the vow that we had made before we had started our missionary journeys. That vow was that if we did not know the answer to a question, we would admit it and make the effort to find the answer. Also, if we were uncertain about any topic, we would research it. But after having travelled through many parts of our country and after we had finished a three-month missionary trip to India, we realise just how well equipped we have been taught through the teachings and leadership training that we received from the Servants of Jesus Covenant Community.



## Chapter 6

### Home 1<sup>st</sup> April 2000 to 10<sup>th</sup> January 2001

Now we land in Sydney, and it is 5.00am on Saturday the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, we are home. We were met by some of our children and one grandson, boy was it good to see them, and a few tears of joy were shed.

After some morning tea we were taken back to the Evangelical Sisters at Camden to our caravan. Unpacking done and then a mountain of post to wade through.

Now Satan overplays his hand. Before we left the country, we had told people that we would be away especially service people like Telstra etc., so when we opened the mail to find a summons, a subpoena for legal action and bills galore not paid, we were in shock. It was obvious that not many of them had recorded our notation on their computers. Many phone calls later we started to clean up the mess but now the car must go in to be fixed. Only a small tune up job, we think, but it turned out to cost just under \$2000. Ouch!! However, through yet another miracle we were able to pay it, God is so good, and we praise Him. He is with us, and He is our provider. He will overcome and Satan is out, all his attempts to destroy what we received in India have been foiled by God.

Now that we are home, we asked ourselves, can we forget what we have seen? the lepers, the orphans, the widows, and the poverty. No, we could not forget, can we do anything about it? Maybe not, but we felt that we needed to try to make a difference. So, after much prayer, we knew that we would return to India to help in any way that was possible.

We have been called to make Inverell our ministry headquarters and it has been confirmed many times, prophetically, so sadly we must leave the Sydney area, our children, our grandchildren, our community and our brothers and sisters in Christ. But when God calls you must obey.

It is very difficult to express in words how difficult it was to be released from our Covenants with the Servants of Jesus covenant community. The day that Joe and the leaders prayed over us at the General Gathering in the second week of April, we had many mixed feelings and not a few tears were shed by us both. After all, surely Community is carried in our hearts and spirits, therefore on that basis, we will never be far from home!! Some people said, “you are both so brave!”, no we are not brave, we are just too scared to say no to God when we know that He has called us. God only wants our faith exercised through our obedience to Him.

Two weeks after we got back from India, we had the sad task of packing up our caravan and all our belongings and say goodbye to our dear Sisters who had become such dear friends, again the tears flowed. Our first stop was Westmead, Marist Brother’s High School auditorium where we stayed for two weeks in our caravan for the Share the Holy Spirit Conference. I was to assist the new conference manager and we could both sit in on many of the teachings as well.

After the Conference had finished, we set out on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April for Inverell. Our journey was full of little surprises as we towed a very heavy load, everything had to go with us this time. Not too far into the journey, we discovered that the van “swayed” dangerously if the speed went over 80 kilometres per hour. No problem we will just travel at that speed for most of the way! We had already decided to take two days for the journey, so this didn’t worry us. Next problem arose on the motorway travelling north, when, due to the excess weight the car overheated. We do not normally



carry as much as we had on board, but due to the permanency of our move we had to take everything. A stop for 10 minutes on the side of the road solved this problem.

We stopped for the night at a town named Willow Tree and it is a sleepy little town with one general store. We parked on the side of the road near the railway and apart from a couple of freight trains that was all that went through all night. We managed to have a hot meal and a cup of tea by means of the gas BBQ before it got completely dark, we were all set for the night. In the morning, after we had some morning tea, we set off once again on our way to Inverell. Only one more problem came our way and that was that the oil in the car was overheating as well as the radiator, so you had to constantly watch the dials on the dashboard while driving. So, we just kept going at a steady pace and we finally arrived in Inverell at around midday on Monday 1st May.

We arrive on a beautiful warm, sunny day to park our caravan, temporarily, on 200 acres of bushland. This property is owned by some dear friends, who are members of Christ the Saviour Community, here in Inverell. They graciously have let us stay on their land and along with themselves, there are four children. Another married couple live in a “granny flat” at the back, so all together we make up a small community group.



The name of their property is Rainbows End.

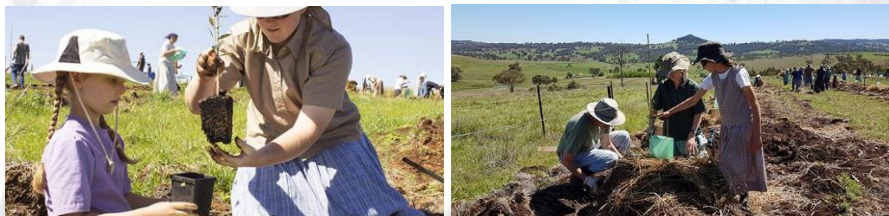
The days are full of sunshine with big blue skies and no clouds, and at night there are so many stars visible, unlike Sydney where the pollution and lights, ruins the view. It actually snowed the other morning; it was only light and wispy but snow is snow. We were quite warm and cosy in our caravan though and both our heater and electric blankets served us well, both loving gifts from some of friends in Christ.

The main reason we are in Inverell is to set up Mamre Ministries headquarters. We must therefore purchase a property to suit the needs of this ministry and to that end we have been praying and looking in all the local areas for a suitable property.

At the present time, after looking at many, many properties, we have got our eyes on one at a small town called Mt Russell. Mt Russell is so small that it has no shop or anything else except about 10 houses and quite a few farms further out of town, so you can imagine how quiet it is, and it is 24 kilometres west of Inverell.

The property is 10 acres which has a large farmhouse with a few bedrooms and other very large rooms, especially the sunroom which would seat more than fifty people comfortably. There would be plenty of room for guest accommodation, retreat facilities, and the sunroom even has wheelchair access. So, if the Lord wants us to have this property, He will open the right doors for us to purchase it, but then, as a couple of you have prophesied, there will be many miracles to glorify God over the establishing of Mamre Christian Retreat Centre. Of course, the house at Emu Heights, which is now up for sale and must be sold first.

During our time in Inverell, we have been introduced to the Bruderhof Christian Community who are situated in Elsmore which is a few kilometres from Inverell. They call this branch of the Bruderhof Community, Danthonia, and it a farming type of community that is made up of families and single members who have left normal society to live in community. The Bruderhof give up their prior lives and possessions to support each other and they also believe in living in an enclosed community. We were told that apart from attracting new members, they do not believe in outreach programmes to spread the Gospel. For that reason, they are ignoring the command of Jesus Christ to spread the Good News. We do thank them though, for their beautiful Christmas pageant and their fine hospitality.



Now that we have settled down to life in the country we have started to reach out to the locals in the Aboriginal town of Tingha, which is 25 kilometres South of Inverell. We have already met many of them and been to their services a few times, shared about India and what God has done in our lives as we continue to fellowship with them.

In the meantime, we have invitations to help prayer groups and communities in Albury, Tenterfield, Moree and Newcastle in New South Wales. As well as Beenleigh, Brisbane and Toowoomba in Queensland. Also, invitations to one church and two prayer groups back in the suburbs of Sydney. Of course, the biggest proposed trip being the return to India in March next year with a team of possibly eight other people to come with us at the invitation Indian Gospel League through Reverend Samuel Stephens.



Tenterfield Prayer Group



Moree Lord's Day Meal

We have made the decision to return to India in January 2001 and with that in mind we started fundraising efforts to go towards paying for the flights and other expenses.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of June we return to the Beenleigh prayer group, at their invitation, where we shared about our Indian trip with some praise and worship.



Then when we are back in Inverell, we continue to help the local prayer group and help other church groups in the area.

In mid-July we return to Sydney, to see our children, grandchildren and to catch up with as many brothers and sisters as we can. We did not have to bring the caravan back down with us, as we will stay with our children, so we will make better time.

After our return to Inverell, we have put into action a cross cultural course, starting in August, to train the prospective India trip candidates in what to expect. It is also a way for us and them to get to know each other and see if they are suitable for such a trip.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of October, we head for Taree in New South Wales at the invitation of the prayer group in that area. We conducted a Life in the Spirit seminar for them over a long weekend and it was very well attended. On the Sunday one of the ladies said that she was sorry that she could not attend the next day because she was booked into the hospital to have a cancer removed from the back of her neck. When we told her that it was kind of her to tell us, she asked us to pray for her. The next morning, we had been about an hour into the last day's programme when the same lady turned up. She explained that when she reported to the hospital, they checked the back of her neck to discover that the cancer was gone. They then did a scan and there was nothing under the skin either, so they sent her home. She was calling us her heavenly angels and proclaiming a miracle, but we told her it was God alone who had healed her.



When we were in India, Bishop Sundar asked us to arrange some speaking engagements for him when he is in Australia. While we are visiting our family, we arrange in late October for him to give teachings at a few locations in the Sydney Area. Then in November we accompany Bishop Sundar on his teaching mission to Moree, Tingha, Inverell and Glen Innes, all in the state of New South Wales.



During our time since returning from India we have received a steady flow of testimonies that have come about because of our presence there and the following testimony deserves to be told.

Pastor Borge lives in a village called Godegaon in North India; he had planted a church in this place. It is growing over the past two years, he has also planted seven other churches in the neighbouring villages. It is his passionate desire to see people come to the Lord. The believers gather together in



a small, rented house in the village. Every single Sunday since the church in Godegaon was planted, new people made commitments to accept Christ as their Saviour during the service. That has become common practice. Never a Sunday passes by without at least one or more being saved except one about three months ago.

When no one responded to the altar call that morning, Borge was concerned. Many people came for prayer for different needs after the service but none to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Borge waited and prayed but nothing happened. His concern turned to worry when everyone left, it was time to close the doors and Borge knelt and started to weep before the Lord. He began to feel that his ministry was over, and God was not going to use him anymore. He cried and prayed: "Lord, please don't give up on me", he wailed and cried out to God until suddenly a man appeared at the door. He looked tired; he was from a village 12 kilometres away. He was just passing by on his way to another village. He was thirsty and asked for water to drink so Borge stopped praying and gave him water to drink then talked to him about the Living Water of God. The man accepted Jesus into his heart and immediately invited Borge to come with him to his village. Borge went with him. Over the next three months a church has been planted in that village as well, Praise the Lord!

It was another great blessing to hear that our fifth grandchild was born to Sharron on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2000 and his name is Michael, wow, our family is certainly growing. Michael and his older brother, Peter, both have a condition called Autism. It is a condition that affects the way they can relate to others and to normal life. Peter has only a mild form of Autism but sadly Michael is affected by it much more.



By the end of the year 2000 our home in Emu Heights has finally sold and we are now able to purchase the 10-acre property in the tiny village of Mt Russell. It was owned by an elderly couple named, Andrew and Maria, sadly Andrew has Alzheimer's disease. On top of that, Maria is struggling with arthritis. With all of that to deal with, Maria has decided to buy a small house in Inverell, where there are much more facilities for their support. However, Maria has kindly offered to stay on at the Mt Russell property to house sit until we return from our 2001 Indian trip.

We spent Christmas with our growing family in the suburbs of Sydney and what a great joy it is to be among them for the celebrations. When we head back up north to the Inverell area, we are able to tow our caravan to our new property in Mt Russell. We have agreed to remain in our caravan so that Andrew and Maria can remain in the house until our return from India at the beginning of March.

Before we were due to leave for India in 2001, Rose was so very sick that we were considering whether to cancel the trip. However as soon as we stepped up our prayers it did not take much longer before she was well and truly healthy once more.



## Chapter 7

### India 11<sup>th</sup> January 2001 to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2001

We left for India on 11th January with Cathy Gunther and her adult son, Richard. We stopped over in Malaysia for one night due to bad flight connections and that meant that we stayed in a five-star hotel, compliments of the airline.

All our connections and luggage transfers went well, and we were greeted in the traditional way with garlands of flowers on our arrival in India.

At this point I must share something that stayed with me every time I would arrive in India. That was the excitement of feeling more alive as soon as I would smell the spicy air, the heat, the crush of so many people and just the general atmosphere. It would happen for all our future trips, and it would make me feel more alive every time. I think it has a lot to do with the greater faith of people who have nothing, yet embrace God with all the zeal they can, it is infectious. Another point is this, when we first set out as missionaries, both in Australia and Asia, I wondered if we would be equipped enough to accomplish our goals, as well as fulfilling the needs of those we ministered too. However, it never became an issue because between my gift of understanding Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit, the needs of others would be satisfied by their own words. Another thing that we would realise by the end of this second trip to India is that we would end up doing much more Biblical teaching this time.

We were shown around the city, especially for the benefit of Cathy and Richard, and preached in a couple of Church Services.

Our ministry to the lepers in outlying villages has been truly blessed and we have had the privilege of laying hands on each person at most of the villages we have visited. We have also visited gypsy villages, orphanages, women's refuges and a home for the aged. What a great joy it is to visit them in their grass huts or just out in the open where they live. A privilege to share their joy in having us visit, to pray over them, give them aid, hand out toys to the children and share the Good News with them. Their faith and reverence are inspiring and faith building for us, while the openness of non-Christians to hearing the Good news of the Gospel is amazing. These same people, who often only eat one small meal in two to three days, were willing to give us anything they owned, including that one meal.

When we visited Valdalur leper colony we had the great honour of praying with a man who had no fingers, sores all over his face and hands and his legs were so swollen and covered with festering sores from top to bottom that he was on the verge of having them amputated. He had heard that we were in the local area, and he had requested to have our group come to pray over him. Our group laid hands upon him. We all knelt around him in his grass hut that was barely big enough to hold himself, his wife and the four of us. We all felt very privileged to even be there, we were indeed seeing the face of Jesus Christ, "the least of these", as we had been with so many others before and after this man. So, as we knelt there in the dust of the dirt floor hut with flies tormenting his pain-racked legs, we felt the presence of God and so did he. After the prayer was over, I happened to glance down at my right hand to discover it had the man's blood on it from where I had held his hand. The worst thing was that the blood was in the exact same spot on my hand where I had grazed it that morning, so his blood was mixed with my own. Instead of being scared and repulsed, I immediately felt privileged and felt as though I had the blood of Jesus on me, what a blessed man I

am, I felt very unworthy. I had wiped the blood off my hand with a clean handkerchief and I have kept it to remind me of him.



There have been many other examples of God working in the lives of these spiritually rich people and many examples of faith in action, but we chose this man's story, as it would be hard to top. He believes God will heal him and we are standing in faith that He will. It is so hard to witness such suffering and poverty and each place you go you feel like giving them everything you have; it is even harder to accept their gifts.

After praying over a dying woman racked with pain and who could only crawl, we shed more than a few tears, but then that was not the first time and probably won't be the last, but praise God for compassion.

We witnessed the miracle of a woman healed of partial deafness, we pray for many more healings, some we will witness and many more we may never find out about.

One gypsy colony we visited at Pallavaram where a Christian ministry called Krupa have been ministering for three years shows the other side of the coin in the spiritual battle. As we prayed over each person the young men of the colony would mock and joke about the whole thing. Talk about spiritual strongholds and the playground of the enemy, but God is bigger than all of that.

We each knew that had we been there unescorted we would most certainly not leave with what we carried on us, unlike most of the villages and colonies we visited. However, it was good to see this side of things and although we were mocked, we rebuked them both verbally and spiritually. One young man asked us for prayer so he could find a wife, so he could marry, and then he started to make a big joke of it when he we started to pray for him. I strongly rebuked him for mocking God, and I told him if he wanted prayer he had to behave. We must pray for Krupa, which means "the grace of God" in all Indian languages, so they will be able to help these lost souls to find God, the victory is always the Lord's.

We have just arrived at Salem, which is about halfway between Chennai (Madras) on the east coast and the west coast. Our intention was to link up with the Indian Gospel League with Reverend Samuel Stephens and the Missionaries of Charity, the Mother Teresa Sisters.

To attempt to put down on paper what we have seen and experienced will be clumsy at best, however, we will ask for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

We have had the great privilege and honour of dedicating and opening a church, a prayer shed, a pastor's hut and a leper's hut. As well as having been asked to bless various churches, houses, huts, villages, leper colonies, gypsy colonies, hospitals, refuges, clinics and orphanages. We have also been asked along the way to preach, teach, sing, do skits, pray, baptise, dedicate babies, pray over leaders and in most cases pray over all those present, what a wonderful labour of love it has been. At most

churches or venues, we have been invited to visit, the normal expectation was that we would be asked to pray over every person in attendance.

It is a great honour to stand before a hall filled with village pastors at a pastor's conference, who are hanging off your every word as you share a teaching from the Word of God. It is a humbling experience, but then most of the groups we have addressed have displayed the same zeal and hunger, from small children to grandparents. It is a bit different from our own churches in Australia, where most children come to church and play games or simply get bored.

Last time we were in India we went on a trip with the Indian Gospel League to Orissa, Bihar and other northern states and this time we went south to Tuticorin, which is on the east coast almost to the bottom of India. We have seen the country now, almost from top to bottom. It was while we were at Tuticorin that the earthquake struck in the northwestern area of India. So, by God's grace alone, we could not have been further away and still remained within India.

On our return to Salem, where the headquarters of the Indian Gospel League is, we had put aside a couple of days to work with the sisters of the Missionaries of Charity who have a branch there. They had previously written to us in Australia, 6 months ago, to invite us to work with them. We had briefly visited them on our previous visit to India and they heard of our intention to return to India for this missionary trip.

#### The India Gospel League headquarters in Salem



We minister to school children. We address the staff. Rev. Samuel at some baptisms.

What a blessed time it was to serve alongside these saintly sisters of God as we ministered to dying, handicapped and aged women who were rescued from the gutters and slums of India. For the many of these women who had hardly more than one or two breaths left in them when they were found by the sisters, there were a considerable number who were not found in time. These ones, whose bodies may otherwise rot where they lay, would receive proper burials from the sisters with dignity and love.

Also at the centre are handicapped children and babies, most of them both physically and mentally. All very young, under 5, and most of them have their limbs twisted in seemingly impossible positions. But they have many things in common with the ladies in the women's dormitory, they are all abandoned. They were unwanted by all levels of society, many of them had been beaten, abused and treated worse than animals. There are also several things they have in common on the positive side as well, like their warm smiles, their openness to the Holy Spirit, their faith and their love towards us.

We were praying with the women and the babies, and generally making sure that they knew we cared. They particularly loved it when we would sing some of our Christian songs, but we also felt that we should be doing more. So, to that end, we asked the sisters if we could help in the kitchen or the laundry but they would always say, "no please just continue to do what you have been doing."



Eventually we were so insistent on doing more manual work that we went to ask the Sister Superior, “can we help in a more practical way, please?” The Sister Superior said to us in response, “do you know how many well-meaning, wealthy foreigners and Indians come here to offer their help and insist on helping the poor and handicapped here in our compound?” I answered, “no, I have no idea.” She continued, “well, I have lost count as there have been so many. But out of the countless beautiful people in our care, none of our visitors have ever done what you have been doing by praying and singing with them, please continue.”

So, with that in mind, the four of us agreed to make sure that we had prayed for every woman and child before we left for our lodgings that evening.

When we returned for our second day the sisters greeted us with a great deal of excitement and zeal. We asked them why they were so happy, and they told us that after we had prayed over all the ladies the evening before some were healed. One lady had not spoken for over 20 years, yet she started to speak to one of the sisters very spontaneously and suddenly. She was up all night while she told the sisters everything that she had remembered, including her mother and all her life experiences. The sisters had never even known the ladies real name before, and all the sisters and ladies were overjoyed and praising God. Another lady had been healed of an infectious wound as well as a few other testimonies of God’s healing power.

The tiny tots who we cuddled, played with and fed were very responsive to prayer and one little girl who was full of fear to the point of shaking when she was touched, yet she was totally relaxed and smiling when we left. The twin girls who were healed of obvious spiritual problems were a delight and one little part albino boy fed himself with his feet. Each one was so beautiful and responsive to our touches of love despite their twisted bodies and mental handicaps.

There were about 80 ladies and only 50 single beds about 4 inches apart, the extra 30 slept on the concrete floor with mats and blankets. It is humbling to have a dying woman kneel at your feet to receive prayer and then have her kiss your hand in gratitude.

The volunteers who assist the sisters are mostly made up of people who are also handicapped and among those who have been rescued by the sisters but have decided to be assistants. One example was a dear young lady in her 20’s whose legs are twisted and useless. She sits on a small trolley about 40cm square and 15cm off the ground, with this she pushes herself around and feeds others plus she washes babies. What a saint! Surely her reward will be great in the Kingdom of Heaven for her love of God, her love of man and her service, she made us feel small.

All the sisters insisted that we pray for and anoint each of the sisters of Charity as we knelt before the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament even though we had told Sister Superior Vinaya that we had the distinct feeling that it was they who should have been praying over us.



But they were honoured and delighted to kneel before us as a team to receive prayer and words of encouragement.



While we were there, we also did some skits, songs, dancing and bucket loads of prayer, much to the delight of all. Surely this part of our ministry is another great highlight in a tour of highlights and unequalled joy, surprises, honours, blessings, sorrow, compassion, love, tears and anointing.

Back at Sharon Cancer Hospital, Reverend Stephen's had asked us to pray for all the patients. So accompanied by a nurse who could speak English we went along praying and we encountered one young boy about 8 years old, his mother was kneeling by his bed crying. The boy's skin looked deathly grey in colour as he laid in his bed, and we asked the nurse what was wrong with the lad. Her answer was that the boy had advanced cancer and he was not expected to live more than a few weeks. So, we asked the nurse to ask the mother if we could pray for the boy and she agreed.

We returned to visit all the patients a couple of days later to just encourage each one of them. When we came to the 8-year-old boy's room, he was sitting up on his bed and dressed in his normal clothes. The boy was a normal colour and smiling but when the mother saw us, she started crying again. We asked the nurse what was happening, and she said that the boy's cancer was gone. She also explained that the mother's tears, were now tears of joy and gratitude.

Another victory was gained for a man who had had a cancer cut out of his throat and who had literally had his throat cut from ear to ear, he had not been doing very well. When we returned, he was sitting up, in high spirits and recovering fast. While yet another man with his tongue half eaten away with cancer was so full of pain he could not keep still. After we prayed for peace and pain relief, he drifted into sleep through the power of the Holy Spirit. Nurses, helpers and patients alike had queued up for prayer in total faith and reverence because of what they saw God had done, wow, praise You, Lord



The boy healed of cancer.      The man we prayed for.

The Sharon orphanage was also full of delights as we played, prayed and sung with the kids.

It was hard to leave Salem and all our friends, tears were shed by all and it's hard to leave such dear friends knowing it will be a long time before we meet again.

We arrived at Pravaham, a country conference and retreat centre just outside Vellore, which is halfway back towards Chennai. Our work has been to teach both the school children and teachers some Australian teaching techniques and games for the Pravaham School. We also have been helping the team of trainee scout leaders who are doing a training camp here.

We met a Sage who has lived on a nearby mountain for 30 years and is building a Hindu Temple, a Christian Church and a Muslim Mosque all in one on his mountain so all people can come and worship. Last night we asked him if he had any insight for us, his reply was that he was glad that we were so close to God. After we asked for God's blessing for him, he blessed us in Jesus' name.

We are conducting a service tomorrow, Friday 9th, for all present at Pravaham in the open-air bush chapel and there is more work to do at the school, plus they all want prayer before we leave.

Our return to Chennai will be on the 10th of February where we have been asked to preach at some church services.

We would like to thank Grace Browning from Krupa, Esther Kathioli from Tamilnad Christian Council, Pastor Joseph who took us to Dalit Villages, Bishop Sundar Clarke for his hospitality, Sam and Prathiba Stephens from India Gospel League, Sister Superior Vinaya from Missionaries of Charity and Lemuel and Kanti-Shree Anderson from Pravaham. As they all showed us a great level of love and hospitality.

After leaving India on the 14th of February, we headed for Malaysia where we were given the royal treatment by The Servants of Yahweh Christian Community. We had the great privilege of teaching to many groups and to pray for many people during our week in Malaysia. However, we were also treated to some sightseeing and cultural events.



Our visit to Malaysia was very blessed but there turned out to be some lack of communication, because the Servants of Yahweh member who was supposed to have organised our time with them was not even there at the time of our arrival. So, it worked out that Cathy and Richard would have to stay at different accommodation from us which was located a very long distance from ourselves. Therefore except for once or twice, we did not see them again until we were due to leave on our flights. So, for the whole week, we were separated and even though we explained the breakdown of communication to them both, Cathy was very angry. Sadly, it seemed that Cathy was never going to forgive us despite the amazing weeks of successful ministry in India. This saddens us both greatly and we had begged our Malaysian hosts to at least make it possible to be housed a bit closer to each other.

Rose and I were used to praying for slum dwellers in the poorest part of Malaysia and we prayed for many sick people as well. I also had the privilege of teaching a few home church groups as well.

We also enjoyed some sightseeing in the capital before we left Malaysia for our journey home.

## Chapter 8

### Home 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2001 to 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2003

We arrived home from Malaysia on the 21st of February and although Andrew and Maria were still staying in the house, we moved into the house with them. Soon after arriving home from the 2001 India mission trip, we discovered that a couple of our children were sick and soon after that some of our grandchildren also became unwell. We immediately began to pray for them as we normally would anyway, but because we had just returned from our successful mission trip, we were suspicious. After some full-on intercession, they all became quite well in a miraculously short time.

When we had purchased the ten-acre property, it was complete with large house, many sheds, a barn, a tractor, a fruit orchard, and a dam. We had decided to call the property, “Mamre Christian Retreat Centre”.

While we were away Samson, our German shepherd dog, stayed at Mamre with Andrew and Maria. After getting up one morning Maria was amazed to see Samson sitting in the chook pen with all the hens lying in a circle around him. He looked up at her as if to say, “why aren’t they playing anymore?” Unfortunately, they were all dead from exhaustion, we think he must have chased them around all night because there were no marks on any of the chickens. Of course, it is funny now but at the time we were not too impressed and poor Maria had to get rid of about 12 dead chickens. She suspected that Andrew had forgotten to close the chicken yard’s gate because of his Alzheimer’s disease.

We offered our ministry over to the Servants of Jesus and we were told quite bluntly that we were not working in God’s will. That was a complete slap in our faces, and we felt totally betrayed, especially when you consider that many of their members had felt strongly that we were fulfilling some prophecies that were given in past years. We had been taught and formed by their teachings, while we had been like their disciples and the leader is our spiritual father.

On March the 6th we helped to move Andrew and Maria into their renovated house in Inverell. It was a long hard day with only three of us to do the work as Andrew was not able to help. Going back to Mamre for the first time knowing it was now all ours was very special.

On March 14th Rose went on the bus and train to Sydney to await the arrival of grandchild number 6 from daughter Anne. By the grace of God, Ryan Cherne, was born on 21st March at 12.20am and both mother and son are well.



Rose then stayed on to help and to get ready for Angela and Richard’s engagement party. This was held on Saturday 7th April and I flew down on the 6th to attend. We both returned home on the 9th of April.





Included with the purchase of the house came an old 1949 model tractor, which was hidden in the back paddock in extremely long grass. When we inspected the tractor, all the wiring had been eaten away by the animals on the property. We decided to pull it out of the long grass and bring it up into the yard so that it could be worked on. We tried to tow it out with the Ford, but it was too deeply embedded, after some jacking and lots of pulling and pushing the Ford victoriously towed it into the yard with Rose proudly steering the tractor.

Now to get it going. That took quite some doing but by fixing a bit here and a bit there, and after rewiring the tractor, it finally started on the 31st of March. Oh, what a feeling!!! And to the echoes of many “praise God” from me. We named our tractor; Trevor and we then gave Trevor a new coat of paint.



On 19th April I left by bus and train to attend the christening of grandchild number 5, Michael Catt at St Nicholas church in Penrith. Then I was to go on to attend the Share the Holy Spirit Conference.

While I was at the Conference, I was the First Aid officer for the event. There was much work to do back at Mamre and that is why Rose did not come to the Conference this year. When I returned on 30th April, we had five days to get ready for the official opening day of Mamre Christian Retreat Centre.

A few days prior to the official opening of Mamre Christian Retreat Centre we were attacked very severely and personally. Somebody accused us of abuse and dishonesty and the word was passed around by the leader of the Servants of Jesus that we were to be shunned and not trusted. As a result of that some of our long-time friends in the community were instructed to have nothing to do with us. Wow, Satan is really pulling out all his armour this time and we were so shattered that we were very close to selling up, cancel the official opening and go back to Sydney. But then the penny dropped, and we knew it was just another attack by Satan.

To say that I was beaten down, lower than low and discouraged was an understatement, with a pain in my heart that could not be described. Rose and I were flattened by it and the worst part was that many of our friends believed the lies, but a disappointingly short number remained faithful to us.

We challenged the person responsible to come before the church elders and accuse us before witnesses along with their evidence. After sending the letter to our accuser, we also sent a copy of the letter to the servant’s leader as well and our accuser slipped away, not to be heard from again. So, after much prayer and discernment, we went ahead with our plans and once again, God won the victory.



On Saturday the 5th of May we held the official opening of Mamre Christian Retreat Centre. In attendance were many people from the community in Inverell and Mt Russell, friends and neighbours. It was held in the presence of the president of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Michael Van Ommen and Sister Margaret Scully, along with David McDonald, Paul Lawson, Brian Millgate and Max and Lorraine Cracknell, who all came up from the Sydney area. Also, present were some of the priests and pastors from the many Inverell churches and Phil and Di Whan, the leaders of the Inverell charismatic community and around twenty of their members. As well as Father Michael Irvine, his wife, Wendy, and the local Catholic Priest. Many of our newest friends from our little village of Mount Russell and some from nearby farms as well as our best friends, Con and Gail Mureau. Our special guests of honour were Andrew and Maria, who were the previous owners of the property. The Holy Spirit moved in such power throughout the entire service that Maria was slain in the Spirit as were many others.

It certainly was a great event with much prayer, praise, and worship in our main prayer room where there was standing room only. The service concluded with a prayer walk through our “Way of the Cross” tree walk and all around the rest of the grounds. After the service we were able to enjoy the sunshine with a barbecue lunch with heaps of side dishes and drinks out in our beautiful gardens. It was truly a day to remember, and we were told afterwards by many of our guests that they were very touched by the whole day’s events.



Mamre is a ten-acre property situated in Mount Russell which is a small village 25 kms due west of Inverell in northern New South Wales. The village comprises 10 houses, a church, not used any more, a schoolhouse, not used any more, a petrol pump, not used any more, a shop, not used any more, a very large, abandoned silo and a working phone box. So, you can see it is a very quiet and peaceful place to live.



We have a large farmhouse and at present we can sleep up to 15 people, however we can squeeze in a dozen more if required. There are two bathrooms and two toilets, wood fire heating, gas heating, town water as well as tank water. At one end of the house, we have been blessed with a “Prayer Room” which is capable of seating over 50 people plus plenty of room for camping. The village is so quiet and peaceful that if a car comes along the road everybody gets excited about possible visitors, most of the time they are just lost, and everyone is disappointed. There is an outside toilet, shower, laundry and garages and sheds galore. We called this retreat centre “Mamre” which is the

place in the bible where God visited Abraham and told him he was going to be the father of many nations.

Outside in the “Prayer Garden” there are many fruit trees as well as a Way of the Cross walk set in a line of pine trees. We have chickens, ducks, turkeys, cows and dogs at the present. The two large paddocks are easily accessible and there is a dam in the back paddock. There are a few out buildings and of course we can’t forget the tractor, Trevor.

Much wildlife can be observed including kangaroos, rabbits, foxes and a variety of birds.

So Mamre Christian Retreat Centre was set up to allow individuals, couples, small groups or even larger groups to come for self-guided Christian retreats. We also offer guided retreats and the centre can be used whether we are present or even if we are away.



We have been really blessed to meet Father Michael Irvine from the Anglican Catholic Church as he has been appointed to their church in Inverell. The Anglican Catholic Church has also purchased the old unused church in our Mount Russell village, so now it will be used again after many years of emptiness. We also met his wife Wendy, his daughter Kimberly and his son Christopher who all live in Inverell.

It was our privilege to meet Archbishop John Hepworth who is the Primate of the Anglican Catholic Church, which means, he is their highest-ranking priest for their church in the world. He has asked us to help his church as missionaries throughout our travels and he also requested our help to paint and repair the old run-down Mt Russell church.

The great tragedy of the attacks on the United States of America by Muslim extremist groups to fly passenger jets into the twin towers really rocked our sense of peace and it spurred us into more prayer.

It was a great privilege to have a few of our children to drive all this way from Sydney to celebrate Christmas 2001 with us. Those who were not able to come, we had travelled down to celebrate an early Christmas with them.

Our property at Mt Russell has been neglected for many years and there is so much old disused equipment that was left to rust away. So, it took us most of the rest of 2001 and a large chunk of 2002 to fill many truckloads of rusted equipment and take it to the rubbish dump. We slashed all the incredibly long grass in the fields, and we removed old rusty water tanks. One of these tanks was on a stand about 10 feet up and to give it new life many years ago, it had been lined with concrete. Well to get that down and break it up was a mammoth task and at one point Trevor the tractor was doing wheel stands in its effort to pull the tank down.

So, we were kept very busy, but it was fun to just get up each day and work hard to make Mamre a nicer place. Once the property was cleared and looking it's best, we could offer our retreat guests good food, fellowship, teaching, stations of the cross, prayer walks, praise & worship, comfortable

beds, camping and a variety of games. We were also able to offer activities like archery, darts, crochet, badminton or to simply sit by the fire, in the prayer room, near the animals, in the fruit tree orchard or under the willow tree.

Whilst we were working hard to bring the property up to our standards, we were also putting on outreach sessions for the local community. We had our weekly prayer meetings which included praise and worship, teachings, and supper.

During the times we would be back at the retreat centre, we created many great bonds with some dear new friends from this region. One couple quickly became our dearest friends, and their names are Con and Gail Mureau from a working farm not too far from us. They mostly worked their farm when they were not helping us and they also provided musical entertainment at clubs, pubs or anyone else who hired them.

We had single people come for time out at Mamre and we also had many couples who stayed for guided or self-guided retreats. There were small groups who stayed and even a couple of larger groups. We had a guest book for anybody who wanted to leave us a message and, in the lines, below are some of the comments made by people who stayed at Mamre Christian Retreat Centre.

- "It feels just like home!"
- "My first thoughts are 'a real home'".
- "The commitment of Mamre Christian Retreat Centre to the vision the Lord has given them is to be admired".
- "We got waited on hand and foot at Mamre".
- "I am at a loss to say what a wonderfully blessed time we had at Mamre. God is good".
- "Could have stayed forever in the peaceful surroundings and great company. Sad, we had to leave".
- "It is like stepping back in time, like a visit to grandma's, a place where doors don't need to be locked and the world is left behind".
- "It is an oasis of peace where values like trust and honesty are re-kindled".
- "Can't wait to come back".
- "We were truly struck by the overwhelming hospitality".
- "It is an oasis of peace in a world of chaos".
- "It is truly a place blessed by God, a house of prayer and spiritual restoration".
- "I'm surprised that many more people don't know about this place yet!"
- "How could anybody not find God in such a place".

We were able to travel back to the western suburbs of Sydney to attend our daughter Angela's wedding to Richard, a very fine young man on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2002. What a joy to be able to celebrate with them and of course enjoy being around our other children and grandchildren.



It took us almost two years of work to get the retreat centre up and running but towards the end of 2002, we felt it was time for us to be back on the road. We began earnestly seeking God for somebody to take over the daily running of “Mamre Christian Retreat Centre”. We had always known that we would go back to our Missionary work on the road and God had promised us a caretaker for Mamre Christian Retreat Centre, but there were no likely candidates.

During the time of fixing the property at Mamre we had run an alpha course, a marriage weekend, Christmas carols and a few social functions. We also helped as catechists in the local school and assisted at local Catholic Church. Now that it is structurally restored, we helped re-wire and decorate the Mount Russell church. We were also involved by leading other outreaches and weekends for local prayer groups and generally supported the local community.



## Chapter 9

### Back on the Road 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2003 to 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2004

In February 2003, we left Mamre with our trusty caravan right behind us and drove to Gunnedah where we caught up with Fr Jose Adriano. He was the previous parish priest at Warialda and therefore celebrated Mass for us at the nearest village to us with a Catholic Church which was Delungra. He is very supportive of our work, and we got a great welcome from him at his new parish at Gunnedah. At Gunnedah we visited the leader of the local Prayer Group, attended Mass and offered any assistance needed to Fr Jose.

From Gunnedah we travelled to Bourke, which in February of 2003 was one of the very badly affected drought areas. Along the roads we travelled it was very evident that stock was dying from lack of water, and many cattle stations were up for sale, and this was also evidence of the very hard times the farmers were having. On our arrival at Bourke at around 3.00pm it started to rain, not much but enough to wet the ground and make the locals cheer, this started a precedent as from then on everywhere we went the rain came with us, thanks be to God. We had been invited to help the Missionaries of Charity Sisters, Mother Teresa's order, with their work among the Aborigines and we also helped with the local Catholic Church.

When we arrive in Bourke, we noticed the huge fences around their compound and are told about the guard dogs that the sisters let out each night. When we query the sisters why is that needed? They said that when they started helping the aboriginal people, all the things that the sisters purchased to help them was continually stolen. So, they eventually put up big fences but the thefts continued until they got two guard dogs. It was so good to be able to help the sisters in their work and we were able to park our caravan within their grounds. The sisters warned us not to come out of our caravan at night because of the dogs. Our work involved helping the homeless men and the aboriginal children who would be dropped off at the sisters help centre.



We had been invited to pray with the sisters the next day, so in the morning we were walking over to the chapel, and we were confronted by the guard dogs. So as the dogs were growling and preparing to attack us, Rose touched one of the dog's noses with her Bible just as the sisters ran out with apologies because they forgot to lock them up that morning. The dogs were trained to only obey the sisters, so they could effectively keep them under control.

After a couple of weeks at Bourke we once again set out to travel south to Bathurst via Dubbo, Orange and a few days stop over at Blayney where we visited Shalom House of prayer at Carcoar.

A week with our children and grandchildren in Sydney and a short visit to the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary at Theresa Park and we were heading north again.

Back to Mamre Christian Retreat Centre for a couple of weeks over Easter, where we assisted Father Michael in the Easter week celebrations as well as our local Catholic parish priest, Fr Simon Leeworthy. Caught up with all our friends, neighbours and local groups then back on the road again.

We left Mamre on Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> of April bound for Tamworth where we were to help Tina Hockey and we stayed for three nights with her and her daughter, Kathleen. Her son, Joshua, is at University at Armidale.

We hitched up the van again and travelled south to arrive at Blacksmith's Beach Holiday Park on Friday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May which is situated between the beach and the inlet to Lake Macquarie near Swansea.

From here we got in touch with Prayer Groups at Morisset and Toronto, and we also had a chance to catch up with some old friends. We started going regularly to Morisset group and started a series called, "That the World may Know", which was well attended and went for about 10 weeks. It is a video series about visiting many different geographical sights in the holy land and talking about what happened at that location in Bible times.

Unfortunately, Toronto prayer group closed down due to lack of numbers so we suggested to Toronto Parish to do an Alpha Course to attract more people. They were very eager to do it but had to put it before the Parish Council meeting which didn't meet until the next month.

On Friday the 4<sup>th</sup> of July we moved to Wangi Point Caravan Park which is on the West side of Lake Macquarie, because working this side of lake and travelling from the other side of lake is pointless, we were sad to move as we no longer had sea views and a beach walk. However, God blessed us with a lovely campsite right on the Lake, a million-dollar view, plenty of ducks and pelicans.

Monday the 14<sup>th</sup> of July, we started Alpha Course at Toronto after lot of red tape was sorted out. I was also doing weekly visits to my old friend, John Lenox, to help him as he was suddenly blinded and Rose visited with Laura, his wife, as she is 81 years of age and needs support as well.

The Alpha Course being held every Monday evening at 6.30pm with about 20 people regularly attending. Because of the shortness of time available we had to watch one video and discuss it, then send them home with a copy of the next video that they would watch at home, and we discussed it the next week. This was the only way to get the entire Course completed before we had to leave Lake Macquarie, and the people were very eager to finish the course and watched each video with eagerness.



Alpha course meal.



Graduation.

On Tuesday the 5<sup>th</sup> of August we met with Fr Reg of Morisset Church who is very eager for us to do work with the children of the school and by this bring some interest to their parents. On Friday

the 8<sup>th</sup> of August did a presentation for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade children at Morisset's St John Vianney's Catholic School, which went down very well.

Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, we went to Anglican Youth Group in Toronto and gave a short talk on our work in India, the youth loved our presentation of a few slides and even when it was time for them to go home wanted to keep asking us questions.

On Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> of August moved into Lenox's for a week to look after John while Laura visited her daughter and son-in-law in Wauchope. It was quite an experience and learning curve to look after a blind man and must remember to put everything back where it was. Also, to remember to pick up everything on the floor, put the chairs back under the table and much more.

Saturday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August drove with John to Wauchope to pick up Laura and on Sunday the 24<sup>th</sup> of August we had arranged a surprise honouring lunch for John and Laura at Rathmines Chinese Restaurant with owners Francis and Kam. Twenty-five people came to honour John and Laura some of them were their children while the rest were from prayer groups, church and neighbours. Everybody had a wonderful time and a special thank you went out to Francis and Kam who opened their restaurant, cooked and waited on us.

On Thursday the 28<sup>th</sup> of August went down to Sydney as I had a doctor's appointment then we had dinner with some old friends.

On Saturday the 30<sup>th</sup> of August we saw our children and grandchildren, went to Mass at Emu Plains. Then on Sunday the 31<sup>st</sup> of August drove back to Lake Macquarie. On Tuesday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September I went to Parish Council meeting at Morisset parish to discuss next year's programme when we have been invited back to do more outreach work.

We decided to give our caravan a new coat of paint while we were parked at Blacksmith's Beach caravan park.



Before.



After.

On Thursday the 11<sup>th</sup> of September we went to St John Vianney's school to give an address to the parents for Education Week and stayed on for ceremonies after. Girls did a traditional Polynesian Dance, and the boys did the New Zealand Hukkah. Then on Friday the 12<sup>th</sup> of September we conducted a short session with the kindergarten to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade children at St John Vianney's school. It was very hard to keep their attention and especially as it was the last lesson of the day and on a Friday as well.

Thursday the 25<sup>th</sup> of September was our last prayer group meeting with Morisset group, which was a sad occasion but remembered that we would see most of them in a weeks' time at Share the Holy Spirit Conference in Sydney.



On Saturday the 27<sup>th</sup> of September held a Marriage Weekend for three couples, it started at 9.30 with praise and worship, followed by a few sessions.



After that we left for St Joseph's Catholic Church in Toronto, for the last two talks in the Alpha Series. These two talks were the Catholic content and much appreciated because it put the whole course into a Catholic perspective. We all then went to Mass at 6.00 for Alpha Course Certificate Presentation by Fr Brian, which he did after the blessing and was watched by the other members of the parish.

Back to Marriage Weekend for soup followed by another session then it is bedtime. On Sunday the 28<sup>th</sup> of September we started with Morning Prayer at 7.30 followed by breakfast at 8.00 and fifth talk at 9.00 then morning tea then sixth talk followed by roast dinner. The final talks and summary were finished around 4.00pm and everybody packed up to go their own separate ways, all very thankful to God for what had happened and what we had all learnt.

We went back to the caravan for our last night at Wangi Point because on Monday the 29<sup>th</sup> of September we had to pack for our trip to Sydney for the Share the Holy Spirit Conference once again.

Drove to Campbelltown to St Gregory's College and started setting up the First Aid station. I was once again the First Aid officer for the conference. We had on site accommodation for the 5 days of the conference, and it was dormitory style rooms. The Share the Holy Spirit Conference was great as it always is and God blessed us all mightily from the accommodation, rain, meals, speakers, content to catching up with old friends.

On Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup> of October we had to be packed up by 7.30am then went to Mass by Bishop David Cremin at 8.30am. The General Gathering followed this at 10.30am for the Servants of Jesus and anyone else who wanted to stay for it and the whole Conference was concluded by a very short talk by Joseph Chee.

After lunch we drove to Wangi Point in pouring rain to collect the caravan and we managed to hitch up the van in the rain then drove to Murrurundi where we stopped on the side of the road for the night. Murrurundi is about halfway between Muswellbrook and Tamworth in northern New South Wales. There was no rain up there but by the looks of the countryside they had had some rain since we were last up this way. The next morning, we drove to Tamworth and stayed the night with our friend, Tina and helped her clear out her garage and it was good to catch up.

On Tuesday the 7<sup>th</sup> of October we left Tina's, drove over the mountain range via Uralla and Wauchope to Coffs Harbour where we spent the night in a caravan park next to the Showground where there was a fair on, so we stood and watched all the pretty lights.

On our way over this huge mountain range, it was a struggle to tow a fully laden caravan at the best of times. However, on one of the steep inclines we could smell burning and when it became even



worse, we pulled over. It turned out that the wiring under the carpet in the back of our car was causing the carpet to burn. So, I had to pull the carpet up and continue our journey with the intention of fixing the problem when we arrived at our next stop.

The next day, on Wednesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of October, arrived at Dreamtime Caravan Park in Coomera, which is on the Gold Coast right opposite dreamworld, from our caravan we can hear the screams of the people enjoying themselves on the dreamworld park rides.

We are here at the request of the Anglican Catholic Church of Australia to assist at St Stephen's college which has 1200 children. Father Andrew Kinmont, who is the pastor wants us to assist him with finding out the needs of the people on the local estates. But not only spiritual needs but practical ones as well, so we will be going around door knocking and having local BBQ's. By doing this we can help them to get to know the ministers in the area as well as getting to know each other. It is good to be working with a Minister's Fraternal that has all its members devoted to one cause, not just wanting numbers for their individual churches, but wanting what is best for the community.

A few people kept asking us, "what is the name of your ministry?" We would usually respond with we are simply an old couple on the road who just want to help. However, we eventually saw the need to make it official so we called it Mamre Ministries. That soon became Mamre International Aid, and it was registered as a charity.

Rose's brother's son, Peter, her nephew, was ordained as a Catholic priest in England this year.



We were in Coomera for about 3 months, and we had a many good times along with a couple of not-so-great times.

Where our caravan was parked and setup, we were in a caravan park that had some genuine tourists but also many others who would be considered rough or westies. These caravan park residents were mainly housed towards the back of the park and if a grey nomad stopped by for a couple of days, they would be situated at the front of the park.

When the park managers knew we were staying for a couple of months they situated us at the rear of the park. However, when they found out that we were here as a Chaplain and his wife, they moved us right up the front and away from the rough elements.

During our time at the caravan park at Coomera I had made sure that the park owners knew that I was a qualified first aid provider and that I always carried my first aid kit in the boot of our car. Over the first few weeks that we were parked at the caravan park we were keen to make friends with the other residents as they were included in our task in finding out the needs of the local community. Sadly though, most of them were a bit suspicious of our motives so it was hard to get through to them that we truly did care. Anyway, as we continued our work we were getting very good

information from the residents of the local residential estates but we could not get cooperation from the caravan park residents. It seemed that they were very suspicious of us, and we could not even approach them.

On one particular day, we arrived back at our caravan after a long and fruitful day of work, and we settled down for the night. At around 9pm there was somebody knocking on our door and when we opened the door, the caravan park owner was standing there. He asked whether I could help somebody who had been injured and Rose and I went to the boot of our car to get my first aid kit. We then followed the owner to the rear of the park, and I found a man lying face down in the dirt with a massive pool of blood next to his head and a huge crowd of bystanders. We had been told that he had been involved in a fight with a neighbour and had been hit in his head with a tomahawk. I had to roll him over so that I could see the damage and the tomahawk blade had hit him across his face. His nose was split in two parts and the blade also split both his lips and knocked out a couple of teeth. I had rolled him on his back to get his wounds out of the dirt and to be able to see the damage better. I then had his head resting on my knees while I applied pressure on his wound to help to slow down the bleeding and I made sure an ambulance had been called. His name was Peter, and he was very drunk, and he kept trying to get up while saying “I have had worse things than this, let me up so can go back and get that mongrel.” I had to yell at him and insist that if he did not lay still, he would bleed to death, and I also asked the park owner to help me to hold him down. It took the ambulance 40 minutes to reach us and by that time Rose had filled a full-sized green garbage bag with the blood-soaked gauze and blood-soaked paper towelling. I was completely exhausted because I had sat on my knees for so long and when the ambulance came one of the paramedics said, “good job, just stay there and keep the wound compressed until we sort out the equipment.” The ambulance officers took him away to hospital and we received news that he was going to need facial reconstruction surgery. The police also arrived to make arrests of all involved.

We eventually got the full story about what happened, and it turned out that Peter was very drunk, he confronted his neighbour, who was also very drunk. So, when Peter knocked on the others man’s caravan with a knife in his hands to abuse and accuse him, the other bloke simply reached for his very sharp tomahawk and hit Peter in the face. Afterwards, Peter was commonly referred to as tomahawk Pete and it seemed that we became much more welcomed by many of the park’s more permanent occupants, we were now considered to be much more acceptable. After quite a few weeks, the park owner approached me once more and said, “tomahawk Pete is back but nobody is game to go and check to see if he is ok and we were wondering that as you are a Chaplain, if you would check him out for us.” Apparently, he had been home for a few days but he has not been seen outside since then. I was not sure what I could do but everybody else was obviously very frightened of him, but I agreed. When I was walking to his caravan, I was not sure what to expect and I had some concerns. When I knocked on his door he answered and immediately said, “oh you are the religious bloke, the Chaplain, yes?” I responded with a simple, “yes that’s me.” Then he continued, “you saved my life mate, you’re a hero, thanks pal.” I then corrected him and said, “I am sure that you would not have died from your wounds, but you were losing a lot of blood and I was glad to help you.”

He invited me into his caravan and showed me his scars where he had received plastic surgery. Then he said to me, “you know mate I gave my life to Jesus when I was in prison and maybe you and me can have some bible study or something.” When I left a short time afterwards, I could not help thinking why is everybody so scared of him? So that is the story of Tomahawk Pete. We put on a

BBQ for everybody in the caravan park a short time after that episode and it seemed that we had become very acceptable to the point where most of the residents turned up.

After a couple of months, we concluded our work in Coomera in Queensland, and we headed back to Mamre Christian Retreat Centre in Mt Russell. Once we were back, we continued with our weekly prayer meetings, and we hosted a couple of guided retreats. After a few weeks we started to prepare for our next Indian mission trip.

We then travelled to the western suburbs of Sydney to visit all our family.



## Chapter 10

### India 10<sup>th</sup> March 2004 to 18<sup>th</sup> June 2004

We arrived at the airport and booked in at 11.30am and asked for seats with a little extra legroom, the gentleman was very kind and said the seats he had given us would be great, so we took his word for it. When it came time to board our flight, we were shown to our seats 25A and 25B, no this can't be right we are not supposed to be in the Business Class section! It was right and God had been so good that we had pure luxury all the way to Singapore. In Economy Class, where we should have been, the seats are close to the ones in front, the television console is situated in the seat in front of you and normally the formation is three seats near the window, then four seats in the centre aisle and a further three seats over the other side near the window. In Business Class, Rose couldn't even reach the seat in front of her, and the seats have built in footrests, which retract automatically. The TV consoles are hidden away in the central column between the seats, the tables for eating and writing are hidden away in the arm rests, there are buttons everywhere and we spent the first half an hour practising which button did what.

Hostesses buzzed around providing drinks and peanuts and after we were airborne, dinner was served. Sitting back enjoying the wonderful views as we flew over the continent of Australia and could see, towns, farms, the Great Artesian Basin, rivers and much more. What a big country we live in and seen from thirty thousand feet and flying at nine hundred and eighty kilometres per hour, through wispy clouds was an awe-inspiring experience. Bottles of Summit Water were then placed on our armrests; we kept these, our crackers and cheese, salt and pepper, sugar, spoons and milks for later use in India.

A couple of months ago we had decided to start a permanent fast and only eat one meal per day while that meal was normally to be eaten at lunch time. When we are in India if Rose had her way, we would travel with many gallons of bleach to help clean up the whole country. But having said that, on a more serious note I would like to say that not too many women would willingly sleep in a grass hut with only a grass mat to sleep on and that was the only thing between her and the dirt floor. Added to that there was always the possibility of her being visited by rats or cobras in the night, yet my Rose has done so on many occasions, what a trooper she is.

We met up with Colleen Hamilton who we had pre-arranged some months ago with the promise of guiding her for her first few weeks in India as she is travelling alone. She turned out to be a real blessing as she helped us with our missionary work. After about 3 weeks we put her on a train for Mumbai and we gave her the name of our friend who will meet her there.

Although we have been helping people in India as our conscience or our Lord has prompted us, we feel that we are not making any lasting difference to the lives of those we help. We help a few people here and there but nothing we have been doing has a long-term effect, so we must find out, how do we make change for a better future.

Well, it has been three years since our last missionary trip to India and it has grieved us not to be able to return until now. This is our third trip, the first in January 2000, the second in 2001 and now this one. Despite our previous experience, we are still suffering from culture shock, we assumed it would get easier but in truth it is harder than ever to see the great need and suffering on such an immense scale.



We have been asked many times ‘Why did you come to India during the height of summer and not during spring like you normally do?’ and we could only answer the same each time, ‘Ask God, He is the one who gave us the date for our visit!’ On that note, it is very hot, and it is constant, both during the day and night, but to be honest in actual temperature it is nowhere near some of our top temperatures at home, what makes it seem so much hotter is the extreme humidity coupled with the pollution. The lacquer on my wooden cross has gone soft and made it look bubbly and wrinkled. When I am walking around, my clothes are so wet from my sweating, that I look like I have had a shower with my clothes on.

Our re-introduction to active ministry has been so blessed and at the same time very humbling. As you all know we spend a great deal of our ministry time with gypsies, dalets and lepers and they are the ones who humble and bless us the most. One of the things that happened on our arrival was that many of the dear little children from an orphanage honoured our arrival to their centre on Palm Sunday (4th April) by throwing rose petals at us, wow, what an honour.

But to help those of you who don’t know what these terms mean, we will explain.

We have previously explained leprosy to you, but gypsies are those people who, as you would suppose, have no permanent address, no fixed income and are generally treated, as most lepers would be, they too are ostracised.

But there is a class of people considered even lower than the previous two and that is the Dalets. In India a caste system has been in place for a very long time with five main castes having been established. At the top of the pecking order is the brahmin class, who are the highest class while the Dalets are the fifth and lowest class. Dalets are said to be below or under the feet and are considered so low that they are regarded as below anyone else. There are some Indians who are gypsies as well as a Dalets and who also suffer from leprosy! think about that. The Dalet class of Indians are usually only considered to be good enough to be servants or those who work at manual labour. The lower-class Indians are taught that if they serve well in their appointed tasks in this life, that they may be elevated to a higher class in the next life and eventually work their way up to a higher cast.

Our ministry at the leprosy hospital left us all feeling very inadequate, to see such suffering and then to have your hand kissed simply because you prayed with them accompanied by a loving touch. We would hold a hand while a nurse changed a bandage over festering wounds or smooth a brow while a wound was swabbed. Despite our feelings of being able to do so little we were able to help one man who was being released into the care of his cousin if he could manage to cross two states to get to him there, lack of finances was the problem, so we paid for him to get there.



As we travel by rail or bus across this vast country, we can never get used to seeing so many people, even in the remotest areas. We tried to explain to some of our Indian friends that although India

has just under one point five billion people in their country, if you turned India upside down it would fit into our state of Queensland. In other words, less than a quarter of the area of Australia and yet we only have about twenty five million people. We explained that in some parts of Australia, you could travel for a few hours without even seeing one person.

We were very privileged to be taken by car and driven to the coastal town of Mamallapuram where there are giant rock carvings, monoliths, and it is a tourist place. These carvings are to be seen to be believed, they are all life-sized carvings that have been carved out of the solid rock face. Life sized elephants along with other animals and along with full sized rooms carved into the rock.

We visited a granite quarry where over 35,000 people live and work. It is mined 24 hours a day by men, women and children who live in such poor conditions. The dust is unbelievable, and the life expectancy of these people is less than 50 years. The children do not go to school because they have to work, and the desperate families would work there as there was no other work available to them. But what makes it even sadder is the fact that even the children had to work as well. It turned out that whether you were 10 years old or 60 you were required to work every day and if you did not work, you would not eat that day. Also, if you left the quarry premises you could not come back, you lost your employment. The dust filled the air, day and night with men, women, and children feeding the crushers, breaking rock with sledgehammers, moving granite around or loading it into trucks by hand. It was not easy to even breathe properly and all because some greedy man in his air-conditioned office in the city wants to make more money by avoiding the need to buy safety equipment and protective clothing. Our hosts were shocked when we told them that in Australia the quarry would be shut down and the owners would be charged. We arranged a special Easter Sunday feast for all these incredibly oppressed and poor families.



At the prayer meeting we addressed some of the quarry families and one woman whom we had prayed with, went down in the spirit or so we thought. In fact, she had fainted due to hunger, so we arranged the purchase of one month's supply of food for her and her children.

It is so refreshing to see such faith in action, but we do wish that they would come to realise that anybody could pray with them and God would still heal them. But it is rewarding and faith building for us to see some of the fruit, like the elderly lady whose back was straightened on Good Friday, praise be to God.

While we were at the quarry, there was a planned explosion at the rock face to break up more granite. However, on that day, somebody forgot to sound the blast alarm to warn people of the imminent explosion and a few adults at the rock face were killed that day. This was the cause of thirteen new orphans who needed to be cared for. So, with the help of the young Pastor who had brought us to the quarry, we rented a building not far from the quarry and this was the beginning of our first orphanage. This eventually led to thinking that housing orphans was one way to make a more lasting

difference in our work to help. By housing them and schooling them we would be able to change their futures to a more positive and productive one.



Praise God, we have adopted a village named Venpakkam and it is just outside Paddapai. It is a village of Dalet people and is now under Mamre International Aid and our representative for the village is a young Pastor. We will pay for the repair of the village water pumps as soon as possible as they have not been working for a couple of years and we will send other aid as well. While we were there a miracle Friday outdoor prayer rally was put on where we were privileged to address the villagers, followed by prayer for everybody. By God's grace we were informed that 11 people received healings that day.



We have met the village President who is very co-operative, and all the village residents are happy about their new church, which was established with our help. We also may helped establish a small orphanage for the homeless children of the village.

We went back to Chennai to catch a train for Salem to join up with Reverend Sam again at Sharon. As we walk along the platform at Chennai central railway station, the trains are all so very long and it seemed that our carriage was near the front of train, a good way to exercise. The train is so packed that there is no room to spare with so many people and so much luggage.

How incredibly faith building it is to know that many people are still talking about our last visit to the Sharon Cancer Clinic after three years. The air is alive with the expectancy that comes from faith as they hear we have returned and will pray for each patient once again. The administrator and staff talk of the miracles that occurred three years ago and like most things they have a favourite. The small boy who was dying of cancer and had been there for six months, his mother was in tears and when we offered prayer for her son she jumped at the opportunity. When we returned two days later, he was dressed in street clothes and awaiting discharge, he had received a complete healing overnight. His mother and all the family were praising God for what God had done for the lad. When the administrator was telling us about the fact that he knew of the boy's healing, he even told us the boy's name. His name was Mahendran and we had not known his name previously.

The other thing that has really stuck out for us on this trip is the unreserved recognition of Roses' gifts, especially her gift of prophecy. We have found the Pastors and elders constantly asking for her discernment and opinions on most aspects of any of their planned ministry.



After praying for all the patients in the Sharon Cancer Hospital we were told that two people had proclaimed healings.

Our return visit to the Missionaries of Charity, Mother Teresa Sisters, also has everybody talking and expectant as they too remember our visit three years ago and some of the miracles that occurred during that time. This surprised us even more as all the sisters were new to us since our last visit yet despite that, the witness of the wonderful things that God had done was still passed on. And once again the most talked about miracle was the woman who had not spoken in over 25 years and had all her faculties restored to her after she was prayed with. That night she had sat with one of the sisters right throughout the wee hours talking about her family and all her past. One young lady was limited to getting around on a square board with four wheels under it, while she pushed her way along because she had no use of her legs. So, she just scooted around, surprisingly quickly, on her little oversized skate board. The most amazing part is she helped the sisters with the care of the abandoned babies and the women. She had followed Rose everywhere on our last visit and she was so excited that we had returned.

There is so many things that we have learned from our time with the dear Sisters of Charity, but the main thing is in reference to Holy Scripture and that is.

***Matthew 25: 31 – 46 The Least of These***

***“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.***

***Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me..For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me..***

***Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you????***

***The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me..***

***Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me..Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed,***



*into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me..*

*They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'**They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'*

*He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'**He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me..*

*Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life. "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."'*

On this visit to the sisters, Rose and I were only able to stay for 3 days on this visit, but we made sure that we had singing sessions, we performed a few skits and we made certain to pray with them all. By the third day there was news that one lady had received healing of her leg ulcers and another who said she was healed of her lung infection.

This makes us expectant as to what news we will receive in the coming days, weeks or months to come. We occasionally get to see miracles firsthand but most miracles that happen we hear about afterwards. But one miracle was when a man with throat cancer could not sleep properly as he would often be up all night pacing the wards of the hospital. He told us through an interpreter that he just wanted a good sleep. So, after we had prayed over him and left, we came back to look in on him 2 days later and he told us that he slept for 9 hours. He slept well once again on the second night, so he was very happy.

During our time with the Missionary of Charity sisters, we stayed in a local hotel as the sisters had nowhere where we could sleep. On our last day at the hotel, we went out for a walk around the town and much to our surprise we discovered a vendor who was selling whole roast chickens. Wow, we have never seen this before now during our Indian travels. In the major cities like Chennai or Mumbai, you will find a McDonald's or a Domino's pizza but anywhere else it is usually curry and rice etc. So fried chicken, yum, I was almost salivating and so we purchased one and took it back to the hotel, what a treat. Anyway, you would not believe it, we got bad diarrhoea and felt sick for a couple of days.

Our next destination is to Cochin in the state of Kerala and most Indian's have told us that Cochin is one of the best destinations in India so we will take a day or two to check it out. There are so many international tourists here that it was almost like home in Sydney. This visit to the state of Kerala also made it possible for us to meet our sponsored child with the permission of Compassion Australia. What a truly joyful experience it was to meet little Sree Kumari Murrigan our 11-year-old girl who we sponsor through Compassion. She was even more nervous than we were but after the ice was broken, we all relaxed a little as she showed us to her home and school. Our gift of a very large teddy bear that she named Babloo, was nearly as big as her and it went down well. What a truly delightful girl and to see her village and family situation plus the difference our small monthly payments make to her life is humbling.



We were also able to visit the first church that Saint Thomas, the apostle, built on his arrival here in India and we saw a replica of the boat that he sailed to India in and saw the blessed relic of his finger bone.

Our visit to Kerala also allowed us to visit the very southern tip of India at Kanyakumari where we visited a famous Hindu shrine.

Our next destination was to take us northeast to a town called Madurai. We were excited to meet R Jeya Sheela whom we had met three years ago when she had asked us if she could adopt us as her grandparents. Sheela is now 17 and quite a young lady and again we were struck by the level of poverty that she lives in. We have been sponsoring her directly for the last year to help her complete her studies and as a result she has passed her higher school certificate and is moving onto Computer College for one year. By the grace of God and through our small contribution she will break the cycle of poverty for her and her family. How blessed we are to have Sree and Sheela as our honorary grandchildren, they even call us Thatha (grandfather) and Patti (grandmother). We are so glad that we had agreed to sponsor Sheela, especially when we saw her very poor family home, which is in the last photo. While we were in the area, we were challenged to a cricket match and we stuck these two photos together as a memory of the occasion. Sadly though, Australia lost this particular test match, but the children had loads of fun and would not have stopped if we had not.



Once again, we were struck by the continuing blessing of God, by the sheer fact that it rained on our arrival in each location. Most of the instances of rain occurred within literally minutes to half an hour of our arrival and in more than one location it hadn't rained for over three years. There was one exception however, and we are still asking God, "Why?"

As in previous trips we are able to sleep in grass roofed huts and what a blessing it was to eat, sleep and fellowship with the locals in the same way as they do.

During our last three visits to India, we have become accustomed to the fact that when the word of our presence in any part of India was discovered it would always mean that I would be requested to preach or teach. Sometimes it might be to speak to an entire village, a local church, a prayer group or even a home church. So, all this meant that I would often be preaching, teaching or sharing up to five times per day.

One of the most anointed churches we visited was a church dedicated for lepers to worship at. But God surely dwells in these churches and what an honour it was for us to be there. As with all the churches in India, they are almost always packed and no matter what subject we preached on for that day they would hang off my every word.

Another church in that category would have to have been a tiny church made of grass and coconut fronds in Bapatla run by a local pastor. Rose gave a prophetic word for a man who had been the victim of an accident and hurt his knees, she didn't know who the man was but that he would find his strength in God. After the word was delivered the local pastor, mentioned above, stood up and accepted the word for himself. He said he had been asking God all morning for healing for his knees, which had been hurt in a rickshaw accident, so that he could continue his ministry as he felt he that he could not continue with the pain he was in. As soon as the word was given, he declared his knees were pain free and he was praising God mightily. Another healing that we witnessed was for an elderly lady in a Dalet village who was so stooped over that her body was parallel to the ground. After prayer she straightened and gave praise to God. Another healing that we witnessed was the healing of a child who had suffered from a fever for many days, after prayer it disappeared.

We preached on many areas of Christianity during our travels and could not possibly count how many were delivered but we were surprised by the lack of knowledge about basic Christian principles, so we preached quite a lot about the basics and how to stay connected to God.

It is still very hard to come to grips with the master servant mentality of even people down to village level. One example of this was when we were riding on a bicycle rickshaw with a Pastor and his wife and their two small children. The poor hardworking rickshaw rider only just seemed to manage to pull us along on the flat ground. So, when we had to go up hill he had to get off the bicycle to push it along and could barely make any progress at all. The bicycle rickshaw driver was no spring chicken he would have been much older than us and here he was struggling to push us along. After a couple of minutes of this we couldn't stand it any longer, so I got off to lessen the weight and walk beside the rickshaw and at times I helped him push us up the hills. But it troubled us that the Pastor and his wife couldn't understand why we would help the poor old man along and they obviously thought that we were strange because of our actions. They obviously felt that because they were paying for the ride, why should they have to help him as well. It was like the one in the photo but with a larger flat tray so we could all sit around the edge.





We feel like we have spent weeks on trains but of course we haven't it only feels that way as sleeping on such 'hard' beds really takes its toll on you. Speaking of hard beds, that is the only kind we will get in India, whether sleeping on the ground, on a train or even in cheap hotels. The usual mattresses that we came across were only an inch or two thick so still hard. All these sleeping situations would mean doing the constant body roll, all night long because our hips would soon become sore, so we would roll over. Hence the night long hip rolling ritual and it does not seem to affect our Indian friends in the same way, we can only assume that they were used to it since birth. I guess you could say that we are truly spoilt.

Our next destination was to a place called Bapatla where a young Pastor had requested our help. So, we spent some time with him as he showed us his ministry situation and we had the great privilege of ministering to many of the locals. In this area it was so obvious that most of the locals had not encountered many white people before as many of them would stop and stare at us. Our ministry here has been very blessed, and we have had the great privilege of baptising many new Christians. There have also been many healings, including a man with chronic heart pain.

We learned quickly not to comment on what we liked to eat as one day when we were served curried prawns, I commented on how nice it was. Well for the next week, we were served curried prawns and rice, and poor Rose does not like them, so I never repeated that mistake.

We had more opportunities for evangelism in the street from people who approached us, when one day a young man, after going through the preliminaries, asked what we thought the wisest thing was we could impart to him. We told him, the love of God, the saving grace of Jesus, the eternal presence of the Holy Spirit and never make the same mistake twice as that is pure wisdom. So, he ended up, after quite a lengthy session, giving his life to the Lord and confessing his sins. We gave him a contact number for follow up advice from local Pastors.

We were so delighted and overwhelmed by our visit to our church in Rajura, the one we dedicated in 2000. What an honour it was to be with them for one week and these poor people borrowed money to see that we had everything we needed. Their future plans are to build a proper bathroom and toilet so that when we return, we will be able to stay with them. The Pastor, K M Paul, his family and the whole congregation treated us like we were truly part of the family. Wow!! Our departure from there was with great regret and sadness, but then everywhere we went we were treated incredibly special, nothing was ever too much trouble. We were almost always welcomed with huge banners of welcome with our names on them.



An open-air prayer rally was organised in a nearby town called Balarpur and we were the honoured guests and keynote speakers. About a hundred and fifty people came forward for prayer at the end of the night and we were there until long after midnight. We were told a week later that many people proclaimed that they were healed that night.

The young Pastor K M took us to visit his sister, Mary, and her husband, Rakesh, in a town called Adilabad. Rakesh is also a Pastor and he kept us busy with a lot of his local ministry projects. Our



accommodation is in an ex Christian Retreat Centre which used to be run by an elderly couple who were missionaries from America and who had returned to live in America. We had stayed there for two nights and boy, talk about spiritual warfare, the entire compound is surrounded by hostile people and there were even some incidents while we were there, but praise God we were not directly involved. The entire area was filled with Muslim extremists who were very anti-Christian and they objected to the Retreat Centre and especially our presence. Anyway, it certainly stepped up our prayer life and besides that, we knew God would protect us from their missiles that were thrown at the building, day and night. We had been given the best room and were told to not leave anything lying around because the rats will eat it.



We were taken to one village, where we were not sure if they were Dalets or Gypsies, but we were asked to address them, and they lived in makeshift tents made of anything they could find. It was dark when we got there and there was no electricity in the village the only light being the truck's headlights as they passed by on the road close by. As we shared the word and some testimonies, it was hard not to imagine what might be going through their minds; we must have seemed like incredibly wealthy people. So, you would expect a certain amount of hostility, instead of which we experienced so much love and at the conclusion of the service they all wanted prayer. How humbling, what a privilege, praise to God.

We were asked many times, “Why we are so happy to come and minister to small village churches when you could be preaching to hundreds of people?” and our response was, “We have preached to very large numbers and very small numbers alike but if we only preach to two people and it changes one life then God’s work has been done.”

At the conclusion of our ministry in Rajura, our final task was to deliver a talk at the Sunday service to the church that we had the honour of officially opening in the year 2000. But just prior to that Rose had been presented, on behalf of all the Pastor’s family, with a beautiful Indian sari to wear at the service.

We left Rajura and said our goodbyes to Pastor K M, his parents, Pastor Rakesh and Mary to board our train to take us to the Indian capital city of Delhi. As usual, the train was packed plus it was so hot that if you put your hand on the bars across the windows, it burned. After about 16 hours of train travel, we arrived in Delhi at 1am. It is so very hot, and we need a hotel with an air conditioner and a lot of sleep.

Delhi is so much hotter that it is like a huge oven and as we walked around the capital, there are hawkers everywhere, who are selling all sorts of things. There are also thousands of beggars everywhere across the city and they prey on foreigners especially. We had been warned by Bishop Sundar Clarke on our first visit in 2000, that most of the beggars in India, work for people who organise them to become professional beggars. He had added that the beggars get to keep very little of what they earn from begging, because the boss keeps most of it. So, he had warned us never to give anything to a beggar. He had also pointed out that if you give to one beggar, you will suddenly

be surrounded by others. He also said there are some beggars who do work alone, but there are not many of them and you would never be able to pick them out.

While we were in Delhi, we decided to change our return flight so that we could stop over in Hong Kong and stay there for 3 days as a treat. That did not cost us more money as we had originally been returning home via Singapore.

The main reason we needed to come all this way north was that we had been asked by the Anglican Catholic Church Primate in Australia, Archbishop John Hepworth if we would contact Bishop Prakesh who lives another train ride north of Delhi. Another reason that we need to see him is that Bishop Prakesh had commissioned us to have a Bishop's gold cross, hand made for him. He had heard that we had a close friend, who was also a master jeweller of fine jewellery. So, after many emails and pictures, that went back and forth from Australia to India, a design was approved. It was to be made of solid gold and was to be about five and a half inches high by three and a quarter inches wide, wow, what a cross. It was to cost him about six hundred and fifty dollars and the jeweller did not charge him for his labour, he only charged him for the gold. Bishop Prakesh was to pay us for the cross when we had delivered it to him and while we were in Delhi, we phoned him to let him know that we would be with him in a couple of days. It was a nice treat to be able to eat western food in Delhi as there was all the restaurants that we have at home, like McDonalds, Dominoes, Pizza Hut plus a few Chinese restaurants as well as many others. You had to be a bit careful though, as many of the items on the menus are really very hot and spicy to suit the Indian pallets.

As per usual though it rained not long after our arrival and everybody was so happy as the rain was rare at this time of year so thank you God.

After a couple of days of sightseeing and shopping, we hopped on a rickshaw to take us to Delhi railway station but apparently there is a New Delhi station and an old Delhi station, so there was a problem which was made worse because the rickshaw driver could not speak English. So, we stopped to ask a man who was not sure which station we needed to go to and a bit further along we stopped to ask two ladies but they were not sure either. A bit further along we got the driver to stop and ask a policeman and that was a bit intimidating as he was carrying a sub machine gun but at least he told the driver to take us to New Delhi station.

When we arrived, we paid the driver and went into the station and there is no sign of our train on the train departure electronic notice board. So, after asking a station official, guess what? we are at the wrong station, we need old Delhi railway station. So, we get on another rickshaw and head to the correct station through rush hour traffic. It is a good thing that we always make a point of arriving much earlier than is needed because we are used to Indian transport. When we eventually arrive, we soon find our train sitting on one of the many platforms. We board the train and are delighted to see that the seats are very similar to our XPT train seats at home in Australia. So, we are heading north to a place called Delra Dun and the trip takes us most of the night and we arrive at 8am.

At first there was nobody there to meet us and after we waited for quite a while, we went to ring the Bishop. Just as I was dialling the number a man approached us and it was Bishop Prakesh and his son, Ashish. We were warmly welcomed and taken to a very large, brand new, 4-wheel drive and were driven 50 kilometres further north to Vikasnagar. Where we met the rest of the Bishop's family

and we were served coffee and biscuits at his very large house. He then took us to the hotel Guru Kirpa where we have a plush lounge area, sumptuous bed, an actual bathtub and of course fully air conditioned. This place is better than the Hilton hotel in Australia, but we are very grateful that the bishop is taking care of the cost.



After a time to freshen up and rest we were picked up and taken back to his house where we were served a veritable feast that was prepared by White Rose, the Bishop's wife. After lunch we presented the gold cross to Bishop Prakesh and he was delighted. He paid us for the cross in the equivalent amount in English pounds and it was not until long after we had left and returned to Delhi that we realised that he had not paid us even close to the correct amount. We would have to suffer the reduced amount ourselves because we had already paid the jeweller ourselves from most of our savings.

We spent a few days at our current location, and we had the opportunity to share our testimonies to the Bishop's church parishioners as well as a little teaching.

We left on a bus to take us from Vikasnagar back to Delra Dun railway station to catch the train back to Delhi. On the train ride we were surprised to be served a meal as well as some lovely sweets, along with ice cream, nuts, chocolate and tea or coffee, plus a little later we were served what was very much like a Cornish pastie.

Back in Delhi and back to the same hotel for two more nights and on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June at 9am, we fly out of Delhi and head for Hong Kong.

## Chapter 11

### Hong Kong 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2004 to 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2004

Hong Kong is very tightly packed with very tall skyscrapers and high-rise dwellings and while we were there, we did a bit of sightseeing and shopping. But the best part was to unwind after the months of missionary work and to enjoy hot showers, clean towels, good food and a soft bed.



We visited the massive shopping malls and explored the area by heading out on some long walks. Also, we enjoyed the ferry rides around Hong Kong harbour, and we saw so many interesting things.



It seemed that the city never sleeps as we look out of our twenty seventh storey room in our high-rise hotel.



There is fantastic infrastructure in place across the whole city with very efficient trains, ferries and buses to take you to any part of this massive city.





We would have liked to see the poorer part of the city but by the time we found out where the slums were located, we had run out of time.

After 3 nights in Hong Kong, we boarded our flight to Sydney which got us home on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2004.

## Chapter 12

### Home at Mamre Christian Retreat Centre

18<sup>th</sup> June 2004 to 18<sup>th</sup> August 2005

It is so great to be able to see so many miraculous things in India and to see some of the poorest people on planet earth who own only the clothes on their bodies. Yet these same people are so very grateful for the smallest kindness and are so accepting of their situations in life. The powerful faith of these simple and well-balanced people put me to shame. But it is nice to be home as well and back in Australia to catch up with family and friends.

It is a real blessing to have the Mamre Retreat Centre but as we travel so much in our ministry work, it would be better to have a live in couple to care for it and look after our guests. So, we placed an advertisement in the local newspapers for a couple to look after the running of the retreat centre in exchange for free rent. We soon received a reply from Father Michael Irvine and his wife, Wendy, and they told us that what we had proposed was an answer to their prayers. Michael is a priest from the Anglican Catholic Church in Inverell. It was an easy and quick decision for them to accept our offer because it meant that they would be free from the burden of paying rent as their income was quite low. So now we are free to travel both in Australia and in India, while Michael and Wendy along with their children, Kimberly and Christopher look after the retreat centre. We can still stay on the property in our caravan when we are not travelling.



By the time we had assisted Michael Irvine and his family to move their belongings to Mamre Retreat Centre and make sure they were settled, we headed out to Coffs Harbour.

Australia has a high standard of caravan and camping parks. It is usually our best option to check out the local ones that are close to where we are to conduct our ministry. So, in most cases we would book into the local caravan park site and use that location as our home base.

So having to spend so much time at these caravan and camping parks, we were appreciating the facilities that they offer as well. Although we were in the area to work and give aid to the local churches or groups, it often seemed to us more like a working holiday as we enjoyed the life that most caravan travellers do.

In Australia, there is a nick name for the elderly couples who have sold up their houses and then invest some of that money to buy a caravan and a vehicle to tow it. They are affectionately called, Grey Nomads, which puts the focus on the grey hair that often comes with age. Some grey nomads travel on a full-time basis, while others put a focus on something like going right around our country of Australia. A third category are the part time travellers who might travel on holidays, once or twice a year, but whichever group they fall into, they are generally lovely people.

One of our favourite pastimes was when we might be sitting in the sun outside our caravan and watching the new arrivals as they parked their caravans. It was real entertainment to observe some of them as they attempted to park the caravan by reversing in. I put the focus on the word, attempt, because it was often much better than a TV show. Sometimes the man would be reversing while the woman gave directions and sometimes it was the other way around. Many grey nomads were excellent at parking their caravans but there were just as many that were hopeless at it. But what often happened was the person driving and the person giving directions would be yelling at each other for getting it wrong and after many attempts, they would still not be correctly parked. "I told you to go right but you turned left, why aren't you listening to my instructions", would be yelled for all to hear. While the yelled response might be, "listen to you? I can't even see you and if I had turned the way you said, I would have hit that tree". The first few times we watched these couples fighting and not being able to park properly, I would offer to help in some cases, but they were so worked up they would often take it as an insult. But our free comedy shows would often stretch to over half an hour and a couple of times longer. Please do not take this the wrong way, because we would never laugh or show our amusement, but it was very funny to watch.

Reversing a caravan or trailer is not easy because normally if you are in just a car and you turn your steering wheel left, you go left. However, if you have a towed vehicle behind you and want to reverse, if you turn the steering wheel left, your caravan or trailer goes right. So, it confuses your brain, and it is so easy to get yourself in a real mess. By God's grace alone, I have over my career in the Air Force, driven every type of vehicle that has wheels with only one exception, which is a railway train. In the early years I had been sent to a ground support Air Force base where, as an electrician, I worked on every kind of vehicle as some point, which I had to also be licensed to test drive. Of course, as my career went forward, I worked on aircraft and eventually worked on the Hercules flight simulator. So, the point being, as a professional driver, I was very good at reversing any type of vehicle. One time when we arrived at a caravan park, just a bit north of Coffs Harbour, the park manager said, "I will put you in a site that you won't be able to get your caravan into, so park the van in the spot where your car should normally be and park your car behind the tree. I can't even park a caravan in that spot and the local council, won't let me chop down the tree". OK, I replied, and when we found our site number there was indeed a huge tree right in front of the caravan spot, so I sort of took it as a challenge and managed to manoeuvre the caravan to the spot in the first attempt. Needless to say, that I need to be aware of pride in myself, so that when I met up with the park manager again, I simply said, "I just got lucky, I probably could not do it again".

Our time in Coffs Harbour was simply to have time out for ourselves, so that we could relax and recharge after India and making sure that the Irvine family were settled in. Then after a few weeks, we headed for the suburbs of Sydney to visit our beautiful family. We spent time with Rose's mother, Eva, my parents, Keith and Joyce, along with all our six children and their spouses plus our six grandchildren. `

When we began our missionary work, people would always ask, "what is the name of your ministry?" Our initial answer was, "we are just two oldies who help our where we are needed." But after a while we soon realised, we needed a name to be able to fundraise so we called ourselves Mamre Ministries, the name Mamre is where Abram pitched his tents and where God promised him so much, so it is a place of promise. After a while when we went to India it became Mamre International. It was in 2004 that we had to become a registered charity it became Mamre International Aid. We were a registered association with the Australian Department of Fair Trading.

As we headed north, we stopped over at Morisset once more as we had promised them that we would return to help with more ministry. So, while we were there, we presented a video series called "That the World May Know" by Dr. Ray Vander Laan. Dr Ray is a very learned biblical scholar who presents the series of various biblical events on the actual geographical site in the Holy Land where that event occurred. So, as we presented two of these twenty different videos each time, it took us ten weeks to finish the series. However, each one was a challenge to each person as they often presented new twists of our opinions on each Scripture that was presented.

By the time we finally left Morisset to head for home at Mount Russell and the Mamre Christian Retreat Centre, we were well into the second half of 2004.

My Rose, who was christened Lesley in England then she came to Australia with her husband along with two children, Julie and Anne. She was born in Walthamstow in England, not that far from London and of course she went on to give birth to Stephen and Angela as well. They arrived in Australia in 1976 after applying for Australian immigration. Her husband left her with her four children, and she had lived without a companion for more than ten years until I had come along.

So, she had lived in Australia as a permanent resident but always travelled on her British passport. That was perfectly fine except that each time we went to India, Rose needed to get a re-entry visa. If she did not, she would not be allowed back into Australia and each time it would cost around two hundred dollars. Therefore, she finally decided to apply for Australian citizenship, and she was called to attend a citizenship ceremony before the Mayor of Inverell on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 2004. After the official ceremony she received her official Australian citizenship certificate in the presence of her sponsor, Con Mureau, our very dear friend. After that she soon applied for an Australian passport and no longer needed re-entry visas.



We are now able to live on the funds that have been granted to me in compensation for my spinal injury during my service in the Royal Australian Air Force and it is paid by the Commonwealth

Employees Compensation Board. So, thanks be to God we are also able to send some of that money to our people in need in India.

Later that year my parents, Keith and Joyce Walsh, made the 13-hour journey by train and bus from the suburbs of Sydney to join us on our Retreat Centre property. My dad particularly enjoyed driving our old tractor named Trevor. While my mum preferred the smaller ride on mower. They were both very struck by the beauty of our property, and they enjoyed every minute of their week-long stay.



On the 11<sup>th</sup> of November we celebrated our 10<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary by going to a fine dining restaurant together.

We were committed to finding different ways to help our dear orphans, lepers, Dalets and widows and to that end we had learned of an organisation called, Armidale computer library. They were a group who were committed to rescuing computers that had been thrown out, either at the public rubbish dump or simply on the side of the road. They are a non-profit organisation comprising of a group of likeminded volunteers who are concerned for their community and are resolved to address problems with waste. They recycle computers thus reducing environmental damage and they supply the computers to the socially or economically disadvantaged. They have supplied computers to orphanages in Afghanistan, Africa and Sri Lanka in the past.

They make sure that the computers are fully functional, otherwise they fix them when it is possible. They then find new homes for the computers, sometimes for children, the poor or even for somebody's first computer to learn on. If one could not be repaired, it would then be used for its parts.

So, we asked them if we could send some computers to India especially for our orphans to learn on but also for others as well. The Armidale computer library was very quick to agree, and they soon donated over one hundred computers, wow.



By the time that the computers were ready to be picked up we were situated back in the Lake Macquarie area where we had been helping the Morisset and Toronto prayer groups. The Toronto branch of Retravision kindly donated the use of one of their delivery trucks for us to transport the computers to our property in Mount Russell. When we loaded up the computers, we received lots of help from our local friends and likewise at the other end of our journey.



Getting the computers to India turned out to be extremely difficult but we managed just a couple at a time.

There was a massive tsunami that devastated a lot of countries in Asia, and it affected some of our own people in India. Many deaths were reported with a great deal of damage to properties as well.



We travelled back to the western suburbs of Sydney once again to celebrate Christmas with all our family. It was so good to catch up with everybody but after about two weeks, it was time to get back to work. Then we travelled back up to Lake Macquarie to help the local church groups and to do some much-needed fund raising.

With that in mind we found out that there was going to be a Toronto community fete held in the town centre and we were offered a stall so that we could do some fund raising.

On the day of the fete, we set up our stall with pictures and posters of our work with orphans, lepers, and Dalets, and as the day progressed, we asked passers-by for their help by donating. The fete was very well attended, and we soon received a lot of support. At one point, I had to leave our stall in Rose's care, while I went to buy us some lunch and while I was away, a very well-dressed man came up to Rose at our stall and started to ask her questions. He initially asked for more information about our work and after he seemed to become satisfied with her answers, he asked her, "How much of the donated funds actually go to those in need in India?" Rose responded quickly by saying, "All of it, why?" Then the man said, "No, that is not possible, you must have some administrative costs or wages." Then Rose said, "No, we do not take donated money for ourselves and any printing, mailing, petrol or any other costs are never paid from donated funds, we pay for all those things ourselves." The man then said, "Wow, I don't think that there is any other charity who can claim that one hundred percent of donated funds go to their cause, be proud of that, well done." Rose was a little taken back because we just do not think about it, we just naturally think that it is the right thing to do.

The man then went on to tell Rose that up until last weekend, he had been employed by one of Australia's major overseas child sponsorship organisations. At this point I will add that although he told Rose the name of the organisation, I am not prepared to name them in this account as it could be slanderous. However, the man went on to say that he was the third highest official in the company and that last weekend all of the higher employees were invited to a three-day weekend to be held at one of Sydney's more expensive and exclusive hotels. He added that the though the weekend was meant to be a bit of a think tank and problem-solving event, he felt it just seemed to be a way of the executives of the company to live it up. He was so angry about the waste of money, which he knew was coming from the administrative costs which was taken from their donated funds. By the second day of the retreat weekend and after seeing all the liquor consumed and the a la carte meals, he told the boss that he was quitting the organisation, so he just walked away. He then told Rose, "Be proud of what you guys are doing because I don't know any other charity who can say that they can send

one hundred percent of donated money to those they care for.” While he said those words, he handed Rose a very large donation and walked away with a big smile.

When I arrived back at our stall with our lunch, Rose told me all about it and said, “you have only just missed him.” I then asked, “what was his name?” Rose answered, “after all that he said, he never once mentioned his name.”

After we had been in the Lake Macquarie area of New South Wales, we headed back to the western suburbs of Sydney to catch up with family and celebrate some birthdays. On one day, we headed for the suburb of Westmead to visit my parents. As we were sitting around and sharing our news and they shared theirs, my parents suddenly started to talk about my great grandparents and how they used to celebrate Jewish festivals before immigrating to Australia.

I was very confused, and I asked them, “why would they celebrate Jewish festivals? They weren’t Jewish, were they?” They answered, “well yes, in fact they were, why is that important?” I was absolutely flabbergasted as there was never any mention of this and such a thing was very important to me as a born-again Christian, of course it was. My response to their question, “why, is that important?” Was, “yes, of course it is important in my current walk with God. So, they were both Jewish?”, I then asked. “Yes son” they answered, “they immigrated to Australia from Europe and when they got here, they changed their surname so that they would not be known as Jews.”

Wow, what an honour, I am Jewish. From that point I had so many questions and I asked one of them, “they never spoke about it nor even mentioned it once, why?” The answer was, “after all the persecution that they suffered in Europe, they just wanted to pretend to be simple European immigrants and so they did not practice their faith or talk about it. As soon as they arrived in Australia, they changed their surnames by de poll to Benny.”

It took me sometime to track down their history and Jewish names and it turned out that they had a surname of Bernstein and that they were descended from the house of David which means that I am descended from the same family line as Jesus, this is huge. It took me a long time to get over the great honour I felt and to this day it still has not worn off.

Somehow, I feel that spiritually, I may have had a small insight because ever since I gave my life to Christ Jesus, I have always had a yearning to study the life and times of Jesus and everything to do with the Hebrew life. I had even begun to try to learn the Hebrew language but all I know is that as much as I have already received from God, there is still much more to come. But it recalls a very important Scripture which should apply to all Christians.

***Luke 12: 48 From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.***

Therefore, I am assuming that since Rose and I have been as loyal to the calling of God as we have been able too, that God on His part has rewarded us abundantly and we have indeed been given much. So, we must assume that God then will ask even more from us both, but we are also painfully aware of our shortcomings and can only try harder to do better.

By now we have our website up and running plus we are now an incorporated association, and we have a license to fundraise by having raffles or garage sales or church bazaars.

Our beautiful 2<sup>nd</sup> granddaughter, who is also our 7<sup>th</sup> grandchild, was born on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August to Julie and her husband, Clark, and they named her Isabella.



At this stage I must make a comment of a lady that we met through the Beenleigh Prayer Group in Queensland and her name is Betty Graver. We originally met Betty at the Share the Holy Spirit conference which the entire Beenleigh prayer group attended every year and of course afterwards when we travelled to minister to the group as missionaries. Betty decided to apply for the chance to accompany us to India on our next trip this year and after we made sure that she was suitable, we gave her our consent. Since the decision was made, Betty has been fundraising for her own expenses but also to support our orphans and lepers. It turns out that Betty is a super fundraiser and her efforts have already raised a lot of money.

Two other people also applied to be able to accompany us to India this year as well, a long time, friend of ours, Paul Lawson from the Servants of Jesus Covenant Community. The second one is a newer friend, Pauline O’Carrigan who is a farmer that lives in the far north of New South Wales in the same district of the Mamre Christian Retreat Centre in a town called Cherry Tree Hill.

## Chapter 13

### India the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2005 to the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2005

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of August, my birthday, Rose and I pack up our caravan and park it for storage at the Blacksmith's caravan park near Swansea in the Lake Macquarie area on the coastal side. We then drive to Broadmeadow railway station to pick up Paul Lawson at 9.30am, he has travelled north from Sydney. The three of us then travel in our car to Mount Russell and we arrive there at around 4.30pm we collect our backlog of post from the Irvine's. Then after a cup of tea, the three of us then drive to Cherry Tree Hill to spend the night with John and Pauline O'Carrigan at their farmhouse. As it was my birthday, our dearest friends, Con and Gail Mureau as well as Brian and Marea all drove over to join the rest of us in celebrating with a fine meal and some cake.



Brian and Marea- Birthday Cake - Gail and Marea



Paul, Con & John (Pauline's Hubby)

The next morning, Friday the 19<sup>th</sup>, Pauline and Paul left with us both to drive to Caboolture in Queensland, a suburb which is north of Brisbane, where our daughter Julie and her husband Clark lived. Julie is the only one of our six children who does not live in the western suburbs of Sydney in New South Wales, although they now live close to our other children. Rose and I share the driving because we both enjoy it and while we drive. Paul and Pauline are becoming acquainted in the back



seats. We arrive at around 5pm and Clark and Julie put on some beautiful steaks on the BBQ and there are many side dishes to accompany the meat. After watching a nice movie on Clark's massive screen from his overhead projector we all head for our beds to rest up before our long flights tomorrow.



Pauline, myself, Rose and Paul

The next morning on Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup>, we are all up by 5am so that we can all be showered, and everyone had breakfast except ourselves, before Julie drives us in our car to Brisbane airport and then she will keep our car at her place until we return. When we arrive at the departure gates of the airport, we soon find Betty waiting for us there, so after saying goodbye to Julie, our team of five is complete.



We soon check in to our Singapore airlines flight and after going through security the other three enjoy a nice extra breakfast. At 10.15am we take off and head for Singapore's Changi airport where we land at 4pm, Singapore time. After we had boarded our flight in Brisbane, it did not take Betty long to make friends with the people sitting next to her and she even managed to get a donation from an American tourist for our orphans. I don't know how she does it, it seems that she is a superbly gifted fundraiser. After we had landed at Changi airport, we have over four and a half hours to wait for our flight to Chennai in India. So, we all waste time by looking around this massive airport with its hundreds of duty-free shops, restaurants and bars.

Our next flight to India, leaves on time at 8.45pm, Singapore time, and we land in Chennai at 9.50pm, Indian time. Singapore time is two hours behind Sydney and Brisbane time and India is four and a half hours behind our time. After a long queue to get through Indian customs, we were outside the airport by about 11pm. Despite the late hour it is still 29 degrees, and we are met by our two Indian Pastors, who take care of things during our absence. They had organised a vehicle to take us to a mission hostel, named ICSA, that we have stayed at on a previous trip and where there are three rooms booked. It is so great to have a shower and fall into bed after such a long trip. We never found out what ICSA stood for.

I will point out a few things about Indian city names to avoid any confusion. Chennai was renamed Madras by the British and Mumbai was renamed Bombay. There are other Indian cities that were renamed as well but after Indian independence was established, the Indian people chose to go back to the city's original names.

It is hard to believe that after so much travelling, we are here in India and just about to go to bed and it is still Saturday. By God's grace, Rose and I do not suffer from Jet lag, but it is very easy to see how it affects so many people given the many different time zones and the speed of flight.



Pauline, Betty, Rose and Paul

We are up early on Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> of August in our room where we share a nice cup of tea each for ourselves and we also make one for Betty and Pauline. Rose and I had discovered on our last trip to India that the Indian shops sell small cup sized electric elements that you can use to heat water in a cup for tea or coffee. Paul missed out because he slept in, but we are all taken in two rickshaws to attend Mass at the nearby Catholic Church. Then after church, the other three had an Indian style breakfast at a food stall nearby and it mainly consisted of idlis and chapattis. All of us headed back to our room for prayer where Paul got a word from Ezra about padlocks being broken and possessions stolen, also a word from the New Testament about prayer being stolen, so we all prayed against Satan's attacks. After unpacking and having a little rest it was time to go for lunch at "Aachi Restaurant" which is in Monteith Road in Elmore, where Bishop Sundar Clark lived. It is a suburb of Chennai, we were served with huge plates of Chinese food as well as Indian, Rose and I had recommended it and the group loved it. We all enjoyed a mixture of Chinese dishes which were all very 'yummy', had different ice creams for dessert, drinks and bottles of water for the five of us and it all came to 168 Rupees about five dollars and sixty cents for us all. From there we went and ordered two salwars, these are trousers, dress and scarf combinations, one for Betty and one for Pauline. They will be altered to suit by tomorrow when we can pick them up in the afternoon.



There weren't too many shops open as it is Sunday but managed to buy a sim card for the phone and some jewellery for Betty. Paul is trying to get used to his camera which is a new digital model, and everyone is getting used to the Indian currency. Went back to ICSA by 4.00pm and played cards, progressive rummy, for the evening.

Paul went to 6.30am Mass at another church he had found a little further from the one we went to yesterday. Craig and Rose went to put the heater on to heat the water for the shower and it blew up, never mind it is so hot that a cold shower is good. All got together in the Walsh room for morning prayer at 7.30am followed by breakfast of bread and bananas for our team of three, plus tea or coffee for those who wanted it. Went and looked at the shops in Alsa Mall in Monteith Road, Fountain Plaza in Pantheon Road and ordered two Saris, one for Betty and one for her friend they will be

made and ready to be picked up when we return to Chennai. Also went to the money changer to change our Aussie money to rupees. Rose's shoes broke and we put them into the menders, a little lady who sat on the corner of the road and mended shoes for a living.



We all had lunch at Aachi Restaurant again and although it was good the dishes we chose today were not as tasty as yesterday's, some of them were a bit too hot. From the restaurant we walked to the Post Office which is quite a long walk to post a parcel that the Evangelical Sisters of Mary had asked us to post in India and a parcel to Sheela in Madurai, who is Rose and my adopted granddaughter. Betty was finding it too hot and so Rose took her back to ICSA in a rickshaw while the others walked back. Pauline went to the Internet and the rest played cards until 6.30pm, once again progressive rummy. Paul went for a walk, Pauline returned and rang her husband, John, Rose and I went to shops then met up with Paul and spoke to a Professor of Social Studies and Economics who Paul had met at the corner stall whilst having a cold drink. I had to go out at 8.00pm with "Poon Raj" the man from the ICSA hotel to book another hotel for us for when we return to Chennai, as ICSA is fully booked for the dates before we leave to fly home.

On Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> Rose, Paul and I went to church at 6.15am there was Benediction followed by 6.30am Mass in English. There was a full choir, all sung responses, a collection, the lot and probably about 300 people or more and this is only a weekday early morning mass. Walked back to ICSA to pack and then prayer followed by breakfast for the other three. Our Australian team can now have toast as I purchased a toaster yesterday, with honey, jam, vegemite or peanut butter, yum, we brought the Vegemite and peanut butter with us from Australia, but Rose and I still only eat one meal per day. The car that we hired was due to arrive at ICSA at 9.00am but by 9.45am there was no sign of it so through Poon Raj, the hostel manager, we ordered another vehicle that would take us to Padappai. This vehicle arrived within 20 minutes and turned out to be a bus, so we had plenty of room for us all and our luggage.

We travelled through Chennai and past the airport heading south to Tambaram, from there we had to ring Arul, our ministry leader in Padappai, for the driver to understand the directions because our driver could not speak any English. Betty was sitting right at the back of the bus and although we had driven from the airport and we had been on a few rickshaw rides this was her first real encounter with the traffic "rules" of Indian driving and we think she nearly had kittens, as the saying goes. When the other vehicles came so close, there was so much noise and so many cars, bikes, rickshaws, trucks, oxen and people everywhere. We arrived at Arul and Sarjini's house about 11.30am and stopped for chai.

They live in two rooms that would be no bigger than a caravan 16' x 8', there is a kitchen as well, but it would be the size of a cupboard and the same could be said of the laundry cum toilet and they sleep on the floor as does their three year old daughter, Sherinne. From here we went to Manna



Farm, which is a Christian retreat centre in Padappai, within walking distance of Arul's and where Craig and Rose stayed last year.



There was a retreat in progress, as there always seems to be, and we were allocated three upstairs rooms. Betty and Pauline took the first one, then Rose and I while finally Paul had the third room, at the end of the block of four rooms is a shower block with two western style toilets and two Indian style toilets each with a shower in the same very small cubicle. Sarjini made lunch for us, and Arul bought it over on his motor bike, which consisted of rice, vegetables and soya sausage, very tasty. Unpacked and sorted out the seeds, rosaries, toys etc which each of the group had carried in their luggage, had to make it into two piles, one for Arul and one of Benjamin. The power went off twice during the next hour or so and of course no electricity means no fans and no fans makes for more heat. Sarjini, Sherinne and Arul arrived at 5.30pm and we all talked for three hours about what would happen in the next few weeks.

They left and Arul returned with a large container of purified water for us which he carried on his bike. Settled down for the night and considering the holes in the roof, there were not too many mossies and thankfully in the middle of the night a cool breeze blew up and we even had to turn the fan off as it was quite cool.



The next morning, we awoke to the sound of the Hindu call to prayer at 4.00am, blasted out of horn speakers mounted on poles throughout the area, then the Christians in the retreat centre had their early morning prayer so that by 6.00 to 6.30am we are all up and having cuppas and showers. Paul, whose name in Tamil means Milk, is not so well this morning, he has Delhi belly, so during our prayers we prayed for Paul then the other two had breakfast of bananas along with toast and jam. We all did some washing and hung it over the balcony to dry. Arul arrived at 9.30am for prayer and a talk; we sat downstairs under the shade of the trees as it was so hot. While sitting and sharing we were entertained by squirrels, hens, dogs, cows, pigs, geese and ducks that all came up very close. As we sang and prayed, it was very interesting to hear the other Indian Christians singing and praying and although none of us understand the others, we knew that they too are worshipping the one and only God. Once again Sarjini had cooked lunch for us and today's menu was rice, curry, dahl, mango pickle and grapes after which we all took a rest when Arul went home. At 5.00pm Arul, Sarjini and Sherinne arrived with two rickshaws, me, Rose, Sarjini, Sherinne and driver in one, while Betty, Paul, Pauline, Arul and driver went in the other and off we went for the seventeen kilometres drive to the village of Venpakkam. Venpakkam is the village that is under the Mamre International Aid's umbrella, it is a Dalet village, and there is also a lot of leprosy there. We arrived at the church which



was built last year and had a prayer meeting for one and a half hours. I began by introducing each member of our team and led us all in prayer. Then Betty gave a donation of 25,000 rupees, nearly \$1,000 for the future orphanage and pre-school, she had raised this money by fund-raising on behalf of the Mamre International Aid.



Paul spoke on God's love, Pauline spoke about raising funds in Australia to help the village, Rose spoke about how pleased they were to be there and to see so many familiar faces. Back to the rickshaws, who have been patiently waiting for us, then back to Padappai where we stop for a drink and then on to Manna Farm where we discuss the evening and how it went. Betty said she thought it went okay but wanted to do more as we have sat around too much already. Pauline said she felt inadequate when praying with others, while Paul was okay with it all. We all still need to listen to each other and learn patience, goodness, kindness and self-control, but in general we are all doing well. Pauline is managing to get through on the phone to John each evening and she also went for a jog around the oval this afternoon. Everyone is enjoying the food so far, thank you God, but Rose and I stay committed to one meal per day.

Thursday the 25th of August we are awake at 4.00am to the sound of the Hindu teaching/music being broadcast over the loudspeakers then the Christian competition started by 6.00am and most people are up except for our group who lie in until 7.00am. Prayer and sharing at 7.30am but not followed by breakfast as the bread has gone mouldy and we will have to wait for Arul to bring some more. He arrived at 8.45am with a fresh loaf, bless him, so then our team had breakfast while Arul went home and returned at 10.00am with a Sumo car, which is like a small four-wheel drive, to take us to Kanchipureem, which is the city of silk and of temples. To all fit into the Sumo the driver and one other sit in the front seat, three in the seat behind and then in the rear there are two seats facing each other so two sit in there.

We stop first at Venpakkam where we visit the pre-school which has been started since last year and has 25 children and then on to the primary school which also has been started since last year and has 78 children and growing fast. We do not have time to stop for long today and we will go back and have a proper visit to spend more time with them next. It is good to see where the money Mamre International Aid is sending out is being spent and how it is changing lives. The two temples we visited in Kanchipureem were alright but not too impressed with them, so dark and dreary. The rest of us refused to go in but Pauline went up to the priest and got a blessing from him and a red dot on her head which she promptly wiped off as soon as she was out of the priest's sight. Before going to the temple, we all got hounded by sandal salesmen and Betty bought a pair, Paul bought a pair and Pauline bought four pairs, they were later found to be made of cardboard and won't last very long at all. Later, Arul warned of the dangers of purchasing anything from street vendors, mainly due to poor quality.

After much discussion the entire group agreed that they all felt the darkness, both physically and spiritually whilst we were at the Hindu temples and were all so glad that we were prayed up, with our armour on. We stopped for lunch at Savaranna Bhavarna in Kanchipureem and Betty, Pauline and Paul had their first 100% Indian style traditional meal, including using the fingers of their right hands only to eat with.



We then travelled back to our lodgings with a stop for coconut milk and praise the Lord it started to rain and was still thundering when we got back to Manna Farm. When we arrived, we found the girls room had got wet from the rain coming through the hole in the roof and had to move them to another room but thankfully the rain has cooled it down a bit and we must expect more rain as it is the monsoon season.

At 6.30pm Craig, Paul, Pauline and Rose walked to Arul's house and he came and collected Betty on the motorbike. We arrived at Arul's at 7.00pm and Sarjini made coffee for us all which we drank with hot crisps and biscuits. Sherinne showed us all how she could read English and then Sarjini made lemon rice and hard-boiled eggs for those who wanted them. We watched BBC news on their television and heard about a big hurricane in America, then returned to Manna Farm by 8.45pm.

Friday 26th August many and varied noises in the night, singing, clapping, talking, barking, wind blowing so that we were all up by 7.00am. Prayer at 7.30am, prayed over Pauline then did some packing and clearing up. The car arrived at 9.00am, the same Sumo as yesterday and same driver, and by the time we were all ready to go Arul arrived and so we took off for Venpakkam for a prayer meeting. There were about 10 women and 15 children, Paul gave a short talk on love, I gave a talk on Gethsemane, about watching and praying, take this cup from Me and Thy will be done. There were three testimonies of healing proclaimed before the service ended and they were thanking God for us. We left Venpakkam about 11.45am and went to Arul's house where Sarjini had prepared lunch of rice, chicken curry and chicken 65, which is like our fried and battered chicken. Sherinne comes home from school for lunch so after she returned Benjamin and Mr Rajah arrived. We went back to Manna Farm to finish packing and then squeezed all the baggage into the back of the Sumo. The Driver, Benjamin and I are in the front seat, Paul, Pauline, Betty in centre seat, while Rose was in the back. We don't know where Mr Rajah got to and are off to the Granite Mines.

We will now visit Benjamin's projects for the next few days. We had coffee with the orphanage manager that Rose, and I had met last year. Praise the Lord it rained just as we arrived, but it was all over by the time we had finished our coffee. We walked all over the mine taking many photos and videos, this is unexplainable, and we hope the photos show the state of devastation there is here, we saw some mine blasting. They often blast new sections of the rock face, and the dynamite is set then a warning alarm goes off and a few moments later a large explosion happens, but last year, the warning alarm was not sounded, and many people had been killed while lots of children became orphans. This was of course another example of their very poor work ethics. All the people who live at the granite mine must work from the young to the old, so they will be fed. The dust is continual day and night, and the work is back breaking. Many of the workers have no shoes, no face protection and their clothes are just like rags. We donated a few hundred disposable industrial face masks to the mine workers. But sadly, when they wear out, they will still have no protection from breathing in granite dust.



Back to the orphanage, which is for the mine children who lost their parents in the mine blast last year. We are served egg toast and coffee and then a new car arrived to take us to Chengalpattu, this time the luggage went in the back, Rose and I with the driver in front, Paul, Pauline and Betty on middle seat and Benjamin had to sit on the floor at their feet which did not make for a comfortable ride. Arrived at Marai Malai (Chengalpattu) about 7.30pm and stopped for coffee at Benjamin's friend's house, they own the unit that we will be staying in whilst in Marai Malai. I will explain here that last year Benjamin lived in Chengalpattu but due to the tsunami he had to move to Marai Malai which is just outside the main town of Chengalpattu. Benjamin was doing a church service when the tsunami hit and they saw the wave coming but fortunately most of them were able to jump into a truck and drive away, he did lose his grandmother though. We piled back into the car and went five minutes to the unit which was really a house, it had one double bed, one divan in the lounge which Betty bagged, we took a mattress off the double bed and put it on the floor in the lounge room for Pauline, and Benjamin went out to buy a mattress for Paul and some sheets for us all, also some water and drinks. Paul had decided to sleep in the kitchen and the toilet is not the best, but we will have to manage, while the fridge is handy. Around 10.00pm all settled down to sleep as best as we can, but Betty is having problems with the toilet situation, apart from being filthy it is an Indian style toilet, on the floor. An Indian style toilet is just a cemented hole in the ground, so you must squat over the hole. As Betty is in her eighties it is almost impossible for her to squat, so I organised a bucket for Betty to use instead.

Saturday the 27th of August, we are up around 7.00am followed by prayer at 7.30am and discussion on the present situation. Paul was covered in bugs falling and crawling on him all night and Pauline says she is okay and will go with the flow. We started with breakfast when Benjamin arrived to say Betty could sleep at the air/conditioned house we stopped at last night because it has a western toilet too. God is good and answers prayers so fast. Pauline will go along with her so that will only leave myself, Rose and Paul in the house. Benjamin took everyone to the shops where we bought Phenol for cleaning the toilet, insect spray and some other essentials. We all headed for Kattankolathui village to visit our orphan children. The children of the village welcomed us with rose petals and they put on a show for us then we had lunch of rice and three curried meat dishes then we head back to the house after dropping Pauline at an internet shop on the way.





We cooled off under the fans, Paul had a cold shower to cool off and Rose and I cleaned the toilet and shower area. Benjamin arrived with a tailor to take measurements for Betty and Pauline's saris, all this is because we have a special event to go to tonight. Us boys have sent our trousers and shirts to be pressed and hopefully they will be back by tonight. We have been promised that a lady would come to help us put our saris on. It clouded over about 4.00pm with thunder in the distance but no rain. At 6pm two men and three girls arrive, then Rose, Pauline and Betty went into the bedroom, stripped off and were each dressed by one of the Indian ladies. Pauline's sari was blue and gold, Betty's was pink floral, and both looked great. Rose had her blue sari from last year. Paul and my clothes had been nicely pressed and everyone was looking really spruced up.



Rose, Pauline, Betty, I and three Indian girls, in all our finery piled into a very small car which was driven by one of the girls. While Benjamin and Paul got on the motorbike and off, we all went. We kept noticing that the motorbike which was in front of us kept waiting for us and the man was constantly turning round to watch the car. Why? We asked the young girl who was driving what was the matter and she admitted that she was a learner and had in fact only been driving for about 25 minutes. Now we are worried too, but we arrived safely after only going a short distance, we never saw the driver again. We were at the town hall and on the building for the whole town to see was a huge banner with our names on it, welcoming us to the celebration. We were escorted to the front seats, although later other chairs and "more important" guests were added, and the show started. This is one year since Karunnani Jeevan Charitable Trust has started and Mamre International Aid initiated it last year.





The celebration began with a traditional Indian band except they were all blind, then the most beautiful dancers performed for us, the orphanage children sang, Pauline presented each dancer with a gift, I was asked to give the local Catholic Priest a gift, there were speeches, and we were given leis of flowers, which we later discovered the colour had run all over our good clothes. We met up with Benjamin's family, for Rose and me it was a reunion, and we were introduced to many people. At 9.00pm Betty, Pauline, Rose and I "Amma", Benjamin's mum, went in a taxi to a food outlet where they make meals for 3000 workers every day and give a lot of food to charity. Paul and I arrived by different means and everyone from the celebration was there to enjoy a meal provided by these kind people. Being 'special' guests, we had our meal in the manager's office waited on by several men, everyone else sat on the floor or the few tables and chairs provided.



At the conclusion of the evening of celebrations, we were taken in an air-conditioned car back to our lodgings. It turned out to be a member of parliament's car, complete with its own flag, very posh. In fact, it is the car of the family who have offered Betty and Pauline's accommodation. Paul, Rose and I are dropped off at our lodgings while Betty and Pauline continue to the MP's house.

On Sunday 28th we are up around 6.15am only to find there is no water for showers or toilet use. I turned on the switch to get the pump to pump the water from the bore water storage on the roof down to the house. Betty and Pauline arrived back for prayer, and they had had a good night in air-conditioned comfort with a flushing western toilet. The only problem was there was only one double bed for them, and they could not be comfortable sleeping in it together. So, Pauline had her bags with her, she is coming back to our house. Prayer at 7.30am then practised the skit we will be performing later that day. A rickshaw came at 9.15am to take us to Mass, Pauline did not come as she was too tired, and we met the priest from last night. The mass was long, in Tamil and it was very crowded. We went with Benjamin and prayed for a family. The husband was an engineer and had been swindled in his business, he had lost everything. We got a rickshaw back to the lodging house to find Pauline much better. Benjamin was hungry because he had had no breakfast so gave him some toast and jam. Then we left for a village called Guddaloor in Shri Nagar in the middle of which is a Hindu Shrine and lots of Hindu music. While loud messages are blaring out of the loudspeakers from 6.00am to 9.00pm every day. The noise was awful; there was no let up at all. We had lunch with Adamstar, his wife, Sumati Salome, their son, John Easterite, daughter, Ida Sweetie, mother, Santa, his sister, Jessie and Aunt Mary Flora.

We walked around the village visiting a few huts, praying for the sick, prayer walking and taking photos and then had an impromptu prayer/singing session in front of Adamstar's hut. The neighbours came and joined in or stood looking at us. The children flocked around us for photos and cricket cards. Paul and I had a ride on a push bike each, which amused everyone who saw us. As darkness came on so did the thousands of lights of the Hindu Shrine and still the music blared out. Such a contrast between the poverty of the village and yet the government can go to all the expense to light up the Hindu Shrine. It is a public holiday and a Hindu festival day, hence all the lights and celebrations. We were told there were two high priests and many other priests celebrating this festival day with thousands in the Hindu congregation.

The church in the village is a slab of concrete with walls to about waist height with a tin roof on supporting poles, there is no door, and it was here that we had a short prayer meeting, skit and song all in competition with the noise of the Hindu music. I gave a talk about overcoming evil with good, using the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel challenging the priests of Baal as the example and pointed out that although we were few, we had much more power in Christ than the thousands of Hindus 100 yards from us. The government car came and picked us up around 8.00pm and Benjamin told us that after we left the village an argument broke out between the Hindus and it turned into a riot and they fought so much that they knocked the whole Hindu shrine down, an answer to prayer, thank you God. Back to Betty's posh lodging house for Betty to change into clean and ironed clothes but sadly she is not well, she has a cold. Then we all sit around in Betty's room talking to Benjamin of the plans for the next few days. After a few misunderstandings are sorted out we eventually sat down on the floor to rice, curry, and dahl at 10.00pm for our team of three. Betty took off to her bedroom and the air conditioning and at 10.45pm we left for our lodgings. Pauline has made her bed and Paul is back on the floor on his mattress. We pray this is the last change around for a little while.

Monday the 29th we are all up around 6.30am to write our journals, after a cold shower, it is still so hot and has been all night. After breakfast and prayer Betty arrived with Benjamin, on his bike and by 10.00am we were ready to set off in our rented Sumo for the day. First stop was at the orphanage, not the Granite Mine one, but just to pick up Jacqueline, Benjamin's sister, who is coming with us for the day. Then on to Chengalpattu to stop in town to buy biscuits, these are for the lepers we are going to visit, it took so long for them to get the biscuits that we got very restless sitting in the car and Pauline went off and bought a Nike bag. The team probably thought that Benjamin, Jacqueline and I had gone to plant the wheat for the biscuits it was taking so long but eventually we returned and we went to the leper hospital. This again was an experience that is hard to explain but Rose and I went to the same place last year and it was not any easier this year. To see the pain and suffering of so many, to see the conditions they live in, yes, it is a hospital but not like you in Australia or Western Civilisation know, it is squalid and pitiful. We gave out the biscuits and prayed with all the patients, gave 180 rupees, about 6 dollars, to a man for some new glasses and gave another man 100 rupees for soap and shampoo. A very moving thing happened to me in the terminal ward when one of the patients prayed a blessing over me, and I was so overcome that I had to go off on my own for a while. While Benjamin was with the other three, Rose and I were sitting out in the open, many lepers had gathered around us, and an impromptu prayer meeting started with much singing and prayer.







From there we went to lunch with Amma of chapatti's, curried potato and bananas, then on to the Leper Adult Literacy Programme which is run by Tamil Nadu Christian Council, headed by Esther Kathrioli. On the way we stopped for more biscuits and a refreshing cold drink. Because of the loss of fingers many people are being taught to write with their fingerless palms or in some cases, with their feet. There was an organised programme of dancing, singing, Paul gave message, we gave out biscuits, we saw the kitchen and then dinner was being served. We also saw the weaving room, lepers making some truly beautiful fabric. Witnessing these lovely people writing on their slates with sticks of chalk is also exciting because most of them were unable to read or write previously. We left at 6.30pm for dinner with MP and his family, then back to the orphanage, where we had picked up Jacqueline, to meet all the children, this is where Benjamin has his office which is also his bedroom. Back to the lodgings after dropping off Jacqueline to say our goodbyes, as we will not see her again this trip. Rani, the cleaning lady cum everything else came with us and did some washing for us and Rose did some ironing. Paul, Pauline and I watched some photos we had taken on the digital camera, on the television and we got to bed around 10.00pm. Still very hot and sticky.

On Tuesday 30th we are up at 5.00am again there was no water and had to turn the pump on, found that the taps were leaking so badly that the water is simply pouring away. The other problem was there was no drinking water either, so not a good start to the day. The driver arrived at 5.50am and we were not ready but managed to get away by 6.05am and went and picked up Betty. We then went on to pick up Benjamin and then headed South for two and a half hours to Panruti. Here we stopped at the president of the Student Hostel's house for some morning tea. On the road again to the village of Devanampattinam which was devastated by the tsunami and 50,000 people lost their lives. Much has been done, new boats have been bought, new huts put up and new buildings are being built but the look on the people's faces and the destruction that was caused is very sad to see. It was very hot as we walked along the beach and of course Rose couldn't resist going in for a swim, fully clothed of course.





On to a village called Cadaloor where cashew nuts grow. We walked among trees and walked until we found a little old man camped under a jack fruit tree, we saw paw paws, we saw and tasted what looked like yams. But we didn't see one cashew nut and only one cashew nut tree, so we are still wondering if we were in the right place. The village people gave us coconut water and coconut flesh to eat and then we went back to Panruti for a rest, after which we had chapatti and potato curry at 5.00pm. Praise the Lord it rained again while we were at Panruti. We went to the student hostel where I gave a talk on David and Goliath, there were so many people that they were all around the outside windows and doors, but they were talking so much that I had to stop and ask them to be quiet so that the people inside the building could hear. This was a very poor area, and they were so excited at seeing white people. Many of the places we go to, people have never seen a white man before that we tend to forget this. It was a long drive home in the dark and Benjamin was so tired he slept nearly all the way there in the morning and all the way home at night, we dropped him home, got some cold water, dropped off Betty and at last we were home.



Wednesday the last day of August and we are up at 5.00am due to storm and rain, ran to get washing in but it is too late. Betty arrived at 7.20am, she had not been well, Delhi Belly, prayer at 7.30am followed by boiled eggs for Paul and Pauline with toast. The car arrived at 10.00am before which we had cleaned the house as best as we could and packed, I had left my small towel in the freezer where I put it every night so it was nice and cold to put around my neck during the heat of the day, but I forgot it so we will have to buy another. We were taken back to the place where Betty had stayed, and Benjamin came out to say that we were going to go to the Royal Hotel for lunch and the restaurant owner wanted us to come and meet him but unfortunately, he had a heart attack. So, we were ushered indoors by Rani our wonderful cleaning, washing lady, we unpacked all the vehicle and just sat down and then Benjamin said we were off. The man had improved, and we were still going to lunch, he may come or he may not. Repacked the van, piled into it and drove to royal hotel in the grounds of the engineering university. We got the royal treatment, had cold juices, cold water, noodles, fried rice, Betty had soup and ice cream, coffee and then when I tried to pay the bill, I was given the money back and told it was a treat from the manager who could not make it after all.

We gave Benjamin 25,000 rupees, \$1,000, for the mine workers and orphanages on behalf of the whole team. We did meet up with Adamstar who bought us some tracts which were handed out in the village the other night. Back into the car, the poor driver has put up with us for three days, and we drive to Tambaram where once again Pauline heads for the internet, Betty and Rose to the



supermarket, Paul, Benjamin and me to the money changers. Betty bought another pair of sandals and I bought some oranges. Eventually we all met up and travelled on to Padappai to Arul's where Sarjini had coffee ready for us. From here we were not certain where we were going to stay but Arul had booked Manna Farm for us even though at first it looked as if they would be full, but God is good and we managed to get the four downstairs rooms, so firstly, we all have a room and secondly the roof doesn't leak. At 5.00pm Sarjini and Sherinne arrived in a Sumo to take us to Venpakkam village for the prayer meeting, Betty stayed in bed as she still was not well. In Venpakkam village the residents are all talking about the healings they received after we had prayed for them the last time. Paul gave a sharing on 2 Kings 6: 8 about the King of Syria and Elisha, the meeting finished early so back to Padappai for cold drinks.

Now we are into September and Arul arrived at 7.00am with breakfast of curry, pomegranates and poori (puffy things). We had prayer with Arul and then planned the day. As we are going to the schools today, Pauline, a schoolteacher of many years' experience, is in charge and she drew up an agenda, we practised skits and songs. Arul returned at 10.00am but had to wait for a while for the car to come as it had broken down and they had to send for another one. On the way we stopped at Padappai to buy a "towel", which will be a gift for the head man of the village, lollies for the children and eventually got to the pre-school at 11.30am. When we went to the pre-school on the 25th of August there were 20 children but today there were 25 and the five new children had only started today, they were all crying except one little boy who had cried all morning and had fallen asleep with exhaustion. The sight of five white strangers did nothing to help this outburst. Pauline tried to speak to them through an interpreter and we did sing some songs for them, gave out lollies and cricket cards. None of it could stop the tears from the new little ones. Lunch was served for the children and each one sat on the floor with their dish in front of them and tucked into their rice, except the crying ones who had to be encouraged and even then, didn't eat much. As we were leaving the confidence of the other children helped a little and they all decided we weren't so bad but still did not openly come to us or wave as the others did. From the pre-school we went to the church, a short walk through the village, where Martha had prepared a meal along with another lady for us of rice, curried potato and dahl. We then all stretched out on the floor of the church for a 45-minute rest which was badly needed as the heat was so intense and as yet there are no fans in the pre-school.



With the support of Mamre International Aid the electricity has just started to be connected and they should have power and fans within a few weeks. Another short walk through the village brings us to the primary school where 80 children were excited about our visit. Pauline did a longer session of teaching with Arul translating for her, Paul shared a story, we all sang songs, gave out lollies and cricket cards, which was a big hit with them all. Whilst we were in the school a storm came over which brought some rain which cooled it down somewhat but left great mud holes which we had to negotiate on our way back to Arul's house where Sarjini and Sherinne had coffee, curry pasties and sweet corn on the cob ready for the other three. We dropped Paul back at Manna Farm, he is not feeling the best, then travelled on to Tambaram where, guess what? Pauline went to the Internet, Rose and Betty went shopping for a nightie for Betty, some rope, more mortien insect spray,

paracetamol, strepsils for Paul, bananas, butter and hair pins. Arul and I went to pick up the computer parts that I had bought from Australia, a mother board and parts to make Arul a computer. We then needed to buy a keyboard, monitor and a couple of other parts and Mamre International Aid was paying for this gift to help Arul. Arul is so excited about having his own computer and we travelled back to Manna Farm by 8.00pm and the rain has all gone and the heat is back. Haven't done much but the heat, dust and travelling are very tiring.

Friday the 2nd of September and we are up at 6.00am and doing some washing, we were able to use the new line, rope, we had brought yesterday and strung it between two trees. Today is a prayer and fast day so no breakfast but prayer as usual at 7.30am. At 9.00am the Sumo arrived and off we all went to Venpakkam church for a prayer meeting which Rose led. Prayed especially for Martha, who is a 25-year-old young lady but has only grown to about the height of a nine-year-old girl, she also has deformed legs. We measured her before the prayer and again after and she had grown half an inch, they will continue to pray each time they meet her and measure her progress on the wall of the church, maybe by next time we are there she will be seven feet tall. Although she may never reach 7 feet, Martha would continue to grow after prayers and following our next 2 visits to India and she miraculously grows a further 3 inches, what a mighty God we serve!



We prayed with everyone there and Rose got them to write their prayer requests on a piece of paper, those who could not write, Arul helped, and placed these in the centre so that during the time of prayer these requests were being prayed for. At the end of the session Rose got them to exchange these prayer requests with someone else and that person would pray for them from now on. We left the church at 11.30am and back to Sarjini's for lunch of eggs, poppadums, potato curry, cheezels and coffee. I stayed to put the computer together while the rest went back to Manna Farm, dropping Sherinne at school on the way. Rose did some ironing, Paul and Pauline seem to have Delhi Belly again, seems to be one thing after the other, we must be doing something right for the devil to bother us so much. I returned at 3.15pm very disappointed as the mother board did not survive the journey from Australia and a new one must be purchased.

After a short rest Arul arrived at 5.00pm, Betty, Rose and I go in a rickshaw, Pauline is staying home with the Delhi Belly and we travel to a village called Samathuva. The rickshaw then leaves us and we thought Paul and Arul, who were on the motorbike were right behind us, but after a little while the rickshaw returns with Arul, Sarjini, Sherinne and Paul so they had only gone to Arul's house and there awaited the return of the rickshaw. You never quite know what is happening. This area is a new development of about 100 houses and on the outside looks a little better than the other villages and we meet up with about 30 children. There is no church here yet and the house we go to is where, hopefully, the new pastor of the area lives, it is really different with green grass, hedges and pot plants. Betty gave a sharing; we sang thumbs up and gave out Mamre Notebooks to all the school children and some lollies. We sat in the garden and had coffee, cake and crisps then returned to Manna Farm by rickshaw about 8.00pm while I sat and talked to Arul until 9.30pm.





On Saturday the 3rd Rose woke at 3.00am as she couldn't sleep, and everyone is up by 6.30am. Showers and prayer at 7.30am, there seems to be a little loss of enthusiasm and unity probably because of sickness and homesickness, so we all need to encourage each other. Breakfast and then off to Venpakkam at 10.00am, half an hour late due to the car being late, where the headman and two elders came to the church and we presented them with the towel, which is a traditional way of honouring and gave Australian gifts to the elders. Paul gave a great presentation on how to sow seeds and how to care for the plants but when it came time to give the seeds out there was pandemonium. So, Arul took charge and organised that everyone in the village got some seeds and that they knew what to do with them. There were so many present that they were standing outside as well. It was 12.30pm before we could get away as the boys once again hounded us for cricket cards and photos. We stopped in Padappai for ice cream then onto Arul's for 'French Toast' with jam and coffee. Sarjini was not well today so we especially asked that she not cook for us and that we would have something light, so she cooked the French toast. Back to Manna Farm by 2.00pm Paul was sick, and Rose had a migraine headache so when Arul, Sarjini and Sherinne arrived at 4.30pm only me, Pauline and Betty went to Tambaram. They managed to get the mother board for the computer, Pauline and I went to the Internet before travelling on to a Bible College where Sarjini's uncle was in charge. We had coffee, chapatti, curried chicken and waited for the uncle to arrive but his son got sick, and he had to take him to the hospital, so we all turned around and came home. Back to Manna Farm by 9.30pm.

By Sunday the 4th we get up by 6.30 and showered. At 7.45am Arul arrived and took Betty on the bike to the Catholic Church in Padappai, Paul, Pauline, Rose and I walk to attend Mass at 8.30am. Mass didn't start until 8.45am and we left after communion, had the inevitable cup of coffee in Padappai then the Sumo with Sarjini and Sherinne arrived to take us to Venpakkam where we had the church service. During a time of testimony where many spoke of what the Lord had done for them that week, one elderly lady said that her permanently bent and ulcerated leg had healed after the team had prayed for her a couple of times during the week. Another testified to a huge spiritual breakthrough and our dear Martha, the one who had grown a little, said in essence, that her heart had been circumcised.

I talk on 1 Kings 18, and I spoke about the miracle of the Hindu Shrine at Guddaloor on Sunday 28th August, we were given plagues and shawls and then lunch was served in the church. We all sat around men, women and children and had rice, dahl and potato curry, then Betty, Rose and I went into one of the men from the church's hut to have coffee made by his wife. Back by car to Padappai for cold drinks and ice cream by 1.30pm. Rest and at 5.30pm I went to do the computer at Arul's while Betty, Paul and Rose played progressive rummy again. I returned at 9.30pm and had successfully got the computer going. This new computer will save Arul a lot of money and travelling as he must go a long way for Internet access to contact us and others. He also must pay for computer time to produce Mamre School book covers, flyers and many other things.

The 5th of September we are up at the usual time for prayer at 7.30am then breakfast of crackers, jam, peanut butter, vegemite, butter or bananas then read or caught up with our journals until Arul arrived at 10.00am to take Betty by bike to his house. The rest of us walked and it was very hot, Sarjini had coffee waiting for us and we watched some of the video and digital camera shots we had taken. Sherinne came home for lunch and the power went off, so that was the end of the photo show, had rice, soya sausage, peas, carrots all mixed like a paella. It started to rain just as Paul, Pauline and Rose were walking back to Manna Farm, and they got very wet as it really rained for about half an hour and then the sun came out but still there was no power. Betty arrived back in a rickshaw and then at 4.00pm another heavy downpour of rain came; well it is the rainy season so we must expect it and we are so grateful for the relief it brings from the heat. The rain must have bought out many unwanted creatures as we witnessed a rat running around the grounds and then a man with a piece of bamboo, flayed at the end, went smack and the rat was dead, what a great shot.

At 5.00pm, the rain had stopped, Arul arrived with the car, and we travelled five kilometres over the bumpiest, potholed, wet dirt roads you have ever seen to a village called Orathur where we sat and were stared at by the villagers who had never seen anyone like us before. We entertained the kids with silly magic tricks with much hand clapping while the men climbed the coconut trees to bring us coconut water which we drank with some biscuits. Arul is starting a children's ministry here and wanted our permission and prayer support. We prayed for the village and moved onto the house of a man who was to be married next week where we prayed over him and his family. Back to Manna Farm over the very bumpy road by 8.00pm and into bed to rest our weary, jarred bones.

The next day poor Rose has got the Delhi Belly and was up seven times in the night, the others had dosa for breakfast with jam, peanut butter or vegemite which Arul bought at about 7.30am. Arul tried a bit of vegemite and the expression on his face was one to be seen, he obviously did not like it but was too polite to say so. We all prayed before Arul and I went off to finish setting up the computer and internet, also to load in the software he would need. Today is the day when we are all supposed to be going to Arul's house to discuss the future and make suggestions. At 5.45pm the car came to pick us up, go on to Arul's and pick him and his family up and continue to Akaash Restaurant. This was to be a celebration, firstly it is Arul and Sarjini's Wedding Anniversary on the 12th of September, secondly it is Sherinne's birthday on the 21st of September and lastly, we are leaving the next day. We had a variety of meals including soup, finger chips, noodles, fried rice, chapatti, nun, ice cream, fruit juices for the nine of us, and it all came to \$25, which Betty blessed us all by paying. On the return trip we stopped at Vandaloor where, on top of a building, is a grass hut church and there was a prayer meeting going on, Rose and I had met this pastor last year. Even though we were not there very long at this church, it was a very anointed time with much prayer and a promise from Scripture for their spiritual victory. Back in the car and home to Manna Farm by 9.00pm. Wednesday the 7th of September up at 6.00am and this is our last morning at Manna Farm, there was steady, soaking rain for most of the morning, good for the land but not good for us getting our clothes dry to be packed. Prayer with Arul at 9.30am and then the car arrived at 11.30am to take us to Arul's with our entire luggage to have coffee, photos, goodbyes with Sarjini and Sherinne.





Always sad to say goodbye to such wonderful people especially as Sarjini had done so much for us by cooking and making drinks. Car took us, with Arul, back to Chennai where we had to firstly go to ICSA, the place we stayed when we first arrived in India, to find out where our new hotel would be as Poon Raj the ICSA manager had arranged it for us. On arrival at ICSA the Lord had gone before us and whereas before there were going to be no rooms available now there were four rooms just for us. Paul got a single bedroom on the ground floor and Betty had a double bedroom next door. Pauline had a double bedroom on the third floor while Rose and I had a four bedroom on the same floor. We all said goodbye to Arul and the driver, who had become a friend to us all, but we will see Arul again at the airport on Sunday. Went to Aachi Restaurant and had a mixture of noodles, rice, vegetable dishes, drinks and ice creams. The waiters at Aachi were really pleased to see us and were very helpful. Managed to get some bread for breakfast and Betty went back to her room to have a rest.

Paul, Pauline, Rose and I went to Konica, which is a photo developing centre, to leave all the rolls of film that we had taken. Paul returned to ICSA while Pauline, Rose and I went to Fountain Plaza to the Optometrists as both Pauline, and I needed to get new glasses and they are a lot cheaper in India. The new glasses and frames were ordered, and we returned to ICSA by 5.00pm. Pauline had a knock at her door and found Betty on the doorstep suitcase in hand, she didn't like being downstairs where people were constantly going past her door, so she was moving in with Pauline. I went to see if I could cheer up Paul as he is still suffering from Delhi Belly, the rest of us seem to have got over the worst of it and Pauline went to the internet while Betty and I went and got films back from Konica.

On Thursday the 8th of September we are all up at about 6.00am and luxury of luxuries we have hot water but, in our room, it runs so slow that it took half an hour to fill a bucket, even the cold water runs at the same speed. Prayer in the Walsh suite at 7.30am, Paul still not well, but the others had breakfast of toast, jam, vegemite, peanut butter and bananas, we must finish all these up as we can't take them back to Australia. We made plans for the next few days in Chennai, what they wanted to see or do. Pauline and Rose went to the money changers to change last of Australian money for rupees and then on to put more credit on the mobile phone so that Pauline could ring home. Betty, Paul and I went to Konica because part of their deal is that you can have one enlargement made from every film you have put in, so they have chosen which enlargements they want and will place the order. All met up back at ICSA and got two rickshaws to Spencer Plaza, which is a large western styled shopping complex, with many small shops and the men or lady owners stand outside and try to entice you in to buy their wares. It is all very loud, noisy, cramped with people everywhere but everyone went their separate ways to purchase gifts etc. We all met up at 1.00am for lunch in the western style eating area and had pizza, chicken burgers, French fries and drinks before finishing our shopping and heading back to ICSA.

Pauline and I had to give our reading glasses to the optometrists, so they could measure the strength of the lens's and had to walk around for one and a half hours without any glasses on which is a bit hard when you can't see very clearly without glasses. Rose and I went to the ATM, and I had to wear Rose's glasses, to get some money out to pay for the rest of our trip. Then went back with Pauline to pick up our old glasses as our new ones will be ready on Saturday. Pauline had a phone call from Shamus, her son, and was excited to learn that he would be in Brisbane on Monday when we land and that she could stay with him at a hotel in Brisbane. Rose and I phoned the family, Julie, Anne, Stephen, Craig junior and Rose's mother, we had previously rung Angela, Sharron and my dad and mum, so everyone had heard from us at least once on this trip. All very tired and went to bed and praise the Lord, we had a little more rain.

Friday the 9<sup>th</sup> of September we are up in time for prayer at 7.30am. At 10.00am we got two rickshaws to the music shop where I purchased some new drum skins and Betty bought a maraca, then onto Chennai beach where we walked along for some way looking at the new boats since the tsunami.



We even saw where the last of the tsunami water is still evident and how people are still living on the beach in their tent shacks. We had some cold drinks from a kiosk on the beach and then got two rickshaws to St Thomas Cathedral where there is the tomb of St Thomas and a museum. During the tsunami many thousands of people sheltered inside the Cathedral which is literally on the waterfront, yet despite the fact all the neighbouring buildings were inundated with sea water, none entered the Cathedral.



We had another long wait while I negotiated our next rickshaw ride as some of the rickshaw drivers try to cheat you when they see that you are a foreigner. They do not realise that Rose and I have been here before and roughly know the cost per distance. We visited the shrine of Annai Vailankanni, and the history behind the global fame of Our Lady of Good Health, is founded on three events that took place intermittently since the 16<sup>th</sup> century.



1. The foremost incident is the Apparition of Our Lady, Mother of Jesus, to a small boy whose empty pot overflowed with milk. 2. A local widow who sold buttermilk to thirsty wayfarers, and whose son was lame from birth, saw the apparition of Our Lady asked the boy for a cup of buttermilk. He was immediately made well. 3. A Portuguese merchant vessel was caught in a great storm in the Bay of Bengal. The helpless sailors besought Mary, the Star of the Sea, to save them; they vowed to build a church in her name wherever they could land. The storm immediately calmed, and they landed at Vailankanni, hence the church stands there to this day.

We had lunch at a high-class restaurant of fried rice, prawns, sweet and sour chicken and soup. Then we were supposed to go to St Mary's Church, which is the oldest church in India, but once again the rickshaw drivers took us to the wrong church, so we refused to pay them, and they were not very happy. Instead, we headed straight back to Pantheon Road where Betty and Pauline went to Konica to collect the enlargements and put in more films. Rose, Paul and I went back to ICSA and then I went to Poon Raj to sort out a car for tomorrow and a vehicle for Sunday to take us to the airport and a room that we can stay in on Sunday. We will be leaving at 8.00pm and so do not want to keep all the rooms and must pay for another night; Poon Raj is being so helpful and says we can just keep our larger room to wait in until we are ready to go. At 4.30pm it started to rain and storm, it seems to be quite a regular thing at this time of the evening, Pauline arrived to show us her new photos and we all looked and admired each other's shots.

Up at 6.00am on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September for hot showers and washing which will hopefully be the last time in India for this year. Prayer at 7.30pm. At 9.00am an ambassador car, which is the make of all the taxis over here, arrived and we have it booked until 2.00pm this afternoon for the grand sum of 500 rupees, less than 20 dollars and he will take us anywhere we want to go. So first, we head off to Little St Thomas Shrine where there is the cave where St Thomas prayed, the stone imprinted from where he placed his arms, there are many statues and all up a totally wonderful and moving experience for all of us.



Having seen where St Thomas landed in India, last year, and seeing where he is buried at the Cathedral and then kneeling in the same prayer place as he did is very memorable. Maybe it is because we know he was Christ's disciple and intimate friend; our Lord touched Him. Then onto



Mount St Thomas where there is another church and a very large cross, it is 135 steps up and 300 feet above sea level, with a terrific view of Chennai Airport and the city.



Pauline and Rose came down the 135 steps while the others came back down in the car, and we returned to ICSA for a short stop before Betty, Paul and Pauline went back to Konica to collect the films and enlargements while Rose and I went to the ICSA bookshop to browse.

All back into the Ambassador car and off to Spencer Plaza where we paid off the taxi and headed for lunch in the Pizza Hut, before last minute shopping. Then we headed back by rickshaw to Fountain Plaza where Betty picked up her saris that had been on order since our arrival in Chennai, while Pauline and I picked up our new glasses. Then back to ICSA to look at photos, purchases and make plans for tonight and Mass tomorrow.

Up at 5.00am on September the 11<sup>th</sup> and off to Mass for 7.30am at St Anthony's. Paul and Rose walked there while Betty and I came by rickshaw. Mass was in Tamil and as always very packed but very reverent and meaningful. All walked back to ICSA where we packed all our bags, Betty and Pauline picked up their last enlargements from Konica and the others all moved into the Walsh room to spend our last hours together. We have managed to accumulate six bags of clothing, shoes, toaster, iron, food, plates and more, to give to Arul and Benjamin, who will be so pleased to have them.



At 12.30pm met up with Esther Kathrioli and all went to lunch at Aachi Restaurant and Mamre International Aid gave her 6,000 rupees for her wonderful work with lepers, homeless and the underprivileged, Rose and I meet up with Esther each year and she wants us to come back next year and visit her latest project on an island 50 kilometres off Chennai that has no facilities whatsoever. We said our goodbyes to all the waiters at Aachi after a good meal and fruitful talk with Esther, then returned to our room for a rest before our trip tonight. We all had showers around 6.00pm and the booked car arrived at 7.15pm. Prayed together and then said goodbye to Poon and ICSA and we then were driven to the airport where we arrived at around 8.15pm. Arul, Benjamin and Rani



came at 9.00pm, when we filled them up with all the bags of things, we had kept for them, then we said our tearful goodbyes to each and they headed off.



From there it took us one and a half hours to get through to the final screening of our bags where Rose and Betty were stopped because something showed up on the x-ray machine. For Rose it was a papier-mâché knife which we had purchased as a gift, but instead of putting it in our big luggage it had been overlooked and was in our hand luggage so poor Rose was looked upon with suspicion. Eventually after much talking, and many people's decisions it was decided that the knife could be given to the cabin crew on Singapore Airlines and we were to collect it at Singapore Airport, where we would have to go through all the drama again. Don't know if the knife was worth this much bother, after all, it was only made of compressed paper. Betty's problem was that the x-ray showed up a 'screwdriver' and she adamantly said that she did not have a screwdriver on her and what would she do with one anyway. On final examination it turned out that the hair pins she had packed were lying end to end and showed up as a screwdriver on x ray, she was okay and through. Please note here that while Betty, Rose and I were going through this ordeal, Paul and Pauline were standing well away from us, disowning us while having visions of visiting their three friends in an Indian gaol. At last, we are all through and boarded Singapore Airlines flight 409, where Paul and Pauline got seats in Row 55 and Betty, Rose and I got seats in Row 40 which turned out to be right on the wing, which is not a good place for taking photos, but at least we had a window this time.

On Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> of September we left India at midnight, and we are all tired but could not get to sleep, had meal and watched movies and tried to dose off before arriving at Singapore Changi Airport at 6.30am, Singapore time. It is still dark, and we are all very tired. Pauline headed straight for the Internet, and I went to sort out the problem with the knife and it is now being taken by the cabin staff on to our next flight to Brisbane, so will have to get it at Brisbane, the drama goes on. All except Pauline headed for the departure gate while some laid on the floor and fell asleep along with many other passengers who had been travelling from various places and were also exhausted.



At 9.30am with Pauline who had returned from the Internet we boarded SQ 245 for Brisbane. Paul and Pauline had seats in Row 36 while Betty, Rose and I had seats in Row 55, left Singapore on time. Arrived Brisbane airport at 7.00pm, passport check, collected baggage and eventually out into the concourse where Betty was met and swept away by her friend because she was parked in a no parking zone, Pauline was met by Shamus who had just landed on a flight from Canberra, and they went off to the Ibis Hotel in Brisbane. Paul, Rose and I were met by Clark who drove us in our own car to

his home where Julie had food prepared, but after all the food we were served on the aeroplane nobody was hungry just tired and after a cuppa and a chat, we all went to bed.



## Chapter 14

### Home 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2005 to 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2006

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of September we are up at 6.00am, Julie had already left for work, we all shower and get ready to leave by 7.30am. Paul has decided to go back to Sydney by plane, so Rose and I drive him to the domestic terminal and say goodbye. We then drive into Brisbane getting lost a few times to find Pauline at the Ibis Hotel. She has had a wonderful night with her son and is very willing to tell us about the great breakfast she has indulged in, while we have been driving around looking for this place. She says goodbye to Shamus, and we then head south to Inverell where we arrive at 4.00pm to collect the post from Michael and Wendy Irvine at the Mamre Christian Retreat Centre. We then drive to Cherry Tree Hill to meet Pauline's ever patient husband, John who is overjoyed to have her home. We all had dinner and showed John some of the footage of the films and photos then it is off to bed.

On Wednesday the 14<sup>th</sup> of September, Rose and I are up and are ready to set out by 8.00am and head south with a few stops as we alternate the driving. We arrived at Blacksmiths Caravan Park at Blacksmith near Swansea, which is home at present, picked up our caravan from storage, set it up on site, unpacked and went shopping to buy some essentials and sitting down by 6.00pm. It is good to be back in our little home, our caravan. This caravan park is so beautiful because it is adjacent to Blacksmith beach on one side and on the other side is Lake Macquarie.

It was so great to see the rains not fail to come as it has done so often in past years in the south of India. It is also very edifying to see that the cycle of wherever we go for ministry, it does rain, but of course for the Indians it will mean successful crops this year. Praise God.

For Rose and me to see so many great things having come into being in the one year that Mamre India has been properly established, only heightens our opinion of the determination, prayer and hard work that Christians in a more threatened society than ours can achieve. The small amounts of tithe and raised funds that we can manage to send to them seems to be able to be stretched so far by our faithful Lord.

We have witnessed many physical healings and even more spiritual ones as well as God's Almighty display of strength and protection. However, the miracles of changed lives, through the establishing safe havens in the form of orphanages and schools, ensures a better future for many of the next generation of village Indians who will break the poverty cycle.

*The following summary letter was sent out to our individual supporters after we returned home from India.*

*The following is a brief description of what the current state of Mamre International Aid in India is, following our 2005 mission trip where 3 volunteer missionaries accompanied us.*

*In just over 12 months our primary school in Venpakkem village has swelled to 78 students and they have their own school building now with 4 teachers. Similarly, the pre-school is now up to 25 toddlers, and they too now have their own building.*

*We have also purchased land for the orphanage, as many of the children do not have families or a place to sleep, while some of them already sleep in our village church.*

*We have also three other orphanages now in other villages and two more primary schools, so that increases our total commitment to four orphanages, three primary schools, one preschool and two churches, plus the families who work in a granite mine.*

*These schools are not quite like anything we are used too here in Australia, most of the children who attend are from villages of the Dalet class of the Hindu cultural system. They are considered non people and from the poorest of the poor in their isolated villages, many of them also have leprosy at different stages, this makes them doubly untouchable in their society. Most of the families who live in these types of villages often can only have two or three meals per week. Therefore, in all our schools the children are fed three meals per day, they are taught maths, history, English, India's second language, Tamil, their native language, geography, science, social studies, hygiene and many more subjects. They are also taught life skills plus they learn about the differences between Hinduism and Christianity. On that last note many of the children and their families have converted to Christianity and fill our churches, but we must stress that we never suggest that they should convert, any child from any religion can attend our schools and orphanages.*

*Having said all of that we are trying to break the poverty cycle through education and by feeding the mind, the body and the spirit. You see, these children's forbears have lived in abject poverty for many, many generations, so these children will gain employment through their education and by the time they leave primary school, we will have the high schools for them to move onto, then they will reach matriculation and then employment. They will have many and various skills for life, family and employment, including the computers we intend to provide for our future high schools, but that is in the future. Also, we are helping to build a church adjacent to the granite mine.*

*Apart from the incredible generosity of a few people we have achieved most of this from our own meagre tithe in the last twelve months. It is important to note, that with one dollar we can feed an adult three meals a day for one week, with one hundred dollars we can sink a well and fit it with a pump and with twenty dollars we can sink a spear pipe in the ground where water is only twenty feet below, so imagine what we can do with larger amounts.*

*One example is that when we were over there a few weeks ago, I wired up one of the primary schools and had the power connected, complete with fans, lights and power points plus we placed a deposit on land for an orphanage plus connected power to a church plus paid wages for teachers for a year plus Pastor Arul's (our representative in India) living expenses and provided them with their first computer and all for just \$1000.*

*We also have a new Indian Pastor on board, his name is Benjamin and there are a few more asking, but we need much discernment before we say yes.*

*We must also stress that the vegetable seeds we took to India this year are already being harvested and eaten plus there are now at least four whole villages praying the rosary, which has since been translated into Tamil, as a result of the incredible generosity of Ellis and Beverley Ryan who make rosaries for anybody who wants them. They had provided our team with a few hundred sets of rosary beads. We need to point out that most of the Christians in India are nowhere near as concerned about the issue of denominations as we are in the western countries. So, an Anglican is quite comfortable with praying the rosary and that is also true of the other protestant faiths.*

*In closing we now realise that we must get registered as a charity and chase up some corporate sponsorship otherwise by this time next year we will not have the three high schools we will need for our year six students to go onto. If that does not happen, they would have to go back to their villages to beg and eat only two or three meals per week again, they all must graduate high school to gain employment and break the poverty cycle. Mamre International Aid is all getting far too big for us alone! So please support us in prayer for some corporate sponsors. End of message.*

*It is great to be back in our caravan and to be able to rest and recuperate. We soon get back into our ministry work with the Morisset prayer group which is around the other side of Lake Macquarie.*



The rest of the year goes by very quickly and we soon travel back to the western suburbs of Sydney to spend Christmas with our families. We had come to the point where we were very much done with Christmas because we had celebrated it on four different occasions. But it was so great to be with all our family again and to catch up on all their news and achievements. We had celebrated once with Rose's children, grandchildren and mother, once with my children and grandchildren, another with my parents and finally with our dear Evangelical Sisters of Mary.

The following text comes from the Mamre International Aid January 2006 newsletter.

*It is hard to imagine that another year has passed during which I have neglected my devotions to our loving Lord, my paternal and spiritual duties to my wife and family, my commitments to all of you our dear friends, my commitments to serve the poor, naked, hungry, imprisoned and sick in mind, body or spirit and above all my conviction to do "unto the least of these" Matt 25: 40, which takes in everything and everybody mentioned above.*

*So, when I am so aware of my failings, all I can do is to continue to ask our Lord in grace to help me to keep on trying to do more and do better.*

*During Christmas both Rose and I were both very, very ill and this made me reflect on our mortality, but more so, it made me reflect on the fact, "am I ready to face The King of Glory?" We were both so terribly ill that it became very apparent that we were once more under attack after such a successful India mission trip. Once we realised this and after we stepped up our prayers, our health began to improve immediately.*

*In recent days I have been studying the book of James and this cemented our calling as he says, "that we must be doers of the word and not just hearers."*

*Please pray for all that lays ahead of us, as you will read further on and may God bless you all.*

*Since returning from India and after catching up with the children, parents and friends, after getting over Christmas and dealing with the everyday chores we have had time to "sit and think".*

*How much time in each day do we seriously think about Jesus? I know our thoughts are always attuned and turned to Him but how often do we just sit and let the Lord talk to us or let His presence wash over us.*

*I had to admit to myself and to God that for me it was not often enough. I will sit with His word, I will pray for many things, I will sit and await His Word in my life, but just to sit in His presence is very hard, my thoughts will stray or there is always "something to do".*

*So, as we start a new year let us remember "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10) is a very important part of our prayer life and means "changing our ways", "changing our plans" and "changing our outlook".*

*May we continue to grow in Christ each, and every day of this new year. END OF TEXT.*

Now that we are in the year of 2006 we are once again back at Blacksmiths Beach Caravan Park to continue our work with the Morriset prayer group.

The following text comes from the Mamre International Aid March 2006 newsletter.

**EDITORIAL** from Craig

*I was reflecting on when I first came to know Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour, which was the start of the “honeymoon period”, as known by most Christians, as that time in our lives when we freely enter into the fullness of God’s love and salvation message.*

*Do you recall, as I do, that it was like a drug but not like a drug in the worldly sense nor an alcoholic beverage or any other kind of pick-me-up, but like a perpetual drug that kept you on a high for many months.*

*If you are like me you need to work at keeping that “first love” very much alive as we face the challenges of the world and the attacks of the spiritual forces that oppose us and try to keep us down.*

*So, I feel the need to encourage myself and all of you to keep your “first love” very much alive in our daily lives.*

*God bless,  
Craig.*

### ***THOUGHTS*** from Rose

*Time is something we all do not seem to have enough of these days. When we know that God made 168 hours for each week and it doesn’t matter if this was when He first created the world and now in the present or even in the future, there are still going to be 168 hours in each week.*

*In Ecclesiastes 3 it says, “there is a time for everything” Why is it that we do not have enough time? We have so many time saving devices, but what do we do with the time we “Save”?*

*We must put God first, first in our day, first in our time and first in our lives. I know it sounds so simple to do, but we get slack, lazy, and other things become more important and therefore God is pushed down the list of priorities.*

*Let us start afresh and put God first in all the things we do, say, think and feel and then time too will be under His Lordship and “all things” will work so much better.*

*God bless and keep you.  
Rose*

Our fellow missionary, Betty Graver, has been fundraising since we returned from India. A mighty accomplishment, especially given that she is over eighty years of age.

To date she has raised just under \$2000 to assist the poor and needy in the villages. Her latest project is getting \$600 for the water tanks and guttering for our church and the school.

### WELL, DONE BETTY

The next trip to India is planned for the fourth of October this year. Brian Millgate has arranged for 150 Rosary Beads to be available for the Indian villages with many more to come. Along with his wife Kaye, he has also organised for the 50 Kilos of seeds which we sent to India late last year and which the villagers are now enjoying the fruit of.

Our son in law, Adrian, and his son, Nathan, our grandson, have been working with plans taken from the Internet to make a Solar Oven and finding out the best method of not only making it but also which materials to use and how to cook with it. It seems that these solar ovens are cheap and

easy to make while they are also very effective for cooking from the sun's rays. We hope to take all this information to India this year and see some of these ovens put into use, which will of course save the villagers searching for wood for their fires.

A request came through to us to travel to Singleton in New South Wales to run a weekly, Bible study presentation and we remain there for about ten weeks. The entire programme was incredibly faith building and it enabled the local Christian community to add new people to their group.

After that we were house sitting for some dear friends of ours at a farm just outside of Inverell in northern New South Wales. While we were in that area, we helped the Inverell Christian community with various ministry support.

Another advantage of being back in the Inverell area is the many opportunities we have, to drop by the Mamre Christian Retreat Centre in Mount Russell and catch up with the Irvine family.

After a few weeks of house sitting, we are back in our caravan at the Mamre Christian Retreat Centre.

On the fourth of June, Archbishop John Hepworth from the Anglican Catholic Church has invited us as, guests of honour, to join him at the Mount Russell church to celebrate his tenth year as a Bishop and his third year as Primate of their Church. Father Michael Irvine and his family were also present, as he is one of their priests as well.

During the service there was the scattering of ashes for one of their priests, who had passed away and his ashes were placed in the soil of a new tree that was planted for the occasion in the church grounds, by Father Michael Pope.

After the service we were all invited to the Australia hotel in Inverell, for a meal and drinks.

Because we had sent out an appeal for clothing and any other useful household goods plus the many computers that were donated, we had to decide whether to acquire a storage unit to store it all. The donated goods were flooding in, and we were incredibly grateful.

Around this time, we were both reminded of the Bible verse in Revelations 3:16 *So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.*

God had prompted us both to take special notice of that verse and to make a point of including it in our next newsletter.

*The following text comes from the Mamre International Aid July 2006 newsletter.*

### ***WHOLEHEARTED COMMITMENT*** - from Rose

*These are just some of my thoughts on this subject as the Lord teaches me what commitment is all about.*

*We need balance in our lives, and I picked out six things we need each day (there are many more but one day or 24 hours is easily divisible by six).*

*Prayer - bible reading - working/ house-keeping - eating - sleeping – play/ entertainment.*

*Divided into one day makes it four hours for each of the above. Do we spend four hours on each?*

*I know for myself that sleeping takes up at least eight hours, eating probably takes about one hour, working / housekeeping up to eight hours. So where does the other seven or more hours go?*

*When we are in church, do we think, "Hope the priest / pastor doesn't talk too long".*

*What if we went to work with this attitude!*

*Why can't we give ourselves totally and wholeheartedly to God in our Prayer / Bible reading time?*

*We know that God is not going to come down physically and challenge us. We must be convicted by the Holy Spirit.*

*If we left work early, we would be challenged by the boss.*

*But when we are challenged by the Holy Spirit, we ignore Him. It is not immediately evident but there are consequences we must face for our Salvation.*

*God wants our all and He does not want our half-hearted lukewarm leftovers. In other words, as we mature in our Christian walk God does not expect perfection, but He does expect continual growth.*

END

When we started the process of registering Mamre International Aid, it was a long and time-consuming process, but we finally became registered as a charity. The final thing to do was secure a license from the department of racing and gaming to allow us to legally hold raffles and other forms of fund raising and we finally achieved it.

The Commonwealth Employees Compensation Board has been reducing the payments that we had been using to pay the mortgage on the Mamre Christian Retreat Centre property and this has been happening for quite a while. This organisation has been paying me because of my accident in the Royal Australian Air Force and because I had lost my career due to the injury. They had dropped my payments because they were trying to force me back into the work force. But who wants to employ an over fifty-year-old man with a spinal injury as well. Things came to a head when we realised that if we did not sell the property, the bank would sell it from under us. We put the property on the market and miraculously it was sold within one week to a family who wanted the country lifestyle. Many of the locals were very sad that it was no longer available for prayer meetings or Christian retreats.

When we had purchased the property, we were so confident that God wanted us to do it.

Were we mistaken?

Was it just us thinking that it was so?

Or was it only meant to be for six years?

We do not know, but we are at the point where we must sell the property for its true value or the bank would sell it from under us and probably at a big loss. The fact that it sold within one week, speaks volumes but it was a sad day. There were so many people from the local communities in Mt Russell, Inverell and Warialda that were very sad about the closure. It seemed that Mamre Christian



Retreat Centre had touched many lives in the community and even members of our own families were deeply touched by their visits.

Quotes from the visitor book of Mamre Christian Retreat Centre.

*"It feels just like home!"*

*"My first thoughts are 'a real home'"*.

*"The commitment of Mamre Christian Retreat Centre to the vision the Lord has given them is to be admired".*

*"We got waited on hand and foot at Mamre".*

*"I am at a loss to say what a wonderfully blessed time we had at Mamre. God is good".*

*"Could have stayed forever in the peaceful surroundings and great company. Sad, we had to leave".*

*"It is like stepping back in time, like a visit to grandma's, a place where doors don't need to be locked and the world is left behind".*

*"It is an oasis of peace where values like trust and honesty are re-kindled".*

*"Can't wait to come back".*

*"We were truly struck by the overwhelming hospitality".*

*"It is an oasis of peace in a world of chaos".*

*"It is truly a place blessed by God, a house of prayer and spiritual restoration".*

*"I'm surprised that many more people don't know about this place yet!"*

*"How could anybody not find God in such a place".*

*"I was so moved by the sheer peace and reverence of this beautiful place, that I just do not want to leave"*

*"We feel like this must be as close to Heaven as you could find here on earth!"*

*"It is such a place of peace that I could not have imagined would ever exist."*

*"I can't possibly think why I would not make the effort to return to this haven."*

*"Our little group have reached heights of being closer to God, than we could not have reached anywhere else but at this glorious place".*

*"My wife and I are besotted by the anointing and peace we have found here. Well done."*

*"You have created a place where surely even God himself comes for succour."*

*"Why is this peaceful retreat centre so unknown, every Christian should know about this haven of peace. Surely even anti Christians can find God here."*

We were very blessed to be able to purchase a later model caravan and after checking out quite a few different models, we decided on a late model Golf caravan. The Golf caravans are the Rolls Royce of caravans and instead of the air conditioner that we used on the viscount that was an old home air con, we now had built in air conditioning mounted on the roof.



As we reflect on our trips to India, we are reminded that it is not easy to leave your country, your family, your traditions etc and go off into a country that is so completely different from the world you are so used to but that is a part of our calling.

We have had to make and are still making many decisions about our lives and the future of Mamre International Aid and in all our answers to these questions we must remember, what God has called us to, and that is to go out to those who are underprivileged, hungry, oppressed etc.

It would be so easy to go off on a tangent and do something completely different, something that looks good but is not where we should be going. It is hard sometimes to tell which is, the right way to go and that is when we must stay within our calling.

All of us have been called by God in some way or another, to be a housewife, mother, to be a husband, to be in the workforce, to be a priest etc., and until God chooses to change that calling on our lives, we must work at it to the best of our ability and even then, give a bit more.

So be blessed and contented in where you are today. Tomorrow may be different, or it may be similar, but it can never be the same, as it is a brand-new day given to us by God.

Enjoy, each and every day just where God has you.

Rose has travelled to Queensland to help our daughter, Julie, to give birth to our 7<sup>th</sup> grandchild. I remained in Inverell to continue with our ministry duties. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> granddaughter, 7<sup>th</sup> grandchild, was born on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 2006 and was named Isabella Rose Hargrave, while she weighed 7 pound and 11 ounces.



A few weeks after Rose returned, we travelled back to the western suburbs of Sydney to help our family. We set up our caravan at Emu Plains caravan park and whilst our daughter, Anne, is visiting

her relatives in England, we are caring for her 2 sons, our grandchildren. Matthew who is now 9 and Ryan who is 5 are with us as we care for them and take them to school each day.

Some people have asked me, “have you lost your healing”, and they ask me this because they know I still suffer a lot of pain.

The answer is a definitive no, because when God healed me in 1994 after having been a semi crippled person for fifteen years, I still walk properly, and all the chronic and acute back and leg pain are still gone from my life. However, a couple of years after that healing, I was struck down by mysterious pains all over my body and the doctors were not sure of the cause of the pain. It seemed to affect every muscle in my body and the bigger the muscle, the greater the pain.

In a couple of more years, I would find out what was the cause, but about suffering in the kingdom of God, I had learnt much. So, in a later chapter you will learn what is the cause of the mysterious acute pains that I am suffering from.

Mother Basilea Schlink, who is the mother superior of the Evangelical Sisters of Mary whose home base is in Germany and they have many sisters posted to many other countries throughout the world. They also have a branch in Australia in Theresa Park in New South Wales and where we lived in their compound for over a year with our dear sisters.

Well Mother Basilea was often quoted as saying, *it is only through our own suffering that we can relate, in a small measure, to the suffering of Christ.*

These same words have been repeated by many of the Saints throughout the years.

While in Colossians 1:24-25 says, *Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh, I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, the Church.*

Also, in 1 Peter 5:9 it says, *resist him (the Devil), firm in your faith, knowing that the same experience of suffering is required of your brotherhood throughout the world.*

Paul is referring to his own suffering so that we can learn from his experience in ministry. While Peter is referring his suffering, which relates to the suffering of the all the brotherhood of the church.

By the end of September in 2006, we are beginning to prepare for our next Indian missionary trip. There is one big problem this time and that is Rose's health. She is so sick that we knew that it must be one of Satan's latest attacks to stop our ministry work in India. We immediately put out the request for prayers to all our friends and supporters.

## Chapter 15

### India 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2006 to 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2006

On the eve of packing up the caravan I still have reservations about Rose's health despite her reassurances. The doctors said it would be okay for her to go to India, but I can't forget how sick she was and the usual brave front she put forward, no one else but myself knew at first, but I had finally convinced her to go to a doctor and I rung around for prayer support. But we must have faith and trust in the Lord especially in the face of so much prophecy and confirmation of a very victorious missionary trip. The last-minute donations came in thick and fast, so we sent out our thanks to all and we spend this holiday Monday packing and making final preparations.

We packed up the van and towed it to the caravan park owner's house where they stored it for us for no charge, praise God, as usually it is \$30 per week but they insisted on helping our cause by not charging us anything. Then we drove the car to our son's place for storage and then our daughter, Anne, drove us to Mt Druitt station for a train to the airport. From there we caught the Ibis shuttle bus to take us to our hotel and it was very nice. It was so good that we booked a room for the day of our return on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December as well.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> we were back on the shuttle bus at 6.20am to take us back to the airport and checked in and we took off on time. Our dear Betty Graver will be with us once again, but she will not arrive in India until the 26<sup>th</sup> of November and what a blessing she is to our missionary work. We landed at Mumbai in India on time and when we had been through customs there were no baggage checking at all, we just walked out after we picked up our checked in luggage. When we first got outside the airport, it was so humid my glasses would not stop fogging. After that we got a taxi to take us to our hotel in Mumbai for a couple of nights. After some prayers of thanksgiving to our Lord and for the saints praying for us at home, we had some sleep to catch up on.

The next morning, we got up reasonably refreshed which was a blessing. After showers and tea, we had some prayer, and then went shopping for, cups, tea, sugar, milk, a pre-paid sim card and other essentials. We had previously booked rail tickets for a 2<sup>nd</sup> class train to Chandrapur, it leaves tomorrow at 3.10pm. We enjoyed some tomato soup and finger chips for lunch in our room. Went back out during the afternoon for two sheets to cover us at night which would help us keep the mosquitoes of our bodies. We also purchased a small towel, a tea towel and a bag to carry our food in. Once back in our room, we rested up during the evening and Rose slept from about 6.00pm and I dropped off at around 9.00pm.

We were both up early and we showered followed by morning prayer. We checked our email at an internet café and went back to our room for a rest, then we left the hotel at 12 noon as that is check out time and took a taxi to the railway station. With all the massive traffic jams it took over one hour. On the way we saw many slum areas that went on for many, many hectares and it was so tragic to see. At the station we read until the train boarding time at 2.00pm, it pulled out at 3.10pm. We had fresh rolls for our meal and bedded down on our wooden sleeping births amongst all the many noises. Indians are night people who usually do not eat their evening meals till after 9.00pm and they tend to speak loudly.

We were awake more than we were asleep, but by God's grace we will make up for it tonight. The second-class trains need to constantly pull over for first class trains to go through, as they have priority. Our 800 km journey took 17 hours and 20 minutes, we pulled into Chandrapur at 10.30am where a hotel was arranged for us by Pastor K M Paul, it is called the Mayur Hotel. Tomorrow we



will move on to Rajura village and stay with his parents and family for 10 days. Pastor Paul senior is the pastor of our church, the one we dedicated in 2000 and it has my name on a plaque at the door. When we did arrive at the station we were surprised and honoured to have KM and Cookie meet us to see us to the hotel themselves. K M and Cookie took us to share a meal with a man named Ramesh along with his wife and daughter who was celebrating her 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. We were asked to bless her new motor scooter which was her birthday gift from her parents. After the blessing prayers we received 30 rupees from the girl, a tradition on birthdays and then we went back to the hotel.



On Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> of October we were picked up at 9.00am by rickshaw, that was arranged by Ramesh. His daughter and her best friend came on the new scooter to see us off as well. We were shown to our quarters, Pastor Paul senior's room, and I preached at 11.00am church service to a fine welcome in our church. I spoke on the "Importance of Reading the Word and Understanding it" followed by praying over those who are sick. That evening we were taken to another prayer meeting in a house and spoke about "Reading the Word" followed by prayer for all those who attended. We came home in a rickshaw with 3 girls and a boy and after some lovely milk coffee we go to bed, but the bed is like a rock to sleep on, but praise God we have a bed.

Our morning began with prayers and scripture readings followed by praise and worship. Showering was achieved by pouring cold bore water over our bodies with a small plastic jug. Then we would soap ourselves up followed by more cold water to rinse it off. I then did some scripture preparation for today's services which was a daytime prayer meeting where I spoke on "The Ten Virgins" and after that we prayed for many people including a man with a mental illness. We were served chapattis for lunch with vegetable curry and then I went to buy cold drinks on the motorbike. A visit to Cookie's followed by the children's club development programme in the new, partly finished, school building where a lady named, Prema, is their teacher. Then Shilpa's house, the heart surgery girl, who had miraculously been healed after our prayers. Then we were taken to Prema's house, then another house where some more children are being taught by another teacher named, Rinky.



At 7.00am on the 10<sup>th</sup>, Rose is praying in the church while I have been writing this diary of our missionary travel. After showers I prepared for today's talk on "Faith" at 11.00am and it was attended by many extra people. We had egg curry and omelette for lunch and at 4.00pm we had hot

milk at Cook's house then off to another children's club programme for beginners with teacher Sharra. Followed by a prayer meeting at the same place at Indiraga, the talk was on "The Unforgiving Servant and Repentance". We then visited 4 more families for fellowship and prayer.



Coffee, prayer, showers and morning prayer, then I prepared a talk on "Tithing" for Sunday. Prayer meeting at 11.00am ended at 1.00pm and I spoke on "Prayer". At 2.30pm we left for Ballarshah to visit a pastor in another India Mission Church, and we booked our Bapatla train tickets. Afterwards we went to a three-year old's birthday celebration and the father was a very young pastor and I was asked to speak at the prayer meeting on the rooftop before the birthday supper. We both rode home on the back of the church motorbikes, and it was a twelve-kilometre trip over bumpy roads. The rats had carried off with Rose's sari top during the night, at first, we were confused as to where the sari top had gone but when we told K M's mother that it had disappeared, she said the rats would have taken it for nest building material. Last night and the night before the power had turned off in the early morning and did not come back on until around midday. We were told that this is normal because the power company cannot supply all areas at once. So, each district is shut out at some time of the day or night for a few hours.

Amma brought the usual milk coffee and Rose prayed in the church with Bible Study while I did my usual morning reading and talk preparations. After showers and more coffee, we walked to town for some shopping, sari material, to replace the top the rats took, plates, light rope to tie our bags to my wrist in the train in the night. It is very sad that some men wander through the trains at night to steal the luggage of the people who are sleeping. The day is very hot, but we enjoyed our shopping trip very much, we were stared at by most of the locals but we were helped by many to overcome the language problem and we had many groups of children following us. Then at 12.30pm we were put in a rickshaw with 4 other young ladies, including Shilpa, the girl who had open heart surgery, she has been pain free for 3 days now, praise God. I spoke on "Provision", and then we were served lunch. Then to another house where the talk was on "The Armour of God". We stopped at a medical shop on our way home to purchase some anti histamine and Amoxil to help with Pastor Paul's flu symptoms.

After all the usual morning showers, prayer time and coffee, Rose went to the Colony, to Nathaniel the elder's house to meet up with his wife Padma, for a measuring for the new sari top. The colony is a housing estate that was built by the coal mining company in this area for most of the more senior staff to live in. Nathaniel is a senior mine engineer, so he has one of the larger houses. Annas, the man with mental health problems, continues to come to me each day and this morning was no exception and I continue to pray for a complete cure for him. I was told by K M that he normally avoids everybody, and he is amazed how he only comes to me. We had a time for praise and worship followed by a game of backgammon. At 3.00pm it was off to the Colony, and we spent the afternoon being spoilt by Nathaniel and his family. We were shown around most of the Colony and the whole place is run by the Mine Company with sports fields, gardens, purified water on tap from the water purification plant and other facilities. It shows what could be done in other parts of India to improve

living standards. The prayer meeting was at 6.00pm and it started with us being honoured, me with a towel and Rose with another new sari which she had to put on before we started. I spoke on “God’s Love” and there were Hindus present, who told me afterwards that my talk was very thought provoking.



It is now Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup> of October, and KM is still suffering from the cold and flu symptoms and now Pastor Paul senior has it too, so we organised the same tablets for him as well. Rakesh, Mary, Smiley and Cuppa arrived just after 10.30am and Mary translated for Rose’s talk on “Women of God”. I went shopping and prayed whilst walking around Rajura, I purchased a nightie for Rose, 2 plates, torch batteries, a fan for the family here, a blender for Nathaniel’s family and an iron for Rakesh’s family. I hired a rickshaw to get back in and arrived back at 1.00pm. Cuppa also has the flu, and I was consulted about what she should take. Cuppa is Rakesh and Mary’s youngest daughter who was named Cuppa after she pretended to be a frog that was biting us. She would say cuppa, cuppa, which means frog in her Indian language and ever since then her name has been Cuppa. We gave Rakesh and Mary some money and the iron and spoke about the possibility of some sponsorship.

Today, the 15<sup>th</sup> is Clark’s Birthday, Clark is Julie’s husband, our eldest child and we are up by 5.45am to farewell Rakesh and Mary as we pray over them before they leave. Coffee and bible study followed, and we were both presented with matching his and her watches this morning from Pastor Paul, Amma and KM. After showers and more coffee, the blue sari top arrived and Amma and another lady helped Rose to get dressed, while I wore my best pants and shirt. There were two messages today for the Sunday service, Pastor Paul spoke on “Thanksgiving”, and I spoke on “Tithing”, group prayer followed then lunch. Then a quick viewing of our digital pictures for those who will be away on Tuesday, we showed them on their television screen. We sorted some photos on KM’s computer and get ready to leave for Santana for a prayer meeting in a house where over fifty people sat on the floor in a room no bigger than our caravan. Rose did a great talk on “The Holy Fear of God” and after hot milk it was back in a rickshaw for the journey back and prepare for bed.



The next morning, we are ready to go by 8.30am and off to Cookie’s tea stand because we had promised him that we would visit it and pray a blessing for him and his tea stand. For those people who are reading this and are not from India, there are many street vendors who sell their products from mobile carts. If you get a mental picture of a table that is about two feet wide and four feet long that is supported by four bicycle wheels instead of legs. These mobile carts usually also have a



roof over the cart to keep out rain or heat as well. We enjoyed some lovely chai, prayed over it, gave him 500 rupees and then it was off to the shops. The midday house visits were changed to 4.00pm so we had lunch at Cookie's house for his thanksgiving.



At 4.00pm we visited 3 houses, which were in such a poor state that we were saddened that some people were forced to live that way. We prayed with each family and at the last one had a mini prayer meeting. They have no power or water and house 5 adults and 4 kids in their grass huts. The second one gave us 20 rupees as a gift and the mother had just had a baby, 4 days old. At 6.00pm we distributed the pen pal packets to Indian kids in the church school and they were received with much excitement. These pen pal packs contained the name and address of school children in Australia who were willing to receive a letter from a pen pal from India and then write back to them. A prayer meeting followed at Cookie's house and the talk was on "Stepping Out", as Jesus and Peter Walk on the Water. We were told today we were like gods to the village people, so we had to correct them by explaining that all God's children are equal.

The next day at 11.00am people started to arrive for the meeting and after worship I spoke on "Humility", followed by us showing pictures on the laptop of, our family, our car, our caravan and general photos of our life in Australia. We also showed them some photos of the Rajura trips in 2000, 2004 and the latest ones, while finally photos of the Mamre Christian Retreat centre. We then prayed for a blessing of the house behind the church which is owned by Nathaniel and which he rents out. At 5.00pm we left for the Colony to Nathaniel's daughter's house, and we had a prayer meeting where I spoke about "First Fruits". Then we had dinner there of fried chicken and fried fish with rice, cold Pepsi, coffee and cold water. That was our one meal for the day, and we missed lunch purposely so we could have this evening meal instead.

On Wednesday the 18<sup>th</sup> we are up at 6.30am for coffee and bible study. We only have one more night on our wooden bed and we are looking forward to something softer, our age is showing in this matter. Showers and rest until 11.00am when we are supposed to go on a church picnic in the bush and the cooking pots, they are taking are absolutely huge. They must be at least one foot high and two feet wide while they are cooking rice and curry over fires at the site. We walked to the bush or that's what they called it, it was low scrub and weeds, but blankets were put down and chairs for us, while cold drinks and coffee were served. They gathered wood and started to boil the biggest pot of rice then chicken with vegetables, all curried. They cooked our chicken fry separate, not as hot. We had a prayer meeting, we sang "Brother Let me Be Your Servant", thanked them all for being servants to us and teaching us and finished with us singing "May Yahweh Bless You."



While we were enjoying our picnic, we would see some women carrying huge loads of wood to sell. We were told that it is a way to earn money but apparently, they only earned a small amount for



their labours. They would walk for miles in the bush to find the wood and they sometimes became victims of attacks from tigers or could be bitten by cobras.



On Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> of October we are up at 6.30am for the usual routine prayers, praise, coffee and showers and then we went to Moses and Prema's house, just a short walk away, to give them their fan. We packed, read and had lunch plus we were given omelette for the journey. Then after photos and giving the family an Aussie Calendar and some money, we left at 2.00pm for the trip to the station at Ballarshah. Those that came to say goodbye were, Nathaniel, his wife; K M, Pastor Paul, Amma and Cookie came to the station. We found out the train is now 2 hours late and after much insistence we finally convinced them to go home. The train was nearer to 3 hours late and at 6.30pm we were finally on our way. We tried to sleep and set the alarm for 6.00am to be ready to get off the train at Bapatla.

After we arrived, we could not find anyone at first who understood the word, "hotel" eventually a man came forward, so we got a bicycle rickshaw to the same hotel that we stayed in two years ago, but purely by chance. It is 225 rupees a night, real cheap, at about seven dollars Australian. It did not have air conditioning, but we were happy with the ceiling fan, and we slept till around 10.00am then we showered and unpacked. Gave thanks to God for a safe journey and went out for lunch, tomato soup, fried rice and ginger prawns. Looked around the shops and went back to our room. Watched a bit of TV and read for a while before bed and I had not realised how very tired I was.

Didn't wake up until nearly 8.00am the next morning and after cuppas we both showered and Rose did the washing. Rose has a nasty throat infection now, so I got us both some antibiotics and lozenges. In India you can get many medications from their medical shops over the counter so long as you know what you need. So, because of my previous paramedic training, I have a reasonable grasp of what is needed. Even things like, amoxicillin, which is a penicillin-based antibiotic, can be purchased without a prescription. Also, I have bad diarrhoea, so I purchased some Lomital as well. The hotel manager arranged our train tickets all the way back to Mumbai for just under 10,000 rupees which is about \$200. For lunch we had chicken fried rice and by the afternoon we went out to do some emailing from an internet shop, where we sent our first feedback to family and friends.

It is Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, so we rang Richard for his birthday, Richard is Angela's husband and Angela is our youngest child. We both slept in till quite late this morning, had a cuppa followed by Bible study then showers. Read our books for a while and watched some TV. Lunch was tomato soup for Rose and omelette for me and some chapatti for us both. Around 3.00pm we went to the shops, and most are closed but we did manage to get some fly spray and strepsil lozenges.

Today we simply prayed and went out for a good long walk, and we had tomato soup, ginger prawns and chapatti for lunch. Afterwards we went to the internet for emailing and then we wandered around the shops.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> we are up at around 7.30am for a shower, cuppa and packing and by 10.00am we had paid the bill, had coffee and were in the foyer ready to go. Pastor Ratna and Anamani arrived with

a car, and we were taken to their house a few doors further down than before. A brick house instead of the grass hut. After some catching up, we were taken to his in-law's house for lunch then a prayer and fasting meeting next door in the half-constructed church, where I taught about "Prayer and Fasting". At 7.30pm we left for the church again to teach on "Not Worrying / Treasure and Faith". Many came forward for personal prayers and Ratna said many people had received healings from our last visit and Rose's prophecies had been proven correct. Another miracle was the birth of Ratna's sister's baby as the previous time we were there she had been unable to become pregnant for five years, wow, God is so good! It turns out that the police are suspicious of our visit, so they want to know why we are in Bapatla? You must remember that in India it is highly illegal to preach Christianity anywhere except in an already established church. Even then there are many extremist Hindu's who are very willing to throw fire-bombs into packed Christian churches, especially on Sundays.

We are up early to be ready to address the Sunday school class at the church and we arrived at 8.30am after buying pencils and lollies for the kids. We taught them two new action songs after they sang and had recited some memory verses for us. Then I spoke about "David and Goliath" followed by giving them their treats, there were 50 children present. Then we stayed for a prayer and fasting time that went on until 3pm. We were served chicken, potato and rice for a late lunch. We eventually had the evening prayer meeting and sang three songs and I spoke on "Humility". Finally, the day finished and we went home to bed, with a mosquito net this time.



On October the 26<sup>th</sup> we are ready to go by 8.30am and travelling in an auto rickshaw heading out to see the block of land for the Canaan/Mamre school to be built on. It is about three quarters of an acre and very flat and if we can raise about \$4,000 it will be ours, anyway we prayed over it and went back to the house. While Ratna left to rebook some of our train tickets, we had some nice time talking, planning and sharing, followed by some prayer. Ratna came back with the new tickets then went off to a friend's wedding. When Ratna finally came back, Anamani, his wife, had already come home from college, and she bought with her the head of the English department of Bapatla College and her female assistant. They wanted to officially invite us as guest lecturers for a special English assembly of up to 100 students and over 20 staff from other departments including the principal. We were so incredibly honoured, but we also felt a little overwhelmed. We were not sure what to teach them but after prayer we felt that the subject should be English Idioms and Slang words. In other words, the many English words that have double meanings and slang words from all the different English-speaking countries. Later that night we went to a Dalet village nearby for a prayer meeting, we sang three songs, and the message was about "The Healing Power of Jesus through Faith". They all came forward for prayer afterwards, which made it quite late by the time we were back to our beds.

On the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup> Rose woke me at 7.00am, we had showers and coffee, and we were ready to leave by 8.00am. A car came to take us to Ratna's family's village, where his parents and siblings are field workers who live hand to mouth. The huts are small, broken down and very worn. It is hard to come to grips with the fact that his 70-year-old father and his mother work in the rich

farmers' fields for a pittance. It would be like my dad and mum plus Rose's mum working on a farm to be able to feed themselves a meagre meal. We came back from there after prayer and giving them some money to help them buy more food. The car dropped us at Pastor Noah's house to have lunch and it was chicken curry, rice and egg, very hot this time. Then at the church prayer meeting I spoke on "First Fruits" and that was after Ratna's mobile interrupted the prayer and praise numerous times, oops, not a good witness for a Pastor.

We went home to change into our good clothes for our English lecture date at Bapatla College of Arts and Sciences. When we arrived the faculty of the English department welcomed us royally and we were given cold drinks and biscuits, introduced to everyone and treated like celebrities. There were these massive banners on the college buildings with our life size photos on them. Rose had prepared all our idioms and slang words to be presented on the digital overhead projector and there were hundreds of young adults plus dozens of teachers in attendance. At one point when we were speaking about slang words from around the world and we came to the subject of Australian slang. We knew that the word cuppa meant frog in India, but I said in Australia if I ask for a cuppa, it means I would like a cup of tea. No sooner had that been said and the tea lady brought me a cup of tea soon afterwards. We had learned that all their English teachings came from textbooks that were produced in United States of America, so we knew that as they spoke with people from various English-speaking countries, that the slang words would trip them up. It went down so well that the compliments flowed, and we were asked for our autographs by many of the teachers and students. We were asked to come back next year and before we left the college president presented us both with gifts.



Back to the house to change again for tonight's service and we left after 7.00pm and addressed some the Dalit youths at a hostel and spoke of "God's Love", then we went to the church, sang, did a skit and we spoke on "Jesus Walking on Water/Getting out of the Boat." Back to our lodging by 10.00pm and we prayed with Ratna as he leaves at midnight on the train.

The next morning Rose did some washing and Anamani made us coffee. Its pouring with rain and we went on a bicycle rickshaw to the shops but by the time we were trying to get back, the downpour was very severe, and a Christian Auto rickshaw driver came to our rescue. We got out of our wet clothes, had a cuppa, unpacked our shopping and were ready to go again by 12.30pm. The same rickshaw driver took us to lunch at Amma's house of chicken biryani. Then we share on the "Parable of the Talents and How we Use, Don't Use or Misuse God's Gifts and Treasures." Back to our lodgings for the afternoon with coffee and the sweets that a church goer presented us with today. It is still raining heavily, and our Christian rickshaw man has become a real blessing. The rickshaw man arrived at 6.30pm and because the rain is even heavier, and the power is off Anamani rang Pastor Noah. He advised us to stay put as over half of the church is drenched and there will not be a service this evening. Rose and I played Uno by candlelight while Anamani watched, we had offered to show her how to play with us, but she was happy just to watch. Finally, the power came back on at 7.35pm and our hostess is cooking up some milk coffee. I asked Ratna two days ago what are the many water buffaloes that are in this area used for and apparently it is for their milk. All our milk



for chai and milk coffee, comes from the black water buffaloes and I have only just learned that six years after our first visit.



The photo was taken after the rain had stopped.

Very bad night for poor Rose, hardly any sleep because of her migraine headaches, but generally it was not the best night between blackouts, rain and because of many night noises we both kept waking. The usual coffee and showers followed, and it is still raining but lightly now and at 9.00am we will go next door for tea. The young couple and their two boys were full of questions about our family and Australia, they gave us tea and cake. Their two boys were captivated by our money and customs, and we showed them our family and some card tricks. We were back at 10.00am as they were preparing for a wedding at their church, the Salvation Army. At 10.30am we left with our auto rickshaw friend and Anamani took us to a photo studio to get a framed portrait of us together. Then to Amma's for lunch of chicken, fried potato scallops and biryani rice. It was time then for the church service that started with hymns and the testimonies of eleven people who had been healed due to our prayers for them, praise God. We then sang three songs for them, then we shared some of our testimonies. The message was about "Tithing" and was very anointed as was the whole meeting and then our rickshaw driver arrived, so we shared that testimony as well and introduced him. After the collection we left for a rest on our bed thanks to the auto rickshaw man.

On the morning of, the 30<sup>th</sup> of October, it absolutely poured during the night with power cuts and violent winds. We thought it may blow the rain clouds away but this morning it is raining even harder. It is coming under the door to form a large puddle and there is another blackout and once again there will be no service at midday, so we stay home. At 11.00am I went to town and there are small amounts of people about, water everywhere and I eventually secured an auto rickshaw. I changed some money at the bank, purchased a vest, and asked the driver to come back at 5.00pm. Praise God it is now time to go, 5.00pm, and we will get in a rickshaw to go to Amma's, next to the church, to say goodbye. Rose helped Esther with her English lesson preparation, we talked to the family and had lunch of chicken biryani, fried egg, rice and potato fried scallops, also they bought us some Sprite lemonade. We presented Justin and Tony with their cricket set, took family photos, prayed over them all, had a final talk and a sum up.

On Tuesday the 31<sup>st</sup> of October it is still raining, and it was a long night with all the noises and only a curtain between us. We also learned that the reason for all the heavy rain is because there is a massive cyclone hovering close to India's east coast in our area. Pastor Noah turned up with the car at around 8.30am but we were asked to pray over all the neighbours on the left side two houses, one with a Lutheran Pastor and a boy named Martin Luther. We got away by 9.00am and so it is off to Thotavari village near Chirala where we arrived 30 minutes later. It was not until we arrived that we realised we had visited this place 2 years ago with Ratna and there is another Ratna Raju here, the sister's husband. The young Pastor, named Solomon, had been consistently requesting us to visit him and after many emails, his persistence prevailed. Anyway, we will live in a grass hut next to the completed church which was only half built 2 years ago. The anointing to pray for women who are unable to become pregnant has followed us yet again when we meet a new mother who we had prayed with on our last visit. Her and her husband had been trying for over five years and now she presents her baby with a request to baptise him.





We are surrounded by water in all the many rice paddy fields which are adjacent to the church compound. The church is very impressive especially for a small village and we saw the foundations of the new orphanage. We shared quite a bit with Pastor Solomon and he with us, he wants us to organise a Holy Spirit Conference for Chirala and we will pray about it. I went to 2 Dalet villages with Solomon on foot between the paddy fields, he was born in one of these poor villages. I prayed for healing over many and they just kept coming at both villages. One of their temporary grass churches fell down due to flooding. Solomon requested that we both pray that the power would come back on by 8.00pm, the start of the prayer meeting at the main church. It seems that the only way the neighbouring villages can know when church is about to start is that Pastor Solomon start playing very loud Christian music over his large horn speakers. In this way when they would hear the music, they would then start the walk to attend church. Well, God is so good, as the power came back on at exactly 8.00pm after being off for 3 days, so the locals could now make their way to the 8.30pm service. We were also informed that we are special and humble to be willing to sleep in a grass hut as they thought we would insist on staying in a hotel. The prayer meeting went very well, and we sang 3 songs, did a skit and spoke on "Faith and Miracles". We prayed with everybody, and 2 women went down in the Spirit, it is the first time we have seen this happen in a village church in India, praise God. We had to explain it to the others and after midnight we are off to bed while they have a huge meal for their dinner.

It is Wednesday the 1<sup>st</sup> of November and Ratna woke me at 7.00am on the phone then coffee at 7.30am. I slept fairly well considering and although the room has a heavy musty smell, and you can hear rustling all night from the rats in the grass roof. Also, the bed is rock hard, it is just a bamboo mat on the floor but despite that, I slept better than I had expected. It is raining quite heavy since the wee hours and the power goes off and comes back quite often. A Burmese pastor we really wanted to see had settled in Bapatla and was only 100 yards from pastor Noah's, his name is Benny. We will try to ring him later, he had previously received a word from Rose and as a result, his leg had been healed. We went to the church after coffee for prayer just before 11.00am and a woman with continuous chronic heart pain has been healed; she proclaimed this when the meeting finally got underway. We sang some songs, and the message was "Where is your Treasure and God Provides". Also, we told them about the prayer for fair weather and we prayed with all of them, then they wanted to see our family photos, so Solomon showed them our mini photo album that we carried with us. We had a good lunch of battered fried chicken with rice and curry, not bad. We had a short rest then I went to another Dalet village with Solomon while Rose tried to sleep off her headache. At this pathetic village with the worst huts I have yet seen, the people fish in the huge sewage canal, they then sell some of their catch of tiny fish and eat some. They also catch and eat rats, plus the children play with baby rats. Dear God, they are cold, wet and starving, so we have arranged food for tomorrow for them all. Poor Rose got no sleep thanks to Solomon's sister, Lord, help her headache to go. There have now been 4 healings, 2 heart pains and 2 with flu. In the village I spoke about "How We Need to be as Children Before God and How He Looks After His Children". The sun has been out enough to dry most things, praise God. The prayer started at 7.30pm in the main church with praise and worship and it was very good, Rose told me to drum and that seemed to lift the anointing and tempo. We did some action songs and some songs with

dancing, and they all liked that very much, then I spoke on the “Basics” followed by praying for the sick and one man who has been cursed by evil powers.

Last night there were stars and the moon visible in the sky but this morning it is raining lightly once again, and the cloud cover is complete. We are up early but just after Solomon and I decided to go to the worst Dalet village at 10.30am, all the Dalets turned up at the church to shelter from the rain, they have now not eaten for nearly 5 days and even that last meal was small. That one meal was made up of scraps and things that would make us sick. So, the preparation for their hot lunch went on all morning by a very dedicated group of believers along with our hosts. Rose helped to cook and prepare food as well and we got many photos. We fed over 200 near starving people with rice, dhal, curry, vegetables, samba and curried chicken from enormous cooking tubs and pots. The food was continually served until they could, not longer, eat anymore and there was enough to feed all the helpers and family plus send some home with the Dalets as well. They could not stop saying thanks to us and God through Solomon. A couple of them cried in gratitude saying surely God did indeed send us, as we had said God is the architect of all things including our coming. We had also purchased two twenty-kilogram sacks of rice for the village people to take home. When leaving the church compound at 3.00pm with their 2 sacks of rice and their leftovers they were proclaiming a great miracle.



A village hut in the flood.



Preparations



Having a feast in church.



Taking home leftovers in their sari scarves.



Cleaning up



One of the 2 villages the day after

Two young men from the village were carrying the sacks on their head and we will join them in the village to distribute the rice at around 4.00pm, we will leave at 3.30pm and walk, it's a fair way but that's the only way to get there. We can't believe how much food they all ate, but we suppose that they eat as much as they possibly can, whenever they can. During all of this it did stop raining but not before the helpers and the pastor got wet but they soon dried. Everyone is looking forward to the picture show via the TV with our camera plugged into it. We just heard from Solomon that many of the Dalets told him today that they were not sure of his motives of starting services there 10 months ago and they were not sure about all the teachings about God's love and provision but today they know that God alone sent us to them and that included the village elder himself, they have had a true conversion, praise God.



We went to the village to divide out the rice and they came out with a welcoming committee, and they had raked and levelled the sand for us, put out a mat and string bed for us to sit on. We showed Rose around the village, went inside one hut, took photos and gave a message on God's love and told them they were special, Rose explained that we have learned from them. We gave out the rice after some action songs and they loved having some fun in their lives. Then we walked back and had a go on the giant swing, the kids loved it. We had coffee, updated our diaries and waited for the evening meeting. It started on time at 7.30pm with praise and worship and many turned up after hearing the huge outdoor speakers. They think because the Hindus and Muslims do it, they should, they never realise they may be disturbing anyone. Anyway, it was a good meeting with much expectancy, and I played the drums. We did 2 songs and I spoke on "First Fruits" with Rose sharing more including Footprints. We then had a picture show of all our digital photos from here on the TV, over 100. Then most of them fronted up for prayer followed by coffee and bed around 11.00pm. Oh Lord, what an amazing day of love and so many blessings! What a great privilege it is to be servant!



Dishing up.



Having fun with Christian action songs



Dividing up the rice. One of the two Villages. My great privilege to pray.

Up around 7.45am, everybody seems to have slept in, so we packed our bags and had showers followed by coffee. When we were preparing for our final talks today, we were asked to go to another Dalet village, 45 minutes away, by a pastor who had just heard about us being here. So, we reluctantly said we would go even though it is short notice, it is 9.15am. by the time we were ready to leave, and the auto rickshaw was arranged we started walking to the main road by 9.45am after that the rickshaw arrived at 9.55am and off we went with Solomon and his brother-in-law, the pastor. We ended up going through Bapatla and a long way beyond and we were getting more and more cross with the brother-in-law. At 11.10am we came to a blocked road due to flooding and even if we turned around now, we would get back at 12.25pm, very, very late for our final prayer service. The brother-in-law said I will get the people nearby and you can say a quick prayer and go, I will only be 5 minutes. 20 minutes later there was no sign of him, so we left, we had to, and even knowing he was stranded, so we left at 11.30am to go back. Pastor Solomon and the Christian auto rickshaw driver were angry with him. I had asked him twice if he was sure, it was only 45 minutes and even though the Holy Spirit was urging caution, but we did it because Solomon said he would like us to do it. Anyway, we got back at 12.40pm in a mad rush, went to the toilet etc and straight to church. I prayed with each person during the end of Praise and worship to save some time, we were presented with a shawl and sang to by all then we sang "I Stand in Awe" followed by Roses' "Fear of God" talk then my "Getting to Know God through the Word with Jesus' Passover Feast". I prayed with the latecomers and Solomon asked for a show of hands by those who had been healed,

27 hands went up, thanks be to God and Solomon is going to send us a list by email. Then we had lunch of fried chicken and rice followed by family prayer and a great send off. Then same rickshaw arrived on time, and we pulled out at 2.45pm for Chirala Station. We stopped at an ATM in Chirala and I got out some money to give to Solomon and the Dalets for a Christmas lunch. Then to the station and the train was only 20 minutes late at 4.05pm and after we were helped by Solomon on board, he had to run for it, it did not stop for long. Our seats are in an air-conditioned carriage, laid back seats as well. I had told Solomon if he remained like clay in God's hands, He would use him mightily. Our journey was very pleasant, and Rose finished reading her book, we both updated our diaries and I read while Rose rested. We pulled into Chennai just before 9.30pm and the station was a sea of people, it was very difficult to walk out. An English-speaking rickshaw driver who took us to a hotel at 350 rupees per night, not bad at about \$7 Australian. We were sitting on the beds by 10.30pm and had some coffee.

On Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> of November there was a knock on our hotel room door woke me at 7.00am asking if we wanted chai, Rose was already up doing her bible study. So, we ordered coffee and it arrived shortly after. By 9.00am we decided to do the washing ourselves as it is a lot warmer here in Chennai and we might wait too long for the laundry man to come. After that we left around 10.00am for Monteith Road and check our Chennai to Mumbai rail ticket. Then we posted letters to our parents and went on to Spencer Plaza, a large shopping mall. We purchased chips, biscuits, deodorant, mozzie repellent, Mars bars, a red pen, greeting cards for Benjamin's wedding, Sheela's birthday and Sree's Christmas. Also, some cashews plus we checked our emails and purchased 2 new rings for me, one for Rose. Also looked at watches, memory sticks for our camera, belts and other gifts for when we come back. We had lunch at Pizza Hut, yum and after 3.00pm we went back to the travel shop to pick up our new rail tickets. Then we went to Egmore Station to book for our return to Chennai on the 19<sup>th</sup> and to book another hotel for when we return. Then back to our present hotel for coffee and unpacking our purchases. Thank you for today, Lord and our time off. We caught up on our diaries, I did some re-packing and bible study, then we read for a while followed by some TV, movies, plus we had some cold drinks. It will be bed by 9.00pm as we will have to get up at 5.40am to get our 6.15am rickshaw.

Up by 5.30am and poor Rose has been awake most of the night, up and down. Rose had a shower and I got cleaned up, showered last night, then had coffee and packed the last bits. We were downstairs by 6.15am and off to Egmore railway station, our train was in the station, but you have to wait for the passenger lists to be posted on the side of each carriage with paste. So, when they were, we checked our seat numbers, which is on the ticket as well, and we boarded. By midday it has been a pleasant and uneventful journey mostly reading and laying down. We arrived in Madurai at 3.55pm got a rickshaw to a hotel and the rooms are only 400 rupees per night. Topped up the mobile sim, bought fly spray, rubber bands and a book. We ordered hot chips and got crisps, tomato soup, plus coffee and a cold drink. The room is clean and comfy, and we watched TV, read, filled in diaries and my bible notebook. Rang Sheela before bed and she will meet us in the morning. Thankyou Lord, for your travel mercies. Just to jog your memories, Sheela is a young teenage girl who asked us if she could be our granddaughter on one of our earliest India trips.

It is Monday the 6<sup>th</sup> of November, our daughter Angela's birthday and we are up at 7.30am and I think Rose slept a little better, praise God. We had coffee and showers, packed up and were ready by 8.30am and we will be in the foyer by 9.00am when Sheela will pick us up. They came at about 9.40am with her father's auto rickshaw and her uncle's rickshaw. There was Sheela, Lythia, her father, her uncle and another uncle whom we had not met, her mother's brother. So, it was back to Thatha's house, Thatha means father, now deceased, where uncle, aunty and Solomon Craig David



lives and where Sheela's mother and aunt were waiting. Sheela and her family still live in the grass hut and Abraham is at school. They have also built a new house nearby which they will rent out for 2 years and they asked the tenants to move out for 3 days so we could stay there, they gave them 1,500 rupees incentive. Sheela, Lythia and Abraham will sleep there too. They have bought all new bedding and towels for us, and we will sleep on the same mattress as 2 years ago on the floor, they have not used it since then, they kept it new for us only and they asked if we wanted a full bed off the floor, we said no. Sheela has exams today so after settling in and giving her a birthday card and gift, she went to college and will be back at 5.40pm. Lunch will be at 2.00pm and we catch up our diaries, rest and read. We also gave out new rosaries as they are still wearing the old ones even though they are broken by now after 2 years, after all they are only plastic. Also, we showed them our family album. At 2.00pm we went to Grandfather's house for lunch of rice, curry gravy, vegetable gravy and potato curry. After a respectable time, we went back to our lodgings and read, rested and studied some bible verses. By 6.30pm Abraham was back from school, 12<sup>th</sup> Standard and Sheela was back from her college, they both sat for exams today and are very confident. We again went to Grandfather's for coffee and tutoring is being done by Abraham, it is usually Sheela, there are 10 students from 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> Standard and are being tutored in Maths and Tamil. After some photos and card tricks, they all left, and we went back to our lodgings and just when we were considering bed some relatives we have not met turned up with biscuits and to meet us. They were obviously better off than father or uncle and asked for prayer before they left. It has been raining on and off all day and the towels plus my jeans probably won't dry before we leave. It is 9.30pm and bedtime for us while the others go for their evening meal.

Woke at 7.45am and we have had rain, thunder and lightning all night. Showered and got dressed before we were ushered to Grandfather's house for coffee where I caught up on the diary and read. About 10.00am uncle, Abram, Sheela, Solomon and ourselves left for the beauty parlour via a very brief stop at Amma's parent's house. Rose asked to have her hair dyed brown with a trim, while I found a stationary shop to buy Sree's school things to go in her school bag plus a couple of things for Sheela, a toy for Solomon and some chocolates. Unlike at a hairdresser in Australia, after the hair die was applied, she was asked to leave the premises. So, poor Rose is standing outside with all this hair die applied while some of it was continually trying to run down her face. All this while she waits patiently for us to come back to pick her up. She was told to wash her hair in an hour with the supplied sachet. After we eventually turned up to take Rose back to our lodgings, she had to wash her hair with the sachet of shampoo/conditioner from the hairdresser, while I stayed at Grandfather's to keep everyone else from going to her and they gave me coffee. Rose came back with dark brown hair, but it looks great, and she had some coffee too. What a funny way of dyeing hair and of course poor Rose standing on the street with wet dye dripping everywhere, not funny then, but it is now.

After some reading, Rose finished her book, we were served chicken 65, rice and curry and a short time later we all squashed into a minivan, 15 people went to a famous church of Our Lady, it is reported to be famous for miracles. There were people there who reminded me of the people that Jesus chased from the temple for defiling it. They were selling holy water, just dirty bore water, by the litre and trinkets. On the way home we sang Christian songs, 3 or 4 from us, and the rest from them. When we return, we catch our breath, update our diaries, and wait for whatever comes next, its 4.00pm. I rang my son, Craig, at the office today and he knew how to get Australian mobile numbers, so I tried his and it worked, you put +61 then the mobile number without the leading 0. so, then I rang Betty, and she is very excited. We went back to the lodging and prayed with about 12 abandoned old ladies who wanted to meet us, then back to Grandfathers. After that we were taken to Sheela's other Grandfather's grave, then to ICICI ATM to get money for Sheela's family

and back to Grandfathers by 7.00pm. Then we showed some of our photos via TV after praying for all the students, plus we prayed over uncle, aunty and Solomon plus their house. Then we prayed over Amma's Father and his extended family plus their house, followed by Sheela's family and their house plus gave them 200 rupees for iron tablets, prompted by the Lord. Then back to our lodgings where we prayed again for some people and the house. By 8.45pm we catch up our diaries and lay down by 9.00pm. Lythia's hearing problem was healed after our praying over her the last visit and daddy and uncle are both registered auto rickshaw passenger carriers as opposed to cargo, which they had asked prayer for last time as well.



On Wednesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of November we woke to the alarm clock at 12.25am and Rose had a shower while I packed. Sheela's family awoke in the front room and daddy went to get a minivan from a neighbour. We left at 1.00am and were at the station by 1.20am, everybody came except Amma. We had coffee and they all had chai, the train pulled in at 2.25am and left at 2.30am, only 25 minutes late. There were quick goodbyes, and we were asked to stay longer next time, more than a week, and we gave them 5,000 rupees. We have air conditioning sleeping berths and I get Rose settled up in the top bunk then I fill in this diary, read a bit then try to sleep on the lower berth. I take the lower to keep an eye on our luggage underneath on the floor. We awake, not that either of us were asleep, at around 6.00am and at about 6.40am we pull into Nagercoil Junction. At 7.15am we arrive at Kanniyakumari, at the extreme bottom tip of India and get a rickshaw to take us to a hotel. It is a good room with a balcony looking out to sea and a huge catholic church. We had coffee and we rested for a while plus Rose did some washing and showered, I will shower now. Rang Sree's project head, a major in the Salvation Army, we will be met here at 8.00am tomorrow. Sree is the 9-year-old girl who we sponsor through Compassion Australia. We also rang Benjamin; he will pick us up tomorrow here at 6.00pm. Another phone call to Sheela to let her know we arrived and thanked her for our stay. Went shopping and purchased 2 blouses, 1 shirt for me, groceries and treats for Sree's family, razors, chips and glue. Rose ordered tomato soup and chapattis for lunch, and I ordered crumbed fish and chips, we both had coffee, all in our room, its 1.30pm. After the coffee I went down for a haircut and some éclairs. Rose tried to sleep while I watched TV, cut toenails and then it started raining, brought the washing further into the balcony and then the lightning and thunder started as well. Rose went to sleep early with the help of a sleeping tablet while I watched TV, got bored with that so I read for a while.

Up by 7.30am and waiting on coffee, Rose listened to mass by loudspeaker out on the balcony coming from the big church. Benjamin rang to say he would now come at around 4.00pm so we decided to check out of the hotel rather than pay an extra day, so we did, and our big bags are in a storage room till we leave. I rang the salvation army major at 8.40am and he said by 9.00am that he would be here, but he arrived at 9.40am and brought a car against our instructions, as we must pay for it. We were there just after 10.00am and by 10.30am Sree and her mother turned up at the school office where we were. Eventually all the staff turned up including the lady who interprets Sree's letters for us. After giving Sree her watch, library bag from the rosary people and her Christmas card and gift of school bag stuffed with school supplies, we left for their rented house. The house

was a big improvement on the last one as was the whole families clothing. It is good to see their lives improving with a bigger and better house and a higher living standard as a direct result of our sponsorship. But on our standards, they still live in poverty. At the house we met her 20-year-old brother and her father at last and Rose gave the mother the 2 bags of groceries and treats we had bought for them, plus the radio and the watch for Sree's brother. After sweetened hot milk and biscuits we went back to the project office where we filled out forms for feedback and the visitor's book. We also found out, too late, that we could have taken Sree sightseeing, after we were told 2 years ago, we could not. Too late now as our itinerary is too tight to change, but we could have allowed more time, and we were not happy that we had only around half the original time with Sree. Anyway, it was still great to see her; we left around 12 noon and got back at 12.45pm. Then it was downstairs to the restaurant for lunch, I had ginger fish with hot chips while Rose had chicken with cashews and hot chips, plus 2 coffees for us both and Rose finished with ice cream, and all very, very yum, possibly the biggest meal we could finish since coming here to India. By 2.00pm we are finished and then we get an auto to an internet place, to check our email but because of the slowness of dial-up internet we had to quit trying, so back to the hotel foyer to read and wait for Benjamin, its 2.45pm. We had coffee after 3.00pm and read our books in the foyer and Benjamin turned up at 3.45pm. We were on a bus before 4.00pm heading for Nagercoil during which it started to rain heavily. At Nagercoil we got an auto to Benjamin's brides' sister's house, and we were there despite the rain by 5.00pm. It is a huge modern house, 2 storeys, marble everywhere and adjoining bathrooms everywhere. Benjamin gave Rose a wedding sari for a gift and me an alb, very decorative. At 6.30pm we went to the house of a professional Indian cultural dance teacher where a show was put on by primary school kids and then teenagers, followed by a DVD. Benjamin's family turned up from Chennai and they had had to stand on the train for 13 hours. It was good to see his mum, dad, Jayaseelan and Jackulyn, his sisters. The first things they both asked was, "How is Paul?" Then we prayed with 5 or 6 people and left by auto and arrived back to our bed and filled in diaries, it is 10.50pm.



It is now Friday the 10<sup>th</sup> of November, and we are up by 6.45am and by 7.00am we have coffee, Rose had a shower, and I cleaned my shoes then showered, shaved and dressed. The tailor came to fit Rose's sari blouse and it arrived back very quickly and a perfect fit. The lady of the house helped Rose into her sari and we had photos with Benjamin. I am wearing my good trousers, shirt, tie and vest with cufflinks and tie clip. More coffee came and at 9.30am we left in a new 4-wheel drive for the dancer's house where Benjamin's family is staying. We were served tea, and the house is packed. After garlanding Benjamin, we prayed and left for the wedding hall. The videos and still camera were waiting and I had to go and get into a borrowed cassock, rope, tie and my new alb. Then we both sat up the front facing everybody including the bride and groom. A pastor from the CSI church conducted the service while I blessed the wedding medallion and Benjamin put it on Jaya, his bride. After the sermon, Rose and I had the privilege of praying over them, and then they signed the papers followed by our blessing of the beautiful couple. Then many photos followed and afterwards upstairs for the wedding meal of fried rice, fried mutton, and beetroot jam some other sweet and banana.





We said goodbye to Benjamin's family and Pastor Happy as they return to Chengalpattu this afternoon, then we are driven back to our lodging about 2.20pm we got back. Daniel from Dubai rang me, he is the brother of the lady of the house here, he wanted to say hello and apologise for our discomfort Ha Ha! Diaries done and a bit of repacking by 3.15pm. Benjamin is seeing what rail tickets he can get for us to Kottayam. We read for a while and then I went with Benjamin to an ATM at about 3.30pm to get some money, 15,000 rupees, out. 6,000 rupees from Paul and 3,000 rupees from us with 6,000 rupees left in our wallet. Back by 4.30pm and we leave at 5.00pm for the Tsunami affected area. Benjamin's brother-in-law is getting us a bus ticket for tomorrow morning to join Arul. The bus ticket fell through, but Jaya's brother is trying the train again as he has some connections. At 5.00pm we left to pick up the dance lady and go to the Tsunami area where her brother is rebuilding. We were shown around but not much to see in the dark. Had some praise and worship at the new house followed by a message "Jesus Walks on Water", then prayer for all. Then we dedicated the house and left. We arrived at Jaya's family home at 8.50pm for farewells and prayers of blessing, they are obviously the poor relations. Left at 9.15pm and back for bed at 9.30pm, set the alarm for 4.30am and time for sleep after a diary update and a short read.

Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> of November is our 11<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, and we are up at 4.30am, we are showered and packed. Gave Rose her anniversary present and card, dressed and ready by 5.00am. Everybody looks so tired, and we are put in a taxi by 5.15am and at the station by 5.25am. Three of the family, Jaya's, plus the station master wait with us until the train comes. We had coffee and the train came in at 6.15am, the men helped us on board, and we pulled out at 6.20am. We read for a while, did our diaries, I had a short nap and we both then read until Kottayam, arriving at 11.30am. Arul and his brother-in-law met us and took us by car to Wagamon and on the way we had coffee and went to an ATM for Arul's money from Paul. At Wagamon we changed to a jeep, by this time we were very high up in the mountains. Also, we went to the maternity hospital on the way to bless and visit his brother-in-law's new baby and his wife. Anyway, this jeep took us over a road that was more like an off-road track and after a couple of kilometres at a snail pace we arrived at Arul's father-in-law's house and met his wife as well. We will sleep here for 4 nights, and it is a tea plantation and very hilly and high in the mountains, it is so beautiful, what a treat. Our arrival was around 3.30pm and we were presented with shawls on arrival. We were given lunch of chicken curry, with bread, then bread and jam plus fruit, then chai. Some girls came by to see us and we rested for some of the afternoon. In the evening some men as well as a pastor came and we discussed many things, a real estate man says that he wants to help Mamre. We finished with prayer, some tea and it is off to bed at 10.00pm.

Up by 6.10am and both busting for the toilet, Rose does her morning devotions while I prepare for the prayer meeting followed by church. By 7.30am we have had 2 cups of chai, showered, dressed and are ready for the prayer meeting. The prayer meeting went well, and I share my testimony plus the Prodigal Son and there was a lot of prayer plus praise and worship also prayed with some of them. Had tea at 9.40am and then we will leave for church in town. We celebrated a great service with the usual praise and worship, prayers and sermon from the resident pastor, who talks faster and longer than anybody we know, then I spoke on "Treasure in Heaven" plus "Getting out of the Boat". Rose shared some testimonies and we all had chai, biscuits and éclairs afterward. After that

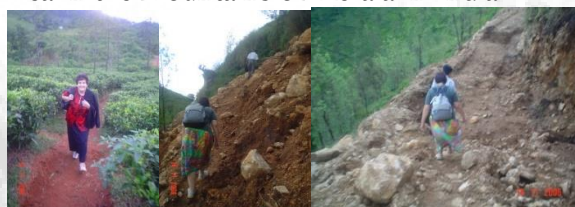


we shopped for singlets and a jumper for baby. Went to Chippy Real Estate man's house, had lunch of fried chicken, rice, dhal and poppadums. Set up the computer for BSNL but it was not responding. Then we prayed for the whole family and then every distant relative's house and a few friends' houses we had to do the same and we had many cups of tea. There are police everywhere in town because of trouble between opposing and sometimes violent political parties having different rallies on the same day??? Close to sunset we headed back in the jeep on the goat track and stopped at a tea plantation house for more prayer over the couple and their house. Then we walked past our lodging to one last house for the same again and then prayed over the land which Arul and his father-in-law hope to buy for an orphanage, 1 acre. Back to the house after dark for tea and closing prayer, a discussion on Arul using the Mamre name for his charitable trust followed by bed, diaries and some reading it is 8.20pm.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> we are up by 7.30am and we both had toilet runs through the night, Rose is out the front doing her bible devotions and I have chai and do the same inside. We both had a wash and dressed for the prayer and fasting here and at 10.00am went to the adjoining room with Arul and the family, here for 2 hours of prayer and praise, some in their language and some led by ourselves. After that we came in for lunch of rice, curry, vegetables and fruit, oh and poppadums. Then I repacked the bags which got rid of one bag, and I gave it to Arul, plus a towel, 2 old bed covers, a sleeveless jumper and the CDs from Brian. I fixed my bible clasp, made my big bag lockable after the zip tags broke and rewrote my pocket notebook. Then I updated this diary, it is now 3.00pm and Rose is having a nap. Also, I wrote a draft for our next email to be sent to all the prayer saints at home. It was then time to get dressed in our good clothes for the combined churches Wagamon Christian Outdoor Convention and we left at 5.30pm. When we got to town via jeep, we went to Sarjini's house to pray for those who were not there yesterday, especially the father who is 55, but he looks to be 75, and he needs heart surgery which will cost him 1 ½ lakhs of rupees, that is 150,000 rupees or about 2,800 Australian dollars. Of course, he does not even have a fraction of that amount so unless God heals him, he will die soon. Then we went to a real estate man's house for coffee, followed by being seated at the convention where there were at least 8 pastors and after praise and prayer one spoke on what sounded initially to be about "fire and brimstone" but turned out to be Mary's love for Jesus. I was then invited to speak, and I gave my testimony after which the senior pastor spoke about the impact of my testimony for another hour. The music was by a professional music ministry who were hired for the convention, and they were called, "Shalom Music."



Tea in the mountains of Kerala in India



4-wheel drives only with exceptions.

Up by 7.05am and chai is ready for us then we had some bible study followed by our Indian style wash, by using a plastic jug to tip cold bore water on our bodies so we could soap them up before rinsing. We must be ready to leave at 8.30am, so just before we took photos of the family picking

tea and of the orphanage land in daylight. The house adjoining the land is owned by a woman who was healed by our prayer 2 days before, for weakness and chronic fatigue. After that we left by jeep to Wagamon and after calling into Chippy Sarjun's, we got back in the jeep and drove for 45 minutes to another village in the remote hills. It is a very pretty place full of flowers and dense growth perched on a hillside with tea plants as far as you could see. We also got some great photos on the way, including tea pickers and the amazing views. Another miracle is that on the first day we prayed for the possibility to improve the road and we found out that the local government just voted to allocate 8 lakh rupees to upgrade it. Also, that it would change from a private road, tea estate, to a public road which means it will be maintained properly in the future. We are waiting for the prayer and fasting meeting to start, and it is 10.40am. By 10.50am we start the prayer, we were waiting for the Wagamon pastor and the rest of the congregation, but he has failed to arrive. So, after prayer and praise I spoke on "Being Prepared for the End" while Rose closed in prayer, and we had lunch of rice, beetroot, vegetables, potato and poppadums. Then we left to return to Wagamon and I bought tablets and pens plus note books. We are now at Chippy's place trying to configure the internet, it is 2.30pm. It took a very long time to set it up, 1 hour 20 minutes, then we could check our emails there were 150 of them, but sadly, mostly junk. We are now at the house of the son, his wife and the new baby for prayer. We had to walk up some very steep and rough mountainside, but the views were spectacular, if the house was in Australia, it would not be occupied. After that house we went to a cousin's house beside a brook and the couple were both very tall, they were offered police positions but declined to run a tea house. We prayed there and then we headed to our lodgings and were back by 6.15pm.

It is Wednesday the 15<sup>th</sup> of November, which is my mother's birthday, and we are up by 6.30am with tea, Rose was reading her bible from 6.00am. After a second cuppa we showered and packed and were ready by 8.00am. We prayed with the neighbours and with our family and were ready to leave by 8.30am, and then we had tea while Angel, the jeep man prepared. We left at 8.45am and arrived in Kottayam at 10.45am where we went to platform 2 of the railway station and had a cuppa plus, we bought chips, biscuits and drinks. The train arrived at 11.35am and pulled out at 11.45am. On our way down the mountain in the jeep we saw and photographed an elephant. I gave Arul 3,200 rupees for all the car and jeep fees plus 200 for Angel and 500 for the family. The trip was okay but long, we had chips, biscuits, chocolate, tea, coffee and fruity. Also, I rang my mother for her birthday, and she could not believe how clear my voice was considering I was calling from India. We pulled into Salem Junction at 9.40pm and got an auto rickshaw to an hotel, but it was full as was the second one until finally we ended up in the Hotel City View with air conditioning, but we won't use the air conditioner, the ceiling fans are enough. It is 11.00pm before we are settled having had coffee and unpacking the essentials.

Woke at around 8.45am and got up at 9.30am, had coffee and did some bits and pieces as well as giving our dirty clothes to the porter man. We watched a movie then headed out to the internet, checked our email and sent a cheerio to the family and a ministry update to all the others. Then we went to an ATM for 10,000 rupees and an Airtel cell phone top up followed by a great lunch at our hotel restaurant. I had ginger prawns, finger chips and toast, while Rose had tomato soup, finger chips, toast and some ice cream, yum. Afterwards we went back to the room at around 5.00pm and watched TV then we were reading followed by bible study, I slept at around 10.00pm.

On Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> of November we woke at around 7.45am when we ordered some coffee. Eventually we had showers and while Rose wrote 2 postcards for the Mums and Dad. We went to post the letters and looked around Salem Bazaar which offered a great variety of items for sale. After that we got a rickshaw to our favourite restaurant and Rose had chicken fried rice while I had

mixed spring rolls and finger chips plus Rose had vanilla ice cream, yummy and all for 190 rupees, about \$4. Back to the hotel and took some photos from the roof then we read for a while. Between reading, watching TV, doing the highlights of my testimony for Arul and 2 cups of coffee we have reached 8.30pm and settling down. Slept at around 11.00pm.

Up just after 9.00am and ordered coffee, poor Rose did not sleep so well last night. We had another lazy morning reading and watching TV and eventually we had our showers plus Rose did the washing. After midday we went to lunch at a hotel restaurant, I had eggs on toast plus chips, while Rose had tomato soup and chips plus, we had toast and Rose had ice cream. Afterwards we got a rickshaw to the Missionaries of Charity Sisters, prayed with all the women and the babies plus our little crippled girl, who can now stand, praise God. Many of the sisters that were there on our previous trip are now stationed at other localities but despite that all the new sisters had heard about the miracles that had happened during our last visit. After a while, the sisters went out on street ministry but before they left, they asked us to pray for them all and left us to it, so we sang, took photos, talked and prayed.



We got back to the hotel at around 3.00pm and ordered coffee. Most of the evening was spent reading and watching TV while we wait to check out at around 10.30pm then we will get an auto to the station. We waited at the station until 12.20am, only 40 minutes late, and we pulled out at 12.30am. Police everywhere on the station and on the trains because there had been a bomb scare.

It is now Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup> of November and we arrived at Chennai Central at 5.30am and got an auto to Chandra Park hotel where we went straight to bed after thanking God. Woke at 9.30am for coffee and showers but sadly we have building going on outside our window with lots of banging, so we consider the possibility of moving to another hotel. The reception girl rang about the cable TV not working and she managed to have the banging next door stopped. By the time we are back from attending Mass it is just coming up to 12 noon and we are looking for a hotel near the airport for the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. The airport hotel is booked, and we go out for lunch, I had fried prawns, finger chips and cheese naan while Rose had omelette, finger chips and some of the non-cheese naan plus Neapolitan ice cream. Then we walked through the Sunday markets, got belts for the boys' birthdays, undies, socks and toilet shoes for Rose. Came back and relaxed, can't get English channels on TV and it is now around 5.00pm so we read until it is time to try to sleep.

Slept till 8.45am and dozed till 9.15am, the 7up leaked out all over the sheets. Ordered coffee before showers and the clean sheet and pillows we requested have come. We then got ready and went to Spencer Plaza, had pizza, cheese bread, coffee plus Rose had soup. We bought watches, a belt, a wallet, and computer games, put my glasses in for fixing, a DVD burner for Arul, earphones, pen and fountain pen cartridges plus 2 cushion covers for the caravan park people. Also, some pills to move my bowels and we are back and unpacked by 5.00pm. Back out by 6.40pm to pick up my glasses at 7.00pm from Spencer, also bought a trolley for my big bag plus we looked around, back by 9.00pm and rang Esther and she will come here tomorrow to work out a programme.

Up by 8.30am for coffee, read our books for a while, had showers and Rose washed. Still trying to clear my bowels. After many trips to the toilet and some reading, we went out. We checked our email, got some money from an ATM, put my shoes in to be mended and had lunch. Rose had fried fish with chips, and I had roast lamb and chips plus Rose had ice cream and topping. We bought shorts for Rose plus 6 pairs of undies and when we got back to the room, we booked the Manickam Grand near the airport from tomorrow onwards and we had coffee. Esther rang and said she will come around 6.00pm and I went back for my shoes, and he did a really good job. Esther did not arrive till 7.30pm but we were reading and having coffee in the restaurant. She will pick us up tomorrow at 5.30pm to see a new project and on Thursday we will leave for her island project and stay overnight. Back to the room to pack and get into bed after my bowels moved, praise God. I pray Rose gets a good sleep as she has a headache, and we will be woken by 5.45am.

On Wednesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November we got out of bed after our wakeup call at 5.45am and ordered coffee and after our showers we packed and were down in the foyer for checkout by 6.30am. We got an auto rickshaw to the Manickam Grand Hotel near the airport for 520 rupees per night, about \$10, and is close to Esther, arrived at 7.30am. The room is fine, not air conditioned but ceiling fans are fine, and we unpacked plus I rang Betty to get her to bring some pain tablets for us. We read for a while, and I had a nap and afterwards we ventured out and found a place to transfer the photos from the camera onto a CD. When we returned, we had a disastrous lunch at the restaurant here, yuk and went back to our room by 2.00pm. More reading and we both had a nap, while afterwards we packed a small bag for tomorrow's island trip. We are ready by 5.30pm for Esther and wait in the foyer. She rang, huge traffic jams, but picked us up and took us to visit the CSI Mt Thomas girl's hostel, about 82 girls up to 12<sup>th</sup> Standard. We sang at their request and did some action songs plus encouraged them. After that we were fed chapatti and chicken plus coffee then back to the hotel. I got some money out, which we will donate to Esther's ministry, and we caught up on our diaries, it is 9.30pm.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> we are up at the sound of the alarm clock at 6.45am but we have not really slept due to a noisy wedding function that went into the wee hours plus we are next to the kitchen of the restaurant. We have been assured that we will change rooms tomorrow after our trip to the island. Anyway, we showered and are ready for Esther's driver by 7.30am with an overnight bag. We left in her new four-wheel drive and travelled north to Pallavada in Tamil Nadu where we picked up another Guna pastor from his house, he is the administrator of the island. Then it was off to Vanadu in Andhra Pradesh to meet a landowner who Esther is hoping to get land from for a community centre. He has been very illusive in the past but after a wait of nearly 2 hours he agreed to give her half an acre, praise God. Then Esther, Ruth, the assistant, the pastor Guna, Benny, the driver and ourselves with all the medical supplies from Esther's brother, the doctor, and all our bedding, chairs, food etc. headed for the pastor's house again for lunch of lime rice and chicken which Esther brought with us. Then finally it was off to the waterfront to get a boat from Arambakkam Tamil Nadu to the island of Arukkam in Andhra Pradesh which has 2 main villages. This is the official address of the island that Esther is taking us to: -

*Land Vanadu – Island Erukkam – Arambakkam Main Land – 1<sup>st</sup> Village TV Nagar – J Gunasekar Pallavada Village and Post Gummudi Poondi T.K. Thiruvallur D.T. Tamilnadu 601202.*





As we set off to go to the island on the donated fishing boat, we experience a beautiful sunset and what a blessing it is.

We landed at the first island in our fishing boat to present a new emergency boat and outboard for the island people to be able to get to the mainland in case of emergency. There was a fine welcome before we pray over the boat and the monstrous outboard motor. We were presented with shawls that were placed across our shoulders. The children getting back from school arrived in a fishing boat, about 60 of them, all excited, the boat was, very low in the water.



What a way to go to school!

After all of that we walked to the island's Pastor/Missionaries house then a further 2 kilometres to the other island village of T V Nagar which has 3 sub communities, which are made up of Dalets, landowners and tribal snake catchers. The whole island is without power as where it usually comes from on the mainland, the line fell down and it killed two bullocks at that time. It is still not repaired after 24 hours. Anyway, we bed down after sitting under a star filled sky outside the new community centre for quite a while and went to bed inside with Esther, Ruth and ourselves on mats and sheets she had brought. The centre only cost 1 lakh rupees, impressive. There were few mosquitos probably as we are so near the sea, thanks be to God, and the concrete floor is very hard and after lying down at 8.30pm I finally dropped off at after 11.00pm turning many times to ease my hips.

On Friday the 24<sup>th</sup> of November we are out of bed by 6.30am and Rose is already off for a prayer walk, while I had some bible study and diary updating. It is a fine morning with a lovely sea breeze, and we walked throughout the village and did action songs with the children at the sister's school. We were asked to give the blessing of the sewing machines and the launch of the sewing classes in the community centre where we slept. Then all the villagers put in their requests for assistance from cots to bullocks to shops plus fishing nets. Then we had lunch after many photos, of prawns, fried fish, fish curry and rice. Afterwards we set off to the wharf to catch the 2.00pm ferry at 2.30pm. It wasn't as good as the fishing boat but still enjoyable. Back by four-wheel drive to drop Manu then back to Esther's office after many traffic jams. After tea and cake, we left for our hotel and after more traffic problems were back by 8.30pm. After we unpacked in our new room 209, less noisy, I bought laundry soap, glue for shoes and coffee.

We awake at 7.00am to put the laundry in for washing and ironing and Rose made us coffee, then I slept for 2 more hours. Rose showered and did her bible study in the meantime, the room that the

hotel people moved us to is much nicer and quieter. We read and prayed for a while and I finally showered, after that more reading and then we left for Spencer Plaza as Rose's bag's zip has been ripped open. So, my original idea of getting new bags here instead of paying a huge amount in Australia was possibly not so bad. My big bag's zippers are broken, and my small bag is ripped. We purchased a wheelie backpack for Rose and for me a large back pack plus a carry-on bag. We also had pizza, cheese bread, tomato soup and mineral water for lunch at Pizza hut and it was packed, like most of the plaza. We got 2 pairs of jeans, 3 tops for Rose, 3 rolls of film developed, 2 new rolls of film, 2 new camera batteries, coffee and sugar. The locks and chain I had purchased as well are to secure our new bags on the trains. I had coffee at 9.30pm and of course we had to unpack all our things and repack them in the new bags. It is now 10.00pm and I have been updating this diary, thank you God for guiding us and saving us so much money. Betty Graver our faithful fellow missionary and fundraiser has left Brisbane two and a half hours ago and is on her way, bless her Lord.

It is the 26<sup>th</sup> and we wake around 8.30m and Rose made me a cup of coffee; we both caught up on diaries and just rested. Everything is repacked and my shoes are glued by 12.30pm and we will leave for lunch. We got an auto rickshaw to the Radisson Hotel assuming they had a restaurant, and it was so posh that we were not even game to ask their room rates. Anyway, Rose had the buffet lunch, all you can eat, and I had king prawns wrapped in bacon with fries and greens, yum, plus I had a red wine which knocked me for six and Rose stuck to water. A rickshaw ride back for 50 rupees and we were back to our room. It is 5.45pm and Betty is on her last leg on her trip to India and then she will be with us again. We will be there to pick her up and she can have a good sleep, by God's grace, she is due to land at 8.55pm. We are so very aware of the various crosses that we must bear, and Rose's migraines are prime among them. But no matter what our individual crosses are, by carrying them, it is the only way that we can relate to the great sacrifice that Jesus Christ made to take upon Himself for all our sins.

Luke 14:27 *And whoever does not carry their cross and follow Me, cannot be my disciple.*

1 Peter 3:13 *But rejoice inasmuch as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed.*

All went well with Betty's arrival, and we whisked her to her room after a cuppa, as always, she was full of news and enthusiasm.

On Monday the 27<sup>th</sup> of November we are up around 8.00am and after a while Betty came for a cuppa. After showers, prayers and some reading we went out and bought a belt, an electrical adapter and a few other bits for Betty. We went to the Hotel Meridian, and I had roast beef, Rose had lasagne and Betty had cheese grills, yum, yum. Then back to our rooms for packing and getting ready to meet up with Benjamin. We left about 3.45pm in a taxi and were dropped at Benjamin's house. We got settled and then put on our good clothes for an anniversary celebration plus a birthday blessing for Betty and a welcome for ourselves. There was dancing, singing, including Betty's cake cutting, Rose spoke on James, about being doers of God's Word and we both sang the Christian birthday song. Then when we were waiting in a room, many people came to us, and we prayed with them. One widow got slain in the Spirit and God moved in her mightily, wow, the miracles are starting already. Arul, Sajini and Sherine were all there and we gave him his DVD burner for an early birthday gift.



We wake by 8.00am and we are showered, shaved and had coffee while we prayed. Rose is suffering again, and we all pray for her relief. After a rest Benjamin took Betty on his bike while I went on the back of a smaller bike, the rider was swaying and was very unsteady. Apart from the fact that he is too young to drive he had only a couple of practice runs in the last week or so. In Chengalpattu, where Benjamin's ministry is located, we spent hours looking for clothes for Betty as she only brought warm clothes to India despite our advice. Nothing fitted or she did not like it so eventually we bought material and went to a tailor to have 2 slacks, a skirt and a blouse made. We purchased 3 huge boxes of biscuits for the children and the lepers plus some food items for ourselves plus water and a pair of shorts. We came back by auto via the bank to get out 10,000 rupees and arrived at 2.00pm for lunch of fish, rice, curry and dhal. Wrote up our diaries and we will leave for ministry around 4.00pm. We then went to a Dalet village, where most of them were leprosy sufferers also, and it was there that we had a prayer meeting where I spoke on "Humility in Faith while Leaving the Things of the World behind us". Then there was much personal prayer ministry, one woman was touched mightily while another was healed of a bad throat. Benjamin said the talk changed lives for 2 women to be convicted to walk away from Hindu idols, wow, praise God. Betty shared a testimony, and we all sang for them then we got back to our rooms by 9.10pm, watched the wedding DVD, updated our diaries and ready to settle by 10.30pm.

*On Wednesday the 29<sup>th</sup> of November we are given a breakdown of the orphanage staff wages per month in Indian rupees and keep in mind that one dollar equals about forty-five rupees.*

*Orphanage: Mrs Ranjithan – Warden – 1,200*

*Sunya Raj – Office Assistant – 1,000*

*Mr Dhinaklan – Cook – 1,500*

*Hilda Amul – Assistant Cook – 800*

*Mrs Rani – Washing – 500*

*Mrs Rajj – Caretaker – 1,000; = 6,000*

*Volunteer teacher – Jackubyn – 200*

We are up by 7.30am for showers, coffee and prayer plus checked Benjamin's books, lacquered his cross and ready by 10.00am to go to the leper hospital. We left late again, and Betty plus Rose went on the motorbikes and by the time the bikes came back for Benjamin and me, it was pouring with rain, so the neighbour who rents his 4-wheel drive took us there. It turned out that we are no longer allowed to prayer with the hospital lepers because some Americans did the wrong thing, and the new director is very pro Hindu.

Back home by 1.30pm for lunch of fish, rice, banana and chapattis. The builder for the new orphanage will come on Friday and Angie, our daughter, rang to borrow our car. After lunch we went on the computer to retype our email addresses on Word, Rose's "Fear of God" talk, the song Holy Night, copied all our photos onto Benjamin's computer and tried to copy his wedding DVD. We left at 6.30pm after some talk about the new orphanage with Benjamin and the builder. We arrived at the orphanage caretaker's mother's house for a prayer meeting where we sang Holy Night and I Stand in Awe. Rose spoke on the "Fear of God" then we had prayer ministry. After coffee and biscuits, we started back and stopped at a house where the family had lost their 51 year old

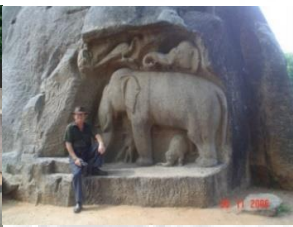


pastor to an accident 3 days prior. We prayed for them all plus separately for the mother and 5-month-old baby. We got back just after 9.00pm and Rose had a word about the caretaker who always had time off due to sickness which she gave to Benjamin for his discernment. We were in bed by 9.45pm.

Arose at 7.30am for showers, coffee, clothes washing, prayer and sharing from Rose about a dream, we left at 9.30am walking part of the way then we got a rickshaw to Chengalpattu. From there we then wait for the bus to Mamallapuram. So, we got shoes for Betty, and I purchased some camera film, mozzie cream and coffee. The bus left at 10.30am and we got to our destination about an hour later. The 3 of us plus Sunya Raj walked around the temples and monoliths for quite some time plus the lighthouse.



Rose.



Myself.



Betty.



More carvings, all by hand.

While we were there, Betty bought some necklaces, and we purchased some stone crosses for gifts. We got some great photos and went to lunch at the Village Inn restaurant where Rose had egg omelette and chips at 80 rupees; Betty had king prawns fried with chips at 300 rupees; Sunya Raj had rice and fish curry at 75 rupees; and I had small fried prawns, salad, chips and cheese bread at 80 rupees. Coffee followed plus dessert of chocolate pancake for Rose and banana pancake for Betty plus copious quantities of chilled bottled water. There were heaps of western people around. Following lunch we got a packed bus, people hanging out the doors, back to Chengalpattu then an auto back to the house by 5.00pm. We changed then Rose ironed while I did this diary, it is now 6.00pm. Benjamin spoke to us about some concerns he is having with Arul and his comments and demands so we simply said we will talk further on the 5<sup>th</sup>, planning day, and speak to Arul next week. Then we had a prayer meeting here with the family and orphanage children, they sang, danced, we sang and danced then I spoke on Matthew 6: 25 – 34, “Do Not Worry for Your Needs” followed by thanksgiving and a closing prayer by Rose. A card trick, some personal prayer and a light meal with coffee, it is now 9.10pm and we are in bed.

It is Friday the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, and we are up at 7.30am and showered straight away, lots of coffee and prayer. Ready to leave by 8.30am for the Aids Hospital as it is International Aids Day. We left by 4-wheel drive and went to the Aids Hospital past Tambaram where we met the chief surgeon and head sister. Then prayed for all the children and gave them biscuits. Their average life span is 10 to 15 years, and they are all on heavy treatment, plus there are 400 there in total and an unthinkable and unpredictable amount in villages in the area who don't even know that they have Aids or can't get to medical facilities. After that we went to a Scripture Union Christian Retreat Centre near Mamallapuram, on the beach, to see if it is suitable for January 2008 for our Indian Pastor's Conference and it was perfect. We can have 5 double rooms each with bathrooms and a five-bedroom dorm for the unaccompanied Indian Pastors plus meeting room and a function hall for a cultural social function and all fully provided with meals etc. During our drive to the coast, we saw more of the after effects of the Tsunami then we left for the Hindu Barrister's house, who asked Benjamin if we could come for a meal, prayer and a short sharing. We had chapatti, egg, carrot, cucumber, chicken, bread, butter, jam, fruit juice and tomato just to mention a few with mountains



of rice. Then an English song, a prayer and my testimony, he asked for our business card, and we had photos from his and our camera of himself, his mother-in-law, wife and the 3 of us. Then back in the 4-wheel drive to the driver/owner's house for prayer and blessings for himself, his wife plus their girl and boy. Back to the house which is across the road to be welcomed by Jayaseelan and Jackulyn, Benjamin's sisters, who was so overjoyed to see us. I spoke to Jayaseelan while Rose answered Jackulyn's questions about Mamre.

We were woken at 7.20am with coffee by Jackulyn, then showers, prayer and more coffee. Rose has been preparing for her women's talk this morning, they leave at 10.00am. We walked to the orphanage and the children danced, Betty danced, Jackulyn danced and even I did briefly. But by 11.30am there was still no woman's meeting but eventually it was about to start, and the men left, I went on Benjamin's bike to get 25,000 rupees out; 10,000 for Betty to give to Benjamin on behalf of Mamre. Got back at 2.00pm and the woman's meeting was a great success according to testimonies, except Betty kept butting in, there were around 20 women. The girls had eaten so Benjamin and I had lunch there followed by the pen pal programme, handing out addresses and photos. Also, we had prayed for around 6 or 7 families in neighbouring houses just prior to that. Afterwards there were fireworks for us, and the children and we are back to the house by 5.30pm. At 6.00pm I had to leave with Benjamin to copy a DVD and put money in MasterCard, but ICICI couldn't do it, they said only UTI bank at Tambaram could do it. Back to the house then a prayer meeting next door, with songs and I spoke on the "Beatitudes" plus Rose closed in prayer followed by lots of personal prayer ministry. Back to the house and more prayer ministry for Jayaseelan, Mummy and Patti plus Benjamin was offered the land next door so he could expand the complex. He is getting a new twin tub washing machine for the orphanage from our Mamre funds. We have been asked by the lady next door if we will do a Christmas Programme at the high school on Wednesday before we leave for Padappai.

The next morning, we talk about whether to go to the high school on Wednesday, but we all agree that the answer is no and mainly because it is 4 ½ hours travel time, each way. The washing machine will be purchased today, and we showed Rose the land next door. Then showers, more coffee and much fuss over sari dressing and preparing us all for church and the Sabbath. We will leave at 10.00am and we have time to spare, and we all believe we should buy the land and building next door so the orphanage can be expanded. In all our finery we left for the Mamre church of India in Katankulathur in Maria Malia Nagar and after praise and worship both Betty then Rose gave testimonies after which I spoke on "Faith". We prayed with the family next door then moved onto another village where we had lunch and prayer. Then we prayed in about 5 houses in another place followed by a mini prayer meeting at the last house and prayer in a cottage church as well. It was a long day with truckloads of ministry and love thrown in. When we got back at 6.00pm I prayed for the father, we prayed and spoke with Jayaseelan (she leaves at 5.00am) and spoke to Benjamin about the building estimate (11 lakh) as opposed to buying the land and house (2.5 lakh) next door, no contest. Benjamin's mother has gone to be with her sister in hospital whom I prayed with last night. Both her kidneys have failed so without a kidney transplant or constant support from a kidney dialysis machine, she will die within a few days.

It is Monday the 4<sup>th</sup> of December; Rose showed the women how to use the new washing machine and then we had prayer time. Arul Kumah rang to come over because he wanted more money for expenses, but we said he could not come because we will be in Chennai today. Our concern over our support of Arul's ministry is in question because every time we have previously asked him to show us the financial records, he has claimed that the books were with his accountant. So, I alone will leave early on Wednesday morning with Benjamin by car to go to Padappai for a showdown

meeting with Arul. If the meeting goes well and Arul produces the books, the car will come back to collect Rose and Betty. If all is not well, I will return to Benjamin's house for further ministry with him. We are praying about getting the land next door with a personal loan ourselves and paying for it with our tithe. In the night I was reminded of Chapter 15 and 18 of Genesis and of Abraham's willingness to step out in enough faith to sacrifice his son, Isaac for the Lord. Betty dedicated the washing machine and Benjamin thanked Betty for the 10,000 rupees. We had lunch of biryani rice and chicken 65 plus poppadums, Betty had soup, and we also rang Wendy for prayer as well. Just after 2.00pm we left for Chengalpattu by bike then Benjamin, Rose and I caught a bus to Tambaram and changed buses for Chennai. In Chennai after 4.00pm we met the film director and after fruit juice we went to their studio and met the camera man. After more drinks I put on a tie and vest, and they fitted me with a lapel mike. I spoke for about 10 or 12 minutes about Jeevan Trust, Mamre International Aid and the orphanage, plus why Rose and I with Mamre do what we do for oppressed children in Christ's name. I was very nervous the whole time and I was confident that it was not so good, but the director said they always must do multiple takes with most people but mine was achieved by one take, thanks to Rose and Benjamin's prayers and the Holy Spirit. The producer now wants me to do 8 to 10 sermons in a rented church over a whole day of about 15 minutes each, translated by Benjamin to broadcast on TV over a period, one per week. It will be organised for next week and they will give us some warning. Then a rickshaw to the bus stand and back to Chengalpattu followed by bike rides home. Jackulyn is proclaiming a healing of her throat after we had prayed for her earlier in the day. We all went to the hospital to pray for Benjamin's aunty once more.

Tuesday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December I finally realised why we are here as I was wondering why in all this time here, we have only heard of 3 healings despite God's previous unequalled anointing in the north, but I believe we are here for the future of the entire Mamre International Aid Incorporated. But that future can only happen as we walk with God, not before Him or after Him, and that when an obvious opportunity comes, we should take it, because God may close that door and we lose the blessing, are we game to step out of our boat. Betty has left for the bazaar with Benjamin's mother and Jackulyn while Rose and I left by bike for the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church Restaurant for our meeting with Benjamin and Jaya over lunch. I rang Max and he and Lorraine said cut Arul off and buy the land and house next door. The planning meeting went well with heaps of input from both sides. We asked how their family survived and apparently their father works 2 to 3 days per week, while the mother makes and sells things, while Jackulyn gets 4,500 rupees per month for teaching and tuition. Our money pays the orphanage staff, and we were given full account records, visions and proposals plus child backgrounds and much more to take home. After lunch we went back home to continue the meeting in the office. I rang Michael and he said if Arul cannot follow leadership, he cannot continue under Mamre but feared us taking a loan for the land and house, but added it was hard without more facts. Rose spent time going over the books and accounts of Karunai Jeevan under Mamre International Aid Inc. and spent some time doing an excel spread sheet plus some photos for future name tags for Mamre India pastors and office bearers. Then another miracle Benjamin was standing out the front when the village president happened to drive by, and he stopped. He agreed to see us at a house he was handling a dispute at. We must add that one, he is hardly ever here as he is away on government business and two, he rarely agrees to impromptu appointments. So, we dashed around there, and he said we can have till the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, and he will not allow the seller to put up the price, plus a little of the profits will go into a welfare fund, another miracle. Plus, he was a very powerful government man and a Hindu, yet he wanted our prayer and blessing. After tea we took photos and moved on to Benjamin's auntie's sick bed in a nearby house to pray for her, I had prayed for her in hospital 2 days ago as both her kidneys are failing, she is on dialysis and an IV drip. She said she felt a little better after my prayer so asked us

all to pray for her. Back to the house after yet more coffee and biscuits and bed. Benjamin still wants to dance because of the news; it is 10.20pm and Lord help me tomorrow.

I was woken at 6.00am on Wednesday the 6<sup>th</sup> by my Mum calling from Australia and she couldn't understand why I was husky; I was just sleepy. Then the alarm went off at 7.00am followed by coffee at 7.30am. I then backed up all the pictures for the TV crew people plus all Benjamin's documents and our Chengalpattu trip plus all the Island photos from our camera. Then a shower and ready for the dedication of the orphanage foundation stone by 10.00am while Rose is working on the computer. We had a wonderful dedication for the foundation plaque of the orphanage with Rose, Betty and my names on it with the students and staff present. There was prayers, praise, songs and flower petal throwing plus the unveiling itself. The plaque will go on the new building, and we feel greatly honoured. I was prayed over and left with Benjamin and George, the driver, for Padappai with a heavy heart.



On the way I got Ezekiel 2: 6 – 7 ***And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you, and you sit on scorpions. Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. 7 And you shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear, for they are a rebellious house.***

After a quick hello between Arul, Sajini and Benjamin, Benjamin left me alone with Arul. I challenged him about carrying out unapproved projects with Mamre funds as he has had three previous warnings. His refusal to show us the financial records that never existed and his talking to others about the money wasted on our airfares. Also, his asking for help through the back door by using our Australian friends and Mamre supporters to beg for more money. Also, his abuse of using the emails of people he did not previously know, through a group email he had received from Brian Millgate and his complaining of neglect by us. Finally, his comparing of what others get and his insistence on setting himself up as a leader of other pastors with Mamre resources plus his giving out materials and money to government schools. He had an excuse for everything, and I was forced to cut the ties after this meeting and a unanimous vote by the committee. He eventually admitted that he did not keep any records at all and so I gave him his birthday gift, Sherine's school bag, Sajini's calendar, Betty's cards plus his usual November/December sponsor money plus money for a Christmas lunch for the congregation. Twice I had to leave the room and cried most of the way home when I fell into Rose's arms with a broken heart. Everybody including Betty was praying and it is the hardest thing I have had to do in a very long time, and of course everybody was upset. After a lunch of omelette, we three went with Jackulyn to the bazaar and got pens, shampoo, chocolate while Betty got sandals, liquid soap, mozzie cream etc. but I could not get Airtel recharged anywhere so Benjamin is ringing a friend in Mumbai to help. Also, I drew out 45,000 rupees to give Betty all her money and get rid of it. Betty gave Benjamin 3,200 rupees for the orphan's food this month and we got receipts plus coffee of course; it is now 10.25pm.

God bless Arul, Sajini, Sherine and all our dear friends in Venpakkam village, I hurt some dear people today, but I had to show firmness with compassion, the price of leadership is my broken heart and theirs. God forgive me!



We went to the hospital where Benjamin's aunty is due to receive her last session of kidney dialysis before they send her home to her village. This means that she will die within a few days because she could not afford to pay for any more dialysis, nor could she afford the massive cost of a kidney transplant. She had been rushed to hospital after both of her kidneys had failed to function correctly and when your kidneys fail you only have two options to avoid death. That was to have kidney dialysis regularly or have a kidney transplant operation. But sadly, she was very poor and from a small village, so she could only afford a five day stay in hospital. We had visited her each day for the last five days to pray for her, and this was going to be the last time we could pray. By the time we arrived at the hospital to pray for her for the last time, the hospital was in a state of excitement. It seemed that when they did her final blood tests, they were confused by the results that were before them. So, after the doctors did some more tests, they discovered that her kidneys had fully rejuvenated back to full health. So, the doctors were saying that there must be a scientific reason for this miracle but we all insisted that it was a miracle of God's. What a mighty God we serve!



Woken at 7.30am with coffee and we had a shower before the queues for showers started. Rose and the ladies were washing in the new machine, and we decided to buy an extension hose for the waste-water so it could be used to water the vegetable garden. I rang Arul to tell him we love him and hopefully he was encouraged plus urged him to submit a new proposal to the board of Mamre with a repentant attitude. We enjoyed our morning praise, worship and prayer and were ready to go by 9.30am. Betty and I went by bike, waited at the bus stand for Rose, Benjamin and Caretaker, we all hopped on the bus for Pudupattinam where there is a nuclear power station and it is on the coast, affected by the Tsunami. We got a rickshaw to the social worker's house, a widow, who showed us most of the Tsunami relief work and suffering. We saw many half-built projects despite that it has now been 2 years since the tsunami, but we also saw some fully finished work by World Vision. We had a chance meeting with the district President who said he would donate 3 new houses for orphans, disabled and anybody else homeless or in need, surely another miracle. Why was he suddenly there at the exact moment we arrived and did God soften his heart? Apparently, he had been refusing to help despite the many requests that were submitted over the last two years. After we saw the ruins, temporary shacks and half-finished dwellings as well as the finished houses. We met up with a widow who offered us her rooftop for our second official Mamre Church free of charge, so all that is needed is a thatch roof. After prayer, thanksgiving and prayer ministry we got



back to the bus stand in time for the express bus to Chengalpattu, it took 1 ½ hours, then a rickshaw home for lunch / dinner. Rose did the accounts, and I updated the diary.



On Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> of December we are up at 7.30am packed for our 3-night trip tomorrow and after coffee I showered. Betty also wanted help with packing. We were ready for prayer and fasting at Mamre Church but that changed to the orphanage, the 3 of us did much praying but few others came and went and as far as we could see there was no fasting except for us. Benjamin was away on business. After 2 hours we made our way back, prayed at 2 houses on the way and had some lunch. We also had the privilege of praying for a Hindu man who decided he wanted to give his life to our Lord, what an honour. After we saw the miracle of one month's food and provision for the orphanage, supplied by Mamre, Rose and I left with Sunya Raj for Tambaram by bus, where we put Rubini's sponsor money in Arul's account. Then we bought a hose for the washing machine, a computer cover, blank CD's and a ceiling fan for their Christmas/parting gift on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Also, we purchased a cotton top for Betty, which she loved. By the time we got back at 8.30pm we had to hand out the monthly wages to the orphanage staff with photos and much pomp and ceremony plus of course prayers. Coffee came again and Benjamin was so grateful for Rose and my computer work from the night before which he only saw today. Jayaseelan arrived home for the weekend, and it is her birthday on Sunday. Also, in Tambaram we checked our email and sent birthday wishes plus one to the Mamre board. It is 11.15pm and we must be up at 6.00am.



The single storage orphanage. It is now two stories high.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> we were awake by 6.00am and quickly showered, after last minute packing and coffee we are ready by 7.00am. As usual Jaya, Benjamin's wife, was up first and showered ready to serve us all. We packed up the car, some bags on the roof, Rose in the back with her feet up, Betty, Benjamin and Jaya in the second seat while Sunya Raj, myself and George, the driver were in the front. Along the way south we stopped at Pastor Smiley's for coffee then moved on another hour when we stopped for lunch of rice, fish fry, crab and dhal at Sunya Raj's parent's house, his great grandfather is 110 years, and he knew Gandhi. We go back there tonight for a prayer meeting. Back in the car to the hotel Sri Ran Lodge in Jayankondam where we booked 2 rooms, one for Betty who complained about its low standard, and one for us. Betty's is 200 rupees per night because it has a western toilet while ours is 175, so I asked for a third room for Benjamin and Jaya. Sunya Raj, Caretaker and George will stay at Sunya Raj's family home. Before we left Sunya Raj's house I rang Sheela, Solomon and Ratna. Solomon says more miracles are still happening plus 50 new church

members from the Dalet village miracle and he sent us an email list of 17 healings while Ratna has secured the land for the orphanage against all odds and logic. He too is claiming a miracle because that is exactly what Rose and I prayed for when we were there, it seems the fruit, blessings and miracle tap just cannot be turned off, because God won't let it and He keeps going before us. We are supposed to leave at 5.00pm and have been resting in our room plus catching up the diaries, it is 4.20pm. At 5.30pm we had coffee and went back to Sunya Raj's house for a prayer meeting, mostly kids (teens). I spoke on the "Parable of the Seeds", and they loved it, plus we did action songs, "Lord's Army" plus "Right Leg in etc". Gave out cricket cards and biscuits, before prayer for Sunya Raj's family before leaving for the hotel. We found out Mass is at 7.00am so we will get up at 6.00am to leave by 6.45am by car with George. Another miracle happened when a local rich man gave us a building free of rent for an orphanage here, we will meet him tomorrow, the miracles keep coming. We visited the sight of a King's palace where there are underground tunnels many kilometres long and where they are rebuilding a Hindu temple.

Sunday the 10<sup>th</sup> of December I received the following:- *"There may be many times when I reveal nothing, command nothing, give no guidance, but your path is clear, and your task to grow daily more and more into the knowledge of Me. That this quiet time with Me will and has enabled you to do My will! I may ask you to sit silent before Me, and I may speak or not that you could write or not. Waiting with Me will bring you comfort, peace and strength. Only friends who understand and love each other can wait silent in each other's presence. And it may be that I shall prove our friendship by asking you to wait in silence while I rest with you, assured of your love and understanding. Therefore wait, love and surely you will hear My instructions only then."*

We were ready by 6.45am waiting for the car but by 7.00am not there so we got a rickshaw for the three of us to go to the Catholic Church for Mass. How good to receive communion and after Mass George, Sunya Raj and Caretaker were waiting outside with the car, so back to the hotel. Coffee, breakfast for the Indians plus Betty then another cup of coffee for us while I prepared sermons and wrote this diary. The 9.00am service is cancelled as it rained all night and the prayer house, half finished, is too wet, so we will only do the second service and it was a huge grass church filled with about 150 worshippers along with a great deal of praise and worship then testimonies of how a millionaire gave yet another building for a Karunai Jeevan/Mamre orphanage. The church congregation had been praying after 3 prophecies a few weeks ago that some overseas missionaries would visit them, so they had prayed since and we turned up. Even Benjamin did not know about us not going to Padappai that long ago in fact he only knew it was a possibility on Monday and it was not decided till Wednesday. So, this prophecy stated that great things would come from such a visit, this church has no connection Karunai Jeevan or Mamre but was a last-minute decision to go there. We did the "How much do You Love Me" skit and I spoke on "First Fruits/Tithing" followed by anointing with blessed oil and much prayer ministry. Rose has the chills back, so was taken to the hotel room while we all ate in the Pastor's house, it is 2.45pm. and I have a heavy heart, God why do you use us so much and I can't even help my Rose? Back to the hotel and Rose has vomited and has the runs, so it could be food poisoning. We pray for a quick recovery, and I gave her 2 anti-diarrhoea tables plus 2 pain tablets. I went out got water, soft drink, lollies, biscuits and Amoxil. It is 4.00pm, Rose is resting/sleeping? And we go out again at 5.00pm. Rose stayed to try to recover while Betty and I left for we were not sure what, anyway we blessed the land and it already had laid foundations for the new church building. This is next to the huge grass church we worshipped in today and we saw by the pillars that it will be twice the size of the grass church, the one which held 150 earlier today. I prayed and declared it to be holy ground and asked God to bring it to quick completion. Then it turned out that the millionaire who offered the building for a future orphanage, rent free, decided on an alternative proposal, he is offering a piece of land behind a storage warehouse free of charge to build an orphanage on plus the free use of a massive flat rooftop

to use for in the meantime. This unused warehouse could hold many hundreds of children if we could buy it. So now, Benjamin must decide whether to take the free land or the rent-free dwelling. We prayed over both locations, but it seems that God has literally opened His floodgates, the blessings just do not stop. Back to the hotel, Rose asked for an injection to help her sleep through the migraine, tummy pains, runs, vomiting and ankle pain, Lord help me to help her. Betty and I had an omelette and then it is off to bed but only when I was sure Rose was asleep.

By the early hours of the 11<sup>th</sup> of December, I decided to go for a walk in the quiet of the night, so I wrote a note for Rose in case she awoke and worried where I was, then I quietly left. As I walked the quiet streets praying for Rose, I only encountered an occasional person and saw those who were asleep on the streets by shops or doorways on the ground. I begged and I pleaded with God, saying to Him “You use us so often, we see so many miracles and healings, why not my Rose?” I walked and walked being careful to remember directions for getting back and prayed in tongues for a long time. Eventually I came to some bush land with a small hill and remembered how Jesus used to go into the hills at night alone to pray to the Father, so I went up the hill and sat. There was a little light from the moon, and I prayed then waited silently on the Lord. Suddenly He said, **“Do not worry, she carries her cross well and she is in My hands,”** so I scribbled notes from my pen on to my handkerchief.

I then asked, why do You not heal her so she can serve You even more? He said, **“I AM, and this is not your concern, My, reasons are not yet for you to know, I will not let her cross be larger than she can bear. Your wife is your balance-partner, you are as one, a team, she keeps you honourable and balanced for when you jump too quickly. Whoever is for you is your support and strength, but whoever is against you, those who do not believe I AM called you, cut those ties you have with them. Not all, only those who reject your calling! I have told you where to go, what to do and what your vision should be, and I promised to use you for My will. So only some of these things you have done, yet I still used you, so why do you hold back, half hearted, lazy and so I say get your house in order and you will see even greater things, do not fear the limits of My power, there are no limits. Then I will show you what comes next, I will give you greater anointing, I the great I AM see you both, leave your precious one for Me to hold and comfort. Can the current vision of your ministry be greater than My power, you have only seen the beginning of it. Follow the structure of the church of man so they will respond to your testimonies of Me, and this ministry will have churches of no religious denomination, only of My teachings, laws and statutes. You must lead them and do not neglect your wife, your partner in ministry. You need her as she needs your strength, prayer and encouragement. Teach her to be bolder and she can teach you humbleness. Become what you were called for from the beginning, a pastor of your ministry and make many more pastors in the same way.”**

After God had finished speaking, I remember thinking that I do not have enough room on my handkerchief to write it all down because I did not want to miss even one word. But then I realised that the words were engraved in my heart so surely, I will remember them, and I did.

By the time I found my way back to the hotel I was dirty and wet, it had started to drizzle with rain. I let myself in as quietly as possible and under torch light tried to write the main points down. I was so exhausted, and I felt like I had just run a marathon so I then went to bed and got about 3 or 4 hours of sleep. We woke just before 8.00am after a knock on our door, we were offered to cancel the rest of the programme to take Rose straight back to Chengalpattu, but she said no, definitely not, we must keep doing God’s ministry! So, we dressed in a hurry and the pastor of the huge grass

church came to pray for Rose, so everybody came in to pray over her. We settle the bill and go to pray over the land and foundations of the huge grass hut pastor's new church, and it will be very huge. We also met up with a millionaire a Mr A Gopalakrishnah who gave Karunai Jeevan/Mamre a free block of land for another orphanage, so we prayed over that complete with banner and photos. We then moved on to the pastor's house for prayer over the whole family, had coffee and received shawls and a gift of cashews. Following that we moved on to a sound engineer shop, miracle sound, where Mr R Pakkiyanathan has invented a new metal and supposedly impossible speaker system which he has patented. He has pledged some free use of sound systems for Karunai Jeevan/Mamre in our Indian ministry. We were taken upstairs to his house and given biscuits and coffee plus we prayed over the family. After that we went to the millionaire's house who gave us fruit juice and coffee. Plus, he and his wife garlanded us. This is the one and same guy who had previously offered a rent-free building or land behind a warehouse, which was in yesterday's diary notes, but God told him to change it to this much more expensive land in the township of Udayaplayam. After that we travelled to Sunya Raj's family house for a final blessing and prayer over the family and moved on, during most of this poor Rose stayed in the car. We travelled south and stopped for lunch after a couple of hours, then another stretch of our legs, do a toilet stop and eventually we arrived at the Hotel Sea Gate in Vailankanni, where I hired 4 rooms for us all so we would not be split up and so Benjamin, Jaya and the 3 boys, Sunya Raj, Caretaker and George would not have to sleep on a church floor, we would have willingly joined them but Betty would or could not, the rooms were only 450 rupees each and were very nice. In the evening Rose stayed in the room while we all went out for dinner and a look around, but I came back without dinner. I did not feel like eating and as I had only 3 hours sleep the night before decided to pray, rewrite some of God's instructions and get some sleep. The rest of them had fresh fish by the beach, the boys stayed up very-late watching TV and had thanked us so many times for the room while the couple did the same, they said it was like their first honeymoon, they haven't had one yet. As I write this it is 5.00pm on the next day, still catching up.

On Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> of December, Betty received a word for the group: –

*Matthew 25: 40 "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."*

She added that she felt that God was saying to us all: - *"They are the chosen ones."*

We were all packed and we were supposed to be in the foyer by 8.45am. We went to attend Mass, but I had to go to the toilet urgently then go back to the hotel to clean myself up, then I had to go again so by the time I found the others which were upstairs at the world-famous Basilica blessed by Pope John Paul II and massive, in fact it is a tourist attraction. Praise God Rose is a little better but now I have the runs plus we suspect that Jaya and Benjamin also have food poisoning. We saw the museum of the basilica and got a couple of items from the book shop, a cross from a stall and went to the beach. After we checked out of the hotel, we had a light lunch and visited Manoharan Arthur Prom Community Action for Rural Development who helped us get the hotel rooms. He teaches sewing and self-help adult groups plus runs a school, so we prayed there and moved on. Then we travelled to a Tsunami affected village and dedicated land for a community/welfare hall which was donated, we had coffee at Benjamin's mother's younger sister then went to a roof top grass church which was packed. I spoke on "Treasure in Heaven" followed by a carol from Betty, then Rose and I sang the Lord's army song. Then after the final prayer we gave out cricket cards to the kids and Christian bookmarks to the adults. Then the biscuits were handed out followed by much personal prayer ministry. We went back to mummy's sister's house for dinner and then went to the Hotel



French Residency at 300 rupees per night. There is now 2 partly built orphanages, one fully functional, 1 church, one more starting, land given or purchased for 2 more orphanages plus a community hall, wow, plus of course all the other miracles and healings.

From Rose for us all – Ecclesiasticus 3: 1 *There is a season for all things.*

On Wednesday the 13<sup>th</sup> of December we met in the foyer at 7.00am and for the first time everybody was ready on time. Car packed and we hit the road a while later stopped for coffee; Betty also had ice cream. Back on the road and we went to Tranquabar where a German Lutheran missionary landed in 1706 and it is now a famous church/seminary/school and much more, he is buried under the church. It is by the seaside and there were many signs of the Tsunami. We saw the many new fishing boats that were donated and the millions of wasted money spent on unfinished housing projects.



After that we drove for a couple of more hours stopped for coffee and ended up in Pondicherry which is French Territory, where we visited a park and had a one-hour boat ride across to an island and back, it was great, 360 rupees for 6 of us. Had to pay entry fee, boat fee and camera fee. We were also blessed to be able to pat an elephant while we were in Pondicherry.



We met a lady and man who are famous Indian film stars and their director and camera crew plus assistants, they were preparing to film a soapie on the island and got there just as we were leaving. From there we drove another hour and a half to Chaiyar at 4.00pm where we prayed with the pastor Mackash's family and were then fed huge prime pieces of chicken plus biryani plus chicken 65 with tomato sauce on hand. Now is a chance to rest before the prayer meeting here soon and it is now 5.00pm as I write this. Praise God we are all feeling somewhat better, and Jaya's mum is OK. We rested for a short time while Betty revved up all the kids, but it was not long before coffee came then we started the prayer meeting. Benjamin led worship then I gave a message on "The Prodigal Son and The Enormity of God's Love" and Rose shared on "Not expecting Rewards for their Attention and Quietness". The children got cricket cards and pencils, while the older kids and adults got book-marks and pens. There were biscuits for all and more coffee plus a carol from Betty and a final prayer from Rose. They all wanted prayers and my autograph. After praying for the family, we headed back to Chengalpattu about 8.30pm as promised, we were given coffee, unpacked the essentials, welcomed home by mummy, Jackulyn and Jayaseelan who took 2 days off to be here

when we got back and when we leave the day after tomorrow. Praise God another great miracle has happened, the sister-in-law of mummy who had kidney failure that we prayed with about 5 times in hospital has definitely been healed. The doctors only gave her 3 possibilities, dialysis for life, kidney transplant but thought death would be close at hand. But she has confounded the doctors who gave her a clean bill of health today and we received a phone call through Benjamin. Also, Jaya's mother had a healing over night after our prayers. I had to design a banner for an interview with Benjamin as a background to be shot by our digital camera in MPEG movie mode. I was up till 11.30pm on the computer and crashed into bed.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> we woke at around 7.45am and while Rose washed stacks of clothes in the new washing machine, I repacked for our departure tomorrow, we had to decide what to give away and we left a bag with a mozzie net, rope, 2 saris and drink heater plus Indian iron here for our next India trip, hopefully in January 2008. We had coffee then I had to go back on the computer to burn more photos from our camera from our ministry in the south and pen pals plus the banner images etc. They spent all day fussing around, coming and going to make these banners. Rose has been washing and ironing for hours and I got most of the software CD's done and the banner people could not do it due to power failure. We had lunch and prayer and finally we sat with Benjamin and Rani, caretaker, for counselling. After that we had a long talk with Benjamin on spiritual, marital, family, responsibility, in-laws, learning from his mother and father etc. The banners still could not go ahead so with Rose's discernment we cancelled them, he was going to pay for them, and Rose did a publisher banner, which turned out fine and only cost a few sheets of paper. In the meantime, Betty has gone to the orphanage to plan the pageant which is now for 7.00pm, originally 4.30pm, and the men are trying to fix the outdoor floodlight, with much fuss. I put the banner together and then there was great fuss over how to hang it, while in the meantime, mummy, Jayaseelan, Jaya, Rose and a couple of the boys are very late for the pageant, Benjamin said don't worry and they eventually went off in George's car, he also provided the chicken for the orphans in honour of his daughter's birthday and of course earlier in the day we had to be present in his house across the road for the little birthday girl's cake cutting. The fuss over the light and banner continued until I put my foot down and took over, within ½ hour the banner was up, and Benjamin had done his spiel in one take. Just as we were about to leave for the orphanage with Jayaseelan and Jackulyn's birthday cakes, their birthdays were only days ago, the car came back and Rose was in tears, the pageant was over when her and the others had arrived, Jackulyn and Betty just went ahead on time. Rose and some of the others were upset, not for themselves, but for the kids. So, I walked with Rose and when we came back, she put on her best face, and she explained what had happened because all the women were worried about her. So, then the whole pageant was repeated here at the house after birthday cake cutting by Jaya, Jayaseelan and Jackulyn with happy birthday songs and Yahweh bless you. Jaya got some birthday money to enable her and Benjamin to go home to Nagercoil for Christmas. The pageant was better than the original, so we were told, with much singing, dancing and a nativity play. The adults danced and sang as well. Rose and I both prayed, and Betty sang carols. It was suggested we all get up at 5.00am for prayer as the kids are sleeping here on the floor but we said they, and the rest of us will not get enough sleep, as it is already 11.15pm, so it was changed to 7.00am. It is now midnight.

Next day we are up for morning prayer with the family and orphans, there were many prayers for all plus children's songs, a short talk from James and Benediction. We finished before 8.30am and after biscuits for the children they went back to the orphanage for bathing, dressing and school. During the night when I got up for a wee, I stepped over all the little feet as they slept on the floor and stepped in a huge pool of wee. We showered, had coffee and we said goodbye and prayed for Jackulyn, she had to go to school, it was very hard to say goodbye, she is so sweet and our favourite.

We start family prayer and goodbyes plus gifts just after 10.00am. We had prayer and praise while most persons prayed for different aspects of God's miracles, blessing for Karunai Jeevan, Mamre International Aid Incorporated, personal blessings, towel blessings, servanthood, hospitality etc. Then we prayed over each family member, while poor Rose was running back and forth to the loo. Not one person did not cry, and parting was very difficult, we presented signed bookmarks, Benjamin's Aussie Hat (mine retired) and their new ceiling fan. We were given kisses, hugs and a signed picture of some of the assembled orphans, big size, signed by the kids themselves. George was ready with the car and Benjamin, Sunya Raj, Daddy, Cook, Betty plus Rose and I got in with our luggage for our trip to the Grand Manickam Hotel with more tears, hugs and farewells from the others. Tomorrow Jayaseelan is receiving her bachelor's degree and will go to Trichy with mummy. On the way I remembered Roses' discernment about the noise at the Grand Manickam, so we ended up a couple of hundred yards further down towards the airport and booked into the Hotel Blue Nile at 420 rupees per night – 2 nights for us and one night for Betty who flies out tomorrow night. We had coffee while Cook, George and daddy had breakfast all for 94 rupees then said our final farewells back at the hotel after Sunya Raj came back from Tambaram by bus, where we had dropped him off to do some accounting work for Kuranai Jeevan then after prayer they left. Unfortunately, Benjamin will have to come back tomorrow by bike as he forgot to give Betty back her CDs and DVDs he had been using to praise God with and she wants them before she leaves but at least we will see him one more time and he owes me two receipts as well. I gave him 500 rupees for copies of Tsunami pictures to be scanned onto CD plus a receipt for the 8,000 rupees land sales tax. We went to the restaurant downstairs, and it was great I had fish finger s and chips, Rose and Betty had tomato soup and chips while Betty also had prawn fried rice. We all had mineral water and some ice cream to finish up, 328 rupees/\$10. The rooms are fine, basic but TV, western too, soft bed and fans. After some sorting and unpacking the basics, I went out for a haircut which was hard because I was 9<sup>th</sup> in line, I bought some Christmas stars, CD covers and chocolate, back by 5.30pm and ordered coffee. It's nearly 7.00pm and we are watching TV, with chocolate and Lays crisps. After we finished watching a movie called Hot Stuff we tried to settle down for bed, I did my bible study while Rose read her novel, it is now 10.05pm and earlier we checked up that Betty was fine, I could not stay awake. Rang my daughter, Sharron, for her 11<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

On Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> of December we woke just after 7.00am and ordered coffee before bible study and showers plus watching BBC news to see what is happening in the world. 8.00am prayer in our room with Betty then we will put her luggage in our room, check her out and ourselves, we got an auto to Spencer Plaza, we help Betty buy a watch then agree to go our separate ways and meet at Thomas Cook. We purchased a new pouch, a bible bag, 2 shirts, a nightie and cover over, camera/phone straps, a VCD gift for Mark and ourselves, 2 baby sleeping mats, chips, deodorant, CD covers and more, but we saved a lot of money and could not buy all this in Australia as it would cost so much more. Betty got all her gifts and things on her shopping list and was very happy. After Spencer we went to Aarchai restaurant in Egmore for lunch, our old favourite, then to Egmore station, opposite, for a Reader's Digest novel for Rose and luggage belts, plus Betty got Strepsils. Back to the hotel for unpacking and a rest plus coffee. I helped Betty pack her extras in to her bag and got a call from reception to come for Betty's room. So, after coffee, packing etc. there was a great fuss about refunds and rebooking 205 for tonight. Then, after nearly 20 minutes, I purchased some water. After I came back Betty slept, Rose tried too, and I repacked my carry bag and bum bag plus all our purchases. At around 6.00pm Benjamin and Sunya Raj arrived, by bus, gave Betty her CD / DVDs and some more receipts for us. We prayed together and went down to the foyer to organise an auto rickshaw and say a last goodbye for now to Benjamin and Sunya Raj. At the airport we had to pay 60 rupees each to go in with Betty. Anyway, we got Betty in the front of the line-up for her flight and waited for the check in time. She went through and seemed fine so we left

after we could not see her again. A rickshaw back to the Blue Nile, he tried to rip us off, as usual, but we got back by 8.00pm. Benjamin rang to say best wishes and they are all praying and missing us. It is 9.30pm, Rose is asleep, praise God, and I will not be far behind her. Also, I rang my sister, Rose, for her 59<sup>th</sup> birthday.

We checked out on Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> of December and in an auto rickshaw by 5.30am and off to Chennai Central Station. Our train was on platform 7 and our first-class AC cabin is good, the porters who carried our bags were paid off and we have a quiet room with separate door, AC, wardrobe, sink and even a rubbish bin to ourselves. The train left at 7.10am and we prayed plus had coffee. We rang Craig, Michael, Angela, Steve, Mum and Dad, Patsy and Julie. Rose had tomato soup and we are ordering coffee; it is coming up to 11.30am. Had chicken biryani for lunch plus Rose had tomato soup and coffee, it's all part of the fare in first class. Rang Ratna, Esther, K.M. and said our farewells and said we would be in contact by email. I had a nap and Rose gave up trying to nap so she sat on the floor to give me more leg room, I did not know until I woke around 3.00pm or I would not have let her, after all there is an upper bed. Anyway, we got 2 more lots of coffee and finally got through to Benjamin who was on his way by bike with Jaya going for the first church service in our new Mamre church number 2. He had his service in church 1 this morning after I spoke to Benjamin, Jaya wanted to get on to say hello. We sent our love to all especially Jayaseelan for her degree presentation yesterday. It's about 4.30pm and we are just about halfway to Mumbai. After more coffee and soup for Rose we made up the beds and Rose is trying to sleep, its 6.30pm. Sleep, woke, sleep, woke and it seemed to get colder and colder, checked the clock so many times.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> we are up before 4.30am, we cleaned up and packed up, had what little drink we have left and some Lays chips. We arrived on time at Mumbai Dadar Central at just about 6.00am and we found a taxi driver after shunning all the touts. Anyway, he ended up packing us into his taxi and agreeing to metered rates. We asked for a medium-priced hotel in the centre of Mumbai shopping district. He took us to one which was booked out and we ended up at the Asha Hotel on Grant Road, it's within walking distance to the beach. We checked in to the Asha Hotel in Central Mumbai and unpacked and sorted, got some coffee. It took over 3 hours to cross the city to find the airtel address and almost as long to get back, but I pray that Rose has had some nice quiet time and rest. We put the 35 mm film in for development and after I got back, we ordered lunch in the room but after much trouble with the TV and general bad feelings about the area we decided to check out and move on, so while we went to pick up my pants, not taken down yet, and checked on our photos, we only had half an hour to wait. So, while I started checking out other hotels by phone, Rose picked up the photos. So many were booked out and we ended up agreeing on the Hotel Sahar Garden closer to the airport. While we were checking on the pants and photos, we saw hookers and their pimps, which confirmed our decision to move on. We checked out and got a taxi to our new hotel, he had huge problems finding it, but eventually we arrived at around 9.00pm and it is posh, TV, fridge, all the mod cons and the coffee is great.

Had a good sleep and Rose said she had a good one too, praise God. Did not wake until Rose woke at 7.45am, checked the TV, got a paper plus coffee. After showers and a rest plus reading the newspaper, I went out got our shoes polished, for 15 rupees and found a tailor to take down my new pants. We thought it might be nice to go downstairs to the restaurant for lunch. Lunch was not what we expected of this class of hotel, most things we ordered were not even available including ice cream. For 100 Australian Dollars per night, you would expect much more. Beside all that we must thank God for this lovely room. All the major hotels were booked out and we suspect that this place is a bit of a try hard! The room is great, the room service is great, but everything else is



not so good, but praise and thank God we got this room at such short notice. Rose had a potato dish and I had lamb plus I had chips and Rose had tomato soup, no dessert. By 3.00pm we are back in our room and enjoying our rest time. I am still drunk with the Holy Spirit and trying to work through all that has happened in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The restaurant might be iffy, but the room is great and close to the airport. I picked up my rousers at about 5.00pm and Rose ordered coffee and that was nice to come back to, it is 5.40pm. We settle down flicked through some TV channels, watched Becker and Raymond etc but not much else on.

On Wednesday the 20<sup>th</sup> of December Rose had her shower and I ordered more coffee and mineral water plus caught up on this diary, it is 11.30am and I will have a shower because checkout time is 12 noon. I thank God for my Rose and God, you have taught me so much on this trip, we have seen so many more miraculous things than ever before on this trip, and you said, and God told me “Do not ask why”, so I will try not to, but I will never get used to it. I also asked God why Rose’s cross is so huge, and He instructed me about that too. Do you not suffer too, “yes”, God said, but I said, but I would rather carry both crosses, but God replied, “no you could not you only think you could!” “If you carried both crosses of trial, you would not be useful for My will.” We left the hotel around midday, checkout time, and got a taxi to the international airport, found a quiet padded seat and wasted time, some in prayer, not wasted, some in diary writing, some in reading, had 2 lots of coffee and lunch, cheese and tomato toasted for Rose and cheese pizza for me, I should have had the same as Rose. It is 6.25pm Indian time, 11.55pm Australian, and we are in the in-flight part of the airport, but we have seats which we can lie down on. I thank You God, for instructing me in the bush. We took off almost on time and our frequent flyer cards worked wonders when we were boarding, we have just past Bangalore to the left of us and it looks like we will all but fly over Madurai, our flight path seems as if we will cross the west coast of WA somewhere between Broome and Perth. It is 4.00am tomorrow already in Sydney time so and we are about to leave the east coast of India but only just above Chennai.

It is now Thursday the 21<sup>st</sup> of December and as we fly home in our aircraft, we are travelling at around 1,000 kilometres per hour at a height of 35,000 feet and the temperature outside the aircraft is around minus 42 degrees plus the distance travelled is around 10,252 kms Mumbai to Sydney. It is 4.00am Australian time and we are being served our dinner. We have just passed over Colombo according to the in-flight movie screen on flight path app view, there must be at least 30 movies to choose from plus multi sitcoms, soapies, comedies, children’s shows, video games, documentaries and much more. We are now over the Indian ocean, having left the Colombian coast at Galle, heading southeast. Anyway, it is 1.50pm and it looks like we are pretty much on time as we pass Wagga Wagga just to our right. Canberra will also pass on our right and it looks like we are heading straight towards Wollongong.

After we land there is no delay through customs or quarantine, but with us having been in a rural area in India, our shoes were checked for mud. The Ibis shuttle eventually arrived after an hour and we were the only passengers. I had to get some money from an ATM when we landed as well and I rang the Emu Caravan Park to say we will be a day late, no problem. God bless all we have done and forgive us for what we did not do, but it is the most anointed and as well as a teaching trip as we learned so much. It is midnight and I have given Rose an injection so she can sleep through her migraine, at her request. Oh Lord, what a disappointing way to end our miraculous trip.

## Chapter 16

### Home 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2006 to 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2007

It is so good to be home and by God's grace Rose woke up feeling so much better and after our morning tea and coffee we left the hotel to head for the railway station. We arrived at Emu Plains railway station and walked to the Emu Plains caravan park where our caravan was parked. Then we went on to celebrate Christmas with each branch of our family and it was so great to catch up with everybody.

After Christmas, we headed up to Singleton in New South Wales and parked our caravan at a caravan park there. While we were in Singleton, we would tackle a lot of paperwork that required our attention. Then after a couple of weeks we headed north once more to catch up with all our dear friends in Inverell, Mt Russell, Delungra and Warialda.

Whilst we were in Inverell the Inverell Times newspaper interviewed us and published an article about the success of our latest trip to India. Then we were interviewed on an Armidale live talk back radio, and we started to feel excited by all the publicity we were receiving. We hoped that the publicity might encourage others to help.

OUR WEB ADDRESS: [www.inverell.yourguide.com.au](http://www.inverell.yourguide.com.au) The Inverell Times, Friday, January 26, 2007 — 5

news

### Couple's Indian aid trip achieves great results



INVERELL'S Craig and Rose Walsh left India dancing after their organisation Mamre International Aid Inc achieved results beyond the couple's expectations on a recent visit. This was one of five trips the couple have made to India and during their three-month visit they started three new orphanages, which also double as schools. Although they lost one of the orphanages made on another trip because of mismanagement beyond their control, they were still left with five orphanages and schools, a refuge centre and two churches. Their organisation was also given three blocks of land from a government official. "We happened to be in the right place at the right time," Craig said. "We met a government official and

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explained to him what we were doing and he said he had a block of land we could have." Craig said this happened on two occasions and on another occasion a millionaire donated almost 1ha. "We were pretty gobsmacked, as you could imagine," he said. When the Walshs were in Chengalpattu in India's south-east, two kids came knocking on the door of one of the orphanages. The children were tsunami survivors who had lost their parents. Craig said the pair were welcomed into the orphanage and given a meal. He said it was amazing to see the children so happy and the smiles on their faces as they

tucked into their meals. "To be there and see them have their first protein-enriched meal in months was worth more than a million dollars," he said. The Mamre International Aid organisation also provided another group of people from the "Dalet" class a feast after the group had not eaten for about four days. It had been raining for about a week and Craig said many of the group slept in about two inches of water. While Craig and Rose were in India they, like those they helped, slept on the dirt floor in grass huts.

➤ Mamre would be happy to accept donations, goods and especially assistance with shipping goods to India. You can help Mamre International Aid Inc. by phoning Craig on 0428 284 568 or check out their website at [www.mamreinternational.org](http://www.mamreinternational.org)

ABOVE: Craig and Rose Walsh with Betty Graver from Queensland at the dedication of land and a building, previously rented, at Chengalpattu.

LEFT: A group dancing after a feast Mamre International Aid Inc had provided for the group.

We had to head back to Singleton for a few days then on February the 16<sup>th</sup> we had to head to the western Sydney suburbs as we were expecting two new granddaughters from two of our daughters. Ironically it is possible that they could be born on the same day, however, it did not happen that way.

#### SUMMARY OF INDIAN TRIP by Craig.

*As we reflect on our recent three-month trip to India, all we can say is we are indeed humbled before God! We thought we had seen it all before but just before we left, we once more questioned our calling until we received another confirmation. How many do we need?*

*We had decided, through discernment from our spiritual advisers and other sources, that we were doing what our Lord had asked of us, but we were unprepared for the magnitude of His blessings.*

*It was made obvious from the onset that, "the children were the answer to the future of our Indian ministry," so we were*

*looking at orphanages and schools for Mamre to invest our time, money and resources in.*

*After two days rest in Mumbai, we headed for Rajura, and low and behold they have a half-built orphanage and school but have no money to finish it. So that presented us with a new opportunity.*

*From the very beginning the miracles started to flow abundantly, we saw many healed and many miracles of God's provisions in the lives of those we cared for.*

*Then we moved to Bapatla, the miracles just kept flowing like a tap that never stops running. The pastor was asking a local landowner, who was, a very hard man to deal with, to sell him some land that the pastor had placed a deposit on for an orphanage. But because the pastor is a generous man, he had loaned the money he had borrowed for the land, to a family member who was in desperate need. This family member had promised to pay back the money by a certain date but had not been able to do so. This left the pastor with no money to complete the deal and the landowner was threatening to pull out of the agreement. We prayed over the land and said to the pastor "Expect a miracle!" A few weeks later we received a phone call to say he had received the money from his family member and the landowner had a "softening of the heart" and waited for him to buy the land, so all is now secure. By the time we left Bapatla, 10 days later, many had been healed of sickness and injury, some of which had been life threatening.*

*We then moved on to a pastor who we had only met once before, but he was insistent on at least a brief visit. At this point we must say that when planning a trip to India the invitations and requests are so many that it is very difficult to discern whom to include. But this young pastor was like a thorn in our side with his persistence and we decided to give him three days.*

*So with that in mind we headed to Chirala and the rain from a cyclone had already been falling in the area for three days. We could not even drive to our grass hut accommodation and the church, and the hut had already been without power for four days. Once again God had gone before us and we were shown the land and foundations for an orphanage but again, there is no money to complete it.*

*There is still no power and a special worship service at 8.00pm has been organised, so we have asked God independently and without each other knowing, "Please God, let the power come on by 8.00pm." We all started praising God about 7.30pm by candlelight and at exactly 8.00pm the power came on.*

*The visit to a Dalet village, Dalets are non-people and are lower than lepers in the eyes of many Hindus. These beautiful people are also gypsies, and their living conditions were very hard to take in. They had been camped next to a sewage canal, which was as wide as a small river, for the last two years and had allowed the pastor, our host, to have services there on Sundays. Their huts were made of just coconut branches leaning together and they had been sleeping in 2 inches of water since the cyclone started. They had no food and even if they had any they could not make a fire on which to cook it, so they had not eaten for four days.*

*I saw one desperate child pick up a rat's tail that was floating in the sewer and she ate it, how desperate can a human become? We asked the pastor to put on a feast in the large church for the next day for them all, and plans were put into operation by the pastor's family. All 50 members of the village were fed along with all the helpers and family as well and it cost a mere \$33 for everything. They feasted on chicken biryani with mountains of rice and vegetables, all curried of course. After some came back for two or three helpings, they all enjoyed a very sweet desert to finish it off.*

*Prior to the feast the rain had not ceased but we asked God for dry weather and within half an hour the sky turned blue, and the sun came out. Everyone ate till they were full, and it was one big party atmosphere. We were told afterwards that the village leader had said, "We only let the pastor have Sunday services in case there was something in it for us. But we all now truly believe in God because surely, He sent the Australians to rescue us when nobody else cared if we lived or died." By the time we left Chirala 17 miracles of healing were proclaimed, and we had only been there 3 days.*

*Next was Madurai where we independently sponsor a young girl of 20 who is now looking for employment and once again, we witnessed some miracles there as well.*

*At the "bottom of India" we visited our, thirteen-year-old, sponsored girl and it was great to see what a difference our monthly pledge makes to not only her life but that of her whole family. We sponsor this girl through Compassion Australia.*

*At Nagercoil in the State of Kerala, we were the guests for the wedding of Pastor Benjamin to his new wife, Jayasutha. We again saw God's hand move as we were involved in two days of ministry.*

*High up in the mountains of Kerala is a place called Wagamon where tea is grown in abundance, and here God's mighty hand moved to bring about yet more miracles.*

*A brief visit to the Missionary of Charity Sisters in Salem to catch up with our friends and then back to Chennai to pick up Betty Graver.*

*At Chengalpattu with pastor Benjamin and Jaya we saw the orphanage that is flourishing under God's hand and through the people who work with such dedication. Whilst in Chengalpattu and the surrounding district two blocks of land were donated, from Government officials and one from a millionaire, for future orphanages. Also, a widow gave a new church building, which makes the second Mamre church in this area.*

*A relative of Benjamin's, a woman whose kidney's had totally failed and was on dialysis treatment, was prayed over. She had been given little hope of recovery but a few days later she was sent home from hospital with a clean bill of health. God had healed her, and the doctors could not explain it.*

*On our return to Australia, we both suffered from food poisoning, the car broke down, a caravan window broke and we were under attack but when you consider all that God has done and that Satan doesn't like it, it is nothing and we are both fine now.*

*God spoke to us about many issues in India and He showed us that although we thought we had already seen it all, we have only just seen Him scratch the surface.*

*The testimonies are still coming in and for an ageing couple of missionaries, who felt their age on this trip, we also felt our youth in Christ.*

Another article that was posted in our newsletter.

### ***A DALET CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION IN INDIA***

*As stated in the "Feeding a Dalet Village" report. Most Indians do not celebrate Christmas because India is a Hindu country. However, in Christian church congregations, scattered throughout India, in our Mamre International Aid orphanages and a few other exceptions, they do celebrate Christmas.*

*One other new exception is the same Dalet village mentioned in "Feeding a Dalet Village", as they all embraced Christ and started coming to church because of the feast we had provided in the pictures from last November. They all felt that God had surely sent us to rescue them! As we have adopted that village, we left enough money with the local pastors to provide for a Christmas feast.*

*So, on Christmas Eve the whole village came to the church grounds around mid-morning. They all pitched in to help the Pastor's family, the men chopped wood and made fires while the women cleaned and prepared the food followed by the cooking itself. The children fetched and carried.*

*There is a real carnival atmosphere with much anticipation, joy and laughter. The main pot of rice on the biggest fire is about two feet wide and two feet high. Also on the six-course menu is curried chicken, curried vegetables with the hottest of peppers added, samba, dhal and of course dessert, of a type of semolina dish with heaps of sugar in it.*

*In the mid-afternoon they sat around in a huge circle and after the Pastor gave thanks by saying grace the meal is served on banana leaves that are what most village Indians use for plates, even in some restaurants. Of course, the leaves are washed first. Everybody, even ourselves when we are there, use the fingers of the right hand only to eat with. After many servings, some will come for more even up to five and six times, dessert is then served.*



*Then the clean-up starts, and the carnival atmosphere is still there, the women take all the many pots to the well and scour them with sand and wash them with the well water.*

*As the evening comes, paper decorations and lights are put up, once again everybody joins in. They then sit around a central fire and start singing Christmas Carols followed by a short sermon, then more Carols and at the end of the singing small cakes and other sweets are passed around. Also, some clothing was distributed as gifts, this causes even more joy and excitement as it is a very rare thing to receive such clothing as what they are wearing could only be described as rags.*

*As the evening closes the women collect the leftovers in the cloth of their tattered head scarves and the whole village walked the 3 kilometres to their huts. There will be a Christmas Day church liturgy in their village the next day.*

*The entire feast for up to 70 people has cost only the equivalent of \$30.00.*

*As you will see by the photos their huts are very basic and small. They are Dalets, the lowest class, non-people, even lower than lepers in their culture, yet many of them have leprosy as well and they are all shunned by society. To make matters even worse because they have no homes, they are gypsies as well.*

*They live beside a very large open sewage canal and catch 2-inch-long fish from the canal to survive, they even eat rat sometimes. Their only possessions are the rags on their bodies and an odd cooking pot. The children's only toys are baby rats, yes, believe it or not, plus sticks and rocks.*

*Most of the photos from November 2006 give a good pictorial overview of Christmas Eve celebration in our absence. These people who have nothing, never normally have fresh meat like chicken or fresh vegetables, so these special feasts are to them an extra special treat. But although they have nothing, they would give us their last possession thinking it a great honour to them. They are content and well adjusted, so we learn so much from them.*

Our daughter, Angela, gave birth to our 8<sup>th</sup> grandchild who was named Georgia and she was born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February.



While our daughter, Anne, gave birth to our 9<sup>th</sup> grandchild who was named Chloe and she was born on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March. They were born exactly two weeks apart.



After lots of time spent with our beautiful new granddaughters, we head off once more for Toronto near Lake Macquarie. Steve Lucas from the Armidale recycled computers has already got 28 working computers to donate to our orphanages in India. After spending time in ministry to the local prayer groups we must head north to collect the donated computers. By the time we get

there the number of donated working computers has risen to 50, wow. We had to pay for a storage unit to store the 50 computers until we are able to send them to our orphanages.

Betty Graver has been a fundraising dynamo with all her church stalls and garage sales she has raised some large amounts of money. While back in Toronto we have been invited to set up a fundraising stall at the Heritage Afloat fete. The event had many different stalls which sold arts and crafts, food, toys and many other things.

While we stay in the Lake Macquarie area, we continue to provide ministry support to the Toronto prayer group and Morisset Parish.

The summary of our last India mission trip was posted in our newsletter, which was sent out to our members and supporters.

## Chapter 17

### India July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007, to 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2007

One of the hardest days of my life, because at around 2.50pm I drove Rose and I to Picton Station and most of the way, we just held hands in silence. The only exceptions were the occasional practical comments. At 3.44pm the train pulled in and after prayer and tears I boarded the train for Campbelltown, I held my tears until Rose could not see me. I connected to a train for the airport at Campbelltown and arrived to find Max already there. We booked into our flights and then we had McDonalds, then I rang Rose, then we went to the in-flight area. Got middle seats, had a sleepwalking episode and arrived in Bangkok at around 6.00am on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July.

I was now drinking very heavily because of the acute pain I was continually suffering from, and the doctors did not know what the cause was. The pain was all over my body and I started drinking in secret to help dull the pain. I was not aware of the fact that my secret drinking was, indeed, no secret at all, I was just kidding myself.

After our arrival in Bangkok, we took a cab to the hotel Synsiri Mansions as Max's friend was not at the airport. The cab fare was 250 Baht, just under \$10 and we got 2 rooms at 550 each with fans. There is a massive 7 storey shopping mall across the road and after Max showed me around, we went back to our rooms for a sleep. I couldn't sleep, so I went for a prayer walk and look around, plus got some video footage. In the shopping mall I found atomizers for Rose's perfume after all this time as we had been looking for them for ages. I had lunch at Pizza Hut with Max's friend, John, from the Coptic church. He is Egyptian and wants to do lay ministry as the Lord leads him. Max went for a haircut and head massage, I went for a prayer walk, then back to my room for sleep.

I was awake by 6.30am then got up washed, packed, had a prayer walk and was ready by 8.00am to check out and get a cab to the airport. Booked in OK and we had breakfast in-flight. Boarded at 10.45am and took off on time at 11.00am. Got lots of room, better for Max as he is a bigger man, so this time he does not need to cross his arms the whole way. Bangkok is three hours behind and India is 5 hours behind Sydney time. Rang my Rose until I ran out of credit, and we arrived on time and as usual we went straight through customs. Benjamin, Sunya Raj, Cook, Daniel and his wife were there; only Benjamin and Sunya Raj came with us in the taxi. Amma, Appa, Jackulyyn were all excited to see us and Jayaseelan arrived very late.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of July I was up by 6.00am, showered and had coffee. We will leave on Monday for the north. I gave Benjamin his video camera for his birthday and in the evening, we had birthday celebrations with much dancing, songs and cake.

Woke many times, up by 6.30am, showered and rang Rose and we were both close to tears. Found out Jaya, Benjamin's wife, hocked her wedding ring for the airport run so we will get the ring back out tomorrow. Max has collapsed with heat stroke, vomiting and the runs, he had the whole family washing him down, massaging him and by 10.30pm we took him to the hospital. He was put in a room and given a fluid drip and by 2.00am he was all chirpy while we were all dead on our feet. Anyway, back home and I tried to sleep by about 3.00am. Earlier in the day I bought a water cooler for him and later for the orphanage. On our way to town and Benjamin wanted me to pray with some of our orphanage children in hospital, but I ended up praying for whole ward full of kids. I have sent e-mails to Rose, and she has sent a couple to me.

On Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> I was up by 8.30am and washed out like everybody else. I asked Max to consider whether he wanted to go north or even if he wanted to go home? We then went to see a builder/Millionaire and Benjamin has been trying to get his help for 3 years, he gave us a \$40,000 piece of land in the local area. He told us the village president is a crook and he would have known we were not allowed to build a permanent orphanage in a residential area and likewise we cannot further develop the family property. He also offered to plan and build an orphanage and school on our new land for free as soon as we get more sponsor money to buy the materials at cost price from him. We have acquired 2 newborn babies in the orphanage, and we need to buy 2 cots. Benjamin decided to ask if we shouldn't make the pastors come to us, I agreed, so the meeting will be on Thursday at the Mamre Office.

We won't be leaving for the office and church dedication until 3.00pm and in the meantime, we had games and ministry with the children and rested. We did not leave till much later with George's 4-wheel drive full of Max, Appa, Benjamin, Jackulyn, Cook, me and 7 kids. We visited the office of Mamre and just as the service started in our new 3<sup>rd</sup> Mamre church of India it poured so we all went downstairs to the pastor's residence to continue and there was nearly 100 people. I inaugurated and blessed the Church, spoke about Mamre and what it means then Max spoke about conversion to Christianity. It took us over 2 hours to get in due to peak hour but much less to get back and we all had ice cream on the way home.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> we are up and showered and Max wants to go to Kerala, and it has something to do with some whacky Muslim escape plan of his. We can't talk him out of it, but he is paying for most of the trip plus Jaya will get to go home. I did however manage to talk him out of going to Bangalore, praise God. We are modifying the pump to be lower in the water, so they don't have to keep bucketing it out. After a trip to town for the Kerala train money and refreshments, back to the house to witness the re-starting of the well pump, praise God, with much celebrating and water splashing. Benjamin has gone to book the first-class tickets for Saturday. On Wednesday we will go to Chennai for 2 nights, the pastor's meeting will be Thursday and Max can shop at Spencer on Friday, then Saturday morning we have my interview CD launch. We then play some games with the kids before going to bed.

While I was still in bed when Benjamin woke Max about purchasing a jeep after I had told him to back off yesterday about the idea. I was so angry with Benjamin and Max was very hurt. Max and I are trying to cure a boy with the worst case of conjunctivitis I have seen in many years and teaching them to isolate him is very difficult. We had prayer time and play time with the children plus we prepared for tomorrow.

On Wednesday the 11<sup>th</sup> of July we are packing to leave at 10.30am for Chennai and by 2.00pm were in our rooms at the Hotel Maurya International. Also, we finally convinced Benjamin to go back and get Jaya as she is suffering badly, I had tried previously to get him to bring her. I must say I have suffered much more this summer, and it is nice to be in air conditioning. I rested in my room while the rest went for lunch, did not feel like company, I miss my Rose while Benjamin will go to get Jaya. Esther arrived just after Benjamin and Jaya at 8.00pm and we had dinner, I had lamb and prawns. We had a nice time and Esther misses Rose, not as much as I do! A quick trip to pay for the official opening of the Mamre office by Esther and me, Max went to bed. Then it was home to the hotel for bed for me too by 11.00pm.

Down to breakfast by 8.30am and we left on time at 10.00am for the office. Benjamin, Solomon, Rakesh, Daniel, Joshua and Ratna were there, and we were hoping for KM Paul as well to attend.



The meeting was held to establish who was totally committed to Mamre International Aid. Max was a good help this time and we asked each one what are their goals and visions and what do they want from Mamre. We also asked each one whether they were prepared to get rid of all other allegiances. Solomon was good enough to impress Max and the final part of the meeting went well. I will ring KM to seal everything, but they were all saying the right things but not much else, probably what we wanted to hear. Gave them shirts, clothes for Solomon's Dalets and paid their costs. Back to the hotel by 5.30pm.

It was a quiet morning, and we are ready to go by 10.30am to Spencer plaza so that Max can purchase gifts. Got there by 11.30am, shopped then until 1.00pm and Benjamin left for the recording studio while we went to Pizza Hut. Got back by 3.00pm and had a rest in our rooms and Benjamin got back at around 6.00pm and we had a summary of yesterday by 7.30pm. By the time we prayed and then rehashed everything it was 8.00pm while Benjamin took Jaya to dinner alone at our suggestion.

The morning was taken up with going to the recording studio to view the Mamre promotional video that Benjamin had organised. We were back by about 3.00pm at the house and were repacking for our trip to Kerala. Rang my Rose then checked the e-mail. I don't know which is harder, talking to her or not talking to her, but talking and hearing her voice is best but after I hang-up, I feel worse. We will leave by car for Chengalpattu station at 5.45pm, the train leaves at 6.20pm. the train pulled out at 6.40pm and we have a 4-sleeper berth next to the Home Minister of Tamil Nadu, nobody else on the 1<sup>st</sup> AC carriage except a lot of police at both ends. It is 8.30pm and we are about to have dinner, for me biryani (chicken) and chapatti, Max trusted me and had the same. I passed on to the home minister both our cards, a short note of request for an appointment and a copy of the new DVD. Let's now see what this divine appointment brings about, to bed on the train by 10.00pm, I miss my Rose?

It is Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup> of July at around 4.45am the home minister got off at Tirunetleveli to a mountain of cameras, press, police and army men. By around 6.30am and after coffee we pulled into Nagercoil Junction and were met by Jaya's brother in a small van and took us to Udupi International Hotel in Nagercoil. We have 2 single beds in an airconditioned room for 800 rupees and were picked up at 8.30am to go to Jaya's family's Church. I had to preach at the service and Max shared briefly but it was a big church though! After the service Max went back to Jaya's house and left me with Sunday school, followed by advice to the church elders and the church building committee. The new church, walls only, could easily be big enough for a cathedral. Then we had lunch at Jaya's and back to the hotel by 12 noon, we have nothing else today. Max snored, non-stop, from 6.30pm until midnight, while I tried to read, then watch TV with the sound way down. At around 8.30pm I tried to sleep, but I could not and by 12.30am Max woke up and said "Gee, I feel good, what a great sleep!" It was around that time that I was almost just dropping off, but Max got up and switched things on and off, went out and back in, numerous times.

We were up by 6.40am and showered then went down to the restaurant for coffee. We left here by a van driven by Jaya's uncle for Kannyakumari, which is at the very bottom tip of India. Went to a beach, looked at the sights and all this after we visited a castle of a king nearby that was three hundred years old. Purchased a gift for Laura, then lunch at a nice restaurant. Then we visited some Tsunami areas and other beaches before returning to our hotel in Nagercoil and ringing my Rose, I so long to be with her!!!! Back by 4.30pm after praying for one of Jaya's relatives, Max just wanted to speed it up and go, he was not into it at all. Then Jaya's family wanted us to call in on the way and Max flatly refused? Had showers and relaxed for the evening, but one more night for me with Max in the room.

We were up by 6.50am because Benjamin called to say checkout is at 7.00am so we showered and leave by 7.30am, went to Uncle's house, the driver, to pray for his family. Then on to Jaya's house for coffee before the train. We gave the family some money, Jaya's brother and the uncle driver. After prayer for everybody and some time for goodbyes, especially Jaya, the 3 of us left for the station. The train pulled in at Nagercoil Junction at 10.50am and we are on our way Cochin. Already the chief ticket inspector has offered addresses and connections, including hotels, in Cochin as he lives there. We pulled into Ernackulam at about 6.20pm and after a short wait for the ticket collector headed to Cochin in a taxi. It is raining and has been for days, anyway we ended up in a tourist resort, a cross between a home stay and a hotel, but a fraction of the price. We have a large room with 3 singles, very clean, good bathroom and fan for 900 rupees all up. Went for dinner at a local restaurant and I had ginger fish with chips followed by group prayer we all went to bed.

It is the 18th and at 7.30am we are showered, we will go for coffee about 8.30am and Max bought some maps at a bookshop after we left our lodgings, then we walked along the waterfront. Got a rickshaw to Jew town where we looked around, visited the synagogue and bought a couple of things. Back to our room by 12 noon and everyone is resting. Why we are here I may never know, he has not tried to contact the Jews or the Coptic's, as he had planned, and we are just sightseeing. All that money for this whole trip could have gone to the kids. Anyway, we had lunch at just after 2.30pm and a German couple gave a donation of 1,000 rupees to the orphanage when we were at the restaurant. Back to the room by 4.00pm and writing up these notes. We watched a movie on Benjamin's laptop and crashed by 9.00pm. I could not sleep and was thinking of Rose so went for a walk to pray in tongues for her.

This morning Max has decided that we might fly back to Chennai, and he got his way so we had to leave by 9.00am to go via the travel agent, then to the station to get the money back, followed by the airport. Our flight was due to leave at 12.05pm and left at 12.15pm, we were on an ATR 72-500 Turbo Prop which seated just under 100 and we were at around 16,000 feet at 350 mph. It was a Jet airways flight, a spin-off of Indian Airways, but quite good. We landed at about 1.50pm and were out by 2.00pm. Sunya Raj was there with a taxi, and we headed for Chengalpattu, nice to be back. I rang my Rose and unpacked plus it is good to see the family, but I long to be with Rose. Had some fun with the kids when they were doing their homework. Started to feel woozy but I think it is lack of sleep, I can now see why sleep deprivation can be used as a torture as I have not slept for three nights and am a wreck.

I was awake at 7.00am and I feel much better, and I played with the kids before school, then had some coffee. Max arranged for a corrugated iron roof and uprights for the hostel flat roof so the kids can sleep upstairs. I ordered two cots and Max paid to have both sewers pumped out plus to put in a new septic tank here. He also arranged to lay a slab of concrete for the bikes, and he is very generous. So, we have certainly seen a lot of improvements here and the president has finally agreed to give back the money so I told Benjamin to put it through the account as Mamre money and start construction.

It is Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> and I drew up a list of all that has been achieved so far, as of today. Went for a haircut and walked around the bazaar, got a rickshaw back, Benjamin had dropped me off on his bike.

Sand for the yard (trailer Load)  
Chicken coop (in progress)  
Septic replaced (in progress)  
New upper floor at orphanage (in progress)

Cots x 2.  
Fans x 2.  
Empty 2 sewers.  
Air / water cooler.  
1 month's provisions.  
4,000 to Solomon.  
Hostel pumps are fixed.  
Well pipes are fixed.  
Orphanage wiring.  
Kitchen exhaust fans x 2.  
Power drill and bits.

I purchased some fresh mutton meat to fry up today and some Lays chips to go with it. We are now up to 71 in the orphanage including an abandoned young mother and her infant son. The fry up was really nice, and we had scalloped potatoes and mutton strips BBQ style. Max cooked and I butchered. To bed by 10.00pm and ready for another sleepless night, where's my Rose?

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> we left by 11.00am to travel south where the land is that the millionaire gave near Joshua's large grass church. We laid a stone and prayed over the land, and we will put up a small grass lean-to because in India you must be seen to occupy land to own it. Millionaire is finally giving us the title papers, but nothing happens fast here. Then we picked up Benjamin's mother to take her home with us, she is very weak. Stopped via Joshua's church, then the sound man who put on dinner, then via Sunya's parent's house. We left there by 9.00pm and got home at 2.00am Monday but we cannot take these long trips these days.

Up at 8.45am to coffee and while we were away Max said the new septic was put in and plumbed. The tree loppers came to fell the one coconut tree and the other tree to clear the way for the laying of the concrete slab. I saw for the first time, millionaire's cabbage, it comes from the heart of the top of a coconut tree. The only way you can enjoy it is to fell/kill a coconut tree, hence the term. I had heard of it but never seen it or tasted it before. Went to Sophia's house, who is Benjamin's aunty who had kidney failure last year and she is great now, but only by the grace of God, and we all prayed for the whole family. The exhaust fan is being put in the kitchen and at the orphanage, as well as the ceiling fans. I went to town this morning and bought some fresh goat meat, we had it BBQ style, I butchered it and Max cooked. I rang my Rose, and she has a sore throat, please Lord, heal her. After we prayed for Benjamin's mother and she has decided not to go to the hospital in Chengalpattu, because she says she is much better now, hallelujah.

On Tuesday the 24<sup>th</sup> of July we did some washing and left at 10.30am to see the other new land that was donated, to arrange a stone laying and secure the land title papers. On the way dropped Amma at hospital for a check-up and we picked her up on the way back, doctor says she is good. I went for a bike ride just to be alone for a while, prayed for my Rose and talked to God. I rang Sharron, my daughter, to check on her and she told me the disgraceful tale of the sorry situation in our biggest hospital at home. Rang my Rose and construction begins on the second level of the orphanage.

After morning prayer, we went to town to buy some more sports equipment for the kids, a cricket set, a badminton set, a soccer ball and a few extras. Also, I had some time alone to talk to God and think and pray about my lost half, my Rose. Max has gone to get more money for the second storey of the orphanage construction. I met today Bhavani a 23-year-old divorced and discarded young

lady with a 5-year-old son seeking shelter. We took her in on the understanding that she does some voluntary work in the orphanage to help out in exchange for room and board.

On the 26<sup>th</sup>, I did some computer work, recording music onto Max's I pod plus printing out our documents for the solicitor here and the ministry partnership agreement. Max decided to go to Chirala tomorrow by plane but when it turned out to be over 26,000 rupees so he decided against it after all. I bought some more sports gear for the kids and went for another bike ride.

I will earth all the pumps today as they give off shocks and Max has taken Appa and Benjamin to the tool shop. He bought a drill, power saw, angle grinder, shovels, a wheelbarrow and other assorted hardware. Of course, all this time most of my days have been spent in wiring up the entire two stories of the orphanage. I spoke to my Rose plus rang Jessica, our granddaughter, for her birthday.

The next day, we took all the kids to an open field and played cricket, badminton, quoits, and soccer, they had a great time. Had a nap after lunch tried to ring Patsy, my sister, but she was not home. In the evening we all watched the movie called Prince of Egypt with the kids.

On Sunday the 29<sup>th</sup> of July it poured all night long and my roof leaked a little, did not say so though. We went to church then we laid the stone and dedicated the new land and picked up the rest of Max's hardware as well. Rested for most of the rest of the day and since Amma came home I have had to give her injections at 7.30am and 7.30pm each day. It is very brave of her as it must be given in the bottom as it is as thick as Rose's medicine but nobody else will do it despite my training. Anyway, it is good to be of help.

On the 30<sup>th</sup>, Benjamin's father is changing tiles on the roof as the rain came in again last night on Max and I finally admitted that my room leaks too. As usual most of my day was spent in finally finishing the wiring and fitting the electric devices to the orphanage. We had fried beef for dinner and played with the kids before bed.

After morning prayer, I had some toast and then helped Max to train Benjamin's father in how to use all the power tools. Went to town to replace a rotten cricket stump and just walk around to be alone with God and my Rose. In the evening there was a special feast of chicken biryani and a celebration. We were presented with gifts including one for Rose and we gave out chocolates plus cake and other goodies. There was much dancing, and everybody had a good time.

On Wednesday the 1<sup>st</sup> of August it had rained all night and this time my feet were flooded. After morning prayer, we started to pack, and we met up with Esther at her orphanage and we gave her some gifts. Had a family meeting and finished packing. On the car ride the wiper blades kept falling off and the window tinting peeled away. We are in the in-flight area by 11.30pm after saying goodbye to Benjamin and we are due to leave now at 1.00am on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, but we left at 1.20am.

On Thursday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August, the flight was uneventful, and we landed around 6.20am. Found some very comfy padded seats so we could lie down fully and get some sleep. Also walked around the Bangkok airport and it is so massive. It was so good to arrive home in Sydney later that day and to be back with my beautiful Rose.



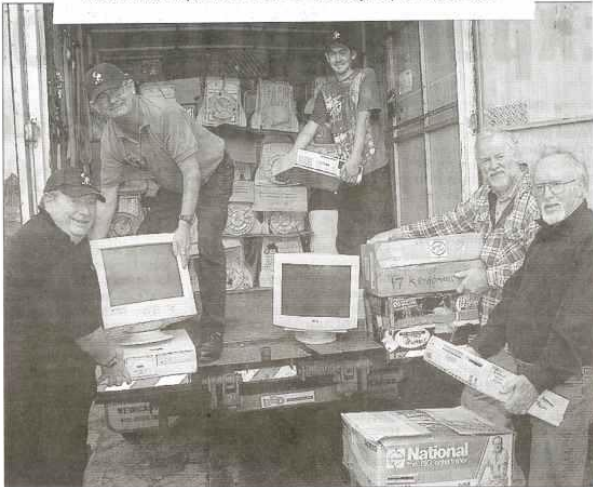
## Chapter 18

### Home to My Beautiful Rose 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2007 to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2007

The first few days after my return home was spent with simply catching up and enjoying having been reunited, in other words, just enjoying being back together.

We soon had to pack up and head north once more to meet up with Steve Lucas from the Armidale computer library. Steve has informed us that he has some more computers that had been recycled for our orphans in India. We picked up the 28 computers from the storage unit and cancelled the need to pay for storage anymore. When we arrived in Armidale with a truck that was very kindly offered to us by the local Retravision retail store, we were informed that we would now have possession of 150 working computers. So, Steve and his team had prepared another 122 recycled computers for our orphans to use and with the 28 that we already had, the total was now, 150. When we picked them up a newspaper journalist from the Armidale Express was there to cover the event. A very dear friend of ours was prepared to store the computers for us free of any charge. He made room for them in one of his barns on his property until we were ready to ship them overseas.

The Armidale Express - PAGE 4 - Monday, September 3, 2007



ON THEIR WAY: Brian Millgate, Craig Walsh, Cameron Cordner, Steve Lucas and Colin Wood load some of the 150 computers which the Armidale Computer Library has sent to orphanages in India and Sri Lanka

## 150 computers bound for five orphanages in Asia

LESS fortunate children on the other side of the world are set to benefit from a shipment of computers from the Armidale Computer Library.

The library, in conjunction with Mamre International Aid Organisation, (MIAO), is sending a shipment of 150 computers to five orphanages in India and Sri Lanka, set up by the aid organisation.

Steve Lucas, from the Armidale Computer Library, said MIAO first contacted the library earlier this year.

"They read an article on us in the newspaper about six or eight months ago and they contacted us," Mr Lucas said.

The computers went into storage before being trucked to Brisbane to be shipped to India.

"They had them in storage in Sydney, but they had to pay so much a week to store the few that they had, so they brought the few up here, added the rest and took them to free storage in Inverell," Mr Lucas said.

He said the computers come from various sections of the Armidale community, and members of the library modify them in preparation for the trip overseas.

"We have a deposit area at the Armidale Recycling Centre that the council has set up, and the general public drop them off there," he said.

### ... and a box of books

COMPUTERS are not the only items being sent to India to benefit the needy.

The Armidale community has also donated a number of books to be sent to the orphanages in India and Sri Lanka.

Steve Lucas, from the Armidale Computer Library, said the books came from all over Armidale and beyond.

"I faxed all the schools in the local area, and Uralla and Guyra," Mr Lucas said.

"They rang me back when they had a box of books, I went and got them and stored them.

"They also came from the Armidale Dumaresq Library

and other community groups."

Other groups in the community have initiated alternate methods of raising funds.

Auswest, formerly Purkiss Seeds, have donated more than 450 packets of out of date vegetable seeds, which will be used in India to feed thousands of starving people.

Mamre International member Brian Millgate said the seeds are already on their way to India, where they will help to feed thousands of starving and marginalised people.

"For the ones that go overseas we generally put two hard drives in them and bump the RAM right up in them.

"We usually put in another fan as well, because they're usually the things that most of the old computers need."

Mamre International member Brian Millgate said the organisation is still looking for someone to provide a container in which to ship the computers.

"We haven't had anyone come forward to provide a con-

tainer to ship the computers and we are keen to find someone," Mr Millgate said.

In addition to the computers, Mr Millgate said a number of different activities are being pursued to raise funds for the organisation.

"We have one woman in Queensland who is baking lamingtons and selling them, to raise money," he said.

"She is raising something like \$1000 a month just from selling lamingtons."

After a few weeks, Rose and I, were interviewed on a local radio station about our missionary work and listeners were invited to telephone the station to ask us questions. We felt very humble because of the publicity that we were being exposed to because we did not need or want praise because that should go to God.

The following article was sent out in a newsletter.

## Sending Computers for Indian Orphans



### THE ORPHANS

Our first orphanage has 76 children and literally growing daily.

It came about because at a local Granite Mine, the alarm to warn people of the blasting about to take place, was not sounded and three hundred adults died, thus leaving orphans to be cared for.

The other orphans come from various tragic situations such as.

leprosy sufferers, aids victims, child abuse casualties, child slave-labour sufferers, Tsunami victims, sexual abuse casualties, the deformed or handicapped, abandoned baby girls (because they are girls) and simply other abandoned children.

### MAMRE INTERNATIONAL AID INCORPORATED

is a non-profit charitable organisation registered with the Department of Fair Trading, the Tax Office, has an Australian Business Number and has a Licence to Fundraise.

Our current membership is 64 people, and it was started in 1998 by a retired couple who saw a need among the "poorest of the poor" in India.

Since that initial vision the couple have travelled to India most years and stayed to help for up to three months at a time.

The biggest need is to 'break the poverty cycle' and this can be done by educating the children with all the disciplines including computer skills.

Mamre International Aid have established orphanages in different parts of India, and it is to these that the computers picked up to day will go to.



### RETRAVISION

The Toronto branch of Retravision have kindly donated the use of their Pantech delivery truck to enable Mamre International Aid to pick up the computers from

Armidale.

### ARMIDALE COMPUTER LIBRARY

is a non-profit association comprising of a group of like-minded volunteers who are concerned for the community and are resolved to address some of the more specific problems faced.

The project seeks to recycle computers thus reducing the environmental damage, and supply these to the socially and economically disadvantaged.

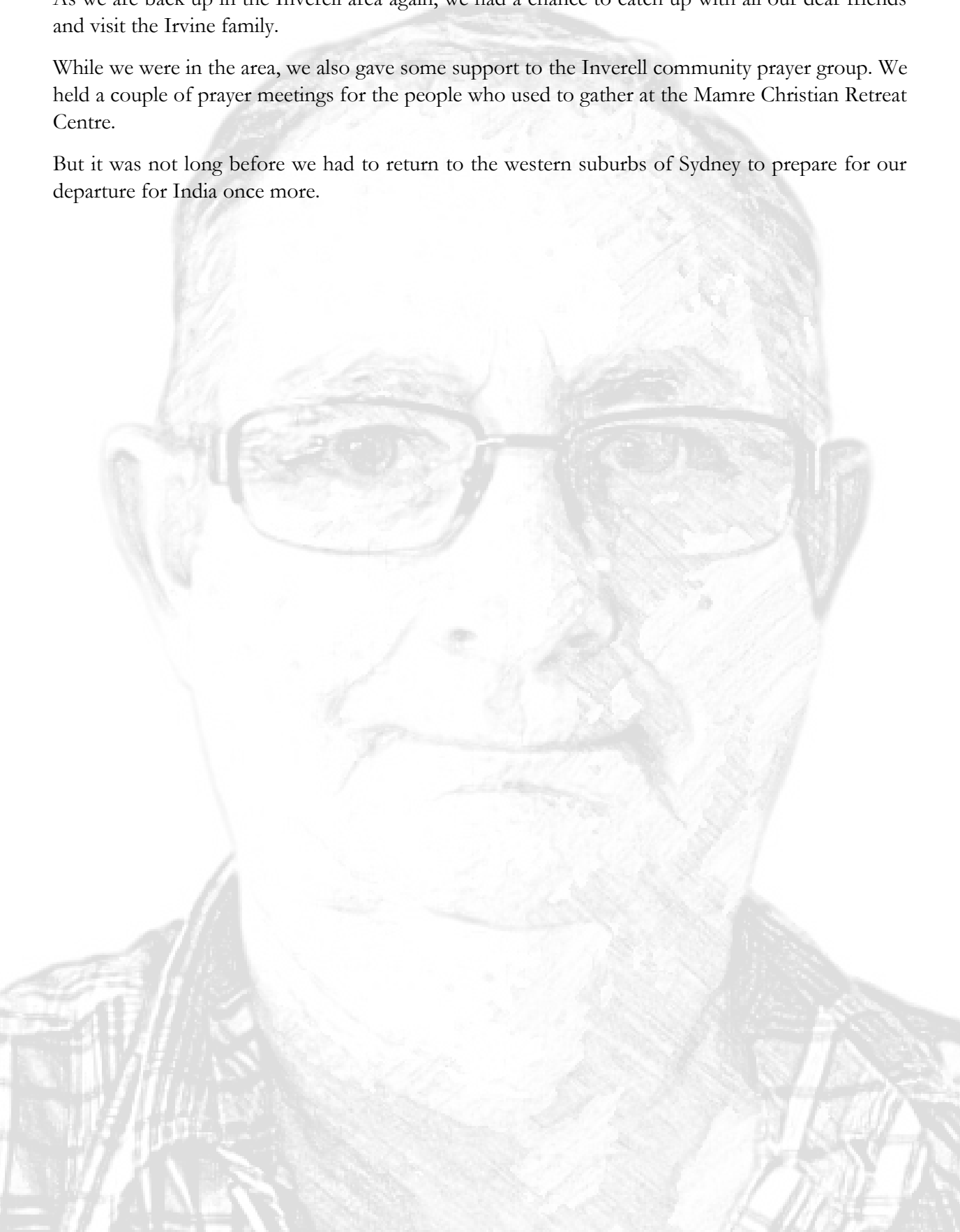
The Armidale Computer Library also provides classes in basic computer skills, telephone and on-site support, personal guidance in internet procedures,

They provide orphanages in Afghanistan, Africa, Sri Lanka and now to India with these computers which are considered too old for use in Australia.

As we are back up in the Inverell area again, we had a chance to catch up with all our dear friends and visit the Irvine family.

While we were in the area, we also gave some support to the Inverell community prayer group. We held a couple of prayer meetings for the people who used to gather at the Mamre Christian Retreat Centre.

But it was not long before we had to return to the western suburbs of Sydney to prepare for our departure for India once more.





## Chapter 19

### India 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2007 to 15<sup>th</sup> December 2007

It is Friday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November and here we are again at Sydney Airport. Rose and I are in the Singapore airlines check-in line when we see John Milligan waving to us. We got through and book our seats 62a and 62c then while John is queuing up, his wife, Denise and son, Justin are with him. Rose heads off to find Betty Graver sitting on a seat nearby and it takes nearly an hour for us all to get through check-in. We all then go to McDonalds for a cuppa and Denise has brought fruit cake for us all. Betty is excited and her usual exuberant self and we all left for Gate 59 and the board announces we are leaving at 12.15pm so we hurriedly say goodbye to Denise and Justin and head through Customs.



John goes to get a refund for his camera at the duty-free shop and we all meet at Gate 59 but now our flight is changed to Gate 58. At 12.20pm we start boarding the plane and we are not leaving at 12.15pm. Our seats are right at the back of the aeroplane, so we are first on. The seats are good we have a little elbow room at the side whereas the normal seating is 3 seats on each side with 4 in the middle. But at the tail, where we are it narrows down to 2 seats on each side and 3 in the middle. So, we are in these seats two side seats with John and Betty two seats behind us and the toilets are at the very back. We didn't take off until 1.07pm then due to rain and cloud saw very little but did experience a lot of turbulence. Dinner was served at 3.30pm of smoked salmon, salad, lamb navarin with vegetables and mashed potato, cheese and crackers, ice cream, roll, butter and coffee. We tried to sleep, no good, read, did crosswords then watch "Underdog" on the in-flight movie screens. Then at 4.00pm, Singapore time, it was snack time. Served spinach, leek and feta cheese slice, tea and coffee. Still very bumpy and still daylight as clocks gradually being turned backwards. Went through enormous black clouds, before landing at Changi Airport. Spent two and a half hours sitting around, trying to rest, cleaning teeth and we started boarding flight SQ 258 for Chennai at 8.30pm Singapore time, so we are late already. We took off at 9.20pm, then a meal is served but we didn't eat anything, I listened to music on my cassette player to block out the noises of passengers. I am very tired because we have been up for 20 hours, and we are not even there yet. We arrived at 10.30pm Chennai time and we enjoyed a swift passage through Passport and Customs. Now we are out of the airport terminal by 11.30pm to be met by Pastor Benjamin. Into a taxi with the big cases in boot which didn't shut then Betty, John and Rose in the back seat with arms and legs everywhere, very uncomfortable. Driver, Benjamin and I in the front with most of the hand luggage, but now it is Saturday already.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> it seemed to take forever to reach Chengalpattu, because we were all so tired. Lots of traffic on the roads, not so many people but then it is nearly 1.00am. Into the house with lots of greetings from Benjamin's wife, father, mother and his sister. We were served coffee then fell into our beds, as we have been up for well over 27 hours. We are all squeezed in, and all the family members are on the floor in the main room. Benjamin's mother makes coffee while we unpack the



next morning, then we have our Bible Study, prayers and showers. We spent the day relaxing, catching up with a bit of sleep, planning our itinerary and John seems to be coping very well. He went with Benjamin to look at the orphanage's new second storey and came back full of ideas for improvements. He is going to start drawing up plans and later he came with me into Chengalpattu on the bikes with Surya Raj and Benjamin to get money and train tickets. All afternoon Rose has been doing the Accounts on the computer and she found a few big mistakes. We had prayer under the grass hut area with everybody.

The next morning, we got up at 6.45am ready for prayer at 7.00am. John led Morning Prayer, then showers all round, Betty has hers heated. Rose and I had our Bible Study then waited for the car to take us to Mass for 8.30am service. Car arrived and Rose, John, Betty and I went with the driver to St Joseph's Catholic Church in Chengalpattu where we were dropped off only to find the Mass began at 8.00am and they were already up to the Gospel. Church is packed as usual, and we sat in the side aisle where we found three chairs and Betty got a seat in the pew with some ladies as we were on the ladies' side of the church. We did not understand any of the words, but we managed to follow along with the service. At the end of Mass, we hired an auto rickshaw, after a little haggling and language problem, to take us back via the butcher's where I purchased a leg of goat for dinner. Rose got onto the computer to do the accounts book and we all had coffee. We are due to go to a Pentecostal Church at 10.30am but right at 10.27am the skies open and the rain comes down in a deluge with thunder and lightning all around us. It was a real soaking, and we are unable to go to the service. Just after 11.00am the rain stops but it is too late to go so I cut up the meat, while Rose peels potatoes and we cook lunch. After lunch Rose goes back to the accounts and then we have a long talk with Benjamin. Sort out some problems and settle other issues. Jaya comes in and we give them their gifts for the baby, they are delighted. Another coffee around 3.30pm then off to the orphanage to be entertained by their singing and dancing. It is just getting dark when we make our way back to Zion Street, this is an adventure as the rain has left great puddles on the very rough road and it is slippery. We arrive back and we check our emails before having prayer under the grass roof. The inevitable coffee before turning in around 8.30pm. There is a Hindu festival coming up and already there are fireworks with big bangers, going off, so we could be in for a lively, noisy night.



On Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> of November we are up at 6.00am, the washing machine we had donated is already going so we put in some of our dirty cloths. Then at 6.30am we have coffee and prayer led by Betty, then into the showers. John has started to dig up the soil to get the garden going. We also spent most of the morning moving 1 ton of blue metal, moving rubbish, sand and digging garden for the new seeds as Rose, Appa and I also help in the digging. We then planted the seeds and by then the sun was out and the sweat was pouring off us all. Benjamin, Surya Raj and I went to town to book the train tickets for the next leg of our journey. We left for Manampathi Dalet Village where I spoke on Mount Carmel. John and Betty shared some testimony then we sang and prayed. We were expected to pray over everyone who was there, and one man testified to not wanting to even come here. So, he had sat outside, but after he heard God's word and he came in for personal prayer, he was greatly touched. We were asked to pray with a woman who has been severally burnt by an exploding gas cylinder and the whole of her body has been affected. Back in the car Benjamin, the

driver, John, Betty, Rose, another man, six children from the orphanage and I, all pile in. Home around 9.15pm and into bed with no mosquitoes because John and I have put our mozzie nets up earlier and we were able to lay in luxury with no bugs and lights out by 10.00pm to settle down.

We are up at 6.00am to ring Angie, our daughter, for her birthday, bad connection but understood that both Georgia and Chloe, our granddaughters, have the flu. Anne was with Angie, and it was 11.30am in Australia. Rose led prayer at 6.45am and we discussed our plans for the day. We hope to go to the orphanage to dig up the garden to plant more seeds this morning. This afternoon at 4.30pm we are off to another village Bairahimadam, apparently this is a dangerous place, as it is known for idol worshipping and violence. Rose, Betty and I walked to the orphanage, while John and Benjamin went on the bike. One of the boys came on his pushbike with the tools and we spent three hours digging, weeding and planting seeds. Got it all done and Ravi sent back to get us some coffee while we washed our hands, feet and thongs. Lunch is ready consisting of fish and rice, so we eat at 11.45am and went to have a rest and I check the Railway Tickets. At 2.30pm we have a shower, coffee and get ready to be picked up at 4.30pm. Yet again no car arrives until 6.00pm then we must get two cars because we have a lot of the children coming plus Jackulyn, George, Benjamin, Betty, John, Rose and me. It takes over 45 minutes to get to Bairahimalam down some rough roads. Songs, skits, message from John then I was asked by Benjamin to do the same talk as last night. He said that it was a great teaching for a village that is involved in idol worship because my talk had covered that topic. Rose prays in tongues all through the talk which strangely seems to be well accepted here, then everyone wants prayer and blessings before we leave. Get back at 9.30pm and ready for bed. I forgot to mention that the village President's wife came today with gifts for each of us, so we are going to organise a concert and they will be the honoured guests.

On the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup>, Max rang and spoke to John, Benjamin and me. We talked about finishing the orphanage and future developments. We decided to start building on new land as soon as possible and finish the orphanage as far as possible but put most of our efforts into development on the new land. John is going to repair the pump at the orphanage, and I have given Betty the project of planning the Christmas play while Rose and I are working on the computer. The Hindu festival must be getting revved up as there are more and more fireworks which are getting louder and louder.

On Thursday the 8<sup>th</sup> of November Rose and I spent some time on the computer typing letters and sending emails to members. We are off to the orphanage at 10.00am to find Esther and a few other pastors there. Everyone sang to start off then Esther gave a talk followed by more singing. Then we had some children's songs and while we danced along with the children. Betty and John sang, then Rose and I sang the "There Was a Man Who Swallowed a Fly" song followed by a talk from John. It was 2.30pm when Rose and I left to walk back to the house where lunch was on the table so had rice, potato and curried meat, glass of water.



We are up by 6.30am and we noticed that the seeds we planted on Monday are coming up, thanks be to God. Prayer was at 7.00am and John led, then we talked about events for the week as I will

be away. I will be travelling to visit all the other pastors who would like to work under Mamre International Aid, I will be assessing whether they are suitable candidates or not. After showers John went with Benjamin to get some money from an ATM, while Betty went with Surya Raj to get Christmas cards. I went by auto to see what time my train will leave for Chennai. Rose started stripping old paint off the toilet block so it can be re painted. The only paint scrapper they had was a small piece of tin and it dug into her hands and caused many cuts but she persevered. John and Benjamin came back but shortly after went again to get something for the orphanage pump. I came back and said my train will leave at 1.18pm and I found a proper spatula for Rose to use for scraping the old paint off. Then some of the orphanage boys came to help Appa do the concreting and some helped with paint scraping as well. Betty came back with her bits of shopping, so she sat and wrote Christmas cards in the shade. I stopped work at noon and had a quick shower to get all the dust off me then Rose, Betty and I had lunch of rice, curried meat and potato. Surya Raj went to the railway station to buy tickets to Chirala for Rose, John and Betty, so he took my bag with him, then Benjamin and I took off on the bike. It is so hard to leave, especially as our wedding anniversary is in two days, however I left by 12.30pm for a 1.00pm train from Chengalpattu to Egmore. Then I went to Chennai Central railway station and had a snack while I waited for my train. The train left Chennai at 6.10pm. After a long night of no sleep, I arrived in Hyderabad, and I worry about my Rose. "Lord help" was my constant prayer, and we will continue to ask for help every minute we can. Rose spent the afternoon with John and Betty reading and talking while John prepares some talks. At 5.30pm Betty went off to the orphanage to teach the children some songs. I rang Rose at about 7.15pm from the train to Hyderabad to tell her that I was okay with a window seat.

To help the readers of this book to get their bearings, Rose, Betty and John are in Chengalpattu which is about 63 kilometres southwest of Chennai. Chennai is on the east coast of India in the state of Tamil Nadu and Chennai used to be known as Madras under British rule. I will arrive in Hyderabad tomorrow sometime. Then I will journey to Adilabad by bus. Hyderabad is 626 kilometres from Chennai heading northwest and it is in the state of Telangana. While Adilabad is a further 305 kilometres heading north from Hyderabad and Adilabad is also in Telangana state.

On the morning of Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> of November my dear Rose had a bad night. She started having stomach pains which lasted until 12.20am when she got up and went to the toilet. She only just managed to get to the door in time and threw up in the garden three times. She came back to her bed and put the blankets over herself, doubled, as she was so very cold. Then at 2.00am she had to make a quick dash to the toilet. Again at 3.20am and again at 4.00am then just after 5.00am she made another trip to the toilet. As soon as she got back to bed, she had to run for the garden again to vomit. Thankfully after the 6.00am toilet run, that was the last time. Rose got up at 6.30am and she told Betty she was not well and that she was going back to bed. By 8.30am I was booked into a hotel in Hyderabad and arranged with the staff to book me a bus to Adilabad and even though it is almost impossible to get a ticket on the same day, they found me a seat for 10.15pm that night. I had another sleepless night, beep, beep, beep all the way along the bus journey. In the meantime, Rose stayed in bed until 12.30pm when she had a shower, then went and talked to Betty. John is back round the orphanage fixing the sewerage. Rose feels very weak and giddy, so she went back to bed by 1.15pm after trying to ring me on my mobile phone but I am on a bus somewhere between Hyderabad and Adilabad and there is no mobile phone signal. Rose was wishing that I was with her, and she spent the rest of day laying down and sleeping. I did not learn about any of Rose's problems until after we were reunited and at 11pm I arrived safely in Adilabad. The first thing I did was to ring Benjamin to tell him I had arrived and to pass on my love to my Rose. Then after a short wait Rakesh arrived to take me back to his home on his motorbike where Mary, his wife, welcomed me and showed me to a very welcome bed.



It is Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup> of November our wedding anniversary and poor Rose had spent all night waking up at least every hour and although she is still feeling a bit better, her head is still aching. She is up at 6.00am and Benjamin told Rose that I had rang at 11.00pm last night to say I had just arrived at Adilabad. Rose had prayer with Betty and John and at 7.45am the car came and took Rose and Betty to Mass. They got there on time this week and got a seat as it wasn't as packed as last week. I then ring my Rose for our anniversary and after that, I give a teaching for the Sunday Church Service in Adilabad. Rakesh, Mary and I then spoke at length about fixing Rakesh and Mary's hurt feelings over Mamre's previous withdrawal from them and explained how I blamed myself for overcommitting. They now feel better and know we still care for them as we will resume their support. They now have a much larger house, and it is a fulfilment of Rose's prophecy for them a couple of years ago. John spent yesterday afternoon fixing the sewer and the pump at the orphanage, while they are now talking about putting in a toilet upstairs. Rose ironed Benjamin's cassock for church then John, Betty, Jaya and Rose walked round to the orphanage for church service at 11.00am. Only the children are there, and John gave a talk on the life of Esther, followed by an anniversary cake for us and sweets. We set out for ECI church around 6.30pm, got there just as the bishop was going in. Poor Rose is still not one hundred percent, and she is still suffering. In the meantime, I have spent the day with Rakesh to access whether he will remain committed to Mamre International Aid if he joins us in ministry.



Rakesh and Mary

My poor Rose is still suffering from the same migraine headache she had a week ago and she wishes I was there, as she feels that I would know what to do. Rose had a discussion with Benjamin, Betty and John after prayer about what they were doing today. This afternoon the whole team are supposed to go to the Orphanage for Jackulyn's birthday. I rang at 7.30am, to report that I was just getting on the bus for Rajura at 9.30am and Rakesh is with me. We should arrive in a couple of hours. Rajura is a small village about 100 kilometres east of Adilabad and it is in the state of Maharashtra. Rose rang me at 11.00am and I had just arrived in Rajura. I said I was fasting for a week and Rose advised me to eat at least one small meal to keep my strength up. The young pastor in Rajura who wants to be partnered with Mamre International Aid is named Melchishua K Paul, but we call him K M. Melchishua, and Rakesh had their own India Mission Church meetings, and I went to our church in Rajura, the one we had the honour of officially opening on our first trip to India in 2000. After that I was taken to meet up with some school kids at another small village and I met up with Cookie and all our other friends. After much ministry I went back to the hotel for a very broken sleep during lots of fireworks going off for a festival and many mozzies. In the meantime, Rose went back to scraping the toilet block and Betty came and sat outside reading her book. Jackulyn, Benjamin's sister, came in after school for a blessing and then Rose rang me and I was at Rajura Church to ask Melchishua for his commitment to Mamre and everyone seems to be happy with my proposals, thanks be to God. I will leave tomorrow at 2.10pm on the train for Bapatla and I told Rose that I was staying in the local hotel when I get there. Rose left for the orphanage as



it was getting too dark to walk by herself, but about halfway there, she met Ravi and two boys coming back to the house and one of the young boys turned around and escorted Rose to the orphanage. She then inspected the work that has been going on, the new toilets, new washing block and all the other improvements. They all celebrated Jackulyn and two other birthdays and it was very noisy and hectic, they played games, ate ice cream and then cake. Betty and John gave Jackulyn a card and some roses, Betty, John, Jaya and Rose walked back to the house about 8.00pm. They had coffee while Rose tried on her new nightdress that they had bought in town for her for 70 rupees. Everyone turned in for the night, with Rose feeling a lot better, thank God.



Melchishua K Paul, KM and father, Pastor Paul

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of November everyone is up for prayer by 7.00am and now John is not feeling so good, because he has the symptoms of a cold. While in the Rajura church service, I gave a teaching, and I had more fellowship with some school children in the school building. Then I had the same talk with the family as I had had with Rakesh. They were all happy and relieved with the outcome. We left by two bikes at 1.30pm for Ballarshah railway station to catch the train to Bapatla, I am on one bike with my luggage and KM with me on his bike. When we got to Ballarshah KM presented me with new watches for Rose and I. Ratmayya, a parishioner who lives nearby, gave me 500 rupees to help with my travel expenses. The train left at 2.40pm and there were eleven of us for eight berths? In the meantime, back at the orphanage, the engineer came to do an estimate for the outside building, he, John and Benjamin sat and talked. I rang to say I was okay and had been involved in some ministry here at Rajura. John and Benjamin tried to explain the plans to Rose but they both seemed to think it wasn't going to happen, still we shall see when the estimate comes in. Rose started scraping away at the toilet block once more, but it seems to be a never-ending task. John sent an email to Denise, his wife, after Rose helped him get through, then coffee for them all. Surya Raj arrived at 11.10am to take Betty and John for a trip to Mamallapuram, for a morning of sightseeing and relaxation with the video camera. Rose did a bit more to the toilet block then had a shower and started packing for Thursday's trip. They had lunch of vegetable rice and made Jaya rest for a while. Around 3.00pm after ringing me at 2.20pm, I was still on my way to the station. Rose went round to the orphanage to check on work, the tiling is finished, and the other room is going on well. Rose sat with the orphanage's female cook and helped to strip palms to make brooms. She then walked back around at 5.00pm and had a cup of coffee, no sugar, first she has had since Friday. Today Rose can say that she was feeling a lot better, still taking pain tablets though as the headache is just in the background. Betty and John arrived back around 6.00pm full of their day out, with lots of beads. They all had prayer with Amma, Jaya, Amutha and Ambica. Rose tried to ring me as I had said I would ring at 6.00pm but I was out of range.

What a night I spent on this train, and it is so hard to find your station in the dark with everybody else asleep but despite my worry that I might miss my station, I arrived at around dawn as we were running very late. There is no mobile reception at all so after checking into the hotel I will go out to ring Rose from a land line phone. But when Rose rang me, I felt better because I knew she would

have worried otherwise. I have decided to have today off as I can see Ratna in the morning. I am vomiting and am so very tired. I had tried having some soup and only brought up a little, but I am drinking heaps. Watched some Discovery Channel show about the future of the earth, read my book, bible and wrote some of this diary. Generally rested until after another call from Rose and tried to settle for sleep, sadly there were a lot of drunken guys on my floor and the arguments and shouting went beyond midnight plus there were lots of fireworks. Bapatla is about 596 kilometres southwest of Rajura and is in the state of Andhra Pradesh. After some sleep I will meet up with Ratna Raju to see if he is suitable for consideration as a Mamre partner. In the meantime, Betty had breakfast then Rose got stuck into the washing because they need to get it dry and ready to be packed. They all sat and talked to Benjamin and Betty decided not to go to Chirala because of the rough living conditions. Benjamin and John went off to the doctors at 11.15am. I went on the email and got rid of the rubbish, nothing from the kids or anyone else. Betty went in the shower at 12 noon, she was waiting for hot water. Benjamin and John returned as the queues to see the doctor were too long so John decided just to take an antibiotic, which we can buy over the counter in India. After a short rest, John and Rose put up the netting for the seeds, to keep the birds away, then she brought in the washing. Betty went to town with Ahma to check on her shoes, but they will not be ready until Friday now. Then Rose had a quick shower and left for the orphanage after having had a good long talk with me on the phone. The adults played balloon games with the children, and they read poems followed by prayers and all left at 8.00pm. Home to finish packing, get some sleep before they get up at 4.30am for their day to start. John seems a bit better, and Rose will get him some strepsil lozenges in Chennai.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of November it is the day for moving on, Rose slept fitfully and awoke before the alarm went off. The rest of our team finished packing, and after coffee, Benjamin and Jaya joined them for prayer to cover the trip. The car came at 5.40am, Amma got up to say goodbye along with Benjamin, so Rose and John are off to the station. The train left at 6.00am so they had to run across the lines to catch it. Benjamin said goodbye as Rose and John are on their way to Chennai, they are travelling with a group of men on their way to work. In the meantime, I am up by 6.30am, rang my Mum for her birthday but she was not home, so I'll try again later. Rose rang from Chennai and she and John are on their way, not long now before we are back together. I am downstairs in the lobby by 8.30am for my meeting with Ratna and my car to Chirala will arrive at 1.00pm. The meeting with Ratna and Annamani went as well as the others, but they are very clingy, continually saying, when are you both coming and also they were very late, not a good impression.



Ratna and Annamani

When Rose and John got to Chennai central station, they board their train to take them to Chirala and they have two window seats so they will get some 'fresh' air. They purchased some Lays potato chips and water on the platform before boarding. In the meantime, I am making the relative short journey to Chirala by car to meet up with Solomon. When he too will be asked about his commitment to Mamre International Aid also. Chirala is only 17 kilometres southeast from Bapatla

and is also in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Both Bapatla and Chirala are very close to the east coast of India as is Chennai as well. The journey for Rose and John will take about five and a half hours and they spent time reading, eating chips and looking out through the bars at the scenery. Their journey was 360 kilometres north from Chennai. It was with relief they pulled into Chirala railway station where Solomon greeted them, but Rose's eyes were looking around for me.



Pastor Solomon and his wife from Chirala.

There I was walking towards Rose with Solomon and his Appa, his father. At last, I have my Rose back in my arms, thank you God. Rose thinks I have lost weight and that I look tired, but it is so great to be back together. I had come by car from Bapatla and had retained the car so we could all go back to Holy Spirit Prayer House in it. We are welcomed by Amma, who is Solomon's mother, Solomon's sister, her husband and their baby. We also met two other boys who we later learnt were two orphans who are 19 and 21 years of age named Shalom and Matthew. Their parents had been tragically killed and the oldest was ready to commit suicide, but after they had spoken to Solomon, and he had taken them in. We unpack and talk for a couple of hours with interruptions of coffee, grapes and peanut cakes. We all enjoy having prayer in the church until 7.45pm. I rang my mum for her birthday and found out she is not well, thrombosis of the legs, so she needs our prayers. When we are back in Australia, we will be having Christmas at home with them. Our accommodation is a grass hut for time we will be here in Chirala.

It became very cold in the night and even I was cold, so we snuggled together more to get warm. In the morning, the three of us had prayer time together, then we had showers and then we planned our day. At 10.15am the photographer came to take Rose, John, Solomon and my photo to put on the Healing Rally brochures which will be distributed all over town. The photos will also go on the huge banners that will be put up all over the town. This healing rally will be held in the church grounds as Solomon expects a few hundred people to attend and it will be run over a few days and nights. We got changed and at 10.50am the auto rickshaw arrived to take us to the Dalet village. It was a larger auto and with two plus the driver in the front and the three of us and Amma in the back we bumped our way until we arrived beside the sewer, where it is located. This village is nearer to the sea than the other Dalet village we had visited last year. We walked across the sand, passed the huts to the church where John, Solomon and I went up the front while Rose sat at the back where she was immediately handed a tiny baby to hold. Rose immediately started comparing what this child was going to have in life compared with our own grandchildren. As tears came to her eyes, she realised how she was being humbled and it was so hard because she knew what the future looked like for this little child of God. After some singing, I gave a talk on Elijah and Prophets of Baal because we found out that the villagers have been worshipping a large tree that was at the entrance of the village. Afterwards John sings some songs for the children and then we have a time of prayer. Then the food we have paid for comes, rice, samba, curry and in three sittings we manage to feed everyone. Everyone is very grateful as it is the first hot meal they have had for a few weeks. Their usual diet consists of tiny fish that they catch from the sewer next to their village or whatever else



they can find. We will come back this afternoon to do more songs and bring more food because some of them are away. Rose and I did a special naming service for the tiny baby she had been holding. The story was that the woman had not been able to conceive, and we had prayed for her the last time we were here. She used to live in the village that we had visited last year just after the cyclone had started to move away from us on the east coast. Since then, she had moved to this village, she became pregnant, delivered her baby and the baby was now only about three weeks old. They had not given him a name so when they asked us what his name should be, Rose suggested Elijah, so we named him Elijah and they were all very happy. We get back into the auto rickshaw and this time there are ten of us to bump our way back to base, it must have looked so very funny. I rang Betty to find her in tears because she feels so alone, and she has nothing to do. So, then I ring Benjamin and ask him why he is not caring for her or trying to keep her occupied and he does not have much to say in reply. After much prayer, Rose decides to travel back to Chengalpattu to be with Betty. Betty objects but after Rose insists, she is so very grateful and happy to know she will be with Rose again soon. Bless her, because we can imagine how lonely and lost, she must be feeling. Solomon is sending someone to book Rose's ticket back to Chennai and I will insist that Benjamin picks her up from the station. Finally, at 5.30pm all is settled as Rose now has a ticket back to Chennai for tomorrow morning's express at 7.20am. What a shock! She is going back within two days of being here. We are both heartbroken, I want her to stay, and she would rather stay plus she would love to be here for the Healing Rally. Rose is going back to Chennai because she knows that it is the right thing to do. Now, we are angry with Benjamin, so Rose has decided to stay out of his way for a few days. But then things change again after Rose, and I talk some more. Betty will be driven by Surya Raj to Chennai Central to meet Rose and they will then travel together to Egmore, a Chennai suburb. They will stay at the Chandra Park Hotel for a few days rest and relaxation, and it will give Betty a break. So now that everything is settled, we leave in an auto rickshaw and with hundreds of bananas we set out for the village we went to this morning. We had a short programme of action songs, skits and a short teaching. After that we then had some ball games, played with some balloons and handed out bananas. When we left, we only got a short way down the road and the auto rickshaw breaks down, it has run out of fuel, so we walk to the main road and in a little while a bus comes along. All eight of us clamber on and leave the poor auto rickshaw man standing in the road. We all get off and walk back to the Prayer House, power is restored here, for Rose's second and last night.

It is Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup> of November, and we are up at 5.30am with usual Hindu music and chanting over the many horn speakers scattered along every street in Chirala. It is interesting to note that Hindu or Muslim music can literally be blaring out of the many huge horn speakers that are placed throughout most Indian towns. Remembering that this happens at various hours throughout the night and wakes everybody up yet Christian preaching is banned in public places. In fact, you can be arrested or even beaten, and you would definitely be deported from India for doing it. We had a quick wash as it was quite cool again this morning. We got dressed and Rose packed her last items. Then the tears started, Lord this is hard, we are both crying, and I think even Solomon is crying too. We have a short prayer time in the church then goodbyes and into the auto rickshaw. We got to Chirala railway station around 7.00am and waited for the train. We are both crying, and we can't even talk to each other as we are to overcome. Train arrives at 7.35am and Rose gets the middle of three seats with a man sitting by the window. The last thing Rose sees of me is me waving to a blank window, because the windows are tinted and I do not know where Rose is in the carriage, but I wave anyway.

As Rose settles in, the ticket man and two police guards come along the carriage, so she hands over her ticket, and suddenly they tell the two people in the seats opposite to move. After they get up



and move, he says to Rose you have those two seats. Then the police pick up her bags and move her over, so she has more room and comfort. The air conditioning is so cold that Rose had to dig in her bag to get out her sari to wrap around herself.

John and I are heading off to the new Dalet village for a prayer service and lunch with chicken curry and rice for around 100 villagers. John did his talk on planting spiritual seeds, and we had action songs and games as well. Then we head to another village for a kid's programme, and I did a talk about David and Goliath with more action songs and games followed by bananas all round. We then head home for fasting prayer in the church.

Rose arrived at Chennai Central railway station at 1.30pm and then she rang Betty, to learn that they were on their way. She waited at the station until Surya Ray, Ravi and Betty arrived at 2.00pm and they made their way by auto rickshaw to Chandra Park hotel. But it turned out that they were fully booked so with the help of another auto rickshaw driver they found their way to White House Residency nearby at 600 rupees per night and they got a room each. Rose rang me and I assured her that I was fine now and enjoying my time of ministry with the village people. Chennai is as noisy and busy as ever and Rose cannot say she is glad to be back, but she is putting a brave face on it for Betty's sake. Betty and Rose go out shopping and they end up at Pizza Hut in Spencer Plaza, then into Westside to get a towel and then to the Supermarket to get water and lollies. They get back in an auto rickshaw for 50 rupees, had short time of prayer and back into their rooms by 6.00pm for the night.

It is Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> Betty goes to Rose's room for coffee and prayer while Rose waits for me to ring her. I tell Rose that I am fine but missing my girl and we both shed some tears and I also tell her that John and I have begun to prepare our six talks each for the Healing Rally after our prayer time. The Sunday church service in Chirala started at 10.45am and went till 3.15pm, wow! John spoke on Romans chapter 7, Giving Over Sin and I spoke on Unity, Judgement and Forgiveness, with prayer ministry all around at the end.

Rose and Betty have another coffee, then they head out for the museum around 9.45am. Museum was a rip off because they are foreigners, they had to pay 250 rupees whereas Indians only pay 15 rupees. When they were in the Contemporary part of the museum there was a power cut so after that they called it a day because it was so dirty and stuffy. So, they walked across the road to the Aachi Restaurant where they had tomato soup and chicken fried rice with ice cream for dessert.

John and I left for our last visit to the new Dalet village for their Sunday service where John spoke on Gideon and we gave out some treats, sang with them and played games with the children. It's hard to leave and the oldest woman, a widow in the village asked John and I to stay. John said we will be back next year, but she said she would be dead by then, so we both left with lumps in our throats after we had prayed over her.

In the meantime, Rose and Betty hired an auto rickshaw to take them back to Egmore Station where Rose purchased two Readers Digests. Then it was another auto rickshaw ride back to the Hotel.

By this time, John and I head back to the church for the Sunday evening service, and I was asked to speak, so I chose Psalm 16. ***Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.***

It is Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> of November and what a long night it was for my poor Rose. Even though she had taken two panadeine forte and a sleeping tablet, her migraine headache kept her from any

real sleep. However, by around 6am she started drifting off but was woken by Betty knocking on her door at 6.45am. So, they had coffee and prayer then I rang Rose at 7.30am. Betty and Rose got an auto rickshaw to Egmore railway station to be ready for their train to Chengalpattu by 10.40am. They ended up in a ladies' only carriage, so it was reasonably quiet, though it had started to rain just before they arrived at Chengalpattu, and they got an auto rickshaw to Benjamin's house.

In the meantime, John and I started to walk to the old Dalet village by 10.00am via Solomon's old family village, where he had grown up. We arrived to a grand welcome and they all wanted to know, where is Mummy? meaning Rose of course. We sang some action songs which they all took part in with great joy, and they especially wanted us to sing the action song called, thumbs up. John then gave a talk on, planting spiritual seeds followed by some games. Then lunch was served to all, and we ate there as well. As bad as the new Dalet village is, it is still a class above the old Dalet village.

Rose and Betty unpacked, and it was raining there with thunder and lightning as well and we do not often see that during our trips to India. They spent the afternoon reading after a lunch of rice, potato, tomato soup and omelette for Betty. It really rained hard and started to flood under the Grass roof and indoors the rising damp is coming up all the mud brick walls.

John and I are back by 3.00pm for a long rest after which I prepared some more sermons for the healing rally. I rang Rose at 6.30pm to tell her that we are going to a Hindu Village at 8.00pm tonight.

Betty had some fish, then she fell asleep so Amma, Jaya, Ambica and Rose had some prayer time. At 8.30pm Rose turned in, Benjamin has not yet shown his face since Rose's arrival. Rose wonders how she is going to keep Betty amused for another week, especially as she knows that Benjamin is due to go to Bangalore tomorrow.

At the Hindu village I spoke on Prophecy, Prophets and False Prophets, we then had some action songs, games and we were expected to pray for everyone there. During our missionary trips to India, I used to worry about being asked to speak at Hindu or Muslim villages. However, it seems that in the Indian culture people from other faiths do not hesitate to ask for and receive blessings or prayers from other faiths than their own. At every Hindu or Muslim village, we have been invited to, we were unable to leave until every person had received one on one prayer. It is refreshing to see that except for some extremists, most people are prepared to believe that blessings can come from any faith.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of November the night was full of rain, storms, wind and noises and eventually, Rose got up at 5.00am for a toilet visit then she sat down to read her bible. She had some prayer time with Betty at 7.00am then rang me at 7.45am, to learn that John and I are fine but busy and basking in sunshine. Rose then spoke to Betty about some of her ideas for the Christmas play and she told Betty to take it on and do something about it. Benjamin has finally come to talk to Rose, and he has told her that the village president was killed on Saturday, and it is dangerous around here as the people who killed the president are roaming around the streets with guns. He stressed on Rose about how important it was for her and Betty to stay close to home. He also told Rose that they had run out of money for the orphanage food. When I heard of this from Rose, I immediately called to mind, 1 Peter 5:8-10, and stressed how we all need to stand firm in prayer.

***1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:***

***9 Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in***

*your brethren that are in the world.*

***10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.***

We are not happy about the news that Benjamin has run out of funds for food because if he would stick to the planned budget, he should have more than enough money to even take care of unforeseen things that can occur.

John and I were all set to walk the couple of kilometres that it would take to reach the old Dalet village. But a tractor that a parishioner owned and used on his farm, had arrived to carry us to the village instead and that is a first for both of us. Once we had arrived at the village, they all greeted us like celebrities, then we sang some action songs, a talk on Gideon by John then some lunch. I rang Rose to check all is well and she tells me that they are all praying for us. So, I tell her that we are praying hard for them as well. We arrive back by 3.00pm and have a rest followed by more sermon reparations. Since we know for certain that we have Satan's full attention, we know that we must have upset him. But he has now had his time to get at us in different ways and he has not succeeded, so his efforts have not worked. He has split up our team, he has caused possible danger, others being upset, sickness and migraines and he has used others to help trip us up, but we are just praying even harder. You have failed Satan, and the Healing Rally will surely be a mighty victory for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Benjamin has promised to show Rose the accounts today and she told me that she will not tell Betty about the danger in the Chengalpattu village because she may panic. Rose has arranged the Christmas pageant with Jackulyn and what they need to buy. Benjamin came back around 5.30pm and showed Rose the accounts and they are not very clear, but at least she has something go on now. She will give Benjamin 6000 rupees tomorrow which will be the money for next month.

John and I left for the branch church at the Hindu village, and I spoke on Love, Faith and Wisdom, plus we had some action songs, games and personal prayer for everybody there.

Betty and Rose went with Jackulyn to their auntie's house, while her daughter and grandson were there as well. Ten other children also came from the orphanage to join them.

The aunty, named Ambica, was the lady we had prayed for last year when her kidneys had failed and had shrivelled up like dried prunes. She had been receiving treatment by being connected to a kidney dialysis machine to keep her alive, but she could only afford to pay for that for a few days. Her other treatment option was for her to have a kidney transplant operation, but she certainly could not afford to pay for that either as it would cost an impossibly large sum of money. So, she had been preparing herself for when she was to be discharged from hospital because she knew that within a couple of days after that, she would certainly die. But God had other plans for her, and He allowed her kidneys to grow back to full life because of prayer. The doctors could not understand how her kidneys had come back to life, so we explained that it was a miracle by God's hand. But they insisted that there had to be a scientific explanation because there is only one organ in our bodies is capable of healing itself and that is our liver.

Betty gave a sharing on Putting on the Armour and Rose elaborated a bit then prayed with Amutha, Auntie Ambica and her daughter. They had some coffee then they headed home and after Amma started a time of prayer, Rose and Betty are back under the grass roof to join in the time of prayer until 8.30pm then they head off to their rooms.

John and I are back at 10.30pm and we are soon off to bed too.

On the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> of November, the rain seems to be going over so maybe we will be able to dry out today in Chengalpattu. No sign of Benjamin at 7.00am so Rose had some prayer and went onto the computer to do some more work with the accounts. After a while Betty got up and they had prayer then Rose rang me to learn that all is well with John and I and this will be the last day of Village meetings for us both in Chirala. Rose also told me that the rain has stopped in Chengalpattu and that she will be teaching at a service tonight. Rose has also discovered that Benjamin is falsifying the financial records.

John has paid for a water pump to be installed in each of the two Dalet villages and he purchased a cricket set so we could play with the village children. Mamre has paid for three consecutive days of meals for both villages. We also purchased some balls, a badminton set and paid for the healing crusade costs. The costs will cover the purchase of flyers, banners, the stage, the musicians and all the other costs involved in preparing everything we will need. At the old Dalet village today the party atmosphere was even greater because of the new water pump; they now have fresh water for the first time, instead of having to carry it a few kilometres each day. We will dedicate the other water pump tomorrow when we visit them as well. We are back to the house by 3.00pm and get some more talks prepared for the healing rally. The Dalet's have built a fence around the vegetable garden to help to keep the animals out of it. I rang Rose at 6.00pm and told her some more disturbing news of what terrible things that Benjamin had previously done to Solomon. So now we must wonder if Benjamin has been lying to us all the time. We have put so many resources into his ministry at Chengalpattu. Lord what should we do? Rose told me about the other three murders in Chengalpattu, so what else is going on? All we can think is that the three-day healing rally in Chirala is going to be mighty, praise God.

At 6.30pm Rose went to another Auntie's house, who has two daughters, a disabled grandchild and a baby boy. She gave a talk on 'Daniel', followed by prayer, then coffee and biscuits. Rose was honoured with the presentation of a shawl, and they walked back with the children by moonlight and once again, Rose has not seen Benjamin all day. What is happening Lord? Please don't let us be judging him wrongly, give us wisdom and discernment.

In the meantime, John and I had prayer and I spoke on how to come before God, the old way and the new way. After that they all watched our Australia DVD which shows our families and how we live, they loved it.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> Rose woke up early and couldn't get back to sleep because so much was going through her mind. Is Benjamin honest? Will we need to pull out of Chengalpattu? Or even who can we trust in this country? We were already hurting from the betrayal of Arul and now it seems that history may be repeating itself yet again.

My spirit is so troubled by all the things that are happening in Chengalpattu, but I realised we must give it to God for now. John and I head off at 9.30am to dedicate the other Dalet village water pump, then to dedicate the donated land plus pray for the family who donated it. It is hard to believe that for twenty dollars this village now has water that they no longer must walk miles to get. It was that cheap because the water table was only a few feet below ground and the soil is very sandy that all that was needed was to pierce the ground with a spear pipe to reach the water.





Solomon has taken John and me to get some traditional Indian men's clothing, as a gift for us both and we are expected to wear it during the evening sessions of the healing rally. The daughter of the Hindu tailor is in hospital with a worm in her brain and after we had prayed for her, we came home for lunch.



After we had prayed over the mixer-blender that I had purchased for Solomon's family, I finished most of my notes for the Healing Rally. In the late afternoon, the children of the main congregation came for games and action songs, John, as usual, was king of the kids. Out of all the action songs we have taught the children, Thumbs Up is still their favourite.

It seems that Benjamin is really starting to get quite nasty because Rose has insisted once more on seeing all the bills and accounts. Rose and Betty went for a walk over to the orphanage and the staff were shocked to see them, why? Then soon after they had arrived, Benjamin suddenly appeared and looked as if he had just woken up. Benjamin's father had followed them there as well, he too is after money to fix up his three-wheeler vehicle. Benjamin got even angrier when Rose told him this was no way to keep accounts. Rose then left with the bills, and she will put them onto the computer. She has decided not to say anything else to Benjamin until John and I are back with her because the atmosphere is getting very tight and unbearable. If Rose could simply return home, she would do it in a second. Rose and Betty then took off for yet another cousin's house with more of the children but with no Benjamin as usual. Betty gave a talk on Feeding the Five Thousand, they prayed with relations had coffee, biscuits, home for more prayer and into room by 9.00pm.

It is Friday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November and Rose is up at 6.30am, there is nobody else up, so she reads her bible and at 7.45am she rang me. This is the first day of the healing rally and I told her all was going well with the preparations. After Benjamin got up Rose asked Betty to ask Benjamin if anything was planned for today, but there were no surprises, absolutely nothing planned except maybe a prayer meeting tonight. They are getting sick of having nothing to do and no plans made, and this makes me very annoyed as Benjamin has really let me down. Rose's day passes between putting washing out, reading, having lunch and getting the washing in and folding it so the hours pass very, very slowly.

In Chirala, all the preparations are going on with an outdoor stage, banners, huge sound systems and lighting going up.



The kids all came round to play with John, and we waited till midday before the rally officially started. I spoke on Servanthood and John spoke on Holiness and the praise and worship was good but so very loud. There were hundreds of people attending the healing rally and each one of them wanted John and I to pray for them.

Benjamin arrived at 2.30pm for his lunch and said to Rose that there had been a big fight round at the orphanage. Apparently, the village elders had complained about the water from the orphanage's bathhouse was seeping into neighbouring properties. Rose feels certain that a lot more was said but Benjamin has promised to buy clothes for the neighbours at Christmas as a peace offering. Where is he going to get that money from? Are the children going to suffer? Then Betty came into the room to say she was feeling sick again, so she has gone to lay down on her bed. Then not long afterwards Betty was vomiting, and everyone starts fussing around. After a while Benjamin ring to say he will come and take her to the hospital.

I had phoned Rose in the middle of all this, but Rose couldn't speak freely because there were too many people around to listen in. Anyway, I assure her that all is well at our end and the Rally is going well, after a late start, not unusual in India. I asked Rose to get the prayers started for John's daughter, Kate, because apparently her baby is not growing in the womb. I assured Rose that we will of course be praying for Betty as well. I had offered to immediately return to rescue her and Betty, but Rose insisted that I finish the work that our Lord had asked of me. She felt that the healing rally was needed to glorify God and was the cause of all the trouble because we have upset Satan.

Benjamin came home and Betty refused to go to the hospital, so Rose convinced him to pray with her and then he left again. Rose then had some coffee before she left for a house three doors up with three ladies, two girls and one man. The man had been struck down by a stroke down his whole left side and he is quite young, but after Rose had prayed, he immediately showed some improvement. Rose gave a talk on Be Still and afterwards she prayed with all those present and had some tea and biscuits.

Back in Chirala we are ready to start praise and worship on time at 6.30pm and John and I are in our new traditional Indian dress. John spoke on Samson, and I spoke on Faith, Love and Wisdom with some stories thrown in at Solomon's request, because apparently they love the stories. We were also told that they wanted some action songs as well and afterwards we prayed for all who were there. The testimonies of healing are already starting to be proclaimed by many who attended. The healing rally was turning out to be a huge success with a huge stage set up for the worship team and for the delivery of the teachings. There is massive lighting and sound equipment while it is all set up to accommodate the hundreds of attendees. Leading up to the rally, John had felt overwhelmed when he had learned that we would both be expected to deliver eight talks each, but he really did deliver some fine teachings.



It was not until after her walk back home that Rose had learned that this had been a Hindu family. She is back for 8.00pm family prayer time and Appa joined them tonight. Betty still in bed and sleeping so Rose went to bed herself. Of course, with Betty not feeling so good and after her refusal of a trip to hospital, Rose made certain that she was started on a course of antibiotics and restricted to clear fluids for a few days.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> at 7.45am Rose rang me and we had a good talk about Benjamin plus whether we should travel down to Nagercoil. Nothing has changed at Chengalpattu, I keep trying to give the problem back to God, but I also worry for my Rose. Benjamin was leaving on his bike as Rose came out of the shower and she had asked him to put 1000 rupees of credit on to John's prepaid phone sim card. That was the extent of Rose's conversation with Benjamin that morning which is so sad. John has asked Rose to put the Nagercoil situation before Betty so that she has time to think and pray about it as well. Nagercoil is 650 kilometres south from Chengalpattu, and it is very close to the bottom of India. Benjamin had previously requested that our team would visit the area. Then Rose spent the morning washing clothes then making some stars with some of the children for Christmas and Betty helped. All the kids are still here except the babies, so Rose assumes the carpenters are at the orphanage and Benjamin has sent the kids here to get them out of the way. It is hard on Benjamin's mother and Rose, as they must look after them all.

John and I started at 11.30am to a packed church. John spoke on Gideon after more action songs, and I spoke on the Cost of Following Jesus then there was more prayer ministry to every person present. We then had some lunch and a rest then the new blankets and saris arrived which we will hand out tomorrow night. We are also getting some bed sheets for the elderly.

Back in Chengalpattu Rose is cutting up the stars the kids had drawn and Jackulyn wanted Rose to do another cottage church meeting, but she really didn't want to go. She had nothing prepared as she was not told about it in time to pray and plan. I rang my Rose at 6.00pm and Benjamin apparently got very angry over our decision to cancel the Nagercoil trip.

In Chirala we started the evening session at 6.30pm and the crowds are getting bigger and bigger but of course the evening sessions are outside so we can allow for more people. After the inevitable action songs, I spoke about Healing, and I shared my testimony. While John spoke from Galatians which covered a few areas.

In Chengalpattu Rose called a family prayer meeting at 8.00pm but Betty stayed in her bed. Then Rose went into her room by 9.00pm while I was thinking that tomorrow is last full day before I arrive back.

At the Healing Rally the prayer ministry went on for a very long time and after getting out of our white Indian dress we got to our beds at 11.00pm.



It is Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, and we are down to the last day until the team is back together, only one more night. At 7.30am Rose and Betty left and walked to a main road to find an auto rickshaw, it cost 50 rupees, one dollar, to take them to St Joseph's Cathedral in time for 8.00am mass. They came out about 9.15am and got an auto rickshaw for 50 rupees to return. Rose rang Anne, our daughter, then spoke to Angela, another daughter and finally our son, Stephen. It was hard not to cry then Rose then rang me just as I was about to ring her. I tell Rose how geared up I am for my last day and then the long journey home in the wee hours of tomorrow morning. In Chengalpattu there is no sign of Benjamin, so Rose assumes he is at the orphanage preparing for the 11.00am service so Rose and Betty left at 10.35am and walked to the orphanage. The children were sitting by the front steps, and they sat down with them. Benjamin came from somewhere and started them singing, then in comes a group of about eight men from Arise and Shine Ministries who are going round villages preaching the Word of God, so they took over. One of them, gave a talk on Joseph and His Special Coat and Rose was asked to give final prayer.

In the meantime, I have done as much packing as I can for now and Rose rang back again to deliver a Bible reading that she felt was for the healing rally from Acts chapter 2 especially verses 17 – 21.

Acts 2:17-21

*17 And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh: And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:*

*18 Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.*

*19 And I will show wonders in the heaven above, And signs on the earth beneath, Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke:*

*20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the day of the Lord come, That great and notable (day).*

*21 And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

John and I started at 11.30am and after praise, prayers, testimonies and high worship, I shared the reading from Acts that Rose had shared. Then I spoke on Salvation to Commitment then John spoke on Healing to Salvation. Much prayer ministry followed as the church was so full, they were sitting outside, we finished at 3.30pm.

Rose spent afternoon reading, and writing, but everyone else seemed to be asleep or not here so she did not know if they were going out tonight or not. Just in case Rose had prepared a talk on Sin.

I rang Rose at 4.50pm because they were starting the final session of the healing rally at 5.30pm. The evening service was huge, and we gave out 35 saris for the Dalets plus 20 blankets and 30 sheets. Santa Claus came; we sang Silent Night and did an action song. I spoke on Faith, and we prayed with everybody, I was still praying till after 11.00pm. By the time the last session had finished, it was time for everybody to leave for their own homes, but it seemed as if they did not want to leave, they did not want the anointing to end.

In Chengalpattu by 7.10pm nobody had come to Rose, so she guessed they were not going anywhere. She told Betty that she was going to bed early and she took some tablets for her migraine headache. She tried to sleep while thinking about the fact that I will be back with her in the morning.

Back in Chirala, we had family prayer and then we left for the railway station. From the testimonies that were reported in because of the healing rally, the healings reports that we had received so far



are now more than up to forty-two. However, we will have to wait for any further testimonies from others, especially those that might come in from the last night of ministry.



The train pulls in and it is over an hour late, so we leave Chirala at 1.30am on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November. John and I pull into Chennai at around 8am and then we must go to Park Station for our suburban train to Chengalpattu.

In the meantime, Rose rang me on John's mobile, and we were making our way from Central Station to Park Station, so once we get on the train we will only take about another hour. Rose spent an hour peeling and cutting up vegetables then they all had coffee. Benjamin seems to be in a good mood this morning and Rose thinks that it might be because I am coming home. John and I arrived home around 10.00am and it was so good for us to be back together again. Rose and I talked for a little while, then John and I went for a lie down while Rose did some clothes washing. Betty came out and hung some of the wet laundry on the line. Both John and I slept till 1.30pm when we had lunch and after that, they looked at some of our photos from Chirala. Rose and I got the washing in then I rang Benjamin to tell him to come round for a chat. Rose, Betty and John continued to look at some of the video footage from Chirala, while Benjamin and I had a talk about his recent behaviour. Rose came in to see Benjamin in tears, he claimed that Betty had been very hurtful, and she had been upsetting everyone. He admitted that it was a poor excuse, so he apologised and asked for our forgiveness. Rose could understand a lot of his points of view but there were some things that still don't add up, but at least we are all talking again. Over the next few hours Benjamin told us that tomorrow morning we had to be at the orphanage by 7.00am for Betty's birthday celebration then in the late morning we are going to Chennai to Pastor Daniel's for lunch and a prayer meeting. In the evening we are going to the reception hall, for the man who donated the land, daughter's pre wedding celebrations as she is getting married on the 29<sup>th</sup> in Bangalore. Rose and Betty were given new salwar's, which are a kind of skirt and pants combo. John, Betty and Jackulyn cut out the rest of the stars, Rose was a little annoyed about this as the children were supposed to do it for themselves. John also made the holes in the cardboard for the Christmas candles. The family had noodles for tea and then we all had family prayer at 7.30pm. It has been a big day and tomorrow will be bigger but thank God we are all back together although John has expressed the desire to see if he could bring his flight forward as he is concerned about his daughter, Kate, understandable. Betty said if he was going home early, she would go back early too, if they can get early flights. If it turns out that way then Rose and I can settle everything down again here, but Your will be done, Lord.

It is Tuesday the 27<sup>th</sup> of November and my poor Rose had trouble sleeping after 4.00am because of this migraine that refuses to go, and we continue to ask our Lord for His help. It is so frustrating for me because we see the Lord's healing power here so often, that I cannot help asking, why do you not heal my Rose, Lord. Everyone is up and ready by 6.45am to go to the orphanage but we must wait for coffee first. We set out walking but after a short way, Benjamin comes along on his motorbike and Betty hops on, it is just starting to rain so Benjamin leaves an umbrella with us. The rain gets heavier so Rose, John and I step it out a bit quicker, but the rain is getting even heavier and as we arrive at the orphanage, it pours down so much that we couldn't hear anything else but the rain. Then the power goes off, but we manage to sing a few worship songs, pray a little, and have

the birthday cake. There were lollies for the children, and we give thanks for the blessing of PA equipment, TV and everything else that was miraculously donated to this orphanage. All finished by 8.00am so children can go have breakfast and then start their school lessons. It stops raining and we make our way back, slipping and sliding in the mud and through the big puddles. John is trying to get his tickets changed but Betty seems undecided about whether she is going home early or not now, Lord please help! We leave in a four-wheel drive with George, the driver, John and Benjamin in front, Betty, Rose and I in the middle, Surya Raj and Lenin in the back. We stopped in town in amongst a big political demonstration and picked up Appa. Then it is onto Pallavaram where we had dropped off Appa previously, then on again to Pastor Daniel's where we had coffee from his wife and their new baby daughter. Upstairs for lunch of rice, dhal and chicken then we walked into town to the main road where we separated. Betty and Benjamin going to buy ice cream, Rose, John, Pastor Daniel and I going to HDFC bank for money, and we are supposed get the wedding gift, but the shop is shut. We got back just before the others, then all enjoyed the ice creams and after that we all went upstairs for the prayer meeting. There were five other women, Pastor Daniel, Surya Raj, Lenin, Benjamin, Pastor Daniel's wife and three children and one other boy apart from us. John gave talk on Galatians 5, followed by more coffee then off we go again in the car to stop twice to find a wedding gift, we eventually found an ornate clock for the new married couple and had it wrapped well. It was then a short drive back through very narrow back streets and very rough roads and we arrived at a hut where there were a few adults and children gathered for another home church meeting, more coffee was served, and I gave a talk on 'The Power of God's Healing. Head out again in the car and not far to a very, very, large Hall, which was lavishly decorated. This is the place that the pre marriage reception is being held. This man is a millionaire, and you can tell by the expensive surroundings, and it is obvious that no expense has been spared. We drove up to the entrance, footmen open the doors and usher us inside. Meanwhile people are streaming in from everywhere and Mr Arunachalam comes rushing out to greet us. We seem to be the only ones he does this for, then he hands us over to another man and who escorts us to our seats in a very prominent and privileged position right opposite the band who hadn't started playing yet. We take our seats and look around this giant hall. The stage is all set with the two golden thrones for the couple, garlands of flowers and Hindu gods everywhere, because it will be a Hindu ceremony. There is a picture of the bride's mother on the wall as she is deceased and there are lavish decorations everywhere. There are also two large screens showing what the video cameras are recording, as they record the event, and they are constantly scanning the hall and entrance. Then the band starts up and our ear drums are hurting, so we screw up some tissues to use as ear plugs. You cannot breathe for the noise and still people are shouting above the music even to the point of talking on their mobile phones. We sit in this for over an hour when suddenly people start getting out of their seats and wandering outside. What is happening? They are going to eat in another very large hall, tables are set, and food is distributed, it took about six sittings with well over 600 people at a time and still there were more waiting. Benjamin, John and I got us all a tiny cup of soup which we drank still sitting in our chairs and suddenly the bridegroom arrived with his own huge entourage complete with another band, as well as all his family and friends. He paraded into the hall to then sit on his golden throne and shortly after that the bride arrived with her own entourage to join the groom on her own golden throne. The next step was for people to queue up to present their wedding gifts to the couple, one gift was a very expensive new car. When the gifts are presented, each person has their photos taken with the couple. Benjamin, Betty, John and I took our small gift up and suddenly Mr Arunachalam arrives from nowhere to have his photo taken with us. Rose didn't want to go in the photo, so she stayed in her seat watching it all on the big screens. There was another even bigger screen at the back of the hall and some more screens up in the gallery level as well. It was well after 9.00pm and Benjamin said it was okay to go now so we made our way outside where we were given a show bag each. In each of the bags there was a silver plate, lollies and a few other treats. Then we were given

trays of ice cream which we ate in the car on our way home. There was just so much more to this wedding like the golden sari that the bride wore tonight, apparently it cost 4 lakhs of Indian Rupees which would have been around thirteen thousand dollars. We all agreed we had never seen so many people at a wedding, there were about three thousand guests present and even in Australia, our own millionaires do not do things on the same scale as we had observed tonight. We are all very tired by the time we got home, and we fell into our beds exhausted. Betty's birthday was special in many ways so that was good, but she has decided to stay on with Rose and I, rather than to return to Australia early with John.



We all wake up late this morning, prayer at 8.00am which Rose did not attend as she stayed in bed to help her get over the headache she has, and it is not surprising after last night. We all wished John a happy birthday and it looks as though he can get a flight home next Wednesday. Rose and I repack our bags, then we check our emails and then Rose creates a proper accounts book which we expect Benjamin to use accurately from now on. John has gone to see the orphanage builders with Benjamin, Betty is reading, and I am repairing the grinder. Rose, Betty, John and I went by auto rickshaw into town to buy paint for the toilet, shoes for Surya Raj and myself, thongs for Rose. Back by 3.30pm for coffee. Got ourselves ready to go to the orphanage to celebrate John's birthday and John wore his new Dhoti and of course we all laughed. We all walked to the orphanage where we sang songs, had some prayer time, followed by cake, sweets, then the kids did some dancing, so we all joined in with them. We got home by walking through the inky darkness and turned in for the night.



On Thursday the 29<sup>th</sup> of November Benjamin, John and I went into town at 10.30am to get some electrical parts for the orphanage, then we all head to the orphanage so I can install some of it. Not long afterwards we arrived back we had a meal. Rose spent the afternoon on the computer but once again there were so many power cuts all through the day, that it made it hard to get anything done. Jaya's baby shower supposed to start at 4.00pm but then we heard 6.00pm. Finally at 5.00pm, there is no power once again, and it is beginning to get dark, so we get dressed for tonight, with me dressed in my white Dhoti and Rose in her pink and blue salwar. Now we sit and wait and see what is going to happen. At 6.00pm Pastor Smiley starts the prayer meeting with songs and praise then Benjamin introduces the Mamre Team, and we each share a little. Betty sings and I give the final blessing, then the ladies start going up to Jaya, who is seated at the front, and blessing her by putting a few bangles on her wrist along with gifts of money. While this is going on the meal is dished up and people sit around to eat the biryani, bananas and sweets. We go and sit in the kitchen to have ours, by this time it is 8.30pm and the children are fed and sent home to the orphanage to their beds. By 9.00pm

it is quietening down, and we go to our rooms and soon things become quieter, and we turn our lights out.

Up at 6.30am, prayer for Rose and me then the others came around at 7.30am. We then decided we would all go round to do the electrics at the orphanage at 10.00am and as the qualified electrician, I will allocate jobs. Jaya and her family will be leaving sometime today so we will come back to say goodbye. In the Indian tradition a young mother to be, would normally go home to their mother to be ready for the birth and they would spend the first couple of months of the baby's life there also. We tidied up our room and had our morning wash then it was breakfast for Betty and John. We all left early as Lenin was offering a lift for Betty on the bike. We all worked very hard as it was a very big job, and it was a true blessing that I used to be an electrician because we were wiring up the whole new second floor of the orphanage. This meant that there had to be a dozen power points, six fans, ten light fittings plus of course the new junction box. Of course, all of that required the wiring to be run inside conduit to protect it. Betty left on a bike to go home around 1.00pm but Rose, John and I worked until 5.15pm then rushed back to say goodbye to Jaya and her family. Tears all round and they got away about 5.50pm for their train at 6.20pm at Chengalpattu. Betty and John watched Benjamin and Jaya's wedding video and the Tsunami, while we were in our room.

Up at 6.30am after restless night, prayer at 7.00am then Rose gets to work doing four loads of washing with some help from the girls. We spent some time organising Christmas gifts for the children and typing a shopping list then it is time for our morning wash. Sat around waiting for Esther who didn't arrive until 12.30pm. We then went to Tamil Nadu Christian Council orphanage only a short drive on the Mamallapuram Road. Esther had brought lunch of rice, potato, vegetables, chicken, cucumber and dhal. All very nice and not too spicy, she had also brought bread and even a cake. We spent a couple of hours talking and showing Betty and John round the complex. Once again, we are so impressed with Esther's work and her helpers, Benny the driver and a new man who is taking up the running of this orphanage. All such good people. Benny drove us back to the house where we folded all the washing from this morning. Jackulyn and Jayaseelin are the only two here as Amma has gone to see a doctor in Chennai. At 5.30pm we leave to collect Benjamin from the orphanage and go to a prayer meeting which starts at 6.00pm. When we get there, they were just finishing as apparently it had started at 6am this morning and had finished at 6pm tonight, oops! Somebody got it wrong. Betty and I prayed with a girl who they said was demon possessed, she may well have been but she was also very simple so that may have had a lot to do with it. I prepared some talks, skits and songs for services tomorrow and we had some prayer time at 8.00pm with Jackulyn, Jayaseelin, Amutha, Ambica, Rose, Betty, John and myself.

It is Sunday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December, and we are up at 6.30am for a quick wash down and coffee then Rose, Betty and I are into an auto rickshaw after having walked to the main road. Mass was at 8.00am with a different priest today, a very young man, back by 9.30am by auto rickshaw and passing Appa on his three-wheeler loaded with bags of rice. After coffee and prayer, we are ready to go again by 10.00am when we went by car to just past the leper hospital to a small church where I gave a talk on Responding Fully to God's Call, we performed the heart skit and sang action songs there as well. We left there around 11.15am and back to the orphanage for their service, where John presented the teaching, we all prayed, sang and did action songs as well. We left at 12.45pm for home to have lunch of fish, rice, vegetables and poppadums. John stayed at the orphanage as the engineer had just arrived before we left. We spent afternoon reading and preparing teachings, then helped the bigger girls to make more stars for Christmas. It took us until 6.00pm to get them all done and then a quick change, cup of coffee and the car came to take us to the leper church. I gave talk on The Lost Sheep; we performed some action songs followed by prayer and then we gave out biscuits to



all. What an incredible privilege it is to provide ministry to these very special souls. The car came back for us around 7.30pm and we got home to find no power, so we prayed by candlelight then at 9.00pm power came back on, and we all went to bed.

On Monday there was some warm water in the washroom bucket, so Rose and I shared this for our shower by the usual tipping it over ourselves and it is the first time we had a hot shower in India. Because it is raining so heavily, I cannot work on the orphanage electrics, so we mainly caught up with some work on the computer. We had lunch of chicken, rice and vegetables along with egg and fried bread with cups of coffee in between. We managed to get the Christmas cards and invitations printed so that they can be delivered today ready for the Carol service tomorrow night. Appa's foster mother died yesterday morning and we are going to pray with the family tonight at 6.30pm. However, we didn't leave until almost 7.30pm when the car came and then we had to go to the orphanage to pick up Benjamin. It only took five minutes or so to drive to the village and Appa was there to meet us along with his lovely family. They were mostly girls who were all very well educated and spoke very good English. One wanted to be an optician in her 2<sup>nd</sup> year of university, another wanted to be a computer engineer, another a pharmacist and the son was studying to be an engineer. They all expressed a desire to come to Australia so they could earn a good wage. Email addresses were exchanged, and prayers were said then photos and coffee followed. We are back in the car, dropped Benjamin at the orphanage and we are home by 9.00pm. It has stopped raining so maybe we will get some washing and electrical work done tomorrow.

It is Tuesday the 4<sup>th</sup> of December, and we are up at 6.45am ready for prayer, then Rose started to do the washing and she did six loads. We had just hung it all out and it rained again, never mind another rinse won't hurt it. I went to town to buy a switch; some wire and I got some money out of an ATM machine. John went to the orphanage to put the fans up and Betty stayed in her room all day except for meals. After lunch of mutton, rice and vegetables Rose is back on the computer then she helped Appa and I to fix the grinder. It works well now that I have fixed it, and it has saved 9,500 rupees. We left at 7.15pm after the children had arrived to go out carol singing, and we walked all around neighbourhood until 11.00pm. We got back to the house utterly exhausted and so full of coffee and biscuits, given to us from almost every household we stopped to sing carols at.

The next day, Rose was back on the computer to finish all the children's profiles for the orphanage records and she kept a copy for us. John, Betty and I had some prayer time and then we were all cleaned up by 10.00am. After that we had coffee then the car arrived to take John on his journey home, so all our prayers, best wishes and goodbyes went with him. I accompanied John so that we could make our final farewells at the airport. Rose got back onto the computer and worked in peace until 12.45pm when her lunch was served of chicken, rice and vegetables. Dinner for Rose was a cup of coffee and three biscuits at 7.15pm then prayer at 8.00pm with Amma, Amutha, Ambica and Geetha and Catherine. Into room at 8.45pm and Rose will expect me home around 10.00pm. I have travelled with John to the airport to wish him well and then it will be a long drive back to Chengalpattu.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of December we are out of bed by 6.45am for prayer, then we sorted out the Christmas gifts for the orphanage children ready for wrapping. It has been raining heavily most of the night and everywhere is very wet. John will be on his way to Sydney out of Singapore by now. I went to town to get mutton and some money for Betty. I came back one and a half hours later very wet and muddy with no money, her card was not accepted. We cannot wrap the Christmas gifts because the scissors have been taken round to the orphanage. Surya Raj has taken the ink cartridge from the Lexmark printer to get a refill. I cut up the mutton for a good old fashion fry up, mutton is another

word for fully grown sheep. Nothing is wasted and all the scraps will be in our soup for another meal. We will manage to get three or four meals from the mutton, as there will be curried mutton for the Indian family for a few nights. Around 3.00pm the scissors arrived and Rose, Betty and I spent just over an hour wrapping and labelling 58 presents with a few spares, just in case. At 5.00pm the church meeting tonight was called off as people had to go to a funeral. Rose and I are into room by 8.00pm and it is not actually raining now, and Benjamin had received a phone call from John to say he is safely home, praise God.

It rained heavily through the night, and we are up at 6.30am ready for prayer at 7.00am, then Rose and I had our own prayer time. Rose had a shower while I spoke to Benjamin while Betty had some breakfast. It is still very overcast with a few showers, so there will be no clothes washing done today. Yesterday's washing is still sitting on a chair waiting to be hung out. I went to town to get Betty's money, toilet rolls for her as well, string and some Panadol tablets. It took me 1 ½ hours and I came back covered in mud again. Lunch was served at 11.10am of chips, mutton curry, rice and vegetables then Rose, Amutha and I hung the washing on the line. I made the holes in the stars, and I threaded the string through them, we hung them up in our room for the glue to dry. Amutha had grabbed all the washing in as it looked like more rain so Rose and I folded what was dry and hung the rest over the back of some chairs. An hour later we hung it all out again and during all this the painter is putting an undercoat on the outside of the house and bathroom. The meeting at Ravi's house is cancelled as his mother has a fever but we are supposed to be going somewhere else instead. Ended up at 6.30pm at a house just down the road on the other side where a mother, her 18-year-old son, 14-year-old daughter, 10-year-old son and 5-year-old daughter lived. Betty gave a talk on Prodigal Son, followed by prayer and a request for a blessing, of the house. The 14-year-old girl, whose name is Mary proclaimed a miracle after we had prayed for her swollen hand, because the swelling went away. Back at home Rose and I started some family prayer with Amutha, Ambica, Geetha and joined later by Amma.

We are both very disappointed by the lack of any in-depth ministry here in Chengalpattu and we challenged Benjamin as to why he has been holding back. During the time we have stayed with Benjamin and his family we are convinced that something is wrong, because Benjamin used to be on fire for God and his ministry. God help us not to judge but please help Rose and I because we must discern what is happening here and try to put it right.

It is Saturday the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, and I did not have a good night, woke at 2.20am from a bad dream then couldn't get back to sleep, which disturbed Rose's sleep as well. Rose finally woke at 6.30am but she did not get up until 7.30am only to find me sitting on my own in the kitchen. Betty was not up yet so Rose, and I had prayer then Rose started five loads of washing plus there was yesterday's washing still damp, so she had to find room for it all and thanks be to God, the sun is shining. Betty had boiled eggs and roast bread for breakfast. I went to town to get Betty some antibiotics for her cough and sore throat, and I got a lift with Benjamin on his motorbike into the Bus Station and I returned by auto rickshaw. When I got back Rose was working on the computer again still finishing up the final touches to the children's profiles. We have stripped our whole bed and put the mattress and pillows out in the sun to dry. At the orphanage today there is a delegation of people coming from the Ford motorcar company with the intention of seeking sponsorship for the orphanage from them. We have been trying to teach Benjamin how to reach out to Indian business companies to seek sponsors for the orphanage. By doing that, it would free up some of our resources, so we are able to help even more ministries. They are providing lunch of chicken biryani for the children and for all of us as well. We washed our bedroom floor, collected the dried washing in before we changed our clothes and then we walked to the orphanage. There was twenty-seven

young men from Ford while none of them seemed to be over thirty. Some of them could be mistaken for schoolboys, but apparently, they all have responsible positions and are all well paid. They danced and they played with the kids, gave out sweets, pencils and biros before leaving at 4.30pm. Most of them were really touched by the children's responses to their presence. Another young man had asked us to pray for his kidney stone pain to go away so Rose and I laid hands on him in prayer. Then, about half an hour later the same young man was telling everybody about his miraculous healing. We eventually learned that he had suffered from the pain of a kidney stone for three days and after our prayers for him the pain had stopped. We walked back home with Amutha, Ambica and Geetha who had caught us up. Rose read through her talk for tonight while I wrote out some stories for the campfire night on Monday. Betty went to bed early while Rose and I left for Ravi's house where his mother, two other ladies, twelve children, Jackulyn and Ravi, all listened to Rose's talk on Wise and Foolish Builders. We were asked to pray for one of their neighbours who had a serious injury to his leg, and it would not heal. After that we sang some songs, had a time of prayer, milk and biscuits followed on afterwards. Betty got up and we had family prayer then into bed by 8.30pm and this time next week we will be at Grand Manickam hotel for our last night. I tried to ring my daughter, Sharron, but I was not able to get through to her .

On Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup> of December there must have been another load of Christmas carol singers going round banging a drum very late last night, which set the dogs barking, people talking, cocks crowing and pots banging, so not a good night. It is a bit chilly this morning but at least it is dry, and the sun is coming up. We had prayer and coffee at 7.00am then we got ready for mass. At Mass there was a visiting priest, and he did go on a bit and Betty timed his sermon at 25 minutes, but he really let the congregation have it as he got stuck into them. We got an auto rickshaw home by 9.35am. Betty had breakfast of boiled eggs and roast bread again. Then we walked to the orphanage for the 11.00am church service and there was only ourselves, the children and Ravi. I gave a talk on the parable of the talents, followed by prayer and blessings. Home by 12.30pm for lunch of rice, mutton curry, vegetables and fish. I spoke to Benjamin for a couple of hours in our room while Rose helped to fold a large pile of freshly washed and dried clothing and she interceded for me as well. Betty returned from town with Jayaseelin, she had bought a little dress for a one-year-old girl and pants and a top for a 4-year-old boy. I was downloading information onto discs from Benjamin's computer for us to take home. This time next week we will be up, up and away on the beginning of our journey home. That evening, Rose and I were going through the video footage on the camera.

We are up at 6.45am for prayer at 7.00am and afterwards Rose and I are going to the orphanage to finish the wiring of the electrics. Appa and I are going to get a Christmas tree this afternoon for the orphanage. Then Rose and I went round to put a bell up at the orphanage gate and to sink an earthing wire for the electrical system. The carpenters have nearly finished the outside awning so I presume the bunks will go up next. At last, we were able to observe how the orphanage ran on a day-to-day basis and we were not impressed. The only person there was Lenin, who is on holiday from Saudi Arabia, and he was asleep. The children were just left to themselves and Ellapan, one of the smaller boys, sat on his iron bed in his own filth all morning. No cleaning had been done, no washing, no cooking and the second storey smelt very badly. We left at 12.20pm to get back for lunch because we had finished installing the bell and connecting the earthing wire. However, Benjamin has decided he wanted a fan installed in the new awning as well and some extra power points. So now I must go back to town this afternoon to buy these things and I will install them tomorrow. We had lunch of flavoured rice, mutton curry and chips. Betty had brought ice cream off a street vendor, but it was inedible. Some great news was shared about the man we had prayed for two days ago with the injured leg that would not heal. He is telling everybody that God sent two foreigners to pray for him so his leg could be healed. The news is that he is claiming and proclaiming

a miraculous healing from Heaven. He is also telling anyone that will listen that he is no longer a Hindu, because he believes in Jesus now. I left at 2.15pm for another trip to the town centre while Rose folded washing, read, did some ironing. I arrived back by auto rickshaw at 5.45pm just as Betty was ready to go to the orphanage. Rose made me a coffee and we sat down for five minutes before we got ready and walked round to the orphanage as well. We had good fun with the campfire, singing, telling stories, having sparklers and celebrating Jayaseelin's birthday with cake, then we all walked back.

We asked Benjamin to explain to us why the children had been left unsupervised and why were they able to sit around in their own urine and faeces? Also, why is the only person that was left in charge of the orphans, asleep? We let him know that we were very angry with him because of the seriousness of the problem. He was also told that if the authorities ever found out, he would be in serious trouble. To overspend and as a result to run out of the money needed to feed the children was bad enough, but this latest episode is unforgivable.

In the very early hours of the 11<sup>th</sup> of December, I had to give my Rose an injection to enable her to finally get some relief from her migraine headache and to enable her to finally get some sleep. After morning prayer, I cleaned all our shoes then Betty had her breakfast. Rose and I went off to the orphanage to install the fan, two fluorescent lights, a connection box, a bell box and power points to the awning area outside. We then had lunch of rice, mutton curry, vegetables and dhal in Benjamin's office then we continued with the wiring until 2.45pm when we left, exhausted. We walked home to find Appa's family there and they had come visiting and had bought us a gift of a wall plaque plus one for Betty as well. We have decided to postpone the DVD film night until tomorrow. We had evening prayer at 7.45pm with Amma, Amutha, Ambica, Geetha, Catherine, Betty and ourselves and into our room by 8.30pm

On Wednesday after morning prayer, we learnt that John's daughter had a baby girl today weighing 6lb 3ozs through a normal birth and they named her Mali Rose. We told everyone here and they are all very excited and we also rang Solomon as well. At 8.30am I was promised that Surya Raj would come round and do the accounts with me. Rose did some clearing up on the computer and then she peeled some vegetables for Amma. At 11.30am Benjamin came with the accounts book with nothing written up in it. He said he would send Surya Raj round, then we went back to the orphanage. We had lunch at midday of rice, chicken curry and vegetables. Coffee at 3.30pm and after many phone calls Surya Raj arrived with the accounts. It only took us a quarter of an hour to write them into the computer and into the book but both Benjamin and Surya Raj will have to come tomorrow for lessons on how to use the new computer programme. We left at 5.15pm for the orphanage, then we set up TV, DVD and video camera and tried to show some films. Later that evening we walked back home while Betty got a lift on the bike with Lenin, then we had prayer time with Amma, Amutha, Ambica, Geetha, Betty and us.

On Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> of December we are up at 7.00am for prayer then Rose and I had bible study followed by our morning wash. We all did the washing this morning and I did vegetables as Jackulyln had lost the bike keys and everyone was frantically searching for them. Weather is overcast so I hope the washing dries as this is our last chance to wash clothes. I spent lot of time on backing up the computer records then we did the accounts together again and we still cannot get Benjamin to understand that he is in debt. He, Lenin and Surya Raj went off to meetings at 11.30am while some of the washing is drying but slowly because it is still overcast. Had lunch at 12.45pm of mutton curry, rice and vegetables and the power was off again so we could only read. I fixed the plug that



is hanging off the wall by the kitchen then the rain started, and it was a quick dash to get all the washing in. At 4.30pm it was still raining so we asked for an auto rickshaw to come at 5.00pm to take us and all our parcels to the orphanage. Well wonders upon wonders the auto rickshaw arrived on time and Rose, Betty, Jackulyn, Ambica, Amutha, Catherine, Geetha, Fatima, me and the driver all got in to get over the rough and boggy roads to the orphanage. We set up the Christmas tree under the new awning and decorated it. As we had just started the programme of Christmas carols, the power went off, but we managed to do the play in the dark. Then we sang some more carols and then while we were handing out their Christmas gifts the power came back on and all the children were delighted with their gifts. To see the happiness of our dear orphans was an absolute treat for us. After the final prayer and blessing we walked home with Amma, it was still raining lightly, very muddy and slippery. We gave George's two children a present each and back indoors for some coffee and into our room after 9.00pm but having sleep in tomorrow, no prayer until 8.00am.



It is Friday and our last full day here, as we are up at 8.00am for prayer then Rose and I had bible study before checking our emails. It is pouring with rain this morning and the power went off during our prayer time. We spent the morning packing, trying to get our flight seats booked and eventually at 11.47am we got our seats confirmed. We had lunch of chips, mutton curry and rice, Benjamin, Surya Raj and Lenin arrived. So, it was nearly 1.00pm before we started explaining how to use the computer programs to them. It turned out to be only Benjamin and it took him a long time to grasp how to use the programme correctly. At 6.30pm we had coffee, then at 8.00pm had final prayer time with Amma, Appa, Benjamin, Surya Raj, Lenin, Ravi, Jackulyn, Fatima, Suganya, Amutha, Ambica, Geetha and Catherine and the three of us. Then we head into our room by 8.45pm for our last night here.

It is Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> of December and we had 7.00am prayer with Rose, Betty and I followed by some bible study before doing our final packing and cleaning up. Then after we had our morning wash, we started saying goodbyes and praying with everyone. We left at 10.15am in the little white car to Chengalpattu Railway Station. Benjamin and Lenin came on the bike with one suitcase. Rose, Betty, Jayaseelin, Surya Raj, Driver and I plus all the other luggage are in the small car. The train was in the station, so we got on and got a seat, by the time we reached Tambaram the train was packed and when we wanted to get out at Pallavaram we had to push our way through the crowds. The boys carried our cases up and down flights of stairs and then across the uneven roads of Pallavaram to the Hotel Grand Manickam where we were given room 209 and Betty got room 208. Made a few phone calls then gave the sim card to Benjamin, prayed with them all and sent them off after final prayers. We had the luxury of a hot shower and changed into fresh clothes, then we got an auto rickshaw for 100 rupees to Le Meridian Hotel for lunch. We ordered some wine for Betty and me while Rose was happy to have coffee. Then Rose ordered lasagne, Betty ordered fillet of Sole, and I ordered a steak. We had beautiful fresh bread rolls and with butter, bottled of water and sweets for afters. The entire meal came to two thousand five hundred rupees, less than sixty dollars, then got an auto rickshaw back to our hotel by 4.00pm. What a special treat that last meal in India truly was. Back in our room we watched a movie with Paul Newman and Julie Andrews that evening.

On Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup> of December we take off on our flight to start our journey towards home via Singapore. Also, we were privileged to be on board one of the new double decked airbuses A380 aircraft and they are huge.



The last few weeks of this trip to India were filled with many blessings. However, there were obvious problems that was going to force us to keep a very close eye on the running of the part of our ministry that is in the control of Pastor Benjamin. Despite that fact we will try to remember the many blessings that we had the privilege of being a part of.

## Chapter 20

### Home 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007 to October 2009

By the grace of God our team has safely arrived home from our latest Indian mission trip. Of course, as you have already read, John Milligan left to return home early on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December and Rose, Betty and I left India on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December.

It was so good to be home in time to celebrate Christmas with our ever-growing family.

Then in January we sent out our latest newsletter to all our supporters and especially thank the dozens of people who had donated specific amounts of for the mission trip. Some donated large amounts but whatever money our supporters gave, we always use each amount for a specific purpose, like a bore water pump or supplies for our orphans and lepers. So, to that end, we have a policy of reporting back to each person to tell them what their donation was used for and show them by giving them the photographic proof. In this way they have something to remember what a beautiful gift it was that their donation made possible.

We received a beautiful summary of John Milligan's view of his experience by accompanying us on our last India mission trip and which was also placed in the newsletter.

#### *My Adventures in India by John Milligan.*

*When the opportunity to go on this trip was first offered to me, for some reason I felt compelled to accept even though I had very limited knowledge of Mamre and those involved or even in the type of work (I'm a builder by trade) that I would be involved in once over there. India was possibly the last place I would have chosen for such an adventure.*

*To experience the godly faith of the 28-year-old, Pastor Benjamin, and his family in trusting God to provide for the needs of the 71 orphans that they have taken in so far was truly humbling and to see what God could achieve with my meagre offering of loaves and fishes was awesome.*

*Once there however, I soon realized that God wanted me in a position where I would have to rely on Him rather than my own resources and as I got to know Craig, Rose, Betty and the wonderful Indian families that went out of their way (and their homes) to make us feel welcome, I began to appreciate the amazing opportunity that had been presented to me.*

*Then to be taken north to Chirala and to find 25-year-old Pastor Solomon and his family caring for the congregations of the four churches that they have established (and constructed) in the local Hindu and Dalet villages, caused me to seriously question my own commitment over 38 years of being a Christian.*

*So, when Solomon naturally assumed that a man of my 'experience' would jump at the opportunity to be the guest Evangelist in his 3 day "Healing, Gospel and Evangelism" Crusade, I was reluctant to refuse, even though the thought of preparing 5 messages for the crusade and another 5 for the village ministry left me feeling totally out of my depth.*

*However, God came to the rescue and the 11 days at Chirala turned out to be the most inspiring, albeit exhausting days of the trip and together with the days spent with the poor*

*villagers and their children and the privilege of supplying fresh drinking water to two villages was more than I could have ever hoped to experience.*

*As I think back now over all that was accomplished at both centres in the time we were there and to know that we, and the money we made available, were in a real sense, the answer to their prayers for so many of their most pressing needs, makes me shudder to think I might have decided not to go at all. No doubt, God would have found someone else, but what a blessing I'd have missed out on.*

*So, thank you Craig and Rose for taking a chance on me, and thank you all who support Mamre, I can assure you that your donations bring real blessings to those who receive them. There are so many wonderful people to meet and experiences to be had, so if you feel you need some 'spiritual stretching' sign on for the next trip, if you're game.*

*Sincerely, John Milligan.*



We also received a short summary from Betty Graver.

### ***MY VISIT TO CHENNAI-INDIA NOVEMBER 2007 by Betty Graver***

*My greatest time in India was watching the children and seeing the smiles on their faces when I used to visit them in the orphanage. Every time I saw them it brought joy to me and all who met them, all they wanted from me was to dance for them. So, I realized that it was only the simple things that the Lord wanted of me, I did not need to go anywhere else, all I needed to do was keep the smile on the faces of people wherever I went but especially the children, which I love. I did organize a Christmas concert for them, but the best joy they gave to me was to see their eyes sparkle as they opened their Christmas presents which a donation had been made to make it possible to purchase them, just for that so we could buy a present for them all.*

*So, thank God for all those children, some who have aids, some who have mental problems, while others have no relatives at all, but they are fortunate that Pastor Benjamin and his family love and care for them so much.*

*From Betty*



Betty is in her eighties and despite her age a real blessing for our charity and she is a fundraising dynamo.

She is always game to help-out and have a go at most tasks.

While she will go on to accompany us on five India mission trips. Thank you, Betty,



## **OUR PRAYER LIST OF FUTURE PROJECTS, SHOWN IN THE JANUARY 2008 NEWSLETTER**

*Money is needed for the following projects:*

- To complete the Orphanage in Chirala
- To build a Second Building in Chengalpattu for the older girls
- Finances for the clothing of the Dalits in Chirala
- Finances for the Medical Camps both in Chirala and Chengalpattu
- New Teacher for Chengalpattu Orphanage as one of our current teachers, Jackulyn, is getting married and leaving the area
- Continued finances for the feeding and welfare, in mind, body and spirit, of all those under the care of Mamre International Aid

*PS Mamre International Aid is growing fast but the demands on our resources often move faster. As you will see on the pictures below, our one storey orphanage is now two storeys' high and it is an exciting time to be part of this ministry.*

**THIS IS THE ROOF OF THE ORPHANAGE PRIOR TO THE NEW BUILDING WORKS**



**THE OUTSIDE OF THE ORPHANAGE IN 2006**



**THIS IS THE NEW ROOF OF THE ORPHANAGE WITH SIDES AND A ROOF (some children now have beds to sleep in)**



**THE OUTSIDE OF THE ORPHANAGE IN 2007**



### **SECOND STOREY ON ORPHANAGE**

*As you can see from the above photos a lot of work has gone into the remodelling of the orphanage in Chengalpattu.*

*The roof structure that was built back in July by Max has now taken on sides which are going to be clad with sheet metal. The floor has been completely tiled. There are two toilets upstairs which are also tiled. The whole of the upstairs was wired up with fans, lights, TV and PA system have all been installed.*

*Also, the carpenters gave up many hours of their work for free and supplied all the materials for making cupboards for the children to put their clothes in and to making the bunk beds seen in the picture.*

*Outside in the back yard a wash house and a kitchen have been constructed and on the side of the building has been built an anning which was wired and has fans and lights too.*

### **WHAT A MIGHTY ACHIEVEMENT**

*Mamre International Aid wants to thank Max who initiated the project, John who put many hours into helping with this project including cleaning out the sewers. To Betty for all her fundraising, because without the money nothing can go ahead. BUT also, to the many businessmen of Chengalpattu who have donated goods, money and time into giving these orphans a lot better way of living. Thanks also to all our supporters for your prayers and donations, if, as we have already said, we cannot do without the money.*

***MOST CERTAINLY NOTHING WOULD HAVE HAPPENED  
IF GOD HAD NOT BEEN THERE WITH US.***

So, as you can see, things are moving forward, very swiftly and all our members, as well as our supporters are praying extra hard.

**THIS IS EMAIL WAS SENT FROM  
PASTOR SOLOMON FROM CHIRALA IN INDIA  
(printed as sent)**

**HEALING MINISTRY REPORT IN NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2007 (MAMRE FAMILY)**

**Main Church.....THOTAVARIPALEM**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>SICKNESS (Miracle)</b>
1.Bhagyam	Converted
2.Turupataiah	Converted
3.Chinna Koteswaramma	Leg pains
4.Matthew	Fever
5.Shalem Raju	Fever
6.Pulla Reddy	Chest pain
7.Imavati	Physical weakness
8.Beaulah	Hip operation success
9.Victoria	Converted
10.Mariyamma	Physical weakness
11.Seshamma	Recovering from the shugar

**Old Dalit Village .....AANANDAPURAM**

12.Subba Rao	Chest pain
13.Prabhakar	Leg pains
14.Dur ga	Body swellings
15.Jalamma	Demon released
16.Polamma	Chest pain
17.Ankamma	Fits (weakness)
18.Venkaamma	head ache

**New Dalit Village .....AASRAYAPURAM**

19.Subbamma	Hands pain
20.Chinna	Fever
21.Saramma	Chest pain
22.Kumari	Hands pain
23.Elijah	A boil on the head
24.Kumar	Fever
25.Kamala	Breathing problem
26.Ramanamma	Stomach pain
27.Kondamma	Headache
28.Naryana	Fever

**Weavers Colony Church .....WEAVERS COLONEY**

- 29.Mamata ..... Kidney disease problem
- 30.Saramma ..... Fever
- 31.Lakshmi ..... Headache
- 32.Philip Raju..... Got good marks in studies.

These are the people healed in your 10 days mission work in Chirala.

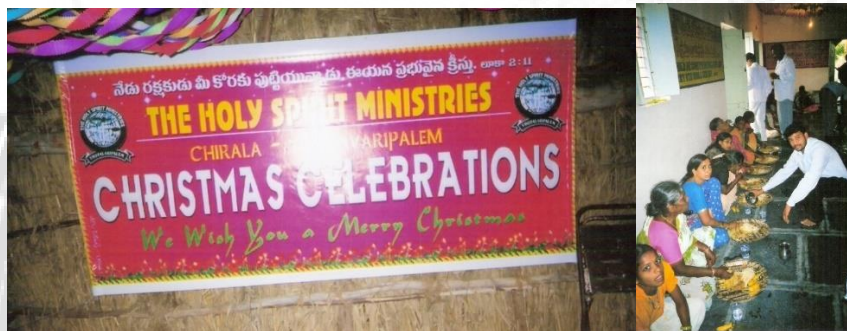
Mamre has recently forwarded the funds to construct a Grass Roof on the school cum orphanage building in Chirala. The pictures show the construction taking place in July.



Also, funds were forwarded to Chirala in central India for the purchase of a four-wheel drive vehicle which is second hand, and which will be used to transport children from remote areas so that they can now attend the school.



After our life changing visit to Chirala, Pastor Solomon sent us some photos of the Christmas celebration that we had left money for the Dalet villages. These were the two villages that we had adopted and provided hot meals for during the cyclone that I spoke about earlier.







## ST JAMES CHURCH AT TWEED HEADS

The last time Craig and Rose were passing through Tweed Heads they managed to catch up with some of the Mamre members who attend St James Church.

These faithful members regularly collect money during church services for the Orphans in India.

Pictured is the collection boxes and the permanent display dedicated to Mamre.

A big thank you to all at Tweed Heads for the wonderful effort.

*Please note that most of this congregation are over 80 years of age!*



Max Cracknell, our Mamre International Aid vice president, who had accompanied, me on our India mission trip early last year, left for India once again. He departed for India unaccompanied so that he could assess our growing concerns about whether Pastor Benjamin was to be trusted or not. This was based on our concerns, following on from discovering that Benjamin did not keep any financial records despite his previous and constant insistence that there were account books that were kept up to date diligently. Each time we asked to see the financial records, he would always have an excuse as to why he could not show them to us. His favourite excuse was that the books were with his accountant until we finally learnt, after much pressure, that there were no records at all and there never was.

We had insisted from the very beginning, during our 2001 India mission trip, that because we were a registered association and charity within Australia, we were required by law to keep all records of our finances. So, with that in mind, Benjamin assured us that he was keeping records of all his finances for the operation of the orphanage, including staff wages and the cost of provisions. So, when we found out that there were no records, Max volunteered to find out more. He was determined to help us see if his deception was deliberate and dishonest or whether it was an innocent mistake due to inexperience. In other words, was Benjamin, personally benefiting, by using donated funds for his own use.

I mentioned much earlier in this account of my faith journey, that although God had so miraculously healed me from my suffering of acute – chronic back pain and from being a semi-cripple, I was suddenly struck down with severe pains in all the muscles of my body about two years afterwards. My GP had no idea what the cause of my constant pain was, and by 2008 I came to a very-bad place in my desire to dull my physical pain and the pain of the two betrayals of our Indian pastors. I had started to drink hard liquor and I had been doing it secretly, in the hope that nobody would know.



My drinking habit was steadily increasing in my desire to be free of pain. I had been in acute chronic pain for over twenty years before God healed that and I could not understand why I would once again be struck down by more pain. Yet here I was again suffering for a further ten years with pain from a different source and nobody knew what the cause of it was.

Everything came to a head as I could not cope any longer and I had a complete breakdown. I had at first been drinking alcohol more and more in secret for many months until it became too obvious. I got to a point where I just could not cope as even my own doctor could not understand the severity of my pain. So, I just gave up and would rather die than live any longer with such constant intense pain yet again. I even thought, why would God allow this? After all, why had He allowed it after having healed me from it once before.

After a stay in John Hunter hospital near Newcastle, I was booked into St John of God rehabilitation hospital at North Richmond in New South Wales. But of course, I had hurt most of my family members because most of them had known of my heavy drinking. Naturally it was my beautiful Rose that I had hurt the most and I do not deserve her forgiveness but despite everything she stuck by me, she was so loyal, and I did not deserve it. I am also aware of how much I must have hurt my Lord by not speaking out more boldly to make someone understand, instead of trying to handle it alone in such a bad way. While I was in hospital, I was seen by a few specialist doctors, and they found out that I was suffering from fibromyalgia. Fibromyalgia is a condition that can make every muscle in your body ache and the larger muscles cause the most pain. It is a condition that can just suddenly occur and there is no cure for it. I was also told that it is an incredibly hard condition to diagnose and that is why my very diligent doctor of over thirty years, could not pick it up.

So, after many weeks of treatment and counselling, I was discharged as a new man with my pain managed in a much better way. I had been prescribed to wear a 100 micrograms per hour Durogesic fentanyl patch to be stuck on my upper arm to dull my muscle pains. Each patch lasts for 3 days when a new one is put on and so now my pain level has been dulled to a much lower level so I can cope much better now.

In all things and every situation, God uses them to give encouragement, courage or even healing for others. Because by having been a crippled man in acute chronic pain and by having suffered a total breakdown because of acute pains, it has opened many new doors to make it possible for me to help others as a chaplain.

God wastes nothing and as scripture tells us, He uses everything for the good of others. We could never understand what any situation would be like unless we have already experienced it ourselves. While another point made by many Saints and great spiritual leaders is that it is only through our own suffering that we can understand in a small measure, what Jesus suffered on the cross. So moving forward, I must try to embrace what is said in: -

#### ***1 Peter 4: 12-13***

***Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.***

#### ***Luke 14: 27***

***And whoever does not carry their cross and follow Me, cannot be My disciple.***

So now I am back with my beautiful Rose, and I can only hope that I can in any and every way, make it up to her. In the meantime, Max has been in India to help us assess whether we can continue to trust pastor Benjamin not to steal from the donated money we send over each month.

Rose's brother, Michael, and his wife, Pam, arrived in Australia for a visit to see Rose and her sister, Linda and our families. They have flown to Australia from London in England as they live in Ilford in Essex over there. Rose and Linda have not seen their brother for thirty-two years, so their visit is special.

While Max was in India, he helped Pastor Benjamin to pick out a four-wheel drive vehicle to transport the orphans. He also helped to put the final touches on the second storey of the orphanage building and to generally help Benjamin by advising him how to manage his ministry more efficiently. By doing that Max was more able to discover that Benjamin was taking donated funds for his personal use and when Max returned home to Australia, he reported his findings to Rose and myself. Therefore, we must do the right thing on behalf of all our members and supporters by withdrawing our support for Pastor Benjamin. We are so glad that we had taught Benjamin how to gain financial support for the orphanage through the Ford company in India and other local companies so that the orphanage can continue to function without our help.

We have had to discontinue support for two young Pastors now and it leaves us wondering if there is anybody in India that we can trust to take charge of allocating donated funds when we are away, with complete honesty.

For the rest of this year, we will both take time out from ministry, except for essential tasks, and we will enjoy some rest and recreation.

In March we had some time out with a trip to Sydney where we enjoyed the harbour by taking trips on some of Sydney's ferry services. Then in April we enjoyed a trip to the Zig Zag railway museum where we saw all the old trains and where we had a trip down then back up the actual zig zag rail line while we were pulled along by a steam engine. The Zig Zag railway system and museum are in Clarence which is not far from Lithgow but up in the blue mountains. It is called the Zig Zag railway because the railway line needs to zig zag its way up and down the huge mountain side that it travels up and down. In some places there are bridges called viaducts that span between peaks, and you can see some in the first picture. When we arrived at the bottom of the line, we enjoyed seeing all the old engines and carriages in the museum and many of them were being repaired or serviced by the engineers who keep everything working.





Then in April we celebrated our son-in-law's birthday by watching him drive an authentic racing car around the track. He had just reached his thirtieth birthday last October, his name is Richard and he is married to our daughter, Angela.

In June we also visited Featherdale Farm with two of our grandkids, it is a small zoo and is situated in the western suburbs of Sydney.

Much of my time in 2008 has been devoted to my Chaplaincy duties with St John Ambulance. I spent much of that time checking in with St John Ambulance volunteers to check up on their welfare. I spent quite a few days at the Royal Easter Show to serve our members and the general public along with other duties in general.

While in August we took all of our younger grandkids to Lollipops Playland in Jamisontown near Pentith. They all had a great time in the huge ball pit, the slippery slides along with all the other attractions. Just watching them running and jumping around made us feel tired, then we all enjoyed having lunch together at the café.

We also celebrated Rose's sixtieth birthday in August and all of our family joined in. Our third eldest grandson, Matthew, celebrated his birthday in August as he had turned eleven.

The Christian ship, named Doulos, was moored in Sydney and we heard that it was open for inspection and for Christian book sales. So in September we went along to check it out and to purchase some Christian books. Doulos means servant or caregiver and the Doulos Christian ship travels around the world to spread the good news of God by providing cheaper Christian books to those who visit the ship.

After nine years of living permanently in our caravan and ministering to churches, prayer groups and small communities, we are moving into a granny flat in Glen Road in Emu Heights which is a suburb of western Sydney. This one bedroom granny flat is owned by our very dear friends, Trevor and Anne Ledger and it is very cosy. As we enjoy being in Glen Road, we have also submitted our names with the department of housing so that we will eventually be approved for a property that will include subsidized rent.

Just prior to the end of 2008, we headed north for our Annual General Meeting which, among many other things, we will vote whether to stop sending support to Pastor Benjamin in India. The vote was unanimous to cease Benjamin's support payments, therefore we will inform him of our decision. Because our Mamre members are spread across our vast country, it is our practice to hold the AGMs at a different location each year. To make it possible for any member to vote and especially for those who live too far away from where the AGM is to be held that year, members can cast their votes in writing or choose a proxy.

Because we now live close to our children and grandkids, we get to see them a bit more often and that included our 2008 Christmas celebrations.

In early 2009 we travelled over 2000 kilometers, to visit all of our members and supporters throughout the states of New South Wales and Queensland.

On Thursday 26th March we were at Morisset in New South Wales and enjoyed praise, worship and fellowship with the St John Vianney prayer group. It was great to be with these wonderful people who have been so supportive of Mamre and have given Rose and I so much happiness. At each location we presented our latest video presentation, which highlights the latest work of Mamre International Aid.



On Friday 27th March Craig and Rose had lunch with a couple from Blackalls Park, near Toronto in NSW. James is blind and he works tirelessly for the handicapped people in Australia. His wife, Sylvi and his trusty guide dog go with him.



Also, on Friday we made another visit to Dora Creek to show a presentation and collect a bag of reading glasses which will be taken to India in November. We ask people to collect old pairs of reading glasses and we take them to India as many poor people cannot afford to buy glasses for themselves. Some of our supporters even buy the cheap reading glasses by the dozen, the ones that you can purchase in the two-dollar shops.

On Saturday, after a four-hour trip, we reached Tamworth to visit a very dear friend and supporter of Mamre, Tina and her daughter, Kathleen. Again a few extra people gathered to watch the presentation and a great time of fellowship followed.



Sunday was spent “catching up”, going to church and preparing for the rest of the trip.

On Monday it was a short, two and a half, hour trip up to Delungra in the far north of New South Wales. It used to be home for the us because that is where the Mamre Christian Retreat Centre was. Staying with our dear friends, Con and Gail, is always a treat for us to catch up and once again a gathering of other people dropped in to see the video presentation of our work. These people not only included some Mamre members but also the local parish priest and others who the Walsh’s know personally. Con has once again out done himself by selling off some of the computers he has been storing in his wool shed and the money is going to India. Also, the Inverell crowd, who live



nearby, has been selling produce on a regular basis like pumpkins and beans etc. for our Indian ministry work.



As always it is hard to leave Mount Russell and Delungra but our tour to catch up with everyone must go on. So, on Thursday morning Rose and I packed up and were on their way, leaving behind the sunshine as they crossed the mountain range at Glen Innes to meet the rain which had been falling in Northern NSW for many days. It rained heavily all the way to Richmond Hill, near Lismore and for the two days they were there it rained continually. This stop was to see two of the Committee members and two other members.



On Saturday the Walsh's were on the road once again, in the rain, and heading for Tweed Heads on the east coast of far northern NSW. All the rivers they crossed were running fast and furiously, but thanks be to God we saw no accidents or breakdowns but did see a great number of caravans being towed to higher ground.

On Sunday at 9.00 am at St James Anglican Catholic church at Miami in Queensland. Most of this congregation are members of Mamre thanks to the wonderful effort of Tom Flood. He is their parish priest and a committee member of Mamre, who is doing a marvellous job of co-ordinating the collection in the money box that is on display in the foyer of the church. Once again, the presentation was shown over morning tea and was greatly appreciated.



Monday evening found Craig and Rose at the Beenleigh prayer group in Queensland. Several people got together to praise and worship, along with Betty, who of course is our amazing fund raiser. Betty has also accompanied us on a couple of India mission trips already and what a blessing she has been. We showed the video of our latest ministry work, and it was appreciated by everybody there.

Tuesday morning found us heading further north to visit our daughter, Julie on the Sunshine Coast where we spent three days. It rained most of the time, what has happened to Sunny Queensland?

Even when they took their granddaughter to the Zoo, it rained, her name is Isabella, but we all call her, Bella.

Friday was Good Friday and Rose and I set off early to travel south as far as Coffs Harbour, again travelling through many rainstorms but by the time we reached Coffs Harbour we found it to be sunny and warm. We arrived just in time to get to the 3.00pm Passion service at the local church and we found the parish to be very much alive with the Youth doing a re-enactment of the passion, with a large choir and the church was so packed it was standing room only.

Saturday we were on the road again heading to a Port Macquarie suburb called Laurieton, to spend time with Michael and Lorna Morson and their family. These are committee members and again the presentation was shown and appreciated. Mass at Laurieton at 7.00pm that night lasted over one and a half hours but was very memorable.



Easter Sunday and Rose and I left Laurieton and arrived at Raymond Terrace in NSW to visit Fr Michael Irvine, his wife, Wendy and their family. Michael is the Vice President of Mamre International Aid and as such is a big help to us in the administration and constitution of Mamre. A lovely lunch was enjoyed, and they enjoyed the video presentation as well.



Final trip down the F3 was very slow due to an awful amount of traffic heading back into Sydney but home was eventually reached, we unpacked, and we settled down for a good night's rest. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their hospitality, love and generosity and we are certain God will bless them in everything they do. After the showing of the latest video presentation to all our members and friends, it inspired them all to better understand how effective our missionary work has become.

Our tenth grandchild was born on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June to our son, Craig jnr, and his wife, Tarron, and they named her, Samantha.



A man named, Jeff Chilton, phoned me to ask if I would address his local branch of Toast Masters men's group and tell them about our missionary work. It was held in the northern Newcastle area and apparently Jeff had heard about our work after we had been interviewed by a local radio station. The meeting was well attended and judging by the questions that were asked of me after my presentation, I would say that they all showed a lot of interest in our missionary work.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July we held our Annual General Meeting at Con and Gail Mureau's house at Delungra in northern New South Wales.

Now that we are living at Emu Heights, I have joined St John Ambulance as a first aid provider to support our local community. Then I completed an advanced responder course plus a first aid trainers' course with them as well. After only a couple of months in St John Ambulance, I was asked if I would consider becoming one of their Chaplains and after I was interviewed for the position, I accepted that duty. I was also made a child protection officer with St John Ambulance. That kept me busy for a few months, but they are aware that I will not be available when we are away during our missionary work in India.

When I was injured during my air force service and was eventually told I was no longer able to work full time, I was being paid under the Commonwealth employees compensation board. However, all my ex-military service friends were always saying to me that I should be eligible for a totally and permanently incapacitated, TPI, gold card pension, but I continued to be knocked back, many times, as not being eligible.

You see on compensation payments; I was not getting any other benefits that a TPI gold card can offer. No free medical for all conditions, private hospital benefits, free dental, free physio, free travel and much more. All I received was the payments and they were much less than a TPI pension as well.

Then a really good mate of mine said, you should go to the Vietnam veteran's association for help, and I said, I was in the service during the Vietnam war, but I did not serve over there. He answered, that does not matter they help all servicemen regardless of where they served. So, I went to the local branch and after they heard my situation, they asked me two questions. The first question was, have Veteran's Affairs ever asked you to fill in form number? I cannot remember the number of the form now, but my answer was, no, I have never even heard of that form. So, they then said, here is the form, fill it in and we will submit it. They then explained that Veteran's affairs never volunteer their help, and they were not at all surprised that I was not informed about the correct process.

The second question I was asked was, have you ever had access to your military health records? My answer was, no, I never knew that I even could. They then gave me another form for the release of my medical records which I filled out as well.

Within a few weeks, I was approved to receive the TPI gold card pension and I was told that I should have received it twenty years ago. They also said I would receive back payments and when I asked if it would be twenty years' worth, they said no the maximum by law is three months.

I was so overcome with emotions, that I cried that day, because once again we are so very blessed by God. Now that I am on a Totally and Permanently Incapacitated, TPI, gold card pension I will receive all medical, dental, hospital, physio, podiatry, specialist and any other need I might have all

paid for. I can even request a driver to take me wherever I want to go and as I get older, I might need other things like an electric wheelchair or other things, wow.

Grandchild number eleven was born on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September to our daughter, Angela, and our son in law, Richard, and they named her, Matilda.



We spent most of September and November catching up with our growing family and what a joy our grandchildren bring us.

When we settled into the granny flat in Glen Road in Emu Heights, we have also placed our names on the department of housing's waiting list. Then because of my new Department of Veteran's Affairs TPI gold card status, I was put on the priority waiting list.

On about the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2009, we received a phone call from the Department of Housing, and they said, we have a place available for your inspection and if you like it you can move in. However, if you do not like it you can choose to wait for another property because on the priority waiting list you can get a second choice.

The property was a villa in a complex with fourteen villas altogether and the one we were offered was villa number eight. A villa is usually a small, one- or two-bedroom, property all on the ground floor, where as a townhouse is usually two storeys. This villa number eight is on Stafford Street in Kingswood and after inspecting it we felt that it was very nice, but we had to consider that we are leaving for India in just over two weeks. We also felt that if we turned it down, the next property may not be as nice as this one, so we accepted the property.

Now we must move in within a week and a half of when the property lease is signed and the keys handed over, so we are still free to travel to India. The whole task of moving has stretched us a lot, but we pulled it off and asked our new neighbours to keep an eye on our new villa while we are away. It turned out that all the other residents had been handpicked to live in our complex as it was reserved for elderly residents of good character.

It is obvious that when it was prophesied that I would receive more faith than most men and that would also make me more accountable, the blessings never seem to dry up, they just keep coming.

But I always must remind myself of the bible verse from Luke 12:48  
***“To him who is given much, much more will be expected”.***



## Chapter 21

### India 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2009 to 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2009

On Monday the 9<sup>th</sup> of November we left the Ibis hotel at 9.30am by shuttle bus and we arrived at the Sydney International airport. Then we checked in to Singapore Airlines flight SQ 232 to Singapore and our main luggage was checked in. We went to Gate 61 which must be the furthest boarding gate from the main terminal, where we got a seat by the window and had breakfast of current toast, tea for me and hot chocolate for Rose. We started boarding our flight at 12.10pm and took off on time at 12.45pm. Our seats are in two of three centre aisle seats, and we were given orange juice and peanuts which we put in our bag for later, then we rested. It was very cold on the aircraft, and everyone was glad of the blankets supplied. Our meal was roasted lamb with mashed potato, vegies, a roll, ice cream, cheese and biscuits plus coffee. We listened to a couple of Dwight Pryor teaching tapes and some music then more food arrived. We arrived in Singapore at 6.42pm, Singapore time, which is 8.42pm, Sydney time. Then we had to get the airport's light rail to take us to Terminal 2 and we walked a long way, to Gate 42 where we sat until we could get through to the transit area at 7.45pm. Our carry-on baggage was checked and got onto Flight SQ 258 at 8.00pm, then took off at 8.30pm. Another snack and orange juice then shortly after a meal of lamb, mashed potato, vegies, roll, ice cream and orange juice, sounds familiar. We watched a movie as we head for Chennai and after what seemed like a very long time but was about 5 hours, the plane arrived over Chennai before the estimated time of arrival. So, we were all hopeful for an early landing but no such luck as another plane had 'broken down' on the runway and we had to circle round over Chennai many times until given the all-clear to land at 10.40pm, Indian Time, which is about 3.00am, Sydney time. Then we made it through the customs checks, picked up our luggage and got a taxi to The Orchard Inns at 19 Woods Road, Royapettah, in Chennai.

We did not fully wakeup until about 8.30am and we ordered coffee then Rose did some clothes washing while she showered while I was repacking our luggage. We then had Bible Study, ordered more coffee, got dressed and head out to look around the local area. It is monsoon season, so there are many very heavy showers, so we hire an auto rickshaw to take us to Chennai central railway station and book two tickets to Chirala for tomorrow at a cost of 168 rupees, which is just under five dollars each. We then hired another auto rickshaw to take us to Spencer Plaza, which is the largest shopping plaza in Chennai. We purchased an Indian Sim Card for our phone, some sugar, tea and coffee then we head back to our hotel. We have a small heating element that you plug into a power socket which can heat a cup of water for tea or coffee. We make some phones calls to home, using our new Indian sim card at 1.45pm, which is 6.45pm in Australia. We ordered some tomato soup and chips and enjoyed it while we watched a bit of Indian satellite TV.

It is Wednesday the 11<sup>th</sup> of November which is our wedding anniversary, and we were awake by 6.00am. We had showers, re packed, had some tea and coffee, Bible Study and then had to wait until 11.30am for Arul to arrive by bus. Went down to the foyer at 11.45am with Arul, signed out and waited for a taxi which we took to Central Station. We sat on our suitcases while we waited for our train and talked to Arul. He had come to ask our forgiveness for his previous dishonesty and bad behaviour. We have arranged to go and see him and his family before we fly home on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December. While we sat on our suitcases, we had lunch of potato dosa then we boarded our train. Thanks to Arul we managed to get seats and he put our cases on the luggage rack, and it wouldn't have been so easy without his help, then we said goodbye. The train pulled out at 2.05pm on time, we are heading for Andhra Pradesh, 342 kilometres north of Chennai. The train was packed, noisy, and even though it was supposed to be a super-fast express we did not pull into Chirala until almost 8.00pm, all but 6 hours travel time. Solomon, his dad, and another man had brought the new multi

seat vehicle that we had purchased for them to meet us. They took care of loading our cases and bags which was wonderful. Back to the Holy Spirit Ministries Church and compound where we are met by Solomon's sister and his mother, amma, who were both happy to see us again. Immediately Rose is bustled into a beautiful Indian sari, and I am asked to dress in an Indian Dhoti for our anniversary celebration. They sang songs, had flower leis presented to us, a cake was presented to us to cut plus there were balloons everywhere, and many photos were taken. What a very special way to be honoured so much on our fourteenth wedding anniversary. At 10.00pm everyone went off to supper and we crept up the concrete outside stairs to our room on the roof of the church. Solomon had already put up the mosquito net, so we undressed and crawled under the netting for our first night in Chirala.



It took us ages to get to sleep mostly because we were killing bugs and getting used to the hard bed which was also quite damp due to the roof, doors and windows leaking. In India you will not find the type of mattresses that we are used to in most western countries. Most Indian beds are usually made from wood with fabric strapping, like seat belt strapping, or they are just solid wooden slabs. Then the mattresses that they use are usually only an inch or two thick. So, when you try to sleep on such a hard surface, you generally spend the night turning from side to side as your hips start to hurt. We are up by 7.00am and sat outside to pray and watch the beginnings of a new day. Our morning prayer time was at 8.00am after coffee and the family joined in. Then we had a long talk with Solomon re the current problems he is facing. We shared an apple between us then we had more coffee, read, wrote two postcards and spent time in the church, where I had a fresh idea for fund raising. Lunch was hot soup, rice, sweet egg bread and chapattis, but we only ate a little bit for each of us. The soup was hot alright, both hot in temperature and chilly hot as well. Then we spent the whole afternoon and evening Indian fashion sitting, watching, talking, listening, reading and sewing. Solomon got the train tickets to take us to Chandrapur when it is time to go on to our next ministry destination. The tickets only cost us 482 rupees, about twelve dollars, for 2<sup>nd</sup> class berths and the distance is 579 kms which will take about 11 hours. Around 6.00pm Rose and I spent some time in church before turning in for an early night.

It is Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of November coffee arrived at 7.30am when we had prayer and Bible study with Solomon then Rose had her wash while Solomon and I went through the accounts. Then I had my wash which consisted of tipping cold bore water over my body with a plastic jug, lathering up with the soap, then rinsing it off with the jug. All the men went to Chirala railway station at 10.30am and Rose spent time reading, watching the goats and then praying with the ladies in the church. We came back at 2.00pm with all the train tickets from Chandrapur back to Chennai, so now all our travel tickets are booked, praise God. We gave Solomon his November and December ministry money from Mamre International Aid. Then had lunch at 2.30pm of sweet egg bread, which we put jam on, chapatti and curried meat. We sorted out things we will need for our ministry at the Dalet village as we are supposed to leave for there at 4.30pm. We had a quick wash and change then I booked a room at the Hotel Mayur in Chandrapur for Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>, then I phoned KM in Rajura to confirm our arrival. We left nearer 5.00pm, got to second Dalet Village on the sewer canal and while us men

set up, Rose taught the women of the village how to do French knitting and they were all fascinated. We found out the bulb in the overhead projector has blown, probably from being thrown around en-route, so we will not be showing the Passion movie as we had planned. I gave a talk on Unity and Loyalty then we dished out two, twenty-kilogram sacks full of rice into saris, bags, skirts, shirts, tins and anything else that our Dalet people could think of to carry the rice in. The inevitable praying over everybody in the village happened then we are back into the car and home by 8.30pm. Amma greets us and coffee is soon on its way, while Rose prays that I can fix the overhead as that is needed for all of her talks for the entire trip, she will be lost without it.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of November the day started with prayer and Bible Study with Solomon then talked about the development of the widow's hostel in the new building. Decision made to raise the walls with two windows, a door, some flooring and shelving for 20,000 rupees, about six hundred and fifty dollars. The builder came and construction will start today and to be finished in approximately four days. There are already five widows that need accommodation. In the Indian culture, widows are shunned and treated badly, while in most cases, they are even shunned by their own family. I went into town to order, bricks, cement, and to see about a possible new globe for the overhead projector. Rose spent the time in intercession with three other ladies and I returned just after 2.30pm with no luck for the overhead, so all of Rose's talks that required the overhead for her presentations are now wasted. Mamre has spent fifteen thousand rupees on this new building and Solomon will put in five thousand rupees from his November money from Mamre. Without the overhead Rose had to re-design her Prayer talk and will teach it from the computer. Rose had just set up the computer in the church downstairs when a fuse blew, what next? It took 20 minutes or more to fix it then praise and worship went to 8.45pm. Rose spoke for over an hour and thanks be to God it was well received, everyone wanted prayer and it was nearly 11.00pm before we got away. The family went over to eat, and we went to bed hopefully to sleep.

It is Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup> of November, my mother's birthday and at 7.00am coffee arrived. We had a storm in the night but this morning it is back to hot and humid. I tried to ring my mother, but I could not get through. When we went to wash ourselves, we noticed that the tiles for the widow's hostel have arrived. Then prayer and Bible Study, then we rested until 11.00am, then church starts with over two hours of praise and worship and testimonies. For the main Sunday service, I gave a talk on being a doer of the Word of God. At the conclusion of the service everyone came forward for prayer and it is 3.00pm before we leave to have lunch. Not many churches would last for that length of time every week, they are very devoted. Lunch was beef and mutton, rice, bread, chapatti. We were meant to leave at 4.30pm but being India, we actually left after 6.00pm, stopped just down the road to throw in two sacks full of rice then onto number two Dalet village, where we went on Friday, to pick up a man and a teenaged boy. Then we are off to this new village we have never been to before, the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalet Village, but apparently, we have fed them occasionally with the money that we send. It is pitch black as we are shown around, we really could not see much of anything then onto the grass church for praise and worship. A teaching was shared by me followed by a sharing from Rose and then we gave out bags to children and the rice for everybody. Home by ten after stopping for coconut water on the way and we have tried several times today to ring my mother but no answer.



On the 16<sup>th</sup> we are noticing that the family will not stay long for prayer and Solomon is easily distracted and starts talking to others or is running in and out. So, we are starting to notice that they are not as devoted to God as we first thought. We swept out our room, wrote postcards to Dr Mark, Andrew, Betty, Nan, Trevor and Anne, all dear friends and supporters. I went to town with the men and Rose spent the time in church then did some sweeping and had another coffee. Although it rained throughout the night, it is now back to hot and humid. We did eventually get through to my mum for her birthday. There is no building happening today and the ladies are washing. I arrived back with the other men at 1.45pm and I had purchased some lollies for the village children, I had posted the cards in envelopes. Toys for the two girls here were also purchased plus an extension lead. We had lunch of fish, bread, and jam and then I cut Solomon's beard and Rose cut my hair, then we had a quick wash and some coffee. Don't know why we rush to get ready, as we were told we were leaving at 4.00pm, wrong we didn't leave until after 6.00pm. Appa arrived back from Guntur, which is a large town 50 kms away, where he had gone on the bus to buy a loudspeaker system and microphone. We walk for two kilometres over railway tracks, paddy fields and sand dunes to reach the village we call our first Dalet village. Of course, it is so dark we can't see a thing as there is no electricity in the village. I share a teaching from the Word of God, we hand out lollies and rice then after prayer for each person we walk back. When we arrive back, we sit and talk over a cup of coffee then up to our room for the night at 9.00pm.



Rose found it very hard to get to sleep, as she kept recalling what happened at our leper village, how very like in Jesus' time it was, us all sitting round listening to Jesus through me. Reminding us all just how much Jesus loves us and cares for us. Why can't it be like this in Australia? She did eventually fall asleep but tossed and turned and her left hip is really rebelling because of the hard bed. For some unknown reason they put the church loudspeakers on at 5.30am and blasted the neighbourhood with Christian music. This morning we had our usual morning prayer and Bible study, but again it was only us. The bricklayers have arrived, and much discussion goes on, until finally at 10.00am after prayer for the widow's hostel, the building was started. The first trowels of cement that were laid by us are recorded on photos. Mamre's hostel for widows is underway, thanks be to God. By midday the walls are going up and the doorway is in place. Lunch at 1.30pm of fish, rice, bread, different fish today with many bones, so we had to be very careful. Rose was asked to speak at 2.00pm to the ladies who are having intercession in the church, so she decided on a talk about Esther. After the talk we gave out reading glasses for our village people and we then prayed over one and all. Back to our room for a rest and coffee at 3.30pm. At 7.00pm Rose and I were in the church reading and there were four ladies praying when we all squeezed into the minivan to go to the weaver's village.





On the morning of Wednesday the 18<sup>th</sup> of November, the loud music started at 4.30am. So, I say something about it to Solomon and I explain that just because the Muslims disturb people with their very loud music, it does not make it acceptable for us Christians to disturb the sleep of the locals as well. At 7.00am it is still raining with thunder rumbling all around and we had prayer and Bible Study as usual. Today we are cooking meals for our Dalet village then taking it over to them. We waited till the rain stopped around 9.30am to have our morning wash and to do some clothes washing. We kept the fan going to help to dry out the bed and the room. I am designing a banner and business cards for Mamre International Aid, which is going to get printed here in Chirala, the banner will cost 200 rupees and the business card 600 rupees for 1000, that is about twenty dollars all up. I left for Chirala at 10.30am and Rose sat downstairs waiting for the food to arrive so she can help to prepare it for cooking. In the meantime, the heavens opened, and a torrential downpour hit us as we start to making some samba. At 1.45pm everything was prepared and cooking on the open fire in a huge pot. The sun is out again so Rose hangs the washing out then she had a cup of coffee. The printing will be ready by Friday and lunch was beef, rice, bread and I had some vegemite as well. Solomon was curious about our vegemite, peanut butter and golden syrup and he wanted to try some. He loved the peanut butter and golden syrup, but you should have seen his face when he sampled the vegemite, it was very funny. On a previous trip, another young Indian man asked us if it was poison when he had tasted it. It is 3.00pm when we go to our room to rest, before leaving for the village at 4.00pm. It was good to see the village and its people in daylight, to recognise old faces and see a few new ones or children who have grown up in the 2 years since we were last here. We handed out some canvas tote bags and then we fed them all, and after the talk we prayed for each person. Then we had a chance to play some cricket with them until it was time to get back for the evening prayer meeting. The meeting began with praise and worship then I gave a talk on some of the parables from the Gospel of Matthew.

On the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> there was no loud music so my talk with Solomon must have resulted in him realising that people don't want to be woken up at an ungodly hour by such loud music. No rain in the night but the bed was still very damp, we hope it dries out today. Coffee arrived at 7.30am then we had our morning wash and prayer plus Bible Study with Solomon. The men are continuing the building today so we shall take more photos of the widow's hostel. Solomon is going to Chirala to pick up the banner, which is ready, but the business cards won't be ready until at least Saturday. Nothing on until this afternoon so Rose did some computer work, and we had more coffee. We prayed in church, went over to see the building work progressing, had lunch of fish, rice and bread. Solomon is not back in time for lunch. At 1.00pm the ladies of the congregation start intercession in church, they are so faithful. Rose and I did computer work all afternoon. Solomon came back with the new banners; they are very good. At 4.30pm we all left for the fifth Dalet village for more prayer ministry. Then after that we went to a hospital to pray with someone who had been injured in a farming accident. By the time we got back, we were served coffee, then off to bed and lights off by 9.30pm.

On the morning of Friday the 20<sup>th</sup> of November our feet, legs, arms, backs, in fact everywhere has been bitten so badly by mozzies, that we were scratching all night. Up this morning and sand is being off loaded from a bullock cart while we enjoy our coffee at 7.30am then we washed ourselves and

did some clothes washing. Prayer and Bible study with Solomon, in the meantime the bullock cart comes and goes delivering sand to the compound. The sun is out, and it is warming up so we spend the morning on the computer, along with the short trip over to see how the building is going and then praying in the church. Lunch is at 1.30pm and consists of chicken fried, rice and bread, then we get changed ready to go to another village at 2.00pm. True Indian fashion as we didn't leave until 3.00pm then walked over while thunder rumbled around. The villagers were happy to see us, and we gave out toys for the kids and plates for the adults. We walked back in light rain and checked on the building which is almost done. We sat in church with Solomon and his family to talk about the dedication of the widow's hostel tomorrow. We are back at 6.00pm to rest until we leave again at 8.00pm for the weaver's village. Just us, Solomon, 1 lady and Ratna Raju, Solomon's brother-in-law, and when we arrived Nana and 1 boy were already there. The church slowly filled with women and girls only during the worship. We sang the action song called, thumbs up and hiney mah tov which they all loved so much they were rolling in laughter. I gave talk and then we prayed with everybody who was present.



On Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> there was very intense rain in the night as we felt it dripping on our faces, the bed and the floor was running with water and then there was thunder and lightning. Got up this morning to water everywhere and looks like more to come but we will try to air the bed out once again. We had prayer and Bible Study with Solomon at 8.00am and left for Chirala at 9.45am. We stopped on the way for cool drinks then to look at and order broken bricks for filling in the holes where the car has made ruts in the sand. Then we move on to the printers to pick up the business cards that I had ordered. We stopped to get the price of a wooden door for the widow's hostel. After some enquiries we found out there is no Catholic church in Chirala so there will be no Mass for us tomorrow. We are back at 1.15pm to find the bullock cart being unloaded of the broken bricks that we had ordered. At 2.30pm we went over for the dedication of the widow's hostel along with 15 ladies from the local villages. Then we came back at 4.00pm for coffee and in between times another cart full of broken bricks arrived. We have a rest and more coffee until 7.00pm and then we get changed before heading down into the church for praise and worship. Rose starts her talk at 8.30pm with about 20 women present and we finish at 9.30pm. After another coffee we retire for the night.

It is Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November and at 7.00am we are given some coffee, but Rose does not emerge until 9.30am, due to her migraine and everyone is very concerned. We got cleaned up and more coffee arrived, then Bible Study followed. At 11.00am Rose gets dressed in her sari and myself in my white Indian robes ready for church. The service starts with praise and worship, testimonies, and a teaching by me on tithing. The testimonies go on for nearly an hour and all of them are claiming healings from God, because of our personal prayers for each one. All the testimonies are given in their own language, but Solomon is interpreting them into English for me as they speak. We end up by giving personal prayers for everyone present and most of them are expecting miracles like those proclaimed in the testimony time. We finally leave the church by 4.00pm for a short break before we must leave again. We rest till 5.00pm then off with Nana, Ratna, another boy, and

Solomon to the house on the corner where we pray with a lady I prayed for this morning for a suspected ulcer. We were served bottles of ice-cold drinks and then we move on to the second Dalet village, where the sacred tree is. We give out toys and plates and just as I am about to speak the rain comes down again, so we make a run for the car and head back home. Have coffee and chat until 7.30pm when we turn in for the night and read for a while.

More rain in the night, had trouble sleeping with mozzie bites itching, decided they are not mozzie bites but bed bug bites as there are not mozzies inside our netting. Up at 6.30am it is still raining slightly, we wash, have prayer and Bible study. At 10.00am we were going to leave for Chirala but the car wouldn't start and after much pushing and talking it got going at 11.30am. So, Ratna, Solomon, Rose and I went to Chirala to go to bank, internet, get a plug then back home. I mended the electric grinder that had broken down then we had lunch at 2.30pm of biryani, chicken and bread. We had an easy day today with not very much ministry planned and we are into bed to avoid mozzies, had coffee then settled for night.

On the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> there had been no rain in the night but there was a silly rooster strutting around all night cock-a-doodle doing, he has no idea when daybreak is, and we could have easily wrung his neck. Up at 6.15am and it is still cloudy when coffee arrived at 7.00am then a wash, some clothes washing, prayer and Bible study. We were told there is nothing on today except to go to the beach tonight. Solomon asks Rose at 11.00am if she will give a teaching to the women at 2.00pm so she threw together a talk on Faith. Before that the wood arrives for the widow's hostel's door, their sander breaks down, so I fixed that as well. Lunch of fish, rice and bread, this is our last meal here, then it is time to head into the church. Rose delivers her talk, along with singing and prayers until 3.00pm then we were given some coffee. At 4.30pm we are ready to go to the beach but were held up waiting for Amma. We saw the fishing boats coming in with their catch, Amma bought some fish and crabs, and they were so cheap at about 30 catfish for less than \$2. Then it is time to head back home after stopping to buy fruit and milk. We then had some coffee before we go to bed to read by 7.00pm.

On the morning of Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup> of November our last night here is over, there was music all night and people talking loudly then at around 5.00am the loudspeakers started, so the talk that I gave to Solomon didn't work for long. Coffee was served at 7.00am, followed by our body wash, prayer and Bible study. Then we were packing, more coffee was served, and we prayed with all the family. We gave them some school bags and some toys for the children. We left at 10.15am and got to the Chirala railway station where we had some cold drinks while we waited because the train was running late. It came in at 11.30am and we left at 11.31am. The boys helped us into our carriage and the train was moving as they jumped off. We are in 2<sup>nd</sup> class non a/c, very hard seats, no windows and we are off to Chandrapur. After 3 hours we had travelled almost 100 kms then we had a 45-minute stop at Viyayawada. For some of the way Rose and I had 6 seats (berths) between the two of us, but it did not last when 5 men, 3 women and a baby came to take the vacant berths. They proceeded to have dinner which resulted in a big mess of food droppings everywhere. Then it was time for everyone to settle down for sleep which left Rose and I sitting in the dark. The train made up time and got into Chandrapur just after 11.00pm. The cases are proving to be far too heavy for us to carry up and down stairs and a kind old gentleman helped me by carrying one of our cases and then he asked for twenty rupees. I was so grateful that I gave him two hundred rupees, after all that is less than five dollars and he was delighted. We got an auto rickshaw to the Mayur Hotel for fifty rupees and were shown to room 111 which is a suite with a lounge room, TV, bathroom, with an actual bath which we have never seen before in any Indian hotel. We won't be using it though because it is disgustingly filthy but for 750 rupees per night this is luxury with a capital L. Looking



forward to a good night's sleep as it is well past midnight. It has got very cold tonight and we put on blankets.

We found it hard to get to sleep because mosquitoes were buzzing around us all night, got up at 7.45am and read the newspaper. Had some coffee then a hot shower, sent the washing to be laundered and it will be back at 8.00pm tomorrow. We ordered lunch of Tomato soup and potato chips and when the power came back on, we made ourselves some tea. Then we spent the afternoon reading and watching TV.

Up at 6.00am and we spent the whole day resting, watching TV and reading. Lunch was tomato soup, hot chips and some chicken done in sauce with vegies, it was quite nice. The laundry came back just after 8.00pm so we went to bed to read after we rang Betty for her birthday.

On the morning of Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup> of November, we are up at 6.45am to have a hot shower and our own tea and coffee. We packed then paid the bill and at 10.30am KM arrived with his brother, Minaymin, in the small fiat car. Another local pastor was with them, but he was on a motorbike. We finished our coffee, and we are off with Minaymin driving because he is a very good driver. KM cannot drive very well as he has had two or three attempts but crashed each time. We arrived at Rajura after the one-hour journey, to be met by Appa, Amma and Miriam (KM's sister) with her new baby named Gifti born 29<sup>th</sup> October 2009. Then we are introduced to KM's wife, Mumtha, who is 8 months pregnant with the baby to be due on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2010. We are shown into our room, same as before, go for a quick walk around to see the changes, which are few and then we unpack. Lunch is egg and rice at 1.45pm and rest until 5.30pm when we changed and five of us leave in the car. KM walked on ahead to Indranagar where we have a home church meeting with a small group of women and children. After praise and worship, I shared a teaching then prayed the Benediction. Biscuits and coffee are served, while we pray for them all, then seven of us are back in the car to get home for our first night in Rajura.



It is Sunday the 29<sup>th</sup> and it was a surprisingly cold night, and we are so grateful that we had purchased a couple of blankets. We have the new bed which was KM's marriage bed and although it is better than the old tin bed it didn't take long for our hips to ache and added to the cold neither of us slept that much. There was movement around 6.30am but we stayed in the comparative warmth of our bed until 7.30am when we got up and had Bible study. Amma brought her great milk coffee at 8.00am, then we had a very cold wash, then we sat in the sun to warm up. Rose is dressed in her Indian sari, while I am in my best shirt with a tie and my good trousers ready for the Sunday church service. Went into church and sat at the back until it was time for them to present us with flower leis then we are asked to sit up the front. I delivered the main teaching and at 12 noon we came out of church got into the car and went to Balharshah to the Indian Gospel church. We were presented with roses and gifts then I gave the same talk as before, but a shorter version. Then we were asked to pray for a girl who could not speak, a crippled man, an elderly grandma and a crippled young woman. We then had lunch with the church elder who lived next door, where we were served very hot beef and rice. We then went to Pastor Paul's old church where they used to live and had coffee.



Back home after picking up bottled water in Rajura. Coffee at 5.45pm as we are going out at 6.00pm to Suntana village, six of us get in the car and go to a small cottage with a few dozen people. We started with praise and worship, then I delivered a teaching, followed by prayer then everybody had chai and then on our way home KM told us some disturbing things about the way Anantha Kumar conducts his ministry. We are booked to visit his ministry centre in a few days and are booked to travel to Bangalore. KM has expressed a desire to construct a second storey on the school building as well.

It was another cold night but thanks to the extra blankets we were warmer. The women are up sweeping by 6.30am but we lay in until 7.30am. Amma brought coffee for us both and the plan for today is we are going to visit villages some 60 kms away and therefore won't be back for lunch. After our morning prayer, Rose was stopped from trying to wash our clothes and we were told to just leave our dirty clothes outside our room. We set off at 10.15am, KM, Prema's brother, ourselves and Curran, Cookies' son left for our day of ministry. We went via Balharshah then through Chandrapur and about 25 kms further on to places called Dolara, Golara, Badrawati and others visiting churches, children's clubs and pastors along the way. So many times, we got in and out of the car, had lunch with a family in the pastor's house of chapatti, chicken, raw carrots, water, Pepsi and coffee. We drank so many cups of coffee we felt like we were swimming in it. We also visited KM's auntie and cousins in a coal town, where the uncle still works. After having ice cream in a parlour in town we arrived home exhausted at 8.00pm. KM and Pastor Paul senior, came to shed more light on Anantha Kumar for us and he told us about his bad practises. So, we said, "well in that case we will not go there then". But Pastor Paul senior said if we do not go, Anantha will blame the Paul family for our refusal. When were in the planning stage for this year's India mission trip, we had been contacted by Anantha Kumar with an invitation to visit him. We were not too sure because we knew nothing about him or his work. But he had been so insistent that we eventually said yes. So now, we have some serious prayer time ahead.

On the morning of Tuesday the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, we got up at 6.30am, wrapped ourselves in blankets and went into church. We had coffee around 8.00am and sat together in the sun to warm up some more. At last, we warmed up then we went over to Prema's parent's house, her mother, brother plus his wife and two children were our hosts for coffee. We have decided not to visit Anantha Kumar, so we emailed him to say that our visit was cancelled, and it is entirely our decision, and had nothing to do with the Paul family. Then we informed our hosts, and they were delighted because it meant we would be with them for longer plus they now don't need to worry about us being involved with Anantha's ministry. At 11.45am we walk to a block of land in Rajurani, which the government have given to the homeless, they have built themselves some mud huts with tarpaulin roofs and they are extremely basic. We go to a recently widowed woman's house; she had lost her husband only 2 months ago. Previously she held meetings, children's club, and literacy classes in her house to help KM's ministry. But since her husband's death, she has not been asked to do anything. I gave a talk on the armour of God, we all had some snacks, then some people came forward for prayer. The widow has a steel rod in her foot, that was put in during an operation, and now it has become infected. I dressed her wound and prayed for her, then we went round the corner to another mud hut where the lady insisted that we all come in. We prayed with the woman and for her house, then she gave us 40 rupees in tithe, how humbling. We walked back home and then we had lunch of curried chicken, chapatti and dhal at 2.30pm. At 4.00pm we are scheduled to go to another village but being India, we didn't leave until after 5.00pm. Seven of us in the car plus three more on a motorbike and went over some very rough roads to Mahtra Village which is another very poor area. There are not many cars or motorbikes here as most of their transport is by bullock carts. We had some hot milk then after a long wait had praise and worship then I gave talk on the life of Joseph.

Then everybody except us had curry and rice, we sat on the bed while they ate then we arrive home by 9.30pm. It is cold again and Rose was very glad of Amma's shawl, have even put socks on for the night.

According to when the tickets can be booked, we are here until the 12<sup>th</sup> of December. Someone is going to Balharshah to see about changing are existing tickets, now that we will not go to visit Anantha Kumar. The plan today is to get a large auto rickshaw to take about 10 of us over seventy kilometres to outlying villages and we are due to start at 10.30am. We get up for washes, some prayer time and coffee are served at 8.00am during which we have Bible Study. We then give KM some school bags, an atlas, some women's bags, reading glasses and hair bands. He then insists on giving me a gold ring, which he says is in appreciation for everything we have done for him and his family. We don't leave until 11.30am when nine of us squeeze into a minivan to travel the seventy kilometres to take us over the border into the state of Andhra Pradesh, to a village called Comono. On the way we passed The Way of the Cross which is a pilgrimage area and hundreds come each Good Friday to climb the mountain which has a huge cross at the top. Comono is where Cookie was bought up and it is a cotton growing area. We arrive at 12.30pm and go to the house of Cookie's relatives. We have a cool drink and chai for those who don't want a cool drink, we pray for two ladies who want God to urge their husbands to come to church. One of the ladies has two girls and the other has one boy and two girls. We went for a walk around the village to another mud hut where the goat in the hut, is better fed than anyone else in the family. We prayed with them and with her sick daughter then she gives us one hundred rupees. Then we all pile back into the minivan to another village where there are three believers, and we hold another home church meeting. I gave a talk on Elijah, pray for them all, then the mother gives me ten rupees of tithe money. We had lunch of curried meat and chapattis, I thought it was chicken and Rose thought it was beef, but we thank God for our meal from this very poor family. It is after 3.00pm by the time we get back into the minivan and then we head to Asifabad where we visit a children's club where we are again given cool drinks and chai. After a short story and some prayers, we are back in the minivan heading back towards Rajura and home as it is now after 5.00pm. We head back over the border into Maharashtra are now fifteen kilometres out of Rajura when we stop at a village to visit another family, where they had prepared rice and curry which we had to delicately refuse. After we had prayed for the family, we are finally heading home. We had stopped at level crossing for ages to wait for the scheduled train to pass through, then we finally arrive back by 7.00pm. We are both exhausted and poor Rose's head is thumping with another migraine headache. So, with the milk coffee we were served, I give Rose some strong pain killers and we head of to bed. Gave all the money that has been given to us to KM for the church's tithe.

On the morning of, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December we had a rat in our room last night, sure it was not the first, but this one got stuck in a plastic bag and was fighting to get out. I got up, turned the light on and was contemplating what to do when the rat managed to free itself and ran round the room, goodness knows where it is now. The sun seemed to take its time getting up this morning, so it was still cold when we sat outside to have our prayer. Coffee came about 8.00am, we had our Bible study. I am off to Balarshah with Minaymin, KM and Cookie to sort out our changed railway tickets. Rose has a lovely visit with Moses' family who live nearby to catch up on all their news. I arrived home at 1.00pm just as coffee was made, we had finally secured our tickets to Chennai for the 14<sup>th</sup> of December, 2<sup>nd</sup> class two tier sleeping berths that would leave at 4.00pm and arriving at 6.15am. I also purchased some jumpers for us both and some bamboo for French knitting. Moses, Prema and son, James, arrive at 2.15pm with our lunch of curried meat and chapattis. We are supposed to go round to their old house where Moses' sister now lives, for a naming ceremony of her child at 3.30pm. Rose wears her sari and I put on a tie before we walk round to their house at 5pm. We start

with 3 hymns, talk by myself on the importance of names, then I had the great privilege of officially naming the little baby girl, Jessica. We had a cake for, three-year-old Rubin's birthday, we were served coffee and some chippy things which we gave to young Curran. Baby Jessica is one month old, and she had certainly christened Rose with her urine, we played with some balloons and we walked home by 6.30pm.



Up at 7.30am and we are wrapped up in blankets for prayer because it was so cold. We find it so strange to be this cold after all our previous trips of extreme heat so we will try to come during India's autumn in future. Coffee at 8.15am and we had bible study then we bathed. We did some work on the computer as we will not go out until 3.00pm. Wrong again, at 1.15pm KM came and said it is time to go, so it took us five minutes to get ready then Minyamin, KM Mumtha, Rose and I travel in the car to Sasti. This is where Nathaniel, one of the church elders, lives and we are to be served lunch here. Then Amma and Appa arrive on their motorbike because we are going to have a home church service here. We start with praise and worship followed by my teaching, and it ended after we had prayed with each person. We have coffee and a great lunch of curried fish, chicken and chapattis with no hot spices then more coffee. Then we get back in the car with Appa to another part of Sasti, to a house we were next door to on our last visit, here we are treated like royalty. Cold drinking water, cold pepsi, coffee, air conditioning and it is 3.00pm and we rest until 4.00pm when Pastor Paul comes for us in the car. He cannot drive so I drive back to the house where we had lunch, and we have more praise and worship. I give a talk on the woman with haemorrhage who touched the hem of Jesus garment, more coffee, then we leave, and I drive us all home. It is 6.15pm and we are due at a cottage meeting at 6.30pm. We hastily pack a bag for tomorrow as we will be in Adilabad for three nights. At 7.30pm we go round to Cookies for the prayer meeting which has just started. I give another teaching, then we are served more coffee and back home by 8.45pm. I used the computer to re write some of my teachings and we finally settled down for the night.



It is Saturday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December and after we have a wash, we are told to be ready by 9.30am. We are ready but we don't leave until 11.00am with KM, Minaymin, when we travel about fifty kilometres to a town called Bela which again is over the border in Andhra Pradesh but south towards Adilabad. Here we visit a hostel which Miriam's husband runs for forty-eight children and the school attached is for 400 pupils, Pragathi Public School. Today there is no school because there has been some political trouble in this area. We visit the school and have official photos taken for the local newspaper, then we are presented with flowers and pens. We have lunch of chicken curry and rice,

bananas plus some 7up soft drink. It is 2.00pm when we leave and carry on over some very rough roads to Janath where Rose and I get on the bus to take us to Adilabad. It is only a half hour journey but certainly not good for your spine or any other bones, as it is so very rough. Rakesh, who is married to KM's sister, Mary, is at the bus depot to meet us and we get into a rickshaw. Rakesh gets on his bike, and we go only a few streets to their new house. What a difference from their last place, as this house is quite big and luxurious. For those who are reading this, you might remember when we stayed in their old and run-down house that was infested with rats and under constant attack from hostile local Muslims. We get a giant size bed in a large room, we meet up with Smiley and Cuppa, their two daughters. Ever since our game of pretending to be frogs, cuppas in Indian language, Rakesh and Mary have permanently kept Cuppa as their pet name for their youngest girl. Mary is on her way home from work as a nurse and it is 4.00pm and we are due to go out at 5.30pm. We had a rest, and some coffee then we left on two motorbikes, with me and a local pastor on one bike, while Rose and Rakesh was on the other. We travelled through Adilabad and out the other side to a small church erected one year ago for beggars who are also lepers of all different tribes and languages. They are very poor people who can only survive by begging. I talked on the life of Joseph, then we prayed with one and all, twice, then back on the bikes by 7.45pm. We will stay here until Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, and it is 9.30pm before we settle down.

It is Sunday the 6<sup>th</sup> and not a bad night but we missed the mozzie net because we had to continually fight off the bugs. We woke just after 6.00am with voices and people moving around but we stayed in bed to keep warm and to keep out of the way. Mary is doing some washing with Smiley's help, and we are served coffee. We sat outside in the sun with Rose reading while I am sorting out my teaching for tonight. Church is due to start at 11.00am and around 40 people gathered for praise and worship then a sermon on worship in Hindi was presented by Rakesh. Then there was more singing followed by holy communion and after that Rose and I are presented with leis of roses. I then teach about, which kingdom should we belong to? The tithe collection buckets were passed around then we prayed over everyone present and we finish at 1.30pm. Have lunch of hot curry, chapatti, mutton biryani, all very hot and spicy. We rest until 5.00pm, then coffee is served as we sit outside with a pastor who has come to take me on his bike, so we set off on our individual motorbikes through Adilabad and over the railway line, past the cotton manufacturers along rough paths to another poor village, where after some hymns and introductions Rose gives a short talk on prayer after which we prayed with everyone before getting back on our bikes and heading home. In Andhra Pradesh there has been declared a two-day strike, no buses, no rickshaws, no shops, and no schools. Got back about 7.45pm and Mary, Smiley and Cuppa came in for a chat and some prayer then Rakesh joined us as well, so it was 9.30pm before we settle down.



The general strike is getting out of control because 250 buses were burnt near Hyderabad, colleges are all closed, with much upheaval and all because of the political situation. But we were taken for a home church meeting with many people present and we sang, before I delivered a teaching and prayed with all of them. Then we had a lovely lunch of chicken curry and rice after we were back onto the motorbikes and home by 1.30pm to rest until 5.00pm. Make that 6.00pm and we go in the



same manner to another church goer's house where there are many people there and we sang hymns in Hindi. I gave a talk about Lazarus after we prayed with all, then we were served coffee. On the way back we stop at the house of the motorbike rider who has been taking me backwards and forwards. More coffee was served with biscuits and at this rate we will drown in coffee, but we cannot offend our hosts. At this house we meet the preacher from the Sunday night church service. He is the man's father in-law and at their request we pray with them then back on the bikes and home again. Where Miriam's husband has turned up, we give out the gifts that we had brought with us and then we retire for the night. It is 8.30pm and looking forward to going home to Rajura in the morning when we hope to catch the bus around 10.00am but we shall see.

It is Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, and we have a wash, then our usual Bible study with coffee. We take photos with the family then the girls go off to school with Rakesh on the bike. Mary makes us coffee then the rickshaw arrives, and we go to the bus stand. The bus comes in and there is a mad rush with much pushing and shoving so we just stand back and wait. We get on and secure a seat, we are in a triple seat because of our large case but we may have to move the bag if the bus gets too full. It is not due out until 10.00am so we sit and wait patiently for our departure. We were told last night that to travel to Nagpur by bus which is a two-hundred-kilometre trip, takes four and a half to five hours, wow. Even to go by train it takes eight and a half to ten hours. This journey we are starting will take two and a half to three hours back over those very bad and bumpy roads. The bus is packed and there are lots of people standing when we pulled out at 10.00am. Unfortunately, the bus would not start so the driver jump started it by getting another bus to push our bus until the engine fired. So, it seems that this is going to be an interesting journey, but despite the bus breaking down again, which involved another jump start. We made pretty good speed and arrived in Rajura bus stand at 1.20pm, only three hours twenty minutes and there to meet us was KM and Prema's brother. They had been waiting for an hour and we are back home to a great welcome from all and told we are going to Chandrapur for lunch. We will be leaving at 2.10pm and it is 1.50pm now so we jump under some cold jugs of water to refresh ourselves then, we unpack. We travel by car with Amma with Prema's brother driving and takes an hour to drive to the 30 kilometres to Chandrapur where KM and Appa are waiting for us. Go to Hephzibah's house and have curried chicken and rice with no spices for a nice change. I give my testimony followed by coffee and we all move on at 4.30pm. Along with KM and the driver we go further into Chandrapur to see a bank manager, who is one of the church members. We have coffee and biscuits, cold drinks and admire his office before moving on. It is 5.30pm and it gets dark as we head back towards Rajura. During the trip home we share with KM about our Adilabad experience. Our plans for tomorrow includes thinking about what to get as a suitable gift to leave for the family. Home by 7.00pm put up the mozzie net and get ready for bed. It has been a long day, and we are very tired.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> my poor Rose is suffering from a migraine that had started yesterday so we pray for her during our morning Bible study. There was no power until 10.00am but after that, Rose did some computer work and ironing. I am fixing the wing mirror on the Fiat car which KM broke when he hit something, yet again. We are due to go out at 11.00am to a place we went to last Wednesday, the village called Comono, where Cookie used to live as a boy. This is the house where the lady gave us 100 rupees, but we didn't leave Rajura until 12.30pm and it is 1.20pm when we arrive but even so, they are still not ready, and we must wait. Amma is roped into cook our meal of very overcooked curried mutton or beef and rice which we ate at 3.00pm. Outside a massive marquee is erected, people are arriving all the time and all this because the daughter of the house has reached puberty. Last week we had prayed because she was sick, now we know why, it was because of her first period. Seems weird to us but in this culture, it is a special occasion, Rose said to me that she would rather no one knew but that is our western way of thinking. We were led in song by 2 men on mikes with

everyone else joining in. A woman then led the singing then intercessory prayer by everyone followed that. During this time Deva is being dressed in her first sari of red and gold by her mother and other women relatives. Another song followed with KM on the drums, more intercessory prayer then the emcee introduces me, and I spoke on, the wedding at Cana, for about half an hour. The emcee prayed then the local pastor prayed while the entire time many photos are taken along with a video recording of the event. Finally, the emcee invites the girl and her family forward to be prayed over by me. Then I give the final benediction blessing after which everyone comes to us for a blessing as well. Then, we all sit down to eat from the huge banquet, it is now 5.00pm and after looking after a baby so her the mother could eat, Rose is free to join me to take a walk. When we come back many want photos with us and after that we all pile back into the car and travel a short distance. We stop to pray with Shoda, she is a demon possessed woman, and after prayer she was proudly proclaiming Jesus' name, Amen and Alleluia. Then while I was praying for the whole family Shoda went down in the spirit. After that we suggested she eat and rest. By this time, it is 6.30pm and we get back into the van and set off towards Rajura and home. Along the way we pull into a truck stop some twenty kilometres outside of Rajura where we all have coffee. Pastor Paul is well known and after finishing our free drinks we are invited into the back of the shop to bless the whole family. KM has told us tomorrow we are going to Chandrapur by our car then we will pick up a bigger car to pick up more people. Then we will go a further 100 kms to have lunch and a church service with another pastor.

We are up the next morning for Bible study then coffee followed by our morning wash. We left at 9.30am with KM, Minyamin, Appa and us and travel to Chandrapur. Arrive there at 10.15am and leave in a bigger car at 10.20am, just KM, a pastor, driver and us. We travel along through villages until at 11.30am we arrive at Ramnagar, Gadchiroli which is a border town but also it is a very backward town. They do not have even one church, but the government is trying to bring the town up to date. We go to a house of a man who works in the courthouse along with his wife, daughter and a woman who runs child groups, plus three children. We have chai and they tell us that their daughter lost her husband, and she has one child already. I give a teaching on miracles, and we are served lunch of egg, rice and chapatti. We then leave with a pastor, his wife and two children and 2 others to go to his house. It is a very poor area, no electricity, no amenities, nothing but a brick-built house on waste land. We have black tea before three of his congregation arrive for prayer and photos. We then drop some of them back to the previous house and we are heading back to Chandrapur at 3.00pm. Along the way, we stop for coffee in Saoli and we are home by 5.30pm to find that Appa has cleared a large area for the sand delivery and tonight's meeting has been cancelled. We had nothing else on today, so we filled the rest of the day with preparing more teachings and we had coffee at about 7.30pm then bed by 9.30pm.

On the morning of Saturday the 12<sup>th</sup> of December, we were told we are having tea at Prema's mother's house at 8.30am. So, after Bible study and morning prayer we were given coffee. Later in the morning we had tea at Prema's mum's house then we prayed over them and came back. Rose did some ironing while I set up the church for the self-help groups which are due to start at 10.00am. It was a big success with teachings about French knitting classes, first aid teaching, and string & pin boards among other activities. In all about forty ladies and a couple of men took part and they were very happy to show off their work. Finished about 1.00pm. After I bandaged a woman's foot, we had lunch at 2.15pm at a new believer's house in Rajura. This person only came to Christ on Good Friday this year and he has a hair salon in Rajura, his wife is a seamstress, they have 3 boys. I shared my testimony after curried chicken and chapatti along with a cup of coffee. Back home and onto the computer to do KM's accounts and have some coffee at 4.15pm and rest until 6.00pm. Do ironing then leave for house just across highway at 6.30pm. This is near the house we went to last

time and prayed with lady who had a head operation, she was there tonight. She gave us 10 rupees, we sang hymns, I gave talk about Jesus' walking on water, prayer with a few ladies, we had some coffee and home by 8.30pm.



This is our last night here and tomorrow is the last Sunday in India. Up at 7.00am, prayer, coffee at 8.00am have Bible study then a wash. We prepare for church and at 9.00am the youth have church for an hour then Pastor Paul leads the main church service, he teaches, the singing of hymns starts as Nathaniel leads praise and worship then Paul teaches again. We don't understand what is being said but somehow it doesn't matter and all the time the church is filling up. By the time I have blessed the new babies of the congregation the church is full. Then I give talk on tithing followed by the tithe collection, sweets are handed around, photos taken, we present bags to elders and wives, then those who want prayer throng forward. We are told we are going to have a church photo but by the time we get out of the church at 1.30pm everyone has gone home to eat. Can't blame them some of them have been here for 5 hours. Back in our room for a few minutes before we head off to Collie for lunch. Appa, Amma, KM, Minyamin, Nathaniel, his wife, Padma, Cookie plus a husband, wife and mother-in-law. We had curried chicken, chapatti, cold sprite and bananas. I teach on the beatitudes then coffee and after that we pray with family then we literally go two steps to the house next door. More coffee, pray with family then walk round to Nathaniel's house, more coffee, biscuits, talk, pray with all and home by 5.00pm. We were due to go to Suntana tonight but as they were all in church this morning we are not going. Rose can now get out of her sari and relax in a nightie before we are due to go out again at 6.00pm. It is now 5.15pm. We leave just after 6.00pm, KM, Minyamin and us and go to a gypsy camp near the railway line. These people make and sell cane mats for a living. They will move on after a month but are Christian and those few who can read the bible, read it out loud while the rest listen. Some of them came to the church this morning, they gave us two mats which we will donate to the church. I shared a short teaching then prayed a general prayer over them all then they came up and put money in my hand, later when we counted it there was four hundred and ten rupees. We will give this money to the church, these people have nothing, the children are beggars, but they give money to us in God's name. Appa and Amma had arrived by bike when the police arrived because we have attracted a crowd. We are swiftly taken away as Appa deals with the police. It all turns out okay when Appa convinces the police we were not trying to convert anybody. You must remember that in India, it is illegal to preach Christianity in public or to convert anybody outside an established church. We go to Rajurina to find an 11-year-old girl for Paul Lawson to sponsor but find out she is not there so we have to go back to the other side of the main road and eventually find Swetha, the eleven year old fifth standard girl who he wants to sponsor. We must get permission from her parents in the morning then we shall present her with Paul's gift and a school bag with all she needs for school in it. There was another girl who was being considered and we shall get a dress for her and give her a school bag too. I am going to give KM five hundred rupees to get two twenty-kilogram sacks of rice for the gypsies after we have gone. We were given more coffee then home by 8.15pm for our last night in Rajura.

Monday the 14<sup>th</sup> we are up at 8.00am just as coffee had arrived along with our normal Bible study and prayer time. We spent the morning reading, then Swetha and her mother came, and we gave her the money from Paul, the school bag and Paul's photo. We took her photo and had coffee together. Nathaniel arrived just after 1.00pm the family gave us gifts of a sari for Rose and a shirt for me. We had lunch round at Cookies at 2.00pm of very hot curry and chapatti. Nathaniel left, we said our goodbyes, took photos, then KM, Minyamin and us got in the car and went to Ballarshah railway station. Our train came in but stops for half an hour to be cleaned and along comes Cookie, Nathaniel, and Padma with drinks and biscuits. Appa and Amma arrive as well with coffee for everyone then it is time to go, so we wave as train pulls out at 4.05pm. We are in a two-tier air conditioned, two bunks either side, there is a gentleman on the lower bunk, we organise ourselves. Rose lays down with her head in my lap but she soon gets uncomfortable so she tries to get in her top bunk but can't make it, so she tries the opposite top bunk which is easier to climb up to and she doses off. I sleep on the lower bunk to guard our luggage as we have been warned many times about luggage thieves who steal from night trains. We try to sleep but we cannot because of a group of teenagers who shout and scream, talk loudly on the phone until the ticket collector threatens to throw them off the train. We sleep fitfully because the train jerks, clunks, rocks, rolls. stops and starts.

On Tuesday morning we crawl into Chennai Central Station at 6.35am and the skies open and it pours down, first rain since we left Chirala. I buy us some coffee then I find an ATM for some cash, we then hail a cooli, which is the name of a porter, to carry one of the cases over to Park Railway Station where we board the train to Tambaram where Arul comes to meet us, and we drive in a friend's car to their house. Rose is feeling really sick, so she rests on the broken-down lounge to rest up until her stomach settles. Because of the heavy rain we are going to Manor Farm, this is where we have stayed on our other visits. So, we drive over there and get settled into Room 3. My poor Rose collapses on the bed and falls asleep for a couple of hours, she is still unable to shake off the headache. Arul and Sarjini come back at 1.15pm with lunch for me of rice, curry and boiled eggs. At 2.00pm Sarjini walks back to her house to collect Sherinne from school at 4.00pm when she will return. Arul and I talk then Rose gets dressed ready for the rickshaw. We leave soon after 4.00pm and pick up Sarjini and Sherinne then we travel to Venpakkam in another torrential downpour. The roads have been widened and much industry has gone up, but it is still a nightmare of a journey. We go into the goat house, pray with them, the people and the goats, then into the church where Martha is overjoyed to see us. Have coffee which Sarjini has bought with her. Pray with all those present then go to Marta's house so I can pray a blessing over it then onto another house where a woman with a sore foot is. Pray then we head back on the awful roads, then we stop in Padappai for water and matches. Home by 7.45pm, we light the mozzies coils and prepare for bed.



Up at 7.30am to make coffee as the power goes off at 8.00am then a wash. Rain has stopped but still overcast as we have Bible study with our cuppa. We packed up and awaited the arrival of Arul with our lift to Tambaram Station. Arul arrived at 10.00 am, we gave him five hundred rupees and prayed with him. At 10.15am the auto rickshaw arrives, and we say goodbye and hand the keys into



the owner of Manna Farm who give us a Christmas present of a Christian Music CD. We then go to Arul's to have coffee, give them the towels and pray with them then we squeeze back into the auto rickshaw and head for the station. After Arul begged us to come to visit him, we half expected him to apologise for having done the wrong thing, but nothing, not a word. So, we had asked his wife, Sarjini, why did he want us to come if it was not to give an apology. She said, I think he wants to, but his pride stops him, I have continually told him, she explains, you did the wrong thing so you have to apologise. Arrive at 11.50am and the train to Chennai pulls out at 12.00pm. Arrive at Park station just after rush hour, the people on the train, are packed in like sardines. Got off and got a coolie to carry our bags up and over the railway line then got an auto rickshaw for one hundred and fifty rupees to Orchid Hills Hotel. It is 1.10pm and now we are on wind down time, so we can recharge before the long journey home. We order lunch, they did not have tomato soup, chips or anything much because the restaurant is closed. Rose got briyani and I got prawn fries and coffee. Not the best but we managed to get onto the computer after that we watched some TV.

On Thursday we pack up again, have a wash followed by our Bible study and prayer. We move up to room 302 because of renovations, get dressed take washing downstairs as we catch an auto rickshaw for 40 rupees to Spencer Plaza. Wandered around and around and up and down because spencer plaza is four stories high with thousands of shops. Had lunch at Pizza Hut then back to wandering, buying this, that and the other until we leave for the hotel at 3.00pm. Cost us 80 rupees to return because they must drive down the road a little way to turn round and come back. We unpack our shopping, then I take Rose's trousers and my jeans down to be laundered. We make coffee and tea and watch a movie at 3.45pm on PIX tv. Then we read for a while then turn the lights out at 9.00pm

It is Friday the 18<sup>th</sup> of December and our last day in India, and we fly out this evening for Singapore. Then after a couple of hours in Singapore we will board our flight to Sydney and then we will be able to enjoy our new villa in Kingswood. Remembering that we had only signed the lease from the department of housing and moved into villa number 8 a week before we had left for India.

## Chapter 22

### Home 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2009 to 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2011

It was so good to be home to celebrate Christmas with our, very large family and it was especially nice to see the joy of our grandchildren.

We also had to finish making our new department of housing villa into a comfortable home because we had only moved in one week before we had left for India. So, for the first couple of weeks of 2010 Rose and I painted the walls because of the marks from new plaster work that had been done to repair damages.

After being away for nearly two months, I also had to devote some time to my Chaplaincy duties with St John Ambulance. As a Chaplain it is my duty to care for all the St John Ambulance members from Parramatta to Katoomba and from Campbelltown to Windsor. Which is an area of about sixty square kilometres, and this is because we do not have enough Chaplains to cover the whole state of New South Wales.

I enrolled in a Hospital Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care course which was run by the senior Chaplain for Western Sydney Health and Nepean Hospital.

A camp was organised in January of 2010, for all my grandsons, so I could stay well connected with them and so we could all enjoy being with each other. We enjoyed some fishing, boating, archery and kite flying plus of course the fun of cooking and sleeping outdoors.



On Australia day, which is the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, we all got together as a family to celebrate at one of our daughter's houses. We all had great fun in the pool, enjoyed a barbecue lunch and even our youngest got into the spirit of the day.



During the Easter holidays I served as a Chaplain at the Royal Easter Show at Sydney Olympic Park. I served there for four full days, and it was my duty to care for the welfare of around fifty St John Ambulance volunteers who were there to provide first aid. The Royal Easter Show is such a huge event that it attracts many thousands of people and is spread over a massive area. The St John volunteers include doctors, nurses, paramedics and first aid providers and they man five first aid stations spread across the show grounds area. As a Chaplain I also care for the welfare of patients

and their families. Whilst I move around the show grounds to check in on the various locations if the need arose, I am also able to provide first aid.

I successfully completed a Systematic Trauma course, followed by a Trauma Resilience course provided by the Critical Stress Management Foundation.

As Rose and I have become regular parishioners of Saint Nicholas of Myra catholic church, we have been active in helping wherever we are needed.

On Father's Day, we were invited to my son, Craig junior's house to celebrate and to be with his new daughter as well. So, this was to be my son's very first Father's Day and it was good to be able to celebrate the day together.



A project that has been high on our list of things to do was to get somebody to help us get donated goods over to India. Finally, Qantas came to the party and offered us the ability to send as much unaccompanied baggage as we wanted. What a blessing! We sent out an urgent request for donated goods and they came flooding in. Clothing, books, glasses, toys, dolls, shoes, jewellery, stationery and so much more.

Rose and I went out and bought eight large suitcases then we packed all these goods into them. Then, with four bags on the roof of the car and four on the back seat, we took them all to Qantas Freight at Sydney Airport.

It was so good that after all this time we could get these goods over to where they would be so appreciated. Thanks to everyone involved in this mammoth task and a big thank you to Qantas for their generosity. You can't imagine what a joy the donated goods can bring to the lives of our people in India.

We have written repeatedly to many companies to ask for donations with hardly any response. However, when our unstoppable fundraiser, Betty wrote to Harvey Norman retail store, and they generously gave \$3000. We will take that money to India next year and put it into many worthy projects and we will inform Harvey Norman about what their money achieved.

Speaking of Betty Graver, she is a non-stop dynamo of fundraising of the highest degree. Over the last year she alone has raised over \$5000 from various fundraising events. Without our Betty, Mamre would not have been able to do half the things it has.

We spent time keeping our web site up to date and sometimes we wish there were more hours in a day.



I was presented to our Catholic parish church in an official ceremony by my parish priest and a senior chaplain from St John Ambulance. I was officially recognised as a Regional Chaplain for St John Ambulance and presented with my prayer stole.



Rose's brother, Michael, and his wife, Pam, are visiting us for a few weeks and they have travelled to Australia from London in England. While they are here, Rose and I, take them to visit Featherdale farm near Blacktown, which is a small zoo. We have two of our granddaughters, Georgia and Matilda, with us as well. Among the many interesting animals we saw, we were privileged to see an albino peacock's display of feathers.



A couple of days later the whole of Rose's family joined together on a lunch cruise of the Nepean Belle paddle steamer as we travelled along Nepean River with Michael and Pam.



Then another four days later we took them both to see the Thirlmere Railway Museum because Michael is a bit of a railway enthusiast.



It was sad to see Michael and Pam go but we wished them well and soon after that we enjoyed



celebrating Christmas with our family.

The new year was slipping by quickly with my chaplaincy duties filling the time, but Easter was soon upon us, and we celebrated it with family.



Soon after that, Rose's daughters and son honoured her on Mother's Day with a great meal and being around her grandchildren.



I received a phone call from Jeff Chilton whom I had met last year when he invited me to address his local branch of Toast Masters. He and his wife Alison, want to bless our Mamre International Aid charity by donating regular funds from Our Town Fencing, which is the company that they own. Our Town Fencing head office is in Wallsend in the Newcastle area of New South Wales. These days they also have many other locations throughout the country. Their success is no great secret, it is because God blesses their endeavours because of their generosity to good causes. Rose and I met up with Jeff and Alison Chilton the managers and owners of Our Town Fencing after Jeff's phone call.



We recommend the Our Town Fencing company to you for their incredible range of quality products, so visit their website at: - <https://www.ourtownfencing.com.au>

The year that was 2010, seemed to go by very quickly and now it is another Christmas time to enjoy with our family and we welcomed the new year of 2011.

Rose and I have enrolled in ministry formation courses that are run by the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta. Rose is training to be a qualified Lector, in other words, a reader and I am training to be an Acolyte. A Lector is the person who reads the first reading to the congregation followed by

the psalm then the second reading. An Acolyte is a minor order in the Catholic Church and an Acolyte can only be installed into the church by a Bishop. An Acolyte wears a white Alb and assists the priest by preparing the altar and generally keeps the Mass flowing smoothly.

It defies all logic just how blessed we have been throughout our ministry work and in our personal lives as well, but what happens next absolutely floors me.

We had travelled the 34 kilometres east from our home to Westmead to visit my mother and father. It was our custom to visit them once per week and we did the same for Rose's mother. Anyway, we were sitting in their lounge room with a cup of tea or coffee and just having a casual chat. Then for some reason my Mum started to talk about her parents and the old Jewish customs that they no longer followed. At that point I was shocked, and I asked my mother, why did they used to follow Jewish customs. My mother said, oh yes, they used to, but they no longer wanted to be known as Jews, so they changed their names when they came to Australia. I was so dumbstruck that my Mum asked, why are you so shocked? Is it so important? Yes, I answered, where I am in my walk with God at this moment, it is incredibly important. Then I asked for more details, and she said that they had been so persecuted in Europe that, when they immigrated to Australia, they legally changed their surname and turned their back on Judaism. So, they were Jewish? I asked, right. Yes, my mother answered. That means you are Jewish too. I added. Yes technically, she said, but it meant nothing to me. At this point I am very aware that the Jewish family line comes down from the women. I then said, they never talked about that part of their lives and neither did you until now. Then Mum said, they wanted to forget all about it.

Information for the readers of this book:- Matrilineal Descent, the code of Jewish law clearly states that a child of a Jewish mother is Jewish, regardless of the father's lineage, while the child of a non-Jewish mother is not Jewish. Matrilineal descent has been a fundamental principle of Torah since the Jewish people came into existence.

After some research I found out more about them under their original name and it was rewarding. Because it turns out that my family line is descended from the tribe of Judah, the house of David, wow, how humbling.

Talk about blessings on blessings on blessings, how much more can I be blessed? Can we be blessed?

The answer is that there is no end or no limit but all I must remember what is in: -

*Luke 12:48*

*Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.*

I must remain obedient and do my duty, my best effort, because He asks no more than that!

As the year of 2011 reaches its mid-point, we are planning our next India mission trip to leave in September. Our very dear Betty Graver is coming along on her fourth trip so far and a new lady who would like to experience a taste of what a missionary life is like. Her name is Irene D'Arienzo, so we travel to Queensland to meet her, and we can make certain that she is suitable for such a trip.

We received an invitation to join Jeff and Alison Chilton at their home in Fennell Bay. They were interested in accompanying us on one of our missionary trips and when they found out that we were

leaving in September, they started working out if they were free to come. By coming along with us, they would get some idea of what their very generous monthly donations from Our Town Fencing was achieving. Eventually it was decided that Jeff could not manage to go on the dates that are already set, but that Alison would be free to join us but not from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September, she could link up with us on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October with her sister, Maria Richardson, for a week. So, after they treated us to a beautiful lunch it was decided that Alison and Maria would join us by flying into Nagpur and then they would be driven from there by KM's brother, Minyamin, and accompanied by Rose, to join us in Adilabad. Then after some ministry there we would all travel back to Rajura for ministry there as well. Alison said that she would prefer to stay longer but their business obligations prevented that.



After our busiest months for birthdays during August and September, including our own, we prepared for our next Indian mission trip.

## Chapter 23

### India 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2011 to 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2011

Thanks to our son-in-law, Richard, we arrived at the Ibis Hotel, which is close to Sydney's, Kingsford Smith, International airport at about 5.30pm. We were allocated room 316, then we found Betty and Irene in room 230. We gave them some of the excess glasses and jewellery to carry in their luggage, so our luggage would not be over the weight limit. They had booked in for dinner at 7.00pm so we went back to our room and had a cup of tea. We also booked the shuttle bus for 8.20am tomorrow to take us all to the airport.



It is Friday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September after a bad night because poor Rose just couldn't sleep, she says that she must have dozed off around 1am then she was awake again at 4.38am. Hopefully she will catch a few hours of sleep on the plane. It is bright and sunny this morning and we have our showers at about 7.00am after I had two cups of tea. We head down to reception by 8.00am and met Betty and Irene in the lift. As we were waiting for the shuttle bus Rose started to feel nauseous, it took us a few days to realise that it happened every time she took her anti malaria tablets. We all got on the shuttle bus which was quickly filled, and we were off to the Domestic Airport first where we off loaded everyone except us four and one other man. Going across to the International Terminal there was an accident on the other side of the road and the traffic was backed up all the way past the International Terminal. We found the check in terminal for our flights which was way down the end of the complex, and it took ages to book in even though I had pre booked in with boarding passes previously. We then went through to the Duty-Free area to get Irene's money back for a camera she had purchased. The queue was enormous, so Betty and Rose took off to McDonald's to get a cuppa and a piece of toast. I waited with Irene but then came over to Rose to say, I do not think Irene will make it in time. At 10.15am I was going back to get Irene when she suddenly appeared, so we were all back together and had some prayer time at McDonald's then we all walked to gate sixty-one. We boarded the aircraft at 11.05am where Betty and Irene were in the main deck, and we were in the upper deck of our airbus A380. Rose took a quarter of a sleeping tablet and dozed on and off for the 8hour trip, but it was made more difficult because we had a constantly whingeing child just behind us. We arrived in Singapore at 7.35pm but had to circle until 7.50pm then after we landed, we got on the airport terminal light rail to go to terminal two. While we sat and waited for our next flight, we had coffee at Starbucks before boarding flight 424 at Gate F 41 to Mumbai. Betty, Irene and I had the three seats by the window and Rose was across the aisle from us. We all dozed for most of the way, and it was a little turbulent. Our arrival in India was at 10.30pm, Indian time, then a long walk back to customs and baggage collection. We managed to get two trolleys and I went to get a pre-paid taxi to our hotel. At first, they tried to squeeze the four of us plus four large suitcases and six smaller cases into a small mini car. That wasn't going to work and eventually we got into a slightly bigger car, then the driver had to find out where we wanted to go to, and it was around midnight before we arrived at the Arma Residency. We were allocated rooms 102 and 103 and it is very good accommodation with 2 single beds, sheets, blankets, fan, air conditioner, tiled bathroom, shower, toilet and basin in each room. We all just fell into bed as we were all so exhausted.



Our first morning in India in the city of Mumbai on Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> of September we are up at 7.00am and we ordered coffee. We had showered with cold water and a bucket then we had our prayer time with Betty and Irene. We left at 9.00am for the shopping centre to get the Sim cards for our mobile phones because the mobile phone rates for international calls in India are a mere fraction of our Australian sim card rates. After four rickshaw trips, which took us to many mobile phone shops, we still did not get one sim card, but we did pick up some chips and biscuits for the train journey. It turns out that without a permanent Indian residential address, we cannot purchase an Indian sim card. So, we will wait and ask KM to get us one in his name like we usually do. Back to the hotel by 11.30am before two taxis arrive to take us to the railway station. We then hired two porters to carry all our luggage onto the waiting train and it was nearly 2.30pm by then. Once we are on the train, the next leg of our journey will start at 3.00pm, when the train pulls out. With a bit of wangling, we manage to swap one of our booked seats so that Rose and I can have the two side window seats facing each other and Betty and Irene are in the seats beside us. So now, we are all together to keep an eye out for each other and the luggage. When it gets dark, we all climb into our sleeping berths with me on the bottom to guard our combined luggage.

It is now Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup> and at about 4.00am our train came to a halt and didn't restart until 7.30am. As usual, the people are coming on the train to sell things like cold drinks, chai, coffee, hot food, snacks and even things like DVDs or novelty items. The train is now running about an hour late and so we arrive in Chandrapur at 10.30am, so we have travelled eight hundred and seventy-seven kilometres in nineteen and a half hours. We hire three auto rickshaws to take us to the Mayur Hotel. We get room 102 and the girls are in 101, all these were booked and paid for ahead of time, and we are into the room by 11.00am. As soon as we arrived, we had a lovely hot shower, rinsed out clothes out, had coffee and rested. At 1.30pm we had more coffee and prayer time with Betty and Irene then we went downstairs to the restaurant for lunch. I had tomato soup and chips, Rose had tomato soup and fried rice, Betty had mushroom soup and chicken chow mein and Irene had sweet corn soup and chicken chow mein. We all had more coffee plus two bottles of mineral water and the entire bill is six hundred and fifty rupees which is under twenty dollars. We send sms messages to our family to say that we had arrived safely. We watched the TV and finally settled down around 8.00pm when a knock comes at the door, it is Irene asking if we want dinner. We explain to her that we only eat one meal per day, and it is normally at lunch time.

In the morning, Betty and Irene come to our room for prayer then we all pack up at 9.30am and go downstairs. We order coffee but before it comes KM arrives with Cookie's son, Curran, and a driver. We buy mum a hand carved bowl, Nan a figurine, and I got one for ourselves as well. They are all hand made by a very gifted man who finishes all his pieces with a highly glossy finish. We all pile into the van with most of the luggage is on the top. Betty and Irene are in the back seat facing forward, while Rose, KM and Curran are on the seat facing them and myself and the driver are in the front. It takes about an hour to reach our tiny village of Rajura which is 26 kms from Chandrapur. Everyone is there to meet us with two massive posters, one over the church and one over the school building. These posters have all our photos, Betty's, Irene's, Alison's, Maria's, Rose's and mine, on them with our names printed under each picture with welcome to India across the top.



We took Betty and Irene on a tour of the area and showed them their room, the new toilet block and Cookie's house. Then we all went to our rooms to unpack and rest up, we have the school room with the old Indian toilet which we will use as our bathroom. It is so hot out here that already the sweat is pouring off us. Amma makes coffee for us all and we are told to be ready by 3.30pm but as usual it is nearly 4.30pm before everyone is ready, back to Indian time. Irene and I now have got Indian Sim cards for our phones and messages are flying backwards and forwards to and from Australia. Six of us get into an auto rickshaw which is driven by one of the church elders and we are off to a local parishioner's house where we hold a home church prayer meeting with songs, a joke and message from me about Abimelech then a summary by Pastor Paul, benediction was given by Betty. Then we were served Chai and biscuits, then dinner of chicken curry and chapattis for everybody except ourselves. We walk back the one kilometre to home and there is a power cut, so we sit outside trying to keep cool until the power returns, then go to our rooms about 8.30pm to settle down for the night.



It is Tuesday the 27<sup>th</sup> of September, and it was a long night of getting used to the hip rolling routine again because Indian beds are so hard, we cannot stay sleeping on one side for long before we must roll over due to sore hips. Rose made us a cuppa and we had some prayer time, we started off in the church but moved outside as they wanted to sweep out the church for a prayer meeting at 10.00am. We all prayed together for about an hour then we got ready for the prayer meeting. While we were waiting a woman arrived who had walked for three hours to be at the meeting, wow, that is commitment. We prayed with her last time we were here for a brain tumour, which she has had removed, but she is still not a well woman. We went to church 11.20am and Rose shared a joke about worms then I presented a talk on the ten bridesmaids. Betty and Irene said some prayers and I gave the benediction. We left at 12.25pm, while the others stayed on for more prayer, then we were served lunch at 2.00pm of egg curry and chapattis. Betty and Irene decided that they wanted to go to the local town to do some shopping, so I drove them there in the Fiat car. KM got worried after some time, and he asked Rose to ring me to make sure the three of us were all okay. We got back around 5.00pm and we were due to go out again at 6pm. So, we walked to the village Children's Club through the slippery mud from the rain that had come down earlier. The children's club teachers, Shilpa, Rinky and Sapana showed us about 30 children, and we gave each child some soap and talcum powder. I presented to them a dramatised story of David and Goliath and we sang some action songs with the four of us teaching the actions. We are back by 7.30pm then we all sat and talked then Pastor Paul and Amma came back home from the markets with the vegetables to last for a week and the Amma started cooking dinner for her family plus Betty and Irene. We sat around until 9.00pm when Betty goes to bed and shortly after Minyamin, KM's brother, arrives. Minyamin works in the city, but he has returned home on leave to be with us and to drive us. Then coffee comes and Irene is assured she will get some curry for her dinner soon.



Early the next morning Rose wrote out a talk on the Wounding of the Spirit, which she felt the Lord gave her in the night. After everyone had showers, we went for coffee at Cookie's house then we had prayer time in the church. Rose, Minyamin, KM and I leave in the Fiat car for Chandrapur, about 1 hour drive, as we are looking to purchase a new vehicle. We stop at Balharshah station to go to the ATM and in all get out 40,000 rupees then continued on to Tristar car showroom and after five hours purchase an Omni eight-seater van in pearl blue colour which cost almost three lakhs of rupees all up. We paid a deposit of one lakh and fourteen thousand rupees, and the van will be available on Saturday. One lakh of rupees is one hundred thousand rupees and is equivalent to about one thousand and eight hundred Australian dollars.



We had lunch at 3.30pm of egg, zucchini mix and chapattis, then we were served some coffee. After another shower, we changed to be ready to go again at 4.15pm but it turned out that we didn't leave until 5.30pm as we had to wait for the Insurance man to come about the car. We went in the Fiat car with Minyamin, Betty, Irene, Rose, Kieran, Cookie's other son, and me, to a house in the colony which we have been to many times before. Mr and Mrs Paul are already there, and the meeting started with worship then Rose gave the teaching she had written on the Wounding of the Spirit. We then had coffee, prayer, and then back home about 8.30pm. In the church we presented the movie of the Passion on the overhead projector and got through it all with no power cuts, everyone was moved by it as they all filed out soberly and we all went to bed.

It is the morning of Thursday the 29<sup>th</sup> when Betty and Irene tell us that a chook had fallen down the well and they had had to fish it out with the bucket. Rose did some clothes washing and swept out our room. We had showers then I find out from KM that the women's day will now be at somebody's house and not in the church and it will not be until 11.30am. Miriam, KM's sister, her husband, Pramod and their daughter, Gifti are coming today also. We had a good time of prayer and bible study then we all sat outside while Rose is teaching crocheting to Betty and Irene. We were given coffee and told to be ready by 11.30am then Betty, Irene, Rose, Minyamin and I go just over the railway line to a small house. Amma leads the singing, Betty and Irene do some sharing of their lives and Rose presents a talk with an overhead presentation, which went down well. We have lunch of HOT curried chicken and chapattis then we were given an offering for Mamre. On the way back we stopped at the shops to purchase some apples and we are home by 2.30pm. Miriam has arrived, and we eat three apples between us, and I set up all the equipment in the church to watch a movie and we had just got started when the power went off. Got ready to go out at 5.00pm to stop in Balharshah where Pastor Paul used to be based as the local Pastor, then we move onto an old fort where we did some sightseeing. Onto a prayer meeting after stopping to get a photo printed to send to Mum and Dad. I gave a teaching, and we recognised many people we had met two years ago. We had Tullah, which is an Indian snack food made with cold orangeade. We prayed with a dumb girl and were home by 9.15pm ready for bed.

We started the day with prayer until 8.30am when we had our morning wash. There were many people coming and going this morning and Tony, K M's and Mumpta's son, and his real name is



Craig, has woken with a 'fever' and is crying a lot. Ayya, Pastor Paul, is trying to mend the driveway for the new car to get inside the yard more easily. Rose did some washing but had to concede my jeans to someone else as she can't bash them on the stones as well as they do. We all prayed for Tony, Minyamin, who is also unwell and for my Rose. We left at 11.25am and went to Comono village, this is the village where Cookie was born and bought up. We went to his relative's house, and they are the only Christian family in the village, so Rajura parish church looks after their spiritual needs. Amma was already there organising lunch and I was allowed to use the mortar and pestle to ground the curry. Betty and I had hot milk, while Irene and Rose asked for hot water, but it never materialised. We walked all around the village of some seven hundred homes, with between fifteen hundred to two thousand people, three temples and no church. We met the president and many residents then back to the house for the prayer meeting. Betty shared and I gave my testimony then we had lunch of curried chicken and chapattis, Amma gave me some curried beef but it was so hot I couldn't eat it. We then prayed with people then we left for home about 2.45pm and got there at 3.15pm, that is thirty minutes to travel for a fifteen-kilometre journey. Then we rested for a few hours then had cool wash and then we got ready to go round to Moses' house. We were supposed to leave at 6.00pm but it was nearer 7.00pm before we left, then sat outside Moses and sang worship songs. I spoke about being a disciple then cups of coffee were served and we are back home by 8.30pm. The young girl we prayed with yesterday for crippling fear came round so we prayed with her again and she was slain in the spirit.

It is Saturday the 1<sup>st</sup> of October when KM and Pramod went on a motorbike to Chandrapur to pick up the van and we prayed with them before they left then we had our group prayer. Rose, Betty and Irene had lessons in chapatti making with Amma, Keziya, Cookie's wife, Miriam and Mumpta. Great fun was had by all and then we went to Rajura shops. I drove and we went to the bank, purchased a new hose for the pump, which they needed badly, wool, apples, a knife and cool drinks. We met Ayya in town as he had had a puncture in his bike tyre and we were home by 2.00pm when we had lunch of potato, egg curry and the chapattis we had made. The new van is not here yet, but Minyamin left earlier on another bike as he was driving the new van home as he is by far the best driver. They eventually arrived around 5.30pm and photos had to be taken and I went off to pray with a sick woman. We then set up for the video night and started around 7.00pm showing a video about Australia and we finished at 8.30pm.



Sunday morning the 2<sup>nd</sup> and everybody is up and busy by 6.30am preparing for the Lord's Day. We had early prayer then showers. Curran cleaned the new van, Pramod went home to Adilabad, and Rose set up the church with a young girl's help. Rose then put on half of her sari as the rest will go on about 10.00am, I put on my best trousers and shirt topped off with a tie and the blazer will go on later. Betty is wearing a Salwar and Irene is wearing a black skirt with gold threaded top which looks nice. We had coffee and church started just after 9.00am for the youth, everyone else will start at 10.00am. It was nearly 10.30am by the time we were all fully dressed, with help from Amma in Rose's case, and church went until well after 1.00pm, followed by blessing for all. The new van had



to be blessed and dedicated for the church and the community. We had lunch of curried egg and chapattis. The man came from Chandrapur with the wood carvings we had ordered when we were leaving the hotel. We had coffee at 3.45pm which was made by Amma with my help. Then we left for Santana but before reaching there we stopped to pray with a first time Christian who came to church this morning and has cancer of the mouth. After praying with him he gave a one-hundred-rupee donation and of course we had to have coffee there. Then onto Santana which is the same place as we have been in previous years and where Pastor Paul always has a second Sunday church meeting every Sunday evening. So, it is there that we have a prayer meeting and I teach on the gift of healing, then more coffee and back into the vehicles and onto Manigargh Village for another prayer meeting in which Rose spoke on the gift of prophecy. Yet more coffee and hot water for Irene and Rose then home by 9.00pm. The van is going well, and we had 12 people in it tonight, but we are all exhausted. The young girl we prayed for two days ago and the day before, was waiting for us to thank us for curing her from her fears. She told us through an interpreter that she knew she was possessed by demons, but she did not know what to do about it, but then she heard that a foreigner had come who had the gift of healing.



After our prayer time with the four of us I started to work on the old Fiat car, with Rose's help, as it is missing badly. So, I check the spark plugs and wires which eventually leads to making the engine run smoothly again. Next, because the muffler is scraping along the ground, we tie it up higher with some, stainless steel, wire. Rose has packed for her trip to Nagpur with Minyamin driving her to meet up with Alison Chilton and Maria Richardson. They are landing in Nagpur tomorrow so that we can all link up and we can show them what Mamre International Aid does and how the Our Town Fencing money helps. Coffee and prayer at 7.30am then we sorted out the programme for this week with KM. I stressed how important this visit by our corporate sponsors was and how we needed to show our best work to Alison. We prayed with Miriam and Gifti before they leave. Then we had lunch at Manigargh, where we went last night, they want to build a church on the 2 acres of land, they are a lovely family, but I couldn't eat the lunch as it was so hot with curry. Photos were taken while Ayya and I were presented with a shawl, which is a traditional way of honouring someone. We are home by 2.30pm and then Rose left with Minyamin in the new van for Nagpur just after 3.00pm. They then stopped to get 1000 rupees of petrol and blow up the tyres in Rajura. Then they saw Ayya and Amma who had followed them into town to see them off. In the meantime, the rest of us went to a prayer meeting in the village behind us nearer the railway to get there we walked through our village, and I spoke on getting out of the boat like Peter did.

Rose and Minyamin travelled over rough and smooth roads, paid two tolls and finally arrived in Nagpur around 7.30pm where they booked two rooms at Hotel Sukhakarta at one thousand two hundred rupees per night, about twenty-two dollars. Rose was in a double bedroom which was quite a large room with TV, which didn't work, and then she rang me at 8.30pm. When I went to bed, I found on my pillow was a lovely note from Rose and I was very touched.

On Tuesday the 4<sup>th</sup> of October Rose is ready and downstairs by 7.15am, when she paid the bill for herself and Minyamin and they left at 7.30am for Nagpur airport. They had to pay a parking fee of sixty rupees then a fee to get into arrivals part of the airport. It turns out that we made a miscalculation on Alison's arrival, and they will not arrive until tomorrow. So, I rang Rose to say they weren't coming today but tomorrow but they still waited for flight AI 276 anyway, just in case and then they left the airport. Now they must waste another day, so they went back to Hotel Sukhakarta and got the same rooms 105, where Rose washed out her clothes. She then rang me, and she found out that tomorrow they need to travel straight to Adilabad. Poor Rose, the battery on her E book died at 11.00am, so she has nothing to do, the TV doesn't work on the only English programme of AXN.

Ayya was up very early stringing the two new beds with strapping for Rose and me, so Alison and Maria can have our bed. How I miss my Rose. I looked at the car engine again and by midday we went to a house prayer meeting and were served lunch as well. In the afternoon after I drove us all home, I went to the ATM with the car for money for tomorrow.

Time is dragging for Rose, so she rang me at 1.00pm, I try to encourage her and tell her how much I miss her. She has no newspapers, so she reads the menu six or eight times, she even reads the E book instruction manual. Coffee comes for Rose at 3.00pm and Minyamin has dropped in a few times, he has arranged to meet a friend at 4.00pm and go out with him for a few hours. Minyamin gets Rose a newspaper to read and takes the E book battery to charge but shortly after they have a power cut, so she does not hold out much hope. Instead Minyamin got Rose a battery pack and her E book is now working again. Rose rang me about 5.30pm, as we were home but getting ready for this evening's Children's Clubs. Minyamin comes to Rose's room with his friend, to check that she was alright, then he left to go out on the town.

In the evening we visited two children's clubs, one in our village and one in the next village up. We gave out soaps, powder and pens and did some action songs then we had coffee at Prema's house.

Back in Nagpur it was 6.30pm but there is nothing to do now but read and try to get some sleep.

On Wednesday the 5<sup>th</sup> of October in Nagpur, Rose is up at 6.00am and ordered coffee. Drank it and had a hot shower, then packed and downstairs to pay the bill. Minyamin is already washing the van. They got to the airport by 7.30am and the plane landed at 7.57am, Alison and Maria came through at 8.35am, as they had started to get a little worried, but all turned out well. According to Rose, a lot could be said about the journey to Adilabad but to summarise it was hot dusty, rough, long, tiring and it took four hours to travel one hundred and eighty-six kilometres which is approximately 48 kilometres per hour.

The rest of us in Rajura, were up and ready at 7.30am to leave for Adilabad in a hired van and we stopped for coffee or chai. While from my point of view, the road from Rajura to Adilabad is even worse than what Rose described. The road is so bad that every time we travel that route there is always one or two trucks turned over, and in many parts of the road, you cannot exceed ten kilometres per hour. However, despite everything we eventually reach Adilabad safely.

In the meantime, Rose, Minyamin, Alison and Maria finally arrived in Adilabad. KM and Pramod met them on a motorbike and escorted them to Lakmi Hotel where three rooms were already booked. Rose and I in 203, Alison and Maria in 202 and Betty and Irene in 208. Rose was so pleased to see everyone, and she had a quick shower and a change of clothes and then we were off.

Now we have two Omni vans, one white that was rented and the new blue one, so we all pile into one of the vans, Curran, Cookie's son, is here with us as well, and we go to Mary and Rakesh's house, Mary is KM's sister. We all set off for Rakesh's church and once we arrive there, we see pictures of us all on huge banners. A welcoming ceremony was performed by the youth followed by prayer and praise. Then I delivered a short talk on the last supper and traditional leis of flowers were presented to all of us, followed by some traditional dancing. Lunch followed of curried chicken and chapattis. Mary has had another baby girl about 1 year old called Precious or Cutey. Alison asks me if the banners with our photos and names on it and the leis of flowers are normal, and I assure her that they are. She said that she felt like a movie star with all the attention and honouring.



We then get back into the vans and we are off to the Children's Club at a village where we give gifts and then onto a Gypsy Village where the only language spoken is Gond, here too we give gifts and medicines. This village was a long way into the wilderness, and we had to abandon the vans and leave Betty with one of our Pastors. We then crossed a river on foot as it was only knee deep, then we were picked up on the motorbikes and driven into the village itself. So, then we were truly treated to some special children, forty children from the gypsy tribe of Gondi who lived permanently in the bush. They have no power, no bathrooms, no washing, no combs and dressed in their only set of clothing. They were overjoyed by their gifts and our children's Christian action songs. At the next tribe, a further one kilometre away, they do not wear clothes at all. We did the reverse coming back by walking across the river but by now it is dark. After that, we make our way to the leper village that Rose and I, visited two years ago. Now it is so dark we cannot see a thing as there is no electricity, it has been disconnected because they could not afford to pay the bill so we will come back in the morning, but we left them with a hot meal of curried chicken and rice. We head back to the hotel for the night, got everybody settled in with hot water and coffee. Bed looks great as it has been a long day for us all.



We got up and had a cup of tea for me and coffee for Rose, then we had some prayer time with Betty and Irene, packed up and downstairs by 8.15am. We had to be ready by 8.15am to go to the lepers before they leave to beg at the festival celebrations, as begging is usually their main source of income. The vans arrived and we are off to the leper village again, where we gave out glasses and necklaces last time. I had observed that Alison, Maria and Irene were very touched by how loving and grateful these beautiful lepers are. But they could not believe that in this century, how could lepers still exist and how could they still be shunned, just as they were in bible times.





Then we went onto another children's club passing the church which has been built on the land where we stayed with Mary and Rakesh 7 years ago with the rats. Then we headed to Pramod and Miriam's house where they live with Pramod's parents, Miriam is another of K M's sisters. Pramod's father is a schoolteacher and a very upright man. They present us with a rose each, cold drinks and a new pen for each of us. Then we go back to their church where somebody has come to open it so we can walk around it and see all of it. Pastor Paul, KM's father, still comes regularly to give a service at this church. After that we continue to an adult literacy class where a former pupil has progressed so well that she is now the teacher. Back to Rakesh's for lunch of beef curry and chapattis plus coffee and then we are all presented with a watch each.



We left Adilabad in the two vans at about 2.00pm and travelled back over the rough roads again for almost 3 hours before getting back to Rajura at 5.30pm. Then, after introductions all around for Alison and Maria, we were all given hot milk coffee which was very welcome. After that, we showed Alison and Maria to their room and showed them where to wash. We then met the man who installed the new western toilet especially built for Betty, Irene, Alison, Maria and ourselves. KM explained to us about going to a village for a Children's Club, but it was cancelled because of the local Hindu festival. There is a Hindu goddess called Durgadevi who has six arms and Hindu's nationwide are celebrating her festival with songs, loud music, and devotion. At the conclusion of all the celebrations the followers will throw the idol in the river. There is another god involved with the celebrations who is Dasara, and he has 9 heads. It is such a blessing to have our dear and faithful Betty here with us on her fourth India mission trip, especially because of her age of 78 years. While speaking of that, Irene has turned out to be a true blessing as well because she simply adjusts to her surroundings and is a great help to us. After such a long day we sorted out our room and then fell into bed.

It is Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> of October with everybody stirring by about 6.00am, Maria and Alison had their morning wash while the rest of us prayed. After we are all bathed, we are off again at 8.00am with me driving with the five girls in the back and KM in the front seat next to me. We travel through Chandrapur on the way to Mule we then pulled over to get photos of another Hindu God called Hunamuntoo who has the head of a monkey and the body of a man, and the statue is huge. Arriving in Mule at 10.30am where there is a tiny church which is one room rented for 250 rupees a month and we are given chai. The meeting started with praise and worship which was, very powerful, as the pastor was on fire. There were about 60 people in the church and many more in other areas outside. All the people are from the jungle tribes and are incredibly poor. I gave a teaching on being



unbound and we gave out reading glasses and prayed with everybody. Lunch followed of Hot Hot Chicken curry, rice and chapattis, then we all travelled back to Rajura. Many of the Hindu gods from their festival were being transported to the rivers, which caused some traffic jams, because the processions were slow with many people following along. Then in town we stopped to pick up some fruit and water. Home by 4.30pm for a cool wash and some coffee plus we fold up our dry washing. At 6.16pm we are off to see the lady who is suffering from crippling fear and whose name is Sukey. Her house is right next to a swamp and when the monsoons come, they must move out as the whole area goes under water. After we pray for her, she proclaims she is now at peace. We have a prayer meeting by starting with worship and then I teach on love. We were then presented with sweets, coffee and then back home by 8.15pm to sort out tomorrow's programme.



The congregation at Mule.

Maria had a cold wash then Amma made coffee for us all, then the rest of us had our morning wash. We then had our morning prayer time and for the first time, Alison and Maria joined us. After that we sorted out the beads, macramé and crochet for our craft classes. Maria, Alison and I went to town to get fruit, wire, lunch boxes and we were home by 10.45am. More coffee and then into the church to give craft lessons and all who took part, took a great interest in learning new skills. Rose, Alison and Maria taught crocheting, I taught macramé and Irene did beading with Betty's help. They were all so keen that we had to tell them to leave by 1.45pm as the power had been off for a few hours and the sweat was pouring off us all. We sat in the shade for some time then went to Pradesh's, one of our drivers from past years, for lunch, we were served pullie, which is a kind of crispy chapatti, and chicken curry. Back for a rest but it is so hot and there is still no power, so all we can do is sit in the shade. The whole village is being fed tonight because of the special day for the Hindu goddess and it is all supplied by the government. We all sing songs, read psalms, a bible verse, action songs, gave out lollies and lots of photos were taken. Then we walk back to Rinky's house, which is really her sister and her husband's house. At 5.00pm we went to Shilpa's children's club and then to Rinky's and I think Alison was very pleased to see our children, the ones from our village. We sang action songs, gave gifts and had photos with them all. Then we were given coffee, and we are presented with necklaces and bracelets while I am given a pen, and all of our gifts are from Rinky and Shilpa. Alison has told Rose and I that she is going to give over 10,000 rupees to Rinky and Shilpa's family. Back home by 7.45pm and the plaque has arrived for tomorrow's dedication. It will be a very busy day tomorrow and poor Rose goes to bed with a migraine headache.



On Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup> of October we are all up at 5.30am, showers, coffee and prepared the church by sweeping it out. We are ready to go to Balharshah at 8.00am and when we get there, there are not many in the church but by the time we did some singing it was full to overflowing. A man we know from Chandrapur sang loudly and he even followed us back to Rajura. I taught on the Armour of God, we received leis and roses then when we were praying with people, one lady gave Rose a cross key ring made by a young girl. We left at 10.00am and back to Rajura, when Rose put on her sari and then we went into the church. The service was well underway, we had holy communion, a collection and the power came back on just in time for my teaching on the Last Supper. During the time for testimonies, four parishioners shared about how God had healed them after Rose and I had prayed over them. Plus, one lady said that after Alison had prayed for her, the crippling anxiety she had battled with for nearly ten years has left her and now she is free of it. We presented stoles to Pastor Paul and KM and Alison gave out Our Town Fencing T shirts for dozens of people. All the T shirts were quickly put on and the whole congregation was incredibly happy.



At the end of the service our whole team prayed with each person individually. At this point I must add that from the very beginning of Alison and Maria's visit, whenever I asked them to pray for people, they jumped right in even though this was something new to them. Then I had to pray for the dedication of the school/orphanage, with Alison's help, and we lay the new marble plaque in the name of Our Town Fencing, followed by lots of photos. Alison was very emotional, and she wished that her husband Jeff could have shared the moment. I then prayed for the dedication of the new eight-seater van with support from everybody. Then we went over to Cookie's house for lunch of mutton curry and chapattis, and we are getting very emotional as the time is running out for our time here at Rajura. Alison gives Cookie 15,000 rupees as a way of thanking his whole family as they have been helping us for the whole visit. During the afternoon, I asked Alison, do you think it is everything we told you about our work? She answered by saying, no it is not, it is much more than you said it would be. I thanked her and she said, no I should be thanking you and Rose for what you both do. Where does your energy come from? You never stop, she added. I was so relieved because it meant that Our Town Fencing's corporate sponsoring of Mamre International Aid, will continue. We did not go to Santana tonight as it was cancelled so at 5.30pm we all left for Manigargh and there is still no power. This is the house near the railway lines and the man of the house is a chai man on the train. He walks up and down the long distant trains selling chai. True Indian chai is made with hot milk, and it is very sweet. A prayer meeting was held there, and the power came back on, I taught on hidden treasures and sharing our gifts with others, we all sang, had some coffee and biscuits and lots of photos were taken. Most of us were wearing Our Town Fencing T shirts while we all sat outside in the cool of the evening. Home by 8.00pm, Rose rinsed out her sari and my shirt because they were both so sweaty.





October 10<sup>th</sup> and today is a sad day as Alison and Maria are leaving. What a huge blessing it has been to watch Alison and Maria jump right into ministry at our sides. They told us that although they felt a bit out of their depth, it did not take long to think that they were experienced missionaries. A five-and-a-half-foot snake was caught in the bathroom in a nearby house last night. We all had our morning wash, and many different things were happening. I mended the water pump while all the women were cooking pullie and chicken curry. There were lessons on how to wear a sari for the Australian ladies, soya beans were roasted and eaten, and Rose did some ironing. As it gets closer to the time of Alison and Maria's departure more photos are taken, and gifts were exchanged. The whole team received shawls and we presented our hosts with gifts from Australia. We noticed that Alison gave the family an envelope and we did not know of its contents as it was none of our business. Lunch was at 1.00pm and afterwards Alison, Maria, Minyamin, Ayya and Amma all left at 2.00pm with lots of tears and farewells. We sat for a short while then Betty, Irene, Rose and I all went to town in the Fiat car to get some snacks for the train trip tomorrow. There was a thunderstorm with heavy rain while we were in town and we sheltered in a small shop where they made us some chai, which is a typical example of Indian hospitality. Everywhere we have been in India, from hanging out with wealthy politicians, to being welcomed into middle class homes, to being welcomed in small villages and down to sharing chai in slum dwellings, we have always been highly welcomed and given so much honour. It reminds me of the very first time we were invited into a humble grass hut and served with mountains of rice and curry. I found out afterwards that what we had just eaten was the food for their family for the whole week. My interpreter said, they will brag about the day you shared a meal with them for many years to come. Anyway, I figured out how to fix the problem by arranging for a twenty-kilogram bag of rice to arrive a long time after our visit without them knowing where it had come from. We managed to get home by 5.00pm and there is still no power, and it has been off all day. We leave to walk to Moses' house at 6.30pm for coffee and the power comes back on, Moses and Prema now live in Nagpur, so the house is occupied by his sister, her husband, a son, a daughter and her mother. Both the children of this couple were dedicated and named by us. The son in Santana a few years ago and the daughter here two years ago. We are home again for the last night here when we learn that KM has heard from Ayya, his father, and they are doing well on their travels but won't be back until 2 or 3 am.

It is Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup> of October we kept checking to see if the van was back, checking the time, wondering where Alison and Maria were and eventually Rose got up at 5.00am. I got up at 6.15am and we packed and washed, had some coffee and then everyone came to say goodbye and have some prayer. Both the cars are coming to the railway station, so I drove the van with Rose, Betty, Irene, KM and Curran with some luggage. While Minyamin drove the Fiat with Cookie, Amma, Tony and Kieran, Ayya and we are all off to Balharshah Railway Station. It is always hard to say goodbye to our Indian family and we got to our booked seats on the train and waved until we could no longer see them all. The train is only twenty-five minutes late and pulls out at 9.00am, we are now on our way to Chirala. The journey took until 5.30pm, eight and a half hours to travel five

hundred and forty-two kilometres which is an average speed of 65kph. Rose seemed very tired for most of the way, every time she started to read her book her eyes would close but she could not actually sleep. We were met at Chirala by Solomon, his father and four others, there is something new at Chirala station and it is a lift, that's progress. The four of us and Solomon pile into the van with the luggage and Solomon's father gets into a rickshaw and the others go by bike. We arrive at the church compound where we are met by Solomon's mother, his sister and her children, Christina, Sophia and a new baby girl. They wanted Rose to name the new baby girl, so she chose Mary Rose. We talked over a cup of coffee and washed after we had shown Betty and Irene around. Our accommodation is in grass huts, and we hope that Betty will cope with it alright. We were served lunch of fried chicken leg, toast and jam and we rang KM to say we had arrived safely and then planned for our ministry here during our stay here. Alison and Maria will be buying up Singapore by now or they could be on their flight to Australia. Bed for us is very welcome because we are all very weary.

We tossed and turned all night and there was a storm out to sea as we could see all the lightning. Rose was up before 6.00am and it was raining slightly but she did some washing and will have to see if it dries. Coffee arrived and we prayed in the church then had our morning wash and breakfast for Betty and Irene of toast. We got dressed and by now it is pouring with rain, so the washing has been moved under the shelter of the new orphanage building and we made an itinerary for the next week. We spoke to Solomon about what his greatest need was, and he agreed it was for the orphanage to be built, so we asked for some figures about the cost. Needs a new roof as the present palm leaves are no longer watertight and it needs walls and windows. So, Solomon rang a builder, and he came to the site to do a quote and after an hour and a half Solomon came to us with a total of 8 lakhs of rupees about \$25,000. When I tried to explain that we would not be able to do the whole thing at once and could perhaps do it in sections. Solomon didn't seem to understand that we did not have access to such large amounts of money, and it became a little frustrating. I was very upset with the greed that was openly portrayed because they assume we are wealthier than we are. We set out walking to the first Dalet village and on the way, Rose could hear me talking to Solomon and heard Solomon say that he had expected us to start the whole building and see it go up during our visit. We were very upset, but we soldiered on to the village where once again we asked, what was the greatest need for the village. We suggested perhaps a bicycle rickshaw for about 8000 rupees, and they agreed and only to find that they had meant one for each man in the village and once more the greed is shown. Then they wanted power connected to the village but when they learnt that they would have to pay the monthly bills they didn't want it anymore. Some wanted fishing nets, but nobody could agree or come to any decisions, and by this time, I was quietly fuming inside. We have explained to all the people that we help in India, that we are just a couple of pensioners who try to raise funds through our Mamre charity and most of them understand. But these people just assume that we must be very well off and are reluctant to part with our money. The lunch came over from the church of rice and samba for the villagers, and we had curried beef and bread. We are all feeling like packing it in and going home but we will do the right thing and see out the week. We all walked home at about 3.00pm and we all feel very dejected and sat under a fan to cool down. Shortly after there was a tremendous down pour which completely flooded the roof, and our room and Rose was madly sweeping out the excess water and I was moving the bedding out from under the leaks. Then I fixed the overhead projector but every time I wanted to test it there was no power but finally, I tried it out at 6.00pm and it was working perfectly. I was very pleased as this projector is now going to go over to Rajura to be used for the ministry there. We have prayed and tried to off load our



feeling from earlier today but are still very hurt by their greed and bad attitude. We are longing for next week to come around and we will be heading home. At 7.30pm had a very short prayer meeting with about 10 people, mainly family and widows, where I gave a short talk on Mark 5 then showed them our home movie and we were back in our room by 9.00pm when coffee arrived but Rose did not want one, so I drank them both.

It is Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> of October; it had rained a lot in the night and the bedding got very wet as the roof leaks like a sieve. We moved the bedding in the night to dodge the leaks and we were out of bed often. By morning everywhere is damp and coffee is served followed by our morning wash. Then we had our prayer time and breakfast followed of toast and jam for Betty and Irene. I did a presentation to show the Indians of our previous years in India. We left at 10.30am for the second Dalet village, four of us in the van with Solomon, his mother, Christina and Sophia. We stopped on the way to get lollies to give the children at the village. There was no welcome at the village, and it was as though they didn't even know we were coming, very strange, but when they saw us, they did expect food from us but none had been prepared because Solomon had not told us that he had no money. I was furious with Solomon for not saying anything and where has the money that we gave him gone. Anyway, I gave a short talk on the meaning of Mamre, then we gave out some sunglasses. There is a comical thing about giving out sunglasses, they call them cooling glasses and they truly expect the glasses will cool them down. Once again, the villagers asked for land which is beyond our means, and we left after promising them that there would be a hot meal tonight. I will come and fix all their broken equipment, but I am still silently fuming as there seems no growth in spirituality here, just greed. There seems to be no true life in them, no excitement and no joy, just greed. We had lunch of hard burnt meat, toast and curry and then went up on the roof where the four of us had a deep discussion on our feelings, thoughts, prayers and came to a unanimous decision to pull out of this place where there is so much opposition. We have asked for prayers and covering from our Australian family and friends. Our intention is to go to a hotel in town, but we will still do the ministry for the sake of the villages that we sponsor. Last night Rose had asked me if I had used some of her tablets because some were missing. We then discovered that some of my tablets were missing as well. Later on, we found the burnt remains of the tablet packaging in the fire, so somebody is stealing from our luggage. When we told Solomon of our intentions to leave there were terrible scenes and much spiritual warfare, the mother even tried to restrain us from leaving. We packed up and left to book into the hotel Saphthagiri, room 124, the girls have 120. It is a nice room, we had some tea, and we all talked, prayed and shared about the strong negative spirits at work in Solomon's family. We unpacked and I went to an ATM, then we did some shopping. I am not going to the village tonight and that is a relief to the others. The girls did not come in for a cuppa so we settled down for the night praying hard that this experience will not affect Irene and Betty too badly.

This is the third time we have been betrayed by these young Indian pastors and it hurts to wonder if there is anybody that we can trust to take care of our ministry resources here in India. But we must stand firm and put our faith and trust in our newest choice of leader, who is Melchishua K Paul, known to us as KM.

The next morning, we had a cup of tea, a shower, then we all had our prayer time. At 10.00am we got an auto rickshaw to take us to the Catholic Church but there isn't one in Chirala so on to the railway station to meet Cookie off the train from Rajura as he has come to pick up the overhead projector. We gave him the projector, some wool for crocheting, macramé things, beads, some socks, a money belt, the torch Betty had brought by mistake, some toys and some money. He was

catching the 2.30pm train back home, so we took Cookie with us when Solomon picked us up just after 11.00am and went to the third Dalet village and when we arrived there, we had a go on the giant swing. We sang some action songs, I gave a short talk on the spoilt and the rich and I had to give two babies their first solid food, gave out glasses. We were served lunch of fried chicken, egg bread with our very hard burnt meat cubes. Then we had to rush back to town to get Cookie on his train and we only just made it. It was sad to see him go again, then we head back to the hotel by rickshaw as Solomon had left us at the station. Time to rest and hopefully catch up on some lost sleep. Betty, Irene and I left at 4.30pm with Solomon to go to the beach and Rose rested until our return. While we were at the beach, we saw the catch coming in and the fish was auctioned off to the highest bidders, right there on the beach. My poor Rose still couldn't sleep so at 10.00pm I gave her an injection. I always have these injections at home but also take them with us when we travel, and they are prescribed by our doctor for when a migraine headache prevents her from sleeping.



Today is Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> of October when we had showers, did washing and had prayer then we all watched the movie Prince of Egypt. Solomon came alone and we stopped to pick up sweets and tablets for the Weaver's Colony and when we arrived, they were already in church. We all sang then all of us gave short sharing's before I gave a talk on the narrow and wide gates. Then we had lunch at 2.00pm of curried fish and toast then we stopped at a very upper-class house. While we were there, we prayed for evil spirits that were affecting the house and its occupants. We were served coffee and biscuits, then we head back to town for ice cream and home to the hotel by 3.45pm. Everything is so strained and unpleasant that we cannot wait until we are finished here. If it was not for our sponsored villages, we would have left days ago.

Now it is Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup> of October when we are showered, and the washing is done Betty and Irene come in for prayer at 8.00am and we all got ready to go out at 11.00am when Solomon and a small HIV boy came in the van to pick us up. Stopped a couple of times enroute but finally got back to the church compound where only a handful of people were already in the church, but the music was so loud that poor Rose stayed outside. Gradually the church filled and there were songs, sharing's and nothing seemed to flow correctly as there were too many wrong spirits at work. The worship that we used to brag about is mixed with wrong spirits and it just did not flow and my main message about Putting God First did not hit the mark as we had hoped. We were hoping that the begging and the constant, I want this, might stop but soon after the service they were still at it. At the end there was prayer for all, followed by lunch of curried fish, bread and fruit. We are back to the hotel by 3.15pm after stopping for coconut water on the way, we made coffee, played a card game. Then I went to the shops for fruit, tea, sugar, crisps and some cool drinks. I was back by 5.00pm ready to play the video of Ruth.

On Monday the power had lasted all night, so we had the fan on full, as it helped to drown out the noise of the wedding party across the road. Power is off at 6.00am and waited for the generator to kick in which it didn't, so we ordered coffee at 7.30am. Had showers and we were so hot we were glad of the cold showers, prayed at 8.00am and the power came on, so we started the movie called

the simple life of Noah Dearbourn at 9am but the power went off again at 10.00am so we managed to finish watching it on the laptop. Another cold shower and ready by noon when Solomon came, picked up bread, lollies, milk and then onto the church compound where we sat and prayed in the church for half an hour before lunch of fried chicken, bread and jam then onto the fifth village. The people in this village survive as pickers and are poor, yet they have a good measure of faith. I taught them the basics, we sang for the kids with action songs, but the adults loved them to. We gave out sweets, gave them bibles and they were all fed. One couple received one thousand rupees from us as they were such faithful souls and they cried. We made certain that it was done in secret, but the Lord had told me to do it. We heard thunder in the distance, gusts of wind but no rain came, we prayed with a few people then helped dish out their lunch. We saw a lovely bird which the villagers had blinded so it wouldn't fly away. As well as that, we saw a tiny kitten but they were being very abusive towards these animals so I asked if we could leave. Got back to the hotel at 4.15pm and guess what, no power. Power came on well after 5.30pm when it was already dark, so we watched the shoes of the fisherman, but Irene fell asleep, so we packed up and settled down for the night.



Tuesday the 18<sup>th</sup> is the last day in Chirala and the power went off at 6.00am but the generator kicked straight in, so Rose made cuppas for all then we showered, did some washing, tidied up and got our gifts ready to take with us today. We were ready for 11.30am pick up when Solomon and his father came, we stopped to pick up fifty plastic containers and five balls for the children but had to wait ages in the hot car. Well, it was a complete shambles, the kids had no idea on how to act and we had to buy more containers as over 80 kids turned up, plus they were all fed. There were many parents and widows there as well and they were all expecting to be given gifts. The church was packed, noisy, unruly and nothing was organised, it was bedlam. I tried to give a talk but spent more time telling the children to be quiet, there is no discipline being taught. Around 2.00pm we had lunch of curried fish again and toast, we fed the rest of the congregation with rice and curry. In amongst all these wrong spirits and confusion that can only come from Satan and that is that five people from the fifth village we had visited had been healed. One was suffering chest pains, another said their foot was healed, two more said their fever was healed and the final one was that his leg ulcer had vanished overnight. So even amongst the fighting and the greed God moved with power over the one village where we saw peace. We then gave gifts we had brought with us for the family and the widows. Then we went back to the hotel by 4.00pm and there is no power but when the power did eventually come back on, we watched the end of the shoes of the fisherman then packed.

It is Wednesday the 19<sup>th</sup> of October and all of us are ready and waiting at 6.30am when Solomon arrived with his father and two other men. We had finished our morning prayer and Bible study well before that. One of the men who had arrived was one that we had prayed over him and his wife a few years back as she could not conceive for a few years prior. We found out that she is now pregnant with their second child and he gave us a photo of their first child, a little girl named Shanene, wow, thank you Lord. We head straight to the railway station where the train is due at 7.20am but as usual it was twenty-five minutes late, so we had time for coffee on the platform. When



the train arrived, we boarded it, it was very crowded and four ladies were sitting in our seats, and I had to ask them to vacate them. They were not very happy and there was a big confusion and in the middle of all this the train pulled out of the station, so we never got to say goodbye to anyone. Our cases are in different places in the carriage. The train is so packed that even if you wanted to go to the toilet there is no way you could get there because people are sitting all over the floor. We arrived in Chennai around 1.00pm and it is very hot. We hired two porters, who are called, coolies, to carry our bags off the train and they then went and got a trolley. Then, we had to run to keep up with them as they made a pathway through the milling throngs of thousands of people. They led us to the taxi rank where they organised a taxi van to take us across the city to the Sangeetha Residency hotel in Mylapore. Our booking of two standard rooms has been upgraded for free and we are in deluxe, air-conditioned rooms, with a tiled bathroom, a proper shower recess, western toilet, toilet paper and we are here until Friday evening. We all went downstairs to the restaurant and ordered lunch and Betty kindly paid for all of us. Back to Room 303, Betty and Irene are in 302 at 3.30pm to unpack and wait for the car to come. A small car arrived at 4.00pm and an excellent driver took us to the Little St Thomas Mount where we spent two and a half hours looking around, taking photos. Little St Thomas Mount is where St Thomas the apostle was reported to have been martyred. He had taken many years to slowly travel the width of India from Cochin on the east coast to Chennai on the west coast. We were even able to attend a catholic Mass and we also accidentally gate crashed a wedding. It is still very hot, and we were all glad of the air-conditioned car on the way back. In room by 7.15pm and did some washing and had a shower.



We spend the next couple of days showing Irene and Betty some of the best tourist sites in and around Chennai. We allow them to shop for gifts to take home to their family and friends. This trip has been filled with some incredible high points that were filled with blessings, miracles and life changing events. But as with all of life's experiences, we have experienced the low points, which of course are usually the work of Satan. So, we reflect on all those things and thank God not only for the blessings, but also for the bad stuff because as with all things there are lessons to learn from everything. After enjoying the sights of Chennai, we fly home via Singapore on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October to arrive safely home in Sydney, Australia on Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October at 5.30pm.



## Chapter 24

### Home 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2011 to 29<sup>th</sup> October 2012

It is so great to be home to our little villa and to catch up with family and friends. We soon restart our various roles and duties with Rose continuing her role as a Lector, while I continue my role as an Acolyte. I report into St John Ambulance to let them know that I am back and ready to resume my Chaplaincy role.

We celebrate our sixteenth wedding anniversary on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, and we dined out in style that day.

We also reflect on our India mission trip and write up a summary for our Mamre International Aid newsletter as seen below: -

#### ***INDIA MISSION TRIP 2011 SUMMARY.***

*As we all set off for India, having travelled there many times over the last 12 years, my wife, Rose, and I are joined by Betty Graver and Irene D'Arienza.*

*On looking back, it has been a trip of discovery because no matter how many times we have been here, we learn new things and experience new things each time.*

*But the incredible poverty that we see is heart wrenching, yet with the little our dear village Indians have, they are swift to offer us what they cannot afford to give.*

*We were joined by Alison Chilton and her sister, Maria Richardson, after the first week. Alison and her husband, Jeff, are Mamre International Aid's main corporate sponsors through their company Our Town Fencing. Through their donations and that of others we were able to purchase an eight-seater van for the ministry work and Alison officially opened the new Mamre Orphanage building in Rajura.*

*We have prayed with many and heard many testimonies of healing, and we keep reminding ourselves and those we pray with that it is God alone who can heal, we can do nothing but be used by God.*

*One of the most touching moments was when we visited one of our eleven children's clubs in a Gondi tribal village where the children live in the bushland away from the towns. They are from the gypsy tribes and are shunned by normal society and when we gave them gifts of soap, talcum powder and pens it caused great excitement as these kids have nothing. Their village of slapped together huts has no power, there are no bathrooms and they do not eat every day.*

*Another very moving moment during our ministry was when we visited a leprosy village where many of the villagers were without fingers, toes and sometimes even feet. Leprosy in India is still considered a curse and they are shunned by normal society. It is so much like the leprosy stories that we read in the Bible and how they too were shunned. What a joy it was to give some of them new reading glasses and a nourishing hot meal, their joy was infectious.*

*When we travelled on to a new area on the east coast, we were ministering to the Dalet class of village Indians. The Dalets are the lowest in the five classes of the Hindu caste system and they are considered, non-humans and they have no rights. So, they are also shunned by the rest of their society just like the lepers.*

*The Dalet villages that Mamre International Aid gave aid to were made up of families who lived in huts that were thrown together from waste materials. These materials include things like plastic sheet, bits of wood, tin sheeting and branches, and by our standards are not fit to live in. These loving people were overjoyed by our gifts of food, reading glasses and sweets.*

*The highlight of this leg of our journey was on the second last day, where some of the people cried upon receiving gifts of bibles and a hot meal, we felt so humbled by their faith and gratitude.*

*Overall, it was an absolute joy to teach all those that we ministered to from God's Word. While we had the great honour to pray over almost all of them, their faith surely puts ours to shame. We have everything and are quick to grumble, they have nothing and are somehow quite content.*

It did not seem like much time had passed before Christmas was upon us once more and our eleven grandchildren, are very excited.

Over the holiday period there is of course the biggest school holiday period of the year. However, there is an increase in adult sporting events and stage shows. This means that the various branches of St John Ambulance are paid a donation to provide first aid services for many of these events. While this also means that as a St John Ambulance Chaplain, I need to attend some of these events to protect the welfare of our members, patients and their families, especially our junior, school aged, members, called cadets. With that in mind I attend everything from football, motor cross, dirt biking and concerts, like Andre Rieu at the dome in Sydney Olympic Park.

I complete two new courses as a Chaplain, and they are Working Effectively with The Broken and Moving On In Crisis. Both courses were presented by Lifeline for the eight Chaplains of St John Ambulance.

I am often asked why I volunteer so much, or why am I a Chaplain or why do I do missionary work?

My answer is always the same, because I want to give back in some small measure, from what I have received.

Another question I get is, why is your life so blessed?

My answer to that is found in: -

*Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure, you use it will be measured back to you."*

*Matthew 6:30-33 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

*Luke 12:48 For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*

So, God can never be outgiven, the more you give, the more you get back. However, if you give so you will be rewarded, God will not bless you. You must want to do it out of genuine kindness because God wants you to.

In other words, the more God asks of you, and you do it, the more you are blessed but also the more He will keep asking of you.

I was asked once by a young Indian man and once by one of my grandchildren, what is your best advice can you offer for a successful life?

My answer both times was, never make the same mistake more than once, that is pure wisdom. We all make mistakes, and we always will until we reach Heaven, but to repeat a mistake is pure stupidity.

We are truly settled into our villa, and we are enjoying the company of the residents of the other thirteen villas in our compound. As we are the youngest residents and the only couple that lives here, we organise an occasional BBQ. By doing that, we can get to know each other and just unwind for a while. As the months pass, we go on to have gatherings for Anzac Day, Easter, one in September and one for Christmas, when we sing carols.

Our eleven grandchildren are such a joy and of course initially we thought the boys would dominate the numbers. Because by the time Ryan came along, as our sixth grandchild, there was only one girl among them, who is Jessica. But now the girls have dominated by coming all in a row. So now we have five boys and six girls to enjoy.

I have a couple of hobbies which are painting and drawing plus I have a couple of quadcopter remote control drones that I fly.

On Australia day, Rose and I, enjoy being aboard a Sydney based private ferry as we cruise around Sydney harbour during the festivities. Our daughter had paid for the three-hour cruise around the harbour. There are many boats and ships decked out with Australian flags and many other truly Australian icons. Included were old sailing ships, called tall ships, paddle steamers, ferries, yachts, tugboats, police boats, Australian maritime boats, speed boats, Navy ships, cruise ships and other pleasure craft. The idea was that a panel of judges would vote for the best decked out ship or boat that portrayed the best Australian theme. There were fly pasts of Air Force fighter jets, and the Navy were well in attendance. During the day's activities there was a display of four Navy helicopters doing coordinated flying. We cruised up and down the harbour while we watched the ferry race and joined in the boat parade. While we cruised, enjoyed some nice food and drinks, then when the festivities finished, we headed back to our dock after about four hours of cruising.

There are many special events that grandparents are usually involved in and as the number of our own grandchildren increases, we find ourselves attending most of them. These special events include, first day of school, Easter hat parades, award ceremonies, grandparent's day, Christmas concerts, sports carnivals and any other event that is important in their lives.

We both went up to the north coast of Port Stephens, to have some time out for a few days, at a reasonably priced hotel where we could enjoy the beach. While we were there, we enjoyed a champagne cruise on a very modern yacht, although neither of us wanted the champagne. We also made use of the local ferry service to take us on a day trip up the river. We made use of the spa baths and enjoyed playing snooker as well.

Another part of a grandparent's life when you have so many grandchildren is the endless flow of birthdays, which are a joy to share.

My St John Ambulance Chaplain's duties keep me very busy and as part of that I served seven full days at the Royal Easter show at Sydney Olympic Park. I also successfully completed a course for St John Ambulance chaplains called Chaplains Growing in Effectiveness.

Rose and I drove to Jenolan Caves which is one hundred and thirty kilometres west from our home in Kingswood. To get there we must drive across the blue mountains which is a part of the Great

Dividing Range. The Great Dividing Range is about fifty kilometres from Australia's east coast and stretches from the bottom of Victoria to the top of Queensland.

The Jenolan Caves are absolutely stunning, and we enjoyed a guided tour as well as self-guided ones.



Our two oldest grandchildren are doing very well for themselves. Matthew, who is sixteen is approaching senior high school with great success and he is also an Army cadet. While Nathan, who is now nineteen, has graduated high school and has been accepted into the Australian Institute of Music.

For his thirty eighth birthday our son, Craig junior, decided to celebrate at the Penrith Panthers wake board park. As Craig has been participating in the sport of kite surfing, he decided to have a go at wake boarding instead. In kite surfing you are pulled along on the water while standing on a board by a giant kite but in wake boarding you are still on a similar board, but you are pulled along by rope attached to a cable that is pulled along by a motor. The cable rotates around the lake constantly pulling the wake boarders along. Where kite surfers are pulled along by a big kite, and they do this in the ocean.



Wake Boarding

Kite Surfing

We go with our daughter Anne and her husband, Michael, plus their children Matthew, Ryan and Chloe to farewell them as they board a cruise ship for their holiday. The cruise ship, named Pacific Pearl, is docked at the overseas cruise ship terminal at Circular Quay in Sydney.

After we say our goodbyes and wish them well, we enjoy the sites of Sydney, then we catch the, Parramatta River ferry, and travel back to Parramatta. Then we simply hop on a train back to Penrith followed by a bus to Kingswood.

Rose asked me if I could make a wooden sign to hang near our front door, with the words of, Pa and Nanna's House. So, after a couple of hours I came up with the sign pictured below and hung it from a chain. All our grandchildren call us Pa and Nanna.





Rose's brother, Michael, and his wife, Pam, live in the United Kingdom close to London along with the rest of their family. Well Michael's son, Peter, who is a Catholic priest, came to Australia to visit his aunties and cousins. He came for a visit with Rose and her elder sister, Linda, and their families. When Peter came with Rose and I to visit Rose's mother, Eva, his grandmother, at her nursing home in Wentworth Falls, he celebrated a Catholic Mass especially for Eva. Any of her fellow residents were welcome to attend as well, and Rose was the Lector while I served as an Acolyte for the Mass. We had to ask the diocese Bishop's permission for Peter to be able celebrate the Mass.



On another day we took Peter to Featherdale wildlife park along with our three-year-old granddaughter, Matilda.



After Peter had a final outing with all his cousins for a party weekend together, we had to say our farewells for now and wish him a safe journey home to his father, mother and his parish.



Next is my sixtieth birthday celebration and all the family turned up to celebrate with me.



For my birthday, Rose had purchased, a one-hour flight on a Chipmunk war plane for me, which included a full barrel roll, corkscrew twists, severe dives and stalls. It was hair raising to say the least, thank you again, my beautiful Rose. The flight took off from Camden airport which is a forty-minute drive south from our home.



The next couple of months pass by quickly and were filled with other family birthdays and our various duties.

Rose has convinced me that I should complete the next India mission trip without her, despite my objections.

I successfully completed another course at the Mary McKillop centre called Combined Catholic Chaplains Working Together. It was a course for all Catholic chaplains from all the emergency services, hospitals, fire brigades, ambulance services, prisons and schools.



## Chapter 25

### India 29<sup>th</sup> October 2012 to 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2012

It is with a heavy heart that I leave my Rose behind and fly to India via Singapore. I arrive in Chennai around midnight as usual and hire a taxi to take me to my hotel for a good long sleep.

Then after two days of rest I leave on an overnight train to Chandrapur and have one night in a hotel there.

The next morning KM arrives to drive me to Rajura, and when I arrive there, the usual giant poster to welcome me to India is there.



The first couple of days are taken up with holding home Churches and there are usually thirty to forty people attending.



Then on Sunday the 4<sup>th</sup> of November the main Sunday church service was held after I had already addressed the congregation in Ballarshah. I gave a teaching on the Beatitudes at both services and after the service I was expected to pray with everybody.



As usual the women sit on one side of the church while the men sit on the other side.

I visited an adult literacy class, and they were all proudly showing me their work and yes, they are writing with chalk on slates.



It was a very busy week because there was also a large wedding held a couple of days later. I could not marry the couple myself because of legalities, however I was asked to give a short teaching and pray a blessing over the happy couple. It was a big day and there was also a large feast of the best chicken biryani and mountains of rice, that was all cooked by our very own Cookie.



There was also several children's clubs to attend and at each one we give each child a gift after leading them in some action songs and giving a short teaching.



On the 7<sup>th</sup> of November we travelled to Adilabad for a visit with Pastor Rakesh and his wife Mary, KM's sister. We visited a very poor village where Rakesh wants me to officially dedicate a new well that was paid for by Mamre International Aid. Prior to the well being dug and the hand pump fitted, the villagers had to walk a long way to the local creek or a neighbouring well to get water. This slum village of huts made from any cast-off scraps is so huge that it covers a few square kilometres.



The next day we visited a local children's club and then we moved onto the Gundi tribal village. This is the same one we visited last year and to get there we must walk across a knee-deep river



crossing. But the effort is more than worth it to be able to help these remote people. These villagers do not have access to electricity, their water is from a river and up until quite recently, they did not even wear clothing. The one exception was when the men wore their traditional dress. While we are here, we visit the local children's club and give them some gifts of soap and some stationary. Soap is something they usually do not have for bathing. We also give gifts to the adults who are as delighted as the children.



I was especially honoured by the Gundi tribal men because they presented themselves to me in their traditional dress that they usually only wear for festivals and important village business. They said, through an interpreter, that it was too hot for their full headdresses that you can see pictured, sitting on the ground and made from peacock feathers.



We also visited the leper village to have a small church service then we gave out food and sunglasses.



On the date of our wedding anniversary, the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, after ringing my beautiful Rose, the main church service was held in Rakesh's church. I gave a talk on the Beatitudes from Matthew chapter five that I had used in Rajura. Then after that we went onto his other church that was built in the name of Mamre and I spoke on the same theme again.

After lunch we headed off for the incredibly bumpy ride back to Rajura, where the roads are so bad that even big trucks tip over.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of November a youth retreat conference was held, and it was incredibly well attended. There were five teachings for the conference and three of those were delivered by me. A highlight was the action songs and as you can see by the photos, they were very popular.



The event was so big that there was a huge canopy erected outside the church to accommodate the many people who registered. There was also catering for the youth retreat day, and it is once again prepared by our dear friend Cookie. We do not know his real name because everybody always calls him Cookie because he is in fact a highly sought after, Indian chef. As well as that he, his wife and two teenaged sons are always supporting us during all our trips here in Rajura and he is also a church elder.



In the first photo only, from the left, one of Cookie's sons, Kiran, Nathaniel, a church elder, then Cookie and on his right is, Pastor Paul

Now that is a POT!

The serving line.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of November I received a phone call from my Rose to tell me that her mother, Eva, had died. My first reaction was to say that I would immediately start my journey to come home and arrange for earlier flights. However, Rose insisted that I should finish the work that I came here to do, but I was still determined to come home. Rose then asked our daughter Anne to reassure me that Rose was surrounded by family and was coping well. Anne also told me that Rose really wanted me to complete the work that I came here to do, so with great reluctance I stayed here. Eva was born in the year of 1916, so she was, ninety-six years old when she died. Rose's father, Frank, had died in 1983, not long after he and Eva had immigrated to Australia, to follow their two daughters



there. Of course, that left only their son, Michael, in England. The photo was taken in 2007 with Eva holding her great granddaughter, Georgia, with Rose next to her.



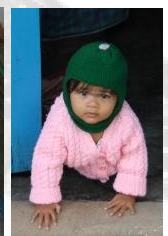
That day the whole of Pastor Paul's family, were very sad for Rose and me, and they put out the call for everybody to pray for our whole family. They also wanted to cancel the home church service for today, but I insisted on continuing on with the work of my visit.

Ironically, today, the 15<sup>th</sup> of November, is also my mother, Joyce's birthday and of course I need to ring her to give her my best wishes but also to tell her and my dad about Eva's death.

Since our last visit KM and Mumtha's son, Craig who is commonly called Tony, has grown considerably. But now they also have a new baby daughter who they named, Rose. We have learned during our time in India that, it is a common practice to give children a pet name or nick name apart from their actual name.



Before the next event is written about, I need to fill in some background information about my beautiful Rose. She knits or crochets all the time and I do mean almost all the time. If we are watching television, she knits, or travelling on a train or on a plane. Most of the things she makes end up being donated to the St Vincent de Paul society or for the birthing unit at our local hospital. Occasionally she receives special requests from friends or family members. But the point of telling you that is because she had knitted or crocheted a lot of items of clothing, toys and a blanket for me to bring to India for our lovely family here. So, it was my job to lay them out so that each person could choose what items that they wished to have. Therefore, I let the immediate family choose first, then I asked Amma to take charge of handing out the rest.





We then headed out to minister to a group of gypsies as they were camped on an empty block of land on the main road of Rajura. They are dedicated Christians and are well known to Pastor Paul as they would pass through Rajura regularly. They had found out about my visit, and they wanted to hear me preach to them, and I considered it to be a great honour. To support themselves they weave mats to sell them at local markets, but sadly it makes getting by very difficult. Despite that, they are quick to proclaim that, God provides for all their needs. Knowing all that makes it very difficult when they insist on giving me their tithe money, wow!



The next few days are filled with home church meetings, and I find out that there are many families who want to compete for my time. It is also a way of sharing the cost of who will provide my meals, because when we go for a home church, that family usually provides the lunch for the Paul family and me. I have been asked if I like small gatherings and having addressed thousands, I can honestly say that I prefer the intimacy of home church meetings. Also, it does not matter whether you teach to thousands or only two, because if you manage to impact only one life, it has been worth it.

It has been so hard to remain in India while my Rose copes with the death of her mother but due to the daily phone calls, I know she is surrounded by family and is staying at our daughter, Angela's house. Eva's funeral is being held today so we are all praying extra hard for Rose and the rest of the family.

The next event is when we travel to Mule, which is about two and a half hours drive time away, to attend the graduation ceremony of the Mamre Bible School students. For the three days that we stayed in Mule, we delivered a series of teaching to the Bible school students. The purpose of the school is to prepare the young adults for ministry in pastoral care work, youth ministry, chaplaincy or even a career as a church pastor. It was an honour to see these twenty graduates who were so excited about their futures. At the end of the three days the graduation ceremony was held, and certificates were handed out.





KM has shown us some land that would be suitable for our church, orphanage and school to be built on. It is in a small village that has no church, so KM has started having church services there to test the possibilities and it attracted many villagers. The land is a few acres in area and a very large well has already been established.



We are asked to do many things while we are in India and today, I was asked to pray a blessing for Cookie's restored chai cart. He no longer wants to work as a chef for somebody else's restaurant, so he decided to operate a chai cart at the large bus terminal. He will sell chai to the many travellers who pass through the terminal. Cookie is a highly sort after chef and he is a great support to us whenever we visit Rajura. He is also a very gifted in playing traditional Indian drums.



We all travel to Ballarshah for their Sunday church service then we head back for the main Sunday church service in Rajura. This is the last Sunday of my Indian mission trip and although it will be sad to leave, I cannot wait to be back with my Rose. Before I am due to address the congregation, eleven parishioners shared their testimonies of how they had been healed by God of various ailments after having been prayed for by myself over the last couple of weeks. Then some of the Gypsies who were passing through Rajura, also claimed some healings that were also a result of prayer. I share my full testimony that day and many people told me that it was a moving experience. After the service, I spent a long time praying over each person. The service was well attended and afterwards Cookie prepared lunch for everybody with help from others.



There was also a dedication of a new orphanage, and I was asked to unveil the plaque, after a dedication prayer. The money for this project was given by Marie Miller from Queensland in Australia.



Mamre International Aid purchased an electronic keyboard for Pastor Paul to use during his church services.



Later, that evening we travelled to Manigargh for the Sunday evening church service.

I was asked to dedicate a snack cart that was started by a young family who regularly attend church. It is a roadside cart that is like Cookie's cart but used for cool drinks and snacks instead.



I took a photo of the first children to occupy the Our Town Fencing sponsored orphanage, so I can show it to Jeff and Alison Chilton.



Just before I left Rajura to start my journey home, I took a photo of nearly all the Paul family. There is only one daughter missing and I can photoshop her image into the photo I took today. My intention is to have the completed photo enlarged onto a large canvas so Rose and I can present it to them on our next visit.



Indians do not usually smile for photographs, but we always try to make them smile and of course they insisted that I be included in one of the photos.

With great sadness I left Rajura to take the overnight train back to Chennai. Then I had two days of rest before boarding my flight home on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December. The flight went via Singapore, and I arrived back in Sydney on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December. Rose was waiting for me after I passed through customs and we both shed a few tears of joy and relief to be back together.







## Chapter 26

### Home 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2012 to 20<sup>st</sup> September 2013

How great is it to be home once again with my beautiful Rose and to catch up with all our children, grandchildren and parents.

We applied for a personal loan of twenty-five thousand dollars to pay for the land that KM had found so Mamre International Aid can build a church, an orphanage and a school on it. In addition to that, there will be a kitchen, a bathroom block, a toilet block and a safe playing area. The loan has been approved and we transferred the money to India and KM purchased the land.

As we are the only married couple here among the fourteen villas, we organised a Christmas carol evening. Because of the average age of our residents, there are only four to five cars parked under the car ports. So, we used one of the empty car ports to sit, sing Christmas carols and enjoy the BBQ food. There were two of our granddaughters present along with one more granddaughter of another resident.



It was so good to be able to celebrate Christmas and to watch our grandkids opening their gifts. Between Rose's side of the family, my side of the family and my parents, we ended up having three Christmas dinners.

Our grandson, Matthew, had a passing out parade of his army cadet leader's course and we were invited to watch. Matthew was fifteen years old at that time and he was being groomed for leadership. He was also leaning towards the possibility of applying for Australian army officer training after he finishes high school.



In February we had a massive hailstorm in our area, and it was very intense.



During March, Rose and I were invited by our granddaughter, Georgia, to attend grandparent's day at her primary school. The day started with a catholic Mass for the whole school, followed by a concert that the children put on for the grandparents.



Rose and I treated ourselves to a day out in Parramatta, to see the tourist attractions there. Even though, Parramatta is only a half hour train ride away, we had never taken the time to do this before now. We visited the original Governor of Parramatta's house, museums, old army barracks and much more.



Leading up to Easter time, we are asked to attend the Easter hat parades of some of our granddaughters. Matilda is on the left at pre-school and Georgia is on the right at primary school.



Over the Easter holidays we enjoyed being with our family, especially our grandchildren, who love an Easter egg hunt. It is also a time for me to attend a few days at the Royal Easter show as a Chaplain. We also organise an Easter BBQ for the residents of our Villa complex, and everybody had great fun catching up with each other's news.



As an Army cadet, our grandson, Matthew, was asked to march for the Anzac parade of a local RSL club.





In April, we took Angela's two daughters, our granddaughters, to Sydney for the day and we arrived there after our one-hour train journey. We took them to the powerhouse museum, then we went on a ferry ride, checked out a Wiggles show and much more.



In between these events, we are very busy by keeping Mamre International Aid operating, plus our church duties and of course my St John Ambulance chaplaincy duties.

In Australia on the second Sunday in May, it is always Mother's Day, and we honoured my mother, while all of our children and grandchildren honoured Rose. This involves the giving of cards and gifts, while they are also being spoilt as well.



Later that month we took our four-year old, granddaughter, Samantha to City farm near Liverpool. City farm is basically a petting zoo where you can touch some of the animals and even feed them. You can also watch some of the shows, like a sheep shearing demonstration or whip cracking and more. We also had a ride on the tractor train all around the vast property.



We received another invitation to a grandparent's day at Matilda's preschool. In Australia many parents send their young children to preschool to prepare them for the time when they will begin to attend primary school. Some parents also send their children to preschool because they need to leave them in a secure and safe place while they are working for their employers.



During the month of June, we were invited to attend our granddaughter, Isabella's presentation of a gold award given to her by her school. Isabella is commonly called, Bella by most of the family. The award she received is a truly special award, they are only given to outstanding students, who have a high level of learning as well as strong community outreach. Being a grandparent can be busy work, especially when you have eleven grandchildren, but we love it.



As we have our granddaughter's, Georgia and Matilda at our villa for one day per week and to make it more interesting for them we take them on the train to Sydney once more.

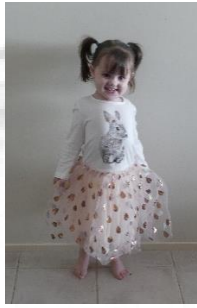


We are invited to a school fete by our grandchildren, and we enjoy all the food stalls and other attractions, plus we watch our grandkids on the various rides as well.



On the 15<sup>th</sup> of September our twelfth grandchild was born to our daughter Sharron and her husband, Adrian. A beautiful little girl who they named, Paula, a surprise because Sharron already has a family of four older children, so we did not expect another one until she told us she was pregnant. So now we have five grandsons and seven granddaughters, what a blessing.







## Chapter 27

### India 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2013 to 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2013

As we prepare to leave on this India mission trip, and we fly to Suvarnabhumi international airport in Thailand where we must spend one night before we fly on to Chennai in India. We are travelling with our dear Betty once more and with her is her friend Tamara, who joins us for the first time.

We arrive in India on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September and after a taxi ride, we are in our hotel for a good long sleep. The next day we board our overnight train for our trip to Ballarshah, where we are met by KM and his brother, Miniamin with the eight-seater van. On the rear of the van is a poster with our photos printed on it to welcome us.



After a forty-minute drive we reach our destination of Rajura, and we receive a warm welcome from the Paul family. There is a giant poster of our team there to welcome us as well and we are shown to our accommodation.



After we unpacked and had a rest, we were served lunch and the beautiful milk coffee. Then we were ready to start our missionary work.



We were shown a new part of the work that KM is doing for Mamre International Aid and that is making new shirts to sell. These new shirts are made by a couple of our graduates from the sewing classes that we hold for young women. They are then sold to make money for the missionary work.



That evening we visited a local children's club where we hand out gifts for each child after some songs and a Bible story. The children are all very excited and they especially love the action songs.



The next morning after our morning prayer and bible study we sat and played with some of our orphans. What a joy they are, and their enthusiasm is really infectious as they just love being close to us.



A couple of years ago, we were asked to pray for a man who had throat cancer and when we arrived back the following year, we were informed that he was cured soon after the prayer. Since then and whenever we are at Rajura, he follows us to nearly every meeting or church service we attend. So now, he requested that we go to his house this morning for a home church meeting.



That evening we travel to an area a few kilometres away to another large children's club. We sing some action songs that they all love, and we teach them some new ones. Then after a short bible



story, we hand out gifts of stationary, and cakes of soap. I have to say that if we gave Australian children those gifts, they would not be pleased. However, these children are overjoyed with their gifts.



That evening we were asked to come and help serve some of our orphans for their evening meal. It is so great to see that because of our presence, they are all so happy and grateful.



The next morning, we drive across the atrociously bad road to Adilabad, which takes a few hours. But when we finally arrive, we are met by Rakesh, KM's brother in-law. He then takes us to the incredibly poor village where we had installed the new bore water pump, last year. Whilst we are there, we have an open-air church service, complete with action songs. It did not take us long to realise that adults love action songs as much as children do.



That evening we visited another children's club to teach them, sing action songs with them and give out gifts. When you care for poor young children by teaching them, having fun with them and freely giving out food and gifts to them, the parents would often embrace Christianity eventually because of the love that was shown to their children. Some of them have told us that it made them question, why are these foreigners giving help to our children? Then, when they learn that we help them because, God told us to help them, they are drawn to want to know more about our Christian God.



I was very privileged to be able to bless a little baby who had been born a few months ago. The couple had asked Rose and I to pray for them to be able to become pregnant during our 2011 India mission trip, because they had been trying for four years without results. So here they are now, to present this beautiful and miraculous baby to me for a blessing, what an honour.



Because of my training as an advanced responder and first aid trainer with St John ambulance, both KM and Rakesh have asked us to conduct some, free medical camps. Because of poverty, many people in India, either have no access to medical aid or they simply cannot afford it. So, by operating these medical camps, we can dress wounds, treat skin irritations, insect bites, check temperatures, check blood pressure, check heart rates and sugar levels, among many other things. Once a person is assessed we are then able to send the more serious cases to a doctor or hospital and to give them the money that is needed to pay for it. KM or Rakesh do the speech interpreting for us to understand what the patient's problems are. Rose assists me while Betty and Tamara can dress small wounds and pray for each person.



It was my very great honour to baptise new Christians in the local river near Adilabad. It made me feel like John the Baptist in the Bible and I half expected Jesus to come along, because it was so biblical. While Betty and Tamara gave prayer support, Rose would lead each candidate into the river and then Rakesh and I would baptise each one. We instructed each person to ensure that they kept their mouths closed. I had the privilege of baptising a dozen new Christians.





Then we were able to visit some of our leprosy sufferers who are currently in hospital. Whilst we were there, we sang with them, prayed for them and distributed some gifts of stainless-steel tiffin containers. These are the same people who normally live in their own small village that we visit each time we make the trip to Adilabad.



A visit to another children's club followed that before the end of that day and as usual the children's excitement is infectious.



The next morning, we held another free medical camp and literally hundreds of people turned up. It was just like the last one where we had to turn away people when we ran out of supplies late in the day. We were kept very busy treating a few hundred people for most of the day and we sent out for more supplies a few times, before we had to stop. In India we can buy most of the supplies we will need over the counter at the medical shops, and you can even buy antibiotics without a prescription. The sad part is because of the lack of education, most Indian people do not know what they need even if they had the money. I bring all my own equipment from home that I will need for the medical camps.



That night we visited the leper village to see the lepers who are not in hospital and while we were there, we handed out more tiffin containers.



The next morning, we attend Rakesh's main Sunday church service where each of our team members are honoured with flower leis and shawls. The team perform a skit for the congregation after the praise and worship. I then deliver a talk on boundaries that we put up to remain independent and at the end of the service we had to pray over each person individually and some people received prayer from two or more of our team.



We then embarked onto the terrible road to take us back to Rajura and that evening we had a service at Manigargh which is very close to the railway lines. While we were there, we were asked to bless another baby for her naming ceremony.



Rose once more has been busy knitting or crocheting and she brought several of her finished work with her to India to give to whoever wants them.



A large children's club was next, and it involved teaching them, storytelling, action songs, prayers and giving them gifts of shirts, knitted items among other things.





Then we had a prayer and feast day for all the parishioners of Pastor Paul's church. So, after I presented a teaching from the book of James and the service ended, we all enjoyed a huge feast.



Another medical camp was held due to popular demand and as usual, hundreds of people arrived. We had to make them line up and wait for their turn to be assessed. Indian people do not generally respond to lining up in a queue to wait for their own turn to come forward for help. So, it requires a firm hand in the enforcing of the rules. When we would find a case that would need a doctor or even a hospital visit, we would give them the money that they would need. We also had various strengths of reading glasses to give out.



After that we were asked to present the sewing course graduates with their certificates. These young girls will now be able to step into good employment and earn a fair wage.



After that we attended the adult literacy training school to encourage the participants. In a third world country like India, adult literacy is a common problem with those who live in remote areas, or for the lower classes or for those who live in the poorer villages. How proud they are to show us their work and it was a great privilege for us to see it.



It was then time for the Mamre bible school graduation day. Our team presented a few teachings and skits plus there was praise and worship with lunch included. At the end of the day, we presented



each graduate with their certificate. These graduates have been studying for over a year and have received a lot of training from some leading theologians.



Then we travelled to a very remote village where we were invited to teach to the local church congregation. Their praise and worship was very intense and a joy to be a part off.



We then attended a house church back in Rajura where Rose gave a teaching and as I have said before, the smaller meetings are much more intermate and special.



Then KM organised an inauguration of the laying of the first bricks and mortar for our new Mamre International Aid orphanage and school on our new land. After the ceremony we all sang praise to God then we all walked around the property while praying to surround it in prayer and protection.

It is such a great privilege to realise just how far God's ministry, through Rose and I, has come in the last thirteen years, what an honour.



The next day being, Sunday, we start the day by travelling to Ballarshah for their morning church service. Each of our team members are honoured with leis of flowers and after I deliver a teaching, we head back to Rajura for the main Sunday service. At the start of the service, they always have a time of thanksgiving when testimonies would be shared. Seventeen people came forward to proclaim that they had been healed after they had received prayers from our missionary team. One of them even said that their angina heart pains were healed and confirmed by their doctor. During the service our team performs a skit followed by a sharing from Betty, then I deliver a teaching on humility. At the end of the service, we were expected to pray for each person as was usual.



That night we went to the usual Sunday evening service at Manigarh near the railway lines. Where we each share the highlights of our visit and I give my last teaching of this trip.

The next day we all boarded the overnight train from Ballarshah to Chennai and we arrived the next morning. Then we hired a taxi to take us to our hotel and once we were settled in, Rose and I, took Betty and Tamara to the plaza to buy gifts for their families.

Then on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October we boarded our flight for home via Thailand and we arrived home on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

## Betty Graver

### **Our Faithful Companion, Missionary, Fundraiser and Lifetime Friend**

Our dear companion during 5 missionary trips to India, Betty Graver, what a woman!

Dear Betty has raised many thousands of dollars for our orphans, leprosy sufferers, widows and poverty sufferers. She did this by holding church bric-a-brac stalls, garage sales and raffles or simply just asking people to help us, what a dynamo she is. On more than one trip she convinced some fellow travellers on the aircraft we left on, to donate money for our cause. On one trip, she was given an American twenty-dollar bank note from a couple before we started to taxi out from the Sydney airport terminal.

Her greatest gift was to minister to our orphans and all the other children who took part in our children's clubs. She was happy to walk across the roughest wilderness, sleep in grass huts on a mat and shower in cold bore water with a plastic jug to tip it over her body. Not bad for a woman in her eighties, Betty you are amazing and if you had not been with us on five different trips to India with us, there would have been a huge gap in our team.



## Chapter 28

### Home 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2013 to 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2014

It is so great to be back with our family and after catching up with everybody we resume our various duties. We connect back to our parish church, and I begin my St John ambulance duties as a chaplain once more.

Just after we complete our Christmas shopping, Samantha, our five-year-old granddaughter, has asked us to accompany her to a special Christmas party. This event has been organised at her local shopping plaza complex for the younger children of the local area. There are snacks, sweets, gifts, a concert and a visit from Santa Claus.



We organise a Christmas carol evening for our villa complex and most of our residents attend the event. Christmas is upon us, and we enjoy the time with our family. We especially enjoy the reactions of our grandchildren as they open their gifts.



I spend New Year's Eve evening in the heart of Sydney as a St John ambulance Chaplain to give support for the sick and our members. It is so sad to see the countless number of under aged drinkers who are suffering from alcoholic poisoning because they had drunk so much hard liquor. One benefit of doing my duty is to see the amazing fireworks over Sydney at 9pm and again at midnight.



We were back in Sydney for the Australia day celebrations once more and we board the yacht named, sun seeker, that we will be on for the next couple of hours. We enjoy the ferry race, all the decorated ships, the navy display, the air force fly pass and all the other shows.



In February we take a three-day trip to Wollongong, which is on the south coast, about one hundred and twenty kilometres away which is an easy one-and-a-half hour, drive from our villa. We are having some time out and we are staying the three nights at a reasonably priced hotel. While there, we enjoy the beaches, a lighthouse, the science centre, the blow hole and all the beautiful walks.



Once we are home, we resume our duties, and it is soon time for Samantha to be baptised. My son, Craig junior, wants Samantha to attend a Catholic school but to do that she must be a baptised as a catholic. Therefore, I ask our parish priest if he is willing to baptise her and he agreed, so she was baptised on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March.



Our granddaughter, Georgia, has invited Rose and I to grandparent's day at her primary school on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March and they put on a concert.





It sometimes worried me that I was training non-denominational pastors and helping to create new non-denominational churches as well and whether as a Catholic, I was perhaps doing something wrong. Because after fourteen years of ministry in India, was there a conflict? So, after explaining what Rose and I were doing during our missionary work in India, I asked our Diocesan Bishop if I was doing anything in conflict with our Catholic faith. He then asked me, if I am hearing you correctly, it seems to me that you are both leading people to Christ, aren't you? I answered, yes, we try our best too. He then said, well then, you are fulfilling your role as good Catholics to spread the good news of the Gospel then, right? So nothing to worry about then, well done.

In between my various duties as a Chaplain, Rose and I have been watching three of our granddaughters play netball and it is on every week.



In Australia, Mother's Day is celebrated on the second Sunday in May, so some of the family gathered to honour Rose.



Our pre-schooler granddaughter, Matilda, invited us to her grandparent's day as well and what a joy it was.



We have travelled up to Port Macquarie on the north coast of New South Wales for some time out for ourselves. While we are there, we enjoy seeing many things at the museums, the colonial village, some beaches, churches and nature walks.



How quickly the year passes as we are invited to the netball trophy day and watch our granddaughters receive their prizes.



Our newest granddaughter, Paula, was baptised and you can see her brothers and sister in the middle photo. Her oldest brother Nathan is not there as he is very busy at the Institute for Music in Sydney.



With so many grandchildren there is always something happening in their lives that they want Rose and myself to be a part of and Matilda's fifth birthday is one of them.



I was approached by a fellow Acolyte named Anthony who is also the President of St Vincent de Paul for the Nepean Region. He asked me if I would consider being the Spiritual Advisor for the Penrith conference of St Vincent de Paul. I asked him what was involved in doing that job? He said, at the beginning of each weekly meeting, you would need to provide a Biblical reflection and ask for opinions from the members, it usually takes fifteen to twenty minutes and then you are free to go. I then asked Anthony, why did you ask me to do it? He answered, Father Joe suggested that you would be perfect for the job. Father Joe is our parish priest and after a time of prayer and discernment I accepted the role.

Rose and I have been caring for Angela's two daughters, Georgia and Matilda, for one day per week while Angela teaches kindergarten children. So, we took a day trip, with the girls, to a town in the Australian Capital Territory near Canberra, to Cockington Green Gardens, where they have built, a miniature village. The miniatures include copies of many famous buildings from other countries and a complete English village.



A very good friend of ours named, Andrew Armstrong, has been praying about whether he should accompany me on the latest India mission trip. So, after a few months of discernment, he has decided that our Lord wants him to go.

## Chapter 29

### India 8<sup>th</sup> of November to 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2014

After much reassurance from Rose, that she will be able to cope on her own, I leave for Sydney International airport with Andrew. We fly out of Sydney and head for Singapore, where we wait for a couple of hours for our second flight to Chennai in India. As usual, by the time we pass through Indian customs and collect our luggage, it is well past midnight. We then hire a taxi to take Andrew and myself to our hotel rooms for a good long sleep. Then after an extra day of rest, we board the overnight train for Ballarshah. We arrive the next morning to find KM, Minyamin and Cookie waiting for us with the eight-seater van, complete with a poster of Andrew and myself on the back. Then we set out for the forty-minute journey to Rajura, where we find an even bigger banner of both of us hanging from the church.



Soon after our arrival, I learn that Cookie's house has collapsed and is no longer habitable, so they have taken another house that was available next door. Because it was the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, I rang my beautiful Rose for our nineteenth wedding anniversary. I ring her every day that I am away, but today is extra special.



I lay out the items that Rose had knitted and asked me to hand out to whoever would need them. So, I asked Amma, KM's mother, to decide who should get them.





The first thing that KM showed us was the partly finished construction of the new school building on the land we had purchased.



The entire Paul family are so dedicated to completing this project that they slept in the makeshift hut that is pictured below, so they could finish the building much faster, Wow, very impressive. They also purchased a small strip of land next to the Mamre land so they could have vehicle access. The new land is in a different village from Rajura, where the Paul family all live, it is a forty-five-minute drive to get to it.



The new Mamre office is also situated in the new village in a rented building until it can be moved to the new land. This building is home for the sewing training centre, where young girls are trained in how to be a competent seamstresses and some of the young ladies also sleep on the premises.



They are building a new water tank for the people who live in the area where the Paul family live and it is massive.



That night we visited a children's club where I told them a bible story, followed by some action songs and gifts were given to each child. Andrew has jumped right into the role of being a missionary and he is proving to be a valuable helper.





Some farmers make simple huts on stilts to guard their crops and the younger men will often sleep in them.



We saw the hut on stilts on our way to a home church meeting the next morning and as usual it was well attended. Afterwards, when we are on our way to attend a birthday celebration, we came across a truck that had tipped over. This is a common occurrence on Indian roads, especially on the atrociously bad road to Adilabad which we were on. It is customary in India for the family members to feed the birthday cake to each other.



When we arrived in Adilabad, Rakesh and his family gave us a warm welcome. Then after checking into a local hotel, we were taken to a large children's club.



After a night's sleep at our hotel, we were taken to the Mamre church to provide a free medical camp and hundreds of people turned up. While I gave help to many people and sent some for more professional help, Andrew prayed for each one.



The medical camp went on all day, and we sent out for more supplies three times and by evening time we had visited another children’s club. We shared some stories, sang some action songs with them and gave out gifts for each child.



The next morning after a home church meeting, I was, once more, extremely honoured to be invited to baptise sixteen new Christians in the local river. Andrew was asked if he wanted to take part, but he preferred to stay dry and pray for each candidate.



There was a lot of rural activity in the area surrounding the river and it was nice to see it all.





We then had to move to a different area to baptise some more new Christians but this time we had to use a type of outdoor concrete bath. As each of these eight young people came forward, I would tell them through my interpreter, Rakesh, what each step was before I baptised them, what a great privilege.



After we baptised eight more new Christians, we were treated to a performance of some traditional dancing followed by a church service where I was asked to give a teaching.



On our way back to our lodgings we stopped at a very poor village to visit a children's club and as usual, after I told them a story and did some action songs with them, we gave each child some gifts.



Then we visited the young ladies at the sewing training centre that Rakesh runs as part of his ministry. After these young girl's graduate, they will be able to gain employment and provide for their families.





The next day we visited some leprosy sufferers who are in hospital, and we were able to give them some new clothing, after we sang with them and prayed for them.



Then we went to the Mamre church for the Sunday service to find the medical camp banner still up. After lots of praise and worship, Andrew and I were honoured with leis of flowers, then Andrew gave a short sharing and I delivered the main teaching before praying for Rakesh and honouring the church's elders.



After that, we were all taken outside where I was asked to pray for the church then officially uncover a plaque. Then Andrew was asked to cut the ribbon, and all this was done with the congregation gathered around us. After that, lunch was supplied for everybody and before they all left, we were required to pray for everybody.



At the end of all this, we visited an adult literacy group, and they were all so very proud to show us their work. I think that we people who live in western countries, can often take things like literacy,

for granted. But for those who come from poor families in third world countries, do not have access to things like schooling and other types of education. They are learning both their native language first and then they will learn English as well.



Before we leave, we give each lady a stainless steel, tiffin container.



Before we leave Adilabad, Rakesh tells us that seven people have told him that they had been healed because of our prayers. We head back across the atrociously bad road back to Rajura and when we arrive, we notice two things. The huge water tank has been completed and the road outside the church and house has been graded and lined with rocks. Andrew had put his jeans out to be washed and after Amma had washed them she found his passport sticking out of the wet jean's pocket. It was destroyed from having been washed, therefore, I rang the Australian embassy and they said they would replace it when we were back in Chennai.



We all rest for the rest of that day and in the evening, we visit another children's club. I ring my Rose and it is obvious that she is missing me, although she is not saying so, I can tell.

The next morning, we go to a different village for another free medical camp. They are so popular that we usually turn people away, even though it operates all day long. We have so many people attending that we must send somebody to a medical shop for more supplies three times during the day.





It was a very long day of treating people's medical needs or sending them for further help with the money they would need. We also gave away the last of the reading glasses that we had brought with us to India. The number of people who came for help today were many hundreds and we had to turn away over one hundred more people at the end of the day. However, we left extra money with KM to give out for people who still need medical help. In India, there is no welfare system and no free medical aid, so if you want treatment, you pay for it and that is why the free medical camps are so popular.

Andrew and I are then asked to hand out the Mamre sewing school diplomas to the graduates who have successfully completed the course.



You get used to seeing all kinds of animals and ways to transport people or goods around. Of course, in the Hindu religion, cows are sacred but there are some Indian's who eat beef, but you mostly find goat and chicken meat are preferred. It took me nearly ten years of travel to India to learn that most Indian milk comes from the black water buffalo's you can see in the first photo.



We then visited a local school that was also the home of another children's club, we told stories, did some action songs and gave out gifts. Then we went on to a poorer area for another children's club.



The next day we travelled to the land we had purchased to officially open the new school building and broke ground to commemorate the start of the next building. Because it was a special day, we all shared a meal to make it even more memorable.







On our way back we stopped at a very poor household for a home church meeting.



The next stop in our journey was to visit a small children's club, and on the way, we encountered an even poorer village. We use the children's clubs to supplement the children's diet and to help educate them as most of them do not have any schooling. We have also learnt that by helping these poor children, we often get a chance to connect with their parents as well.



On the way home we take part in another home church and the next day, being Sunday, I am expected to teach the congregation. Just after a time of praise and worship, Pastor Paul asks for anybody who wants to share a testimony can come forward. During that time fourteen people testified that God had healed them by sending Andrew and I to India to pray for them so God could heal them. We knew this because KM was quietly translating what they were saying. Then we are honoured with flower leis once more and then I deliver the main teaching. As usual, at the end of the service, we are expected to pray with each person, and it takes a long time to do it well.



The next day is a day of teaching for the Mamre Bible School graduates which is followed by the presentation of their certificates.



We attended another home church the following day and that night we had the privilege of going to a gypsy camp for another church service. What a pure delight it was to meet these very poor people, who have a very devout faith in God and accept their living standard as normal. They camp by the side of the road in whatever town they come too, and they make and sell mats for a living. It is so dark that it is hard to see more than a couple of feet away. They express their honour to me by giving me their tithe money and I feel like giving it back but that would hurt them badly, as if I had rejected their gift.



We visited two more children's clubs the next day before we left for Vijayawada which is a lot closer to the east coast of India. It is about five hundred and twenty kilometres southeast of Rajura and will take us thirteen hours to get there. The other bonus is that it is about halfway on the way back to Chennai. When Andrew was praying about accompanying me to India, he was contacted by a young Indian pastor while Andrew was online. This young man requested that Andrew and I visit the pastor's area during our trip. After much prayer, I agreed to visit him on the homeward leg of our journey. We arrived to a fine welcome and while we were there, we had a good look around the area. During our time in Vijayawada, we were lodging with Andrew's friend's family.





The poverty in this massive city is the worst that I have seen in all my time in India. We found families living at the city's rubbish tip and most of these families go through the rubbish, bit by bit, and sort it. They put steel with steel, aluminium with aluminium and cloth with cloth etc. They sit for every hour of daylight doing this as they live in this slum, and it was heartbreaking to see it.



Anywhere you go in India if somebody sees you with your camera, they will ask you to take a photo of them. Many times, you may like too but you don't know these people and you probably will not remember them. We soon learnt to just pretend to take the photo to make them feel happy. After our first trip, we had hundreds of photos of people we did not know or even remember.

While we were in Vijayawada, I was asked to give some teachings to three different churches and Andrew was able to use his gift of prophesy. We were also expected to pray for each person at the conclusion of any of the services.



Before we left Vijayawada, they had begged us to extend our time there as they claimed that many people had been healed and that God's anointing was on us both. We explained that we were unable to stay any longer so they then begged us to return, and I said that I would pray about that. I added that if God wanted me to come back, He would tell me too.

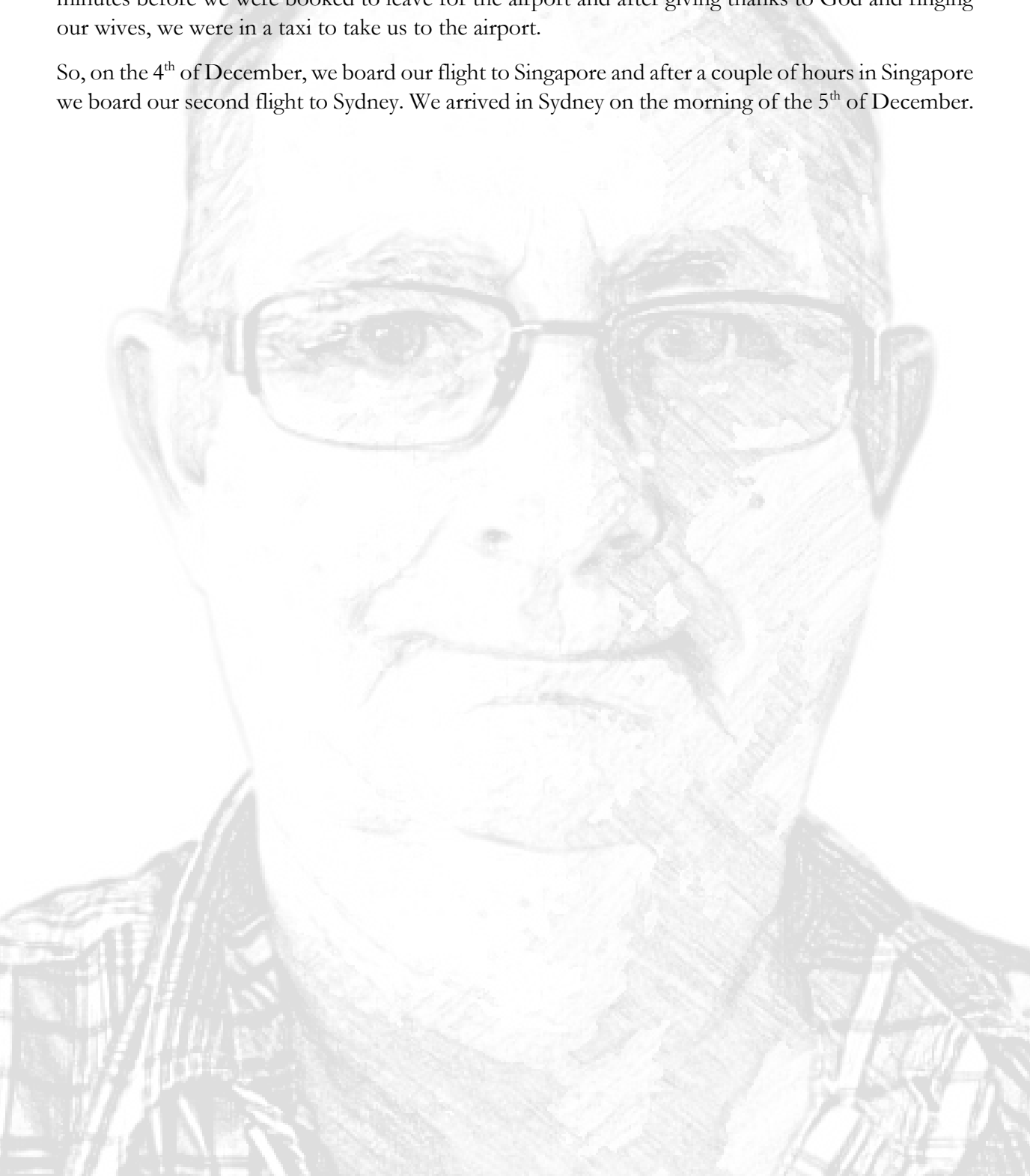
After our four days in Vijayawada, we travelled back to Chennai for three days of rest and Andrew wanted to buy gifts for his wife and children. It was a four hundred and sixty kilometres south and it took us about ten hours.

Now that we are back in Chennai, we arrange to get Andrew a new interim passport and they told us it would take three days. As we only have three days before our flights, it might be a problem, so we asked for prayer support from home. The embassy warned us that we may not make our scheduled flights.



After I took Andrew out to shop and I showed him the main tourist sites, we had packed to be ready for our flights and the final process of Andrew's passport and exit visa. The process for getting a new Australian interim passport and exit visa in India, is like almost everything else in India. It was slow and complicated because we must have gone to twenty different departments and officials, that involved mountains of paperwork and signatures that it was ridiculous. They came through, ten minutes before we were booked to leave for the airport and after giving thanks to God and ringing our wives, we were in a taxi to take us to the airport.

So, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December, we board our flight to Singapore and after a couple of hours in Singapore we board our second flight to Sydney. We arrived in Sydney on the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> of December.



## Chapter 30

### Home 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2014 to 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2015

We were invited to our granddaughter, Matilda's, preschool graduation ceremony and we were delighted to attend.

Another invitation in December was to watch our grandson, Matthew, on his army cadet pass out parade.

In between those two events I was busy with catching up on my Chaplain duties with St John Ambulance.

It was not long until Christmas was upon us once more and we enjoyed celebrating with our family.

On New Year's Eve, I spend that evening in Sydney on the north shore side of the harbour to support the St John Ambulance staff, the patients and anybody else who needs help in my Chaplaincy role. During that duty, I can enjoy the 9pm fireworks as well as the midnight ones. It is so very sad to see the many under aged drinkers who need our help due to alcoholic poisoning because they had drunk so much. Even sadder is the fact that most of their parents did not know where they were or with whom. When I ring the parents, it is obvious that some of them are also drunk. When we treat anybody under 18, we can only release those teens to their parents or to the police, so my job is to try to find their parents first.

On Australia day, which is the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, we have been invited on a private yacht which is called Sundancer to celebrate the day's activities. The owners only ask for a moderate fee to help pay for the running costs. There were about thirty people aboard after we boarded the yacht at Rose Bay. We had all been asked to dress up in clothing with Australian symbols on them and hats as well. Thankfully, on the weeks before Australia day, all the nick knack shops are loaded up with everything you would need for the day. When the yacht arrived, it was also dressed up with flags, banners and bunting to make it look good for the boat parade. After the parade the judges would choose the best dressed up boat.



There was the usual ferry race, the tall ships were all there, plus cruise liners, navy ships, tugboats, and a fly past of air force planes. There was also many ships and boats dressed up for the best dressed boat parade. After about five hours of cruising around the harbour we were dropped off at Rose Bay to make our way home and yes, we won the best dressed boat contest.

I attended a Counsellors and Acolytes Pastoral Care course at the Catholic Training Centre in Blacktown.

Very sadly, both my parents had a hospital stay, my mother for her angina and my dad because he fell and damaged his leg.

Soon after my parents were back in their home, we were invited to grandparents' day at Georgia and Matilda's school once more.



I was suffering from a constant pain in my left arm and as it was cold around this time, so I had shrugged it off. Then about one week later I had my next scheduled doctor's appointment and doctor Mark immediately did an electrocardiogram, ECG, which proved that I had been having a heart attack for the whole week. Doctor Mark then called an ambulance to his surgery to take me to hospital for treatment. I was sent up to the catheterisation laboratory, also simply called a cath lab, where they inserted a stent in my blocked artery and after about a week and lots of new tablets, I was sent home. If I had I been paying attention to my own medical training, I would have told anybody else with constant arm pain, to seek medical help.

After much prayer and because I will need some more stents inserted in my heart arteries, I have stood down from my position as Chaplain. Easter was soon upon us, and our grandchildren loved the easter egg hunts and we enjoyed being with our families.

As Anzac Day was approaching our Penrith city council organised an artificial poppy field in a local park, so we went there to see it and it was very well done. The red poppy is recognised around the world as way to remember all those who died in war and the red poppy's that covered the ground at Flanders Fields like huge carpet were the origin of the tradition. Flanders Fields is a name given to the battlegrounds of the Great War, World War one, located in the medieval County of Flanders, across southern Belgium going through to north-west of France. From 1914 to 1918 Flanders Fields was a major battleground in the First World War. The first photo is from Flanders Fields, the rest are from the display of artificial poppies in Penrith and there was even a tower to look down on the field. There were names under each red poppy and the purple one's are to remember animals who died in war.



On Anzac Day itself, Rose and I travelled to Sydney to watch the Anzac Day march past of all the veterans or their descendants. I did not march myself, but I had done in previous years. The march this year commemorated one hundred years since the First World War. When you wear medals, you



wear your own on your left breast and you wear your descendants, medals on your right breast. I was wearing my grandfather, George Oakley's, medals from Gallipoli in the First World War. My father, Keith Walsh's, medals from the Second World War and my own medals for my twelve years of service in the Royal Australian Air Force.



We are kept busy with all our grandchildren's events and sports, especially the girls with their netball.

I have been approached once more by my good friend, Anthony, to ask if I will take on the Spiritual Advisor position for the St Vincent de Paul's Nepean regional meetings. As I am already in that role for weekly meetings of the Penrith conference, I ask Anthony what is involved in this new position. When he tells me that it is only once per month and it is the same as what I do weekly for the Penrith conference of St Vincent de Paul, I agree to take it on. The Nepean region takes in all the other conferences for the region and at the monthly meetings the seven presidents of the conferences meet with the regional president to plan, and problem solve.

Rose and I have some time out for ourselves by taking a trip to Sydney for the day and while we are there, we visit the Chinese gardens, looking around the harbour and visiting the Powerhouse Museum.



My parents have both been in hospital for treatment once again and after they return to their apartment in Westmead one of my sisters had been staying with them to care for them. When she is not able to care for them any longer, I stay there to take over their care. After I had returned home to my own place after having stayed with my parents to care for them, I was very suddenly accused

of stealing a couple of hundred dollars from my parents and my accusers are my own sisters. I was so shattered by the accusation that it made me feel sick and it seemed to me that the loudest accusation came from those who refused to help my parents. It seemed that one of my sisters had put my father's wallet under my parent's mattress for safe keeping and it had two hundred dollars in it. So, after I had finished my time of caring for my parents and had gone home, my father needed some money and when my sister went back to get it for him, the money was gone. The first time I had learned of this was after I received a filthy and abusive phone call accusing me of stealing. I felt so sick from the accusation that I could barely function, and it gave me pains deep inside me with the hurt of wondering, how could my sisters even think I could ever do that. I continued to receive threatening phone calls and abuse, so I responded by saying we will call the police and let them work it out. Oh, we will, was the response but they never did, maybe I should have done it myself.

Soon after that my father was sent back to hospital, and I was the only one left who was willing to care for my mother who still needed full time care in her home. A week or two later the doctors had decided that my parents needed to go into a nursing home. So, it was left to me to check out the nursing home that the hospital had recommended, and the arrangements went ahead to move them there.

While all this was happening, my parent's apartment was being packed up and everything either sold or kept by family members. During this time, I was once again, accused of the theft of some valuable items that my father had owned. By this time, I am truly suffering from a deep pain inside me that truly made me feel even sicker.

Once my parents are settled into the nursing home in a double room, I am praying whether to cancel my planned trip to Israel on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September. My dad seems to settle down in his new surroundings, but my mother is not dealing with it well. Apparently, my sisters had promised her that they would never allow her to end up in a nursing home. It is hard to believe that all this trouble and care for my parents has consumed the last few weeks and all the time I stayed with my parents, my poor Rose was on her own at home.

I am still so very sick with worry because of my accusers, but my parents insist that I should still go to Israel and so does Rose, because she knew how important it was for me. As a Chaplain, I have counselled many different types of people and it makes me wonder how some people, who are supposed to love me, yet can steal, then blame it on me. So, how is it that I cannot even sleep properly because of the worry, yet those same people can live normally? Surely, they cannot have a conscience and they must be spiritually dead inside. Once again, I challenged my accusers to ring the police and they assured me that they would. But I find it interesting that the police were never brought into it. My inability to sleep and all my worry is not because of any guilt on my part, it is simply because the same people who are supposed to love me and who should know me to be better than that, have become my accusers. Even as I write this down, it makes me sick inside like a stake through my heart. But finally, one sister now believes in my innocence and has sworn her support on my behalf, so that helps a little. Soon afterwards another sister who had not been involved assured me of her trust in my integrity.

I should be able to shrug off all my feelings of betrayal and hurt, especially given that I am an experienced Chaplain, but my feelings are very deep, and I have always been this way and this deep. If it had been people I did not know, it would not have affected me very much at all. But these are

my very dear sisters, and it is very likely that it was one of them that had stolen the money and goods.

Anyway, after a great deal of persuasion from my parents, from friends and from my Rose, they all convince me that I should go and enjoy the trip. Because they all insist that it might help me to forget about my accusers.





## Chapter 31

### Israel 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2015 to 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2015

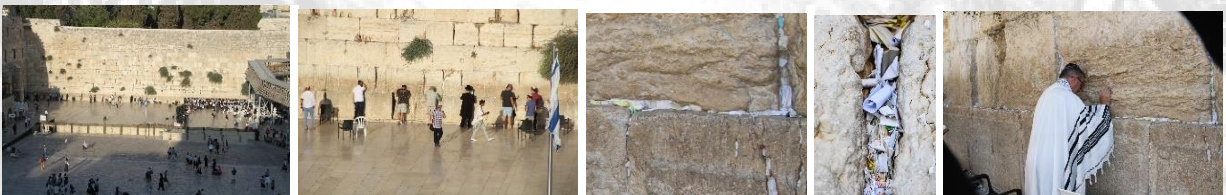
I leave on my flight with El Al airlines, the Israel national airline, with mixed feelings. Firstly, I am excited to see my heritage by visiting Jerusalem and secondly, I am still sick with worry because of my accusers. I feel betrayed and singled out by the real thieves who were determined to make as many people believe I could carry out such a low act as possible.

When I finally arrive just outside the gates of the old city of Jerusalem and I am settled into my accommodation, I was kidding myself that I could relax and enjoy my trip of discovery.

However, I did keep trying to relax and when I went forth to the old city of Jerusalem it was truly amazing. To see these ancient walls which are home to many Jewish families as they have done for thousands of years. The markets that line the walkways and the many streets that lead to different parts of the city are just so filled with history.



To be able to visit the synagogues and the ancient, western wall of the old original temple, that is also called the wailing wall because of the intense prayers that are prayed there. It was there where I poured out my heart to God to ask Him to fix my problem and prove my innocence. You can see in the photo below the large left part of the wall is for men to pray and the small right side is for women to pray at. The men must wear a Kippah, the small Jewish prayer cap and tourists are given one to use. Women wishing to approach the wall must dress respectfully and preferably wear a blouse with sleeves, long skirts or trousers, because bare shoulders, short skirts or shorts are not permitted. Modest shawls in dark colours and a form of a wraparound skirt are available at the entrance to the prayer section for women tourists or those who need to cover up more. That is me on the right, praying at the western wall. You can see the white between the joints of rock, that is the many written prayer intentions that were written, prayed, then inserted into the cracks of the wall.



For Men ^ For Women

While I was at the western wall a Rabbi approached me to see if I had any questions about the history of the temple. He asks me about when I realised that my heritage was Jewish, and he asked for more information. When he learned that I did not learn about my Jewish heritage until I was in my fifties, he asked if I had ever celebrated my Bar Mitzvah. When I said that I never had, he asked me, do you want to do it now? I answered with, what, here at the western wall? Yes, he said. So, he prepares me, with what I will need to be ready for my Bar Mitzvah. I already had my kippah or yarmulke, the small Jewish cap, and I had my tallit, my Jewish prayer shawl. The rabbi provided me with a pair of Tefillin, the set of two small black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the Torah and they have long leather straps attached to them. After I am prepared the Rabbi leads me through my Bar Mitzvah and tells me what to say and when to say it. Wow, what an honour and afterwards I purchased a set of my own Tefillin.



I returned to the Western Wall on the Sabbath, which is Saturday for Jewish people, and it has always been the Sabbath, all the way back to the earliest time in Jewish history. It was interesting to see so many Rabbis and teachers at the wall praying. There were so many women that it would have been difficult to get in at all.



You could not miss the Dome of the Rock, the Muslim Mosque that sits on the site of the old Jewish temple mount and is directly on the other side of the Western wall.



When I got back to my room, God showed me a scripture reading to help me from:- Matt 10:26  
*Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.*



Therefore, whatever lies my accusers spread and whatever evil they spread or do will be revealed. But despite my surroundings and despite the scripture God had showed me, I still feel sick inside. I know that I am very sensitive because I always have been, and many people say that is what makes me a better Chaplain. But I suppose that makes me an easier target for those who want to make me a target for abuse.

During my outings of discovery, I often forget about the trouble that plagues me, but as soon as I am back in the solitude of my hotel room, it still troubles me.

It is spoiling my whole trip, and I am not so sure that I should have even come to Israel.

Anyway, in the meantime, Rose attends Matilda's 6<sup>th</sup> birthday party and Matthew's High School graduation. I miss my Rose very much and I ring her every day.



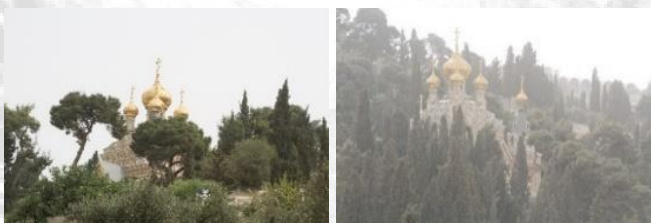
I travelled to many parts of the city and after looking upon the Kidron valley, how so very beautiful it is, and it must have been so beautiful also when Jesus prayed there just prior to His crucifixion. The garden of Gethsemane was what it was called in the Bible, but it was in the Kidron valley. He would also have walked through there every time he travelled to Bethany from Jerusalem or back again.



The Church of the Sepulchre of Mary in the Kidron valley was a church that was mostly underground as you take steps down to get into it.



Sometimes you were not allowed to take photos, like at the church of Mary Magdalene, but you can see the beautiful spires of the church.





A trip to Israel is not complete without visiting the site of Jesus's crucifixion and not everybody can agree about where that is, but I visited the most likely site. His crucifixion site had to be in front of a risen area because the sign that Pontius Pilate put above the Cross needed somewhere to be put.



I visited the burial chamber that was given to Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea and is also a controversy as to where it was situated.



His prison was another interesting site to see.



Visiting the Tower of David was a very interesting site that was filled with amazing and huge architecture.



I visit a museum and see some restoration of some of the older archaeological sites around this amazing old city.

The via dolorosa was another incredible site, otherwise known as the way of the cross. To walk the same route that Jesus walked on His way to Golgotha was a privilege and makes me realise how far they made Jesus carry His cross, it is a long way. In fact, it is about half a mile or just under one kilometre.



A visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was essential and very moving. Once you are there you are able to touch the ground where Jesus was crucified.



During my daily outings, I was able to take my mind of the worry of what my accusers have spread around about me, but as soon as I am back in my room, I continue to tie myself in a knot of worry. I tell myself not to worry because I know the truth, but I cannot stop it. I guess I should not care so much about what others think of me, but I cannot help it.

I also purchased a few essential items to enable me to have a Passover celebration from time to time back at home and I purchased a couple of gifts as well.

I have spent a lot of time praying at the western wall and I have another two weeks here, but I feel that I should request an earlier flight and go home. So, after a couple of phone calls, I can start for home tomorrow. I have not told Rose of my early return because I want to surprise her.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of September I board my El Al flight to take me home to Sydney, where I land on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September.



## Chapter 32

### Home 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2015 to 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2016

After landing in Sydney and passing through customs, I caught a train to Penrith. As I was travelling on the train, I started suffering from terrible chest pain and by the time that I had reached Strathfield railway station, I had to get off the train with my luggage. I went to the station attendant's office and told the staff that I was having seriously bad chest pain. The station attendant called for an ambulance, and I was soon whisked off to Concord hospital. Rose was also contacted, then she soon joined me at the hospital and afterwards she picked up my luggage from Strathfield railway station. I was taken straight to the catheterisation laboratory, cath lab, where they inserted more stents into my heart arteries. They asked me if I was suffering from any stress and when I told them about my upset over what some of my family had accused me of, they said that stress was a big contributing factor and that I needed to rest more.

Due to all the upheaval in my family, Rose and I decided not to tell anybody that I was in hospital. I was released from hospital after a week, and it was so good to be home with my Rose again. She told me she sensed that I would come home early, so she was not as surprised as I thought she would be.

After returning home, I went to see my cardiologist who started to monitor my progress and he said despite all that was done in hospital, there was still one more stent that needed to be inserted but, it was not urgent. So, a couple of months later the last stent was put in to expand the last partly blocked artery.

Since all these events in my life have happened, I have forgiven my accusers. I only wish them well now and I know with certainty that the truth will be revealed.

We visited my parents at the nursing home soon after that and we did not tell them about my heart problems.

Apart from my, remote control model flying, I enjoy growing bonsai trees and other plants as well. One of those other plants is a large orchid we have had for over five years that we put a lot of care into, and it had not flowered in all that time. It was something we did not know how to fix until we realised that our neighbour had an orchid that received no care, yet it flowered every year. It was then we realised that we had our orchid in the wrong location, because of where our neighbour's orchid was. So, we had moved ours to a similar location at our villa and this year it flowered, and we were very happy.



To help me relax and unwind, Rose took me to play some put put golf.



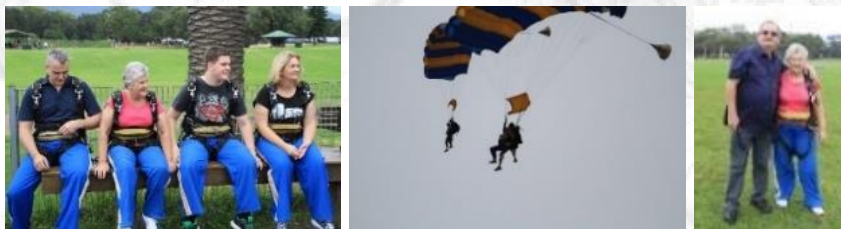


During October we were invited to Georgia and Matilda's school awards ceremony which was very special.

I learn that my sister, Pauline, has died and I do not even know the exact date as I had found out quite a while afterwards. Pauline was the sister that was raised by my Aunty Margaret and her husband.

Our parish priest has asked Rose and I to take Holy Communion to the catholic residents of Newmarch nursing home once per week from now onward. The parishioner who used to do it has become too frail to be able to do it any longer. So now, each Tuesday morning we visit each catholic resident in their room and after a short service we give them the Body of Christ. That has been our duty right up until present time.

In November Rose goes to do a tandem skydive with an experienced skydiver and she does it with her daughter, Anne, her grandson, Matthew, and her son, Stephen.



Then for our twentieth wedding anniversary, Rose and I go hot air ballooning with Balloons Aloft. We had to meet the Balloons Aloft people out in a field near Camden before sunrise and after the balloons had enough hot air in them, up we went. As you can see, the baskets are huge and after a beautiful flight we landed near the local airport.



I am really worried about my mother because after I arrived home from Israel and was released from hospital, I found out that she had been refusing to eat for many weeks up until now. It is assumed that it is a protest for having been sent to live in a nursing home and nobody, including my father, can get her to eat anything. The result of doing this over a few months, was that she had passed away on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2015. It was left to me to organise the funeral arrangements and to fulfill my promise to conduct the service myself.

I hired White Lady funerals, and the service was conducted at Pinegrove cemetery chapel. Exactly half an hour after we had started the service, a staff member of Pinegrove cemetery said if you do not leave now, we will charge you another five hundred dollars. So, we could not complete the final prayers and as we were leaving the chapel they were waiting outside with another coffin. What a disgraceful way to treat those who want to say goodbye to their loved ones. Of course, it did not help that we had lost the first five minutes due to late arrivals.

All this time at the funeral and the wake, I have had to face my accusers and it was very hard.

Despite all this, life goes on and it is not long before we attend the school Christmas celebration of two of our granddaughters.

We celebrate Christmas with my side of the family and then enjoy another feast with Rose's family.

Our eighteen-year-old grandson, Matthew, has been accepted for officer training at the Royal Australian Army college of Duntroon in Canberra and we have a farewell party for him.



We are on the same yacht as last year, the Sundancer, for the Australia day celebrations on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January.



An invitation came to watch Matthew on parade at the Army's officer training parade ground in Canberra.



Another grandparent's day was held for us at our granddaughter's school and what a joy it was.

Then we flew to Lord Howe Island, which is seven hundred and eighty-kilometres northeast of Sydney. We had decided to have a one-week holiday there and it was so interesting. It was so



beautiful and relaxing, and at one beach, the fish were so tame that they would swim around your legs.



By the time we flew back to the mainland, Easter was upon us and as usual, all the grandchildren loved their Easter eggs and we all celebrated.

We went to Sydney for the Anzac Day march and our son in law, Richard was going to march with his father's war medals, while we watched from the side of the road.



A lot of our granddaughters are still playing netball and they like us to come along and watch.

There was a combined party for our daughter, Julie's birthday and Mother's Day for Rose.



I enjoyed spending some time with my daughter, Sharon and her husband, Adrian's family for a photo shoot. I also managed to get a photo of their oldest son, Nathan and his fiancé, Holly.



We were invited to Georgia and Matilda's school sports carnival.





Rose and I went on a trip to the Cessnock area, which is about one hundred and eighty kilometres north of where we live, but a little to the west. We went there to see where our son, Stephen and his fiancé, Audrey will be married. While we stayed there, we had a ride on a Segway for an hour and it was quite an experience.



Over one month later we spent a couple of days in Newcastle, which is one hundred and eighty-seven kilometres north of where we live, and it is on the east coast. While we were there, we visited museums, lighthouses and the harbour.

After that outing, we enjoyed celebrating book week at the school of two of our granddaughters and one of our grandnephews where we purchased books for them and enjoyed the concert that they put on.

I visited my father to wish him a happy Father's Day and my sister, Patsy arrived, followed by my son, Craig junior and we had a nice day together.



Our orchid has bloomed once more, and it is beautiful.



One more sister has rung me to make sure that I am alright and that adds to my relief because now I have the support of two sisters.

It is time to pack for our Indian mission trip once more and it will be good to go there so I can be away from everything that reminds me of the horrid accusations that were made about me.

## Chapter 33

### India 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2016 to 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2016

This turns out to be the last India mission trip that both Rose and I will go on together. We travel to India via Kuala Lumpur international airport in Malaysia as we will stay there for five days on our way back home. As usual, we arrive in Chennai very late in the evening and by the time we have passed through customs and baggage collection, it is well past midnight. We hire a taxi and head for our pre booked hotel for a good long sleep. After a day of rest, we board our train for Ballarshah, which will be about a one-thousand-kilometre journey northwest and is an overnight journey.

When we arrive on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October in Ballarshah, it is to a fine welcome by KM, Minyamin and Cookie. We are quickly driven to Rajura where we receive another welcome from KM's parents and his wife Mumtha. The beautiful milk coffee that we are used to soon arrives while we unpack.

Then we are driven to Kothari, where our new land is with the new school building, and we find a huge welcome banner.



We visit the young ladies at the sewing school, then we teach the bible school students as well.



The next morning, we are driven to Ballarshah for the Sunday morning church service then we drive back for the main Rajura church service. It is so great to see Pastor Paul playing the keyboard that we purchased for him. During the service I give a teaching on the Beatitudes.



That evening we went to teach at a home church service and as usual it was a very special time.

Over the next two days, the both of us taught the bible school students at Kothari followed by lunch then more teaching.



On the 5<sup>th</sup> of October we held another free medical camp and as usual hundreds of people were lined up to seek treatment. As per our usual policy, if we had to send anybody for further medical help at hospital or the local doctor, we sent them away with the money to pay for it.



After a very long day of treating people, we attended a children's club and gave them each some gifts after singing action songs with them.

The day after that we held a home church at Nathaniel's house and attended another children's club where we sang, you put your right foot in, you put your right foot out etc. We also sang the wheels on the bus go round and round and father abraham.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of October we left for the drive to Adilabad to visit Rakesh and his family. When we arrived, there was a birthday cake for Rakesh and his daughter, smiley and they had waited for our arrival to celebrate.

Then we headed out to see another new bore water well and pump that was installed in a poor village in the name of Mamre International Aid. Then we gathered at the Mamre church for a service where I was asked to teach after the leaders had honoured us with flower leis and scarfs. A lady comes forward to thank God for her and her husbands new baby as apparently she could not fall pregnant for more than five years until I had prayed over her in 2014.



Along the way back we visited a special family who had asked if we could stop at their house to say hello. We also called into a gypsy camp, where we were asked to teach and share God's word.

Then we must travel along the atrociously bad road back to Rajura and this road is so bad that a trip which should take an hour at the most usually takes us three to four hours.





After we get back, we have two birthdays to attend, one after the other. When we are in India a lot of different people want us to visit for a house blessing, a birthday celebration, a home church or any other excuse they can think of to get us to come to their homes and it is a great honour.



We attend another couple of home churches and by the 12<sup>th</sup> of October we are asked to present the Mamre sewing school graduates with their certificates. So, after a talk by a representative from Global Reach skills training, I give a short sharing. Then the Global Reach lady, Rose and I hand out their certificates. Mamre International Aid also donates a new electric sewing machine which can do the more complicated tasks of dress making. The current treadmill sewing machines that the school owns can only sew, so this new machine will enable them to do things that they used to do by hand sewing, like buttonholes and much more.



We also hand out the Mamre bible school graduates their certificates.



We are asked to teach at another home church that we love so much because of the sheer intimacy that makes them so very special.

Then yet another birthday party that required our presence was followed by a children's club.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of October there was another home church followed by a children's club where the kids really loved the action songs.



This is our last Sunday in Rajura, and we start the day by teaching at the Ballarshah morning service followed by a dash home to teach at the main church service. During the service five people give testimonies of receiving healings after we had prayed over them. To make it more special, lunch for everybody is supplied.



The next day we are driven to Kothari where our land and school is and we are honoured to officially open the new gates that have been installed with both our names on them, then we all have a picnic lunch.



We leave the next day for our train journey back to Chennai and on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October we fly to Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.



## Chapter 34

### Malaysia 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2016 to 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2016

When we planned our 2016 India mission trip, we had decided that it might be nice to see a little bit of the Malaysian capital city and have some time just for ourselves.

So, after we landed in Kuala Lumpur, we took the express train to the city and booked into our hotel room. Our room was on the 24<sup>th</sup> floor, so we had some great views of the city.



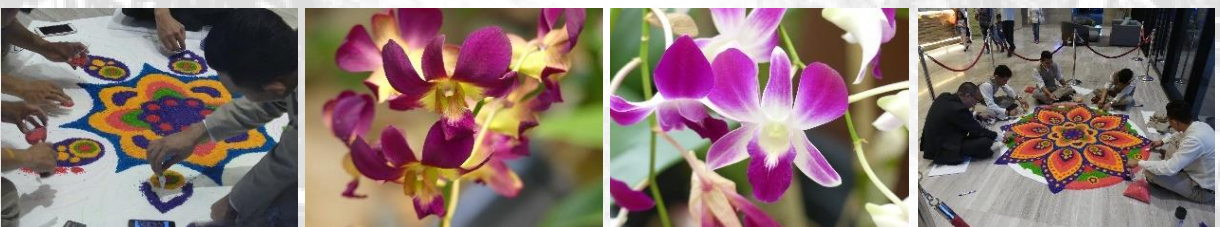
It was so easy to get around the city by fast trains and we ventured out to the centre of the city. There is some striking architecture and beauty throughout the city, but it is very hot here.



We made good use of the in-house facilities as we played a game of pool on the pool tables, and we took advantage of the beautiful swimming pool as well as the spa baths. The pool side waiter service came in very handy as well.



The fine detail that was put into decorating some building for the Deepavali festival with coloured sand was amazing to watch. While some of their orchids were quite incredible as we visit some gardens.





We also visit a wildlife sanctuary that is very impressive and well presented.



Our building even has a gymnasium and a nice roof top observation area, and the views are amazing.



We can see from the lofty views we have that there is the high-rise part of the city and a poorer part as well. So, while Rose enjoys a massage that she had booked in for, I am going to check out the architecture in the poorer area and you can see the skyscrapers behind the old homes plus a massive mosque.



The finished Deepavali festival sand art.



Finally, after a few days of rest, we start our journey home on a suburban train followed by the airport express train, and we board our flight for Sydney.

## Chapter 35

### Home 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2017

We were very blessed to arrive home just in time for our son, Stephen, to marry his fiancé, Audrey, and I had been asked to take the wedding photos. They chose the 12<sup>th</sup> of November to be married and that is the day after our own wedding anniversary.



Two of our granddaughters invited us to their school's Christmas concert, so we all sat on the grass and watched the lovely festivities with drinks and snacks.

Christmas itself soon came around and as usual we enjoyed celebrating with our ever-growing family.

We spend about five hours on the same yacht, the Sundancer, as the last two years to celebrate Australia day and once again, we watch all the festivities that go on around Sydney harbour. The ferry race, the navy seals in action, the decorated ships and boats, the tall ships, the grand parade and the air force fly pasts.



Between our various duties that we carry out for the church like taking Holy Communion to the Catholics at our local nursing home, running a weekly Alpha outreach programme and serving in our roles of Acolyte and Lector, we try to make time for ourselves. I will always remember that my father told me that we should enjoy as much of our world while we can, because he and my mother did not, and he is now sorry they did not travel much more.

In March, Rose and I have booked a rail and sail journey to Wollongong where we travel down to Wollongong from Sydney by steam train, and we return by sea. Wollongong is eighty-six kilometres south of Sydney on the south coast.





We are invited to grandparent's day at our grandkid's school once more and what a joy it is to see them perform in their different age groups.

Stephen has a proper wood fired pizza oven in his backyard and he has invited everybody for a pizza night.

Anzac Day comes around again, so Rose and I travel into Sydney to stay for one night and watch the Anzac Day march the next day.



Our daughter, Anne, has a time share apartment in a high rise building up at the gold coast in Queensland. It is rented out as often as people request it, but Anne can use it for a couple of weeks each year for herself, other family members or friends. So, we have taken advantage of the opportunity and book the apartment for two nights. The gold coast is eight hundred and forty-five kilometres north of Sydney and about eighty kilometres south of Brisbane. We fly up and book into the apartment before venturing out to check out the local attractions. Firstly, we visited a museum of wonders and the unusual, then we go to a wax museum.



We enjoy a dinner cruise along the city's harbour, have fun playing put put golf and enjoy the amazing views from the Sky Point Q1 tower. The Q1 Sky Point tower is seventy-eight floors and three hundred and twenty-two metres tall. Of course, you cannot go to the gold coast without enjoying the many miles of beaches.



Our granddaughter, Georgia, invited us to attend her Confirmation ceremony at her local Catholic church where the Bishop of Parramatta dioceses, Bishop Vincent Long, came to celebrate Mass and the Confirmation ceremony.



Rose's brother, Michael, who lives in England has sadly died and her sister, Linda, is going to travel to England to visit Michael's family. He is with his wife, Pam, in the photo.



Over a year ago we had booked a ten-day Cairns holiday for our combined birthday gifts to each other and so we flew from Sydney to Cairns. Cairns is in far north Queensland and is two thousand four hundred and twenty-two kilometres north of Sydney on the east coast. We had booked a two-bedroom apartment with a full kitchen so we could cook our own meals. The apartment is adjacent to the harbour, and we had some beautiful views from our third-floor balcony. After our arrival we walked into the Cairns town centre to buy some supplies at the local Woolworths store to stock up our fridge and cupboards. Along the way we were amazed by the facilities that the local council had installed for the locals and tourists.

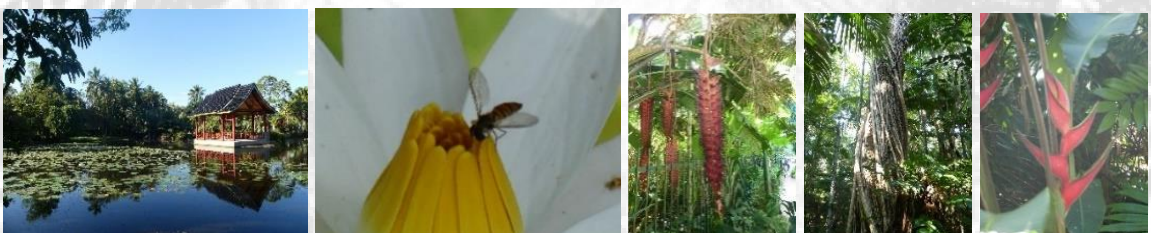
After a great meal and a good night's sleep we boarded a boat to take us down the local river where we saw some beautiful sites. We also watched some people hang gliding off some seaside cliffs and saw some incredibly complex pandanus trees plus a local orchid specialist.

The next day we were taken out to one of the few Great Barrier Reef wharfs that are open to the public. The wharf is attached to a small island where there are tourist facilities including, food stalls, toilets and gift shops. You can easily walk around the island as well and tourists can choose if they want to scuba dive or go on board the glass bottomed boat to view the reef or fish.



Back at our apartment we enjoy the spa pool and the swimming pool before settling down for the evening.

The next day we head out to explore the botanical gardens and we soon find many different plants.





Then we encounter the butterfly enclosure, where you can walk among the butterflies, and they can often even land on you as one did on Rose's finger.



We then visited the Australian Armour and Artillery Museum.



Next, we go for a ride on the Skyrail, and it is a seven and a half kilometre long scenic tourist cableway running above the Barron Gorge National Park, in the Wet Tropics of Queensland's World Heritage Area in Australia. It operates from the Smithfield terminal in Cairns to the Kuranda terminal on the Atherton Tableland.

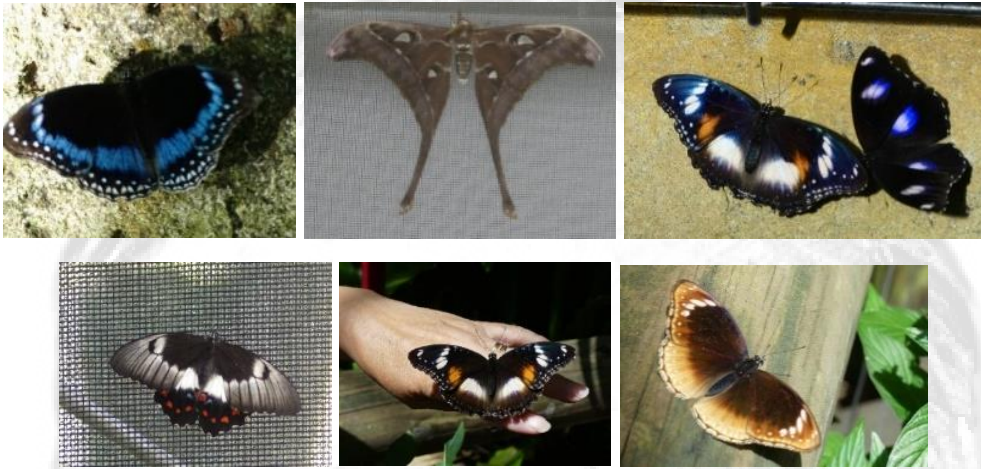


On our way up we get to stop halfway and walk through the rainforest before climbing back on to make our way to the top at Kuranda. While we are in Kuranda, we see lots of restaurants plus arts and craft stores. We also see some amazing plants like the picture below, it is only one tree.





We also visit another butterfly farm up in Kuranda.



After that, we were able to handle some birds in the bird sanctuary enclosure.



Then we headed for the Kuranda scenic railway to make our way back down to Cairns. You can choose to use either rail or skyway to go up or down the mountains. The views are as amazing going down as it was coming up the mountains and the train is so long you can easily see the front when going around bends, but wow, what a day.



During our Cairns visit we were having a day of rest between the days of sightseeing so that we would not wear ourselves out.

On our second last day, we went into the heart of Cairns to visit the museum and it was very interesting.



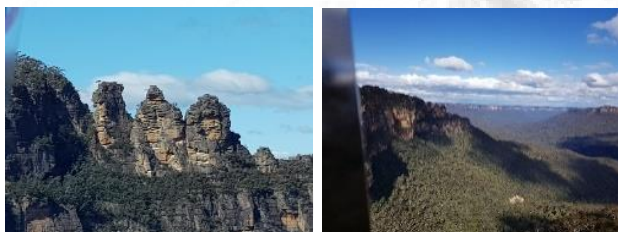


It is the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, so we pack our bags and head for Cairns' airport for our flight home.

After a few weeks of doing our assigned duties, we decided to visit Scenic World in Katoomba. Katoomba is near the top of the Blue Mountains and is fifty-five kilometres west of our home. The Scenic Railway has a fifty-two-degree angle slope which is a 128% maximum gradient. The 310 metre long, 1,017 feet, funicular was originally built for mining purposes in 1878 but was converted into a recreational ride for tourists in 1945. When you ride the Scenic Railway, you feel like you are going down vertically because of the angle of descent. These days the whole thing is enclosed with Perspex, but I can remember when I had ridden on it as a child, it was completely open, and the first photo shows an image of what it used to be like. Another ride is the Skyway, which is a cable car that travels between cliffs. You glide between cliff tops with panoramic views of the World Heritage landscapes on the Scenic Skyway. This 720-metre journey provides the best views of Katoomba, the world famous Three Sisters and the incredibly wild landscape. There is also a walking track laid out to explore the surrounding bushland.

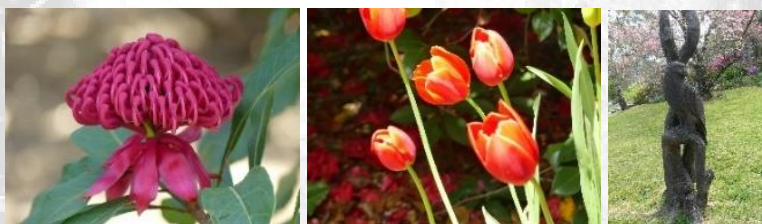


The Old Scenic Railway. The Modern One. Then two photos of the Skyway.



In September we travelled one hundred and eleven kilometres south to Bowral for the annual poppy festival and apart from enjoying the flowers, we enjoyed looking around the pioneer village in Kangaroo valley as well.

During October we visited the annual Leura Garden festival in the Blue Mountains, where various local properties open their world class gardens to the public. This event only costs five dollars which goes towards the organiser's costs and allows you to enter the many gardens that have participated. A bus constantly travels around the venues to make it easier for people to get to each garden.



We also visited Mount Tomah to visit another beautiful garden. Mount Tomah is about sixty kilometres northwest in the Blue Mountains.

For our wedding anniversary on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, we travelled to Canberra. Canberra is Australia's capital city and is two hundred and eighty kilometres southwest from our home. While we were there, we boarded a boat to cruise around lake Burley Griffin for an hour, then we went to Cockington Green Gardens. Cockington Green Garden has an entire miniature village laid out and it includes a miniature railway and famous buildings from around the world in miniature.



Christmas is upon us once more and having finished our shopping we were ready for the various family celebrations.

During December we had the opportunity of taking two of our granddaughters on a trip to Sydney where we had a ferry ride plus some fun at a beach.

Rose's sister is Linda and sadly her husband, Maurice, died from cancer after many days in hospital and we attend his funeral.





## Chapter 36

### Home 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2018

We take our granddaughter's, Georgia and Matilda to see some amazing sand art sculptures in Windsor, which is twenty-two kilometres north from where we live.



On Australia day we are on our favourite yacht, the Sundancer, for the day and as usual we enjoy the many festivities. The ferry race, the grand parade, the tall ships, hundreds of leisure craft, the fly past, the Royal Australian Navy showing us what they can do, the firing of the cannons and the steamboats.



Over a year ago we planned a two-week trip to Tasmania, which is an island that is situated at the bottom of Australia, and it is also a state of our country. We normally plan our longer holidays over one year ahead. The capitol of Tasmania is Hobart, and it is about one thousand, five hundred and ninety kilometres south of where we live. To get there we take an interstate train, called the XPT, from Sydney to Melbourne, which takes about twelve hours. We then stay overnight in a hotel in Melbourne, which is the capitol of the state of Victoria and is eight hundred and seventy kilometres southwest from our home. The next morning, we board the ship called, The Spirit of Tasmania and our trip across Bass Strait to Devonport in Tasmania takes about ten hours. Devonport is on the top of Tasmania and Hobart is on the bottom, so we overnight in a hotel room and board the bus for Hobart the next morning. Once we reach Hobart, we book into our two-bedroom apartment and as usual it has a full kitchen so we can self-cater. The Spirit of Tasmania is so big that it takes on board, cars, caravans, buses, semi-trailers and thousands of people. It has many restaurants, movie theatres, gyms, sleeping quarters and day bed seats.





The ship can take one thousand four hundred passengers, it has five hundred sleeping berths and can carry five hundred cars. It can cruise up to thirty knots and it is one hundred and ninety-four metres long.

Tasmania was established very early in the colonial stage of our history, and it was decided early that the convicts who caused the most trouble would be sent to Tasmania. The Governor established a penal colony at Port Arthur which is about ninety-four kilometres southeast of Hobart. They were transported down to Tasmania by ship and the conditions both on board and at Port Arthur were incredibly bad.

We were impressed by the diversity of the architecture in and around Hobart and we had as much fun enjoying them during our walks as we did at the various tourist attractions.

After we settled in and had a good night's sleep, we took a bus ride into Hobart because our apartment was in the suburbs.

We visited the Maritime Museum and we saw many amazing displays of ships and maritime equipment.

Whenever we go away on a holiday, we normally have a rest day in between our outings, so the next day, all we did was to go on a short walk.

Our next outing was to go to Port Arthur on a bus that was supplied by the tourist company we had booked with. After we travelled the ninety-four kilometres to get there, we had all day to tour around the old penal colony and the town. A lot of the old penal colony is in ruins but amazingly the prison itself is almost complete along with some of the official's houses. The prisoners would sleep on a hammock bed with very little else in the tiny rooms. To attend church, each prisoner had to stand the whole time in individual cubicles and if you ducked down you would be punished. You can see me in one of the cubicles and there was not much room.



There were houses for the priests, the governor, the medical officer, the chief accountant and the surgeon. Also, there were churches, a post office, a doctor's surgery and a general store.

Port Arthur was ideal for the worst of the convicts because of its isolation but it still did not stop some from trying to escape. There was one convict who decided to hide until it was dark, then he killed a kangaroo and put on its carcass so the guards would not see him. The only trouble was that when the guards decided to shoot the kangaroo that they saw and the convict had to yell out to save himself. We decided since then that we need to return to Port Arthur because you need a couple of days to see it all properly.

Our next outing was to visit the Botanical Gardens and it was very a rewarding trip.



On the 9<sup>th</sup> of March we visited the historic town of Richmond, which is about twenty-seven kilometres north of Hobart and it was known as an old coal mining town. The bridge was built in 1825 to allow coal mine vehicles to cross the river.



The next day we visited Hobart's Street Markets and enjoyed seeing some vintage cars at a car show.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of March we boarded the Pennicott Wilderness Journeys boat to cruise around the bottom of Tasmania. But to get to the departure jetty we had to travel there by bus. These all-weather, high-speed boats are really fast and when we had boarded, we were told to put on the head to toe wet weather gear.



We saw many sea caves, birds and sea lions, and apart from Port Arthur this three-hour adventure was incredible.

The next day we had a couple of games of put put golf.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of March we boarded a boat called The Spirit of Hobart to cruise up and down Hobart harbour.



We had booked a bus ride to take us to the top of Mount Wellington and as we had enjoyed amazingly good weather up to now, we could not believe how overcast it was this day, the day to see the views from the top. You can see the view of Hobart in the first shot, then I have zoomed in on Hobart's casino.



We visited the Hobart Museum next, and we saw many amazing things.

I mentioned the amazing architecture that we have seen, so here is a couple of the best. The first picture is the Governor of Tasmania's house.



The next day it was time to board the bus to take us back to Davenport, to start our journey towards home. In Davenport we book into the same hotel we had used on our arrival in Tasmania.

The next morning, we board the Spirit of Tasmania to take us back across Bass Strait to Melbourne.

In Melbourne we book into a hotel for one night then board the XPT train the next morning to take us back to Sydney. Then a suburban train from Sydney to Penrith, followed by a bus ride home to Kingswood and home.

Now that my heart is stable, I decided to resume my role as Chaplain with St John Ambulance and I can help our members, their families, patients and bystanders once more.

Every time I would visit my father in the nursing home, I would get so upset by the terrible condition that he had to live in. It was called Ark nursing home, and it was in Parramatta which is a half an hour drive east from our home. So, on many of the visits that Rose and I made, I would occasionally offer to transfer him to a much nicer nursing home, but he would always refuse.



The conditions became so bad that in June I rang the nursing homes standards authorities who oversee the required standards for all nursing homes, and I made a formal complaint. They then asked me to send it to them in writing, which I did in detail. Then, within a few weeks the officials came to the Ark nursing home for an inspection, and they then failed fifty one out of fifty-two areas of the required standards for health care. As a result, the nursing home was told that they had three months to fix all the fifty-one failed standards, or they would lose their license to operate.

By now the channel 9 television news crews here in Australia had heard of the failed standards and they were filming footage of the nursing home from the street on the afternoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July when I was leaving. One of the news presenters asked me if I had been visiting somebody in the nursing home. When I said that I had been visiting my father, he asked me if I knew about the fact that the nursing home had failed fifty-one out the fifty-two areas of health care standards. My answer was, yes, I know all about it. Then the channel 9 news presenter asked me, how did you learn about the failed standards and are you concerned about it? So, I then answered by saying that yes, I know about it because I was the person who had rung the authorities and yes, of course I am concerned. I went on to add, that when I could not convince my father to leave for a better nursing home, I knew I had to report them so something would be done about the terrible conditions. Of course, all this time the television video cameras were recording me and when I told them that I was the person who phoned the nursing home standards authority, the look on the news presenter's face was lit up. He obviously thought he had stumbled onto the right person, and he went on to ask me how bad the conditions were inside the nursing home. So, I told him of some of the atrocious meals, the dirty conditions and negligent health care workers that were supposed to care for my father.

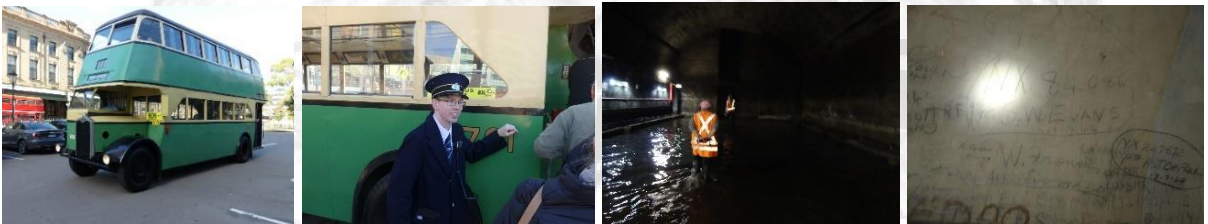
That night I was so surprised to see that it was the top news story on channel 9 news and even more surprised to see the interview with me on the television. The next time I visited my father he said to me, you should not have done that because now they will punish me. I responded by saying, they would not do that because then the police would charge them. Over the next couple of weeks, I was continuously stopped in the street and asked wasn't that you on the news the other night?

Within the next couple of weeks, Anglicare took over the management of the nursing home and suddenly the conditions became top priority, and my father was so pleased he said to me, thank you for fixing everything. Within a couple of months, a Royal Commission into the care and standards of nursing homes was launched and it was all because of my phone call.

We are on the mailing list of the Railway Heritage Museum, and we receive an invitation to attend a three-day Railway Heritage weekend at Central railway station in Sydney. When we arrive, we see an orchestra that is playing old time songs and dressed in olden day attire. As the music plays there are olden day dancers, twirling to the music. We enjoy a steam train race to Strathfield and back, and our train won the race. It was a joy to be served a Devonshire Tea with scones and cream on an old interstate train carriage from the past. A trip on an olden day double decker bus was also special.



When we had received the invitation by email there was an option to enter a draw for a tour of the unused railway tunnels near St James underground railway station in Sydney. There were a limited number of available places for people to do the tour. This is because they only take twenty people per tour and there was, only six tours a day for the three-day programme. When we did not receive an invitation, we just accepted it but halfway through the weekend a train official announced that for those who wanted to go, the bus was leaving in five minutes for anybody who wanted to go on the underground tour. We were not too sure, but we boarded the bus anyway and when we got to St James station they asked, did you receive an invitation? When we said no, we explained about the announcement, the lady said, wait around because sometimes some people do not show up and if they do not, you can come along. A couple with two children did not arrive so we were invited to go after all, wow, God is so good to us. After we put on gum boots and safety gear we descended into the old unused tunnels. We discovered the site where a Police Rescue episode had been filmed as well as an American movie. When we entered the tunnels, many of them had a few inches of water in them.



In the last photo, there is a lot of messages written on the walls and apparently, during World War two, the old tunnels were used as air raid shelters and there were messages to loved ones and to soldiers on the walls. These unused tunnels were built by the same man who built the City Circle underground railway tracks, and this tunnel was the start of a new underground railway to reach other suburbs, but the war put a stop on construction. These unused tunnels are under Hyde Park and the air raid shelter's entrance stairs were in the park, but it is all cemented in now.

Our final outing was on a small diesel-powered train, and we were able to stand directly behind the driver.



A couple of weeks later we had a five day stay in the heart of Sydney to check out the sites. The Jewish Museum was our first outing, and we learned a lot about the holocaust.



A two-hour guided walking tour of the more interesting history of Sydney was next and it was very good.

Then we visited the Art Gallery to see some incredible paintings, drawings and sculptures.

We explored the old rum hospital and mint buildings that has amazing history behind them.

The maritime museum was next as we walked all over the HMAS Vampire, which is a destroyer from the nineteen twenties. We also went on a submarine, the replica of the Bounty and the museum itself.

I visited the great Sydney Jewish Synagogue and enjoyed a guided tour.

We walked all the way around the Sydney Harbour waterfront from Darling Harbour to Mrs Macquarie's Chair and that took us a few hours. Then we finished the day in the Botanic Gardens.

A visit to Sydney is not complete without a walk-through Hyde Park and a ride on the light rail.

As it was to be my Rose's seventieth birthday this year on the third of August, I had reserved us a suite at the famous Carrington hotel in Katoomba for two nights from the twenty seventh of July.



The Carrington hotel in Katoomba at the top of the Blue Mountains was built in 1883 and was named, The Great Western Hotel but was renamed The Carrington in 1886. It was so popular that the wealthier people of Sydney and its suburbs would travel up to Katoomba to stay and party there.

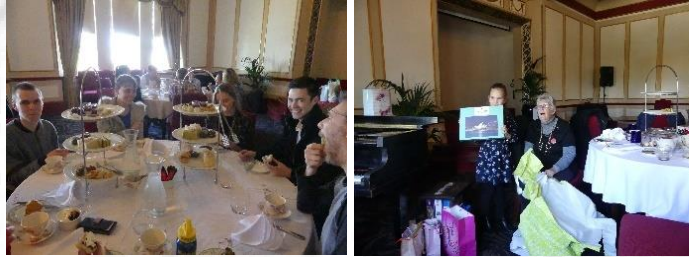
Anyway, we had the Lady Carrington Suite, complete with bedroom, lounge room and bathroom, plus a spa bath. Rose thought that the stay in our suite was her birthday gift but there was more to come.

During our two nights stay we enjoyed our lofty views from our fourth-floor suite as we looked out over the Jamison valley's views where the famous Three Sisters sit.

We enjoyed the in-house dining; the various beautiful lounge areas and we had a game of snooker in the games room. Sometimes we ventured out to visit some of the local attractions, but mostly, we enjoyed what the hotel provided for their guests.

On the twenty ninth of July, we are due to check out of our room but there were more surprises to come for Rose and I had to delay our departure. To do that I had arranged a Devonshire tea to be served in the Grand Lounge room and I told Rose it was complimentary. So, we sat and enjoyed morning tea while our guests slowly arrived in the Grand Ball room for a surprise High Tea seventieth birthday celebration. When it was time, I took Rose to the Grand Ball room to be greeted by our children, grandchildren, her sister, her nieces and nephews and her best friends and it was set out for High Tea.





We are invited to our grandchildren's athletics carnival next, and it went on for most of the day.

Of course, between all these events I have been doing my assigned duties of being a Chaplain, an Acolyte and a Spiritual Adviser which keeps me very busy.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> of October, I left to serve as a Chaplain for St John Ambulance at the Bathurst 1000 touring car races over the long weekend. The Bathurst 1000 is an annual touring car race held at the Mount Panorama racing track in Bathurst and as the name implies the race finishes after 1000 kilometres of racing. I travelled by train to Bathurst which is about 150 kilometres away and was taken to our lodgings for the weekend. The lodgings are at a famous old heritage mansion not far out of town and the rooms were kindly donated for St John Ambulance for the long weekend. St John Ambulance is the first aid provider for the event and there will be a couple of hundred thousand spectators and service providers. My job will be to give moral support and guidance to our team of 32 members and be available to the public for support as well.



We decided to return to Sydney for another week in early November as we realised that there were more attractions that we had not seen on our previous trip. The accommodation we chose was a two-bedroom apartment with a full kitchen, so we can self-cater. Our first outing was to return to the Chinese gardens in Darling Harbour as the plants were more in season now.



We travelled by bus to Palm beach which is forty-three kilometres north of Sydney. While we were there, we enjoyed two ferry rides around Pittwater and Broken Bay.

A walk around Circular Quay and the Opera House was followed by a visit to the Justice and Police Museum. We can see the huge cruise ship called, the Ovation of the Sea, in the harbour at the overseas cruise ship terminal.

Then we returned to the Maritime Museum as there was so much that we had missed on our last visit, like more ships to investigate.

The Botanic Gardens and Centennial Park were our next trip, especially as we are now in spring.

The next trip was to walk across the Sydney harbour bridge and go up in the bridge tower. To walk across the bridge is something we have never done and to go up in the tower enables us to see the history of the building of the bridge, as it was a kind of museum. While we are up in the tower, we can see people doing the bridge climb, which is something that Rose has done previously.



It is soon time to head home and prepare us for another round of Christmas celebrations.

Very quickly another year is ending, and I head into Darling Harbour in Sydney to serve as a St John Ambulance Chaplain to support the team who are there to treat any New Year's Eve accident victims.



## Chapter 37

### Home 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2019 to 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2020

Apart from our regular duties, we enjoy being close to our ever-growing family. We had decided some time ago, that we would enjoy as much of our beautiful country of Australia, as much as we can and while we can.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January we travel on the only postal delivery by boat in Australia from the Brooklyn public wharf. It delivers mail to Dangar Island, Marlow and Milson's Passage. During the journey, we were served lunch, which was included in the cost of the trip. At each stop there was always somebody to collect the mail for their community. Milson's Passage is a closed community that have withdrawn from Australia and proclaimed themselves as a separate country and their King came to the wharf to greet us, as he does each day that the mail boat comes.



Last year I had planned to travel to the Avalon Air Show in the state of Victoria in late February, where the various World's Air Forces would display their aircraft to those who attended. But as the time came around, Rose and I have decided to make it a five-day visit to explore Melbourne, which is Victoria's capital city.

The first day we visited Fitzroy Gardens, which started with a tour of Captain Cook's original English home. This building was shipped to Australia after being purchased for that purpose and it was where Captain Cook had lived up to the time he went to sea. It was reassembled when it got to Melbourne's Fitzroy Gardens for everybody to enjoy.

After seeing how Captain Cook had lived, we enjoyed the gardens and a miniature village that was on display.

We also visited a cathedral, another very large park, a museum and many of the other sites of Melbourne.

When we returned to Avalon airport for our flight home, many of the air show aircraft were still at the airport and some of them took off while we waited for our own flight.





When we are back home, we go back to visiting our dear local nursing home residents, teaching at the St Vincent de Paul meetings, checking in on my St John Ambulance members and serving as an Acolyte at church.

We visited an Orchid show at Clarendon, near Windsor, to see the beautiful varieties of Orchids in bloom.



Because we are members of the Maritime Museum, we received an invitation to go on a steamboat ride. The name of the boat is the Lady Hopetoun, and it has been beautifully restored by the Museum's volunteers and the highly polished and lacquered woodwork is stunning.



I have been given the opportunity to become a Chaplain with the New South Wales Ambulance service and after an interview back in April, I am attending a four-day orientation course. At the end of the course, it is official, I am now a Chaplain for them now and I need to stand down from my role with St John Ambulance. However, I did help St John Ambulance by recruiting a friend of mine to replace me.

When I got back home after the four days of training, I received a phone call from the senior Chaplain to ask me if I was able to perform a catholic funeral. My response was I cannot do a funeral Mass because I am not a priest. He said, that is fine, it is just that the family wants a catholic funeral, but no Mass and you are our only catholic Chaplain, can you, do it? I responded with, yes but I don't even have my uniform yet. He said, I can fit you with a uniform very quickly. So, he asked me to go to the warehouse in Westmead, where the NSW Ambulance uniforms are stored and issued, and I received a formal dress uniform.

Then I met the family of the deceased person, who had been a member of the NSW Ambulance rescue team. In the past the NSW Ambulance had their own rescue team branch of the service but since then the decision was made that it would be the fire brigade's job. The deceased's son was also an ex-member of the Ambulance service and after I met up with him and his family, he asked me to make it a one-hour funeral service and would I also lead a rosary service the night before the funeral.

The funeral was held at the Pinegrove chapel and there was a sea of NSW Ambulance uniforms, the chapel was so packed, some people had to stand. Talk about being thrown in the deep end, it certainly was a baptism of fire. After the hour-long service, I had to lead the hearse to the grave site

and finish with the committal service. I was invited to the wake at a local hotel and was thanked by many for a job well done.

A few weeks after that, I was sent a massive box of uniforms and equipment. As an NSW Ambulance Chaplain, I would be called out to events like, child deaths, suicides, multiple injuries or anything where a Chaplain is deemed necessary. Chaplains carry the same gear as any Ambulance officer, including radios and my car is tracked just like other ambulance vehicles.

We are happy to get the opportunity to take our ten-year-old granddaughter, Samantha to Sydney for a day together. The opportunity to see her is not very often because she lives in the state of Queensland, but she has come down to us for a visit.

A few months ago, we had decided to return to Cairns because we had not seen everything and because it is so beautiful, so that is our birthday gift to each other. We fly up there on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August and we are staying in the same apartment as last time. A visit to the local Woolworths supermarket enabled us to stock our cupboards and refrigerator and we walked all around the streets of Cairns.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> we visit the areas of the Botanical Gardens that we did not see last time we visited.

The next day we visited the aquarium which was closed for repairs on our last trip.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> we visited some beautiful waterfalls, then we went to Paronella Park, which is an old retreat centre and amusement park that is being slowly restored. It is in the rainforest region and all the old buildings are covered in moss.



José Paronella arrived in Australia from Catalonia in Spain, in 1913. For the next 11 years he worked, cutting sugar cane initially, then purchasing, improving, and reselling cane farms. In 1924 he returned to Spain and married Margarita in 1925. The trip back to Australia was their honeymoon. José first saw the 13 acres of virgin scrub along Mena Creek in 1914. He eventually purchased it in 1929 for one hundred and twenty pounds and started to build his pleasure gardens and reception centre for



the enjoyment of the public. Using the fast-flowing water from the waterfalls, he designed and built his own hydroelectricity. What would eventually shut down the park, was a series of massive floods in 1967, 1972 and again in 1974.

The 8<sup>th</sup> of August we travel up to the Kuranda rainforest mountains from Smithfield on the Skyrail.

We visit the famous curtain fig tree the next day, followed by a visit to the Heberton Historic Village. This fig tree has literally created a curtain of vertical roots and it is five hundred years old and is fifty metres high. At the historic village, we saw what the life of our ancestors would have been like, and we also enjoyed a ride on the villages mini train. At the end of the ride, we were able to visit the railway restoration workshops.



On the 11<sup>th</sup> we went to the Cairns showground for the classic car show, and we saw some beautifully restored cars. Our beautiful thirteenth grandchild was born to Stephen and Audrey today, a beautiful girl named Samantha. So now we have two granddaughters named Samantha, one to Rose's son Stephen and the other to my son, Craig junior, who is now ten years old.

We played tenpin bowling the day after that and we had some fun trying to get some strikes or spares.

The 13<sup>th</sup> was taken up by a visit to Palm Grove which was a bus ride up the north coast, and it was so beautiful.

On the following day we took another bus trip north to Yarrabah and this was another coastal location with great views and beaches. On both those days we enjoyed walking along the coast to see the various beaches and views.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> we went to play put put golf followed by a trip to Munro Park.



On the 18<sup>th</sup>, which is my birthday we visit the local club for a steak dinner and enjoy the walks around the local area.

After another bus trip north on the next day we walked from Karrawa to Palm Grove, along the coast.



We are staying at 181 The Esplanade and from our third-floor veranda, we can look out to sea and a park area just below us. The Cairns hospital is very close to our accommodation, so when the ambulance helicopters come to drop patients at the hospital, they land in the park just below us.



On the 19<sup>th</sup> we fly home to Sydney, then we board a train for Penrith and then we only need a local bus trip to our Villa in Kingswood.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of August we finally get to meet our newest granddaughter, Samantha, who is now ten days old.



We soon get back into our routine of our various assigned duties and we both catch up with our residents at Newmarch nursing home. While I begin teaching the members of St Vincent de Paul once again and I catch up with my NSW Ambulance Chaplaincy duties.

A visit to my father is another priority, so when we get to his nursing home, he seems to be doing fine. He quickly points out to us that he is sorry he did not travel much with my mother like we are doing, and he said he is happy that we are.

Starting from back in July, the east coast of Australia has been experiencing the most bushfires in our history and it will last right through to February of next year. It was concentrated throughout New South Wales and Queensland and the final count was 11,264 fires. They destroyed over 5.4 million hectares or 13 million acres with 2,439 homes destroyed, 34 people killed, many thousands of wild animals killed, and thousands injured. The smoke spread over 11,000 kilometres as it affected the weather itself and is now known as black summer.





I have been given the task of facilitating the Plenary Council meetings for our local catholic parish. In these meetings that consist of up to twenty parishioners for each group, they are run to find out what the individual people want to see for the future of our church in Australia. Each group meets each week for ten weeks and I run six different groups over three months. Then I correlate the findings and hand them into the Priests who then send them to the Diocese.

At the conclusion of the Plenary Council meetings, Rose and I run an outreach program called That the World May Know. This series of videos are presented by Ray Vander Laan, who is an imminent Biblical Scholar. He takes small groups around the Holy Land and teaches his students what happened at each location in Bible times. After each video we then break up into a general question and answer session. As there are twenty-two videos in the series, the programme runs for eleven weeks as we show two videos each time.

I receive a phone call from my father's nursing home to say he has passed away and they have called me because I am his next of kin. So, after phoning my little sister, Patsy, I drive to my dad's nursing home, and I pick up Patsy on the way. As we sit with my father's body, Patsy asks me to pray, and we share some nice stories about his life. My sister, Rose, arrives next and after the arrangements are made of where his body is to be taken, I leave for home. My dad was born in 1924 so he has reached the age of ninety-six and he had all his faculties working well except his walking was limited.

I make the funeral arrangements with consultation with my sisters, and I will be officiating over his funeral service. The service is held in Penrith on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December and there were, many friends and family in attendance.

Christmas was a bit more sombre for us but we put on our best appearance so we would not spoil it for the grandkids.

Another year has quickly passed, and we look for a bright year of 2020. On New Year's Eve I do not have to be in Sydney as a Chaplain for the celebrations this time, so we spend it together, just like any other day.

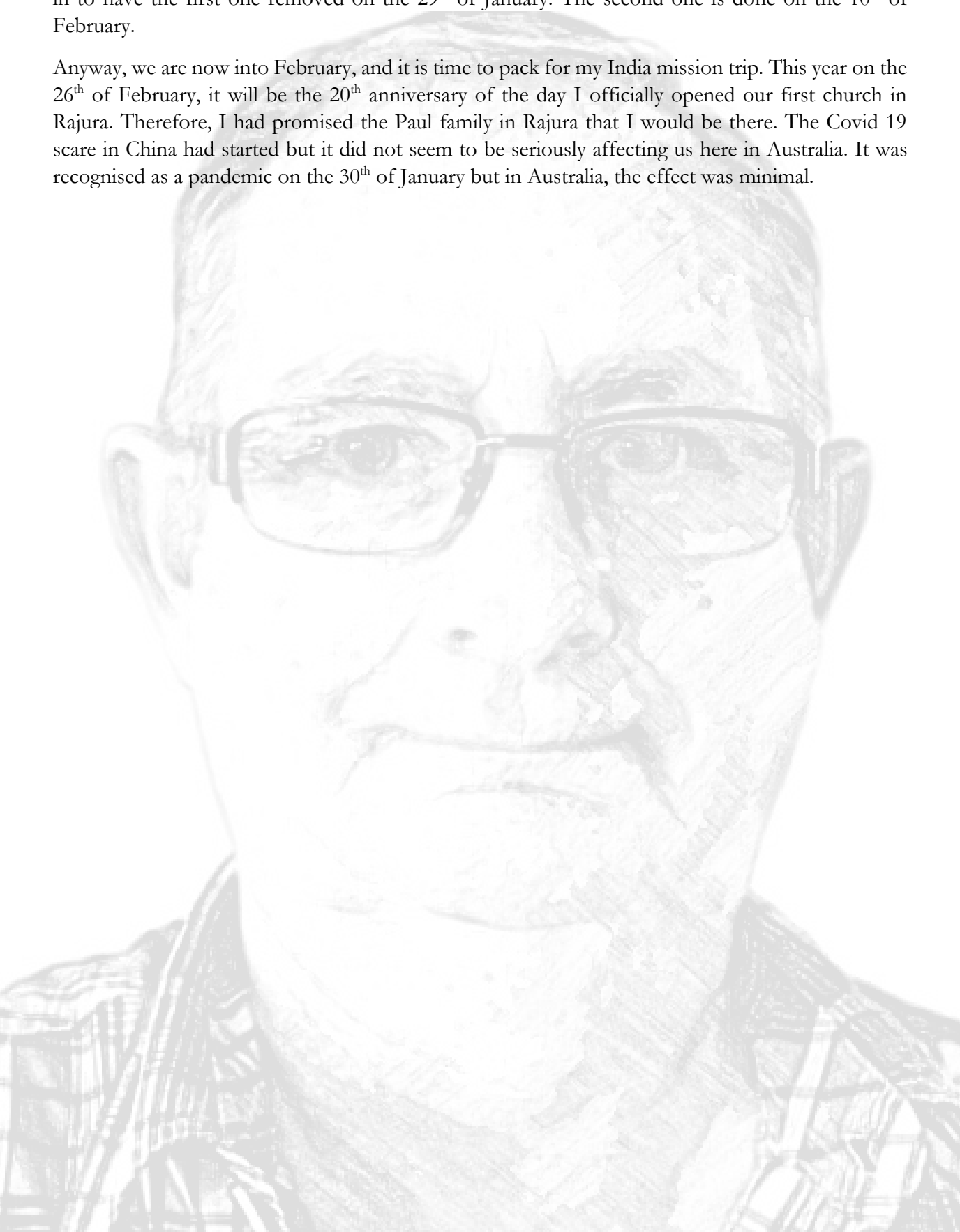
We continue doing our various assigned duties as the new year kicks off and that keeps us very busy.

I have already mentioned my hobby of flying my remote-control quadcopters and my one point two metre Spitfire aeroplane. But now I have begun to build a one metre Italian World War two remote control patrol boat. I am building this boat from balsa wood, and I am beginning to wonder if I will be able to finish it.

My beautiful Rose has not been able to see as well as she used to and after a trip to an ophthalmologist, an eye specialist, she learns that she has a cataract on both eyes. So, she is booked

in to have the first one removed on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January. The second one is done on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February.

Anyway, we are now into February, and it is time to pack for my India mission trip. This year on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February, it will be the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the day I officially opened our first church in Rajura. Therefore, I had promised the Paul family in Rajura that I would be there. The Covid 19 scare in China had started but it did not seem to be seriously affecting us here in Australia. It was recognised as a pandemic on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January but in Australia, the effect was minimal.





## Chapter 38

### India 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2020 to 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2020

I fly from Sydney to Singapore and after a couple of hours, board the second flight to take me to Chennai. After passport control and baggage collection, I am out of the airport well after midnight and take a taxi to my hotel for a good sleep. After another night's sleep I board my overnight train to Ballarshah on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February.



On the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> KM is at Ballarshah station to welcome me. With him are Miniamin, his brother, Kurran, who is Cookie's son, and Tony, KM's son. There is also the usual welcome banner on the back of the minivan. They drive me to Rajura for a warm welcome from the rest of his family. I meet Miniamin's new wife and their new baby as well, wow, I had not even known of his marriage. After a rest and some lunch, we visit a children's club and the construction at the new land.



On the first day I am blessed to be able to visit a gathering of teenagers that were formed as an older version of a children's club and it was so great to see the enthusiasm of them all, but no smiles for the camera. After they showed us what they had learnt, we handed out gifts, then a group picture was snapped and we left them all very happy.



The 23<sup>rd</sup> is Sunday and we travel to Ballarshah for the Sunday morning service and after I deliver a Bible teaching, we head back to Rajura for the main service. After sharing my second teaching of the day, I am faced with all the parishioners who want me to pray for each one. In the evening we travel to the family near the railway lines for the usual evening service.



On the next day we visit two children's clubs and a home church. The 25<sup>th</sup> had me travelling about an hour away for another home church and on the way back we visited a children's club.



It is the 26<sup>th</sup> of February, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the day I officially opened the Rajura church, and the huge pots are already heating up under open fires. As the service gets underway, I am expected to deliver the main teaching and it is hard to believe I opened this church twenty years ago. There is a cake and I have been asked to pray before it is cut. As it is tradition on any occasion the cake is fed to the chief guests first and then each person receives a piece of the cake that is fed to them from the hand of another person.



After the service and cake cutting, there was the usual individual praying over most of the parishioners. Then a series of group photos were taken to commemorate this important day and the very reason I was in India. What a privilege it is to be trusted and respected so much to be responsible for each individual prayer.





After prayers and group photos, we all adjourned outside for the special meals that have been prepared for everybody.



K M Paul & his family

Apart from our minivan and motor bikes, a new toilet block has been built for the church parishioners, the family and for visitors since we were here last time. On one side is a standard Indian toilet, with the opening at ground level, and on the right side, a western toilet. They are also adding another room onto the existing building.



On the 27<sup>th</sup> we go to a home church and a children's club in the evening. A young lady approaches us at the home church and through KM's interpreting, she thanks me for praying for her to fall pregnant as her and her husband had been trying for five years. Then she presents me with her three-year-old daughter and apparently, we had prayed for her during our 2016 trip.



The next day we travel out to the new land at Kothari, where the new school is operating, complete with the new school bus. KM has done a really great job of bringing all of this together.





That evening we have a children's club come to our church compound and as usual we sing action songs together and hand out gifts.



On the 29<sup>th</sup> of February we visit two home churches and I share the Word of God at both as usual. As I have said in the past, these small, intimate home churches are just such a privilege to be a part of and to be able to connect with every person in attendance. When you teach people in a small gathering like these and knowing each one of them is so keen to hang onto your every word. It affects me by knowing how much it encourages them is even more encouraging to me, being able to look into each face without anonymity of large gatherings and they often end with a meal.



The 1<sup>st</sup> of March was the day we headed for Adilabad on the vastly improved road to visit Rakesh and Mary. While we were there, I was honoured in the traditional India way and then I shared from God's Word at the Mamre church.



Back at Rakesh and Mary's house I was served lunch, and I had a lovely conversation with my adopted granddaughter, Cuppa, and she is such a beautiful young lady. When she was little, she used to say cuppa cuppa to us and move her hand toward us and it took us a while to learn that she was saying frog frog in her language. She was playing with us and since then we have always called her cuppa. Now she is a young adult and a very special person while these days, Cuppa is one of our adopted grandchildren.



During the time that I spent with Rakesh and Mary, I was convicted by our Lord that I have been neglecting them. They have been so faithful and uncomplaining for many years now even though they only receive a very small contribution towards their ministry. Yet despite all of that they are always so grateful for our mere presence for just a weekend. So after another church service we will be heading back to Rajura.



On the 2<sup>nd</sup> we are at another home church back in Rajura and again on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. It is such a privilege to share the Word of God to so many people. That afternoon we visit another children's club to sing, play and hand out gifts.



Another home church is celebrated on the 4<sup>th</sup> and again on the 5<sup>th</sup>, with children's clubs to visit as well. Two more children's clubs on the 7<sup>th</sup> as well as another home church. Somebody asked me once if I liked smaller gatherings and my answer was big gatherings are good, but they lack intimacy, but small gatherings are much more intimate and besides that, if you only help to change or touch one life, it is well worth the effort.





On the 8<sup>th</sup> of March it is KM's daughter's birthday and being Sunday, it is time for the main service. So after the service there was birthday cake cutting and lunch prepared for everybody.



At the service, during the time for testimonies, the testimonies went on for a good half an hour of people thanking God for answering prayers after my prayers for them during the week.



The 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> of March are taken up quickly with home churches and children clubs. The children's clubs have become such a huge outreach tool now because we are eventually able to reach out to the parents as well through our gestures of generosity to their children.



There have been so many special people who have blessed us, served us, or simply stood out above others due to their special gifts. One person in particular has stood out even more so than others during our Indian ministry. Her name is Rinky and ever since we have been travelling to Rajura, she has stood out along with K M, his whole family, Cookie, his whole family, Rakesh, his family, and Nathaniel plus his family. Her spirituality and devotion to the Lord are just so refreshing as well as her service to us both, as there is nothing, she would hold back in her works of help for us through her love of Jesus. The saddest thing is that we cannot name everybody who has blessed us so much and many of those names are too hard to remember as well. The one consolation is you all know who you are and never forget that even if we cannot remember your names, we will never forget your beautiful faces. Also, God knows who you are and He will reward your every kindness when you join Him in Glory.





I catch the overnight train out of Ballarshah for Chennai on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March after warm farewells. As I travel, I worry about the news of this wicked Covid 19 pandemic and how fast it is spreading. Rose has been keeping me up to date and when I hear news of Malaysian airlines closing, I worry about my flight with Singapore airlines. So, I ring them to see if I can fly home early and they say that there is nothing available.

When I get to Chennai on the 15<sup>th</sup>, I am booked into a five-star hotel, named the Taj, which Rose insisted on so I could rest for four nights in comfort before flying home. Every morning and every evening I check that my flight is still active. All our children have been saying to Rose, get him home as soon as possible, and we both know I can only just pray and wait until the 19<sup>th</sup> to get home. According to Australian law I will have to stay in lock down at home for fourteen days and will not be allowed to leave my home for any reason during that time.



I was at the airport ready to fly to Singapore and when I got there, there were some people in full body suits from their feet to the tip of their head, wow. Anyway, I kept my mask on and by the time we reached Sydney, they evacuated three people off our plane as soon as we landed. My Rose was there to greet me, and we both shed a few tears as we bear hugged each other. Rose had booked a nearby hotel for one night and the next morning we got a train to Penrith then a bus to Kingswood.

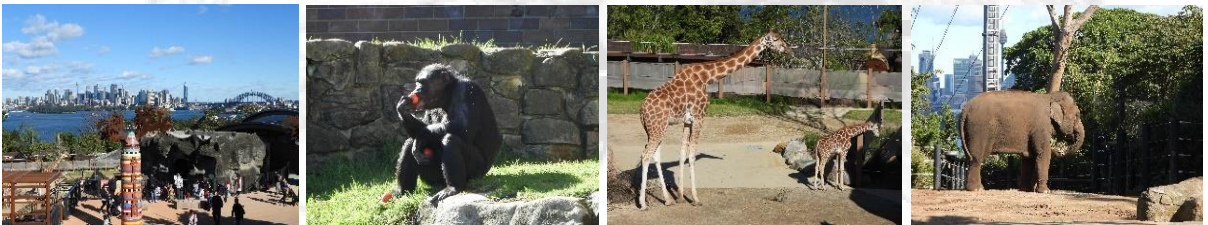
## Chapter 39

### Home to My Beautiful Rose 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2020

It is so good to be home even though we are now in two weeks of complete isolation. Our children have been making sure we have got all we need, and a couple of grocery store door drop offs have happened and another one from Bunnings.

By the time my two weeks of lock down was over the Covid restrictions were limiting what we could do. During that time, we find a lot of interesting and beautiful walking tracks, so we spent many hours of walking and exploring. We were allowed to do that because that was our allocated exercise.

After the Covid restrictions were lifted a slightly Rose and I go to the Taronga Zoo in Mosman, which is on the other side of Sydney harbour from the city itself. It has been many years since we have been there, and it has been beautifully upgraded. We enjoyed the bird show, where a couple of the zoo's bird trainers put on a show with many bird species, and they had even trained a vulture.

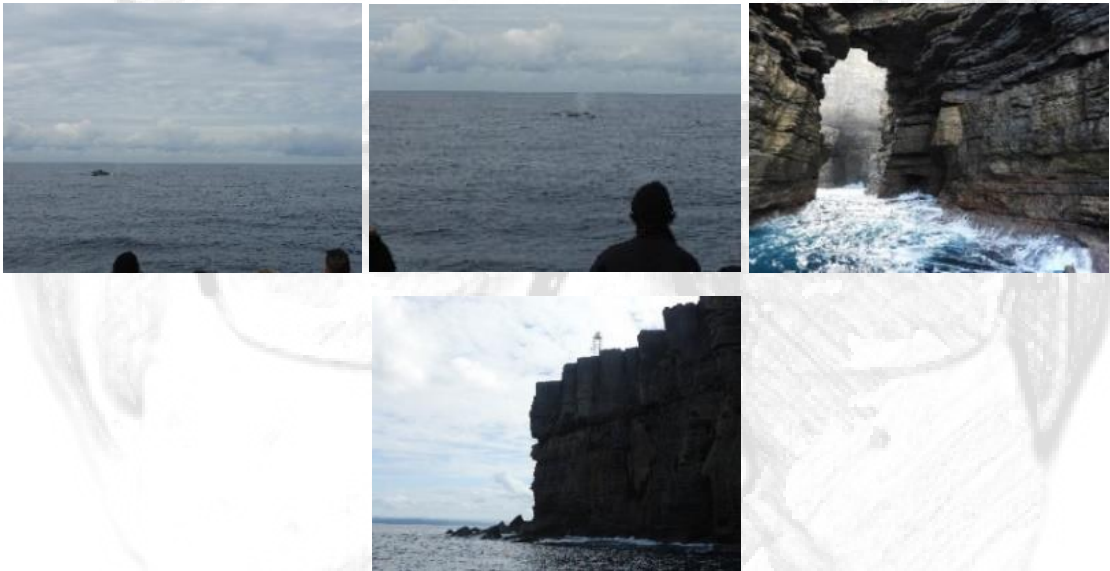


I keep trying to remind myself, what a great honour it is to be able to teach people from the word of God, because I get that opportunity many times during our Indian Mission trips, usually about three times per day and sometimes more. But also, at home through my role as Spiritual Advisor to St Vincent de Paul and through my monthly teachings with the Community of the Risen Christ. So, I must keep reminding myself what a huge honour it is that I am able to fulfill that duty and I am always aware that sometimes, the Holy Spirit pulls me up because He wants me to sometimes change my plans for the subject of my teaching. I remember one night when the Holy Spirit waited until I was about to speak the first word of a planned teaching when He suddenly urged me to change the topic, but that is rare because He usually tells me during the planning stage or even when I am travelling to the venue. Anyway, I will say it again, I am so very privileged!

Rose had purchased a one-hour flight in a Cessna aircraft for my last birthday and as it was valid for one year, I had put it off until now because we had been too busy. So, now at the end of June, I went flying. This was supposed to be a one hour flying lesson but when the instructor learned about my Air Force background, he let me taxi to the runway and take off. We flew out over Warragamba Dam after we took off from Camden airport and I had control of the aircraft. After the hour was up, we landed and I taxied back to the parking bay and the instructor said, that was good because it was like having an hour off work.



In July we both drove down the coast to Huskisson which is, two hundred and ten kilometres south of Kingswood, on the south coast. We had heard about how beautiful it was from our daughter, Angela. On the trip down we stopped at the small town called, Berry, and we had some lunch there. While we were in Berry, we discovered a great bakery store where we had purchased some chocolate eclairs. When we arrived at Huskisson, we booked into the waterfront cabin we had previously booked online for two nights. After unpacking we headed out to see the beautiful beaches that were only a few metres from our cabin. When we had eaten the first chocolate éclair, we decided that they were the best we had ever had. The next morning, we headed out to the boat marina to board our whale watching tour boat and we set sail for the open sea. We had to cross the huge inner harbour first and go around the cliffs that the lighthouse sits on. We only saw glimpses of whales though and then we were shown some amazing sea caves.



On the way back we also saw a group of seals who were playing in the sea near the rocks. After we investigated more of the area, we decided that we would need to come back because there was so much more to see. After another night of sleep, we drove home to Kingswood, and we stopped at Berry to buy some more eclairs to take home.

As soon as we are back home duty calls and we continue to visit Newmarch nursing home, keep up with my Chaplaincy duties, my teaching for St Vincent de Paul and our church duties.

I have been asked to become the spiritual adviser for St Vincent de Paul for the whole Diocese of Parramatta now and I have accepted. So now I fulfil that role for the St Vincent de Paul Penrith conference each Tuesday, for the Nepean Regional meetings once per month and for the Parramatta Diocese Central Council every two months. The Parramatta Diocese Central Council has now been renamed Western Sydney Central Council.

Our car is a year 2000 Ford Laser that we purchased from our son Stephen, and we had decided if anything costly was needed to fix it, we would look for a newer car. Well, we learned at the Laser's next service that the shock absorbers needed replacing and that was going to cost us, many hundreds of dollars. The decision was made to replace the Laser and we had always wanted a modern version of a Mini Cooper. When we started to look around the internet for a suitable Mini, we quickly found a 2013 Mini Cooper and it was at a car dealer in Revesby which is about forty-eight kilometres



southeast of where we live. When we arrived at the car dealer, we took this beautiful white Mini for a test drive, and we loved it. We learned two things about Mini's that we had not previously known, this Mini was a model called a Mini Cooper S Paceman and that meant it was a larger version of the normal Mini's. The other thing was that a regular Mini would have been fine except it would have been a bit too small. We purchased it after agreeing on the price and it was a good deal as it came with a warranty plus it had only ninety thousand kilometres on the tachometer. Everywhere we go, people comment, love your car or we love your new car. We purchased it on my birthday but that is just a coincidence.



We gave our Laser as a trade in as well and we had to transfer the registration, get third party insurance and comprehensive insurance. I fitted the dashcam system that we had previously used in the Laser as well.

It was so nice to own such a beautiful car and we felt very honoured because normally we should have paid much more than we had. The car sales boss told us that if a car does not sell within two months, they reduce the price by five thousand to sell it quicker. He added that Mini's usually sell quickly, but this one did not, and we know God was saving that car just for us and it is now insured for twenty-one thousand dollars.

Our very dear Melchishua K Paul, known to us better as K M, has decided to go solo as he feels he can run his ministry now without our help. Now we will send that monthly money to Rakesh in Adilabad, KM's brother-in-law. In the past, a small portion of KM's money went to Rakesh but now Rakesh will be able to move forward more quickly. This is certainly a blessing from God because last year I had been convicted by God that I had been neglecting Rakesh and Mary, so now we are able to support them more.

We continue trying to obey all the Covid 19 restrictions and we go out on our walks as our allowed exercise time. While at the same time we try to keep up with our assigned duties.

There is one thing that is troubling us greatly, and that is the television news that some of our catholic friends in Newmarch nursing home have died because of Covid 19. We have not been able to visit there now for many weeks and now we learn of their terrible battle against this pandemic.

In November we return to Huskisson for a five night stay this time and we a staying in the same cabin as last time. After a stopover in Berry we unpack, we go for a walk on the beach. The next day we visit the maritime museum, and we see there many displays. We go for a walk on mangrove swamp boardwalks to see the foliage and wildlife.

The next day we visit the Booderee National Park and visit Murrays Beach on the way, where we see some kangaroos, an eagle, a tiny wallaby and a snake.



There is a Royal Australian Naval base for Navy recruit training in the Jervis Bay area. Huskisson is situated on the shores of Jervis Bay, and you see many Naval ships cruising around this massive bay as they train their recruits.



The next day we drive out to the Cape St George Lighthouse ruins and enjoy long walks to get to the actual site. Cape St George Lighthouse was a lighthouse that stood near Jervis Bay Village, in the Jervis Bay Territory, Australia. It was located about 3 kilometres south of the southern entrance to Jervis Bay. Constructed in 1860 it was active until 1889. The tower was destroyed between 1917-1922 to avoid confusion in daylight. The shipping authorities soon realised that the lighthouse had been built, in the wrong place as it caused more shipping accidents than that of saving ships. Therefore, a new lighthouse was commissioned to be built at Point Perpendicular on the northern entrance to Jervis Bay. While we were looking out to sea, we spotted some whales as well.



Getting supplies to the old lighthouse was always difficult with the nearest landing place over four kilometres away at Murrays Beach. Horses were needed for transporting mail and supplies and it was also needed to take the children to and from school. Keeping a horse permanently was not easy as there was a shortage of grass for feed. However, goats were better suited to the terrain and were kept for milking, some meat was needed for consumption and for bait for catching sharks.

From 1860 to 1877 up to 15 people including the lighthouse keeper, 2 under-keepers and their families lived in this 8-room complex. Oil and supplies for the lighthouse were also stored here so conditions would have been relatively cramped and uncomfortable. In 1877 a 7-room weatherboard cottage was built for the head keeper near the stables.

Then on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October we visited the Point Perpendicular Lighthouse and to get there, you drive through Navy controlled land. The gates only open at a fixed time each day and then you

follow a dirt road out to the point. While we were there, we were able to go to the cliff's edge and see the stunning views.



The light was first lit on 1 May 1899. The original light source was a vaporized kerosene lamp with an intensity of one hundred thousand candela and a visible range of around thirty-three kilometres, twenty-one miles. On 5 July 1993 the light was shut down and replaced with a fully automated, solar powered lamp on top of a lattice skeletal tower. At that time the light was a one and twenty volt, one thousand watts quartz halogen lamp, visible to a range of twenty six nautical miles and the light characteristic was a group of three white flashes every twenty seconds.

That Afternoon we visited an Alpaca farm that have Alpaca handling afternoons and we were taught many things about Alpacas and their amazing wool. Each person was given an Alpaca to take through the exercise course.



We went on a few long walks as we enjoyed the many miles of coast and we saw various animals, including snakes.



While we were in the south coast, we took the opportunity to visit some dear friends who live in the area. Then on the 18<sup>th</sup> we drove home to Kingswood and resumed our various duties, at least those that were permitted with the Covid 19 restrictions.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of December, Rose and I, fly to Ballina because it is the closest airport to Byron Bay where we will stay for two nights. We will be attending our grandson, Nathan's wedding to his fiancé, Holly, tomorrow. Our accommodation is in a cabin at a local caravan park and at the appointed time we arrive at the beachside wedding venue.





Because of Covid 19, we had our Christmas celebration in a local park, because that was the only way all the family could legally gather. We were blessed to be able to use a large gazebo type building when some light rain started.

We are all praying for a better future and a way to be safe from Covid 19 or any other pandemics.

The boat that I had started building is a very difficult task for somebody who has never done it before, and I am not sure whether I will be able to finish it.

## Chapter 40

### Home 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2021

At the beginning of this year, we are living in a very different world and the restrictions that we must obey vary according to how many new people catch the covid 19 virus.

One thing that has been consistent is permission to exercise so Rose and I go for long walks. By doing this we are learning so much more about our local area and the fact that there are so many more walking tracks than we knew about before.

When we can travel on a bus or train, we go to other areas to take advantage of the walking tracks in those areas.

In February a young couple that we know from our local church has asked me to teach a group of Christian people who meet each week via social media, so that we can all see each other. They want me to share biblical teachings every third week of each month and I soon learn that this meeting attracts many people. Some from within Australia, also some from India, Singapore, England, and some other countries as well. I go to the young couple's house, and I soon also provide the praise and worship session prior to my teaching. These meetings have continued each month up to the present time.

We had organised a trip to Vanuatu but now that international travel is banned, we ask for a refund from the Vanuatu airline company. They said that they could not give us a refund, but we could use it as a credit to use within twelve months. As that is highly unlikely, we realise that we have lost that money.

Rose and I decided to have a holiday in Sydney instead, so we booked a hotel for a week starting from the 8<sup>th</sup> of February. We have a beautiful yet moderately priced eighth storey room with a view of Sydney's famous Hyde Park.



On our first day we caught a bus to take us to Waverly cemetery to walk around this famous landmark. There are some famous people buried there including, Henry Lawson and it was first allocated as a cemetery in 1875. As it is on the waterfront, the views are outstanding.

The next day we had decided to travel to the end of each of the three new routes that the brand-new light railway system travels to. One travels to Dulwich Hill and back, the second goes to Circular Quay and back, while the third one goes to Randwick and a branch line to Kingsford.



A few ferry rides were the way we spent the next day and we also walked through China Town and Hyde Park where we saw parts of the Anzac memorials.



On the 11<sup>th</sup> we caught a bus to Palm Beach on the north coast where we had another ferry ride.



The day after that we travelled to the top of Centrepont Tower to see the amazing views from the top.



A visit to Sydney must include a visit to St Mary's Cathedral and the Archibald Fountain in Hyde Park.



We had booked a bush tucker afternoon tea and tour of bush tucker plants in the Royal Botanical Gardens. Bush tucker is a name given to edible food that can be found in the wild and our very own Australian Aboriginal people are experts at it. The tour was organised by a local Aboriginal man, and he showed us the many plants that you can eat in the bush. After the tour he served us our



afternoon tea which was made up from bush tucker. Even our cordial was made from bush tucker, and it was sweet and fruity.



On the 14<sup>th</sup>, which was Valentine's Day, I had booked us a cruise around the harbour in an old sailing ship for Rose, my Valentine. Whilst on board we were served afternoon tea and our choice of beer or wines. We also walked around the harbour foreshore before heading back to our hotel room.



The next day we caught a train to take us to Penrith then we caught a bus to carry us home to Kingswood.

I have finished building my remote-control boat and once it was complete, Rose and I have tested it at a local lake, and it runs very well and is surprisingly fast. It is about one metre in length, and it is a copy of an Italian WWII patrol boat. At one point the boat had stopped working and I was not sure why, so we tried many things to force it close enough to the bank to pick it up, but all our efforts failed. So, in the end my beautiful Rose just walked into the dam water and rescued it for me, what a legend. It turned out that the electric motor was faulty and since installing a new one, it now works very well and every time.



So now my collection of remote-control models includes, three quadcopters, a one point two metre WWII spitfire aeroplane, a one-metre-long WWII Italian patrol boat, and a normal helicopter.



My poor Rose has been suffering some severe pain in her foot so our local GP, doctor Mark, sent her to a foot specialist in Windsor. The foot specialist's surname is also Walsh, and he has recommended surgery to fix the problem. She is booked into Hawkesbury hospital to have it done but we must wait for a phone call from them to tell Rose when it can be done. In the meantime, Rose can have injections into her foot every couple of months.

I have completed a working with children awareness course to keep me in line with government requirements.

The covid 19 restrictions vary according to how many cases are found in the community but at least we are much better off than places like India or the USA. We are getting used to wearing masks whenever we go out though.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of June the first Covid 19 delta strain victim has been discovered and apparently this strain is extremely contagious and deadly.

We gather as a family at the Leonay Golf Club for our daughter Anne's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration.



On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, Rose and I have our first Covid 19 immunisation injection and we will get the second one in twelve weeks to become fully vaccinated.

We had booked a five-day holiday at the Entrance on the north coast but due to Covid restrictions we cannot travel up there at this time. The owner of the apartment we had booked with has moved the booking dates to February of next year now.



The outbreak of the delta strain of Covid 19 is climbing at alarming rates and that is causing tighter restrictions on our movements. But as we are still allowed to do exercise, we continue to go out on our walks. The only thing is we cannot go more than ten kilometres from home.

The delta strain numbers are climbing each day, and we are soon restricted to stay within five kilometres. The New South Wales premiere has urged those people who have had their first injection of the covid vaccine to get their second injection after only eight weeks instead of twelve.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of August Rose and I receive our second injection of Covid 19 vaccination so now we are protected.

The restrictions have become even harder as we go into September, but we can still go out for our walks.

We had booked a three-day time out at Fingal Bay which is, a little north of Newcastle. The booking was for a cabin that is subsidised by the RSL clubs, and it was for September and due to covid restrictions we cannot go there either.

Apart from our walking, Rose has been doing lots of knitting and jig saw puzzles while I try to finish this book.

Our next outing was to take a trip on the only Boat Postman still operating in Australia and they offer people to join them on their postal route for a reasonable fee. They service the isolated communities along the Hawkesbury River and it was a lovely trip as we watched them delivering mail.



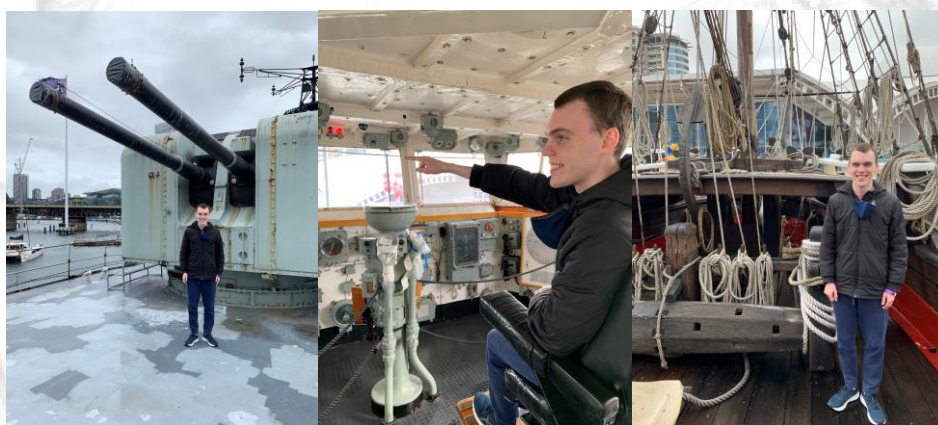
My very dear friend, Anthony, has fallen very ill. He would often fill in for me as Spiritual Advisor to St Vincent de Paul when I am unable to attend. To make matters even worse his son, Anthony Jnr, is also dangerously sick in hospital. So, I visited Anthony at his home, and I gave him some healing oil and we shared some prayer time together. A few days later, Anthony rang me to say that after he was anointed with the oil from our Lady of the Olives his health improved so much that he is now feeling good enough to resume his duties as an Acolyte again.

We recently went to visit Mark, our dear friend and doctor for a doctor's consultation and while we were there, he told us about how much his daughter loved her visit with some Clydesdale draught horses. As Mark's daughter is very handicapped, my lovely Rose decided to knit Mark's daughter a stuffed Clydesdale draught horse as a surprise gift. So, we found a great pattern on the internet and Rose knitted the various parts of this horse. I helped by assembling the parts by stitching them together. As a result, a forty-centimetre-high Clydesdale draught horse named Dobbin was created and delivered to Mark's house and they were so delighted, that they even posted a video of it on the internet.

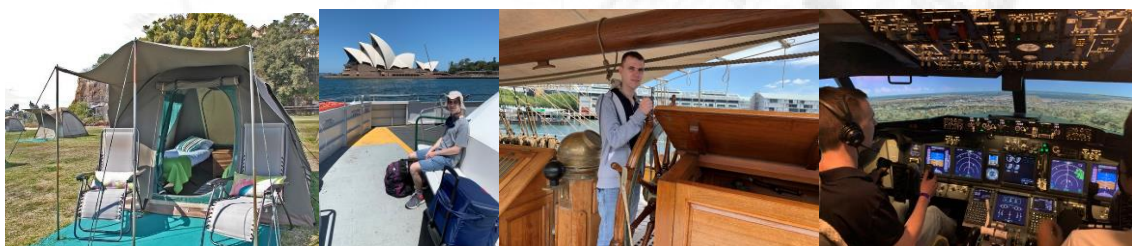




I took my grandson, Michael, on a trip to visit the National Maritime Museum in Darling Harbour for a day of discovery and he loved it.



Soon after that I took his brother, Peter, for a two-night camping trip on Cockatoo Island and we were able to take a short ferry ride to visit Darling Harbour in Sydney. Peter also chose to visit the Maritime Museum then we went ten pin bowling and after that, Peter flew in a 737-flight simulator. Michael could have come on the camp also, but he chose the Maritime Museum only.



On the 15<sup>th</sup> of December we attended our granddaughter Jessica's graduation ceremony for her Bachelor of Arts in the Liberal Arts at St Patrick's Catholic Cathedral in Parramatta. It was an honour to be there with my daughter Sharron, her husband Adrian and my beautiful Rose. It is so good to be able to see that God is already working threwh some of our children and grandchildren.





During our past twelve years in our complex of fourteen villas, I have discovered two of our single men residents had passed away. I have conducted two funeral services for one man and one lady, and we have organised many get togethers for Easter, Christmas, Anzac Day or just for fun. While we also just try to be good neighbours by giving help when it is needed without living too close to each other.

During our years of trying our best to be obedient and faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ, we sometimes felt it was hard to obey Him because the cost was sometimes so high physically, emotionally, or financially or multiples of all three. Despite that, we did obey Him regardless of the cost and that is why we have been so very blessed by God ourselves.

As we approach another Christmas, we find that the many restrictions that were imposed on us by the covid 19 virus are now starting to be lifted. This started to happen after our state of New South Wales has exceeded over eighty percent of the population having had both doses of the covid 19 vaccinations. So, we are all breathing a huge sigh of relief because of the new freedoms we can now enjoy so long as we show the proof of being double vaccinated.



We now face another year where we are faced with more questions than we have answers for, but if we move forward in honesty and with a strong faith to support us, we will be in a good place.



## Chapter 41

### Home 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2022 to 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2023.

For Mother's Day last year our daughter gave Rose a gift voucher for a high tea for two people on board the Captain Cook cruises flag ship for a ninety-minute Sydney harbour cruise. So, we booked it for Sunday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January at 2pm and we travelled into Milson's Point by train after we had been to Mass. From Milson's Point we walked back to Sydney over the Sydney harbour bridge and then we had a drink at a café in Circular Quay. Then we boarded the large ship for high tea and the cruise and what a beautiful way to spend an afternoon.



As we move forward here in Australia, our tactics for controlling covid 19, seems to be effective and many restrictions have been lifted.

By this time, Rose's foot has healed but sadly now she is suffering from acute pain in her knee, and it is the same leg that her foot was operated on, so now she still cannot walk very far. We both love walking very much and poor Rose misses our regular walking trips. After another trip to her specialist, the one who operated on her foot, she found out that she now needs a knee replacement surgery. This means she will be put on a waiting list of up to one year.

Not long after that it became apparent to Rose that some of her pain was still coming from the foot she had been operated on last year. When she went back to her specialist and after studying an x-ray of the foot, he said, "the metal plate that was put in your foot to stabilise it from causing your previous pain, is causing your new pain". He went on to say that the metal plate is designed to be there until the new bone work has healed and we do not normally remove the plate afterwards. However, because you have such a small foot, it is rubbing in a place where it should not normally do so. But now that your foot is healed, we can now safely remove the metal plate and your pain will cease.

Now my poor Rose who is waiting for her knee replacement surgery must wait to have this metal plate removed surgically as well, another operation. We did ask if they could be done together but the specialist said no, so another 12-month waiting list for that as well. I am not very happy that while my dear Rose suffers, she is now on the public waiting list for two operations.

In February Rose and I set off for The Entrance, which is on the north coast of New South Wales and where we had booked a nice small apartment at a low cost because it is not during school holidays. We stayed from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> and we enjoyed many walks along the beaches and waterfront, plus we hired a small boat to go fishing. A visit to a Nougat and Chocolate factory, complete with a tour of how they make everything was next. On another day we visited Henry



Clarence Kendell's colonial house and museum for a tour. Henry Kendell was a famous Australian author and poet, who is well known in our history. Next came a tour of the areas regional art gallery which I found interesting due to my own artwork. We also visited a very beautiful Japanese garden, which covered a very large area. Next was a was a heritage tour of some of the region's oldest buildings and monuments. Our time at the Entrance finished with a tour of a famous lighthouse in the area and what a nice way that was to finish our little holiday.



We did not catch much. Nougat & Chocolate, yum. Henry Kendell



Gardens. Lighthouse. History.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of March one of the neighbours in our 14-villa housing complex physically smashed up our Mini Cooper car by throwing thousands of rocks at it. Of course, we were devastated, and she was charged by police however you can read more detail in chapter 45 which covers this and some other problems we have faced.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, which is Anzac Day in Australia, we travelled out to Mulgoa to join our daughter Angela, her husband Richard and our granddaughters Georgia and Matilda. Anzac Day is the day when all Australians remember and honour those who gave their lives in war to keep us safe and to honour those who served in the defence forces during wars and still live. It is not a day to honour wars, only the brave men and woman who helped to save us all from tyranny. So as I also served in the Royal Australian Air Force, I wore my grandfather's medals, my father's medals and my own medals on this day during the celebrations. Our granddaughters both marched with their school during the parade.



We had booked a 5 day stay in our state capital of Sydney last year for May 2022, so now the time has seemed to come up on us so quickly and it is time to go. The very different architecture is impressive from the old colonial style to the very modern as we go out on our walks around the city centre. A visit to Sydney must include a visit to the large Chinese Gardens and the many walks to look at the many wonders that only a major city can boast of. We enjoyed seeing old sailing ships alongside modern ferries along with all the historical sites. On another day we visited the convent

and home of Mother Mary McKillop in North Sydney. Of course, Mary McKillop is Australia's first and only Saint and to see her home convent was a real treat. We were very impressed with the history and surprised by how large the facilities had become. We were also treated to discover a very large, secret garden that was surprisingly so very nice and very close to the harbour side. Another great part of being in the heart of Sydney is a visit to the Botanical Gardens which is a bonus because of the great walks that we love while viewing the beautiful plants and animals. On another occasion we went back to the Botanical gardens to take part in an aboriginal bush tucker tour and demonstration. We were taken around the gardens by an Australian Aboriginal man who showed us which native plants we could eat and after the tour we were served morning tea that was all made from some those native plants, and it was very impressive and tasted great.



About this time my heart specialist said that I needed another angiogram to check my heart and arteries for any blockages because I had been short of breath and had a strange throat tightness when I walk. So, I was booked into Nepean Hospital for the Angiogram and as a result my doctor inserted a balloon to widen one of my arteries.

It is only 2 years ago that Australia's east coast has suffered 6 months of bushfires and now we must battle some of the worst floods throughout the east coast of New South Wales, Queensland and many kilometres inland. Many thousands of people were evacuated, homes destroyed, towns cut off from any access and much suffering.

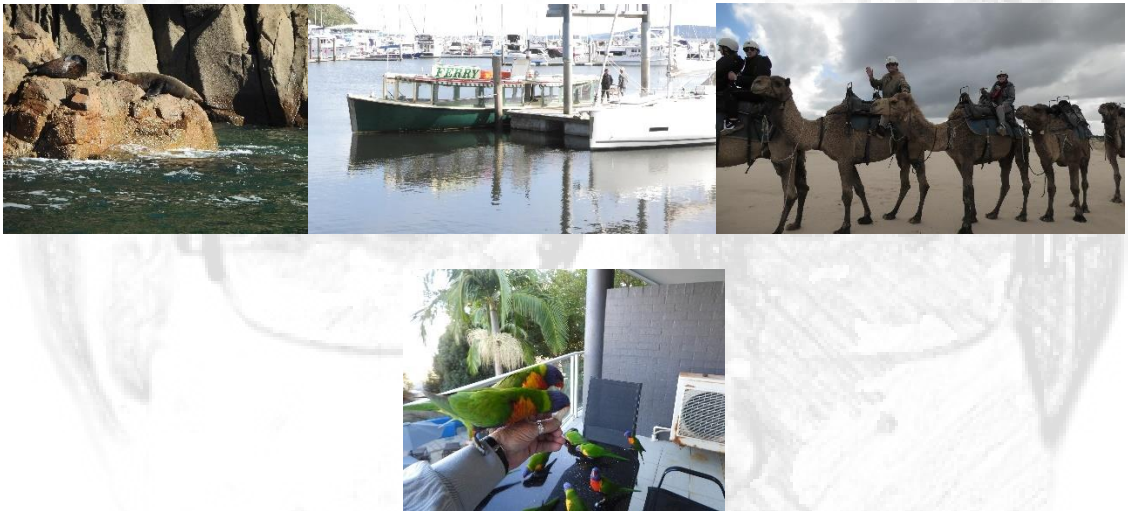


On the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of May Rose and I have entered some items to be judged in the main pavilion of the Hawkesbury show and to be displayed for all to see. Rose had entered many knitting and crocheted garments that she has so skilfully completed, many of them are baby clothes. Whilst I entered 2 bonsai plants, about 8 photos and a painting. We were able to win a couple of ribbons for first and second prizes and we were encouraged to try some other shows in the future.





Towards the second half of July, we travelled to Nelsons Bay on the coast a little way north of Newcastle on our north coast. While we were there, we enjoyed whale and seal watching, many lovely walks, ferry rides, camel rides on the beach and we had some lovely birds come to our balcony.



Rose had insisted on booking a special trip to Brisbane for our birthdays, hers on August the third and my birthday in August the eighteenth but especially because it was my seventieth birthday. Brisbane is the state capital of Queensland, and we arrived on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August and left on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. On our first day we had a lovely river cruise that passes through Brisbane and the views were spectacular. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, we had a great day strolling through the Brisbane Botanical Gardens and it is different from the Sydney version but very picturesque. Later in the day we made our way to the other side of the river to see south bank and the many tourist and leisure attractions. This is where we discovered The Chanel Seven, Wheel of Brisbane and it is a sixty-metre-high Ferris Wheel, wow, what a great view we had with full commentary of all that we could see. South Bank was quite an interesting place that was full of interesting and vastly different restaurants and attractions. We also were able to follow a heritage walk through Brisbane city to view all the amazing colonial architecture.





You may think that we seem to travel fairly frequently and yes, we do, however, both Rose and I are always extremely busy with our various ministry work, and we use these times to recharge and relax. In this way we can spend more personal time with our Lord in a relaxing environment as well as having some nice surroundings to recharge in. We never spend much money because we always find cheap accommodation that has a kitchen with full cooking appliances, and we do that so we can cook our own meals rather than using restaurants or take away food. Also, we do not pay to attend overpriced tourist attractions, instead we visit museums, botanical gardens and we love to go for long walks. Also, we are now in a period where we seem to be recovering from this wretched Covid 19 outbreak but at the same time many areas of our life are still unavailable to us, including some of our ministry work. Therefore, we may as well enjoy this extra time, while we have that extra time to do more travelling.

During September we decided to visit the Mid Blue Mountains flower show and it is organised for those residents of that district to allow people to visit and view their gardens. Naturally those with the best gardens are approached and most of them were very beautiful.

Finally, my Rose received a phone call from Hawkesbury hospital to say that due to somebody on the waiting list who was due for surgery but was unable to at this time then asked Rose if she would like to have her surgery earlier. The answer was yes, and Rose must book into the hospital for her knee replacement surgery on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October.

The surgery went well but she is in a lot of pain and her recovery will be long and painful.

For our wedding anniversary on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, we had booked a special lunch on board the Nepean Belle paddle steamer boat that operates on Nepean River. With great care for Rose's knee replacement that she is recovering from, we managed to board the boat and have a really special meal.



Christmas this year is as special as ever which involves catching up with all of our ever growing, super large family and that often means having 2 or 3 separate celebrations.

## Chapter 42

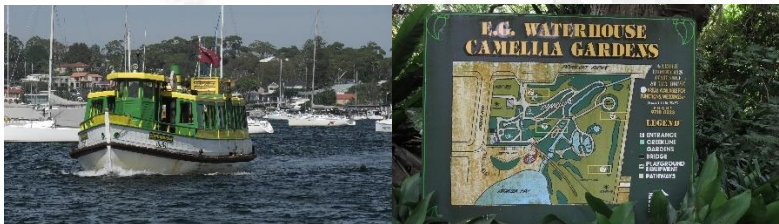
### Home, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 to 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024

I cannot believe how quickly the time seems to pass us by, however, we continue to be involved with all of our ministry responsibilities and especially now that covid 19 seems to be controlled even more by now.

By now we have assumed that our time of travelling to India had passed, however, we were wrong because we felt that we should at least visit our Indian family to let them see that we still care. So, we have chosen to visit them over a two-week period from late January to early February 2024. After considering all of our ministry responsibilities we booked our flights with Malaysian airlines to leave on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January and fly home on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February and that way I will be back in time to start teaching scripture in the primary schools.

Because of all the trouble we have been forced to suffer from our neighbour, the same lady who smashed our car, we have been forced to apply for an apprehended violence order through the court system. We had started this process towards the end of last year and so far we have appeared in court 3 times. This is because of her lack of appearing and other tactics to slow down the process. Finally, after we appeared in court the 4<sup>th</sup> time on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February, she did not appear in court again, so the judge awarded the AVO. This means she cannot speak to us, abuse us or disturb our sleep any longer, otherwise she can be arrested by police. You can read more about these problems in chapter 45.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of February Rose and I headed for Cronulla for a short 4 day break and while were there, we enjoyed a ferry ride across the bay to Bundeena, where explored the coast there before getting the ferry back again. We also explored some beautiful botanic gardens and just generally relaxed for most of our stay.



On the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of March was the Luddenham Show and we had both entered some knitting, crocheting, photos, art, and we also entered Dobbin at the request of Doctor Mark. You may remember how Rose had knitted Dobbin the draft horse and I had made his extra bits in 2021 for the handicapped daughter of our doctor friend Mark. Well, Dobbin won first prize, along with first for my art, many prizes for knitting and a couple for photos.



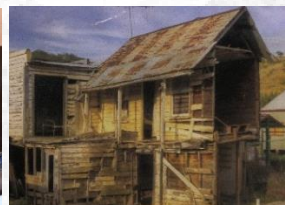
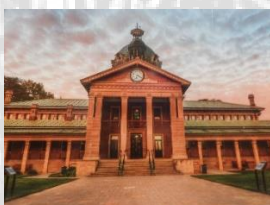


By this time Rose has been through one surgery for her foot and two for her knee and all on the same leg, the sad thing is she is still in pain when she walks due to the metal plate in her foot that is causing it. The worse part she is on yet another waiting list to have it fixed and I am no longer prepared to let her wait any longer. So, I rang the specialist to ask him, if we paid for the surgery as a private patient, how much would that cost? Well after he told me the cost, I was prepared to pay it and arrange a date. By God's grace and because it was a reasonably simple procedure to remove this metal plate which is no longer needed now that the bones have knitted together, the cost was reasonable. So my Rose was booked into Nepean on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March and the metal plate that was causing the pain was removed. Rose was able to come home the next day and after a short healing time for her flesh to heal, she could walk much better.

I had promised Rose a trip away to celebrate and more fully enjoy the fact that she can now walk without the pain she previously suffered. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of March we drove to Bathurst where I had booked a small, old colonial style house with a kitchen to cook our meals and we stayed until the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. I took Rose out to see Abercrombie House, the mansion I had stayed at for the Bathurst 1000 races in 2018 and we were given a tour of this great old house. We drove out to a famous old gold mining village called Hills End and we were amazed at the old colonial style, throughout the whole town. A visit to the museum was also a part of our day but the whole village is a museum itself. Of course, all the gold mining history was also interesting because when gold was first discovered in 1872 in this area many thousands of people came here to make their fortunes.



We visited another colonial style house called Bagonia House which was another lovely day out for us both and as we toured throughout the interior, we witnessed how these richer families lived in those times, just like Abercrombie House. Another day we visited another gold mining town called Sofala and the it occurred to us that the largest and often first permanent buildings in these towns to be build was the hotels for selling alcohol and providing accommodation.





We included many walks during our stay and we enjoyed walking through many gardens along with just witnessing the architecture as well as many other interesting things to see. There were many attractions in Bathurst itself which included museums, art galleries, gardens and we had a game of ten pin bowling on one of those days. Of course, a trip to Bathurst would not be complete without visiting Bathurst's Mount Panorama which is the site of the Bathurst 1000 touring car races. I drove around the 6.2-kilometre race circuit and visited the racing museum as well.



The 11<sup>th</sup> of June was when we attended 9-year-old, Paula's 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion and you may remember that she is our daughter Sharron's child. Paula is being home schooled now and I have the privilege of teaching her scripture classes occasionally.



On the 17<sup>th</sup> of July we head off to Mackay for some more timeout, and it is located about half way up the Queensland coast. We stayed in a cabin with a kitchen to enable us to self-cater and on our first outing we visited Green Mount house. A colonial style home of a wealthy land owner with all the original furniture, just as it would have been over one hundred and fifty years ago.



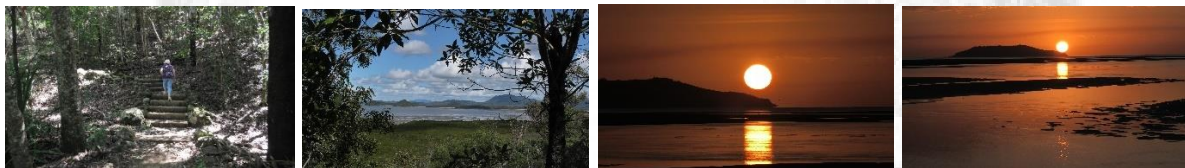
We visited the massive coal loading platform that is designed to receive the coal by train and load it into cargo ships. The next day we visited the town of Sarina where the sugar shed is located where sugar cane is transformed into various products and where they demonstrate how sugar cane is turned into refined sugar and other products. The massive sugar cane refinery is located behind the sugar shed where you can purchase many of their products after the tour.



The Eungella Chalet restaurant and guest house up in the hills in Eungella about a one hour drive out of Mackay. This very interesting chalet was built by 3 doctors in the early nineteen hundreds, and it was a favourite place to stay or be entertained by many while overlooking the valley below.



During our stay we went on many bush walks, beach walks, visited museums, precious stone galleries, old colonial towns, gardens, and the beautiful scenery.



Time to be back in our 2-room villa to once again be involved in our various ministries, in other words get back to work, including the work towards finishing this book. So, for the next two months we concentrate on the work that our Lord has called us to and being involved with our family.

On Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September, we head out around mid-morning to watch our granddaughters play netball and this is a part of our usual weekly routine. Sadly though, this routine has been observed by others as well, because when we returned home a few hours later, we realised that our little home had been broken into. They broke in through a small bathroom window to enable them to reach over to open the back door. There was just under ten thousand dollars' worth of portable electronic equipment and other items stolen. Although that is not what we had paid for them as most of the items, we had purchased second hand, but the insurance company put the new replacement value on it all. We phoned the police, and they sent out an officer to interview us plus another officer to test for fingerprints. Sadly, there were no fingerprints found and said the thief probably wore my socks on their hands as we found one outside. The police did not take it too seriously despite the extra information we had received from our neighbour and the fact that the next day, I found my iPad by using "find my iPad" at an address only a few blocks from where we live. Therefore, we were grateful for the brand-new replacements of everything from our insurer. Most of my time for the next couple of weeks was spent on changing passwords and protecting our files that were stored on cloud storage providers. Anyway, we soon realised that this event was another one of Satan's attacks to try and interrupt our ministries and our trip to India.

By October we applied for our Indian Visas so we could receive a tourist visa each to allow us to visit our dear Indian family.

Another casual ministry of mine is the ability to fix electrical or electronic items for friends or family or to just do some handyman work. So, when my friend and neighbour Ken, asked me to install a new ceiling fan remote control, I said yes. When I had finished, he wanted to pay me, but I do not help people for money but just to bless them and myself.

Due to our encouraging success at the previous Agricultural Shows by winning prizes for our handywork, we decided to enter a few items into the Queanbeyan Show. But as Queanbeyan is close to Canberra, which is just under 300 kilometres away or just over a 3-hour drive, we could not drop off our entries the week before followed by picking them up again afterwards. It made more sense to stay in some cheap lodgings for the week, so we drove there on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November. The



following day we entered our various articles along with the entry fees, so they could be judged on the 10<sup>th</sup>. After that we headed out to visit Cockington Miniature village which is a re-creation of old English villages, buildings, and famous building by their countries. The scenery includes tiny people, trains, boats, a maze, and much more.



We visited a bird sanctuary where you can feed them from your hand, followed by a trip to the Botanical gardens and the next day to Questacon National Science and Technology Centre where we could have spent 2 or 3 days.



Some great walks through gardens and long rivers along with some great architecture as well. Of course, we visited the Queanbeyan show on the 11<sup>th</sup> to see if we had won any prizes. It turned out that Rose had not only won 6 first prizes and 3 second prizes as well as best in show and the most successful exhibitor prize for her knitting and crocheting. I won 1<sup>st</sup> prize for my hand made remote control boat, 2nd prize for my hand painted wooden plaque, 1<sup>st</sup> prize for my ink black rose drawing and a couple of 1sts and 2nds for my photos. The next day we went on an outing to visit the local museum, we picked up all our show entries and prize money that afternoon and we left for home the morning after that.



I asked our senior Chaplain at Nepean Hospital last week, why do I always get sent to the oncology ward for my Chaplaincy duties, why don't you send me to some other wards? His answer was, well as you know oncology is probably the hardest ward for a chaplain because it is where many patients first find out that they have cancer and because you have proven to constantly achieve good results due to your experience, we will keep sending you, is that OK? Of course. I said yes, but in my mind, I am thinking, wow what a compliment, but it is not me, it is God working through me.



Increasingly over the last few years I have been approached by many parishioners from our church to pray for them or a family member by the laying on of hands and anointing with the holy oil that we have used for many years. I am also approached quite often for personal counselling and chaplaincy as well and I feel very honoured and privileged to be able to be trusted to help others in this way. Some need prayers of healing, some for guidance and some to just vent their problems, frustrations, anger or injustices.

During the last couple of months, I had been suffering some pains in my throat whenever we would set out for a walk and from experience, I assumed it was my heart. However, knowing that I had an upcoming appointment with my cardiologist, doctor Hallani, I waited until the day of my appointment. When I saw him, he immediately arranged for me to have an angiogram to find the small artery that was causing the pain. He expected that it might be one of the previous small arteries that he had expanded with a stent or possibly a new one.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of December I was booked into Nepean Private hospital at 2pm after having fasted for a few hours. Because of my Department of Veteran's Affairs status as an injured defence force veteran, I receive all my medical, dental, physio and optical care needs for free and that is why I am in a private hospital. After all the usual check in procedures are completed and a canular inserted in my wrist, they start to connect me to a bag of saline to go through the canular. At about 4.30pm the wardsmen came to wheel me to the cardiac operating theatre and I am transferred to the operating table. Doctor Hallani came in to insert the die and put probes up through my arteries from my groin and he could see all my arteries in and around my heart. Both Doctor Hallani and myself had assumed that the problem would be reasonably minor but the artery that was severely blocked was the main artery that leads into my heart. He then inserted a balloon into the artery to force it to widen and he said to me, you will experience some heart pain while I widen this artery, just like a heart attack pain. He was not wrong because the pain was so intense that I was given 125 milligrams of fentanyl, and the pain was still only just bearable. After I was back in my room, Doctor Hallani came to check up on me and he told me that my main artery was blocked and that it is known as the "widow maker". Obviously, another miracle because God still has a need for me to stay here on earth for His purposes and just before Christmas, His birthday. Wow, I ask myself once again, who am I? Why me? That I receive a Christmas miracle because if I had said nothing as I often do, I would have probably suffered from a massive heart failure.

We enjoyed the Christmas celebrations that we traditionally share with the multiple parts of our families along with various parties throughout the various ministry groups that we work through.

As usual we spent our time on New Years Eve at home, except when we ventured out for a walk and by the time midnight arrived, we were woken up by all the fireworks exploding all around our neighbourhood and now it is the year of 2024.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January we visited the little independent movie theatre in Glenbrook in the lower Blue Mountains. We saw a lovely film called One Life with Anthony Hopkins as the main character and it portrayed a true story about how a man organised the evacuation of over 600 starving and homeless children from war torn Prague to England before the Nazis arrived to take over.

This is my last factual entry, as I must finish writing now, even though this book will be launched in just over 4 weeks, it must be checked one last time then converted to a PDF format and uploaded to the website.

## **Chapter 43**

### **India, 25<sup>th</sup> of January to Whatever Our Lord Has Next for Us Both To The Future**

God willing, we will leave for India on Malaysian Airlines flight MH 122 at 1.10pm on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January and we will trust our Lord to help us to arrive safely back home on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February.

The purpose of this trip is to visit our adopted Indian families, to let them know we still care and to see all the latest improvements they have made.

We intend to land in Mumbai, via Singapore, then board an overnight train to Adilabad to visit Rakesh and his family for a few days of ministry and fellowship. After that we will travel to Rajura by bus to visit KM and his family to do the same.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of February at the Sunday church service in Rajura, the official launch of this book will be celebrated. The church in Rajura is the same one that Rose, and I officially opened and dedicated in the year 2000. The same one I attended in 2020 for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

Then we board an overnight train back to Mumbai to catch our flight home via Singapore to land home on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February.

This is a short chapter but please read on for two more chapters and some final comments.

## **Chapter 44**

### **Summaries of My Family, Current Ministry Work and Hobbies**

Our family now comprises of six children, Julie, Anne, Stephen, Sharron, Craig Jr and Angela are all now married. We have thirteen grandchildren from eldest to youngest, Nathan, Matthew, Peter, Jessica, Michael, Ryan, Isabella, Georgia, Chloe, Samantha Walsh, Matilda, Paula and Samantha Fossey, with only Nathan married. In addition, we have four honorary granddaughters. All our children and grandchildren are a constant delight to our lives.

In India we have helped to establish six churches, three orphanages, two schools, a pre-school, a widow's hostel, two sewing centres to train young women, two Bible colleges and over fifty children's clubs. We have also been sponsoring four Dalet villages for a few years, a village for leprosy sufferers and a Gundi tribal village. All these achievements could not be possible without the power of God because we could never have achieved so much through our own strength alone.

Without my beautiful Rose's constant support as my partner in love, in life and in ministry, I know that sometimes I would have gone too far off track. She is a true traditional wife and spiritual partner to me, and her gentle correction and support is what keeps me travelling towards the goals that our Lord wants of us.

At present we are both very involved with our catholic parish of St Nicholas of Myra in Penrith where we both formulate the parish rosters for all liturgical ministries. We both have been visiting local nursing homes for chaplaincy and distributing Holy Communion, Rose is a Lector which means she reads holy scripture during Mass, and I serve as an Acolyte. An Acolyte is somebody who serves at the Altar for the entire Mass and ensures the smooth flow of the service for the Priests, it is a minor order and Acolytes can only be installed by a Bishop. I also serve as assistant senior Acolyte in charge for training and correction. While lastly, I serve on a parish advisory committee to help organise the smooth running of the parish and to organise outreach programmes.

I am the Spiritual Advisor for St Vincent de Paul for our Diocese; I teach scripture in our local public schools; I also give teachings for the Community of the Risen Christ, and I am serving as a Chaplain for Nepean hospital.

Rose's hobbies are completing jigsaw puzzles, crossword puzzles, reading and she enjoys going to aquaerobics three times per week. While my hobbies are flying my remote-control spitfire, the quadcopters, my boat, and the regular helicopter. I also enjoy flying on my computer's Microsoft flight simulator, while I also enjoy photography, painting, and drawing. All this of course is when or if I have time, but sometimes we must make time for all the things God gifts us with and time out is often needed so we don't burn out.

We both enjoy long walks and when we need to travel into the Penrith, we prefer to walk the 2.5 kilometres rather than using our car. Also, we prefer to use public transport for travelling between suburbs or for heading into Sydney rather than using our car. Despite our various health issues that are mostly due to old age, both of us have not been infected with covid 19, by our Lord's grace.

## **Chapter 45**

### **A Cross We Have Been Carrying for the Last 14 Years Due to where we have lived during that time.**

This chapter is dedicated to a very sad collection of events that have occurred at our villa complex, where we have lived for the last 14 years. So, before I move onto 2022 and 2023, the last 2 chapters, I need to share about some serious times of trial that has seriously threatened our peace of mind and at times, even our faith.

Starting from the next paragraph is a copy of the summary letter of events that I presented to NCAT on behalf of all the residents from our 14 villas in our housing complex. NCAT stands for New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

We had suffered so much trouble and violence from 3 of our tenants during 14 years of tenancy here in the 14 villas of 83 Stafford Street in Kingswood, that a lawyer suggested that we take our case before NCAT. This was because the Department of Housing was doing nothing to stop the troublemakers. I prayed about leaving this sorry account of our trials out, but as it is a part of our life and story it must be told. To be an active Christian will usually draw much attention and it sometimes brings on trials and testings as part of the package. One solution would be move to another property, but then we would have felt like we were deserting our friends here who look to



us for support. All the other residents are older than us and they all live alone. The best way to tell a part of the story is to show you the Covering Letter that was sent to NCAT along with many reports and other documents, that are described as attachments, and I will not include these bundles or attachments in this book, but the letter below will give you an idea.

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### **The beginning of the covering letter to NCAT.**

Addressed to the NCAT presider. We signed the lease for villa number 8 of 83 Stafford Street in Kingswood NSW, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2009 and we moved in on the 24<sup>th</sup>. At that time, we were informed by Housing that our complex of 14 villas was specifically designed and allocated for elderly people over 55 years of age and at first it was like living in a beautiful and peaceful parkland setting. In fact, there is a plaque in the common area to show the dedication date and the list of dignitaries that were here to officially open our villa complex, which was Penrith Housing's showpiece. The Housing officer who oversaw our complex at that time was very efficient and attentive to the needs of us residents. We moved in very quickly because we were due to return to India for a further month one week later. Then Ross moved into villa number 13 about 2 to 3 months after our return from India and for the first few months he seemed to fit in to our little community of 14 villas quite nicely. However, I did become concerned about what he told me one day when I was helping him, he said, "I came here from Lithgow, but nobody in Lithgow liked me, including the police". I was 57 years old back then, and my dear wife was 61 years old, yet we were the youngest people who lived here at that time. Added to that, because I have been a Chaplain for NSW Ambulance and currently for Nepean Hospital and St Vincent de Paul, plus our church backgrounds and missionary work, we soon realised that most of our residents here looked to us both for support, both physically and spiritually. We are also the only married couple who live here. Initially, we organised BBQs for Easter, Anzac Day and Christmas or just for no reason at all and when our dedicated Housing officer found out about this she asked us if we could help her to set up social groups at some of the larger complexes in our area. Unfortunately, before it all got started, she was transferred, and it was all cancelled. After our new Housing officer took over our complex, the indifference started. Housing recently stated in response to an article about terrible anti-social behaviour in another larger complex in our area, that was published in our local newspaper, that they always respond to every complaint of anti-social behaviour. That is not true, we usually only see somebody from Housing, no more than twice per year and it is usually for an inspection or a smoke alarm check.

After a few months, Ross decided to turn against most of the residents here and his verbal abuse began, because he was convinced that we were all just troublemakers and that became even worse after we all started filling out anti-social behaviour reports about him to submit to Housing, (the Department of Communities and Justice). As a combined community, many of us started to complain by telephone to the Department of Communities and Justice, (Housing), at the local Penrith office but after a while, we were told to put all our complaints in writing, as our verbal complaints did not count. So, we started doing that, but as the years past, nothing ever seemed to change as Ross just became nastier and even more threatening. He would even play very loud music through large speakers that he put outside his unit to disrupt any of our community BBQs, just to be nasty and anti-social. He took a particular dislike to me, and I could never walk up the driveway to the bins, to check for mail or to simply leave our complex without him yelling out abuse, threats of killing me, and foul language. Our villa number 8 is situated at the lowest part of our complex

and his villa 13 is halfway up our driveway, so I always had to pass his villa to leave the complex, check the mailboxes or to access the rubbish bins. He often would be much worse when he had been drinking heavily. Six of us tenants attended a meeting with Housing at the Penrith office with team leader, Bettina, and we wanted to see if Housing could respond to us prior to attending NCAT. One of the things that we told her was, “we are no longer going to submit any more formal anti-social reports because it is a waste of time because we never get any feedback anyway.” I then showed Bettina a list of dates and events to show her that the anti-social behaviour is still happening. Her response was that a list is enough and if you email short descriptions to me instead of on Housing’s formal anti-social behaviour report forms, that is acceptable now.

Our next-door neighbour in villa 9, was a nice elderly German man, who had limited mobility, so we tried to give him as much assistance as we could. Sadly though, he died in 2012 and after that an aboriginal lady named, Nerida, moved into villa 9. It turned out that she openly admitted to being a sufferer of mental health problems and when she does not take her medication, she acts up very badly with some of the foulest language I have ever heard. From the very beginning, Nerida would go from villa to villa, begging for a loan of money, for coffee, cigarettes from those who also smoke, or anything else she may need at that time. She would often beg for things, including money, the day after her own pension day. Many times, she would entertain a villa full of her aboriginal friends and they would have very loud alcohol drinking parties. Her friends or relatives will often arrive any time between late in the evening to 3 or 4am and continue to loudly knock-on Nerida’s door while yelling out to get her to respond. It seems to us that many of these people have no social skills of realising that these actions will disturb others. Another habit of Nerida’s is to loudly leave her villa during the very early hours of the morning, like 2 or 3am, to wander the streets to find discarded furniture and bring it back to her villa by shopping cart and she does this once or twice per week. She would then wake us up even more by dragging her old furniture outside and then to drag her latest find into her unit. Most of the time she has a lot of discarded furniture sitting outside her villa. From that time forward, we started having incidents of abuse, filthy language, and constant screaming at any hour and more often in the very early hours of the morning. In fact, anytime that she had not taken her medication or for no other reason than that she was in a very foul mood.

So, from then onwards we all, as a community, were submitting reports to housing of bad behaviour about both Ross and Nerida but it seemed that nothing was ever done about it, whenever we reported them. Housing would never give us any feedback or updates about any supposed investigations, and we were never sure if there even was any. We had been told by Housing that they always investigate every single complaint, however, we hardly ever saw any Housing staff and when we did, it is only for a yearly inspection.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2016 Ross physically assaulted Maureen and myself and after the police arrived, he was charged by them. It was obvious to everybody, including the police that he had been drinking heavily because we could all smell it on him. Had housing acted more diligently concerning Ross’s constant anti-social behaviour, which had continued for 6 years up to that time, his physical assault on us would never have happened. To make things much worse, I had suffered from a heart attack only one week prior to that incident. Then on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2017 he appeared before the Penrith Local Court and was charged with common assault, he was put on a good behaviour bond and a conditional AVO to avoid us plus not talk or approach us for 12 months. During the next 12 months, although Ross was quiet, we continued to have a lot of trouble from Nerida. However, during those 12 months, Ross would often still abuse me but only loud enough so that there would

never be proof from anybody else that he was still acting up. As soon as the 12-month good behaviour bond had ceased, Ross started to make more trouble for us all once again. For the rest of us our memories of our old peaceful existence here were now long gone, it was like living in hell and none of us ever dreamed that it could get any worse, but we were wrong, it did. Ross started to convince Nerida that we were all evil and scheming against them both. He also convinced Nerida that he did not assault anybody and that we had all lied about it, even though there were other witnesses. This resulted in Nerida acting even more aggressive and abusive to us other residents. The assault was reported to Housing, and we did not even hear anything in response as usual.

In about 2019, one of our resident ladies had passed away and the Department of Housing decided to replace her by allocating villa 3 to a young man who had just been released from prison. He would be in his thirties and his name is Paul. As a small community we all try to welcome new residents whenever they move into our complex, so the first time I saw him was when he was standing out the front of his villa on the driveway. It was on the morning after he had moved in, I was about to leave, to go out in my car, so I stopped in the driveway to greet him, and he was drinking straight out of a long neck beer bottle at 8am in the morning. It was so obvious that he was already well and truly drunk, not a good first impression. We asked Housing “why did you place a young ex-convict in our villa complex that is supposed to be for over 55-year old’s?” They responded by saying that it is no longer classified like that anymore. However, we recently learned that it was re-classified for older people, and I would not consider a person in their 30’s to be older. The Housing officer continued to say, we thought that by placing him amongst older people, it may settle him down. Then we said, well that has certainly failed then, Paul has turned our complex into a battleground.

We all tried our best to submit reports of bad behaviour to Housing, but it becomes a very tedious thing to have to keep doing, especially when it seemed to us all that Housing, was not doing anything about the problems that we were facing, and we have all been subjected to this behaviour now for 14 years. Therefore, I repeat that their claims of investigating every incident, was just not happening and there 3 strike policy was not being followed properly either, because if it was, Ross and Nerida should have been evicted a long time ago.

Anyway, after Paul moved in, Ross decided to take him under his wing and to use Paul to make more trouble for us all. Ross taught Paul that most of us were nothing more than interfering troublemakers and we knew this because they made a point of telling us through their yelling out the constant abuse and threats for all to hear, of just how bad they thought we all were. If we thought we had been treated badly previously and that it could not even possibly get any worse than it had been, we were so very wrong. This was because Paul was in another league of trouble making entirely. He threatened to kill most of us over the first few weeks and he would yell, scream, and abuse us with extremely foul language. He even threatened our villas, our property and our cars, plus he would even abuse our visitors. We had to call the police many times to deal with Nerida or Paul and sometimes for both. During all this Ross would not get involved himself, he would only encourage them and coach them. Nerida and Paul would often yell out to us, “go on, call the cops, they won’t do anything anyway”. Housing Penrith claims that they work very closely with the police, but they did not even know that the police had charged Ross Foley after he had assaulted Maureen and I until a couple of years later.

During this time though, Ross still insisted on abusing me whenever I would walk past his villa, and he threatened me many other times. So, I continued to submit anti-social behaviour reports to



Housing concerning all three of them as did some of the other residents. Eventually in 2020, Ross was evicted by Housing because he had received too many warnings, but he had left a legacy, through Paul and Nerida. So now, we ask why it took 10 years to evict him and why did Housing not do that after the assault that happened 4 years previously.

It did not take long before Paul decided to link up with Nerida more formally and that started a love, hate relationship. When they were drinking, having sexual relations, or taking drugs together, they would have wild parties with very loud music, much yelling, abuse, and foul language. But when they were fighting, as they often were, everybody else would suffer even more because it often happened during the very early hours between midnight and 5am, although there were some fights during the day as well. Their sexual relationship was so obvious because whenever they would yell from villa 3 to villa 9 and back, we would hear everything they yelled out about, and we knew they were using drugs because they would often brag about it. We continually begged the Housing department to do something about all of this, but it appeared that they would not because we were never kept informed, and we would never see any Housing staff. Even if we would attempt to go in for a talk with their staff, they would always say, put it in an incident report.

One day in March 2022, I was out to carry out some Chaplaincy duties, my poor wife, Lesley "Rose", rang me to say she was very scared, and that Paul and Nerida were calling out for me to come outside so they could kill me. I knew it was serious and that Rose was very scared because she was crying and Rose, rarely cries as she is so typically British with a stiff upper lip. I could not understand that they did not realise that I was not home because I had taken our car. Anyway, I hurried home and had already called the police. The threats to my life were as severe as their filthy language and when the police arrived, they were both warned, and we were given an event number. Over the last decade, most of our tenants have called the police on many occasions but sadly in most cases, the police can only warn them to behave. This was not the only time my poor wife has been scared and alone because of the disgusting behaviour of our troublemakers.

Some months later, Paul must have broken his parole conditions because he was sent back to prison for 6 months. But as soon as he returned, he continued to cause heaps of trouble. During the time that Paul was back in prison, Nerida continued her own trouble making, especially when she did not take her mental health medications.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2022, Nerida started screaming out at us at 5am and she woke my wife and I up, which was a common occurrence for us. But this time she was accusing me of going into her house during the night and stealing from her. She was screaming and swearing in a continuous manner which continued for over an hour. Then finally, she screamed out, "you have stolen from me, so I will take something from you". She then started picking up handfuls of large rocks from our own garden and she threw handful after handful at our mini cooper car, which is always parked in a carport that is close to both our villas. She smashed the left side passenger window, the windscreen, the whole of the left side of our car had large dents and a few plastic panels were also destroyed. The way our villa is situated, we can see our car and part of one side of Nerida's villa from our bedroom window and our villa is only 3.6 metres from hers. The police were called and by the time they arrived, Nerida had left, but eventually she was charged, and a court date was set. The repair bill to fix our car was nearly \$4,575 and because of the shortage of the supply of car parts, caused by covid 19, it took about 2 months before our car was returned to us. After having been woken up in the early hours of morning so many times, we had planned the previous day to place a

microphone just inside our own bedroom window. By doing this we planned to start recording her abuse when it happened next, never knowing that it was to be the very next morning. We felt that if we could play back Nerida's bad language and abuse to Housing, they may better understand what we go through at least 2 to 3 times per week. Therefore, we did manage to record Nerida's abuse as she was damaging our car. During the 2 months that our car was being repaired, we were forced to hire a car for that period and that cost us \$3,071.70. That was necessary because of all my Chaplaincy and Spiritual Adviser duties that required me to travel. Many times, after our car was maliciously smashed, Nerida yelled out a few times after the event, "it was just a few dents, so why are you whingeing like babies." On the 26<sup>th</sup> of May, Nerida appeared in court and the judge fined her \$2,000 for court costs because the police were not sent the costs of damage, so she gets away without paying us any compensation. However, if Housing had done something to stop the ant-social behaviour this incident would never have happened. Once they could have prevented the personal assault by Ross and once again, they could have prevented our car from being smashed up.

As a result of the malicious damage to our car, we asked Housing for an urgent face to face appointment and we were able to finally make them realise just how bad our two troublemakers can be. As a result of that meeting, they sent out a team of three Housing officers to inspect all 14 villas and interview each tenant. They were unable to inspect Nerida's villa number 9, because she was not at home and as far as we know, Housing has never seen inside her villa. When they got to Paul's villa number 3, he threatened the three Housing officers with a baseball bat, and he screamed out foul language. He also threatened to kill them all and we found out a week later from a friend of mine, who works for housing, that one of the three officers, who is a woman, quit her position at the Penrith office because it scared her so badly.

Many of the residents sent in a petition that was signed by most of our residents to housing, we also sent a letter to our local minister, then one to the housing minister after that and then after the car was smashed, we updated our local minister, Stuart Ayres, once again. Every time that Housing has been contacted by these ministers, they would suddenly become more attentive for a couple of weeks, but we would quickly be forgotten after that yet again, no feedback and no response.

The next two incidents will demonstrate just how sick, depraved, and filthy our troublemakers really are. One day when Pamela from villa 5 was passing Paul's villa 3, he was standing at his door with Nerida at his side to back him up and Paul yelled out to Pamela, "come and lick my ar..., because I have left plenty of poo on it, just the way you like it". She did send in a report of the incident to Housing.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of May this year, while checking my mailbox and walking back down past villa 3, Paul yelled out to me, "you know what you need, a good f..... up your arse and I would be happy to oblige you". I came so close to wanting to punch him out, that it scared me and when I forced myself to walk away, I asked my wife to pray for me.

The anti-social reports keep adding up, but if we had reported everything, we would have been constantly writing them. On 1 Monday in June, I alone handed in 7 reports for anti-social behaviour that occurred over only a 3-day period.

Another issue of concern is the filthiness of Nerida's villa number 9. I know this because as a Chaplain I will try to help anybody, especially any neighbour who lives here at 83 Stafford Street, I have been asked by Nerida to help her out with various tasks over the last 10 years. That has included

tuning in her television, fixing things, changing light globes and many other tasks. Her villa is so full of cockroaches that the last time I tuned in her TV in early May of this year, I had to check that the antenna was plugged in first and when I touched the plug at the back of the TV, I felt something crawling on my hand and when I pulled my hand back, there were 7 cockroaches on my hand. This was during the middle of the day when cockroaches usually hide, but they are everywhere, and her kitchen is so filthy that I don't know how she can even use it. Her villa is so full of furniture and other items that they spill out into the yard outside. Our villa is only 3.6 metres from Nerida's villa and the problem of keeping our villa free of cockroaches is a huge and constant battle, especially in the warmer months. We have told Housing about it, but they do nothing as usual, another law under the Residential Tenancies Act and their own lease, broken. Another issue is that Nerida has broken her windows twice before because she had locked herself out and she broke Paul's bedroom window after a huge and lengthy fight they had. So, we ask ourselves, why does she get away with these things? Nerida has been before the Housing tribunal, twice before and instead of eviction, she managed to talk her way into avoiding eviction to get another chance, we know that because she has told us. In many ways, I still feel very sorry for Nerida because of her mental illness and the way she always feels alienated, however, she receives a lot of help from different health groups. Her biggest trouble is that she will not allow any of them to help her and she has been offered accommodation in a dedicated home for mental health sufferers, but she refuses all help.

Nerida has another strange habit that I can only consider that must be related to her mental health. Usually about twice per week she walks the streets to search for discarded furniture and when she finds something that she likes, she brings it back to her villa. Usually, she moves things on shopping trollies or discarded baby prams but if that does not work, she will just drag the furniture. When she has it to her villa, she will then drag it inside and drag older furniture out. That is all ok and if that is what pleases her, great, except she usually does all this between about 11pm to 5am and naturally it wakes us up. Most of the time there are many pieces of furniture sitting outside her villa and it often even blocks the path to reach our own villa plus it looks so very untidy. It appears that she seems to think that the things she already has are never good enough. Nerida also leaves her outside lights on permanently and it shines up through our bedroom window at night.

We sent a letter to Housing outlining our demands that we intend to place before NCAT, and we gave them one month to respond by. I also sent another update to the Honourable Stuart Ayres so he will be aware of our actions, and he has indicated his support for our cause.

This whole situation is tiring, it affects our health, our nerves, our sleep, and our right to quiet enjoyment. After I had read the tenancies act, I realised just how many parts of the act that the Housing department are breaking. We know that there are many others who suffer from similar situations, with much larger numbers, and we read about another local problem area in our local newspaper, but it does not mean it is right for these things to be allowed to happen. Both my wife and I will often walk up behind villa's 7,6,5,4 and 3 instead of using the paths and driveway, to avoid being abused or threatened and we should not have to do that. I have lost count of the many nights of lost sleep we have been subjected too. But as my dear wife has suffered from migraine headaches from her childhood and as a result, she has lost many nights of sleep over that alone. But only a short time ago, she had suffered from a migraine for the previous two days and had not slept during that time. After giving her some stronger medication, I finally got her off to sleep on the third night but after about half an hour, Nerida started to scream and swear, so, consequently my wife was awake yet again for another long and lonely night. We also wish to stress that all the other tenants



are constantly scared of reprisals because Paul and Nerida are always threatening us all physically as well as threatening our homes, cars, and other property. It is not an acceptable way to live, in constant anxiety and we would refer you to the 2 newspaper reports that are enclosed because it is obviously a much larger problem than just our own complex. As a Chaplain I have been reaching out to Nerida and I have given her help many times, even after she trashed our car, however, none of us are experts in mental health issues. In my fifteen years as a Chaplain, I have managed to help many people, including some with mental health issues, however, Nerida refuses all help because she will never co-operate with whoever is trying to help her. Why should we be landed with putting up with her silly and violent behaviour and she appears to be unable or not willing to change. When she is on her medication, she can seem quite passive, but when she does not take her medication, she can be very dangerous.

After having read the entire contents of the Residential Tenancies Act, I took notice of the three-strike system of warnings in section 154C, about anti-social behaviour. Most of us tenants at 83 Stafford Street, believe that, at the Penrith branch of Housing, the three-strike system is not being applied correctly. We were told by a friend of ours, who works for Housing in another district, that the Penrith office of Housing, is well known for its inefficiency.

We would bring into question whether Nerida, Ross or Paul were eligible for Housing accommodation in the first place, when you learn about Housing's own "Eligibility for Social Housing Policy" which outlines the risk to cause anti-social behaviour before offering accommodation. Housing Penrith has not only gone against that policy, but they have also broken their own lease agreement in sections 6.1, 6.2, 8.4 and 11.1.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2022, my daughter, Sharron, came to visit me for Father's Day, but as she pulled up in her car, adjacent to 83 Stafford Street's driveway, she was very shocked and concerned to watch as Paul from villa 3, put his fingers into every locked mailbox's letter slot and opened one that had no lock. At first, he did not realise she was watching him, but when he finally did, she became scared.

Pamela from villa 5 can testify that she has seen Paul going through our rubbish and on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September, I had tied our rubbish up securely in a black garbage bag and took it up to our communal bins. The next morning, I noticed various articles spread around on the ground near the bins that was paperwork that we had disposed of the previous day.

I have included a copy of a doctor's report of Pamela from villa 5, which has only been handed to me a couple of days prior to submitting these documents.

-----End of the Letter submitted to NCAT-----

Sadly, we received no judgment in our favour from NCAT, however, they did warn Housing to do more to resolve the problems. As an update to that, things have improved, and we now only have occasional anti-social behaviour.

The shocking truth of this situation is that if we had been living in the same type of complex that was managed by a real estate agency, the troublemakers would have been evicted immediately, but the department of housing operates according to a different part of the tenancy act and different rules. Our nation boasts often about equal rights but sadly though, it is not always applied.

## Was It Worth It?

A good question that some people have often asked us. Because we threw away, gave away or sold most of our possessions to enable us to obey God's calling. That included leaving our families, selling our twenty-six-foot river cruiser and even our beautiful house had to be eventually sold. We could only keep what we could carry in our car or caravan, so that meant that we had to decide that what we would carry with us was essential for our own needs or for our ministry and considering our weight restrictions for towing.

Now that we look back on what we experienced, we ask ourselves that same question, after thirty years of ministry work, was it indeed worth it? The answer must be an absolute and giant, YES. What a great privilege it was to hug the leprosy sufferers as they cried because they had felt loved and accepted for the first time in their lives. To be able to minister to some of the poorest people on this planet earth, to be honoured to be able to live among them in grass or mud brick huts. But most of all to be able to hear Jesus say to us at the end of time, ***what you have done to the least of these my people, you did it for me, so welcome into my Father's house. Matthew 25:40*** That is only IF we have done enough?

When talking about, was it worth it? It reminds me about the lesson that Jesus taught His disciples in Mark 10 from verse 17, when after a rich young man had asked Him, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus tells him to sell all he has and give it to the poor; the young man goes away very sad because he was a very rich man. So, then the disciples question Jesus about who can be saved then Peter says, we gave up everything to follow you and Jesus explains that whoever has given up possessions to follow Him will be rewarded a hundred-fold.

### ***Mark 10:17-31            The Rich Young Man***

***And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: "Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, Honour your father and mother." And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.***

***And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God." Peter began to say to him, "See, we have left everything and followed you." Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left***

***house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first."***

After over twenty years of ministry as missionaries, Rose and I, are already a very long way into the receiving the incredible blessings that God showers on us both. In fact, the blessings started from the very day that we said yes in response to God's calling us into the mission field. Because we had been both working for God prior to our calling to the mission field, some might wonder, why did God wait until then? In answer to that, we were blessed prior to our calling but nothing like the blessings we have received since then. Yes, Rose was the office manager for the Servants of Jesus Covenant Community, and I was the conference and seminar manager, but we were often so busy that looking back, we did not have the spare time to spend quality time with God. In fact, when we went to India the first time, we were annoyed by the hold ups that we were forced to get used to, but it was in those times of being forced to wait around that we realised that we had more opportunities for prayer or to just sit in the presence of God. It also gave me more quality time to prepare better sermons that would have a deeper meaning or impact and it was a time of travelling deeper in our relationship with God. Therefore, we can both say with all certainty that it was well and truly worth it, and the memories are treasures in our hearts.

Always be aware of those around you, as we can often tend to miss those who may be in great need of a simple kind word or acknowledgement. Always care for others in their own time, place, culture and spirituality, while being sensitive to their chosen faith.

Worry much more about what our Lord thinks of you, rather than what any other person does.

Finally remember to worship Jesus of Nazareth, the radical Jesus, rather than, Jesus of suburbia, the comfortable version that we create in our minds and lifestyle. And remember that Heaven is NOW as we read in Hebrews 8 and 9.

## **My Final Thoughts, Quotes, Scripture Verses, and Reflections**

Our blessings started to appear from the minute that we obeyed God's calling and they have not ceased since that time. Rose and I are just two people who receive a government pension these days, yet we never want for anything, including vegemite. As we travelled through India and Australia, we used a simple camera that needed film and developing but that was costing us too much and suddenly a Christian friend gave us a new digital camera. But God did not stop there because a year or two after that I was given a professional camera that needed repairs and I was able to fix this new camera that would have been worth around one thousand dollars. Everything else we needed or wanted came to us in other miraculous ways even our mini cooper car. So yes, we may seem to be well off, but it is only because of God that we are incredibly blessed. We are also very satisfied to stay in cheaper accommodation with cooking facilities so we can cook our own meals when we travel on holidays.

I have often wondered why Rose and I have had the truly great privilege of witnessing so many miracles and I have had many discussions with God as to why He cannot allow so many other Christians to witness even one miracle. On the rare times that God has answered me, He tells me to mind my own business. But while I speak of miracles, all the miracles that are mentioned in this book can be verified by other people, starting with my own miracle of healing. I have had many



discussions about why God can not heal my dear Rose's migraine headaches, but He has instructed me to leave that issue to Him. But on that same subject I must remind you what God told me in the very early hours of the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2006 on the top of a hill in India: -

Rose had suffered from a migraine headache for a couple of days, so I had injected her with some medication to make her sleep a couple of hours prior. After I was certain that she would sleep for a few more hours, I headed out for a prayer walk in the early hours of the morning.

I begged and I pleaded with God, saying to Him "You use us so often, we see so many miracles and healings, why not my Rose?" I walked and walked being careful to remember directions for getting back and prayed in tongues for a long time. Eventually I came to some bushland with a small hill and remembered how Jesus used to go into the hills at night alone to pray to the Father, so I went up the hill and sat. There was a little light from the moon, and I prayed then waited silently on the Lord. Suddenly He said to me "***Do not worry, she carries her cross well, and she is in My hands,***" so I scribbled notes from my pen on to my handkerchief.

I then asked, why do You not heal her so she can serve You even more? He said, "***I AM, and this is not your concern, My, reasons are not yet for you to know, I will not let her cross be larger than she can bear. Your wife is your balance-partner, you are as one, a team, she keeps you honourable and balanced for when you jump too quickly. Whoever is for you is your support and strength, but whoever is against you, those who do not believe I AM called you, cut those ties you have with them. Not all, only those who reject your calling! I have told you where to go, what to do and what your vision should be, and I promised to use you for My will. So only some of these things you have done, yet I still used you, so why do you hold back, half hearted, lazy and so I say get your house in order and you will see even greater things, do not fear the limits of My power, there are no limits. Then I will show you what comes next, I will give you greater anointing, I the great I AM see you both, leave your precious one for Me to hold and comfort. Can the current vision of your ministry be greater than My power, you have only seen the beginning of it. Follow the structure of the church of man so they will respond to your testimonies of Me, and this ministry will have churches of no religious denomination, only of My teachings, laws and statutes. You must lead them and do not neglect your wife, your partner in ministry. You need her as she needs your strength, prayer and encouragement. Teach her to be bolder and she can teach you humbleness. Become what you were called for from the beginning, a pastor of your ministry and make many more pastors in the same way.***"

After God had finished speaking, I remember thinking that I do not have enough room on my handkerchief to write it all down because I did not want to miss even one word. But then I realised that the words were engraved in my heart so surely, I will remember them, and I did.

The miraculous oil that is mentioned throughout the book was a very small jar of oil that was given to me by Father Tom Forrest and was originally oil that came from Our Lady of the Olive Tree. The oil was also blessed by Father Peter Mary Rookey as well when we travelled with him. The oil came with instructions of how to anoint somebody according to our Lady of the Olives. As well as instructions that the oil was perpetual so long as you did not let it run out but that you needed to top it up with pure olive oil when it became low.

One of the craziest things that we witnessed in India is the transport because we saw cars, trucks, buses, auto rickshaws, bicycle rickshaws, bicycles, motor bikes, carts pulled by water buffaloes, cows and horses. While all these things and more, share the very busy streets of some of our world's

largest cities. People catching a ride on the top of buses, trucks and trains is so dangerous, yet many do it. We saw a man riding his bicycle with a stack of thirty trays of eggs that were stacked vertically on the luggage rack. Another man was sitting behind the driver of a motor bike with a pane of glass that would have been at least six feet wide. Another motor bike rider was balancing a huge flat screen television on his lap while he rode along. Also, there seems to be no limit of how many people can ride on a motor bike and the most that we witnessed was six people, the driver with his wife on the back who was carrying a baby, two larger boys behind her and a toddler sitting on the handlebars. It was common to see a family of four on a motor bike though and it is rare to see anybody wearing a helmet, although during our later years of travelling through India, they are becoming more common.

It is very difficult to describe the level of poverty that we witnessed in India to anybody else because you must witness it for yourself. However, the poorest of the villages that we have sponsored would have to have been the Dalet villages in Chirala. These beautiful people only own the clothes they wear and in some cases one or two cooking pots, but sometimes not even that. They live in huts that are made of branches, waste plastic and old cast-off pieces of metal or cloth. These huts are certainly will not keep out water if it rains and at best, they provide some shade from the sun but by mid-morning it is so hot they are better off outside anyway. Added to that, they are squatting on land that they do not own. The greatest irony of their situation is that they feel great honour to share a cup of chai with us or give us what they cannot afford to give away, yet they will talk about it for many years to come, as if we are that important. It was such a joy for us to bring some happiness into their lives by singing with them, playing with them, feeding them, or simply just spending time with them.

I always must remind myself not to avoid the handicapped, the broken or those who just need a kind word. We are so good at avoiding that annoying person who wants to share their problems or stories, but if we make a point of just sharing a few moments with them, it probably makes them feel better, and not only that it may make their day feel better. Remember, **to walk in love is the highest form of spiritual warfare!**

We are all called to be disciples of Jesus and we must try our best to reach out and although it might not be a call to India or anywhere else but to reach out to family, friends, neighbours, or people from our workplace. In that way, we are all called to spread the good news of the Gospels.

**C. T. Stud said: - A man wished to live near the sound of a chapel bell, but God said, I want you to run a rescue mission within a yard from hell.**

**Hudson Taylor once wrote: - There are three stages to every great work of God; first it is impossible, then it is difficult, then it is done.**

Over the years of being a missionary and chaplain, I have learned that many people think that ministry work is more important than even family and it is an easy mistake to make. Especially when we all know that God should come first in our lives. However, yes, God must be first in our lives then family, then ministry and our careers. If we cannot get our family life right, we will be no good in ministry either.

**Charles Spurgeon wrote: - You will never make a missionary of the person who does no good at home. He that will not serve the Lord in the Sunday school at home, will not win children to Christ in China.**

If we reach out to others, it leaves an extremely loud message to them and it reminds me of a divine appointment we had with one of our neighbours. A divine appointment is when God puts somebody else in your mind to help or to simply share a kind word. One of our neighbours here at our villa complex did not have a lounge room sofa and Rose and I felt that God wanted us to purchase one for her. So, we took her to a furniture store where we allowed her to choose a lounge chair and she asked us why we did it, so we told her that God told us to do it. We were fortunate to have had enough money at that time to do that but most often, God will just urge us to speak a few kind words to somebody. We have lost count of how many divine appointments that have been put on our hearts, some to give aid or help, some for just a kind word or spiritual insight, but whatever He asks of you, will always be within your ability.

**Another story that relates to this is:- There was a little boy with no shoes who was looking at some new shoes in a shop window. A lady came by and after seeing how much he loved the new shoes in the shop window, she took him inside and she brought him the brand-new shoes. Then the boy asked the lady, are you God's wife?**

I am often asked the question; how do you know when God is calling you into a ministry? My answer is usually the same, you should test it by checking it with your spiritual advisors, then your peers, then your family and ask two questions, is it practical and is it in line with God's Word.

**Billy Graham left us some fine wisdom on that subject: - When he was asked what ministries do you move forward in and which ones do you drop? His answer was, I open many doors to explore the possibilities, but I only walk through the ones that God wants me too.**

Always remember that many people have never known about Jesus in our vast world and many of those could be neighbours, co-workers or friends.

**Oswald J. Smith once wrote: - We talk of the Second Coming; half the world has never heard of the first.**

Many times, we feared failure, scared of harm or scared of being stuck to know the right thing to say, but we were never left short. We were always able to know the right things to say, we were never harmed and as far as we know, we were not aware of any failure. It was scary to step out in faith to give up everything you have and go out into the life of a missionary, but God never left our side. We have been blessed beyond what we would have ever dreamed of and when I remember the name of this book, I remember, He loves me THAT much.

**William Carey wrote: - Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.**

**Karen Watson once wrote: - The missionary heart: Care more than some think is wise. Risk more than some think is safe. Dream more than some think is practical. Expect more than some think is possible. I was called not to comfort or success but to obedience. There is no joy outside knowing Jesus and serving Him.**

**Roland Allen wrote: - Missionary zeal does not grow out of intellectual beliefs, nor out of theological arguments, but out of love.**

***1 Corinthians 13: If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.***



He goes on to say: - With love, our words and actions can point others to Christ as we honour Him with our life.

David Livingstone said: - God had only one Son, and He was a missionary.

*Proverbs 13:22 A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children:*

I thank you for reading about my journey of faith and please be assured that I will be praying for each person who reads it. I will leave you with my email address, just in case you want to contact me to be included for any special prayer intentions and please put the word, vegemite, as the subject of the email. [aussy.craig@gmail.com](mailto:aussy.craig@gmail.com)

May God in all His majesty, power and sovereignty bless you in your family life, your ministry, your career and all your endeavours. I make this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen

I said in the forward of this book that I would repeat it in the last chapter as well, because I felt that it was that important: - “Why me, who am I to have been so very blessed? Why did God allow Rose and I to see so much of His power? Why did God use us in such a dramatic and powerful way? Why did God allow us to see so many miracles?” I have put these questions to God so many times and have never received any answers. I am just an ordinary man who, having been healed in such a miraculous way, was then called by God to step out in faith to serve the least of these.

*Numbers 6: 24-27*

*The Lord bless thee and keep thee:*

*The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:*

*The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.*

*And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them*

**The End**