



India Outreach Newsletter

February 2014

Visitors to Vellore



Since our last newsletter, the delegation from Georgetown Protestant Reformed Church—Prof. and Lori Gritters and Elder Deane and Donna Wassink—spent twelve

days with the saints in the Reformed Christian Church of Vellore and returned safely home. The delegation left for India on January 2 and arrived back in Grand Rapids on January 17. The Wassinks and the Gritters report that they had a blessed time of fellowship with the congregation, with the Paulraj family, and with Paulraj's contacts and friends. Here are a few highlights!

Travel

Relatively simple plans to travel halfway around the world can become extremely complicated. All it took to change a 31 hour trip to a 56 hour trip was a snowstorm in West Michigan. Deanne Wassink writes, “[We had some] adventures getting here: flight delays, spending the night on cots sleeping in O'Hare, plane mechanical issues, splitting up, rescheduling on several different airlines, finally all four of us rerouted on a United flight to Frankfurt, Germany and then to Chennai. It was one of the roughest flights I have ever been on... Safely landed! It was about 2am on Sunday...

What a wonderful greeting awaited us. Over 15 members of the church met us at the airport in the middle of the night. They gave us flowers and helped load us into the colorful private bus that was hired for the trip. After a prayer of thanksgiving we headed 'home'--another 3.5 hour ride.” The couples worshiped that Sabbath morning with the congregation, and Prof. Gritters preached a sermon to a full house on the truth of the Church, the body of Christ.

Church Conference

An important mandate of the trip was to instruct the church in the Reformed Faith and Practice. Prof. Gritters led a three day conference. The topics were: The Church, The Offices of the Church, and the Offices of Believer. The conference was well attended by 25-30 individuals per day. Pastor Paulraj

translated, and the delegates report that there was lively discussion on the topics. In a letter to Rev. Haak, Paulraj wrote, “The conference was limited to the Pastors and Church leaders who join us for our monthly Bible Study. Most of the regular participants attended all three days, and it was a joy for me too. The regular attendance may be a sign that they loved what they have been learning from us over a period of time. Thanks be to God.”

Bible Studies

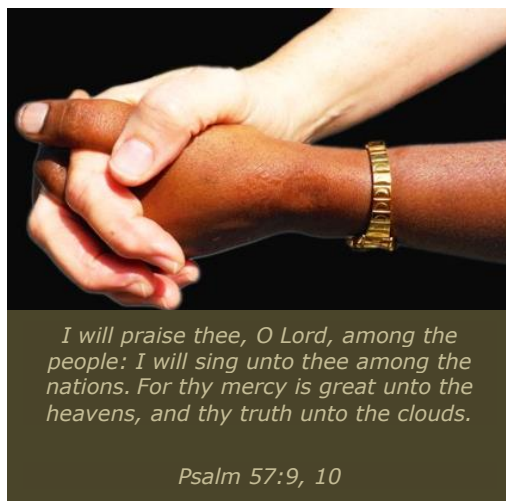
The next Sunday with the English speaking church, Prof Gritters preached and also taught a Bible Study on the Covenant of Grace. He led a similar study on the Covenant for the Sola Gratia Study. Paulraj has organized this Bible study to train men from the church in the faith and practice of the Reformed Heritage and equip them for leadership positions in village outreaches. Prof. Gritters was invited again to lead a Young Adult Bible study at the Christian

Medical Center—the same group of young adults that they met with last year. He led the group in a study of Moses desiring to see the glory of God.

Grace Foster Home

Donna Wassink had three impressions from her visit to the orphanage and meetings with the children and their caregivers. “The wonder of God's mercy in rescuing these children from terrible circumstances and bringing them into His Church and Covenant. 2. The blessing to the children of the care and love expressed to the children by their sponsors. 3. The children are lovingly

given the best care possible. They show their appreciation to the staff of GFH by their happiness and loving expressions.”



I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.

Psalms 57:9, 10

Conclusion



Georgetown PRC enjoyed exciting updates from Deanne Wassink every day. If you want to read these letters, please find Georgetown Protestant

Reformed Church on Facebook and “like” the page. Let's continue to support the Vellore Church and Mission with our prayers!

From Grace Foster Home...

An Old - Fashioned American Picnic.

We had a great time carrying out the idea we had to bring all the children together in a fun and relaxed event. Our idea was to sponsor an old fashioned American church picnic like we have back home.



Donna and Lori started a couple of days ahead buying supplies. Our Indian friends were very helpful, but, curious and a little bit doubtful. You see, their idea would be to make a very large pot

of rice ahead of time with all the curries, spices, and meats added in later. This would be served without utensils at the picnic. Instead, we were buying frozen “hotdogs” (really, they were more like brats of different flavors), ketchup and specially ordered hotdog buns from a local bakery. They also created special no bake chocolate cookies (haystacks) for a treat. Regular cookies were not an option seeing they do not own ovens like we have, only, little microwaves. They also bought bags of potato chips. Our Indian friends also took a large pot of rice in case there wouldn't be enough food.

We met on Saturday about 5pm. The children ran free in the fenced 2 ½ acres of the Eden land. We had so much fun. The children danced and played games. They also found a puppy to adopt. We had



Frisbee, soccer, cricket and tag going on all at the same time. The children and especially the adults were amazed that the two old guys, Prof. G. and “Unka Deane”, were able to hold our own in soccer. Donna and Lori danced and “played” with the children. Then they held the youngest ones that needed a “gramma lap”.

Kasthuri's mother carried out the traditional rice boil over a fire for the Pongal holiday, then it was our turn. We got the fire burning much higher and then many of the children roasted their own hotdogs for the first

time with custom blacksmith-made four foot wiener forks. What a blast! Thankfully, everyone survived.

The young men of the congregation pushed Donna and Lori out of the way in plating and serving the food. They were a huge help. Pastor Paulraj opened with prayer, after the



loudspeakers were turned down. Donna had to show them all how to eat a hotdog, they loved it. There were smiles all around the big circle seated on the ground.



Too soon, it was dark. We gave the children glow in the dark bracelets which they enjoyed throwing in the air. Then they loaded into the “open” bus for a ride home.

Our picnic was a success. In fact, everyone was too full to eat the rice, so it was saved till later. We are so thankful to God for the opportunity to be a small part of gathering these children from darkness and trouble to the light of the blessed covenant of God. May God care for them while we are apart.

Did You Know...?



~The Indian flag has three horizontal bands of color: saffron for courage and sacrifice, white for truth and peace, and green for faith, fertility, and chivalry.

An emblem of a wheel spinning used to be in the center of the white band, but when India gained independence, a Buddhist dharma chakra, or wheel of life, replaced the spinning wheel.