

Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! (John 4:35)



Sharing my testimony, with a translator

Quick Quotes

"100 rupees! ... Five for 100 rupees!"
— a street vendor

"India is a village"
— Benny Moses

"Where He leads me, I will follow; what He feeds me, I will swallow"
— Benny Moses, on the missionary's pledge

"Why are you like this?!"
— a store owner, on my indecisiveness at bargaining

"It's been Monday morning 21 hours and 40 minutes so far"
— me, upon returning to the US

White for Harvest

Rob Gaebler's news from Gospel for Asia

March/April 2006

Incredible India

Dear friends and family,

My trip to India was wonderful! How excited and glad I am to have this opportunity to give you a glimpse into my time there. My hope is that you will be encouraged as you read about what God is doing in Asia and in my own life.

I was on a team of eleven Gospel for Asia interns and staff that went on this "vision tour" from February 25 to March 13. The purpose of our trip was to see—to see the great need, to see the amazing and powerful things God is doing, to see the result of all our work back in America—to see what Gospel for Asia is all about. And see we did.

Our team visited four of GFA's regional offices in India. We spent quality time with the staff and top leaders of Gospel for Asia, visited churches and Bible colleges and Bridge of Hope schools, and much more.



We were honored and welcomed in a variety of ways

We even visited the Taj Mahal, although honestly that was about the least interesting thing we did.

Every place we went, the believers welcomed us very warmly. They often placed leis around our necks, gave us seats of honor, and put on special programs for us with traditional dances and music.

When we arrived at one Bible college, the students were lined up on both sides of the path, and they showered us with flower petals as we

marched in to the sound of music. At another place, they welcomed us with exuberant songs as they washed our feet. I remarked to Brad, "They're celebrating us being here!" Wherever we went, we could feel the love of these dear brothers and sisters, and we expressed to them how much we loved them and were de-



Our India Team. Back: Rachael, Gabe, Brad, Sheri
Middle: Angela, Jen, Sarah, Maddie
Front: Rob, Brettin, Nathan

lighted to be with them too. Even though our skin color and language were different, we had the joy of knowing that we were part of the same family. Truly we are one in Christ.

I am grateful to you, my dear family and friends, for making this trip a success by your support and your prayers. I certainly experienced God's grace while I was there. I stayed in decent health, remained energetic despite lack of sleep, and was able to reflect on my experiences and write extensively in my journal. The Lord sent us amazingly good weather, with some nice rain to cool things down. Praise the Lord!



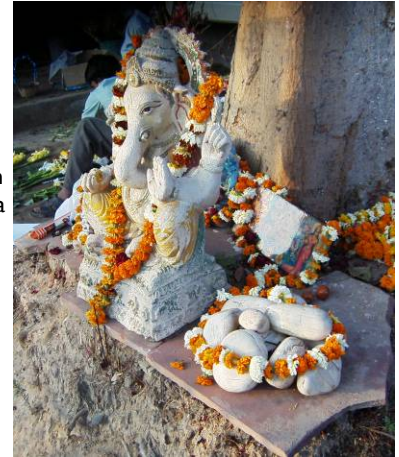
Hindus worshipping an idol in one of their temples

Spiritual Darkness

India is a land where Jesus is little known or tolerated. We had to be careful what we talked about, and not call attention to the fact that we were Christians. There were idols everywhere—inside the buses, in the corners of rooms, beside the streets. (Keep in mind that Hindus worship over 330 million gods and goddesses.)

Our team went into two Hindu temples and saw the gut-wrenching lostness of people desperately seeking forgiveness of sins—sins that only

Jesus can forgive. People sang and danced before a large idol. In one room, a man endlessly beat a drum as he mournfully chanted a god's name, "Krishna, Krishna, Krishna...." In another room, men lay motionless, facedown before an idol. And then there was a little girl, just two years old, on her hands and knees, being taught to bow before this piece of wood and stone. What must Jesus think of that?



An idol by the roadside



The Victorious Church

In the midst of spiritual darkness, a great light is rising over India! Through many trials, the Church is emerging victorious by God's power. Committed men and women of God are boldly proclaiming the message of salvation in the most remote corners of the land, the Lord is confirming this message with wonders and miracles, and many people are finding new life in Christ. One verse that really summarizes what we saw is Matthew 16:18, which says "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

Let me take you with me to a church we visited in northern India. It might seem like nothing much, but God is here. We are seated in front of a congregation of about 60 people, mostly women and children,

crammed between two buildings (there is no church building). The pastor's wife is leading worship while holding their baby in her arms. Heartfelt love and joy are written on the believers' faces as they sing—I can tell Jesus means a lot to them. On top of a house across the street, five curious neighborhood kids are watching the service.



We visited this church in North India

Then the pastor speaks, testifying about the great miracles that God has done and the grace shown to these humble people—miraculous healings and deliverance from demons.

I have heard many such stories before, but now they are alive in front of me. I am so humbled and blessed to be among these precious people, and I think to myself, "It is my privilege to serve you." Today I have met Jesus.

The pastor begins speaking about the church's outreach in the area. They are first-generation believers, and they know what it's like to be lost. Together they are praying earnestly for the 10 surrounding villages to be saved. The pastor breaks down and begins to weep as he tells about his incredible burden to reach the lost.

Verse of the month:

"I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

— Matthew 16:18



Pastor Raj with his wife and child



Brother Emmanuel says the main part of his testimony is how God taught him humility through trials

Testimonies

Whenever we went to a Bible college, church, or regional office, our team was treated to testimonies from the missionaries and students.

One missionary, by the name of Francis, had labored for three very difficult years before anyone listened to his message. Since then he has had an extremely fruitful ministry filled with amazing miracles. One time, 25 men dragged an insane man to him. Pastor Francis prayed for him, he was made completely well by God's power, and as a result 19 peo-

ple put their faith in Jesus! He has planted over 85 churches and led hundreds of people to the Lord, and he now pastors 5 churches and teaches at one of GFA's Bible colleges. Lalachan, the regional leader that oversees Pastor Francis, told me, "There are several more men like Pastor Francis in this region" who the Lord is using powerfully.

Another testimony we heard was from Brother Emmanuel, who "wasted" 17 years of his life in the newspaper industry before serving the Lord these last 17 years. He used to be a hard man, but over the years, through many

difficult hardships, God "broke me nicely." The main part of his testimony is God teaching him humility, so that now he can say, "When you are left with God only, that is the beginning of all good things in your life."

Through these trials, Brother Emmanuel also experienced God's grace. The key to persevering, he said, is to focus on the right thing. He used to look at his problems through a magnifying glass so they looked very big. Now he looks at the promises of God through the magnifying glass, and the problems become very small.



When Brother Sanjay was thrown in prison, he took it as an opportunity to preach the Gospel to 100 other prisoners

Suffering for Jesus

Persecution against Christians in India, especially those who share their faith, is very commonplace. The missionaries accept beatings as a way of life. One time we were at a train station with Gospel for Asia's leader in that state. He told us that a year ago three of our missionaries were handing out tracts in this train station. They were grabbed and beaten, then arrested and thrown into prison. They ended up having to pay a fine before they were released. Another missionary who has had a very fruitful ministry told us he has been beaten "many times."

I asked Benny Moses, one of GFA's regional leaders, how many of the missionaries get beaten at some point. He said, "We don't keep records on that." Then he said something

I'll never forget: "It's like eating pizza." He went on to explain that in America we often eat pizza, and so it's no big deal to us. However, for Benny Moses in India, eating pizza is a rare treat. For the missionaries in India, getting beaten is an every-

"Getting beaten is like eating pizza"
– Benny Moses

day occurrence, and they treat it lightly and don't even report it unless it's serious. However, when we in America hear about these beatings we make a big deal about it.

Persecution doesn't just come in the form of beatings. New believers are often thrown out of their families when they are baptized. "Untouchable" Christians, those at the bottom of society who live in extreme poverty, are denied rights granted to other untouchables. Missionaries are arrested for "forcibly" converting people. We could see that the love, joy, and

peace of the Lord ruled in our brothers' and sisters' hearts through these and a hundred other trials. They endure because they have an intimate relationship with Jesus. Lalachan, one of the regional leaders, said to us, "There are many reasons to be discouraged, but the peace of God rules my heart."



Benny Moses, one of Gospel For Asia's regional leaders

"But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed."
(1 Peter 4:13)



Please Pray!

The following prayer requests were given to us by our brothers in India:

- Pray for non-Christian family members to be saved
- Pray for the Lord's will to be done in each person's life
- Pray they would be rooted in faith and would continue in God's service through any trials
- Pray for the salvation of those who persecute our missionaries
- Pray for all India to know Jesus!

"Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Luke 10:2)

"Pray for us, that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored" (2 Thess. 3:1)

By faith, it will be done!

Dear brothers and sisters, I am very grateful for your support and prayers, which enable me to serve here at GFA on behalf of the missionaries in Asia. You are a great blessing to me. As Paul said, "I thank my God every time I remember you." (Philippians 1:3) Thank you so much.

*Serving in Jesus' name,
Rob Gaebler*

A Personal Connection

People keep asking me how I was impacted by my time in India. Here's my answer:

When I saw a man on the streets of Delhi, I thought, "This is who I'm sharing the Gospel with by working back in Texas!"

When I saw the Bible college students, I thought, "These are the people I'm raising up sponsors for!"

When I was at the church in northern India, I thought, "These are the people I read about getting miraculously healed!"

When I was at the train station, I thought, "This place, where I'm standing, is where our missionaries have been

beaten!"

When I saw India roll past out the train window, I thought, "This is the land God has called me to reach with the Gospel!"

My internship at Gospel for Asia ends July 28. For the last four months, I have been seriously thinking and praying about coming on full-time staff after that. In view of the imminent Second Coming of Christ, I wrote this prayer in my jour-



Nathan, Brad, and me with some Bible college students. These are the people I'm raising funds to support, who will perform miracles, and who will be beaten

nal while in India: "In the short time that is left, take my life and use it to the fullest for Your kingdom." Pray for godly wisdom in my decision.



Answered Prayer!

In my last newsletter I asked you to pray about a gathering of 500,000 Hindus on Feb. 11-13 to forcibly reconvert Christians to Hinduism. God answered our prayers! A police force helped maintain order (which is rare), only about 150,000 people came, and there were no reports of violence. "It was an obvious answer to prayer," said Gospel for Asia President K.P. Yohannan.

The situation in this area is still extremely hostile to

Christians, so please continue to pray for the believers there.

Wherever I went in India, the believers urged us, "Please pray for us!" The incredible things taking place on the mission field today are only because of prayer. So, please do pray!

I have written you only half a newsletter this time. Next time, I'll continue sharing about my time in India!

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I would love to hear from you!