

Report on visit to India - Revd's Alison Hardy and Nicki Farr
April 2023

Over the last 30 years Alison has built a relationship with Brother Samuel John and his family in India who have planted about 250 new churches and carry out a variety of missional activities under the ministry of 'Reaching the Unreached.' Alison and I have recently had the opportunity to travel to India to engage with the family and be part of their mission. This has been a wonderful opportunity to learn and experience mission and ministry with our global Christian family.

Living with a Christian family of a different culture was fascinating. There were the obvious differences with food and dress styles, transport and road systems, which included cows and dogs wandering around, but more subtle differences became apparent as we built and deepened our relationship with the family. For example, the impact of the Hindu culture on styles of Christian worship, the government and political stance, arranged marriages, the Caste system and the oppression to some people groups.

Two of the people groups that we connected with in mission were firstly, the people who come in from the forest areas and now live by the rubbish dump and secondly, the people who suffer with leprosy and live in a leper colony. We carried out a food distribution to each group and it was such a humbling experience especially when the people suffering with Leprosy sang and praised God with smiles and joy.

Another interesting aspect of ministry was in planting churches through evangelistic outreach events. 'Reaching the unreached' maintain oversight and support of the 70 pastors who lead these churches across 4 districts, having helped nurture their faith and support them through Bible school. The oversight ministry in India has both similarities and differences to oversight ministry in Cornwall, but the same challenge exists in both countries of finding ways to share the Gospel of Jesus and how to make church relevant in the culture and society of the 21st century.

We had the opportunity to visit several of these churches to preach and provide testimonies. Delivering the message to an unknown congregation of all ages, with an interpreter, was challenging but exciting. At the end of each service an invitation was given for people to receive prayer if they wished. There was great hunger for prayer and frequently the entire congregation, numbering between 30 and 120, patiently waited in line to receive prayer. The prayers generally fell into three categories: for physical healing; for education, both to be able to attend school and to do well in exams in order to progress; and the Pastors prayers for flourishing churches.

Another area of mission we engaged with were the children and staff in the children's homes which the family run and oversee. We met with children from two of the four homes and it was a delight to see their bright, smiling faces full of hope and light. Many of the children have come from backgrounds of extreme poverty where their future looked so bleak they may have ended up as child criminals, prostitutes or died of malnutrition. Many come from non-Christian backgrounds but today 85% have become Christians. It is through this mission and the Grace of God that many have been fed, clothed and educated leading to them settling into good jobs in government, business, farming and Christian ministry.

Each of these strands of mission and ministry are funded by faith and prayer and the kindness of generous donors. For more information please contact Alison or Rev Nicki at reverendalisonhardy@gmail.com or revnfarr@icloud.com



Children waiting for Nicki to cut the ribbon to open their new room at the orphanage



Alison with one of the pastors she supports: Sugunama



A typical welcome from one of the many churches where we visited and preached



Nicki speaking to children at the main orphanage, our host Azariah John interpreting into Telugu.



Tribal people living off scavenging at the rubbish tip