

Nelsons' News - April 2009

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Thanks so much for praying for our trip to Asia!

We've been home about a week now, so the worst of the jet lag is behind us. We had a great trip, and we know your prayers were answered. Here's a few highlights of the trip. Hopefully, we can get our photos up on Shutterfly soon... keep checking at <<http://nelsonmissionphotos.shutterfly.com/>>

Cambodia

We spent 5 days in Cambodia, but were pretty jet lagged most of that time. Jim preached at the Phnom Penh church Sunday morning, and that afternoon Margaret got asked to share at prayer meeting on Wed. night... She had suspected that might happen, so had some notes on hand.

We were excited to find out that three of the couples married in the past year are now expecting babies! Sarah & Sokheoun are due in August, Daniel & Abigail are due in September, and we didn't hear the date for Sophanny & his wife. Thanks for praying for safe deliveries of healthy babies.

Daniel Sar told us that his father can't see now, because the brain tumor is pressing on his optical nerve. The family is trying to get some loans repaid to them so they can take Samuel to Vietnam for further treatment. Please be praying about this.

It was great to go out to the ministry center property in Phnom Penh Thmei and see the first phase of the multipurpose building that's almost finished. Part of the construction funds have come from the memorial fund for Margaret's mother. Joel and Grace should be moving into the lower left apartment soon. There will be another apartment for guests, and the rest will be open rooms to be used for dorm space for retreats.



At the Mission District meeting that took place right after we left, Chris Wilkins was appointed to take over from Joel Margin as Field Supervisor. Please lift up Chris as he takes on this responsibility, and for Joel and Grace as they look forward to concentrating more on church planting ministries. The whole team needs your continued prayers as they cope with the heat, crazy traffic, intercultural challenges, exhaustion, and all the other things that are part of "normal" missionary life in Cambodia.



Thailand

was the next stop, for the Asia Leadership Team (ALT) meetings in Bangkok. The discussions there were very profitable, plus the fellowship over meals was great. We were able to spend time praying for the persecuted church, for new ministries being launched in several Creative Access countries nearby, and for each other's ministries.

On Sunday, Jim preached at a small storefront church in a large apartment complex. The congregation came to the grand total of 11 people and 1 cat! The pastors (husband and wife) work during the week as a taxi driver and a used clothing dealer. They're seeing fruit, but often the families try to keep the new believers from coming back to services.



India

On Monday night, Dave & Sherrill Yardy, Don, Kathy, Katelyn & Michaela Williams, Jim, Deb & John Wilson, and the two of us flew to Hyderabad, India, to spend the next week on an exposure tour of Free Methodist ministries. It was quite the week – non-air conditioned buses, HOT & dry days, squatty potties, eating new and different foods with our hands... However, because you prayed, we survived all that with joyful hearts and thoroughly enjoyed getting to see and hear what God is doing in India.



We visited the headquarters for Bishop Joab Lohara's Agape Ministries, as well as Bishop John Gollapalli's COUNT Ministries. Both groups provide educational opportunities for tribal children and young people, providing them with skills to support themselves back home.

We toured a 16th century fort in Hyderabad, had an evening meal at Bishop Narendra John's home with the Alpha Conference pastors of that area, and got to do some shopping, which turned into quite an adventure when the pastors leading us were determined to find everything on everyone's lists. :-)

Thurs, March 19, was the longest day – we left the hotel in Hyderabad at 6 a.m., and finally dragged into Yavatmal that evening at 11 p.m., after having traveled a “mere” 350 miles. Of that time, about 12 hours was actually riding in the bus. We stopped for breakfast for about an hour, had several bathroom stops, and had a late lunch in the small town of Asifabad, where we had the special privilege of attending the dedication of the newly built Child Care Hostel there.



From there we continued on through miles of cotton fields just harvested, green rice paddies, coal mining areas (our hair and faces were black from the dust), little villages, barren hills, flocks of goats, and so on. We were all ready for supper when we finally got it at 11 p.m., and then had the fun of showering in the dark when the power went off for about 10 minutes around midnight.



Since Jim and I had visited Umri last August, we opted to stay in Yavatmal the next day and rest our weary bones. We were glad we'd gotten to see India in the rainy season back then, because it sure was dry on this visit! All the beautiful teak trees had lost their leaves, and the cotton, corn and wheat harvest was in process, instead of plants just being put in the ground.

Our final stop in India was Mumbai, where each family got to visit a different church. Jim preached in a “slum” church. The worship time was vibrant, with 45 minutes of music followed by over 30 minutes of testimonies.

One lady praised the Lord for protecting her when she fell off a moving bus! The pastor also goes to another state of India, where Christians can be fined for being baptized. He'd just baptized 34 new believers the day before, and 60 more were ready for baptism in the months ahead!

We all tried to sleep on the overnight flight from Mumbai to Bangkok. We said goodbye to some of our fellow travelers, and after a long layover, flew on to Manila.

The Philippines

We had a day to catch our breath, and got to do some shopping with Jim & Deb Wilson. We also were able to have lunch with Pol/Paula Guazon. Then the Asia Pacific Free Methodist Missions Association (APFMMA) Executive Committee meetings started, with members from India, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, the Philippines and the US. The main discussions centered around finding suitable nominees for the position of Executive Director, as the current ED, Polly Ho, plans to step down next year after serving for 15 years. Please pray for God's guidance as the selection process continues in the months ahead.



We flew down to Butuan City on the island of Mindanao, along with Polly Ho (Hong Kong) and Shirish Ahaley (India). We were royally entertained by Bishop Jim & Ruth Tuan, and the staff of Light & Life Bible College. We got to visit several churches, and were excited to hear about and see some of the ministry to families living and scavenging in the city dump. How would you like to lead one of the 3 cell groups that meets right in the dump?



Dump kids ministry

On Sunday, Jim preached in the 7:30 a.m. Cebuano service at the main Butuan City church, and we rested during the Sunday School time. At 10 was the Baccalaureate Service for the Bible School and Graduate School of Theology graduates. The speaker for that was former superintendent Constancio Managbanag, back from Texas for a visit! After a good lunch, we had time for a short nap before heading out to the Bancasi Conference Center for the graduation ceremonies. The Lord helped Jim give a good message, and we enjoyed all the pomp and circumstance.



Graduate School of Theology grads with Jim & Bishop Tuan

We got to visit briefly with Jonathan & Maryjane Engalla, and meet their two daughters. Keep

praying with them about funding so they can go to Cambodia as missionaries as soon as possible.



Although we were enjoying the lush beauty of Butuan City, we'd been away from home long enough that we were ready to head home. We flew back to Manila on the same plane with Managbanags and Pastor Shirish. Jim Wilson helped us and Shirish settle in at the guest house for the last night in the Philippines, and then offered to take us to the nearby "Mall of Asia." I needed some tissues for a runny nose, so we said, "Sure."



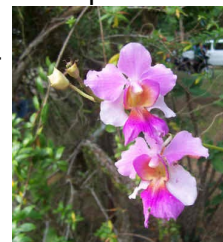
As we were going through the side streets to the parking lot, we were $\frac{3}{4}$ through an intersection when Shirish gasped and there was a crash and bump and a few more thumps. The other driver was not paying attention. **We praise the Lord for His protection!** No one was seriously hurt! The other car hit before and after the passenger doors. The Wilsons' truck is now in the

garage, and the insurance is figuring out the details (the other driver is now claiming he stopped and looked...)

We were very happy to head for home the next day, without any more mishaps. The Lord blessed us with an empty seat between us from Hong Kong to San Francisco, and that helped immensely in reducing the cramped feeling on the plane.

Now to catch up on everything else...

We're enjoying being back in COOL California, where the grass is still green and the spring flowers are blooming. Margaret's dad has an angiogram this Friday (April 10), and her great-nephew Alex will spend his Easter break with us the following week. We're glad to have some time at home before our next trip to Indianapolis the end of May. Thanks for praying for us that we'll use our time and energy wisely as we process all the results of the trip and decisions made at the various meetings. Your prayers made our trip very smooth, productive and enjoyable! We value your financial support, and your letters and e-mails are bright spots in our days!



With love in Christ, Jim & Margaret Nelson

Philippine orchids