

The Watchstander

Volume 2, Issue 1

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Special points of interest:

- Training continues as Nehemiah Study Notes are translated into Talago
- Have been invited back to teach next year
- An invitation has been extended to speak at an upcoming Pastors Conference at CEM

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Serving An Awesome God

This was my second trip to India and hopefully it won't be my last!

There is much that those of us in the USA can learn from this land. People value things differently here. The materialism that we battle in America is not an issue in a land of poverty. I was watching an Indian political talk show in the airport last Saturday and they were discussing the economic plight of this country. One of the hosts stated that out of the 88 poorest countries of the world India ranked 67th. Only 11



MTS Pastoral Students

other countries were in worse economic shape than India and this is a country that competes with China of having the largest population in the world.

Like last time being

here helps me realize what is and is not important.

(Continued on page 2)

Chapel Messages

Each and every day all of the folks at CEM including adults and children met for chapel at 6:00 AM each morning which is rather early for me on a daily basis.

During the week I had the opportunity to speak at the chapels.



Speaking in Chapel

Serving An Awesome God (continued from page 1)

I had the privilege to teach the MTS classes this past week. We studied Nehemiah and how he applied Biblical leadership to the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, helped bring about spiritual renewal for his country and dealt with economic inequity all while facing down major political opposition both from within and from without.

It was so exciting to watch their faces as we took the lessons of Nehemiah and applied them to their current spiritual, political, and economic situation. As the

light came on in their eyes they seemed to begin to understand how they could address issues both in and out of their pulpit.

We had had about 30 students (20 men and 10 women who were studying the Bible together. An additional unexpected experience were more than 10 pastors who attended these sessions. Some had traveled over 150 k to attend. The icing on the cake was the fact that two of these pastors had been students of mine last year. (Continued on page 4)



Pastoral Students at MTS

Lockstep

I spent a couple of hours getting to know Jaya Sankar the pastor and leader of Chris's Evangelical Missions in India. There was much that we were in lockstep. He has a great passion to reach the urban and rural people of the state Andhra Pradesh. After reading Jay's master's thesis I realized that we were kindred souls. Our passions and our concerns were the same even

thought we lived and ministered half a world away.

One quote that Jaya cited was from J. N. Manokaran's book *The Challenge of the Cities*, published by the India Missions Association. "We can't

"We can't sing 18th Century songs, follow 19th Century methods and have a 20th Century mindset to reach the 21st Century people."

sing 18th Century songs, follow 19th Century methods and have a 20th Century mindset to reach the 21st Century people." How often have we continued to use outdated material and methods and complained that God doesn't move like He did in the past!

The Least of These

In recent years India's elderly have become disenfranchised. As people get older their family takes them to another town and dropped off. They end up living on the street and begging to survive.

CEM has established one of the first home for the elderly. Here they have a roof over their head, food,



Agape Old Age Home

While I was there this year we dedicated building that is now housing some very dear souls.



New Resident of Agape Old Age Home

Nothing New Under the Sun

⁹ What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.
Ecclesiastes 1:9 (NIV)

The writer of Ecclesiastes tells us that there is nothing new, often things that seem new to the current generation end up being recycled from previous generations. Sometimes we take a page out of the past dress it up and give it a fresh look. I had a seminary professor who used to describe this as repristination (taking old things and making

them new again).

While I was in India this year I witnessed the rebirth of a Christian tradition from the birth of our nation. As a young United States of America expanded to the west the need for spiritual instruction grew faster than denominations and churches could meet the need, so the circuit riding preacher was born. For half a century these Circuit Riders traveled with the rest of the nation to the frontier.

This past trip I witnessed the re-

birth of Circuit Riders in India. Christ's Evangelical Mission commissioned 10 pastors with (Continued below)



Motorcycles for modern day Circuit Riders

Nothing New (continued)

the goal of planting churches in villages surrounding their village church. Each man was given a motorcycle, and a set of rhythm instruments to help them accomplish this mission.

In India motorcycles are a major means of transportation. They are less expensive than cars, cost less to maintain, are easier to re-

pair and are easily maneuverable in tight quarters. As you can see from the pictures entire families often ride together on these "bikes."

It was exciting to see these men of God trying their keys in the cycles until they found their new vehicle.

But even more exciting for me was the fact that several of these men were my former students

(See below)

"What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun."
Ecclesiastes 1:9 (NIV)

Nothing New (continued)

from last year.

One of the humbling and exciting aspects of this is to realize that both you and I are a part of this ongoing effort to reach rural India for Christ. Your prayer and financial support provided me



Pastor & his wife on their new wheels

Only in heaven will we learn the full impact of our participation in the Great Commission.

ANCIENTFUTURE MARINER

39384 Cobridge Dr
Clinton Twp. MI 48038

Phone: 586-412-0755
Cell: 586-260-8708
Email: vlprest@comcast.net



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The watchstander is a nautical term and usually refers to the Chief Officer (or First Mate) who stands in for the captain of the ship. He has three fundamental duties: navigate the ship, safely avoid traffic, and respond to any emergencies that may arise. As one of God's watchmen my responsibilities include navigating the followers of Christ through the seas of post modernity, avoid any kind of traffic that will take us off our course or cause us to founder and be there to address any emergencies that might arise during our journey.

As a trained theologian, teacher and pastor Dr. Vallen Prest observes society and addresses the many issues from a Biblical perspective.

You can follow his blog at <http://AncientFutureMariner.blogspot.com> or view his blog through his website www.vallenprest.com

Serving An Awesome God (continued from page 2)

It was exciting to see how God had been blessing their ministry!

We finished the study of Nehemiah and they asked me to continue to teach. I had been asking God what I should do if I finished early and he had laid on my heart to teach Galatians.

It had been over a year since I had taught this great book but at the prompting of the Lord I launched into the study.

I'm always amazed at how God orchestrates things like this. I was

teaching on some of the different Gospels that the Galatians were chasing after. I mentioned the concept of "Dualism" and how it emphasized spiritual things and downplayed the physical. This launched us into a hot topic that the local pastors were currently dealing with. It seems that a local pastor had taken a second

wife, now having two wives at the same time. When this pastor was challenged he told his critics that

he preaching a spiritual Gospel and didn't have to worry about the physical since it wasn't important.

We were able to discuss this and look at the Scriptures and determine what God had to say about this very relevant subject.

I know I shouldn't be taken by surprise when God decided to show up like this and orchestrate events and people so that there are these God Moments, but I still am excited to witness them much less be allowed to participate in them.



MTS Class 2011