

The Watchstander

Volume 3, Issue 1

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Special points of interest:

- Training continues as 1 Peter Study Notes are translated into Talago
- Have been invited back to teach next year
- I have been approached to explore the possibility of a missions trip to the West Bank to train pastors

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Persecution In India

This is my third trip to India. And I have to say that while I knew the trip was God ordained, I wasn't looking forward to the 36 hour trip to get here. But I knew as soon as we arrived in Rajahmundry that this was going to be a special trip for me. It felt like I was coming back to one of my favorite places on the earth!

Yesterday I began teaching at the MTS school and have the pleasure of teaching 17 men and 18 women



MTS Professors, Pastoral Students & Dr Vallen Prest

the Bible. This year I felt compelled to speak on the subject of suffering and persecution, God's grace, and the priesthood of the believer (including

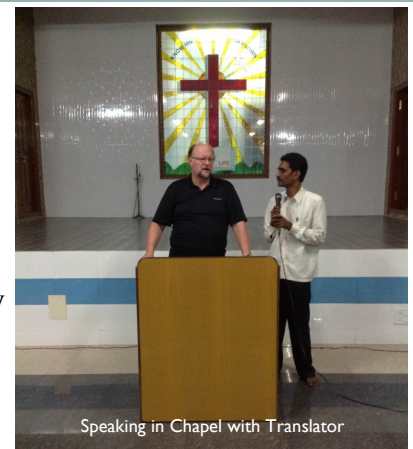
what our responsibilities are). In case you might be wondering you find all of these issues dealt with in one small book of the New Testament - 1 Peter! (continued on page 2)

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. This year I had the opportunity to speak in the new church audito-

rium during our first evening.

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



Speaking in Chapel with Translator

Persecution In India (continued from page 1)

Christians in India are dealing with persecution and it is becoming more prevalent here in this region of the country. The fundamental Hindus are attacking the faith by selecting passages from the Bible and twisting them out of context. Lot for example is accused of incest and therefore how can the Bible be holy when it contains stories of people who have lived lives of less than perfection.

They take the comments of Jesus when he says that he is come to divide families to say that Jesus is not family friendly. These and other twisted stories are causing consternation among the flock and at times the pastors themselves struggle to explain what the Bible is saying.

To have the chance to explain what is happening to

these believers and to offer them hope and help in this



Dr Vallen Prest & translator and professor Rev. GJ Pramod Kumar

Living Sacrifices

I have had the privilege of teaching the students at the Missionary Training School here at CEM. This year we are studying 1 Peter. During one of the first classes I gave the students the assignment to search the scriptures to find examples of spiritual sacrifices that God wanted New Testament believers to offer (1 Peter 2:5).

The next day I had the students to share what they had found in their personal study. I was amazed at how many had scripture passages to share and how extensive their search had been. It was exciting to see these men and women of God apply them-

selves to the study of God's Word.

I was also able to help them round out their list and help them see the correlation with Christian living and the responsibilities of offering acceptable sacrifices. . It was heart warming

to see the light go on in many of their eyes as they began to understand that all that we do can be an offering that is acceptable to God, if our attitude is correct.

After all Romans 12:1-2 says "Therefore I urge you brothers in view of God's mercy to offer

your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and prove



MTS Professors, Female Students & me

Apologetics

Each time I've been to India I'm amazed at how the Lord used in what I've chosen to teach to help the church or how He has used my gifts and passions in my time in India. Last year after finishing my course work on Nehemiah I was asked to continue speaking and after praying about it I chose to speak from Galatians. Little did I know that the first chapter addressed a major issue that the local churches were dealing with.

This year I spoke with Jaya Sankar (pastor and leaders of

Christ's Evangelical Mission in India). He indicated that one of the most pressing problem for the church in India was a pamphlet that the Hindus were publishing that was questioning Christ's teachings by twisting his words and more importantly the issue of a scrap of paper that seemed to indicate that Jesus had been married to Mary Magdalene.

It became apparent to me that Jaya the professors were more than capable of addressing most issues that these pamphlets

brought up with the possible exception of the Gnostic scrap of paper. (Continued below)



Dr Vallen Prest, Rev & Mrs Jaya Sankar

Apologetics (continued)

As my time with the pastor's class neared the end I felt like I had two choices I could either try to finish my study of 1 Peter or I could address this pressing apologetic issue.

For my last two hour session I addressed the issue of Gnosticism in the Church and the significance, if any, of a document with no provenance.

I stressed the importance of apologetics is to build up the believer and to help the non-believing seeker, but I reminded the students and pro-

No one has ever been argued into the Kingdom. Faith only comes by hearing the Word of God and only as the Spirit draws people to the Father.

fessors that no one has ever been argued into the Kingdom. Faith only comes by hearing the Word of God and only as the Spirit draws people to the Father. For more information on Gnosticism check my blog the link can be found on my website www.vallenprest.com or <http://AncientFutureMariner.blogspot.com>

International Recording Artist

While I was visiting in India one of my friends Naveen asked if several of us would help him with a recording project. So one night we went into the recording studio and laid down several background tracks for a new Christmas CD that was intro



ing back up singers on this project and now both of us can honestly say that we are international recording artists!

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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 Pastor Val's 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>

Persecution In India (continued from page 2)

was on the increase I had no idea what our fellow comrades were facing or how discouraged this was making them.

Today one of the teaches came up to me and thanked me for the teaching that God had laid on my heart. He told me that the lessons had been used by God to convict and encourage him as he realized the purpose of suffering was to continue to form us into the image of Christ.

It is humbling to realize that God used my attempt to explain

God's Word to bless and encourage the folks in the class.

