

WALDRON NEWSLETTER

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TAMIL NADU IN NOVEMBER

Laura

Thunder is rolling all around us but still we have seen no rain – and this is supposed to be the monsoon season!

The Dindigul campus is full of people this week – men attending Don Inversion's' classes and about 80 women (in beautiful colored Saris) attending Cathy Iver-son's classes. The men are in the large auditorium on the ground floor and on the roof of that building they have constructed what is called a Pundle for this occasion. Huge bamboo poles were attached to rings previously set in the concrete wall around the top of the building to support a very high thatched roof. Fluorescent lights and fans are affixed to poles running crosswise of the building, which serve as rafters. The classroom then was enclosed with woven mats attached to the poles holding up the roof to make a very comfortable temporary room.

The women sit spellbound listening to Cathy teach God's word. Her translator is a lovely young woman named Beulah from Madras, who travels with the Iversons while they are in India. Cathy uses lots of easy to understand illustrations to get her points across. And they are loving every minute of it. For instance, she was teaching about honesty and deceit. She told of an Indian woman who asked her husband for a new sari. He said, "We cannot afford one, but if you can save a little money each week from the food money until you save 200 Rs. you may buy a new sari for that amount." His wife very frugally went about her shopping every week. First week she saved 50 Rs. Second week she saved 45 Rs. Third week 50 Rs. Fourth week 50 Rs. And the last week in the month she saved 40 Rs. That meant she had 235 Rs. You could see the light beginning to dawn on their faces and a giggle broke out over the audience. Cathy said, "Now what should she do?" They replied, "Buy only a 200 Rs. sari!!"

The rain is finally coming down! Jim has been working with the students in the afternoons in their vegetable fields – which are really needing the rain. (The students are required to work for 1-1/2 hours four days a week either in the fields or in the office doing correspondence work, or sometimes making blocks for the construction projects.) And the water in the wells is low, as well. He has been praying all week for this rain.

Some questions came up in Cathy's class this morning about the Holy Spirit, so Don and Cathy asked Jim to field these questions tonight before a mixed group

of the men and women. Since Jim has the little tract on the Holy Spirit translated into Tamil, he was able to teach them and to put this tract into their hands as well.

This campus is operated in a very orderly fashion. (Reminds one of the Christian camps we attended as youths.) Whistles and bells are used to notify everyone that it's time to get up (5:30 a.m.) or have tea or a meal or go to class, as well as to signal the end of class.

The cook, brother Jaya, has been with the school since it began (1989) He has helpers, of course. Who wouldn't, if they had to feed 195 people 3 times a day plus 2 tea times. (That is double what the number is during normal times, just for this week with the Iver-son's here.) Brother Jaya goes home on weekends, as do all the students, and preaches for 3 congregations on Sunday. Class begins again on Monday at 2:00 p.m.

COWS, COWS AND MORE COWS!

Jim told sometime ago of a young mother of two (Poongothy) who had been abandoned by her Hindu husband, who was later burned badly in a house fire. She lived in a thatched hut and somehow it caught fire. She was badly burned on her upper body and face. When Jim met her in December 1999 she had been a Christian seven months. With the aid of the Waldron Fund she was sent to several doctors who have given her back the use of her arm, though her scars are still very prominent, especially on her face. She tries to cover her face with her sari, but you can see the happiness in her eyes. She was also given a cow to provide her a means of support. Many of you have seen her picture in the slides that Jim shows. She came to visit us here at the campus this week (November 21-27), bringing her two children and photos of her "herd." Her first cow had been inseminated when she got it, so it dropped a heifer calf early in 2000. The mother cow was re-bred and dropped another heifer calf this year. In the meantime the first calf has been inseminated. (They are selling 2 and 1/2 gallons of milk a day.) She is proving to be a good business woman. She needed Rs 4,600 (\$98) for a cow shed so Jim had brother Pillai send that to her. Also her neighbor is raising milo maize (a kind of grain). He told her for 1000 Rs. (\$22) she could cut fodder for her cows for 6 mos. Jim provided these funds for her and told her "you must teach your son to milk the cows." She said I'm going to teach him to be a gospel preacher! **Music to Jim's ears!!!**

GOATS, A RICKSHAW

AND TWO PREACHERS

Someone from an area congregation that meets about twelve miles from the campus came to Jim about a poor widow, who was in need of help. It was decided to purchase for her a flock of seven goats. So Jim and Samson, the principal of the Dindigul Bible School, went to the market early on the 12th to buy the goats. Since they were unable to hire a pickup truck they decided to load all the goats into a rickshaw (a small three wheeled, motor driven cycle of sorts) with them and make the trip from the market. In a small shelf area behind the seat at their backs they placed four small goats. The other three shared the foot room at Jim and Samson's feet. Since they could not take the rickshaw through the field from the village to the sister's house they stopped beside the road and pulled and dragged the goats across the field to her little hut. Don said, "I didn't feel so sorry for Jim and Samson as I did for the goats, who had to be pulled along by the rope around their necks." When the rickshaw came to the school the Iversons commandeered it back to the city to the email office.

"PLANTATION" ATMOSPHERE

I'm thinking – sitting here in our nice little apartment in back of the dining hall – how much this situation reminds me of the "Plantation" atmosphere. There are seven acres in this property, eight miles out from the city, in the country. There is an office building, a large auditorium with 3 attached classrooms, a dining hall, a school kitchen and our apartment. At three locations on the property, three wells have been drilled and pumps installed to raise the water up to storage tanks.

The rest of the land is under cultivation. It is divided into plots and planted with many different vegetables like chilies, tomatoes, corn, beans okra, etc. At the moment it is raining slowly but Kanarukaran, the gardner, and his three temporary hired helpers are planting chilies with no heed to the rain. All the plots are laid off in rows with trenches between so that gravitational irrigation can be used from the three wells.

The new apartment I wrote about last month is such a blessing, especially to the Iversons this week because they have been teaching 4 and 1/2 hours a day (and the men like Don so much they want him to speak at their devotionals in the morning and sometimes go with them on Bible studies at night). Devotional begins at 8:30. Class then goes from 9:00 till 10:30. There is a thirty minute break for tea. Class begins again at 11:00 and goes till 12:30. Lunch break until 2:00. Then class until 3:30. Before when the American workers have come they had to stay in the city in a hotel. So at break time there was no place to rest between class periods (and no where to get good ole American food). That's where I came in. Cathy taught and I cooked. I told her I was

being a "Martha." Now that the apartment is here, it is only a short walk for the teachers to find a place to relax or take a short nap. The bus trip out in the morning took an hour and back to town in the evening another hour (after standing on concrete for four and a half hours each day), rarely ever getting a seat. This month the government bus drivers went on strike so every private bus that is on the road has people hanging out the doors. Transportation to and from the city would have been even more tiresome without the new apartment.

TEACHERS FELLOWSHIP

All the principals from the ten of the Bible schools came to the campus on our last Saturday in Dindigul to meet with Jim and to share ideas and problems with one another. The Iversons left to return the 100 miles to the Angie Greene campus in Coimbatore for a full week of teaching to the single boys and the single girls. FYI the young woman named Merci was allowed by her parents to attend these classes of Cathy's. Please still remember her in your prayers. Then the following weekend they made a trip by car to the southern most Bible school in Tamil Nadu to a city called Kanniyakumari to attend their first graduation exercises, stopping first in a town 40 miles from Dindigul to attend the quarterly meeting of the teachers and their wives, (who get together regularly for fellowship) and then home to North Carolina. Jim and Don spent their Sundays speaking for the various congregations in the area.

HOME AGAIN – HOME AGAIN

Our trip home on November 19-20, took 45 hours, with a four hour car trip in India, long layovers, four long flights and a two hour drive from Nashville. The Iversons, however, made the same trip a week later and because of a storm delay in Memphis had their trip extended to about 75 hours.

We are grateful for co-workers like the Iversons and other brethren who go to the field, but we are equally grateful for those of you who stay home, pray for the work and give of your money so that all these wonderful things can take place.

We love and appreciate each of you,

Laura