

Free Grace Evangelistic Association

(Mark 16. 15, 2 Timothy 2. 2, James 1. 27)

Registered Charity No. 1139084

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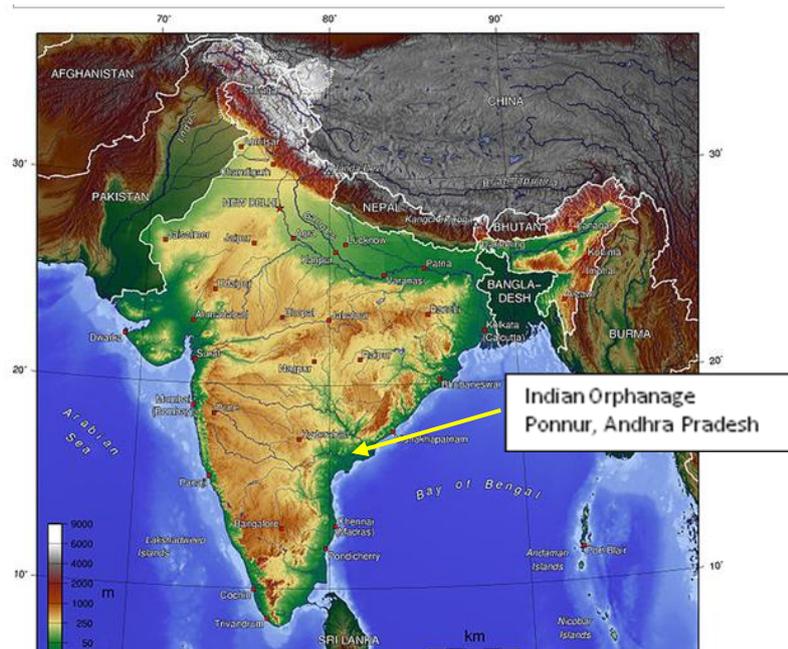
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Report on the Visit by the FGEA Chairman to India - December 2011

I am writing to give an account of my recent visit to Andhra Pradesh in India on behalf of the Free Grace Evangelistic Association. It was with much fear and trembling that I set out, but as with previous visits I proved the Lord's goodness and watchful care over the Indian brethren and myself throughout the programme and our travelling. The Lord was very gracious to answer prayer throughout the programme of preaching, Bible and book distribution at a total of 18 meetings over the 9 days in India.

I left home at 7 am on Monday 5 December, and arrived at Hyderabad Airport at 5-00am (Indian time) on Tuesday 6 December. I arrived refreshed, as the Lord graciously inclined the airline staff to give me a free upgrade of my seat to a more comfortable cabin. At the airport I was met by Pastor Sudhakar (FGEA(India) Co-ordinator) and several other brethren from FGEA (India). We had a hired vehicle with driver for the visit. This was essential as all of the 10 FGEA(India) members are poor and do not possess a vehicle. Furthermore, it had to be a 4x4 8-seater, as the amount of books and Bibles to be distributed required this type of vehicle, and many of the villages that we were visiting were only accessible by rough roads. We then left for Ponnur, where Pastor Sudhakar and the orphanage are based. The journey was about 220 miles and took 8 hours.



No sooner had I arrived in India than I discovered from Pastor Sudhakar the full extent of the challenges facing us. Pastor Sudhakar had requested help with interpreting at the meetings from another minister, as Pastor Sudhakar was not proficient in hearing the accent of a native Englishman speaking. However, his request was met with a demand for large sums of money in payment. Likewise, Pastor Sudhakar had asked if some rich ministers or locals could accommodate me for the stay, but in the same manner had received a demand for large money to show me hospitality. Given that FGEA(India) members are very poor and do not have the rooms to accommodate me, it was therefore necessary to hire two rooms (one for me and one for Pastor Sudhakar) at a cheap lodge in the town of Bapatla (near the coast and 13 miles from Ponnur). In this situation, we brought our petition to the Lord of heaven and earth for our help. In particular, that the Lord would help Pastor Sudhakar in interpreting himself for all the meetings and that I would be given grace to speak simply and clearly in English. On arrival at Ponnur I spoke briefly at one of Pastor Sudhakar's churches, and then again at his church at Bapatla, before going to the Lodge to rest. That afternoon and in the following days we proved the Lord's answer to prayer, because Pastor Sudhakar found that he had little

difficulty in interpreting for me; and as described below the Lord's blessing was manifest the following day at the orphanage.



On Wednesday 7 December we went to the orphanage at Ponnur. After being welcomed in traditional Indian style with garlands and flower petals, I then spoke at an open-air service, in which I preached on the subject of the authority of God as Creator, Law Giver, Saviour and Judge. New blankets were also given to each orphan, then to widows and other poor people. Afterwards I discussed with Pastor Sudhakar and his wife about the orphanage accommodation. I should just say at this point that Pastor's Sudhakar's wife is heavily expectant with a third child and her health was of great concern throughout the visit, necessitating much prayer on her behalf.

At present most of the care of the orphans is being carried by other church members. The gracious and loving spirit in the church was most evident to me.

There are at present 46 orphans, of which 20 are boys and 26 girls. There are only two rooms for the orphans, one for the boys and one for the girls, plus an outside toilet block. Each room is only 22 feet by 11 feet, the size of a typical living room in the UK. There is no space for furniture, and 26 girls have to sleep in a room of this size on the floor. However, these conditions are very good compared to the pitiful lot of some that I observed on the streets and living amongst the filth. The orphans on the other hand are evidently in good health, clean, neatly clothed, well-fed, go to school and are lovingly cared for. A service is held each Lord's Day at the orphanage and they are instructed in the scriptures and the way of salvation in Christ Jesus.



Pastor Sudhakar and his family only have one small room to live in with almost no furniture, and this also is clearly in need of improvement. They have no other house, because they sold what they had to build the orphanage.



Pastor Sudhakar and his wife took me onto the roof of the orphanage to show that there are reinforced pillars that extend upwards that would allow a first floor extension giving three more rooms, thereby doubling the accommodation. FGEA at present does not have funds from the charity's normal income to undertake such a major expense, given the regular support FGEA provides for the 46 orphans. However, I said that if the Lord will and a special donation were to be given for this purpose, then I would be only too pleased to see FGEA helping to improve the very cramped conditions. This is a matter for prayer.

Later that evening, Pastor Sudhakar had a phone call from a lady in his congregation to say that she had been blessed under the ministry during the preaching at the orphanage, and she requested baptism. The

following day her son also came forward for baptism, and then afterwards another lady. This was truly a miracle of grace. On the Saturday the three were baptised by Pastor Sudhakar in the sea near Bapatla. I was privileged to witness the baptizing and was asked to speak a few words from scripture on the beach.

On the Lord's Day I preached at one of Pastor Sudhakar's churches at Ponnur, and was called upon to dedicate a new church building. I preached on Jacob at Bethel, and his vision of Christ in the form of a ladder that stretched from earth to heaven. This building and the orphanage building are being used to store the Bibles and literature being distributed. As can be seen from the photograph, texts of scripture in Telugu are written on the outside of the building, and the preaching is relayed outside through a loud speaker. The brethren in India are not ashamed of Christ and do not hide their light under a bushel !



On the following day (Monday) we went to the village of Vattichukuru, where Pastor Sudhakar's uncle ministers (he is a loyal member of FGEA(India)). The church building is of very poor construction, nevertheless we knew the Lord's presence in a service to send out two of his son's (also FGEA(India) members) into the ministry. I was asked to preach, and I spoke from 1 Samuel 2. 30; "them that honour Me, I will honour".

From Wednesday 7 December to Tuesday 13 December, we also travelled each day to different villages to preach on the Word of God and to distribute Bibles and Telugu books ("Jesus the Way" and "Love of God" translated freely by Pastor Sudhakar and printed in Ponnur).



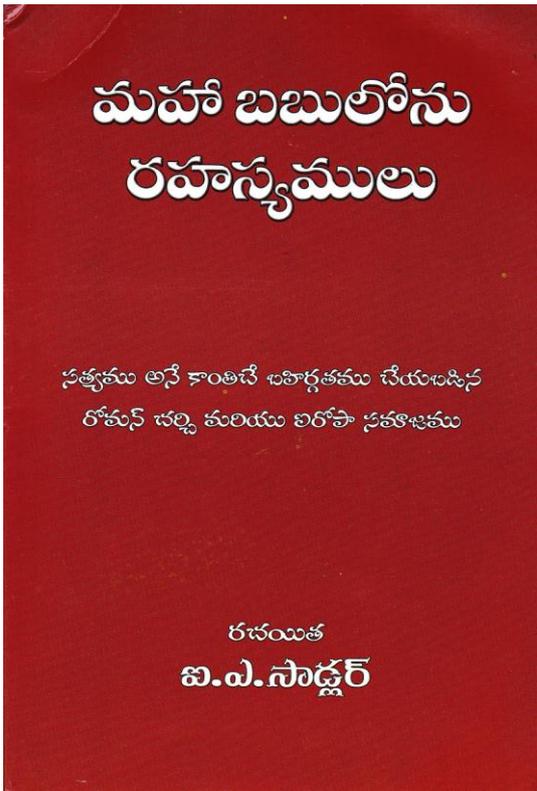
Some of the villages were some distance away and on very poor roads, so that we did not return to Bapatla Lodge until after midnight, twice after 1-00am. Many of the evening meetings were held in the open air outside the hosting church, so that others in the village often came and listened to the message. At one village church there were a number of younger people gathered, who were learning English: each was given a KJV English Bible that had been donated by Chippenham Bible Aid Fund.

Many of those who received expressed evident joy and thankfulness. Generally speaking the pastor of the church we were visiting was told how many Bibles were available, and he nominated those individuals to

receive a Bible who he considered to be most in need. However, it was particularly sad, on those occasions when we did not have enough Bibles for all those who were present, to see the faces of those who wanted the scriptures but did not receive; although we always ensured that everyone received at least some literature.

Earlier, I mentioned about the requests for money to help with the visit (which of course we did not agree to). Further solemn examples were evident from ministers asking money during the visit, which showed that the love of money was having the pre-eminence in a number of ministries. The worst example was at a church that is part of a large international denomination. After preaching and distributing Bibles and books one night at an open air meeting, the minister and his elders requested that we return the following morning to pray at “ground-breaking” ceremony for a new church building, to which we agreed. However, I was not entirely comfortable at this service; firstly the minister was wearing round his neck the Tau of the Egyptian occult (an occult form of the cross used in the pagan worship of ancient Egypt) and secondly there were literally plagues of flies, and there were other matters that I will not mention. The following morning, whilst preparing to leave the Lodge I was wondering why they should ask us to come ? Was it because they were seeking money ? Then Pastor Sudhakar came to my room and said that we would not be going back to pray at the ground-breaking ceremony. The minister had phoned him to say that his Bishop would only allow us to pray for the new church if we donated 100000 Rupees (£1300) ! Even if we had that money (which we did not), we were not going to be part of such an abomination in God’s sight.

On the final day (Wednesday 14 December) a Pastor’s Meeting was held in the open air at Bapatla, with about 90 present. I spoke on the subject of “Preaching the Word” based on Paul’s Epistles to Timothy, emphasising the need for faithfulness to God’s word and faithfulness in a minister’s conduct before God. Then I gave an introduction to the Telugu edition of “Mystery, Babylon the Great” warning about Satan’s opposition to all that is godly.



The photos on the left were taken at the Pastor’s meeting, with myself, Pastor Sudhakar and his wife on the lower photo. The picture above is of the front cover of the Telugu edition of “Mystery, Babylon the Great.”

Afterwards books were distributed to all. Pastor Sudhakar then asked that those who knew English could come to the front to receive a KJV English Bible. However, this provided further sad evidence that many pastors are acting in a questionable manner in that part of India. The table at the front was besieged in a rather unruly manner by some, and Pastor Sudhakar sharply reproved a number of pastors in Telugu and sent them away. The reason was simple - he knew that they could not read English ! Pastor Sudhakar then instructed me as to who was worthy to receive an English Bible out of our stock. In this, we were taking all reasonable precautions against the Bibles or literature being subsequently sold for money.

After briefly returning to the Lodge in Bapatla we set off for Hyderabad at 4pm, arriving safely at the airport at 2am on the Thursday morning, ready for check-in at 4am and flight at 7-15 am. Again I proved the Lord's mercies, because I had a group of three seats to myself, which allowed me to lie down across the three seats and get a good period of rest during the 10 hour flight to London. I arrived safely home after the 30 hour journey from Bapatla with the knowledge that the Lord had gone before us.

Throughout the 9 day visit the following approximate numbers of books and Bibles were freely distributed:

Bible (Telugu)	600
Bible (KJV English)	50
Jesus the Way (Telugu)	700
Love of God (Telugu)	700
Mystery, Babylon the Great (Telugu)	100

Many more copies of the books remain in stock for distribution in 2012, God willing. In addition, 100 blankets were distributed to orphans, widows and poor members of Pastor Sudhakar's congregations.



I am very thankful for the faithfulness, dedication and sacrifice of the small number of FGEA(India) members, most of whom are members of or connected with Pastor Sudhakar's small group of churches. This is both for their work in the organisation of the visit, the distribution of the books/Bibles and in the practical care given to the 46 orphans. The photo on the left is taken of most of the FGEA members who had gathered together at one of the meetings. Most of the photos were taken by Pastor Sudhakar's 13 year old son Joseph on a camera provided for future use by FGEA(India), that I had brought from the UK. I am very grateful for all the work Joseph did with the photography for my visit.

I must also record how warmly I was treated by many who were not professing Christians. For example the Hindu driver of our vehicle who did so much to meet all our needs in the schedule, the Lodge owner who gave us preferential rates for the stay, the foreign exchange dealer who changed money at a preferential rate, and the owner of the hire vehicle who gave us a substantial reduction on the normal price. These were a great help and a token of the Lord's mercies. However, the visit gave an insight into the corruption in many Indian churches and how there is a pressing need for a faithful, spiritual and searching testimony of the truth of God in this land. Our prayers are that the Lord would mightily appear by the Holy Spirit to bless and water the seed sown to His honour and glory, and that many would be given a true spirit of repentance.

I would conclude by thanking all those who have supported this visit, either locally in India or in the UK through prayer, practical help, donations or grants.

Ian Sadler

Chairman: Free Grace Evangelistic Association