

GRACE THIRD WORLD FUND

Manx Registered Charity No 727



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We delayed sending out this Newsletter until after my visit to India at the beginning of November so that we could give our supporters an update on the situation at Grace Children's Home following the cyclone in October.

The year 2014 ended on a difficult note for GCH and the school. The Cyclone Hudhud came into Andhra Pradesh in October hitting the main city of Vishakhapatnam at 125mph. It destroyed homes, businesses, 70% of the trees and caused mayhem everywhere in the city before continuing inland and roaring through the Promised Land and Grace Children's Home, devastating and destroying things on its way.

Those who receive the Sponsors' Quarterly will already have seen the photographs of the damage caused at GCH. As usual, our sponsors and supporters came to the rescue and approximately £12,000 came in response to our appeal letter. We cannot thank them enough, because it meant that we could give the go ahead to Timothy and his workers to begin the restoration work immediately—even before I went out to India. During my visit Timothy and I sat down and made an inventory of everything that had been damaged or blown away and which needed fixing or replacing. I am pleased to be able to report that the funds have been sent to India, and all the necessary repairs and replacements can be dealt with. Although the buildings were not structurally damaged (having been built to withstand cyclonic weather), most of the windows were blown in and the walls were 'sandblasted' by the wind and rain. Consequently the paintwork was damaged, and we have included funds to repair all the outside paintwork on the buildings.



THE SECURITY WALL



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Those of you who read our last Newsletter will remember that the item mentioned at the end was related to our decision to raise funds to build a security wall around Grace Children's Home throughout 2014. We expected the fundraising to take a year, if not more. However, following the Deputation Visit of Timothy Babu in September 2013, to our amazement all the money was raised in just a few months. By September of 2014 the wall had been completed, and new gates installed. This was tremendous, but sadly almost as the last bricks were laid, the cyclone hit Andhra Pradesh, and some of the wall was destroyed by falling trees. The good news is that this has now been repaired and there is now a strong and safe wall surrounding the whole of Grace Children's Home and land. (see picture at the top)

THE 2014 CYCLONE HUDHUD

After seeing things for myself I can now report on the situation after the devastating damage caused by Cyclone Hudhud. As most folk know by now, there was extensive damage to the land and crops in particular. The new 'buffalo hole' which had been created for the water buffalo had lost its picturesque look and had become a rather muddy pond surrounded by flattened greenery. The buffalo still enjoyed the water though, and we took a few photos of the buffalo being led down to wallow.



NEW LIVESTOCK

Whilst mentioning the buffalo, one of the new developments on the land since our last Newsletter is the livestock which Timothy has introduced. There are now turkeys, geese, ducks, hens, goats and sheep. There are only a few of each, but it was really good to see these animals strolling around the land. James, who came with me on the trip this year, was in his element—being a farmer himself!



GRACE CHILDREN'S HOME

In spite of the devastation Timothy and his staff gave us the usual wonderful welcome. The little children had been learning a 'welcome' routine, and were delighted to dress up and show how they had been remembering their words. One of the things that always impresses us when we visit is how well turned out the children are. They are always dressed in brightly coloured clean clothes. Considering there are over 100 children in GCH this is a remarkable achievement.

The older boys and girls performed a 'March Past' for us. This was not an insignificant thing; it was a very solemn occasion, as a 'March Past' only normally occurs once a year on Indian Independence Day in July. This was the first time they had ever performed it for anyone else. Prior to this they were all lined up in their team colours, red, blue, yellow and green, on the field. Then one of the teenage boys marched up to me and asked my permission to carry on. When I responded 'yes' he marched back to the others on the field, took up his position and they commenced the march, which was around the paths of GCH. On completion, the same young man marched back to me, and officially welcome us to GCH and school. It was beautifully done and no one put a foot wrong, I think James Caley and I both felt quite emotional.



The children themselves, in spite of the frightening experience they had when the cyclone hit, are looking happy and healthy. Their playing equipment has for the most part been restored, and all they really need otherwise is a ball!.



MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR PRASANTH

Grace Third World Fund always seeks to help those in need, even though they may not be directly connected to GCH. For some months now the charity has paid for cancer treatment for a young man called Prasanth. Prasanth is 21yrs old and Timothy Babu knows his family well. I met Prasanth during my visit, and he is responding to the treatment well.



WORK IN THE VILLAGES



Timothy, is not only the proprietor of Grace Children's Home, he is also the pastor of Grace Baptist Church, N.G. Palem, the church inaugurated by our founder Matthew Else. Funds for the church building itself were raised by GBC in Peel. Although GTWF is concerned mainly with the children and Grace Children's Home, many people are very interested in the work Timothy does as a pastor. Especially since they have met him whilst on deputation, so I think you will be interested to hear about work he is doing amongst the small village churches.

We visited four very small village fellowships which Timothy has been helping. They were all about one and a half hours drive away from GCH, deep in the Indian countryside. The meetings had to take place in the evening because the people were working in the fields during the daytime. We drove there through the pitch black, down narrow winding lanes in what my mother would have called 'the back of beyond'. I had the privilege of speaking at each of the meetings, and Timothy translated my words in Telugu.

The venues were extremely basic, as you can see from the photos, but they were wonderful gatherings—vibrant and with a gracious sense of the Lord's presence. After each meeting food was provided which was, as you can probably guess, curry and rice! Timothy and his brother Samuel have taken an interest in these small fellowships, one of which lost their pastor to illness a few years ago; a pastor from another fellowship has been looking after this church as well as his own.



The churches were really only huts, with banana leaf roofs; the floor had been made from cow dung. These floors last two or three years with regular use, and have the added benefit of repelling mosquitoes—a great advantage I can tell you! It was heart-warming to meet these people who are lively singers, and very keen to come to the meetings. Some of them had walked miles after a day working in the hills. Indeed some of these folk came to more than one of the meetings, and many came to ask for prayer. We had no idea what they were saying, and they couldn't understand our prayers—but the Lord knew, and that's what mattered. James and I prayed that God's grace would be sufficient for them and that He would meet all their needs. James, who came with me from the Isle of Man, left some money with Timothy so that they could buy a few bibles to give to the folk there, and also to help towards a church renovation project in the village. Pastor Samuel, Timothy's Assistant Pastor, is seen here presenting them a week or so after our return.



