

Some news from Pat

A Wedding, a Funeral & Easter

The last week or so has been a bit of a blur. My British flat-mate Ben just got married to a local girl, Shiyani, on Saturday. I was best man – well, one of two best men anyway. It was a fantastic day, full of fun and laughs, from breakfast through to the evening's wedding reception.

That was quite a contrast to the mood a week beforehand – on Good Friday, at about the same time in the afternoon when we remember the crucifixion of Christ Jesus, I got a call from Shiyani, saying to come quickly with Ben and her as they had received news that her grandfather may be dead. He had indeed passed away.

The story of this man's life was a sad one. For 45 years he had been not in his right mind – apparently after some type of curse was put on him. Barely able to communicate and unable to look after himself, he needed constant care. For the last 5 years, he lived with Shiyani and her mother. They fed him, changed his nappies, the lot! Even though he could offer nothing in return, these women tirelessly loved him by sacrificially taking care of him. The memory of the burden of this dysfunctional old man's life at Easter time reminded me of the burden Christ bore for us – loving us sacrificially – to the point of being nailed to a rugged tree – even though we could offer little in return.

The saddest part of the cursed old man's life, according to his family, was that he could never be the person he was meant to be. Resurrection Sunday reminds me that Christ defeated not only death, but the curse of sin, so that, unlike the old man, we can be all God intended us to be.

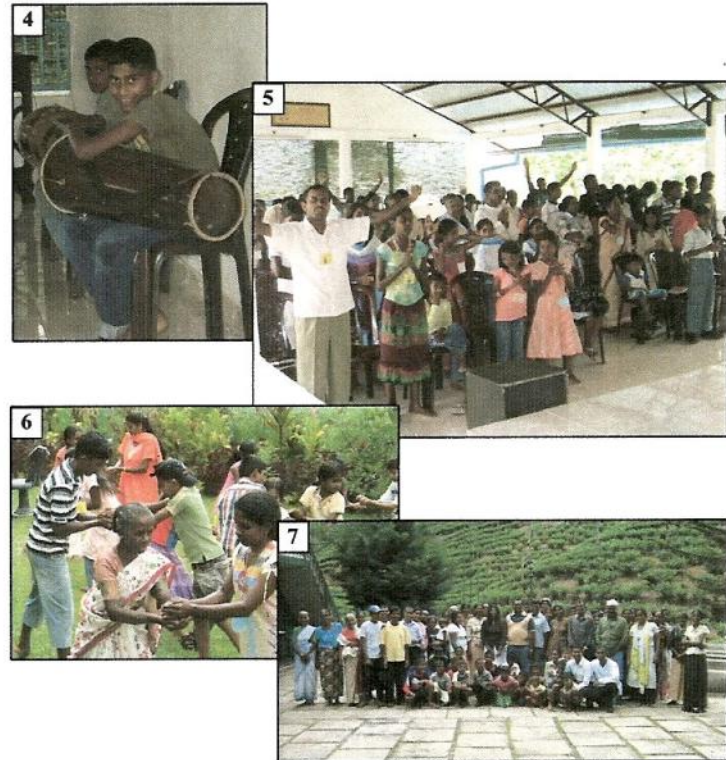
Photo 1 below shows an old lady I sat next to as I visited my friend Jacob's church for Easter. **Photo 2** shows people responding to Jacob's message – mostly women you might observe. That seems to be common in rural areas here – please pr that more men might commit.



Holidays

This year Easter was immediately preceded by the Sinhala and Tamil New Year here. Almost everyone gets holidays at this time – many travel to their family's village and engage in cultural festivities. For churches it is often a good time to have a camp! I was invited to two such camps – I took a kids session at one, struggling in the local lingo, and I took a couple of sessions with adults (and a great interpreter!) at the other. **Photos 3-7** give some images from the camps.

More travel this week-end as I head out of town to conduct a cricket coaching day for kids. Please pray that my local contact there will make good connections with the kids so that they might come for his other programs. Thanks!



War

Also pray for the ongoing war - it is being labelled a humanitarian catastrophe as thousands flee for their lives and others are still trapped in the fighting zone. It is currently international news, so you may have read more about it. **Photos 8 & 9** are from someone working with an aid organisation.

Bye for now, Pat

