



Trinidad - Mission Trip

May 6, 2006

We left home at 10 a.m. to pick up the rest of our group in the church bus. We then drove to Miami to board our 4:20 p.m. flight to Trinidad. It is about a four-hour flight so we arrived and passed through customs at about 9 p.m. to meet our host family. Thus, we spent the day in travel. We had sandwiches and sodas at the home Gary and Brenda Hunter, the missionaries, and I asked

about the history of Trinidad.

After settling down for bed we slept well that night.

May 7, 2006

You can see where we were, its just right of the word, "Gulf," in Chaguanas, central Trinidad.

This close to the equator, the sun rises about 5 a.m. all year round so when the sun came up, so did I. I went for a run around the neighborhood to get a good view of the surrounding area but first had to get out of the house. Burglary and robbery are so common that the house has bars on the windows and three padlocks on the exit through the garage. Denise, our host opened the locks and warned me that she had never gone south of the house and that there were legends that there were squatters



there so she suggested that I run to the north. As I left the house which has no house number, I decided that I would look for distinctive markings. I noted that this was a house without a big fence, that had a patio on the left side of the house and was just to the left of a house with flags in the yard.

I ran north past many houses with dogs, houses with chickens and roosters and one house had all kinds of strange animal noises. I said hello to everyone I passed and many looked at me like I was crazy as I was considerably lighter color than most of the people of Trinidad. As I ran down the road I noticed a huge frog road kill. It was as large or larger than what we would call a bull-frog, about three inches wide and four inches long, plus legs.

I jogged for about 10 minutes past houses and fields, one had sugar cane and then turned around to come back. I thought I'd run for a minute and then walk for a minute back. The problem was when I looked for the house on the way back there were many with flags in the front yard so I passed the house without realizing it. When I passed a church that I didn't recognize, I knew I had gone too far. I walked back and found the house, no problem.

After a shower I went for breakfast and found that our host, Pastor Ricky, was also a computer technician. He showed us his workshop where he assembles and fixes computers and networks.



We rode the "church bus" to our host church, Grace Reformed Evangelical Church. There is no sign on this residential building because it is in a residential neighborhood.



Before the service begins, the men get together for prayer.

After the opening prayer and few hymns, Pastor Ricky gave the sermon. The text was NAS 1 John 2:29 "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is

born of Him. NAS 1 John

3:1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him."



I enjoyed the sermon that explained this scripture and then applied it to our lives, particularly because the emphasis was on the Bible explanation.



Afterward, once every six weeks, the ladies cook up a "Fellowship Dinner" and they serve it in the kitchen. Everyone gets together to eat.

After all had left, we received an extensive orientation about the techniques of prayer walking and surveying. We also learned about the customs of Muslims and Hindus, the two religions of the Indians who we will be surveying.

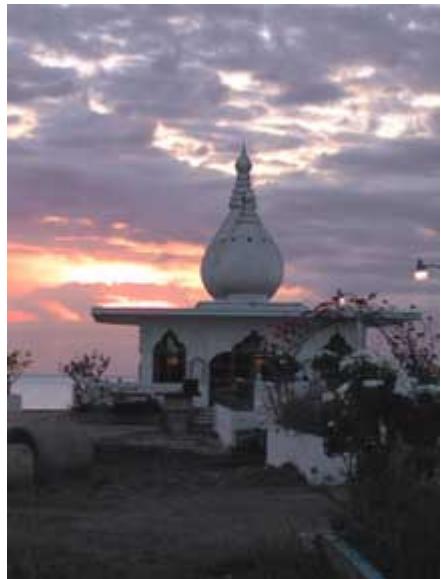




Afterward, we went to see the largest Hindu icon outside of India, Hanuman, the monkey god, the god of strength.

The most fancy
Hindu temple in Trinidad
and a swami





We then went to the sea where this tribute to Siewdass Sadhu, may be seen just before the sunset. There are three principal gods in Hindu, Brahma, the god of creation, Vishnu, the god of preservation and this one, Shiva, the god of Destruction. (Note the cobra around his neck.) When the Hindu prays to a particular deity, these flags represent the type of puja that is performed. Many people fly similar flags in front of their houses.

May 8, 2006 - Prayer Walking

Our first experience began with devotions following breakfast. We read NAS Luke 1:11-17

11. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.
12. And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear gripped him.
13. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.
14. "And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.
15. "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb.
16. "And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God.
17. "And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."



Our mission today and tomorrow is to prepare the way for the national church planter who would not be able to talk with people who we will talk with. A bunch of white Americans is not an everyday occurrence here so the people invite us to sit with them and tell them from where we came. We ask them to tell us about their religious customs. Today we pray for each house as we walk by, tomorrow we will complete surveys from those residents who will talk with us. Note well: You will see many pictures of adventures and sight-seeing that we did on the two days that we played. There are many things to photograph. Nevertheless, our mission was to

pray and survey the people in the Charlieville community. We can take only a few pictures of this because we would not want to take pictures of the families that we surveyed, it would be distracting and you can only stand so many pictures of us standing around. These few photos are representative of our unique mission.



Today we prayed for the people who lived in the houses that we passed, that the Lord would send his Holy Spirit upon the household that they would be home and available for our visit, that they would be interested in answering our questions and curious enough to visit the nearby Bible study.

This couple invited us in, offered us a drink and the lady showed us her Hindu prayer room. Here Ann explains that she may relieve the swelling in her foot by raising it.

Meanwhile, the man is explaining that all roads lead to the

same god, that Karma is your deeds and that good deeds give you credit with god.





Isn't one man's junk, another man's treasure. This side of the road junk yard is a sight to behold. This man is getting married next month. He has brought part of his herd in for watering, the rest are still in the pasture. His mother explained the various rituals of the Hindu marriage.

Of particular curiosity is that she, the groom's mother may not attend the ceremony, instead she prepares the reception at her home. On the left a pasture, perhaps that of our friend runs back to the mountains. On the right, the majestic mountains of Trinidad.



May 9, 2006



We continued to prayer walk this morning and had lunch at the Hunter's house.



After lunch, Ricky asked me to come with him. We did a computer service call replacing a power supply. We then went up to the mountain that you see above, about 15 miles away. From here you can see 1/3 of Trinidad!

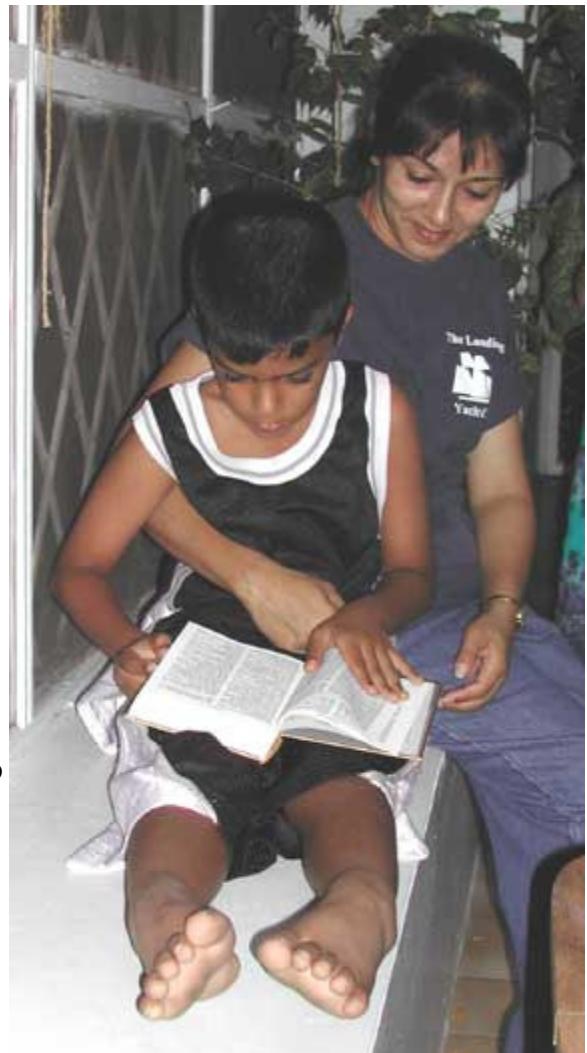


Doreen and Brenda went to get some food for our outing to Asa-Wright Nature Center on Wednesday. Gary took Bill, Ann, Lorri and Judy to see Jacob (left), a 29 year old man that we had met the day before, who has cancer. Dr. Bill explained that Jacob was in the final stages unless God intervenes. Jacob is a Christian, for which we were thankful. He lives with some friends and the man living there has liver problems. The friends are Hindu and are not Christian. We laid hands on them and had a wonderful time of prayer.



That evening The Trinidad and Tobago Baptist Mission went surveying. We were given a community survey to get answers to various questions about the community needs but most important was whether the

they would attend a Bible study in the neighborhood. The research from our surveys would be used by Pastor Ricky Gary and Brenda to establish neighborhood Bible studies lead by nationals to lead others to Christ. We broke up into three teams of two, Judy and I went with Nakita, the young lady on the left who was very helpful in steering us to



houses where people would be open to us. Accordingly, we visited six houses and took six surveys and five out of six wanted to attend a Bible study, three of which would host a Bible study in their home and many wanted calls from the pastor. Other teams had similar but less complete success.

Later that evening we had dinner at the Hunters and Josiah (third grade) said that he planned to read the Bible cover to cover.

May 10, 2006



Today was a vacation day, we visited the Asa Wright Nature Preserve, a park for the preservation of the rain forest, its birds and other wildlife. Harold, our guide, introduced the park and told us about what we would see.



Above, our group on the veranda. Harold explained about the powder puff tree. Left, the herb garden is the source of medicinal remedies as well as food flavor enhancers.





On the left, Harold explains that these colorful pieces of the Arrowhead plant are neither fruit nor flower, rather than are braches. The Arrowhead plant derives its name from the shape of the bottom-most braches.



On the right, he shows a bird's nest in an unlikely spot, so close to the ground. The nest contains four eggs, below.

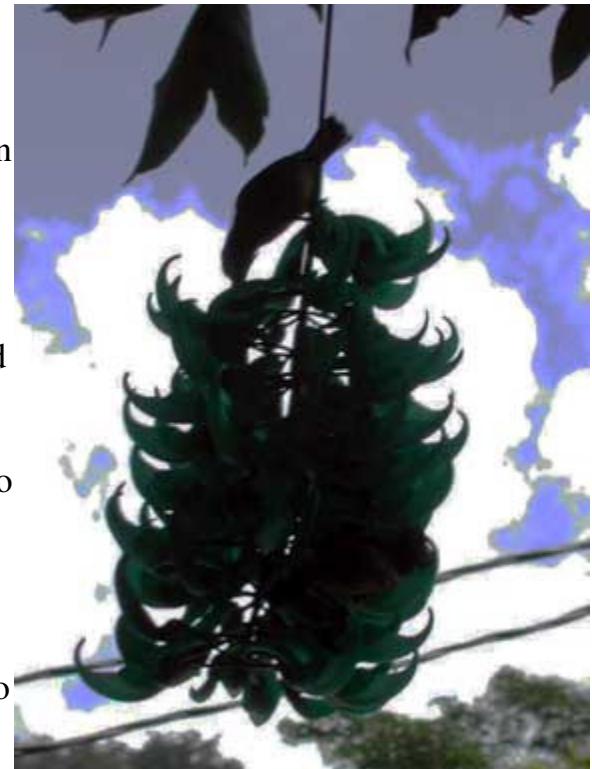


Harold also explained about leaf cutting ants, who can denude a tree by cutting up the leaves that they don't eat, rather than carry pieces four or five times their size into their ant hole where they defecate

on them and then grow fungus on them, which they eat. The photo did not turn out clear enough to show the ant but I'm sure



that you've seen ants before. We also saw diurnal bats (those that fly and feed in the daytime). Those things fly so fast that I couldn't get their photo either but they sure looked like bats. Harold said that they could see quite well.

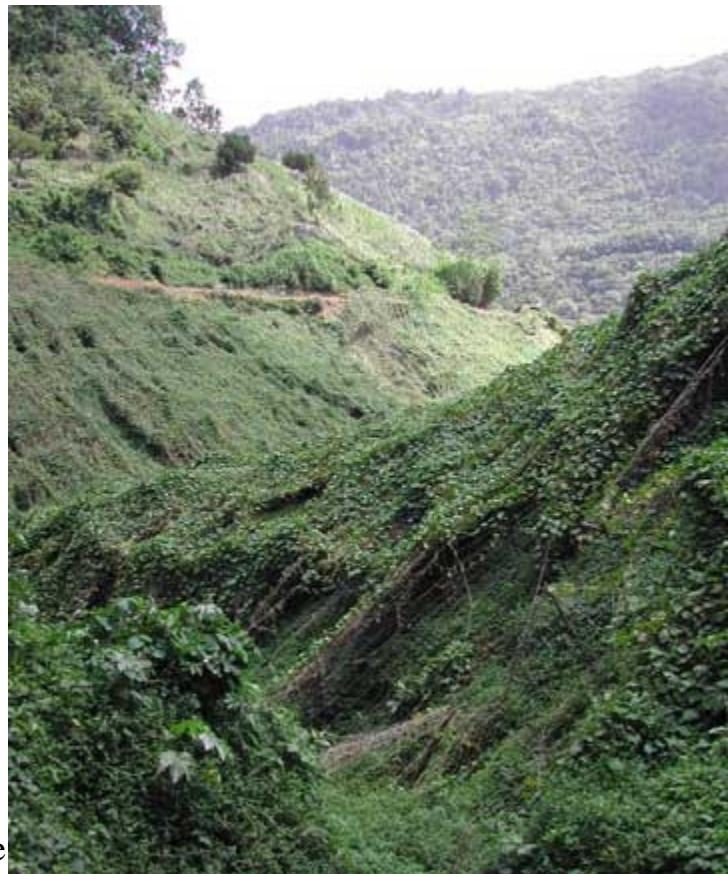


Following our nature walk, we had lunch with KFC on the grounds.

While eating, we saw this bird feeding on the flowers of this plant that hung down just outside our patio.



As we drove home, we saw these korieli vegetables along the side of the road. They hang on these wires along the whole valley.



May 11, 2006



We continued surveying this morning and evening. We prepared about 44 surveys when all are combined. We found that most of the people we surveyed were Hindu. Virtually all were open to answer our questions. Many invited us in for food or drinks. Most were interested in attending a Bible study in their area. Most of those were also willing to host a Bible study in their home, even though they were not Christians. Hindu people believe that there is but one god and that all roads lead to god. Hence, they find Christianity generally to be non-threatening and they yearn for further enlightenment.

The man on the left was cutting up chicken when we stopped by this morning. He would feed the bones and skin to his two dogs who watched him intently. He was happy to answer our questions but asked us to wait until he finished this job.

During the afternoon, the ladies went shopping for Hindi garb so that they would be adequately attired for the visit to the mosque tomorrow. One should have one's arms and legs covered and head covering is also desirable.



After an evening of surveying, we went to Wendy's home for dinner. A Trinidad specialty, chow mien sandwiches was prepared. Here Brenda helps Rosie in the kitchen.



The "coconut bake," a pita bread made in a pan was freshly made and was still warm.



After dinner, the family poses for a photo. Ricky takes a photo of the whole gang together.

May 12,
2006



Our final day is used for shopping and site seeing. The ladies are all excited to see the Chaguana

s Market. Chaguanas is the city that we are near. As you can see on the right, there is a whole lot of shopping going on.



These green, crucifers are the vegetables we saw growing on the hillside in the previous photo.

Next we went to Zaid's house to prepare for the mosque. This being Friday, the Muslim holy day, the imam will give the sermon. We must do the ceremonial cleansing first and Zaid sets the example. One must wash the feet, hands, ears, nose and face.



Next, Bill prepares while Jim is taking off his shoes.

Then the sacred, fragrant oil is applied to the back of the right hand. The hands are rubbed together and the oil is applied to the forehead.



Finally, we are ready to go.





The ladies have also prepared themselves by buying Hindu clothes that cover their legs, arms and head.



In the mosque, the men pray separated by a wall. Slats in the wall prevented them from seeing the imam and from being seen, nevertheless, they could hear the message.

The imam gives the sermon on

forgiving our brothers and on applying our money to the support of the family first.





We then traveled to San Fernando, in the south part of Trinidad to see the oil refinery and the drilling rigs in the sea. The flames come out of the smoke stacks in the refining process.

(This photo was taken from a great distance using the highest telephoto setting so it is not clear in the foreground.)

Finally, we gathered for pizza and debriefing. We went around the room giving our experiences, insights, suggestions and telling of what we learned.



Our hosts, on the left, Jonathan, Ricky, Denise and Josiah Gosyne. Our missionaries, Brenda and Gary Hunter.