

Day 4

Wednesday, August 14th



Our day starts with breakfast

One of the things you learn before you go on a cross-cultural excursion is that other people and places have a different emphasis on time. Today we experienced the truth of that! However, in embracing the value of relationship over time we were gifted by our Sri Lankan community.

In the morning, during the worship service, Bishop Cliff ordained five candidates to ministry in the Free Methodist Church *in* Sri Lanka. This is the new legal name of the work here. Each candidate joined by her or his spouse heard the reminder of what their vows meant, made their vows, was prayed for, and received ordination their work. This was a wonderful time of celebration with this community in what God is doing in their midst.



The ordinands with their spouses

Following this was a break before we returned for the business meeting (to elect a new BOA).

Here is where time became a little looser than we would normally be comfortable with. Let's just say that by 2:30 pm we were ready to eat our lunch (breakfast was at about 8:20)! Even in the midst of this we were reminded that our sisters and brothers were right to make God's work their priority before making space for the appetites of the flesh. Finally, the process was complete and we heard many say to Cliff that it was the most harmonious election. With some of the difficulties over the last three years this was cause for joy.

With the lunch and siesta break used up we had planned to reconvene at 4:00, but by 4:30 we realized only a few were coming so we made it an impromptu prayer meeting and we went for our afternoon break.

We were able to join Karlene and Jaylynnne as they were chatting with some teenagers and young adults. It was so amazing to sit down with shared songs (printed song books) and just start to sing together. The FMCiSL has a promising future embodied in their young people. What is especially important is that that future has begun in the present. These young ones are full fledged participants in the life of the church and conference.

After supper our group was fading as many of us had been up in the wee hours of the morning



Karlene and Jaylynnne playing with the kids during break before dinner

after a very busy travel schedule the days before (see day 1). I resisted the urge to photo Cliff falling asleep sitting up. However, we still had a talent show to watch and participate in and the time was now past 9:00 pm and no one seemed in a hurry to begin the program. So, we thought we should be proactive and let the show's leadership know that we would like to leave by 10:15 pm. This was met by great dismay as the whole program had been designed to honour us. Besides, it should be done by 12:30 am and all the pastors dance together at the end of the program.



Getting ready for the talent show

We thought there was no way, but we decided to begin and see how it went. I'm not sure we gained any stamina, but as act after act came forward and performed so beautifully, we found capacity to stay. Jaylynn and Karlene caused the roof to almost lift with applause after they did a well known praise song in Tamil. Then Cliff and Karlene were honoured with a personalized homemade gift. As promised the program ended with the majority of the kids, all the pastors, the superintendent, and us coming up to dance a final song. Our Bollywood was not

strong, but our enthusiasm was sincere. I should note that Cliff had no ability (according to his wife) to film or photograph anything until that dance began and then he had to be a filmographer leaving himself unavailable to dance. I, David, on the other hand was taken by the hand to the front to dance with the male pastors. I threw in some of my (very) old breakdancing moves and (might have) had a dance battle. You can see my Facebook page for Cliff's video.

Well, the girls were wrong and the program finished before 12:30 am. At 12:10 we were loading into our van to head back to the hotel. That was great until the front gate was locked. Fortunately, we were able to rouse someone on staff to let us out. We'll have a few hours sleep and then onto tomorrow.

It wasn't the schedule we had in mind or thought we could handle, yet it was a day filled with beauty and love. To quote our friends here, "Thanks to God." Amen.