

## Day 9

### Monday, August 19<sup>th</sup>



After a whirlwind trip or traveling, family camp, BOA and leadership meetings, visiting churches, and generally having very full days, today was our sightseeing day. We traveled to an elephant orphanage this morning. A funny thing happened on the way to the elephants, we passed a woman walking three porcupines. We had to stop to check it out. She has domesticated these creatures so that she can pet them and let people handle them. We chose not to handle them, but we did get a picture. Wow, were they cute.

When we finally got to the orphanage a (sometimes overly) helpful local recommended we go to another place in town, suggesting more bang for our buck. However, when we got there we saw that this animal was simply being exploited. We thanked them, explained why we were leaving, and headed back to the orphanage. We were just in time to see these animals being shepherded to the river for their morning water time. There were some moments when we could see that even these animals were being

used to entertain the people, but their treatment at this facility was good and humane.

Included in the price of the elephant orphanage was a visit to a medical spice garden. There we met a doctor who conducted us on a tour explaining the various spices they grow which are indigenous to Sri Lanka and what the benefits were of the products they make with them. This tour concluded with a free professional massage using their products and then, of course, the gift shop. We felt the massage itself was worth the price of admission.

Following this we went back to the orphanage to see the elephants out of the water and living life in their herd. They really are wonderful and beautiful animals. Once again we exited through the gift shop and headed out for lunch. Over lunch we were able to hear Sister Pramila's dreams and thoughts about the Free Methodist Church in Sri Lanka. We are so very impressed by this godly woman and are grateful God has brought her into leadership with us.



In the afternoon we visited a tea plantation and learned about the process of making the various teas: Gold, silver (or white), green, and black of various grades. There was nothing earth shattering about it, but it was interesting to see how the old methods are still in use today for a major export of Sri Lanka. There was also a pride in this production that isn't present in a lot of what we've seen in Sri Lanka. Then this evening our team planned a later dinner and spent the time debriefing our trip and sharing what we see as good next steps. We all agreed that it was a very good trip over all, and we made a really good team together. We have met God here personally and in the midst of this people.

Tomorrow we do our final packing, have lunch, and then head back to Colombo to the airport to leave at 12:30 am on the 21<sup>st</sup>. We will be flying through Hong Kong. We're sure it will be fine, but please pray for us.