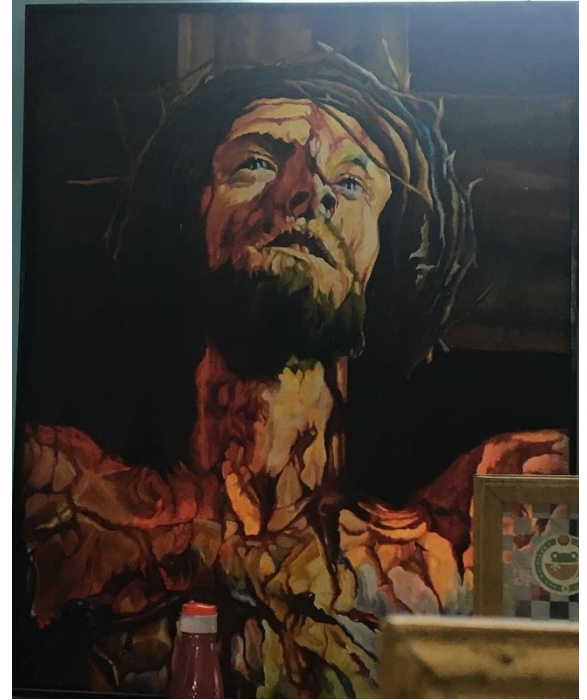


SOUTH INDIA NEWSLETTER – WEEK 2

When I initially sat down to write this newsletter, I was going to tell you I hadn't been very busy, and therefore there isn't as much to "write home about" as I would like. However, particularly in the last few days God has shown me that he is still working even when I might not feel like I'm actively "doing something". I have mainly been based in the CSI (Church of South India) Communication Office for the past week preparing for upcoming events during my stay and doing some archiving work for the Comms. Office in between. Primarily I have been working on two projects, writing an outline for a drama workshop and preparing a physical theatre piece for a Youth Festival in one of the local churches. Next week I will be assisting in the running of an Arts Camp here at the Synod Centre for painters and sculptors, and it is inspiring to see many pieces of art from previous Art Camps hung on the walls throughout the Synod Centre (where I am staying). This beautiful painting (right) is hung in the Communications Office and I wish you could see it in person rather than on a rubbish photo from my iPhone as it is so detailed and impressive.



At the weekend I got the opportunity to explore a little more of Chennai, and I was thankful that the group of Health students who are visiting from the US were able to show me some of the places they had already discovered during their stay. We first visited a bookshop called "The Writers Café" where we stayed for some lunch. The café served western style food, and although I love the Indian food here it was nice to have something a bit more familiar for a change. After exploring the bookshop (and purchasing some Indian literature!) we visited a place called "Spencer's". The only way I feel I can describe Spencer's is by saying it was kind of like a half shopping centre half indoor market hybrid. I was told by the students that this was the place to buy gifts for people at home, and vendors did stock lots of beautiful (often handmade) items that would make perfect gifts (I will have to revisit when I'm nearing the end of my trip). When we returned to the Synod Centre, I got talking to one of the students and it turns out she was in fact ordained and worked as a youth pastor for a number of years. It was amazing to hear some of her story and what God was doing in her life, and it was a blessing to have the opportunity to share with her also.

Yesterday, I attended a Youth Conference addressing the issues of Human Rights here at the Synod Centre, now for the most part I've been able to coast by despite the language barriers, as often Tamil speakers will use a number of English words mixed in with the Tamil meaning I can get a rough idea of what is being discussed. Unfortunately, this was not the case with this conference yesterday and hence most of what was discussed went over my head, and I left feeling rather disappointed. However, when the conference finished, I visited 'the EA' a very big "westernized" shopping centre (or the mall as my American friends keep saying!) not far from the Synod Centre and I happened to bump into one of the young people from the conference. He invited me to hang



out with him and we spend the rest of the afternoon talking with each other and eating some delicious ice-cream! It was wonderful to hear his story and the transformation God had bought about in his life. I'm finding such joy in listening to people's stories here, and I felt that yesterday this young man was also grateful to be able to share his story, but also some of his current struggles that had been a burden to him. Although I may not have a lot to physically show for it when my time here comes to an end, if I got the opportunity to just be a listening ear here for those who need it and offer some form of comfort to those people, I feel I would return home feeling very blessed 😊

Prayer Points: For more opportunities to serve God, in whatever ways He has planned for me. For boundless energy.