

Inspiring people to stop the traffic

by Marion White

It seems strange now to be looking back on fourteen months of planning and preparation for the Stop The Traffik Tour, including the time spent in Mumbai. It has been an amazing journey and we have seen God's hand on all of us, and on the whole project in so many ways.

There were definitely times when I was tempted to give up, and where my faith has been very weak. As I look back on this period of time I am so grateful to God for all the support and encouragement to keep going from the rest of the Team and many others. It was particularly special to be given the offering towards Stop The Traffik at this year's Conference in January.

On a practical front we covered all the costs of doing the Tour with at least ten of us involved, plus having a Tour Manager, two sound engineers, and various musicians also with us on the road, and paying for the venues. Some of the venues were given to us, like Manchester Town Hall, or charged very little which was a real confirmation of God's affirmation.

More importantly we raised £10,000 towards projects run by Oasis India that we visited in Mumbai. We saw well over 200 children sponsored during the Tour, through Compassion UK, which removes them from the risk of being trafficked into domestic slavery in Haiti. We were also able to give an extra £2,000 to Compassion to go to a community project in Haiti. We have given to some of the local projects in the UK who are working with trafficked victims and we have money left in the bank which we could possibly use for making a resource for secondary schools in the UK, but as yet that is a work in progress. I would appreciate any input from educationalists who may read this magazine.

We have done many radio interviews, made many contacts and learnt a lot. I guess most of us were not fully aware of the number of UK girls who are being groomed, introduced to drugs and trafficked for prostitution around cities in the UK.

I think the greatest link we have made is with the UK Human Trafficking Centre which is a police initiative, but combines many other agencies, like Immigration, Customs, Serious Organised Crime Agency etc, set up in October 06, based in Sheffield, but covers the whole of the UK. They sent a representative to be interviewed by us at all of the 11 venues. We have appreciated seeing their passion and dedication and having their experience and knowledge as part of the Tour. This link with the police happened in a very 'coincidental' way and we are continuing in discussion with them to see if there are ways we could work together in the future. We are also praying that our Christian example will continue to challenge and encourage them all.

We based the Tour on the fact that every person could make a difference and our prayer is that we will know whether it is right for us to continue, in any way, with what has been started and that many others will begin initiatives that will, in time, help to draw to an end this whole travesty of human trafficking.

Songs of Praise on May 13th featured my brother, Paul Field, being interviewed and singing one of the songs from Cargo, the musical about slavery past and present that he has written, and also an interview with Dorrie, my granddaughter, about her involvement with Stop the Traffik.

Dorrie is now just 15 and she was seriously impacted during her time in Mumbai, particularly when she came face to face with Bhavani, a girl of the same age as herself who we met in a Rescue Foundation that we visited. She had recently been rescued from a brothel where she had been since being abducted on her way home from school at the age of 11. Since then Dorrie has talked to two Year 9 classes at her school, done one school assembly, with a little help from Granny, and is about to speak at a Churches Together event in the village of Duffield, near Derby, where she lives. The school has been so supportive and Dorrie spent time selling the Stop the Traffik keys and raised over £200 from the pupils there. Rob and I reckon that we will be able to retire soon and leave all the speaking to Dorrie! She said that she actually ran out of time during her last class talk (an hour in duration) so she definitely takes after her grandfather!

Paul, my brother, is now going around the UK performing Cargo so do go to his website paul@paulfield.com/cargo if you want to see if he is coming to your neck of the woods, or if you would like him to come. He tells me that he is hoping to perform Cargo at Gatwick Airport, a place where girls have been trafficked, which I think is due to the combined efforts of the Churches Together in Horley!

The final evening of the Tour was a memorable time of seeing the culmination of so many hopes and dreams, blood, sweat and tears, of so much help and encouragement from so many, but particularly the incredible commitment and support from so many members of my own family, not only my children and grandchildren, but also brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews and some great friends.

What is exceedingly clear is that God has honoured the initial vision of setting something in motion, like that pebble thrown into a pond and causing ripples, and seeing others taking it up which is indeed happening and is a great joy and encouragement.

Just like the twelve men praying and planning in the back of a printing shop 200 years ago, we can make a difference!

Don't forget, if you haven't yet signed the Global Declaration Card that goes to the UN in November please go to the Stop the Traffik website and sign it online.

www.stophetraffik.com