

HeartBeats

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Sharon and Stephanie's Travel Journal

Friday, January 7

(Sharon) Well - we're in London getting ready for bed. It's 8:45pm, and we've both been up for almost 32 hours, and we're pooped! This trip has been planned for months, and I hate to admit that up until last week, I had a really bad attitude about it. All I could think/talk about was how hard it was going to be - and how uncomfortable/tired and possibly sick I was going to feel. I was committed to going, but had the wrong attitude - then the tsunami hit India, specifically the city we would be landing in, and my heart began to change. People from all over the world were going to India to provide relief to the tsunami survivors, and they were going with better attitudes, and they would be doing things I'd never have to do. God used this tragedy to show me/remind me that it's a privilege to serve Him in India, and that my complaining about how "hard it is" doesn't glorify Him. OUCH!

(Stephanie) We arrived in London a little later than scheduled but we're here safely. I left Dave and the girls - we were all feeling very tearful and sad. I seemed extra emotional this time. I guess it's because time just goes by so fast. I miss them already. It was a good flight here - a bit crowded, but ok. I couldn't get comfy and hardly slept, but I watched 3 movies!

Saturday, January 8

(Sharon) Check in for our flight to India went so well it was hard to believe we were in the right place! The only hassle was getting to the right terminal - the Hotel Hoppa doesn't service this terminal, so we had to "hike" a bit to find it, but once we did, check in was a breeze! The flight was long - but altogether uneventful. We arrived in Chennai at 12:35am - ahead of schedule.

(Stephanie) As soon as you step off the plane in India, you know you are here by the smell! I wish they had "smellivision" so people knew what I was talking about!

Sunday, January 9

(Sharon) We finally got to the head of the immigration line at 12:50am, and the guy who was "helping" us took an immediate "dislike" to Stephanie! I was afraid he wasn't going to let her into the country!

(Stephanie) It's (immigration) usually not any big deal, they give you a form to fill out that asks various questions, one of them being the place where you are going to stay and a contact number and address. Well, since Sam makes all of our arrangements and he's completely trustworthy neither Sharon nor I had any info on us! The man at immigration gave Sharon a little bit of a hard time but did stamp her

passport and let her go through. And although we both had the exact same information on our forms, he wouldn't let me pass!!! He kept saying the same thing, "You have to have an address, this isn't sufficient information!" I kept telling him that I didn't have an exact address that all I knew was that we were staying in a convent in Bangalore, but if he would just let me pass so I could get our Indian person on the other side I could give him all the information he wanted! He wouldn't listen to me, he just kept saying the same thing over and over! I thought I was going to get deported and Sharon started getting worried. They kept trying to tell her she was done and could go get her luggage but she wouldn't leave. The guy waited until the very last person went through and finally called me over again. He said the same thing and proceeded to tell me that he felt I had something to hide! I tried to assure him that I was there to visit friends and I had nothing to hide, but he wasn't hearing a thing I said. He did finally stamp my passport but made it clear that he didn't trust me!

(Sharon) I can't tell you how relieved I was when Stephanie's passport got stamped! Once we got our luggage and got to the hotel it was 3:00am - we dropped into bed and slept for 6 hours! We had breakfast - and went back to bed and slept until 1:30pm! We could have slept longer, but we had another flight to catch and had to get up and get ready to go.

(Stephanie) We arrived in Bangalore around 6pm and were met by Sam, his wife, sister and some of the directors of the centers as well as a Protestant minister. From the airport we drove directly to the convent (which actually turned out to be some sort of education center) Sharon & I have separate rooms and bathrooms in our rooms, but it's far from luxury.

(Sharon) Sam was concerned that we wouldn't want to stay at the center because the rooms are very "rustic." As much as we'd have liked staying at a hotel with all the "creature comforts," we both felt we should really try to "tough it out" here where the other women are staying. We got to bed a little before 11:00pm.