

Mission to India provides Wayland group insights into Hinduism

October 7, 2010

PLAINVIEW—Rick Shaw of [Wayland Baptist University](#) has spent many hours working in slums around the world, leading mission teams and sharing the gospel with people of different faiths. But this summer, Shaw led a small team to a mission field he never had experienced before and gave participants new insights into Hindus.

Wayland Baptist University graduate and adjunct professor Nick Pruitt delivers a Bible story in costume to a group of children in India.
(PHOTOS/Wayland Baptist University)

Shaw, director of the Wayland Mission Center, led a six-person team to Bangalore, India, to explore ways to aid indigenous missionaries in their work.

“When I was praying about it and really looking for direction, I was looking for a place that would be heavily Hindu,” Shaw said. “For almost three years now, we have engaged Muslims in Macedonia and Kosovo, but I wanted students to engage Hindu people.”

Shaw was put in contact with indigenous missionaries, Latha and Suresh, by a foreign missionary with Wayland connections who was working in South Asia at the time. While the missionary and his family had to return to the States for health reasons, Shaw remained in contact with the Indian missionaries who operate ministries and sewing centers for the children

and women in Bangalore, Dhar-maprui and Chittoor.

“I knew (Bangalore) was about 98 percent Hindu,” Shaw said. “There are a few Muslims, but not many, and very few Christians.”



The Wayland team visited ministries and sewing centers for children and women in Bangalore, Dhar-maprui and Chittoor.

Joining Shaw in the six-person team was Elaine Heard from Dimmitt, Donna and Roland Hamilton of Quitaque, Wayland graduate student Kori Bowen and adjunct professor of history Nick Pruitt.

Their trip coincided with a major Hindu festival known as the Day of the Dead. The group witnessed many of the rituals incorporated in the festival, including animal sacrifice and a ceremony in which young boys and girls were pierced through their cheeks.

While the Hindus in India are tied to their religion, they still are open to hearing about Jesus, Shaw said. After all, there are more than 330,000 gods and goddesses associated with Hinduism, and their religion allows for the addition of more.

Eventually, however, they must learn Jesus is not just one of many gods, he added.

“For a Hindu that is really well versed, Christianity is a challenge to its core, because Christianity is exclusive in terms of the worship of one God,” Shaw said.