



INTERNATIONAL TRIP REPORT

CSI INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE - INDIA

NOVEMBER 2012

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Ensuring I had everything in my bag for the flight the next day it all suddenly felt real. In less than 24 hours I would be on a plane for the first time ever, travelling for 20 hours to the other side of the world with a boy I'd never met before. His name is Jamie and he is from Falkirk. We were the lucky individuals chosen to go to India for a youth camp.

Flying was amazing and I couldn't sleep a wink the whole way due to excitement.

My first impressions of India were far from what I was expecting. As soon as I stepped foot out of the airport all I could see was cars and people. The place was jumping. The smell was in-describable. It was humid but the heat was bearable. It was around 9pm when we arrived and it was quite dark. It took around half an hour to get to the CSI Synod Centre where the camp was being held.

The following morning after a good night's rest I went for breakfast with Jamie and got to know my room-mate Naomi from Japan. She studies theology and has a pet hedgehog. The 3 of us were quite surprised that the breakfast curry and we were expected to eat it with our hands. As we weren't used to eating with our hands the locals got us forks. The food didn't get much better throughout the week. It was all very spicy and I couldn't eat much.

On the first night there was an opening worship during which we prayed and sang in English and Indian. There was a large gold ceremonial candle with 5 wicks. 1 person from each of the 5 countries was invited to light one of the wicks. I was invited to light one for Scotland. There were people from Japan, India, Sri Lanka and Nigeria. This represented the start of our week and joining us all together.

Throughout the week there were different talks and workshops, discussing topics like Woman In Leadership, Impact of media in youth culture, you theatre and theology.

During my time away I met a lot of amazing people and made many new friends including Ukoha, Simone and Mercy from our partner church in Nigeria. The 4 of us plus Jamie spent time discussing how to connect with other youths in Presbyterian churches all over the world. They told us about all of the youth events in Nigeria and we told them about NYA.

Unfortunately during my trip away I became unwell and had to travel home early, but since returning home I have had contact with numerous people I met in India and am hoping to invite Ukoha, Simone, Mercy and Naomi to NYA 2013.