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Mission group ready

By **LYN STEGEMILLER**
Tribune Staff Writer

GRANGER -- Velma Rassi had no idea she was being rude when she sat on the floor and stretched her legs out in front of her.

Jack Magruder, director of Life Mission for Granger Community Church, gently reprimanded her.

"You shouldn't point the soles of your feet at anyone," he said. In India, it is an insult to make someone look at the dirt on the bottom of your feet, he explained. Sitting with legs crossed, leaning to the side with your legs bent behind, or sitting on your knees is far more acceptable.

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Such tips are part of the training being given to a 13-member church missions team that soon will head to Pondicherry, India, to help build houses.

Granger Community has sent more than 100 representatives to southern India in

the past four years as part of a long-term effort, Magruder said.

Opting to take a "laser" rather than a broader "flashlight" approach to adult missions, Granger Community continually targets its efforts in this one area of the world, Magruder said.

Church workers have joined representatives of Habitat for Humanity, the Bible League and World Relief for their mission work in the region,

which includes tsunami-stricken areas.

Magruder and Randy Haycock of Cassopolis, who went on a missions trip to the area late last year, now help to train the people who will leave Monday. Those people, in turn, will lead others on a subsequent trip in October.

During a recent training session, discussion topics ranged from using water bottles to dealing with the Asian country's caste system.

Team members also practiced sitting on the floor for an extended period, since that will be expected during their trip.

"It's hard," Rassi said, standing up after about 30 minutes of sitting the polite way.

Just wait.

Magruder also planned for team members to practice sleeping on the floor.

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Randy Haycock of Granger Community Church avoids any language barrier by using a smile to communicate with a baby in Ipiturai, India. Haycock went on a church mission trip to India late last year and has helped to train a 13-member team that he will join when it heads to Pondicherry, India, next week.

Photo provided