

Friends of Jagadhri

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FIFTY-FIRST NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2013

Reflections on Mission Partnership

HEATHER LAXON revisits Jagadhri 25 years after first going there in 1988

Making another visit to Jagadhri was not something that I had thought would happen any time in the foreseeable future but in March this year I found myself back there.

I went with Phil King (PCANZ Global Mission Co-ordinator) and Brian Rowley (Somervell Parish) as part of an exploratory trip to visit some Church of North India projects with a view to Somervell forming a mission partnership with one of them.

I first went to Jagadhri in 1988 when I was in my early 20s. I spent six months working as a nurse at the Christian Hospital and during this time I lived with Doreen Riddell. In my spare time I started teaching guitar to a student at St Thomas School and consequently ended up helping with music at the annual Christmas concert. The relationships I formed while there led me to returning to Jagadhri on several occasions over the next three years. Each time I spent a couple of months in Jagadhri teaching music to a group of students at St Thomas School.

The visit to Jagadhri in March brought back many memories and felt a little like coming home. It was wonderful to reconnect with the friends I had made there. Attending the student nurses' Lamp Lighting ceremony was a very special and moving experience. After the ceremony I had the opportunity to sit and talk with some of the students. They were very keen to talk and it was wonderful being able to find out more about each other.

Spending time at Christian Hospital allowed us to see that the nursing school has a very successful training programme. I was able to spend a small amount of time with the senior nursing



tutors and was impressed with their commitment to providing a quality education for the students. The loving care and concern that Cecil and Nayana Harrison have for these students in their care also became evident. Whilst talking to people in Jagadhri I learnt that the nurses trained at Christian Hospital are highly regarded and have no problems getting good jobs when they finish their training.

My final visit on this trip was to see the student I had originally started teaching guitar to 25 years ago. I stayed with him and his family and we had a wonderful time catching up and sharing with each other. I guess the visit to India summed up what a mission partnership is for me: it is about relationships, sharing with other Christians what it means to be disciples of Christ and assisting each other to make a difference in the world we live in.



Student nurses celebrating at the Lamp Lighting ceremony.

Rev Phil King Visits Jagadhri

In March this year I visited Jagadhri with Heather Laxon and Brian Rowley from Somervell Church in Auckland. I had heard so much about Jagadhri over the years and had met the director Cecil Harrison and his wife, Nayana, when they visited New Zealand for the centenary celebrations of PCANZ mission in India, in 2008. So it was great to finally be there, to meet the staff and the School of Nursing students, and gain a deeper understanding of the history of our partnership there.

As I walked around the hospital grounds, it was this sense of history that made a deep impression on me. There are many plaques all over the hospital buildings bearing witness to the contribution of members of PCANZ over these many years. I felt humbled to be walking in the footsteps of so many who had sacrificed so much in their Christian service there, in circumstances that were much more trying and difficult than my own. Hebrews 12:1-2 came to mind: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us run with perseverance the race that is marked out for us."

I came home feeling how important it is that we honour the work of those who have gone before us in Jagadhri, and continue this mission partnership as it evolves in the future. It will take patience and wisdom and good communication to discern how we best do that in the changing mission context in India. It is not straightforward, but I hope that by working hard at the relationship we will be able to work with Christian Hospital and the wider mission of the Church of North India, continuing to be alongside them as a partner in mission.

As an aside, I wish more people could have experienced the concert hosted by the nursing students while we were there. After seeing so much poverty and deprivation throughout our travels, it was amazing to be in the midst of such overwhelming colour, joy, music, dancing and humour as the students celebrated at the Lamp Lighting ceremony, a rite of passage for first year nursing students. I had an insight into why Heather Laxon, our travelling companion, had returned to India several times after her first visit so many years ago. I hope many more members of the PCANZ will have further opportunities to deepen and extend our longstanding partnership with the Church of North India, in Jagadhri and beyond, in years to come.



Sponsored Nursing School student Poonam Patras (centre) with the New Zealand visitors (l to r) Brian Rowley, Phil King and Heather Laxon.

IN MEMORIAM

We give thanks for the lives of two former missionaries to India who have died recently.

Dr Beryl Howie QSO 1924-2012

Dr Beryl Howie was appointed to head the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Christian Medical College Ludhiana, Punjab, India in 1959 and three years later promoted to full professor within the University of Punjab. She continued serving at CMC until 1980.

Beryl was very compassionate, highly skilled and extremely hard working. She touched the lives of hundreds of students, colleagues and patients who all remember her with love and deep thanksgiving.

Betty Roxburgh 1919-2013

Betty and her husband, the late Rev Rymall Roxburgh, were based in Jagadhri-Yamunanagar and then in Dehra-Dun from 1945 to 1965. Betty was gifted with a good ear for languages and supported Rymall in his pastoral work and shared her faith and life skills with those around her. The local people remember Betty and Rymall with great affection.

Thanks for Your Donations 2013

Thank you very much for your very generous continuing support. Last October we sent \$4,186.00 to purchase an Na/K Analyser and this is very efficient. Blood samples from other hospitals are collected by a Christian Hospital staff member and results emailed to the hospitals. This is a very well used service. Further funds will be remitted to Christian Hospital towards the renovation of the Nursing School facilities once plans and quotations for needed equipment are received.

Please note that financial assistance for St Thomas School is no longer required. Please do not give further donations for the school.

Dr Cecil Harrison and all the staff of Christian Hospital and the Nursing School thank you most sincerely for your prayerful remembrance and financial support.

Please note that all donations should be remitted through Global Mission, PCANZ, PO Box 9049, Wellington 6141. Your receipts will enable you to claim a tax rebate. Friends of Jagadhri will continue to disburse the funds.

Is Your Address Correct?

We have changed our mailing list to a new system and also identified correct postal codes. In this process a little information has been lost. If your address is still incomplete or wrong or you know of someone who would like to receive a newsletter please write to Doreen Riddell, 50/4 Admiral Cres, Hamilton 3210 and include the incorrect label along with your correct address. Thank you for your help and your patience.

Prayer Circle

We invite all readers to join a prayer circle every morning for the people of Jagadhri and Yamunanagar. Please pray especially for the Bishop of Delhi Diocese, the Rt Rev Sunil Kumar Singh, and all at St Thomas School. Pray also for Drs Cecil and Nayana Harrison and all the staff at Christian Hospital, also the ministers at Jagadhri and Yamunanagar in all their varied responsibilities.

Publishers

This, the fifty first newsletter of Friends of Jagadhri, is published by Margaret Bear, Heather Laxon, Richard Lawrence, Alan Leadley, Peter Mirams, Doreen Riddell, Elaine Riddell and June Welten.