

Friends of Jagadhri

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FIFTY-THIRD NEWSLETTER – May 2014

Friends of Jagadhri is Moving On

Friends of Jagadhri was formed in Christchurch in 1986 to support the work of the Global Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand in North India and especially in Jagadhri. In 1997 the office moved to Hamilton and now it is time to move on to Auckland with the support of the Somervell parish and others. Heather Laxon and Brian Rowley, who both visited North India with Global Mission Coordinator the Rev Phil King in 2013, will be part of the new group.

It is interesting that the Somervell parish has had a long association with the work in Jagadhri. They supported one of our pioneer missionaries, the Very Rev J L Gray, and Mrs Marion Gray, from 1921 to 1940 at Jagadhri and then as parish minister for some years at Somervell in Auckland until they returned to India for three years from 1956-59.

It has been a joy to be in touch with you over the past 17 years but it is now time to hand over these responsibilities to a new group and to the Rev Phil King. This is our last newsletter from Hamilton and all the members of our group, currently Doreen Riddell (Convenor), Peter Mirams (Treasurer), June Welten (Secretary), Elaine Riddell, Margaret Bear, Alan Leadley, and Richard Lawrence thank you most sincerely for your support and encouragement over the years. We also thank Jock and Lee Crawford of Bankwood Publications for their skilled help in printing our newsletters and maintaining the data base.

• **Donations will continue to be received and disbursed by the Global Mission Office in Wellington and all correspondence and donations should continue to be sent to the Global Mission Office, PCANZ, PO Box 9049, Wellington 6141.**

Going Global India 2015

Global Mission Coordinator, the Rev Phil King, is making preparations for a group of young adults from PCANZ congregations to visit North India in November 2015. Going Global is a joint programme between Global Mission and Presbyterian Youth ministries, which encourages young adults from PCANZ congregations to build understanding and raise awareness of our partner churches overseas.

Phil says that he plans to take a team to Jagadhri to learn about the long and significant history of mission there, and observe the changing mission context within the Church of North India. 'I hope that we can educate a new generation of young people in our churches about our mission history, and inspire them to build on that foundation of dedicated service for the gospel, whether that be in India or New Zealand. What we want is to motivate young adults to discern and follow the call of God on their lives.'

The visit will include time in Jagadhri, where participants will learn about the history of mission at Christian Hospital and St Thomas School. It will also include a visit to Avalon Girls School in Pathankot, a CNI School which is being supported by Somervell Presbyterian Church in Auckland. ▶



Staff and students at Avalon School Hostel:

Left: Principal Ms Manjit Mal. Rear: the Pastor, Heather Laxon, Brian Rowley, and the Hostel Warden (right) and students.

◀Group members will share in a valuable experience of cross-cultural sharing with the staff and students at the School of Nursing in Jagadhri, and at Avalon School.

It is expected that a number of the Going Global participants will come from Somervell but the visit will be open to young adult members of any PCANZ congregation. The date for the trip will be late November 2015, to allow for tertiary students to complete their exams. Detailed information including costs will come out later in the year. Expressions of interest are welcomed in the meantime.

Somervell Presbyterian Supports Avalon School Hostel Project

Brian Rowley from Somervell Presbyterian describes the new project to assist needy girls at the CNI Avalon School in Pathankot.

Avalon School is a well-respected Christian school established in Pathankot in the late 1800s and operating under the oversight of the Church of North India. Pathankot is in the Punjab, 335km North West of Jagadhri, near the foothills of the Himalayas. The school operates with no government assistance apart from some partial salary contributions and currently has some 700 fee paying students.

PCANZ Global Mission Coordinator Phil King together with Brian Rowley and Heather Laxon from Somervell Church visited the school in March 2013 when plans for the hostel development were in their infancy.

The school's Principal, Ms Manjit Mal, was keen to expand their existing hostel facilities to enable needy girls from poor areas in the Punjab to obtain a good education. The aim is to take girls into the hostel in their final two school years and lift their standard of education and English literacy. This targeted assistance will enable the girls to proceed to tertiary or vocational training with better prospects of obtaining good jobs which in turn will enormously assist their family and local community.

In establishing such projects the CNI uses a PDS (Parent/Diocese/Synod) model. The aim of this model is to provide opportunities for underprivileged children to receive a good education, made possible by the joint financial support of these three parties, with extra assistance from overseas partners. This gives projects a broader base of funding support and lessens the risk of projects falling over should a funding partner pull out or be unable to meet their contributions.

The Avalon project was endorsed by the local Diocese and officially established as a PDS project in mid-2013 and the project has launched with an initial intake of 15 students late in 2013. Somervell Presbyterian church has committed to being a partner in the project for an initial period of 5 years.

Early in May Somervell Presbyterian sent a \$4,000 contribution. These funds were raised at a quiz night late last year, and also from regular giving commitments from various members in the congregation. Somervell is also seeking to develop partnership with the project in other ways. More personal ties with the school and the girls in the hostel are being looked for. At least one family from Somervell is visiting the hostel later this year, and a trip including youth representatives is planned for next year.

The next fundraising event Somervell is holding for the project is an "Indian dinner" plus a silent auction to be held at the church on 7 June. Tickets are available from the church office, 497 Remuera Rd, ph. (09) 524 5379.

Please note that there is opportunity for other groups to support such projects elsewhere as each Diocese of the CNI is being challenged to provide similar hostel support for other needy children to enable them to complete secondary education and move on to some tertiary training.

IN MEMORIAM

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

The Rev Catherine Hollister Jones 9/8/1919- 23/2/2014

Catherine felt called to a ministry of prayer and devotion. After training at Deaconess College Catherine was appointed to the developing parish of Tamaki. In 1953 she responded to the need for a worker among the village people in the Kharar District of North India. Her ministry continued at Henderson Memorial Girls School as Chaplain. Later she was asked to found a fee paying independent English medium School named Jubilee School. In addition Catherine had an important ministry to medical students at the Ludhiana Medical College. She retired in 1988 and, back in Tauranga, Catherine continued her ministry of prayerfulness and encouragement locally and nationally.

The Rev Lorna Aberley 18/9/1911 – 6/3/2014

The hymn 'I feel the winds of God today' epitomizes Lorna's life and ministry. As a young woman she felt a strong call to prepare herself for missionary service. She attended Deaconess College and completed her nursing training. She was appointed to work at Christian Hospital, Jagadhri, where she introduced nursing training for young women. In 1960 she returned to New Zealand for 6 years to care for her ageing parents and was ordained as a deaconess. She then went back to nurse at Jagadhri for another 6 years. Returning to Hawera she was ordained to the ministry in 1976 and ministered in several parishes in the Taranaki Presbytery before retiring to Hamilton and finally Tauranga.

Thanks for Your Donations May 2014

Thank you very much for your very generous continuing support. \$15,940.43 has been received in the year ending 31 March 2014. Recently we have sent \$20,000 to provide a Computer Laboratory for the Nursing School students.

We are about to send funds for half fee scholarships for two first year students (yet to be named) and second year students Nisha Samuel and Priyanka John and third years, Poonam Rani and Priyanka John. These payments are made from the Doreen Riddell Scholarship Fund. The students are very grateful for your help.

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 and correspondence should be remitted through Global Mission, PCANZ, PO Box 9049, Wellington 6141. Your receipts will enable you to claim a tax rebate.

Is Your Address Correct?

If your address is still incomplete or wrong or you know of someone who would like to receive a newsletter please write to Global Mission at the above address 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, Yamunanagar and Pathankot. Please pray especially for the Bishop of Delhi Diocese, the Rt Rev Sunil Kumar Singh, and all at St Thomas School and the Avalon School. Pray also for Drs Cecil and Nayana Harrison and all the staff at Christian Hospital, the ministers at Jagadhri and Yamunanagar in all their varied responsibilities and the General Secretary of the Church of North India, Mr Alwan Masih.

Publishers

This, the fifty-third 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.