

Fellowship of St. Thomas



NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2012



Balloch

July 2012

Dear Friends,

It is summer as I write this! A chilly summer indeed with many a thought of the warmth and sun of the subcontinent where temperatures this year frequently reached 45°C which was difficult as people survived without fans and air conditioning as electricity supplies encounter frequent load shedding.

In Scotland we tend just to think ‘weather!’ but in other parts of the world it is much more considered ‘Climate Change’. It is good to know that the Churches in India and Bangladesh are particularly concerned with Climate Change and other ecological issues. Flooding as a result of the monsoon hit India and Bangladesh again this year particularly Assam, India and Cox’s Bazaar in Bangladesh with over ½ million people affected.

I was intrigued by the linking of Ecumenical Relations and Ecological Concerns in the Church of South India. It is good to work on Ecological Issues with others not only with other Christians but with people of other faiths.

The other change that is prevalent in the churches of the sub-continent is retirement and appointment of new bishops. This can be a time of opportunity but there are so many tensions around this so let us rejoice with those who have successfully completed the process and pray with those who are struggling through the process.

Another perennial problem for expatriate church workers is getting visas. Some have been granted and some have not – one partner from Scotland is at Language School in Murree in Pakistan, let’s hope Susan is able study well and settle in to life in Raiwind Diocese.

I had a trip to Israel/Palestine in the spring (and hadn’t appreciated how chilly it can be) but I am pleased that some people from the Church of South India have also visited and are very aware of the problems of the Palestinian Christians and Palestinians in general. While some of us link the Palestinian situation with apartheid the Indians likened it to

casteism. These links will no doubt inform church life in the future. The Participants of the Theological Consultation on Kairos–Palestine in Chennai on 14th July 2012 said ‘We call on the churches and theological colleges in India to stand in solidarity with the struggles of the Palestinians for justice and peace and for the end of the occupation of their land.’

The separate communities so often result in persecution and we noted that last year at our Annual Celebration perhaps it is good this year to turn our attention to Healing. I look forward to seeing many of you at our celebration in Dunblane.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Nutter

Dr Daleep Mukarji elected as Vice-President Designate of the Methodist Conference.

At the recent Methodist Church Conference (July 2012) held at Plymouth, Dr Daleep Mukarji was elected Vice-President Designate of the Conference. He will take up his office at the next Methodist Conference to be held in July 2013 in London. Daleep is a Patron of Friends of the Church in India and Chair of the Mission Working Group of the Methodist Church. Congratulations, Daleep!

January 2012 Our congratulations to the newly elected officers of the CNI

The new Moderator of CNI is the Most Revd Dr P. P. Marandih, Bishop of Patna Diocese and the Deputy Moderator is the Right Revd P. K. Samantaroy, Bishop of Amritsar. We remember them in our prayers as they take on these heavy responsibilities.

The Eighth Triennial St Thomas of India Unity Lecture “A Driver’s Manual for the Indian Road: Bishop Appasamy and Comparative Theology in India Today”

Brian Dunn BA, MSt in the Study of Religions (Oxon)

In a riveting lecture delivered in the Martin Hall, New College, Edinburgh, on 14th June 2012 Brian Dunn took the over-arching theme of Unity and approached it from the point of view of plurality. His aim was to present comparative theology in a subtle mode with particular reference to the life and writings of the important Tamil Christian theologian named Ayadurai Jesudason Appasamy (1891-1975). Bishop Appasamy was an Indian [Christian theologian](#), and [bishop](#) of the [Church of South India](#) in [Coimbatore](#), Tamil Nadu. He was a member of the 'Rethinking Christianity Group', and sought to reconcile Christian with Hindu philosophies. He interpreted Christianity as 'bhaktimarga'.

Dunn used the descriptions of two roads to serve as a framing analogy in order to address the purpose of plurality. Those of us who have lived in the UK or in Canada and also in India will be familiar with such roads. Dunn says: “I first learned to drive when I was sixteen years old. With the help of a manual, an instructor and carefully controlled after-school driving lessons, I learned how to check my mirrors, indicate, make safe and considerate lane changes, parallel park and ultimately to merge at highway speed into the four-lane traffic of the Trans-Canada Highway. Thirteen years later, when I moved to India with my young family for a seven-year term of work at an international school, I learned quickly that if I were ever to dare to pull a motorized vehicle out onto the Indian Road I would have to learn to drive all over again. All bets were off. Cows, dogs, rickshaws, children playing in gutters, Tata trucks overloaded with falling stalks of sugar cane – the Indian Road posed challenges that the Young Drivers of Canada manual knew nothing about, and could not even begin to imagine. It was a bewildering new language game of ‘rock, paper, scissors’ in which larger, faster and louder vehicles trump smaller and slower ones, unless, of course, those smaller and slower vehicles happen to be oblivious, meandering cows or *kaanvari* pilgrims carrying pots of Ganga water. It is not as though there are *no* rules for the Indian

road. There are a few very obvious ones, and these I hope to present to you today..... Contrary to what many believe, plurality is not the enemy of unity. It is, rather, its ultimate test. And there is no plurality quite like the Indian road. If you learn to drive in a place like Canada then you can safely drive in other places like Canada. But if you can drive in India, you can drive anywhere.”

Having grown up in India with Hindi as his second language and having been confirmed at the age of 14 in the Church of North India of which he is still a member, Dunn is well qualified to enter the interstitial spaces where traditions, cultures and languages meet in real and vital exchange. He quotes M.M. Thomas who speaks of Appasamy as being “perhaps the first systematically trained Indian theologian to have made a pioneering contribution to indigenous theology with professional competence”. Dunn finds that the pioneering contribution of which Thomas speaks has much to say with regards to the stated purpose of his lecture. For lack of any driver’s training manual for the Indian road, he finds in Appasamy an instructor of sorts, a guide and guru by which to engage its bewildering plurality. Appasamy’s lifelong conviction was that he, as a Christian theologian and *bhakta* (‘devotee’) of Christ, had much indeed to learn from the living traditions of his homeland. Working from the premise that doctrines, theological systems and even ecumenical creeds are largely cultural and linguistic negotiations, and that these are therefore provisional rather than permanent or universal constructs, Appasamy dreamed of a day when the Indian Church, knowledgeable and conversant in the Hindu traditions, could formulate its own systematic interpretive frameworks. He dreamed of a church that could write its own theology, as he puts it, “answering the questions thrown out by the Hindu mind.” For only then, he says, “will a Creed, truly Christian and truly Indian, emerge.” A great deal of Appasamy’s earlier work was inspired by what he found in Ramanuja. He learned much from the language, analogy and idiom of the *bhakti* traditions and using Ramanuja’s celebrated analogy of the ‘Body of God,’ Appasamy developed a way to explain how and to what extent God can be described as present in the world. Later on he borrowed increasingly from the classical Indian notion of a *vada*, an intellectual ‘discourse’ conducted within, between and across traditions (*sampradayas*). His repeated appeal to all who would claim to hold a

stake in the Indian Church was thus to no longer simply theologize *about* the Hindu traditions, but to actually work out their theology *with* and *among* them. Such theologising is not a million miles away from that of Aquinas' Aristotelian philosophical framework or Augustine's Neo-Platonist one.

Throughout his lecture Dunn interweaves his analogy of the two roads. In a telling passage he writes: "Because all creatures of our God and King are on the Indian road, all at varying top speeds, everything has to move much, much slower - and not just slower, but closer as well. Unlike the wide-berth of the fast lane on a sprawling Canadian highway, driving in India is almost always up close and personal. Analogous to that, scholars can theorize from a safe academic distance all they want about larger artificial groupings called 'religions', but when it comes to actual encounter, it is all about real historic traditions as lived, reasoned and practiced. Comparative theology thus avoids the artificial tidiness of academic groupings called 'religions' and embraces the slower, messier business of particular engagement between particular thinkers, texts and traditions. Appasamy learned to do this over the course of his career. As his work matures it is less about the convenient shorthand of 'Christianity' and 'Hinduism' and more about how his post- *Lux Mundi* Anglican sacramental theology encounters different traditions of *bhakti*. His penultimate book is a primer of the distinct Hindu *bhakti* traditions in which he both explains their historic and textual roots as well as interacts with them as distinct theological systems." There is so much more in this lecture deserving of careful scrutiny and the complete text is on the FOST website www.fost.org.uk

Towards the end Dunn writes: "Back, now, to the purpose of this lecture – unity! Unity would be no problem, of course, were it not for the persistent inconvenience of plurality. Please note, however, that 'plurality' does not mean 'pluralism'. To put it simply, plurality is reality, but pluralism is an 'ism'. In post-Critical modes of scholarship all of our ism's, our grand and overarching narratives and ideologies must now come under the scrutiny of the so-called 'hermeneutic of suspicion'. What is popularly defined as pluralism, pluralism *as* an 'ism,' is not the ideology of post-Modernity, as is commonly misconstrued, but is rather a vestigial throwback to Modernity, and the logical end of its essentialist assumptions. Essentialism assumes that

the various disparate phenomena of the multiple religious traditions are but appearances and manifestations of a single common essence, a singular underlying supra-traditional ‘religious experience.’ In this present age of post-Critical scholarship these assumptions have been tried and found seriously wanting. Truth claims are not the problem in a post-Critical age. Undetected, undeclared and disingenuously held ones are. Unfortunately, the encounter between religious traditions is, still to this day, too often short-circuited by popular and ideological pluralisms that rush to neutralize traditions and their historically held commitments..... Plurality has become the irreversible reality of our world. It is the reality that has always been and, quite simply, it is time now to embrace it.”

At present Brian Dunn is a DPhil candidate at Regent’s Park College, Oxford to whom we in the Fellowship of St Thomas owe a considerable debt for his outstanding lecture. Those not on line can receive a printed copy of the lecture by writing to me at 4 Ferryfield Road, Connel, Argyll PA37 1SR.

Murdoch MacKenzie

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Fellowship of St Thomas Annual General Meeting

1. Secretary

Rev Murdoch MacKenzie will be completing three years as Secretary and is stepping down. Nominations for Secretary are invited from Fellowship members. These will include Miss Janet Brown who is willing to stand. Other nominations may still be made at the AGM.

2. Committee members.

Vanessa Stark is willing to join the Committee and other nominations may still be made at the AGM before the meeting makes a decision.

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A novel way to tackle domestic violence in India.

Pradeep Baisakh 2 July 2012

The plethora of progressive laws in India to protect the women from various forms of harassment and discrimination has not brought the desired change in the status and dignity of women. This is partially because of the mindset of the men and women in a patriarchal milieu and due to the low level of awareness of women and men about the laws and women's rights.

The 'Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Law 2005' is the latest addition to the list. Tough assessing its performance would be too premature at this stage. However the informal mechanism of Mahila Panchayat (MPs) designed at the community level to address issues relating the domestic violence and other forms of harassment against women could well prove to be an exception. Mahila Panchayats are informal institutions promoted by the Delhi Commission of Women (DCW) aiming at "crisis intervention and legal aid at community level and help tackle local level legal disputes and assist in reduction and reconciliation of violence against women".

Take the case of Ms Sonali Samantray (name changed) of Sangam Vihar colony that is located near the ruins of old city of Tuglakabad in South Delhi. The young lady having one daughter was living a life of hell inside the four walls of her in-law's house. Being beaten by her husband Hemraj (name changed), snubbed and beaten by her mother-in-law had been her regular way of life till she desperately knocked doors of Mahila Panchayat in Sangam Vihar for help in September 2011. Why was Sonali tortured? "My husband and the mother-in-law wanted one lakh rupees from my father, which my father could not give." says Sonali. The mother-in-law also wanted a male child from Sonali. As she was unable to conceive for the second time, it had become an alibi for physically and mentally torturing her and of course, contemplating for a second marriage for Hemraj.

Going to the police and filing a case against the in-laws was more than a dream for Sonali and her poor parents. Following the report filed by Sonali the Mahila Panchayat summoned Hemraj to appear before it. It may be noted that the Mahila Panchayat does not carry specifically

legal power to summon anyone. But it does enjoy a lot of persuasive power. Adamant Hemraj instead brought goons to beat his own wife. Sonali made a panic call to the leaders of Mahila Panchayat who immediately rushed to her house to tackle the situation. Seeing the unity of leaders, determined to take the challenge, the goons literally ran away from the place. Hemraj then appeared before the Mahila Panchayat, which undertook a phase of counselling for the couple. The members explained to Hemraj about the provisions of law dealing with women harassment and dowry and the possible consequences. He realised his folly and understood the powerful influence of the leaders of the women panchayat. He apologised and signed a written agreement not to repeat any form of cruelty on Sonali, narrates Anwari, a paralegal worker who guides the leaders on legal matter. In follow up visits to Sonali's house, we found her leading a happy life, informs Sakuntala Gupta, an elderly lady who is a leader of the Panchayat from its inception three years ago.

Composition and functioning Mahila Panchayats are run by DCW in partnership with NGOs. There are about 44 Mahila Panchayats run by 22 NGOs working in the National Capital. The working of Sangam Vihar Mahila Panchayat is facilitated by YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association). Some other NGOs which run Mahila Panchayats are Action India, Delhi Brotherhood Society and similar. The Sangam Vihar Mahila Panchayat has 25 members, all of whom are from the local community. The leaders hold regular weekly meetings not just to resolve disputes but also to discuss the laws on protection of women, government schemes and other laws like Right to information Act etc.

A member of DCW, Kiranvati Tank, says "in slum areas where most people are illiterate and are unaware about various laws and schemes, Mahila Panchayats have been established to help the women and spread awareness on the same. Several family disputes are resolved by the Panchayats." Awareness camps are organised by the concerned NGOs for the leaders on legal issues, dispute redressal mechanism, laws relevant to crimes against women. They are given exposure on the existing legal position regarding property, maintenance, marriage, custody, etc. They are trained in counselling, FIR writing etc.

The Panchayat has adopted some minimum formality in its functioning. After receiving the applications it summons both the parties for counselling and resolving disputes. It sits for some sessions of counselling and attempts to arrive at a solution. The final outcome is recorded and both the parties sign on the agreement. Then the case is followed up by the visit of the members or the paralegal workers to the houses for about three months.

“The remarkable features of Mahila Panchayat are its informal ways of functioning and the ease at which an aggrieved woman can approach it. The threat of bringing the violators to book under the existing laws, in case counselling fails, brings moral pressure on the aggressors to accept the verdict of Mahila Panchayat. Unity, leadership and motivation are the hallmarks of it.

Bringing the women together and constituting the women body has not been easy from the beginning. The active women who started coming to the meetings due to the persuasion of the staff from YWCA were discouraged by the husbands as male chauvinism was challenged. Some male members straightway opposed their women going to the meetings. The NGO staff persuaded the husbands of the members and explained the novelty and utility of the institution. When their women started gaining respect from the community by way of providing leadership and guidance in resolving family disputes, the husbands were captivated. “My husband now even reminds me of the time of the weekly meetings in case I get late!” says Ranju Singh, young member of Sangam Vihar Mahila Panchayat, chuckling.

Empowered women lead the community

Out of about 200 cases received in last three years by two Mahila Panchayats facilitated by YWCA (another exists in Govindpuri), more than 85% of cases have been resolved informally. “Our approach has always been to keep the family intact while protecting the rights and dignity of women.” adds Kamlesh Rathore, another paralegal worker. The institution has brought in conspicuous results in the empowerment of the women who have stepped out of the threshold to participate in the wider advocacy process in favour of the community.

Pradeep Baisakh is a Development Journalist based in Odisha, India. He has written extensively on transparency law, right to work and food,

environment issues, industrialisation and development, women, tribal rights so on. His writing can be found at:

<http://pradeepbaisakh.blogspot.com/>

He can be contacted through email:2006pradeep@gmail.com

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Nursing in Bangladesh.

This is an extract from the recent Partner Plan letter of Gillian Rose who works in Bollobhpur Hospital in Meherpur District of Bangladesh as a missionary nurse.

In the female beds next to each other are a Christian lady Minu, with heart disease and no one to look after her or pay for her treatment, and Muslim Amena, who has just returned after a brief visit to see her home again. Amena was first admitted 2 months ago, severely ill with uncontrolled diabetes, high fever and a horribly infected hand and foot. Indeed she was brought to us because other hospitals had insisted that the hand needed amputation, and live or die, Amena was not going to have her hand cut off. She had given up eating several days previously. But thanks be to God, with careful daily dressings, antibiotics injected into her veins, diabetic control with insulin, and with lots and lots of prayer, Amena now has a beautifully healed hand and foot, all she lost was half of her index finger, and her great toe. Amena is now the life and soul of the ward with perfect diabetic control. And completely in charge of her own life again. Her two sons are managing the cost of her medicines, and we manage the diabetic diet. In this way the name of the “Mission” hospital spreads amongst the Muslim community.

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OBITUARIES.

We regret to announce the following deaths: Rt Rev Dr M Azariah, Rev Raymond Bailey, Miss Winifred Margaret Gow and Miss Lillian Smith. Our thoughts go out to sorrowing relatives and friends.

Rt. Rev. Dr. M AZARIAH (1934 - 2012)

Rt Rev Dr M Azariah was a truly amazing man. Rising from humble background he became General Secretary of CSI at a crucial time and later as Bishop in Madras led the diocese in innovative projects, including the upliftment of the Dalit people from amongst whom he came.

Born in a small village outside what was then Madras, he lost his father when he was two years old. He dated his love and dependence on God to his experiences during those childhood years. At night as he lay in bed, he would hear his mother talking to someone, asking advice, listening and acting. He realised that she was praying and basing all she did on that relationship. He learned to do the same. His potential was quickly recognised and following school, he was granted a place at Madras Christian College. There he made an impression on staff and fellow students alike, and friendships made then lasted through his life.

Working with leprosy patients, criss-crossing the diocese on evangelistic duties - a journey with him in later life was punctuated with memories of villages visited and experiences which forged who he was - he came to the notice of people in authority, especially Bishop Lesslie Newbiggin, who was to become a mentor and a friend. Indeed, Azariah later served as his chaplain.

Azariah was a combination of scholar and activist. He trained for the ministry at the United Theological College, Bangalore and later had a spell in US. Following a period as a pastor in Vellore, he lived out his training working as Associate Director at the Community Service Centre, the Education Secretary at the NCCI based in Chennai, and the Auxiliary Secretary of the Bible Society of India, Tamil Nadu Auxiliary.

But he never stopped reading - theology, politics, history and literature in both Tamil and English. If anyone wanted to give him a gift, he would ask for books, and until days before he was death he was still

reading avidly, and writing too. His published works include poetry, theology and works on social action. In his latter years he taught at Gurukul Theological Seminary and spent a term as visiting lecturer at New College, Edinburgh.

It was as General Secretary of the Synod of Church of South India in 1980s that his wider influence became felt. Along with Most Rev Dr P Victor Premasagar, then Moderator of CSI, he led the church in national and international fora. It was at this time, at the Vancouver assembly of the World Council of Churches, that he brought to the attention of the world the plight of his own people, the Dalits, and the remainder of his life was spent in raising awareness, providing education and working to stop discrimination. During his period as bishop, this was high on his agenda and programmes such as BBC - Bible, bicycle and chappals - promoted the self-reliance and self-respect of the least, the last and the lost.

His dedication and his commitment inspired great loyalty and also great animosity, but no one would ever remain indifferent.

Azariah was a people person, who accepted people for who they are not what, and he numbered amongst his friends the highest and the lowest in worldly terms, and made no difference between them.

Above and beyond all of this, Azariah was a loving and loved human being. He had a long and happy marriage to Josephene. Theirs was a very supportive partnership. And their home remains a place of warmth and welcome. Their three children, Andrew, Mary (Selvi) and John speak lovingly of family holidays and meals out always formed an important part of life. The family extended to nieces, nephews, cousins, and the moving tribute at the memorial service by nephew, Dinesh Livingstone spoke volumes. I have been privileged to share in this warmth. My personal tribute is thanks to a person who believed in me, supported me and did me the great honour to call me his sister and friend. Like many whom Bishop Azariah encouraged, I know I would not be the person I am today had I not known him.

He will be greatly missed as an elder statesman in the church in India, and by those who loved him as husband, father and friend.

Eileen Thompson

Rev Raymond BAILEY (07.01.1915 – 14.05.2012)

At the Thanksgiving Service for Raymond Bailey
at Morningside Parish Church on Friday 18 May 2012

A Tribute given by Norman Shanks.

Love came down at Christmas. It was one of the hymns at Raymond and Mary's wedding in 1939 and love – God's unconditional love and our calling to love one another – was the driving force of Raymond's life.

Raymond was born in 1915 in the Punjab, then part of India, but after partition Pakistan. Following his parents' return to Britain in 1919, Raymond went to Highgate School and thence to Edinburgh University to study first for an MA and then to train for the Church of Scotland ministry, graduating in 1939 with a BD from New College. He met Mary through their involvement in the Student Christian Movement. He was the male president, she the woman president, as was customary in these days; and Raymond in his memoir said "Ours has been a joint ministry for the most part; and my wife has certainly been a source of imaginative inspiration behind everything that I have done or achieved." The two main influences in his life were the SCM and the Iona Community. The Iona Community remained important to Raymond all his days.

Raymond and Mary sailed for what was then still India in January 1940. He worked as a district missionary in the Punjab, supervising the work of the church in a school and a district. His contact there with Christians, Hindus and Muslims alike reinforced his conviction, that remained the foundation of his faith and life all his days that at the centre of the Christian Gospel is self-giving love. The original intention had been to spend his life in India but, after the birth of Alan, Diana and Elizabeth there, and when he was just beginning to

feel useful after six years, he and Mary had to return to Britain on medical grounds. But a wonderful new opportunity arose when, on the recommendation of Professor John Baillie and George MacLeod, Raymond was appointed minister of St Columba's Church, Oxford and

Presbyterian chaplain in the University. Ten very happy and full years followed – during which their fourth child, Ros, was born.

In 1957 he was called to be the first minister of St Martin's Church, a new church extension charge in Edinburgh to establish and develop a congregation in a new housing scheme and Raymond has said that, whereas in Oxford, his aim was to encourage the undergraduates to be intelligent Christians, in St Martin's where he sought to help people to see God in their own experience and see the relevance of the Gospel to the realities of their daily lives. In 1968 it was time to move on and Raymond agreed to a request to go back for a short time to the Punjab, now part of Pakistan.

Raymond found the situation in Pakistan was very different from previously. The missionaries were now servants of the local church, in a predominantly Muslim nation; and Raymond saw his main task as to help the Christian leaders accept and even love their Muslim neighbours. Health reasons again cut short the time in Pakistan. On returning home he was called to the small parishes of Ladykirk and Whitsome in Berwickshire where he spent six and a half years. Their next move was to London, where Raymond served for two years or so as Associate Minister at St Columba's, Pont Street.

In 1980 Raymond and Mary retired to Edinburgh. He looked after Mary until her death in 2000 with outstanding dedication and remarkable patience. There was opportunity too to keep in touch with his extensive network of friends and his growing family. His family relationships were always at the heart of his life: while the death in 1992 of Alan was, as we have heard, an immense shock and sadness, there was his strong relationship with his daughters, who in turn have cared for him with such devotion these past years, and his great reciprocated affection for his grandchildren. In retirement too he pursued and developed the wide and varied range of interests he had always had, of which Diana has spoken. He had always been involved with the Leprosy Mission of which he was latterly Honorary Scottish President. A long-standing member of the Labour Party, his commitment was much admired within the party, not least when, less than 20 years ago, already at a relatively advanced age, he was delivering many more house-to-house leaflets than anyone else. And in this very church when he happened to be

preaching on the Sunday after the election that Neil Kinnock famously and perhaps unexpectedly lost in 1992, Raymond agonized over what he should say but stuck to his guns in speaking of the Gospel imperative of social justice and care of those who are vulnerable, and John Smith, who worshipped here regularly stayed behind that morning, specially to thank him.

Raymond was a bit of a paradox. In so many ways he was modest and unassuming (above all in his underestimating his own achievements and abilities), but he was also an unashamed self-confessed celebrity-hunter and had steadfast determination.

We give thanks to God for the life of this thoroughly good man, and for all the other lives he has influenced and touched for good through his faithful commitment to walking in the footsteps of Jesus, embodying the Gospel hope and the steadfast love of God which was his foundation and inspiration all his days.

The full tribute and prayer can be seen on the website. www.fost.org.uk

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Miss Winifred Margaret GOW (1920 - 2012)

Miss Winifred Margaret Gow died at Florabank Home, Haddington on Thursday 28 June 2012.

Winifred served with BMS from 1947-1951 and 1956-1981. The funeral service took place at Mortonhall Crematorium, Edinburgh on Monday 9 July 2012. It was followed by a Thanksgiving Service at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Haddington.

Winifred was a member of Bristo Baptist Church, Edinburgh and was appointed as a missionary in 1947 to Bhiwani, where she worked until 1952. After a break of four years because of family responsibilities in the UK, she was appointed to Baraut where she served from 1956-57, as a church worker and evangelist. She worked tirelessly among the village churches of that area, and in Baraut itself where she and her colleague Jennifer Pell made a highly effective team. When the church of North India was established, she put herself at the disposal of the united church and the Bishop of Delhi asked her to live and work in Ajmer in Rajasthan, at that time in the Diocese of Delhi. There she

worked as a 'church sister' visiting, counselling, speaking and sharing fully in the life of several large churches. She was a valued colleague to her fellow workers, both missionary and national and was greatly missed in the newly formed diocese of Rajasthan when she retired in 1981.

After her return to the UK in 1981, Winifred retained an active interest in the BMS and was a member of the local BMS Support Group. On her return to Edinburgh she lived for some time at the home of two Bristo members, Bill and Florence Christie. She then spent several years living in the Abbeyfield House in Inverleith Row, which overlooks the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. While living there, she joined the local Episcopal Church as it was very close to where she was staying, and remained with that denomination until her death. The 'Botanics' were of special significance to Winifred, because when she was a baby she was the first baby ever to be allowed to be wheeled around the Garden in a pram. Prams were not allowed at the time but she had a childhood disability and so was granted a special dispensation. She loved flowers and the Botanics and frequently visited them when she was living in Abbeyfield House. Even after she moved to Haddington some years ago, she made an annual visit to the 'Botanics'.

We give thanks for Winifred's life and pray that the Lord will comfort her family and friends at this sad time.

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Lillian SMITH (16/07/1930 - 14/01/2012)

Lillian was brought up in the Whitson area of Edinburgh, the eldest of two sisters. She attended, firstly, Balgreen School and later Boroughmuir High School. During the war, It was during her teens Lillian became responsive to God's call: a life of Christian service. And so on leaving school, she trained as a nurse at Chalmers Hospital, and on completion of her training she was recognised as 'top nurse for her year'. Thereafter, she did her midwifery training in Glasgow.

However, Lillian's desire was to serve as a missionary, and after a year's preparation at St Colm's College, she sailed for India in 1956. She served with the Church of South India in the Christina Rainy Hospital (Madras), where she was a Sister and also a trainer of nurses. She met

the Rev Lesslie Newbigin and formed a great appreciation for his ministry and his writings. However, as a result of poor health, Lillian returned to Scotland in 1972 but these never seemed to hinder her capacity to embrace a very full and varied life.

She worked at the Eastern General Hospital (Edinburgh) where she became a Clinical Tutor. She was highly respected in the nursing profession. She achieved a BA degree through the Open University. She worshipped and served in Wester Hailes and by 1977 was commissioned as a Deaconess and later ordained into the Diaconate. The Church of Scotland appointed Lillian to work in Fintry Parish Church in 1981, and thereafter Trinity Parish Church, Dundee from 1986. At Fintry she helped establish home groups as well as being involved in the pastoral care of the community. She often spoke with great warmth of her work in the large Trinity parish church context.

Retirement was not retirement for Lillian, as she became a member and elder of the Steeple Church. There, she helped organise the catering for the Exodus outreach event. She was a long-term member of a house group. She helped organise the catering for and occasionally spoke at the Tuesday lunchtime meetings. She participated in the Monday Club. She was much loved by the Steeple fellowship.

Lillian continued her involvement in the Diaconate, and was also a representative at the World Diaconate Conference. She also participated in the regular meetings of the Fellowship of St Thomas and the Association of Returning Overseas Missionaries. Every May, Lillian would go back to Edinburgh and help in the Christian Aid Book Fair held in the St Andrews church building. She did this for over twenty years, and was very much the expert in children's books. We acknowledge her faithfulness of support to this annual event.

Of course, Lillian had a passion for collecting books, especially the 'Chalet School' stories by Elinor Brent Dyer and also the 'Abbey Girls' series by Elsie Oxenham. She attended gatherings of like-interested people as an informed contributor, as well as visiting the location of the Chalet Schools in Switzerland. She was a member of the National Trust of Scotland attending local meetings. She was also extremely gifted in embroidery and in general enjoyed craft work, particularly card-making.

We celebrate a very talented woman who has used her life extremely creatively and who exemplified 'faithful commitment' in whatever she undertook.

Of course, we know that Lillian is far more than a narrative of the many varied contexts of her life. She was hospitable and generous, thoughtful, and extremely kind. She engaged with people of all backgrounds. Her life was set upon serving her Master, and she lived a 'way of life' that reflected clearly that commitment to Him; she was a person of living faith in Jesus Christ. She meant a great deal to her sister Lisbeth, and her niece, Denise. She has been a blessing to many in the Steeple, and I'm certain that is true to many more in Dundee, Edinburgh, and Chennai. Lillian exuded 'life' even in the years she lived beyond the three score and ten.

I give the final word to a young man whose home is Chennai but worshipped at the Steeple and studied in our city until recently. He emailed from Chennai on Friday and said simply 'Lillian was an amazing lady'!

We extend our love and sympathy to Lisbeth, to Denise, to Charlie, to all the family at this time of loss.

Tribute by Rev David Clark

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Let us pray

1. for our Annual meetings at Dunblane on 29th September, for the speakers and those who will lead our devotions and the Cathedral Service.
2. for the bishops and presbyters of the CSI that they may be faithful shepherds.
3. for the bishops and presbyters of the CNI and Mar Thoma churches that they may give supportive leadership.
4. for the members and adherents of the CSI, CNI and Mar Thoma churches that they may be regular in their attendance for prayer

- and worship and may support the work and outreach of the churches with their gifts.
5. for the doctors, nurses and other staff who serve in the mission hospitals and dispensaries that they may be guided in their diagnosis and treatment.
 6. that the churches will have the resources to support their pastors and medical staff.
 7. that the churches will be able to maintain their institutions – medical and educational and be able to seek new fields of service to the community.
 8. that Christians will play their part in the political life of the panchayats, towns and cities, and states and central government and have a vibrant Christian influence.
 9. that the Christian institutions will seek to serve the needy in the community, including the uneducated in the villages and the needy sick and leprosy patients.
 10. that Christians will give a consistent moral leadership against favouritism, bribery and corruption.
 11. that we may all be resolute in our Christian witness at all times.
 12. that CMCH Vellore and other Christian institutions may use anniversary and other celebrations for rededication and a reassessment of their witness and work.
 13. that the Dalit community is not despised but given its rightful place in the life of the nation.

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A Wedding in Bangladesh

Reported by Dipty Linda and James Pender who work as Advisors with the Church of Bangladesh Social Development Programme in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Yesterday we attended the wedding of Utom and Kanta. We know both their families pretty well, as Kanta's father was the accountant at the CBSDP office in Meherpur and his wife is the warden at the Girls' Hostel, while Utom's father worked in Rajshahi Mission Hospital and has a pond from which we regularly get fresh fish! Unlike a wedding in

UP which mostly consists of family and close friends the whole community seemed to be at this one. In fact, talking to Kanta's father Anondo (his name means 'joy' and whenever we meet we seem to share a joke or a laugh so he is appropriately named) apparently 750 people attended the reception! It got me thinking... a wedding with just close family and friends would simply be impossible in Bangladesh. Community bonds are so strong that it would just be unthinkable not to invite all the people that you are connected to, such as at this wedding where colleagues mixed with neighbours. As at least 4 different ethnicities were present, food had to be appropriate for people of three different religions (so chicken and goat but no beef or pork) and of course guests were allowed to bring friends or relatives that happened to be with them (we took Linda's brother and sister)!

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Send Health.



<http://www.thejacobswell.org/>

‘Jacob’s Well’ will be pleased to accept unused medicines (in date and still in foil).

Based in Hull. Jacob’s Well phone number is 01482 88 1162

Address is: 2 Ladygate, Beverley, E. Yorkshire. HU17 8BH

Recently medicines have been sent to Africa and Romania.

Supplies and medical equipment are the first priority. These come from a variety of sources - manufacturers, hospitals, pharmacies, surgeries, and patients. Donated medicines can be passed on after careful checking and documenting, provided there is adequate shelf life to meet the recipient’s regulations and requirements and the condition is good.

Many medical agencies have items which are still in working order which are replaced for new technology. In many cases such old equipment is better than what is currently in use in poverty situations. It is also often cheaper to operate and better suited to their conditions.

News from the Friends of the Church in India.



It may interest our readers to know that our sister organisation in England, the Friends of the Church in India (FCI) is proposing to consider widening its friendship to all the United and Uniting Churches of South Asia, including the Mar Thoma Church. Martin Heath has published an article in their magazine 'Pilgrim' on this topic, to inform discussion. Previously only Church of South India (CSI) and Church of North India (CNI) were considered.

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Fellowship of St. Thomas

The Annual Meeting will be held on 29th September 2012 starting at 10 am – see the programme on the back cover. The programme has a medical theme in view of the Jubilee celebrations of Friends of Vellore.

The Buffet Lunch at 12.15 pm is included in the charge of £12, but members must pay separately for any drinks. Please send a cheque for £12 per person to Mr. John McCafferty, 87 Falcon Court, Edinburgh EH10 4AG before 15th September 2012. Cheques should be payable to Fellowship of St. Thomas.

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For information about the Fellowship of St. Thomas contact the Secretary: Rev. Murdoch MacKenzie, "Torridon", 4 Ferryfield Road, Connel, OBAN, Argyll PA37 1SR.

Tel. 01631 710 550

Email: mackenziema@ymail.com

The Fellowship of St. Thomas

Annual Celebration

on Saturday, 29th September 2012

in Dunblane Cathedral.

* * * *

10.00 am: Tea/Coffee and registration in Cathedral Church Upstairs Hall.

10.30 am: Welcome and Opening Prayer –
President, Margaret Nutter

10.40 am: CMCH Vellore and Friends of Vellore today –
Revd Canon Dr Isaac Poobalan

11.00 am: 5 minute reflections on medical work from recent visits:
Val Nellist – Calcutta,
Murdoch MacKenzie – Chennai
Maureen Buwert – Kanchipuram
Margaret Nutter - Pakistan

11.30 am: Open discussion with contributions from the floor relating to medical work.

12 .15 pm: Buffet Lunch at India Gate Restaurant.

1.45 pm: Annual General Meeting in Cathedral Upstairs Hall.

2.30 pm: Communion Service in Dunblane Cathedral
using CSI Liturgy.

Celebrant - The Revd Canon Dr Isaac Poobalan,

Rector, St John's Episcopal Church, Aberdeen

Preacher - Dr. Anderson Jeremiah,

Lecturer in World Christianity, Department of

Politics, Philosophy and Religion, Lancaster
University

3.45 pm: Tea/Coffee in Cathedral Church Hall.

The Friends of the Church in India

FCI Day

Indian YMCA, Fitzroy Square, London

Saturday, 6th October 2012 at 10.30 am

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