

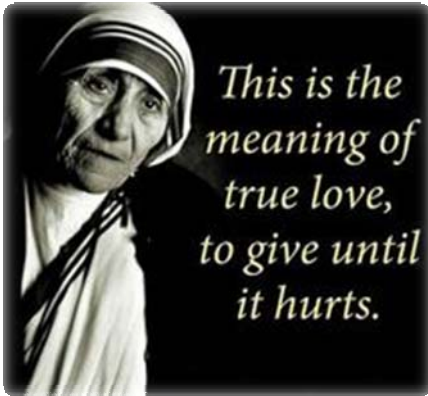
PARTNERPLAN

An ecumenical appointment with

The **Methodist Church** 

Pat Jamison - Bangladesh February 2015

Apologies for the late arrival of this letter.



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Hello Everyone

This month lots of people celebrated St. Valentine's Day. It's a time when husbands and wives, boyfriends and girlfriends show love by sending flowers, gifts and cards. As much as it's a lovely time, like many other special occasions it has become very commercial and a way of making money. Even here in Bangladesh red roses doubled in price for this occasion. I often hear many friends, mainly male saying they don't have to wait until Valentine's Day to show love, they do it every day and indeed that is so true.

Jesus Christ showed love in many ways to everyone He met and I try to imitate Christ by showing love to people I meet every day. In this land of 160 million+ people and a city of approximately 12-15 million it is hard to share that love with everyone. Each day I leave my home I am faced with people who are asking for something. Many of the people are begging on the streets as their only source of income. My heart wants to give to every single one I meet however it's just impossible. At times I really struggle with what God really wants me to do, who I can help and where I should be.



each time. One day I had no change and he told me to leave it until another day he trusts me and

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we have developed a lovely friendship. When he sees my car approaching he runs with the paper and is so grateful to have just a little bit extra taka every day.

Another lady begs on the same road Shudan sells papers. She has a crutch and her arm in a sling, both from old injuries however she still keeps them in use. She has such a wide smile my friends children have labelled her Smiley Miley. She has been beaten, attacked by a dog, had a fall sustaining a fracture and several other injuries yet she still returns to the streets to beg. I just love this lady. On an occasion when there was a massive traffic jam and my car was stationary for quite some time I had the opportunity to talk with her and she told me she has two daughters, one married one not. The unmarried daughter is studying business management at university. I thought of the love she was showing to her daughter by begging so she could provide her with a good education and a much better life. I often try to communicate with her, give some money and on occasions medicines for severe pain she was had had due to the fall she sustained.

Many of you are aware of how much I love Mother Teresa and her quotes. To me she was someone who showed such love to everyone no matter where and who. I read a book about her private writings and picked it up again to read recently. Mother Teresa struggled. She had a task to do and knew it was very much a call from God. She had to overcome many obstacles, yet she became so well known, showed such love and was loved by so many more. A tiny little Albania nun who spoke up for what she knew God was asking her to do, coped with many difficulties in her life, had periods of doubt and darkness, never ever seen herself as special or perfect, yet achieved so much and went on to be a Nobel Peace Prize Winner. The work she started continues and has spread throughout the world working in many difficult places and situations.

I have been reflecting on a range of biblical characters who could be seen as imperfect such as Gideon who was afraid, Abraham considered he was too old, Timothy thought he was too young, Martha worried about everything, Jonah ran from God and the Samaritan woman was divorced more than once yet God used every one of them in many different ways forgetting about their imperfections and doubts. Here I am older, sometimes afraid and certainly imperfect yet knowing and continually asking God to use me more and more whenever and wherever. I am a perfectionist and everything in my life has to be just right and I strive for the best. I am often reminded by people that I don't have to be perfect, I don't have to get it right all the time I just need to try and God will use me.

Since arriving in Bangladesh almost five years ago I have attempted to speak Bangla and even after all this time I still cannot speak at all well. I struggle and at times it's like a 'thorn in my flesh.' Yet speaking with someone just a few days ago made me realise it doesn't matter if I can speak decent, good or even perfect Bangla God brought me to this land to love the people and that is what I strive to do every day by helping the vulnerable, providing assistance to the needy, giving advice to people who need it and may not be able to afford to attend a clinic or hospital and to constantly be His servant.

In this land I admire how family is so important, love not only between husbands and wives but also between siblings and aging parents. Usually when a son marries they bring their new wife to live with his parents however now many people are moving to towns and cities to obtain employment in factories, offices or as service workers so often this does not happen. Sons however still help parents and younger siblings by supporting education fees, paying for school uniforms and for hospital and medicine charges.

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This month I have been editing several reports for central office and one section of one particular report stood out for me. In Jessore south of Bangladesh there is a technical training school funded by several organisations of which Church of Scotland is one of them. At Christmas the young men who board at the hostel connected to the institute were given a small amount of money as a Christmas gift equivalent to about £5. They all bought something mainly clothes however many of them bought gifts for their younger siblings. It was their money yet they have a love for their brothers and sisters and so it was shared with them.



My ayah has eight nieces and nephews and as she has no children and two jobs she helps to support them and several other children in her camp. Two of the children are now older and have jobs, five are at school and one only 1 ½ years. She has such a love for these children and so do I. I love to visit their homes, chat to them as best I can and enjoy eating snacks and drinking cha with

them. I am so pleased the BB Company from my church are helping for now to support their education. The photo shows left to right Dawat 7, Shubo 11, Janatul 10 and Arfad 4 all in their new school uniform.

“I am not sure exactly what heaven will be like, but I know that when we die and it comes time for God to judge us, he will not ask, 'How many good things have you done in your life?' rather he will ask, 'How much love did you put into what you did?’”

Mother Teresa

Thanks for

- Love shown to me in so many ways in this land
- Great training held in Old Dhaka with staff all part of the Community Health and Nutrition Programme (CHN)
- Being able to attend a beautiful wedding and 40th birthday party this month
- The start of fruit season beginning with delicious strawberries from Rajshahi
- Safety as I travel during so many hortals (country wide strikes)
- Retired Bishop Mondol celebrating his 40th Anniversary as a Bishop



Prayers for

- The cessation of blockades, hortals, violence and dialogue between political parties
- The families of the people who have been killed, those who have been injured due to violence and of those killed in the recent ferry disaster
- Safety as we all travel to and from central office and in other programme areas
- Further training next week planned with CHN in Old Dhaka and in this month with all CBSDP managers

Until next month

Pat

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