

Canadian Vellore Ludhiana Committee

Ministering God's love through medical training & care at CMC Vellore & CMC Ludhiana since 1944



Committee News

To all our supporters, it has been longer than usual between newsletters but that is not because we have been taking a break! As a committee, we have been extremely busy working on a number of organizational and structural changes. In the future, these changes will enable us to better control how funds are used, meet the new Canadian legal requirements and improve our efforts in both, advancing healthcare for those who cannot afford it, and professional healthcare education. This should provide a solid foundation for the Canadian Vellore Ludhiana Committee to continue effectively ministering, in India, through the Christian Medical Colleges and Hospitals of Vellore and Ludhiana, for many years to come.

A few months ago, we were surprised to receive a phone call from Elizabeth Cockburn of Owen Sound. Until this call, we didn't know her but she had tracked us down via our web site, cmchospitals.ca. Her call was to tell us about her Grandmother who was passionate about the medical work in Ludhiana, in the early 1900's, and often talked to her about it. One of the things left to Elizabeth by her Grandmother was the script of a speech given at the annual meeting of the "Women's Christian Medical College, Ludhiana, India" by the President, Dr. J. Gary Wildman. This meeting was held in Toronto at the McGill Street Y.W.C.A Hall, on November 21, 1913.

It is quite obvious from his speech that this support for Ludhiana had been going on for sometime! Dr. Wildman refers to donations, in previous years and to funds and staff sent from Canada to India. In addition, he also notes that a change in name occurred in 1913 from "North India School of Medicine for Christian Women", in Ludhiana, to "Women's Christian Medical College." This signified a change in status from a school to a college. *We thought supporting CMC Ludhiana since 1944 was notable but, this being 2013, we now know we have been actively doing this for 100 years or more!* Our thanks go out to Elizabeth for providing this information. We are eager to find further historical information to determine when this began here in Toronto and Canada. We'll need to acquire some Sherlock Holmes' hats and do a little detective work!

In our last newsletter, we announced that Linnea Good and her family were planning to visit both CMC Ludhiana and CMC Vellore. With much hard work and determination, Linnea's dream came true and she and her family began their "pilgrimage" to India in February 2013.

She is a captivating writer; the following are two reports condensed from her web-log. We are delighted to share them with you and will give you links at the end so you can go online to enjoy the complete web-log. For our Ontario supporters, please note that Linnea will be performing in southern Ontario this coming Fall. Information on this is also available on her web site.

Making a Joyful Noise in Ludhiana – Linnea Good

In February-March of this year, Linnea Good, David Jonsson and their 3 children, Patrick (16), Nicole (14) and Isaac (10), travelled with the support of the Vellore Ludhiana Committee to India to offer their music ministry at the CMCs north and south.

"My work is for a King." Dame Edith Brown, founder of CMC Ludhiana

continued from page 1



From sunrise to late night the city streets teem with weeping cars, scooters, bicycle and auto rickshaws, children walking to school in uniform,

women in bright salwar kamise, men in groups in front of tight-knit shop openings. Fabrics, dresses, jewelery, sandals and plastic utensils are on offer in shop fronts, alleys open like illuminated caves, sweets and fruits sit geometrically stacked on large plates, alongside incense, strings of marigold...

The traffic in old Ludhiana, where the streets are narrow and winding, is a river. All is reversed: drivers on the left, pedestrians stepping into the oncoming flow, moving seamlessly to avoid what zooms past behind them, advancing just enough to beat the onrushing mob. Children chat as they slip along.

In my presentations at the CMC, I have joked a bit about Canada-Meets-India. I describe western bewilderment with the Indian traffic system, with an intelligence of its own but which can look like utter lawlessness to the inexperienced eye.

I tell them how Canadians are people who have space and who say 'excuse me' and 'sorry' all the time, though we don't know why. The picture of Canadians excusing and sorry-ing their way through the roiling streets of India is comic indeed.

We are here to offer music as refreshment and Christian nurture. So, we lead student devotions, sing with choirs, preach in worship, address student groups, travel to the nearby town of Moga to sing in Sacred Heart School, visit and learn about the hospital.

There is a respectful gentleness to the students and staff of CMC that is so sweet I am completely disarmed. Everywhere we walk, we are greeted with smiles (yes, some stares) and "Hello, Mam" or "Good afternoon." David is "Mr David." Nicole is "Baby" to her elders (much to her chagrin). A quiet patience fills the room after our first evening's students' association presentation. Young people stand around me after we are done, asking a polite question or two and then simply standing after I have finished answering. I am not used to such serene attention. Of course the Indian head wiggle does nothing to answer my questions...

I can tell there is a little rivalry between Ludhiana and her sister hospital down south because every time Rev Stanley introduces us to groups, he says, "Vellore wanted them to come, but we got them first!" He and his wife are "local guardians" to 74 students who come from outside cities and who need a parent-liaison while living on campus. He is always answering his cell phone's popeye-the-sailorman ring, making plans for the drums and guitar to be transported, and asking his many assistants to bring us some forgotten piece of equipment or show us the lunch room.

Rev Stanley has convened a CMC student choir to share a performance with us, and a student "choreography" (dance drama). In this way, we are assured of a large audience. And so, after our first night's presentation, we stay on for our first of three late-night choir practises to prepare for performing four of my songs together. The students are strong, true singers and study, work and play longer hours than I can fathom. After dress rehearsal has officially ended at 11pm, I hear that the students have stayed on to practice the choreography. They knocked off at 2:30am and we awoke to find that a huge, plastic concert banner had appeared on the front steps of the college chapel. I see such posters magnificently appearing all over the campus, but Rev Stanley bursts into laughter as he explains that his team has moved the one banner from place to place all day long.



To my great joy, Patrick and Nicole are joining us in performance. Nicole plays percussion and Patrick the guitar. Isaac runs our LCD projections when needed, and although the most hidden, he is the star of this visiting family, receiving so much attention that he simply does not know how to react. Neither he – nor his sister – knows why people think he is so cute.

continued from page 2



Not a day goes by that a student does not come to me and ask me to pray for them. They are just beginning a course of education here at the college hospital that will be their journey for life. What they ask me to pray about, however, is that God would direct them to greater faith and give them guidance in how to become better followers of Jesus.

One early morning, Mrs Renuka, head of evangelism, comes to fetch us, so that David and I can join the chaplains for their rounds in the hospital wards. The team of 4 chaplains enters each ward in the building, moving into the waiting room where worried and weary people draw near. There, they ensure that they have the names of all those in care in the ward. Then, Mrs Renuka and I pull our dupattas over our heads and one of the chaplains prays in Hindi. Filled with the mixture of anxiety, tension, exhaustion and longing that hangs in the room, filled with an overwhelming sense of people's reliance on God's healing, filled with a sense that I am somehow participating as one who shares the chaplains' gift of prayer and, above all, filled with a sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit, I am overcome.

As I step out of our guesthouse and greet smile after smile, I feel elated. Where I thought that my first couple of weeks in this hemisphere would require a super-human effort to retain my stamina, I feel light and energized. David and I simply can't stop smiling. The sound of Hindi speech, like raindrops tumbling on water, and the rapid fire of Punjabi join with the meeping, the honking, the sirens, the choir, the muezzins nearby, the clank and clamour of the industry around the college, rising like a great call to worship above the CMC walls.

Touching the Hem of Jesus in Vellore – Linnea Good

I love the moment in music leading when a glimmer begins to appear in the group – an adjustment of posture, an expansion in the air - as singers begin to perceive the power of their own singing. We spend our time shadowing the chaplains, singing in their devotions and services, leading adult and children's choirs, speaking with student groups about our musical life of faith, preaching and sometimes teaching liturgical music leading or biblical storytelling. It is stretching us in every way.

"Jesus, when did I see you hungry? When did I see you scared?... You know that I care. But hey – when did I see you there?" (Mt25) The crowd – children or adults – begins to smile and even giggle. A bible passage as a rap; imagine that!

The voices of the children in our 4 choirs rebound throughout the room – sometimes an aquarium-like confluence of sound, sometimes pure peals of choral bells.

We have sung with parents in the children's ward, preschoolers in mama's arms, grandmothers with little ones clinging to their legs, a newborn lying on dad's lap with feeding tube hanging. One nurse translates into Tamil; the chaplain translates into



Hindi. "God is so good..." I tell the story of the Prodigal Son as an expression of comfort, mistakes, jealousy and a Parent's uncomplicated love; most of those sitting in the room are Hindu. I say: "That is what God's love is like" and some parents nod.

All I know is that whatever I have planned will not be. If I think it will be a small, intimate group, 300 students show up with technology, chairs and snacks. If I prepare for a large workshop, 15 or 1 comes. There is a keyboard, there is none. There is no pedal, the power cord doesn't exactly fit in the electrical connection or the sun melts the tape that is holding it in. David plays drum kit when there is one, a chair, a child's toy drum or a box.



continued from page 3



This is Anshu's last "check-up" visit in 3 years. She and her dad will return to their home in the northern state of Assam, 3 days' journey. He thanks God she is cancer-free. Younger Nikita joins us, trailing an IV tower; all that can be seen of her face is weary but willing eyes. David and I return to children's oncology a couple of days later to visit them again. All have been discharged but Naim. His father, in long white Muslim garb and kufi hat, is glad to see us. Naim had been declared free of cancer last December and by January it

was all back. He and his dad are away from their home in Bengal – also 3 days' journey from here. We visit, pray with them. Dad takes the elevator with us; he is on his way to noon prayers down the street.

I am blown away by the breadth of the ministry in this place: the variety of needs, languages, spiritualities that all must be respected, the medical concerns that must be dealt with quickly and for little cost, the organizing that must make it all work. We eat with international visitors most every morning, people learning on an "observership", teaching laboratory procedures or quality control, people who came and got "hooked" on the place and return 1-5 times a year. They say patients travel great distances here because they trust that they will get "honest" health care. "People feel the presence of God here. They say it over and over to us."

Mrs Jennie greets us at the Low Cost Effective Health Care Unit, where a group sits in the stone courtyard before us - parents and family mostly of patients, largely Hindu, entirely non-English speaking. Mr Raja interprets as I tell a Jesus healing story and sing a well-known chorus that I know can be found in Tamil.

We make to leave, but there appears a small crowd in front of me - people asking for my prayer. I am thrown off by this request. But what have I been doing all these weeks at the two CMC Hospitals but turbo praying, reflecting, bible studying, relying on the Spirit, singing the faith? I reach out and touch each face, praying for God's healing mercy, extremely moved by the trust God has shown me.

We return to Vidialayam School on campus, to sing with the elementary children a second time. Rev Giftus tells us that the teachers were reminded at our last visit of how they used to have visiting musicians regularly at the school. "She brought the music back," they said.

"What story should I tell?" I ask Serene, who is 11 and the daughter of the pastor, as we make our way to the Rehabilitation Chapel on Sunday morning. "Maybe the one about the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' cloak?" she offers. Such a story for India: Jesus in a crowd that is pressing in on all sides, a woman who is untouchable, but who dares to reach. Jesus says 'Who touched me?' and you can almost hear the disciples laughing: 'What do you *mean* who touched you? We're in India, dude; there are a billion and a quarter people here.'

Go ahead and ask for what you need. God is listening.

Linnea Good is a singer-songwriter / Christian Educator in British Columbia. Her web site is www.LinneaGood.com, her blog is at <http://linneagood.blogspot.ca>. Short videos of the visit to India are found on her YouTube channel. She and David invite you to come to one of their concerts or workshops in southwest Ontario this fall; see her web calendar.

In Closing

Thank you for all your prayer and financial support for these two amazing colleges/hospitals over the many, many years! Soon, "since 1944" will change to "since 1913" or even earlier. We look forward to what God has planned for us to accomplish together, in the future.

DONATION & CONTACT FORM

Please complete and mail to:

The Vellore Ludhiana Committee, 23 Farmview Cres, TORONTO, ONTARIO M2J 1G5

Tel. 416-921-2301, email: vel.lud@sympatico.ca, please visit us on the web at: www.cmchospitals.ca

Please make cheque payable to: Vellore Ludhiana Committee.

Date: _____

Please accept my gift of \$ _____ to be used:

As needed CMC Vellore CMC Ludhiana Divided equally Other: _____

Name: _____ Address: _____ City: _____

Province: _____ Postal Code: _____ Telephone: _____ Email: _____