

Prayer Letter

June 2010

Dear Friend,

The sky was blue with a few scudding clouds. The pathway stretched across a landscape of fields and rolling hills; a patchwork of brilliant yellow rape seed and greens of every hue. Through the woods bluebells were spread like a carpet among the trees, where primroses, violets, forgetmenots and other wild flowers had also sprung to life. The air was full of bird song. I took deep breaths of the fresh air, smelt the lilac and revelled in the glory of God's creation. There was new life, and energy everywhere. It was Springtime in England.

On 5 April I had left Vellore for Thailand, eagerly looking forward to the prospect of meeting BMS friends and colleagues again in Chiang Mai. It was the time of our Asia retreat. Those were such good days, sharing and listening to God's word. I continue to be amazed at just how different we all are and yet how God chooses to use us all as we commit our lives to him.

The journey to England was long, especially as I had to go through Indian immigration as I was changing airlines. In through Arrivals where my papers were well perused and then out again through Departures with many hours in between. Fortunately I managed to find a seat and through the early morning hours shared an interesting conversation with a young Muslim couple returning from Vellore to Oman. Once in the UK it was a smiling "good morning", a quick look at my passport, with no papers to plough through. I was home!

Perhaps I had not quite envisaged what the next two months would entail. Apart from escaping the increasing heat of Vellore (which realised temperatures of 116°F this year in May) the main reason was to undergo a cataract operation. In a wonderful way God worked to enable this to be done at the end of April at St Thomas's Hospital. I managed to attend the Baptist Assembly meetings and with the permission of the consultant I travelled to Plymouth



the following day. This proved to be another special time; meeting many friends and colleagues but also gaining inspiration, encouragement and renewed challenges for the days ahead. I am sure that those for whom this opportunity is available every year cannot fully comprehend what it means for us forus. It is a rare privilege.

Following the Assembly meetings Valerie Pitt, with whom I have been staying in Sevenoaks, and I spent some restful days on the edge of Dartmoor. What perhaps had failed to dawn on me was the fact that for the next six weeks or so I would be without glasses. Having thought that after a long time I would be able to immerse myself in books, write and use the computer I suddenly found that this was not possible. Doing any of these things could only be done for short periods. It was easy to feel frustrated until God reminded me that I could be spending more time listening and talking with him! God continues to teach me. Not being able to drive meant some curtailment of visiting but some journeys were made by train and good friends were marvellous on coming to visit me. There have been some glorious days out walking in the countryside and long phone calls. Valerie has been the most gracious chauffeur, amidst her busy life, often picking me up at the station and joining in some of the outings with friends who needed transport.

London transport has always fascinated me and as I travel

I watch people. So many nationalities now in London. Faces of different colours and shapes and all wearing a variety of clothing! But... it is faces that interest me. Some are so obviously alight with expectation, some bored, some weary, some deep in thought while others pour over papers and then suddenly, realising that their station has come, hastily stuff the papers into a bag and leap off the train. Few people talk and it seems that most know where they are going. Like rivers in full spate they flow up the escalators which disgorge their flood of humanity into streams heading in different directions. Behind each face, each person, I know there is a story.

The crowds to which I will return on 25 June will be larger than those on the London underground. Most of the faces will be dark. In Vellore there will be many different languages heard and people will come from thousands of miles across the length and breadth of India and beyond. Behind each face there will be a story to tell. I will have the privilege to share many of those stories as I work with children, young people and patients and journey with them.

So in a couple of days I will be back in the heat and dust of India. There will be more opportunities and challenges to share God's love. What could be more exciting?!

Ann

Give thanks for:

- A successful operation.
- All the beauty of spring which I have enjoyed.
- Faithful and supporting friends.

Pray for:

- Strength of body, mind and spirit for the demands of each day.
- Discernment of God's will for new challenges.
- The Hostel parents and new children joining this year at Balanilayam.
- Wisdom and insight as I teach at Bible Class and school.
- All the love and sensitivity I need as I journey with the haematology patients.