

Prayer Letter November 2009

Dear friend,

I do not usually write this month but having missed October it seemed right to get news to you before Christmas.

It is just over three weeks since I returned from Australia. It was once again a special time in many ways. A time of renewal of special friendships, Christian fellowship and plenty of fresh air! How I wished that I could bring back a few boxes of the latter to our polluted Vellore! It is amazing how God works in our lives and I must share a couple of instances of this with you from my time in Australia.

It was a small shop and I had entered to find a few items to take back to Vellore. The only salesperson was on her mobile phone and she was crying. My friend and I wandered around the shop, choosing various items and then came to pay the bill. The lady was so obviously distressed and continued to cry as she totalled the bill. My friend gently placed her hand on her arm and said that we were so sorry that she was so unhappy. The whole story poured out and there in the shop we listened and then prayed for her. My friend was able to tell her where she could get help in a church in the city which was open in the lunch hour. She was an Indian lady and before we left we were able to share together something about the land of her birth.

It was a glorious day and three of us drove north of Perth for a considerable distance, to one of the national parks. The spring flowers in Western Australia are quite wonderful. I had a short time to wander on my own and was thanking God for this opportunity and his wonderful creation. I noticed three nuns sitting playing cards at a picnic table. They were dark skinned. I patted one on the shoulder and asked her if they were all enjoying their game. "Oh yes" she said "we have just been on retreat and tomorrow are returning to the places where we work. This



is just a day of relaxation for us." "Where are you from?" they asked me. I told them that I was working in India. "Oh, but we are all Indians." they said. As we talked I was to discover that all three were from Tamil Nadu and all three knew about Vellore. To their delight we chatted on in Tamil for a while. What a coincidence? No, I think that was just one of God's little extra gifts. Why else should I meet three Christian ladies from Tamil Nadu in the middle of a national park in Australia miles from anywhere?

Balanilayam

The Hostel has been functioning well since June and the children are obviously happy and settled. Sam, the little boy who, at seven years was struggling, having not attended school until coming here, has progressed by leaps and bounds. I had been helping him with reading before I went away and he brought all the other children over to see me the first evening I arrived back in Vellore!

Hospital

It was good to be back in the wards again visiting patients, especially those whom I knew before my time in Australia. Some of the children have progressed so well and are growing physically and once more back at school. When coming for their check-ups a visit to the playroom is a priority and they all congregate to play games and do craft work together.

The team from Bangladesh

The team are nearing the end of their time here now. Being the first group to have this experience has not been easy but they all agree that they have benefited. I will be sad to see them go in December as we have come to know each other well now. The next group will arrive in January and I hope that I will be able to help and support them also.

School

After a term of working with the 11th standard children at Scudder school I had Scripture exam papers to mark on my return. This was an interesting exercise and most of them had obviously taken in much of what I had taught, which was encouraging. Having spent the term studying the ten commandments, I had given their final question of the exam paper as "What was, for you, the most challenging of the commandments? Give your reasons." For the majority it was 'keep the Sabbath day holy' and 'honour your father and mother.' The keeping of the former is so hard for young people here with the pressure of studies and the latter... well, teenagers certainly are the same all over the world! What was so good was that they were all so honest in their answers and certainly did not write just what they thought I would like to hear!

The north east monsoon has arrived, although so far its activity has been subdued. So far Tamil Nadu has a deficiency of 78 per cent for October but we hope that the rainfall will increase. We are so dependent on this monsoon to carry us through until next June or July. Although so badly needed, the rain always brings misery for many people. Small huts which survive the long hot months crumble, roofs leak and the earth is damp and cold. I may complain that clothes do not dry and that everything feels damp, that things go mouldy and that our poorly kept roads succumb to large pot holes, making driving hazardous... BUT... my roof does not leak and if the temperature drops at night I can pull up a blanket to cover myself. While many have to depend on damp wood to light fires I can use my gas cylinder to cook and heat water.

Ahead there is plenty to keep me occupied... Scripture and Sunday Bible classes to prepare, practises for our carol service at church and just the contacts and relationships which I have with many people that are so important.

I will not be writing again before Christmas but will be sending out 'Ann's Activities' by e-mail each month. If you wish to receive this please send me your up to date e-mail address.

As we celebrate once again the coming of Jesus may you experience deep joy and peace... the joy and peace which only comes as we open our hearts to him and give of ourselves to others.

Ann

Give thanks for:

- ◆ Safety in travelling throughout my time in Australia.
- ◆ Good and meaningful friendships.
- ◆ The gifts of God's wonderful creation which I was able to enjoy.

Pray for:

- ◆ Balanilayam and the ongoing work there with the children.
- ◆ All the contacts which I have both at hospital and school.
- ◆ The ability to teach well.
- ◆ A continuing sense of God's presence and his will in all that I do.
- ◆ Strength and energy in every aspect of my life.