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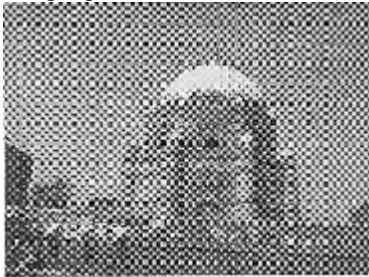
Dear friends,

Greetings from Pakistan! And first of all a deep apology because a letter I wrote in June went astray and therefore did not reach you. So this letter is a summary of my five months in Pakistan since I came, up to my first week in Lahore; and in a month or so I will give you a more detailed account of Lahore. But first of all, thank you to so many who have sent me cards, letters and emails - it is lovely to hear from you and I do very much appreciate it, even if I don't always reply to each one. Especially thank you to St Peter's Leckhampton, for your card with everyone's signature - that is on my wall now where I see it every day.

Its been an exciting and very positive time of learning and srettleing in – the firdt two weeks in Lahore and Multan, then four months language study in Murree, and now just one week back in Lahore.

Early days: Lahore and Multan

I landed in Lahore the day before Easter Sunday, and it was good to be able to worship with "my" congregation on Easter Sunday morning. It certainly didn't seem a year since I had seen the members of the congregation, and the "honeymoon" continued as I was invited out to meals with different families. So God gave me a very soft landing!



After a few days later, I travelled to Multan, to spend a week at the Women's Christian Hospital. It was a very good week - I learned a lot about Pakistani culture, dress and life, and my hostesses generously gave me many gifts, including a beautiful embroidered Multani outfit and sandals. We visited various sights around Multan, including the famous shrine of Rukn-ud-din and the pottery **WORKS**, and we picnicked at the

River Chenab.

Multan shrine

Language School

And then I went up to Murree, for four months language study, and this I really enjoyed - it was a great gift of time and space before actually starting my real work in Lahore. Murree is a hill-station, about two hours' drive from Islamabad, the capital city. It's 7,000 ft above sea level so it's cool, green and fresh while the cities on the plains, like Lahore, are enduring temperatures of up to 50 degrees. The Murree Language School took place next to our hostel, Hill Lodge, which is owned by the Diocese of Lahore. It was comfortable in a pleasantly old fashioned way; for washing we used buckets but there were flush loos.

Language School was hard work: I had four individual lessons daily, all with different teachers, and in the free periods in between there was plenty to do learning vocabulary, practising Model Sentences, reading and writing exercises. But by the end I had taken my Third Progress Evaluation, and was told that I was making good progress. The other students, all mission people, were from many countries: Colombia, Argentina, China, Korea, USA, Germany, Holland and Finland ... so we usually conversed in Urdu at mealtimes. We had devotions in English and Urdu on Monday and Friday, and on Sundays we could go to Murree Christian School (an international boarding school for missionary children) for English worship, or in Murree town to Holy Trinity (Church of Pakistan) or St Margaret's (Presbyterian) for their Urdu services.



School teachers & students

Life at Hill Lodge



Hill lodge

But Hill Lodge had its own social programme: on Wednesdays we had some hymn-singing and one person would tell us their life story. These were fascinating: one week we had a visiting couple engaged in "Member Care" (of missionaries), who talked on managing stress... and pointed out that for us, living in community and learning a language, could already be a stressful experience. Another person talked about life at a mission hospital in an isolated town near the Afghan border, where security was a constant concern, and expatriate staff were not allowed to leave the hospital compound, but patients came from far and near and they had seen some miraculous healings. One speaker described life in tents Gojer people in the mountains of Kashmir; another person was preparing to work with Hazaras (a persecuted minority) in Quetta. One weekend two of us stayed over at a mission house in a nearby village, Khaira Gali, which has spectacular mountain views. Hill Lodge also had a good phone line, so email was easy and quick - a great blessing.

A Pakistani Christian's story

While in Murree I met some lovely and very impressive Christians, both Pakistani and expatriate. Many of the expatriates have lived here for thirty or forty years, and some have seen their children enter the mission field alongside them. One Pakistani lady came to supper and told us her family's story - I'll call her Farzana (not her real name). Her family were devout Muslims living in a city with minimal Christian presence, until one missionary family came to live there. Her father strongly advised his fellow Muslims not to have anything to do with the missionaries, and especially not to accept any books from them. But he was horrified when his friends boasted of having removed the petrol cap from the missionary's car, and he made a point of taking the cap back to the mission house, with apologies for his friends' conduct. He was of course invited in for tea and conversation, and at the end the missionary said "You have been so kind in coming to my house and returning my petrol cap, I am going to give you a gift" and when he got home and unwrapped the parcel, the gift was some books of the Bible. Farzana's father was in a quandary, not wishing to show discourtesy by refusing a gift, but aware he was doing what he had told his friends not to do. Finally he took the books, and then started to read them. His interest grew, and over the next ten years he had many conversations with the missionaries, until finally he accepted Christ and was converted. His wife was so impressed by the change in him over this time - from being a proud and argumentative man, quick to take offence and nurse a grudge, he became a peaceable and forgiving person - that she too became a Christian. But they had many problems from their own families, who cut off communication, and from the (Muslim) townspeople who refused to trade with them or sell them food. The other Christians now in the town, and their Padri Sahib (pastor), used to come by night secretly with food for them. Finally the family moved to another town, where the father set up a business with manufacturing equipment which the missionaries had provided to him, and the children were all brought up Christian and went to Christian schools (Farzana was at school here in Murree). Now she works in a Christian organisation's office, and also helps her mother with the business. Becoming a Christian here really does mean a completely new life.

Church in Murree

At the local church in Murree (Holy Trinity), the Padri Sahib (Vicar) was quite heavily committed, being chaplain to St Denys', a Diocesan girls' boarding school, and also coordinating the Diocese's contribution to the earthquake relief work in Muzaffarabad (in Pakistani Kashmir). This was mainly with schools, providing educational materials and planning a new building, but he also gave some seminars on stress relief and mental health. The Church of Pakistan is taking the opportunity to reach out in a more visible way in Kashmir, in an area where there has been no organised church presence before.

Half-term Holiday

For my "half-term holiday" (at the end of June) I arranged to visit two mission hospitals in this area, Bach Christian Hospital in Qalandarabad, North West Frontier Province and Kunhar Christian Hospital in Ghari Habibullah, near Muzaffarabad. Both were front-line hospitals during the earthquake emergency and are still involved in various rehabilitation projects.



Bach Christian Hospital

The two hospitals are very different, but each in its way is doing great work. Bach Christian Hospital, is a well-established hospital of 50 beds, just 50 years old, with 150 staff. It is tightly managed by its parent American mission organisation, all except two of the medical staff are expatriates, and it is also developing rehabilitation and physiotherapy services under an expat physio; there is a huge demand for prosthetics in the aftermath of the Earthquake last October. There's an active pastoral care and outreach department alongside the medical work, and the pastoral team moves through wards and clinics talking to and praying with patients. Every morning while Devotions for staff are held in the hospital chapel at 7.40, staff members are simultaneously preaching and leading prayers in each ward and clinic area. It's a stable and well-organised hospital, and many expat missionaries use it for their own care.

Kunhar Christian Hospital feels very different. It has grown in 18 years from a small clinic in rented premises, in Ghari Habibullah on the banks of the River Kunhar, to a 20-bed hospital with the usual diagnostic departments. It seemed to me, by contrast with Bach, to be primarily a Christian outreach initiative, part of which involves medical work. It is an entirely Pakistani initiative, born of the vision of one Pakistani doctor (who was working at Bach Hospital at the time), who wanted to present a challenge to the Pakistani Church to reach out to people in this area, which at that time had no Christian presence of any kind. There is therefore a strong core of Christian staff, and Bible School students on placement, and in addition to prayer and preaching in wards and clinics, outreach clinics are held regularly in some nearby villages with Christian witness; and two local groups have been formed and are supported from the hospital. It is operating with a very slender staff and infrastructure, and is still very dependent on the personality and decisions of the Director, Dr Haroon. He in turn would say he is dependent on the promptings of the Holy Spirit!



Kunhar Christian Hospital

The hospital is right in the Earthquake area, so you can see the scars of landslides on the hills around the valley, and the disaster has in fact benefited the hospital, making its work known and enabling it to accommodate and facilitate other Christian NGOs coming into the area, e.g. for building reconstruction. Indeed, in the aftermath of the earthquake there has been no shortage of offers of financial and material support, and the Hospital Board have agreed to the purchase of more land for future developments. So it has huge potential, but needs much prayer and support to enable it to become more firmly established, and to gain the support and practical involvement of more Pakistani Christians.

And at the end of August I returned to Lahore. I am currently staying with another missionary friend and will be moving into a flat in the Diocesan compound over St Peter's School, when necessary

work has been done. I have started working with the Bishop Rockey Chapel congregation (I preached and presided at Communion last Sunday, wearing my new cassock), and they gave a Welcome Lunch for me my first Sunday, a very happy occasion.

You may _a_sk (j)bout my visa. I'm still on a Tourist Visa, and apparently there is progress on the application for a long-term visa but it's not clear when it will finally be issued. So I have just applied for a 3-month extension to my tourist visa and hope that will be granted. At some point I will probably have to return to UK to re-enter on the new Visa, but it's not clear when. Other issues to be worked on include my actual programme of work - the balance between pastoral work and hospital management and whether I need a car to get around Lahore and visit the congregation.

So here are some reasons for thanksgiving and some matters for prayer:

Thanks:

- for a warm welcome on arrival and for new friends in Lahore, Multan and Murree
- for progress made in Urdu, and for a cool and peaceful time in Murree
- for so many supportive cards, emails and letters from friends and church members

Please pray for:

- my Bishop, Samuel Azariah, the Diocese of Raiwind, and for the Bishop Rockey Chapel congregation, with my pastor colleagues Naeem and Evelyn
- continuing progress in the Urdu language - "a retentive memory and a flexible tongue"!
- the granting of my long-term visa
- clear guidance on the pattern of my work in Lahore, especially the health management work.

Thank you all for your care and concern, your emails and letters and your generous support - may God bless your own ministry and prosper your work for Him.

Yours in His service,

Jane

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