

Greetings to my sponsoring churches! This month I have been traveling as well as working on my palliative care courses from Cardiff University. One of the projects involved videotaping an interview with the relative of a patient. The son of one of the patients agreed to help me with this, I hired a videographer, and the taping went well, but when I played it back, about all I could hear was the fan that had been running to keep us from melting! After a lot of failed attempts, I was able to download and use an editing program that cleaned up the sound a little. I had to do a transcript of the interview as well so that it would be clear to the professor at Cardiff.

I had a lot of other tech problems too. I won't bore you with the details of my woes, but let me just say that I will never take my "gadgets" for granted! They keep me in touch and facilitate my work and it is very difficult when they are not working!

Graham, my pastor friend from Australia - the one I visited in 2009 - was in Vellore for a visit. He came and had lunch with the whole palliative care team and that was very nice. It was a pot luck lunch and the pots were very lucky indeed and so were the people around the table eating such good food!

I also had a visit from my boss, Franklin. He is the person in charge of Asia and the Pacific for Global Missions. I took him on a short tour of Vellore, stopping at the Catholic Cathedral, my church Christ Lutheran and their school, and the hospice and the Sneha Deepam Study Center. The next day I took him to see the Golden Temple and then we went to the Fort and walked around a bit. We drove around Vellore, stopped for chai, and then had dinner at the rooftop restaurant at the Darling Hotel.

In early February, I left for my trip to the northern part of India. The first leg of this trip took me to Kolkata where I stayed at the YMCA. Their rooms start on what would be the fourth floor and there are no elevators. I met with the Missionaries of Charity to talk about doing classes in palliative care with them as I have done with others of their order in Vellore and Bangalore. The next day I flew to Guwahati where I stayed in a very nice hotel. The next day we drove to Parkijuli Hospital which was founded by a Norwegian doctor and her pastor husband. One of the people I traveled with was their son who spent most of his youth there. He's now a doctor in Norway - helping raise money for Parkijuli.

From there, I flew to Delhi where I stayed in a guest room at St. Stephen's Hospital where I have stayed before. It's a good place to stay and there is access to good pizza and even McDonald's. I taught an all day class on palliative care for 53 newly graduated nurses. The day after that, I flew to Lucknow in northern India for the 18th Annual Palliative Care Conference. The rest of the palliative care team from Vellore came to the conference as well but it took them 42 hours on the train! The best part of the conference was seeing friends, getting to talk to other people in this field and make connections.

From Lucknow, I flew back to Delhi, spent another night at St. Stephen's, and then flew to Trivandrum which is on the south western coast of India and got to watch the sunset from the hotel restaurant.

Today is my friend's wedding. More about that next time. Then I spent time with a palliative care team in Trivandrum - some strategizing and some teaching.

I will be on my way to Liberia soon. I heard that one of the speakers at this summer's WELCA Triennial Convention will be a Liberian woman named Leyma Gbowee. Her story and the story of many Liberian women is told in a powerful documentary called "Pray the Devil Back to Hell." It is available on video.

Please keep me in your prayers as I travel and spend some time at Phebe Hospital. And know that you are all in my prayers as well. Peace, John