

Greetings to my sponsoring churches and thank you for keeping me in your prayers. At the suggestion of one of the churches, I now have a web page (zionmilaca.org/Rev_John_Lunn) where you can see some photos and catch up with any newsletters you might have missed. If you have a question for me, I also have an email address for you to use. It's revlunn@zionmilaca.org At the end of June, with some funding from ELCA Global Mission, we sponsored a workshop called "The Sacred Art of Living and Dying."

Richard Groves, from The Sacred Art of Living Center

(sacredartofliving.com) Bend, OR was the workshop presenter. It was an excellent workshop _ where participants gained some new and wonderful insights. Richard went with our Palliative Care Team on some home visits and was overwhelmed by the conditions our patients live in. Richard will be a good resource for me not only because he is very eager to be involved with our work and future training, but also because he may be able to help recruit faculty for the nursing education program in Liberia that I told you about last month. He will also be a asset for me as I work on my idea of training Spiritual Directors which I also wrote about last month. He also did a workshop for about 15 of the local pastors in Chennai which is where the airport is and where Richard arrived and left.

I decided that it was time that I had a Master's degree in Palliative Care since it is what I do! I looked into programs that would allow me to complete the work online - distance learning - and found one in Cardiff, Wales. Many of my colleagues from India have done this program.

The ELCA Global Mission approved the program and Cardiff accepted me, so I will be getting out my notebooks and sharpening up my #2 pencils in the late fall when I return from my recruiting trip to the US. In mid-July I attended my first Muslim wedding. It was the wedding of my friend Basha's daughter - he runs a medicine shop where we used to get some of our Palliative Care medications. At this wedding, the groom is the one with the flowers - he is fully covered with garland from head to toe. The public part of the ceremony centers around the groom signing the wedding certificate and saying something like "I marry her" three times. There were 700 people at the wedding and Basha fed them all. My friends - two Lutheran chaplains - had 5,000 people at their various wedding dinners and fed them all. Jesus was certainly present at their wedding, but I don't think he did the catering!

On July 17th, we celebrated the second anniversary of the hospice at Sneha Deepam. The first two patients were admitted two years ago on that day, and in the past six months, things have really come together. Now there are never less than five patients and often eight or ten. We could technically accommodate up to 50 patients but a more realistic top number would be 25-30. Some of the staff now live in some of the double rooms as do the two Sisters. Mostly we use the two wards - each with eight beds - and a couple of the double rooms for patients who are sicker or patients with families that want privacy.

The Missionaries of Charity are considering using our training services.

Sister Lourdes who heads the training program teaching nursing skills in Bangalore came to meet with me about sending students to our hospice for palliative care training when we can work out a schedule. I agreed to go to Bangalore and teach her current class of 25 sometime early in August.

Toward the end of July, I took a road trip to Tirupathur along with one of CMC's psychiatrist - Dr. Anna _ to visit a home for about 30 mentally ill men who have been rescued from the streets of Vellore and the surrounding area. All but one are on psychiatric medication now and live quite peacefully in this home. They do small jobs around the place, do some crafts, and go on outings together. A few men have returned home to family and community, some are waiting to be ready to go home, and some don't seem to have anything left of home to go home to. Their illnesses cause a lack of insight and so many are not grateful for what is being done for them. They have forgotten the real horrors of living on the street - eating maybe every three days and being subjected to abuse. The staff doesn't hear "thank you" very often - except maybe from visitors like me.

Please keep me in your prayers and remember that you are also in mine!