

To my sponsoring churches - greetings! February was a busy month for me. I had to spend five in Delhi days at an Indian Association of Palliative Care conference and then I left from there for a little more than two months in Liberia and a week in Kenya and Tanzania.

But first, I took the last couple of days of January off after having some minor surgery on my big toe. I mostly stayed in my room at Sneha Deepam resting and watching TV and movies and receiving visitors. The toe didn't hurt too much so it was a nice break!

My driver, Suren, is a man of many talents. He is a handyman who can fix just about anything. He is a wonderful driver, and he makes a wonderful cup of chai - a spicy, milky tea.. You almost have to be a native of India to brave the traffic which is horrific at best with many trucks and cars and carts and rickshaws, not to mention pedestrians and wandering cows! After a while, denial becomes a good friend again as you look at all of the near misses. When the housekeeper at Sneha Deepam had surgery, Suren stepped in to do my laundry.

About halfway into my flight to Delhi to the conference, the flight attendant asked if there was a doctor or licensed medical person who could offer assistance. I told her I was a nurse but my specialty was working with the terminally ill. No other medical people seemed to be on the flight so I went to help the man who was short of breath and having mild chest discomfort. It turned out my skills with dealing with symptoms were what was needed and I was able to slow his breathing and calm him. He made it through the flight just fine and was met by a doctor in Delhi.

I stayed at St. Stephen's hospital again and took the metro and autorickshaws to get to the conference. The autorickshaws turned out to be the hard part - getting the drivers to understand where I wanted to go. (I guess I don't speak Delhi English so well and no Hindi at all.) The conference was most valuable for the many opportunities for networking.

I did a little shopping as well. At one market I was approached by a shoe shiner. I said no, but he said, "Look at your shoe!" It had something that appeared to be cow dung on it and the only way I can think that could happen was that he dropped it there - and then he tried to clean my wallet as well.

When the conference was over, I was off to the airport to go from a 50 degree Delhi to a much hotter Monrovia. The last leg of my journey I traveled with the president of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. She was in first class and I was not, but we were on the same flight. She used to come back and greet everyone on her flights but I guess security has something to say about that. Or maybe she was just tired?

I spent the first few days in Monrovia at the Lutheran guesthouse. I missed the electricity - it doesn't come on until 7:00 p.m. and until there is a fan it is too hot to do anything but read and sweat. I was able to meet with the Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Liberia. Then it was back to Phebe where I would be staying in the house I lived in when I was there before.

It was a slow trip as the traffic was heavy, but there was a nice welcome waiting for me at Phebe. There was a sign on the door and there were flowers and decorations. To the dismay of Carol, the volunteer who has been living in the house, everything was pretty much back to the way it had been when I left. She had made some changes - some of them real improvements and some just her taste - but my "guys" who had worked for me first wanted it to be like I had it!

The water situation isn't much better, yet. The first night I was there, I thought that we had one and a half hours of running water which was - thankfully - long enough to get a load of laundry done. Turns out that the valve for my bathroom was shut off. So now the water situation is a bit better. So far the electricity seems to be working and I hope it will keep working until the large generator is repaired.

Please pray for the people of Liberia and please keep me in your prayers as well. Your prayers give me the spiritual lift I need to do this job! Yours in Christ, Rev. John Lunn.