

CHIT CHAT March 2011

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Building Futures for Children

A party of eight, including four Trustees, has been out in India, meeting in small groups with staff, mingling with children and helping teach English in the school. There was a detailed examination of the budget. The fall-out from the poor harvest is now serious, with appallingly high prices being paid for basic foodstuff.

As behoves a Christian charity we have been praying for guidance. The children have an act of worship and prayer every day and have started a special ten-minute prayer slot at 6 pm on **Saturday evenings**. The photo below shows the children at prayer. If you would like to join them, it's 12.30pm here in the UK.



Girls at prayer at Bapatla prayer time, the mature ones with heads covered

As the economies brought on us in the UK by years of over-spending with borrowed money begin to bite, it is essential that those of us who care for the poor overseas **retain a clear sense of perspective**.

During the days of rationing in the war years, the health of the nation improved. We now have an astonishing problem in the UK with **obesity**. Even for slim-line readers, let us be clear - cutting down on what we spend on food may well do us good.

In the UK 40% of our food is imported. Indeed it is flown in from all parts of the globe. In India they have always grown their own, with enough rice to export in vast volumes. Rice has now become very costly. How are we to cope without cutting the rice portions and damaging the health of our hungry children?

It is clear that we need wider and deeper support. At a time when giving to charities is known to be declining, CHIT needs a substantial increase. Now what does God want us to do about that? As always, we need to start by examining our own giving.

Live simply that others may simply live.

It is remarkable how one's own generosity can release one's inhibitions about asking other people for money or help. Angela and I have given freely of our time, our money and our expertise. The two offices in our home: three computers, two printers, and photocopier are all available for CHIT, as well as other things we are called to do, but the fact is that without unstinting help from three technically talented friends we would be in all sorts of trouble. Angela is a retired piano teacher and I am a deaf old entrepreneur still working.

The precious gift we have is the humility and courage to ask for help. As CHIT now finds itself at a cross-roads we have to ask you to follow our lead. Many of you have already been generous with your money. "What more can you do?" Try starting with prayer. If you are increasing your commitment to CHIT, and many of you are, we hope you will also consider approaching others to help us. What is it that attracts people to help? Firstly it is probably you. Someone who admires your integrity or your life-style may feel that you are likely to be connected with a good charity. You are! Read what this supporter wrote:

It must be 20 years since George came to speak at our Church in Cardiff. Sitting - maybe wriggling- in the pew with me were our four much-loved children. I decided that day to sponsor four children for as long as I could. It is a decision I have never regretted.



*The regular letters, photos and updates from the children and their teachers really mean a lot to us. Sometimes when I open their letters and see the big smile of a child whose life has been turned around by CHIT and read those words "**Auntie and Uncle we pray for you**" well, I feel so blessed! Now our own children have flown the nest and we are thrilled that our daughter Sophie has also become a sponsor. Best wishes in all you do. Kind Regards, Gill Nelson.*

There are a variety of aspects of the work that appeal: 270 children from dreadful poverty or homes which have disintegrated after accidents, murder, suicide, HIV/Aids, marital breakdown, mental illness; all are taken in, loved, fed, and sent to school. The great majority end up as healthy, well educated, responsible and honest adults, 74 in further education, a teacher, a vet, a pharmacist and ten nurses among our success stories; quite a record from an annual income of £90k. People like to see their money well spent and are very pleased to know that ALL THEIR GIFTS go to India.

People have asked me some searching questions:

Isn't it likely that sponsoring an individual child leads to favouritism? In fact in our CHIT homes it is not so. All the children are treated alike. To be fair it has to be so. If a sponsor sends a gift to 'their' child you might suppose that it could make for difficulties, but that is not the case either. Our children do not seem to 'do' jealousy. They all delight in one child's joy. Just ask anyone who has visited. It is lovely to see. Even so, the advice I give to sponsors, when asked, is : "Send a cheap gift suitable for sharing with friends."



I used to think that sponsoring a child was ideal for someone who had sadly been unable to have a child of their own, or who had lost one. I have found it has far broader appeal. Many parents find themselves concerned at their own children's avarice. It helps to give a child a sense of their own good fortune in being born British if there is some contact with a child in genuine poverty. I just did not think it was for me, but when visiting Bapatla in 2005, a little scrap of a girl called Santha Kumari, picked a wild hibiscus and handed it to me like a precious jewel. I was hooked!



I asked my friend Howard, our Treasurer, if he felt it was right for the Chairman to sponsor a little girl. He thought it was, and now sponsors a bright girl himself. From the photo you see 14 year- old Santha no longer looks like a waif. With her hair up she looks

quite an assured little lady. One can enjoy seeing them mature. I reckon you receive more than you give.

A third of the world's poor live in India, **750 million of them**. Some rich Indians could do more to help, stuck, it seems, with the Victorian concept of "the undeserving poor." Christians are often among the most disadvantaged, along with Dalits and Tribals. Help us demonstrate the compassion of Jesus Christ.

When world poverty is so vast one can easily feel discouraged and powerless. That is defeatist. Focus on one child and you can see the difference you can make. If that child becomes a teacher, a nurse, a doctor, an honest civil servant, an altruistic business executive, a Christian evangelist, or a well-educated mother, you are contributing something immensely worthwhile, with results you cannot possibly foresee.

CHIT likes to have more girls than boys. We know that children are abandoned because women get such a bad deal. If her husband dies or deserts her, a poor woman is in trouble. She may marry again but the children of her first union almost always get left with a grandmother, whatever the state of her health, or dumped on an uncaring relative, or left on the station.

At least children are not put to work in factories any more, but destitute children do work or beg or starve. It is not surprising that most of them study extremely hard when they get the chance to go to school.

Sponsoring a group is also good and is less work for us. I am grateful to ALL our donors, great and small, but the ones who lift my heart most are those who bring us in a new supporter. That seems to be easier for those who sponsor a child and have a good photo or a child's letter to show their friends. If you are worried that questions might be asked which you cannot answer, ask me for our Resource Pack and some leaflets. Show them our website. If they are old and worried about money, suggest they leave CHIT a legacy. Have **you** done that? God Bless your efforts.