

Focus June 2021



Northall Baptist Church – 200 years and still going.

A little Church with a wide reach.

Suffering today....

You may have watched the Real Marigold Hotel on TV? It's all about elderly celebrities spending several weeks in India to research the best place to make their retirement pots go a little further. If you've seen it you will know about the busy city streets, the entrepreneurship to make a living as there is nothing equivalent to our NHS or state help to fall back on when sick or unemployed.

We were there in 2014 and it struck as a country of extreme contrasts. One of my cousins was brought up in St Andrews Colonial Homes for children run by Dr Graham at Kalimpong near Darjeeling where we spent a number of days. Darjeeling is better known for its narrow gauge steam trains which run through the streets in the area and is an eye-opener. They run with much whistle blowing to avoid the cars and people going about their business occasionally having to stop where someone has parked on the line. Before the end of the British Raj in 1947, government administration and similar at Shimla, was moved into these areas at altitude in the summer where it was cooler.



Christ Church - Shimla (2014)



Preparing food street side Amritsar (2014)

There is so much to see in India – monkeys in the street, stealing any food that has been left around. Elephants in the street are not unknown and cows are everywhere, mingling in with the traffic, trains and people. A view of Everest in the background was spellbinding. It was also where we first saw funeral pyres in the street.

It feels so much more personal when you have visited the country, now seeing the current situation with so much suffering due to the spread of coronavirus and not knowing how to help. With over a billion people India is hailed as the world's largest democracy and an emerging global power, but despite this COVID, has clearly overwhelmed the resources they had available. It is made worse for those Indians living in this country who are unable to help their families so far away, concerned for their health and those unable to work to feed their families.

As I write, it is really distressing to watch so much suffering. Aid Agencies continue to help the poor and underprivileged there and our church has contributed to the work of some including *Christian Aid*.

Psalm 145 says '*The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.*' Follow this with the hymn '*All things bright and beautiful, the Lord God made them all.*' Ephesians 2 tells us that we are God's workmanship. He cares for each one of us, wherever we are.

We are continuing our Sunday services on Zoom for the moment at 11 am. If you would like to join in the worship, music and song, you'll get a very warm welcome. Please ring the number below or contact us via our website.

For those interested in the history of Northall Baptist Church, a free copy of the booklet, *Rebels in Green Pastures* can be supplied or downloaded from our website: <http://northallbaptistchurch.org/>