

SATURDAY 2ND OCTOBER 2010

at the YMCA Indian Student Hostel, Fitzroy Square, London

It was a very good day! Over a hundred people attended the annual meeting which as usual was held in the Indian YMCA, Fitzroy Square, London. The morning began with the celebration of the Eucharist led by the Revd Adrian Watkins. The preacher was the Revd Canon Dr Arun John. Miss Margaret Addicott led the intercessory prayer which included reading out one by one the names of 28 friends who had died during the past year. The Chair, the Revd Julie Lipp-Nathaniel, welcomed everyone, including several visitors who were invited to the microphone to introduce themselves. Canon John spoke of "*missionary unity*" in sharing *the message of Christ, the fact of Christ, the love and mercy and the seeking heart of God in Jesus Christ to this world*. He referred to the example of Church Unity provided by the Church of North India founded 40 years ago and, citing his own parish in Manningham, Bradford, spoke of the need for many church communities in Britain "to unite" lest they disappear.

Lunch was a success too: plenty of curry and rice followed by ice-cream and coffee or tea.

The Annual General Meeting took place after lunch and the Chair thanked the retiring Secretary, Mrs Margaret Smith, for her many years of efficient service to FCI. Her report was received with thanks. The following were elected to be members of the Committee: Secretary - Mrs Angela Wingate; representatives from FCI – Dr Martin Heath and the Revd Judith Ramble. The Treasurer, the Revd Suresh Kumar, presented a statement of accounts, which was received with thanks.

With the business completed, the afternoon session was a lively affair. On the platform with the Chair, the Revd Julie Lipp-Nathaniel, were Dr Daleep Mukarji, the Rt Revd Dr Samson Das, Bishop of Cuttack, Orissa, North India, the Revd Adrian Watkins, the Revd Jessie Anand, and the Revd Daniel Ramble. Dr Mukarji chaired a forum about "the Church of North India today", firing questions at the members of the Panel and then occasionally widening the discussion to involve members of the audience. Bishop Das was invited first to speak about the situation in Orissa and he provided a moving account of the bloodshed, pillaging, looting and violence that had occurred during the recent riots. Other matters discussed included the issues of persecution, the CNI's response to church growth and the work of indigenous missions especially in rural areas, the lessons of the CNI unity experience for the church in UK, issues of accountability and whether the CNI was too westernised and the extent to which indigenous forms of worship were practised.

After the enjoyable and lively discussion the audience was treated to a beautiful Indian dance by Vasantha Gnanadoss. Then, over Indian sweets and tea, farewells and hugs, the company dispersed for another year.