

SATURDAY 1st OCTOBER 2011
at the YMCA Indian Student Hostel, Fitzroy Square, London

On a beautiful *Indian summer morning* seventy friends gathered at the Indian YMCA, London, for our annual FCI celebration. After a cup of tea or coffee, and an opportunity for informal conversations, the FCI Chair, the Revd Julie Lipp-Nathaniel, opened the proceedings promptly at 11 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Revd Dr Chellaian Lawrence was the celebrant and preacher at The Eucharist and he was assisted by the vice-chairperson of FCI, the Reverend Jessie Anand. The first reading (Genesis 47, 11-12 & 20-21) was read in Tamil; the Gospel (Matthew 16, 13-20) was read in English. Dr Lawrence's sermon was on the theme of *The Keys of the Kingdom*, of drawing out challenges for Christians and churches in today's world. During the intercessions led by the FCI Chair, the names of friends who had died during the past year were remembered with thanksgiving for their faith, service and witness. The offertory was for the caring and educational work of the Delhi Brotherhood and amounted to £408.00. The service concluded with the singing of *To God be the Glory*, and the Blessing.

Before lunch the Chair gave a warm welcome to visiting guests including several Indian students who are studying in the UK and who briefly introduced themselves.

After a delicious rice and curry, the 19th Annual General Meeting took place with approximately 70 members attending and eligible to vote. The Chair, the Revd Julie Lipp-Nathaniel welcomed everyone. Apologies were received from Dr Daleep Mukarji, the Revd and Mrs Murdoch Mackenzie, Canon Arun and Mrs John, The Revds Daniel and Judith Ramble, Canon Derek and Mrs Elton, the Revd Jim and Mrs McManus, and the Revd Peter and Mrs Hiscock. Reports from the Secretary, Mrs Angela Wingate and the Treasurer, the Revd Suresh Kumar were received with thanks. Mr Anthony Thomas and the Revd Jessie Anand were unanimously elected to serve on the Management Committee for the next three years. The date of the next meeting of the AGM is 6th October 2012.

The main business in the afternoon included a paper entitled "Caste discrimination is still a menace in the Indian Church" read by Mr Vincent Manoharan of the Queens Foundation, Birmingham and Founder of the *National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights*. After listening to the paper members split into small *buzz groups* to discuss the paper which had been distributed so that everyone had a copy. Unfortunately there was insufficient time for the groups to discuss the matter in depth but a proposal to issue a statement from FCI indicating solidarity with the *Dalit Christian struggle against discrimination* was referred to the FCI Management Committee for consideration and action if deemed appropriate.

The afternoon ended with two devotional songs by the *Indian Christian Organisation music group family of six* followed by tea and goodbyes. Fewer people attended FCI Day this year than in previous years. Nonetheless by common consent it had been an enjoyable, informative and worthwhile day.