

## FCI SECRETARY'S REPORT 2013

The Annual FCI Day was held last year on 5 October in YMCA Indian Student Hostel, as in previous years. This year, unfortunately, we were not able to hold today's event there and, luckily, we prevailed on the kindness of Revd Anand Asir and our Chair, Jessie to meet here in Battersea and we are happy that some members managed to get here. It is sad that a few friends were unable to be here because of long journeys and, as one friend expressed it, their 'increasing difficulty in mobility'. The number attending last year was fewer than previously and, as you heard in the service, several members have died during the year. It is sad, but not unexpected, that we have very few guests and students to welcome but so far no student expected this term, in the colleges contacted, has been granted a visa. This is true of other visitors too, such as the Bishop of Vellore and his wife, whom we hoped to welcome.

The morning session at the last FCI Day was led by Revd Suresh Kumar, FCI Treasurer, on 'Celebrating links with the Indian Church' with experiences in Germany and UK being shared. The Eucharist was held in the afternoon but, because of a longer than usual AGM, some friends had to leave before the end of the Day which was a pity. This year we reverted to the usual timetable. Speaking of last year's FCI Day, there is an excellent account of the day in February's Pilgrim, written by friends Roy and Joy Martin, clear and accurate - many thanks to them. The celebrant for the Eucharist was Julie Lipp-Nathaniel who also preached a thought provoking sermon and completed her time as Chair.

Earlier this year the Education Secretary arranged a seminar, also held here in Battersea, when the theme was Discipleship and Dialogue, the title of a book of essays written and published in honour of Revd Dr Israel Selvanayagam, a former Education Secretary of FCI. The book was launched by Rt Revd Michael Ipgrave, Bishop of Woolwich and then several of the authors gave presentations. Israel, who had just arrived from India, responded. A lovely lunch was provided by Anand and a team of helpers and enjoyed by all.

In the two Management Committee meetings since the last Annual Day, there have been discussions on the proposal at the last AGM to widen the friendship to united churches in South Asia such as Pakistan and Bangladesh. Progress has been slow but Jessie, our Chair will speak more on this. The idea of a Partnership Day was introduced and this was developed further after FCI Management Committee members attended the CNI/CSI Forum in March and had a positive response to a paper presented at the Forum by Adrian Watkins for a Partnership day in 2014. Planning for this is being done by FCI and other agencies that have links with CSI/CNI. Thanks to Adrian and Jessie for their work on this.

Our new editor of Pilgrim, Joshva Raja has produced two good issues, following in the footsteps of dear Timothy Mark, who is, sadly, not able to be with us today. We could only have two Pilgrims this year because of two unexpected legacies to FCI, without which not enough funding was available. So we are very grateful for that.

I want to thank Roy Smith for his work on the website and Margaret Smith for collecting all the subscriptions. We give thanks for the service of committee members who have retired during the year, especially Joy Martin and Ardil Watson, and for all those members who attend regularly and give support and suggestions. This year Jessie has once again undertaken all arrangements for the Eucharist but we have even more to be thankful for as she and Anand have made the whole day possible. Many thanks to both. I wish to stand down from being secretary but as I have received no nominations I have agreed to stand for election for one year. I hope there will be someone amongst FCI members willing to take this on.

Angela Wingate

5 October 2013