

Hi Everyone

I returned to Bangladesh on 14th January after a wonderful albeit busy time in Northern Ireland. It was great being with my family and friends although due to so many commitments I had not as much time as I would have liked with them especially my nieces and nephews.

I spent one week in Scotland and England early in December and visited two of my link churches in Kirkcudbright and Newton Stewart. I received a great welcome and enjoyed being there (especially the soup and pudding lunch). Once again I stayed with Rev Douglas Irving and his family and enjoyed this very much.

Although my lead organisation is the Methodist Church I am also linked to CWM, USPG (both London), CMS (Oxford) and Church of Scotland based in Edinburgh. So during my time at home I visited all these organisations. It was busy trying to get from one to another although very enjoyable especially meeting with some people who until then I had only made contact with via e-mail. While in London I also got the opportunity to meet with some friends Chrissy and David who I hadn't seen for a several years so lots of good food and chat that evening.

I was disappointed we had no snow as I was looking forward while at home to building snowmen, throwing snowballs and going sledging however the only snow I seen was on my way to Edinburgh. I thought this view was so beautiful. I just marvel at the magnificent world our God created and thank Him every day for His marvelous beauty.



It was wonderful also to spend time with many of my family and friends celebrating my special birthday and Christmas. I was reminded about how time disappears so quickly and how I need to make the most of every minute of my life doing what I should be doing and not wasting time.



The first weekend I was at home there was an evening for young people held at my church. I didn't have the opportunity to attend due to another commitment however I did get to visit the prayer room which had been set up in one of the smaller rooms. I was so impressed and taken back by it all. My favourite was this area. It just said it all. When I look around our world that appears to have so much violence, cruelty, greed, injustice and abuse I have HOPE. Not in material things, not in anything other than in my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As I travelled around my own country I was reminded of that hope. A land where at one time driving up to the Woodvale Road in West Belfast where I was speaking in November may have been risky and where driving across the border to Moville in County Donegal in December would have been a bigger risk especially in the evening. A land now seeing more tourists than ever before, a land of peace, a land where there is hope.

So as I travelled to Edgehill, DYCW, Bangor, Belfast, Glastry, Whitehouse, Glengormley (twice), Donegal, Portadown, Finaghy and in my own church I was continually reminded of not only the hope but also of a power that was not of my doing, something greater than I could ever be the power that can only come from Jesus. I know that I am never alone and Jesus is continually with me protecting and guiding me.

Similar to N. Ireland Bangladesh has had its share of troubled times. After a really bloody war and the country seeing independence the Father of the nation Sheikh Mujibur Rhaman and all but two members of his family were assassinated by an anti-liberation force in 1975. In December 2011 the authorities thwarted a coup which may have resulted in the assassination of his daughter Sheikh Hasina. I still believe there is hope in this nation and just as N. Ireland may not have perfect peace there is still hope.

So at this time in Bangladesh when the fields are full of paddy and many people work on the land I consider the hope they have that there will be a good harvest.



There is hope for my own country and of my current home here in Bangladesh a hope that peace will continue and a hope that love will be spread.

As I begin another year in Bangladesh and reflect on my past year and time spent at home I ponder over what more I can do to help the people within the area I work. I pray I will be a light shining for Jesus in this small rural place.

Thanks for

- Time spent at home with family and friends
- The welcome back I have received by many
- The coolness of Bangladesh at present
- The beauty of your creation especially as I see new growth in the fields and within people

Prayers for

- Many who are unwell at present here in Bangladesh and at home in NI
- The retreat for mission partners being held early February in Dhaka
- Workshop I will attend in Dhaka mid February
- That my work within the community health department will continue

Thank you all for your prayers for me while I was at home and my safe return

Pat

