

Extract from a letter from Rev. David and Sue Hudson, (former) PC(USA) Area Coordinator, South and South East Asia and Middle East



God's servants working together.

‘The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose...for we are God's servants, working together...’

1 Corinthians 3: 8, 9a

Dear Friends,

Paul's words to the Corinthians became alive in a new way for David on a recent trip to Pakistan. After 11 years, David returned to Sangla Hill Christian Girl's High School and Hostel and was humbly reminded that the role of mission co-workers is often laboring together in fields where others have sown and others are yet to come.

The school and hostel were established in 1902-3 by the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the United Presbyterian Church of North America. For more than a century, the Girls Hostel and High School have provided residential educational opportunities to girls. Many of the students come from illiterate families and help their parents earn their livelihood. Many Christians from this area are poor and work in the fields as laborers or work in brick kilns as bonded laborers. Located in a region of Pakistan under the influence of fundamentalism, Christians have experienced discrimination and even the torching of several churches as recently as November of 2005.

In 1972, the Punjab government took control of the school, which resulted in hard times. By God's grace even during the lean years the school and hostel continued. New seeds were sown in 1993 when a portion of the Presbyterian Women's Birthday Offering was given for construction of a new girl's hostel. The plans to build were in place; however, the realization of the new hostel took time because the land was occupied. David worked with others for reconciliation to resolve the land dispute and guarded the funds from the offering to build the new hostel.

Repeated personal visits were made to the family home of the patriarch who was farming on the land. The family would not vacate agricultural land they considered theirs. A lot of tea was consumed! Finally, he agreed it would be best for the community to have a new hostel. Late one afternoon in 1997, while sitting on a rope-strung bed in the field with his grandson by his side, he relented and verbally agreed. After some time his verbal commitment became a reality. What role did we play? We guarded the field and kept the seed alive for those to come along behind.

Things began moving in 1998 for the return of the school from the government, and the new Girl's Hostel was dedicated in April 2001. In January 2004, ground was broken for the Christian Girls' High School building.

Since then further seeds have been sown as the Presbyterian Education Board responded to a need being overlooked: girls at risk. In 2006, on the 14-acre Sangla campus, the Presbyterian Education Board started a “Home for Girls at Risk” designed to involve the

community and identify girls at risk due to child labor, violence and harassment, being orphaned, destitute, threatened by fundamentalists, possible child brides, and girls at risk for honor killing.

The program attends to the physical and spiritual needs of these girls and offers workshops to help them earn a livelihood and rise from poverty. The Girls at Risk Program is growing and making an impact on the marginalized girls in the surrounding area.

After a long history of being known in the community for its boarding hostel, the school must now compete and promote itself to the larger community. The Sangla Hill Girl's School actively recruits day students from the area. At present about 300 students attend the school. The hostel has a capacity of 200 students, but scholarships are not yet available for this many. There are computer classes for some students, health checks for all, sports, debate competitions, plays, educational trips, and for Christian student's participation in church activities.

Ongoing needs: scholarships for Christian girls in the boarding school, sports equipment, computer lab, school furniture, science lab apparatus, library books. For more information, see the Web page.

Other servants will come along, working together to carry forth the witness to Jesus Christ in Sangla Hill. Pray for the ongoing work in this corner of God's kingdom.

We are thankful for your financial support and prayers, and remain your partners, working together in God's fields.