

**Dorothy Wallace Darjeeling/Eastern Himalaya Diocese
North India.**

Church of

A speaker at our Youth Fellowship mentioned that teachers were required for our Christian schools abroad. I had been teaching for 4 years in Scotland and I felt that I ought to offer to the Church of Scotland, but I did not expect to be accepted. I was horrified when I was sent to St. Colm's and told that I was to go to Kalimpong/Darjeeling. I had to look up the area on a map! In our Sunday School we had heard only of Africa! I expected to be teaching and no one told me anything else.

My second day in Darjeeling I was supervising examinations in the Nepali Girls' High School where I had no idea what they were writing, or saying, in Nepali. So even when, - very soon - I became the Principal of the school I spent an hour every morning sitting on the floor with the KG class trying to learn to speak and to write the script. I did write on paper while they wrote on slates. So my first friends were 5 year olds and two older girls in the hostel.

Women had little place in the Church; no women Ministers or even Elders or members of any councils etc. But after I had been in Darjeeling only a few months, the ordained missionary who had been in charge of the council Provident Fund, retired and I was given that job. As the P.F. included, at that time, all the Church workers (teachers, doctors, nurses as well as Pastors, for the whole area were members of the P.F.), it was quite a responsibility to collect all the subscriptions every month, and it involved travelling to all areas of the Council, hills and plains. But it was a wonderful opportunity for me, as I now had a seat on the all male Council and the chance to visit and get to know the area well, I really felt part of the Church.

Also about the same time the last Missionaries' Committee was held in Mahakalguri, and we became responsible to the local Boards.

As the plans went ahead for the Church of North India, I was more and more involved in Church Committees of the Diocese. Under its new Constitution the CNI had reserved places for Women, on its Synod, and I was appointed one of the delegates from our Diocese. In fact I served a term on the Synod Finance Committee and one on its Executive Committee. Meanwhile I was still in charge of the school of about 2000 students, with 100 in hostel, many of them sponsored. So I had many friends and felt a real part of the CNI.

One of my cherished memories is of when I was a member of the Synod Executive Committee. Rajasthan, which was included in Delhi Diocese, entirely different from the Capital City, was urging to become a separate Diocese. The Synod Executive decided to appoint six delegates to visit all parts of Rajasthan and report to Synod. My name was suggested as one of the delegates but someone said, "She's a foreign missionary". The Moderator replied "She's here as an elected representative of her diocese and a member of Synod Executive as an elected member, not as a foreign missionary, so she has every right to represent the Synod:" I was appointed one of

the delegates to visit Rajasthan which was a wonderful experience, and I really felt I had accomplished what God wanted me to be - a part of His church in North India.

It was a greater wrench to me to leave Darjeeling and India in 1993, than it was for me to leave Scotland, UK in 1953 and to sail for the unknown.

Looking back I think that God deliberately sent me out with no preconceived ideas of what was in store for me or what I would have to face. I was not in a situation where I was in a group of "missionaries" and looking to them for fellowship and instructions. Almost from the start I was on my own, compelled to find my spiritual home with the local people. As the head of the school I had to have the authority, but as I was away often with other Church work, I had to delegate a lot. In fact for some time I was in charge of the school in Darjeeling, and also the school in Mahakalguri (the place where the final missionaries committee was held). This meant that once a week, I would open school in Darjeeling at 9am, take the jeep the 5 hour journey to the other school, close it at 4pm, spend the night there doing administrative work, open Mahakalguri the next morning and return to Darjeeling. And as the Mahakalguri school medium was Bengali, of which I knew nothing I had to find a Nepali girl in each class to translate into Nepali, But when I had to retire there were local people trained to take over; though unfortunately not Christians, in every case.

In a wonderful way God gave me the strength to do what I was asked to do, and to help in the training of local people to take over. I was very much privileged to become part of the Christian family in the Eastern Himalaya Diocese and in the Church of North India.

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