

The McCabe Educational Trust



Jungle Mission

April/May 2010

The Revd Andrew McCabe MBE has spent his life In India helping needy children and underprivileged communities. His most recent initiative, a health clinic for the Tharu tribe in a remote jungle area on the border of Nepal, has been for the most part funded by Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh, which raised £26,000 as part of its bi-centenary celebrations last year. The McCabe Educational Trust has agreed to help with co-ordinating the funding. Last January, work was started on creating the infrastructure for the clinic and recruiting staff. Peter Grainger, “Pastor at Large” for Charlotte Chapel, recently visited the project with his wife Nita. We are delighted to be able to give his report on the excellent work being carried out there and the progress which has been made.

A long journey

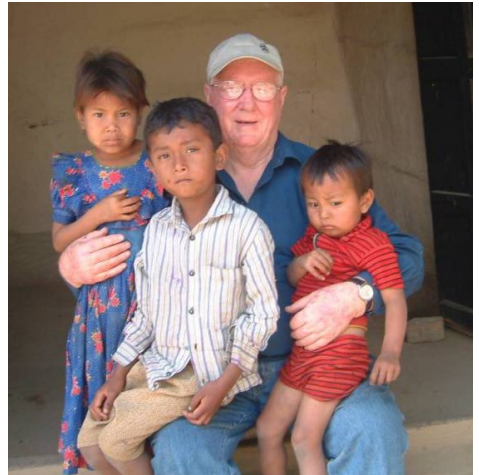
Why had my wife and I undertaken this journey through the jungle? In my new role as “Pastor at Large” for Charlotte Chapel, my responsibility is to visit and minister to as many as possible of our forty mission personnel scattered throughout the world and the longest standing of these is Andrew McCabe. Born in India to missionary parents and sent out from the church in 1950, Andrew is now 85 years old and still going strong! It was both fascinating and challenging to spend a week with him. We set out to visit the Tharu people who live in the jungle area known as the Don, in the western corner of the State of Bihar bordering Nepal.

Getting there is no easy task as it involves driving two hours on narrow and poor metalled roads, then a further three hours through the jungle which is a nature reserve, crossing the river 12 times. For three to four months of the year during the monsoon it is totally impassable, and the area is therefore inaccessible both ways.

The Don

It is a fertile region with rice, wheat and lentils being grown. Sugar cane is the main cash crop, which is transported by both ox-cart and tractors often towing several cartloads.

There are 26 villages in the region with a population of approximately 10,000 people. Tigers, leopards, bears and poisonous snakes are still in the area and can be a danger to the people, who are not allowed to kill any of them.



Andrew’s main work in India has been in providing education for poor boys in several places, in particular the James Harvey Memorial School in Nawabganj and the Anand Niwas Hostel where 160 boys are provided with an education and a future: former pupils are now in responsible positions in all walks of life. 30% of the boys in the hostel are Tharus from the Don and almost as soon as we had arrived there, a steady trickle of fathers came down the track with small sons (some in borrowed clothes!) to ask Andrew for admittance to the school and hostel for their boys. The school really is a lifeline for their future. We were impressed both by the sensitivity with which Andrew handled their requests, and his anxiety to take only the poorest boys, as there are far more requests than places in the school.

We met two young men undertaking Christian work in the area . Both were working for small Indian missions which have now cut back and withdrawn from the area, so they are no longer paid their salary of £20-£30 a month. Andrew, to whom these missions have handed back responsibility for the Tharu work, said he planned to find some way of paying them, as they were good young men.



Great progress

The piece of land that has been acquired for the clinic is well situated in the centre of the region, just a few miles from Belatare, the village with the largest Christian population and a church building. A large perimeter wall is nearing completion, a borehole supplies water and the clinic is already operating in temporary accommodation with a full-time medical worker, a couple trained in community health care, and the present pastor's daughter half way through her nursing training. A school for primary children was also operating on the site under a covered awning as the government schools do not function in the area. There are no other health provisions in the area, the nearest being several hours drive or walk through jungle and over the river.

Everywhere we went, people of all backgrounds, including an army chief, wanted to express their appreciation for the clinic, which will literally be a lifeline for the people who have, in recent times, been attacked by bandits and infiltrated by Maoists. They believe that Christians are the only people they can trust not to exploit them.

The people gave us a tremendous welcome and laid on a special presentation by the young people (including a small boy who recited the Ten Commandments by heart in Hindi!) and a wonderful meal. We hope to continue to support not only Andrew but also the work of the clinic, and they would welcome visits from doctors, dentists and optometrists.

The Tharu people in the Don are a people who are largely neglected with no active schools or health care. They need your help to have access to even basic medical services and supplies; they need your help to provide their children with even a basic education; they need your help to survive.

If you would like to help support Andrew's work in India, please earmark your donation Tharu Project and send to the McCabe Educational Trust. A regular donation of £40 a month will pay for one health worker's salary; £30 a month will pay for one child's education. Any donation of any size will make a difference. Please help us to support Andrew in his incredible ongoing and tireless efforts to give these people a chance in life.



Make a difference

For more than twenty years, the McCabe Educational Trust has been creating partnerships with inspiring people we have met on pilgrimage.

A special **Thank You** to McCabe pilgrims who helped us raise **£20,664** during March contributing to a total of **£86,658** raised so far this year.

With your help, we will continue helping those in need we encounter on our travels.

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