

The Wind Call

The Christian Community
in and around Cape Town

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Our Website:

www.thechristiancommunity.org.za

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Reflections on Ladakh.

AFTER SPENDING ALMOST A MONTH in the high mountainous region of Ladakh in the very North of India amongst one of the most peaceful and happy people in the world – you have to ask yourself what is it that enables these beautiful people to be the way they are? There seems to be a complete absence of aggression and violence and practically no crime. People are friendly, welcoming and interested. They laugh a lot and always greet you with a smile.

And yet it is not as if they live in utopian circumstances or have no problems or are unaware of the state of the world. On the contrary, their whole existence and their way of life is under threat from the obvious results of climate change in the region which have brought about a drastic increase in the incidence of flooding, landslides and rock falls. They exist in extreme conditions on the very edge of possibility with a short four month summer and a long snow bound winter, cut off from the world. Their whole culture is dependent on abundant supplies of glacial and snow melt water – both of which are under threat through reduced snow falls and rapidly melting glaciers. They are not alone in this as these changing conditions threaten the livelihood of over two billion people in India, China, Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan, and Pakistan. So what are they all so happy about?

One thing which enables them to deal so effectively with all the upsets and difficulties that they face - such as losing everything including their precious barley fields in a mud slide - is the unshakable strength of their sense of community. When a community lives so on the edge, one family's loss is everybody's loss and so everybody in the community helps in finding a solution to the problem. No one is alone with their problems.

Another factor is that when observing the people at work in their daily lives, whether they are farmers, truck drivers, vendors, house wives or businessmen, and when seeing the layout of their villages and towns and their private houses it is quite obvious that every aspect of their lives is steeped in – and an expression of - their religion, of their Buddhist faith. It is not as if they are passively resigned to whatever might happen. They are extremely energetic and industrious and at the same time there is a deep-seated trust in life and in their destiny. They are masters at "Do your best and leave the rest" i.e. leave the rest to the spiritual world and to destiny without fretting about the outcome.

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Most enviable – we might think. True, but there is a naïve (in the sense of unspoilt) innocence about these wonderful people which we in our fiercely individualistic state of consciousness would simply not be able to emulate. Their attitude towards life is a goal towards which we need to strive - not through force of circumstance but rather freely through the schooling of our own soul forces. Their equilibrium of soul could be attributed to the Buddha's teaching of the eight fold path which they follow – a path which avoids the pitfalls lurking on either side of the "right" path. The teaching of this path is the very centre and essence of Buddhism. Christianity is also a path to be followed, the essence of which is not a teaching but rather a deed.

In preparation for our Wellspring Conference in April – May this year we looked at what is essential to the task of The Christian Community. One of these tasks is to re-discover the eight fold path of Buddha – but in the Christian sense – which means as a deed of transformation. This is a path which we could well afford to focus on in the coming year.

For instance: whereas the Buddha's "Right Seeing" is to do with the acceptance of the fact that all life is suffering and that our task is to overcome the thirst for existence and thus extricate ourselves from the suffering of earthly life; Christ's challenge to humanity is to see the necessity of saying yes to suffering and to death and facing both head on so as to transform them into new life which is no longer subject to the forces of death. One is a path of avoidance and the other is a path of transformation. The latter is a radically different approach to life which is only possible through an I-conscious relationship to Christ and his forces of resurrection.

Parallels to the eight-fold path can be found in the Gospel of St Luke as we follow the Christ "on the way".

Making the deeds along the way a part of our inner striving would create the building blocks out of which we could build free community into the future and so recapture as I-conscious individuals the wonderful social attributes of the Ladakhi people. They have indeed much to teach the world.

Richard Goodall.



Above: Christina waving at the camera from a water taxi with her travel companions.

Below: Painting murals in Kalsar Monastery.



**Extracts from Christina Goodall's
Travelogue.** *(Edited for reasons of space – M.K.)*

Dear Friends,

I'm happy to be back in Cape Town after an overwhelmingly rich three months overseas.

I'd like to just share a glimpse of our four weeks in North India in a valley called Ladakh or "Little Tibet". Ladakh is wedged between Pakistan and Tibet (taken over by China) and therefore a strategically important part of India. You can feel that through the high army presence around the main towns and arteries.

Richard and I, our two youngsters and two friends who organized the trip went hiking in the Zaskar Valley. ⇨⇨⇨



Above: Richard and Christina on the Senge La Pass at 5,100m amidst a landscape of prayer flags.

Buddhist territory. Pink rose bushes softened the rocky slopes, organically shaped barley fields glowing in different shades of green clustered around terraced villages – oases in a mountain desert.

Every hamlet and peak we passed was marked with stupas and adorned with strings of prayer flags. They call them wind horses and believe that the prayers printed on the flags will be carried fast by the wind into all the corners of the world.

Our next altitude adaptation break was in Sani at 3,400 m and just in time to participate in a monastery festival. We had arrived in another time in space. My heart still raced when I walked too fast but the next day we would be starting our seven day trek. *(Cont. next page) ...*



Our first acclimatization time happened in Srinagar (Kashmir) on a rickety houseboat furnished in frilly colonial style. On arrival we heard that the road we are supposed to take to Ladakh had been damaged by mudslides due to heavy rain falls. The military worked hard and a few days later it was reopened. The track led in sharp hairpin bends past overhanging rock faces, a river gushing fiercely at the bottom, up to a plain with a village at 4 400 m. We passed colourful lorries shrouded in smoke, military convoys and small cars stuck in the mud. We were happy to buy a calming cup of Chai before the next leg of the trip. From there we drove over many more passes until we were mainly in

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Above: Jaffapiya Hotel and Stall (and presumably Tea Garden).

The Buddhist faith permeates Ladakh. Above most villages a monastery perches on the rocks or a huge Buddha statue glistening gold in the sunlight overlooks the slopes with a protecting gesture.

The landlady with whom we stayed in town after our trek murmured mantras under her breath while going about her daily chores. For them prayer and the deep-seated wisdom and interconnectedness is part of life.

Christina Goodall.

Below: Negotiating passing trucks along the national high way to the Nubra Valley, Khardungla Pass at 5,600 meters. **Bottom right:** Family Goodall in a pass at 5,000 meters.



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We hiked along a narrow path above the Zaskar River which was grey, angrily foaming and swirling, fed by the ever faster melting glaciers and very unusual rain falls due to global warming. "How far is it still?" we asked. "Five hours, maybe six," our guide replied smiling. After eleven hours we arrived at the camp site.

We quickly got stripped of our comfort zones. We went with the flow – to just keep walking, looking forward and having our aim in sight. Sometimes we hiked over three passes a day. The highest we climb was 5,100 meters.

... In front of us a goat track curved horizontally along the mountain. One false step and we could tumble hundreds of meters down bare rock. I decided not to look down.

... We were invited to a teacher's kitchen where we sat on mattresses covered with blankets while he served us butter tea brewed on his ornate wood stove. He took us to his school consisting of two rooms and a barren playground. The children learn four different languages and scripts and school lasts from 10h00 – 16h00.



Dear Members and Friends,

On Thursday evening, July the 23rd 2015, I boarded a plane of South African Airways taking me all the way from Munich to Cape Town and stopping over at Johannesburg. I used the last few days before take-off to prepare myself for the task in hand and at the same time finishing off matters here in Heidenheim. I suppose some of you might be familiar with the name of that community as it was the first congregation Richard was sent to. Here he took his first steps as a priest. And now a priest helping out for seven weeks, who's first community also was Heidenheim, visited the congregation in Cape Town. It is about seven years ago that I was ordained at a place called Wuppertal, which is not to be mistaken for the South African Wupperthal situated on the West Coast.

Well, it's an interesting matter to board a plane and fly to a different community situation. From a European point of view South Africa lies at the other side of the world. It was an eerie feeling flying across the Mediterranean Sea. As I was hosted on by two lovely stewards I became aware that at the same time some miles down below many people were very tightly hurdled together trying desperately to get across the Mediterranean Sea in a rubber dinghy.



Marcel Frank relaxing in nature back home.

Living in hope of a better life they left their home country taking a very dangerous road to reach Europe only to arrive in countries that are totally overwhelmed by the number of people they had to cope with. Kind of Paradise Lost.

After about two to three hours we reached the African coast. I was following the route on the monitor in front of me. Wow, we have arrived in Africa. However, after some time I had to correct myself as I realised it was the North-African coast and we still had a long way to fly. Even though I couldn't see anything it was an unbelievable feeling to know we would fly across the entire continent.

The congregation gave me a warm welcome and so did Reingard, who introduced me to a lot of things. She showed me step by step everything I needed to know around the church and the Goodall's house. Due to my inexperience in matters to do with alarm systems I managed to set off the alarm on more than one occasion!

During my study at the Priest's seminar I got my first introduction to the Act of Consecration of Man in English when I was spending my practical part of the study at the Christian Community in Forest Row, England. However, I was only ever celebrating it in my mother tongue, which is German. When writing the English words for it in my new book I became a little more familiar with the wording. Every priest is writing his own ritual book by hand. But, writing it is not speaking it out loud. Celebrating the Act of Consecration of Man in a different language in a different country was a precious experience. The same goes for all the lovely encounters I had and the glimpses I got into community life of another congregation. To give but one example, the Family Fair was a great event and showed a lot of good ideas and people's strength to pull them off.

I perceived a very cordial hospitality. Whether I needed anything or if I was well were questions that filled the air. On excursions I was able to explore the surrounding area, the nature, the town and anthroposophical places. Also, the invitations for dinner and conversations held over them will positively stay with me. So many offers came my way that I was unable to take them all up, even though I would have liked to.

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I would like to express a great gratitude for what I was able to experience. The minerals that I was given as a departing gift are really beautiful, a big thank you for those as well. The gorgeously crafted card that revealed lots of warm greetings particularly took me aback. The community in Heidenheim was also very pleasantly surprised to receive the stunning illustrated book on Cape Town. You might guess that your priest has had an eventful time!

Lots of very warm greetings from Heidenheim. Thinking of you all.
Marcel Frank.



Below: Early on Fair Day Marcel captured the rising spring sun and the setting-up of stalls in the church garden.



FAIR 2015.

Marcel Frank took these colourful photos at the Fair. On the left are some of Colleen's tie-dyed crafts beautifully displayed in the church garden. Below are some of the dolls made by Heike and her group of crafters.



Above: The Cake Table with Yvonne Bruwer, Marion Penfold and Rhoda Rutherford in attendance.

Commentary received on the Fair 2015.

"I enjoyed buying second hand books from Malcolm. The marmalade, hummus, atchar, tabeneh, olives etc at the Deli Stall were all exceptionally delicious. The nut and raisin loaf and coffee ring cake were both excellent, and packing the loaves in brown, stone-ground flour bags is great ... It is lovely to have the Fair in spring! "

"It was an excellent idea having the notice board out front with the times of Magic/Puppet shows on it and that could be somehow placed in an even more conspicuous position to attract passing children (and parents)."

Some constructive ideas for possible changes were also received; for example the placement of some stalls and some other matters which will be re-looked at our first Fair meeting in 2016. There is always space for change and growth!

Thanks again to all who helped to make this event a success. Our net income came to R34,041.00 with still some income expected during the Advent time. Fair Coordination Group.

Financial Report.

Dear Friends,

The calendar year is coming to a close and although I am reluctant to do so, as your treasurer I feel obliged to point out to you that our monthly income has suddenly dropped alarmingly. In fact last month's contributions could not meet our monthly payroll. This is not a good state of affairs to be in and I hope that this is only a short term hiccup. I fully understand that there are people who find themselves in financially constrained situations. However, some contributors have been paying the same amount for years without ever taking the rate of inflation into consideration. Others used to pay a certain sum annually and have not yet done so. Please understand, we need your regular monthly payments as a month or two lost is difficult to make up.

On the other hand there are many faithful and prompt payers and to them I would like to say a huge thank you, especially to the pensioners, who live on a fixed income and still manage to put something aside for the church. All your sacrifices are much appreciated.

I also want to reiterate that all improvements that you have seen during the year or are currently happening, were solely done with either the funds raised at our annual fair or from a donation for a specific purpose. Therefore, your monthly contribution goes towards the day to day running expenses of the church.

May I also point out that your contribution alone would not keep us on an even keel. It is of utmost necessity that we also receive regular income from rentals, which in turn means that maintenance and regular upkeep is essential.

I thank you for your attention in reading this. You will understand that without a sound financial basis, we are not able to fulfill our key purpose – the furthering of Sacramental life. Blessings to you all, Rosemarie.

Those in our Community who have recently crossed the threshold:

- **Cornell Senekal** died on 5th September in Robertson. A Memorial Service was held on his sister's Western Cape Farm.
- **Loes Schipper**, aged 93, died suddenly on 16th September.
- **Doris Hulme**, mother of Carole Penfold, passed away on 16th October aged 95.

Our condolences go out to these families.

Thank you

- to **Clare Bell** whose invaluable input into the church garden is starting to show visible results.
- to **"Team Enthoven"**, our indefatigable maintenance and upgrading maestros for all their hard work and magic making in the flats, the chapel and the foyer fire door. You are true stars! Richard Goodall.

Children's Camp. We have a bumper camp this year with 40 children, 14 helpers and our faithful kitchen crew of Anette and Rene. May the elements be kind to us. Richard Goodall.



MONDE WAS BORN in Umtata in the Eastern Cape where he grew up with his parents and siblings. For him it was a friendly community of family and friends. He is now married and, like many others, he and his wife have moved to Cape Town to look for employment. They live in Khayelitsha where his wife is a home maker and mother to their two sons. Monde was first employed by Lia Gabler and helped her (and some of the other THC residents as well) to establish their gardens.

The picture above was taken by Rosemarie Enthoven amongst the Timour Hall Cottages behind the church. Many people have been commenting on how beautiful the church garden is looking this spring, no doubt thanks to the quality compost which Monde makes in the back of the property.

Both Monde and Veronica still need another day's work in the southern suburbs preferably. For enquiries please phone the church office. Marilize.

Living in Dying and Becoming.

The annual celebration of our living relationship with those souls that have crossed the threshold will again take place during three events.

Friday 20 November at 7.30 pm.

A conversation to realize the connection between death and becoming in life.

Saturday 21 November at 3.15 for 3.30 pm.

Celebrating our relationship with those who have crossed the threshold. (Due to the quiet nature of the event the doors will close at 3.30 pm.)

Sunday 22 November at 9.00 a.m - Remembrance Sunday Service

Enquiries: Cobie Roelvert 021 671 4757 or Carole Penfold 021 794 4110.

Our church gardener and char.

IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT WE introduce Monde Mtshemia and Veronica Kula who have both been with us for several years. They are the people in the background whose hard work helps to maintain our building and garden in good order. And they do it with a friendly willingness and dedication that is much appreciated.

Veronica was born in Ugie in the Eastern Cape where she spent a happy childhood with her parents and siblings. They had chickens, cows, pigs and sheep and they grew vegetables and mielies. She also went to school there.

She describes Eastern Cape as a very cold place in winter and with very friendly people but unfortunately not with many work opportunities.

As a young adult she relocated to Cape Town with her husband and three sons to look for work and she has lived in Philippi for over 30 years. Although her children are now all grown-up she last year started raising her sister's little girl, seven years of age, to help put her through school.

Once a year she visits her home in Ugie which is being looked after by her sister's son while she is in Cape Town. She hopes to retire there one day so each time she visits she gets out the paint to help maintain the building. This includes cement jobs and roof repairs where needed. Clearly her hands are ready for anything! Marilize.

Advent Festival – 28th November.



At 4 p.m. we start with refreshments in the foyer and the making of candle holders by the children. There will also be Advent and Christmas crafts for sale.

The Advent Garden starts punctually at 5 p.m. It is suitable for children aged three to ten. It should be finished by 6.30 pm.

Please R.S.V.P. by 20th November so we know for how many children to cater. You can phone Marilize in the church office (021)762-0450 between 09h00 and 15h00 from Monday to Friday or e-mail to christianco@telkomsa.net. We suggest a contribution of R15 per child to cover costs.

We are looking forward to seeing you all there.