

Scott & Melanie Smith, India  
**December Update**

From reading this letter you will find out we are retiring from our work under the PC(USA) in 2009. Please know that we have felt loved and supported by all our church friends over the last 30 years. Although much has changed, both with us and with the PC(USA), over these years it has been a privilege and a blessing for us to have been in partnership with you to some of the most needy communities in south Asia.

We will continue working in India in a new project, based in Dehradun, that develops small businesses linked to three economic sectors; horticulture, medicinal plants, and tourism. These sectors are particularly important to the mountainous state of Uttarakhand where we have been living for most of our time in India. We are looking forward to leading this new effort that will benefit those who have not yet gained from the improving markets in India. The project is a joint venture between the government of Uttarakhand and the German government. It will be different working in a secular organisation after working in church sponsored projects. This change itself causes some anxiety but in many ways I am looking forward to the challenge.

Scott

**Mel's Musings**

I am not sure how many years I have been writing Mel's Musings. I started them to share about our home life and what goes on behind the scenes of a "missionary" family living in Nepal and India. I sometimes have the opportunity to explore how I feel and make decisions in life. This time I have to tell you about a big change in our lives. We have retired after 25 years working with the Presbyterian Church. This was going to happen next summer but will now happen from February 2009. It feels a bit like jumping out of the boat, but the shock is wearing off, like getting used to cold water. Scott's new office will be on the top floor of the Inderlok Hotel in Dehradun, just 30 km. from Mussoorie, where we have lived for most of our time in India.

Scott's new job will be as team leader of a joint project of the German and Indian Governments. The project will be helping strengthen small business in the state of Uttarakhand (which is the state that Woodstock School is located). He is the team leader but also called the long term international expert and has several other "experts" working with him in the areas of off-season vegetables, education tourism, and medical herbs, which are the potential growth areas for employment and income for people living in this remote hill state of North India. This type of business development has its own vocabulary and processes, is so totally new for Scott and is really pushing his comfort zone. However, we are excited about the practical help this will be for poorer hill based communities, developing the new team, and all the new knowledge that Scott will absorb about "value chains", market development, branding, etc. He has the advantage of living in these hills for 8 years and has a knowledge of village life in the area.

My new work in Delhi has not turned out to be easy. The chaos that was exciting and challenging has turned into frustrating and anxiety making. As Office Manager, I can manage very little change as I do not have the authority that goes with the responsibility. My co-workers are great and mean well, but it gives me a sort of indigestion working around such spontaneous activity.

When I left Woodstock to work in the city I was concentrating on what I was going to "do". Again I am asking myself, and others are asking, what I am going to do now? Scott is moving back north to Dehradun, but I came to Delhi for a reason, so I am not in a hurry to move again after five months. So I am choosing not to answer that question at present. I am going to try to work on just "being" rather than "doing", and see what comes my way. Scott will be on the road quite a bit but will manage most weekends here unless I visit him there. The trains are very comfortable and there are several each day from Dehradun to Delhi and back the other way.

We wish you all peace, and joy and strength for new beginnings in this season that reminds us of God's total commitment.

Melanie