

Old Delhi crammed with orphans

Near the end of my stay in India I met a man from South India at the Ashoka Hotel. I told him I was disappointed at not being able to visit Calcutta before leaving India, as I had hoped to visit Mother Theresa's home for the destitute.

He began to tell me about Mother Theresa when suddenly tears began streaming down his cheeks. I was very moved and quickly told him it was alright, I understood how he must feel. He said, "we love her so much."

Then he told me of a home for unwanted babies not too far away in Old Delhi. So the next day, after obtaining the address from the nuns at a catholic school for girls, my friends and I set out in a car to find the place. It was a small building tucked way in the back of some larger ones and we had all but given up hope of ever finding the place when one of my friends saw three men and an older woman standing waiting for a bus. After stopping the car he walked over to the group and began speaking to the men. But from the car I noticed the woman kept waving her arms and pointing.

Soon my friend came back to the car alone with the old woman, who climbed in too. She spoke perfect english and told me she knew exactly where to go, as she used to go there often as a volunteer to help with the babies. My friend smiled at me and said, "surely God must have placed her there at the bus stop," as we were about to give up and leave without ever finding it.

She took us in and introduced us to the nun at the desk, who asked a young nun to show us around. There were three small rooms of babies in that desolate building, run by Mother Theresa's Sisters of Charity. The first room I entered had 14 babies in two rows of cribs and when I walked in, all 14 were crying.

As I walked up to their cribs, they stopped crying, smiled and reached their little arms out to be picked up. I had a pendant watch on a chain around my neck and let each one play with it as I moved from crib to crib, blinded by tears and not caring who saw me crying.

When I thought that was all and started to leave, the young nun said, "Don't you want to see the rest?" There were two more rooms, about 40 babies in all, including some very tiny newborns. A few of the older ones were crippled or retarded, but most were beautiful, healthy babies, waiting for homes, and I longed to take them all. It was such an emotional shock, I quickly thanked the nuns for letting me in, gave them what seemed to me a paltry sum of money for such a horrendous task and promised myself to come again next trip, and to tell everyone who'll listen about those beautiful homeless babies that nobody wants.

The Indian woman who was with me in the car that day was the driver's wife. She was from Bangladesh and spoke no English. Although we could not com-

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municate verbally, we were instantly drawn to each other and with my meagre Hindi and plenty of sign language we got along fine. Later, over dinner, she tried to tell me something. she said "bachae" which means children, and touched her heart and smiled through tears. Her husband explained, she was trying to tell me she liked the babies. I knew she had no children of her own and although she's not

so young anymore, I left India hoping she would go back and maybe take one home with her.

God often works in strange & mmysterious ways. Even in India. On a tour to Agra to see the beautiful Taj Mahal, I met an American woman whose husband works in the American Embassy in Delhi. They lived less than two blocks from me, so we visited back and forth and soon became fast

friends.

One day when the weather had turned very hot, and I was longing for the company of fellow Canadians, she and I walked the two miles to the Canadian Embassy where I asked if I could swim in the embassy pool and hopefully make the acquaintance of some Canadian women. The woman at the embassy apologized and said only embassy staff could use the pool. She asked if I was lonely, and if so, would I like to join the Delhi Bible Fellowship members, who were gathering at the home of the Canadian high commissioner to hear a talk given by a missionary woman from Texas. She gave me the address and said she'd meet me there.

The high commissioner's wife greeted me at the door and patiently introduced me to each of the women. There were about 30 in

all, of several different nationalities. As a result of that gathering, I met an English woman whose husband was with the British high commission and who lived not far from me. She invited me to her home in the British compound and said if I liked to swim, to bring a bathing suit. So I wasn't allowed to swim in the Canadian Embassy pool, but both the British and Americans invited me to theirs.

The English woman also invited me to attend the most meaningful Good Friday communion service I've ever had the pleasure to experience. So many people turned out for the service there were not enough communion glassed to go around, so we were asked if some of us would share. I shared my Good Friday communion glass with an Indian woman I will probably never see again, but certainly will never forget.