

ROTARY CLUB OF PARRAMATTA CITY Inc. DISTRICT 9675

www.parramattacityrotary.org.au

Rotary Four Way Test

The Four Way Test challenges Rotarians, in everything they do, to ask of themselves:

Of the things we say or do:

1. Is it the **TRUTH**?
2. Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
4. Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

Meeting 18 May 2015

Our Guests

Bob Rosengreen introduced Ian Cochrane, a one-time high school teacher who decided in his retirement to get involved with a charity in the most extreme part of the world he could find. He found himself in a Christian organisation running a hospital and school in a Muslim country. Ian is not unknown to the club. His visit was the ninth time he had been with us.

Our other guest was Frederik Andersen, our Danish exchange student, accompanied by his former host mother Natalie. A most successful hosting, we might point out. They have become friends for life and Frederik has an invitation to Natalie and her family to visit him and his family in Denmark.

Our Toast

Bob Rosengreen proposed a toast to the Rotary Club of Osaka, where a Rotary convention had attracted 42,381 people. "I think that the fact that Japan has involved itself strongly with Rotary gives the country a better chance to see how the rest of the world thinks," Bob said.

Charity in Bangladesh

Ian Cochrane and his wife Jill first went to Bangladesh 10 years ago. It was a country the size of Tasmania but packing in 160 million people. There was extreme poverty. IN many cases a house would fit into half a kitchen in an ordinary home. The society was bound by the caste system. International aid did arrive but little of it tricked down to the ordinary people.

Ian and Jill became involved in the LAMB (Lutheran Aid and Medicine in Bangladesh), founded about 30 years ago by a group of Lutherans who set up a 150-bed hospital, and which was now serving two million people. Nearby was the Livingstone School which was for very poor children. "Jill and I were so impressed by LAMB that we set up Friends of LAMB in Australia (FOLIA)," he said. FOLIA was now a project of Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS).

The hospital had a staff of 1,000, mostly Bangladeshis, who were Muslim or Hindu, and about 25 expat doctors, nurses and support staff. The hospital had 30 new patients a day, which came to about 11,000 for the year, and had 180 outpatients a day, which came to some 66,000 annually. It had established 30 regional health centres which operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week. One of the biggest contributors was the Muslim Aid Foundation of the United Kingdom.

Ian said that about 70 percent of babies born died before the age of five. A lot depended on the wealth of the parents. Educated people had two, perhaps three, children and made a great effort to ensure they survived. Uneducated people had 11 or 12 children in the hope that one male would survive till adulthood.

Parramatta City Rotary had been at the forefront of support for the LAMB project. In the first two or three years the club had paid for a teacher and the headmaster had divided that money up to supplement the income of several teachers, each made to think that they were a special teacher supported by Parramatta City Rotary.

Ian said the conditions were extreme. When the monsoonal rains came it could rain for weeks. Covers had to be put onto walkways so that people could get from one part of the hospital to the other. Good coats of paint were needed to protect the woodwork. There had been support from the Rotary Club of Dacca. The hospital had received a \$20,000 grant which had enabled the purchase of much-needed equipment.

There was so much more that needed to be done. In the last two or three years the hospital had had a disability unit which had been unfunded till FOLIA came along. In Bangladesh the situation of the disabled was lamentable. It was considered shameful for a family and disabled people were hidden away.

“LAMB has taken that on and changed the culture of Bangladesh,” he said. “They have welcomed people with disabilities into the project, which had catered for thousands of disabled children. Ian showed our club a pictorial representation of a disabled boy called Promon. “FOLIA is trying to pay for this little boy’s education,” he said. The cost was \$3,000 a year but that paid for the teacher as well as the school fees.

The Livingstone School was about 500 metres from the hospital and now had 211 children. Of these, all but three were the first members of their family who had ever been to school. But teaching itself was difficult because the children did not have enough food in their bellies. Some of them had only two meals a week. So the school itself had to take on the role of providing food. Ian said the staple diet in Bangladesh was fish. The men ate first, the boys, then the women and last the girls. If there was insufficient fish, it was likely that the girls starved.

Donations

At the club’s Board meeting, the board members decided that \$1,000 should go to FOLIA, along with \$1,000 each to RAWCS (for Nepal relief), St Peters Junior School Uganda, our sister club, the Rotary Club of Ramon Magsaysay, our National Youth Science Forum student attending the International Forum in London, and Days for Girls project. The Rotary Foundation will receive \$2,500 and Australian Rotary Health will get \$4,000. (\$2,500 to support an Indigenous Health Scholarship and \$1,500 donation). The board also decided that \$500 each should go to Westmead Hospital, Parramatta Mission and the Northcott Society.

Dates for Diary

24 May. Have a pleasant day off. The Parra-Amble has been postponed till some date in November.

25 May. Police Officer of the Year Award at Oatlands Golf Club.

31 May., The Red Shield Appeal.

1 June. Kaheba Clement Honda, mental health professional and prospective member, will speak about life and conditions in the Congo.

15 June. Kylie Warry, communications specialist, speaker, author and trainer will address the club. She is the author of a book, *The Enlightened Communicator –Avoid the Common Communication Traps for Betty Connection at Work and Personally.*

19 June. Farewell Dinner for Frederik Andersen. Peronis Restaurant Harris Park

28 June. District 9675 Changeover Luncheon, Campbelltown.

29 June. Our Changeover evening to welcome Malcolm as Club President. This will be at the Oatlands Golf Club, 6.30 for 7 pm. The meals will cost \$55 per person.