



FORMAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
(A CHARTERED UNIVERSITY)

Rector's Update

The latest news and announcements from Dr. Jonathan Addleton

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Dear Fellow Formanite,

From time to time I hope to provide members of the Forman community with an "update" on recent developments at FCCU. This is the first such effort. Comments are welcome, along with ideas and suggestions on what to include in future editions.

First, Happy New Year! 2020 was tough for everyone and as 2021 starts we still face many pandemic-related challenges. Still, it is gratifying that the university part of FCCU will soon return to a "blended approach"; already, half the Intermediate student population is back and it is nice to see them bring the Forman campus back to life. As always, I admire the resilience of the Forman community, as reflected in the actions of many of our students, faculty, and staff.

It was wonderful to see Lahore included on the *New York Times* list of "Dream Destinations to Love in 2021". We who live in Lahore don't need to be reminded of the vibrancy and hospitality of its people. However, it is nonetheless gratifying that "our city" should receive this special recognition. More than ever, I look forward to the wave of visitors that we expect to host once international travel becomes easier.

March 3 will mark the 200th birth anniversary of Charles W. Forman, founder of Forman Christian College. He is buried in Lahore and I plan to join with others in commemorating the occasion at some point during the coming weeks. Other special programs are also being considered, possibly including an online webinar/symposium. Suggestions and comments are most welcome!

I have been impressed at the number of Zoom meetings, webinars, and other events sponsored by faculty as well as various student organizations, despite the pandemic. Indeed, the realization that certain international connections can be strengthened through information technology may be one of the most important "lessons learned" from the pandemic experience.

On the faculty side, I participated in a webinar arranged by FCCU's Population Research Center involving participants from five countries on the demographic impact of Covid-19; retired Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali reflected on *Mysticism: The Nature of Spiritual Experience* in a fascinating program sponsored by FCCU's Religious Studies Department; Vice Rector Douglas Trimble moderated a discussion on first generation Americans sponsored by the US Consulate's Lincoln Corner, and both Dr. Arfa Sayeda Zehra from the History Department and Dr. Kamal ud-Din from the English Department participated in outstanding interviews arranged by the FCCU Advancement Office. I also very much appreciate the continued on-line training provided by Forman's Center for Learning and Teaching, an especially important service at a time when much of our teaching is on-line.

On the student side, I have been impressed with the wide range of online offerings including programs on Fulbright Fellowships (Speers Chemical Society); Quaid-Azam (FCCU Character Building Society); Green Energy (Earth Watch Club) Vaccinations, and Covid-19 (Forman Biology Society); Kashmir (Forman Sociological Society); Entrepreneurs at FCCU (Young Entrepreneurial Platform) and an on-line Calligraphy Competition (Forman Islamic Society), among others. As an aside, I see that the deadline for students interested in Society registration is coming up soon: January 24, 2021.



During my early weeks at Forman, I set aside a shelf in my office for books with direct links to Forman. Although many more books need to be added, the collection so far includes *The Politics of Ethnicity and Federalism in Pakistan* (Oxford University Press, 2020) edited by Professor Ryan Brasher; *Literary and Non-Literary Responses Toward 9/11: South Asia and Beyond* (Routledge, 2019) edited by Professor Nukhbah Taj Langah; *The Charismatic Leader: Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the Creation of Pakistan* (Oxford University Press, 2018) by Professor Sikander Hayat; *Medicinally Important Trees* (Springer, 2017) and *Flowering Plants* (Wiley, 2017) by Professor Aisha Saleem Khan; and *Temples of the Salt Range* (University of the Punjab, 2015) by Professor Farzand Masih.

I look forward to adding other books to this shelf in the future including Dr. Sara Rizvi Jafree's *The Sociology of South Asian Women's Health* (Springer, 2020). I will also be on the lookout for books written by former Forman faculty. For example, I was recently browsing in a used bookstore in downtown Lahore and came across a signed copy of *Modern Islam in India*, the first book was written by Wilfred Cantwell Smith who taught at Forman during the 1940s. Subsequently, Smith went on to establish Religious Studies Departments at Dalhousie, McGill, and Harvard.

Grants have recently been received that add to Forman's strength and reputation as a research institution. For example, FCCU's School of Life Sciences has received a 10.5 million rupees research grant and a 3.5 million rupees equipment grant, both as part of the Alexander von Humboldt program established to forge international links involving German universities; the applications for these grants were submitted by Dr. Kauser

Abdulla Malik and Dr. Samina Mehnaz, both of whom are Humboldt Fellows. Also, Dr. Vaqas Ali from FCCU's Sociology Department is heading an effort to address issues faced by brick kiln workers in Pakistan, supported by a 3.7 million rupee grant from the Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation.

Some of you may have noticed a reference in the news to one of Forman's younger alumni: "Old Formanite" Javed Ali Manwa, aged 33, was recently voted in as the youngest member of the Gilgit/Baltistan Assembly; his BA degree is in Political Science.

I will also always be proud of the achievements of our students. In particular, I very much enjoyed the outstanding short animated video on one of the potentially habitable satellites of Saturn, produced by sophomore physics major Syed Muneeb Ali in cooperation with planetary scientist Dr. Nozair Khawaja from the Freie University in Berlin. It is truly outstanding!

Despite the pandemic, construction continues on a number of buildings including the new Campus Center which should be complete by January 2022 and the new Media Center which is moving along nicely. Once the required building permit is received, we hope to proceed with the construction of a new classroom block for Light of Hope School.

A new Forman/TSA partnership is also moving forward. Most notably, the old TSA site near the FCCU campus will provide facilities for a new female hostel, starting with 16 female students but eventually including as many as 86. This initiative, headed by Dr. Matthew Jeong, also includes the continuation of a special needs school that had been closed due to Covid-19; the establishment of a community counseling center; and the maintenance of the TSA female income generation program. These activities should eventually provide internship or volunteer opportunities for Forman students, especially those living in the nearby hostel. Forman departments such as Psychology, Education, and the Business School are already involved or potentially can become involved. My sincere hope is that this partnership will give tangible meaning to our motto: *"By love serve one another"*.

Official meetings during the past few weeks included one with Governor of Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar and another with Dr. Muhammad Ali, Vice-Chancellor of Quaid-i-Azam University. I appreciated the governor's Scottish connections, given that my wife Fiona is from Scotland. I was also intrigued to learn that the Quaid-i-Azam Vice-Chancellor is a Forman graduate -- as are his four brothers.

On the personal front, I was privileged to visit the Pakistan Bible Society Museum in Anarkali in December, a matter of special interest because as a child my parents paid the then-large sum of 500 rupees to enroll me as a life member. During this Age of Covid-19, I was struck by the sign outside the Museum: *"All men are like grass and their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall but the Word of the Lord stands forever"* (I Peter 2:24-25).

In early January I joined several Forman colleagues on a socially distanced visit to Changa Manga, arranged by Colonel Khaqan. I had seen this large man-made forest south of Lahore from a train window as a child. However, I hadn't realized that it had since become a tourist attraction. I was interested in particular in the wildlife, especially the peacocks in all their brilliant glory.





Noticing one peacock with his tail in full display, I was immediately reminded of the Urdu proverb "*Jungle mein mor naucha, kisney dekha*"? The literal translation -- "*Who saw the peacock dancing in the jungle?*" -- is intriguing enough. But to my mind what this proverb really means is that even wonderful events need to be seen, publicized, and brought to the attention of others, otherwise no one will know they even happened.

Put another way, I want to ensure that others across Pakistan and beyond hear about the many positive things that are happening at FCCU, despite the challenges and inevitable setbacks that all of us will experience along the way. And that is one of my wishes for Forman in this New Year -- that such stories will *not* remain "hidden in the jungle," rather that they will be circulated, told, and described to others in ways that also help advance Forman's wider educational mission in Pakistan!

Sincerely,

Dr. Jonathan Addleton
Rector, FCCU

