

# A Journey Through Time: Dr Jonathan Addleton reflects on his life in Pakistan and his leadership at FCCU

**| Dr Addleton says we have a socio-economic, ethnic, and religious diversity at FCCU | Despite AI's current limitations, it is essential to keep up with technological advancements**

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Born in Pakistan in 1957, Dr Jonathan Addleton, the current President of Forman Christian College University (FCCU), shares a deep, multi-faceted relationship with Pakistan. His initial 18 years in Pakistan were pivotal, carving out a deep-seated affinity for the country that he carries with him to this day. "I spent the first 18 years of my life here. Pakistan is not just a place I was born in, it is a part of who I am," Dr. Addleton shares passionately. His journey includes a 30-year-long career in the Foreign Service, with a focus on development systems in several countries, including Pakistan.

Dr. Addleton vividly recalls his return to Pakistan after the heartbreaking earthquake of 2005, a disaster that claimed the lives of more than 60,000 people and resulted in the loss of homes for approximately three million people. These experiences shaped his perspective on resilience, service, and the power of communities, which would later inform his approach at FCCU. From a young learner at Murree Christian College to the President of FCCU in 2019, Dr Addleton has witnessed Pakistan's transformation first-hand. He noted the stark contrasts between the Pakistan of his childhood and the one he now serves, emphasizing the country's significant strides in development and global connectivity. "In



**Dr Addleton, President Forman Christian College, during his visit to The Nation Islamabad office.**

the early 1960s, they pointed to a place and said, 'This is where they are going to build the capital.' Now, it's a bustling city, testament to the country's remarkable progress," Dr. Addleton reflects.

Transitioning from Pakistan to Northwestern University was not an easy feat in a pre-internet era. Dr Addleton reminisces about the hardships he faced when applying to foreign universities through traditional mail. Despite the struggles, he shares that the experience instilled in him a resilience and determi-

nation to seize every learning opportunity. "I had to communicate through letters. It was difficult, but the experience taught me resilience and to seize learning opportunities," he said.

On discussing FCCU's rich legacy, Dr Addleton notes the institution's remarkable history, dating back to 1864. He deeply appreciates the tenacity of the alumni who reversed the nationalization of FCCU and rejuvenated its stature. Having seen FCCU's transformative journey, he takes his leadership role

forward the liberal arts tradition. I have high hopes that they will help shape the future of higher education in Pakistan," he emphasizes. With the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), Dr Addleton discusses its potential impact on students and education. He believes that despite AI's current limitations, it's essential to keep up with these technological advancements. "AI applications have their limitations and still need human intervention. Our faculty is very aware of this and actively engaged in discussions about it," he shared.

FCCU, under Dr Addleton's leadership, is also a beacon of diversity. The institution boasts a wide array of students from diverse religious, socio-economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Dr. Addleton takes pride in this diversity, noting that the first Sikh officer in the Pakistan Army is a Forman graduate. "We have a socio-economic, ethnic, and religious diversity at FCCU. Students from all walks of life and parts of Pakistan join us." Despite the current political and economic uncertainties in Pakistan, Dr Addleton remains hopeful, drawing inspiration from the resilience and vibrancy of Pakistan's youth. "There is incredible resilience among Pakistanis. We have vibrant, outstanding young people here. Education matters, and I believe in a national consensus that upholds it, even amidst governmental changes," he concluded. His optimism shines through, providing a beacon of hope for the future of education in Pakistan.

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very seriously. "I bring my diplomatic background to FCCU, but the challenge lies in the academic side. We focus on fostering critical thinking here, not just on rote memorization," he explains.

Dr. Addleton is optimistic about the future of education in Pakistan. He acknowledges the hurdles, particularly around quality assurance, but believes that FCCU and its graduates will play a crucial role in shaping the educational landscape. "Our students embody the ethos of FCCU, car-