

Malabar Mission Newsletter

Winter 2011

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Our Mission

The Malabar Mission Society is a group of Christians interested in assisting the Malabar Mission Circle in India as it shares the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ along the Malabar Coast by supporting, with prayers for God's blessings,

- the spread of the Gospel, and
- the Circle's witness



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Malabar Mission Newsletter

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PROJECT OFFICER ATTENDS MAJOR EVENTS IN MALABAR DURING VISIT

- Rev. Carlton Riemer, MMS Project Officer

The Project Officer attended several major events in Malabar during his visit from October 20 to November 13, 2011.

Christ Lutheran Church, Wandoor, held a Harvest Festival on October 23, 2011, with a special worship service at 2 p.m. Pastor Carlton Riemer preached on Malachi 3:10 with the theme, "Tithe to Test God." The service featured the singing of many hymns set to traditional Malayalam tunes, some of them led by talented members of the church choir. Then a fund-raising auction was held with the members bringing bananas, chickens, tapioca, coconuts, rice, and other crops from their gardens and farms. The ladies of the congregation brought tasty baked goods.

On October 25-26, around 35 young people gathered at a YMCA camp in Vythiri, near Sulthan Bathery, for a Youth Seminar. The theme was "Arise and Build," based on Nehemiah 2:20. The Rev. T. Joy, MMS Program Director, led the activities. Keynote addresses were given by a local Mar Thoma pastor and his wife. The Project Officer presented a Bible Class on Nehemiah Chapter 1. Nehemiah is an example of an effective leader, because he prayed, organized, and overcame obstacles.

St. John Lutheran Church, Malappuram, observed World Sunday School Day on November 6, with a special worship service held in the morning in the school. Pastor Riemer preached on I Samuel 1:21-28 with a theme, "Lending to the Lord." Like Hannah and Elkanah, Christian parents have a responsibility to "lend" their children to the Lord by teaching them the Word of God in their homes and by sending them to Sunday Schools and Christian schools.

After a delicious chicken biriyani dinner, members and friends gathered to rededicate St. John Lutheran Church with their extension of the worship area, a new entry way, and bell tower. The bell was donated by Dr. Leena, a resident lady doctor at Christian Welfare Centre, Malappuram. Pastor Riemer did the honors to cut the ribbon and preached a sermon based on I Kings 8:41-43, 59-61, in which he stressed that the reason (according to King Solomon's dedicatory prayer) for Christian buildings and activities is "in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your [God's] name." The service included their Harvest Festival, for which Rev. Oliver, pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Wandoor, preached. The congregation members and guest choirs from area churches used their talents to glorify God and enhanced the worship service by singing beautiful traditional Malayalam songs. There was an auction of local donated produce and baked goods after the service and into the evening. The Rev. I. Titus led all of the worship services.



St. John's Lutheran Church, Malappuram before the ribbon cutting.

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PROJECT OFFICER'S VISIT

- Continued from pg. 1

A highlight of the trip was the Family Convention held on the grounds of Karunalaya Hospital in Wandoor, with Christ Lutheran Church hosting the event. Rev. I. Titus oversaw all the arrangements for the convention, including food, housing, and travel for more than 100 people. The MMS supported the event with Rs 40,000 to cover half of the expenses.

The Family Convention opened on November 11, 2011 with a devotion led by Rev. T. Joy at the grave site of the Rev. Henry Otten, the LCMS missionary who started the work in Wandoor. After tea Pastor Riemer gave the opening devotion on the name, Jesus, and His title, Christ. The main speaker was the Rev. D. Christudas, who spoke on the theme "Grace of God and Human Life," which included an overview of Martin Luther's life, thought, and theology. A fellow student of his in the Master of Theology program at Gurukul Lutheran Theological College in Chennai, the Rev. Sathiadas, taught some of the sessions. Rev. Sathiadas preached for the Divine Service of Holy Communion at 7 a.m. on November 12 in Christ Lutheran Church, Wandor. Pastor Riemer did a presentation on "God's Labor and Our Labor: Luther's Views on Calling/Vocation." Mr. C. Rejidas gave the closing devotion. He is a Bachelor of Divinity theology student in his last year at Gurukul Lutheran Theological College. The MMS has been supporting him during his training for pastoral ministry. The meeting area was decorated with pictures of Luther and Reformation events provided by Rev. Joy.

At the family convention Pastor Riemer presented the Gospel Workers of the MMC with a Christmas gift from the Malabar Mission Society. Repeatedly during the event and during the personal visits that the Project Officer made to the stations in the Malabar Mission Circle, workers and members of congregations expressed their appreciation for the prayer, spiritual, and financial support that the Malabar Mission Society is giving to the Gospel work in Malabar. They are profoundly thankful. The donations are definitely fulfilling the MMS mission of "assisting the Malabar Mission Circle in India as it shares the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ along the Malabar coast by supporting, with prayers for God's blessings, the spread of the Gospel and the Circle's witness."



Revs. Shaikh Benson, Shaikh Ismail, Siddikh Khan, Masthan Vali and Mahamad Rasool from Anantapur

Please pray with us for God's help to make a God-pleasing decision about this weighty matter and about all the other items in the MMS budget for 2012. All of them have an evangelistic thrust and reflect real needs. With God's help the MMS can meet the challenges that God places before us in His mission to save everyone in the world through the Good News of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. ☩

In Appreciation

The Malabar Mission Society sincerely thanks the following who have so generously given special gifts ...

In memory of:

- **Libby Ritter**
Rev. Walter Ritter
- **Edward Wudrick**
Florence Wudrick & Family



Memorials and gifts honouring special occasions are welcomed by the Malabar Mission Society, and are used to support the Lutheran Church in India to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those who do not yet know His love. All donations are receipted for income tax purposes. Special-occasion gifts and memorials will be acknowledged in future issues of the Newsletter.

*Send your gifts to
The Malabar Mission Society
P. O. Box 32045
REGINA, SK S4N 7L2*

Rev. Shaikh Ismail and four pastors/leaders from the Gospel for Muslim Salvation & Welfare Association from Anantapur in the state of Andhra Pradesh, came to Sulthan Bathery for a one day meeting with Rev. Joy, Rev. Dr. K. M. Victor, and the Project Officer. They reported that they have 23 workers who conduct 24 worship services weekly, many of them in homes, with around 1,370 people attending worship weekly. They also have around 200 secret believers, whom they are nurturing in the faith. They have also been training 12 new leaders to expand the Gospel work even further into more villages. They hope that MMS will be able to give some support to these additional new leaders, as we have been supporting the 23 workers since 2006.

The MMS Board of Directors will prayerfully consider these and other compelling requests in their December 9-10, 2011, meeting in Saskatoon. We shall also need to consider the bigger question of whether we can anticipate enough support from donors to commit ourselves to another three-year cycle of supporting this group of new believers who "represent probably the largest Muslim group in South Indian history to turn to Christ." (A quote from Rev. Dr. Roland Miller's article in the Fall, 2010 Malabar Mission Newsletter.)

THE OTHER CHILD

- Brian Wonnick

Ever since Sue Walton's mother had passed away a few months ago, Sue and her husband, Gary, were keenly aware that they should review and update their wills. Before arranging to meet with their professional advisers, they sat down, took out their current wills, and started to pour over them. They felt they should do their "homework" before going to see their lawyer, as that was much better use of everyone's time (and money). As they considered the changes that had taken place in their lives, they had the nagging feeling that something or someone had been missed. The phrase "Leave A Legacy" came to mind, which led them to consider the charities they usually support.

Gary remembered a talk by their pastor who shared that each one of us has another child in our family, whether we are married or not. That child is Jesus, God's Christmas gift to the world. Sue picked up on the idea, and asked,

"In addition to our own three children, let's add a fourth, Jesus, and leave a gift in our will to ensure His work continues after our death."

Overseas missions had always been one of their passions, and so they chose the Malabar Mission Society, which spreads the Gospel of Christ in India. To put this gift in place, they added a paragraph in their will outlining the bequest gift, deciding to leave a fixed percentage of their estate to the Society. (See the sample bequest wording below.)

Their accountant, Ted, pointed out the tax saving their estate would receive, indicating that all of the donation may be used to offset taxes in the final return. Ted also observed that other clients have used life insurance, an RRSP or RRIF, or a gift of publicly traded shares. Each of these gifts has tax savings attached to them, and because circumstances vary from family to family, a professional advisor should be consulted.

The Waltons were pleased that their children were positive about their gift planning, indicating that they, too, will recognize another "child" in their own family.

Sample Wording for Bequests

This may be inserted in the will:

"I give to Malabar Mission Society, P.O. Box 32045, Regina, SK S4N 7L2 a gift (insert amount, legal description of the gift, *i.e.* cash property, specific amounts, etc.) for the purpose of continuing the work of the Malabar Mission Society.

"The donor acknowledges and declares that this gift is absolute and that the Malabar Mission Society shall be under no obligation in respect to the gifts to heirs, administrators, executors, or assigns of the donor."



Brian Wonnick was born and raised in Winkler, Manitoba. He moved with his family to Winnipeg, where he completed a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Manitoba. His working career covers 8 years in the Ford automotive business, 18 years in the Ford New Holland Versatile farm equipment business, 5 years as a Saskatchewan Liquor Inspector, and 9 ½ years with Lutheran Foundation Canada as the Central District Gift Coordinator. As a Gift Coordinator, Brian obtained the Certified Financial Planner (CFP) designation to assist him working with donors in planned giving. Since July 1, 2008, Brian and Joan, his wife of 43 years, have been retired, residing in Regina, SK. They greatly enjoy their children, and three grandchildren, all in Saskatchewan. Brian continues working with Lutheran Foundation Canada, Lutheran Church Canada Central District, maintains membership with the Canadian Association of Gift Planners, and the Association of Lutheran Development Executives. He serves on the board of directors of the Regina Lutheran Care Society, and on the newly created board of Relationship Model International.

INTRODUCING RON WALTER

Ron Walter was elected as Treasurer of the Malabar Mission Society at the 2011 Annual Meeting. He is a lifelong member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Saskatoon where he currently serves the congregation as President.

Ron is retired from a 31 year career in the education sector, most recently as Secretary Treasurer of the Saskatoon (West) School Division. He has served on many Boards and Committees over the years, from Pension Boards to volunteer Boards, including the Saskatchewan Abilities Council, Easter Seals Canada, the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute and the Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials. Ron has held leadership positions in his church as President, Treasurer and Chairman of the Board of Stewardship. In 2009 Ron was elected to the Board of Directors of FaithLife Financial, a fraternal life insurance and benefit society.

Ron is looking forward to serving the Malabar Mission Society as Treasurer to support the valuable work the Society performs in that region.



HEALTH UPDATE - REV. T. JOSEPH

- Mark Dickinson, Newsletter Editor

We are pleased to report that Rev. Joseph, pastor of the Good News Centre [Church and Nursery School] in Calicut (Kerala), is recovering from successful heart surgery in Thiruvananthapuram. Six months ago, Rev. Joseph was diagnosed with a heart defect in his mitral valve and a secondary problem in his aortic valve. Emergency surgery was required at the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Science and Technology. Although complications developed both pre and post surgery, Rev. Joseph's health is showing improvement with every week. Unfortunately, however, his medical costs have created a severe hardship for his family. Rev. Joseph has incurred Cdn.\$1,615.00 (81,000 Rupees) in medical bills so far.

Please pray for a full and complete recovery in Rev. Joseph's health. In addition, Rev. Joseph, his family, and the MMS are deeply grateful to any individuals, groups, or churches willing to assist in covering a portion of his medical bills. May God strengthen Rev. Joseph as he climbs back to better health. 🙏



Rev. T. Joseph recuperating at home with his wife Nancy (on the right) and daughter Jeja.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT: THE MANGER IN THE SHADOW

- Rev, Howard Ulmer



For the last few months we have been bombarded with advertising that entices us to buy that unique gift for someone special. The ongoing commercialization of Christmas, along with the secularization of the "Holiday Season," tends to cause a distraction from the purpose and meaning of Christmas. Although we are unable to change the ongoing media and advertising emphasis, we can make decisions that focus on the **Birth of Jesus** and **God's Gift of Love** to the world.

John the Baptizer preached, saying, "After me comes one who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:7-8) If John, the last great prophet before Jesus, considers himself unworthy, where is our hope? In our sinfulness we are also unworthy. However, God's love, grace and mercy came to our world on that **first Christmas** so that we might receive his forgiveness. The **birth of Jesus** in the rough wooden manger takes place in the shadow of the even rougher wooden cross of Calvary when **Jesus dies on Good Friday**. On **Easter morning Jesus arises** from the grave and declares his victory over sin, death and the devil. The birth, death and resurrection of Jesus are the basis of our Christian faith and hope. As individuals we may not have the opportunity to go to India and preach the **Good News of Salvation in Jesus Christ**, however through our faithful prayer and financial support the message continues to be preached in **Malabar and beyond**. Sincere thanks to all of our faithful supporters. **A Blessed Christmas!** 🙏



Christmas

is a grateful heart,
 Christmas is a prayer,
 Christmas is the spirit
 Of good will that's everywhere,
 Christmas is a time of joy
 And hope and peace combined –
 But Christmas is, above all else,
 God's love for all mankind.

