

Malabar Mission Newsletter

Winter 2014



Vol. 21 No 2

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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WOW! LOOK WHAT THEY DID!

Rev. Dr. Roland E. Miller

In the last Newsletter I used this phrase about the wonderful new hospital building at Malappuram, which Dr. Sophia and friends produced by their own efforts. I also reported that they needed some help in purchasing an ultrasound scanner. Lo and behold, donors came forward to meet this need. So now I have to use the same words to describe our MMS donors: Wow! Look what they did!



Rev. Dr. Roland Miller unveiling the cornerstone of the addition to CWC. Rev. Titus is standing on the left of the stone; Dr. Sophia is next to Rev. Dr. Miller; the other clergyman is the Rev. Dr. J. Samuel, President of the India Evangelical Lutheran Church at the time.

As I look ahead in India I see some negative pressures emerging. By that I mean some difficulties have come together in an unusual combination. The sociopolitical climate is less than favorable since May, so some of our public activities may have to be modified. Inflation is running so high that there is a problem making rupees stretch. The core group of our workers is rather elderly and we have to find some younger staff. As the population increases, the harvest fields are getting bigger and MMS is looking at new ways to do the reaping. Still, the Lord blesses us bountifully. The photos from Anantapur illustrate how that extensive movement to Christ is still going on.

The blessing of the Lord is real right here in Canada as well as in Malabar and beyond. Last month while in the States on a speaking mission, I met a young Lutheran pastor from a Gujarati Muslim background with a Tanzanian connection. Now he is shepherding a rural congregation. In the city where I spoke there is now a small fellowship of Somali believers. That is quite extraordinary. I also met an Arab Lutheran Pastor who was born in Jerusalem. Rev. Abdul Masih ("Servant of the Messiah") is vigorously church-planting in Dearborn, Michigan. I marveled at how the Spirit, the Primary Reaper, is working.

We also need to continue working hard in Malabar while it is day. Please do not forget to pray for and support that outreach this season. I hope to give another WOW! next time.

PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT

Rev. Carlton Riemer

During my latest visit to India, 30 July to 19 August 2014, I visited all the stations in the Malabar Mission Circle (MMC) and had discussions with all MMC Gospel workers; traveled to Anantapur to work with leaders of the Gospel for Muslim Salvation and Welfare Association on a work plan for 2015; met and consulted with Mr. Tony Jose in Ernakulam and Mr. Samuel John in Thiruvananthapuram about computerizing the Bible Correspondence Courses; and firmed up plans with the (cont. Pg. 2)



Seated: Rev. Shaik Ismail. Left to right: Mr. C. D. Solomon, Pr. Masthan Vali, Pr. Saddiq Khan, Rev. I. Titus, Pr. Mohammad Rasool and Pr. Shaik Benson

In Appreciation

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



† **Libby Ritter**

Walter and Doris Ritter

† **Mike Schioler**

Sue Morrison

† **Edward Wudrick**

Florence Wudrick and 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
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administrators of the Otten English School in Wandur for an English as a Spoken Language program to take place 12-24 October 2015. I also enjoyed a meal in the homes of Rev. I. Titus (MMS Agent) and Mr. C. D. Solomon (MMS Accountant). They accompanied me on all my travels.

Gospel workers expressed heartfelt appreciation for the support MMS gives them, financially and prayerfully, in their evangelistic activities. I felt honored to extend MMS greetings to them, as well as the assurance of our continued support at least through the year 2017. Administratively, the India Evangelical Lutheran Church continues to struggle with internal conflicts. The situation is similar to the one 24 years ago that led to the founding of MMS! Hence, our "reason for being" is still valid. See our mission statement under the heading of this newsletter.

In all my annual visits to India I am impressed and inspired that in MMC's local congregations, the witness of the Church is still vibrant and effective. Laypeople and pastors make friends with their non-Christian neighbors and share the Gospel with them through personal conversations, house prayers and other outreach events such as Vacation Bible School. They do so even in the face of persecution and discrimination. They are edified, encouraged and equipped in their witness through regular worship and home devotions, which include singing Christian hymns to indigenous melodies from memory. Please continue to pray for the believers in Malabar and beyond.

HERE IS HOW THE PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY MMS ARE ADVANCING



April, as the hot dry season begins, is the month for **Vacation Bible Schools**. A total of 20 VBS camps were held in the MMC with a total 921 attendees: 409 were Christians, 455 were Hindus and 57 were Muslims. Rev. A. T. Baby, pastor in Sulthan Bathery, had the most camps and highest attendance: VBS camps in five locations with a total of 312 children. He also had the largest number of Hindus: 212. Rev. T. Joseph, pastor in Kozhikode, had the largest number of Muslim attendees: 27 in two locations. The church in Meenangadi served by Reverend Satheesh had the largest number of Christians in attendance: 165. VBS held at Christ, Wandur, by Rev. S. S. Oliver had only Christians attending. The VBSes held in Sharathkunnu (Evangelist C. D. Solomon) and Kozhikode had only Hindus and Muslims attending. Evangelists Devaraj and Richard and Rev. Joseph led VBS sessions in new locations where they have not been held before. May God bless the Gospel seeds planted in the hearts and lives of these children, so that they yield a bountiful harvest in their families and communities.

MMC workers reported the following **results from their ministries**:

- Vadattupara (Pastor Devaraj): one baptism and two confirmations
- Wandur (Rev. S. S. Oliver): two adult baptisms and 12 confirmations
- Kozhikode (Rev. T. Joseph): one person preparing for adult baptism
- Two new families are worshipping in Moolenkavu (Rev. A. T. Baby) and three new members are worshipping in Chooralmala (Evangelist Richard).

Rev. Raju reported that his congregation, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mundakutty, is raising funds to build a **new church building**. Ladies in the congregation are making soap as a fund-raising project. They request help from MMS for this challenging undertaking.

The **Youth Camp** sponsored by MMS in Sulthan Bathery, 2-3 October 2014, had a record 81 participants. The presenters posed the questions “How can we serve God at our young age?” and “Who will go to the Harvest that is waiting?” A woman psychologist explored the topics of drugs and alcohol and their influence on society as well as Christian identity.

The **Family Convention** on 7-8 November 2014 also had a record number of participants: 173. The event took place in a newly constructed community hall built by the congregation members and Rev. Baby in Sulthan Bathery. The theme was “Let anyone with ears listen!” In addition to the main speaker there were smaller group meetings for youth, women and men, and a Bible quiz.

Computerizing the **Bible Correspondence Course (BCC)** is moving forward thanks to our technical consultants in India, Tony Jose and Samuel John. Mrs. Lillian Saar has graciously provided a major gift for this project in memory of her husband, Art Saar. We invite our readers and supporters to visit [http://](http://www.malabarbiblecourses.org)

www.malabarbiblecourses.org

and see the preliminary design of the website. The English version of the BCC on the book of Isaiah, written by Rev. Dr. Roland Miller, is available for download. Consider enrolling in the course yourself, then recommending it to your unchurched friends. Samuel John and Rev. Dr. D. Christudas have done the translation into Malayalam. It is being proofread now. The Malayalam BCCs that have been used in Malabar are being retyped in a format suitable for computer downloading. They are based on the four Gospels and a special course for a Muslim audience called “The Promises of God.” We will also add the English versions of those courses. Eventually all of them will be available online for downloading.



Tony Jose brings up the BCC website as Rev. Titus looks on.

Students using the courses in Malayalam can download and print the materials, fill in the answers by hand and either scan the completed lessons and email them back to the instructor OR mail the completed lessons through the postal system. Students taking the courses in English will be able to do so interactively on computer using Word or PDF formats. We hope this will revitalize the BCC ministry in Malabar and stimulate more interest, especially among younger people. Please pray that the study of God’s Word will create faith through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our prayer request for the **English as a Spoken Language** program at the Otten English School in Wandur on 12-24 October 2015 is that at least three more teachers will volunteer to join our team. Contact Lorna Pederson at <lpederson@accesscomm.ca> or 306-586-0988 for more information, to volunteer or to refer someone. The Otten English School has an enrollment of more than a thousand students in kindergarten through grade 12. Most of them are Muslims. The faculty numbers more than fifty teachers. They all teach in English, but want to improve their speaking and teaching skills, so the ESL course is designed primarily for them.

God has blessed us with a **new worker** in the Malabar Mission Circle at Bethel Lutheran Church, Naduvil, and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Chengalai. He is **Rev. S. Resalayyan**. He reached retirement age in August 2014, after 38 years of ministry as a pastor in the India Evangelical Lutheran Church. He was able to “take duty” in October 2014. These congregations are new mission starts initiated by MMS around ten years ago. The church and attached parsonage have received needed new roofs. Enrollment at the nursery school in Naduvil has increased. We welcome Rev. and Mrs. Resalayyan in Jesus’ name and pray for many years of joyful ministry in this mission field.

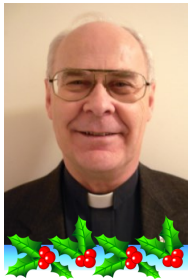
The Gospel for Muslim Salvation and Welfare Association of Anantapur hosted a **Muslim Converts Meeting** on 21 August 2014. More than 70 people attended! The six testimonials included one from a man miraculously healed and two from doctors (one government and one from a private clinic). Rev. Shaik Ismail, the leader of this phenomenal movement, encouraged these new believers by comparing the Bible and the Qur’an, and Jesus and Muhammad. They also conducted three adult baptisms of new converts in September and five in October 2014. Besides the spiritual encouragement and support this meeting gives, it also creates a venue where families of converts can meet each other to arrange marriages for their sons and daughters, since converts are often ostracized by their families. The event was funded by MMS.



Muslim Converts Meeting, August 2014



MCC’s Gospel workers at the Family Convention in November: Front row, l-r: Mr. C. D. Solomon; Rev. Joseph; main speaker Rev. Jaimon; Revs. Rejidas, Titus and Raju. Back row, l-r: Pr. Richard; Rev. Dr. Victor; Revs. Henry, Satheesh, Baby, Oliver; and new worker Rev. S. Resalayyan.



President's Message – Rev. Howard Ulmer

PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

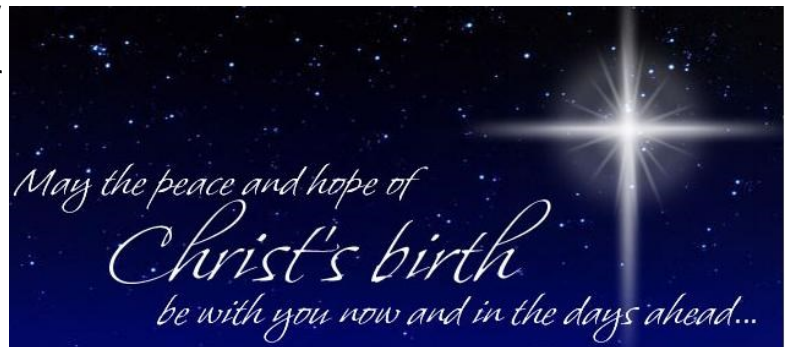
During the last few years we have received various reminders to be alert to terrorist attacks, to natural disasters, such as hurricanes, tornados, rain and snow, and to medical epidemics, such as ebola. These events encourage us to be ready and prepared. Personal events, such as a diagnosis of cancer or other terminal illness, may also cause us to reflect on the meaning and purpose of life. Are we ready and prepared?

The season of Advent is a time of preparation for the celebration of the birth of **JESUS** at Christmas. The second Sunday of Advent includes the theme “**Prepare the Way of the Lord**” in the Old Testament lesson from Isaiah 40:1-11 and Mark 1:1-8. The prophet Isaiah called the people to repentance, to change their ways, and to trust in the promises of God. The last prophet, John the baptizer, called the people to “repent of their sins and be baptized” as God comes into their midst through His Son, **Jesus**. God continues to prepare our hearts for His coming into our lives. As the Holy Spirit works through the Word and Sacraments, God’s grace and mercy touch us with forgiveness, life and salvation. Daily we have opportunity to reflect on God’s purpose for our lives. His Mission **IS** Our Mission. We “go and make disciples” of all nations, including **India**. Indeed, the **Malabar Mission Society** continues to support the mission work of the Pastors and Gospel Workers in India as they proclaim the Good News of God’s love in **Jesus, our Saviour!**

John prepared the people for the coming of **Jesus**. He preached saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.” Indeed, God’s Son has come down to us and we too are unworthy, but He comes to die on the cross so that we might have forgiveness. He rose on Easter morning to proclaim His victory over death and give us new life and hope for eternity. **Christmas** is the celebration of the birth of **Jesus, our Saviour**.

Continue to share the Gospel at every opportunity. Daily pray for the workers. May God continue to bless the workers and the proclaiming of God’s love in **Jesus, our Saviour**. Your faithful prayer and financial support are sincerely appreciated.

Merry Christmas!



“And a Child Shall Lead You”

Brian Wonnick, Development Officer

The focus on children at Christmastime, seeing their joy and excitement, prompts a question. How do we as adults unlock the child within us? How do we retain and renew that spirit year after year? The answer comes in a child’s unquestioning faith based on simple love and acceptance.

Where we as adults see many shades of gray, children see things simply. What adults need to see is the baby Jesus in our hearts, in all parts of our lives. Then we become Christ-centered in our thoughts and actions.

Christ is truly a gift from the Father, a sacrificial gift, given out of a bottomless love for all people. The deep sense of gratitude for our gift of faith changes our giving motives, from an expectation of return to an expression of sacrificial giving as the Father has provided us in His Son.

As we reflect on 2014 and the ways in which we’ve managed our time, talents and treasures, I urge you to offer some of your gifts in support of the work of the Malabar Mission Society. Another way of looking at the Great Commission is to “take someone with you to heaven.” Only as the Gospel is spread will others hear and come to faith in Jesus Christ. Someday in heaven, someone from India will tap you on the shoulder and say, “I am here with you because of a gift you gave to ensure the Good News was spread, the Good News which I heard and came to believe. And now I share heaven with you. Thank you!”

It’s hard to imagine this, but who’s to say it won’t happen?

So our call to you is to pray for the workers in Malabar, and plan to leave a gift in your will as well as the annual financial support you may be currently providing.

Have a blessed Christmas!