

# Malabar Mission Newsletter

Spring 2004

Volume 11, Number 1

## 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

- the spread of the Gospel, and
- the Circle's witness with prayers for God's blessings.



## MALABAR OUTREACH

- Rev. Dr. R. Miller, MMS Project Officer



In the previous *Malabar Mission Newsletter* we introduced our mission to Muslims, and the Wandoor and Malappuram stations that were set up for that work. In this issue we will outline our efforts in Calicut, the third South Malabar station started for work among Muslims, as well as the ministry of Rev. K. K. Alavi.

## Calicut

Calicut, a port on the Arabian Sea, is the biggest city in Malabar. It is also a very old city. It has given its name to calico, a cotton cloth. Dr. Martin Luther mentioned Calicut, advising the German people not to spend too much money on its cloth! The spice trade was more important to Calicut than textiles, however, and it drew people from many nations, like flies to honey. Vasco da Gama of Portugal landed there May 20, 1498, introducing the European era, which brought so much sadness to the Malabar region. Today Calicut is a thriving commercial centre of a million people. On the other side of the Arabian Sea, which is really the northwest portion of the Indian Ocean, are the oil-rich Gulf States, and from them has come much money to Calicut. As a result, buildings are going up everywhere, the streets are thronged with people, and land prices are enormous. One-third of the residents of Calicut are Muslims. Called Mappilas, they were the first Muslims of India.

Christian work was first conducted in Calicut by the Basel Mission Society, which began in 1839. Their most famous missionary, Dr. B. Gundert, prepared the first Malayalam to English dictionary. As the result of its efforts, there is a congregation in Calicut with a large, attractive church. Anglicans followed when the British came, and Roman Catholics were there from Vasco da Gama's time. But their numbers are small, and no one was working among Muslims.

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## Malabar Mission Newsletter

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## Malabar Mission Society

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Allan Hjelte Dr. Harold Weiss  
Lorraine Jackle Brian Wonnick

Advisory to Board: Glen Ozem

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the

## Malabar Mission Society

will be held

Friday, April 30, 2004

at 2:00 p.m. at

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH,  
627 Taylor Street East,  
SASKATOON, Saskatchewan

**YOUR ATTENDANCE IS WELCOMED**

## Board Hears of Malabar Mission Circle Expansion

### An Overview of the January 30-31, 2004 MMS Board Meeting

- Emerald Schoepp, Newsletter Editor and MMS Board Member

It was a bitterly cold and snowy weekend in Regina, Saskatchewan's capital city, but it was one of our better board meetings, with three guests joining us from the United States:

◇ **Rev. Jim**

**Kroonblawd** pastors Trinity Lutheran Church in Rochester, MN. That congregation supports the work in Naduvil through the Malabar Mission Society. You read about the work there in Dr.

Miller's "Malabar Outreach" article in the Fall 2003 *Malabar Mission Newsletter*.

◇ **Rev. Dave Christensen's** congregation, Faith Lutheran Church in Hutchinson, MN has committed to support Rev. K. K. Alavi in Calicut's New Hope Mission—the mission featured in Rev. Dr. Miller's Malabar Outreach article in this issue.

◇ **Rev. Carlton Riemer** from Stillwater, OK, who began his ministry in India and is still deeply interested in Christ's mission there.

Exciting, first-hand reports from the Malabar Mission Circle (MMC) Gospel Workers in Kerala were given by Dr. Miller, who had returned from India just a week prior to the board meeting.

The journal which Dr. Miller kept during his seventeen days in India gives us a wonderful picture of his time there. We are informed of his encounters with each of the Gospel Workers: their joys, their sorrows, their accomplishments, and their requests.



Guests at the January MMS board meeting: Rev. C. Riemer, Stillwater, OK; Rev. D. Christensen, Hutchinson, MN; Rev. Dr. Roland Miller, MMS Project Officer; Rev. J. Kroonblawd, Hutchinson, MN; and Rev. L.L. Guebert, MMS President.

Our India agent for fifteen years, **Rev. K. M. Victor** is now 74 years of age. He had agreed to serve as agent for one more year, with the hope our prayers to find a replacement for him would be answered. God willing, it looks like our prayers have been answered. On the last day of Dr. Miller's visit **Rev. T. Joy**, retiring president of Concordia Seminary in Nagercoil, travelled to Calicut to discuss the possibility of succeeding Rev. Victor. Discussions were positive, and these two men will work together for an agreed period of time, allowing Rev. Joy to become acquainted with the task, and Rev. Victor to become less involved and to serve more as a consultant. This was truly a day of great blessing!

The work of the **Malabar Mission Circle** is most certainly expanding. In the Fall 2003 *Malabar Mission Newsletter*, Dr. Miller informed us about the work in Kannur, where the **Open Door student library and reading room** has been functioning for about two years. St. Armands

Key Lutheran Church, Sarasota, FL has pledged to fully support the needs of this project for the next three years. Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow! Since cultural restraints mean women will not come to the Open Door, a parallel program is now being considered to reach the young women who attend a Government Women's College just a short distance away.

Medical work at the **Christian Welfare**

**Centre** in Malappuram continues to be strong and effective. Four doctors serve there: Dr. Radha, the medical officer; her husband, Dr. Anand; Dr. Sophie Brillin, the gynecologist; and Dr. Annie Kutty. Although this institution is self-supporting, it is important to note help is always needed to provide special medicines such as anti-snakebite serum, new equipment, and to enable more charitable work among the poor.

The **hospital in Wandoor** is presently working through some delicate issues regarding the retirement of Dr. Vijayan as its superintendent. We pray this matter will be quickly resolved so God's healing work, and our part in it, may continue. Funds were acknowledged for anti-snakebite serum.

Though not the "original" policy of support for evangelism and service projects of the Malabar Mission Society (MMS), a two-year **maintenance and repair project** was agreed upon in 2002, and is

*Continued on page 3.*

now completed. Because of this, many of the buildings in Malabar have been improved and refurbished, and their clean appearance enhances the image and witness of the church. All of the workers send their prayers and their thanks for the gifts and blessings through the MMS.

The ministry of **K. K. Alavi** was adopted by Faith Lutheran Church in Hutchinson, MN. In India Rev. Alavi receives program guidance from an excellent advisory committee, which met during Dr. Miller's visit. With additional support from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Elgin, IL, and other contributors, funding is available for a special literature project to put the CPH publication, "One Hundred Bible Stories," into Malayalam production. This work has beautiful coloured pictures. When first published in Kerala many years ago it was a winner, but funds have not been available to publish it again. This support from the Elgin congregation will translate into an 8,000-10,000 edition which will be used for both evangelism and nurture.

One can see why there is such keen interest in attending these board meetings when Dr. Miller has just returned from a visit to India. We get first-hand and close-up information about the progress in motion in Malabar!

**T**he MMS Board met Friday and Saturday on the first weekend of several "weekend" blizzards experienced by Regina and area this winter. With many matters yet to be discussed, our meeting continued after a Friday-evening meal hosted by Luther College and the graciousness of Dr. Bryan Hillis. However, we were soon interrupted with the news that drifting snow was closing the parking lot and we had best finish our discussion for the evening and head for home if we wanted to get our vehicles out of the parking lot.

Since there would be no normal activity at the College on Saturday and we might not be able to get close to the buildings, it was determined we would resume our meeting on Saturday at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. On Saturday morning my wonderful

hostess, Lorna Pederson, and I were astounded at the drifting that had taken place overnight, but managed to dig out of her driveway and get to the meeting, even if we were a bit late.

Sectional committee meetings were cancelled, and discussion continued on the important matters at hand. This was followed with the treasurer's report, and the adoption of the 2004 work program, which will be approved at the Annual General Meeting in April.

I distributed to all board members a booklet I had been preparing for several years. This is to serve as an introduction to the MMC Gospel Workers in Kerala, and contains a bit of history, a map, and pictures of the workers and their churches, with bits of information about each station. Feel free to ask a board member in your locale to share it with you sometime. Pictures *are* worth a thousand words, and you will see what your support dollars are doing in Kerala. ♥



Despite the blizzard raging outside on January 30-31, 2004, MMS Board Members and guests in attendance enjoyed the exciting reports from India. Pictured are:  
 Back row: Dr. Harold Weiss, Rev. Jim Kroonblawd, Art Tim m, Ed Fruson, Donna Mueller, Rev. Carlton Riemer, Rev. Dave Christensen.  
 Front row: Emerald Schoepp, Lorna Pederson, Rev. Howard Ulmer, Dr. Roland Miller, Gerald Wagner, Phyllis Guebert, Irene Raedeke (Photo taken by Rev. Lowell Guebert, MMS President)

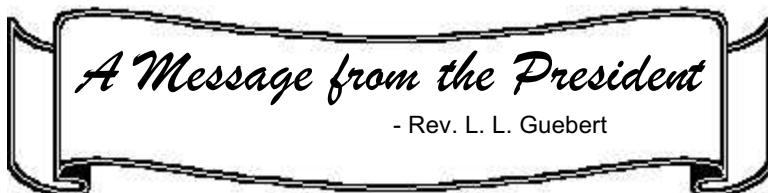
## Prayer Concerns

### Pray

- for the Solomon Family in their special need for healing, and that the Lord would continue to provide gifts of love through our supporters for the children's education.
- for open hearts to help provide anti-snakebite serum, new medical equipment, and the ability to increase charitable work at our two hospitals in Malabar.
- that the Women's Study Centre will become a reality in Kannur.
- that the Lord will bless the literature program about to be undertaken to provide evangelistic tracts for the Gospel Workers.
- for a quick resolution to the issues at the hospital in Wandoor so God's healing work may continue.

### Give Praise and Thanksgiving

- for the medical staff who are performing exemplary service at the Christian Welfare Centre in Malappuram and the Karunalya Hospital in Wandoor.
- for the maintenance and repair projects that have enhanced the image and appearance of the church in India.
- for the gift of Rev. T. Joy as our new India Agent, and that the two-year transition period works to the benefit of all concerned.
- for continuing support of special projects by individuals, organizations and congregations. Move the hearts of many to respond to our outreach along the Malabar Coast.



Exciting things are happening in Christ's mission in India as well as here.

New outreach possibilities and challenges face us.

And you have the opportunity to travel to India with others who are interested in reaching out with the Good News. See the special 'travel ad' on page 6.

And even our Annual Meeting promises to be exciting! Dr Herb Hoefler will be our special guest. He wears a couple of hats: He teaches at Concordia University, Portland OR, and also serves as Director of Missions for South East Asia for the Missouri Synod. He has just come back from a trip to India, and will be sharing with us about the challenges he saw for the Christian church in India. Don't miss it! Friday evening, 7:30pm, April 30 at St Paul's Lutheran Church in Saskatoon.

Perhaps not as exciting, but we also face some challenges and hard work as we look for more ways of spreading the word about Christ's mission in India to more people. We need you involved in that mission!

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## VBS Sponsors

In Kerala it takes only \$25 to fund one Vacation Bible School camp where the Good News of Jesus Christ will reach children (and their families) who might not hear it otherwise.

Two Sunday Schools in the Lutheran Church-Canada ABC District have responded to this special appeal, and we are truly grateful. The Calgary, AB and Abbotsford, B.C. Sunday Schools together have helped to sponsor forty-two Vacation Bible Schools in India with gifts of varying amounts. Large and small, these gifts are all received with thankful hearts. Other Sunday Schools may want to follow these examples.

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## 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. Special-occasion gifts and memorials will be acknowledged in future issues of the Newsletter.*

*(If you would prefer not to have your name published, please let us know.)*

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## The Children's Medical/Education Fund

Our thanks to the Lutheran Women's Missionary League of Trinity Lutheran Church in Abbotsford, B.C. for their continuing monthly support.

There is no Medi-Care in India. If someone becomes ill, the family must bear the costs.

More help is still very much needed. Twenty dollars (\$20) each month will provide the clothing, books, school fees and a noon meal for two children. Please mark your cheque, "Medical/Education Fund."

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## Outreach *(continued from page 1)*

In 1969 the writer gathered a group of students and we conducted a Bible Correspondence Course campaign in the city; that group included our next India Agent, Rev. T. Joy. On the basis of our findings we decided to start work in Calicut, and Revs. Henry Otten and G. Vishwanathan, with their spouses, took it up.

The then Manitoba and Saskatchewan District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, led by Revs. Roy Holm and Ron Raedeke, gathered US\$35,000, and later the "Forward in Remembrance" campaign added US\$25,000, and with these funds we were able to purchase a property and construct the Good News Centre. It was completed in 1983, by the sterling efforts of Rev. P. Chellayen, as a three-story all-purpose building, with a separate pastor's residence. The compound is situated on a very busy road in a suburb called Meenchanda, which means "Fish-Market." The Centre is dedicated to the task of "catching" people, as Jesus commanded.



Mrs. T. Joseph

In the Good News Centre Rev. T. Joseph and Mrs. Joseph conduct an active nursery school on the first floor, with the second floor reserved as a worship centre and a Bible Correspondence Course centre. The top floor is used for rental purposes to gain income. Urban work, everywhere, is a challenging task.

Rev. Joseph has chosen to emphasize prayer in his ministry, and he is very effective with this approach. Several miles from the Good News Centre he has an outreach station called Saradamandirum, where he goes regularly for prayer and where he has brought a Brahmin magician's family to faith. The Malabar Mission Society helps this work with a monthly stipend, and in January assisted Rev. Joseph with motorcycle repairs. Rev. Joseph in a sense is both "fish" and "fisherman," for he is, himself, a Hindu convert from Wandoor, a product of our Malabar work.



Rev. T. Joseph

### The Ministry of K. K. Alavi

I have sometimes referred to Rev. K. K. Alavi as "the bravest Christian I have ever known." A convert from Islam, his stirring and widely-known testimony has thrilled many people. It is not possible to relate his personal story within the confines of this brief report. The story has been published under the title, "In Search of Assurance," and translated into 32 languages. Here we will speak only of his work in Calicut, which he calls "New Hope Mission."



Rev. K.K. Alavi

Rev. Alavi's ministry in and beyond Calicut has two major prongs: the first is his personal outreach to Muslim people, and the second is his evangelistic literature program.

In terms of his personal witness, K.K. is famed for his courageous directness, for his boldness in the Lord. That is all the more remarkable because of his perilous situation. There is a hymn line that says, "I walk in danger all the way." Despite the fact that he lives in that context he has an intrepid loyalty to Christ, and his courage has provided inspiration for other Muslims to follow him into the Christian faith. He numbers them at 47, but there are also thousands of inquirers.

That brings us to the second focus of his ministry—his outreach through literature. His evangelistic methodology is to write, translate, print, publish and distribute as much evangelistic literature as possible, which then leads to personal contact. For this purpose he works out of his home in Calicut, where he also spends a great deal of time in teaching and counselling new believers and serious enquirers.

After his graduation from Concordia Seminary in Nagercoil, K.K. worked for several years in Malabar in the service of the India Evangelical Lutheran Church. Following that he was in the employ of the Carmel Mission Society of Germany, situated at Manjeri, where he built up a major centre. In the past three years his ministry has been sponsored by Faith Lutheran Church in Hutchinson, Minnesota, collaborating with other congregations and working through the Malabar Mission Society. K.K.'s work is conducted on an independent basis, rather than within the frame of the Malabar Mission Circle, but maintaining personal contact with that work. His fine Advisory Committee is composed of senior Malabar laity, with Rev. Victor as its secretary.

Mrs. K. K. Alavi, whose name is Yasmin, is herself the daughter of Muslim converts. She has a very active and devoted ministry of hospitality, taking care of the literally hundreds of people who come to the Alavi home. The family has three grown children in educational institutions. In addition to the problems of security, both K.K. and Yasmin have serious health problems and need your support in prayer.



Mrs. K. K. Alavi



# Special Mission Evening

Friday, April 30, 2004  
7:30 p.m.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
627 Taylor Street East  
Saskatoon

Hear



Rev. Dr. Herb Hoefler,  
Director of Missions for South  
East Asia for the Lutheran  
Church— Missouri Synod

and Rev. Dr.



Roland Miller,  
Project Officer  
for the Malabar  
Mission Society

The Malabar Mission Society Annual General Meeting begins  
at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, April 30, 2004.  
Everyone is invited — Meet the special guests

## Introducing Dr. Hoefler

Dr. Herb Hoefler was born in Chicago, IL, in 1941. He was called from the seminary to be a missionary to India and served there for 15 years. He then served for 13 years as a pastor in River Falls, WI, and for the past 6 years as a Professor of Theology at Concordia University-Portland. He has his STM from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and his doctorate from Columbia University, New York.

Along with teaching at Concordia-Portland, Dr. Hoefler has been serving part-time with the LCMS Board for Missions as Area Director for India and Sri Lanka. From January, Dr. Hoefler will take up new responsibilities with the LCMS Northwest District in mission development and expanded responsibilities with the LCMS Board for Missions, particularly in developing outreach to Muslims around the world. His writings have been primarily in the area of faith-culture issues in India.

Dr. Hoefler's wife is Carol (Cloeter) Hoefler. They have three daughters and one grandson. ♥

## A Unique Idea

In lieu of Christmas gifts, a donation was sent to MMS from the Don and Merceda Schmidt family. What a marvellous idea! The Schmidts said, "Most of us simply have too much 'stuff' already," and they ask that God may richly bless the MMS and pray for His guidance and blessings as their gift is used to share the Gift of Jesus. The MMS responds with a huge

**THANK YOU!**

## TRAVEL TO INDIA September 14–30, 2004

- Visit the Malabar Coast
  - Talk to the Gospel Workers
- See the Taj Mahal and other sights by deluxe motor coach
- Tour hosts: Dr. Miriam McCreary, and Dr. Roland and Mary Helen Miller

- Sep. 14-17: Travel to India; arrive Calicut Sep. 17.
- Sep. 18-25: Visit Malabar region.
- Sep. 26: Overnight at Game Sanctuary; ride an elephant.
- Sep. 27-30: Fly to Delhi; visit the Taj Mahal at Agra; arrive U.S. Sep. 30.

**OPTION:** Return Sep. 27 to Calicut, then to Bombay, arriving U.S. Sep. 28. This individual option reduces total trip cost by US\$400-500.

**Total cost  
US\$2,500-\$3,000**

Submit a US\$50 deposit by April 30, **payable to Miriam McCreary** to:

Faith Lutheran Church  
Attention: Boni Schanil  
335 Main Street S.  
Hutchinson, MN 55350

Final payment is due July 14, 2004

### Travel Requirements

- Must be able to walk short distances.
- Must hold valid passport for at least six months after your September 2004 return.
- Update vaccinations to include hepatitis B & C and typhoid. Malaria not necessary.

**For further information** contact Boni Schanil at the address above, or telephone: 320-587-2093 - ext. 17, or e-mail: bonis@faithlc.com

**NOTE:** With the \$50 deposit we require:

- Your name exactly as it appears on your passport.
- Your telephone number (include area code).
- Your mailing address.

