

Malabar Mission Newsletter

Fall 2007

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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



ESL KANNUR—A "WONDERFUL" SUCCESS

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



- ☺ A new approach in Malabar ministry!
- ☺ A new opportunity to serve!
- ☺ A new need for a pilot project!
- ☺ A new facility waiting to be used!

Put these together and the result is the English as a Second Language program that took place in Kannur August 28– September 9, 2007.

Let me start with the need for a new approach in our ministry that meets the needs of youth. Old India is now so youthful. A full 50% of the population is under the age of 25. It is for that reason our approach in the Kannur outreach has been youth oriented—we have the Open Door Centre mainly for young males and the Vanitha Friendship Centre for young females. How can we more deeply touch their lives, their hopes and desires, their spiritual needs?

The second element is a new service opportunity. We try to help students by making available in our reading rooms college-course-required textbooks, which students cannot afford to buy. But they have an even greater need—the need for employment when they graduate. India has become the home of "call centres." These are telephone offices set up by Canadian and American companies for customer services. They have gone this route because there are so many English-speaking people in India who are ready to work for relatively low wages. The problem is that Indian English accents are not North American! So there is a lot of dissatisfaction among Canadian and American customers. Suppose we help some young female students with their accents? In this way they might become more eligible for some of the 130,000 call centre jobs available. In meeting this need a new Malabar ministry is born and a new foundation for witness is laid.

The third element is the need for a pilot project. Faith Lutheran Church in Hutchinson, Minnesota is supporting the stirring ministry of Rev. K.K. Alavi at Calicut– Manjeri in South Malabar. The possibilities of augmenting that ministry through ESL programs has been discussed. Thus the idea arose for a pilot project at Kannur that would test the need and the possibility of meeting it.

The fourth element is our new facility at Kannur. The purchase of the building with the help of a loan was a big venture of faith for the MMS. It has now been renovated to meet the needs of a variety of programs, thanks to the sterling efforts of Rev. K.M, Victor and Mr. C. Reji. Those who have seen it say: "What a beautiful building!" It was a facility waiting for new use just when the ESL project came along!

The elements were there. They would not have come together, however, if it had not been for the efforts of Mrs. Dorothy Desens of Hutchinson, her husband Richard, and two graduate students at St. Cloud University, Valerie Anderson and Cindy Deuser, and their supporters at Faith Church and elsewhere. They agreed to conduct the experimental program at Kannur and to cover most of their costs. In Malabar Rev. Victor, Mr. Reji and our two women workers, Smitha and Manjusha, worked hard to publicize and arrange for the program.

The ESL team from Hutchinson took many materials with them, including a textbook and supplementary materials such as books, internet downloads, laminated pictures, newspapers, and New Testaments as gifts. The daily program was intensive, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. They overcame travel weariness, the unfamiliar climate and food, a different teaching context, and the difficulties of cross-cultural communication to produce a worthwhile result.

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KANNUR SUCCESS (continued from page 1)

The Holy Spirit energized them all and made the event possible and successful. How wonderfully God does work! Here is how it happened, in the summary of Dorothy Desens, our Academic Director:

"The teaching area was very nice and bright. The chairs were comfortable. The white board was nice and large with good markers and erasers. Large ceiling fans and floor fans helped keep the air moving in the hot mornings and afternoons. There was a very nice western toilet for the teachers. The students could have benefited from an additional toilet. Some type of writing surface for students would have made note-taking easier.

"The students were bright and eager to learn spoken American English. They worked hard and the teachers could hear improvement in their spoken English. There was a fine mixture of [24] students from various backgrounds: Christian, Hindu and Muslim. Ages varied from 18 to 40 years. The ladies all worked well together.

"The teachers found the main curriculum was adequate. Because of the limited lessons there were several important vowel sounds that were not introduced in the curriculum. When the teachers realized that, they developed lessons to cover those sounds. At times it was difficult to discern sounds from the CD, but the two specialist TESL teachers were able to help the students recognize and say the sounds.

"Teachers and students all worked very hard but also had time for enjoying and learning about each other. Most of the students were enrolled in college and the class was scheduled during the Onam [harvest festival] break. The main criticism of the class was the short length of time. Students expressed a wish to have a longer class but since it was a "break" class, additional days weren't possible. Ideally a longer class with a shorter day would probably be a better learning situation. Since we had considered that problem before we started the class, each student was given the instructional booklet as well

as three CDs so they could continue to practice after the conclusion of the class.



The ESL team from Hutchinson—Dorothy and Richard Desens (front row, centre) flanked by Valerie Anderson and Cindy Deuser, with Mr. Reji (left) and Rev. Victor (right), and the students who benefited from the Spoken English program pilot project at the Vanitha Friendship Center in Kannur.

"Some of the students were quite fluent with spoken English and they helped interpret concepts to other students. It was good to have that assistance, and since there wasn't an assessment available, the teachers didn't divide the groups according to fluency. An ideal situation would have included a pre-assessment to divide students into advanced and beginner categories. The cost of the trip was fairly high. . . . Even with the great expense of time and money, the teachers

felt the pilot Spoken English program was a worthwhile and successful endeavour. To continue the Spoken English class in Kannur, it would be both beneficial and more cost effective if the teachers were sought from the Kannur area. By September 9, area parents had heard about the students' participation in the class. They called Pastor Victor to inquire when the next class would be held. He felt the class was very successful.

"Overall, all of us felt it was a very successful class and a wonderful teaching experience. We felt that there will be a long-time impact on the students . . . [and] that the additional speaking skills will assist the students to secure better jobs."

In telephone conversations Dorothy used the word "wonderful" several times to describe the team experience. We may also add that her courage and contribution were wonderful. We thank God for blessing this venture of faith, and we thank the members of the team for their dedicated missionary spirit and work!

The successful ESL program now presents us with a triple challenge:

- to follow up our contacts in Kannur;
- to possibly repeat the project there or elsewhere; and
- to develop volunteers for such service.

May God's Spirit lead us onward!

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN INDIA THROUGH THE MMS?

ANANTAPUR

- In 2006 there were 197 people baptized (43 Muslims and 154 Hindus).
- During January to March 2007, the 24 Evangelists visited 520 villages and distributed some 50,000 Gospel portions and 70,000 tracts and booklets.
- There are currently 187 attending baptism classes (52 Muslims and 135 Hindus).

LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

- Held June 19-20, 2007 at Calicut and included theological training led by Rev. Joy.
- A second training course for Gospel Workers was held in September.
- Spiritual Convention will be held November 10-11 at Sultan Battery. Dr. Miller will attend while in India.

KANNUR – Vanitha Friendship Centre

- Renovations are now complete in this newly purchased building.
- Vanitha Open Door has moved to this new location.
- The women workers are living at this new location.
- ESL project for 24 women was conducted at this new centre.
- A worship area was included in these renovations. Additional space for a library, correspondence courses and storage are included in the building.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

- 102 teachers conducted 31 Vacation Bible Schools in 15 areas.
- Included 1,201 students (587 Hindus, 149 Muslims, 465 Christians), with an average of 40 students and 3 teachers.
- Cost was \$28/camp or 70¢/student.

HIGHLITES — APRIL 2007 BOARD/ANNUAL MEETING

- Approved 2007 budget of \$71,715
- Elected Allan Hjelte, Donna Mueller, Art Timm and Gerald Wagner for a three-year term to the board.
- Executive includes President: Rev. Howard Ulmer, Vice-President: Art Timm, Secretary: Lorna Pederson, Treasurer: Donna Mueller, Financial Secretary: Gerald Wagner, Project Officer: Rev. Dr. Roland Miller, Development Officer: Mark Dickinson.
- Twentieth anniversary in 2008 includes plans for a North American tour by Rev. T. Joy, Program Director in India.
- Approved MMS Endowment Fund (Special Needs Fund) to support ongoing ministry and special projects. Life insurance, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, property and designated financial gifts, including estates may be designated.
- Summary of board policies was distributed.
- Letter of thanks received from Karunalaya Hospital for the \$5,000 gift from the LWMLC Ontario District.

HIGHLITES — AUGUST 2007 BOARD MEETING

- Approved Development Officer's job description.
- Approved Project Officer's job description.
- Rev. Carleton Reimer accepts appointment as Project Officer starting February 1, 2008. Dr. Miller will continue to provide support.
- Twentieth anniversary of Malabar Mission Society in 2008 will include a visit from Rev. T. Joy, Program Director in India. Newsletter articles will include a "memory lane" of significant events.
- Continue support for Anantapur for another three years.
- Approved printing 2,000 copies of *Luther's Small Catechism* in Malayalam.
- Approved additional funding of \$1,200 for ESL project.
- 2,000 colour brochures printed for publicity purposes.
- Next India tour scheduled for 2009. If you are interested in participating, please e-mail malabarmission@sa sktel.net.

THANK YOU LWML–CANADA LADIES

- LWMLC Ontario District for \$5,000 gift at Karunalaya Hospital.
- LWML–Canada 2006 (Regina) Convention offering of \$3,283.77 for Open Door–Vanitha (Women) in Kannur.
- LWMLC Laurentian District for approval of \$3,000 for Christian literature and hymnals.
- LWMLC ABC District for approval of \$7,675 for Open Door–Vanitha (Women) in Kannur.

Your faithful prayer and financial support in sharing God's love in Jesus is sincerely appreciated.



BOARD VISITS SEVEN CHURCHES IN CALGARY

On August 26, 2007, the day after the board meeting in Calgary, various board members visited seven churches, including Ascension, Foothills, Good Shepherd, Grace, Prince of Peace, Shepherd King and St. Matthew. Board members were invited to tell the Malabar Mission story through preaching, Bible study, PowerPoint presentation and short talks after the service. In addition brochures and newsletters were distributed to those present. We are thankful for this wonderful opportunity to tell the story of how God is guiding the Gospel Workers and Evangelists in India as they share the Good News of God's love in Jesus in their communities. Mission stories of family baptisms, Vacation Bible School and spiritual growth are encouraging and renewing.

Foothills Lutheran Church has responded by providing support for the work in Anantapur. Various individuals from the congregations also responded with generous gifts. Some congregations are still considering the opportunities. We give thanks and praise God for prayers and financial support.

GIVING THANKS – For What? – To Whom?

- Rev. Howard Ulmer, MMS President

Thanksgiving Day was observed on October 8, 2007 in Canada and will be observed November 22 in the United States. Usually this family time provides an opportunity to share with others and enjoy a special meal along with a time of reflection for our many blessings and freedoms. Our reflection time may include hearing the story of the ten lepers seeking mercy from Jesus (Luke 17:11-19). Their desperate need is expressed in the words, “**Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.**” As societal outcasts they could only call from a distance as they described their greatest need. Their human dignity and value were minimal since they were marginalized and rejected. However, these ten lepers recognize Jesus as one who is merciful and has the power to heal their physical condition.

Jesus shares this story in response to the disciples request “**to increase our faith**” (Luke 17:5). On their way to the priests the ten lepers were miraculously healed. Although all ten received a favorable response to their request, only one, a Samaritan, returned to Jesus “**praising God with a loud voice.**” His expression of adoration and worship of Jesus is described, “**He fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks.**” It appears the other nine continued on their way in their cleansed condition.

In our sinful condition we are outcast lepers seeking God’s mercy through Jesus. Our gracious and loving God gave his only Son to die on the cross for our sins so that we might receive forgiveness. Through Christ’s resurrection that victory, hope and assurance is complete. Our faith continues to be strengthened and increased through his Word and Sacraments. His grace and mercy continues to touch our lives daily. May we also turn back “**praising God with a loud voice**” and fall at Jesus’ feet, “**giving him thanks.**” Too often we enjoy the gift and fail to acknowledge God, the giver of the gift.

Jesus said to the Samaritan, “**Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.**” The focus of the Malabar Mission Society is to “**go and make disciples of all nations.**” Our particular focus is in the states of Kerala and Andhra Pradesh in India. The Gospel Workers and Evangelists share the Good News of God’s love in Jesus to the people in India through word and deed. Your faithful support in prayer and financial gifts is a special blessing that offers new life and hope to many. **Praise God with a loud voice!**

In Appreciation

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

In memory of:

- **Katherine Elizabeth Endel**
Ernie & Arlene Hiller
Howard Ulmer
- **Violet & Edward Hjelte**
Allan Hjelte
- **Edwin Kubke**
Foothills Lutheran Women's
Missionary League of Calgary
- **Jamie McIntosh**
Sue Morrison
- **Oscar Sommerfeld**
Martha Sommerfeld

In honour of the marriage of:

- **Albert K. Robinson & Gai Mlazgar**
Ernie & Arlene Hiller
- **James Kozmyk & Doreen Townsend**
Ernie & Arlene Hiller

In honour of the 90th birthdays of:

- **Don & Merceda Schmidt**
Vic & Elfriede Fisher
John & Christine Sander

With thanks to God for 100 years of His grace and blessings on St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Saskatoon
Lowell Guebert



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
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