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**LINKING GOD'S PEOPLE TO
REACH THE UNREACHED**

We're on the Web!
www.BridgeInternational.org

FROM R.K.'S CORNER

Steve and I so enjoy the times we spend in our home with visiting Bridge partners who are reaching the world for Christ in the nations. Last month, we had a delightful time with Steve and Sophia Schmalz who live and work in Tbilisi, Georgia.

A few days ago, **Varughese Mathew** spent a few days with us. He and his family live and serve the Lord in the **Andaman Island**, an **Indian** archipelago app. 300 miles long, consisting of more than 500 islands of which 38 are inhabited, located between Burma and Sumatra in the Indian Ocean. Twenty two years ago, he moved with his family from Kerala, India to **Port Blair**, capital of the Andmans to follow God's call in establishing a pioneer work for the Gospel among Hindus and several unreached tribal peoples on these islands. His blossoming ministry, **Indian Christian Fellowship (ICF)** is focused on preaching the Gospel, establish churches, and raising up, training, and commissioning indigenous church leaders. In addition, he and his wife Care for orphans. They run two orphanages in different locations with a total of 200 children. Their ministry has expanded into India proper, as well.

The epicenter of the **2004 tsunami**, located just a few hundred miles from the Andaman Islands, brought devastation to the people there. The underwater earthquake caused the entire plate on which this archipelago rests, to sink 16 feet, so many of the seashore communities are now permanently under water — whole islands even sunk and disappeared into the ocean! It has not been determined how many perished from the tsunami on these islands, but thousands were presumed dead. Tens of thousands of refugees flooded the capital.

We found and connected with Varughese and his ministry right after the tsunami, as many of our financial partners wanted to donate fund toward the victims through The Bridge. As always, we prefer to send our funds - in full - through smaller, indigenous ministries who are well connected and doing effective grassroots work among their people, thus avoiding the massive overhead and administration costs that larger, international NGO's, out of necessity, demand. By God's grace, the mission compound was spared the major flood; nevertheless, many of the buildings were destroyed. Most of them have been rebuilt, except the commercial kitchen and dining hall for the orphans, for which they are still seeking funds. The **January 2005** and **March 2006 Bridge Reports** featured the Varughese's testimony, an introduction of his ministry, and our contribution toward the tsunami relief aid administered through **ICF**. They are found at: <http://www.bridgeinternational/archive.html>

For several years after the tsunami, we helped financially support some of ICF's pioneer pastors in remote villages, as well as Varughese and his family.

While enjoying Varughese's company in our home and reconnecting with him as friends, he shared his heart with us on their present situation and vision for the future. In this issue, I am giving you a glimpse of Varughese's love for his people by quoting, in his own words, excerpts from his latest news-briefs. With food prices rising sharply globally, ICF is in need of financial help. Mark you gifts to Varughese and his ministry: **8309 Andaman Islands**.

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LINKING GOD'S PEOPLE TO REACH THE UNREACHED

The Bridge Report

VARUGHESE MATHEW — REACHING INDIA



Steve and Varughese — different cultures — one in Christ!
INDIAN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP ON THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS

By VARUGHESE MATHEW

Our warmest greetings to you all in the precious and most faithful Name of Jesus Christ, our Master and our Lord, in whose Name we all hope and trust! Praise be to The Alpha and The Omega!

By the grace of God, we - the family of Indian Christian Fellowship - see deliverance and salvation of many people on the Andaman islands. It is our call and responsibility to reach the islanders with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as quickly as possible. Our ministry is flourishing here, and in the places on the mainland (India proper) where we established churches many years ago. We thank God for our faithful co-workers who are doing a great job for Him!

Presently, we have seven mission fields in the Andamans, and six on mainland India. Our goal is to plant a church in every village on the islands. At our base in the capital of Port Blaire, we have a training center, from which we send workers to pioneer the Gospel in new fields. Some islands where aboriginal tribes live, are off-limits for outsiders, regulated by the government. The villages of the interior peoples are very remote. In some places, it takes me ten hours on foot to reach one of these villages. They are poor squatters and subsistent farmers living in the forests. Illiterate, without medical care, and often addicted to alcohol, they are often unable to care for their children. Once a month, we send a ministry team from Port Blair to these remote places, where we preach the Gospel and train local ministers.

VARUGHESE MATHEW—REACHING THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS, INDIA WITH THE GOSPEL



OUR CHILDREN'S HOMES

The Calvary Children's Home and Bethany Children's Home are two refugee centers where we take care of under-privileged and neglected children from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Presently we care for 200 children (124 children at Calvary Children's Home in Badmaspahar, and 76 at Bethany Children's Home in Bathubasthi). These children, from toddlers to teenagers, have been accepted into our homes because they have been neglected or abused by their parents and relatives. If we did not take care of these children, many of them would end up as thieves and drug addicts, due to their upbringing and broken family backgrounds.



While staying with us, we desire to bring these children out of darkness and make their lives bright. Here they are provided with a healthy at-

mosphere, full of love and care. All these children go to school and get a good education, and we provide them with educational material and school uniforms. We also take care of all their basic needs, like healthy food, good quality clothes and shoes; we teach them how to properly take care of their hygiene, and with love and affection, we teach them how to be part of a family. We provide time for playing, for singing and music, for picnics, and other social activities, and wonderful times with God with singing, worship, Bible teaching and prayers.

These abandoned and neglected children become well adjusted adults, some of them go on to higher education and become professionals. By encouraging these children to continue their studies, we help build a healthy, new generation. May God bless them to remain in Christ forever!

TESTIMONIES

Prem was born into an alcoholic family. A month after Prem's birth, due to the unbearable physical and mental torture by her husband,

Prem's mother left her newborn baby, her husband and three other older children, and ran away with another man. Nobody knows her whereabouts. Prem, and his three siblings, were left beside the road to die.

As the news reached the police, the police officer brought these children

to our Children's Home. When we saw Prem, we had no hope he would survive. He was so thin that we could count every rib on his chest, and he was deadly ill. Today, Prem is a handsome, healthy young man who loves the Lord, is very smart, and doing well in school.



PRAISE AND PRAYER — UPDATE ON SHELLI SELLARS



Prayer warriors: Her is a personal greeting from Shelli. She has been, and continues to be, on an amazing journey with her Heavenly Father! Please keep praying for her miraculous, complete healing; for strength, financial provision, and guidance regarding further medical treatment!

"I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has prayed for me this year, seeking God for my complete healing.

As a very happily married wife of almost 23 years and a greatly blessed mom of two young teens, battling Stage 4 Colon Cancer has given me plenty of opportunity to embrace fear and anger. But, I serve a God who loves me, a Father who has always been faithful to me!... and my situation certainly hasn't changed His character!!! It can't! He IS loving, kind and dependable. He IS good. He IS provider, anchor, hope, joy... and healer. And... He IS working miracles in my life!

My medical prognosis has gone from inoperable to operable, from impossible to possible! I've done miraculously well with 5 months of chemo and four major operations, including losing half my liver and 2/5 of my lungs, constantly astounding the doctors with my strength and rebound. They never expected me to make it this far... but now they're actually using words of healing and hope. I am so thankful!... No, my journey isn't over. Without a supernatural miracle, the road to total health is still long, but... no matter how difficult it may yet be... one thing I know: It leads straight into God's love and good plans for my life. I trust Him. I love Him. And... I smile. His joy is great in this heart!