



The Bridge Report

UPDATE: INDIAN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP IN ANDAMAN ISLANDS



Warm greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. First of all, we convey our sincere thanks and gratitude to The Bridge for your commitment and involvement in His service to us through your ministry! Your prayers and financial support enable us to keep extending His Kingdom among the unreached throughout the **Andaman Islands and several states in mainland India**. May God bless you abundantly! By the grace of God we all are well here and trust that everything is well with you and Steve.

Our ministry in the Andaman Islands is progressing well by the grace of the Lord. The pastors are busy with evangelism and discipling. The people who respond to the Gospel are invited into cell groups where they are cared for and trained to walk in faith and prayer for healing and restoration. Alcoholism is a terrible problem among the people here. We thank God for the many alcoholics who have repented and are being healed of their addiction, and then experience their broken family relationships being restored. Looking back, we see God's provision and protection in all our lives—thanks be to Him! Our missionaries keep laboring in the remote areas and expanding their ministries in spite of daily hardship and much opposition from people of other faiths.

Recently, we had severe, weather with continuous rain and hurricanes which did extensive damage to our properties. The wind uprooted a huge tree which fell on our staff quarters and crushed four units. There was no loss of life, but we are facing extra costs of repair. Cont...



We have more than 150 children in our **Bethany Children's Home**. Many of them have a horrible and dreadful past. If we did not take care of these children, their lives would have been miserable. Thank God for all of His provisions and grace.

111 of the children living in our Children's Home and the 90 being cared for by our missionaries in various remote villages, are school-age. Here in the Andamans, the academic year starts in the last part of June. Every year, we provide our children Back to School items: uniforms, bags, books, shoes, raincoats, etc. The cost of life in the Andaman Islands is more than 60% higher than any other parts of India. Before they came to us, many of these children were neglected, exploited and abused either as orphans or by parents or other relatives, many of whom are substance abusers. After the children have been with us for a while, they smile, laugh, play and show all the signs of being loved and cared for. Most of them had never been to school before; now they are happy and well adjusted socially, and overall have top grades in their respective subjects.

Back at our Home, our staff help them with their homework, and teach them from the Bible — the children love Bible quizzes! The children are longing to know the Holy Spirit better. After homework and other assignments, some of our youth (junior high and high school age) love to partake in intercessory prayer. It is their choice to do so, but day by day, the group is growing. They bring prayer needs before the Lord and experience their prayers being answered and miracles taking place!

Our children's ministry is going so well that the national television, **Door Darshan**, broadcast one of our children's programs especially made for **Jawahar Lal Nehru** (the first Prime Minister of India) throughout the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**. The children from both orphanages performed very well!

NIVETHA AND SUVETHA

Even though education and standard of living is increasingly improving in the population at large, so many families are still greatly suffering due to the abuse Cont... of alcohol and other intoxicants. Two

UPDATE: I.C.F. IN ANDAMAN ISLANDS

Two months ago, the parents of two small girls, **Nivetha** and **Suvetha**, committed suicide by setting themselves on fire. The girls watched this horrible act take place, then saw them die in the hospital. This memory still gives them nightmares. The social welfare officer trusts our ministry, and asked if we could provide shelter and refuge for the girls who had nowhere to go. We took them in; the loving care they receive from us is gradually helping them heal, both physically and emotionally.



together with the promise he would marry her.

Two months before Sumithra gave birth to her beautiful baby girl, she began behaving strangely. Right after her cesarean delivery, she jumped out of bed, and began running through the hospital ward, screaming that the child was not hers, and that she would kill the baby. Two days later, she was discharged from the hospital, but her husband did not want to care for her or his baby, so he left and moved in with another woman elsewhere. We were told about this terrible situation for this young lady and her child, so we decided to take them into our care. **Baby Miriam (see picture) is doing very well in our Bethany Children's Home and Sumithra is being taken good care of in our Home for the Mentally Challenged.**

MARIAM TUTTI

Mariam Tutti is a two months old baby girl born to **Sumithra Kumari** from **Nanmun-anagar Village** of South Andamans. Sumithra is from the a **Ranchi** tribe.

From a young age and throughout her childhood, Sumithra was cruelly beaten and abused by her father. Her mother never protected her from the abuse. Somehow she was able to remain in school till seventh grade, when her father removed her from the school and forbade her to study any more.



Realizing her life was in danger, Sumithra left home. Broken and destitute, she was living in the streets of **Chat-ham Jetty**, when she met a young man who had come to the Andamans from **Jharkand** state. He was also homeless, so they joined

CHURCH MINISTRY

The most important commitment of Indian Christian Fellowship is church planting and pastoral care. We have just started to work in **Haddo**, a port community in Andaman Islands. Brother **Mohan** with whom I had been sharing the Gospel for more than 15 years, recently stopped drinking alcohol. In the past, he would spend his entire salary, and then borrow money, to buy booze. Every day he would be verbally abusive to his wife. A staunch Hindu, Mohan found it difficult to believe in one God (Hindus worship 330 million Gods and Goddesses). But now he understands that only Jesus can give him peace and joy. Today, he loves the Lord. We are praying that his wife will also embrace the **TRUTH**.

We have also started a new work in **Bathu Basti**. **Mr. Ramesh** is a carpenter from a devoted Hindu family originally from **Kerala State** who moved with his family to the Andamans eleven years ago. **Cont...**

FROM R.K.'S CORNER

This month's Bridge Report features an update report on Varughese Mathew's ministry, **Indian Christian Fellowship** in the **Andaman Islands**. It is located in the **Indian Ocean**, very close to the epicenter of the **2005 Tsunami**. We became partners seven years ago, right after the disaster. Since then, as the funds are available, we have been helping to support I.C.F. financially.

If you want more background information on Varughese and his ministry, just copy the following links into your web browser:

<http://www.bridgeinternational.org/pdf/january2005.pdf>

<http://www.bridgeinternational.org/pdf/march2006.pdf>

<http://www.bridgeinternational.org/articles/andaman.php>

<http://www.bridgeinternational.org/articles/editor1110.php>

The Bible has many verses which admonishes us to be generous to the poor and needy, the fatherless and widows, and the alien in the land, with a promise, "... that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands." Deut. 24:19. The Mathews have been obedient to God's call by showing mercy and love toward the very least. They are worthy of our support—will you help? Please mark your gift **Andaman Islands**.



Varughese Mathew with his family

... Cont. They went through a very painful situation, so finally, they all decided to commit suicide by jumping into the sea in **Port Blair**. But some "unknown power" stopped them from losing their lives. They heard the news of Hope in Jesus. The family put their lives into the hands of Jesus. They are now very active members in our **Newpahargaon Fellowship**.

It breaks my heart to see so many people in the Andamans and throughout India who are completely neglected. They are the drug addicts, mentally retarded, and elderly people whose children do not want them. They lie in the streets, being treated worse than animals. But in God's eyes they are just as valuable as those regarded as successful in life. We do not have enough finances to reach out to these destitute people, but here and there I pick up a few and minister to them. The joy in my heart is to see that our loving care improves their lives. As the Lord provides, I hope to rescue more people. One of our prayer teams prays specifically for their desperate needs. They would love to pray for your needs as well!



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