

Teams reach many in Kerala districts

Open-air meetings, individual contacts spread the gospel village by village

In the southwestern Indian state of Kerala, the coastal districts of Kasargod, Kannur, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Malappuram and Palakkad have little Christian influence. So New India Evangelistic Association (NIEA) made these districts, as well as four additional ones nearby all in the northern part of Kerala, its strategic focus for evangelism activities.

Ministry coordinators with NIEA received training from Malcolm Webber of LeaderSource, who taught them how to train leaders to carry out evangelism. This ConneXion model uses Jesus's example of training others for service, summarized in Mark 3:14-15. It encourages leaders to focus on Christ, engage in community, build their character, identify their calling and grow in their competencies. It further encourages learning for leaders through a comprehensive approach that includes spiritual, relational, experiential and instructional components.

With the ConneXion model in mind, NIEA went on to launch two initiatives that combine training and practical evangelism experience: the Institutes of Community Transformation (ICT) and Friends Mission (FM). Both focus on the targeted coastal districts in northern Kerala.

Institutes of Community Transformation

Working in partnership with Seva Bharat, NIEA launched ICT to train leaders in evangelism and church planting. Ten young pastors from Kasargod district participated in the ICT training for a year. The program included a three-month residential period followed by nine months of field work to practice the skills they learned. Experienced ministry workers facilitated the course and mentored the students.

ICT students visited numerous villages during their training. One of the people they visited was a troubled man named Saji, who had grown up nominally Christian.

"I was affected by an evil spirit that made me hit my head on trees," he said. "People were afraid of me."

His parents took him to "divine shrines" to pray for his healing. Then they tried witchcraft, but neither made a difference. But when the ICT students visited, one of Saji's neighbors challenged a student to ask "her Jesus" to heal him.

The student told Saji and his family about Jesus and prayed for his healing.

"I was miraculously healed, to the wonder of our neighbors!" exclaimed Saji.

He and his family began attending a new church shortly after that.

"Now I am a happy, healthy person, and I, too, go [around] telling others to believe in Jesus," he said.

All 10 students in the 2018 ICT course finished successfully and



Faith, trust lead to miraculous healing

Samuel (Swamy) grew up in a non-Christian home. When he began to follow Jesus, he experienced a new sense of peace and joy in his life. As he studied Scripture with other believers, his love of Jesus grew. It wasn't long before he wanted to tell others about his life-changing experience with Jesus.

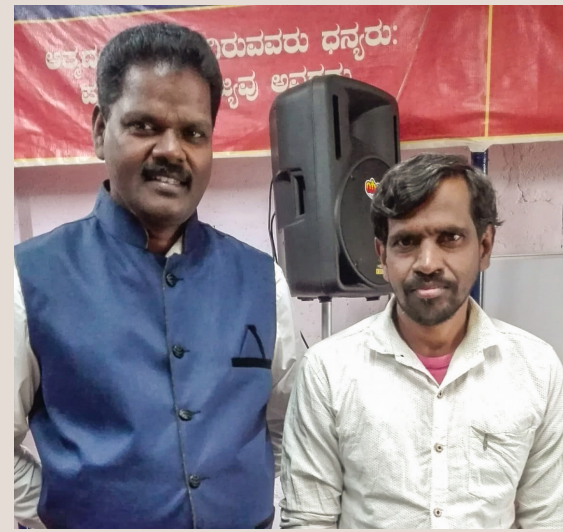
He joined Friends Mission, a ministry of New India Evangelistic Association (NIEA), as a missionary to the state of Karnataka in southwestern India. He regularly visited families and individuals, including those who were sick, to tell them about Jesus. During these visits, Swamy would often pray with people for spiritual and physical healing.

One day Swamy visited Manjunath's family. Manjunath was 35. He had a history of alcoholism, mental instabili-

ty, verbal abuse and physical violence. His wife left him, and he lived with his mother and younger siblings. They tried to take Manjunath to a special hospital for treatment but couldn't afford the costs. For their protection, his family locked him in a room.

Swamy told Manjunath's family how Jesus changed his life. He encouraged them to believe God could change their lives and heal Manjunath if they chose to follow Jesus. The family was hesitant, but Swamy pleaded with them to pray with him. Week after week, Swamy and his pastor visited the family and prayed for Manjunath. The family continued to resist.

Finally, Swamy and his pastor encouraged Manjunath's family to take him to New India Church. The family agreed. The church organized fasting and prayer for him, and the whole con-



Pastor Baby and Manjunath.

gregation participated. And Manjunath was healed!

Praise God with us for this miraculous healing, and please pray that Manjunath and his family will continue to grow in their faith and trust in Jesus.

NIEA ministries help Kerala regions encounter the gospel

Continued from front

committed to continued missionary service in the area.

Friends Mission

In 2013 NIEA launched Friends Mission with 10 students. They received training in Bible teaching and evangelism. Then they were sent out to several districts to put what they'd learned into practice. The goal for each student was to share the gospel with 100 people every month.

Every year now, more than 100 students are being trained and doing evangelism in the targeted coastal districts in northern Kerala as well as districts in another nearby state. During their year-long training, students participate in home visits, biblical literature distribution, evangelism, open-air preaching, small group facilitation and training others. Over five years, hundreds of people have heard about Jesus and many have responded.

At the end of 2018, Friends Mission partnered with New India Bible Church in Malappuram, a city in southwestern India, to host a one-day outreach event.

Starting at 9 a.m., six people presented the Gospel at 10 open-air



meetings. They spoke clearly and in a culturally relevant way about Jesus' mission to all of humanity. Additionally, 20 people visited more than 1,600 homes and distributed nearly 6,000 pieces of biblical literature including copies of the Bible.

Ten people from the community reported making a decision to follow Jesus after the day's activities. New India Bible Church has committed to follow up with these new believers to ensure their continued growth in their faith, and they invited each person to join their Sunday worship program as well as other church events.

Ravitha was one of those who followed Jesus after meeting FM stu-

dents. Several young women from FM distributed biblical literature in her village. Ravitha read the pamphlets out of curiosity. As she read, she was intrigued. She asked her husband if she could invite the young women into their home. He agreed.

"We had many questions to ask when they ... visited us again," Ravitha said. "When they shared the gospel, the Holy Spirit worked in us, and we joyfully accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord!"

Ravitha, her husband and their young daughter began to attend a church, and they report that they are looking forward to being baptized soon.

Meanwhile, a day laborer named Madhavan came to Kerala to work from Tamil Nadu, a state in southeastern India. When he arrived, he met Pastor Benny and several young men who were FM missionaries.

"When they shared the gospel, I became curious and wanted to know more about Jesus," Madhavan said.

They invited him to a service at New India Bible Church. He found many young people at the church, including some from his home state who became his friends.

"I want to study the Bible and learn more things about Jesus Christ," Madhavan said. "Please pray for me."