

CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION OF INDIA

Christianpet, Nidubrolu - 522 124, Guntur(Dt), Andhra Pradesh, SOUTH INDIA



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CLCI ACTIVITIES ANNUAL REPORT- 2011

(A report to 11th Joint Asia English Pastoral conference held at Chennai, Dated 13 to 14 Oct - 2011.)

*H*onorable Missionaries respected Chairman, secretary, members, delegates, pastors and officials of the CLCI, BELC, HCLCN and CLCM. On behalf of the Church of the Lutheran Confession of India, we convey our loving greetings to all of you in the saving Name of our Lord Christ Jesus who has joined us and united us to a common faith and love.

I have great pleasure in presenting the CLCI report to this 11th Joint Asia English Pastoral conference; also it is with great delight that I am expressing my thanks for giving us this opportunity. We report to you and to God only.

1. Chairman of the CLCI:- Before I begin, I thank once again our Lord for His wonderful grace towards the chairman of the CLCI Rev. V.S. Benjamin who has been regaining his health. We feel happy that he has been able to participate in some of the CLCI church programs. We praise and thank the Lord, for His amazing grace towards Rev. V.S. We thank all of you who have prayed for his health.

2. Progress and Statistics: - We feel a tremendous responsibility to God and to the Great Commission of Jesus. God kept His wonderful presence with the CLCI because we have seen great improvement in every aspect of the CLCI ministry. We are already seeing wide spread growth in our congregations. God is helping the CLCI mission church to grow rapidly. We find many hundreds of believers coming into the church every month.

The CLCI also has been expanding more and more in rural, sub-urban and urban areas of Andhra Pradesh. Many new souls were added to the CLCI. We were also glad to report that our CLCI pastors in Chattisghad State have also been successfully doing their work there. We are giving repeated instructions to our pastors to take special care to improve our CLCI members, knowledge in Catechism.

The results of the mission program until now are satisfactory. Praise God for the Churches planted in tribal areas and among unreached people groups. Through the consolidated effort, so far 11,718 souls were added to Christ. Also 256 worshipping congregations and nearly 200 preaching stations have been established. The CLCI is now spreading in 12 districts of the Andhra Pradesh very rapidly. Please see the district wide statistics on the screen.

3. Outreach and Evangelism and Pastors Seminars: - The Lord has been good to us in this year 2010-11. We are conducting outreach programs in every weekend. I gratefully acknowledge our CLCI pastors, evangelists, youth seminary students for their good work in doing this great work of CLCI evangelism. Many young men who were drenched in the CLCI youth camps at Nidubrolu became evangelists for this outreach programs. Gospel processions were held. Souls were saved. It was a dawn of realization of what God could do through "Just ordinary people" (1 Sam 17:33). Even though it is becoming very difficult in doing outreach programs in India because of the opposition, still we are getting much calling for the new contacts in the tribal remote areas through our Evangelists.

We are glad to inform you that this year also we have many Hindu and Muslim conversions. For converting a Hindu or Muslim we do as follows. First we make friendship with Hindu and Muslims. We listen to them and make them feel that they are respected as good friends and accepted as they are (Rom 5:8). Friendship proceeds sharing. Degrading their religion or way of worship will not help. This will create a block. Then we share with them the plan of God's salvation and our testimony. We keep praying for them. We don't get disappointment or angry or sad if they don't show interest. We give them time to believe. We use simple language, not KJV! We help them to see God in commonplace. We don't manipulate with false promises and hopes such as healing and miracles. By doing like this God bless our words at the right time. Our job is to present the gospel. Salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit. We also give them Great Bible Truths or the New Testament to read and we continue to be their good supportive friends. By God's amazing grace we have many Hindu and Muslim converts in our congregations. We are also proud to report that we have few converted Muslim pastors also in the CLCI.

Pastoral Seminars: - We have been conducting annual pastoral seminars twice during annual convention meetings. These seminars once again enable pastors, district leaders and students to gather for intensive study in a wide variety of subjects. In these seminars, we discussed some of the essays given by Rev. David Koenig and also once again studied Lutheran doctrines such as creeds, sacraments, ten commandments etc. We are happy to inform you that our CLCI pastors have received much benefit from these seminars. CLCI recognizes the resourcefulness and wisdom that God has placed in the hearts and minds of many pastors and leaders. We believe that God, in His wisdom, has great plans to meet the needs of the end-time harvest through these revival seminars. God is uniting and extending His body for this purpose, and it is the goal of these seminars to refresh and revive our Pastors to do more work.

4. Tracts Distribution and House to House visiting: - Tract distribution teams plays very important role in our entire CLCI ministry. In the weekend program we distribute tracts door to door. We also visit House to House and we will share gospel with them, pray for the sick people. The CLCI Young men have been doing good work in this tract distribution. They stand in busy street corners, road junctions, market places and bus stations in distributing tracts. The volunteers hand out the tract, Good News of Deliverance, to the enquirers. We supply the gospel literature to many of our CLCI evangelists for door-to-door evangelism, street rallies etc. Every day, we are receiving many requests from various people in different walks of life for the gospel tracts and other Bible study materials. God is changing the lives through our Gospel tract distribution program. The wonderful testimonies, which we are receiving every day, will reveal the importance and effect of the gospel literature. On behalf of the CLCI Tracts distribution team, we convey our heartfelt thank to Rev. David Koenig and Rev. Matt Ude, in providing thousands of Telugu tracts for the CLCI outreach programs. Our evangelists distribute hundreds of tracts in Schools, Colleges, Hospitals, Railway Stations and Bus-stations. We are happy to report that through this tracts distribution, we have been receiving good number of phone calls and inquirers to join in the CLCI.

House to House visiting: - Results with this house to house visit are very high. We live our lives according to the Bible, need to let the Bible methods become our model, pattern, and way of life. *"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."* Acts 5:4. Houses in the New Testament were a place where people could gather to hear the Word. We choose and select some of the well known friends and relatives to visit new houses and we noticed that 90% people responded positively. According to our CLCI survey from its experience, this following is the people response to the gospel.

Activity

1. A special need 1%
2. Walked in to the church 2-3%
3. Tracts and Evangelism 5-10%
4. VBS - Sunday School 15-20%

5. Gospel meetings 24-30%
6. Church Programs 15-20%
7. A Friend or Relative 55-70%

From the above list we can see that 55 to 70 per cent of all people coming to Christ or coming to church have come because of a friend or a relative. We choose perfect times like summer season to evangelize house to house with help of a friend or relative. We hear their personal family problems and sicknesses, comfort them with the word of God and pray for their problems and invite them to our Churches. People don't care how much we know until they know how much we care! With our Lord's wonderful grace, we have been receiving positive results by doing this House to House visitation.

5. CLCI Public Gospel Meetings: - This year we have conducted 18 Public Gospel meetings in different districts of Andhra Pradesh. This year CLCI public gospel meetings attracted 7,120 villagers. The participants received great blessings through these public gospel meetings. We organize CLCI Public gospel meetings several times a year in various villages. Usually these public Gospel meetings last 3 days and services are held in the morning and in the evening. Anywhere from 500 – 1000 people attend these meetings. The focus of the meetings is gospel music and sermons intended to attract people and to introduce them to Jesus Christ. Meetings are held in open air under temporary tents and sermons are given in loud speakers. Many people have moved by the word and received Jesus through these meetings, got baptized and have started to attend the church. The CLCI word of God ignites the many minds on the purpose of their existence on this earth. The inspiring messages from our CLCI leaders and pastors refreshed many new comers, and promised the way to salvation and eternal life. As you know India lives in the villages. So mainly we concentrated in villages.

6. Baptisms: - There are many conversions and baptisms have been progressing throughout our CLCI congregations. In total during these public gospel meetings and in the CLCI churches, we have performed 146 baptisms including child baptisms. There's nothing like seeing the excitement on the faces of people who are "going public" with their faith in Christ through baptism. God bless these new brothers and sisters in the CLCI. *"...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5.)* Jesus Christ was the ultimate winner in the hearts of many people including Hindu and Muslims. It's a win-win – our church gets to baptize more people and we get to partner together to provide water to those who need it desperately. *"Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your Name be the glory..."*

7. Constructing Churches and Prayer sheds: - This year the Lord has opened amazingly many doors to start new CLCI congregations. God has helped to construct six prayer sheds this year where He himself is being glorified. In the coming year, we are praying for repairing 23 prayer sheds and construction of 12 urgent prayer sheds of each cost \$ 1,000. We request you all to join with us in your prayer support in this progress. Our vision is to have solid prayer sheds in our CLCI so that our members do not walk away from not being able to find one to worship the Lord.

8. CLCI Tribal Ministry:-We kept special focus on evangelizing the Tribal people in various districts of Andhra Pradesh. As we know most of these tribal people live in below poverty line and neglected by all classes of people including government. They are downtrodden people. Their main occupation is raising pigs, catching rats, Scavengers, collecting empty plastic bottle & paper in garbage, and sometimes begging. Many tribal groups are struggling for their existence in Andhra Pradesh States. Even though the Government is offering them some special reservations but those facilities are not reaching these tribal people. They have no employment even their children do not go to schools because they are untouchable in the society. They were being oppressed in all sorts of life. They look for people who come to them and offer comforting words and help. This special tribal mission work undertaken by Rev V.S.Benjamin in 1985, has meant bearing witness to the word of God among tribal peoples, and contributing to their professional and spiritual development as well as their growth as human beings. From that time onwards we have leading these tribal communities towards Christ, sharing their problems and suffering. However, after the Gospel was announced to them and their

problems began to be shared, they found the "meaning of the word love". Here in tribal areas, people don't have any transport facility. In some tribal areas, the vehicles won't go into their colonies. By walk only we are reaching these villages with word of God with our team. We need to walk many kilometers to reach their colonies.

At present, the CLCI works in close contact with the Yerukala (Pig risers), Yanadi (Rat catchers), Paki (Scavengers) and Lambadi tribal people, who live in Guntur, Krishna and Medak Districts. We have 27 tribal congregations in the CLCI, where tribal people been comforted by the word of God and bear witness to the life and message of Christ. We conduct special gospel meeting in their tribal colonies. Adults listen to the Gospel; while children learn read and write and couples learn how to consolidate their relationship in order "to be good husbands, wives, fathers and mothers." The CLCI Tribal Mission work does not stop at announcing the word of God; it also includes education. With this in mind, we distribute slates, slate pencils and primary educational books to the tribal children and teaching to write and read. In many CLCI tribal congregations now the children are able to read and write. We distribute New Testaments the tribal children who can read. Yearly twice we conduct medical camps among the CLCI tribal congregations so that they can get health care. We try every way to bear witness to the message of God t these downtrodden people.

9. CLCI Audio ministry: - *As ACTS 1:8 says that the Word of God should be reached to the ends of the Earth*, the powerful messages by Rev. V.S.Benjamin and other CLCI pastors are being delivered to different places of Andhra Pradesh through the CLCI Audio Ministries. We have been using CDs and DVDs to send the messages since their prices become very low. In keeping with 2 Corinthians 9:7, this audio ministry is supported by freewill offerings. We do not sell the audio CDs and DVDs. We take whatever they give for these CDs and DVDs. Every two weeks we send two recent messages. They listen and give it to others without any charge; pay only the postage at library rate. Those who regularly support this ministry need not return the CDs. Some of our CLCI government employees have been helping in buying empty CDs and DVDs.

10. CLCI Film Ministry: - Since film is an effective and popular method to reach the masses, this CLCI film ministry was started. An outstanding movie on the life of Jesus as well as other Christian films, are shown with great results As you know Film ministry is more effective especially among the illiterate Indian tribal and village people. In nighttime we conduct street meeting in that village after that we will show one Jesus film there. With this strategy, we have been achieving very good success in doing mission work in many rural areas of Andhra Pradesh State. The people of India are widely attracted to the big screen and thus it is being used as a powerful tool to give the message of Jesus to the semi illiterate and illiterate village mass. We show the "Jesus Film" in streets, slums, villages and local towns, and remote areas.

It has been giving our church an opportunity to further God's kingdom with our many other brothers and sisters in the rural communities. This film ministry draws people's attention towards CLCI and it becomes the rough beginning of churches. Starting churches is just what we had in mind. It's not just show and go. We are building new churches with the help of this CLCI film ministry. In this CLCI film ministry, along with regular Telugu Christian movies, we are also showing dubbing movies. In our CLCI film ministry we have Telugu dubbing movie collections like Jesus (according to Luke), Genesis, Abraham, Moses, Jacob, Joseph, 10 commandments, David, Solomn, Ruth, Esther, Samson and Delilah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Pilgrims progress, Passion of Christ (with Telugu subtitles), Blink of an Eye, Left Behind. With this film ministry we have been adding more people to the CLCI. We firmly know that "Seeing is Believing."

11. Prison Ministry: - By the grace of our Lord this year we have started this prison ministry in Andhra Pradesh State. Since our Brother Raju is a lawyer, with his help we get permissions from well known Government officials to visit the prisons. Under this ministry, we have been working with men convicted of murder, rape, theft and drug trafficking.

We do the prison ministry in five ways - with Government permission, 1. Praying for the prisoners, 2. Distributing New Testaments, 3. Distributing fruits and gifts like tooth paste and brushes, 4. Meeting their families and praying for them, 5. Conducting medical camps in the prisons (if funds available). The prisoners have been benefiting by these five aims. Some of our CLCI local pastors visit the prisons every month pray for them. Our aim is to captive prisoners for Christ. Our first step is to listen to and counsel the prisoners, who suffer from anger, depression and disappointment. This often engenders a new willingness in prisoners to change their life. Prayer sessions, New Testaments and fruits distribution are conducted to ease minds and offer moments of peace. We meet the family of the prisoners and giving them, every possible assistance, spiritual, emotional, material and legal. By the grace of our lord the CLCI prison ministry is growing gradually. We do record their testimonies use them in our outreach. We are glad to inform you that many prisoners are saved and after releasing from the prison some of them have been working as our CLCI evangelists during their free time. We regret to inform that at Yeddumailarm village of Medak district one our CLCI evangelist (who have released from the prison and working as our part time CLCI evangelist) was murdered by his enemies. We felt very sad about this. We request you all to pray for the people who released from the prison and became our CLCI members.

Our only lament is that we have not been able to reach out to all the prisoners, as there are so many of them. Even though it is difficult and risky, we thank and praise God that we are able to turn criminal hands into creative hands.

12. Medical Camps:- Since many years, the CLCI has developed effective programs to the health of hundreds of our CLCI members who are suffering from various diseases like viral fevers, Dengue, Chikungunya, Swine flu, diarrhea and from HIV/AIDS. We conduct frequent medical camps among our CLCI churches with the available funds. The CLCI's medical camp programs include support for home-based care, awareness, prevention and giving free medicines.

We have been continuing in doing the services to the HIV/AIDS affected people. This year also we have distributed medicines and daily commodities to 175 victims. We have been teaching to our members that a faithful, intimate presence in the lives of those sick people, witnessing to them of Jesus' comforting touch in their hearts, is our responsibility

13. Annual 2011 VBS: - The CLCI VBS celebrated another successful year. Here is the summary of the Vacation Bible School 2011. Our annual VBS-11 was held from July 25th to 29th, 2011. In what is believed to be the largest VBS held in the CLCI, these 1,515 children and youth were fed, cared for and taught from the Word of God on the CLCI campus. Even though the staff and volunteers had been accustomed to handling large numbers of children at their VBS in recent years, this year's turnout amazed them as well, far surpassing last year's record attendance of about 1,420. Because quite a few of the children would have had transportation to come to the VBS at the CLCI campus, the CLCI VBS ministry rented autos to pick them up from the surrounding villages and also to take them back home. Sleeping arrangements were not a problem either. In summer nearly everyone sleeps on the ground with only a mat or a small blanket. And the warm, dry weather in south India in summer is ideal for sleeping outside.

As usual at every point we reinforced the Gospel with songs, crafts, scripture memory and stories from the Bible. The children present various programs and participate in all the major events of the VBS. Our efforts have been well received by the children who participated in this five day VBS. The children present various programs and participate in all the major events of the VBS. As usually our VBS-2011 has activities like Bible education program, Bible quiz programs, Bible written tests, Bible story telling competitions, Coloring of biblical pictures, coloring of plaques made by plaster of Paris, Songs competitions Sports and Games. The kids also had a chance to win certificates, prizes and New Testaments for participating in various VBS activities. Children learned many other lessons, enjoyed being together, and finished up with a great cookout, a big meal on the last day. Preparing and serving food for so many children over a five day period was a great task, but it was well worth the effort. Most

of the teenagers, who attended, numbering several hundred, committed their lives to the Lord during VBS week. Seeing the wonderful smiles on their faces as they experienced the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ gave way to much joy and celebration. Finally everybody received a wonderful book of John Gospel with colored pictures on it.

No VBS is complete without some great games and Seminary students created some fun games to play. God is using this VBS to reach precious children with His saving, transforming grace.

Please pray that the Lord will use this CLCI VBS ministry to bring many into His kingdom and to call some into full-time Christian service.

14. Future Planning: The CLCI seeks to experience and reflect Christ by:

1. Cell phone ministry – collecting the new cell numbers and attracts them by praying for them.
2. Conducting more Sunday School programs,
3. Conducting adult educational programs to increase literacy rate
4. Increasing in the effectiveness of the spiritual growth of our CLCI youth.
5. Increasing of the number of Public Gospel meetings,
6. Finding out new preaching stations.
7. Conducting more social service programs like medical camps in the rural areas,
8. Employing more evangelists in the Hindu and Muslim areas.
9. Praying for financial assistance to Construct 12 urgent prayer sheds each cost about \$1000
10. Praying for more financial assistance to newly joined pastors in the CLCI.

The Lord has chosen us to make us a blessing to many. Only one life; it'll soon be past! What's done for Christ, alone shall last! Doing Christian service in India, may be Sphysically it is hard but spiritually it is the most joyful one! Job satisfaction is highest in Christian service! Perfect freedom, team work and loving fellowship! We remain faithful to His call till the end—By His Grace, for His Glory! We give all the glory for His work in our lives as we seek to make His name known in our Indian community. Pray that God will help us reach His goals. Thank you all.

Respectably submitted to the 11th Joint Asia English pastoral conference.

---- Presented by the CLCI Ministries

