

Church Growth Association of India Ministry Impact Report Spring 2012

Rev. Vasantharaj Albert, ministry leader

The Indian Church is currently enjoying an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Churches are being planted daily, and people are obeying Christ in baptism by the multitude. But the time has come for the Indian Church to think beyond baptism. How will we establish the churches in sound doctrine? How will we implement church-based training to develop leaders? How will we tap the enormous talents and gifts of women in the ministry? How will we raise local funds for the sustainability of the ministry?

For all the above questions, we are trying to provide answers, trying to be on the cutting edge of ministry and answer the critical questions of our age. Thus, we have:

- Effectively used the **Scriptures In Use** model to train Master Trainers among oral learners to develop leadership among this untapped but available seed bed of leaders.
- Successfully integrated **community development programmes** which are becoming self-sustainable and easily replicated.
- Developed a model to unleash the potential of women through **Mission to Women**.
- Begun to extend the training for lay people through the **Antioch School Programme**, through which the churches can be established in sound doctrine.



A group of young leaders receive training from CGIA in preparation for church ministry and community transformation projects

Brother Isaac Israel, from one of the groups we trained—Rural Blessing Mission of Maharashtra—said: "Since our mission is a small one, we were struggling to implement a right strategy in the field. Appointing people from formal theological backgrounds didn't solve the problem. We began to partner with CGAI, and after several training sessions we are clear about what to do and how to do it."

Thank you for partnering with us so that the Kingdom of God will grow in India!

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2011 Last year, 1,961 full-time leaders were trained directly by CGAI in the topics of church planting strategies and church growth. Of these, 939 were women. The trainees came from 10 states of India. In addition to this, CGAI was invited to provide resource persons to train 720 trainees from various missionary movements and organisations. We thank God that our impact is growing through your partnership and prayer support!



MENTOR TRAINING Rev. Navasingh said: "I am from a traditional Christian family. I worked as a teacher. When God called me, I resigned from my job and planted a church for new converts from Hinduism. The converts are poor. They are involved in rolling tobacco leaves for their livelihood. I tried to develop leaders with little success. In September, I attended the mentoring training at the Church Growth Centre. I was challenged to change my life and the training methods to develop quality leaders. The teaching was very powerful. I am going home with a renewed vision and a practical method to develop leaders in my community.

Another attendee said, "The foot-washing ceremony on the final day was a heart-warming moment!" Many trainees plan to conduct follow-up seminars to develop leaders in their localities.

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES THROUGH LOCAL CHURCH NETWORKS Our goal is to help local churches and missions increase their impact. Godwin's story is one example of how this works. A local pastor who planted a church among poor families living on the outskirts of Chennai, his church grew quickly at first, but over time the initial growth declined. Godwin's vision was to train 50 lay leaders, but he didn't have a workable strategy.

Through a mutual friend, Godwin began to consult with us. We held a series of seminars starting in August. Within a few meetings, 23 lay leaders were identified. We encouraged these leaders to start 'Transformation Groups' (Bible studies) as platforms to present the gospel to unreached families in their communities. The storytelling method we introduced is an extremely effective way for people with little or no education to learn the Bible and then share it with others. Our training encouraged them to start self-help groups which teach life skills and enable poor families to increase their income through savings and small businesses. These groups also help multiply leaders, as individuals are encouraged to minister in their own communities on a volunteer basis.

"After the formation of groups, we saw a change in the attitude of our leaders," said Pastor Godwin. "They pray more and involve themselves more in the ministry. We are thankful to CGAI for their effective strategy."



The leaders in Pastor Godwin's church have since started 30 Transformation Groups. Now the leadership has increased to 40 men and women to lead these groups. This group has set a 10-year goal to plant 1,000 churches and to develop 2,000 Transformation Groups. They have no plans at present to own property or construct buildings. They are using low-cost, effective ways to spread the Gospel and to bring about physical and spiritual transformation without outside investment. Being with these people for a couple of days provided us a rich experience of their simple lifestyle and community life. We are planning to visit them again and help them continue to develop their poverty-stricken communities.

Women learn to share the Gospel through drama, song, and story-telling

MISSION TO WOMEN The goal of Mission to Women is to train women from various denominational backgrounds who have a desire for ministry, equipping them to minister the

love of Jesus among people in their home areas. The programme involves three key elements: women's training centres (training women leaders and wives of pastors), Transformation Groups, and self-help groups (empowering poor women through vocational training and micro-enterprise). Altogether, 459 women received leadership training in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa in 2011. Now, 88 self-help groups are functioning with 1,095 women. More than 480 women were trained in various vocational skills.

Here is an example of our work from Wardha District, one of the 34 districts of Maharashtra State. The Kolami and Gond are the major people groups in this area. Rural Blessing Mission (RBM) is working in this area with a vision to reach the entire district by 2015. Eleven women from RBM were trained at the Church Growth Centre in Scripture storytelling, how to form self-help groups, character, leadership and other skills.

Shoba and Ramlal are the church planters of RBM in Waghdara village. "As with many other tribal groups, our people also experience many miracles by the hand of God," said Shoba. "Many diseases and even snakebites are being healed miraculously when we pray. Many were coming to our worship services but their faith was not being strengthened. But after 10 days of the CGAI training, we began to start many small groups. We began to teach Bible stories, encouraging everybody to join the discussion. Now we are seeing their faith start to increase."

Now 85 people in the village have accepted Christ, almost half of the village's 175 people. One of the new believers, Seetha, said: "I accepted Christ through the ministry of my son. Now I regularly attend the worship services. On Wednesdays we gather for storytelling. I won't miss any of those group meetings because I find it very interesting and easy to re-tell the Bible stories to many others."



Through the solidarity of self-help groups, women are empowered to contribute to their family's wellbeing through savings and income generation.

FAMILY NEWS Mano and I travelled more than 12,000 kilometres this year on rugged roads and day—long travelling on trains. God was gracious to keep us safe and provide us health for every day. Our visits to the partner ministries are to encourage them on their journey and to help them to cast visions that are 'God-sized'. Age gives us more respect for them, and they listen intently. We enjoy meeting people in informal settings. My children and their families are involved in the ministry. We have two grandchildren.

We are grateful to you who have prayed for and supported us for all these years. Most of you are not known to us personally, but your support enables to minister to thousands of people in this great and needy country. What a partnership! Please continue to pray for us. The ministry is expanding and the challenges are many, but God's promises are encouraging. Praise the Lord!



*Two of the women leaders
we trained in 2011*

PLEASE PRAY

- **For each rural pastor and leader who is faithfully serving Christ under difficult circumstances. Pray they would persevere in their valuable ministry.**
- **Praise for the growth of the Transformation Clubs and self-help groups throughout India. Pray for men's and women's lives to be touched powerfully by Christ so that they can be used by Him..**
- **For our need for four new staff members. Pray for God's choice and provision.**
- **For health and strength for the CGAI team.**
- **For God's Kingdom to be established powerfully throughout India.**