



“The Most Excellent Way”

INDIA

Report by Pastor John Pendleton

Active Member of TMEW Board of Directors

Director of “Reaching The Unreached” (RTU) Ministry

May, 2010

And [Jesus] said to them,
"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."
Mark 16:15 NKJV

Introduction

In 2007 and 2008, I introduced “The Most Excellent Way” ministry to areas of India and Nepal. This is a report of the progress I have seen during my visit during March, April, and May, 2010.

“The Most Excellent Way” is welcomed in India and Nepal. Pastors see it as hugely useful in starting new Christian churches. It offers a solution to the serious problems brought about by the Hindu religious practices involving alcohol.

Until now, pastors have neglected approaching alcoholic men and women because they just did not know how to do it. Coupled with that is the caste system, that results in a tendency to avoid people with alcohol problems. Now, that is changing as the seeds have been planted and are growing. God promises us that He will do more than we can ask for or imagine (Ephesians 3:20), and that is happening with “The Most Excellent Way” in India and Nepal. May God continue to provide.

In His service,
Pastor John Pendleton

Andhra Pradesh State

Under the supervision of **Pastor Timothy Tagor**, the “Reaching the Unreached” ministry has funded the building of a church in the village of **Chintakunta**. This church is named “**New Life in Christ**.” Here a weekly “The Most Excellent Way” meeting is conducted by the church pastor.

Because wives are forced to be involved in making the “home brew” that their husbands drink, there are many wives who are alcoholics. These people are all Hindu, a religion that encourages the drinking of alcohol during religious rituals and activities. It comes as a pleasant surprise when they learn that Christianity discourages the use of alcohol and that they can have a loving relationship with the one true God of the Bible.



Their relationship with Hindu gods is based on fear that those gods will punish them if they do not conduct acts of appeasement. Therefore, they frequently offer the gods gifts of coconut, flowers, food, and miscellaneous other items. Now they are able to worship God without fear.

This church is named “**New Life in Christ.**” For the wives and daughters of the village, the church building is used to house a sewing class. Because the village has no electricity, we have provided two foot-powered sewing machines, along with the necessary material, needles, etc., and an instructor. The women attend free of charge as they have no money. The class accomplishes three main objectives:

1. Introducing them to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Preparing them for gainful employment in nearby towns.
3. Strengthening their families spiritually and financially. Previously their only source of income was farm labor field work or prostitution.

Chintakunta is a 100% Hindu village. Our aim is to reach the young girls and women with Good News of Jesus and liberate them from ignorance and economical poverty. **Mrs. Lalithamma**, instructor, is the only lady who knows tailoring in this *dalit*



village. *Dalits* are of the lowest caste in India and are not provided with education or medical benefits. The government and all society ignore them. This is the first time anyone has reached out to these village people ... ever.

These girls have never been to school of any kind. They work in the agriculture fields in the mornings, to provide food for their families. Their only other source of income is prostitution, which is forced upon them due to family poverty. They attend the tailoring class every afternoon from 2:00-5:00 PM. They begin with sharing of God’s Word and prayer, and close with prayer.

Girls are very much interested in learning tailoring, Christian songs, and God’s word. Around 30 to 35 young women are waiting to take part in the training. The training period is four months. During my visit I awarded certificates of completion to 27 young women.

Two additional sewing machines have been provided to another village, along with an instructor. This brings the total of machines to four, with two instructors. At the other village, we are renting a room where “The Most Excellent Way” weekly meetings are being held. This group has 27 men and women attending regularly.

Karnataka State

- Gurupura

Pastor Daniel has assigned **Pastor Steven** to supervise all aspects of “The Most Excellent Way” ministry in the western area of Karnataka state, in and around the city of **Shimoga**.

There are 15 pastors conducting weekly meetings, each in a separate village. I require them to come to **Gurupura** once per month for TMEW training and evaluation. They are self-supporting, but because we require them to come a long distance for the monthly meeting, RTU sends each of them 500 Rupees each month (\$165). That is equivalent to \$11 each and is just enough to purchase two gallons of fuel for their vehicles. In addition, RTU provides Pastor Steven 3000 Rupees per month (\$67) since he now is devoting his full time to “The Most Excellent Way.” His duties require extensive travel, often by train, and the 3000 Rupees comes to about \$2.22 per day. RTU has also provided him with a donated used laptop, and a motorbike.

I have personally interviewed each of the pastors who are working with “The Most Excellent Way,”

and have interviewed 15 additional pastors who are very eager to begin. However, RTU does not have the additional \$165 necessary to provide them with gasoline money. It is my prayer that God will provide as there is a great need and a great desire for the spread of “The Most Excellent Way.” The leaders are available; we are just waiting for the funding.

- **Calcutta**

During my visit, Pastor travelled to **Calcutta** to conduct a two-day “The Most Excellent Way” training seminar for 50 pastors. Twenty-five pastors committed to start TMEW weekly meetings.

- **Bangalore**

In **Bangalore**, **Pastor Vinay Raj** pastors a small church and makes regular visits to eight Hindu villages on the outskirts. He conducts “The Most Excellent Way” meetings on a regular basis, however, there is extensive opposition because of the Hindu religion’s encouragement of the use of alcohol in many of the ceremonies and activities.

Also in **Bangalore**, the **Ebenezer Church** has two pastors who conduct TMEW meetings. Another small church, led by **Pastor James**, has a weekly TMEW meeting.

Mr. Yesudian is not a pastor, but has built a large church and has one young pastor leading a TMEW meeting.

- **Dharmapuri**

In the city of **Dharmapuri** (100 miles south of Bangalore), **Pastor Premkumar** has three assistant pastors who each conduct weekly meetings. In addition, **Pastor Devaraj** reportedly continues to hold meetings.

Orissa State

The state of Orissa is intensely anti-Christian. Many Christian churches have been burned to the ground. While I was in India, a missionary, his wife and children, were all burned to death by Hindu radicals. Even so, in April, 2010, four pastors came from Orissa to attend “The Most Excellent Way” training. We spent several days together. Through telephone calls and emails, I know that one of these pastors is actively conducting TMEW meetings. I fear for his life, but he is very strongly committed to “The Most Excellent Way.”

Maharashtra State

My very dear friend, **Dr. Treveli**, also lives in an area that is too dangerous for me to visit. We had plans to meet in Bangalore, but someone threw acid on him when he was sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ at a “The Most Excellent Way” meeting. He was in intensive care during my visit and I could not visit him there. RTU provides him with \$100 per month since he leads five TMEW groups, and to help with some medical expenses.

Summary

“The Most Excellent Way” ministry is welcomed in India and Nepal. Pastors see it as hugely useful in starting new Christian churches. It offers a solution to the serious problems brought about by the Hindu religious use of alcohol.

Until now, pastors have neglected approaching alcoholic men and women because they just did not know how to do it. Coupled with that is the caste system that results in a tendency to avoid people with alcohol problems. Now that is changing as the seeds have been planted and are growing.

God promises us that He will do more than we can ask for or imagine (Ephesians 3:20), and that is happening with Most Excellent Way in India and Nepal. May God continue to provide.