



# CHURCH PLANTER

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Chief Editor: Rev S Duraiswamy

ecichurchplanter@gmail.com

## **MALTO TRIBAL CHILDREN'S LIFE BEING TRANSFORMED THROUGH THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL AND EDUCATION!**

Of all the Indigenous Mission Organisations, Friends Missionary Prayer Band missionaries are in the front line. They took the Gospel to the Malto in Jharkhand, one of the diminishing tribes in India. God worked miracles and many churches have been established among the Malto through them. On 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2005 FMPB handed over 441 churches to Evangelical Church of India. From then on, ECI is actively involved in constructing church buildings, establishing new churches, training the local pastors and also assisting the people through tailoring school for women and English medium school for the Malto tribal children.



*Malto Tribal children in Jharkhand before and now*



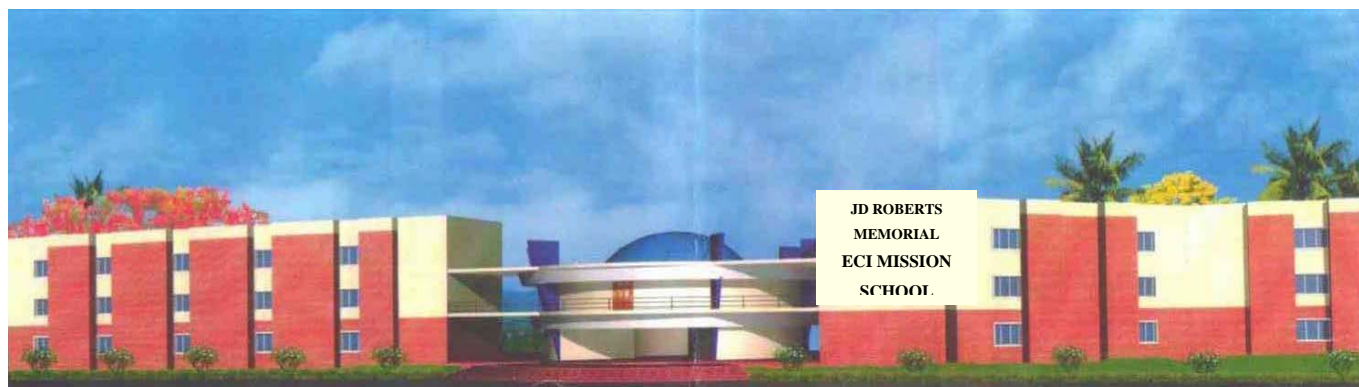
Maltos are one of the aboriginal races of India, who inhabit the Rajmahal hills of Jharkhand. Their population is about 12 hundred thousand and they are animists. Maltos are very poor; they can hardly have one meal per day. Being illiterates, they are easily cheated by the money lenders and they become debtors for life. These people are plagued by number of killer diseases like Malaria, Kalaazar, Diarrhea and TB. God who created these people had a plan for them.

Today by God’s grace we have 523 churches among the Maltos in Jharkhand. Most of the children have no access to basic education. In an effort to enlighten the children through education, we have started schools in three places and we are as on today educating 445 children and also providing them breakfast and lunch. Pray that many more kids may be benefited through these schools.



**Mr Rex Abraham family handing over 6 lakh rupees to Bishop President**

By faith we have started the construction works for a higher secondary school in a village called Rajpokra which can accommodate thousands of children. Mr Rex Abraham family from ECI Sholinganallur church in Chennai Diocese have generously contributed 5 lakh rupees (12000 US\$) towards construction of this school. They have also donated another one lakh rupee for constructing a church at Chemmencheri in Tamilnadu. We praise God for people like these who support generously towards building God’s kingdom.



**Blue print of ECI Mission School building to be developed at Rajpokra in Jharkhand – 2 ½ to 3 crore project (\$ 600 thousand) funds raised by IMM through ECI Churches in Chennai Diocese**



**Construction works commenced toward the ECI Mission School building for the Malto children**

## MALTO CHILDREN TESTIFY THE LORD



*Sunil Malto*

Sunil malto is pursuing his studies in our school at Rajpokra in class three. He lives in a village called Lelagodda which is 8 kms away from our school. So everyday he walks 16 kms to come to our school. He is very keen in his studies. To our surprise now he can speak few words in English. Praise God for this transformation. He has a desire to be an English Teacher for the malto children in the future.



*Mariam Malto*

Mariam malto is from a village which is very far from the village where our school is located. Since she wants to do her studies in our school she stays in one of her relatives house which is near to our school. She is doing her class three and is very bright. She has a dream to become a professor in a college. Pray for many of these kids who carry big dreams in their lives that the Lord will fulfill their wishes and dreams.



*Sika Malto*

Sika Malto hails from a very poor family but has a great desire to study in school. He was sent to the school with a condition by his father that he has to take care of the goats and sheeps during the weekends. He is studying in class one and he has memorised many of the Bible verses. He also wants to be a school teacher.

## CHURCHES DEDICATED FOR THE GLORY OF GOD THIS MONTH

ECI Bommalapuram church in Andhra Pradesh was dedicated for the glory of God on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2010 by Rev Abel Neelakandan. We are thankful to New Directions International for their partnership in building this church.



*ECI Bommalapuram Church*

ECI Keelambakkam church in Chennai was dedicated on 31<sup>st</sup> May by Bishop President and Rev Moses Kim, Bishop's Commissary of ECI Calcutta Diocese. Another church in Burujupalle in Andhra Pradesh was also dedicated by Rev Moses Kim, along with Rev Abel Neelakandan and Rev Dr David Onesimu.

These two churches were sponsored by the Korean Evangelical Holiness Church through Rev Moses Kim. We pray that the Holy Spirit will fill these newly dedicated churches and that all the prayers prayed in these churches will be answered for the glory of God.



*ECI Burujupalle Church*



*ECI Kelambakkam Church*

**65 RECORDED BAPTISMS OF NEW CONVERTS THIS MONTH (Many go unnoticed, pastors asked to report)**



**16 people were baptised at ECI MGR Nagar Church by Rev Paulraj**



**In ECI Vanagaram 6 people were baptised by Rev Paul Sundar. Another 6 people were baptised by Rev Moses Gnanasekaran and joined the ECI Koladi church**



**In Krishnagiri ECI Church 8 people were baptised and added to the church by Rev Immanuel Arumugam. Another 6 people were baptised by Rev Deva Asirvatham in ECI Kolkambakkam church in Chengalpet District of ECI Chennai Diocese**



**7 people baptised in Punjab which includes one family from Sikh community. Six others were baptised at ECI Solan by Rev Deborah glory and Rev Siddeshwar Naya**

From the heart of the Bishop-President ...

## UNDERSTANDING DR DONALD A MCGAVRAN

Bishop Ezra Sargunam

Dr Donald A McGavran's 103<sup>rd</sup> birth anniversary falls this month. Almost two decades have gone since this mammoth missiologist has passed into history, but his epoch-making principles of church growth are still pertinent and are effectively employed in mission-fields around the world.

### My first meeting with McGavran in 1972

Dr Donald A McGavran, whom I had always considered my *guruji* (teacher) and who had accepted me as his *challaji* (disciple), is one of my foremost role-models in missions. It was in June-July 1972 when I was teaching in the Madras Theological Seminary and College and also pastoring a church on Mandapam Road in Kilpauk, that we had set the goal for 100 ECI churches. There were 30-odd ECI churches then.

At that time, a seminar on church growth was organised here in Chennai and I was asked to present a paper on 'Urban Church Planting'. I presented the paper, but I could not attend the remaining sessions on that last day of the seminar, as I had to conduct a funeral service that evening. The following day, I had a knock on my door. And low and behold, it was Dr Donald A McGavran standing at the door with another missionary! I couldn't believe my own eyes! I never thought McGavran would come all the way looking for me. He said, "You are the kind of man I am looking for ... you already speak my language. I want to invite



you for a doctoral programme at the School of World Missions in Fuller Seminary." He offered me full scholarship. Since it was very difficult for me to leave my family and ministry for two or three years, I agreed to take up a one-year Master's programme, which some scholars spread to two years.

### McGavran's famous slogans and pertinent church growth principles

It was during my sojourn in the US between 1972 and 1973, that I was exposed to the great church growth principles comprising the "**people-groups**" concept – **reaching the unreached and the least-reached people groups, beginning with the most responsive ones**. It was there that I came across the famous slogans of Donald A McGavran: '**win the winnable**', '**harvest the harvestable**', '**reach the reachable**', '**go where the fishes are found and biting**', '**make conversions with minimum social dislocation**' and the phenomenal India-specific approach – plant caste churches, have an urban strategy ... begin with cities and then move on to the villages from where the migrants moved into cities.

The title of my thesis was ***Multiplying Churches in Urban India***, which was later published under the title *Multiplying Churches in Modern India*. While focusing on the responsive people groups who are oppressed, stressing on social emancipation as found in the gospels, I had emphasised that strategies like power encounter ministry – healing the sick and casting out the demons – were essential tools in evangelism and church planting ministry.

**“Do not go heavily on service missions”**, said Donald McGavran, who evolved his church growth principles, after rejecting the popular view that mission was “philanthropy, education, medicine, famine relief, evangelism and world friendship”. He was convinced that “good deeds, while necessary, must never replace the essential task of mission, discipling the people of the earth”. (Donald A McGavran, *My Pilgrimage in Mission*, International Bulletin of Missionary Research 10, No 2 (April 1986): 53-58, p 54)

My mind was bombarded with so many other missiological church growth principles, especially based on McGavranism, as contained in Donald A McGavran’s *Understanding Church Growth, The Bridges of God, How and When Churches Grow*, etc.

### **Can we accept a polygamist into the church?**

In one of my sittings ‘under his feet’, I sought his advice regarding a **predicament we had with a polygamist convert**, back in the mission-field in a village called Koladi, one of the outreach villages of the Kilpauk Church. I was the pastor of this church at

that time. We could not find a solution to a practical problem we had with this man named Palayam, a devout convert with three wives and eighteen children. When I told my *guruji*, that our Pastors Conference did not approve baptising Palayam and his family of nineteen members, Dr Donald A McGavran, said “though we do not approve polygamy, we must have concern for the children of this man” and rather challengingly asked, “Don’t you want to give them a Christian future?” “Christ is willing to accept us as we are, though we may not deserve to be his followers. So I suggest that you baptise all of them upon your return to India”, said my *guruji*.

This was one of the first few problems I was able to resolve by trying to understand the missiological giant’s thoughts on church growth. The first thing I did upon my return from the US was to baptise Palayam and his three wives and fifteen children – nineteen people in all. What a church growth! Today, one-third of the Koladi church’s congregation comprise Palayam’s family of nearly 100 people. I became one of McGavran’s daring disciples this way.

We not only reached the goal of 100 churches, but we went on to set another goal of 1000 churches and God’s promise to us at that time was, “A little one shall become a thousand” (Is 61:22). We indeed became a 1000 and then 2000 and now we have more than 3000 churches and are marching on faithfully towards the goal of 10,000 churches.

What I am today, **I owe it all to God and to great men of God like Dr Donald A McGavran**, who shaped my way all along.

## PRAYER AND PRAISE POINTS

1. Mr Kalaiselvan from ECI Saidapet church donated Rupees Two Lakhs to Bishop President towards construction of a Church in Jharkhand for the Malto people groups.



2. Praise God for the healing that the Lord showered for Rev Navaraj Moses. Pray that he may completely recover from his sickness and have a fruitful ministry for the glory of God.

3. Rev Appadurai, Bishop's Commissary of ECI Chennai Diocese dedicated a parsonage for ECI Thiruvallur church in Kaveripakkam Area of Chennai Diocese. The local church pastor Rev Paul Babu and Kaveripakkam Area Chairman Rev Austin Daniel were also there at the time of dedication.



4. For ECI Gujarat ministries, Indian Missionary Movement have provided a desktop computer along with a printer. Pray that these gadgets will be used for the betterment of ministries.



5. Pray for all our ECI Happy Homes and Schools that the Lord Almighty will meet the needs of the children as they begin their academic year.

6. Praise God for ECI Nungambakkam Church who have started their pioneering ministries in a place called Manalmedu in Seiyar which is in the outskirts of Chennai. People are so responsive to the Gospel. ECI Nungambakkam church have made the initial contribution and started the construction works for a church in this place. Pray that the Lord will help us to complete this church for the glory of God and for the use of the people.



7. Praise God for Bishop Sundar Singh who celebrated his 68<sup>th</sup> birthday on 13<sup>th</sup> of June. Pray that the Lord will use him more effectively in the days to come in the leadership of ECI.



8. MTSC faculty members and staff had a three days retreat at one of the Bible Seminaries in Pondicherry. It was a time of retrospection under the theme "A Vessel unto Honour". Pray that the Lord will anoint all the faculty members and staff of MTSC and use them for His glory.



9. Pray for all our Bible Schools and Seminaries which commence their academic year in this month that the Lord's hand will remain with them to bless and equip their ministerial training. Pray that committed and dedicated students will enroll for their studies.

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Evangelical Church of India has more than 3400 churches and 13 Bible Schools in different parts of India. We move forward with a goal of planting 10,000 churches and 100,000 house churches. Hundreds of people are turning to Christ every day and Churches planted. If you want to know more about the overall ministries of ECI, please write to:

### Bishop Dr M Ezra Sargunam

Evangelical Church of India

No 1, Second Street, Ormes Road,

Kilpauk, Chennai, India 600010, [ecindia@vsnl.com](mailto:ecindia@vsnl.com)