

JUNE 2014



FAR & NEAR

EVANGELICAL MEDICAL FELLOWSHIP OF INDIA

Our Vision
To see disciplined doctors & dentists
impacting the society through
Biblical values by their
service and witness

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VELLORE
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Far & Near is a newsletter published once in three months



Chairman's letter

Vote of Confidence

I just met a young couple going through serious, prolonged difficulties in their marriage. Both of them came separately to talk. I was disheartened by the attitudes expressed. Having listened to them, I came home and told my wife, "These guys are incorrigible; and you know what, this particular marriage will never work"! I thought I was just being a realist. Later on, as I thought about my own inference, it struck me that I had come to wrong and severe conclusions. First of all, I had said, "These folks are not mature enough to sense what is good for them". That may not have been totally wrong...

But I had also made another judgment of far greater import: "The Grace of God is not good enough or over arching enough to salvage this situation". ("Lord, I believe You created the heavens; and that You parted the Red Sea. I know You transformed millions of people in the past; and that You continue to do so. But Lord, about this particular situation down here, I don't want to burden You with unrealistic expectations"! I had just passed a 'no-confidence-motion' on the Lord's ability and willingness to intervene and pour out His love into that marriage. Deeply convicted, I had to confess my lack of faith... or more than that, my own 'active disbelief' to the Lord.

Do we propose or second such votes of 'Sorry; we have no confidence in You' more often than we realise? How hurting would it be if my son or daughter turned around and said, "I like you; but I don't trust you!" Surely, what gladdens the heart of the Father is that His sons and daughters confidently go to Him with the cry, 'Abba, Father' and with trusting hearts, place the situations that demand attention at His feet. **"Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; He rises to show you compassion"** (Isaiah 30:18). Could we identify those areas in our lives where we must exercise our faith?

Our little faith... but in a Great God. We are not called to be men and women of great faith; but rather, men and women of faith in a Great God. What a difference it makes to understand it; what a release it is to know it does not depend on 'mere us'!

Dear child of God, cheer up! The Lord longs to be gracious to you. His jurisdiction is wide enough to include your situation. Be a channel of His grace in your hostel, home or hospital. As someone who has received much grace, show much grace to others who cross your path today. It is ballot time; cast a vote of confidence today.

Naveen Thomas

EMFI welcomes you to the

Biennial National Conference 2014

Venue: CMC, Ludhiana
Dates: 2nd to 5th October 2014

Please block these dates, pray and prepare to come with family - It will be a life changing experience.

For more details please see the enclosed brochure

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE STAFF

Devakumar: Coordinator: Training

Deva was enabled to visit many fellowships and also be part of the 'Alongsiderz' programme at CMC, Vellore. He had a wonderful trip to Andhra Pradesh visiting fellowships in Kakinada, Amalapuram, Gannavaram and Vijayawada. Deva and Nanditha along with Dr. Manoj were able to visit Dr. Mallika Chidambaram at her place of ministry in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu. The villagers there have not fully accepted her as yet, but she has been faithfully visiting villages, mentoring fisher men, running free clinics and a programme to feed and teach the kids of the local fishermen. Dr. Manoj taught some of the local widows the basics of common illness, early signs of dengue and malaria, so that they could help the community. The Pachalur camp was a blessing inspite of tremendous water shortage.

KT Paul: Coordinator: North India

Apart from visiting the fellowship groups in North India, KT was able to help the students in Lucknow to finalise the venue for their conference. KT and Helen together were able to minister at a Church in Jamshedpur during the Good Friday, Easter weekend. They ministered to some young graduates and hurting families. KT had the joy of leading some students to the Lord on his trip to the North East part of India.

George Suchiang: Field Partner: North East India

George conducted a camp in Shillong where many of the students shared their testimonies. Dr. Sedevi took some sessions on Bio-ethics and Whole Person Care and the students were greatly blessed. There was a Doctors' fellowship held in a mission hospital at Jowai and George was able to spend time with some of the new doctors. He took a student from the NEIGHRMS fellowship along with him on his trip to the fellowship groups at Guwahati and exposed him to the ministry of EMFI. George also accompanied some leaders from NEIGHRMS on a trip, spending quality time of fellowship and sharing.

Solomon Raju: Field Partner: Andhra Pradesh

Solomon was encouraged to see some of the doctors' meeting and guiding the fellowship group students on a weekly basis at Ongole. He visited students at Anantapur and Kurnool on a regular basis encouraging and praying for students preparing for exams.

Malcolm & Uma Johnson: Andhra Pradesh

Malcolm and Uma visited many fellowship groups in the central and north-eastern parts of Andhra Pradesh and were encouraged to see the zeal and enthusiasm of the students for the Lord. Malcolm participated in a couple of one-day retreats in Vizianagaram, Srikakulam and Karimnagar. The involvement and initiative taken by the doctors to nurture the young students are commendable.

Pratik Sindhu: Coordinator: Madhya Pradesh & Chattisgarh

Pratik participated in the Annual conference at Chattarpur Christian Hospital and had fellowship with the doctors. He could visit the fellowship groups in Bhopal, Gwalior and Raipur to minister and pray for the students who were appearing for their exams.

Malsawmliana Darlong: Coordinator: West Bengal

Malsawma visited fellowship groups in Bankura, Burdwan and Kolkata in the past few months. He has been helping the students understand the true meaning of salvation. Many are keen to get to know more by studying the Bible. He was also enabled to minister to some individuals on a personal basis and to address their day-to-day life struggles.

Anshuman Singh: Field Partner: Maharashtra

Anshuman was encouraged by the home visits, the doctors along with their families made to meet him, in the past months. One of the doctors wanted him to minister to a family, who was rescued from a perilous lifestyle and was hospitalised. Anshuman writes, "Had a pleasant experience at the hospital, when the patients saw me pray for the girl, many of them asked me to pray for them as well. I took the opportunity and prayed for their spiritual healing." The Doctors meet at Andheri in Dr. Usha's home was fruitful.

Michael Sandersingh: Coordinator: Pastoral Care

Michael has been helping students in the fellowship groups of New Delhi to be accountable to one another for Christian growth. He was involved in organising the Saline Process seminar at Delhi. Michael and Grace hosted a couple of graduates, who were on their way to Herbertpur for a mission trip. They were able to counsel a young doctor couple, who were getting married.

Tamil Nadu State Conference

Pachalur, Oddanchatram 18th—20th April 2014



Lindley Marquis: Coordinator: Karnataka

Lindley has been focusing on one area in his constituency from January this year, to start a fellowship and by the grace of God some progress has been made. He managed to get the doctors to start meeting in a Mission hospital chapel. He visited other fellowships in Hubli, Davangere and Tumkur too.



Saline Process Training

Kachhwa 3rd & 4th May 2014

Praise God for

- The 10 students who attended the training in medical missions (IMM) at Asha Kiran Hospital, Orissa in March and were blessed.
- All the students who attended the Andhra Pradesh Zone I conference in April.
- The 40 odd students who came with great enthusiasm to attend the DOWNLOAD at Chennai in March.
- His provision in providing for the extreme water shortage at the Pachalur Camp held in April, and for all the 140 odd students who attended it.
- All the doctors who were benefitted by the 'Saline Process' workshops at Robertsganj and Kachhwa.
- For the 'Kingdom of God' workshop, held at Bangalore in May, where the curriculum and module outlines for the Kingdom Study Circle and seminar were developed.

ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN PRACTICE

As I work in a cancer hospital I come across patients with progressive illness and terminally ill patients. Can we get advance directives from patients in our country? Can we issue 'Do not resuscitate' orders in India?

If the situation is hopeless, can we disconnect life supports in our country? What are the legal implications?

- Dr. RK, Trivandrum

The main issue in this ethical dilemma is about stopping life support.

There are essentially 2 questions, as we consider:

1. The Christian/Biblical perspective
2. The legal aspects/implications in India

The Christian perspective:

It arises from the Christian understanding of the origin and basis of life:

- All life is God's creation - Job.10:12. Hence all creation is precious.
- Human beings are created by God in His image.
- God is the author of life, so our life belongs to him - Job.12:10
- So, we deal with life with the utmost reverence, as only God can give and take life.
- Hence we are to save and protect life and not take it away.
- Remember the tree of life at the very center of the Garden of Eden.
- We move from this foundation and premise to look at the legal aspects now prevalent in India.

Legal position:

If you search the internet you can get the detailed pronouncements of the Supreme Court of India on this subject. Let me attempt to summarise the essence as follows:

If you are a doctor caring for a terminally ill patient, in a permanent vegetative state on life support and if you think that the patient will not make any progress, you have to initiate the following procedures:

- Get an informed decision by the relatives of the patient (as the patient is not competent to do so mentally and intellectually). After a full and open discussion about the medical condition with the relatives, if they understand that the patient will not make any progress, in spite of all the treatments and if they are in favour of stopping the life support, you have to present the situation to a panel of 3 medical experts (from a list of approved persons prepared by authorities namely, the Director of health services/medical council/court of law).
- A register is to be kept recording all the steps.
- The experts have to give a written opinion in favour of or against stopping of life support; the relatives are to be informed in writing. Only then, in the best interest of the patient, the stoppage can be done, provided the relatives give a written consent. Infact, in the 2011 Supreme Court judgment, it is required that the whole procedure mentioned above has to be done through the court, which initiates the process and appoints the relevant experts.
- So, admittedly it is an elaborate and a tedious process.
- The essence of such lengthy procedures is so that the decision be made in the best interest of the patient and with full, open discussion with the nearest relative/friend and with much prayer and the approval/decision of the court of law. For details, one can refer to the Supreme Court judgment on March 7th, 2011 in the Aruna Shanbaug case. Here, the withdrawal of life support is considered as passive euthanasia, which is allowed on a case-by-case basis, ultimately by the court. So, it is clear that a decision to stop life support is crucial and involves the medical, legal and spiritual dimensions.

Dr. Kuruvilla Varkey, Christian Fellowship Hospital, Oddanchatram, Tamil Nadu.

This is a column that addresses the dilemmas that Christian doctors face, in relating their faith to their professional practice. Readers are requested to send their requests to emfipublications@gmail.com and senior Christian doctors will give you Biblical guidelines to address your issues and concerns.



Medicos camp at Shillong 2014



George on an outing with some of the leaders of Shillong Fellowship



Participants of the Medical Missions Training at Asha Kiran Hospital, Orissa—March 2014

1st batch of students from South Sudan on arrival in Kampala with Dr. Anil



Dedication service for the new students



News from Drs. Anil & Shalini Cherian South Sudan

After the mindless violence by rebel groups, we are grateful to God for intervening and restoring some peace. It has been a long and difficult waiting period. But God has been kind and enabled us to accomplish all things through His wisdom and grace.

We would like to praise God for:

- Making it possible for the institute of Medical Health to be relocated in Kampala, Uganda. Many were involved in getting this done- The Mengo Hospital agreeing to partner in the venture, the ministry in South Sudan and the approval of the ministry in Uganda. The 50 students who have finally arrived in Kampala.
- The dedication service in Juba, before the journey to Kampala. It was novel in South Sudan and by conducting this service the people became aware of the fact that this is a Christian venture.
- Being able to start the course on schedule on 2nd June 2014. The first 2 weeks are the foundation course- English and Maths will be taught.
- Providing Anil with wisdom and physical strength to be able to withstand all the stress related to getting the institute on its feet and running.

Ground Realities: When the Tyre hits the Road

We are working at the Makunda Christian Leprosy and General Hospital, which is a 120-bedded remote rural hospital in the Karimganj District of Assam bordering Mizoram and Tripura.

Makunda Christian Leprosy and General Hospital was started by the Baptist Mid-Missions (USA) in the 1950s. In the 1980s, the hospital was closed when the missionaries had to leave the country. The hospital was taken over by the Emmanuel Hospital Association (EHA) in December 1992 and we were the first doctors.

In 2012-13, at the hospital we witnessed 90867 outpatients, 10288 inpatients, 2342 major surgeries and 4309 deliveries. The hospital is focused on the poor – with no private rooms and it is the only one with pediatric surgery facilities in the lower half of the northeast of India. The hospital runs the Makunda Christian High School, which has 750 students upto class X, with 220 staying in 2 hostels. An ANM school trains 25 students every year. The agriculture department manages the 350 acre campus – fishery, agriculture, farm and forestry. A 12-bedded branch hospital was started in the Dhalai district of Tripura and the only mission hospital in the state

Both of us felt God's calling to work in missions when in college (Vijay at Chennai and Ann at Madurai). In fact, the common interest in missions was the reason that we were interested in each other! After marriage, we were looking for a place to work. Vijay had worked for 2 months with Dr. Vinod Shah at Chinchpada in 1990.

When Vijay completed his MS at Madurai in 1992, Dr. Shah suggested that we travel to Assam to see the closed-down Makunda hospital in October 1992. There were severe problems at Makunda – a trade union, no finances (hospital assets were being sold to pay salaries) and a hostile group of staff. However, when we looked at the unique situation (strategic location at the junction of 3 northeastern states, situated in a thickly populated area with very poor medical facilities, large 350 acre campus with a lot of scope for expansion) and the need (we heard stories of patients in obstructed labor who died for want of a facility for LSCS), we were clearly called to work at Makunda. EHA took over the hospital in 1992 and we joined in March 1993. The greatest joy was to see the large numbers of people who benefitted from the services of the institution – patients come every day and are treated at affordable cost. Another delight was to observe the staff and students (over 1000 on campus) from all over the northeast come together to work willfully.

It is a great challenge to get good quality results while working under constraints (for many years there was no reliable electricity or running water) but we stand testimony to the grace of God, through whom all things are possible. Many challenges were faced – false criminal court cases were filed against us (and other staff). There was violence and threat to all. For many years, inspite of the little funds, we looked to God. Vijay had a MI in 2008 and it is a miracle that he is alive and well. As the focus was on poor patients with shortage of staff, it took many years for institutional and personal goals and ambitions to become a reality. Many other problems were faced – however when compared to the joy of God's approval, we consider all of them as trivial temporary inconveniences.

A chaplain and many of the staff talk to patients and share the Gospel with them. Retreats are held for staff and students, as well as for college students in northeast India to give the missionary challenge.

By the grace of God, over a period of 20 years, a closed down hospital with severe local problems has grown into a thriving institution, offering many services and transforming the community around. This gives hope to other Christian institutions in similar situations – no institution is beyond redemption. We also acknowledge the contribution of about 200 staff, who have worked joyfully inspite of inconveniences and peer pressure. We have had the wonderful privilege of being a part of God's work – we should invest our lives in this world by surrendering our will into God's hands, so that we enjoy the peace, joy and contentment, which are the fruits of obedience and eternal riches in heaven.



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Please pray:

- For us to be able to find good God fearing and capable people to fill in positions, both administrative staff and faculty.
- For safe travel of Shalini to Kampala this month end.
- That the students will begin a new phase in their lives and in the lives of the people of South Sudan.
- That we will be able to give not only medical/nursing knowledge, but also nurture the students spiritually.

Families at the recent Alongsiderz program in Visahakapatnam.



Participants at CMC, Vellore.



Alongsiderz

—An accompaniment initiative of EMFI

The Journey So Far...

Neeta* had just moved to the Christian Medical College, Vellore for her post-graduate studies. The transition from a mission hospital setting in North India where she has been working since her graduation to the fast-paced academically oriented tertiary care teaching institution was quite a challenge for her. At this crucial juncture of life, the Alongsiderz initiative of EMFI helped her to cope and stay focused. “Each of the Alongsiderz sessions had the Rhema word, of God's assurance and hope for my future”, says Neeta.

Stephen's* small family was much involved with the lives of medical students and the local church ministry. Their lives were always spent on others. But when it came to their personal struggles in decision making, there was hardly any one they could turn to. That is when the seniors came alongside them, willing to share their lives and offering accountable companionship in life's journey – thanks to the Alongsiderz ministry of EMFI. “I was able to trust seniors with my personal struggles, without having the fear of being judged”, quips Stephen.

The above are examples of how the lives of young doctors have been touched by God through the ministry of Alongsiderz. It was in November 2012, that the EMFI took the responsibility of facilitating the accompaniment initiative for committed Christian doctors and dentists (and their families) in the country, to enable personal and vocational formation and growth. Looking back at the past 15 months, the journey has been meaningful and fruitful. May all praise be to Him, who is the Author and the Perfector.

As a beginning, we started off in three places – Bangalore, Vellore and Visakhapatnam. So far, we have had many formal sessions, including four in Vellore, three at Bangalore and two at Visakhapatnam apart from a few informal interactions. The groups were also encouraged to meet among themselves occasionally and be accountable. From the feedback that we received from most of them, they seem to have been blessed through this endeavour. At the same time this has been an immense blessing to some of us who were privileged to be involved with these groups.

But, this is only a beginning and we have got a long way to go. Even though the formal meetings were good, our current challenge is to see more accountability being developed among the established small communities and also between them and some seniors whom they can relate to.

Further, we have an ambitious plan to develop a curriculum for accompaniment, so that whoever is accompanying and those who are being accompanied are clear what they are expected to learn and pursue. Only then, will we be able to impact the large constituency, whom we are called to serve for His glory. May the good Lord enable us and strengthen our hands for the same.

* Names changed to preserve confidentiality

Dr. Cijoy Kuriakose, Oddanchatram, Tamil Nadu
Coordinator—Alongsiderz

Movements

Dr. Arun Shankar from Kerala to CMC, Vellore.
Drs. Danigachalam and Bamani from Baripada, Orissa to Century Hospital, Chengannur, Kerala.
Dr. Sheena Ebenezer from CMC, Vellore to Jiwan Jyoti Christian Hospital, Robertsganj.
Dr. Chandan Nalli from CMC, Vellore to Duncan Hospital, Raxaul
Dr. Nicholas Rao from CMC, Vellore to Duncan Hospital, Raxaul
Drs. Vinod & Anne from CMC, Vellore to Duncan Hospital, Raxaul
Dr. Swetha Madhuri from CMC, Vellore to Herbertpur Christian Hospital, Herbertpur.
Dr. Sujatha & Mr. Appalrao from Hyderabad to Warangal, AP.
Drs. Vijay Anand & Sowshilya from Hyderabad to Kothagudem, Khammam Dist, AP.
Dr. Vidya Wilson from RIMS, Adilabad to Pratima Institute of Medical Sciences, Karimnagar.
Drs. Philip Finny & Leejia from Duncan Hospital, Raxaul to Basildon, UK, for 2 years.
Dr. Ambedkar Yadala from AMC, Visahakapatnam to JIPMER, Puducherry
Drs. Sunil & Mary Abraham from Australia to CMC, Vellore.

Family News

Wedding Bells

Dr. Sheeba wed Dr. Vivian on 3rd May at Hyderabad.
Dr. Pranuthi wed Dr. Noel on 16th May at Hyderabad.
Dr. Ramya wed Dr. Sandeep on 23rd April at Bangalore
Dr. Banu wed Dr. Shabanya on 5th June at Hyderabad.
Dr. Priya wed Dr. Prashanth on 13th June at Bidar.
Adithya S/o Nanditha & Devakumar wed Karuna on 31st May at Bangalore.

New Arrivals

Drs. Suesh and Swati were blessed with a baby girl on 2nd June
Drs. Raison & Jemy were blessed with a baby boy, Samuel on 4th June

REFLECTIONS FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

It is my joy to connect with you all through this space. God has enabled me to complete my term of 4 years as GS with EMFI and it has been a privilege to be a part of what God is weaving in and through the Christian health care professionals in India. I am grateful to God for each one of you, your encouragement and active involvement in the ministry. Please pray for EMFI and for us as we seek clarity for the future.

Now that the much awaited election results are declared and a new government is in place, the nation is looking forward to a period of stability, progress and development.

What the future holds for the church is yet to be seen. The Gospel may continue to have an unhindered progress or there could be a period of restriction. Whatever be the situation, the Word of God calls us to pray and intercede for those in authority, so that we may **“lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity (1 Timothy 2:2).”**

As people called into the healing ministry, we are placed in a unique position to be witnesses of Jesus Christ. Francis Grim, the founder of the Hospital Christian Fellowship regularly proclaimed, **“more people pass through the hospitals of the world than through the churches”**. While they are ill, they are often more spiritually receptive and eager to reach out to God!

We will continue to have opportunities that 'full time evangelists' and 'missionaries' may not have, in a season of restriction or 'closing of doors'. Each encounter with a patient, many of them hurting, is a potential prospect, not just to address the physical ailment, but also to be an agent of healing in other areas of their life.

Being either too busy or unsure what to say can be an impending hindrance. We seldom include a spiritual assessment while taking a case history, which, going by the best practices in medicine, is necessary. For a start, we can ask simple questions like, “How has life been generally?” or “How is your family?” This can be an ice-breaker, leading on to deeper levels of interaction.

Our nation needs us; this generation requires us to be transformed. We have no time to be slack. It is important that we get equipped and get on to the job of fulfilling our role of being agents of healing and transformation in the lives of people and communities. We at EMFI are only happy to facilitate this. As a man of God prayed, **“Lord, let us be a generation of world changers, culture shapers, and nation transformers for Christ”**. May this be our prayer from the depth of our hearts.

Preparations are proceeding for the National Conference in Ludhiana from 2nd to 5th October, 2014. Being the 40th year of EMFI's formation, we desire to look into the future and consider our roles for the coming years. I hope and trust many of you are planning to join us; our prayer is that it will be a time of a fresh visitation of the Lord's Spirit and a great blessing upon our lives.

Manoj Jacob

OBITUARY

Dr. P.A Abraham was called home to glory on May 14th, aged 91. He faithfully served the Lord in Rajnandgaon, Chattisgarh since 1953, after his medical studies in Miraj (details follow)

Treasurer's note

Dear Friends,

As you can see from the Financial update of the past 3 months, God has seen us through and He always will. We praise God for the faithful and persistent contributors. I am sure that there are others who would like to help, but somehow in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, it gets pushed aside. Please do take the time to pray for and support the ministry as God leads you to.

Regards
Grace Thomas

Financial Update

Month	Income	Expense
Feb	7,47,180	5,99,148
March	5,75,146	6,28,164
April	6,85,910	7,03,498

Those wishing to contribute can send your cheques/DD's/MO's in favour of 'Evangelical Medical Fellowship of India' to the address given or make an electronic/Bank transfer to: State Bank of India A/c No: **10021817300**

(Branch Code: 2288, IFSC: SBIN0002288)

HDFC Bank A/c No: 04921000009885

(Branch Code: 492, IFSC: HDFC0000492)

*Please call/Text/Email us after you make the transaction.

09176215489/90. emfihq@gmail.com

Pray for

- The one day retreat for medical students of Chennai called DOWNLOAD on 22nd June.
- The young doctors who will be attending the ALONGSIDERZ program at CMC, Vellore from 19th—20th June.
- The ICMDA World Congress at Rotterdam, Netherlands from the 19th—26th July, that the delegates would have safe travel and will be blessed by the congress.
- The Annual CMF conference in Kerala from the 5th—8th September.
- EMFI Biennial National conference at CMC, Ludhiana from 2nd—5th October. For the preparations, speakers and delegates attending the conference.

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