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(Good Tidings)

August 1999

To the Friends of Menno-Clinic, India

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## Our Trip to India

*On February 18, 1999, Dr John Egli, Andrea Philbrook, Velda Bontrager, Dawn Miller, and Bryan Anderson left for a two-week trip to India.*

My trip to India was the most challenging, but interesting experiences of my life. I learned a lot about the Hindu culture and was able to see the different needs that people have there.

The biggest challenge for me was to be able to see the small babies at the hospital not receiving the nurture and love that little kids need. It was real easy to grow attached to those precious babies. I felt sad to leave when we did. I felt like a part of me will forever be there at St. Theresa Hospital. If ever the opportunity would come that I could go back, I would like to visit the hospital again. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to go to India. Not only did it broaden my horizons but also it helped me to see life in a totally different setting.

**--Velda Bontrager**

Contributions can be sent to:  
**Menno-Clinic, India**  
Emma Mennonite Church  
1900S 600 W  
Topeka, IN 46571

I couldn't (and still can't) believe that God gave me the opportunity to go to India. Before I left, a lot of people were telling me that it will be like nothing I have ever experience before, that I would be changed and would see the world and life in a new way. Well, it is definitely different than Shipshewana, Indiana. However, for me it was not such a dramatic experience as some were saying that it would be. Of course, most of the living situations were extremely poor which stirred up feelings of sympathy and wanting to help everyone of them, but still overcome by the reality of not being able to. I expected to feel this when I arrived in India—the overwhelming feeling of wanting to help every one of the poor people who lived there and yet, knowing that I couldn't.

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Menno-Clinic, India database and newsletter are being managed by Ben and Beth Hunsberger. Please let them know of any error on your mailing label. You can email them at [benbeth@ln.net](mailto:benbeth@ln.net) or write to them at:

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**Shipshewana IN 46565**

The Menno-Clinic, India newsletter is published quarterly. If you have questions or comments about the newsletter, please contact Ben and Beth at the above address.

## Our Trip to India

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One thing that I really enjoyed about the trip to India was the fact that everyone, adults and children, wanted to look at us, talk to us, and even take pictures with us. It made me feel like I was doing something for them even without knowing it. Of course there were times when we would get annoyed and just want to be left alone. I had to think about how Jesus felt when he was here on earth. Many times people would start to gather around him just to see him, to hear him, and to touch him. The disciples would try to send them away, but Jesus told them not to send them away. What patience and love He must have had for the people—those same people who we sometimes just wanted to get away from.

Another great part of my trip was the kids we worked with in St. Theresa's Orphanage. They were so cute. These kids all have feelings and long to feel loved just as you and I do and yet none of us that were there could take them home and show them not only a family's love, but most importantly God's love.

We were unable to go out to the village where the clinic is to be built and that was disappointing. We wanted to see the village and do what we could to help out, but God had a different plan in mind, I guess. We stayed with Olga and her parents in Hyderabad during the second week of our trip. We were able to meet some of Olga's relatives, watch an annual festival (Holi) and politely try every Indian food that her loving mom would make for us. I want to thank everyone who enabled each one of us the opportunity to take a possibly (but hopefully not) once-in-a-lifetime trip to India. Most of all though, I thank God that I was able to go and experience things which I will remember for the rest of my life.

--Andrea L Philbrook

## PRAYER REQUESTS

*"Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."  
Mark 11:24*

- ◆ For a contractor in India who can share in our vision for Menno-Clinic, India. That there will be clear communication between the contractor and the Menno Clinic, India Board.
- ◆ For wisdom in designing the clinic
- ◆ For Gary Gushwa and Olga Yarlagadda as they prepare to go to Chiluvuru to start the building construction. (tentatively in November)
- ◆ That God will prepare the hearts of those He wants to serve.



## News & Notes

**Sebastian's wife was in a car accident:** Sebastian's wife was on her way to pick up Olga in Chiluvuru, about 4-5 miles out of Hyderabad, they lost the brakes in the car, and hit a tree. All is well and no one was seriously hurt. Not only was this a harrowing experience but it also had the unfortunate side effect of delaying the surveying process as Olga, unaware of the accident, was waiting with 4-5 engineers.

**Olga gets sick on last trip:** The last trip was more than Olga bargained for as she got sick and was unable to spend as much time contacting an architect or getting the land surveyed.

**Menno-Clinic, India Board tightens bonds with Emma Mennonite Church:** In a move to improve communication, minutes and treasurer's reports from the monthly Menno-Clinic, India Board meetings will be sent to the Emma Mennonite Church Council.

**Program at Shore Mennonite Church:** Doc Yarlagadda, Dawn Miller, and Andrea Philbrook gave the morning service at Shore Mennonite Church on April 11, 1999. The theme was on Missions. Dawn and Andrea shared from their trip to India. They shared their joys, disappointments and life impressions. Doc Yarlagadda gave the morning message. He spoke of his love and response to God and also, his response to the people of his home village in India. Doc shared his concern that all people know Christ.

**Plans for Menno-Clinic to be designed by Indian architects:** Even with all the setbacks with the car accident and Olga's failed health, an architect from the region has been contacted. The board is pleased to have been able to get a hold of local expertise in this matter as this architect has experience with hospitals in India. Also the land is cleared and surveyed. God has allowed progress in the midst of seeming setbacks. The board is optimistic about future plans being delivered in the next several weeks.

## Finding the Balance

**The Board struggles to find the appropriate balance between western medical practices and assumptions and Indian customs**

As the Menno-Clinic, India board continues planning for the construction of the clinic building in Chiluvuru, one of the issues that is always at hand, is how much western influence should be reflected in the building and medical practices. The culture and practices of India are so much different than most of us can imagine, yet must be considered very seriously if the clinic is to be effective in its outreach. Such things as the placement of entrances must be done according to Indian culture, or people will not enter the clinic. And yet the clinic must be built in such a way as to promote quality medical care. We ask that you continue to pray for the board, as we move from rough sketches to the preliminary drawings of an architect, that the correct balance will be found.

--Greg Schrock

## Sowing Seeds of Vision

**Dr. Yarlagadda was invited to give the morning message at Silverwood Mennonite Church and speak to the adult Sunday School Classes.**

The Lord used Dr. Subbarao Yarlagadda to challenge and inspire the congregation to be involved in Christ's mission at home and abroad. His personal testimony of coming to faith in Christ through contacts with members from the Emma Mennonite Church was a refreshing example of how God uses simple kind deeds as a bridge into Christ's saving and transforming kingdom. His understanding of the key elements to missions was helpful in reminding us what is included in a Biblical and Anabaptist perspective of discipleship and missions.

We join with you in prayer that God will use the mission of Menno-Clinic, India to change lives both in India and in our communities.

--Ken Bontreger  
Silverwood Mennonite Church



## Financial Corner

India Clinic Fund June 30, 1999	
Assets	\$123,956.26
Fund Balance	123,956.26
Receipts and Expenses 9/1/98 through 6/30/99	
Donations	\$22,202.05
Interest	3,859.50
Total Receipts	\$26,061.55
Total Expenses	7,665.80
Net Receipts	\$18,395.75

## A Word from the Board

**Dr. Subbarao Yarlagadda**

On a typical Sunday, you will find me, and my wife Olga, hugging a lot of people in the fellowship hall of the Emma Mennonite Church. The church people make us feel like they have known us for ages. Their genuine affection penetrates color, race, and national origin. When we hug them, we feel like the grace of God is touching us. They make us feel as if we are their blood relatives.

Christianity is meant to be that way. All Christians are blood relatives. Common in all of us is the blood that Jesus had shed on the cross. We would like to share this feeling of Christian brotherhood in deed with those that we have left behind in our village in India.

Please extend the same generosity that you have extended to us. Together, we will change lives and win souls for Christ.

Khuda Hafeez  
(God be with you)