

South Asia Regional Fellowship – New Beginnings

January 2003 saw member countries from India, Bangladesh and the Junior Work of the Evangelical Church of Malaysia meeting in Chennai, India. In total, 5 organisations were represented. Tage Kleinbeck, Chief Executive of Global Fellowship, had been working in consultation with the members to secure such a meeting for some months. One of the main difficulties in the past had been finding the necessary funding to assist travel between countries.

Following a successful application to the Danish Youth Council, Tage Kleinbeck was delighted to travel to India for the first Regional Meeting of its kind in almost a decade. The meeting extended into a 4-day regional leader-training seminar with 32 participants from the member countries, most of whom stayed on to participate in the Arcot Lutheran Church Junior Ministry Jubilee Camp.



Young members attending the camp in India, 2003

What the meeting achieved:

- The members decided to change the name of the Fellowship to South Asia Regional Fellowship.
- The Junior Work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Malaysia had expressed a desire to change their membership from East Asia Regional Fellowship to the newly created South Asia Fellowship and were



Participants at the Regional Meeting

admitted into membership with immediate effect.

- The Pathway Organisation of the Bangladesh Lutheran church was given observer status with the new Fellowship.
- Junior Ministry of ALC was elected as Chairman and will act as Secretariat for the Fellowship during 2003 to 2004.
- The next meeting will be held in Bangladesh in 2004, hosted by Sishu Kishore Sangha, and a training seminar for young leaders will be organised to run in conjunction with that gathering.
- The members of the Fellowship decided to be proactive in terms of expanding the membership with other Christian organisations of a similar nature. A number of potential groups have been identified and contact will be made in the coming months.

In Christ we are ONE was the motto of the Arcot Lutheran Church Junior Ministry camp in South India in January which followed on from the leadership seminar. A motto like this can easily be taken for granted but the reality for Junior Ministry is that they find themselves very much in a missionary situation, and at this camp an estimated 50% of the participants were from Hindu families. In light of this the motto became a hopeful vision and a heartfelt prayer for the future.

This camp marked the 25-year jubilee celebrations for ALC and started in January with a 5 day camp for more than 1,000 members of Junior Ministry. International participation came from Bangladesh, Malaysia, Sweden, Denmark, and the USA. The camp was formally opened by Rt. Rev. John Franklin, the Bishop of the ALC. Tage Kleinbeck lit the symbolic opening camp fire with the torch that had been brought to the camp by young runners. The young leaders were accommodated in tents and enjoyed a large number of challenging activities, including games and Christian education studies tailored to each age group. Spirits remained high and there was a great sense of commitment made by all who attended.



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