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PRAYER REQUEST:

- ✠ For the Sri Lankan Lutheran Church, that God would bless both them and us through our working together.
- ✠ For the deaconesses of the Philippine Lutheran Church, that they be strengthened and encouraged through continuing education.



THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
Missouri Synod

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I spent some time in Sri Lanka in November, doing hymnal work, so I decided to devote this newsletter to the land and language and music of

Resplendent Island
Sri Lanka
இலங்கை

Tamil

When the British withdrew from Sri Lanka in 1948, they left behind English as a recognised language. By contrast, the two official languages, Sinhala and Tamil, are closely connected with religion and ethnicity. Nearly three-quarters of the population are Sinhala-speaking Buddhists, while most of the rest are Tamil-speaking Hindus. The hymnal for the CELC (Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church) will be in Tamil, as that is the predominant language among the Lutherans.

Tamil is a classical language has a long and fascinating history. It first appeared 5,000 years ago, around 3,000 BC, making it one of, if not the, world's oldest languages. The collection of in Tamil is very vast.

Tamil has 12 vowels, 18 consonants, and one special character. The vowels and consonants combine to form 216 compound characters (12x18), giving a total of 247 characters (12+18=1=(12x18)).

The word "Tamil," in Tamil is தமிழ்.



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Naming the Hymnal

One of the highlights of hymnal projects is choosing a title for their hymnal. The name of the book is significant. Once the book is named, it is more real and concrete. We can talk about it by name. There is meaning in the name. It says what the book is and what it is not. There is, appropriately, pride of ownership. The committee's discussion of the words to use is a salutary testimony of the gift a hymnal is for their church.

During our November meeting, the committee chose the name for what will be the first official hymnal made by and for the Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church:

பரிசுத்த தேவாராதனை
மற்றும் பாமாலை

which translates to

Lutheran Holy Liturgy
and Garland of Hymns.

The word that translates to "garland" is used to describe the collection of songs as precious and beautiful, like valuable flowers that fit together and are chosen with great care.

Notating the Music for the Hymns:

The hymns that have Western tunes will have Western music notation; that is to say, they will be notated with the familiar-to-us staff, clef, and notes. The traditional Sri Lankan hymns will list a raga and beat instead, as that is their familiar tradition. What, you might ask, are this raga and beat?

A raga is a unique feature of Indian music tradition that doesn't translate directly into classical European music concepts. It is a melodic framework for

improvisation. It's not a scale, but each raga has 4, 5, 6, or 7 tones, called swaras. The tones are

Sa ri ga ma pa dha ni sa.

Sa and pa are the anchors, more or less comparable to do and so in Solfege.

There are 72 scales which are grouped according to the tones of the lower tetrachord. Scales can have different numbers of notes ascending and descending.

There is symbolism and meaning in each raga. Each one has a specific mood or color.

That's about the extent of my understanding, and it's only the tip of the iceberg. It is fascinating to encounter such a completely different structure for music.

The raga and beat are listed with words at the top of the song and give people the information they need to sing that song.



Left: Renita and her sister Renisha

Svara in South Indian system of rāga^[85]

Svara (Long)	Shadjam (षड्ज)	Rsabham (ऋषभ)	Gandharam (गान्धार)	Madhyamam (मध्यम)	Pañcamam (पञ्चम)	Dhaivatam (धैवत)	Nishadam (निषाद)
Svara (Short)	Sa (सा)	Ri (री)	Ga (ग)	Ma (म)	Pa (प)	Dha (ध)	Ni (नि)
16 Varieties (names)	C (sadja)	D ^b (suddha ri), D [#] (satsruti ri), D ⁴ (catussruti ri)	E ^b (sadarana ga), E ⁴ (suddha ga), E ⁴ (antara ga)	F [#] (prati ma), F ⁴ (suddha ma)	G (pancama)	A ^b (suddha dha), A [#] (satsruti dha), A ⁴ (catussruti dha)	B ^b (kaisiki ni), B ⁴ (suddha ni), B ⁴ (kakali ni)

Entering Tamil into the Finale files

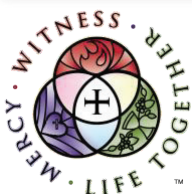
The biggest accomplishment on this trip was to connect with a person who can enter Tamil lyrics into the Finale music files. As with other hymnals where the alphabet or characters are unfamiliar to me, I need a local person to enter the lyrics after I've entered the music.

Meet Renita, and her sister Renisha. Renita is able to type in Tamil, and is familiar with the structure of Western music, so I went to her house and, with Renisha's help, we got Finale installed on her computer. Her sister Renisha is more familiar with computers, so she is a helpful assistant.

Renita is a hard worker and wants to see this hymnal succeed. Please pray for God's blessings on her and her husband and young child, as she joins me in working on the hymnal.



Left: Renita's husband, Vijay, and their son



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