

MALABAR MISSION PROJECTS PROGRESS:



The Malabar Mission Society 2011-2016

By Carlton Riemer

I dedicate this publication to the memory of
Rev. Dr. K. M. Victor and his wife Sulochana Mable
with appreciation for their faithful service in the Malabar Mission
Society, their loving hospitality, and their sacrificial commitment
to spreading the good news of God's love in Jesus the Christ to
all people, especially in Malabar.



Rev. Dr. K. M. Victor and Mrs. Sulochana Mable Victor

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PREFACE

This booklet continues The Story of the Malabar Mission Society, published in 2010 and written by the Rev. Dr. Roland E. Miller, who with his wife Mary Helen founded the Malabar Mission Society (MMS) in 1990. This history of the MMS covers the period from 2011 to 2016.

By the grace of God the MMS has continued to be true and faithful to its mission as “a group of Christians interested in assisting the Malabar Mission Circle in India as it shares the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ along the Malabar coast by supporting, with prayer for God’s blessings, the spread of the Gospel, and the Circle’s witness.” Most of the projects undertaken by the MMS have progressed with God’s help. Some new ones have been added; some have ended after reaching completion. Through all the changes and transitions God’s blessings have been steady and abundant. Those blessings have been bestowed on the workers in Malabar and the members of MMS. To God be the glory!

From 2008-2016, I served as the Project Officer of the MMS. My wife Arlene and I did mission service in South India for one year, which included a visit to Malabar and the Miller home. Our mission service continued in the Philippines for eight years. That was followed by 28 years as a pastor and campus pastor in the USA. We appreciate the uniqueness of the MMS as a mission society, we thank God for the opportunity to be part of it.



CHAPTER 1: *Founder Roland Miller Visited Malabar*

Dr. Miller made a personal visit to India on 5-22 February, 2011. While there, he agreed to help with some Malabar transitions. The Past MMS Agent, Rev. Dr. K. M. Victor, and his successor, Rev. T. Joy, met with him for a planning session. It was interrupted with the shocking news that Mrs. Joy had just expired from a spreading cancer. Rev. Joy had been tending to his wife in Trivandrum, but he took courage to leave her in order to attend this meeting in Kozhikode. After emotional and practical issues were dealt with and after fervent prayer, Rev. Joy traveled home to attend to the funeral arrangements for his wife and to be with his family.

The meeting of the Malabar Mission Circle Gospel Workers was held as scheduled on the day after Mrs. Joy died. The group observed the custom in India to start a memorial discussion with a hymn and a prayer, after which each person presented a brief reminiscence of the departed. The official part of the meeting involved a planning exercise. The Gospel workers made plans for congregational growth, family conventions, Vacation Bible School, and Bible Correspondence Courses; and they shared their salary problems resulting from administrative issues in the India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC). The generous support of our donors made it possible for the MMS to supplement the evangelistic support for these church workers until they received their salaries again.

CHAPTER 2: The MMS appointed an accountant in India, and the Malabar Gospel Mission Society formed

On 15 February, 2011, the MMS Board appointed Mr. C. D. Solomon as the MMS part-time Accountant. Mr. Solomon was the former accounts manager at Karunalaya Hospital, Wandoor.

The formation of a local Malabar Gospel Mission Society (MGMS) was completed on 2 February, 2011, when the state of Kerala formally recognized it as a registered society. This action was needed to conform to the technical requirements of the India government regarding the receipt of foreign charitable funds.

CHAPTER 3: Schools in MMC received special encouragement

In October, 2010, Mr. and Mrs. David (& Beth) Hoepfner visited all of the schools in MMC in their role as Educational Consultants from the LCMS requested by the IELC to help the IELC maintain and develop its rich legacy of educational mission work. They visited the following schools in MMC:

- Dr. Miriam McCreary Nursery School in Chelad, Vadattupara.
- The Good News Centre, Kozhikode.
- Bethel Lutheran Church Nursery School, Naduvil.
- Christ Lutheran Mission, Wandoor.
- Christian Mission School and Nursery School, Malappuram.
- The Henry Otten Memorial English Medium School, Wandoor. They had classes from Kindergarten through standard (grade) 12.

The Hoepfners were favorably impressed with the schools in Malabar. Praise God for these fine Christian schools in which the Gospel is shared verbally and physically by means of Bible stories about Jesus told and lived out in loving deeds.

CHAPTER 4: *Christian Welfare Centre, Malappuram, Received Support*

The MMS has a tradition of making a donation annually for the medical work at the Christian Welfare Centre (CWC) in Malappuram, Kerala. Items such as snakebite serum, a fetal heart monitor, and a vital signs monitor have been purchased with those funds. The CWC was founded in 1956 by Indian Christians and Dr. and Mrs. Miller to augment the evangelistic work of sharing the Gospel in word and deed.

Dr. Sophia John/Brillin, the Medical Superintendent, delivered around 200 babies per month, some of them grandchildren of her former patients. The staff provided maternity, child welfare, and general treatment (including tuberculosis and leprosy), as well as community health services (sanitation and pure water).

The CWC is self-supporting for its regular expenses, but they were outgrowing their current space consisting of a 60 bed clinic constructed in 1976 with \$57,000 from Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) Mite Box offerings. The Hospital Management Committee prayerfully made the decision, in faith, to begin construction of a five story addition in 2007. Dr. Miller unveiled the Foundation Stone for that addition 32 years after he and Mary Helen had laid the stone for the previous LWML project.

A mission grant proposal was made to LWML for consideration at their national convention in June, 2011, to help with this addition. It included 44 single rooms, six doctors' consultation rooms, a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, a Medical Intensive Care Unit, a larger waiting area, a laboratory, and a pharmacy.

At the LWML convention, the CWC project did not garner the necessary votes to be funded. In response to this disappointing outcome, leaders of the Oklahoma District LWML recommended that this proposal be submitted to several LWML districts in smaller amounts for consideration at district conventions in 2012. The following LWML districts supported the project in the amounts indicated:

Mid-South District LWML - \$5,000
Montana District LWML - \$96
Oklahoma District LWML - \$8,000

The addition became financially possible mostly from local resources. The MMS supports CWC, because this mission hospital shows the love and compassion and healing power of Jesus the Christ. Dr. Sophia repeatedly tells her patients, "I can't heal you, but God can."



Rev. Dr. Roland Miller unveils the CWC Foundation Stone

CHAPTER 5: *The MMS Continued Support for the Gospel for Muslims Salvation and Welfare Association, Anantapur*

The MMS support for the Gospel for Muslims Salvation and Welfare Association (GfMS&WA), headquartered in Uravakonda, Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh, began in 2006. The MMS Board decided to support the ministry for three years at a time, and that support continued through 2016. The Rev. Shaikh Ismail, the founder and leader of the ministry, continues to reach out with the Gospel himself and inspires the workers under his supervision to do the same, even in the face of resistance and hostility from non-Christians.

Rev. Ismail converted from Islam at age 20 in 1969 under severe persecution. Later his wife converted after a miraculous deliverance from a suicide attempt. Their four daughters have all married Muslim converts, and their son helps with the ministry. The leaders have had several years of Bible training. Together they lead one of the largest movements toward Christianity in South India. The mission vision of the MMS includes the efforts GfMS&WA to share the Gospel especially with Muslims, because the phrase "Malabar and beyond" appears in the MMS Constitution.

Originally the ministry had 24 evangelistic workers (converts themselves from Islam and Hinduism) who supported themselves with secular jobs. Later they became full-time evangelists, and twelve new workers were trained and added to their roster. They look to the MMS for support in addition to what the new believers provide locally.

In November, 2011, the group reported that the workers conducted 24 worship services weekly, many of them in homes, with around 1,370 people attending weekly. They were also nurturing 200 "secret believers" in the faith. The MMS through the Lutheran Heritage Foundation presented copies of Luther's Small Catechism and other doctrinal resources in Telugu for the spiritual growth of the converts.

The group sponsored a Muslim converts meeting funded by the MMS almost every year with around 70 attending. GfMs&WA is not affiliated

with any Christian denomination. Their message is Bible-based. They often show the “Jesus” film in villages, especially during the hot season.

From 2006-2016 more than 1,300 Muslim and Hindu adults were baptized. They usually do baptisms at Christmas and Easter. The ministry has grown and expanded by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word.

CHAPTER 6: *MMS* Released Publications

The Story of the Malabar Mission Society: Two Decades of Service, authored by Roland E. Miller, became available in August, 2011. The Rev. Howard Ulmer, President of the MMS, announced the publication in the Malabar Mission Newsletter with these words: “[This book] is a history of God’s love in action in India and in North America. Dr. Roland Miller has told the story of Malabar, its development and remarkable growth during the last twenty years. The Pastors, Catechists and Gospel Workers continue to share the Good News of God’s love in Jesus Christ to the people in India. God has blessed their courageous and bold witness to Hindus and Muslims in their communities.” Copies of the book are still available by contacting the Malabar Mission Society. A donation of \$10 assists with the cost of printing.

A companion publication is the Viewbook entitled Your Entry to a World of Service – The Malabar Mission Society. It was prepared by Dr. Miller and Mark Dickinson to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the MMS. Rev. Ulmer described it with these words: “The Viewbook provides a glimpse of how God’s grace and mercy has touched the hearts of people. ... During the last twenty years the mission and ministry of Malabar has achieved remarkable growth.” As a VIEWbook, it features pictures on every page and maps. The topics covered are Vacation Bible School, Literature, Correspondence Courses, Naduvil-Chengalai, Kannur Open Door, Kannur Women’s Centre, The Anantapur Movement, the K. K. Alavi Ministry, Medical Work, Nursery Schools, ESL Program, Station Outreach, Spiritual Nurture, Leadership Training, Motorcycles, Buildings, and Administration. Copies are available upon request. A PDF version is posted on the Malabar Mission Newsletter page at www.malabarmissionsociety.org.

CHAPTER 7: *The MMS Appointed* *Rev. J. Titus, A New India Agent*

In October, 2011, Rev. T. Joy informed the MMS that he wished to step down as the MMS Program Director/Agent. In April, 2012, the MMS Board selected Rev. I. Titus as the candidate. Rev. Titus accepted the position of the MMS Agent on 23 May, 2012, as he wrote:

“After getting your message I put that in God’s hand and prayed. Then I took a decision. That is, God’s call is this. So I submit myself to God. So I accept this responsibility. I know it is a great task. So I want MMS prayers and full cooperation; then only we can do this for His glory.”

On 14 September, 2012, at the Family Convention Rev. T. Joy was formally thanked for his service, and Rev. I. Titus was then placed into office as the MMS Agent.

In 2012 Revs. Titus and Victor recommended that MMC use the skills and experience of Rev. Dr. Joshua Siromony. He was retiring as the Principal of Concordia Theological Seminary, Nagercoil, and had impressed laypeople with an evangelism workshop he led. At a Bible study led by Dr. Siromony and Rev. Titus, they asked the twelve lay participants for their ideas about growing the Church in Malabar.

Dr. Siromony’s assistance on a half time basis from September, 2012, to May, 2013, was especially helpful, since Rev. Titus’ workload included both the positions of pastor of his congregation and the MMS Agent. After Rev. Titus’ retirement from Malappuram on 31 May, 2013, he and Mrs. Titus relocated to Kozhikode, and he served as the MMS Agent full-time. They used Sundays to visit every congregation and station in MMC, and Rev. Titus taught a Bible class on stewardship. In 2016 they moved into the upstairs portion of *Vanitha* in Kannur, as he became the temporary Director of the Bible Correspondence Course ministry and the church planter in Kannur as part of the “Forward In Service - Kannur” project.



**Rev. T. Joy receives plaque from the MMS and
Rev. I. Titus becomes the MMS Agent**

CHAPTER 8: *Mr. C. Rejidas Graduated from Gurukul Lutheran Theological College*

Mr. C. Rejidas graduated from Gurukul Lutheran Theological College (GLTC) in Chennai on 18 March, 2012, with the degree of Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.). For five years Reji had served as Evangelist at the Open Door Men's Reading Room in Kannur. Starting in 2008 the MMS supported his theological studies up to 95% of the cost for four years. This support was made possible by a grant given by the late Mr. and Mrs. Roderick (and Helen) Lawson in the amount of \$6,000. Later this Leadership Development in Malabar grant was supplemented by a gift from the estate of Velmar Weinhold in the amount of \$3,000. Miss Smitha Babu and Mr. S. S. Sherma also benefited from these grants.

In July, 2012, Rev. Y. Sukumaran, the Convener of the IELC Board for Missions, appointed Mr. Rejidas to serve his probationer term as a Church Planter in Kannur and to supervise the Open Door Men's Reading Room and the *Vanitha* Women's Reading Room. In January, 2014, Pastor Rejidas was appointed by the Acting President of IELC to finish his probationer training at St. John Lutheran Church, Malappuram. On 14 September, 2014, Pastor Rejidas became Rev. C. Rejidas when he was ordained by Rev. Y. Sukumaran and assigned as Pastor in Malappuram. The Lord of the Church used the MMS to train a Gospel Worker and Pastor.

CHAPTER 9: *Bible Correspondence Course* *Ministry was Revived*

Bible Correspondence Course (BCC) ministry was included in the 2010-2011 evaluation of the MMS ministries with the recommendation to add an on-line format. The effort was given great impetus by a generous gift of \$35,000 in memory of Mr. Arthur Saar by his widow Lillian Saar in April, 2012. This new interest in BCC moved Dr. Miller to complete a project he started when he was still a missionary in India: a BCC course on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.

When the objectives, strategies, programing, resources, timetable, monitoring, and evaluation features of the project were decided upon, Dr. Miller wrote to the MMS Board: "We have a good chance here to do something quite significant. ... This project is potentially one of the greatest in the history of the M.M.S., and it is one that may be destined to go on into the future beyond us, if we can put it on sure foundations. Let us pray that the Seed falls on good soil."

Specific objectives included: "to establish friendly, long-term relationships with course enrollees; to carry out practical follow-up activities with enrollees and graduates; to conduct at least one Inquirers' Camp every year for five years; to offer a minimum of six (6) Bible courses, available in Malayalam and English, both as printed and as electronic PDF/WORD documents."

The goals were challenging: "To have at least one percent (1%) of Malabar's 13 million people complete at least one course in five years (130,000 people totally; 26,000 people annually; 220 people monthly). To have at least ten percent (10%) of the enrollees complete at least two courses in five years (2,600 annually; 220 monthly)." The MMS is able to think big!!

The courses offered in Malayalam were:

- The Promises of God (written by the Rev. Dr. Ernest Hahn; revised by Rev. Dr. K. M. Victor)
- The Gospel of John or "Light of Life"
- The Gospel of Luke (written by Dr. M. Grumm; revised by Mrs. M. E. Otten).

- The Gospel of Matthew or “The Way of the Pilgrim” (written by Dr. Miller)
- The Gospel of Mark (written by Rev. Dr. K. M. Victor)
- The Book of the Prophet Isaiah. (written by Dr. Miller)

The courses on Isaiah and The Promises of God were offered in English.

On 30 May, 2016, the Saar Bible Correspondence Course Centre (SBCCC) was inaugurated in Kannur.

The Home Page features an open book and an oil lamp, graphics intended to be inviting and welcoming for Muslims and Hindus. The Bible quote is from Psalm 119:105: “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.” The lamp of learning invites everyone in the world to learn from all sources of knowledge, information, and wisdom. The courses offered by the Saar Centre invite people throughout the world to learn about Jesus, the Light of the World. May God bless this evangelism tool to His glory and the growth of the Church! All readers are invited to enroll. The website is <http://malabarbiblecourses.org>.



Inauguration of Saar Bible Correspondence Bible Course Centre in Kannur

CHAPTER 10: English as a Spoken Language (Accent Reduction) Course Was Offered

From 27 August to 8 September, 2012, the Canadian and American Spoken English Course (CASEC) was held at the Vanitha Women's Reading Room in Kannur. The goal was to equip Indian women who are already fluent in English to improve their speaking ability and to adjust their accent to Canadian and American (non-British) situations in conversations, public speaking, and job interviews.

Dr. and Mrs. Miller recruited three teachers from Ottawa, Canada: Sharyn Heagle, who served as Academic Director; Analis Groh; and Jennifer Voelker. Her husband, Ian, accompanied her on this adventure. Lorna Pederson and Arlene Riemer, members of the 2009 ESL team, completed the team. Christ Risen Lutheran Church, Kanata, Ontario, extended funding assistance to one of the volunteers.

They combined their impressive skills to prepare 22 "Modules," original lesson plans on various subjects. The modules were specifically developed with Malayalam-speaking students in mind. This was a monumental task and made a significant, creative, and original contribution to the field of ESL!

Most of the 33 enrollees were recruited from the Sri Krishna Menon Memorial Women's College across the road from Vanitha. Pastor Rejidas interviewed prospective students and administered the registration process. All but one of the enrollees completed the requirements with perfect attendance. There was an equal distribution of Hindu, Muslim, and Christian students. The evaluations were overwhelmingly positive in that all the activities made the women more confident in speaking English.

Here is one expression of appreciation for this experience:

"Greetings.

I am writing to you as one of the CASEC teachers privileged to be in Kannur this past August/September 2012.

I wish to thank the Malabar Mission Society for providing such a wonderful opportunity to serve God in such an intimate and meaningful manner.

Between my husband and myself, it was a true pleasure to meet Pastor Marshall and his wife, Rev. Titus, Rev. Wilson, Rev. Victor, Rev. Baby, and Rev. Joy, and Mr. Solomon. Most importantly, I wish to express the tremendous help and prayerful guidance shown by Pastor Rejidas. He was forever running around to do anything and everything to make this CASEC program successful. He truly did an amazing job!! And on that note ... I cannot thank Rev. Carlton Riemer enough for everything he did. A true diplomat in every sense of the word, Carlton literally walked us through India. Carlton, and his lovely wife Arlene, unceasingly tended to our every need to ensure our comfort and happiness. Arlene and Carlton were there every step in this CASEC program and I thank them for their love, patience, and guidance.

Heartfelt thanks to Dr. Roland Miller and Mary Helen. This beautiful couple introduced us to India, and then graciously guided us in our efforts to make this dream come true.

God bless the future CASEC programs and all Mission programs within India. Thank you for this past opportunity.

Jennifer & Ian Voelker"

CHAPTER 11: *Family Convention in 2012* ***Focused on Prayer***

Family Conventions were held annually. The fellowship around God's Word is appreciated by congregation members of all ages in a society where Christians are a minority. The MMS supports the effort by covering half of the cost.

The 2012 event was held at *Markaz ul-Bisharah*, Manjeri, the site for the ministry of Rev. K. K. Alavi for reaching Muslims with the Gospel. The theme was prayer. One of the speakers was a well-educated young man who grew up in a devout Muslim family. He had met with Rev. Alavi with the goal of converting Rev. Alavi back to Islam. Instead, the young man became a Christian. He had recently been baptized and was studying at a seminary to deepen his understanding of Christianity. He explained and demonstrated the ablutions and postures that Muslims perform, as well

as the words they say, when they do the ritual prayers (*salat*) five times a day, one of the “five pillars of Islam.” Rev. Alavi pointed out some differences between Christian prayer and Muslim prayer.

Our Lutheran Christian friends in India are inspiring examples of prayer to Christians throughout the world. Prayer usually ends every visit in a Christian home in India. The MMS and MMC are mutual prayer societies.

CHAPTER 12: *The MMS Received a Generous Gift*

In early 2012 the Rev. Richard Zimmerman donated \$150,000 to the MMS. He completed his life on earth on 13 April, 2012. He was a close friend of Rev. Ulmer, the MMS President. The MMS received an additional \$51,326.01 from his estate. This was the largest donation the MMS had received to date. With this generous gift, the MMS paid off the remainder of the Lutheran Church-Canada Central District Church Extension Fund loan on the Kannur property used for *Vanitha*, the women’s reading room. The MMS Board realizes its responsibility to manage responsibly as faithful stewards all donations that are received and use them for the glory of God and the growth of the Church.

CHAPTER 13: *Otten English School Established a Computer Lab*

In May, 2013, the MMS provided \$6,000 from its budget plus a donation of \$800 to establish a computer lab at the Henry Otten English Medium School (OES) in Wandoor. The funds purchased fifteen computers.

CHAPTER 14: *The MMS Completed an Educational Support Project in Srikrishnapuram*

When illness or other tragedies strike, the Malabar Gospel Workers usually face severe financial difficulties and stress. That happened to Mr. D. Solomon, a dedicated and capable evangelist at the Srikrishnapuram station in MMC, when he suffered a debilitating stroke in 2000. The family remained in the parsonage but had no income. The MMS sought and found special donor help for the two sons, so that they could finish high school and receive further vocational training. That goal was reached in 2013, and the project was then discontinued.

CHAPTER 15: *The MMS Completed an Educational Support Project for Mr. Shermar*

Mr. S. S. Shermar completed the one year Bible course at Concordia Theological Seminary, Nagercoil, in 1999, and then served as an evangelist in the MMC for five years, which included service in Srikrishnapuram. He graduated from Gurukul Lutheran Theology College (GLTC), Chennai, on 24 March, 2013. For the last three years of his studies the MMS covered 95% of his tuition and fees with special funds from the Lawson-Weinhold grant mentioned in Chapter 8.

In May, 2012, Mr. Shermar did an internship at the congregation in Choormala. The station had not had a Gospel Worker for several months. He was able to reinstate regular worship services by making house visits in the tea plantation.

After his ordination he requested the IELC officers to assign him to MMC, but he was placed in the Mumbai mission field.

CHAPTER 16: Gospel Workers Showed Creativity

Mr. Pradeep Kumar began as a new worker at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Vadattupara, in February, 2015, with a creative approach. He invited the neighboring pastors of the Marthoma and Pentecostal Churches as well as a Panchayat member (a local political leader) to attend a "convention." In addition, thirteen IELC pastors from the Trivandrum District Synod and MMC participated. A total of 200 people gathered! Rev. Titus commented, "A very good participation got from the public and the neighbor Churches. ... Everybody appreciated the worker (Mr. Pradeep) for his effort during a short period and encouraged him to continue the work for the growth of the Church. By God's grace we can also expect the growth of the Church at Vadattupara."

The members of Immanuel, Mundakutty, began raising funds to build a new church building. Women in the congregation initiated a building fund-raising project of making soap. The congregation requested the MMS financial support for the new construction, but that is outside the purview of the MMS policy.

From 15 March – June, 2015, eight students from Shaliach Bible Institute, an evangelism training program founded by Rev. K. K. Alavi in 2014, took a course in outreach ministry while staying in the *Vanitha* building in Kannur. The students came from Assam, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. The MMS was pleased to partner with this ministry in this way.

John Tennyson, a long time Malabar worker, is the reading room attendant at the Friendship Centre, Malappuram. After he thanked the MMS in a moving way for help with personal medical expenses, he went on to describe the remarkable support that was coming from the community. He explained,

"The Library is a gift from the MMS to the ordinary people and school children of Malappuram, where they can sharpen their reading habits and also get to know the current world affairs. Some people use this reading room to strengthen their religious beliefs and walk in righteousness. Along with the MMS about 15 people of Malappuram also join their hands to help the functioning of the

Library. They sponsor newspaper and about 19 magazines for the reading room. I consider this sponsorship as a cooperation of Malappuram citizens towards the activities of the MMS. We are expecting your continued support and service in future also. We want to convey our love and gratitude to each and every member of the MMS.

*Sincerely with Love Yours,
John Tennyson"*

CHAPTER 17: *MMS* Gospel Work Was Affected by National Politics

After the 2014 national elections in India, the political scene in India changed significantly. This has been reported widely by the international news media. The Gospel Workers have indicated that there is now less freedom for evangelistic activities and other projects that the MMS has supported. For example, the number of VBS "camps" decreased in 2015 and 2016, due to opposition in some local communities, even though the workers planned for more VBS programs. These are realities that the workers have faced before, but this new situation calls for much fervent prayer to the Lord.

CHAPTER 18: *The MMS Celebrated Its 25th Anniversary*

The 25th Anniversary of the Malabar Mission society was celebrated on 10 April, 2015, at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Regina, ON, with a banquet of Indian food (mildly spiced!).

Dr. Miller started off the program with information about the beginnings of mission societies in Europe and, more recently, in North America and related that to the beginnings of the MMS. The work centered in Malabar, but it has expanded to include the work in Anantapur in the state of Andhra Pradesh. In 2006 New Hope Mission Society, Inc., in Hutchinson, MN, formed in collaboration with the MMS to support the Rev. K. K. Alavi mission work among Muslims. Dr. Miller concluded with this comment: "If we have the conditions to go ahead, the Holy Spirit will lead us in the future and will bless us."

The Rev. Carlton Riemer reported highlights from his recent trip to visit the MMS stations in India. He observed that India is changing and developing exponentially. Therefore, we must listen more carefully, as the workers in MMC face societal opposition and cost of living increases. The MMS has been acting boldly with ministries of outreach to young men and women through our reading rooms and the on-line Bible Correspondence Courses. The challenges move us to proclaim more zealously the Gospel that Jesus died for all and rose again from the dead. He encouraged the MMS to take another **LAP** of **L**istening, **A**cting, and **P**roclaiming in word and deed.

The Rev. Robert Bugbee, President of the Lutheran Church—Canada, spoke on "Missions and the Church" by raising the question, "Why does the church reach out in mission to foreign lands when there is enough work to do in Canada?" His answer was that mission to foreign lands is not a "frill" after all the needs of a local congregation have been met. We are called by Jesus to be witnesses to the ends of the earth. New Christians in other lands committing themselves to Jesus encourages us to be even more committed to Jesus ourselves.

Cognizant of the importance to preserve our history properly, the MMS Board established the MMS Archives in April, 2015. At the time the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, was selected as the site for the MMS records with Rev. Ulmer as the MMS Archivist.

CHAPTER 19: *Project Officer Experienced Visa Problems*

In August, 2015, I renewed my USA passport and then submitted a "Transfer of Tourist Visa for India" form to the Houston Consulate. On 3 September, 2015, I was informed, "Unfortunately, you were not issued a visa at this time by the India Consulate and also they have canceled the previous visa on your old passport." Efforts to learn the reason(s) for this decision or to change it were to no avail.

I have resigned myself that I probably will never be able to visit India again. I hold on to the belief that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

CHAPTER 20: *A New Kind of English as a Spoken Language (ESL) Was Undertaken*

The success of the 2012 ESL inspired the MMS Board to consider another ESL but with a different target group and goal: an ESL for the English medium teachers at the Henry Otten Memorial English Medium School in Wandoor. The purpose statement for this new and different venture reads:

“The purpose for this ESL is to provide a setting for the Otten English School (OES) and the ESL teachers to establish relationships and develop friendships with one another, while they work together on improving communication skills and understanding by conversing in the English language. The OES teachers have asked the ESL teachers to help them improve in teaching, learning, and speaking in English more fluently and correctly. The ESL teachers will help the OES teachers to be able to control and change the accent common to India, so that the changes can be used in situations when that is needed and desired for understanding. A basic assumption of the program is that, as the OES teachers improve in speaking English, the OES students will improve accordingly. ... The project is intended to support and advance the mission of OES, which has been offering English medium instruction since 1987. Classes include Kindergarten through Grade (Standard) 12.”

- The team members were:
- Lorna Pederson as the Team Coordinator. She participated in two previous MMS sponsored ESLs.
- Dianna Just had experience with leading an ESL for nurses at Bethesda Lutheran Hospital, Ambur, India, and two ESLs for teachers of English in China and Malaysia.
- Daryl Mang, an MMS Board member, was active in outdoor ministry at Kinasao Lutheran Bible Camp. This was his first visit to India and his first experience with teaching ESL.
- The Rev. Dr. Gilbert and Mrs. Linda Duchow came from Hilliard, Ohio, where he was a pastor and she was a registered nurse.
- Arlene Riemer participated in two previous MMS sponsored ESLs.

The project took place on 12-24 October, 2015. Dianna Just submitted a detailed report to the MMS Board of Directors in which she described how the sessions were organized to maximize conversation and interaction with all the OES teachers. She concluded:

“The facilities provided to us at Otten English School were the best I have ever experienced in an overseas ESL program, and I have taught in ESL programs since 1999. ...

Overall this was an effective and blessed ESL program, and I thank God for the opportunity to meet so many wonderful teachers and administrators in Wandoor, India. We were treated with much respect and appreciation. I hope there will be another opportunity for ESL instructors to teach in Wandoor in the future.

*Dianna Just
Academic Director”*

The Duchows described other aspects of the experience:

“We feel that an equally valuable part of our time in India was the time that we spent visiting many of the pastors and churches and reading rooms that receive support from the Malabar Mission Society. ...

We were greatly blessed by our time and experiences in India. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve our Lord and His mission, through these programs and ministries of the Malabar Mission Society.”

Mr. D. Appukuttan, the founder of OES, spoke of the event in these terms:

“The ESL course was immensely useful to all teachers and their skills of communication in English has been enhanced to a greater extent. The participants are highly impressed not only with the lessons but also with the friendly, loving nature of the instructors who used every opportunity to manifest the love of Christ so as to glorify the name of God. This is what God expects from every one of us. ...

We are thankful to the Malabar Mission Society for sending the ESL team to our school. ... D. APPUKUTTAN.”



The ESL Instructors and the Otten English School Teachers

CHAPTER 21: *The MMS Focused on Ministry in Kannur*

The MMS Board approved a “Forward in Service – Kannur Special Project” at the December, 2015, meeting. The project, funded by a gift from Mrs. Elaine Broughton, was designed to run for two years and focused on women with the *Vanitha* Reading Room as the base. The goal was to intensify evangelism and social work by developing uplift programs among the poor and addressing health, economic, and educational needs in the area. The evangelism component would develop contacts among college students (female and male) through the Kannur reading rooms. It would include public witness programs with a view to establishing a core worship group.

The *Vanitha* building was to be used as

- the site for women’s ministry through evangelism and social work outreach with worship space for church planting and congregation activities,
- living space for two lady Gospel workers,
- a temporary living area for Rev. & Mrs. Titus,
- the headquarters for the SBCC Centre, and
- the office address for the Malabar Gospel Mission Society.

Rev. Titus conducted his first worship service as the church planter in Kannur on 29 May, 2016, in the *Vanitha* chapel. The MMS is thankful for the generous donation by Mrs. Elaine Broughton which made the “Forward In Ministry - Kannur” emphasis possible.

CHAPTER 22: *Both Mrs. Sulochana Mable and Rev. Dr. K. M. Victor Completed Their Lives on Earth in 2016*

The Malabar Mission Circle and the Malabar Mission Society suffered a great loss in 2016 when both Mrs. Mable and Rev. Dr. K. M. Victor completed their lives on earth and continued their eternal life by God's grace through faith in Jesus as their risen Lord and Savior. In the MMS Newsletters Dr. Miller memorialized both of them and their ministries with fitting remembrances from his personal and professional association with them.

In the Spring, 2016, MMS Newsletter Dr. Miller wrote:

"Mrs. K. M. Victor was taken home March 21, 2016, at the age of 74. She had been weakened by severe health problems, including a disabling stroke. While she has experienced a blessed release, her passing is a great loss for Rev. Victor, their family, and her many friends.

Mabel Victor and Rev. K. M. Victor were a strong team in ministry. A native Malabari, she was from the Basel Evangelical Mission tradition, which stood for equality and a strong role for women. ...

Quiet and humble in spirit, Mrs. Victor was a woman of deep faith and prayer. Her passing in Easter week reminds us all of the hope that gave her strength. In the words of the great Malayalam hymn – Jayum, jayum, kollum naam – 'Victory! The victory is ours' in Christ Risen."

Mention must also be made that every congregation in the Malabar Mission Circle displays some of Mable's beautiful embroidery work. She made altar frontlets and pulpit and lectern hangings with Christian symbols for every worship area in MMC. It was one of her ways to give glory to God for salvation in Jesus the Christ.

In the December, 2016, issue Dr. Miller wrote:

Rev. K. M. Victor, a stalwart leader of the MMS from its inception, was called home October 2, 2016, at the age of 86. He was predeceased by his wife, Mabel, on March 21, 2016. They leave a son, Christopher, and a daughter, Nancy, and their families. He was buried at Moolankavu near Sultan Battery in Wynad, Malabar.

Two things have to be said about Rev. Victor. First, he and his wife had fun together in the Lord's service. Second, he is one of those individuals about whom you cannot say too much.

Rev. Victor grew up in a faithful Lutheran family in South Kerala and decided to become a pastor. ... Ordained in November 1959, Rev. Victor was one of the few southern pastors who spent their entire ministerial career in Malabar.

One of the factors in his long Malabar tenure was marriage with Mrs. Victor, on May 10, 1958. ... What a team! I said they had fun together in the Lord's service. Visitors to their home discovered that. ... They gave themselves fully and joyfully to the Lord's work, and their joint careers—which included a great deal of social service on her part—were inspirational.

The first portion of that career was spent at Srikrishnapuram, to which Rev. Victor was called after his Lutheran seminary graduation. It was rocky soil for evangelism, but they persevered; some people came to faith, ... Two things emerged about Rev. Victor in this period—first, his dominant commitment to evangelism, come what may. The second was his interest in construction work. ... He did it personally—that is, climbing up and helping out the workers. Sometimes I feared for his safety.

Building Christ's Kingdom was his first love, however. As time passed his leadership qualities emerged. He channeled and focused them on evangelism. They received a new outlet when they moved to Wynad in the Malabar hills, having taken over the Sultan Battery station. ...

Along the way he became interested in the role of literature in outreach, ... and he was sent to the US, where he trained at the Fortress Press and Mennonite Publishing House in Philadelphia and

at Concordia Publishing House in St. Louis. From the early 70s he dove into that work, resulting in a very large outpouring of literature. ... IELC is still reaping the benefits.

In the critical years of 1988-90, when the Malabar Project developed into the Malabar Mission Society, Rev. Victor added another role. He led that endeavor for a quarter century. ... He was deeply appreciative of the work of the Society, and on behalf of all the Gospel workers he wrote wonderfully thoughtful lines about its supporters. I still like best his simple words: "Thank you for your interest in us."

The MMS brought Rev. Victor to Canada in 1999 to share his witness on a speaking tour, although the cultural and linguistic gaps did not make that particularly easy. More natural and effective was his memorable leadership given to the MMS tours in Malabar, always culminating in glad occasions in the friendly Victor home, where participants personally experienced their warm hospitality. It was quite appropriate that in 2008 Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Edmonton granted him an honorary doctor's degree in divinity in recognition of his unique service.

Rev. Victor used to belt out the lively hymn 'Jayam Kollam Nam,' a Malayali Christian version of the stirring words 'We Shall Overcome.' After a period of painful decline in his final years, he has now reached a new dimension of that overcoming: 'To the one who is thirsty I will give water free of charge from the spring of the water of life. The one who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be my son.' (Revelation 21:6b-7NET)."

Praise be to Jesus the Christ for all He has done for K. M. Victor and Sulochana Mable, and for all of us, by His birth, His death, and His glorious resurrection from the dead!

CHAPTER 23: *Project Officer Riemer* *Concluded Activities*

From 7-12 April, 2016, Arlene and I traveled to Ottawa, CA, to accept a long-standing invitation to visit Rev. and Mrs. Miller in their home. In addition to meeting with Mark and Monique Dickinson, we also enjoyed a reunion with the CASEC teachers of 2012 over an Indian meal. On the very day of the 26th anniversary of the founding of the MMS on 10 April, 1990, I was honored to preach at Christ Risen Lutheran Church. The congregation and many of its members have supported the MMS in many ways for many years.

My appointment as Project Officer ended on 31 October, 2016, since I was unable to obtain a visa to India. I submitted my final report at the MMS Board meeting on 5-6 November, 2016. At the Board's request I agreed to continue as a "Past Project Officer" for at least one year. For the December, 2016, MMS Newsletter I wrote:

"Thank you for the opportunity to serve as Project Officer of the Malabar Mission Society for eight and a half years and for the many kindnesses shown to me by members of the board. It has been a challenging and fulfilling ministry to encourage and stimulate the MMS to fulfill its mission of assisting the spread of the Gospel in Malabar and beyond. I had planned to continue serving till the end of 2018, but visa problems have prevented that. I shall always treasure as special gifts from God the friendships that have been formed in India and the MMS as a result of our association and working together. I am in full agreement with the MMS policy that the Project Officer should visit Malabar at least once a year. Hence, I stepped down as Project Officer on October 31, 2016. I thank God that Lorna Pederson has agreed to serve, and I assure her and the MMS that I am willing to give ongoing assistance and counsel as needed. May God bless the Malabar Mission Society as disciples of Jesus who make others disciples of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit."

A Closing Word

Love Makes the World Go 'Round" is a popular song written by Bob Merrill for the 1961 Broadway musical "Carnival." It has a catchy tune. Bing Crosby, the Everly Brothers, and others recorded it later. The lyrics talk about human physical love. I John 4:19 - "We love, because he [God] first loved us." - stresses divine love as the source of all love.

Love is a one-word summary of everything that God does for all people around the world. God's love revealed in Creation, Redemption through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit really does make "the world go 'round." Our Christian mission is to make our love (which is God's love in us) go around the world. India is geographically almost literally on the other side of the globe from North America. The faithful prayers and financial support of the members, friends, and donors of the MMS are greatly appreciated. They give evidence that the love of God is working among us and through us in Malabar and beyond.

With God's help and power MMS is committed to continue doing what the words say, "We love, because God first loved us" to the ends of the world and until the world ends. "Come, Lord Jesus! Amen!"

Appendix

MMS Board of Directors Members during 2011-2016.

Mr. Ryan Baker
Mr. Mark Dickinson
Rev. James Dimitroff
Mrs. Elfriede Fisher
Mr. Ed Fruson
Rev. Lowell Guebert
Rev. Dan Haugen
Mr. Steve Loewen
Mr. Daryl Mang
Rev. Dr. Roland Miller
Mrs. Donna Mueller
Mr. Joel Otten
Miss Lorna Pederson
Mrs. Irene Raedeke
Mr. Mark Raedeke
Rev. Carlton Riemer
Mrs. Emerald Schoepp
Mr. Art Timm
Rev. Howard Ulmer
Dr. Mary Vetter
Mr. Gerry Wagner
Mr. Ron Walter
Mr. Harold Weiss

Honorary Members

Mrs. Dorothy Desens
Mrs. Emerald Schoepp
Mrs. Mary Helen Miller

Advisory to the Board:

Mr. Allan Hjelte
Mr. Glen Ozem
Mr. Brian Wonnick





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