

Malabar Mission Newsletter

Spring 2008

Volume 15, Number 1

Our Mission

The Malabar Mission Society is 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 prayers for God's blessings,

- the spread of the Gospel, and
- the Circle's witness



MALABAR — 20 YEARS AND BEYOND

- Rev. Howard Ulmer, MMS President

June, 1988 is the foundation month of the Malabar Mission Society. The Gospel Workers in India were notified that "help is coming," and they responded with their "revival plan." During this month the first interest income was received from a Grant from Shepherd King Lutheran Church, Calgary, Alberta. A "Welcome Letter" was received from the Convenor, Board of Missions, India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC).

The Rev. Dr. Roland Miller and Mary Helen Miller served as missionaries from 1953 to 1976 in Malappuram, Kerala, India. Several other missionaries served in the Malabar area and maintained contact with the Gospel Workers. In 1986 an "appeal letter" for assistance was received from Mary Esther Otten, missionary in India. Malabar Mission Society was formally organized on April 10, 1990. Dr. Miller has served as the Project Officer for the Malabar Mission Society since 1988 until recently. He continues to serve as the Program Advisor.

The Malabar Mission Society provides financial support to the Gospel Workers for their outreach ministry among the people along the Malabar coast in Kerala State, India. The Gospel Workers, pastors and evangelists, along with the congregations and mission stations, form the Malabar Mission Circle in India. The Malabar Mission Society assists the Gospel Workers in sharing the Good News of Jesus in their communities to the Hindu and Muslim people through Vacation Bible Schools, Bible Correspondence schools and reading rooms. They also provide assistance to the medical institutions at Wandoor and Malappuram.

During the last 20 years we initially focused on the mission stations in the central area of Kerala State. However, we have also expanded the work beyond to the northern part of Kerala, as well as to Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh State.

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Malabar Mission Society

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held

1:00 p.m., April 26, 2008

at

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

603 - 115th Street East, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

All regular and honorary MMS members are invited to attend

We continue to receive requests for additional support in sharing the Good News of God's love in Jesus. Although the work of sharing the Gospel message is difficult and challenging, the Gospel Workers, pastors and evangelists are faithful in serving Jesus. They report how God is touching the hearts and lives of many people. They also report the baptisms of Hindus and Muslims, along with the ongoing spiritual growth of many people. We look forward to celebrating our 20th Anniversary with praise and thanksgiving for God's faithfulness. We also look forward to many more years of supporting the outreach ministry of the Malabar Mission Circle, as well as reaching out beyond the Malabar region with the Gospel message. We give thanks and praise God for the many faithful people and congregations who regularly support the work through prayer and financial resources.

We shall celebrate our 20th anniversary year "with Joy." Our India Program Director, the Rev. T. Joy, will visit Canada and USA to help us celebrate "20 Years and Beyond." We will publish his itinerary and invite you to hear this distinguished and respected church leader, pastor, and past president of Concordia Seminary, Nagercoil, India. In his retirement he is serving MMS by regular direct contact with and supervision of the Gospel Workers in the Malabar Mission Circle and developing new evangelistic programs. +

INTRODUCING THE REV. CARLTON RIEMER, MMS PROJECT OFFICER



Let me tell you the story about how I first heard about the Malabar Mission Society and why I agreed to be the Project Officer.

In July, 2003, my wife Arlene and I attended the International Lutheran Laymen's League Convention in Peoria, IL. We attended partly because The Rev. Dr. Roland Miller was slated to speak and lead a workshop. We had not seen him for more than thirty years.

After his workshop, Rev. Miller asked me to stay a little while, because he had something he wanted to discuss with me. Arlene was back in the hotel getting us checked out. This was in the days before we had a cell phone. I could find no phone to call her and let her know why I was delayed. So the first exposure to MMS wasn't all serene and relaxed.

Rev. Miller's first question to me was: "Have you ever heard of the Malabar Mission Society?" I had to truthfully admit that I had not. He told me that it was supporting Gospel workers in the Malabar area of India in the state of Kerala. He mentioned that, while most of the supporting congregations and individuals are in Canada, there is also some support coming from the United States.

He went on to say that he was the Project Officer, and he was looking for someone to take over for him, since he was supposed to be retired. He asked whether I would be at all interested in working with the MMS and offered to send more information. All that took longer than "just a little while."

I rushed back to our hotel to finish checking out, and in the car I shared with Arlene what Rev. Miller had discussed with me.

Now, lest you think that Rev. Miller would just offer the Project Officer position to anyone who showed up for one of his workshops, I need to let you know that we have more of a common history than that.

Rev. Miller taught mission courses at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, during my last year there. He worked with the placement director to find potential students for overseas missionary work. I was asked to consider this ministry. After discussing this with my parents and family and with Arlene, whom I had just met in October, I agreed to consider it and mentioned that I wanted to work among Muslims. I also mentioned that I was dating Arlene, a sixth grade teacher at St. John's Lutheran School, Seward, NE, and asked if she could be included in the screening process. The placement director agreed.

So Arlene came to St. Louis for the physical and psychiatric exams and for interviews and visits with the director and with Rev. Miller. We passed the exams, and our relationship grew. I proposed to Arlene on March 24, 1967.

A week before Call Day we had been told there were a total of ten overseas calls and that there were only ten candidates who were still interested in overseas ministry, so Arlene and I knew I would be receiving one of those, but we did not know what country it would be. Call Day was May 2, 1967. How excited I was to open the call document! The word "India" jumped out at me!! Arlene shared my excitement when I telephoned her. She couldn't get away from her teaching duties.

We attended Mission School as an engaged couple in June and July. Rev. Miller was one of our teachers. Since my sister was getting married in mid-June, we set our wedding date for August 23, 1967, in Coffeyville, KS.

While we waited to apply for visas to India, we did graduate work in Islamics. Rev. Miller helped us select Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford, CT, his *alma mater*, as our place to study. It took two years to get a visa (that's another long story). In that time I earned a Master of Arts in the History of Religions with a specialization in Islamics.

We finally reached India on June 28, 1969. We were committed to making mission work in India among Muslims our life-long career. Our visa had a one-year restriction, but we hoped that it could be renewed annually. However, since there was a possibility that we might be in India only one year, we traveled to all of the mission stations in south India and learned about the work being done especially among Muslims. That brought us to Malappuram and a memorable visit with Roland and Mary Helen Miller. She helped Arlene shop for her first sari!

Arlene's father, the Rev. Walther Haefker, died six days after we left for India. By the time we got the news, he was already buried. Mary Helen was one of the first of the missionary family to comfort us.

The government of India did not renew our visa. We left India on June 28, 1970, and went to the Philippines and lived and worked among the Maranao Muslims on Mindanao to complete our five-year term. During furlough I did Southeast Asia studies, and then our family returned to the Philippines till 1978.

The remainder of my ministry was as a town-gown campus pastor in Ruston, LA, and Stillwater, OK. I retired as the pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Stillwater, OK, on June 30, 2007, forty years after my ordination.

Our paths didn't really cross again with the Millers until that ILLC Convention. I learned more about MMS by attending a Board meeting in January, 2004 (in a blizzard!), and Arlene and I took the Malabar Mission trip later in 2004. I spent three weeks with Rev. Miller in Malabar in November, 2007. I became the Project Officer for MMS on February 1, 2008.

I feel challenged by the job but also excited about serving the Church in India in this way. Both Arlene and I felt very disappointed to have to leave India after that one year. But we have always had a special place in our hearts for India and the work of the Church there. So we welcome this opportunity to participate in the mission work in India.

I thank God for each of you in the Malabar Mission Society—for your steadfastness in prayer, for your commitment to evangelism, for your generosity in providing financial support, and for your faithfulness as disciples of Jesus who earnestly desire that Muslims, Hindus, and all the people in the world come to see "the fullness of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

May God bless our ministry together, as we continue to proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again, and celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord as the thing "of first importance." (I Corinthians 15:3)

- *The Rev. Carlton Riemer, MMS Project Officer*

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

“I AM SENDING YOU”

“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” John 20:21. With these words Jesus greets the disciples and provides the evidence and assurance that **He is alive**, as well as the commission to his disciples/followers that **they are the sent ones**. We continue to hide in our fortresses (church buildings) and fear witnessing for Jesus because of the civil and religious authorities. In the midst of their fear Jesus announces “**Peace be with you.**” In this way Jesus transforms their fear into faith. Faith is the gift of the Holy Spirit opening the hearts of sinful disciples to the message of the forgiveness of sins won through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The disciples are now authorized to share the message of the resurrection to the world. In a similar way Jesus touches our lives, gives us faith and eyes to see **the risen Christ**. With the words “**I am sending you,**” Jesus commissions us to **proclaim the risen Christ who has entered our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit**. The Easter message of Jesus’ death and resurrection is at the heart of the Christian faith. Jesus paid the price for our sins through his death on the cross. In his grace and mercy God provides forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Through his resurrection Jesus proclaimed victory over death and provides assurance and hope. **He is risen!**

- Rev. Howard Ulmer, MMS President

REMEMBER IN PRAYER . . .

- Our new Project Officer, Rev. Carlton Riemer of Stillwater, Oklahoma.
- Rev. Dr. Roland Miller as he continues to serve as Program Advisor.
- Rev. T. Joy, Program Director of the Malabar Mission Circle in India as he provides leadership and guidance to the Gospel Workers, Pastors and Evangelists.
- Rev. T. Joy and his planned tour (September 18 - October 20) to Canada and the United States for safe travel and good health.
- All of the Gospel Workers, Pastors and Evangelists of the Malabar Mission Circle as they continue their efforts to become self-administrating, self-supporting and self-propagating.
- Staff of the Christian Welfare Centre, Malappuram, and especially for the continued health of Dr. Sophie John as she delivers many babies each day. May God provide additional staff, including an obstetrician and nursing superintendent.
- Mr. Nelson, administrator of the Karunalaya Hospital, Wandoor, in his attempts to rejuvenate the work of this hospital.
- Malabar Mission Society as it continues to assist in the sharing of God’s love in Jesus to many in India. May the Gospel touch the hearts and lives of many people.

WE THANK GOD . . .

- For 20 years of blessing the faithful service by the Malabar Mission Society, its various leaders and workers.
- For 20 years of blessing the Gospel Workers, Pastors and Evangelists of the Malabar Mission Circle in India as they continue to share the Good News of God’s love in Jesus.
- For Rev. Dr. Roland Miller, Project Officer, in his faithful service during the last 20 years, as well as previous missionary service.
- Rev. K. M. Victor, India Agent, in his faithful service to the Gospel Workers, Pastors and Evangelists of the Malabar Mission Circle.
- For the various congregations and individuals in Canada and the United States who provide financial support of this mission and ministry in India.
- For many new opportunities to share the message of peace, love and hope in Jesus.

- Emerald Schaepp, MMS Newsletter Editor

The Rev. Carlton Riemer, new Project Officer
and Rev. Dr. Roland Miller, Program Advisor



A “SPECIAL FUND” for Endowment Purposes

was established by the Malabar Mission Society. The interest earnings will be available to assist with special or designated projects. The mission and ministry of Malabar Mission Society may be supported through bequests, shares/stocks, mutual funds, annuities, life insurance, real estate and cash donations. Gifts recognizing anniversaries, birthdays, memorials or other special occasions may also be included. All gifts will be receipted for income tax purposes.

MMS LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

- Rev. Howard Ulmer, MMS President

Dr. Roland Miller has served as Project Officer for the past twenty years. He will continue to serve as Program Advisor. Rev. Carlton Riemer began serving as Project Officer on February 1, 2008. See the full introduction to Rev. Riemer in the article on page 2. During November, 2007 Dr. Miller and Rev. Riemer traveled together and visited the many stations and Gospel Workers in India as part of the orientation and transition of leadership. At the close of the January Board meeting there was a Service of Thanksgiving as we remember God's blessing of Dr. Roland Miller's faithful service and the Commissioning of Rev. Carlton Riemer as the new Project Officer. The transition of India Program Director to Rev. T. Joy from Rev. K.M. Victor was included in the trip last November. These transitions will provide new opportunities for growth and service.



Pres. Howard Ulmer commissions Rev. Carlton Riemer, new Project Officer on January 19, 2008



Pres. Howard Ulmer thanks God and Rev. Dr. Miller for Dr. Miller's twenty years of faithful service to the Malabar Mission Society

In A ppreciation

The Malabar Mission Society sincerely thanks the following who have so generously given special gifts ...

In memory of:

- **Betty Dickinson**
Mark & Monique Dickinson
- **Katherine Endel**
Patricia Wirth
- **Elizabeth Filazek**
Lorna Pederson
- **Paul J. Haehlke**
Emerald Schoepp
- **Bertha E. Hedt**
Emerald Schoepp
- **Arthur O. Hedt**
Emerald Schoepp
- **Walter Schoepp**
Emerald Schoepp
- **Henry Stock**
Emerald Schoepp

In honour of Vic Fisher, on his 90th birthday

Donald & Merceda Schmidt



Memorials and gifts honouring special occasions are welcomed by the Malabar Mission Society, and are used to support the Lutheran Church in India to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those who do not yet know His love. All donations are receipted for income tax purposes. Special-occasion gifts and memorials will be acknowledged in future issues of the Newsletter.

Send your gifts to
The Malabar Mission Society
P. O. Box 32045
REGINA, SK S4N 7L2

We wish to celebrate the life of **Mr. Eric Kemle**, who gained his crown of righteousness in January of this year. Eric was instrumental in guiding the congregation of Shepherd King Lutheran Church, Calgary, Alberta to provide a large initial gift for our Malabar Mission Society. Those initial funds have borne good fruit in the State of Kerala along the Malabar Coast of India. Eric was truly a passionate man for the Lord's work and one of God's servants. We will cherish his memory.