

Malabar Mission Newsletter

December 2016

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SAAR BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE CENTRE OPENS

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



Rev. Carlton Riemer

On May 30, 2016, the Saar Bible Correspondence Course Centre (SBCCC) opened at Vanitha, the Women's Reading Room in Kannur. Rev. I. Titus, MMS Agent and Director of SBCCC, led the opening prayer followed by a song in the Malayalam language. A reading of Psalm 121 gave the participants encouragement to lift up their eyes and look to the Lord for help in this evangelistic endeavour. Then the two new women workers at Vanitha, Anitha Kurrey and Radhika Nirala, sang "Be Glory." Rev. Dr. J. Siromony, SBCCC Instructor, gave the message from God's Word, followed by introductory remarks by C. D. Solomon.

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The inauguration took place with the cutting of a ribbon by special guest Abdul Vahab, Coordinator of Operation Mobilization in Kannur. Rev. Titus presented him with a newly printed brochure describing SBCCC and its work. Mr. Vahab is a convert from Islam to Christianity who studied in the Lutheran Boys' Hostel in Sulthan Bathery, managed by MMC's Pastor Baby and the late Rev. Dr. K. M. Victor. Mr. Jayarajan, the attendant at the Open Door Men's Reading Room in Kannur, gave the vote of thanks, and Rev. Rasalayyan, pastor in Naduvil and Chengalai, led the closing prayer and gave the benediction.



Abdul Vahab with participants (from left) Rev. I. Titus, C. D. Solomon, Mrs. Flory Titus, Anitha Kurrey, Radhika Nirala, Rev. Rasalayyan and Mr. Jayarajan.

We thank Mrs. Lillian Saar for her generous gift in memory of her husband, Arthur Saar, to revitalize and modernize this evangelistic outreach project. There are six Malayalam and two English courses available for students to learn about Jesus, either by taking an interactive course online or by receiving, answering and returning paper copies of the lessons via post.

We encourage all of our MMS Newsletter readers to visit <http://www.malabarbiblecourses.org> and to take the course on Isaiah in English written by Rev. Dr. Roland Miller, founder of MMS. We suggest that you invite at least one unchurched or non-Christian friend or relative to take the course with you.

MMS FINANCIAL NEEDS

At the recent November board meeting we reviewed our current financial situation. During the first nine months our receipts were \$12,000 and our expenses were \$55,000. We sincerely appreciate your financial gifts and prayer support. Your assistance is needed as together we support the evangelistic outreach of the local Gospel Workers in Malabar and beyond.

In Appreciation

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

In Memory of:

✠ **Rev. Angus Schneider**

Edith Schneider

✠ **George & Gladys Smith**

Sue Morrison

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**

INTRODUCING LORNA PEDERSON, NEW MMS PROJECT OFFICER

In 1990 Lorna Pederson became a founding member of the Malabar Mission Society. She has faithfully served as a Board Member and Secretary for many years. Her dedication and willingness to serve Jesus, her Lord and Saviour, is an inspiration and example for many. The Board sincerely appreciates her willingness to serve in a new capacity as Project Officer for the society. During November 15-30 Lorna will be visiting the Malabar Mission Circle, where she will meet with Rev. I. Titus and the other Gospel Workers in the Malabar area. We look forward to hearing about the mission work following her return to Regina.

Let's let Lorna introduce herself further:



"I was privileged to grow up in a Christian home. Trinity Lutheran Church in Torquay, Saskatchewan, was our place of worship as well as the centre of our social life. I was confirmed in the Christian faith in 1960 by Rev. Dr. S. T. Jacobson.

"Following high school at Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute in Outlook, SK, I completed a bachelor's degree in pharmacy at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. A 14-month stint as a volunteer pharmacist at United Christian Hospital in Lahore, Pakistan, through an ELC youth

program, sparked my interest in the people of South Asia. In 1976 I heard of a class in Islam offered by the new dean of Luther College in Regina. Dr. Roland Miller had recently returned from India where he had been a missionary for 25 years. I enrolled, and thanks to the encouragement of Dr. Miller over 19 years, I graduated with a master's degree in religious studies in 1995 (while working as a pharmacist at the Pasqua Hospital). In 1990 I became part of the newly formed Malabar Mission Society.

"Thanks to Dr. Miller's encouragement, my first trip to India in 1992 involved research for my master's thesis on medical missions with reference to South India. I spent a month at Christian Medical Centre in Vellore, Tamil Nadu. During this time I also travelled by train to Kerala where I visited K. K. Alavi and Yasmin in Manjeri, Mrs. Esther Otten in Wandoor and Dr. Sophia Brillin, a newly graduated physician from Vellore, in Malappuram. At that time Karunalaya Hospital in Wandoor was a thriving medical institution while Christian Welfare Centre had few, if any, patients. Since that time I have been on two MMS sponsored tours to India (1999 and 2006) and I have been part of two ESL teams organized by MMS: in Kannur (2009) and in Wandoor (2015). Through these visits I have come to know many fine people in Malabar whom I love and respect. I look forward to working with them in my new role."

OUTGOING PROJECT OFFICER THANKS MMS

From February 2008 to October 2016, the Rev. Carlton Riemer has served as the Project Officer of the Malabar Mission Society. As such he visited the Gospel Workers in India for about a month each year to act as liaison between MMS in Canada and the workers in India. He worked most closely with the MMS Agents, Rev. Joy (2008-2013) and Rev. Titus (2013-present). He writes:

"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 in 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 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.”

‘FORWARD IN SERVICE IN KANNUR’ PROJECT BEGINS

A special intensive evangelism and social-work ministry in Kannur has been made possible through an anonymous donation to the Malabar Mission Society. The time frame for the project is 2016-2018. It has two emphases:

- planting a worshipping community/congregation in Kannur
- developing social programs that will contribute to the social uplift of women educationally, financially, occupationally and spiritually

MMS Agent Rev. I. Titus has agreed to begin the church-planting process, while at the same time recruiting a permanent pastor to serve this ministry. Rev. Titus also supervises the Open Door Men’s Reading Room in Kannur, where Mr. Jayarajan serves as an evangelist. Rev. and Mrs. (Flory) Titus moved from Manjeri to Kannur in May 2016. Their living quarters are in the upper level of the house purchased by MMS for this ministry in 2006.

Also in May, two young workers took up service at Vanitha, the reading room for women across the road from the Krishna Menon Memorial Women’s College in Pallikunnu, Kannur. Anitha Kurrey and Radhika Nirala both come from the state of Madhya Pradesh in North India. Both have bachelor of theology degrees and are conversant in English, Hindi, Marathi and some Urdu. They are learning Malayalam from Mrs. Titus.

The first worship service was held at 9 a.m. on May 29, 2016, the Second Sunday after Pentecost. Attendance has risen to nine worshippers.

REMEMBER IN PRAYER ...

- Our new Project Officer, Lorna Pederson of Regina, Saskatchewan, as she visits the people of the Malabar Mission Circle in India.
- Rev. I. Titus, India Agent, of the Malabar Mission Circle in India as he provides leadership and guidance to Gospel Workers, Pastors and Evangelists.
- All of the Gospel Workers, Pastors and Evangelists of the Malabar Mission Circle as they continue their efforts to share the Good News of God’s love in Jesus.
- All the Gospel Workers in Anantapur as they continue to share Jesus with the Muslims in their community. May the Holy Spirit continue to provide strength and courage in the midst of persecution and struggle.
- Malabar Mission Society as it continues to assist in sharing God’s love in Jesus to many in India. May the Gospel touch the hearts and lives of many people.

WE THANK GOD ...

- For 26 years of blessing the faithful service by the Malabar Mission Service, its various leaders and workers.
- For 26 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. Carlton Riemer, Project Officer, for his faithful service during the last 8.5 years.
- For Rev. Dr. Roland Miller, Program Advisor, for guiding and leading the Malabar Mission Society.
- For Rev. Dr. K. M. Victor, Past India Agent, in his faithful service. God called him home on October 2, 2016 and also Mrs. Mabel Victor on March 21, 2016.
- For the various congregations and individuals in Canada and the United States who provide financial support of this mission and ministry in India.

REV. K. M. VICTOR IS CALLED HOME

Rev. Dr. Roland E. Miller

Rev. K. M. Victor, a stalwart leader of 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. I first met him when he was a student. In South Malabar we had a mission station in the primarily Hindu areas of Cherpalcheri and Srikrishnapuram. The missionaries there were Elmer and Florence Griesse, as well as pastors working with them. While

he was still studying, Rev. Victor came to that area in two periods to help out the evangelism. From that time, for over 60 years, I was able to observe and share his remarkable service. Ordained in November 1989, 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. Mabel came from the Basel Mission tradition in Malabar. She was an individual of high qualities and talents, about whom I have written previously. What a team! I said they had fun together in the Lord's service. Visitors to their home discovered that. They happily spilled out the things they were doing, not in a prideful way but with obvious delight at the opportunities that came their way. 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, including a Hindu from a goldsmith's family who is now a leader in one of our institutions. 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. While they lived at Srikrishnapuram, he built a church and parsonage, and maintained this avocation throughout his career. 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. He won the respect of his peers, not only because of the sparkle and sense of humour in his personality, but also because his leadership was clothed in affection. That did not mean he lacked the critical function—on occasion he could tear into what was unimaginative or lazy with the vehement word "Hopeless!" The crucial factor in winning the esteem of his colleagues was the fact that he stayed on the frontlines of personal evangelism and paved the way for others. His optimism was infectious. Looking at the record I marvel at the amount of work he and his fellows did in those years.

Along the way he became interested in the role of literature in outreach, and the work of colporteurs (Bible and tract distributors). He gave some of his time and energy to that ministry. I had been the first IELC Literature Secretary, but along with others soon realized that an Indian pastor must be assigned to that activity. Rev. Victor was the obvious choice, 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. He took a personal interest in all aspects of that effort—from writing to production to distribution, and IELC is still reaping the benefits.

As he reminisced about his US training, he always remembered how hard it was to make the cultural adjustment. I had helped to get him a beautiful grey suit. His first night alone in Philadelphia he wore it to a restaurant. The waitress brought him his food, including a salad. She asked, "What kind of dressing do you want?" He looked at his suit and wondered, "Is there something wrong with it? Do they require uniforms here?" Exasperated, the waitress left and brought him a tray-load of salad dressing bottles and pointed at them, much to his relief!

In the critical two years of 1988-90, when the Malabar Project developed into the Malabar Mission Society, Rev. Victor added another role. He led that endeavour for a quarter century. Supporters of the Society know what that service meant! With determination, integrity and often brilliance, he led the involved MMS affairs in Malabar. All was not roses, and he experienced tough as well as good days, but he was as faithful as he was steady. Our correspondence is full of his remarks about trusting the Lord. 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."

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 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 Mayali 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).