



A Biographical Story of

Rev. Dr M. B. John

21 September 1908 – July 22 2002

A Veteran Pastor in the Service of Mennonite Brethren Church and Conference

Author

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Edited & adapted

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THE STORY OF DR. REV. M.B. JOHN
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Published by
Sons and daughters of Dr. Rev. M.B. John

DEDICATED TO

The evangelists and pastors who lived and
labored in the nine fields of the
Mennonite Brethren Church of India,
and won thousands and thousands
of souls into the
Glorious Kingdom of our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ,
The Master of Gospel Harvest

Luke 10:2

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FOREWORD

It gives me a great pleasure and I dare it is a privilege to write this foreword, to this book of tribute to Rev. Dr. M.B. John, authored by Rev. Arthur Dalavai.

The author had known Rev. John for over seven decades as co-workers in the Mennonite Church field area in the Telangana districts of Andhra Pradesh. They have worked in the villages as well as towns and in the Hyderabad city. They taught in the Seminary and spoke in evangelistic campaigns and conventions. Dr. Dalavai has traveled widely and likewise Dr. John had also visited western countries to attend conferences and had represented at Missions meetings. The contributions made by Dr. John to the rural churches in India are very well described by the author.

I had known Dr. John for about two decades until his passing away into glory. I always admired his knowledge of the word of God, simplicity in conveying the message in the manner that would make simple peasants also to understand and follow the instructions.

Dr. Dalavai has depicted this quality of Dr. John as a model for the pastors of this generation. I pray to the Lord that this book will be read by many Christians, especially pastors and evangelists so that they would be inspired to serve Him with great commitment and dedication.

The efforts made by Dr Arthur Dalavai, in writing and publishing this book is commendable. May the Lord's blessings be upon this venture.

B. E. VIJAYAM

PREFACE

Rev. Dr. M. B. John is a man apart in the annals of the history of the India Mennonite Brethren Church. After having addressed his M.B. Church congregations for about 36 years (26 years at Calvary M.B. Church of Mahbubnagar, and about 10 years at Bethlehem M.B. Church of Malakpet in Hyderabad before his retirement in 1986), and for another 15 years as an emeritus itinerant Bible minister at large in the 1MB field, the indefatigable M.B. John is in the brink of an historic lectern preaching landmark. At 93, he maintains his health remarkably. We may say he is like Moses of Old Testament era standing on the peak of Pisgah of the mountain of Nebo, "whose eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated" (Dt. 34: 1, 7).

Pastor M.B. John is one of the most prominent servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, popularly and widely known in the history of the Mennonite Brethren Church of India and also of the North American M.B. Churches; a "Tall Tree in the MB field"; a mountain peak among the India Mennonite Brethren Conference stalwarts, marked by outstanding strength and vigor of body, mind and spirit. Pastor John's outstanding characteristic has been his versatility. He could embrace a variety of responsibilities in the field of church proper and conference administrative service simultaneously. He is generally considered as an acute leader and spiritual statesman. The open Bible has been his sword and strength. Joshua 1:8 was to M.B. John as it was to the servant of Moses, Joshua the son of Nun. Pastor M.B. John has certainly been a God-chosen man of exemplary character. The story of his career is very interesting and inspiring and is worth reading.

I count it as one of the blessed privileges the Lord ever gave me to know this 'man of God' to call him 'my pastor' at Mahbubnagar (1956-1962) as a member of his church, 'my co-worker' in the administrative work of the Governing Council (1962-1972), and finally, 'my friend' in the field of evangelism during the last days of his emeritus itinerant ministries (1995-2002). He laid his hand, as 'servant of God' on three members of my family: on myself (Arthur J. Dalavai) on August 4, 1968 on the eve of my leaving for foreign studies; on Milton Douglas Dalavai, on January 29, 1989; on Lionel Adrian Dalavai, on February 10, 2002, ordaining them for the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Three members of our Dalavai family are ordained servants of the Lord. Praise the Lord.

ARTHUR J. DALAVAI

INTRODUCTION

Mt. 28: 19; Acts 1:8

GOD, in His economy of redemptive plan, dispensationally revealed and executed for the salvation of fallen mankind throughout the biblical history, called and used in each dispensation men of His choice to proclaim to mankind of all ages *"the way the grace of God to be known before the coming of Christ, and the way it was manifested after His redeeming work has been accomplished."*

During the Old Testament dispensation, broadly speaking, men like Enoch (Jude 14; Heb. 11:5), Noah (Gen. 6:8), Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), Moses (Exo. 3), the major and minor prophets (Isaiah to Malachi), and many other prophets, were God-chosen men to proclaim to the world the message that "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. *"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth"* (Exo. 20:3,4).

And during the New Testament dispensation, the twelve disciples of JESUS, and Saul of Tarsus were called by Jesus Himself as His witnesses *"unto the utmost part of the earth"* (Matt. 4:9; Acts 1 :8, 9: 15, 16).

Even so, God, in our own times, continues to choose and send thousands of foreign missionaries unto the ends of the earth to proclaim JESUS CHRIST as the only Savior and Lord of all mankind (In. 14:6).

Theodore Mueller gives us the life-stories of great missionaries that were sent out into the world. Mueller's books are: "Great Missionaries to the Orient", "Great Missionaries to India." Mueller dedicated his above publications to 'Christian people everywhere who are interested in the worldwide spread of the Gospel'. St. Paul writes, for the benefit of the church workers thus: *"And He (Jesus) gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. "* (Eph. 4:11-13)

During the last hundred years (1899-1999), many Mennonite Brethren missionaries were sent to India who labored in the field of Andhra Pradesh State and sowed the seed of the Gospel. They labored through the days of the last century, and 'brought forth fruit' and 'they glorified the Father, for they brought forth much fruit' in the Mennonite Brethren Mission field, which embraced about 12,000 square miles as recorded by H. W. Lohrenz in his book "Our Mission Among the Telugus," (of September 1939). By the end of 1939 there were

12,443 baptized believers; 564 mission compound school children (middle and elementary pupils); village school children studying numbered 1,676; 56 organized churches With 12 ordained preachers, and 210 village teachers/preachers. H. W. Lohrenz wrote: "One of the most hopeful sign is the growth of a certain spirit of responsibility and independence on part of our Christian Telugu brothers and sisters." (P. 36).

Rev. P. M. Hamm gives in his "India Mennonite Brethren Church Statistical Report" (of May 30, 1970) the following picture of the IMB Church growth of 70 years. (pp. 64-65):

1. Total number of M.B. Church members	18,933
2. Number of male church members	9,950
3. Number of female church members	8,983
4. Members who have completed middle school education	828
5. Members who have completed high school or more	1,287

The biographical sketch of Pastor M.B. John would be incomplete without a glimpse of the history of the Mennonite Brethren Mission in India, and of the India Mennonite Brethren Church spread over three districts of Andhra Pradesh State, namely Nalgonda, Ranga Reddy (the erstwhile Hyderabad District) and Mahbubnagar.

NALGONDA District constitutes the chronological starting point for both Mennonite Brethren Mission work, and the life-story of M.B. John, for both these entities began in the district of Nalgonda. We shall, therefore, begin with the establishment of the Mennonite Brethren Mission work in India; and secondly, we will trace the story of the 1MB Church of which M.B. John is a part of the IMB brotherhood which is the fruit of the M.B. Mission labor among the Telugus.

CHAPTER-I

MISSIONARY BACKGROUND TO M.B. JOHN'S LIFE STORY

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1 :8), said Jesus.

"Missions have had a vital part in the history of the Mennonite Brethren Church. The desire to do mission work manifested itself from its very beginning in South Russia in 1860. With the establishment of the Mennonite Brethren Church in America, this missionary spirit was also transplanted to the new home. The zeal of spreading the Gospel found its early expression in an aggressive home-mission effort in supporting such foreign missions with which the church was familiar and in sympathy, and in establishing its own mission among the Comanche Indians in Southern Oklahoma." (WHGW/p.3)

A strong desire to begin a foreign mission of its own, however, soon made itself felt in the churches. This cherished hope was realized when the General Conference of the Church in 1898 accepted its first missionaries for foreign lands and decided to begin an American Mennonite Brethren Mission in India. The Lord graciously blessed this enterprise in a wonderful way. He has provided the workers, the field, and the means of support. He has kept the Church loyal and true to this cause. He has prospered the efforts on the field, so that souls were saved and an indigenous church could be established. (WHGW/p.3)2

story of their missionary life in India. The later visits of Missionary Abraham Friesen of Russia, who worked in India under the auspices of the American Baptist Missionary Union, stimulated our people still further in the endeavor to organize their missionary activities in India on a lasting basis. (HWLp.3).

2. THE FIRST 44 A.M.B. MISSIONARIES (1898-1948)

1/2 In the summer of 1899, Brother and Sister, N.N. Hiebert,

3. Accompanied by Sister Elizabeth Neufeld, sailed for India where they landed in the fall of the year to find a friendly welcome at the mission station Nalgonda.

4. Here this group was joined by Sister Anna Suderman, a member of the M.B. Church, who had gone to India the previous year and was working in a

mission in the Bombay Presidency. So the four formed the first group of A.M.B. missionaries to India.

"Somewhat later Brother Hiebert rented a place in Hughestown and was looking for a suitable field for their work in consultation with Rev. E. Chute of the Baptist Mission, who recommended a field east of his own at Mahbubnagar. But before a decision could be made, Brother Hiebert became quite ill, and the Hieberts were forced to return home. But in spite of their short stay, they had been able to do a good bit towards starting the missionary activity in India. The Hieberts' ministry was of eighteen months."

"The Sisters Neufeld and Suderman continued on the field, temporarily assisting on the Nalgonda mission station."

The Mennonite Brethren Church of Russia had already begun to do mission work among the Telugus in the eastern part of the Hyderabad State, which was started by Rev. Abraham Friesen in 1890. Their chief mission station was at Nalgonda, a district town, 65 miles east of Hyderabad. When the American M.B. mission workers arrived, these brethren welcomed them, received them into their homes, and assisted where they could. (WHGW/p.6)

Abraham and Maria Friesen began their mission among the Telugus at Nalgonda in the State of Hyderabad. The Friesens were accepted by the Baptist Missionary Union of Boston, but they were virtually independent in the administration and operation of the mission, receiving their full financial support from the M.B. Churches of Russia. The Mennonite Brethren Church in India was officially organized on the 4th of January 1891. When the Friesens left for their first furlough in] 897, the church numbered 700 baptized members. Brother Friesen had been so kind as to loan us three of his native mission workers. These were Levi, K. Nariah and Rathnam Rangiah. With this excellent help, work of evangelization could be begun in the surrounding districts. (HWL/p.4)

1. THE FIRST A.M.B. MISSIONARIES TO INDIA

The year 1948 marks the 50th Anniversary in the history of the Mennonite Brethren Mission to the Telugus in India. The surveying treatise of the Jubilee Year (1898-1948), entitled "WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT" gives the names of "The forty-four missionaries, who obeyed their Master's call and yielded themselves to this cause" (pp.5,30). We briefly narrate them as Mrs. Viola John A. Wiebe. Mrs. Tina Bergthold died at Suryapet on 20-11-1904.

9. "Sometime later Brother Bergthold was united with Miss Anna Epp, an M.B. Missionary from Russia. They began the second mission station of our mission at Nagarkurnool, a large village eighty miles south of Hyderabad. The

Lord manifestly blessed their Gospel ministry. Heathen turned from darkness into light. A church was organized, soon a school was begun on the mission station. "The Bergthold family passed through another deep/grief in September 1915, when the second Sister Bergthold was summoned to her heavenly home, leaving her husband along with six small children. The Lord, however, sustained Brother Bergthold wonderfully and enabled him to continue in the work at Nagarkurnool." Miss Suderman, who was working at Malakpet Mission Station, devoting herself chiefly at work among the sick of the same station (Malakpet) until 1916, was united in marriage to Bro. D.E Bergthold. Thereafter, she worked for many years together with her husband on the Nagarkurnool station and field. The Bergtholds retired in 1946.

10/11 Rev. & Mrs. (Maria Epp) John H. Voths' first sailing was in fall of October, 1908. Their main station was Devarakonda, a large village, 65 miles south-east of Hyderabad city. Here they found a very responsive field in which workers from Nalgonda had already

5/6 The next missionaries to arrive were Brother and Sister J.H. Pankratz. They arrived on the field in October 1902. They zealously began their work. After prayerful investigation, a place for station was found and purchased at Malakpet, an important suburb of Hyderabad city.

1. The First Mennonite Brethren Church in India

On Thanksgiving Day of USA (1903), the Pankratz family, and the Sisters Suderman and Neufeld moved into this mission home.

Several native evangelists from Nalgonda and from other places came and joined the M.B. missionaries for the proclamation of the Gospel with them.

"On March 27, 1904, the missionaries, native workers and a few new converts met in prayer and organized themselves as "THE FIRST MENNONITE BRETHERN CHURCH IN INDIA"

In 1904 Miss Neufeld began with a school for children with classes held at first under a large shady tree. Miss Suderman found open doors for ministering to the sick and suffering, and for doing personal work among women.

7/8 In fall of 1904, Rev. and Mrs. Bergthold arrived as additional missionaries. "A severe trial almost immediately came to the Bergthold family". Mrs.Tina (Mandtler) Bergthold contracted small-pox and passed away to be with her Lord in heaven, leaving behind her infant daughter (Viola), who grew up to become 'the first mission worker from among the missionaries children, begun to proclaim the Gospel, and some converts

had been won. Through the zealous efforts of Brother and Sister Voth, and Lord's blessing resting upon them, many more were saved and an indigenous church was established which grew rapidly. Devarakonda is a field which the American Baptists transferred to the Mennonite Brethren Mission on January 1, 1910. Rev. Voth writes in his report in German language (27,31, Z.B.) translated and quoted by Dr. George W. Peters in his book, "The growth of Foreign Missions in the Mennonite Brethren Church" as follows:

"When the American Mennonite Brethren assumed responsibilities for the field on January 1, 1910, there was an organized Christian church in Angadipet with Dalvai Nariah as elder of the congregation; and some 350 Christians lived scattered in the surrounding villages. Seven evangelists were laboring in this section of the field of whom the Baptists withdrew five, leaving to the Mennonite Brethren Mission the evangelists Samllel and Benjamin." (p. 181).

After prolonged efforts, sanction for a mission station was obtained and needed buildings were erected. A school was begun, to which the children flocked in large numbers. M.B. John, the hero of this booklet, emerged as a product of the Devarakonda mission school, under the principalship of Rev. Voth for two years and under the principalship of Miss H.L. Warkentin, till he finished his middle school studies (in 1926).

12/13 In Fall of 1910, Rev. & Mrs. (Elizabeth) F.A. Janzen arrived. They subsequently established the fourth A.M.B. Mission station at Wanaparthy, a town of some importance, 20 miles southwest of Nagarkurnool. Here brother and sister Janzen found a large field responsive to the Gospel. The Lord blessed the testimony of his servants. Souls came into a saving faith in Christ, and growing church was the result of their labour. A school was opened as soon as possible. Brother Janzen suddenly and unexpectedly passed into his heavenly home, while still work ing on the Indian field. He died on October 8, 1927, with 17 years of service at Wanaparthy.

14. In March 1907 (Spring), Miss. Katharine L. Schellenberg, a medical doctor (M.D.) arrived. Her early services were at Nagarkurnool, where the Mission built its first hospital in 1912. Later Dr. Schellenberg served at Hughestown, and finally at Shamshabad, where she labored for long years and passed into heavenly glory in 1945 (38 years of glorious service in the field of medicine).

15. Miss. Katharine Lohrenz, prepared for the ministry of teaching, arrived in the fall of 1908. To her was assigned the Malakpet Mission School, which she built up into a strong primary school. She ministered just one term only, when in

September 1913 she had a severe attack of typhoid fever and was called to her heavenly home on the 5th of September 1913.

16. By the coming of Miss. Anna Hanneman, in the summer of 1915, the vacancy in the Malakpet school, caused by the death of Miss K. Lohrenz was again filled. She served also at Shamshabad School and Bible Institute. Her service was 25 years (1915-40).

17. Miss. Mary C. Wall, a trained nurse, coming at the same time, in 1915, ministered at Nagarkurnool, and Devarakonda, where she spent the greater part of her life in a blessed ministry of healing among the many sick. Her span of ministry was from 1915-1957 (a total of 42 years).

2. Synopsis of Period 1902-1919

At the close of the year 1919, India Mission numbered 11 active missionaries; two families and three sisters on the field. The period covered by the years 1902-1919 is important in the history of A.M.B. Mission in several ways.

- a. The work was established so that it could expand and prosper in later years.
- b. Four Mission stations were established and a school on each of them: Malakpet (Hughestown), Nagarkurnool, Devarakonda and Wanaparthi.
- c. A considerable area of the field was occupied and outstations were planted in many of the large, strategic villages.
- d. The policy of doing the work was laid down at this time. Direct evangelism with continuous preaching on extensive tours, was strongly stressed and done by all the missionaries.
- e. The need of schools in the normal development of a Christian community was understood, and these received their due attention.
- f. India, the land with sickness and many diseases, and at the same time, with very inadequate provision for medical care, obviously led the missionaries to realize the dire need and the great opportunity for showing the love of Christ in a ministry of healing. (WHGW/ 13-14).

3. The Four Pioneer Missionaries

"The four brethren, Pankratz (who arrived in October 1902), Bergthold (arrived in fall of 1904), Voth (in October 1908), and Janzen (fall of 1910), who were on the field during this time have truly performed for an indigenous church, the Telugu Mennonite Brethren Church. Their interests, their strength, their prayers,

their love, yea, their life, were built into the structure of the M.B. Mission in India." (WHGW/p.14).

4. The Birth of the Telugu Annual Convention (1918)

"The Lord in His grace visibly blessed the efforts of the early missionaries. As a fruit of their continuous preaching of the Gospel, hundreds were saved and through baptism added to the Church. The report for 1918 shows a total of 2,100 members in all churches of the field.

"In this year the Telugu Christians and the missionaries met for the first time as a 'Convention.' This convention corresponds to the Church Conference in America. It has since met annually, and has become the organization through which the Telugu Mennonite

Brethren Church of the whole Mission field finds its expression.
(The end of the Synopsis for 1902-1919)

THE FIRST 44 MISSIONARIES (CONTD.)

5. The Field Expands (1919-1936)

18/19 Rev. & Mrs. (Maria Klassen) John H. Lohrenz, A.B., A.M., B.D., arrived (sailing) in summer 1920. After some service in Nagarkurnool, they were stationed at Shamshabad; and were also in charge of Hughestown and Janampet (Shadnagar). They built most of the Shamshabad mission compound buildings and other quarters. The earlier work at Shamshabad (before the Lohrenzes) was done by the Pankratz's, who labored in getting government sanction to open a mission ministry at Shamshabad.

20. Miss. Helen L. Warkentin (of Winnipeg, Canada), accompanying the J.H. Lohrenzes, arrived in the summer of 1920. Miss Warkentin was assigned to the school at Devarakonda, of which she served as principal for many years - a total of 37 years (1920-1957).

21/22 Rev. & Mrs. (Elizabeth Kornelson) Peter V. Balzer arrived (first sailing) in the fall of 1923. The Lord had for them a sphere of blessed and fruitful labor, chiefly on the Devarakonda mission station, and also on Wanaparthi and Kalvakurthy stations (span of service 1923-61). Also at Shamshabad, Kurnool, Narayanpet.

23/24 In the fall of 1927, the mission was privileged to get new workers in Rev. & Mrs. (Viola Bergthold) John A. Wiebe. Their earlier years of service were

chiefly at Devarakonda, Nagarkurnool, Kalvakurthy, Janampet (Shadnagar). (1927-59)

25/26 Rev. & Mrs. (Anna Jungas) J.N.C. Hiebert arrived in the fall of 1929 (July). The Lord used them in service at Mahbubnagar in MBC High School, as principal, Nagarkurnool, Hughestown, Wanaparthy, and Shamshabad. (1929-51).

27 Miss Margaret Suderman~ R.N., a medical worker, who arrived a few weeks later, in the spring of 1929, was assigned to hospital work at Wanaparthy. Her service experienced remarkable expansion through good efforts (1929-62), Service:33 years.

28 Miss Katherine A. Reimer, a trained nurse, arrived in January 1931; rendered one term of useful service in the hospitals at Devarakonda and later at Nagarkurnool (1931-37).

29/30 Rev. & Mrs. (Anna Enns) Abraham A. Unruh arrived as new missionaries in January 1937. To them was assigned the work of Gadwal mission station and field (37-71); Mahbubnagar, Wanaparthy, Nagarkurnool (1937-71). Service: 34 years.

33 Miss Anna Suderman, a new worker, came in the fall of the same year (1937). She was assigned to school at Wanaparthy as its principal. She worked in Wanaparthy, Devarakonda, and Mahbubnagar in the areas of radio ministry translation, and Christian education, and teaching in mission school and publication, etc. (service 1937-69).

34/35 Rev. & Mrs. (Eva Block) J.J. Kasper, who arrived in 1946, as new missionaries, worked at Devarakonda, Shamshabad, Gadwal, in field of evangelism, church-planting at Nagarkurnool (1946-65).

36. Miss Emma Lepp, who arrived in 1946, was entrusted with the charge of Middle School at Shamshabad. She taught also at Bethany Bible School, Shamshabad. Her total span of service: 1946-74 (28 years).

37. Miss Helen Harder, arrived in 1946, was entrusted with the medical ministry at Shamshabad in place of Miss. Dr. Schellenberg, who died in 1945. (Total service 1946-71).

38. As a pleasant surprise, in 1946, three new workers arrived by plane across the seas. Margaret Williams, placed at Gadwal and also

39 Miss Edna Gerdes, placed at Gadwal as principal (1946-60). (Williams 46-70).

40. Miss. Rosella Toews (1946) was assigned to Devarakonda work-ing in medical department, at Nagarkurnool, Shamshabad and Jadcherla (Total ministry, 1946-71; 25 years).

41/42 In January 1947, Rev. & Mrs. H.H. Warkentin arrived. They were stationed at Kalvakurthy, to take charge of that field. Bro. Warkentin worked in evangelism, and church planting. He met with accidental death while descending into a deep well to repair a pump at• Ka1vakurthymission station in 1953.

- A group of six missionaries reached the field in 1948. This included Rev. and Mrs. J.N.C. Hiebert, who were placed in charge of Shamshabad.
- Miss Mary C. wall, who again resumed her work in the Devarakonda hospital.
- And Miss Margaret Suderman, who returned to Wanaparthi, taking again charge of the hospital.

43/44. The two new sisters Mildred Enns and Mary Duerksen were diligent at language study.

* The last worker to arrive is Miss Anna Suderman, again in returning to Wanaparthi, resuming her work in the Middle School.

(Source of this information from the booklet, "WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT" Num. 23:23).

CHAPTER- II

INDIA M.B. NATIONAL CHURCH BACKGROUND TO M.B. JOHN'S LIFE STORY

"I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain.... " John 15: 16.

As all the Mennonite Brethren missionaries came from abroad, some from Russia, and most of them from North America, almost all of the pioneer national evangelists and pastors came to the M.B. field of Andhra Pradesh from the Baptist Mission fields of Nellore and Ongole districts. These pioneer national church workers from the Baptist field must be mentioned and recognized from whom in the plan of God, M.B. John received education, training and blessings as we shall see in the pages to follow. If M. B. John can be recognized as "The Tallest Tree in the IMB Field," the other great trees must be recognized who infused into M.B. John's character and career "the unusual vigor of mind and body and spirit." These great pioneer workers of God are as follows:

Some of the most outstanding leaders during the first half century (1899-1948) who worked on the Mission Compounds as pastors, Bible teachers or headmasters, as mentioned by concerned missionaries.

1. Hughestown and Shamshabad : (J.H. Pankratz & J.H. Lohrenz) J. Levi, V. Abraham, G. Samuel Douglas, V. L. Benjamin, DJ. Richards.

2. Nagarkumool Mission Station: (Missionary D.E Bergthold) Aaron Kelly (Kodamala), O. Basaviah (HM), Dalavai Joshua (HM), T. Jeevarathnam, Dalavai J. Richards (HM).

3. Devarakonda Mission Station: (Missionary J.H. Voth) T. Samuel Rangiah (Pastor), Gone Gamaliel (Pastor), G. Albert Samuel (Pastor), M. C. Laban (Pastor), K. N. Nathaniel (Pastor), G. S. Paul (Hospital Compounder).

4. Wanaparthi Mission Station: (Missionary EA. Janzen) Gaddala John (Pastor), C. Abraham (Pastor), M. Elisha (Pastor).

5. Mahabubnagar Mission Station: (Baptist missionary, E.Chute, M. B. Missionary, John A. Wiebe, from 1937). T. Samson Rangiah (Pastor) (1900-), M.S. Paul succeeded T. Samson Rangiah on his transfer to DVK; M.B. John from 1949).

6. Gadwal Mission Station: (Missionary A.A. Unruh from 1937; from Baptist missionary J.A. Penner to John A. Wiebe). Late Bhoompag (Gadwal), A. S. John (Peddadhanwada), A. K. John (Bijjawaram) and B.K. Samuel.

7. Kalvakurthy Mission Station: (1922-49); (Several missionaries were in charge of the station. D.E Bergthold started the work at Kalvakurthy as an extension of Nagarkurnool). R. Sadhu, Dalavai Joshua (1910-15), Aaron Kodamala Kelly, R. Rathnam.

8. Narayanpet-Makthal Mission Station : (From Telugu village Mission Missionary Charles Henry Billington to M.B. Mission in 1938). D.Yohan (1897-1964, died at Kollur bus halt); Caleb D. Bella, joined TV Mission on July 19, 1930, as office assistant (TVM) as in charge of evangelism, church-planting, and continued with M.B.Mission. Billington died in Kodaikanal on 27-4-1954 after 33 years of service, a few weeks after handing over TV mission to M.B. Mission. Caleb D'Bella died leaving behind a son (Samuel), two daughters (Thara and Padma).

**M.B. National Evangelists Trained At Ramapatnam
Baptist Theological Seminary (1886-1935)**

Year	R.No	Name	Mission	Field
1886	180	Gandham Douglas	M.B. Mission	Hughestown
1887	197	Tatapudi Pitchiah	M.B. Mission	Hughestown
	201	Cherukoori Yakobu	M.B. Mission	Nagarkumool
1895	290	Gandham Samuel	M.B. Mission	Hyderabad
1897	307	Jutike David	RMPT Teacher	Shamshabad
1898	328	KolaYohan	M.B. Mission	Nagarkumool
1899	244	Patra Katiah	M.B. Mission	Shamshabad
1901	361	Methari Nathaniel	M.B. Mission	Nagarkumool
	365	Gavidiperu Yakobu	M.B. Mission	Hyderabad
1902	372	Gongati Kondiah	M.B. Mission	Hughestown
1904	387	Kasimalla Daniel	M.B. Mission	Devarakonda
	391	Thathapudi Timothy	M.B. Mission	Hughestown
1906	419	Vemavarapu A.braham	M.B. Mission	Hyderabad
	428	Gandamalla Paul	M.B. Mission	Devarakonda
	433	Thalloori Ezra	M.B. Mission	Nagarkumool
	440	Katikela Sadhu	M.B. Mission	Hughestown
1907	447	Janrajupalle Stephen	M.B. Mission	Nagarkumool
1908	454	Gona Gamaliel	M.B. Mission	Devarakonda
	461	Thirukovaloori Ramilth	M.B. Mission	Bhuvanagiri
1909	465	Kodamala Aharonu	M.B. Mission	Nagarkumool
	468	Thagaram Paul	M.B. Mission	Nagarkumool
	469	Suligiri Peter	?	Gadwal

	470	Mannamu Elisha	M.B. Mission	Wanaparthy
	471	Munagalachetti Yohan	M.B. Mission	Wanaparthy
	474	Bolleddula Daniel	?	Mahbubnagar
1910	481	Manda Jehoshuva	M.B. Mission	Nagarkurnool
	482	Chedupalli Abraham	M.B. Mission	Wanaparthy
1912	509	Pulukoori Yosepu	M.B. Mission	Nagarkurnool
	512	Madugula Hanoku	M.B. Mission	Shamshabad
1914	533	Kashimalla David	M.B. Mission	Devarakonda
	534	Madugula Matthai	M.B. Mission	Shamshabad
	535	Vangoori Benjamin	M.B. Mission	Shamshabad
	538	Gandham Samuel	M.B. Mission	Shamshabad
1916	558	Bandaru Daniel	M.B. Mission	Shams habad
	559	Pandi Yelliah	M.B. Mission	Shamshabad
1917	567	Methari Theophilus	M.B. Mission	Nagarkumool
1919	589	Pandi Joshua	M.B. Mission	Shamshabad
1921	621	Kanamala Nariah	Wesley Mission	Hyderabad
1922	625	Maddela Josiah Ramanjulu	Tchr. RSTS	Ramapatnam
1926	703	Medari Simon		Mahbubnagar
1928	735	Ellapu Vandanam		Mahbubnagar
1930	750	Bhoompagu Paul		Gadwal
	753	Sangapogu Simon		Mahbubnagar
1933	768	Bhoompagu Aaron		Gadwal
	773	Kothapalli John		Nalgonda
1935	798	Jonnalagadda John		

Source of material: Ramayapatnam Baptist Theological Seminary History; 1974 to 1954. PP.113-150.

CHAPTER - III

THREE SERVANTS OF GOD WHO WERE SHEPHERDS WHEN CALLED TO MINISTRY

Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" He said unto him, "Yes Lord; thou knowest that I love thee". He said unto him, "Feed my lambs. " (John 21: 15).

1. MOSES: The Shepherd Man (Exo. 3:1)

When God called Moses to the ministry of redeeming His people out of Egyptian bondage, Moses was a shepherd-man in the land of Midian, keeping the 'flock of Jethro', his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. God directly appeared to Moses as a burning bush at Mount Horeb in the land of Midian, and revealed Himself as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and gave the job:

"Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt." (Exo. 3: 1- 10).

Moses served the Lord for forty years, leading the people of Israel from out of Egypt until they reached the land of Moab on the east of Jordan. Deut. 34:10 describes Moses' career as *"And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."* Theodore 1. Epp writes of Moses:

"God had an eternal purpose in creating, emancipating and building the great nation of Israel. All of this was done to create a testimony through this nation for the sake of others. God chose the nation of Israel so He could give progressive revelation of Himself. It was to Israel that God gave the Scriptures which revealed His person, and it was of this nation that Jesus Christ was born, according to the flesh. For this God needed a man a common man - who would dare to believe God, a man who would dare to commit himself totally to God, So through simple faith and absolute obedience, Moses became the most commanding figure of the ancient world in character, in faith, and in the unique position which was assigned to him. He became the mediator of the old covenant, and because of his achievements he stands among the best known of all the heroes of the Old Testament. 'Faith' and 'Obedience' - these two words appear over and over again in the study of Moses' life. Moses was called the "servant of God", meaning the 'slave of God'. Moses asked no questions; what God said he did." Theodore exclaimed, "What a man! From Adam to Christ none was greater. Yet Moses was just like any other man. Although he had many great qualities that needed to be developed and improved, he had many flaws

and deficiencies that would have made him powerless except for the all-sufficient grace that he eventually learned to appreciate." (Moses Vol. I, p.7).

2. DAVID: The Shepherd Youth (I Sam. 16:11)

When God sent the prophet Samuel to anoint David, the youngest of eight sons of Jesse, David was on his father's farm keeping the flock. As shepherd youth, he showed great courage in protecting the flock (I Sam. 17:34-36). David was divinely chosen to succeed King Saul, and quietly anointed by Samuel, the prophet (I Sam. 16: 12- 13).

David, in his youth, was an athlete. He became the greatest of the kings of Israel. He was one of the most prominent figures in the history of the world; a mountain peak among the Bible characters. He is the most famous ancestor of Christ. Jesus is not called the Son of Abraham, or the Son of Jacob, but the Son of David. In the early period of his life, he is mentioned as a man of God's own heart. 1 Sam 13:14 reads, "The Lord has sought him a man after His own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over His people." This was only true when he kept the divine commandments. It may be said to his credit that he never became an idolater, and that he was loyal to the Lord in his testimony and worship.

The fact that the general trend of his life was eminently religious and spiritual, if not always consistent, together with his great genius, accounts for the very high place he occupies in Hebrew history. He has generally been considered as the greatest king of Israel. He displayed unusual wisdom in the management of government. He was a very courageous fighter. As a shepherd, when a lion and a bear took away from the flock a lamb, he fought them both and delivered the lamb from their mouth. And he killed the Goliath, the captain of the Philistines with a sling and a stone, and slew him. (CRB/236/4296). All in all, David was a grand character. He did some things that were wrong, but for an oriental king, he was a most remarkable man. He was heart and soul, devoted to God, and the ways of God. In a world of idolatry, and in a nation that was continuously falling away into idolatry, David stood like a rock for God. In every circumstance of life, he went directly to God, in Prayer, in Thanks or in Praise. His two great accomplishments were the kingdom and the Psalms. (Halley's, p. 188). David was 30 when he became a King. He died at seventy. He was very successful in wars. He completely subdued the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, Edomites, Ammonites, and all neighboring nations. The Lord gave victory to David whithersoever he went. (2 Sam. 8:6). David is one of the most prominent in the history of the world." (CRB/4296/I).

3. M.B. JOHN: The Shepherd Boy

The way M.B. John developed his name and fame into prominence, and became the most esteemed church pastor, and conference administrator and evangelistic diplomat was different from the way Moses and David developed themselves into God's mighty servants in the days of Old Testament.

In the case of Moses, God directly appeared and spoke to Moses in the form of a burning bush and assigned to him the job, saying, *"Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. "*

And in the case of David, God sent prophet Samuel, saying,.

"Fill thy horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward" (Sam 16:1, 13).

Now, in the case of M.B. John, God had a different way to call him into His ministry. God did not speak to M.B. John directly as in the case of Moses. And He did not send a messenger to M.B. John to recruit him for a specified ministry. God used eight mission workers, and took forty years to prepare him for his work. When God's Spirit started to prepare M.B. John for a ministry, John was a shepherd boy, living with his uncle Medari Moses, an evangelist working in Mandapur village. It will be very interesting and wonderful to go through M.B. John's life story, and to see how the Lord's spirit prepared the young Medari shepherd boy to become God's remarkable servant in the course of 40 years time (1908-1948).

M.B. John's life-story may be divided into three segments:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. 1908 to 1948 | THE RISING STAR
Preparation for life |
| 2. 1949 to 1986 | THE BLAZING STAR
Profession of his life |
| 3. 1986 to 2002 | THE GAZING STAR
Post-retirement life |

CHAPTER-IV

M.B. JOHN WAS TRAINED BY MISSIONARIES AS THE 12 DISCIPLES WERE TRAINED BY JESUS CHRIST (Mt. 5:19; Acts 2:14-41)

Because of the intensely personal nature of his book, "A Brief Story of the Life of Rev. & Mrs. M. B. John, 1908-1983", his character and life are better known to us than that of any other writing church pastors of our time. Dr. M. B. John was devout evangelical patriot wholly committed to God and purity of Christian life. John, a rural shepherd-boy, was transformed into a highly esteemed pastor of the famous Calvary M. B. Church of Mahbubnagar, Andhra Pradesh, India. How did it transpire? The answer is, How was Simon Peter, poor Galilean, transformed into a powerful fisher of men? (Acts 2:14-41).

Jesus said to Peter and Andrew, his brother, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." For three years, the disciples of Jesus were under His training. Toward the end of His ministry on earth, Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, (In. Ch. 17), *"Father, I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."*

Now, at the end of three years of training under their Master Jesus, the disciples would certainly be qualified as 'fishers of men' . What were the principles that Jesus, their Master, imparted into their life to make them His powerful evangelists (fishers of men)? Let us see John's Gospel, Chapter 17: Jesus reported to His Father in heaven, saying. (1) I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: and they have kept thy word (v.6); (2) I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me (v. 8); (3) I have given them thy Word (v. 14); (4) the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one (v. 22); (5) that they may be perfect (v. 23); (6) Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth (v. 17); (7) As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world (v. 18).

Pastor M. B. John, living with his uncle Moses at Mandapur for three years, ultimately became a famous church pastor of the Calvary M. B. Church of Mahbubnagar. M. B. John was trained under three missionaries: (1) 3 years as middle school student under the principalship of Miss H. L. Warkentin at Devarakonda; (2) 3 years as a Bible student at Nagarkurnool, under the principalship of Rev. D. F. Bergthold, missionary; (3) 3 years as high school student under the principal Rev. B. J. Rockwood of Coles Memorial High School, Kurnool (1929-32); and finally as bible student for one year at Allahabad Oriental Missionary Society and for one full semester theological study at Mennonite

Brethren Seminary, Fresno, California, U.S.A. Thus, we see that M. B. John was a special student, blessed of God, trained under missionaries in India and also abroad.

Pastor M. B. John has been one of the most prominent figures in the history of the India Mennonite Brethren Church: a mountain peak among the church characters; the tallest tree in the M. B. field of the Andhra Pradesh State, India. Psalm 92: 12 reads: *"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon."*

It is difficult to think of the nine-field Conference of the M. B. Church, A.P. , India, without thinking of Pastor M. B. John, who served the conference five terms as the Chairman of its Governing Council, (usually called 'GC'), for the terms, 1960-61, 1962-63, 1963-64, 1973-74 and 1974-75.. He was the first national chairman of the GC to succeed the missionaries who brought the Governing Council into a conceptual reality in the year 1956. Rev. John A. Wiebe, the missionary statesman served the first two terms as the chairman (1956-57 and 1957-58); Rev. A. A. Unruh served one term (1958-59) ; and Rev. P. V. Balzer, one term (1959-60).

It was M.B. John's privilege to serve as chairman of every sub-committee of the Governing Council for at least once, namely, the CRC, the education, the evangelism and the other boards. M. B. John served also in other capacities of the M. B. Conference: as chairman of the Annual Spiritual Convention; as editor of the monthly official magazine SUVARTHMANI; as chairman of the Property Committee, etc.

These most important branches of the IMB Conference activities have added to the prominence of M. B. John's personality in the history of the IMB Church at large. His outstanding characteristic, as such, was his versatility. He has been a combination of pastor, evangelist, builder of churches, administrator, editor, writer, church statesman, etc.

Pastor M. B. John can be called 'witness to the history of the India Mennonite Brethren Church; its memory bank; its conscience; all rolled into one.'

M.B. John will go down in the annals of the India Mennonite Brethren Church as its legendary hero as prophet Moses was or still is of the people of Israel (Deut. 34: 10).

CHAPTER-V
M.B. JOHN: THE RISING STAR
His Preparation for Life
(1908-1948)

Introduction

1. JOHN'S NATIVITY AND CHILDHOOD

M. B. John (Medari Butchiah-Abraham John) was born at Gudipally village in Devarakonda Taluq of Nalgonda District, on September 21, 1908 (according to his autobiography/1983, JAB). His parents were Medari Butchiah-Abraham and Andugula Muthyalamma. They had four children (two boys and two girls). Medari Butchiah's parents (John's grand-parents) had a family of six children (five sons and one daughter). The last two sons (brothers of Butchiah) Guruviah and Moses were preachers, who worked with the pioneer missionaries of M. B. Field. Moses, working as evangelist. at Mandapur, had no children. Butchiah's wife, Muthyalamma, passed away into heavenly home in 1915, when John was 7 years of age. With the death of his wife, Butchiah found it difficult to maintain his family with four children, and had to take a second wife. At the request of Butchiah, his brother Medari Moses, who had no children, took John to live with him at Mandapur. John was 7 years when he stepped into his uncle Moses's home. Moses had some sheep and goats for his livelihood. Young John was made to take care of the flock. John kept his uncle's flock dutifully and faithfully. He kept the flock for three years (1915 to 1917). Moses, his uncle liked and loved John very deeply.

As an evangelist Moses taught John, I imagine stories from the Bible at his devotional family sittings and also taught him to pray to the Lord. Naturally Moses shared with John news about Gudipally family brothers and sisters of John. John learnt that his sisters and brothers were going to school. John began to think of going to school. He expressed his desire to his uncle that he would like to study at school. Uncle Moses gladly consented and admitted John into school at Nagarkurnool mission station. There was no mission school at Devarakonda. Young John started schooling in 1918 at the age of 10 years. Rev. D. F. Bergthold was the missionary at that time. Mr. Dalavai Joshua was the headmaster who became John's first teacher and headmaster in his life as a student. Dalavai Krupanandam and Dalavai Jestina were the other teachers as M.B. John recorded in his autobiography. This was the turning point in M. B. John's life as a 'rising star' in the plan of God for him.

2. GOD'S MINISTERS WHO TRAINED M.B. JOHN FOR MINISTRY

God's Spirit used more than one minister in molding the life career of the young shepherd boy, Medari B. John, into what He had planned it to become ultimately. Two nationals and five missionaries became instrumental in preparing Medari Butchiah John (commonly called M.B. John) into a gigantic 'servant of God' in the ministry of church among the Telugus of India. The two nationals were (1) Medari Moses of Mandapur, and (2) Dalavai Joshua of Nagarkurnool; and the five missionaries were: (1) Rev. John Voth, missionary at Devarakonda, (2) Miss Helen Warkentin (Devarakonda), (3) Rev. P.Y. Balzer (Devarakonda), (4) Rev. D.F. Bergthold, (5) Rev. John A. Wiebe (Mahbubnagar). It was certainly the Spirit of God who guided the young John of Gudipally to climb the seven steps of preparation during his first forty years as Rising Star. Certainly Prophet Daniel 12:3 became manifested in his preparatory period of life (1908-1948): *"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever"*. The Lord's Spirit was upon M.B. John as he continuously labored and climbed seven steps of preparation between Mandapur and Mahbubnagar until the Lord finally commissioned and ordained him as the shepherd of the Calvary M.B. Church of Mahbubnagar, and as *"the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward"*, so the Lord's Spirit rested upon John from that day forward. (1 Sam 16:13).

3. SEVEN BUILDERS OF M.B. JOHN'S LIFE

1. Medari Moses, Evangelist, Mandapur

M.B. John had never learned how to keep sheep, before he came to live with his uncle Medari Moses. His uncle Moses must have guided him to begin with and taught John how to take care of the flock. In three years time, I am sure, the young shepherd boy became an excellent sheep keeper like Moses and David of Israel's time. Medari Moses, I am sure, taught John many stories from the Bible about Jesus and many truths about Him and His disciples teachings, which became the seed of the Gospel planted into the young heart of M.B. John. And so the Spirit of God, I believe, used Moses of Mandapur as the first teacher and preacher in the plan of God for M.B. John.

2. Dalavai Joshua, Headmaster, Nagarkurnool

The second national, God used to train M.B. John for God's ministry was Dalavai Joshua, a great scholar from Ongole and noted for his discipline, who was the headmaster of the Nagarkurnool Mission Middle School, when John was admitted into the school, during the time of Rev. D.E Bergthold, missionary of the field and principal of the school. Dalavai Joshua was the first one who introduced M.B. John into the world of education in 1918. "Mr. Dalavai Joshua left an indelible

imprint on M.B. John whom he gratefully acknowledges even now" (0.1. Shubhaker). Dalavai Joshua was the corner stone of M.B. John's educational infrastructure. M.B. John had a very blessed educational beginning at Nagarkurnool, where both missionary Berghold and Dalavai Joshua were great scholars.

"The period 1914-18 was of the first world war. John and his sister, Mariamma were students of the school at NGKL. As a result of air-pollution due to this war, the epidemic of influenza broke out throughout the world, and it reached even the doors of the M.B. Mission School. Many students were attacked by it, and many of them died. My eldest sister Maryamma and some others were graciously saved from this epidemic.... by the grace of God. My cousin sister became one of the victims.... " (ABJ/pp.5-6). God had a long time for M.B. John to serve Him after 1918 since John was one of them who survived. This was the second step John could climb on his way to the Calvary M.B. Church at Mahbubnagar.

3. Miss Helen L. Warkentin, Principal, Devarakonda

M.B. John writes in his autobiography: "At the end of 1918, the Devarakonda school was opened by Rev. J.H. Voth on his return from furlough, and was the principal of the school until Miss Helen L. Warkentin of Winkler, Canada, came to India and took charge of the DVK school as principal. She served at DVK mission school from 1920 to 1957. Her birthday falls on November 25 on which day many old students and others gathered at DVK to celebrate her birthday annually in honor of her faithful ministry as principal of the DVK mission school and hostel." M.B. John was one of the many orphan students of the DVK school of her time. M.B. John has a story to tell us of his experience as a student under Miss Warkentin's principalship. M.B. John writes: "When I was in the I Form, the question of payment of fee arose. Neither I nor my father was in a position to pay the fee. So I was asked by the principal to discontinue my studies and go back to my village. In obedience to her orders I went back to my village, and remained there for a week.

To my great surprise and joy, I received a call from the principal to come back and continue my studies in the school up to III Form without paying any fees. Foreseeing God's will and providence for my future career (I returned to school). But for her kindness and concern for me, my educational career would have stopped at I Form itself. I can never forget this good turn done to me by my beloved principal, Miss. H.L. Warkentin. When I visited Winkler in 1961, I had the good fortune to see her there in her own home after many years, and had a nice lunch with her after my message given in the Winkler Bible School. She also attended the meeting. When I and my wife visited Winkler in 1976, we could not see her, because she had gone to be with the Lord." (JAB/pp. 6,7). That was the third step God enabled M.B. John to climb leading to his future ministry at

Mahbubnagar. John's completion of III Form at Devarakonda goes to the credit of Miss H.L. Warkentin, who was led by the Spirit of God to find funds for M.B. John to continue his studies at DVK until completion of his Middle School.

4 Rev. P.V. Balzer, Missionary, DVK

Rev. J.H. Voth who established the Mission Station at Devarakonda, was on furlough for two years (1926-1928). In his absence Rev. P.Y. Balzer was in charge of DVK Field, and Mission Station. M.B. John, who completed his III Form in 1926, approached Rev. Balzer to send him for high school studies. M.B. John tells us the story from there: "Rev. P.Y. Balzer told me that he had no funds available with him to send me to high school, but he had funds to send me to Bible School. Accordingly, I agreed to go to Bible School and studied there (at NGKL) for three years under the supervision and management of the late Rev. D.F. Bergthold as Principal. There were also some native teachers namely, the late Mr. Aaron Kelly and the late Mr. T. Jeevarathnam. I studied well and stood first in my class continuously for three years, and I received first prizes in the final year. The Principal and the teachers used to appreciate my devotion to God and desire for the church work. This Bible School training was also an inspiration for my future ministry of the church." (JAB/pp. 7,8).

I believe M.B. John's ambition and submission helped him to climb his fourth step towards his spiritual victory in life. Mr. Aaron Kelly, one of M.B. John's Bible School teachers at NGKL, was an excellent Bible teacher, and highly appreciated pulpit Bible preacher, comes from Ramapatnam Baptist Theological Seminary, graduated in the year 1909 (R.465). M.B. John's aim was to complete high school secular education. But by yielding to missionary Balzer's advice to go for Bible school education, he later realized that God was leading him in his life in the right direction. John completed his elementary Bible School training at NGKL in three years (1926-1929). Rev. P. Y. Balzer deserves appreciation for sending M.B. John for Bible training for a period of three years.

5. Rev. D.F. Bergthold, Missionary at Nagarkurnool

Fortunately, M.B. John studied Bible courses under the two great scholars, namely, missionary, Rev. Dr. D.F. Bergthold, a great Bible scholar from Germany, and Mr. Kodamala Aaron Kelly, an excellent Bible teacher, trained at Ramapatnam Baptist Theological Seminary and graduated in the year 1909 (R. 465). Aaron Kelly was appreciated highly for his very effective heart-rending exposition of Bible truths, as a pulpit speaker. M.B. John writes: "I studied well and stood first in my class and received first prize in the final year. The principal and the teachers used to appreciate my devotion to God and desire for the church work. There were also some native teachers namely, Mr. Aaron Kelly and Mr. T. Jeevarathnam." (JAB/7,8). M.B. John told the author of this booklet that

"Rev. Bergthold wrote a letter to Rev. Voth, missionary at Devarakonda, saying, "One day or other, M.B. John will become a great servant of M.B. Church of India."

M.B. John's Bible training at NGKL under Rev. Bergthold for three years may be considered as his fifth step leading to his ascendancy into prominence in the plan of God.

6. Rev. J.H. Voth, Missionary at Devarakonda

Rev. J.H. Voth who was on furlough for two years (1927-28) returned to India and took charge of Devarakonda Field from Rev. P.Y. Balzer. M.B. John has the rest of the story to tell us :

'Then I approached Rev. J.H. Voth and repeatedly requested him to send me to high school. First Rev. Voth advised me to go and work in villages as a preacher. I said that I liked to be in His ministry, but I felt that my meager schooling was not enough for my full-fledged ministry. I promised to Rev. J.H. Voth that I would remain in the ministry itself after I completed my high school education. Finally, he saw my burning desire for higher education (and) he was convinced of my repeated requests and sent me to the Coles Memorial High School, Kurnool in the year 1929. He supported me in my high school education from 1929 to 1932. I continued my high school education under the late Rev. B.J. Rockwood, Principal, and under late P. Raju, Headmaster.

During my high school days I was a good sportsman; football captain continuously for three years, and our school team retained the rolling shield for football consecutively for all the three years. I won many prizes in other sports also-throw-ball, half-mile race, hundred yards, lawn tennis, etc. I also won the proficiency first prize in the V Form, first prize in throw-ball.

My teachers and my principal used to appreciate my activities and achievements in my high school career. The late Rev. J.H. Voth my patron missionary, was very much pleased with my performance. In this way, I completed my high school education successfully with the financial support of the Ebenfeld M.B. Church Sunday School Department, Hillsboro, Kansas, U.S.A., through the efforts of the late Rev. J.H. Voth". (p.8). This is the sixth step the Lord enabled M.B. John to climb into prominence as a servant of the Lord.

John goofs and loses his Mission Ministry

M.B. John writes in his autobiography: "Having successfully finished my Bible school and high school education, I immediately entered the mission service as a teacher at Devarakonda in 1932 under the principalship of Miss. H.L. Warkentin,

who entrusted to me the department of sports and games. I did this job to the best of my ability and to the satisfaction of the principal. I took great interest in teaching the students from 1st Form to 3rd Form. I continued in this teaching profession ... from 1932 to 1936. Then, I entered the P. W.D. where I served for seven years" (1937-1944).

I, the author of this booklet, put the question to M.B. John, "Why did you leave mission work and joined PWD contrary to your promise made to Rev. Voth that you will work as a mission servant after finishing your high school education?". John paused a while thoughtfully, and with a smile, gave me the reason: "On the event of Miss Warkentin leaving for Kodaikanal for summer vacation, she held a staff meeting to decide as to who should be in charge of supervising school responsibilities in her absence. I expected that I would be chosen for the job. But to my disappointment, someone else was entrusted with the job. The meeting was over and the principal left for Kodaikanal. I shared my disappointment with a friend of mine among the teachers privately, saying, "If missionary Voth were to be in the chair, the result would have been different." Someone flashed my statement to Kodaikanal. The consequence was, the principal flashed back her reaction dismissing me and another teacher from the school work. I goofed and lost my mission ministry. We note that Miss H.L. Warkentin was a 'righteous servant of God.' When John was in trouble for fees, the principal paid his fees for three years as a student; but when John, as a teacher, was critical of her chairmanship, she punished M.B. John for his overconfidence.

Asked of the reason for his leaving mission school work in 1936, Brother M.B. John answered, saying, "Yes, you may. I goofed and I lost my mission ministry." We should appreciate his willingness to put his confession into his biography, as an example for others to emulate him. "To err is human", but to confess openly is Christian. We esteem M.B. John for his Christian example of self sanctification, left behind for the benefit of young believers of the church.

Young M.B. John in Mission Ministry

Brother M.B. John writes:

"I continued my PWD service for seven years from 1937-44. Early in August of that year, missionary Rev. John A. Wiebe at Mahbubnagar, had a vision that my services were essential in the Mission School as its headmaster. He came straight to Pendlipakala, where I was then working, and prayerfully discussed the matter in his mind with me. In my hearts of hearts I was ever and anon waiting for such a chance to be engaged in the Lord's work once again. I felt that the Lord wanted me to work there and I gladly agreed to go along with him. Then he took me and my family along with all my belongings from Pendlipakala to Miss. H.L.

Warkentin at Devarakonda and asked her whether she had any objection to me being taken into the Mission service at Mahbubnagar. She readily replied that she had no objection at all about it. On hearing this testimony about me and my work from Miss. Warkentin, Rev. Wiebe brought me to Mahbubnagar exactly on August 8, 1944, and stationed me at the mission compound with my family, providing us with a good house for our residence.

Thus my services started once again in the Mission field. I was given charge of the Mission Middle School as its Headmaster. Under my supervision and management the school developed and progressed greatly with Rev. Wiebe as its principal. I continued in this position up to the end of 1948." (pp. 11,12).

Thus Rev. John A. Wiebe became the 7th minister of the Lord in preparing M.B. John for the church work. M.B. John; born on September 21, 1908, was 40 years of age at the end of his ministry as headmaster of the Mennonite Brethren middle School. This is the end of M.B. John's preparatory life as RISING STAR. In 1949 M.B. John was shifted to church life as pastor of the Calvary Mennonite Brethren Church of Mahbubnagar. From here, M.B. John's life will be designated as Blazing Star.

4. SYNOPSIS OF M.B. JOHN AS A RISING STAR

[Forty years of His Preparatory Life (1908-1948)]

1. His Early Life

- a. He was born on September 21, 1908, at Gudipally village, Devarakonda Taluq, Nalgonda District.
- b. His parents were: (Father) Medari Butchiah (Abraham), and (Mother) Andugula Muthyalamma of Mylapoor village.
- c. Muthyalamma died in 1915, when John was 7 years old.
- d. Butchiah had four children (two boys and two girls). He became helpless with the death of his wife; and had to take a second wife, Vellamma.
- e. Butchiah had five brothers. Of them Moses the last but one, had no children. Butchiah sent his eldest son John to live with Moses, a preacher working at Mandapoor village.
- f. Moses had a flock of sheep and goats. He entrusted them to young John to take care of them. John stayed with his uncle Moses for three years (from 1915-17). John became a faithful and dutiful shepherd boy in three years of his stay with his uncle at Mandapoor; loved and trained by him.

2. His School Life

- a. After staying with his uncle Moses at Mandapoor for three years, John expressed his desire to study at school. Moses who appreciated John's

- faithful work as shepherd boy, gladly took, John and admitted him at Nagarkurnool Mission School at the beginning of the year 1918, under the principalship of Rev. D.F. Bergthold, and headmastership of Mr. Joshua Dalvai. There was no mission school at Devarakonda up to 1918.
- b. A mission school was opened at Devarakonda by Rev. J.H. Voth, and the DVK students were, therefore, shifted to DVK mission school "at the end of the year 1918." (Page 6 of M.B.'s autobiography). John was one of them. Miss. Helen Warkentin of Winnipeg, Canada, took charge of the school from Rev. Voth in 1920 and was its principal until the year 1957. M.B. John studied his middle school under the principalship of Miss. Warkentin and completed III Form under her in 1926.
 - c. At the end of his middle school graduation, M.B. John made a request to Rev. P. V. Balzer, missionary, to send him for high school studies. But Rev. Balzer advised him to go for Bible school studies. John willingly agreed and went to NGKL and spent 3 years (1926-29) studying under missionary Rev. D.F. Bergthold, Mr. Aaron Kelly and T. Jeevarathnam.
 - d. On his return from Bible school training at Nagarkurnool, M.B. John approached Rev. J.H. Voth with his desire to go for high school education. Missionary Voth advised him to work as a preacher in villages. M.B. John repeatedly requested the missionary to send him for higher education and promised to work in the mission field after his high school studies. Rev. Voth finally agreed to send him for high school education. Rev. Voth sent John to the Coles Memorial High School in Kurnool. M.B. John worked hard and very successfully completed his high school studies and returned to Devarakonda.

(3) His Service as Teacher

- a. At the end of high school study at Kurnool, M.B. John joined the mission school at Devarakonda, under the principalship of Miss. H.L. Warkentin. He worked in school for four years from 1932-36. He left the school in 1936 and joined the PWD office in 1936 in Pendlipakala, and worked as a clerk for seven years.
- b. M.B. John's marriage took place on March 23, 1933 while he was working as a teacher in the mission school at Devarakonda. He married Miss. K.B. Krupamma, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. K. Benjamin of Nalgonda. Marriage was performed by Rev. M. Benjamin, Pastor of Baptist Church, Nalgonda, during the time of Rev. and Mrs. Frenberg, the stationary missionary of that time.
- c. While M.B. John was working as PWD clerk at Pendlipakala, Rev. John A. Wiebe, missionary at Mahbubnagar, visited M.B. John with the proposal that his service at Mahbubnagar was needed as headmaster of the mission middle school. M.B. John very happily accepted Rev. Wiebe's invitation and left PWD service and accompanied the missionary with his

- family. John was appointed as headmaster of the school at Mahbubnagar on August 8, 1944.
- d. Thus M.B. John, who lost seven years of mission service from 1936 to 1944, was once again redeemed and brought into the Lord's work through the statesmanship of Rev. J A. Wiebe.
 - e. M.B. John worked as headmaster at Mahbubnagar from 1944 to 1948, which completes his 40 years of preparation in the plan of God for M.B. John's life as "Rising Star".

CHAPTER-VI
M.B. JOHN: THE BLAZING STAR
The Profession of His Life
(1949 to 1986)

The first 40 years of M.B. John's life was a period of preparation for life's ministry in the plan of God for him. We have seen that God has used 7 ministers in preparing John for his ministry, namely, (1) Moses, an evangelist of Mandapoor, (2) Joshua Oalavai, headmaster of mission school of Nagarkurnool field, (3) Miss Helen L. Warkentin, principal of Devarakonda Mission School, (4) Rev. P.v. Balzer, missionary at OYK working in place of Rev. J.H.Voth on furlough, (5) Rev. D.F. Bergthold, missionary of Nagarkurnool field, (6) Rev. J.H.Yoth, missionary at Devarakonda, (7) Rev. John A. Wiebe, missionary of Mahbubnagar field. John's preparation for ministry in God's plan consisted of four kinds of training which all together molded Medari John into a remarkable servant of God in the making as a well known and most popular church pastor and administrator in the history of the Mennonite Brethren Church of India. M.B. John's popularity, as the top-most leader among the prominent leaders in the India Mennonite Brethren Conference scenario, began to become conspicuous with his coming into church ministry appointed as pastor of the Calvary M.B. Church of Mahbubnagar, in the year 1949.

John A. Toews of General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, Fresno, California, writes in his book (1975), A HISTORY OF THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH :

"Great and revolutionary changes have taken place in India since the country achieved independence in 1947. A rising nationalism and opposition to foreign influence have also affected the pattern of M.B. missionary, involvement in India. In God's providence these winds of the change have aided in the indigenization of the M.B. Church in India.

The mission station pattern has given way to a church-centered ministry. Mission property has been transferred to the national church as rapidly as possible and advisable. The administration of churches, schools and hospitals were turned over to national church leaders. Although the new and larger financial responsibilities appeared to be beyond the church's resources, the national Christians have risen to the challenge in a remarkable manner. By 1970 the Andhra Mennonite Brethren Church was prepared not only to support the local program, but also to provide one-fourth of the total conference budget for Bible training, literature and radio evangelism.

Of utmost importance for the future development of the M.B. Church in India is a strong and positive spiritual leadership. In recent years a number of men have emerged with exceptional ability and vision. Among these, according to Phyllis Martens, are the following:

M.B. John, Pastor of the large Mahbubnagar Church;
D. J. Arthur, Conference Evangelist;
N. P. James, Principal, Shamshabad Bible School and College
J. Paranjyothi, Conference Chairman and Bible teacher, and
R.R.K. Murthy, Former head of literature and radio work, now in "high - caste evangelism."

"The Mennonite Brethren Church in India is well on its way to become self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating." (pp. 404-405).

1. M.B. JOHN: THE KEY MAN

For 40 years (1908 to 1948) God had been preparing Medari John to be His key person to guide the Mennonite Brethren of India in the face of the "great and revolutionary political changes" taking place in India since the country achieved independence in 1947, which is in reality an intense conflict between two great ideological forces ... Biblical and philosophical faiths. The time of preparation (40 years) was so long because this was a great task such as no other person had been called upon to do. Medari John probably had a high IQ and many natural talents. But he had to have 40 years of special training under the trainers of God. Those 40 years (1908 to 1948) gave Medari John his final preparation as "God's man", for tending and defending the flock of Jesus Christ (cf. In. 21: 15,16, "Feed my lambs, Feed my sheep ").

2. M.B. JOHN'S MINISTRY BETWEEN 1949 to 1959

M.B. John, who was working in the Middle School, Mahbubnagar, as headmaster, from 1944 to 1948, was shifted to church ministry appointed as pastor of the Calvary M.B. Church, Mahbubnagar in 1949, and sent for a year's Bible training at the Allahabad Oriental Missionary Society. Dalavai Richard was also sent along with M.B. John. They both were accompanied by their families. After a year's training at Allahabad from 1949-50, the two families returned to their respective mission stations (the M.B. Johns to Mahbubnagar and the Richards to Hughestown). Brother Richards, after a year's service at Hughestown, passed away into the Lord's presence. He died in the Hughestown Mission Compound.

Brother M.B. John was ordained by the Mahbubnagar Calvary M.B. Church on July 8, 1953. His ordination function was attended by missionaries, J.J. Dick, J.H. Lohrenz, I.1. Kasper, and J.A. Wiebe. The native pastors Rev. M.S. Paul,

(Mahbubnagar), Rev. G. John, from Wanaparthy, Rev. Jonnalagadda John, (Mahbubnagar), Rev. Y.L. Benjamin, Shamshabad, were also present at the function. All those who were present at the function laid their hands on the ordained couple and blessed them. M.B. John, at the age of 45 years, became a full-fledged pastor, with the designation Rev. M.B. John.

3. MINISTRIES OF REV. M.B. JOHN

All the ministries of Rev. M.B. John, mentioned here under, are cited verbatim from his autobiography, published in February 1983.

1. His ministries

"I would like to present this statement as under for the ready reference of all the readers at a glance" says M.B. John (pp. 33)

1.	The total number of baptisms given by me	1370
2.	The total number of Lord's Suppers served	442
3.	The total number of marriages solemnized	366
4.	The total number of burials	265
5.	The number of children named and dedicated	180
6.	The total number of ordinations	50
7.	The total number of churches established	10
8.	The total number of church buildings built	10
9.	The total number of sermons dedicated	25
10.	Total number of sermons delivered, and more	1000

2. Week of Witness (pp. 35-37)

"This ministry (i.e., Week of Witness) was an additional and extra service which I was carrying on with the help of the young people of the Calvary M.B. Church, Mahbubnagar, during every summer season, particularly in the month of May. The young people devoted their time for 10 to 15 days in joining me in this ministry of witness for Christ....going around the villages surrounding Mahbubnagar. It was good training for the young people who participated in this noble cause. I would like to mention some of the names of the young men who were blessed by this ministry and who said to me time and again that it was good training for their future ministry. The chief people among them are as follows:

BROTHERS

1. R.S. Lemuel (now ordained, is the director of MCSFI)
2. R. S. Aseervadam (now Dr. in both Ministry and History)
3. M. P. Charles, Headmaster, Govt. High School
4. M. L. Caleb, Headmaster, Govt. High School
5. M. P. John, Headmaster, Govt. High School
6. M. P. George, UDC, DEO's Office
7. M. J. Walter Benjamin, Customs Officer, Madras
8. M. Jesse John, (Now in USA)
9. M. Clement John, (Now in USA)
10. C P. Lazarus, (Teacher, MBC High School, Mahbubnagar)
11. G. P. Paul (in Govt. Service)
12. S. P. Samuel (in Govt. Service)
13. S. E. Samuel (Advocate)
14. S. E. Samuel (Sanitary Inspector)
15. V. B. David (Physical Instructor)
16. S. R. Ephraim (TTI/APSRTC)
17. B. S. Gnyanaprakasham (Retired Headmaster)
18. Abraham Budala (Retired Chargeman/APSRTC)
19. S. A. Jyothi (Radio Technician/Vishwavani)
20. S. A. Krupavaram (Private Medical Practitioner)
21. K. J. Daniel (Chairman)
22. K. P. Saul (Preacher, Mahbubnagar)
23. S. A. Prakasham (Typist in the court)
24. G. L. Prakasham (School Asst./MBCHS/Mahbubnagar)
25. M. P. Joseph (School Asst./MBCHS/ Mahbubnagar)
26. R. S. David (School Asst./MBCHS/ Mahbubnagar)
27. R. S. Dayavaradanam (Lecturer, Govt. College)
28. B. D. Luther (UDC, Agriculture Dept, Kodengal)
29. B. Jayakar Prakash' (Sub~Inspector, Police, Hyderabad)
30. B. Sathyaraj Prakash (Commercial Tax Officer, Mahbubnagar)
31. P. S. Purushotham (Prison Preacher)
32. T. D. Vinaykumar
33. B. D. Luther
34. K. S. Abraham
35. M. P. Jacob

I am thankful to all these people mentioned above and also others who encouraged me in this special project by their participation and cooperation in it. I personally received great blessings by doing this ministry and all those who worked with me also received great blessings."

I also am happy to mention some of the leaders of the M.B. Conference and Council of India as under.

1. The late Bro. Albert Samuel, Chairman, Devarakonda
2. The late Bro. G.S. Paul, Chairman, Devarakonda
3. The late Bro. M.P. Devadas, Devarakonda
4. Rev. Dr. Arthur Dalavai, Chairman
5. Rev. N.P. James, Chairman
6. Rev. J. Paranjyothi, Chairman
7. Bro. P. B. Richard, Secretary, Treasurer
8. Bro. M.C. Emmanuel, Secretary
9. Bro. B. Z. John, Secretary
10. Bro. P. B. Isaac, Treasurer
11. Bro. B. A. George, HM, Hyderabad, Secretary
12. Bro. A. R. Jaipal, Secretary
13. Bro. B. A. George, HM, Mahbubnagar, Secretary
14. Bro. J. S. Devasahayam, Treasurer
15. Bro. P. G. Arnold, Chairman
16. Rev. M. C. Laban
17. Bro. S. A. Bhasker
18. Bro. S. A. Raju
19. Rev. R.R.K. Murthy, Radio Pastor
20. Bro. A. S. Caleb
21. Bro. V. C. Abraham
22. Bro. M.B. Paranjyothi
23. Rev. M. N. Jeevarathnam
24. Rev. S. Nathaniel
25. Bro. C. J. Sathyanandam
26. Rev. N. Mathew
27. Rev. A. Thomas
28. Rev. K. P. Saul
29. Rev. N. R. Samuel
30. Rev. A. S. Joshua
31. Bro. M. P. Paul
32. Bro. M. Prakasham
33. Bro. Ch. Vedantham
34. Bro. Y. B. Reuben
35. Bro. David Eshwarlal, HM
36. Bro. S. D. George, HM (pp. 38, 39)

3. The Ministry of Sign Board Evangelism

Pastor M.B. John writes:

"Sign-board evangelism is another means and way of propagating and proclaiming the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the whole world. I

was privileged to do this service in the Calvary M.B. Church, Mahbubnagar area in two important places- one in the church compound facing the public road leading to the railway station; and the other in the Christian cemetery facing the Mahbubnagar - Hyderabad road by fixing big wooden and metal boards with Biblical verses, written in bold letters. The church board contains the following verse: *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."* (I Tim. 1: 15). The second sign-board contains the following verse: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house."* (Acts 16:31)

Many people who pass by those roads read these verses and are inspired to know more about them. Such people came to me and enquired about the full meaning of these verses and I explained to them the full Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord. After hearing like this many a time from me, some of the people believed in Jesus Christ and accepted Him as their Personal Savior and Redeemer and were baptized in the triune name of our God. This sort of ministry added some souls to the church and it helped more and more in my personal evangelism." (pp. 32,33)

M.B. Visitors from North America to M.B.Churches in India during M.B. John's Pastorate in Mahbubnagar

Pastor M. B. John writes: "The following M. B. Brethren visited M. B. Churches in India from North America (USA and Canada) during my pastorate in Mahbubnagar:

1. The late Rev. H. K. Warkentin (Foreign Mission Board Member).
2. Rev. and Dr. J. B. Toews (General Secretary, Board of Foreign Missions and Services)
3. Rev. A. E. Janzen, (Treasurer, Board of Foreign Missions and Services, Hillsboro) ..
4. Rev. Dr. G. W. Peters, (Professor, Dallas Theological Seminary; and also Board Member)
5. Rev. Dr. F.C. Peters, (President, Waterloo University, and Board Member)
6. Rev. Dr. Vernon Wiebe, (General Secretary, Board of Foreign Missions and Services)
7. Rev. Bill Wiebe, (Associate Secretary, Board of Foreign Missions and services)
8. Rev. J. H. Epp, (Associate Secretary, Board of Foreign Missions and Services)
9. Rev. and Dr. Waldo Hiebert, (Chairman, Board of Foreign Missions and Services)
10. Rev. I. B. Kleiwer, (Pastor and Board Member)
11. Bro. Dephare, (Board Member)

12. Rev. Dr. Paul G. Hiebert, (Consultant Member, Board of Foreign Missions and Services, and Missionary to India)
13. Rev. Dr. P. M. Hamm, (Associate Secretary, Board of Foreign Missions and Services, and Missionary to India)
14. Rev. Dr. R. M. Bearg, (Pastor, and Board Member)
15. Rev. Dr. H. R. Bearg, (Pastor, and Board Member).
16. Rev. Dr. H. A. Harder, (Chairman, Board of Missions and Services)

I and Mrs. M. B. John feel highly grateful to God for the closer Christian fellowship of the above mentioned God's servants whom we visited in North America and they visited us in India. It was a great privilege and opportunity for me to meet them in the Centennial Conference that took place in Reedley, California in 1960 which was an eventful and memorable occasion for me as a fraternal delegate from the M. B. Church of India. It was a rare and seldom privilege for me to attend this historic conference and participate in deliberations and discussions. (pp. 37,38)

M. B. Conference National Leaders very closely associated with Pastor M.B. John while working at Mahbubnagar

Pastor M. B. John writes: "I also am happy to mention some of the leaders of the M.B. Conference and Council of India as under."

1. The late Bro; G. Albert Samuel, Pastor, Devarakonda (DVK)
2. The late Bro. G. S. Paul, Chairman (DVK)
3. The late Bro. M. P. Devadas, HM, DVK
4. Rev. Dr. Arthur J. Dalavai, Chairman, Shamshabad
5. Rev. N. P. James, Principal, Shamshabad, Chairman
6. Rev. J. Paranjyothy, Chairman, Mahbubnagar, Radio Ministry
7. Bro. P. B. Richard, Secretary, Devarakonda
8. Bro. M. C. Emmanuel, Secretary, Devarakonda
9. Bro. B. Z. John, Secretary, Mahbubnagar
10. Bro. P. B. Isaac, Treasurer, Wanaparthy
11. Bro. B. A. George, HM, Secretary, Hyderabad.
12. Bro. A. R. Jaipal, Secretary, Mahbubnagar
13. Bro. B. A. George (HM, Mahbubnagar), Secretary
14. Bro. J. S. Devasahayam, Treasurer

15. Dr. P. B. Arnold, Chairman, Jadcherla
16. Rev. M; C. Laban, Pastor, Devarakonda
17. Bro. S. A. Bhasker, Mahbubnagar
18. Bro. S. A. Raju, Mahbubnagar
19. Rev. R. R. K. Murthy, Radio Pastor, Mahbubnagar
20. Bro. A. S. Caleb, Shamshabad
21. Bro. V. C. Abraham
22. Bro. M. B. Paranjyothi
23. Rev. M. N. Jeevarathnam, Nagarkurnool
24. Rev. B. Nathaniel, Devarakonda
25. Bro. C. J. Sathyanandam
26. Rev. N. Mathew
27. Rev. A. Thomas
28. Bro. K. P. Saul, Mahbubnagar
29. Rev. N. R. Samuel
30. Rev. A. S. Joshua
31. Bro. M. P. Paul
32. Bro. M. Prakasham
33. Bro. Ch. Vedantham, HM, Wanaparthy
34. Bro. Y. B. Reuben
35. Bro. David Eshwarlal, HM
36. Bro. S. D. George, HM, Gadwal

In Chapter V we have seen how the Lord had been guiding the training programme for His up-coming 'servant of God' ,M. B. John, during the years 1908-48. God used seven of His ministers (two national and five missionary personnel). The fruit of this training under the God-chosen teachers can be seen in the ' 14 firsts' of M. B. John recorded by hin1self at the very beginning of his autobiography of 1983. These ' 14 firsts of M. B. John' clearly vindicate the fact that the Lord's Spirit was preparing John for his future ministry, and also that the outstanding characteristic of John was his God-gifted versatility.

4. The 14 Firsts of M.B. John's life mentioned at the beginning of his book are as follows:

1. First M. B. Student Higher Theological studies at Allahabad.
2. First M. B. Pastor for Calvary M. B. Church, Mahbubnagar.
3. First M. B. Ordination among M. B. brotherhood.
4. First National Chairman of the Governing Council.
5. First Fraternal Delegate to Centennial Conference at Reedley, U.S.A.
6. First Student in M. B. Bible Seminary at Fresno, California, U.S.A.
7. The first visiting Pastor in all the M. B. Churches and institutions in U.S.A. and Canada.
8. The first Chairman for MCSFI organization, Calcutta.
9. The first M. B. Executive Committee Member in the Presidium Meeting of the World Mennonite Conference.
10. The first Executive Member of the Bible Society of India, Auxiliary Branch, Secunderabad, A.P.
11. The first M. B. Correspondent for M. B. Schools.
12. The first M. B. Delegate to go to Portirico, South America for making pre-arrangements for the World Mennonite Conference.
13. First Chairman of the M. B. Property Association Private Ltd.
14. First representation to APCC and Evangelical Fellowship of India.

4. PASTOR M. B. JOHN'S CONFERENCE MINISTRIES (Apart from His Pastoral Ministry)

Because of the intensely personal nature of his book, "A Brief Story of the Life of Rev. & Mrs. M. B. John," published in February 1983, his character and life are better known to us than that of any of the other writing church ministers. M. B. John was a devoted patriot, wholly committed to God and to evangelical faith of the Mennonite Brethren Church of world.

M. B. John enjoyed the full confidence of the M. B. missionaries that worked in India, with whom he was closely associated throughout his life, beginning from his studentship (1918) up to the time of his retirement in 1986, as a church pastor and Conference leader of the Mennonite Brethren Church of Andhra Pradesh, India.

His autobiography may be divided as follows:

I. The Rising Star. Preparation as a student and teacher, for the ministry, a period of 40 years in the making.

II. The Blazing Star. Various activities that molded him into one of the 57 most prominent figures in the history of the India Mennonite Brethren Church; a

mountain peak among the church characters. He will be remembered as the most famous ancestor of the India Mennonite Brotherhood.

III. The Gazing Star. His post retirement itinerant ministries (1986-2002). Like Moses of Old Testament time, M. B. John has ever been busy preaching in many churches on invitation, touring on evangelistic campaigns in the 1MB Conference areas and constructing church-buildings in several villages of Nalgonda district from where M. B. John hailed.

Under Chapter VI, M. B. John, the Blazing Star, we have three phases of M. B. John's total ministry as church pastor (1949-1988), which loom large into mountain-peak eminence: (1) M. B. John, the first national chairman of the Governing Council of the IMB Conference; (2) M. B. John, the first Fraternal Delegate to the Centennial Conference, held at Reedley, California, U.S.A.; (3) M. B. John, the first visiting pastor in all the M. B. Churches and Institutions in U.S.A. and Canada.

1. Governing Council

The Governing Council (GC) came into being in the year 1956. Rev. John A. Wiebe, missionary at Mahbubnagar, was GC's chairman for the first two years (1956-57; 1957-58). Rev. A. A. Unruh, missionary, was GC chairman for the year 1958-59; and Rev. P. V. Balzer, missionary, was GC chairman for the year 1959-60

Then Rev. M. B. John, the first national minister, became the GC Chairman, for the year 1960-61; the second national to become the GC Chairman was Bro. G. S. Paul, Compounder, Mission Hospital, Devarakonda, for the year 1961-62.

The Secretaries and Treasurers for the same period (1956-62) were as follows:

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------|
| 1. | Secretary for the first year (1956-57) was | Rev. Henry P. Poetker |
| 2. | Secretary for the second year (1957-58) was | D. Franz Joshua |
| 3. | Secretary for the third year (1958-59) was | D. Franz Joshua |
| 4. | Secretary for the 4th year (1959-60) was | B. Z. John |
| 5. | Secretary for the 5th year (1960-61) was | R.R.K. Murthy |
| 6. | Secretary for the 6th year (1961-62) was | D. J. Arthur |

For the full picture of Governing Council officials for 20 years (1956 to 1977), see the next page. Reference : "The History of the Mennonite Brethren Church, A.P., India," published in 1990; Editors: Bhoompag Aaron George; "India Mennonite Brethren Church at Cross-Roads," published in March 1973, Edited by D. 1. Arthur, Governing Council Chairman, for the GC Executive.

2. Synopsis

1. Rev. M.B. John was the first national minister, pastor of the Calvary M. B. Church, Mahbubnagar, to become the Governing Council Chairman. He was elected as GC Chairman for five terms: (1960-61; 1962-63; 1963-64; 1973-74; 1974-75).
2. Bro. G.S. Paul, Compounder, Mission Hospital, Devarakonda, was the second national minister, to become the GC chairman. He served two terms as GC Chairman (1961-62 and 1964-65).
3. Bro. D. J. Arthur, Conference Evangelist, was the third national minister, to become the GC chairman. He served four terms as GC Chairman: (1965-66; 1966-67; 1971-72; 1972-73).
4. Bro. J. Paranjyothi, Radio minister, Mahbubnagar, was the fourth national minister to serve as GC Chairman. He served two terms: (1967-68; 1968-69).
5. Bro. M. P. Devadas, HM, Mission High School, Devarakonda, was the fifth national minister, to serve as GC Chairman. He served one term (1969-70).

Chairmen of the Governing Council of the Conference of the M. B. Church of India (Est. 1956).

YEAR	CHAIRMAN/ Asst. Chairman	SECRETARY/ Asst. Secretary	TREASURER/ Asst. Treasurer
1956-57	John A. Wiebe	Henry P. Poetker K. S. Premiah	
1957-58	John A. Wiebe	D. Franz Joshua	M. Timothy
1958-59	A. A. Unruh M. B. John	D. Franz Joshua K. S. Premiah	
1959-60	P. V. Balzer M. B. John	B. Z. John V. S. Villard	Henry Krahn D. J. Arthur
1960-61	M. B. John G. S. Paul	R. R. K. Murthy K. S. Premiah	D. J. Arthur
1961-62	G. S. Paul J. John	D. J. Arthur P. B. Reuben	M. B. John
1962-63	M. B. John P. V. Gerhardt	D. J. Arthur B. A. George (G)	M. B. John
1963-64	M.B. John P. V. Gerhardt	B. A. George (G) C. J. Sathyanandam	G.S. Paul
1964-65	G. S. Paul P. B. Abraham	B. Z. John D. S. Krupadanam	M. B. John
1965-66	D. J. Arthur P. B. Abraham	M. P. Devadas C. J. Satyanandam	M. B. John
1966-67	D. J. Arthur M. C. Simon	M. P. Devadas R. D. Kruparam	P. B. Isaac
1967-68	J. Paranjyothi P. V. Gerhardt	D.J. Arthur A. R. Jaipal	P. B. Isaac

1968-69	J.Paranjyothi M. P. Devadas	A. R. Jaipal D. S. Krupadanam	N. P. James
1969-70	M. P. Devadas J. Paranjyothi	P. B. Richard D.S. Krupadanam	N. P. James
1970-71	N. P. James M. B. John	P. E. Solomon A. R. Jaipal	P. B. Richard
1971-72	D.J Arthur Dr. N. S. Isaiah	B. A. George (H) M. C. Emmanuel	P. B. Richard
1972-73	D. J. Arthur M. B. John	M. B. Paranjyothi	P. B. Richard
1973-74	M. B. John Dr. N. S. Isaiah	M. C. Emmanuel S. A. Raju	P. B. Richard
1974-75	M. B. John	M. C. Emmanuel Dr. N. S. Isaiah	S. A. Raju
1975-76	N. P. James Dr. N. S. Isaiah	M. C. Emmanuel B. A. George (G)	A. S. Caleb
1976-77	N. P. James Dr. N. S. Isaiah	M. C. Emmanuel B. A. George (G)	A. S. Caleb

5. PASTOR M.B. JOHN'S FOREIGN TOURS

Pastor M.B. John's ascendancy into prominence and popularity as a blazing star in the history of Mennonite Brethren Conference of India began in the year 1950 when he returned from Allahabad Oriental Missionary Society after a year's Bible training (1949-50) and was commissioned as a full-fledged pastor of the Calvary M.B. Church of Mahbubnagar in 1950 and ordained in 1953. Between 1950 and 1960 he was fully and industriously engaged in the work of the Conference at large. It is good to quote from his autobiography (A brief story of the life of Rev. & Mrs. M.B. John from 1908 to 1983) the way in which M.B. John was involved in the work of the M.B. Conference in addition to his responsibility as the pastor of his church at Mahbubnagar Calvary M.B. Church: He writes:

"In addition to my pastoral duties I was requested to take Bible classes for the high school sections, and tenth class in particular with the permission of the church. Many students received spiritual blessings from my Bible teaching, and most of them were convinced of their sins and received Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, and were baptized by me. This is one of the joyful ministries that I have done during my pastorate and won many souls for the Lord... "

"I also worked for the conference in many capacities such as chairman, treasurer and as the first M.B. Correspondent of the M.B. Schools, and also as the first radio speaker. Here I might mention that there were no studio facilities for recording our radio talks. So we used to go all the way to Trimulgherry from Mahbubnagar along with our missionaries during 1956-57. Then we had studio facilities at Mahbubnagar itself. This work was then entrusted to the permanent

staff of the radio ministry. Since then I was fully engaged in the church ministry. I was elected several times as chairman of the Governing Council of the M.B. church of India, and also as the chairman of many boards of the Governing Council. I did it with great joy and happiness for the betterment and development of the M.B. Conference, I took active part in these extra activities and responsibilities apart from church work and I always felt very glad that I was doing them for the glory of God and the growth of the Conference. God gave me physical strength and spiritual courage to face some hard steps and difficulties in the work of the Conference, and solve them peacefully according to the will of God. I am thankful to all of my brethren who co-operated with me and helped me in this blessed and glorious ministry of our Almighty God.

Pastor M.B. John gives us a vivid picture of his foreign tours as follows: "While I was serving the Lord in the church faithfully, missionaries thought of my dedicated and consecrated services rendered for the glory of God and the edification of the church. They had a vision to send me to North America on the special occasion of the M.B. Centennial Conference which was going to take place from November 13 to 16, 1960, at Reedley, California, U.S.A. The proposal was unanimously accepted by the Missionary Council in India and the M.B. Conference in India and it was forwarded to the M.B. Board of Foreign Missions and Services at Hillsboro, Kansas, U.S.A. On receiving this proposal from the M.B. Conference of India and the Missionary Council, the Board readily agreed to welcome me as a Fraternal Delegate to represent the M.B. churches in India at the Centennial Conference. Accordingly plans and proposal's were made for my passage from India to U.S.A. I left India for USA at the end of June 1960, and reached Los Angeles harbor on board the ship, Silver Spray, on September 12, 1960. The late Rev. and Mrs. J.H. Lohrenz, the late Rev. H.K. Warkentin and others were waiting to welcome and receive me at the harbor. They carried all my belongings from the ship into their cars, and drove me straight to Fresno, California, where our M.B. Biblical Seminary is situated. For a fortnight the management of the seminary arranged for my stay with the Lohrenzes whom I knew very well at seminary campus. The Lohrenzes gave me a very good hospitality and kind treatment. After that period, the Seminary authorities made arrangements for me to stay in Reedley with late Rev. and Mrs. J.H. Weines, as they were very closely related to the late Rev. and Mrs. J.H.Voth, the missionaries who worked in India.

I was called to the USA by the M.B. Board of Missions and Services for a specific threefold purpose:

Firstly, to be a Fraternal Delegate from M.B. Churches in India to the M.B. Centennial Conference (1860- 1960).

Secondly, to undergo Biblical training at Fresno Seminary for one full semester from September 1960 to February 1961.

Thirdly, to visit all the M.B. churches in the States as well as in Canada, for fellowship, preaching and presenting M.B. churches' activities in India (February to April 1961).

It was a great privilege for me to be invited as the first Fraternal Delegate, the first student to the seminary, and the first visiting pastor from India to the M.B. church of North America." (MBJ's Autobiography, pp. 13,14).

A quote from MBJ on his programme

"I participated in the Centennial Conference as a bonafide delegate, and presented the activities of the M.B. churches in India in it, and took active part in its business sessions also throughout. The officers of the Centennial Conference were very much pleased to have me in their midst. I served the Lord's Supper in the conference along with twenty church leaders from other countries.

"As soon as the Lord's Supper was over a very old man from the congregation came to me, fell on my neck and kissed me saying, Brother John, today I have seen a glimpse of a little heaven in this Centennial Conference. Some day when I go to be with my Lord, I will have a broader vision to look into the real heaven in all its glory. I will see you in person and you will see me in that great glory in person as we both belong to the Lord, Jesus Christ, who is our Saviour and Redeemer. I may not see you again in this world, but be sure that we will meet in the other world" (MBJ's Autog. 14).

MBJ continues to write, "I successfully completed my Biblical studies at the Biblical Seminary, Fresno, for a full semester and I was given a very good certificate by the seminary authorities to that effect."

"After finishing my work in the seminary and in the Conference, the Board made a programme for me to visit M.B. churches and Bible schools and colleges in the USA and Canada. This tour took a period of three months from February to April 1961. I was called to the Headquarters in Hillsboro where I stayed till the end of February giving them all information regarding the activities of the India M.B. Churches, before leaving on tour to visit churches as scheduled. The Board gave me Rev. H.K. Warkentin as my guide in whose fellowship I was able to complete my tour successfully." (MBJ's Autog. 14).

1. Churches visited by M.B. John

MBJ gives us a list of churches he visited in USA and Canada during the months of March and April 1961. They are:

Churches visited by MBJ in USA (1960-61)

1. The Reedley M.B. Church, California
2. The Dinuba M.B. Church, California
3. The Zion M.B. Church, California
4. The Butler M.B. Church, Fresno, California
5. The Bethany M.B. Church, California
6. M.B. Church, Hillsboro
7. M.B. Church, Ebenfeld, Kansas
8. M.B. Church, Newton, Kansas
9. M.B. Church, Fairview, Minnesota
10. M.B. Church, Mountain Lake, Minnesota
11. Zion M.B. Church, Mountain Lake, Minnesota
12. M.B. Church, Salem, Oregon
13. Carson M.B. Church, Delft, Mountain Lake, Minnesota
14. M.B. Church, Coaldale, California
15. M.B. Church, Bakersfield, California
16. M.B. Church, San Jose, California
17. Kingwood Bible M.B. Church, Salem, South Dakota
18. General Mennonite Church, Salem, Oregon
19. M.B. Church, Wichita, Kansas
20. M.B. Church, Henderson, Nebraska
21. M.B. Church, Corn, Oklahoma
22. M.B. Church, Hooker, Oklahoma
23. M.B. Church, Bridge-Water, South Dakota
24. M.B. Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma
25. M.B. Church, Shafer, California

Churches visited by MBJ in Canada

1. M.B. Church, Ontario
2. M.B. Church, Vineland, Ontario
3. Bethesda M.B. Home, Vineland, Ontario
4. Elmwood M.B. Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba
5. M.B. Church, Steinbach, Manitoba
6. Bethany M.B. Church, Winnipeg
7. M.B. Church, Winkler, Manitoba
8. M.B. Church, Morden, Manitoba
9. M.B. Church, Calgary, Saskatchewan
10. M.B. Church, Chellawaik
11. M.B. Church, Saskatchewan
12. M.B. Church, Dalmeny, Saskatchewan

13. M.B. Church, Abbotsford, / Columbia / British
14. M.B. Church, Clearbrook, British Columbia
15. M.B. Church, Yarrow, British Columbia
16. M.B. Bible Institute, Winkler, Manitoba
17. M.B. Bible Institute, Clearbrook, British Columbia
18. M.B. Home for the Aged, Clearbrook, British Columbia
19. M.C.C. Centre, Yarrow, British Columbia
20. The Niagara Falls, Ontario.

"I was able to visit and have fellowship in the churches, Institutes and families according to the programme and plan chalked out by the Board of Foreign Missions and Services, Hillsboro, Kansas. All these churches and institutes welcomed me warmly and they listened very eagerly to my messages and the report of the activities of the MB churches in India. This was the first time for an Indian brother delegated to go and visit the brethren and sisters in USA and Canada, and this made them very anxious and curious to see me in person as a fruit of their prayers and support. The old people in the Home for the aged in Clearbrook gathered together with great desire to see me say about the work of the MB missionaries and native preachers which was being carried on by them in India. Wherever I went I was very much loved and treated very well, both in churches and families with great appreciation. It was a rare chance for which first of all I praise and glorify God and then thank wholeheartedly the M.B. Brethren and sisters who helped me and supported me during my first visit to USA and Canada in 1960-61, and I also thank the Board of Foreign Missions and Services for all the arrangements they made for me during my stay abroad. I can never forget the love and affection shown to me by Rev. Lando Hiebert (Chairman), Rev. J.B. Toews (General Secretary), Rev. A.E. Janzen (Treasurer), and other associate secretaries and members in the Board, and I am deeply indebted to them for all their help and co-operation. Wherever I went the people were delighted to hear my name M.B. John, because my initials reminded them of M.B. Mission, M.B. Church and M.B. Conference and they remembered me more easily as Mennonite Brethren John as my initials exactly fitted into the M.B. context. They all wished in a slogan: Mennonite Brethren John come and visit us again, Mennonite Brethren John, come and visit us again. This is a memorable and historical event in the history of the M.B. Church of India." (MBJ - Autob./pp.16, 17). "I am thankful to the Calvary M.B. Church, Mahbubnagar, for permitting me to go to North America as a delegate to the Centennial Conference at the instance of the Missionary Council. After completing my programme for nearly one year, I came back and resumed my church duties.

2. Pastor M.B. John's Second Foreign Tour

M.C.S.F.I. (Mennonite Committee of Service and Fellowship of India) was formed and established as a national organization from the previous M.C.C. (Mennonite Central Committee) in 1962. Bishop P.J. Malagar was the Director and Promoter of this new organization. Rev. M.B. John was fortunate to become the first chairman of the newly formed M.C.S.F.I. representing the M.B. Church of India.

Our M.B. churches have an affiliation with this organization. He was very cooperative and helpful in dealing with our M.B. Church affairs promoting social works in the M.B. fields of Andhra Pradesh. He opened the way for many of the M.B. young men to go abroad for 'one year training' and to return to India after completing their training as a condition laid down by the M.C.S.F.I. Organization Committee. Some of our young men accordingly went abroad and returned faithfully back to India.

Rev. M.B. John was fortunate to become the first chairman of the newly formed M.C.S.F.I.. M.B. John writes:

"I was fortunate enough to go abroad for the first time in 1960-1961 on the arrangements made by the Board of Foreign Missions and Services, Hillsboro, Kansas, as mentioned earlier in this narration. In the year 1975, I was once again privileged to go to Puerto Rico, South America, to attend and participate in the Mennonite Presidium Meeting of the World Mennonite Conference held from July 2-9, 1975, by the arrangement of the Mennonite Central Service and Fellowship of India (MCSFI), in collaboration with the World Mennonite Conference. According to the programme, I received intimation so I arrived at the San Juan airport on July 1, at about 6 p.m. The Executive Secretary, Krabil, received me at the airport warmly and took me to Puerto Rico where the said meeting was arranged for our discussions and deliberations for the ensuing World Mennonite Conference.

On the first day of the meeting I was asked to lead the devotions and then the business of the meeting took place for the remaining of the day. There were more than 15 delegates from various countries and I was one from India. In this Presidium meeting several important matters came up for discussion, such as: Symbol for the World Conference (Emblem); Place of the ensuing conference; The main theme of the conference "Unchanging Christ in a Changing World"; Dates and arrangements for delegates who come from different countries. This meeting lasted for one week as scheduled. (p. 23,24). And all the delegates took keen interest in its discussions and deliberations and expressed their views and plans freely in the meetings. Some of the delegates who attended these meetings departed for their respective places at the end of the week. I and a delegate from Africa were delegated to visit some churches in South America, and preach the word of God on the following Sunday. Pastor Nephthali took us to churches such as Mennonite La Plata Church and the Andrews Church where we

preached on that Sunday. We spent our Sunday night at the church of La Plata, and in the morning we were brought to the San Juan airport. The church people were very much pleased with our spiritual messages and the report of the activities of M.B Church in India and also Africa.

"We took our flight from San Juan to Fresno, USA. As soon as I arrived at the airport, I phoned to my son and daughter-in-law, Jesse and Joyce, with whom my wife was also staying. On receipt of the phone call, all the three came to the airport in their car and received me with great warmth and affection embracing me and shedding tears of joy for a while on meeting after a long time. Then all of us came to Jesse's home in Fresno, California. My wife was already staying with Jesse and Joyce for a week after we departed from the New York Airport. This was the first time for my wife to visit the USA and Canada. Jesse and Joyce arranged for their mother's visit abroad. Both of us stayed with them for a month or so, visiting M.B. churches in Fresno, Reedley and Dinuba, etc. on the programme arranged by Rev. Waldo Heibert, who was the chairman of Foreign Missions and Services in consultation with the Board at Hillsboro, Kansas. The Board gave their consent to me and my wife to visit the M.B. Churches around Fresno according to the guidance and instruction of Rev. Waldo Heibert, who was the professor of the M.B. Seminary at Fresno and we finished the programme of visiting the churches in the stipulated time up to the end of July 1975". (MBJ -Autob.lp.24.)

"We proceeded from Fresno, CA, to reach the Carson M.B. Church, Mountain Lake, Minnesota, along with Rev, & Mrs. Waldo Heibert, the chairman of the Board of Foreign Missions and Services. After four days' journey, we reached the Carson M.B. church in the first week of August 1975, to attend and participate in the Centennial Celebrations of the Carson M.B. Church according to the programme prepared by the said church from August 2-4, 1975. Rev. Dr. Waldo Heibert was the main and guest speaker of the occasion. Mrs. J.A. Weibe was there at that time, and reported about the church work in India and we along with her gave the message and also the report of the M.B. Church in India. Mrs. M.B. John talked in Telugu and I interpreted for her from Telugu to English, and the whole congregation appreciated our message and felt glad for the ministry in India. They were also amazed at our way of talking in Telugu and interpreting into English-for the first time in their church as wife and husband from M.B. Church of India. After the duration of the programme of the Centennial Celebrations of the church, we then started to go to reach Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, as per the programme made by the Board of Foreign Missions, to attend and participate in the M.B. General Conference taking place from Mountain Lake to Winnipeg the right time scheduled for the Conference in their own car. There we met the Board members namely, Dr. Vernon Weibe, the General Secretary, Bro. Bill Weibe, Associate Secretary, and Bro. Henry Paul, "Treasurer, and other .Board members. The chairman Waldo Heibert introduced us (myself and Mrs.

M.B. John) to the Board people and they received us warmly into their fellowship and made all the necessary arrangements for our visit around the States and Canada after Conference was over. We also participated in the Board meeting held at Winnipeg and reported about the church work in India and the Board felt glad over the progress of the activities of the church work in India. During the sessions of the Conference we were taken to site-seeing trip to Great Lake which is 60 kms from Winnipeg. It was very beautiful sight and the lake was very big and we sailed on the lake in boats. Afterwards we all delegates from different countries met in the fellowship meeting for hearing the Word of God and participating in the Lord's Supper,} and Rev. Dr. R.M. Bearg administered the Lord's Supper on the occasion and many of the people participated in this Holy Communion with great joy and happiness at the lake view site, and then we all departed from that place to Winnipeg to attend the Conference sessions at 7 p.m. on the same day. (p. 25)".

"After the Conference was concluded at Winnipeg, we went to Winkler, Manitoba, to attend and participate in the Evangelism Seminar as per the programme arranged by the Board for all the delegates, who came from various countries. This seminar took place in the Bible Institute, Winkler, Manitoba for a week in the second week of August, 1975. All were very pleased to be in this seminar to listen to the messages, to discuss and to deliberate on the subject of Evangelism. We all gladly and interestingly took part in these discussions and deliberations and expressed our views on how to evangelize in our own respective places of our different countries in the world. It was a great privilege and joy to me and my wife to have participated in this fellowship of the seminar. This seminar was closed on Saturday of the second week of August 1975';.

"At the end of this Conference we were asked to visit the M.B. churches in the Alberta province of Canada along with Bro. Henry Paul, Treasurer of the Board as our guide in our visits to churches. On the same evening we were taken to M.B. Church, Kallprni, and spent the night with a certain family belonging to the church. The next Sunday morning, we were in the Spruce woods camp with many visitors there in the camp. We had the Sunday service with all the people who came over there to have fellowship with each other. I spoke in the service and Mrs. John also reported about the woman's work in the M.B. churches of India and the report was translated into English by me. The people were listening very attentively to our talks and felt glad about the way in which we presented the message, wife in Telugu and husband in English. It was a great amazement for them to hear us in Telugu and English in this way for the first time in their life. The collection was taken at the close of the service and the people gave gladly for the ministry of God and service came to an end with my prayer and benediction." (p. 25).

"From this place we continued our visit along with Bro. Henry Paul, Treasurer, in the following churches of Alberta:

1. M.B. Church, Madison Hat
2. M.B. Church, Coaldale
3. M.B. Church, Vauxhall
4. M.B. Church, Grassy Lake
5. M.B. Church, Pincher-Creek
6. M.B. Church, Gem
7. M.B. Church, Lath-Bridge and so on

The people of the above churches along with their pastors and families received us with great love and affection into their midst and treated us very kindly by giving their utmost cooperation, care and attention to us during our stay with them. They were very eager to listen to our spiritual messages and report of the activities of the M.B. Churches In India and felt glad and amazed at our way of presenting the facts in Telugu and English, our way, for the first time in their life. In this way we completed our programme of visiting churches in Alberta. As per the arrangement of the Board of Foreign Missions and Services, the Treasurer bought passes and made them available to me and my wife for our travel in Canada and the States for a period of two months. This arrangement was very convenient for us to travel throughout North America. We made good use of these passes and traveled far and wide and we feel very grateful to the Board and also the M.B. church members for their help and support during our stay and visit in North America." (p.27).

"Brother John Dick of Pincher-Creek related to us an important historical event that took place from a mountain, which was 20 km away from Pincher-Creek. He took us to the spot and explained how the event took place several years back. The people who were residing at the bottom of the mountain were informed many a time to shift their places to some other safe region. But they did not give their attention to these sayings and warnings and went on living there only. After some years, in one rainy season during night time a huge portion of the mountain came down and fell upon them while they were sleeping. This was a very sorrowful event of great tragedy, and many people lost their lives because of this landslide. The visitors make it a point to visit this place without fail on account of its historical importance. With that intention Bro. John Dick drove me and Mrs. John to that spot and explained to us everything in detail about the tragic incident. As a memory of our visit we took a photo of that spot. This "was the first trip for my wife and the second trip for me to visit Canada and the States." (p.27)

"From the M.B. Church at Gem, we proceeded to Vancouver and then left for Clearbrook where our missionary J.J. Dick was living with his family. Rev. J.J.

Kasper, Missionary was also residing there by the side of Rev. Dick's home with his family. We stayed there for three days visiting M.C.C. centers in Yarrow and Clearbrook also. Both of us paid a special visit to M.B. Home for the Aged. All the old people of the Home gathered in a hall in order to listen to us regarding the information of the M.B. Church in India. We used three languages there, Telugu, English and Russian because most of the people living in the Home for the Aged knew the Russian language, and Rev. Dick translated our messages into the Russian language for the clear understanding of the people. They felt very happy about the work of the missionaries and also the M.B. Church ministry in India. They listened to us very keenly and eagerly." (p. 28).

"From Clearbrook we went to Salem, Oregon, where our M.B. Missionaries, Rev. and Mrs. T.F. Fast were ministering in the General Mennonite Church. They received us into their home warmly and arranged a meeting for us to speak in the church. I gave the report of the activities of the M.B. Church, and Mrs. John on the women's activities in India. We spent three days with them and they took us around for site-seeing during our stay with them. We highly appreciated the nice treatment and sweet fellowship we had with them." (p.28).

3. M.B. John's visits to various places before leaving for India

"After this we proceeded straight to Fresno, CA, to spend some time with Jesse and Joyce. We stayed there for about a fortnight and we had a very nice time with them. We felt very glad for the love and affection they showed to us during our stay with them, this time in September and nearly for the whole of July earlier to this. We appreciated their support and assistance given to us during our stay with them. In the middle of September 1975 we took leave of them and reached Chicago after a continuous journey of three days by bus. We were received by Suryakumari and her husband Prashantham very cordially. We were with them in their home for about 15 days, meeting and visiting people in the surrounding area and also in other states. In Chicago we met almost all of our India friends and others. We also saw our own relatives Kagava Isaac and his family and Franklin Isaac and his family, who are the sons of the late Mr. C.L. Isaac. We spent a day with them and received their nice hospitality.

I preached in the M.B. Church at Chicago on the same day which happened to be a Sunday. On that evening I was given a chance to speak in the Indian congregation and the audience at both these places were very much pleased to listen to us. A gift of honorarium was given to me at the end of these services." (pp. 28,29).

4. M.B. John's visits to Rev. J.H. Voth's Children

Pastor M.B. John. continues to write:

"From there we went to Bloomington where we visited Deenadayal Gaddam and his wife, and also his brother, Sudarshanam. They felt very happy for our coming into their midst all the way from India and they treated us very nicely. The same evening we returned to Chicago. The next day we left for Tulsa, Oklahoma, where we met Mrs. Sarah Ferris and her family in their own home, and also Miss Elizabeth Yoth who had come to pay a visit to her sister's family from Washington. Our stay with them was very delightful and the more because they are the daughters of our beloved and patron missionaries, the late Rev. & Mrs. Voth who had worked for a period of 24 years in Devarakonda field. After returning from there to Chicago again, we proceeded to Plato Ville, Wisconsin state, for visiting Mr. & Mrs. Teddy Voth. Mr. Teddy Voth is the second son of the late Rev. & Mrs. J.H. Voth. We received very good treatment from them. Then we also visited Brother Robert Simon, and his wife Vallery along with their two sons. Vallery is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Teddy Voth. They were very happy to see us as being the fruit of their grand parents' memorable ministry. We, then, took leave of them and returned to Chicago after spending two days time with them. From there we came back to Chicago again and stayed there for about two days upto the end of September 1975, and started our preparation for our return journey to India. We traveled upto New York by bus and took our flight from there to India. We reached India in the first week of October 1975. On return, I joined my ministry at Calvary M.B. Church, Mahbubnagar, and continued my work there upto the end of April 1976. (p.29).

A senior most missionary who had received baptism by sprinkling belonging to the Methodist Mission in Madhya Pradesh was convinced and convicted to the baptism by immersion, came all the way from Madhya Pradesh to Mahbubnagar along with Bishop P. J. Malagar and was baptized by me in the Calvary M.B. Church, finding it to be the most suitable and proper place for him to be baptized. He was 70 years of age. I also had a chance and privilege of baptizing Roger Fast, son of Rev. T.F. Fast, at Calvary M.B. Church, when he was in his teens. This was a rare occasion to baptize the old missionary from Australia and the young boy, Roger from the USA."

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6. TAFTEE

"On account of un-favorable conditions prevailing at Mahbubnagar, I resigned my post as pastor and came to settle down at Hyderabad. Soon after I came from Mahbubnagar to Hyderabad, I settled down at Malakpet with my family (and) I built a small house of three rooms in Malakpet and named it as "Voth Cottage" as a token of gratitude to the memory of the late Rev. and Mrs. J.H. Voth, my patron missionaries and their dear children, namely, Miss Elizabeth

Voth, Sarah Voth (now Mrs. Robert Perris), Mennon Voth, Tilly Voth, Teddy Voth and Hugo Voth, who died in his teens." (pp. 29,30).

Taftee Work

"From April 1976 to September 1977, I was entrusted with the task of teaching Bible classes in three centers namely, Veldanda, Kalvakurthy, Kothakota, Wanaparthy, and Emmanuel M.B. Church, Sanathnagar, Hyderabad, by the Governing Council of the M.B. churches of India. The pastors of these centres, Rev. M.P. John (Veldanda), Rev. P.S. Zecharaiah (Kalvakurthy), and the late Bro. J. Caleb (Kothakota) gladly gave their full cooperation and support to me in this ministry in their respective places. This kind of ministry is known as TAFTEE work. Rev. Arthur J. Dalavai was the Director of the TAFTEE. Rev. N.P. James was the chairman, Bro. M.C. Emmanuel was the secretary, and Bro. Y.K. Rufus was the treasurer of the G.C. in those days. While doing the TAFTEE work, I also preached in different churches on their invitation." (pp. 30,31).

7. PASTOR M.B. JOHN'S MINISTRY AT MALAKPET

Introduction

The missionary candidates Rev. & Mrs. I. H. Pankratz arrived from USA on the field in India in October 1902. They zealously began the work. After prayerful investigation, a place for mission station was found and purchased at Malakpet, an important suburb of Hyderabad in the southeast of the city. On Thanksgiving Day of USA, 1903, the Pankratz family and the Sisters Suderman and Neufeld moved into this mission home.

Several native evangelists from Nalgonda and from other places were willing to come and join the missionaries for the proclamation of the gospel in this field. Aggressive evangelism was 'at once undertaken in the city as well as in the villages to the south. The Lord graciously blessed the testimony of His witnesses and some souls were won for Christ.

On March 27, 1904, the missionaries, native workers and a few new converts met in prayer and organized themselves as 'The Mennonite Brethren Church in India'. In 1904 Miss Neufeld began with a school for the children, having the classes at first under a large shady tree. Miss Suderman found open doors for ministering to the sick and suffering and of doing personal work among women." (WHGW/8, 9).

The Malakpet area was populated mostly by the Muslim community. When the Gospel of Christ reached them, some of the Muslims had a mind to believe in Jesus Christ, and became Christians. Consequently, the leaders went to the

Nizam and reported the matter and expressed their apprehension that, if the spread of Christian teaching is allowed for some years to continue, there was a danger of many Muslims becoming Christians. As a result of this report, the Nizam called the missionaries and sternly advised them to vacate the place and stop their Ministry. The missionaries moved to the Golconda Cross Roads area and started to establish their mission work there and expand their ministry from there.

But the missionary, J. H. Lohrenz, who came to India in 1920 stationed at Musheerabad near the Golconda Cross Roads, continued the Gospel ministry at Malakpet, holding the Sunday Services in some Christian homes, such as the houses of P. J. Purushotham and P. J. Prakasham for some time. There was a need for a larger room for the growing audience for Sunday Worship services. The brethren Purushotham and Prakasham and others requested the Missionary to do something for buying a suitable place and constructing a church building. Strenuous efforts were made and the Lord opened the door to meet the need.

"The Nawab, who hated the Christians in the early years of beginning of the mission work at Malakpet, changed his mind and decided to sell away his property situated very adjacent to the old mission station purchased in 1904. The missionary Rev. Lohrenz was very glad to buy the Nawab's property. And the deal was immediately completed. The construction of the church building was started in 1954, in commemoration of the earlier mission work, started exactly 50 years ago in 1904. The construction work of the church building was completed and dedicated on November 22, 1955, for the glory of God and for the use of the church services." Rev. Lohrenz, Rev. M. B. John, Arthur J. Dalavai (HM, Mission School, HGT) and others were present at the dedication function.

Episode of Pastor Simhadri : Rev. J. H. Lohrenz appointed Brother Simhadri as the pastor of the Malakpet M. B. Church (named Bethlehem M. B. Church) on the completion and dedication of the building, to conduct the church services and religious ministries. Pastor Simhadri worked as pastor for 18 years from 1955 to 1973, a long and faithful service by the grace of God. But unfortunately, he came under the influence of unrighteous people of the church and his own relatives and tried to sell away or lease out the whole church property at the end of his 18 years service to the World Wide Mission. But the Governing Council officials, under the chairmanship of Pastor M. B. John, took immediate steps to check the mischievous attempt and saved the situation, and brought the whole church property under the control of the Governing Council by removing the unfaithful pastor from the church premises in the year 1974. This happened the year before Pastor M. B. John and his wife left to America in 1975. Mean while a pillar, named Ebenezer (1 Sam. 7: 12), was erected in commemoration of the 75 years of the establishment of M.B Mission work and M. B. Church work in India from 1899-1975 (The Diamond Jubilee Celebration). It was inaugurated by the Pastor, M. B. John, the chairman of the Governing Council, in the presence of the

honorable Minister for Tourism, Games and Sports, Dr. Ch. Devananda Rao, and Mrs. P. V. Balzer, Rev & Mrs. T. F. Fast, and Rev. Dr. Paul G. Hiebert. The programme of the celebration was conducted by Rev. N. P. James, the chairman of the M. B. Convention of 1975. The whole congregation attended this function, praised God and rejoiced in Him, proclaiming that "God Almighty hath done great things to us where of we are glad," (Ps. 126:3) on that special and blessed occasion.

Rev. M. B. John takes over the Pastorate of Bethlehem M. B. Church, Malakpet, Hyderabad.

All the above narrated happenings took place just before Pastor M. B. John and his wife went to America on his second trip to North America. Rev. & Mrs. M.B. John returned to India in the first week of October 1975 and continued their pastoral ministry at Calvary IMB Church up to the end of April 1976, and resigned, and left to Hyderabad, where they settled down for life in Malakpet, living in their newly built home, named "Voth Cottage" in memory of their patron missionary family, Rev. and Mr. J. H. Voth and their children. (P. 30)

CHAPTER VII
M. B. JOHN - THE GAZING STAR
His Post-Retirement Life
(Anticipation for Glorification)
(1986-2002)

1. CHANGE IN CITIZENSHIP

Rev. M. B. John, after retirement from his pastoral ministry in the year 1986, writes thus:

"A change in my citizenship: Some of my children began to turn NRIs as citizens of USA. That brought a change in my citizenship too. In spite of this change in my citizenship, I spent most of my days of retirement in India, serving the Lord in the rural areas, in association with Rev. Dr. Arthur J. Dalavai, in the field of evangelism and church planting. Using the benefits of my American citizenship, we (my wife and I) have built a church building in Gudipally, our native village, for the spiritual fellowship of all my relatives living in (and around) Gudipally. With Gudipally as our center we would like to evangelize as many souls as possible, participating as members of Arthur Dalavai's touring team."

2. REV. M. B. JOHN'S LOVE AND COMPASSION FOR HIS PEOPLE

It was our team's privilege and joy to have Rev. M. B. John and Mrs. M. B. John traveling with us in our evangelistic campaigns several times in the surrounding areas of Gudipally during the closing years of their retirement period. M. B. John's declining years were spent in visiting his native village Gudipally as often as he could visit India as an NRI living in USA.

The heart of M. B. John's setting days was full of love and compassion for the people of his native village Gudipally and the church building he constructed for them in June 1992, for their fellowship and growth in the knowledge of Christian light and witnessing activity. Mr. Medari Reuben, a middle aged, educated man from Medari background, is now pastoring the Gudipally church congregation, a very faithful worker. His help in our evangelistic campaigns around Gudipally was very effective and was much appreciated. Rev. M. B. John constructed another rural church building at Chinthapally village in December 2001, his second and last church building, being pastored by one of his relatives, Mr. Peter, whose wife, Medari Leelamma, is a very dutiful and committed Christian woman. I personally trust in the Lord that both Peter and Leelamma, assigned to Chinthapally church work by Rev. M. B. John, will guide the church and win a good number of their local people to the Lord. The two church buildings

constructed by Rev. M. B. John at Gudipally and Chinthapally will surely attract many local Christians and others to worship the Lord for a long time to come.

3. THE LAST DECADE OF REV. M. B. JOHN'S LIFE (1992-2002)

1. Gudipally Church Dedication (June 28, 1992)

During his post-retirement period Rev. M.B. John constructed two church buildings, one at Gudipally village, dedicated on June 28, 1992, and another church building at Chinthapally village dedicated in December 2001. Rev. M.B. John started constructing a third church building at Mylapoor village in memory of his mother in 2002 but could complete the construction only upto lintel level and left it unfinished.

2. Diamond Wedding Celebrations of Rev. & Mrs. M.B. John held on March 23, 1993.

On that occasion the Mahbubnagar Calvary M.B. Church laymen presented a felicitation address reflecting their great appreciation and honor for Rev. M.B. John's most successful pastoral ministry of the church for 26 years from 1951 to 1976, which is quoted verbatim hereunder.

3. Felicitation Address presented to Rev. and Mrs. M. B. John on the eve of their Diamond Wedding on March 23,1993 by M.B. Laymen Evangelical Fellowship

Most Esteemed Sir and Ammagaru,

It gives us immense joy to present this brief address in appreciation of your outstanding ministry in the India Mennonite Brethren Church and on the eve of your Diamond Wedding on March 23, 1993. We deem it a privilege to honor the stalwarts of your stature on this august occasion and we rejoice with you as people of the generation which you both have faithfully served, pursuing the will of God. It is said of David, a man after God's own heart, that he shepherded the people of Israel with integrity of heart and with skillful hands he led them (Ps. 78:72)

As the shepherd of the Calvary M. B. Church, Mahabubnagar, for more than three decades, you guarded, guided and nurtured the flock leaving a profound impact on every individual member. This church building, barring the wings which came up a couple of years ago, owes its existence to the beloved missionaries, the John A. Weibe and to you as its pastor. We remember the words spoken commending your pastoral ministry by the visiting Secretary of the Mission Board, Rev. 1. B. Toews who was present at the church dedication

service on July 28, 1957. Whenever the church bell tolls, we remember the ministry of Mrs. John as it was donated by the M.B. Women's Association, Mahabubnagar, under her leadership. Your contribution to the church extension and church planting programme over the decades in the Mennonite Brethren constituency has been immense.

Sir, in the realm of church administration and leadership, you were always at the zenith. During the period of transition, the mantle of the top leadership fell on you. As the first national to adorn the office of the Chairman of the Governing Council of the Conference of the M. B. Church of India, you gave commendable leadership, getting elected to this high office for several more terms in the later years. Your clear insight, clarity of vision and integrated spiritual approach kept the brotherhood united and strong. Your spirit of arbitration and indomitable spiritual courage in solving church disputes, putting an end to dissensions is on the record. As the President of the M. B. Property Association of India, you brought back the church properties from the hands of the self-seeking usurpers. The India M.B. Church owes a lot to your capable stewardship. There is no institutional or church position of significance which You have not held. In every sphere, you left your mark worthy of emulation.

The brotherhood recalls with fondness your participation in the Centennial Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church held in Reedley, California, U.S.A. in 1950, representing as a fraternal delegate from M. B. Churches in India on the invitation of the M. B. Board of Missions and Services .. Your subsequent ministry in the M.B. Churches in the United States and Canada gave new inspiration and insight to the people there about the country and the conference that you represented. Where ever you laid your foot, you were accorded red-carpet welcome, showered Christian love and affection in abundant measure. Thus you brought laurels and laudation to the national leadership.

Honored man of God, even in the evening of your life, your active participation in the evangelistic and church ministries in the India M. B. Conference is an evidence that the Lord your God is renewing your youth like that of eagle's as promised in the Scripture. Your monumental contribution of constructing a beautiful big church in the tiny village Gudipally of Devarakonda Taluq which you hail from with the financial contributions from the members of your own family, whom God has blessed and greatly multiplied, is a rare example which every servant of God should emulate. Those of us who were present at the dedication service of this church on June 28, 1992, which also joyfully happened to be the 75th birthday of Mrs. Krupamma John, rejoiced in the Lord, giving Him thanks, for the spectrum of your spiritual vision and burden for your own people. Spiritual father, in the providence of God, you served three generations fulfilling His will and purposes. You have been a guidepost to the old and the new. Most of the institutional heads, pastors and lay- leaders in the Conference have been

influenced by your teaching, preaching, and much more by your personal life. The church lost its direction today because it is bereft of father-figures like you whose direction, counsel, wisdom and guidance is the need of the hour.

This address is incomplete if we fail to make a special reference to the ministry of Pastor Ammagaru, Mrs. Krupamma. Being a help-mate who is equal in all respects, she stood with YOU as a pillar of strength in times of testing and trials, in adversity and prosperity, sharing your joys and sorrows. As a minister's devout wife, leading a life of dedication and commitment to the cause for which her dear husband has been called, she gave her best to the Lord and His church. Her ministry among the women in the Conference is worthy of note.

Esteemed Sir, in the end, we lift up our hearts with praise and thanksgiving to God for giving you and Ammagaru to the India Mennonite Brethren Church as a gift to serve and strive for His cause and for the extension of His kingdom. May God grant you both health and strength, making you a blessing to many more people so long as you sojourn in this world.

With profound Christian love, grateful regards and sincere prayers,

We remain, Yours in His service,
February 28, 1993 Editor-in-chief:

S. S. David,

M.A. (Litt.). M.A. (Socio.)

Mennonite Brethren Laymen Evangelical Fellowship and

Mennonite Brethren Revival Forum Editorial Board:

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R. S. Dayavaradanam,

M.A., M.Ed.

Mrs. G. Priscilla Lazarus,

M.A., M.Ed., M. A. Solomon, M.A., B.D.

4. Rev. M. B. John honored with 'DOCTOR OF DIVINITY' degree.

Towards the end of his multifarious church ministries most faithfully rendered for over a period of 50 years (1950-2002) as a great servant of God in the ecclesiastical scenario of the India M. B. Conference, Rev. M. B. John was divinely led to be honored with the degree 'DOCTOR OF DIVINITY', conferred on him by the famous Hindustan Bible Institute of Madras, India, on the 10th of October 1997, on the recommendation of two internationally well known ministers of God who have known Rev. M. B. John very intimately for many years as a great servant of God working with the American M. B. Missionaries pioneering in Andhra Pradesh, India. They are:

1) *Prof. Dr. B. E. Vijayam, M.Sc., Ph.D., a retired famous geologist of Osmania University of Hyderabad, India; presently serving with Christian Nationals Evangelism Commission (CNEC), also called Partners International, San Jose, USA, as Regional Area Coordinator for South Asia, stationed in Hyderabad, India.

2) *Rev. Dr. Arthur J. Dalavai, M.A., Th.D. (Dallas, TX, USA); retired Regional Area Coordinator for South Asia of CNEC/ PT, San Jose, CA, USA; presently working as President and Director of INEF (India Nationals Evangelism Fellowship), Hyderabad; and formerly chairman of the Governing Council of the Mennonite Brethren Conference, Andhra Pradesh, India.

5. The 65th Wedding Anniversary of Dr. & Mrs. M.B. John

Brother M. B. John and Sister K. B. Krupamma as young couple were united in marriage on March 23, 1933. Their last wedding anniversary celebration card reads as follows:

Ps.
Please come and join us
in Celebrating our 65th Wedding Anniversary on Monday, March 23rd 1998, at 6
pm
at Officers Mess, New Malakpet, Hyderabad.
Dr. Rev. & Mrs. M. B. John

Their invitation card tells us that they lived together and they served the Lord together for long years, a glorious long life of 65 years together in the service of the Lord. They lived together one more year after their 65th wedding anniversary celebration, and were separated by death when Mrs. Krupamma John left this world and flew into eternal glory of heaven on the 14th of January 1999, at the age of 81 years, beyond the biblical age (Ps. 90: 10). Mrs. Krupamma John passed into the very presence of God, the Father. She flew away from the home of her 4th daughter, Mrs. Grace Papa Abraham, Vanasthalipuram of Hyderabad, at 11 am, into the welcoming hands of her Master Jesus Christ.

6. Dr. Rev: M. B. John's Last Monumental Work

Dr. John lived a glorious life in India as a pastor of two churches - 26 years at Mahbubnagar Calvary M. B. Church (1950-1976), and 10 years at Malakpet Bethlehem M. B. Church in Hyderabad (1977-86). After the death of his life partner in 1999, Rev. M. B. John, as an NRI of USA, availed all his later visits to India in paying visits to his native village (Gudipally) where he had constructed a large and beautiful church building for the believers of his father's background, with the main purpose of edifying and emboldening the congregation of the

Gudipally church to grow strong in Christian faith and to share their faith with their relatives in the days to come.

In his last days I became his close associate in the field of evangelism, and accompanied him in many of his visits to Gudipally, and we both visited many villages around Gudipally, and presented the Gospel messages to all sorts of people. Dr. M. B. John zealously preached Christ to large gatherings that came to listen to our evening meetings. Dr. John boldly presented to them how he was saved and from what background he came from and how the Lord changed his' whole life through Christ, as the Savior of the whole mankind. It was a great time of evangelistic outreach work to the glory of God.

7. Two more Church - Construction Projects on his Mind

There was no end to Dr. M. B. John's desire to serve the Lord in the field of evangelization and church planting. The more visits he paid to Gudipally area the more indefatigable and enthusiastic he appeared to me as his close associate. His love and compassion for his people in and around Gudipally (his birth place) seemed 'renewing his youth like the eagle's (Ps. 103 :5)

Dr. John told me he had two more projects to undertake and complete, the Lord willing. One was to construct a church-building at Chinthapally where a couple of his family background was living and serving the Lord as evangelists, but had no church building to gather with their local Christian believers. The workers were Peter and Leelamma. This project was finally completed and the church building dedicated in December 2001. The other project was also a church building construction work in Mylapoor, a small village, where his mother was born, brought up and later married to Medari Butchiah of Gudipally, who became the parents of M. B. John. Dr, M. B. John and I visited Mylapoor once or twice. The people of the village Mylapoor told me that Dr. M.B. John's mother was a light colored lady and was called Andugula Muthamma (later called Muthyalamma in Gudipally). The cottage of Muthyalamma's parents is now in dilapidated condition, become a dung hill. We both (Dr. John and I) stood for a while looking at the neglected plot of land where Muthyalamma was born and grew up into a maiden to become someday the fair looking mother of Dr. M. B. John, the great and most prominent 'man of God' and an NRI living in USA today. With spontaneous impulse, I uttered the words, "Sir, you have come out of that dunghill". Dear reader, you believe me. Dr. M. B. John, who had never seen his mother's place before, began to efface the tears dropping from his eyes. I suggested on our way back home, 'That dunghill should be changed into a prayer hall in remembrance of Andugula Muthyalamma, your blessed and beautiful mother'. Yes, Dr. M. B. John took my words seriously and started constructing a church hall in Mylapoor, not exactly on that dunghill plot, but in a place gifted by the local government to the poor people of the village. The

church building in Mylapoor, in the name of Muthyalamma, mother of Dr. M. B. John, was constructed up to lintel level and rest left unfinished for the reason that Dr. John was unable to make further trips to Mylapoor on account of his deteriorating physical health. Dr. John told me that the unfinished work will be completed by his children in the near future.

I am sure the three monumental church buildings at Gudipally, Chinthapally and Mylapoor will remain for long time to come as great works of Dr. Rev. M. B. John, the most faithful and illustrious man of God ever to be remembered in the annals of India M. B. Conference history.

8. Dr. Rev. M.B. John's Ascent to Mount Pisgah

"Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death," (Duet. 33:1).

The blessing of Moses given here (Dt. 33: 1) just before his death (Dt. 34: 1-8) is well suited to the context of Dr. Rev. M.B. John's last days of his longevity. "It was customary for a father to impart a blessing just before his death" (of Jacob's blessing, Gen. 49). Moses, leader of the Exodus and the mediator of the Sinaitic Covenant, was in a sense, Israel's "father".

Dr. M. B. John, in the same sense, becomes the 'father' of the Gudipally-Church congregation. The majority of the members of the Gudipally Christian congregation are the descendants of 5 Medari brothers, namely, Medari Butchiah (Abraham), Medari Narsiah, Medari Baliah, Medari Guruviah and Medari Moses (who had no children). Dr. M.B. John (son of Medari Butchiah Abraham, and the eldest of all Medari descendants) would be considered as the father of the whole Gudipally Church membership, in the light of his 94 years of age.

Moses, the 'servant of God' and the leader of Israel, who lived the full span of his longevity of 120 years (Gen. 6:3), guiding the people of Israel 40 years (Num. 14:33) through the wilderness of Zin, between the Red Sea and the land of Moab, took time to give his farewell blessing to Israel just before he went up unto the peak of Mount Pisgah for the moment of his death and burial, as per the word of the Lord (Duet. 32:50; 34:3). Moses had loved the 12 tribes of Israel dearly and therefore blessed each of them as individual tribe- Reuben to Asher (Duet. 33:6). For Moses' love for the children of Israel, see Exo. 32:30-32.

And, likewise, Dr. Rev. M.B. John cherished special sentimental affection for the believers of his nativity at Gudipally. He constructed a church building for them and dedicated it on June 28, 1992, and later pastoral facilities were added to it - a monumental work of Christian legendary beacon of Gospel light and witness to all people around.

Now at the fag-end of his aging life (93+years), Dr. M.B. John deeply desired to spend a good number of his last days in fellowship with his blood related Christian flock of Jesus Christ, worshipping at Gudipally church compound under the pastorship of Medari Reuben 'and his wife, to prepare them for the day of the Lord's return to mid-air, the resurrection of the dead in Christ and the rapture of the universal church, to meet the Lord and so shall we all ever be with the Lord (I Thess. 4: 16, 17).

And with that intention, Dr. M.B. John left Hyderabad and sojourned at Mahbubnagar for about three months, staying with his grand children " Sunny and Finny, (sons of his late daughter, Mrs. Pushpaleela Prakasam). From Mahbubnagar to Gudipally it is about 75 miles (about 120 Kms), During the three months of his sojourn, Dr. M.B. John made 12 trips to Gudipally, visiting with the believers of his native church, every Sunday, as we are told by his grand children at the end of his stay with them at Mahbubnagar. Dr. John's last trip to Gudipally was on Sunday, the 7th of July 2002. The months of his sojourn at Mahbubnagar were middle of April to the middle of July 2002. July 7, 2002 was his last Sunday message and farewell blessing to his favorite church of Gudipally - the place of his birth and his parting into eternity. The following is a report by Mr.M. Reuben, pastor of the Gudipally Church, on the visits of Dr. Rev. M.B. John during the months of April to July 2002:

9. Pastor Medari Reuben's Report

Synopsis of Dr. Rev. M.B. John's ministry during the last three months (April 7 to July 7) of his life as recorded by brother Medari Reuben, Pastor of the Gudipally Church, Devarakonda Taluq, Nalgonda, Dt.

FIRST SUNDAY OF APRIL 2002 (7-4-2002): Rev. Dr. M.B. John arrived from Mahbubnagar, and ministered the word of God to the Gudipally Church congregation and after a brief fellowship with the believers, he returned to Mahbubnagar.

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SECOND SUNDAY OF APRIL 2002 (14-4-2002): Dr. M.B. John arrived from Mahbubnagar, and after a brief fellowship with the believers of the Gudipally Church, preached the word of God exhorting the members to share their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and to diligently work to lead as many souls into their Christian fold. In the evening he returned to Mahbubnagar.

THIRD SUNDAY OF APRIL 2002 (21-4-2002): Dr. M.B. John and his son Walter Benjamin arrived from Mahbubnagar. After the morning Sunday service, Dr. John, Mr. Walter and I went to Mylapoor village, where Dr. M.B. John's

mother, Muthyalamma was born. Efforts were made to purchase a piece of land at Mylapoor for constructing a church in memory of Dr. M.B. John's mother (Andugula Muthyalamma) in that village. Finally, a piece of land of 4-room area was purchased, of which 2-room area was donated by Sri Vaddera Johan, and the remaining 2-room plot was paid for by Sri M.J. Walter Benjamin.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF APRIL 2002 (28-4-2002): Dr. M.B. John visited the Chinthapally Church, and ministered the word of God to the new congregation established at that village, and pastored by Sri Gottimukkala Peter and his wife Medari Leelamma.

FIRST SUNDAY OF MAY 2002 (05-5-2002): Dr. M.B. John visited and ministered the word of God at Gudipally Church and returned to Mahbubnagar.

SECOND SUNDAY OF MAY 2002 (12-5-2002): Dr. M.B. John directly went to Mylapoor, and later came back to Gudipally Church and ministered the word of God to the congregation of the church and returned to Mahbubnagar.

THIRD SUNDAY OF MAY 2002 (19-5-2002): Dr. M.B. John visited Chinthapally church congregation and ministered the word of God to the believers and after the service, Dr. John went and supervised the construction work of the new church building at Mylapoor, where pastor Reuben joined Dr. M.B. John, after his Gudipally Sunday morning service was over. In the evening Dr. M.B. John returned to Mahbubnagar.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF MAY 2002 (26-5-2002): Dr. John did not visit Gudipally church on 26-5-2002.

FIRST SUNDAY OF JUNE 2002 (02-6-2002): Dr. John visited Gudipally church and after the morning service, we went to Mylapoor to supervise the church construction work. Dr. M.B. John returned to Mahbubnagar leaving Mylapoor at 5 in the evening.

SECOND SUNDAY OF JUNE 2002 (09-6-2002): Dr. M.B. John visited Gudipally Church and conducted the morning service. Dr. John and I, then, left for Mylapoor to check on the progress of church construction work. After that Dr. M.B. John left for Mahbubnagar.

THIRD SUNDAY OF JUNE 2002 (16-6-2002): Dr. M.B. John first visited Mylapoor to ascertain the progress of the church construction work there, and returned to Gudipally and conducted the morning Sunday service, and returned to Mahbubnagar.

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF JUNE 2002 (23-6-2002):1 Dr. John did not visit Gudipally on that Sunday.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF JUNE 2002 (00-6-2002): Dr. M.B. John visited Gudipally, conducted the Sunday service, and proceeded to Mylapoor to see the progress of the church construction. Dr. John then left for Mahbubnagar at 5 p.m.

FIRST SUNDAY OF JULY 2002 (07-7-2002): Dr. M.B. John arrived from Mahbubnagar and conducted Sunday morning service at Gudipally church and fellowshiped with the congregation at length and proceeded on to Mylapoor to ascertain the progress of his mother's memorial church construction work and returned to Mahbubnagar in the evening.

JULY 10 (WEDNESDAY), 2002 : Dr. M.B. John paid a special visit to Chinthapally church and had a brief meeting of fellowship with the Chinthapally church members. Being fully tired, Dr. M.B. John left Chinthapally for Mahbubnagar in the afternoon the same day. I accompanied him to Mahbubnagar and stayed with him that night. The next morning, i.e., 11 th, Dr. M.B. John and I went to Malakpet, Hyderabad, and spent two days at the home of Mr. C.P. Emmanuel, relative of Dr. M.B. John and moved to Musheerabad where Dr. M.B. John stayed with his grandson Rajkumar. And I returned to Gudipally.

10. Rev. Dr. M.B. John climbs up to the top of Mount Pisgah

Rev. Dr. M.B. John, the faithful servant of God, having attained, by the grace of God, the blessed age of 94 years, has spent his last several months of his life (from middle of April to middle of July 2002), visiting his native village church-congregation at Gudipally, Taluq Devarakonda of Nalgonda District, on about 12 consecutive Sundays, fellowshiping with them and reminding them of the 'things to come' (Rev. 1: 19) in the near future, and encouraging them to be faithful in their Christian life, and to share the Gospel with their unsaved relatives, friends and others and bring to the flock of the Lord Jesus Christ as many souls as possible.

July 7, 2002, was his last Sunday with them his blood related believers. It was a time of sorrow and grief for Dr. John leaving behind the church and the believers he had brought into the kingdom of the Lord and nurtured through many years of teaching labor at Gudipally village, the place of his birth (September 21, 1908), which has now become the parting place as he leaves them on his way into eternal glory. But his blessed old age and declining health made it inevitable to wave his palm of farewell blessing.

Rev. John paid a brief visit on the 10th of July 2002 to Chinthapally church recently constructed and dedicated in December 2001. It was not a Sunday. He had brief time of fellowship with the pastor Peter and his wife Leelamma. His health was too weak to stay with them, and had to leave hurriedly to Mahbubnagar, from where he was taken to Hyderabad City as he was too tired to stay away from his home at Malakpet in Hyderabad. After a day at his home in Malakpet on the 11th, he was shifted to Musheerabad home, where Dr. John's grandson, Rajkumar's family is living.

From the 12th to the 28th of July, Dr. John seemed picking up his normalcy and talking at ease with church brethren from Hughestown and Malakpet. On the morning of the following day, July 29, 2002, Dr. John at about 7.30 hours, walked into the toilet room. Rajkumar, Dr. John's grandson, noticing Dr. John's delay from the toilet room, went to the room and found his grandpa lying on the floor and struggling to get up. Rajkumar helped his grandpa to rise and dress himself, and walk back to his bed room. Noticing that Dr. John's situation was worsening, Rajkumar telephoned to Walter Benjamin (Dr John's son) and informed him of the condition of his father. (On Walter's advice, Rajkumar took Dr. John and admitted him at CARE HOSPITAL at about 8:30 a.m). Meanwhile Walter Benjamin arrived at the hospital and stood by the bedside of his father, Dr. John.

Dr. John looked at his son Walter but could not utter a word, and then closed his eyes at about 10:30a.m. Walter's face was the last Dr. John saw before he passed away into eternal glory. May be, Dr. John's last glance at his son Walter, had a message for him to complete what his father left unfinished - a church building at Mylapoor in memory of his mother Andugula Muthyalamma, wife of Medari Butchiah, Dr. John's Father.

CHAPTER VIII

SYNOPSIS OF M.B. JOHN'S FAMILY BACKGROUND

Source of Information:
His Autobiography dated 28-2-1983

Medari Butchiah (Abraham) John (M. B. John, for short) was born on September 21, 1908 (1909) at Gudipally village in Devarakonda Taluq of Nalgonda District. His parents were Medari Butchiah (Abraham) and Andugula Muthyalamma of Mylapoor village. Butchiah had brothers, younger to him (Narsiah, Baliah, Guruviah and Moses, who were born to Venkiah and Saramma). Guruviah and Moses were preachers, and the other three were ordinary field workers. Narsiah had 5 children. Baliah had 6 children, Guruviah, 4 children, and Moses was childless.

Butchiah had 4 children (Mariamma, John, Santhosamma and Ramulu). His wife, Muthyalamma died in 1915, when John was 7 years old. Butchiah had to take a second wife to maintain his family. On Butchiah's request, Moses, his brother, who had no children, gladly accepted John as his child and took him to his home at Mandapur in 1915, the year John's mother, Muthyalamma died. Moses had a flock of sheep and Moses assigned John the work to take care of the flock. John dutifully and faithfully, kept his flock of sheep and goats for 3 years (1915-17). Moses was very much pleased with John's work as a shepherd lad, and helped John as a motherless child in many ways. 'In the early part of 1918, it occurred to John that his elder sister and his cousins were studying and he was not studying.' And so he requested his uncle Moses to send him to school. Moses gladly took John and admitted him in the M.B. Middle School at Nagarkurnool where Rev. D. F. Bergthold, missionary, was the Principal, and Mr. Joshua Dalavai was the headmaster. There was no mission school as yet in DVK. At the end of the year 1918, with the return of Rev. Voth from furlough, a mission school was opened at DVK. And DVK children studying at NGKL were shifted to DVK, under the principalship of Rev. Voth for two years. In 1920, Miss H. L. Warkentin of Winkler, Canada, took over the charge of the school as Principal, in which position, she ministered until 1957, a span of 37 years. John studied under her principalship from 1920 to 1926, and completed his middle school education as one of the favorite students of the principal.

In 1926, Rev. P. V. Balzer, missionary in the absence of Rev. J. H. Voth on furlough, sent M.B. John to Nagarkurnool to take Bible training under the principalship of Rev. D. F. Bergthold, where John studied for 3 years (1926-29), and having completed in a creditable manner the required course, returned to Devarakonda.

1. MEDARI B. JOHN'S BAPTISM, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

In his autobiography of 1983, Rev. Dr. M. B. John writes:

1. His Confession and Baptism

Rev. John Voth, missionary at Devarakonda Field, was his spiritual father ever since he entered school life at DVK. Rev. Voth was his Bible class teacher in the school from I Form to III Form. Rev. Voth used to give his class spiritual encouragement to live and work for the glory of God, and also for the up building of His Church. On account of his constant guidance and inspiration, John was able to see his short comings in his life, and the need to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and accept Him as his personal Saviour. Principal, Miss H. L. Warkentin was also a great source of spiritual inspiration to him as his Sunday school teacher. The native teachers and preachers also inspired him greatly to come closer to the Lord. Eventually, John was convinced of his sins, and opened his heart to the Lord on December 15, 1924, and was baptized by missionary Voth on the same day, along with Teddy Voth, the second son of Rev. IH. Voth. The Bible verse, John 3:16 was his personal testimony as the basis of his belief on the Lord Jesus. On the day of his baptism John was 16 years old.

2. His Marriage

After his middle school study at DVK, John was sent by missionary, Rev. P V Balzer, to NGKL for a 3 year Bible school training under the principalship of Rev. Daniel F. Bergthold. Having completed his Bible School study at NGKL(1926-29), John returned to DVK, and was sent to Coles Memorial High School, Kurnool under special permission and sponsorship of missionary Voth. With his high school qualification, John returned to DVK and was admitted into mission middle school as a teacher under the principalship of Miss. H. L. Warkentin. During his service as a teacher in the Mission School, John made arrangement for his marriage with the help of his elders, especially with the assistance of Mr. K.S. Joshua, as mediator. K. B. Krupamma, the eldest daughter of Mr. K. Benjamin of Nalgonda was finalized as the bride to be united with Medari John in holy matrimony. The marriage date was fixed and the couple was united in marriage on the 23rd of March 1933. The marriage was performed by Rev. M. Benjamin, Pastor in the Baptist Church, Nalgonda. Rev. and Mrs. Frenberg, the stationed missionaries, took much interest in the marriage function, and blessed the newly united couple as a family in God's holy name. God blessed the couple M. B. John and K. B. Krupamma in their long journey of more than 65 years together as a family with a gift of 9 children as their life-story tells us.

3. His Life's Help-mate (Mrs. M.B. John)

(Script by Mrs. Helen Shobha Rani, wife of Rev. Dr. Lionel Adrian Dalavai, and grand-daughter of Mrs. & Rev. M.B. John)

- i. M. B. John and K. B. Krupamma were united in marriage on 23rd of March 1933, at Nalgonda. Krupamma's parents were Kothapalli Benjamin and Chettupalli Mariamma of Nalgonda. She was married at the age of 16 years, born on June 28, 1917. M. B. John, born on 21, September 1908, was 25 years of age on the date of their marriage. Krupamma's parents had 6 daughters and 2 sons. Krupamma was the eldest of all.
- ii. Krupamma was a very pious and God-fearing lady. She had the habit of spending much of her time reading the Bible and singing songs.
- iii. At church service and especially at the Lord's Supper time, she would be the first person to pray. As pastor's wife she would always herself prepared the sacraments for the Lord's Table at her own expense; and when others did the job, she would liberally pay to buy the sacred material.
- iv. She was very much involved in church activities, and was many a time elected as chairman and secretary of the women's association of the church.
- v. She was very regular in tithing their monthly income, even when their salary was very low. That was the reason why God blessed her and her family in life so much.
- vi. She was a good alms giver to the poor and needy. She would give them clothes and even money, depending on their situation in life.
- vii. Her daily prayer time began at 5'0 clock in the morning when she would kneel down and pray for her whole family.
- viii. Her fellowship with women visiting her was always informal and friendly and was untiring throughout, mixed with hospitality.
- ix. She brought up her children in a very disciplined manner. She would see that they all attended Sunday school classes and the church services. She herself was the first to get ready and start going to Sunday services.
- x. She loved all her 9 children equally (5 daughters and 4 sons). All her children, in return, loved their mother equally. On her birthdays she would receive 9 saris from all her 9 children for sure.
- xi. Till the day of her death (on 14-1-1999), she herself did all the cleaning and washing of dishes and clothes.
- xii. She used to stitch clothes even for her grand and great-grandchildren. Just before her death she stitched a silk skirt for her grand child (Pinky), daughter of her own ninth child, Mercy. She made always her own blouses.
- xiii. She was a very good cook, and prepared delicious dishes for her family and even for visitors.
- xiv. She liked gardening very much and had a beautiful garden grown up at the backyard of their pastoral residence in Mahbubnagar.

- xv. When she visited a village near Yacharam, she witnessed to the village people who gathered around her, and preached God's love and advised them not to worship idols, but believe on the Lord Jesus. Even today the people of that village, Mogullavampu, recall her witness and talk about her speech.
- xvi. Mrs. Krupamma John was a very beautiful lady, and she always dressed herself neatly and walked very briskly even in her last days.
- xvii. I, Shobha Rani. her grand child, praise the Lord for such a wonderful servant of God who is worth emulating in all respects. It was mostly from my grandmother, Krupamma and also from my own mother Vazraleela that I have gathered my inspiration to enter into the Lords ministry at Yacharam ordained together with my husband, Dr. Adrian Dalavai, in February 2002.

4 M. B. John's Children

Pastor M. B. John was blessed of God, gifted with 10 children.

One of them, Ebenezer, died on 10-6-1958 at the age of 16 years. The remaining 9 children were married and settled in life, blessed with children. They are as follows.

S.No	Name	Date of Birth	Spouse
1	M.J. Abraham Lincoln M.A., B.Ed	7, April 1934	Dosapati Suvama
2	Mrs. M.J Vazraleela M.A. B.Ed.	27, July 1936	Thalluri D. Samuel Asst. Engineer
3	Late M.J Pushpaleela B.A., B.Ed	10, July 1939	Late Gattu Prakasham B.A., B.Ed., Teacher
4	Late M.J Ebenezer	2, Feb. 1942	Unmarried (Expired - 10-6-58)
5	Mrs. M.J Marilyn B.Sc .. B.Ed,	25, Oct. 1944	Manda David Raju B.A., Accts. Officer
6	M.J Jesse B.Sc., B.Ed	3, May 1948	Deborah (Debbie) M.A.
7	Mrs. M.J Sarah Grace B.A.	9, March 1952	Chinta Abraham M.Tech., C.E.
8	M.J Benjamin Walter, I.R.S	22, Sept. 1954	Thalluri Swarna Kumari M.Sc., Lecturer
9	M.J Clement B.A.	13, Oct. 1957	Ponmil Sabina B.Sc., B.Ed., M.S
10	Mrs. M.J Mercy B.A., T.T.c.	4, Aug. 1962	Prem Mitra B.A.

2. GLORIFICATION

- Mrs. M. J. Krupamma expired on 14th of January 1999, at 11 am. at her 4th daughter, Mrs. Grace Papa Abraham's residence, Vanasthalipuram, Hyderabad. Mrs. Krupamma's date of birth: June 28, 1917; born at Nalgonda; died at the age of 81 years.
- Dr. Rev. M. B. John expired on 29th of July 2002, at 10 a.m. at Care Hospital, while he was living at his 3rd daughter, Marilyn David Raju's home, Musheerabad, Hyderabad. His date of birth was 21st of September 1908; died at the age of about 94 years.

CHAPTER-IX

SEVERAL DISTINGUISHING TRAITS OF M. B. JOHN

Pastor M.B John was blessed of God with several distinguishing traits. M. B. John is a warm human being interested in people. Being a church pastor, and as a man of God, M. B. John, in his own life, is at the meeting point of several streams of activity dealing with, for example, the law of God, (Exo: 20), philosophy of men (Co I. 2:8), meta-physical inquiries, social service (1 In. 3:17-19), the concern of charity (1 Cor. 13), the concept of sin and salvation (Justification, sanctification and glorification), (Rom. 1: 18-25).

1. His Awesome Memory

Many of us are not surprised at the number of people whom M. B. John remembers and recognizes. Memory is a phenomenon difficult to analyze. Pastor M. B. John's recollections of men and matters were amazing for their conformity to truth. Few church men can be so immaculate as 'a computer storage system'. M. B. John remembers his church members and their family life events which happened 50 or 60 years ago as though they were happening now; concerning their past marriage functions, their children's educational progresses, their spiritual growth problems, and their baptism dates, places, etc., in which he was involved as a pastor.

Pastor John's informality which attracts people to himself is the key to his popularity as a mountain peak personality. Those who imagine that such elderly persons concern themselves mainly with spiritual questions will, however, find how well informed, M. B. John has been about their social, economic and political awareness in the context of Biblical understanding. M. B. John was a deep and judicious thinker.

God has blessed Pastor M. B. John with photographic, elephantine awesome memory. He remembers the names of our A.M.B. Missionaries' children and even their grand-children with whom he was closely associated in the ministries of IMB Conference. He has not forgotten his school classmates, his teachers. His classmates in I Form were: (p. 10)

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. M. B. John | 6. N. Lizamma |
| 2. G. G. Alfred | 7. V. S. Maryamma |
| 3. D. M. Devadanam | 8. G. Kanthamma |
| 4. K. S. Samuel | 9. B. S. Gnyanaprakasham |
| 5. K. Nathaniel | 10. K. S. Joshua |

His headmasters and teachers were: (p. 9)

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Mr. D.G. Samson (HM) | 5. K. Elizabethamma (Tchr) |
| 2. Mr. G. Robert Samuel (HM) | 6. Mr. N. Prakash am (Tehr) |
| 3. Mr. G. Devasahayam (Tehr) | 7. Mr. G. Benjamin (Tehr) |
| 4. Rebecca (his wife) (Tehr) | 8. Mr. G. Albert Samuel (Tehr) |
| 9. Mr. N. C. Daniel (Tehr). | |

2. His Pursuit for Excellence

Medari B. John was with his uncle Moses at Mandapur for three years, taking care of his sheep, dutifully and faithfully. He was 10 years of age in 1917. John was now and then hearing of his father Butchiah, his sister Mariamma and other members of the family at Gudipally. He was told by his uncle that his sister and other members of the family were all well and studying at school. And suddenly came the boom and John cashed in. He said to his uncle: 'Send me to school. They are all studying, and I am not studying'. Moses agreed, and took him and put him into the mission school at Nagarkurnool (NGKL) under the principal Rev. Dr. O. F. Bergthold, and headmaster Mr. Dalavai Joshua, at the beginning of the year 1918. There was no Mission School at Oevarakonda (OVK) at that time for want of permission from the State government.

That was the beginning of Medari B. John's great adventurous future to come-his' pursuit of excellence' in the field of secular and theological education. He started his life as a student, sitting at the feet of great scholars of that time, namely, missionary O.F. Bergthold, Mr. Oalavai Joshua, Mr. Aaron Kelly, Mr. T. Jeevarathnam. This beginning of Medari John's education at NGKL mission station reminds us of the words of Paul, the Apostle who wrote (Acts 22:3), 'I am verily a man brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught. according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day'. Medari John of Gudipally was the most fortunate chosen man of God to begin his life sitting at the feet of great men of God : Rev. O.1. Shubhaker, a college lecturer, writes: "Rev. J. H. Voth (John's spiritual father and patron missionary), Rev. D. F. Bergthold, and Mr. Dalavai Joshua, left an indelible imprint on him, whom he gratefully acknowledges even now. Rev. John A. Wiebe was instrumental to expose him to the challenge of the ministry which provided ample opportunities to get trained theologically and penetrate into multi-dimensional role for His glory." (In his article, Rev. M. B. John, A Devout Disciple of God, Feb. 28,1993, p. 6).'

On such spiritual infrastructure of knowledge, understanding and wisdom, (Prov. 2:6) M. B. John could accomplish his "14 firsts" printed on the very first page of his autobiography of 1983. His pursuit of excellence in all phases of his career,

as an athlete at school, Kurnool, and as Bible student at NGKL, is acknowledged by both missionaries and national elders:

Rev. Bergthold wrote to Rev. J. H. Voth, "M. B. John will one day or another become a great servant of the M.B. Church of India". Rev. Gandham Samuel Douglas, Pastor at Shamshabad, put his hands on M. B. John's shoulders at a convention in Mahabubnagar, and said, "Brother John, you have an old head on your young shoulders."

3. M.B. John as a Pastor

As a Pastor the great ministry of The Calvary M. B. Church demonstrates to all the nine fields of the M.B. Brotherhood that this 'man of God' has taught to all the M. B. churches the secret of a successful pastor - the heart and core of the largest Calvary M.B. Church of Mahabubnagar is evangelism and training of its youth in the ministry of outreach work. More than 35 young people, mentioned in his autobiography, were, participated in the 'week of witness' and evangelistic campaigns, every year. (p. 36). In association with Rev. John A. Wiebe, the station missionary, a number of village worshipping congregations were established, and more than half a dozen rural churches were constructed.

4. M.B. John as a Writer

From historical point of view, M.B. John's books, namely, 'A Brief Story of the Life of Rev. & Mrs. M.B. John, of 1983, and 'The Life Story of Rev. & Mrs. J. H. Voth', Missionary of Devarakonda field, (1908-1942), have remained with us as very valuable sources of information on many aspects of IMB church ministries at large. His historical details are immaculate and speak of his photographic memory which was sane and remarkably conversational till his last days. Most of our predecessors have completely failed in this respect of writing our IMB church history or even of their own family background.

5. M.B. John as Conference Leader

His outstanding characteristic was his versatility. He was an indefatigable person. In his youth he was an athlete. As a pastor he preached to a congregation packed and jammed to capacity every Sunday. He trained more than 25 young men at regular intervals in Bible study gatherings; he led evangelistic campaigns to all the villages of his field (MBNR); he built with the cooperation of the station missionary, a good number of rural church buildings; he was the Governing Council Chairman for five terms; was the chairman of every subcommittee at least for once; there was not one Board that he did not participate in as its executive member; he was the most popular 'Ind highly esteemed worker of the Lord. He has been generally considered as the ablest leader of the Conference of his time.

6. Biological Identity

M. B. John hailed from Gudipally village and belongs to Medari family background. Rev. OI Shubhaker writes: John comes from an economically deplorable low family background. Whenever he visits Gudipally, most of his Medari relatives flock around him in the church, calling 'Jananna' our big brother. Brother John was never ashamed of identifying himself with them. He always openly and lovingly, said aloud, These are my people from whom the Lord chose me to be his witness to the world. "The greatest characteristic of M. B. John, now an American, with most of his children settled in U.S.A."

7. Ambition and Submission

No other IMB national mission-worker was so closely and for so long associated with AMB missionary personnel as M. B. John was. Medari John had one ambition in his life, and that was his desire to get the highest level in education of his time during the period of his training (1918-1932). He was aware that his headmasters (Dalavai Joshua of Nagarkurnool, G. Robert Samuel and D. G. Samson of Devarakonda) and Bible pastors and teachers (Kodamala Aaron Kelly, T. Jeevarathnam of NGKL and Rev. Gandham Samuel Douglas of Shamshabad) were high school graduates from Ongole Baptist background. And to become their equal with high school education was his burning ambition.

As soon as he completed his middle school schooling at DYK under the principalship of Miss Helen L. Warkentin in 1926, John made a request to missionary Rev. P. Y. Balzer to send him for high school education. The missionary turned down his request saying, 'We have no funds for high school education, but we have funds for Bible school training if you want to go'. John was disappointed, but there was no other go. May be in the plan of God for Medari John, the young aspirant John (aged 18 years) agreed and studied 3 years at NGKL under Rev. D.F. Bergthold, as Principal and Mr. Aaron Kelly and Mr. T. Jeevarathnam, as other teachers.

Medari John returned to DYK after his Bible school training, and immediately and anxiously approached missionary Rev. J. H. Yoth, with request to send him for high school education. Rev. Voth was not willing to accept John's request, but advised him to become a preacher in a village. Medari John, now 21 years of age repeatedly requested the missionary to allow him to go for high school education, and promised to remain in the mission ministry after completing his high school studies. Rev. Voth finally consented and sent John to Kurnool to study at Cole Memorial High School under the principalship of Rev. B. J. Rockwood. John successfully completed his high school studies, returned to DYK, and was accepted as a teacher under principalship of Miss Warkentin in 1932.

After working from 32-36, John had to leave the school on account of his overconfidence and find another job. He joined the PWD at Pendlipakala. He was praying that God would take him back to mission ministry. Providentially Rev. John A. Wiebe visited Pendlipakala and took Medari John and his family to Mahbubnagar and put him into Mission Middle School as headmaster in August 1944. John regained his lost paradise, with the help of the missionary Rev. John A. Wiebe. His submission to every missionary in his career fructified the seed of his ambition.

Brother Medari John worked with Rev. John A. Wiebe for 15 years (J 944-59) under his guidance and in close fellowship in the ministries of teaching as headmaster in mission school for 4 years (1944-48) and evangelism and building of churches (1949-59). Pastor M. B. John left a note with the author of this booklet on the 2nd of September 1997, mentioning three missionaries who were instrumental in building his career into a prominent minister of India Mennonite Brethren Church, stating how they guided him in his life. They are

1. Rev. J.H. Voth, Missionary to Devarakonda field

- I. Rev. Voth was my spiritual father, patron missionary, who sponsored my high school studies at the Coles Memorial High School (1929-32).
- II. He was my Bible class teacher during middle school studies at DYK under the principalship of Miss H. L. Warkentin. During that time I received Jesus as my personal Savior, and was baptized by Rev. Voth on the 15th of December 1924, at the age of 16 years.
- III. I named my private house as VOTH COTTAGE at Malakpet, in Hyderabad, in memory of him as my spiritual father and patron missionary.

2. Rev. J.N.C. Hiebert. Missionary at Mahbubnagar

Rev.J.N.C.Hiebert, for a short period sent me to Allahabad Oriental Missionary Society, North India, for one year Bible study, along with Brother Dalavai J.Richards. We both returned back to Hyderabad with our families .

3. Rev. John A. Weibe, Missionary to Mahabubnagar field

- I. Rev. John A. Wiebe brought me from PWD government service at Pendlipakala village back into mission ministry in August 1944 to Mahabubnagar, where I worked as middle school HM from 1944-48, and pastor of Calvary M. B. Church from 1950-76.
- II. I worked with Rev. John A. Wiebe for 15 years (1944-59), the longest period with a missionary, under his guidance in the

ministries of teaching at School, pastoring the Calvary M.B.Church, evangelizing the surrounding villages, building large Christian congregations. Calvary M.B. Church, the largest church in the whole conference 9 fields, built in three years and dedicated in the year 1957, in the presence of Hillsboro Mission Board secretaries. I was ordained as permanent church pastor at Mahabubnagar in the year 1953.

- III. Rev. Wiebe arranged my first trip to U.S.A. as fraternal delegate to M. B. Centennial Conference, held at Reedley in the year 1960-61.

The key to M. B. John's remarkable life as a servant of God in the ministry of the IMB conference of India was his faithful association and fellowship with his missionary personnel of his time, his unflinching diligence as a student at school and servant of the Lord's ministry in pursuit of excellence, and his willingness to become a channel through which God's purpose was to be achieved. Through simple faith and absolute submission, M. B. John became the most honored figure in the second half of the IMB conference history in the unique position which was assigned to him by the Governing Council of IMB Conference (1950-1986). For the prophet Daniel (12:3) says: *"For they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."*