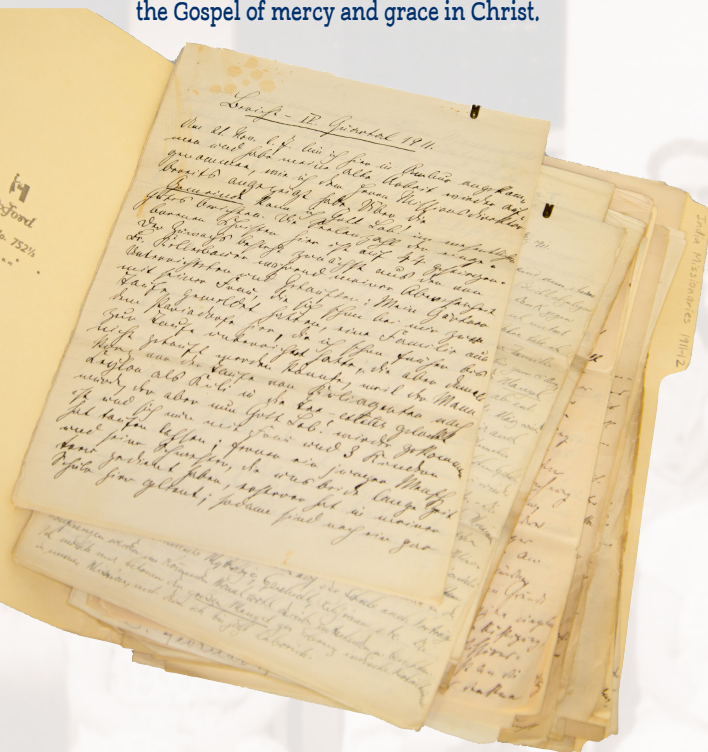


Concordia Historical Institute is committed to sharing the history of this important missionary work and the Lutheran pioneers who gave witness to the Gospel of mercy and grace in Christ.



This historically important report from the hand of MELIM missionary Franz Mohn in 1911 is only one of thousands of primary source documents in the Concordia Historical Institute collection being made available for study online.

Join us in furthering an appreciation and clearer understanding of an untold chapter in Lutheran missions: the work of MELIM missionaries and their families.

Prayerfully consider a donation that will help MELIM ONLINE preserve and present photos and documents online by retrieving, cataloging, and uploading historical treasures that will inform our understanding of Missouri Synod mission work in South India.



**melim online**

A HISTORICAL ARCHIVE PROJECT

Photographs and primary source documents that chronicle the history of MELIM are in danger of being lost. The window of opportunity for recording the history of those directly involved in MELIM is rapidly closing. More needs to be done to make these historical treasures available to researchers around the world.

Moreover, the costs of actively maintaining (retrieving, cataloging, digitizing, translating and uploading) these historical treasures are substantial. Currently the goal is to increase CHI's MELIM ONLINE project fund in order to sustain this project for the next 10 years.

**Please contact Concordia Historical Institute today to learn how you can help move this important historical archive project forward.**



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MELIM missionary families attending the Nagercoil Missionary Conference in 1931.



**Sharing the History  
of an Untold Chapter  
in Lutheran Missions**

**The Missouri Evangelical  
Lutheran India Mission  
(MELIM)**



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MISSOURI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN INDIA MISSION (MELIM)

During the 19th century The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) was indirectly involved in mission work in India by supporting the Leipzig Lutheran Mission (LLM).

However, the Leipzig Lutheran Mission dismissed K. G. T. Naether and T. F. Mohn, who were working in the southeast part of Tamil Nadu over their stance on the inspiration of Scripture. Subsequently, Naether and Mohn petitioned the LCMS for direct support of their work in India. The Missouri Synod agreed to their request and in 1895 Naether and Mohn moved to Krishnagiri and Ambur in northern Tamil Nadu to begin a new mission there. Their mission work was carried out under the banner of Missouri Evangelical Lutheran India Mission (MELIM).

Naether continued to sow the seeds of the Gospel until he contracted the plague and died in 1904. Mohn continued missionary work for a few more years.

The outreach of Naether and Mohn was continued by groups of missionaries sent from the LCMS. A number of churches, schools and healthcare ministries in the Ambur-Krishnagiri region were established and expanded.

In 1907 MELIM missionaries received a “Macedonian call” from Christians in Nagercoil in the princely state of Travancore to establish a MELIM station there. The LCMS sent missionaries to work in Nagercoil in south Travancore in 1911. Concordia Theological Seminary was established in 1924.



This photograph of pioneer MELIM missionaries was taken at Ambur in January 1903.  
Standing (left to right): Georg Kellerbauer (1895); Georg Naumann (1902). Middle: Franz Mohn (1895); Reinhold Freche (1898); and Theodor Naether (1894). Front: Frederick Forster (1902); A. Huebener (1900).  
(The year each MELIM missionary began their service is in parentheses.)

MELIM missionaries began work in Trivandrum (present day Kerala) in 1912. These missionaries in Travancore and Ambur, along with local pastors and teachers, formed congregations, schools and hospitals for new Tamil and Malayalam-speaking believers in the Gospel. Subsequently, the India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC) was established in 1958.

The MELIM missionaries, together with IELC pastors, teachers, and lay-workers continued with theological training, strengthening congregations, primary and secondary school instruction, and medical missions. Outreach expanded to Muslims, those in urban settings, women and other socially marginalized groups. Literacy and music programs began as opportunities to share the Christian Gospel.

However, by the one hundredth anniversary of MELIM in 1995, most missionaries had left MELIM and India. The IELC continues to minister, teach



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Participants at the MELIM Executive Committee Conference in June, 1970 at Kodaikanal.

and serve tens of thousands of Christians in hundreds of congregations throughout Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Sri Lanka.



The One Year Class at Concordia Seminary in Nagercoil (1968).