

# A BIOGRAPHY OF DR K M CHERIAN



# HAND OF GOD

by Priya M Menon

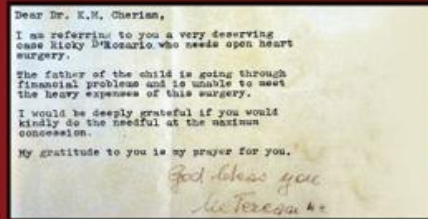
The Biography "Hand of God" is also available at Frontier Life Line Hospital and on Flipkart & Amazon

<http://www.flipkart.com/hand-of-god/p/itmec8aezz2wjnye...>

[http://www.amazon.in/gp/product/9384038644?keywords=hand%20of%20god&qid=1451384594&ref=sr\\_1\\_2&sr=8-2](http://www.amazon.in/gp/product/9384038644?keywords=hand%20of%20god&qid=1451384594&ref=sr_1_2&sr=8-2)



Priya M Menon is a Senior Assistant Editor with The Times of India, Chennai. She has been working as a journalist for the last 15 years and writes on a wide range of issues, ranging from lifestyle trends, art and culture to gender issues and social concerns. She has won numerous awards for writing about animal welfare and human rights, including the Jaigopal Garodia Voice For Animals Award and the TAI-VHS award for working for the welfare of the transgender community. She lives in Chennai with her husband Devanshu Arya and son Nishant.



"I had the pleasure to visit the hospital where Dr. Cherian and his group of doctors are doing excellent work. They were not only doing complicated revascularization surgery for acquired heart diseases, Bypass and Transmyocardial Revascularization, but they were also doing very complicated congenital heart surgeries. Now, I have always said that congenital heart surgery separates the men from the boys because there, the skill of a heart surgeon is really tested."

DR. CHRISTIAN BARNARD (World's First Transplant Surgeon)



"I am happy to find that a high technology cardio-thoracic and vascular diseases centre has been created in a remote Panchayat (Parumala) in Kerala, which is a dream for every rural Indian."

DR. APJ ABDUL KALAM (Former President of India)



I congratulate you on all your magnificent achievements. I also predict that you and the institute of Cardio-Vascular Diseases in Madras will have an important and growing influence in the cardiac surgical world, and will provide your patients with unusual and exemplary cardiac surgery."

JOHN W KIRKLIN (M.D., Birmingham, Alabama, USA)



"Dr. K.M. Cherian is a true leader in surgery and has established his institution as one of the most versatile and accomplished in India and Asia. I admire his accomplishments."

DENTON A. COOLEY (M.D., Founder of the Texas Heart Institute, Houston, Texas)



"To my friend and student, as an International Fellow at the Oregon Health and Sciences University, you were among the best in those exciting early days of Cardiac Surgery. It is no surprise that you have emerged as an innovator and great leader in your own right. I am happy to take some credit for your very successful career."

ALBERT STARR (M.D., Portland Oregon, USA)

A BIOGRAPHY OF DR K M CHERIAN

HAND OF GOD

by Priya M Menon

# A BIOGRAPHY OF DR K M CHERIAN



# HAND OF GOD

by Priya M Menon

World renowned cardiac surgeon Dr K M Cherian has achieved many 'firsts' in his long and illustrious career. He performed the first successful bypass surgery in India in 1975. In 1995, he became the first surgeon to do pediatric heart, lung and heart & lung transplants in India.

Cherian, however, traces his roots back to a family of farmers. Born to Mammen and Mariamma on March 8, 1942, in Kayamkulam, Kerala, his future as a cardiac surgeon was predicted even before he was born by a tribal chieftain.

He graduated from Kasturba Medical College, Manipal. In 1971, he migrated to Australia and US and got his FRACS from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.

Eager to contribute to cardiac care in India, Cherian returned to Chennai and joined the Indian Railways in 1975 at the lowest cadre. He has been closely associated with pioneers in cardiac surgery such as John W Kirklin, Sir Brian Barratt-Boyes and Albert Starr.

He has been the president of Indian Association of Cardio Thoracic Surgeons (IACATS) and Pediatric Cardiac Society of India (PCSI) and received lifetime achievement awards from both. Cherian was the first and the only Indian at that time to be elected as the member of the American Society of Thoracic Surgeons in 2002. He is the first and the only Asian who was elected as the President of World Society of Cardio Thoracic Surgeons (WSCATS) in 2010.

He received the Padma Shri in 1991. He is the first and the only Indian whose name is engraved in one of the stones in Kos Island, Greece, the birthplace of the Father of Medicine, Hippocrates.

Cherian lives in Chennai with his family. In his free time, he loves to farm.

Published, Marketed & Distributed by



A division of  
Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd.

www.tgb.indiatimes.com



₹499



**Launching of my Biography by shri.Oommen Chandy  
(Honorable Chief Minister of Kerala)**



# Launch of Biography "Hand of God"

DECCAN CHRONICLE

## 'IN INDIA, THERE IS NO RECOGNITION, NO OPPORTUNITY'

■ Dr K.M. Cherian's biography was recently released and the doctor tells DC that life of a surgeon has always been lonely



L.V. SIVA PRASADNA  
KUMAR / DC  
THIRUVAN, Nov 20

Despite possessing the best of brains, India has behind countries such as Britain or Chile in research due to lack of recognition and opportunities, said Chennai-based cardiologist and author Dr K.M. Cherian.

Biography writing has done the establishment of research institutions in some medical sciences, he

said. As a result very few Indians take up research.

"India has only four research centres for health technology, while Korea and Chile has 5, Brazil has 10, Canada, US and USA, 10 and Russia, 16," he said.

These research centres are not only lack of recognition, infrastructure or opportunities. According to Dr Cherian, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Make in India program could make one bright if it

supports in the real sense. "It should not let a slight to waste, help from every field, especially in oil field, biotechnology and space exploration," he said.

Nonetheless, India and other private sector partners should understand that research in health medical sciences has a long gestation period and it can't be equated with other industries.

He spent his formative years and professional years in USA and Australia and

took up a job in Sydney Australia and performed the first coronary artery bypass in the country in 1975.

Over the years he made notable contributions with heart operations in the country. Looking back over the decades to arrive to the sectors breaking these are many who through their will was seen Dr K.M. Cherian. More than his "Hand of God" that made his return to India.

## Gives up lucrative career, transforms India

"I was 20 then. Any doctor in my position would have remained in US or Australia where I had migrated. In fact, I was one among four earliest Indian doctors who had migrated to Australia after the White Australia policy was changed, and did my post graduation - FRACD there (in 1972). Then I migrated to the US but decided to come back to see whether I can do what I have learnt for my own people," he recalls.

"I did something that many would never do. I had worked to a lucrative career drawing a salary of \$70,000, returned to (Chennai) India and joined the Railways as an ad hoc AMO with ₹1,071 as monthly salary. Two weeks after homecoming, I performed the first coronary bypass surgery in the country and thereafter many fruits came to be and these presented me to leave India," Dr Cherian said.



### TOWARDS MAKING BIOLOGICAL VALVES

Dr Cherian came up with many new technologies like cardiac stem cells, biological valves, bioprosthetic valves, amplification of red blood cells and creation of artificial blood. All these projects are going at full speed but for bureaucratic elements and lack of financial support, he said.



# Dr Cherian releases his biography

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Chennai:** Celebrated heart surgeon Dr K M Cherian, the man who performed the first heart transplant in the country, released his biography 'Hand of God' on September 29, World Heart Day.

Dr Cherian, founder of Frontier Lifeline Hospital, presented the first copies of his biography to his teachers and mentors Professor M Srinivasan, former principal and professor of surgery, Kasturba Medical College and Prof B M Hegde, former principal and director of Kasturba Medical College.

It was a double celebration at Frontier as the hospital also marked the completion of 20 years since the first heart transplant was performed in 1995 by Dr Cherian and team.



Dr K M Cherian at the launch of his biography 'Hand of God' on Tuesday

"My mother's birthday also is this month and since both my parents are no more I am happy to present my biography to my teachers who guided me through my career," said Dr Cherian at the launch. The book, written by Priya M Menon, senior assistant editor with *The Times of India*, and pub-

lished by Times Group Books, illustrates Cherian's career and how he was destined to become a surgeon. From the trauma and exhilaration of the first heart surgery he ever saw as a medical student ("It was the first heart operation I had seen in my life, the first time I donated blood and also the first death I saw on the table"), his precious gun collection (the good doctor loves to hunt too), and why the memory of Ahalya continues to haunt him to this day... the book chronicles the ups and

downs, both personal and professional in Dr Cherian's life. It details how for Cherian, professional satisfaction made him overlook practical difficulties he faced in his personal life, of how he had to support his wife and two young children on a meagre salary at the Railway Hospital. But clearly, the 'hand of God' had a part to play in turning his life around, with Dr Cherian having performed more than 36,000 cardiac operations in his lifetime.

In 1991, Dr Cherian was awarded the Padmashri and before that he had twice received the Railway Minister's Award for performing the first bypass surgery in India and for saving patients during the Sirpur Kagaznagar derailment of Tamil Nadu Express.