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

Gives up lucrative career, transforms India

"I was 30 then. Any doctor in my position would have remained in US or Australia where I had migrated. In fact, I was one among four earlier Indian doctors who had migrated to Australia after the White Australia policy was changed, and did my post graduation – FRCC 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 recollects.

"I did something that many would never do. I bid farewell to a lucrative career drawing a salary of $70,000, returned to (Chennai) India and joined the Railways as an AoA AMO with Rs. 3,071 as monthly salary. Two weeks after homecoming, I performed the first coronary bypass surgery in the country and thereafter many flies came to be and prevented me to leave India," Dr Cherian said.

TOWARDS MAKING BIOLOGICAL VALVES

Dr Cherian came up with many new technologies like carbon steel valve, biological valves, bioprosthetic valves, allografting 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

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.

"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 published by Times Group Books, illustrates Cherian's career and how he was destined to become a surgeon.

From the trauma and exhalation 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.