

MAR THOMA MESSENGER



MAR THOMA ZONAL COUNCIL OF THE
MAR THOMA CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

JUNE 1984

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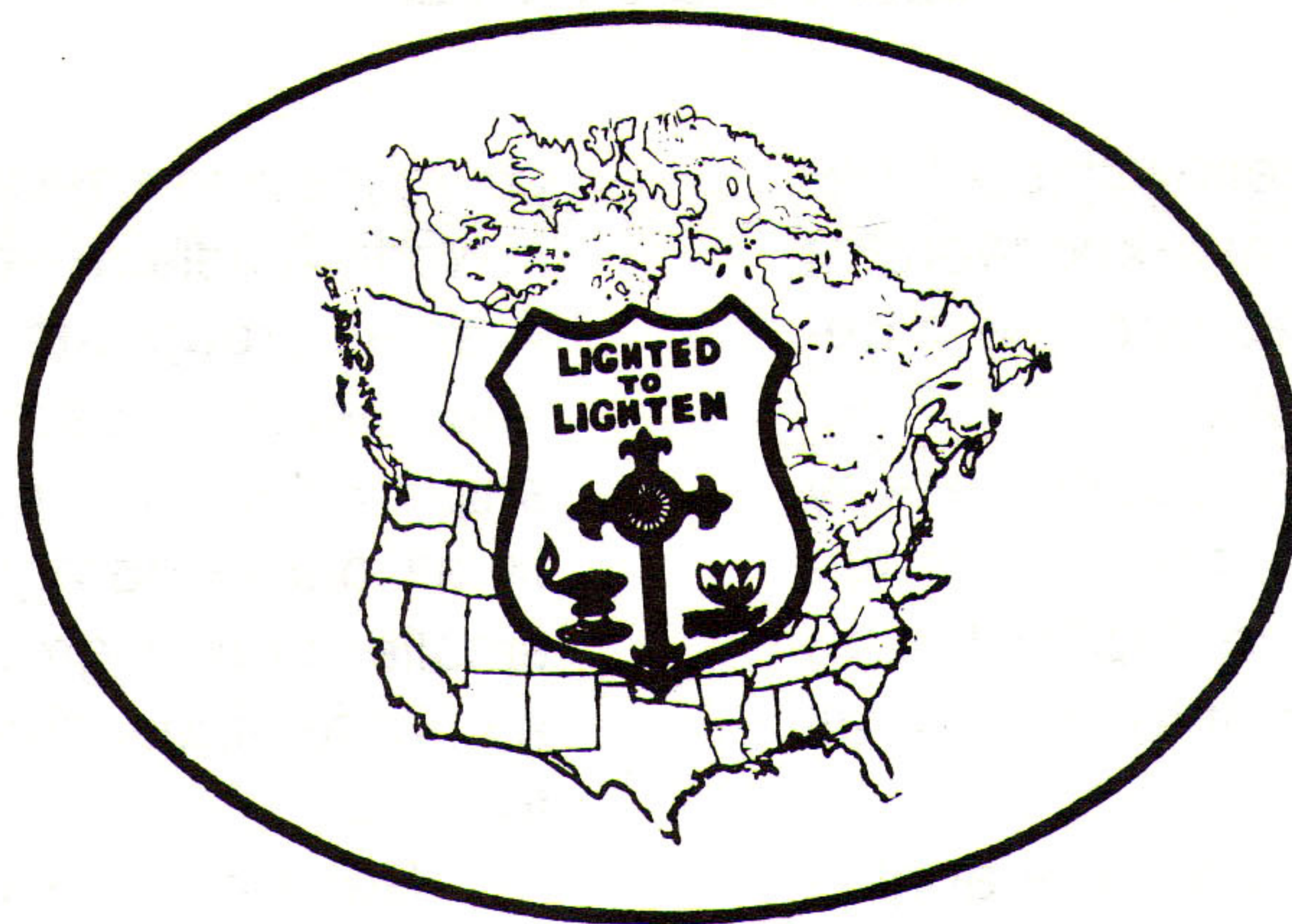
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Vol. III. No. 1.

MAR THOMA MESSENGER

June 1984

Mar Thoma Messenger is published by the Mar Thoma Zonal Council of the Mar Thoma Church in North America.

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We invite literary pieces, pictures and reports of church events etc. for publication in the Mar Thoma Messenger.

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EDITORIAL

Dear Friends,

We as Christians are a fellowship of believers. "Fellowship" is an overworked word. It often has a false image and has become a devalued currency. The Methodists call it 'P.S.A.' — Pleasant Sunday Afternoon, or a good gossipy get-together. In most churches, the idea of fellowship has lost its meaning and depth. It is no longer relevant to the Christian of today with all his multitude of problems.

Let us look at fellowship from three angles — Biblical, historical and practical. We find the Biblical warrant of fellowship in Genesis 2:18 where we read that God found that it is not good for man to be alone. Often it is looked upon as a direct reference to marriage. But the great reformer Calvin says it has a wider reference than to marriage. Aloneness is not the will of God, either in ordinary life or in Christian life. This does not rule out our solitude with God. It is God's will that people should have fellowship with each other. M.E. Macdonald in his book "The Need to Believe" says; "The real menace to life in the world today is not the hydrogen bomb, but the fact of proximity without community". Husband and wife, parents and children may be living under the same roof; but that does not necessarily mean there is the warmth of togetherness. Similarly, members of the same parish worship in the same church for decades together; still there is no intimate interaction. Bruce Larsen says: 'bar is the best counterfeit to Christian Fellowship'.

Well, in our homes do we really experience a sense of belonging to each other? Most of us have 'broken homes' where either the husband or wife is away at work. It is not easy to suggest a way out of this due to quite genuine reasons. But how far are we concerned about the sanctity of the Christian home? Money is not everything in life. Sort out the priorities of life lest you will have to feel sorry later. See that all members are together in the house at least for some time, every day.

The need for fellowship is not met by church-going or weekly meetings completely. There is something unnatural and subhuman about large crowds. They tend to be aggregations rather than congregations - aggregations of unrelated persons. Crowds can perpetuate aloneness. The larger they become, the less they know each other, and care about. So we need house-

churches and smaller congregations. Fortunately in North America, we have smaller congregations. A small group can become a community of related persons. Lack of intimate Christian fellowship hinder or damage one's spiritual progress. In all our congregations, we very much need smaller prayer groups and cells where we can air our feelings, share with each other and pray together.

Secondly, history abounds in examples of various spiritual movements born of fellowships. Famous movements of the Spirit of God began in intimate fellowships. For ex: the English Reformation started with the group of scholars who met in the White House Inn in Cambridge to study the New Testament of Erasmus. Methodism started with the Holy Club in Oxford. The Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association with all that it is today started with a very small group of people in Kallisserry. In our generation, God wants us to form small groups to meet together, pray, share and plan for great things for God. Such a move will change the face of our parishes and zone. The question is, how many of us will come out of our hideouts to look for two or three or a dozen people to meet together for prayer, Bible study and sharing.

Finally, every congregation needs better, personal pastoral oversight. But laymen also can be made responsible for many things. Each of us is his brother's keeper. Each of us can do much. We can do cooperative service. What do we do for others? In business relationships and other activities, we are partners with Christ and with one another in the business of catching men. As his ambassadors, visit the sick, comfort the brokenhearted, console the bereaved, extend fellowship to the lonely, strengthen the weak and cheer those who are upset.

With our rich heritage as members of the Mar Thoma Church with its strong emphasis on personal evangelism, open Bible and Christian Fellowship, let us rededicate ourselves for a richer and more meaningful family and parish life. Struggle hard to recapture the meaning of Christian home and parish.

Rev. P.V. Thomas
Editor

THE DIOCESAN BISHOP VISITS NORTH AMERICA



The Rt. Rev. Thomas Mar Athanasius Suffragan Metropolitan will be visiting the parishes and congregations in North America from June 29 to September 24, 1984. Thirumani will preside over the N. American Mar Thoma Clergy Conference on July 18 and the Mar Thoma Zonal Council meeting on July 18 and 19 at Dallas. Thirumani will be the Principal Speaker at the Students' Conference and the Family Conference at Dallas from July 19 to 22. Thirumani will conduct the Dedication Service of the new church building of Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston on July 14. Thirumani will speak at the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministries Meeting at Seattle from July 10 to 12, 1984.

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Dear Friends:

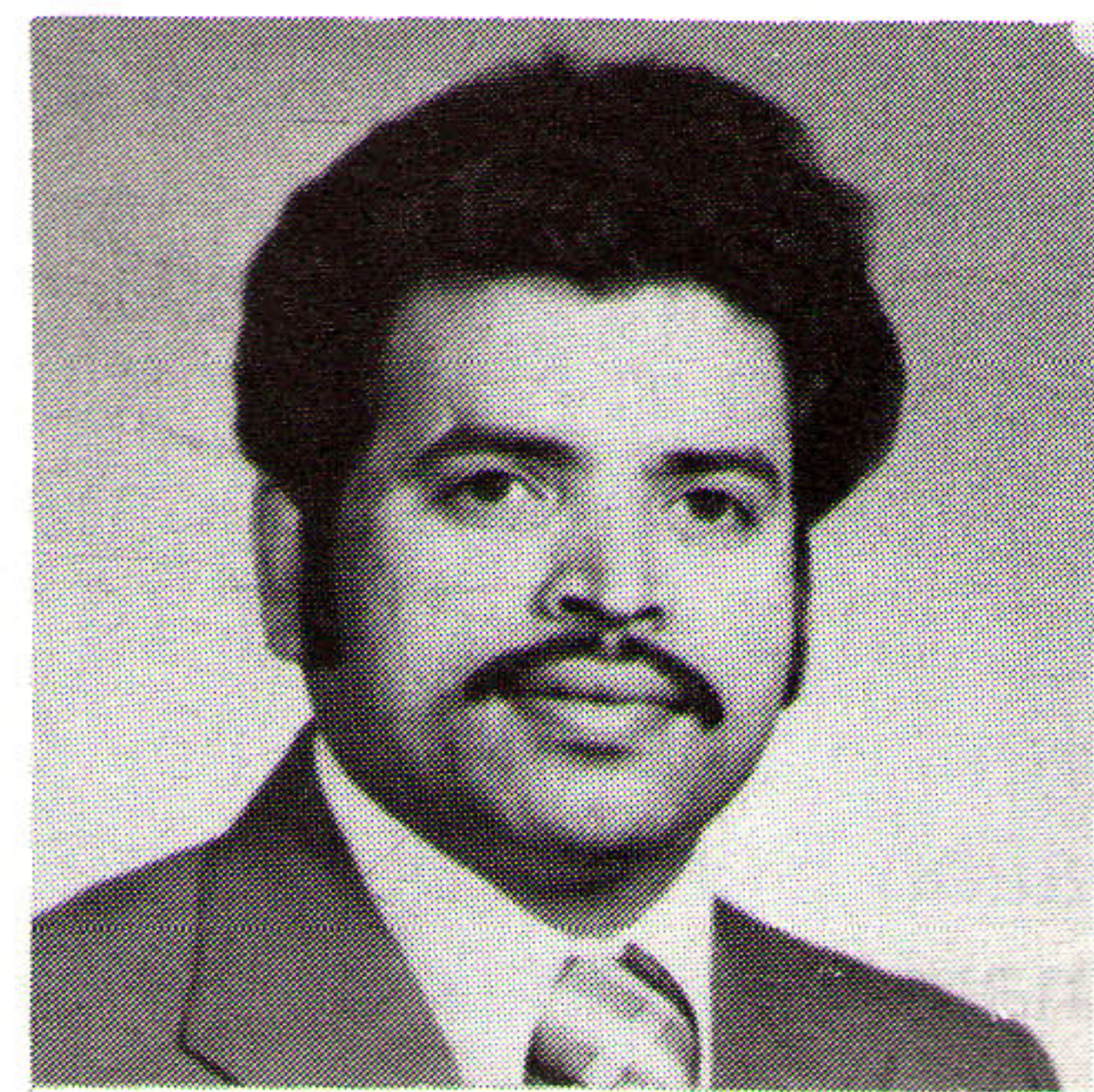
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A SPIRITUALITY FOR COMBAT*

Dr. M. M. Thomas

Colossians 2:13b-15. "God forgave us all our sins; He cancelled the unfavourable record of our debts with its binding rules and did away with it completely by nailing it to the cross. And on that cross, Christ freed himself from the power of the spiritual rulers and authorities. And he made a public spectacle of them by leading them as captives in his victory procession." (Good News N.T.)

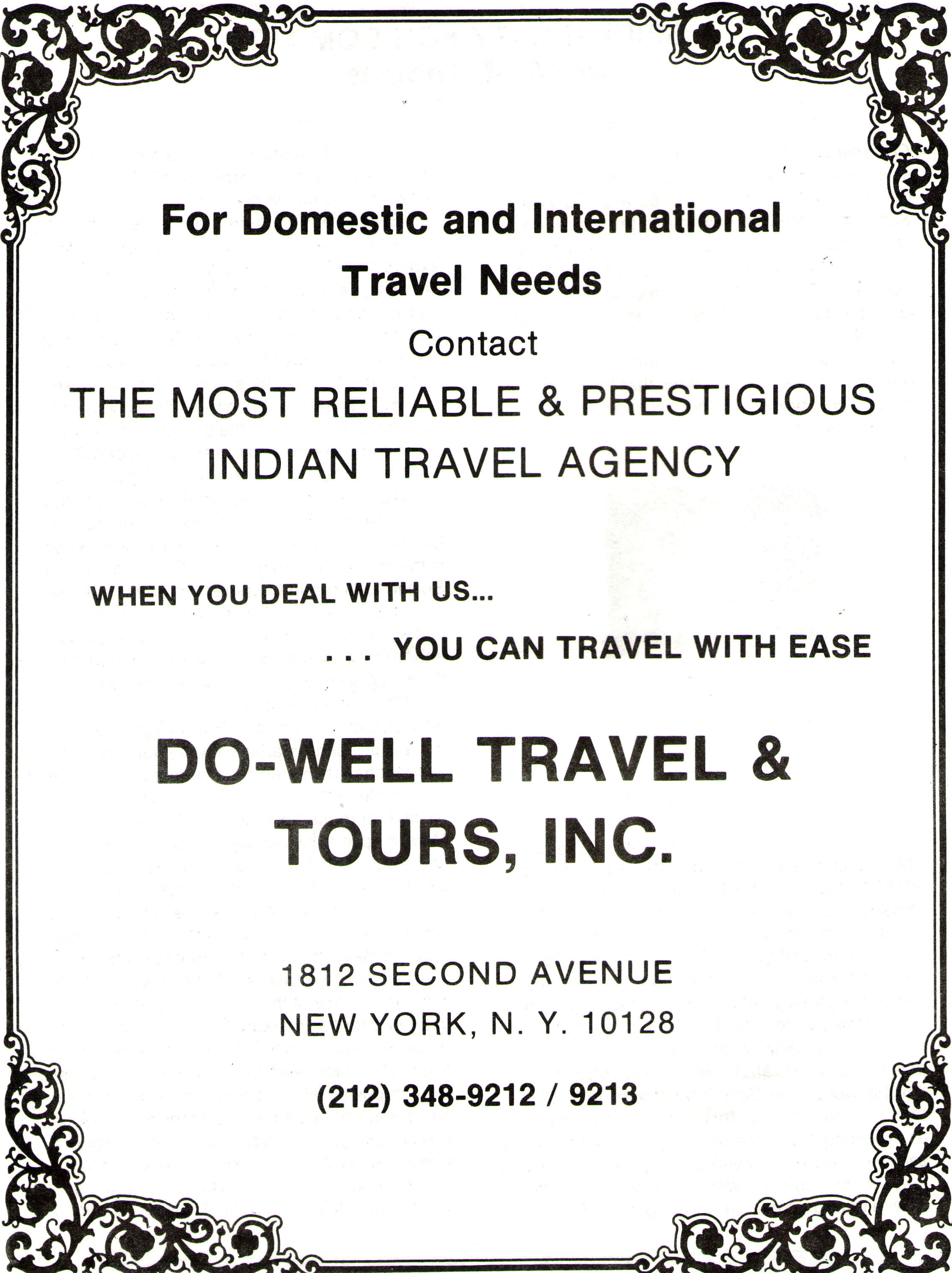
For our meditation this morning I want to take the last verse which says that the cross of Jesus Christ brought victory over spiritual rulers and authorities.



Hendrik Kraemer the Dutch missiologist, who was also for many years Director of the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, near Geneva, used to say that every person needed two conversions — the first conversion from self to God and the second from God to the world. The first one appropriates Divine Forgiveness and finds a standing ground for oneself before God; the second one moves to combat the evils of the world around in the power of God. It is about this second conversion "to the world with God" that I want to speak briefly today. Without this second conversion, as an Evangelical Consultation on Gospel rightly said, we often let "a privatised gospel of personal forgiveness" co-exist with "a demonic attitude to wealth and power" in our corporate life.

If you will excuse me, let me share with you my own personal experience of this second conversion to the world.

Early in my student days in college (that was a long time ago), I had a deep evangelical experience of conversion in which Jesus Christ became real to me as bearer of God's pardon and power in personal living; and I was also enthusiastic about winning souls for Christ. But I was very indifferent to social evils around me and to the idol-worships underlying them. And you will be surprised to know that the three people who made me aware of the spiritual significance of the corporate life and the structures of culture, society and state, were in the first place non-Christians — Jawaharlal Nehru, Karl Marx and Mahatma Gandhi. In the late thirties and forties, Christians in my State in India became involved in the struggle for Responsible Government and Social Justice and became part of the national struggle for political freedom; and it was there that we began to listen to national leaders Gandhi and Nehru and to study Karl Marx to understand the Indian society. India's caste-system enslaved one fifth of the people of India as outcastes for several centuries; and Nehru though a secular humanist, used to attack the system, not just as irrational, using religious language he spoke of "this demon of caste" which has to be "exorcised" from the body-politics of India. And Karl Marx, in spite of his rationalist approach to history had to use the categories of primal religion to explain mass poverty in the midst of affluence. As the tribal peoples saw in some natural objects like a piece of wood or stone or in a human bone or hair, independent, magical and mysterious spiritual power which they called fetish, Karl Marx spoke of the fetishism of commodity produced for the market. That is, he saw in the economic system itself some in-built power of alienation which produced poverty and oppression, a power which appeared as mysterious and spiritual to people. And Gandhi as a religious Hindu, spoke of the satanic forces of modern materialistic civilisation ruining the people of India. And he said, "I want to realise God, attain salvation, but I shall not withdraw from the world



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and go in some cave in the Himalayas as many religious Indians have done; No I need not do that, for, I carry a cave in my heart, to which I can retreat with God renouncing the world, but only to return to the world of politics with God to fight the satanic forces in the world.” And he spoke of the spirituality of detachment, *Nish-kamakarma*, as the basis of his political struggles. It was out of this contribution of spirituality and politics that his ethic of non-violent resistance to corporate evils emerged.

That traditional and modern corporate structures of Indian society was under the sway of demons, fetishes and satanic forces which have to be fought, came as an important discovery for me. Also Gandhi's idea of a religious spirituality for combating these spiritual evils built into the corporate life of India struck me. And it was this that led many of us in the student and youth Christian movements of Kerala to go to the Bible and to find there, not merely the Christ who brought Divine forgiveness to individuals but also the Christ victorious over “principalities and powers.” These principalities and powers are in fact the sins of idolatry of many generations accumulated and instructionalised in social structures, economic systems and cultural traditions and which have acquired an independent momentum on our common life and on individuals now living. The ecumenical movement also helped us at this point of understanding this dimension of Christ. In 1939 the World Christian Youth Assembly at Amsterdam met under the banner: ‘Christus Victor’. In 1947 the Oslo World Conference had as its theme: Jesus Christ, the Lord of the World.

Jesus Christ is both Saviour and Victor. He is not only the lover of my soul but also the Lord of the universe. This is precisely what the verses read to you from the Epistle to the Colossians affirm. Christ on the Cross annulled our debts under the law and brought us Divine forgiveness. Christ on the Cross in spiritual combat defeated the powers and principalities which enslaved the world and made them part of Christ's victory procession. The imagery here is clear. When the Roman Generals returned victorious from battles, Rome had victory processions in which Kings and Generals defeated by them were put in chains and paraded in the procession. St. Paul is using this imagery to say that in Christ's march of triumph in our world history, the forces

of corporate evil are made a public spectacle as captives of Christ, so that communion with God through Christ becomes for us the source of a spirituality of hope, of discernment and of participation with Christ in His continuing combat against the forces of corporate idolatry, self-righteousness and inhumanity built into the structures of our modern culture, society, economics and politics.

Dag Hammarskjold in his book of meditations, “Markings”, says: “The road to holiness in our day lies through the world of action.”

To those Indians who worshipped in temples with doors all shut to keep away the noises of the street, Poet Tagore said, “Open your eyes and see your God is not before you; He is where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and the path-maker is breaking stones; Stand with Him in sun and shower; What if your clothes get soiled”. He is there with “the least, the lowliest and the lost”, struggling for humanity and new life. It is there you meet God.

I suppose all of you had your first conversion. Have you had your second conversion? — of moving with Christ into the world?

* A sermon preached at the chapel of Princeton Theological Seminary on Dec. 8, 1983, while Dr. M.M. Thomas was a Guest Professor.

25. DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE US IN YOUR RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS.

You really enjoy “Malayalam” songs, liturgy, prayer meetings, and other social activities as part of your native traditions. Sometimes we attend these meetings (not always voluntarily) which is the least enjoyable to us but a real blessing to you. Since you all know the use of English language, why don't you try to have some programs in English which can be enjoyed by us all.

* Some of the points listed in this bill of rights are adapted from “How to be happy though Young” by George Lawton.

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ROLE OF YOUTHS IN OUR CONGREGATION*

Dr. Abraham A. Panackal, Philadelphia

The status of youths - what it is and what it should be.

The Youth of our Congregation is the first generation and immigrants in a new and different culture torn apart between two radically different cultures. His parents have rigid values and attitudes entirely different from that of his peers and society. Parents expect and demand implicit obedience and submissive behavior from their children. Schools and peers and this society sponsor and reward questioning attitudes and independent self directed behavior. If the youth follows the parents' wishes, he becomes a social outcast and many a times he may even regress to academic mediocrity. If he follows the peers and his social pressures, he may likely break many of our religious principles and family traditions. Thus the Marthoma Youth in this country appears to be in a no win situation.

He, being a member of the first generation in USA the cultural melting pot, has the responsibility to set up a new tradition and sets of values upholding the good aspects of the Syrian Christian tradition and values and synthesizing them with the better values in this society. The future of our group depends on how successfully and effectively you are able to perform this delicate task.

The youth, being new in a new country, will have to identify and establish himself as a productive member of the new society spreading out his roots firmly in this country. In this competitive society he will have to learn to succeed and face tough competition. In a society which sponsor initiative, independence, originality, and creative and innovative behavior, the rigidity and conformity behavior imposed in our families, and in some instances the lack of positive effort to compete in this society by parents are negative forces affecting the development of our youth.

There is a lack of role models in our group for the youth to emulate. There are achievers in our group, but many of them have accepted some of the values in this culture, and therefore, the parents of the youth present these successful people from the wrong perspective. There are many religious and traditional people in our group. But many of them are more adapted to a life in Kerala State, India during the 1960s and early 1970s. At least that is what they are looking for-

ward to in their future. The youth is confused about the direction of his growth and very little help is provided to him by our Congregation. We should learn to accept the desirable characteristics of our people who achieve in different fields and accept these people as role models for developing those better characteristics in us. We have no right to discuss and evaluate those characteristics and qualities of others we cannot accept. If we concentrate our attention on such undesirable characteristics we are more likely to learn and acquire such characteristics.

Our youth is in a land of opportunities, and there is no limit to the scope for potential development physically, mentally, and spiritually. He will be taller, stronger, heavier, and will live longer and study more than his parents. He is eligible for an excellent system of education coveted by people all over the world. He is also eligible for a financial aid system which will serve his educational needs at all levels. All he needs are high aspirations and willingness to work hard. This is the country which supports evangelical work all over the world. We have many outstanding christians and christian organizations. Christian leaderships and spiritual developments attained by many of our bishops and clergy have blossomed in this country. The christian spiritual support is there, the youth has to find it and develop himself.

The youth is living during a time period of severe unrest, confusion, and emergence of new thoughts and new ideas. There is, perhaps, more sin here and now than in any other period in history. The parents of the youth are shocked and are trying to hide the youth from the sinful world. Unluckily, that is the world in which we live and there is no place to hide the youth from the sins. He can only be educated to avoid sins.

Our Youth League and our Church, the organizations that should understand these problems of the youth and assist him and educate him to develop a character to face this world, are not doing enough. Both these organizations look up to the central church organization and leadership for directions and support. The central church organization in Kerala do not understand the problems of our youth and they do not have the time or resources to spend on these problems. It is up to us to charter this unknown sea

and develop a program to suit our needs and conditions. Our future in this country depends on the effectiveness and success of our programs. God will help only those who help themselves.

Youth Programs - What we can do.

We are all rational beings. We should try to understand our situation in this society. We will have to accept the fact that the youth cannot avoid the conflict between the two divergent sets of values. There are laws of God which should be upheld always and they will never change. Laws of man such as some of our traditions and customs will change with time and circumstances. If and when you find such customs and rules as undesirable, discuss them with parents, your vicar, your elders and your peers in this group and develop new sets of values, rules and modes of behavior that will be acceptable to you, to your parents, to your vicar, to your elders, and to your peers in this group. A practical suggestion that can be easily executed is to list a number of man made rules which you think are not suited to you in this society and bring them for discussion in a forum consisting of the youths, parents and elders, and the vicar. Discuss the different aspects of such rules and values. Try to get a consensus on the standards you would like your parents impose on you in your behavior and list them as your rules of conduct. Revise these rules of conduct as often as your group feels fit following the same procedure. You will be doing a great service to your community by developing such standards for our community.

In order to be successful in this competitive society, you will have to be competitive in a healthy way. The only way to be competitive is to compete. Compete against your own previous records and against each other without trying to destroy each other. I know that God has given you each many talents. Develop them and sponsor competitions in these areas to get training in competing. Bring any innovative idea for the benefit of the group and the church. Plan projects and programs and execute them. Thus learn to initiate, plan and execute projects and programs to improve upon them the next time. Two sets of practical suggestions that can be executed are presented here. Conduct several competitions throughout the year in sports and games, or even in fund raising and membership drives. Call for innovative ideas for projects and programs to be executed by your league each year. Take teams with a team leader for planning

and executing these proposals. The plans for these projects may be discussed by the larger group for critical suggestions to improve the projects. The revised plans may be executed according to a time table for them by the teams. These projects should be documented properly with suggestions for improvement.

There are successful people in different fields from our community in this country. Invite them to your meetings and request them to present to you their success stories. Please look only for the good qualities and aspects of these people and try to learn from them.

The current events and problems in this country has significant influence on your life. Bring some of these issues and problems for discussion in your group. Even if you may not influence these events or solve these problems, you will be better prepared to face them if you have thought about such issues earlier. You will be better informed about your world and our next generation will be better off in this country.

You have common qualities and aspirations as well as similar backgrounds. You need only common activities to build up cohesiveness and friendships. All the common activities you plan and execute together will go a long way to develop group cohesiveness. However, if you plan a few picnics, visitations, lunches, and retreats each year we can build group loyalties and group identification essential for the support of the group and our church in the future.

Our church is controlled by your parents and elders and they are happy with the present environment in the church. Otherwise, these conditions would have changed. I hope and pray that you, the younger generation of our church will respect each other, cooperate with all your planned activities, and try hard to bring peace and love in your community. Sponsor all people who are willing to serve your group and cooperate in all the activities of the church. Do not allow personal attacks or destructive suggestions to kill the initiatives and enthusiasms of youngsters. Keep cool, aim high, strive hard, and trust in our Lord. And our God will guide you to be successful and help you to set a model to all our youths in this country.

*The summary of a paper presented at the Philadelphia Youth League in March 1984.

CHRISTIAN YOUTHS AND THEIR BILL OF RIGHTS

Dr. V.T. Samuel, Louisiana

Most Marthomites, like other first generation Indian immigrants, are settling down in various cities and towns in North America and are likely to end up here after retirement. Our parishes are either building new sanctuaries or trying to buy or lease buildings for worship and assembly. Among Indian families, in addition to the usual generation gap, one can observe a pervasive cultural gap between the first generation immigrant parents and their offsprings who are quickly assimilating into the American culture. This is a common problem for most non-European immigrants whose cultural roots, and moral and religious values are quite different from that of the dominant white Anglo-Saxon culture in America. Informal talks with parents of several religious traditions and their children confirm the concerns many of us have with regard to the widening gaps in areas of family and religious life. There is also a tendency among many to generalize or stereotype the American culture and society with reference to certain "negative" aspects such as permissiveness, high rate of divorce, family instability, individualism and materialism. This ethnocentric attitude may be partly influenced by the news media as well as by the lack of a wholsitic understanding of the host culture in which we live at present. Debates and discussions on the continuity of Indian traditions and social institutions such as family and church are beginning to find their place in appropriate settings. As this is the emerging situation, an outline of twentyfive points under the umbrella of "Christian Youths and Their Bill of Rights"* are listed below with the hope that this will stimulate further dialogue and discussion between parents and children, and leaders of social and religious organizations who are concerned about the welfare of the immigrant families in North America. The bill of rights are essentially a plea from our growing children and youth for better communication and understanding on the part of the parents whose roots are nourished in the traditional Indian culture.

1. UNDERSTAND THE CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH WE ARE GROWING UP.

We are growing up in two different cultures: the

American culture outside home and the Indian culture within. As you find it difficult to adjust to the new found homeland, we are also experiencing difficulty in adjusting to the norms and values of the environment within and without.

2. SPEND SOME TIME WITH US.

We realize that we are growing up in a family where, many a time, both parents are working. Some times it involves different shifts which leaves us with one parent at a time. But we like to talk with you, play with you and share with you. We need your attention and a portion of your time so that we can grow together with mutual benefits.

3. STAND BY US, NOT OVER US.

Give us the feeling that we are not alone in the world, that there are many others like us, and that we can always count on you when we are in trouble.

4. MAKE US FEEL THAT WE ARE LOVED AND WANTED.

We want to love you, not as a duty but because you love us.

5. TRAIN US BY BEING AFFECTIONATELY FIRM.

You really will achieve more with us through patient teaching than by severe punishment or regular preaching. Say "No" when you feel you have to, but explain your rules, and don't merely impose them on us because it was the way your parents taught you.

6. BRING US UP SO THAT WE WILL NOT ALWAYS NEED YOU.

We understand that our relationship (parent-child) is an eternal one. However, we need to grow and become independent. Teach us how to take on responsibility and become independent of you. We will learn this faster and better if you will let us question you, your ideas and standards with a view to understand them.

7. DON'T ACT SHOCKED WHEN WE DO THINGS WE SHOULDN'T.

It is going to take us time to learn how to grow into life properly.

8. TRY TO BE AS CONSISTENT AS POSSIBLE.

If you are mixed up about what you want from us, why shouldn't we be mixed up too in which we give you?

9. DON'T TRY TO MAKE US FEEL INFERIOR. Self-pride is part of all of us. We doubt ourselves enough without confirming it. Predicting failure for us won't help us succeed.

10. APPRECIATE AND SAY A NICE WORD WHEN I DO SOMETHING REALLY GOOD. Don't hold back the praise when we deserve it. That's the way to spur us on.

11. SHOW RESPECT FOR OUR WISHES EVEN IF YOU DISAGREE WITH THEM. Respect for you will flow naturally from your respect for us. Don't shut us down completely without giving your reasons for doing so.

12. SHOW INTEREST IN WHAT WE ARE DOING. Even though by your standards our activities may not be important or interesting, don't reduce them in our eyes by your indifference.

13. GIVE DIRECT ANSWERS TO DIRECT QUESTIONS. Some times we ask serious questions. But don't give us more than we ask for or can understand. When you don't know, say so, but find someone for us who does know.

14. TREAT US AS IF WE ARE NORMAL, EVEN WHEN OUR CONDUCT SEEMS PECULIAR TO YOU. All God's children have problems. That doesn't mean we are all problem children.

15. TEACH US BY EXAMPLE. As you are observing our behavior, we are also observing your behavior at home, church and other places. "What you are speaks louder than your words".

16. TREAT EACH ONE OF US AS A PERSON IN HIS/HER OWN RIGHT. Children are people, not carbon copies of grownups. Treat all children in your care fairly; that is, as of equal value to you. That is how we will learn to respect the rights of other people and to treat them fairly.

17. DON'T KEEP US YOUNG TOO LONG. We want a chance to prove what we can do as soon as we are ready to give proof. Don't hold

us back by love which over-protects and paralyzes.

18. WE NEED FUN AND COMPANIONSHIP. Help us share our interests and happy feelings with groups of friends. Give us time to be with them and make them welcome when they come to visit.

19. MAKE US FEEL THAT OUR HOME BELONGS TO US. We are at least as important as furniture. Don't protect "things" at our expense by making us feel like intruding bulls in a china shop.

20. TREAT US AS JUNIOR PARTNERS IN THE FIRM. Democracy starts at home. If you want us to be worthy successors to you, take us into your confidence, and let us help you in some measure in managing our family, our school and our church community. We are not asking leadership roles but a fair share of roles associated with each unit in the family so that we can become successful leaders of tomorrow.

21. MAKE YOURSELF AN ADULT FIT FOR A CHILD TO LIVE WITH. Prove to us "it is not so" that parents are the worst persons in the world to have children, or that teachers are precisely the people suited to teach. Show that home, school and church are not simply places where children learn how to get along with disagreeable adults.

22. PREPARE US TO LEAD OUR LIVES, NOT YOURS. Find out what we can do or we want to before you force us beyond our capacity or make us become what you want us to become.

23. GIVE US THE RIGHT TO A MAJOR VOICE IN OUR OWN LIVES. Decisions that will affect our whole future should be made with us, not for us. We have a right to our kind of future.

24. PERMIT US THE FAILINGS OF AVERAGE CHILDREN, JUST AS WE PERMIT YOU THE FAILINGS OF AVERAGE PARENTS. We (you and us) may break the rules sometimes. We can grow only at our own rate, which means in easy stages. We want to become the best we can become, but we would not be human if we were perfect.

Continued on page 7

A SMALL SEED — A BIG TREE TODAY

Miss Susy David, Principal, Vanitha Mandiram



A small seed, that sprouted in the Maramon Convention Pandal on Feb. 14, 1919 and has grown into a big tree today, is the Mar Thoma Suviesha Sevika Sanghom (Women's Auxiliary of the Mar Thoma Church). Its roots are the sevika sanghoms in each mar Thoma parish and its leaves are the ladies in each Sevika Sanghom. Every Mar Thoma woman adds to the beauty and function of the Sevika Sanghom as the foliage and the roots to a huge tree.

Salem Home was begun with one or two infants in 1924. In 1984 it is celebrating the Diamond Jubilee as a large family. It aims at helping orphan infants to grow into independent self-supported adults. There are 45 girls at Thiruvalla and 70 boys at Punalur. Few are handicapped or retarded. Rehabilitation of these boys and girls is not an easy task. Mite box collection ('Dappirivu') is the main means to support this work. By donating Rs.1000 each year, you can sponsor a child. You can partake in this ministry, also by giving special donations and endowments. Let us remember the parentless when you spend for your children.

The Sevika Sanghom runs a school that has classes up to grade VII in English and Malayalam. Boarding also is attached.

Vanitha Mandiram was begun in 1925 to train young ladies for full time Christian work as well as for Christian family life. About 40 ladies are trained here every year. Most of our lady evangelists today, have received their training here. To train a person for one year, we need an amount of Rs.2000. There are many who come forward for training but unable to support

themselves financially. You can help such and this training center by donations, endowments or by sponsoring students. Donating books to the Vanitha Mandiram library also would be a valuable help.

Today there are 49 lady evangelists working in Kerala in 15 mission fields, who have received their training in Vanitha Mandiram and Episcopal Jubilee Institute.

A home for the retired workers was built at Elanthur by the help of Kuwait Sevika Sanghom. Three retired workers have been staying there. As more workers are retiring now, a new home for retired workers with enough facilities is an imminent need. We have the great responsibility to care for those who have spent their lives for the Lord's work in the service of the Sevika Sanghom and are now retired. Some of them are ill-healthy too. A Medical Fund to help them also is an urgent need.

The ministry of the 'Sevinies' is our ministry and it is the responsibility of each one of us to support them. 'Soujanya Danam', which is collected during Sevika Sanghom Week in September is earmarked for this purpose. There are also ladies working in the mission fields outside Kerala at Hoskote, Ankola, Sihora, Tibetan Border etc. 'Videsa Mission' collection is to support this work.

The Development Department of the Sevika Sanghom functions as a means to provide job opportunities for unemployed ladies. The snack center and show room at Tiruvalla, the tailoring department, curry powder project etc. are some of them. Projects such as ladies' hostels also are part of the activities of the Sanghom.

Vanitha Bodhini is the official publication of the Sevika Sanghom. You can help this publication by subscribing for life membership and also by contributing items for publications.

By the showers of God's blessings, the small seed that sprouted in 1919 is growing as a big tree today. Sevika Sanghom needs young ladies with vision and calling to carry on the various ministries of the Sanghom. Sevika Sanghom needs the prayers and the support of each one of you. You are the core of the Sevika Sanghom. Let us all join together to help this tree grow and bring forth fruit in all seasons.

MAR THOMA JUNIOR CONFERENCE OF THE NEW YORK, NEW JERSEY & PHILADELPHIA REGION

Dates: August 3-4, 1984

**Place: Stony Point Center, Crickettown Road, Stony Point, New York
10980**

Theme: "JESUS CARES FOR ME"

Sponsors: St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, New York

**Mailing Address: Mr. Daniel Thomas, 8 Sherbrooke Road,
Hartsdale, New York 10530.**

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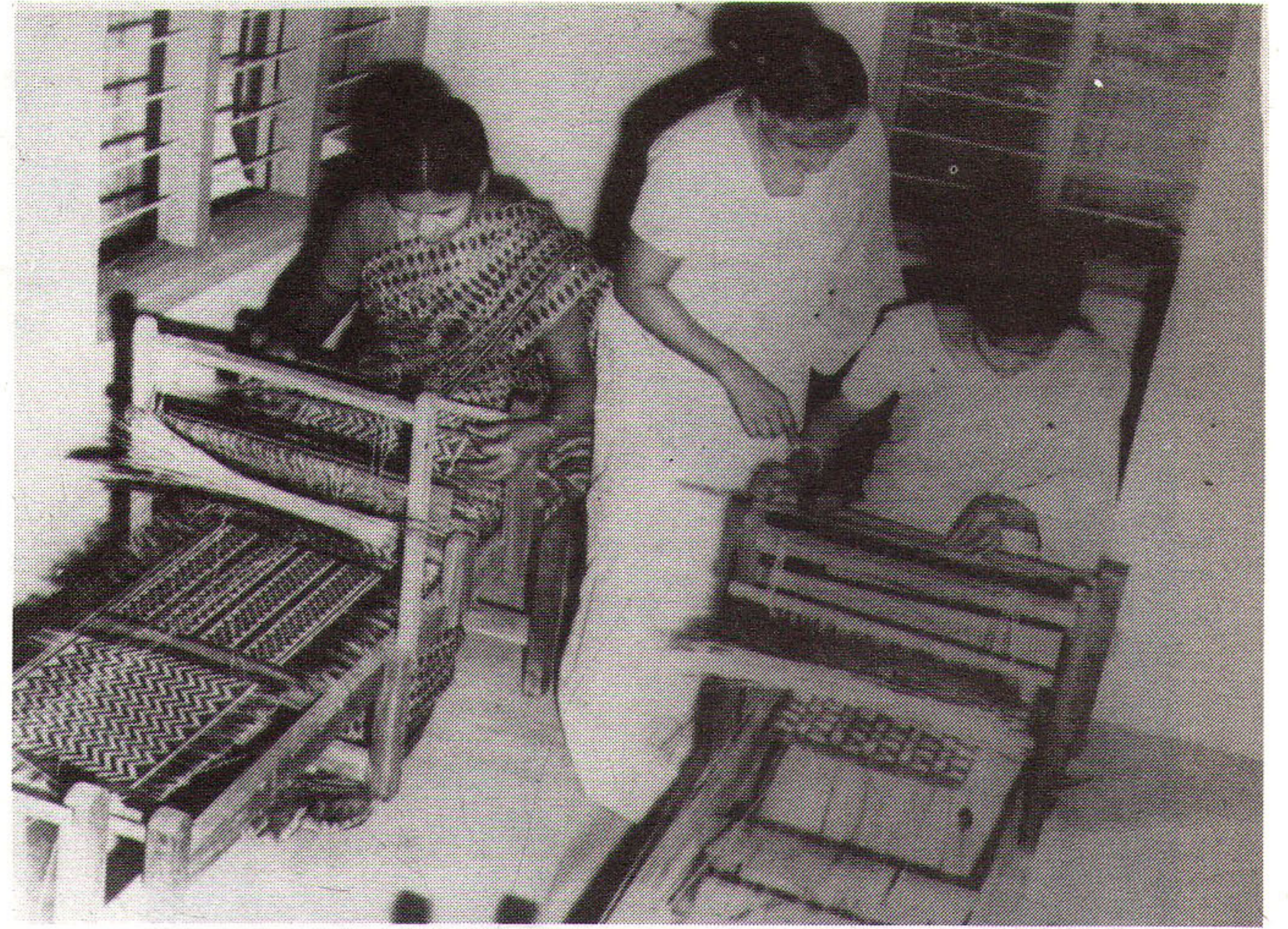
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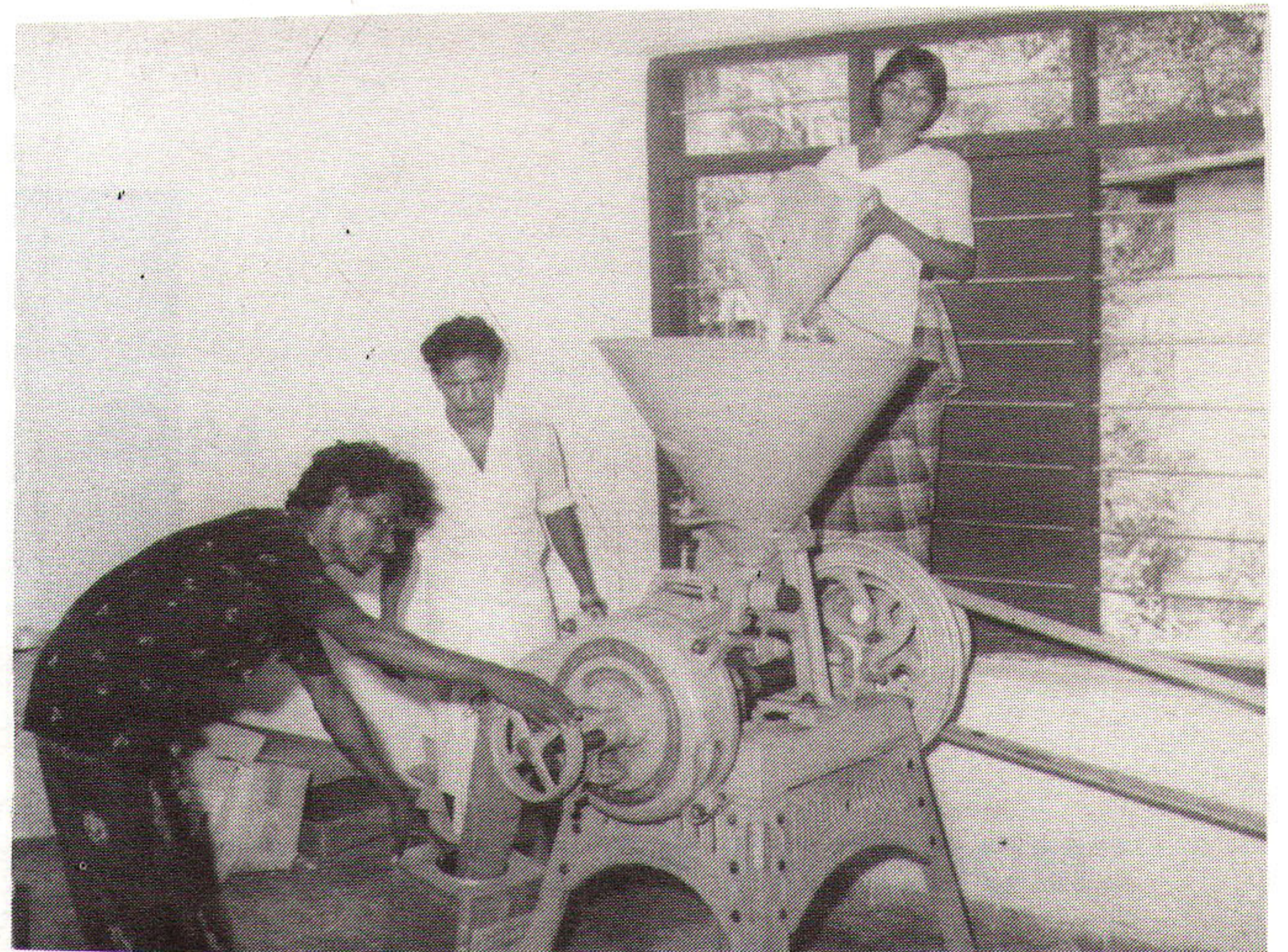
Tailoring Class



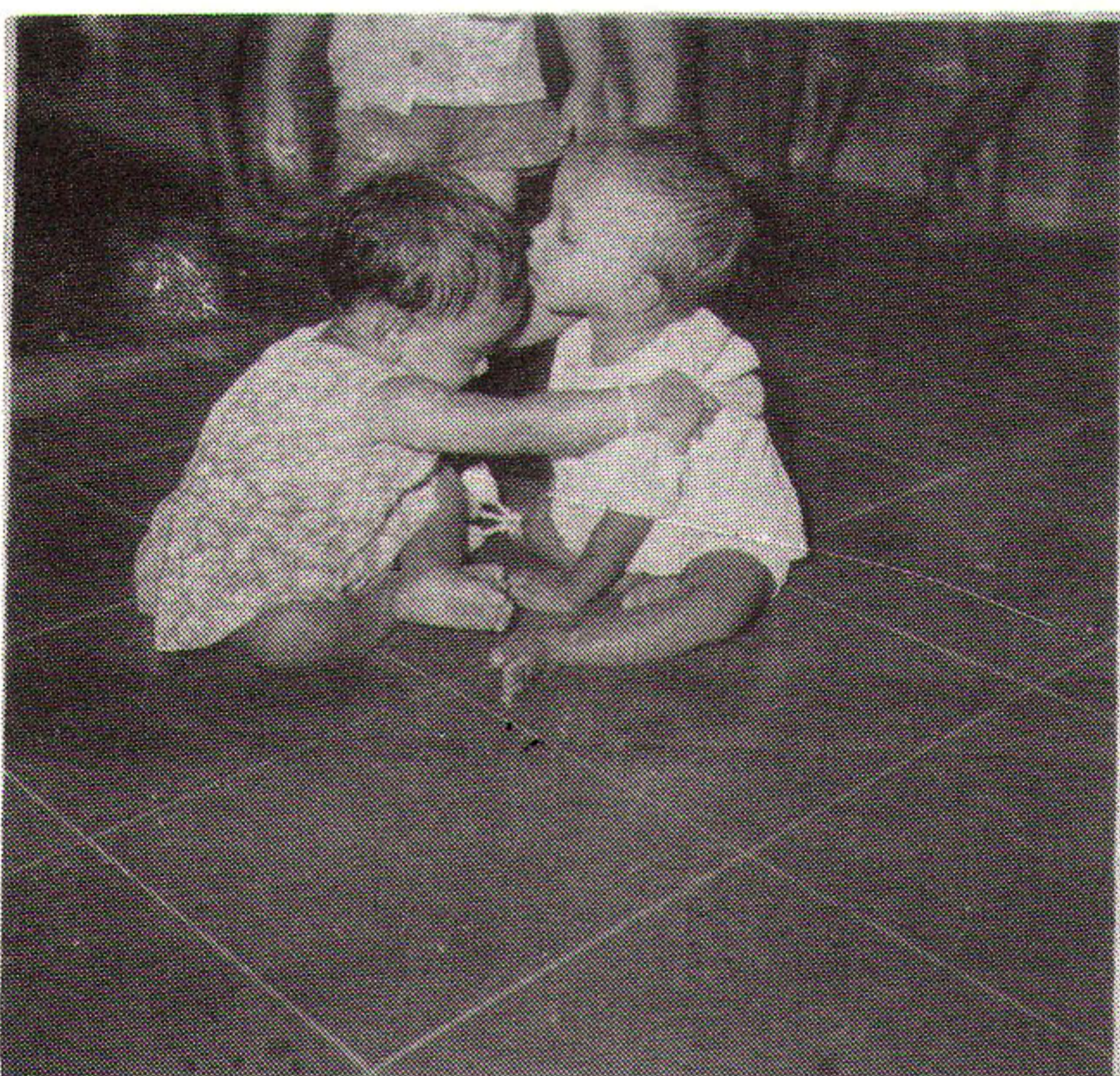
Teaching Handwork



Show room & Snack Center



Curry Powder Project



Salem Children



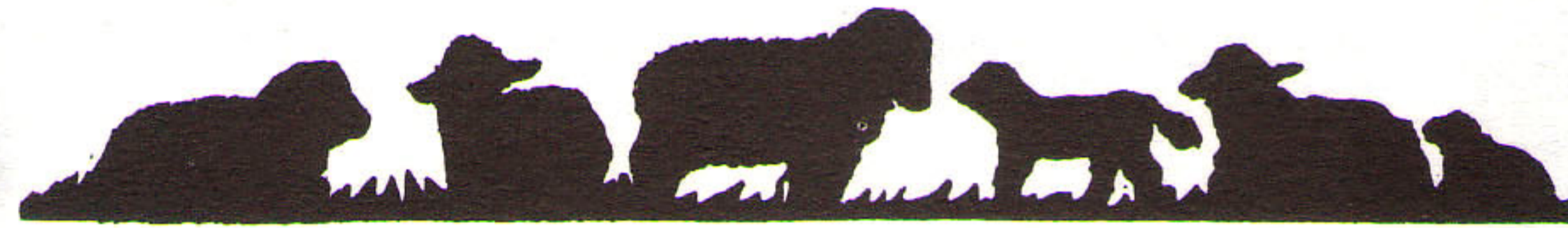
Salem Children



Wedding at Salem



Montreal Mar Thoma Congregation 1983



23RD PSALM FOR BUSY PEOPLE

The Lord is my pacesetter, I shall not rush, /He makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals, /He provides me with images of stillness which restore my serenity, /He leads me in ways of efficiency, through calmness of mind, and His guidance is peace. /Even though I have a great many things to accomplish this day, I will not fret, for His presence is here, His timelessness, /His all-importance will keep me in balance – /He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of my activity by anointing my mind with the oils of tranquility. /My cup of joyous energy overflows. /Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hours, for I shall walk in the pace of my Lord, and dwell in His house forever. —Toki Miyashina, in *Grace Notes*, Grace Cathedral Church, San Francisco, Diocese of California

MAR THOMA STUDENTS' CONFERENCE



MAR THOMA CHILDREN'S CONFERENCE



MAR THOMA FAMILY CONFERENCE

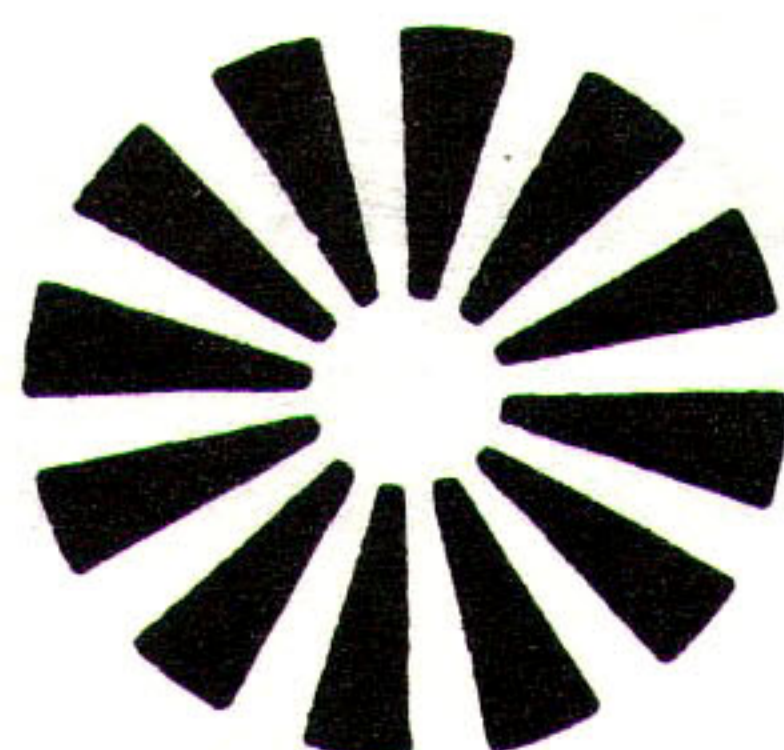


DATE: July 19-22, 1984

THEME: "CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF FREEDOM"
VENUE: The Dallas Baptist College, Dallas, Texas
Principal Speaker: The Rt. Rev. Thomas Mar Athanasius Suffragan Metropolitan

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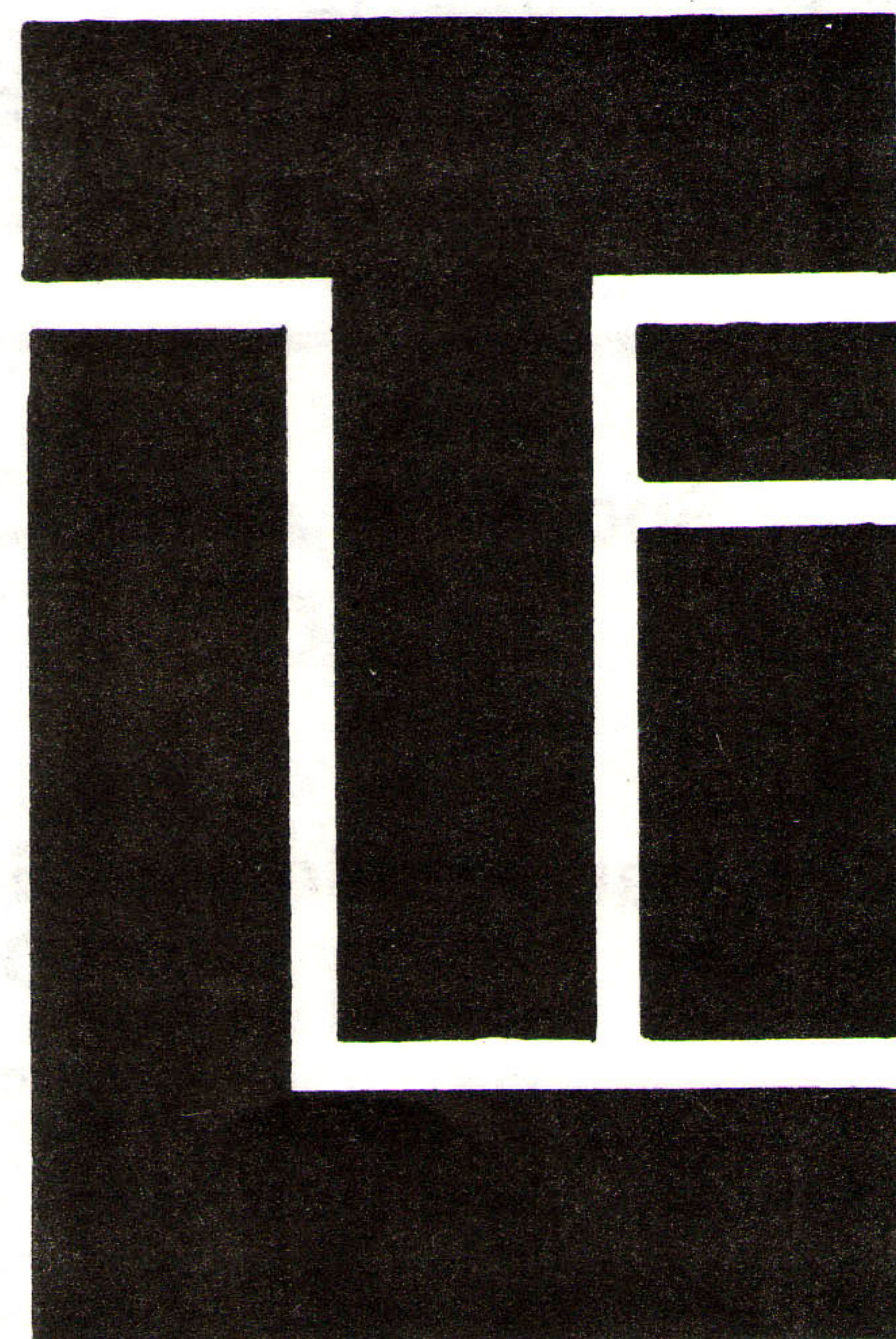
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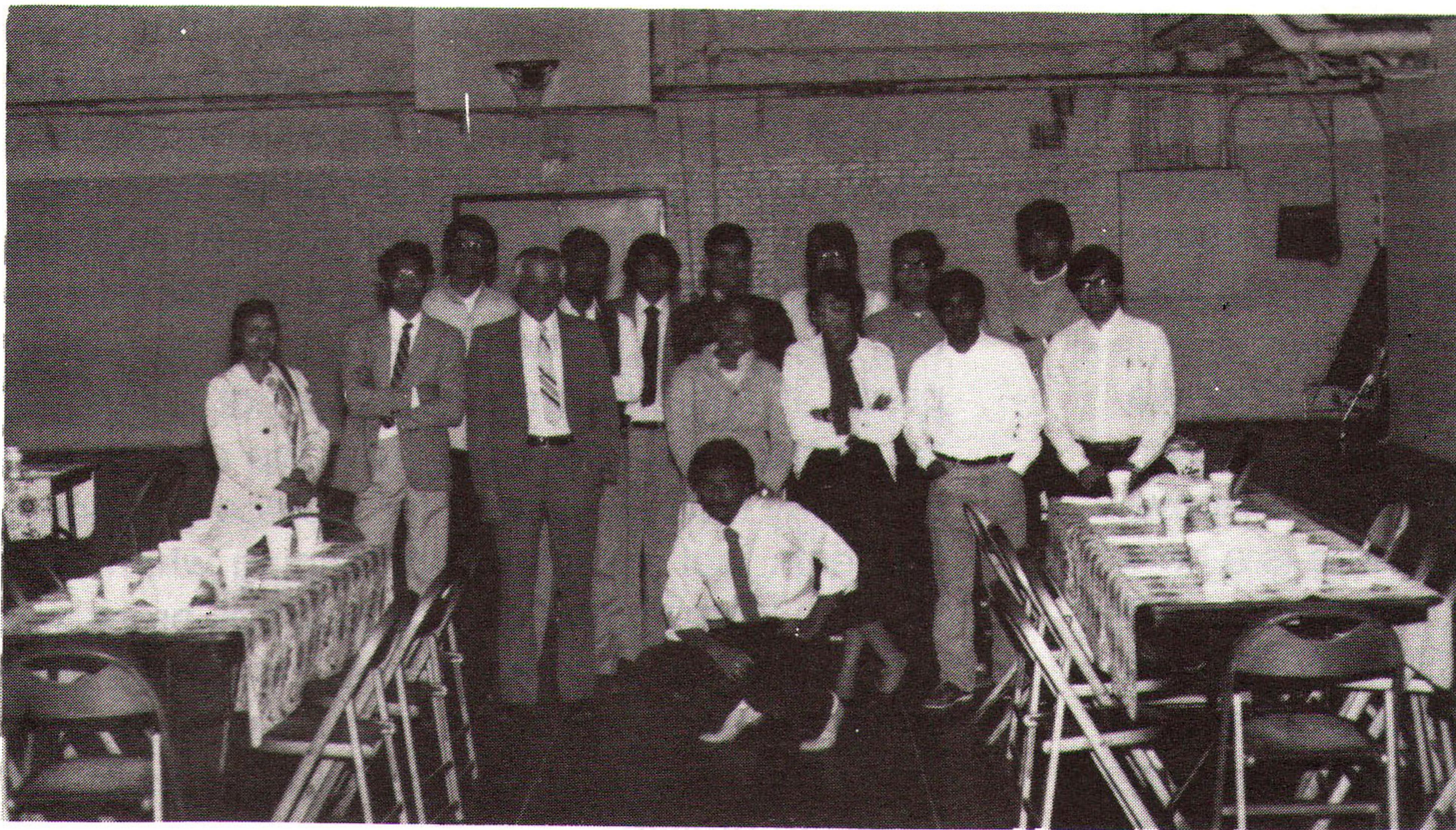


YOUTH AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

Suraj Varghese
New York

Christian life is most meaningful when our religious beliefs are applied in daily lives. This is true for individuals as well as organizations such as churches. The St. Thomas Church of New York has taken a modest step in this regard in applying Christian charity to the social problem of hunger. Once a month, the congregation is encouraged to bring food items. Members of the youth fellowship of our parish collect the

food and with the cooperation of the local Episcopal Church, they prepare and serve the food to the needy people in the neighborhood. The lunch is served to approximately 120 people each time. These people are typically homeless and jobless and have no other means of subsistence. The experience helps to make us aware of the problem around us and finds satisfaction in helping others. Furthermore, it fulfills the church's role in the social area, something to be strengthened by the Mar Thoma parishes in North America as they continue to exist in this society.



Members of Youth Fellowship



Preparing Food



Serving Food

A SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADUATES

Dr. T.M. Thomas, New York

The graduates of our Sunday School seem to be like those in a "half-way house", people who are neither in an institution nor in the main stream of society. These graduates during their junior and senior years in high schools do not belong to the Sunday School and they keep aloof from the worship at the church since they cannot understand its language. The Youth Fellowship meeting cannot be arranged at the time of Sunday School because the former consists of many others above and below this age group, 16 to 18. A special program for those in the upper grades of high school, before they move to college, is an immediate necessity of our Mar Thoma parishes in North America.

At the St. Thomas parish in New York we recognize this need and a program is being initiated for the graduates of Sunday School. Above the Sunday School senior class, there is a new class called "student-teachers" with about 12 students and 2 teachers, Mr. Suraj Varghese and myself. Instead of following any regular syllabus, the class formulates its own course of study and activities. There were classes on teaching methods and educational psychology. All students observed model classes and wrote an evaluation to be discussed further. At present nearly half of the students in the class are planning to begin teaching in Sunday School after one year. All students will help at VBS either in teaching or in organized play activities. A successful series on "Contemporary issues from a Christian Perspective" was completed in about two months. They included topics such as capital punishment, euthanasia, abortion, suicide, peace in a warring world, and others. The last issue of *Mar Thoma Messenger*, containing students' articles on some of these topics was helpful for our preparation. Students themselves presented both sides of an issue and there were guest speakers for a few topics. One of the topics, capital punishment, presented at the parish day meeting by a panel was appreciated by the adult members of our parish. We studied the theme of the Sixth WCC Assembly, "Christ the Life of the World" when a film strip was shown on the

Vancouver Assembly. The series on world religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam drew the interest of the students when they themselves prepared the lessons for class presentation. The explorations on career plans and life goals were relevant for these youngsters who make plans for their college education. In cooperation with other members of Youth Fellowship, the students in this class initiated social service activities, such as serving food to the poor at the local Episcopal Church and mailing books and magazines to some colleges in Kerala.

These programs and activities for students in the upper high school grades generate interest and keep them in the church as active participants. If suitable programs are not arranged, youngsters will drift away from the church and they may look elsewhere for a place to belong. Students feel a sense of belonging when they share in learning and service activities organized for the class. During the stage in life when peer group members are most influential, such common efforts create an atmosphere that facilitates Christian growth.



Model Class - Students & Teachers Observing

THE EPIPHANY MAR THOMA SUNDAY SCHOOL, OZONE PARK, N.Y. 11417

The EPIPHANY MARTHOMA SUNDAY SCHOOL was established in 1981 with 65 students and 8 teachers. The story of this Sunday School is one of exceptional progress within a short span of time. At present we have more than 170 students and 23 active teachers.

The Sunday School starts every Sunday at 9:15 A.M. After a general assembly of about 45 minutes with hymns and prayer, children go to different classes. For instructional purposes, the students are grouped into eleven levels comprising of twenty one classes ranging from Nursery to Adult. The syllabus followed by the Sunday School is that of the material published by David C. Cook Company, in accordance with the recommendation of the MARTHOMA ZONAL COUNCIL OF NORTH AMERICA. The active participation of about twenty senior students in two classes is a praiseworthy development of this year. They are taught Church History, Christian Ethics and Doctrines. Another important factor to mention is that some of the Nursery and K.G. teachers are the products of this Sunday School. The Senior students and most of the teachers are also members of the Youth League. Our students actively participate in all Church Services, especially English Services.

We conduct parent-teachers meeting and talent show for the children once in three months. The Sunday School has a representative in the Executive Committee of the Church. The Sunday School has a library of its own and it also has a 16MM movie projector. The teachers and students are making good use of the library.

We conduct V.B.S., Picnic and retreat every year. This year V.B.S. will be held in July. The retreat was conducted on April 21st 1984. Dr. Abraham Panackel, Philadelphia, was the leader. As in the past, the picnic will be held sometime during the summer. Most of our senior students and some of the teachers are expected to participate in the Youth Conference in Dallas. Our juniors are looking forward to the Regional Junior Camp to be held in this summer.

The Sunday School year begins with the calendar year. At the beginning of each year, the teachers meet to plan and work out the var-

ious activities of the Sunday School for the year. Teachers' meetings are held regularly to discuss and implement the activities. At the beginning of the academic year in September, a dedication Service is conducted for the students. The Sunday School year ends in December with the Christmas and Anniversary celebrations, before the Anniversary, we conduct competitions and Annual Examinations. The competitions are held in singing, elocutions, story telling, memory verses, Bible puzzles etc. This is an occasion for all of us to recognise the students' efforts and talents. Prizes are awarded to the winners of both competitions and examinations as well as consolation prizes for all the students who attended the Sunday School. A distinguished guest is invited for the occasion.

The success of our Sunday School is largely because of the wholehearted support of the parents and other members of the church, and also the enthusiasm and dedication of the teachers and students. The Sunday School has its own budget. A grant is provided by the Church and offertory is collected in the Sunday School. The offertory not only provides the Sunday School with additional income, but also helps the students to form the habit of caring and sharing in their life. Over all, our Sunday School has achieved tremendous growth and let us pray to the Lord for His abundant blessings in the future.

Mathew T. Mathew

Secretary



THE EPIPHANY MAR THOMA SUNDAY SCHOOL



General Assembly - Singing



General Assembly



Classes At Work - 8th Grade



Classes At Work - 2nd Grade



**കെ. ഇ. ഉമ്മൻ
കഴിശ
നിര്യാതനായി**
1984 മെയ് 24 വ്യാഴം

തിരുവല്ല: മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭയിലെ ഏറ്റവും സീനിയറായ വികാരി ജനറാളും പീലിപ്പോസ് മാർ ക്രിസ്തോസ് സിറോ സിറോയുടെ പരിപാലനം കൈമാറ്റം ചെയ്തുകൊടുത്ത കലമണ്ണിലച്ചൻ [വെരി റവ. കെ. ഇ. ഉമ്മൻ കഴിശ] 103-ാം വയസിൽ വെല്ലൂർ ഹോസ്പിറ്റൽ കോളജ് ആശുപത്രിയിൽ തന്നെ ഉച്ചയ്ക്കു നിര്യാതനായി.

ശവസംസ്കാര ശുശ്രൂഷകൾ വെള്ളിയാഴ്ച രാവിലെ 10 മണിക്ക് തിരുവല്ല സെൻറ് തോമസ് മാർത്തോമ്മാ പള്ളിയിൽ ആരംഭിക്കും. തുടർന്നു മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭ വക പ്രത്യേക തയ്യാറാക്കിയ കല്ലറയിൽ മൃതദേഹം സംസ്കരിക്കും.

പ്രവാചകൻമാരുടെ ധീരതയും സുവിശേഷസത്യങ്ങൾ പ്രചരിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിൽ അപ്പോസ്തോലൻമാർക്കുണ്ടായിരുന്ന തീക്ഷ്ണതയുമായിരുന്നു കലമണ്ണിലച്ചൻറെ കൈമുതൽ. വിശ്വസിക്കുന്ന സത്യങ്ങൾക്കുവേണ്ടി എന്തു വന്നാലും ഉറച്ചു നിൽക്കുവാനുള്ള അദ്ദേഹത്തിൻറെ നിശ്ചയദാർഢ്യം അഖണ്ഡിതമായിരുന്നു. നവീകരണ ആദർശങ്ങൾ അദ്ദേഹം മുറുകെ പിടിച്ചു. മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭയ്ക്കു നേരിടേണ്ടി വന്ന പ്രതിസന്ധികളിൽ സഭയെ ഉറപ്പിച്ചു നിർത്തുവാൻ അദ്ദേഹത്തിൻറെ ഉറച്ച നിലപാടു സഹായിച്ചു. നവീകരണത്തെ ഊട്ടി വളർത്താൻ ആരംഭിച്ച പുരോഗമന പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിൻറെ ഡിസ്ട്രിക്ട് സെക്രട്ടറിമാരിൽ ഒരാളെന്ന നിലയിൽ പ്രശസ്തമായ സേവനം അനുഷ്ഠിച്ച ബ. കലമണ്ണിലച്ചൻ ക്രൈസ്തവതയുടെയും സുവിശേഷം പ്രഘോഷണ താല്പരതയുടെയും ആദർശനിഷ്ഠയുടെയും ഒരു ഉജ്ജ്വല ജ്യോതിസായി പ്രകാശിച്ചു. വാർദ്ധക്യത്തിൻറെ ക്ഷീണം ശരീരത്തെ കുറെയൊക്കെ ബാധിച്ചെങ്കിലും ഏതു വിഷമ സാഹചര്യത്തിലും തൻറെ ക്രൈസ്തവത്വത്തെ വിട്ടുമാറാത്തവനായ ക്രിസ്തുവിൻറെ സുസ്ഥിരമായ സ്നേഹത്തിലുള്ള അദ്ദേഹത്തിൻറെ വിശ്വാസത്തിനു ക്ഷീണതയോ തളർച്ചയോ ബാധിച്ചിരുന്നില്ല.

സഭാ വാർത്തകൾ

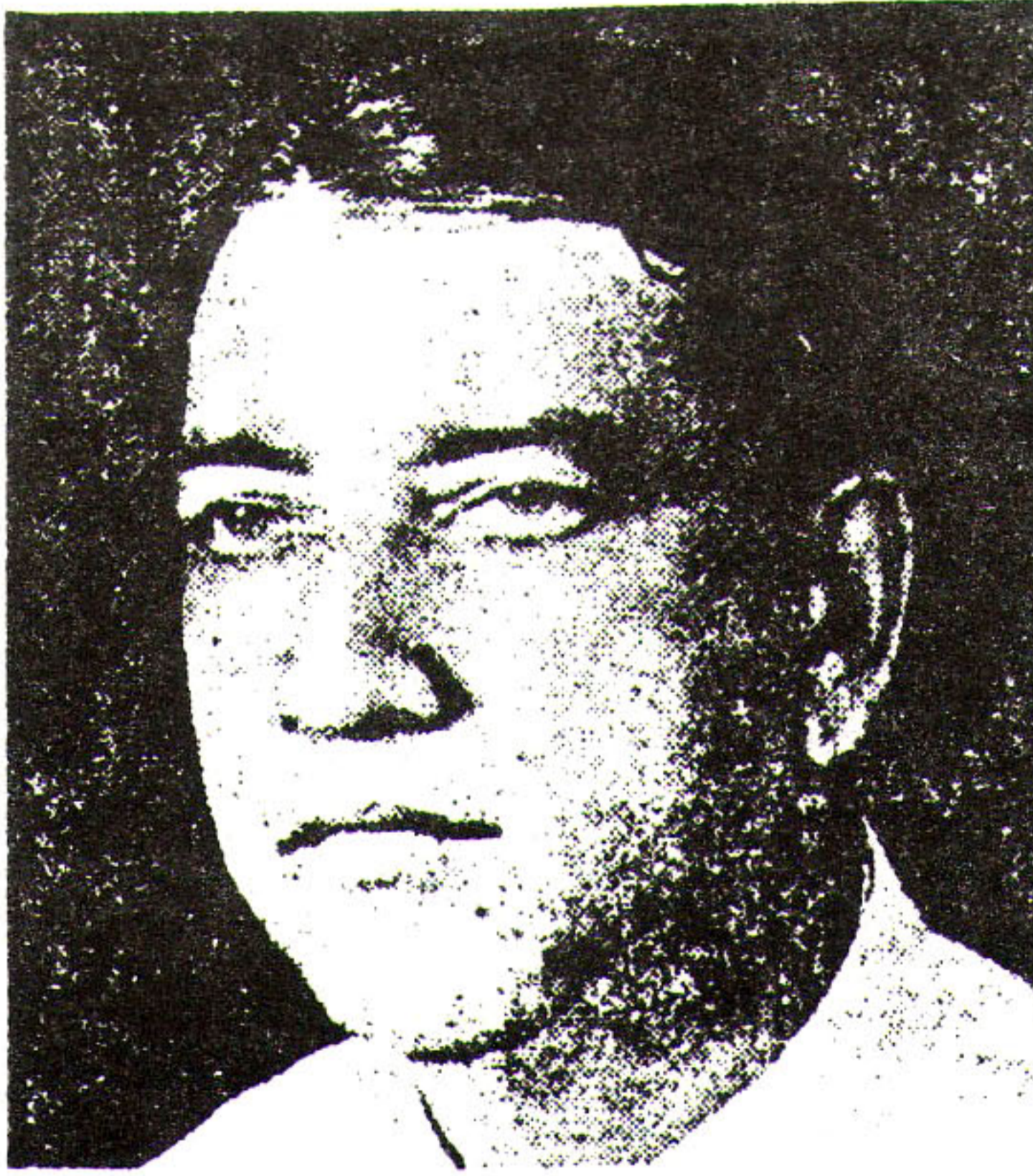
വികാരി ജനറൽ സ്ഥാനത്തേക്ക് രണ്ടുപേർ കൂടി

തിരുവല്ല: മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭാ വികാരി ജനറൽമാരായി മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭാ സെക്രട്ടറി റവ. സി. ജി. അലക്സാണ്ടർ [60], തിരുവനന്തപുരം പാറൂർ ഇടവക വികാരി റവ. കെ. വി. ജേക്കബ് [61] എന്നിവരെക്കൂടി നിയമിച്ചു.

മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭാ കൗൺസിൽ യോഗത്തിൽ ഡോ. അലക്സാണ്ടർ മാർത്തോമ്മാ ക്രൈസ്തവചരിത്രം



റവ. സി. ജി. അലക്സാണ്ടർ



റവ. കെ. വി. ജേക്കബ്

ഈ വിവരം പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ചത്. തിരുവല്ല സെൻറ് തോമസ് മാർത്തോമ്മാ പള്ളിയിൽ മാർച്ച് 24-ന് ഏഴരമണിക്കൂർ ഇവരുടെ സ്ഥാനാരോഹണ ശുശ്രൂഷ നടത്തി.

തിരുവല്ല: മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭാ സെക്രട്ടറിയായി റവ. പി. സി. ജോസഫും, അതേയായ ട്രസ്റ്റിയായി പി. സി. കോശിയും വൈദിക ട്രസ്റ്റിയായി റവ. ജോർജ് വറുഗീസും [ചുനക്കര] തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കപ്പെട്ടു.



റവ. പി. സി. ജോസഫ്



പി. സി. കോശി



റവ. ജോർജ് വറുഗീസ്

Very Rev. K. E. Oommen, the senior-most Vicar-General of the Mar Thoma Church passed away on May 23, 1984. Rev. C.G. Alexander and the Rev. K.V. Jacob have been installed as the Vicar Generals in the Mar Thoma Church. The Rev. P. C. Joseph, Mr. P. C. Koshy and the Rev. George Varghese have been elected as General Secretary, Lay Trustee and Clergy Trustee respectively of The Mar Thoma Church by the Sabha Mandalam which met on May 15-16, 1984.

REGIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS' MEETING

A meeting of the Sunday School teachers in the New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia region was held at Epiphany Mar Thoma Church in Ozone Park on Jan. 21, 1984. Regional coordinator the Rev. George Mathew presided over

the meeting. Reports from various Sunday Schools were presented. Discussions on various relevant matters were held. The meeting planned to hold retreat and training seminar for teachers and junior conference for students.

BON VOYAGE TO MARAMON CONVENTION SPEAKER

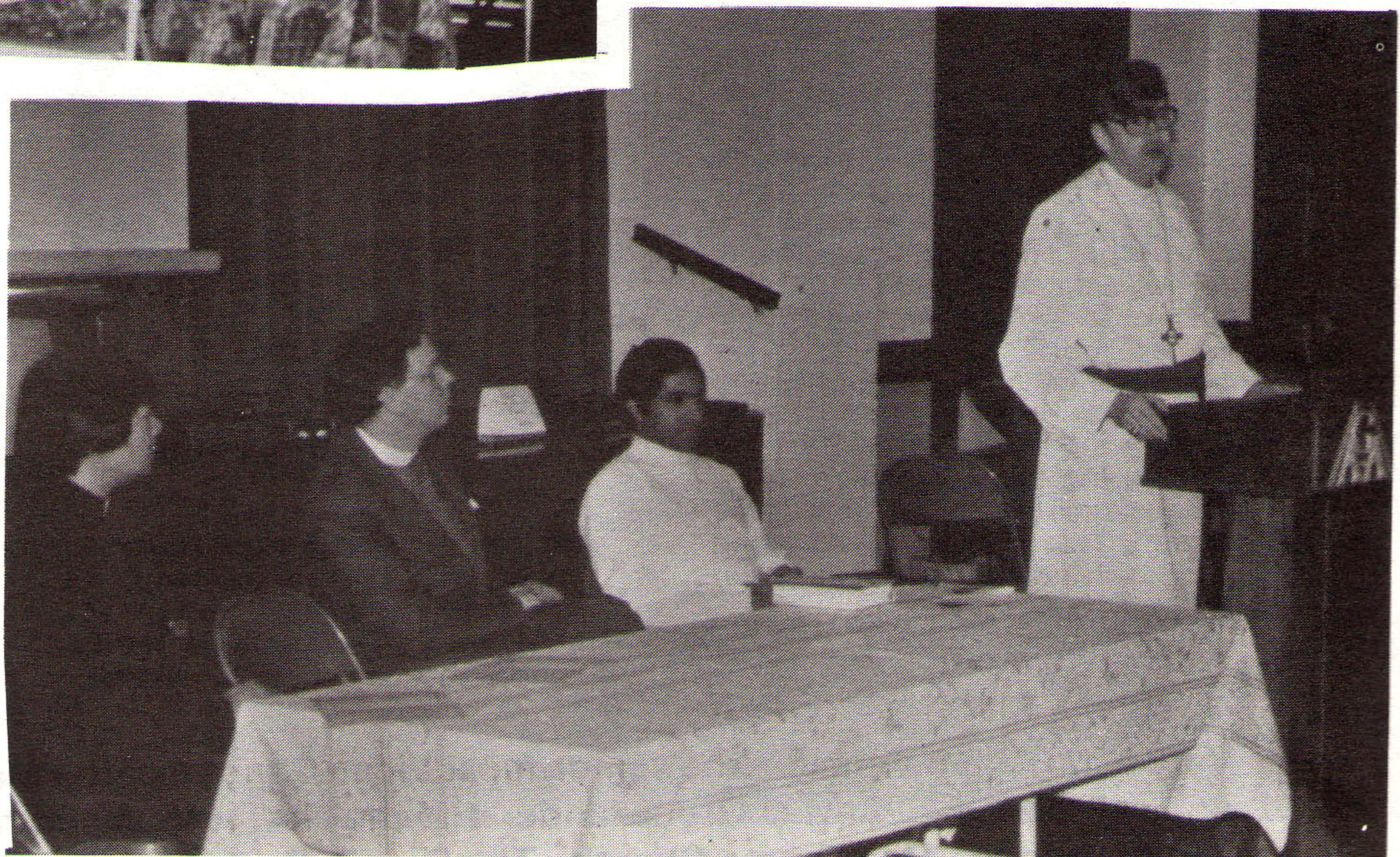
A special meeting was arranged by the Mar Thoma Church of New Jersey at 10:00 AM on Saturday, February 4, 1984 to bid Bon Voyage to the Rt. Rev. John S. Spong, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark, before he left for India to speak at the 89th Maramon Convention from February 12 to 19, 1984. The Rev. Leslie C. Smith led in opening prayers. Bishop Spong preached in the meeting. The Rev. Winston W.

Ching shared his experience of the 1983 Maramon Convention. Mr. Christopher Den Blaker showed the slides of the 1983 Maramon Convention. A video tape of 83 convention also was shown. The Rev. Leslie C. Smith bid Bon Voyage to the Bishop. The vicar Rev. N.M. Cherian welcomed the gathering and the secretary Mr. M.C. Alexander said vote of thanks. A fellowship lunch was served after the program.



The Rt. Rev. John S. Spong Speaking

Photo Credit © Chris Den Blaker



The Rt. Rev. John S. Spong Speaking

MAR THOMA CHURCH OF NEW JERSEY

Parish Day Celebrations: The third anniversary of the Mar Thoma Church of New Jersey, was celebrated on April 8, 1984. The Rev. Winston Ching celebrated Holy Communion and presided over the Parish Day meeting. The Rev. Leslie C. Smith, Rector of Christ Episcopal Church, Mr. Charles C. Barbera and Mrs. Priscilla Arnold, wardens of Christ Episcopal Church spoke at the meeting, conveying greetings. There were programs by Sevika Sanghom and Sunday School. The Rev. N.M. Cherian said words of welcome and Mr. George Philip said vote of thanks. Fellowship lunch was served after the meetir

Combined Service on Visitation Day: On June 17, 1984, the day of Episcopal Visitation by the Rt. Rev. John S. Spong to Christ Episcopal Church and the Mar Thoma Church of New Jersey, the two churches planned a joint worship at 10:00 AM. Bishop Spong celebrated Holy Communion according to the Mar Thoma liturgy, assisted by the Rev. Leslie C. Smith and the Rev. N.M. Cherian. A reception was held after the service in honour of the Bishop. In his sermon during the service, the Bishop shared some of his experiences of his recent visit to India, especially speaking at the Maramon Convention.

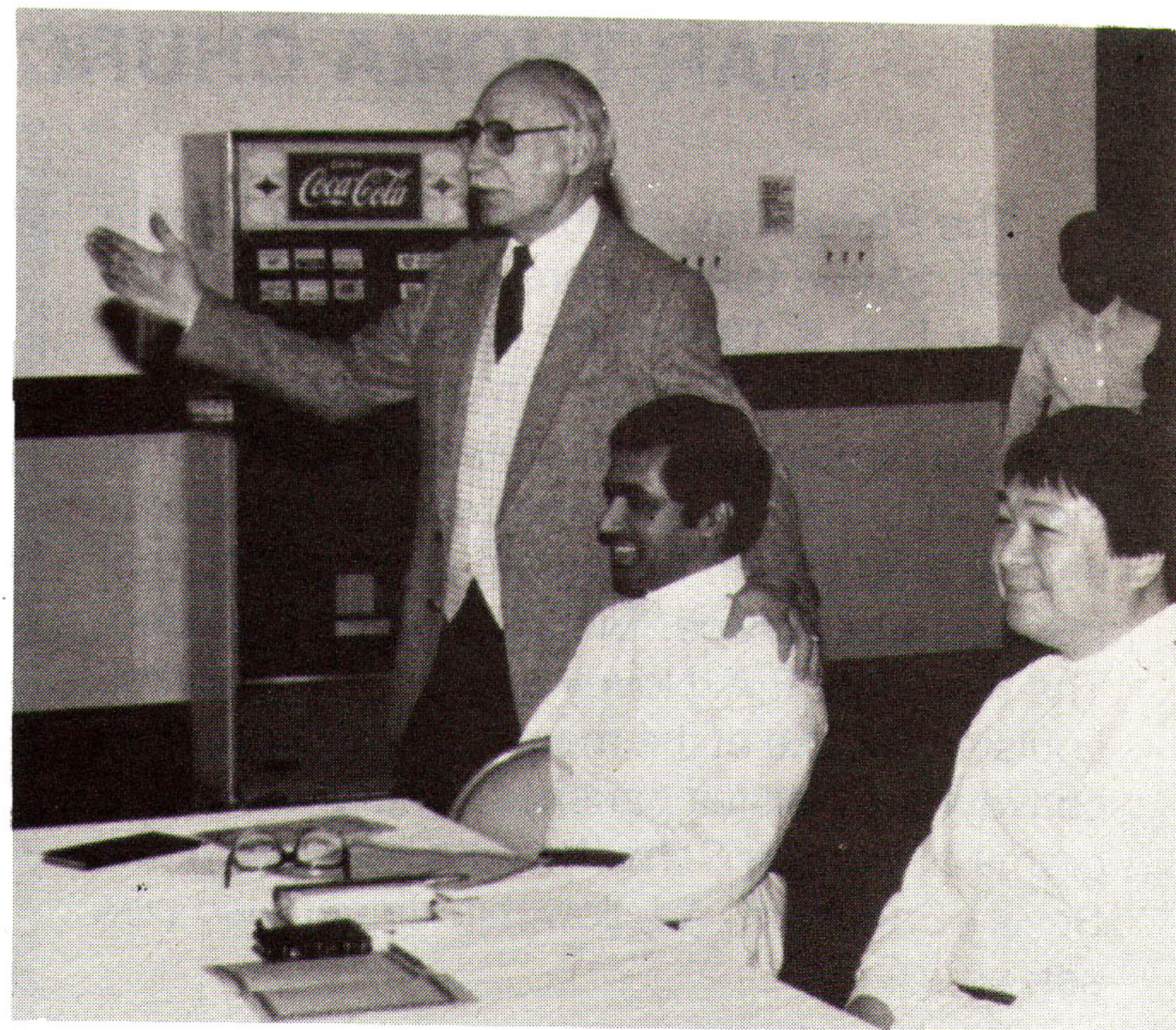


The Rev. Winston W. Ching
Celebrating Holy Communion

Photo Credit © Chris Den Blaker



The Rev. Winston W. Ching
Celebrating Holy Communion



Mr. Charles C. Barbera Speaking at the Parish Day Meeting

ST. ANDREWS MAR THOMA CHURCH, NEW YORK

St. Andrews Mar Thoma Church has found a new place of worship at the Chapel of the Resurrection, at the Church of the Intercession, 550 W. 155 St., New York. The worship at the new place began on Palm Sunday, April 15, 1984. The Rt. Rev. Walter D. Dennis, Suffragan Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York,

led in a short prayer service, marking the beginning of the new relationship between the Church of the Intercession and the St. Andrews Mar Thoma Church. Canon Frederick B. Williams, Rector of the Church of the Intercession and the Rev. N.M. Cherian, vicar of St. Andrews Mar Thoma Church assisted the Bishop in the service.

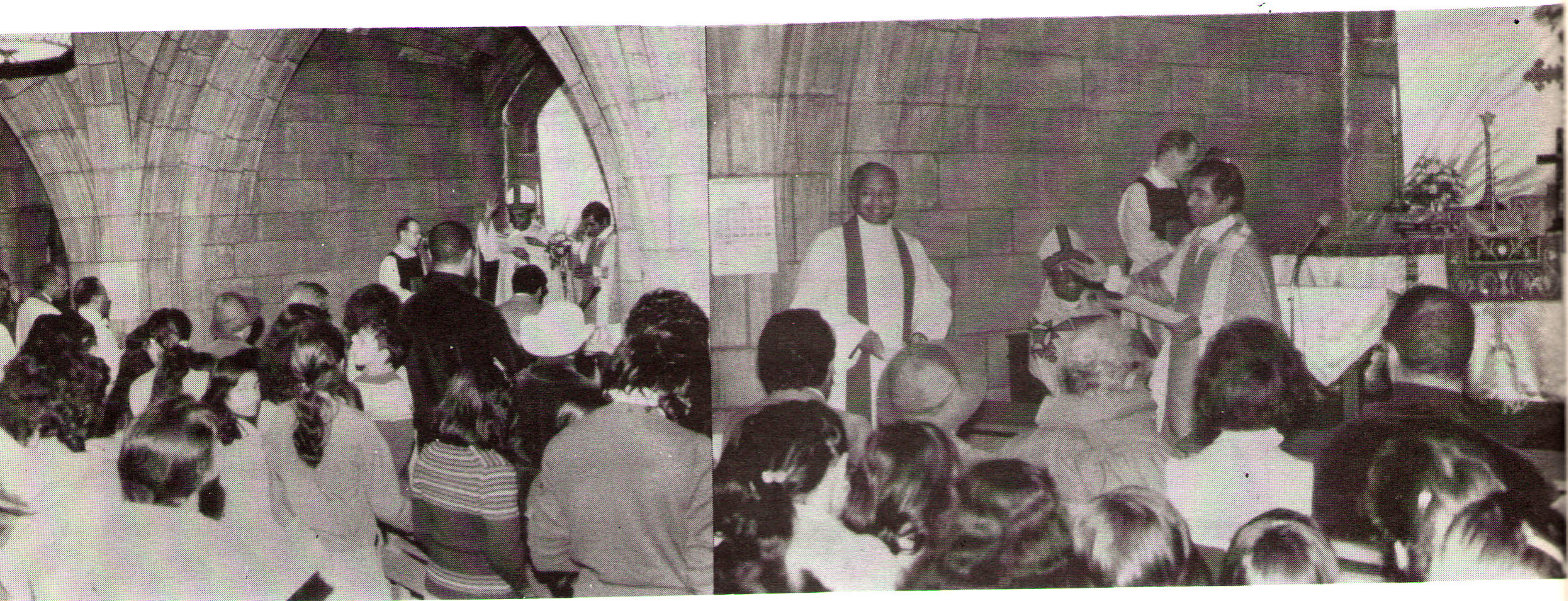


Photo Credit © Chris Den Blaker

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Walter D. Dennis
Saying the Benediction

Canon Frederick B. Williams
being introduced by
Rev. N.M. Cherian

MAR THOMA CHURCH, STATEN ISLAND

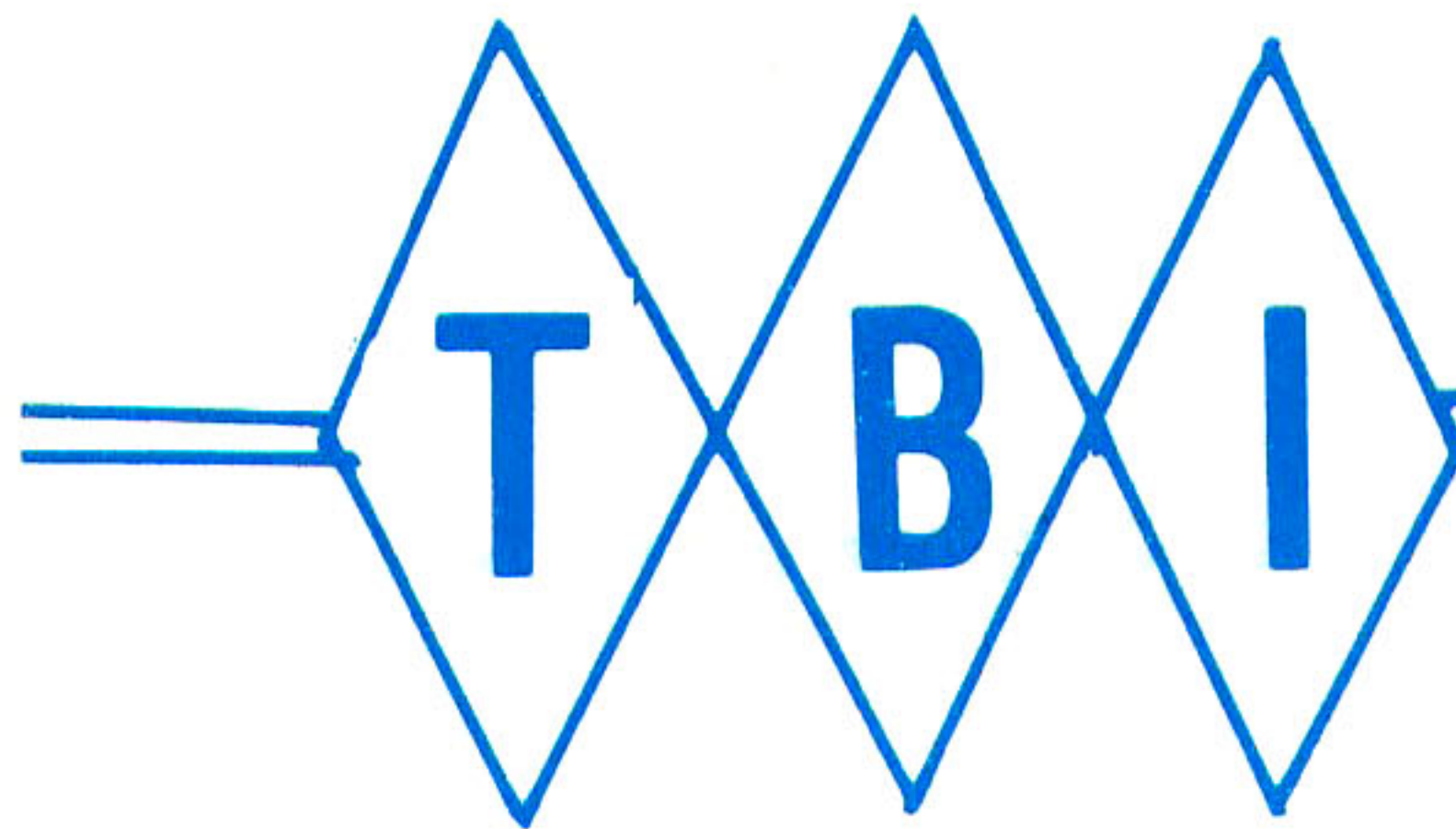
The Parish Day celebrations of Mar Thoma Church, Staten Island, were held at 6:00 PM on Sunday, Feb. 5, 1984 at the All Saints' Episcopal Church. The Rt. Rev. J. Antonio Ramos (Associated Director of the Caribbians, N.C.C.) was the chief guest. Holy Communion service was held at 6:00 PM. In the parish day meeting that followed the service, Bishop Ramos presided. The Rev. Joel E.A. Novey and Dr. V.T. Samuel, Louisiana spoke at the meeting. Greetings were conveyed by sister parishes. There were programs by Sunday School, Youth Fellowship and Sevika Sanghom. A fellowship dinner also was served.



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The Rt. Rev. J. Antonio Ramos
The Rev. N.M. Cherian and
The Rev. Joel E.A. Novey
Celebrating Holy Communion

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