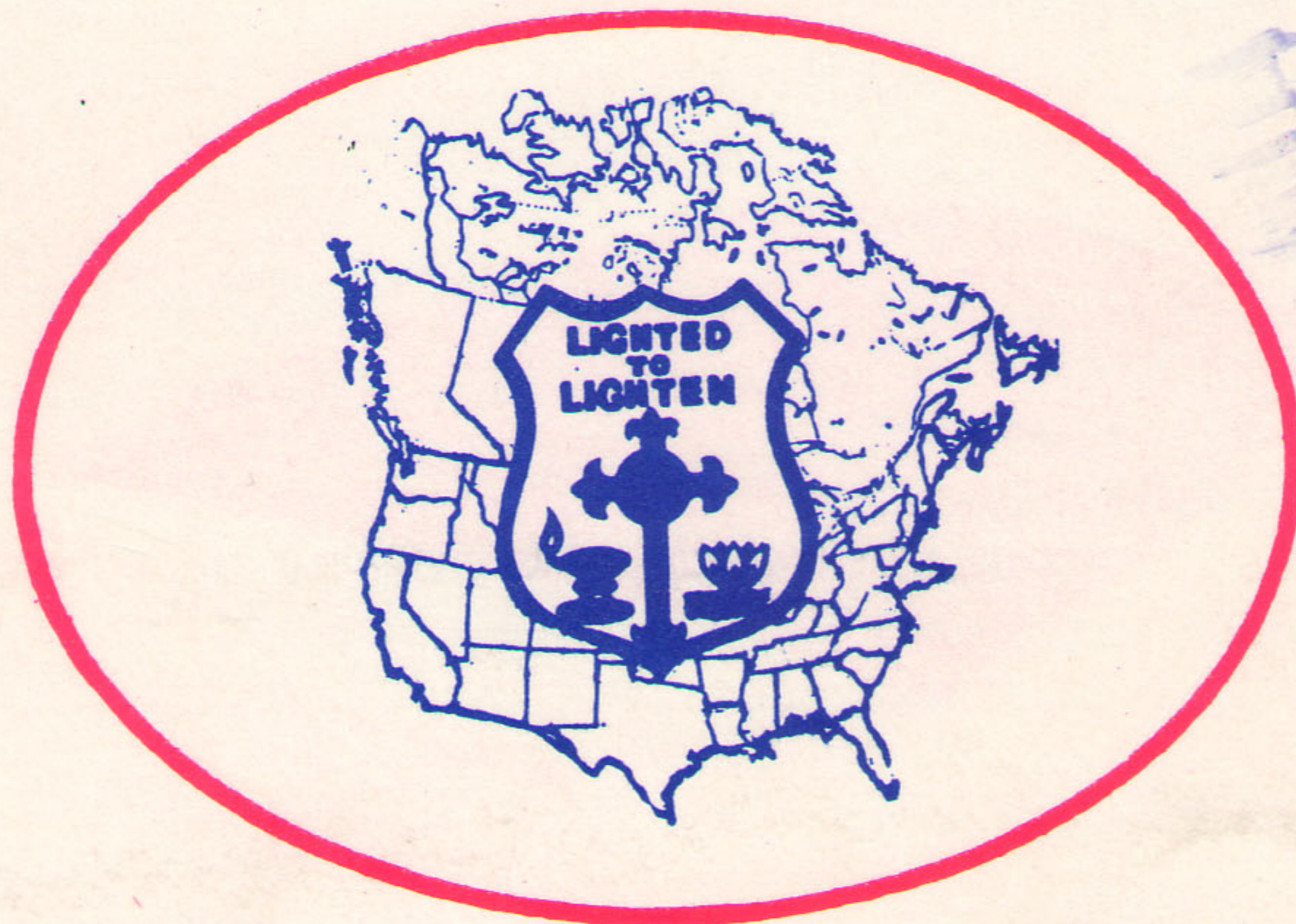


# MAR THOMA MESSENGER



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

MARCH 1986





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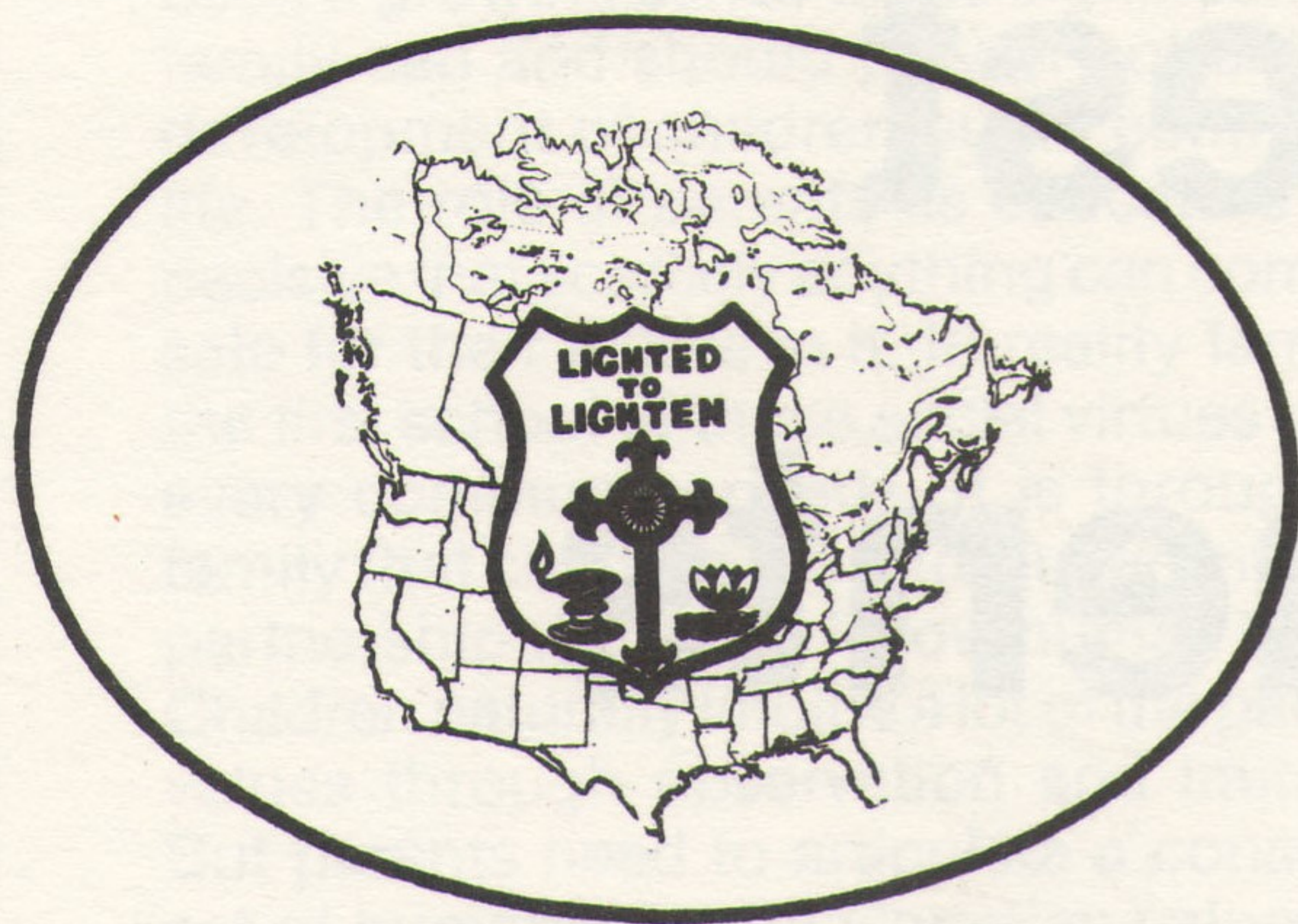
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**IN THIS ISSUE . . .**

- Editorial: Speaking of a Challenge for Our Families
- The Presidential Address in Sabha Mandalam
- Christian Response to Crises
- The Role of Our Women in the Growth of the Mar Thoma Church in North America
- A Time of Growing
- Reflections on the Mar Thoma Students' Conference
- Private Prayer and Meditation
- Thinking About Life
- In God We Trust - A Poem
- The Mood of American Youth - A Review
- In Memoriam - The Late Dr. A.M. Alexander
- The Late Babu Philips
- Mar Thoma Church Loses a Very Good Friend
- Announcement: Essay Contest
- Reports:
  - Zonal Council
  - Mar Thoma Clergy Conference
  - Mar Thoma Students' Conference
  - The New Presiding Bishop
  - Installation of the Most Rev. Edmond Lee Browning
  - Laying of Foundation Stone for Chicago Mar Thoma Church
  - Inauguration of the New Sanctuary in Dallas
  - Mar Thoma Youth League - Southern Regional Conference
  - Mar Thoma Youth Leadership Training Institute
  - The Sesquicentennial Meeting in New York

Profile: Rev. P.M. George  
 The Challenge of Pentecost  
 News In Brief:

- Honorary Doctorate for Rt. Rev. Joseph Mar Ireneus
- Concert in Mar Thoma Church in Philadelphia
- Congregation Day in Washington

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# EDITORIAL

## Speaking of a Challenge for Our Families

Reflecting upon the recent live-aid gala for the Ethiopian relief fund one thought struck me with enough force that I wish to share with you. In recent years there has been a growing sense of the significant role family can and should play in not only the development of children but in community life. The role of parents as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it. In reality family is the first school of those social virtues which every community needs. It is through the family that children are introduced into civic partnership with their fellow human beings. Children naturally imbibe a lot of the parental values through observation and imitation. But parents need to articulate a consistent set of humanistic and Christian values and then struggle to live by them and teach them to their children.

Our challenge, if we take it seriously, is a phenomenal one. We have the responsibility to instruct our children cooperation in a society that pits one race, class, nation or sex against another. We have to engender wholesome attitudes to enable them to live in a competitive society conscious of their responsibilities and respecting the rights of others. We have to nurture in them trust in a society riddled with fear and cynicism. We have to encourage involvement and independence of judgment at a time when apathy, indifference and conformity are rewarded. We have to point out to them unequivocally the rampant media exploitation. In the past we have viewed child-rearing (raising) problems a family unit matter and have ignored the structural or social level of that reality. Our homes have been veritable ghettos and have tried to protect its members from the world and social problems. Partly this is due to the overvaluation of an individualistic ethics of nuclear families considering each family on its own. When we are protected from the victims of injustice and from those who are working for social change, the massive problems seem less real and less urgent. We are like the parents of Prince Siddharta (Guatama Buddha). I recall reading

somewhere an article the title of which included the phrase, 'How to rock the cradle without rocking the boat'. You would recall, for Mahatma Gandhi, the real power of non-violence was the power to bring about social change. We need to develop a greater sense of our stewardship: what is mine is not mine for my exclusive use, but for the welfare of others.

We give Thee but Thine own,  
What-e'er the gifts may be:  
All that we have is Thine alone,  
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.  
(an offertory hymn)

Thus there are two elements of stewardship that are integral to its functioning in our lives. One is the source of what we have. The other is our own accountability for the use we make of what we have. I confess. This is not easy. And yet, it remains as a great challenge and a golden opportunity for our families. We should as families get involved in social action/service in helping build not only our community but a society where integrity of character and service for the welfare of others are valued above all.

"I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits. I believe that what self-centered men have torn down, men other-centered can build up . . . I still believe that we shall overcome." — Martin Luther King, Jr. upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.

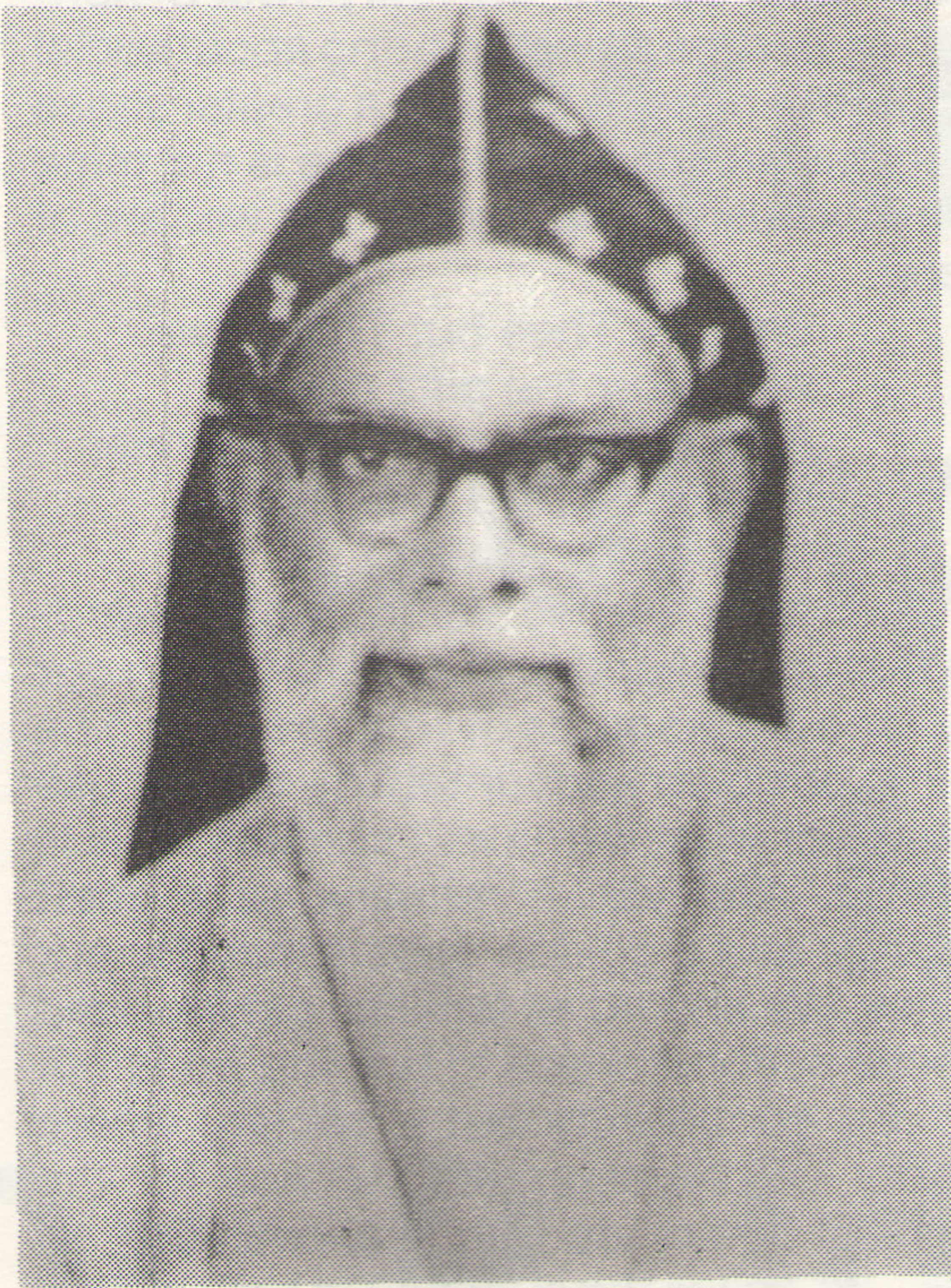
George K. Zachariah



# THE MAR THOMA SYRIAN CHURCH OF MALABAR

## The Presidential Address of DR. ALEXANDER MAR THOMA

in the Sabha Mandalam on May 21, 1985\*



The Most Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma,  
our Metropolitan & Diocesan Bishop

1984 was the year of great losses for the church and the nation. The death of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, terrorism by the partisans for Khalistan, the tragedy at the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, the fights between the Tamilians and the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, the threat of atomic war, the Iran-Iraq war, are some of the events that challenge our collective conscience.

In the Church, our great loss was the unexpected death of Thomas Mar Athanasius, Suffragan Metropolitan. His ability to confront any situation with calm resolve and to make fair decisions on complicated issues, as well as his deep knowledge of theological matters and his ability to lead worship in liturgical beauty, are some of the qualities that we will greatly miss. The Sabha Council is taking steps to establish an adequate memorial to him. I personally consider it a loss to have to miss him after serving together with him for thirty-two years.

Rajiv Gandhi has taken over the rein of India. Congress (I) has received vast plurality in the elections. These

steps help in the unity, freedom and security of the country. However, in Punjab and Assam, there is no peace. Gujarat and Bihar give examples of injustices to the minorities. We need to pray so that structures of peace and justice are established. In our own state, alcohol dependency and licentiousness increase. We as a community need to combat these evils.

Vast changes need to take place in the area of education. Last year I addressed this issue. Primary education is in a crisis. The wealthy send their children to expensive private schools while the poor are neglected. In 1984 our Corporate management tried to take some steps to correct this.

We are celebrating the 150th anniversary of our reformation. The Sabha Council is deliberating on what we need to do during this occasion. **Reformation and the Church's Mission**, jointly authored by the Rt. Rev. Thomas Mar Athanasius and Prof. T.P. Abraham, deserves our special attention. Steadfast faith, holy life, the love of the Word of God, willingness to witness to Christ in the world, are most important.

1. **Study of the Word of God** - We need to use the Bible Study prepared for this purpose.

2. **Renewal of Faith** - Is the experience of Christian love and fellowship increasing in our parishes? Are there efforts for reconciliation?

3. **We need to recognize that the whole Church is the priesthood and the holy tribe.** Anything that is not "according to the mind of Christ" needs to be purged. This requires the participation of everyone, without any distinction between male or female.

4. It is urgent that we communicate to the world the love of God in Jesus Christ. We need to arrange to have the message of Christ sent everywhere in India. Each Diocese must select at least one mission field. The **Niranam-Maramon Diocese** has already done this. I trust that other dioceses will do the same. The districts of Busther and Sidhi as well as the states of Orissa and Rajasthan are open for the gospel. We need to utilize these opportunities.

We communicate the message of the love of God through our words and deeds. The Lord Jesus Christ sent his disciples with specific instructions to preach the Kingdom of God, heal the sick and cast out the demons. Jesus raised his voice against the evils, injustices and ugliness of structures of society. And yet some of the evils of the larger society creep into our church. We need to be ever on guard against these evils and keep alive the spirit of reformation. Likewise, we need to be careful so that we can prevent the abuses in our own institutions.



When accusations are raised, we need to investigate and see whether there is any truth in those allegations. At the same time we need to avoid acting upon every rumor. Such rumors bring damage to our church.

The United Nations has declared 1985 to be the Year of the Youth. We want to look at the problems and possibilities of the youth. We need to establish a **Youth for Mission** for the liberation of India. Many respond to be ordained as ministers in the church. But very few respond to the call to be missionaries. We need to understand the reasons for the disparity between these responses. Annually, our theological seminary can admit only twelve people. Our capacity, based on faculty and staff, is to accept many more than that. If we can only increase accommodation and other facilities, we can accept more candidates for training and send them out as missionaries.

I need to bring the following matters to the attention of our church as a whole:

1. We need to consecrate two more episcopas (bishops). An Episcopal Nomination Committee has begun the process of receiving nominations and investigating credentials. After the death of Thomas Mar Athanasius, certain temporary arrangements have been made with regard to the administration of the dioceses. When additional episcopas are consecrated, these temporary arrangements shall cease.

2. Last year there were some irregularities in counting the votes during the Sabha Mandalam election. When these irregularities were discovered, immediate action was taken to correct them. Further actions were taken to prevent a repetition of such irregularities.

3. After the establishment of full communion among the C.N.I., C.S.I. and the Mar Thoma churches, there was a debate as to whether or not we should accept a common name. After considerable discussion, it was decided that we do not need a common name. Reflecting our relationship in full communion, the joint council shall be known as the **Council of Churches in Communion**. That decision will be presented to this Mandalam for approval.

4. We need specific guidelines to admit people to our colleges under the Management Quota. Twenty-four representatives in this Mandalam have sent a resolution in this matter. But even during last year we had established such a quota. We admitted students under a set of guidelines. Then there were suggestions that local concerns should be given special consideration. The Sabha Council will consider all these issues. Our colleges operate under independent councils. There is no corporate management. There is an Advisory Board on Higher Education. That board gives advice on common issues. We have prohibited monetary requirements for the admission of students or the appointment of teachers. From 1972 we receive no grant from the government for the maintenance of our colleges. And yet we spend over a hundred thousand rupees for this purpose. We need Parents-Teachers Associations to raise these funds.

5. There have been some accusations against our hospital at Kattanam. An advisory committee, chaired by the Diocesan Bishop, attends to the administration of the hospital. The committee has investigated the accusations and corrected some mistakes. Several revisions need to be made in the constitution of the Medical Mission. A sub-committee of three has been appointed for this purpose.

In the beginning, the hospital was a simple organization meeting the ongoing medical needs of the people around. But now it has grown to be a complex institution with several departments and specialists. The activities of the hospital are many and the scope is very large. We have corrected the mistakes. One critical issue is the shortage of qualified physicians. Because such physicians can command high salaries and extended benefits, they do not want to work for institutions such as Kattanam. We need to find physicians who are committed to Christian service. For this they need to know the love of God in Jesus Christ.

6. Let us now pay attention to the material assets of the bishops. Except that which is inherited, all the endowments or funds established for specific purposes, are spent for such. The episcopal residences and institutions are built or established in this fashion. Once a bishop dies, all the assets, except the inherited personal wealth, goes to the church.

7. We had decided to establish worship places for the people of the back-ward classes as we celebrate the sesquicentennial of our reformation. Each diocese needs to take steps in this regard.

We had established a commission for poor relief. One of its main functions is to provide tuition assistance to those who are economically depressed. The commission also tries to build houses for the poor. It is mandatory that those who have should try to help those who have not.

I call your attention to our Development Department as well as the project **Home for the Homeless**. Dioceses and parishes must pay attention to such needs. A mark of the early church was the provision for the orphans and the deprived. We read that their needs were met. May we try to make that true about those in need around us.

Currently we have twenty-six residents in the Home of the Mentally Retarded. We are trying to increase the facilities to accommodate forty. We need to encourage and support the **Blind School at Kasergode**, the proposed **Institute for the Handicapped at Pathanapuram**, as well as the various development projects under the auspices of the dioceses.

During the tragedy at Bhopal, our parish there rose to the occasion. Under the chairmanship of the Diocesan Bishop, the service to the afflicted still continues.

In February 1986 Pope John Paul II will visit Kerala. It would be most appropriate for members of various religious communities to receive this messenger of peace. For the 1986 Maramon Convention and the celebration of the sesquicentennial, the Archbishop of



Canterbury as well as Dr. Emilio Castro, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches will be with us. Their presence is most appropriate.

May this occasion of our sesquicentennial of reformation be an opportunity for carrying out the mission of our church. Even during their abject failures, God never forsook Israel. Instead, He called them again and again, and sent them out to be His witnesses. Even in our failures, may we never lose heart. May we trust God and in His grace to increase our witness. India is wide open for our witness and mission. Those who recognize their calling and are willing to make the necessary sacrifices for mission, shall succeed. God calls us to declare His

love in our generation. Let us commit ourselves to this great task. May God help us to have His name glorified through us.

—Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitan

\*(Editor's note: This is a free translation by Mr. George J. Poikail as per the request of the Editorial Board. Even though the address was given nine months ago, we decided to publish this because it outlines some of the activities our church is engaged in and some concerns of our Valia Thirumeni)

## CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO CRISES\*

Dr. Titus Mathews \*\*

The word crisis may be defined as an emotionally significant event or a radical change of status in a person's life. A time of crisis is a time of unstable state of affairs in one's life. It is a decisive moment. Perhaps, if we added the adjective 'unexpected' or 'ill-prepared for' to this definition, it will be a little closer to the sense in which we often use this word. We live in a world full of crises, of calamities both natural and man-made. As Christians, what should be our responses to these?

When we read the headlines in newspapers, or watch television news, we read about famine in Ethiopia, hear about cyclones in Bangladesh, etc. These events take place far away from us and naturally many of us do not always feel any urgency to deal with such crises. But there are other crises whose impact is immediate: difficult situations faced by people who are close to us and personal crises, such as illness, loss of employment and break-up of marriage. There are also spiritual crises which we face from time to time, such as an unanswered prayer, the happening of an event which we feel is quite unjust, which our good God cannot allow to take place.

Those of us who are recent immigrants to this continent face another kind of crisis. In North America, we live in a success oriented society with its emphasis on material well being. The social and spiritual values by which we live are quite alien to the one in which we were brought up. When we first came here many of us had to face severe cultural shock for which we were not prepared beforehand. We faced discriminations of various types at work as well as where we lived. Our children are faced with tremendous peer pressures to assimilate themselves to a way of life about which we have many reservations. Often our reactions were not rational but authoritarian and some children have rebelled. There has always been a generation gap between young and old; but add to this a cultural gap and we have the making of serious family crisis in our homes.

Grief, anxiety, fear, guilt, pain, anger, resentment etc., are all natural human responses to personal crises. There is an abundance of books to help you in living

through crises, and in North America there is a thriving profession of personal counseling. It is not my purpose here to discuss the merits of one book over another or to compare one kind of therapy with another. My intention is just to ask the question: What is the Christian response to crises which many of us find ourselves in from time to time and try and answer that question.

Christians and non-Christians alike face crises in their lives. Sometimes, it would appear that, Christians face difficulties even more abundantly than others. The Rev. David Watson was one of the leading figures of the renewal movement in the Anglican Church during the past two decades. Two years ago he was stricken with cancer in the prime of his life. His friends around the world prayed ardently for a cure for his cancer. But he died a year later. Why didn't God answer the prayers of so many people? It was only just a few weeks ago that a very active member of our Church, whom many of you perhaps knew, was killed in the Air-India crash off the Irish coast. We shake our heads in disbelief that such a tragedy would strike his young family. It is very hard for us to understand why the good Lord is so indiscriminate in meting out such fate to the good and the bad alike. Many situations that we find ourselves in, often, become crises just because we do not understand God's intentions for us in such situations.

It is important for us to realise that suffering and disappointments are part of Christian life. Our problem is that we are lulled into a sense of false security by the massive amount of statistics available to us. Who would believe that he or she could die before the age of 78 for that is the statistically expected life span in this country? The triumph of modern science and technology has made us arrogant enough to believe that everything is possible. This is one of the real sources of problems in our lives: the false sense of security and power, which our material well-being gives us.

Suffering and earthly failure were in the very centre of divine activity in the incarnate life of Jesus Christ. When God became Man, and walked on this earth, he did not



choose to live in luxury. He experienced every bit of sorrow and failure that each one of us face in our day to day life and indeed, even more in his death on the cross. Suffering does not lie on the fringes of God's awareness, but at the core. It seems to be the chosen mode of God's love for man. If we still ask the question, why does God allow so much suffering of the innocent, we should ask ourselves whether we understand the true nature of love (1).

A Christian's response to crises must be based on an understanding of God's purpose for him or her in that situation. But it is a most difficult thing to figure out exactly what is God's purpose for each one of us in one and every situation. God's intentions are not the same for everyone. It would have been quite easy for us, if God woke us up every morning and told us what to do that day and why; we could just go ahead and do his bidding. Alas! that is not how God works through us. We were made in His own image, that is to say, He gave us a free will. So we respond to crises in different ways, never being sure at the time that we did the right thing. But when we look back upon our lives, we are amazed to see how God has fulfilled His intentions for us in those difficult situations.

In facing the various crises which come across our way, we must also be aware of our calling in life. We, as Christians, are called to be witnesses. Witnesses of faith, hope and charity. Being Christian witnesses do not mean standing at street corners and shouting at passers by: Are you saved? Nor does it mean shutting up ourselves in small groups of like minded people in a sea of disbelievers. But it means, being Christians at your place of work, where you do your shopping, etc., in other words, in all your interactions with others. It means displaying, in our actions, every aspect of love that St. Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 13. Every crisis provides us with opportunities to be true to our calling to be witnesses.

Caring and sharing are the hallmarks of Christian response to crisis. Early Christian Church was not founded upon a College of Cardinals or Diocesan Synods; they were made of people who cared for and shared with each other their joys as well as their sorrows. In the Mar Thoma Church, we have a very strong tradition of prayer groups and of close fellowship. In the renewal that is taking place in western churches today, such prayer groups and fellowship cells are given great

emphasis. In our busy pattern of life, do we have any commitment to share other people's problems? Do we have any time to care for others? If not, we have little to offer to those facing crises in their lives. Jesus said "... to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me".

What, then, is the basis of a Christian's response to personal crises? It can only be **FAITH**. St. Paul in his letter to Hebrews (Chapter 11) expounds the kind of faith we should have; the kind of faith that Abraham had which gave him the courage to leave his home and friends for an unspecified 'promised' land; the very same faith that Moses had when he led his people from the fertile land of Egypt to the barren deserts of Sinai. It is precisely that kind of faith we must have in order to face the many uncertainties we have in this new land of ours. Our faith in God must be total and unquestioning.

Jesus, at the height of his passion, begged God to let his cup pass by. When Jesus knew that was not the will of His Father, he surrendered himself: "Into Thy hands, I commend my spirit". I told you the story of David Watson. When it became clear to him that it was not the will of God that his cancer be cured, that is what he also did. If it was the will of God, He was ready to die. We read in his book 'Fear No Evil' (2) that his surrender freed him of his fear of death and the last months of his life were filled with joy and a quality of life that he had never experienced before.

Faced with the most difficult crises in our lives, do we have the readiness to say, "Thy will be done"? Do we have that silence in which we can hear a soft voice within us say, "Fear no evil, . . .". If we do, we as Christians will have the peace of Christ which passeth all understanding.

\*\*\*\*\*

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- 1 Harry Blamires, "A God Who Acts", **Servant Book**, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1957.
- 2 David Watson, "Fear No Evil", **Hodder and Stoughton**, London, 1984.

\*Paper presented at the Mar Thoma Student's and Family Conferences, New York, August 1985.

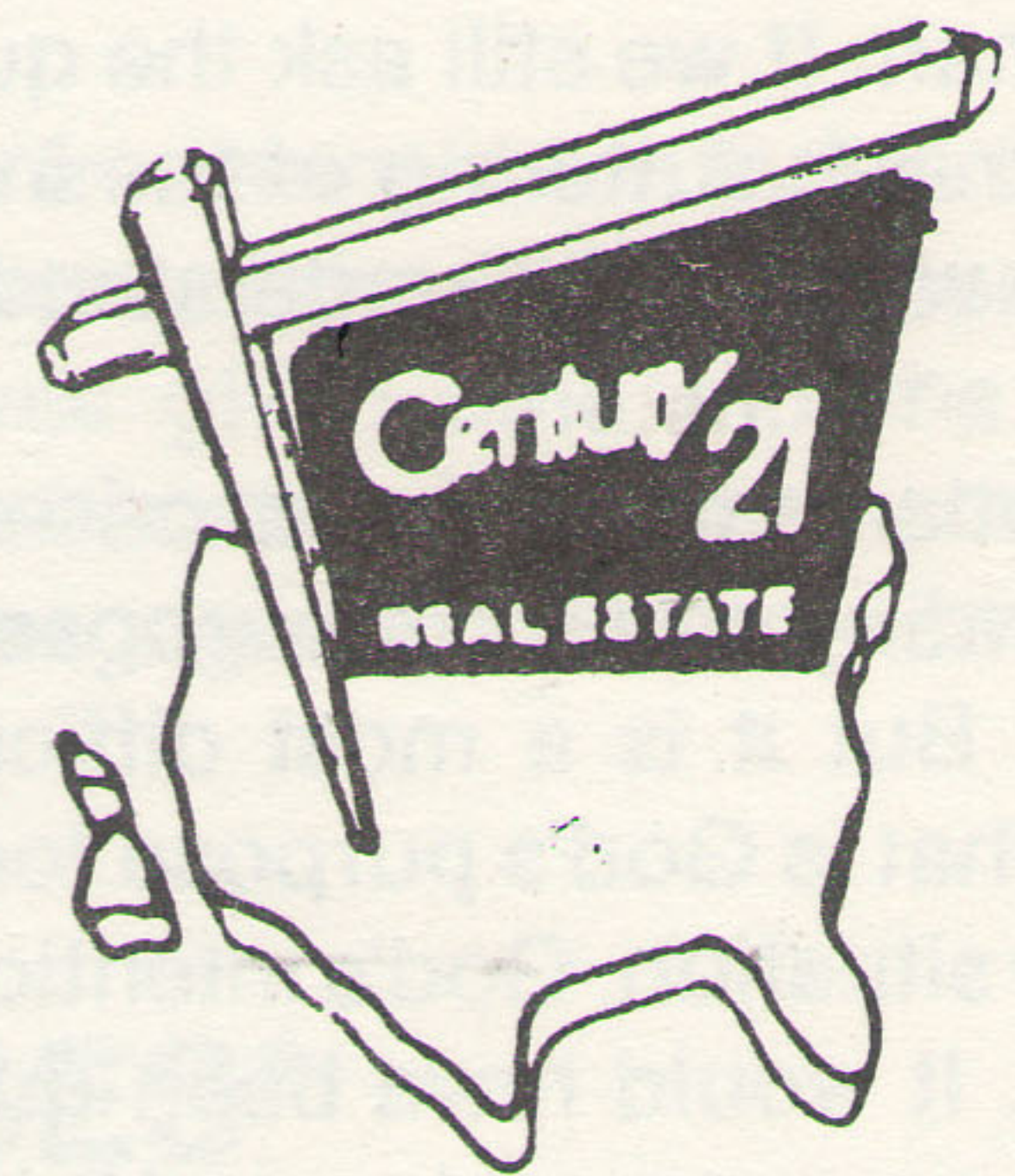
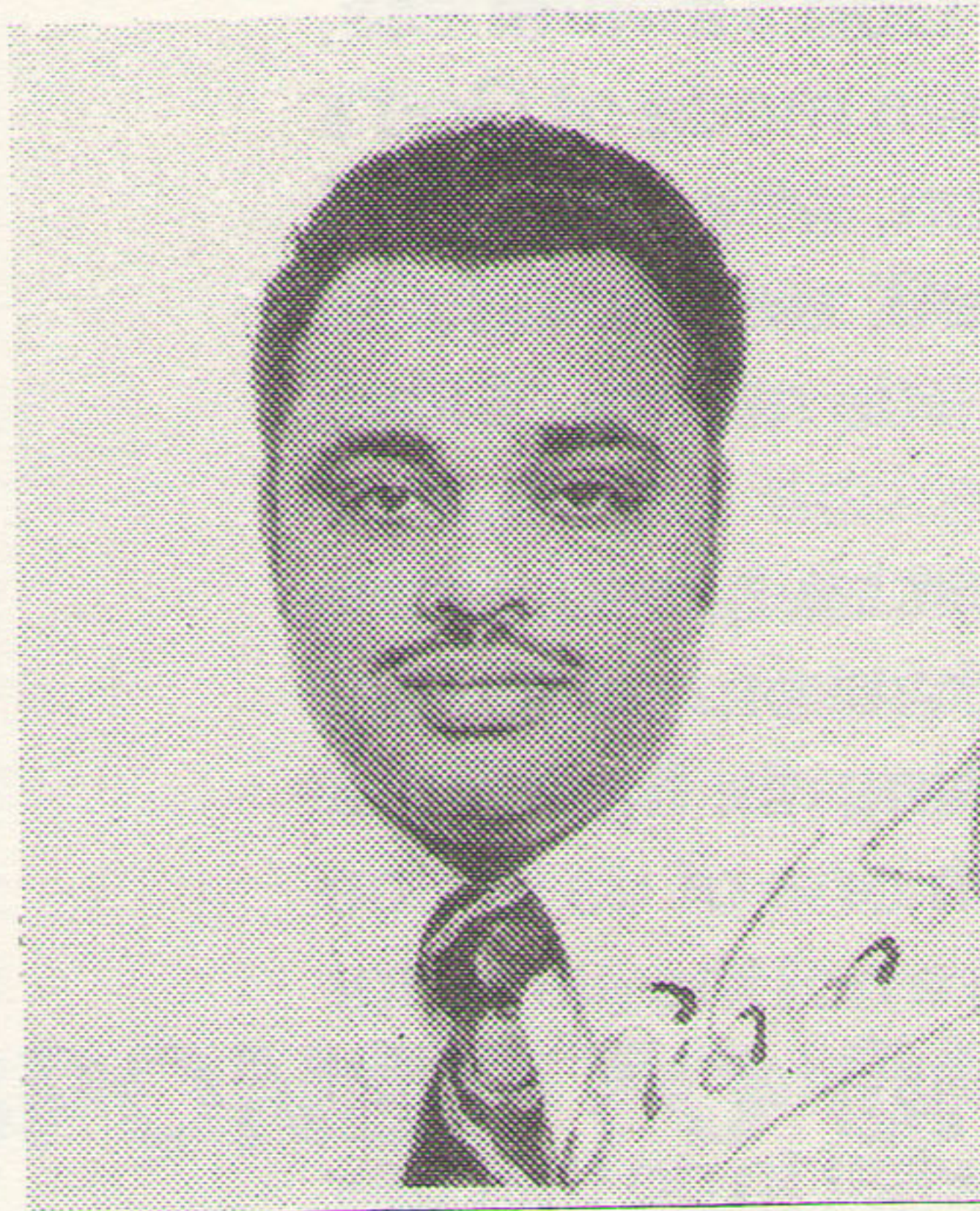
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# THE ROLE OF OUR WOMEN IN THE GROWTH OF THE MAR THOMA CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA\*

**Mrs. Kunjumol Cherian  
Philadelphia, PA**

In a situation much like ours today, changes occur in every spectrum of life, in society, politics, church and religion, in the lifestyle of women and in their role in the church. Mar Thoma immigrants began to gather here on the shores and green pastures of this land of opportunity about two decades ago. When we arrived, North America had been undergoing rapid changes in the role of women in society, religion and church, and we were absorbed into the mainstream of America. It appears that our society is beset with injustices and alienation between classes, sexes and ethnic groups. And we have a low morale and are in a world marked by violence and violation of human rights and overshadowed by a sentiment that organized religion might be irrelevant to everyday life. Given this context, the role of our women in the growth of the Mar Thoma Church in North America needs critical and careful analysis.

I would like to present my views regarding the role of women in the growth of the church here by attempting to answer three questions. Do we have a role to play in our church? If we have, has it been defined? And if it is defined, are we doing our job? We lay women must realize that we are meant by God in whose image we are created (For it is said, "Male and Female created He them", Genesis 1:27) to come together, witness together and help others to do the same. If we take the risen Christ seriously (and we must) as alive, well and active among us, then we know well what Paul meant when he proclaimed that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28) We know well that this cannot be written off as occurring someday - in heaven, but rather it is a statement of the gospels' radical affirmation of the power and values and the worth of all persons. Thus we are called by God to live, to serve to witness and if needed, to die for Him. Therefore, undoubtedly we have a role to play in our church.

Traditionally women's role down through the ages has been considered to be one of being housewives, to bear children and to raise them. Perhaps men all over the world with their patronizing and neglectful attitude toward women still consider them inferior. Although, much has been said about reforms and changes in women's role in the church, proponents are often surprisingly passive about the improvements of women's lot.

Women in the Mar Thoma Church experienced the spiritual power generated by the reformation in our church. Many of our mothers and grandmothers realized this. They also felt the need and responsibility to take

part in spreading the gospel. It was their vigor and enthusiasm that gave birth to the Sevika Sanghom in 1919 during the Maramon Convention. It is very encouraging and gratifying to see that our Metropolitans and Bishops since Abraham Mar Thoma have been supportive of women's role in the growth of our church especially through the Sevika Sanghom.

I am not sure how well organized are our Sevika Sanghoms in parishes and congregations in North America. Are they just for names sake or are they meaningfully carrying out their mission? In Kerala, sevika sanghom members work in 16 centers and outside Kerala their mission has extended into Tibetan area, Satna, Sihora, Ankola and Hoskote. Also women do evangelistic work in their respective diocese. The church has to decide whether the contributions of women in North America are a much needed resource for the renewal of our community in parish life. Our women have potential influence on shaping the future of the Mar Thoma Church in North America. The United Nations decade for women provided occasions for women to meet regularly for the planning of events, and to share experiences. Within the church there are multiple levels of programming for worldwide women's organizations. Catholic, protestant, evangelical and orthodox women engage in their own ecumenical conversation, share their own vision and dialogue with women of other faiths. Our Mar Thoma women all across North America should have an organized central women's organization which can coordinate its services for the growth of our church. By solidifying our activities in the church with its mission of evangelism and service, we can help in the spread of the gospel and thereby the growth of our church.

Our role in the church need not be in the sevika sanghom alone. Women have to be more involved in church life and administration. In this modern time, where changes are happening day by day, church should encourage women to have more involvement in church affairs and administration. Perhaps a redefinition of our role in church affairs may be necessary. Although our Zonal Council is in its very early years, the women representation on it is negligible. The number can be and must be greatly increased. Our women should have more representation in the executive committees of parishes and congregations than what they have at present.

Immediately, our role points in the direction of helping our children to grow within our church and become active members in the future. In the North American



culture and lifestyle, women can play a significant role in shaping the character of our youngsters and to invigorate them for a spiritual awakening. These youngsters are the prospective builders of our church in North America. We can instill in our children a sense of dedication and loyalty towards the church. However, the present pattern of our worship does not seem appealing to them, and they seem to be frustrated by it. I don't think we have given enough emphasis to this serious matter. We would like to urge that our pattern of worship be modified to suit the need of our youngsters in understanding the liturgy, and to have meaningful fellowship. Mothers should be involved in the decision-making process concerning programs and projects for our youths.

Our children are part of a troubled generation. If we do not guide them to lead an active church life, they may slip away into a world of violence and injustice. Recently, there was a report about the possible danger that society will face due to the alienation of youth from church and religion. The report said, "unfortunately, the kids become the enemies to the parents and the church. Parents and pastors ask, how can we control them?, but they fail to realize that their most important decision, (not necessarily positive), will be made when mommy and daddy are not around." Mahatma Gandhi in his autobiography paid homage to his father and mother. He wrote: "My father never had any ambition to accumulate riches, and left us very little property; the outstanding impression my mother has left on my memory is that of saintliness." Every great man and woman had a mother who was god-fearing and religious. While we are working hard to provide them for their education and future, how many of us women do really care for their spiritual growth? It has been in youth conferences and students' conferences that several of our ordained and lay leaders made their commitment to work for the growth of the church and for its Master. I am not sure our parishes have taken this

concern about our youth as seriously as it demands.

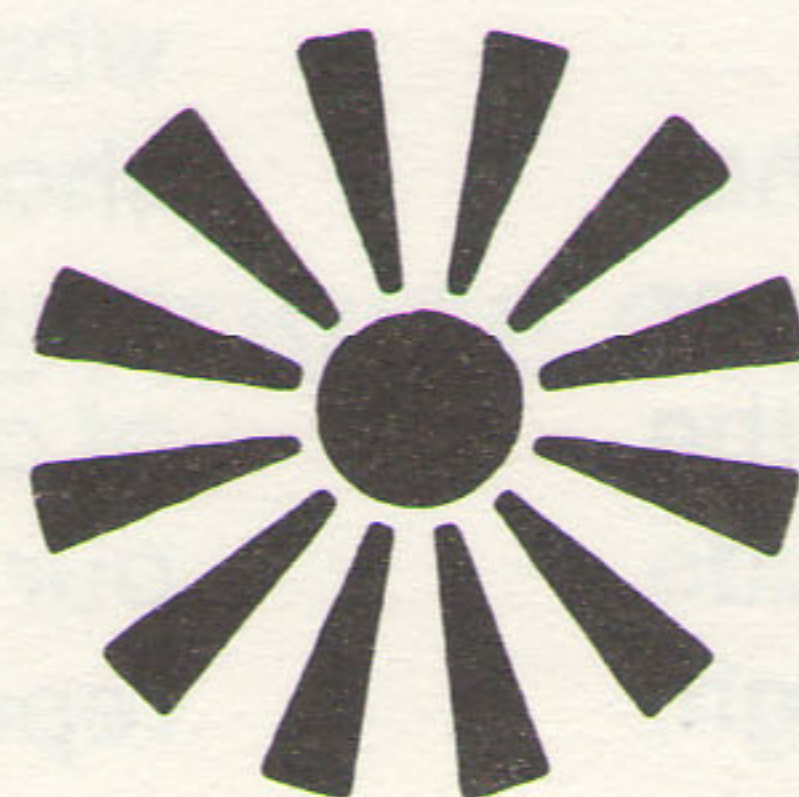
As a first step in our evangelical work we should make an earnest attempt to organize meaningful fellowship and prayer meetings for a spiritual awakening. We can engage in social activities, missionary work, helping the needy, comforting the sick and providing fellowship for the old and the young. When we look at India, a large number of people there suffer from chronic illness, poverty and sectarian violence. There are people without shelter, girls who do not have the dowry to pay for their marriage, and there are many orphans and destitutes who are the creations of God. We should be able to pool our resources, our strength and as Indian Mar Thoma women, we should be able to ease the problems of some suffering people here and abroad.

We often hear our people talk about American society as having no values and that morality and spirituality are low, if non-existent. But we should not forget that women of this country since the 16th century have had great revival and much evangelical work that still sparks in American civilization. We can keep only what we cherish.

We do not exactly have to be feminist in all the views when it comes to our role in the church. I have to say that whatever changes in the social and political arena may occur for women, the ultimate effect of our role in the church must be for witnessing, and spreading the Gospel in this land, because that is the mission of our church, and our role should be to help in carrying out that mission. Whatever role we may play, it shall be with the utmost loyalty to the church, and with deep devotion to our Master.

\*Paper presented at a joint session of the Students' and Family Conferences of August 3, 1985

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# A TIME OF GROWING

Annie Mathew\*

Birchwood School, Grade 9

It came about very suddenly. It started with a cough. . . . I had no cold, but a constant, nagging, sinister cough. Then along came the upset stomach, and worst, the awful, horrible stomach ache. I had incredibly painful cramps — in the middle of my stomach and right side. I couldn't stand up straight due to pain, and also couldn't sleep.

I was admitted to the hospital for 12 days. The doctors didn't know what was wrong, but they finally decided on hepatitis. They released me, and I returned every week for a checkup.

By the second week, my doctor was uneasy. The yellowness hadn't faded, and two lumps, like little rocks, rose on my stomach just underneath the skin. I wasn't worried; I simply took them for granted.

The doctor wanted me to go to Edmonton for some tests. Frankly, I wasn't worried. I remember calling a close friend of mine and saying, "I won't be here for the next few days. The doctor wants me to go to Edmonton for some tests." She said, "Oh. . . . I hope it's nothing serious. . . . I hope everything's okay." To that I scoffed, "Of course it's nothing serious! I'm okay. They just want to do some dumb tests." It had never occurred to me that anything could be dangerously wrong.

Well, my parents took me to Edmonton. By the time I reached there, another lump had risen on my neck, three in my right arm pit, and several in the groin. I still didn't care. Many different doctors paraded into my room wanting to poke their fingers around in my neck, stomach, armpits, and groin to feel those lumps. I was reluctant and embarrassed. To me all the bother and poking was a nuisance. I was repeatedly questioned, poked, and embarrassed.

I remember the student intern. He was kind of weird. He was always smiling — his smile was ironed on. Most strange was that he seemed to have an air of femininity about him — his voice, the way he spoke, his actions, and his long-lasting smile!

I behaved very well when I had my biopsy done. The surgeon used a local anesthetic and removed two of the lumps from my armpit. I was scared stiff at first, but my fear gradually subsided. When he finished he showed me one of the lumps. It looked like a small pebble covered with blood. I was thrilled to have actually seen something that was once inside me!

One afternoon an acquaintance of the family, a pediatrician, came by. He asked if we had been told the diagnosis yet. We hadn't, so he told us. He'd had a look at some of the test results. The mono test was positive. *Mono!* He explained everything to us — how it could be acquired, my restrictions, and so on. I still wasn't too worried or upset. All that bothered me was that I was to

hold off swimming. Oh, bother! He warned us not to tell anyone because he could get into serious trouble. He was not supposed to tell us—my specialist was—he was trying to help, knowing how scared and tense and anxious my mother was. She was then quite relieved.

That evening my specialist, Dr. Thompson, called my parents out of the room. Shortly after, the tall, clean-cut doctor entered, saying, "Annie, I'm afraid I've got some bad news for you." I waited calmly for him to tell about mononucleosis. He came around to my left side and sat on the bed, looking troubled and disturbed. Very gently, he said, "Annie, the tests show that you have a tumor. . . ." (The word tumor blotted all else from my mind. I'd always associated tumors with cancer. Terry Fox had cancer. He's had the *same* significant cough. Cancer causes death. My mind sped on.) . . . which is causing all the complication involving your liver and pancreas." Gripped with fear, I interrupted, "Does that mean I have cancer?" I noticed that he did not always look directly at me. While talking he'd look at the walls, then at his lap, then at me, then at the floor. "Uh. . . well. . . ." Frowning and reluctant now—"The tumor is cancerous, yes. . . . We're not too sure—" I don't remember what he said after that, but the words bone marrow test caught me. "Does that mean I have blood cancer?" "Uh. . . ." Very uncomfortably now: "Yes, possibly. . . ."

I was *shocked!* Me? Cancer? I don't want to die! This is so unbelievable! The tears had started flowing. Huge, heaving sobs shook my whole body.

"I don't want to die!" I cried out through my sobs. "Everything's going great! I've got terrific friends—I'm really good at volleyball—I love swimming! I love distance running! I play the piano! I love being ALIVE!"

With a pained expression, he put his hand on my arm. After a moment he continued. He went on to say that I'd be moved to the children's ward, where my treatments would begin.

I remembered the children's ward. I passed through on my way to x-rays. I thought it was a wild, crazy place. Huge, bright animals—pink hippos, blue storks, green alligators—were painted all over the walls. (Very striking!) It was noisy, and quite busy. All assortments of children walked in and out of doors - mostly younger children. *Me*, in that crazy place?

But I was swallowed up in my misery. I could think of nothing else—until the doctor rose to call my parents.

What would I say? What would they say? We weren't close. I dreaded this.

My father entered, looking dazed. He pulled a chair over and sat down. My mom followed behind him. She seemed old and tired, ready to burst into tears.

I can't recall exactly what was said. All I can remember



is saying to my dad, "You've got to believe in God and in Heaven now." He assured me that he would, and told me to stop crying. And then we prayed.

I remember very little after that. I remember thinking that cancer patients were supposed to be very miserable and gloomy, that they should feel sorry for themselves all the time. One should never, ever mention the disease before a cancer patient, either. The patient might start crying!

That theory was short-lived. A yellow-uniformed nurse wheeled me to my new room, a bright, cheerful, pink room. The empty bed for me was next to a whole row of windows, which I loved.

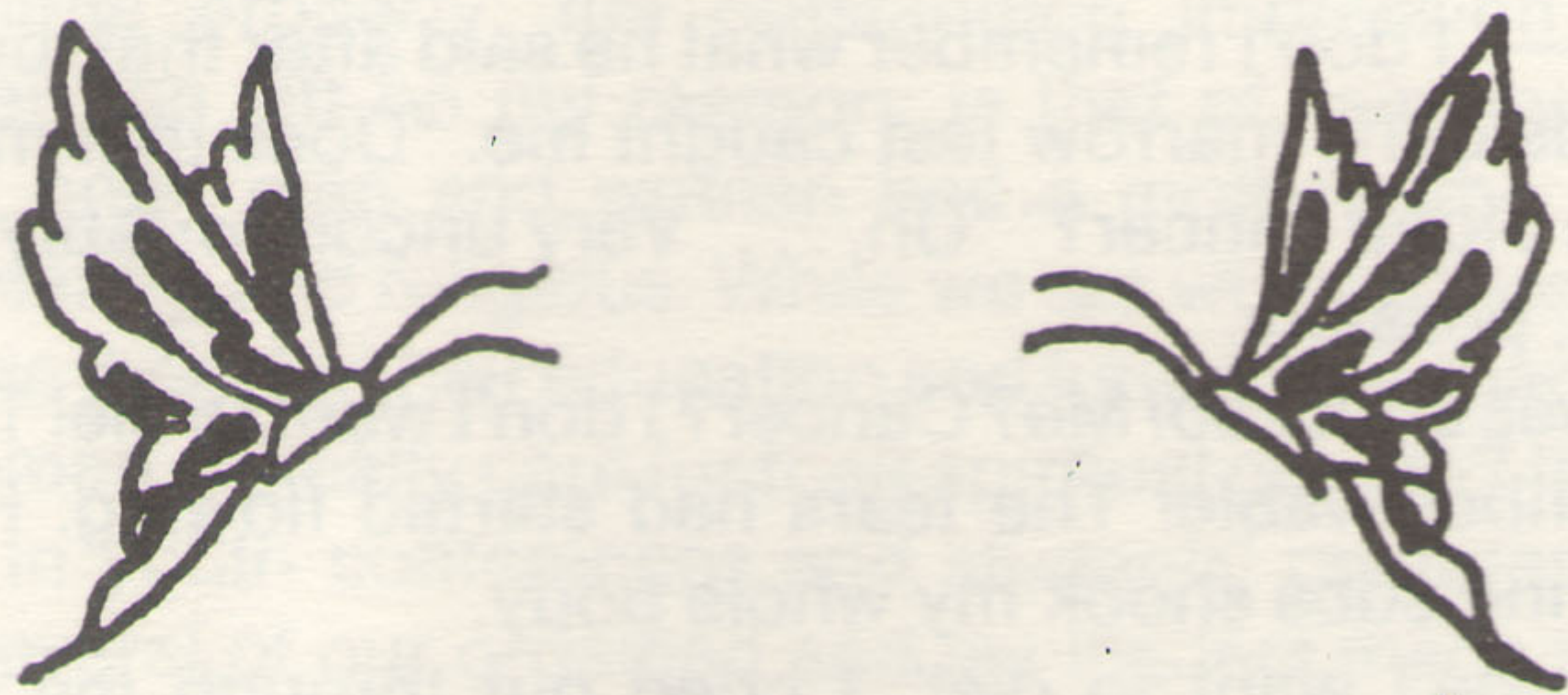
"Tammy, this is Annie," she said. "Annie, Tammy." Her large, dark, sunken eyes regarded me with interest. She was a tiny, pale, skeleton of a girl, propped up on a pillow. She wore a bandana on her head.

"Hi," I said with a smile.

"Hi," she replied, smiling back. After settling into my bed I asked, "What are you here for?"

"Oh, I have cancer of the kidneys," she calmly informed me. I was astounded! She didn't seem to care — she said it so easily and casually. Well, if she could do that, so could I!

"I have cancer of the lymph glands," I bravely responded. I then learned that cancer patients were very different from what I had supposed — they were like everyone else.



I never went through the "why-me" syndrome. Usually people do, when stricken with such major diseases, but I viewed "why-me-ers" as disgustingly weak people who made themselves miserable by feeling sorry for themselves. It's like being chosen to be "it" in a game of tag and being a bad sport about it, saying "Why me?" Self-pity and "why-me" are the same thing, and I was completely free from self-pity. Besides, I could come up with plenty of reasons for why me. Being without self-pity, though, doesn't mean you can't cry. I've cried many times, especially during procedures such as spinal taps. But Terry Fox had always been a special idol to me; it was times like these I could go to his memory for support.

They began my treatments immediately. A tube, called a broviac catheter, was installed in my chest, and an IV was hooked up to it. My "chemo" began.

The tube caused many problems at first. It wouldn't heal; it kept bleeding. I had blood in my lungs from the operation. I'd wake up during the night, and with the dim bedside light shining, I'd have terrible coughing fits (during which I'd cough up blood) that seemed endless.

But eventually they stopped.

Then my hair fell out. They told me it would; naturally, I considered it a major catastrophe. I'd had thick, luxurious, wavy hair, but not anymore. Standing weakly before the mirror, I gazed at my reflection. Completely bald, all that remained was the coconut with the large eyes staring back at me. Aghast, I returned to bed. I thought it would grow back in September; that thought was of some comfort. Then they told me it wouldn't! How dreadful! How could I return to school hairless? I cried all afternoon. That evening I couldn't believe I'd wasted a whole afternoon crying over something so trivial.

I grew stunningly ugly. I lost about 26 pounds — I was a skeleton. I was stark bald. My skin and eye-whites were a sickly yellow; there were huge bags beneath my eyes. I looked like a Jew, fresh from the concentration camps of Nazi Germany.

Since I looked so pathetic, I expected everyone to ignore me. Instead, everyone smiled and talked to me. They actually seemed to like me.

Once, Pam, a tall brunette nurse, walked into my room and, smiling, handed me a pink and white paper bag. I silently took it from her and peered inside. Who could it be from? It was stickers and stationery from her; she could see past the outward ugliness, and could see the real me, inside, just as all others could. I was too sick to maintain my appearance. I couldn't wash myself, and before my hair fell out I couldn't brush it myself either. I was too sick, in fact, for anything but reading and writing letters (in bed, of course). I was so grateful to everyone for seeing the real me inside the ugly, deathly body. Never judge people by their outward appearance, as I learned that summer, because there may be a real treasure inside.

I was to learn later on that at the time I was so sick I would have died, if the particular drugs they administered had not taken effect immediately.

I had my share of pain and hard times. I received spinal taps, which are needles in your spine, as often as three times a week. They were simply agony. I was made to curl up on my side in a tight ball, and then they would inject the needle for a torturous few minutes. I also got extremely painful canker sores *all* over my mouth, on my tongue, and in my throat. I couldn't talk, or even swallow my own saliva. It was just one thing after another.

Yet having been through all that pain, I never gave up — I never wanted to die but once. The doctor prescribed glycerine and sodium bicarbonate for my canker sores. We only received it from the pharmacy at about 11:30 p.m. I proceeded to rinse with it. It hurt even more! By then the pain was intense and intolerable. I was crying really hard. With clenched fists I began screaming as loud as I could with canker sores, crying at the same time. It was almost midnight. Nobody heard me. At that point, I just wanted to die, peacefully and painlessly, and get the pain over with. But after a while it hurt a little less, so I was glad to be alive!



Other than that one time, I never thought about dying, and assumed I would live. I believed in God very strongly, never doubting His existence. Sorry to say, though, I didn't think too much about Him then. One thought I did cling to, though, was the memory of a visit of a dear family friend. She'd said, "Annie, I was thinking about you, and all this suffering you're going through. You know, no one is satisfied with a brick of gold. We all prefer beautiful gold jewelry. But to be made into that gold jewelry, the gold must be melted first—put through the fire, and shaped. You're in the fire now, Annie, but God is shaping you into something beautiful." At that time I was far from being beautiful, but I knew what she meant.

I'll never forget the day of my discharge from the hospital. It was about 5 p.m. and my doctors came in. The chief specialist said, at the end of his visit, "Well, Annie, would you like to go home?" "Yes," I replied calmly, thinking he was joking. "Well, if you can be ready and packed by 6 o'clock, you can go." I had received no former warning. "Sure. I bet." "No, seriously! I mean it!" "Yeah, right." "You don't believe me?" "No!" "Okay, then," he said, shrugging, "if you want to stay," and he began to walk out. "No!! WAIT!!" I frantically screamed, realizing he was serious. "YES, I WANT TO GO!" It was 41 days since my admittance.

"All right, then, get packed," he said smiling and left. I then wore the biggest smile anyone had ever seen. I bounced up and down in my bed, squealing with glee. What a glorious day!

Being in the hospital did have its advantages. I didn't have to write my final exams!

I received a wonderful welcome upon my return. Four of my friends came to visit me the day after. Later, one day, the doorbell rang at the unearthly and unheard of hour (being summertime) 9 o'clock in the morning.

There stood my friend, Sandra, with a glass of milk and a jelly doughnut for me! She told me she was determined to "fatten me up some."

Since then I've returned to school and resumed all normal activities except swimming. Life is great.

The first day of school caused me a lot of anxiety at first. I was so scared! No one had seen me without my hair. What would they say? But it went fine, to my surprise. Passing the familiar faces in the hallway, I saw many big smiles and waves, and heard many, "Hi, Annie!"s. Ah, it was good to be back.

Because of my homework I've been frustrated many times. There is plenty of catching up to do after returning from monthly treatments. My father would attempt to explain my algebra homework to me. Unable to find the right words, he'd hesitate. Suddenly exploding into tears I'd burst out. "Oh, I don't care! I don't get it and just don't care if I lose marks!" I'd slam my books shut, storm up the stairs to my room, and hurl my books on the floor, leaving my dad staring in surprise. But by the next day I would return to my mild-tempered self.

Many people have told me that I am very strong. They wonder how I do it. Well, my answer is a quotation from Psalms: "The Lord is my strength and my salvation. Whom shall I fear?"

Looking back upon last summer, I can see that I've learned a lot. I can say that I've been through a Hell on earth but I can also say that my hospitalization is the most valuable experience I've had. I've learned and grown from it. I think I'm a much better person now. Life is GREAT!

\*(Editor's Note: Annie Mathew, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. P.E. Mathew of Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada, died of leukemia on July 19, 1984. She was posthumously named Junior Citizen of the Year.)

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# REFLECTIONS ON THE MAR THOMA STUDENTS CONFERENCE 1985

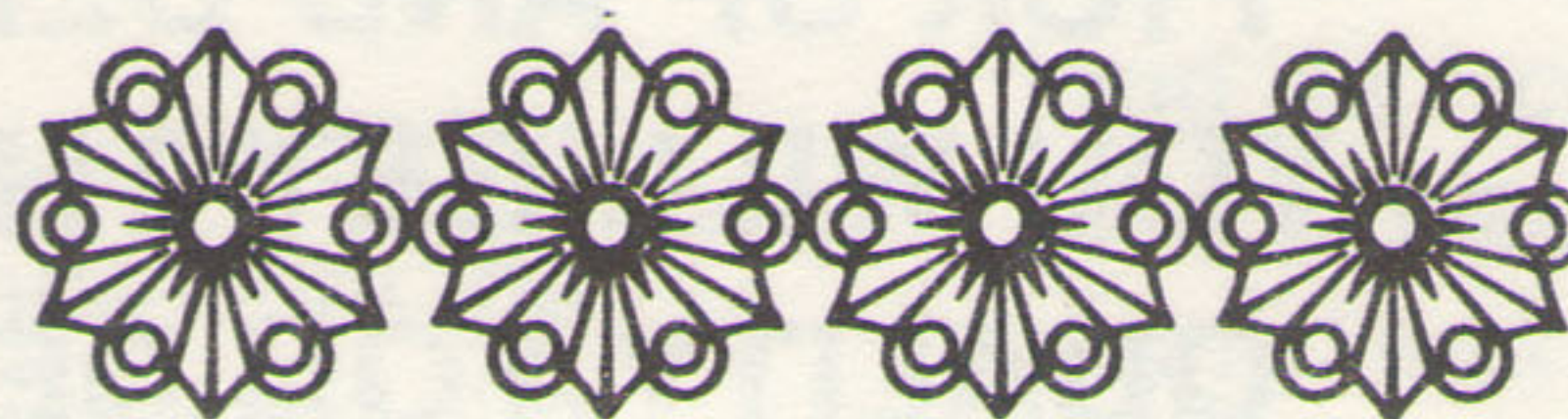


**Sharon Thomas  
Detroit, Michigan**

The first weekend of August last summer was truly a memorable one. At Fordham University in New York, students and families from all over the United States and Canada came together to learn a little, laugh a little, and to make a joyful noise unto the Lord. I, a newcomer to this annual event, was curious and a bit nervous about attending the conference. However, I wanted to attend for a specific reason. I came into contact with many people who are very uninformed about the Asian Christian churches, but it is extremely difficult to tell them anything when I myself do not know much about my own church.. For this reason I was very determined to attend, and also to have all my questions answered. I was very glad to see that these and others were the issues discussed in the various conference seminars, and I was very much satisfied with the very direct answers I received.

I feel privileged to have attended the Conference because it turned out to be a much greater experience than I first anticipated. It was truly an uplifting feeling to

see so many students gather together in the name of our Lord. This created a great sense of community which I believe also laid the foundation for the future of our church in North America. The conference helped me, personally to reestablish my spiritual life on solid ground. For the first time in my life I felt like a true member of the Mar Thoma Church, and not just the child of a member. It helped me to identify with the church and appreciate its beliefs and teachings. The single most common and beneficial aspect of the Conference was finding out that no one is unique with regards to the problems that one faces. And since our dilemmas are similar we all have the duty to help each other overcome them. There is hope for the world in Christ, as the theme of the Conference "Christian Hope in a World of Crisis" emphasized. I can safely say that I saw this hope in all its brilliance and strength, in the eyes of my fellow youth at the Conference. If you have never attended a Student, Youth, or Family Conference please contact your parish priest for details about the next conference.





**The Mar Thoma Students Conference, 1985  
A High School Student's Perspective**

**George Alex Varghese, Grade 10  
Notre Dame High School  
Bethlehem, Pa.**



This year's Mar Thoma Students Conference was held at Fordham University, New York, along with the Family Conference on August 1 through 4. The Most Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma, Metropolitan of our church, was the main leader of the event. This was the first conference for many, including myself, and a new experience with the Lord, our Savior. Spending four days at a function as this every year gives us an opportunity to learn more about

the world around us as well as our Lord.

The theme of this year's conference was **Christian Hope in a World of Crisis**. Dr. Titus Mathew's presentation helped us to see this world of crisis as it is and helped us to open up in our own discussion groups. Also, Dr. Abraham A. Panackal described this issue in an article he wrote in the Student's Handbook for our use. The article described who we are, the meaning of the word crisis, our christian hope, and also our role in this world of crisis. This article was very informative. Parental crisis was brought up by Rev. Bryan Hobbs from Florida. His talk was as entertaining as informative. He helped us all to open up to our parents and discuss our feelings.

Dr. Robert Zuber, a Professor at Manhattan College,

and a U.N. representative discussed our roles in doing what we can do for the World Peace Program and our role in the International Youth Year.

The panel discussion topics included faith and practices of the Mar Thoma Church, origin and history of the Church, youth involvement, role of women, lay leaders, and impact of the Students conference on the growth of Mar Thoma Church in North America. These are all interesting topics and should be discussed again in future conferences at a place at which the topics can be heard and discussed. All these discussions stimulated us to an extent that we wanted to learn more.

The Holy Communion service was held on Sunday, the last day of the conference, at the University Church by the Metropolitan. That was indeed a great experience.

This being my first conference, I did not know what to expect. But it was a great enjoyment. I met many of my cousins, relatives and friends from all over the country as well as was introduced to others thus making more friends. The conference was very well organized. Our Valia Thirumeni made the conference a hit in itself. The students appreciated all that His Grace did for the conference. He was in touch with students as well as the parents to make things easier for everyone.

The overall attitude permeating the conference was uplifting. Students were willing to learn, as leaders were willing to teach. Spiritually, the conference helped me to realize that I have a bigger part than I think. This event brought a new meaning to the word 'Christian' to me. Now I want to know more about Him through attending Church, reading the Bible, and most importantly by prayers.

The conference was also a plus for me because I received first communion there from our beloved Metropolitan. My parents were able to make it to New York for all of us to celebrate this event together. I very much enjoyed this year's conference as I learned more about myself as a christian and being with my friends again.

## **PRIVATE PRAYER AND MEDITATION**

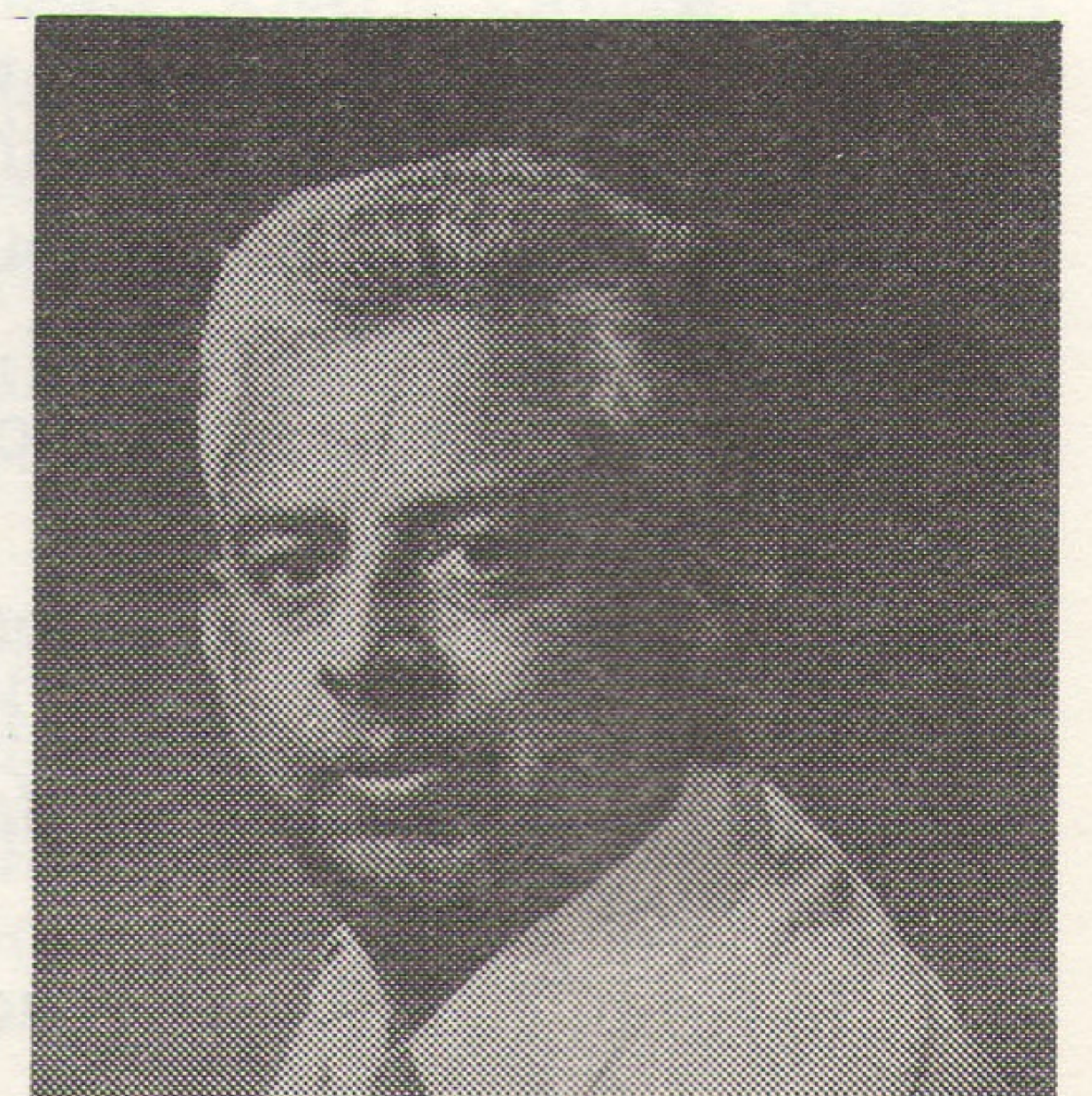
**Dr. P.M. Mammen  
Allentown, Pa.**

### **Introduction**

We believe in the triune conception of God — the three in one and the one in three. This is a baffling concept in theology; nevertheless, we hold it as valid and vital. In 2 Cor. 13:14, St. Paul refers to (1) the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, (2) the love of God, and (3) the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

We also believe in the triune conception of man, who was created in God's image. In 1 Thess. 5:23, St. Paul refers to the spirit and soul (mind) and body of man. The body deals with matter. It is the receptacle of mind and spirit. Of all the three aspects, what makes man divine

and continues to keep him in the realm of the divine plan of God is this indwelling spirit (of God). The body, mind, and spirit of man are interdependent. The major principle of this triune conception is the interdependence of the aspects of the trinity of





Being, Knowledge, and Will that correspond with Body, Mind, and Spirit. About man, it may be said: He is (the image of God), He knows, and He wills. Moreover, it is said that Truth presides over the mind (that "knows"); but the worst enemy of man's mind is his (unbridled) mind itself. Furthermore, his body is known for the cause of his unmaking. St. Paul refers to the things of the flesh (of the body in the Being) in Romans 8:5 and 8:7. In Eph. 2:3, he talks of the "passion of . . . (this) flesh". In Rom. 8:5-7, he says: "For those who live according to the flesh (body) set their minds on the things of the flesh (i.e. the matter, the material, and what is sexual and sensual), but those who live according to the spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit (and the spiritual). . . . For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God. . . ."

#### The Need for Prayer:

That is to say: man, who was created (or divinely evolved) in the image of God, has become a contradiction in himself because he falls short of the image of God. Man's spirit craves for the divine; while his body and mind go astray.

This calls for the need for prayer. If the whole man (in his three aspects) was in unbroken commune with the Triune God, there would not be any need for prayer.

There is an element of dualism in Christian Faith. God stands aloof. He is transcendental. He is the Lord God Almighty, the Creator, and the Law-Giver. Besides, He is holy, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, incomprehensible, invisible, and immutable. Before Him, the weak man should bend his knees in humility and complete submission. This dualism also calls for the need for prayer.

What is prayer? It is not the humble supplication of a long shopping list. It is not the eloquent utterance of words. The movement of lips has no central place in real prayer. All these are a part of Christian prayers; but they are not central. They are only peripheral. What is central in prayer is the exercise of the spirit of man, as thought is of the mind. Besides, prayer does not require a particular time or a definite place. C.S. Lewis says: "We may ignore, but we can nowhere evade the presence of God. The world is crowded with Him." This calls for the need for a continuous filling of man's spirit with the Holy Spirit of the triune God, which can only be accomplished in prayer. This spiritual flow should be uninterrupted and does not require the external forms of vocalization and ceremonialization.

#### Private Prayer:

Brother Lawrence had this to say (in **Practice of the Presence**): "The Time of busyness does not with me differ from the time of prayer, and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the Blessed Sacrament." Prayer of this nature is extremely private. Private prayer is a way of life and an unbroken spiritual communion with God.

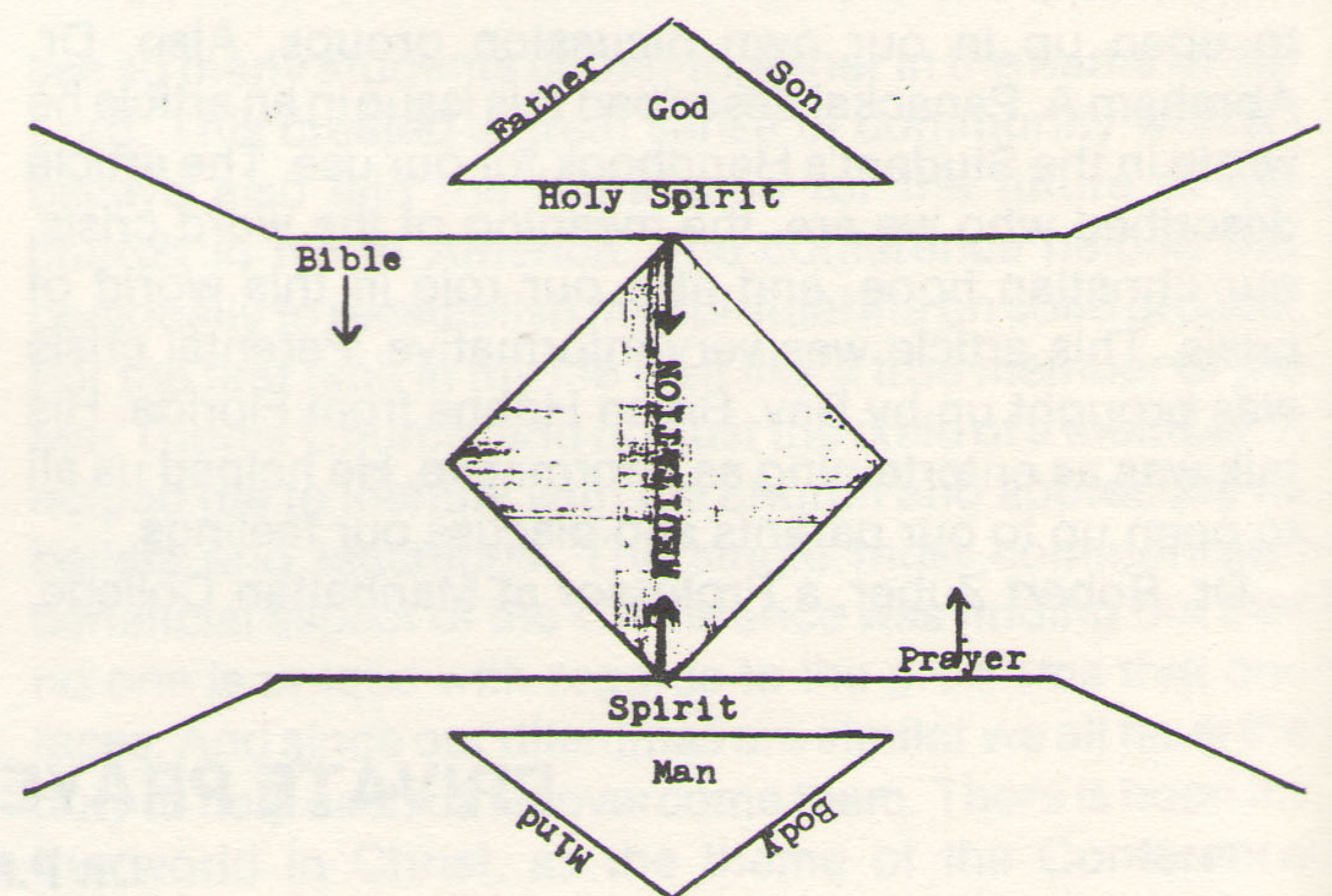
In Rom. 7:26-27, we read: "Likewise the Spirit helps

us in our weakness (of body and mind); for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. . . ." This level of spiritual communion in private prayer does not come about without effort. It is an exercise that has a discipline of its own. It needs training, which corrects, molds, strengthens, or perfects. Elizabeth Yates says, "The aim of any discipline of (private) prayer is to become quietly but constantly aware of our relationship to God. . . at all times (*A Book of Hours*).

#### Meditation:

St. Francis de Sales says, "The chief exercise of (private) prayer is to speak to God and to hear God speak in the bottom of our heart." Prayer, in its highest form, is a silent language. It is then called meditation. Meditation is not pondering over a theme but a direct insight into the reality of spiritual things.

Through the Scripture (Bible), God speaks to man. Through his private prayer, man speaks to God. In meditation, both God and man meet and a two-way communion is established. In this meditation, the whole man is revived. Meditation is a prolonged, intensive reflection that transforms man. A man reflects on his spiritual identity. In this reflection, there is a sense of duality; but it eventually dissolves because the human identity becomes lost in the presence of God that surrounds the human being.



In this reflective meditation, the triune God and the triune man together form a new trinity with their aspects of: God, man, and the meditation itself. (This conception of meditation as one of the three aspects of a new trinity falls in line with the Augustinian investigation of trinitarian principle. According to Augustine, "When I . . . love anything, there are three realities involved: myself, and the beloved, and the love itself." (See **Confession**.)

That is to say: Man's body, mind and spirit possess relationship within their own triune configuration, and at the same time they reflect the relationship among the Father, Son and Holy Spirit when reflective meditation is established. In this position, the meditative man discovers the image of God, the Creator, within himself. It elevates



him from his "fallen nature" to a higher nature of sublime sovereignty free from the passion of his flesh (body) and the provocation of his unbridled mind.

Let us be reminded here that this stage of meditation (spiritual communion) can be achieved only through self-discipline.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **Time and Place:**

One of the monastic disciplines of the Middle Ages was to take the striking of the clock as a reminder to turn thought to God. Howard Thurman (20th century) said that the discipline of private prayer (meditation) was to keep oneself open to God and be ready to respond. It requires a reminder to a beginner. (In our present age of technology and all kinds of domestic gadgets, maybe a pocket timer that can set to sound every hour can be used for our private meditation. Every time, as the hum reminds, one can lift one's thoughts into the presence of God — instead of running to the oven to check on the baking chicken.)

The morning must be set aside to keep our appointed time with God. Let us keep to this appointment for self-dedication and inward listening. In the silence of the morning meditation, we should be able to prepare ourselves for dedication; in the silence of the evening meditation, we should be able to surrender ourselves. We must not hurry through our moments of meditation. One of the medieval mystics said, "He who is in a hurry delays the things of God."

Meditation establishes communion between God and man. Once begun, the communion continues throughout the day. In Psalm 119:97, the Psalmist says: "Oh, how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day." In Mark 1:35, we read of two devotional characteristics of the life of Jesus. It is said: "And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place, and there he prayed." He chose a quiet time and he chose a quiet place. In Matthew 6:6, Jesus advises his followers, "But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. . . ." In other words, we should shut the world out and shut us in alone with God. This is one way of disciplining the mind so that the spirit may be able to function effectively.

#### **Mind:**

Concentration of mind is one of the most important attributes of meditation. A restless mind does not stimulate the spirit. One should acquire clarity of mind, and this is possible only if one is free from everything that disturbs the mind. When one's mind is fleetingly attached to something, it is to that extent not free enough for meditation. Being free from all things does not mean that there is an empty void. To become free from any attachment to this physical world (matter and the material) and to be free from human sensualism and sexuality (the problem of flesh and body) are necessary conditions for one's growth in spiritualism. True Christians at their

high level of meditation must be known for their material poverty. Though poor in the material world (that promotes the desires of the body), their spiritual life knows no poverty.

#### **Body: A Definite Posture**

Besides a mind of concentration, there should be the body in the right posture. (In different religions, we come across different body positions for particular prayers.) The lotus position is recognized to be the best for private meditation. One should sit with legs crossed in such a way that each foot rests sole up on its opposing thigh. The spinal column is held erect. Hands are placed with palms up on the lap, one on top of the other, thumbs touching.

Christians advocate closing the eyes so that all external distractions may be shut out. However, we should be more concerned with internal distractions. It is recommended in the yoga exercises that the eyes be left half open and focused on a point between the eyes at the base of the nose, or at the pit of the stomach. Breathing posture is equally important. Uncontrolled breathing can shatter mind's repose. Regular breathing is necessary — at a regular rhythm. When we breathe out, let us say, "Lord, I give you my feeling of stress." When we breathe in, let us say, "I receive your healing power." (One may substitute any other statement.)

Mind's fiercest enemy is mind itself. In meditation, one should develop the power of concentration. When all the senses are stilled, when the mind is at rest, perfect communion is possible with God. When this communion deepens, a union between God and man is made possible. Then the duality of the knower and the known is resolved into perfect unity. Anything that stands between God and man is removed now. The stresses of guilt vanish. Now, God invades the mind of man and fills it. (Thus a new trinity of God, man and meditation is formed.)

#### **Conclusion (Body: The Power of Meditation)**

Meditation has enormous power over the body of man and its physiological working. The effect of meditation over mind and body is conclusively proved in the medical science. Meditation releases a built-in mechanism that causes such physiological changes as decreased heart-rate, lower blood pressure, and amelioration of the general stress-related symptoms. This "relaxation response" through meditation is being used now in medical science. (Read Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *Making Stress Work for You*.) Harvard cardiologist Herbert Benson has discovered that meditation brings measurable results in helping patients cope with stress situations. Using the methods of transcendental meditation, he helps his patients discover how to meditate from ten to twenty minutes a day.

His patients are taught to sit in a comfortable position; close their eyes, concentrate on a simple word, sound, or phrase, and exclude all other thought. Patients are encouraged to select their own mantra, the word or phrase to be repeated in gaining thought-control. A



mantra may be selected from one's own religious experience.

Another form of relaxation through thought-control is biofeedback. By means of machines that monitor blood pressure, muscle tension, and body temperature, patients become aware of what is happening in their bodies. They learn how to relax. After a number of sessions at biofeedback during which a person learns the power of thought-control, he/she is taught to gain the same results through meditation. Meditation is not merely an attempt at gaining control over bodily respons-

es, it is an attempt to bring the total being (body, mind and spirit) into an integrated contact with the triune God. In the ministry of Jesus, whenever He was besieged by the needs of people, He said, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." (Mark 6:30) This rest is a retreat from the busy world for meditation. Meditation should become a vital part of one's daily life. It will change mental attitudes as well as bodily responses. It will also place man at the healing spirit of the triune God.

## THINKING ABOUT LIFE

Some men spend so much time trying to make a killing that they forget to make a living . . . Those who throw mud usually lose ground . . . Past experience should be a guide post, not a hitching post . . . We can never do a kindness too soon because we never know how soon it will be too late . . . The years are short-only the days are long . . . Obstacles challenge, but do not frighten brave men . . . A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials . . . Best way to forget about the high cost of living is to live so that life is worth more . . . Beware of a half-truth; you may be hearing the wrong half . . . When you dig another out of his troubles you find a place to bury your own . . . The most highly inflammable kind of wood is the chip on the shoulder . . . Sympathy is for the one who tried and failed; pity is for the one who failed to try . . . Character is much easier to keep than to recover . . . It's a rare thing to win an argument and the other fellow's goodwill at the same time . . . Petty feelings always get lost in a big person . . . You can't hold another man down without staying down with him . . . Any ugly thing is only a challenge to someone who can care enough to make it beautiful . . . You can't keep a man on his toes by trying to keep him on his knees . . . Kind words and kind deeds enlarge the heart of the man who gives them . . . Good judgment comes from experience; experience comes from bad judgment . . . Worry is interest paid by those who borrow trouble . . . The wisdom of the wise is usually an uncommon degree of common sense . . . There's so much more to life than increasing its speed . . . Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power . . . The only thing worse than growing old is to be denied the privilege . . . You can't build your reputation on what you're going to do . . . Poise and noise seldom go together . . . True nobility is being superior to your previous self . . . One's education has been a failure-no matter how learned he may be-if it has failed to open his heart . . . The real happiness of your life depends mostly upon the quality of your thoughts . . . Actual difficulties can be overcome, only the imaginary ones seem unconquerable . . . A person's growth depends not on how many experiences he devours but on how many he digests . . . Never cut what you can untie

. . . You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today . . . Setbacks should set us up for comebacks . . . We are as big as the responsibilities we accept and carry through . . . Kindness consists in liking people more than they deserve . . . Dogmas of the quiet past are usually quite inadequate in the stormy present . . . Too many talkers give you in length what they lack in depth . . . Character is not made in a crisis-it is only displayed then . . . Discipline yourself and others won't have to . . . Maturity begins to grow in a person when his concern for others outweighs his concern for himself . . . Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eye off the goal . . . Silence is sometimes golden, sometimes it's a yellow streak . . . Time heals all wounds, but more importantly, time wounds all heels . . .

## IN GOD WE TRUST

The animals that lived, once by the sea,  
Were all driven out; including me,  
The only place that was available now,  
Was in a dirty ol' place with a stinkin' cow.

The humans had driven us out you see,  
Oh those humans, but let them be,  
For it is written, that ye shall love thy neighbours,  
Even if it is as painful as labour.

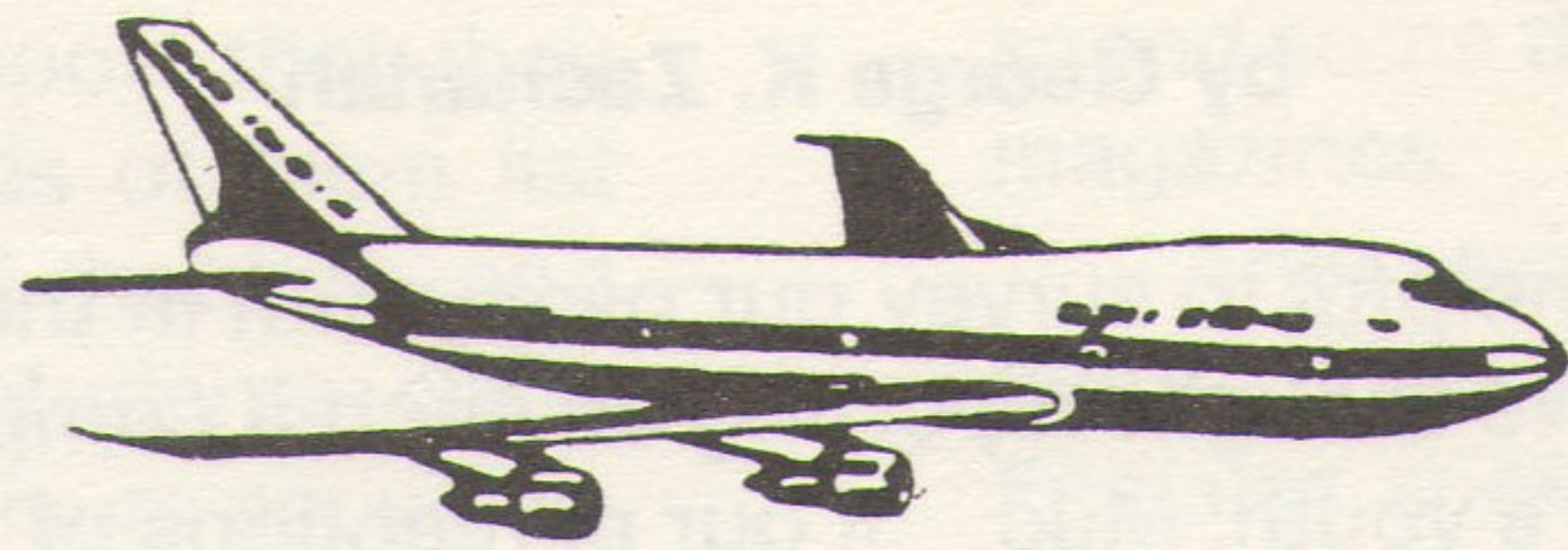
The animals had all, trusted in God;  
Even the large lion who was named Todd!  
They now, however turned up to plead,  
For all of them were hungry, hungry for feed.

God was full of kindness and love;  
The food came down, even for the dove,  
The animals all had a party that night  
And trusted in God to show them His light.

**Ajit Ninan, Grade 9  
Toronto, Canada**



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# THE MOOD OF AMERICAN YOUTH

## National Association of Secondary School Principals, Reston, Va., 1984

### SUMMARY & REVIEW

by George K. Zachariah

(Note: It might be informative as well as helpful to survey our own youth in these areas. This summary and review was designed to provide such an incentive. We thought reporting on such a comprehensive study would be helpful to our readers to understand the mood of today's youth. Much of our perceptions of young people may not be accurate.)

The mood of American Youth is one of the most comprehensive studies on secondary school students ever undertaken. It was reported in 1983. It covers a whole gamut of issues, institutions and perspectives of youth which are shaping their lives. This national survey explores the ideas, beliefs and aspirations of America's youth on a wide range of items. It also compares the attitudes of today's young people with those of their counterparts a decade ago using data from a similar survey. The survey was based on a national probability sample of 1,500 students in grades 7 through 12. Today's students generally give high marks to their schools and teachers. This is especially significant at a period of intensifying national debate about the quality of education in the United States and the warning by the National Commission on Excellence in Education that the nation is at risk and is facing 'a rising tide of mediocrity'. Other task forces have sounded similar warnings that 'the nation is failing to provide its own children with the intellectual tools needed for the 21st century'.

When asked why the students liked school, they ranked 'learning' a distant third behind 'friends' and 'sports'. This was the general view of even excellent students. Students who gave their schools high marks also indicated that, on the whole, their schools were innovative, and had few discipline problems, used a variety of teaching methods, and had well qualified teachers. But students who ranked their schools with lower grades reported gave opposite characterizations.

From the student's viewpoint, a teacher's attitude toward students and manner of presenting classwork seem to be more important than the actual 'book learning' that a teacher possesses. Including the weekends, study time for students averaged less than one hour and ten minutes a day. Students' grades and the amount of study time go hand-in-hand. Lack of discipline topped the list of school problems. The next most frequently mentioned was the drug problem.

Students had generally positive regard for teachers, principals and guidance counselors. An overwhelming 86% of the students thought that high school students can keep up with their academic life while participating fully in sports activities. However, academic achievement was highly correlated with lower value given to sports than academic excellence. Organized music pursuits also engaged a large number of today's students. The second most frequently reported cocurricular activity was membership in a school band or orchestra. While

fewer students report belonging to organizations with selective or competitive membership criteria, a good number were involved in a variety of school clubs and organizations. School activities with a more strictly academic orientation such as science clubs and debate teams were reported as the least popular cocurricular pursuits.

Female students were more active in many of these areas especially in student councils, debate teams and school publication staffs. In the majority of cases, school-related activities drew a disproportionate number of students with the highest grades. 'Student power' apparently is truly a slogan of the past as reflected in the views regarding the role of student councils. They are seen as more having a role in conducting school social activities. Today's typical student gets a little more than 60 hours a week for 'spare' time. Video games and computers are among the most frequently cited leisure pursuits today. Music and television are ever popular, causing reading to take a back seat. Sports, cars, and clothes are important to them but these material concerns are balanced by substantial student involvement in church activities, youth organizations, and after-school jobs.

Almost everyone thinks that a high school student should have a part-time job in school year and full-time job in summer. But only 30% of students were working at paying jobs. Almost half of the students had part-time jobs in 1974. They work as sales clerks, stock persons, many in restaurants and about 1/5th deliver newspapers. One third worked on a job-by-job basis, eg. baby sitting, mowing lawns, and cleaning houses. While 87% do not believe that their jobs have a negative effect on their school work, many do feel that working interferes with their social lives and their ability to participate in school-related activities. Only fewer than half of the students reported that their parents agreed with their sentiments as far as need for a part-time job during the school year. A little more than a third of the students reported they participated in church or religious group activities. Scouting was a pastime of 17% of males and 6% of females. 4-H clubs, YMCA/YWCA and Junior Achievement were listed by 3 to 9% of the students. Religious groups included among their membership ranks more students making 'mostly As' and fewer students making 'mostly Cs' than other kinds of community organizations. Also, females were more likely to be involved with religious organizations than males. Volunteer community



service also engages many students (41%), although the percentage has dropped slightly in the last decade. Females dominated this area.

Not only do almost all students report that they watch sports activities, almost two-thirds of them list sports and fitness activities as personal 'hobbies and special interests'. Almost half of the students claim sports as their first or second choice in leisure activities. Football, basketball and baseball, in that order, were the interests of students.

Music plays a significant part in the lives of today's youth. Music was the fourth-ranked student hobby. While the relatively recent musical trends such as 'punk' and 'new wave' command the interests of a substantial segment of the student population, rock music is by far still the reigning style among teenagers today. Country music receives only the third rank while only 15% of students said they enjoyed listening to classical music. Females seem to be in the forefront of fans for emerging styles of music such as punk rock and new wave. The students believe that today's popular music and musicians do actively express the attitudes of contemporary youth.

While ranking very high on students' list of reported hobbies, video games apparently have not fully captured young people's attention. When asked to rate eight areas according to their importance in students' lives, the teenagers put video games at the bottom of the heap. Students rated television, styles of clothing, and even newspapers and magazines higher in importance. But still they are important to many. Students who make the highest grades are among the least likely to play video games.

The average secondary school student spends about six hours a day watching television and listening to the radio (about half and half). Mostly radio is tuned in to listen to music. Students who reported making better grades in school did devote less time to both radio and television than did students making lower grades. Students, on the average, only go to the movies about once every three weeks.

Perhaps one of the most startling comparisons between today's students and those surveyed a decade ago lies in their reading habits. Students then reported that they read less than one book per month including school-assigned readings. Today, however, students on the average read two books per month for their own enjoyment and start on a third. There is also a dramatic change in the students' view of reading as a pastime. Then it was listed next to last in their choice of hobbies and special interests. Fewer than 1% cited reading as a hobby. However, in the recent survey, reading was the second most frequently mentioned pastime. A total of 49% of the students claimed reading as a leisure time interest. The majority of students spend two to three hours a week for reading as a hobby. Students making mostly A's reported reading four books for every one read by students making mostly D's. 85% of the students

report reading a daily newspaper at least one day each week; the overall average was slightly more than three days a week. Magazines are very popular. More than 90% spend some time, an average of 2 hours a week, reading magazines.

After savings, clothing, entertainment and transportation costs consume most of the students' money. Females spend an average of \$143 a year on clothes, compared to male clothing expenditures of only \$57. Males spend almost twice as much as females on entertainment, probably because they foot the bill for dates. The home front is viewed more positively. Not trusting anyone over 30 is a sentiment from a bygone era; most students now report that not only do they generally get along with their parents, they also respect and share their parents' values. The generation gap of the sixties narrowed to a mere 'crack' during the 70's and today appears more like a simple hairline scratch for most students. When students do clash with their parents today, the disputed issues are not likely to stem from discrepancies in basic philosophy. The arguments are over curfews, choice of friends, clothing and hair styles, attendance at religious services, household chores and an assortment of 'house rules'. To some adults' surprise, perhaps, small but significant percentages of students feel parents should be stricter in some areas. The most frequently mentioned areas in this category were rules related to school work, attendance at religious services and completion of household chores. The age-old problem of the communication gap has narrowed recently. However, it remains as a significant area of contention among young people. Mothers continue to serve more frequently as the teenagers' 'listening ear'. The students claim their mothers are more up-to-date than fathers. Parents are depicted as 'old-fashioned', 'rigid' and that they treat their teenagers 'like children'.

In eight major issue areas — drugs, education, work, politics, choice of friends, religion, sex and dress styles — a clear majority of students said they agreed with their parents' views. The 1980's have been characterized by an unprecedented incidence of teenage pregnancy, yet, curiously, a majority of students contend that their attitudes about sex are consistent with their parents' beliefs.

Politics still does not hold much appeal for students today. They remain a fundamentally loyal and supportive — but not rabidly patriotic — group of citizens. 40% of the students said they were undecided about which political party best represented their own political views.

Joining the armed services apparently has not gained in popularity. The likelihood of students' volunteering for military service goes up as their grades go down.

As for the worst influences in their lives, students identified drugs (almost half of them), alcohol, peer pressure (more a concern of females), television, violence, unemployment, threat of war, sex and poor morals.

School and work seem to far outstrip religion in



terms of everyday importance to young people today. However, they contend that religion does play a significant role in their lives. Students making higher grades tended to consider religion more important than those whose grades were lower. About 65% of today's students reported that they regularly go to church or other religious services. This is a dramatic rise from 25% in the 1974 report.

Student viewpoints on current issues are truly a mixed bag of political thought. An overwhelming majority of students reported strong support for a guaranteed annual income, a national health plan and subsidized housing. Majority of students feel nuclear weapons are necessary to protect the United States. Almost 70% expressed support for handgun control legislation. The death penalty is considered to be acceptable form of punishment for some crimes. There was an overwhelming sentiment for stricter laws to control the use of the insanity plea.

Almost 70% of the students believe local control of schools is the best way to provide the best education. Almost 99% of the students say local school officials should be able to censor the books and materials to be used in their schools. Surprisingly, not one student disagreed with this position. The remaining 1% had no opinion.

There was strong support for bilingual education. Half of the students favored schools playing a role in providing sex education. 35% believed their parents should handle sex education matters. They are almost evenly divided over legalization of abortions and they take extreme polar views. 54% of students were opposed to the view that pornographic materials should be legally available to adults. Most of them strongly opposed while, among those who were agreeable to the view only 10% were strongly in favor.

A slight majority of students supported raising the drinking age to 21 in all states. A majority of today's youth oppose legalization of marijuana. The youth of today look to their individual futures with a good measure of optimism. They place high priority on higher education and careers, but seem to have tempered some of the dogged ambitions evident in their counterparts of the 70's. They admit hard work lies ahead and claim they are willing to make the sacrifices needed to reach their goals.

In one question, the students were asked to construct their own 'personal success formulas' by assigning points to the life areas they viewed as most important to them. The seven areas were: personal development and satisfaction, immediate family, extended family, friendships, work and career, religious and spiritual activities, and social influence. Sacrifices required for achievement included some degree of spare-time activities, social activities, money and self-centredness. Female students mentioned sacrificing self-centredness twice as often as male students, indicating that social pressures on women

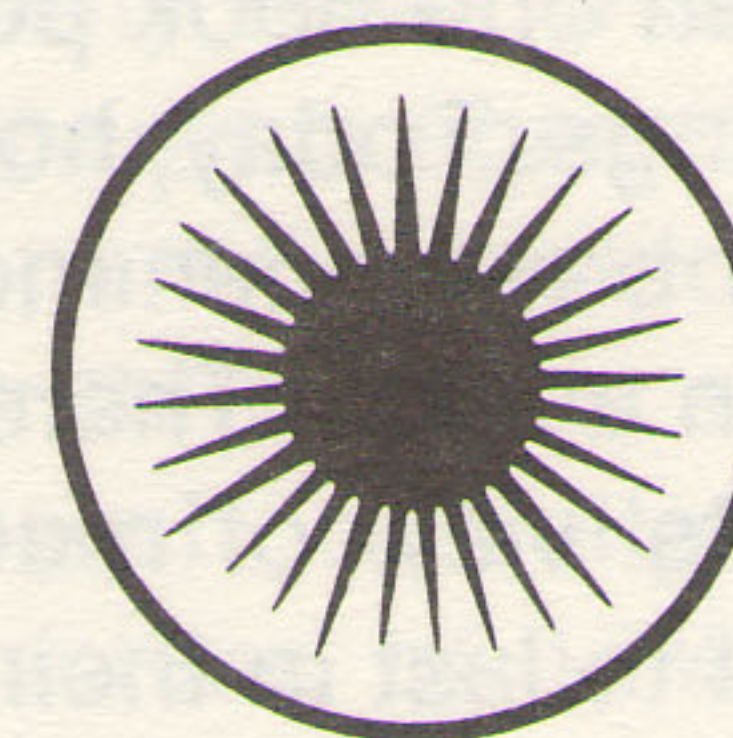
to subordinate their own desires to those of others are still at work in the present generation of teenagers.

Today, computer-related jobs are students' number one career choice followed by non-management business careers. While doctors and lawyers still rank high on students' job preference lists, these areas are not the very popular choices they were 10 years ago. While some young women today seem to be moving away from traditionally female-dominated occupations, the progress is slow. Women show greater preference for medicine and law than in 1974.

Notably missing from the students' list of favored career choices were basic science occupations such as chemists, biologists and physicists. There is a consistent pattern of lower salary expectations among female students.

The current student generation is not particularly supportive of careers for women who have very young children. Most students report they will get married and have children. The ideal age for marriage mentioned is 22. A substantial majority believe that people who get married before their 20th birthday are more likely to get divorced than people who marry later in life. Today's young women still tend to want slightly larger families than men want. Two-thirds of the students said they would not raise their children differently than they themselves had been raised. The students who said they would alter referred to giving more responsibility to their children which might include being less strict, allowing children to make more decisions, being more trusting, and being less protective.

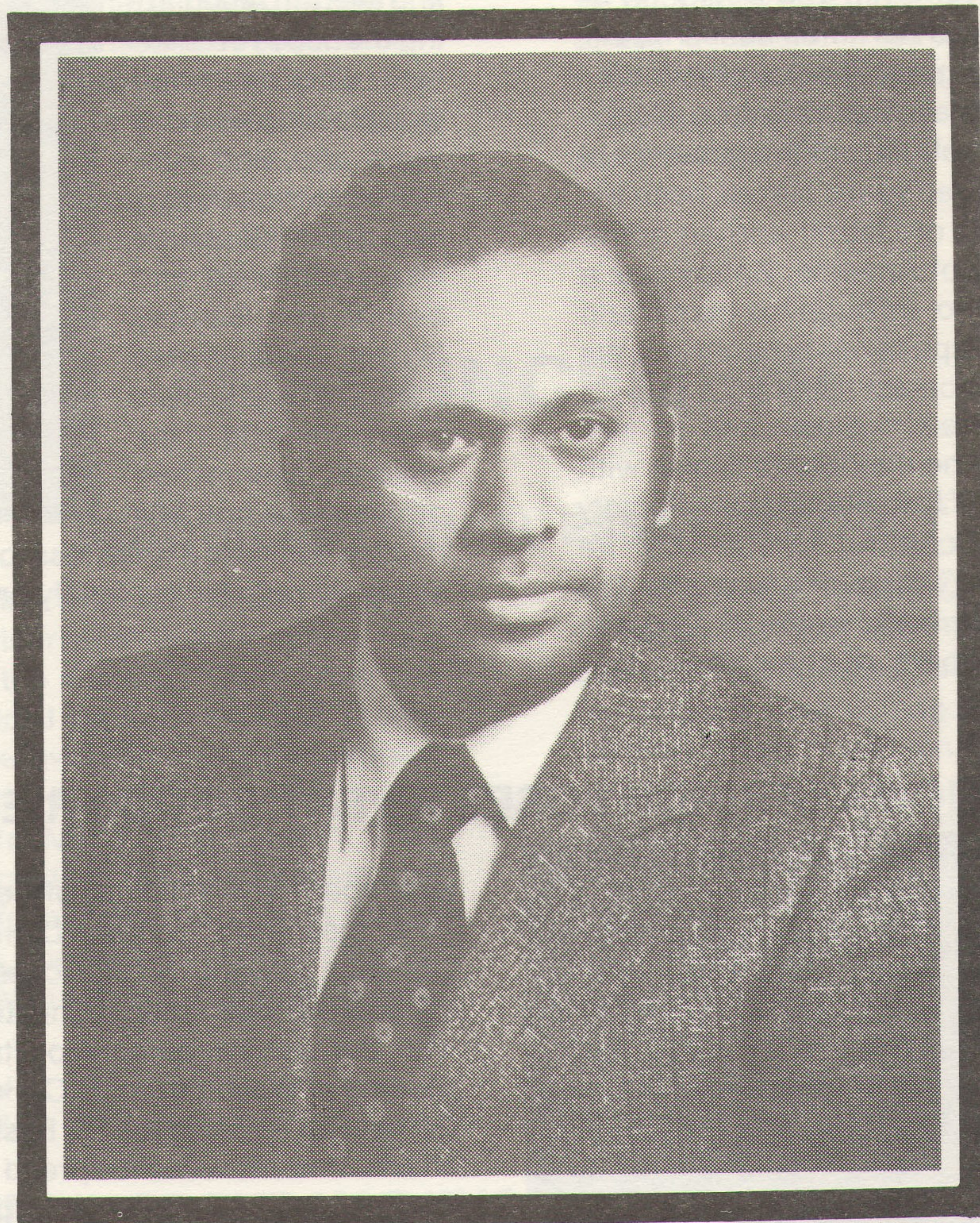
The second most frequent change in parenting the students would make when rearing their own children focuses on improving parent-child interactions. In this area, the students vow they will be more understanding, less punitive, more encouraging, and less 'old fashioned'. Today's youth have few lofty notions about 'changing the world' but have chosen instead to make contributions within the sphere of their own family, friends and community.





# IN MEMORIAM

THE LATE DR. A.M. ALEXANDER (KUNJUMON)  
1944-1985



The members of the Editorial Board of the Mar Thoma Messenger deeply regret the untimely death of one of its pioneer members, Dr. A.M. Alexander of Canada, who died in the tragic air crash in January, 1985. We remember with great appreciation and thanksgiving the dedicated and faithful service he rendered to the Mar Thoma Messenger during 1982 and 1983 and as a member of the Mar Thoma Zonal Council of North America during that period. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Esmie Alexander, children Robbie, Tania and Jamie, and relatives and friends and pray for God's peace and strength to them in the days to come. Mar Thoma church has lost a very loyal, dedicated and able son. His philosophy of

abundant life was stated in the concluding paragraph of an article he wrote for the Messenger in December 1983 entitled, "Parents and Burning Issues".

"Finally friends, let me remind you that in joy and sorrow alike, life itself is precious and let us love what we can love, snatching joy out of the path of pain. Having the image of a 'base camp' for a mountain climber, equipped properly and adequately with love and companionship, warmed by loyalty and faith and trust, then after asking God's blessings on all comings and goings, we can go forth with confidence to climb the highest peaks life offers."



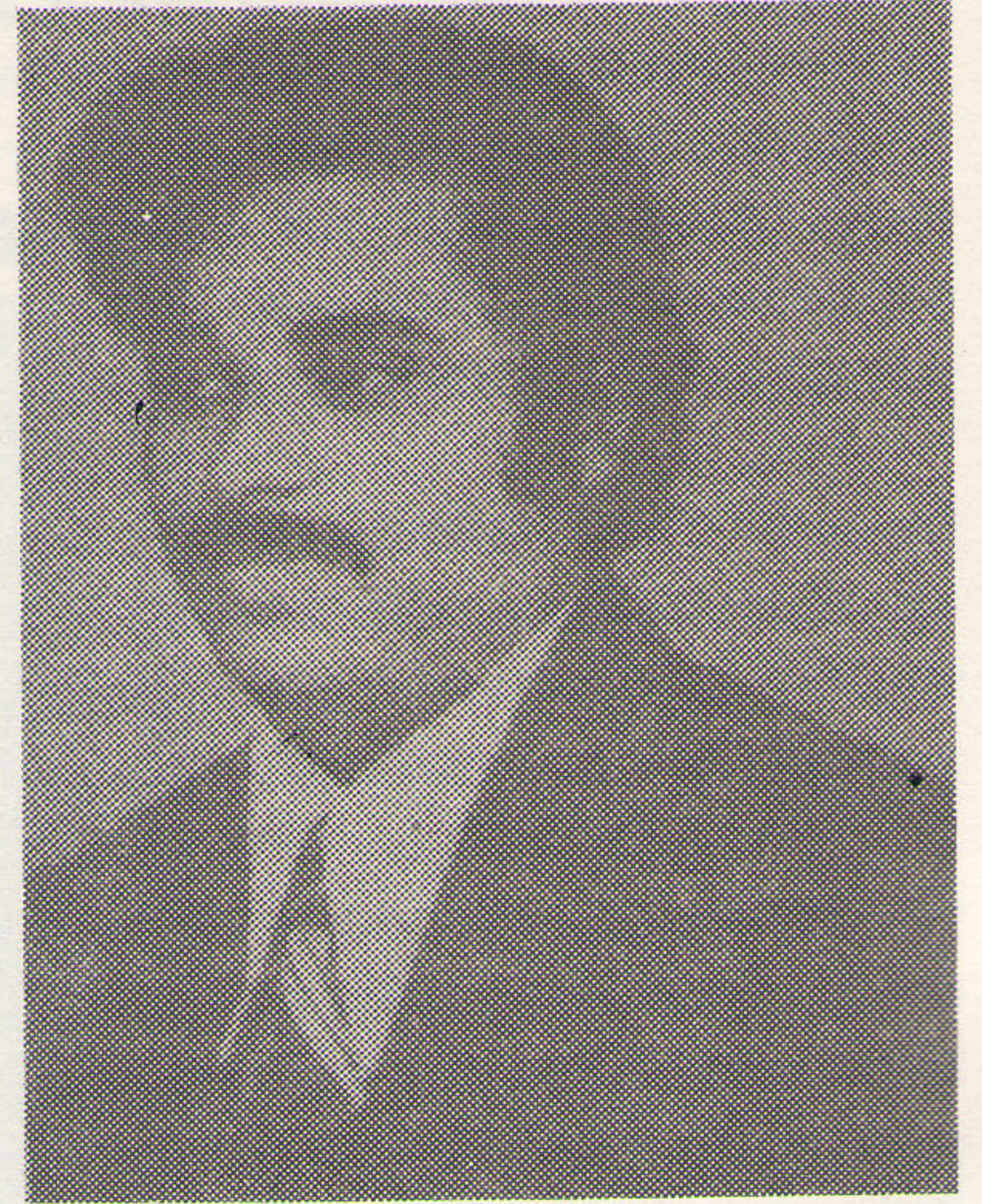


## THE LATE BABU PHILIPS

Mr. Babu Philips (Bobby) passed away as a result of injuries sustained in an automobile accident in Detroit on September 21, 1985. Injured were Mrs. Marykutty (Laly), Philips and their children Beena (7), and Becky (4) as well as Saramma Varhese and her three sons Tiji, Liji, and Saji. This incident was a great shock to the Indian community, especially the Malayalees of Detroit. Bobby was very active in the social, cultural and religious life of our community for the past three years. He has been the Secretary of the Kerala Club of Detroit and an active member of the India League of America. Bobby was a unique and rare individual who, through his gentle and loving nature and pleasant disposition, brought out the best in those who came into contact with him.

Bobby was a very talented musician and an avid sportsman. At the age of ten he distributed Bibles with his father, an active member of the Gideon Bible Society in Vijayawada. Even after coming to the U.S. he continued to be active as a Gideon. He was also the current Secretary of the Detroit chapter of Gideons International. We, the members of the Detroit Mar

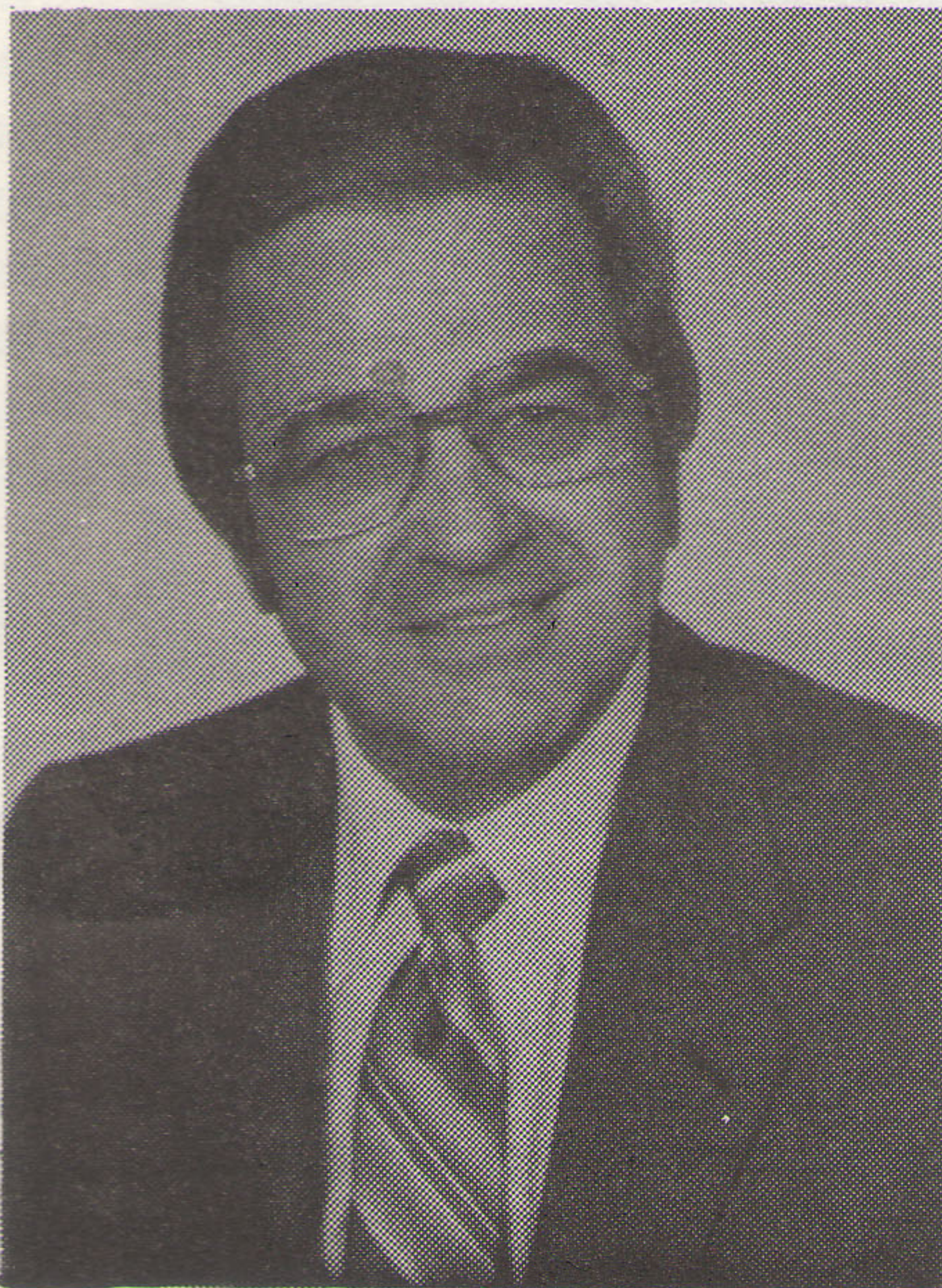
Thoma Church are very proud of him for his work in our own church. He possessed a special skill and talent in recognizing the needs of children, who attended worship services many years ago, and ministered to those needs even before the church was established and before any Sunday School programs were thought of. He was always thinking of the children even when others were not. His demise is indeed a great loss to all of us in Detroit, and we sincerely pray for his family and all friends.



**Sharon Thomas**

## MAR THOMA CHURCH LOSES A VERY GOOD FRIEND

Dr. Clifton J. Robinson was called to eternal rest on May 12, 1985, releasing him from intense pain, leaving behind his partner in witness for forty-five years, Betty, three married daughters, one married son and six grandchildren. He has been ill with cancer for about four years. It has been a deep perplexity to many as to why Cliff should have been called to suffer such pain for so long. His indomitable spirit and exemplary faith in God's grace that He can convert our suffering into glory sustained him over these years.



He was born in Baltimore, Maryland on June 17, 1919 and grew up in Hampton, Virginia. He studied theology in Malone College, Canton, Ohio which awarded him with an honorary doctorate later. In 1940 he married Elizabeth Osborne in Cleveland, Ohio. Cliff, by now a minister of the Friends Church, founded the West Park Friends Church in Cleveland and pastored it for four years. From 1946 to 1965 Cliff and Betty served in India as a missionary husband-wife team. Six and a half years

were spent in the villages of Central India. From 1955 to 1965 they lived in New Delhi working broadly with Christian leaders and churches. During this period they initiated the International Christian Leadership Movement with the encouragement of its founder, Dr. Abraham Vereide of Washington, D.C. He served as the Secretary General for Asia and the Far East. Through Dr. Robinson's efforts this movement spread from the Indian parliamentary group into thirty-two cities of India, and also to many South East Asian and Far Eastern capitals. They returned to Washington in 1965 at the call of Dr. Vereide to share in developing the global outreach of that movement. In this capacity Cliff travelled widely, meeting with leadership groups throughout the world, as well as with state and national 'core' groups across the U.S. During this time he was also a key figure in developing the annual National (Presidential) Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C. and similar events at state and city levels.

Growing out of a concern to find a way to get Bibles 'legally' into the Soviet Union, Dr. Robinson accepted in 1975 the position with the Bibles for the World organization as its International Director. In March 1980 he accepted the call of the newly formed Board of the Leadership Ministries International as Executive Director Minister-at-Large.

He was a well sought after speaker and leadership consultant. He hosted the 'World Family Friendship Tours' to various countries, including the Soviet Union. He served for a number of years as a Trustee of the



National Heritage Foundation and recently was President and Chairman of the Board of National Foundation, Inc.

He was a man of vision - a vision that embraced a world-wide fellowship of people meeting to pray for their own spiritual development and for the release of divine power in and through the leadership of the world. His life echoed the tremendous challenge issued by Dr. Abraham Vereide, when he said, "let us go forth as God's men - seeing the invisible, believing the incredible, doing the impossible!"

Both Cliff and Betty have been good friends of the Mar Thoma Church. During their Episcopal trips, our

Thirumenis visited the Robinsons. Cliff was involved in the planning of raising funds for our Retreat Center at Maramon. Cliff's illness interrupted that effort. A fitting memorial for Cliff at the new Guest House at Maramon is currently being planned. Our Church has indeed lost a very good friend whose vision of nations and institutions under "a leadership led by God" and whose spirit were inspirations to all who have been touched by his life.

We express our heartfelt condolences to his family and praise God for his life and ministry.

G.K.Z.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### SESQUICENTENNIAL ESSAY CONTEST

During this year the Mar Thoma Church has been celebrating the sesquicentennial of its reformation. As a part of that celebration the Editorial Committee has decided to publish a special issue of the Mar Thoma Messenger. The Committee invites articles from members of the Mar Thoma Church in North America on the theme, "Reformation in the Mar Thoma Church: Then and Now". We hope to include in the special issue best articles from each of the following groups: high school students, college students, and adults. We invite children below the high school level to write on a different theme:

"What can Mar Thoma Church do to help us grow in Christian faith and life?" Prizes will be awarded for the best essays. The essays should not exceed four typewritten (double space) pages. The essayist's name and address, name of the congregation, telephone number, age, grade level/college status must be provided in a separate sheet of paper. It must be sent to Dr. George K. Zachariah, Editor, Mar Thoma Messenger, 4601 Sunflower Drive, Rockville, Maryland 20853, so as to reach him no later than May 31, 1986.

## REPORTS:

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

(Some decisions taken at the Council meetings held on July 31 & August 1, 1985 at the Epiphany Mar Thoma Church in New York and approved by the Episcopal Synod on August 21, 1985. The following is an excerpt from a circular dated August 22, 1985 from our Metropolitan and Diocesan Bishop, the Most Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma who presided over the meetings)

1. The Zonal Council is to be known hereafter as the Zonal Assembly of the Mar Thoma Church in North America.
2. The Executive Committee which has been appointed in the Zonal Council meeting is to meet as often as necessary to take steps for the implementation of the decisions made in the Assembly and to submit to the Assembly recommendations for necessary action in the Assembly regarding the regular work and growth of the Church in North America.
3. Parishes with a membership of more than 100 families will have two representatives in the Zonal Assembly and others will have one as decided in the Council meeting.

4. Steps must be taken to register the Zonal Assembly.
5. The Youth Committee is to take necessary action for the development of the youth work in the Zone. Regional activities of the Sunday School, Youth League and Sevika Sangham are to be encouraged.
6. An Endowment Fund is instituted with a target of \$50,000 with the name "Thomas Mar Athanasius Memorial Endowment Fund", the interest from which is to be used for scholarship assistance and clergy assistance. This fund is to be raised by the end of 1986.
7. To meet the urgent need of clergy assistance, effort is to be made to raise \$5,000 this year itself. The Executive Committee shall recommend a target for each parish/congregation.

I pray that the Mar Thoma Church in North America may take special effort to see that our growing generation also will be nurtured in the faith and practices handed to us and bear true Christian witness in the land of their adoption. May the Lord renew and strengthen all by His Holy Spirit at this historic moment of our Church.



## MAR THOMA CLERGY CONFERENCE IN NORTH AMERICA, 1985

The Fourth Conference of the Mar Thoma Clergy was held at the Epiphany Mar Thoma Church in New York on July 30 & 31. Out of the ten archbishops ministering in North America nine were present. The Most Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitan presided over the meeting. Thirumeni gave an inspiring message based on St. Mark 10:35ff. The message can be summed up as follows:

What is your need? Early church had the quality of submissiveness. Modern man lost it and instead his need seems to be for authority and power. Modern man has a feeling that he is able to do anything and that he is self-sufficient. But apart from God we are not able at all. We are nothing. As St. Augustine stated, humility is the first christian virtue. Thirumeni concluded that our attitude must be not to rely on our ability but be relentless in our availability to God and the Holy Spirit. If we are available to the Holy Spirit we are able. That is the need of modern man.

Following the intercession, concerns of parents regarding the young generations, concerns of the young in the midst of peer pressures, future of the church, etc. were discussed. The Rev. K.G. Pothen, Vicar of the Mar Thoma Church in Los Angeles, conducted a very thought-provoking bible study based on Ephesians 3:1-4.

The Rev. Cherian Thomas and the Rev. Jacob Thomas presented papers on 'The Challenges in Ministry in North America' from the perspective of the clergy and the laity. The conference also evaluated some concerns arising from the ministry in this zone. The needs of this zone included revision of liturgy, finding young candidates for ministry exploring the feasibility of a resident Diocesan Bishop in North America, and a Chaplain for youth work.

Rev. A.G.M.

## MAR THOMA STUDENTS' CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA 1985

The omnipotent and all encompassing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was key to the realization of a very successful and uplifting happening - The Mar Thoma Students' Conference of North America 1985. This, the sixth annual conference, was held at Fordham University, the Bronx, New York, U.S.A., from August 1-4, 1985. Epiphany Mar Thoma Church, Queens, New York, was the proud host of this memorable and fruitful event.

The Conference - which now has grown to be a North American phenomenon - was attended by over 230 students from across U.S.A. and Canada. Representation was well distributed geographically. Delegates from Boston to Los Angeles, and from Ottawa to Houston congregated in New York for this historic event. Also in attendance were ten Archbishops, and approximately thirty adult resource persons and student leaders, who devoted their energy and skills in counselling and guiding students, and in leading the discussion groups.

Recognizing, and thus addressing, the turbulent and uncertain state that the world is in today, the theme for the Conference, appropriately, was "Christian Hope in a World of Crisis". The main leaders for the Conference were Our Valia Thirumeni, The Most Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitan, and The Rev. Bryan Hobbs.

Thirumeni delivered the first main address on the theme, and also participated in the panel discussion, the dedication service, the business meeting, the holy communion service, and in the presentation of the awards. Thirumeni's great talent in attracting and effectively reaching out to the students was, once again, very evident. The second main address on the theme was

given by The Rev. Bryan Hobbs, a minister of the American Episcopal church in Florida. Rev. Hobbs, in general, spoke about how young people need to reach for Christ in today's chaotic world, and in particular, spoke about how Mar Thoma youngsters can deal with the chaotic conditions that might occur in their lives in North America. Both Thirumeni and Rev. Hobbs were well received by the delegates.

Dr. Titus Mathews, from the University of Calgary, Canada, presented a paper entitled "Christian Response to Crisis". Dr. Mathew's presentation, in conjunction with the discussion that ensued - regarding the significance of being a Marthomite -, made the session very informative and interesting. Rev. K.G. Pothen, Vicar of Mar Thoma church, Los Angeles, California, conducted Bible Studies for the students. Rev. Pothen's remarkable ability to reach the students was quite apparent, and hopefully, the future conferences will take advantage of his great skills.

This year, the Conference ventured into a new dimension, by conducting a session on World Peace. Dr. Robert Zuber, an expert on the subject, presided over the session and made the students aware of the various issues involved. This session was without precedent, and its success, no doubt, will spawn other similar ones in future conferences.

During a joint session of the Students and the Family Conferences, a panel discussion was held, with the topic generally being "The substance of the Mar Thoma Church, and its potential for growth in North America". The panel, moderated by Dr. P.V. Cherian of Phila-



Philadelphia, consisted of five distinguished individuals, who represented different groups (church leaders, students, women, lay leaders, etc.). The different views and concerns brought forth by the panelists were helpful in understanding our church in the North American context.

In addition to the above activities, there existed many other opportunities for active participation on the part of the students. These included discussion sessions, choir competition, talent show, friendly athletic competition, etc. The choir competition and the talent show, held jointly with the Family Conference, proved to be very entertaining and shed light on the multitude of talents that our members possess.

Two rolling trophies, as a memorial to our late diocesan bishop - the Rt. Rev. Thomas Mar Athanasius Suffragan Metropolitan - were instituted at the Conference. These trophies are to be awarded to the 1st place winners in the Students and Family Conference choir competitions. The trophies were donated by Mr. Koruthu Mathew and by Mr. Varkey Abraham, both of Epiphany Mar Thoma

church, to the Students and Family Conferences respectively. Philadelphia Mar Thoma church was the proud recipient of both these trophies for the year 1985.

The Conference concluded on August 4 (Sunday), with a holy communion service, and a public meeting. The holy communion service, conducted in English by Thirumeni, was probably the largest gathering to date of Mar Thomites in North America, the Rev. A.C. Oommen of the Church of South India delivered the sermon. The public meeting brought distinguished representatives from different churches, who gave short messages.

We thank the Lord for once again giving us an opportunity to successfully conduct a conference of this magnitude at the national level. We pray for, and look forward to, the 1986 conference to be held in the Windy City, Chicago.

**Koruthu Mathew**  
**Secretary,**  
**Mar Thoma Students' Conference 1985**

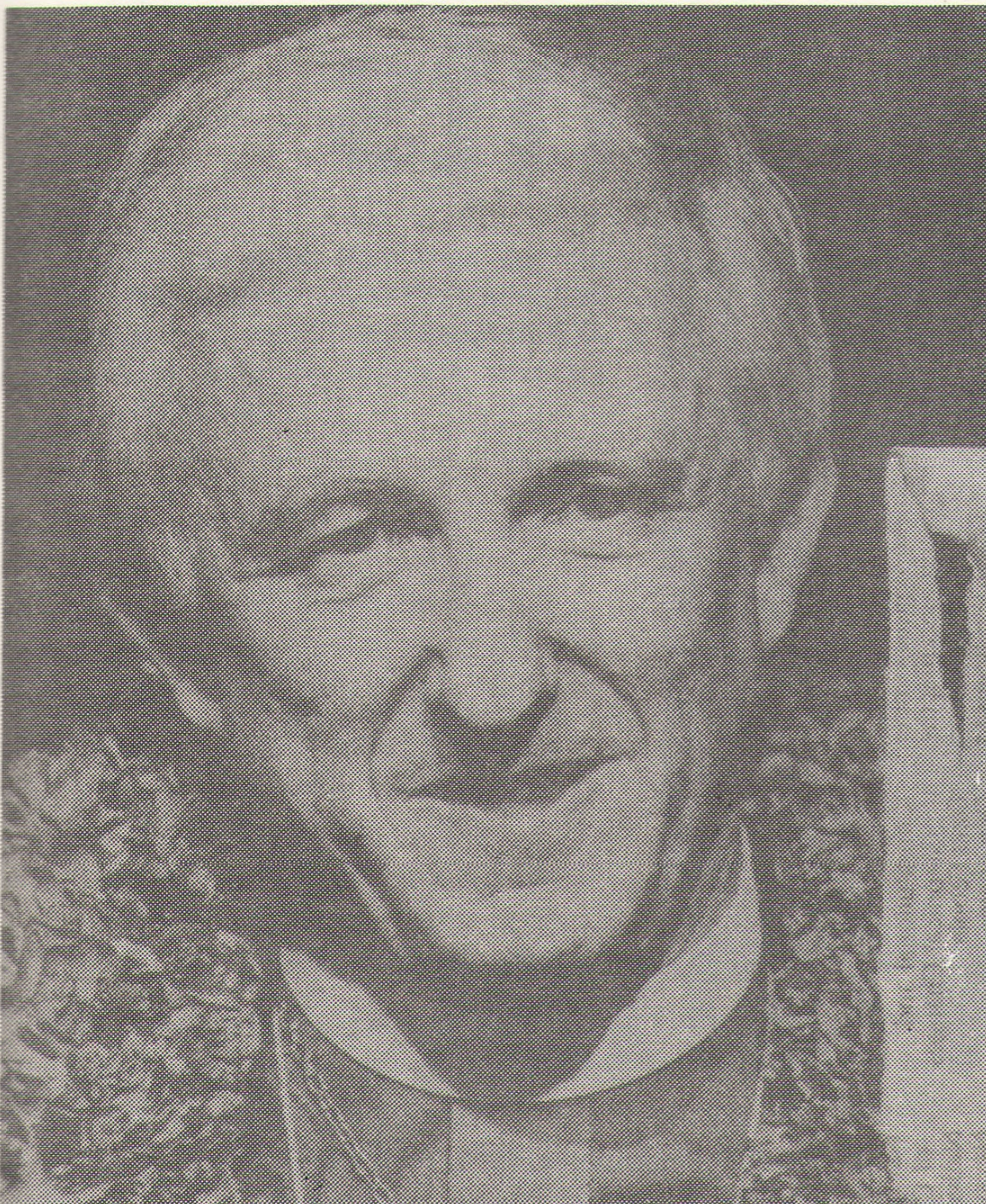
## THE NEW PRESIDING BISHOP OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

during his 12-year term as Chief Executive Officer of the 2.8 million-member church. "I believe I am here because of the will of God and because of the prayer of the church", said the new leader. At a subsequent new conference, he discussed a wide range of issues. Describing himself as a personal friend of the South African Bishop Desmond Tutu, the Bishop pledged that the church would continue in its very supportive role for the black majority in South Africa. Of ordaining women, he said, "I am tremendously committed to enhancing the ministry of women." He praised church efforts to improve relations with other denominations. In his nine years in Hawaii, he led the relatively small Episcopal Church into several cooperative programs with other religious groups including the Buddhists.

Born in Corpus Christi, Texas, he was educated at the Episcopal related University of the South. He was ordained in 1955, served in Texas for four years, then went to Okinawa as a missionary. He was consecrated Missionary Bishop of Okinawa in 1968. In 1971, he was appointed Bishop-in-charge of Episcopal congregations in Europe. One of his tasks involved counseling Vietnam-era draft resisters and deserters, particularly in Sweden. From 1974 to 1976, he was on the church's national staff in New York as executive for world missions, a post that gave him high visibility.

He said: "I've probably had more jobs than most bishops. When I have gone into something new, I've tried to listen to where the church was and what the job called for". He said he would apply the same philosophy to his new job.

G.K.Z.



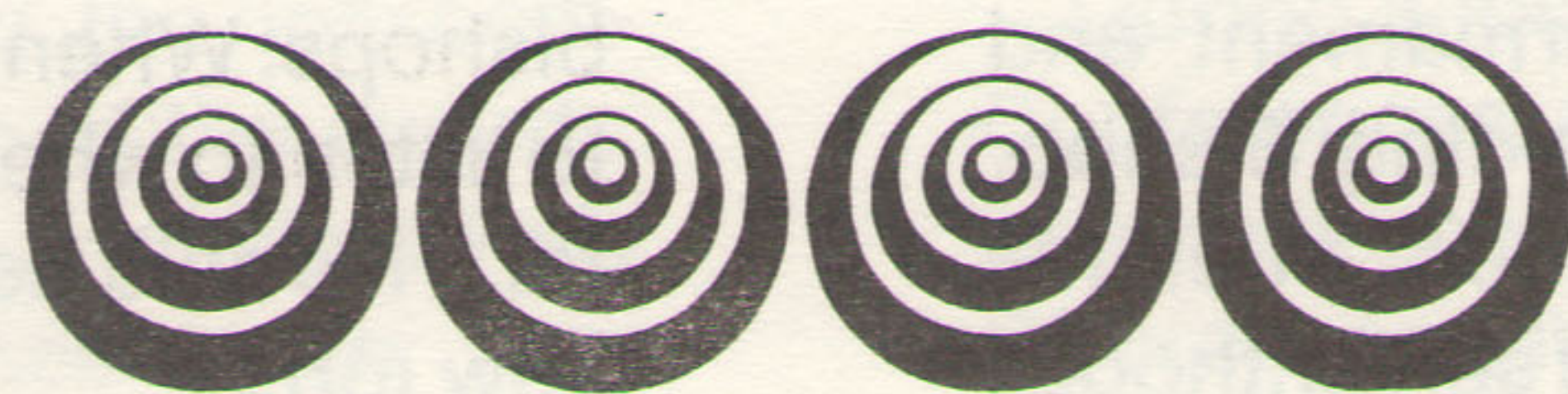
**Edmund Lee Browning**

The General Convention of the Episcopal Church in its September meeting held in Anaheim, California, chose Bishop Edmund Lee Browning of Hawaii, a liberal who has supported civil rights, nuclear disarmament and women priests, as the church's next Presiding Bishop. The Bishop told cheering convention-goers after his election that he "hoped to offer a ministry of servanthood"





# With Best Compliments from a Well Wisher





## INSTALLATION OF THE MOST REV. EDMOND LEE BROWNING AS THE 24TH PRESIDING BISHOP OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Most Rev. Edmond Lee Browning of Hawaii was installed as the 24th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church on Saturday, January 11, 1986 at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. Thousands belonging to the Episcopal Church and other denominations witnessed the solemn occasion. It was a two and a half hour service blended with many sounds, languages, traditions, sights and expressions. The sounds of music from the cathedral organ, singing of the choir and the liturgical settings gave the celebration a new aura. The long procession of lay people, priests, deacons, and bishops wearing their traditional vestments for the occasion accompanied by banners and torches was an unforgettable scene to watch. The thousands who attended the service exchanged the Peace of the Lord with smiling faces, forgetting the barriers of denominations, color or nationalities.

the co-celebrants.

A number of symbols of the Ministry were presented to Presiding Bishop Browning as part of the Service. The gifts were Bible, Book of Common Prayer, a copy of the newly dedicated Hymnal, Water, Wine & Bread, Oil, a towel and basin, a Plumblin, and a compass rose symbol of the Anglican Communion. The final gift was the PRIMATIAL CROSS, the symbol of the office of the Presiding Bishop which was presented to Bishop Browning by his predecessor the Most Rev. John M. Allin with the words, "Edmond, be among us as one who holds high the cross of Christ."

Bishop Browning, in his sermon, remarked, "I want this to be **our** day, not just **my** day, a time for the whole church for all the baptized to gain, reaffirm its mission for their times." The Bishop used the theme of compassion as a framework for comments about the mission of the

Bishop Browning (fifth from the left) with the Asiamerica Ministry Committee of the Episcopal Church and Rev. A.G. Mathew (extreme left) our church's representative.



There was a feeling of great anticipation with regard to the form and substance of leadership to be provided by the new Presiding Bishop. The presence of retired Presiding Bishop, John E. Hines, evoked nostalgia and remembrance of the past. Thanksgiving for the ministry of the recently retired Presiding Bishop, John M. Allin, generated excitement.

It was the first time that the installation of a Presiding Bishop was done within the context of the Holy Eucharist. The service began with the chanting of an ancient Hawaiian Call To Worship which was unique. The Rt. Rev. John Walker, Bishop of Washington Diocese, the Most Rev. John Wantabe, the Primate of Japan, and the Rt. Rev. Desmond Tutu, the Bishop of South Africa were

Christian church and the state of the world. "The fragile earth on which we live is threatened by the very beings that God created to be its stewards", the Bishop continued. "There is pain beyond this cathedral walls which most of us barely comprehend. There are tears of despair which we refuse to see. There are cries for help which we do not hear. There are those reaching out to be embraced whom we have yet to touch. . . ." Bishop Browning reminded that our Spiritual lives are bankrupt if our prayers do not call us to see, to hear and to heal. He pleaded that the church not ask him, "to honor one set of views and disregard the other." "I may agree with one", he said; "but I will respect both. . . . The unity of the church will be maintained not because we agree on



everything but because, hopefully, we will leave the judgment to God".

The diversity of the cathedral congregation on that day called to mind both what the church is and what the church is called to be. As the Carillon bells pealed

mightily at the conclusion of the service of installation, the believers left the church greeting one another, with a renewed spirit of enthusiasm, joy and hope.

**The Rev. A.G. Mathew**

## **FOUNDATION STONE LAID FOR THE CHICAGO MAR THOMA CHURCH**

The ground breaking and laying of the foundation stone for the new church building for the Chicago Mar Thoma Church were held on Sunday, July 14, 1985 at 1:20 P.M. His Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitan laid the foundation stone. A large number of parishioners attended the celebrations. Indeed, it was a happy occasion for all Marthomites, and especially for us in Chicago. This was another solid step towards our long cherished ambition of worshipping our Lord in our own building. The first step was the purchase of a plot of land on January 10, 1985 God willing, we will be able to complete the construction by June, 1986.

The new church is being built on an acre of land in Desplaines, Illinois, a northwestern suburb of Chicago. When completed, the church will accommodate about 450 people. There will be parking facilities for 79 cars. The estimated cost for the construction is \$350,000.00.

The Chicago Mar Thoma Church is one of the larger parishes of the Mar Thoma Church in North America. Marthomites in and around Chicago organized prayer meetings in the early seventies. In 1973, a congregation was started in Chicago during the visit of the then Rt. Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Theophilose Episcopa (Our present Metropolitan). In 1978 the Synod of the Mar Thoma church recognized us as a congregation and raised us to the status of a parish. Rev. Dr. Iype Joseph was our first vicar. Our present vicar is Rev. Cherian Thomas. Even though our beginning was small with only a few families, we now have 140 families as our members. We have grown tremendously under the dynamic leaderships of both Rev. Dr. Iype Joseph and Rev. Cherian Thomas.

This year we are celebrating the Sesquicentennial of the reformation in the Mar Thoma Church. We are happy to note that God helped us to start the building of a Mar Thoma Church here in Chicago, in this 150th year of the reformation in our Church. We thank God for His



manifold blessings upon us in the past. We request your prayers for the successful completion of our humble endeavor. I am sure, the dedication of this Mar Thoma Church in Chicago, will be a moment of pride for all Marthomites.

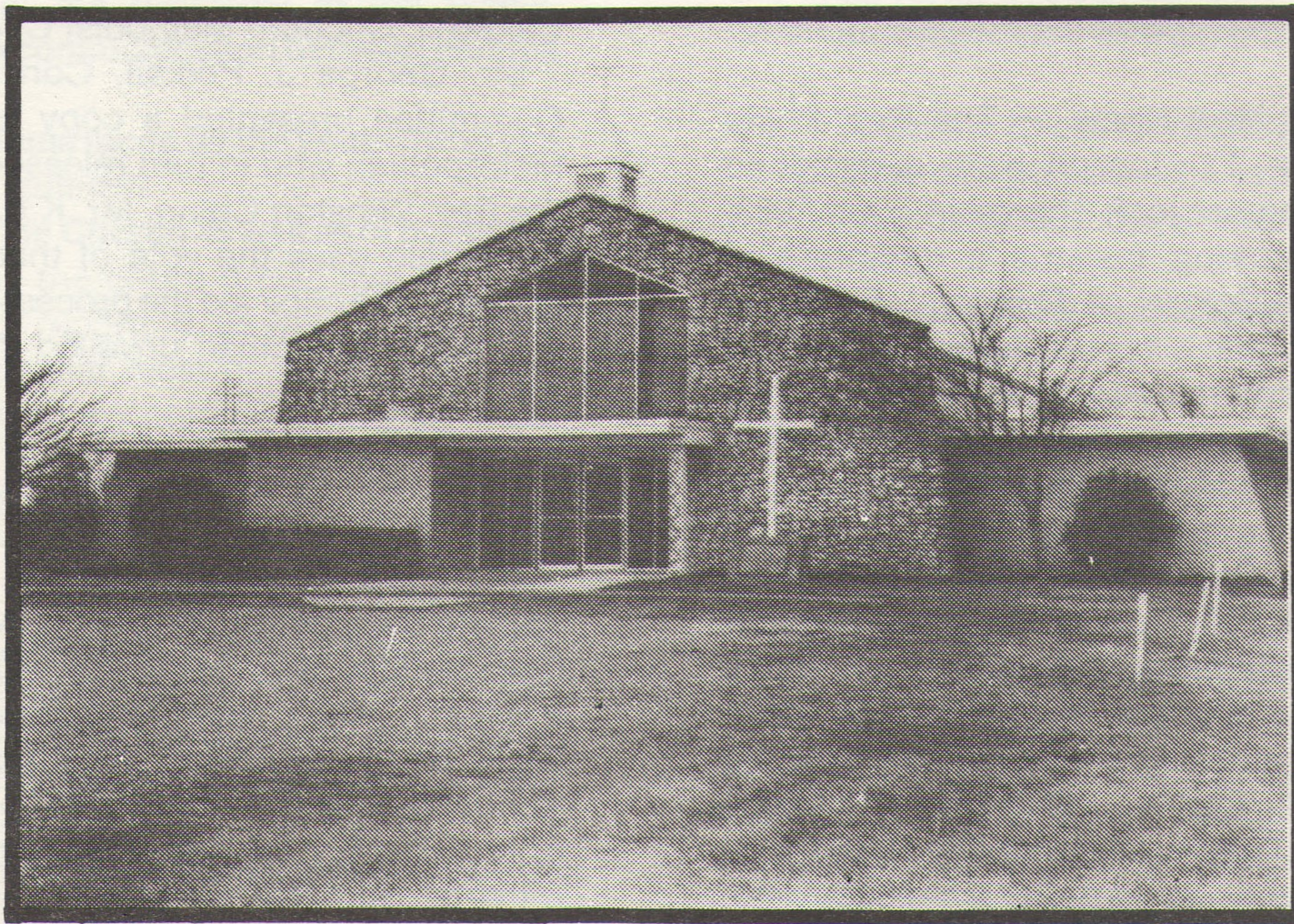
**T.A. Abraham (Secretary)**





# THE MAR THOMA CHURCH OF DALLAS, TEXAS

## Inauguration of Its New Sanctuary July 20, 1985



**History** - The Mar Thoma Church of Dallas had a small beginning nine and a half years ago. Over the years the membership increased and at present it is one of the largest Mar Thoma parishes in North America. It is the second largest parish of the Mar Thoma Church in the Southern region. The church is located on a beautiful 2½ acre site at 1517 S.W. 3rd Street, Grand Prairie, Texas three miles south of Interstate 30.

From the early seventies, all Malayalee families in Dallas and suburban areas, without any denominational differences, came together to worship the Lord. At first, this gathering was known as the Christian Fellowship of Dallas. The Rev. P.O. Ninan (CSI) and the Rev. T.I. Joseph (Mar Thoma) greatly contributed their time to lead this fellowship. Over the years the number of Kerala Christian families increased and they began to worship within their respective denominational structures. The members of the Mar Thoma and C.S.I. churches continued to worship together, at the Canterbury House on the campus of Southern Methodist University. Due to rapid growth in membership, we moved to St. Luke's Methodist Chapel near Harry Hines Boulevard and Gilford. The general body which convened on August 15, 1976 at St. Luke's Methodist Church decided to rename the Dallas Christian Fellowship as the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Dallas.

Several inconveniences forced us to move to a central location. The minister and Board of Trustees of the Cochran Methodist Chapel were kind enough to allow us the use of their chapel and fellowship hall from 1976 to 1984.

**Vicars** — The Rev. T.J. Thomas was our vicar in 1976.

He was a graduate student at the Perkins School of Theology of the Southern Methodist University as well as the Vicar of the Trinity parish in Houston. The general body which convened on February 20, 1977 passed resolution requesting the Episcopal Synod of the Mar Thoma Church of Malabar, India, to recognize the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Dallas, as a parish. In 1977 the parish was incorporated in the state of Texas as a non-profit religious organization. In 1978 the Episcopal Synod recognized the Mar Thoma Syrian Church as one of the parishes of the Mar Thoma Church of Malabar. It has been recorded that the general body which convened on February 5, 1978 decided to start a special building fund account of \$1,000.00 which was forwarded from the general account of 1977. It is characteristic of the mission orientation of this parish that a subsequent general body decided to send this \$1,000.00 to the needy mission field of Malabar, India.

In October 1979 the Rev. T.J. Thomas completed his graduate studies and was transferred back to India. The Rev. Joseph Thomas, another graduate student at the Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, was appointed as the vicar of our parish as well as the Houston Mar Thoma Church. In 1982 he went back to India. In September 1982 the Rev. Philip Varghese became our Vicar. He was also the Vicar of the Mar Thoma congregations in Lubbock and Oklahoma. Because of his very busy schedule of ministry and studies, the Rev. T.I. Joseph was assigned to conduct Communion services on one of the Sundays. The Rev. Philip Varghese must be credited for his efforts to bring together the whole parish as a family under Jesus Christ.



Spiritual growth of our church was his priority. It was under his leadership too that the Executive Committee of 1983 took the initiative to start the project to buy a place of worship of our own. The general body meeting of April 17, 1983 decided to form a seventeen member building committee.

**New Sanctuary and New Name** — The Rev. Philip Varghese and the Rev. T.I. Joseph were re-assigned when the Rev. K.M. Samuel took charge in June 1983. Achan is currently working towards a doctorate in ministry at the Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. Under his prayerful leadership and approach the building committee started the search for a sanctuary for our parish. The convenor of the Building Committee Mr. Abraham Mathew and the members of the committee spent a good deal of their time to complete this project in December 1984. The total price of the building was \$190,000. Thus our dream of a church building of our own was fulfilled. It has a sanctuary with a seating capacity of four hundred, a balcony, a beautiful altar, two side rooms, six class rooms, an office for the Vicar, a fellowship hall, kitchen, utility room and rest-rooms. Our first Holy Communion service in the new building was celebrated on Sunday December 23, 1984.

On July 21, 1985 the general body met and unanimously passed a resolution to change the name of the parish from Mar Thoma Syrian Church to Mar Thoma Church of Dallas.

**Inauguration of the Sanctuary** — On July 20, 1985 His Grace Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitan inaugurated worship services in the new sanctuary. The program started with a procession led by the choir. All the choir members, office-bearers, all Achans and the Metropolitan joined in this procession. The Metropolitan announced the formal inauguration, by cutting a ribbon. The Vicar of the parish, Rev. K.M. Samuel gave the welcome speech. The Metropolitan's brief inaugural speech was followed by greetings from the Rev. Winston Ching of the Asiamerica Ministries of the Episcopal Church, Prof. William Richey Hogg, Professor of World Christianity at the Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, The Revs. T.I. Joseph (Lubbock, Oklahoma, Detroit parishes), Koshy P. John (St. Gregorios Orthodox

Church), Jacob Angadiath (Roman Catholic Church), V.M. Thomas (St. Ignatius Jacobite Church), Lynn Bowman (Dean of the Episcopal Seminary in Dallas), Jacob George (C.S.I. Parish, Houston), and Mr. Jim Caldwell, Cochran Methodist Chapel.

Mr. George J. Poikail, Convenor of the Souvenir Committee presented a copy of the Souvenir to the Metropolitan who in turn released it by giving a copy to the Rev. Winston Ching. Mr. K.A. Thomas, Secretary of the parish gave the vote of thanks. At the end of the program, the choir led the procession out of the sanctuary and the Metropolitan unveiled the inaugural plaque in front of the building.

Currently the parish has one hundred and fifty-five families with three hundred and fifteen adults and two hundred and sixty children.

Besides the regular worship, Holy Communion, including the English service on every fourth Sunday, we have Sunday School classes, Adult Bible study, parish mission, Sevika Samgham, Youth League, Saturday Night prayer meetings. We conducted Vacation Bible School during 1984 and 1985. To enrich the spiritual life of our parish we conduct annual conventions and retreats. In 1984 we proudly hosted the Mar Thoma Family and the Mar Thoma Students Conferences.

**Conclusion** — When we look back to the various stages of growth of our parish, we just cannot explain how it all happened. Amidst the financial stress and strain, difficulties with the real estate negotiations, we struggled very hard; but the Grace of God was sufficient for us. Even when things looked dark and gloomy, God sustained us. On behalf of the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas I must thank everyone for their prayers, encouragement and support. Soon we will celebrate our tenth anniversary, in a year when the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar is celebrating their sesquicentennial of its Reformation and the state of Texas is celebrating the sesquicentennial of its founding as a Republic. I close with prayer and gratitude to God who sustained us through these years.

K.A. Thomas, Secretary 1985

## **THE MAR THOMA YOUTH LEAGUE — Southern Regional Conference December 7-8, 1985**

The first Southern Regional Conference of the Mar Thoma Youth League was held at the Trinity Mar Thoma Church in Houston, Texas during December 7-8, 1985. There were seventy-five youths representing the Mar Thoma parishes at Dallas, Houston, Lubbock and Oklahoma.

The conference began on December 7, 1985 at 8:30 a.m. with singing, prayer and introductions. Dr. M.M.

Thomas, the well-known Indian theologian, former chairman of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and a visiting professor at the Princeton Theological Seminary, was the speaker. Dr. Thomas spoke on **CHRISTIAN MESSAGE AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES THAT CONFRONT THE YOUTH**. His message surely caught the attention of everyone.

After the opening presentation the youths were divided



into groups and they were asked to answer two of the following four questions:

1. **What are the problems faced by the youth as they physically grow and become self-conscious?**

2. **What are some of the problems in the family, especially with regard to communication between parents and children?**

3. **What are the problems faced by the youth living in a materialistic-consumer culture?**

4. **What is the role of the Church as well as of our faith?**

After the discussions the entire group met with Dr. Thomas for a session of reporting, as well as questions and answers. It seemed that most of the groups dealt with the question of problems of communication between the parents and their children. Some young people expressed their fears that their parents do not trust the children. They also felt that many of the parents live here but still want to retain what they consider to be values from their Indian background. Some young people appreciated the sacrifices made by their parents and sympathized with them in their conviction of bringing up their children 'right.' After thirty-minutes of singing, the session was closed.

The Houston Mar Thoma Parish served a most delicious and sumptuous lunch.

The last session of this day was a meeting of the parents and the youth. The Trinity Parish sanctuary was packed. Dr. Thomas was asked to deal with several questions. The parents took this opportunity to express their unhappiness with the desire by the Mar Thoma Youth Conference and the Chicago parish to do away with a national Family Conference. Dr. Thomas avoided dealing with the specifics of the conferences and dealt with several questions emphasizing the need to keep the lines of communication open.

A decision was made to hold the next Regional Conference at the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas during early summer. The session ended at 5:00 p.m.

On Sunday December 8, 1985 the youth participated in the Holy Communion conducted in English by the Rev. P.M. George, Vicar of the Houston Parish and assisted by the Revs. K.M. Samuel and T.I. Joseph. Dr. M.M. Thomas preached the sermon. He spoke of **OUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.**

**He said that Paul spoke of three aspects of the Cross**

**I. Through the Cross, God in Jesus Christ has forgiven all our sins and has destroyed the law which always condemned us.**

**The Church is a community of forgiven sinners. So forgive one another.**

**Self-righteousness is the opposite of forgiveness.**

**II. On the Cross Christ has overcome the principalities and powers - the evil rulers.**

**The victorious Christ has helped chain the evil powers.**

**Stand with the victorious Christ and fight against all evil powers.**

**III. Through the cross God has assumed human nature amenable to death.**

**The cross means victory over death.**

**Annihilation of the human personality is the greatest evil.**

**Renewal means life beyond death.**

The closing part of this two-day conference was a period of dedication led by the Rev. K.M. Samuel. This was truly most sentimental because some young people dedicated themselves for the first time to live as followers of Christ. Others re-dedicated themselves.

There was a period for expression of gratitude. We are truly grateful to the Rev. P.M. George and his parish for hosting this first conference. They spent time and resources to host us. Many people opened their homes during the night of Friday December 6, 1985 for us to sleep. The Revs. K.M. Samuel (Dallas Parish) and T.I. Joseph (Oklahoma and Lubbock parishes) were most gracious to provide leadership. Dr. M.M. Thomas was truly inspiring. We also thank the many who drove us to the conference and provided leadership at the conference. We look forward to the next meeting at Dallas in early summer 1986.

As a participant I truly benefitted from this conference and thank everyone who made this possible.

**Jenny Mathew**

**Secretary 1985**

**MAR THOMA YOUTH LEAGUE, DALLAS**



## Mar Thoma Youth Leadership Training Institute - '85

A Mar Thoma Youth Leadership Training Institute, first in a projected series of such institutes, was held at the Christian Life Center (a Roman Catholic Retreat Center described as a beautiful venue), La Grange Park, Chicago from 6 p.m. on Friday, November 8 to 3 p.m. on Sunday, November 10, 1985. Rev. M.S. Varghese, Rev. George Varghese, Rev. Cherian Thomas, Mr. P.G. George and Miss Sheeba Varghese provided the leadership. The overall purpose of the Institute was to provide Christian leadership training for some of our young people and to help them define their relationship with and responsibility to God and others.

1. Worship services (coordinated by Rev. George Varghese) - Experimental liturgy was used in worship. Morning and evening services were self-contained with liturgy, readings, prayers, and a short homily.
2. Workshop sessions: There were three workshop sessions.
  - a. Bible - 'Me and My Bible' (led by Rev. M.S. Varghese) Discussed how to read the Bible so that we may receive a message for daily living. Participants were given 'A Guide to Daily Bible Reading'.
  - b. Witness - 'How to be a witness for Christ and lead others to Christ' - Rev. M.S. Varghese, using Andrew as the first missionary for Jesus, gave a biblical perspective on our mission. Miss Sheeba Varghese shared her testimony.
  - c. Preaching - Rev. George Varghese led a very practical session on how to plan, prepare and deliver a short sermon or homily in a youth group meeting or in the church.
3. Main talks on 'Christian leadership' - Two talks were given by Rev. M.S. Varghese followed by discussion. The first talk was based on the life of Moses, the great leader and liberator of the people of Israel. God taught him: (a) a sinful man cannot approach Him and carry out this work; (b) rejection by other people does not mean that God has abandoned him; (c) failure in early life is no proof that he was useless for the work of God; (d) God assumes that leading the people is His job and He will be with Moses. The second talk was based on Daniel, whose life was discussed to explain the 'inner life of a leader' which is the key to success. The following characteristics were outlined: (a) purity of life - a leader has to live a life that matches the standards of the scripture; (b) humility - a humble spirit is the hallmark of a person God uses; (c) faith - trust in the unchanging, powerful, ever and all-sufficient God. An 'alter call' for personal dedication followed the second talk. Several young people dedicated themselves for Christian ministry.

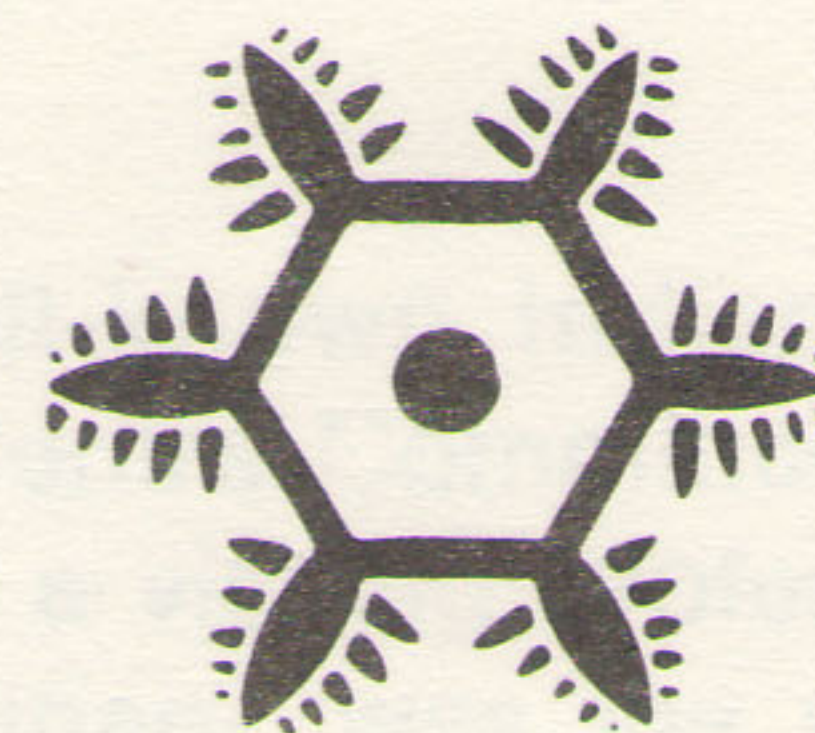
4. Family prayer - This is something attempted for the first time in a North American Mar Thoma Conference. The delegates were divided into three 'family' groups, one of women, two of men. Before going to bed and in the early morning they assembled as families to read a given portion of scripture and pray together. This was a good experience.
5. Open Forum - (moderated by Rev. Cherian Thomas) In this forum participants at the institute were free to air problems they faced in their school or college, local church or congregation and in the society at large.
6. Participants attended the Holy Communion service at Chicago Mar Thoma Church.
7. Joint meeting with the Chicago Youth Group - Three delegates shared their experiences at the Institute. Two questionnaires were distributed, one prior to the beginning of the Institute to discover delegates' expectations and the other at the end to gather their experiences and criticisms.

The concluding session was used for sharing by participants and concluding remarks by the leaders.

**Post Script and a Personal Note:** I would like to offer our special thanks to Rev. Cherian Thomas, Mr. T.A. Abraham, Mr. Sabu Abraham (Secretary) and Mr. Roy Koshy (Treasurer) of the Chicago Youth group. I believe that there is much potential and untapped talents and resources amongst our young people. We need to acknowledge this fact and act upon it. I have seen and heard our young people with a 'vision' and commitment. So let our parishes and congregations be a place where committed young people are nurtured, strengthened and their potential for Christian service is truly harnessed. So far we have not been able to select Regional Youth Coordinators as we planned. We need further institutes to train our young people for leadership. Financial help is badly needed to implement our plans.

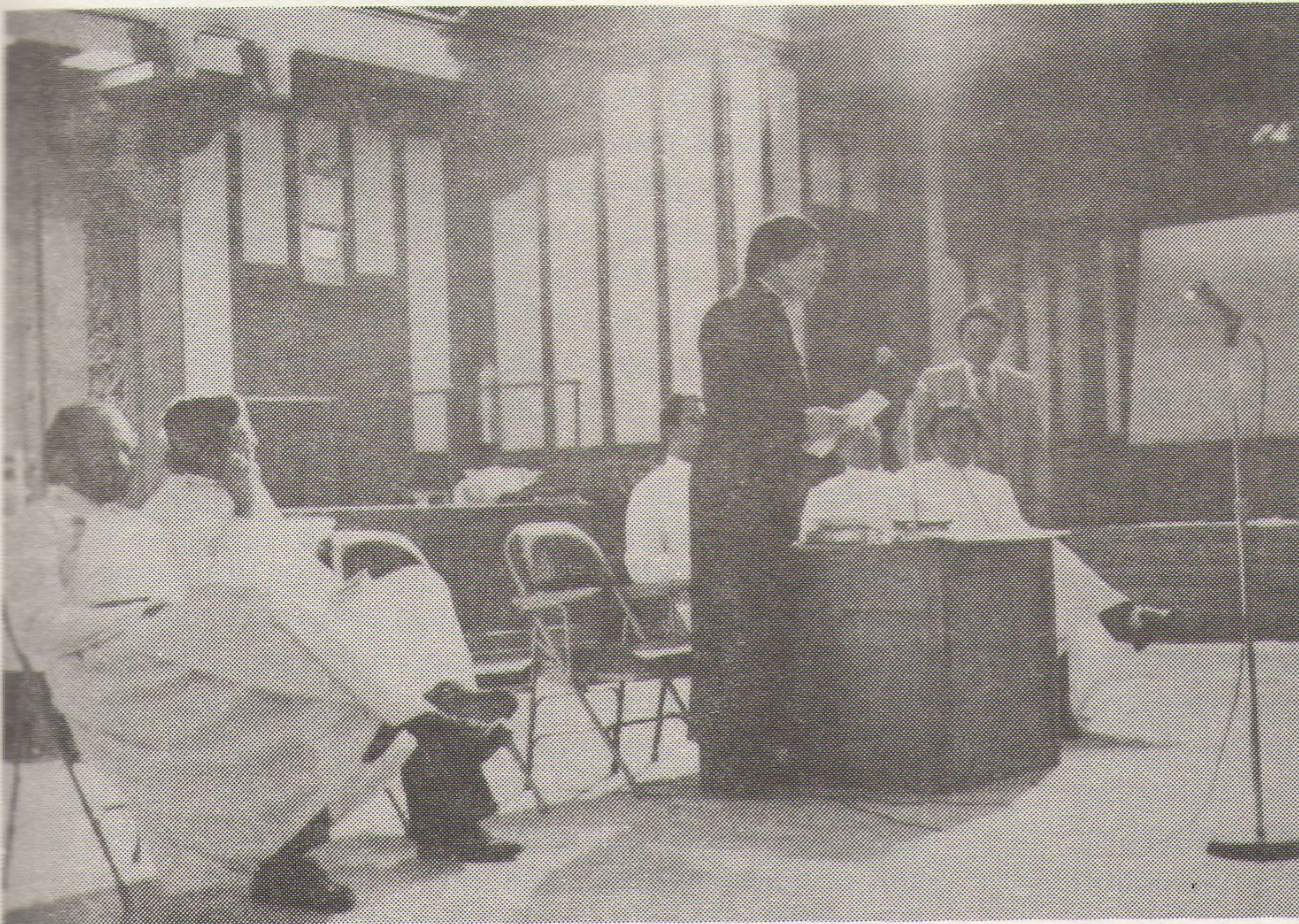
On behalf of the Youth Committee,

**P.G. George, Convener  
Youth Committee**





## St. Thomas Church, New York Celebrating the Sesquicentennial (150th Year) of Reformation



Rev. Winston Ching releasing the souvenir.

The St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church of New York arranged a program on February 16, 1986 to observe the 150th anniversary of Reformation in the Mar Thoma Syrian Church. As we know, there are celebrations in Kerala during February to mark this event.

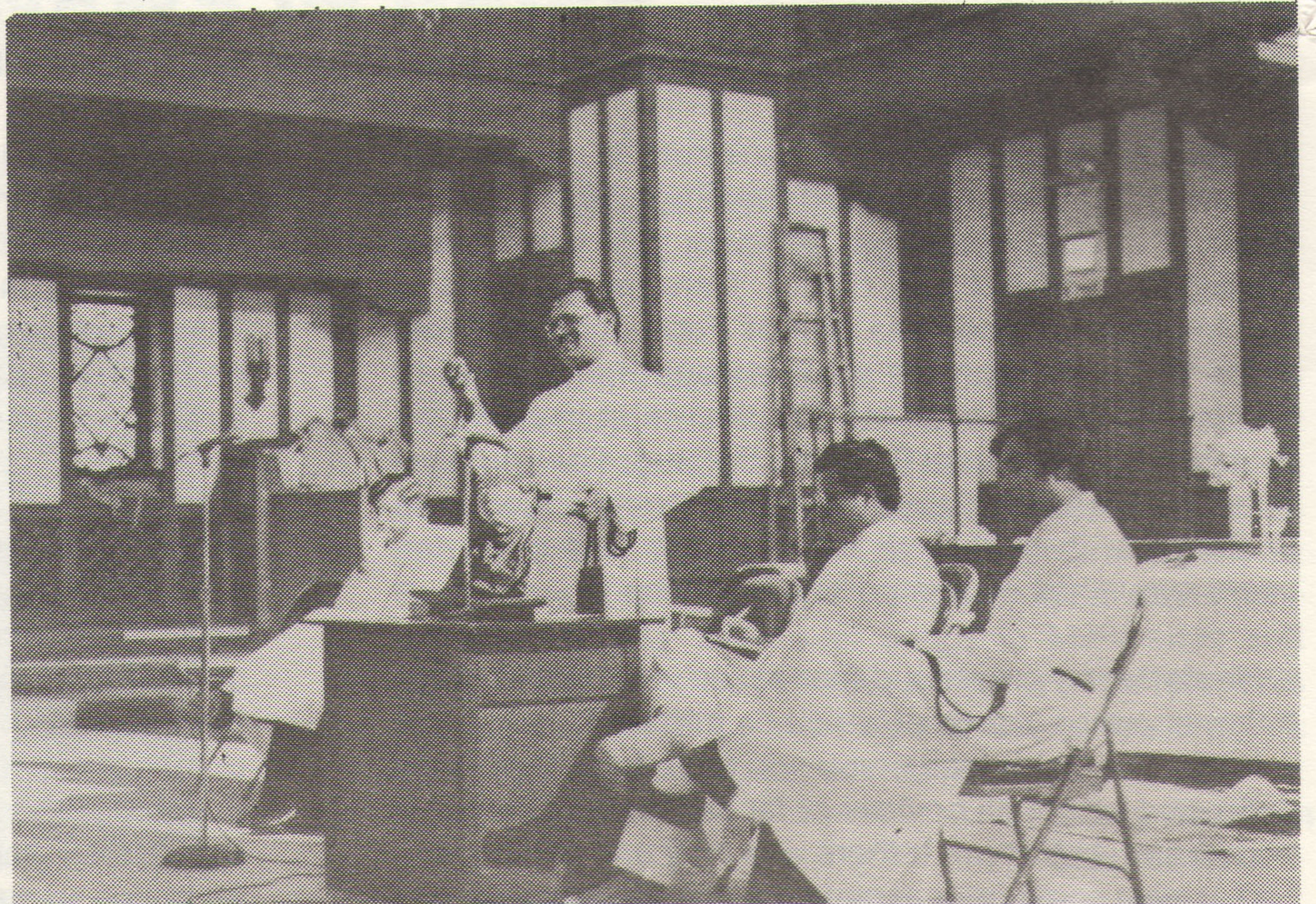
The program started with the Holy Communion Service at 9:30 a.m. and was followed by a public meeting presided by Rev. George Jacob from Canada. Rev. G. Varghese, the Vicar of the Parish welcomed the gathering and Mr. John Kurien, the secretary, presented a report. The messages were given by Rev. T. Jacob Thomas, the former vicar, Rev. A. I. Isaac, graduate student at Princeton, and Rev. Winston W. Ching, of the Asiamerica Ministry of the Episcopal Church Mr. G. Koch-

ummen, Vice-president, thanked the gathering.

To commemorate the occasion, a souvenir was released at the meeting. It contains many articles some of which highlight the history of the Church, the growth and development of our Church in North America, and struggles of the Kerala Christians in a new country. Copies of this souvenir will be mailed to all Mar Thoma parishes in North America to be distributed among members.

The meeting was followed by a fellowship lunch. Then, a musical concert was held by the Yuvajana sakhyam of the parish. The program was attended by members of the different Christian communities of New York.

**Rev. George Varghese  
Vicar**



Rev. George Jacob delivering the presidential address.



## A PROFILE . . .

### Rev. P.M. George

Rev. P.M. George was born on October 9, 1928 at Mekozhoor. He belongs to the Chirakaroth family. He was educated at the Catholic High School in Pathanamthitta and at the Union Christian College, Alwaye. His theological training was at the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary in Kottayam. He did advanced studies in theology at Lincoln Theological College in England. He was ordained as Kassisa by Dr. Yuhannon Mar Thoma Metropolitan on May 24, 1952. He has served the church in various parishes and institutions for over three decades. The parishes he served include Konni, Kaithakuzhy, Uthimood, Ranni Christos, Kozhencherry, Edayaranmula, Eraviperoor, and Mekozhoor. He also has an illustrious career of service behind him as Malabar Missionary, Students' Chaplain, General Secretary of the Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam, Secretary of the Yuhannon Mar Thoma and Mathews Mar Athanasius Memorial Fund, Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association, Director, Board Member and Clergy Trustee for our sabha, Governing Board member of both Kozhencherry and Perumpavoor colleges, Member of the Theological Students Selection Committee and in various positions. He married on October 30, 1952. He and his wife, Mary, have three sons



and three daughters. Mrs. George helps him immensely in his ministry. Rev. George is at present the vicar of the Mar Thoma Church in Houston. (Address: 12000 Fleming Dr. #3114, Houston, Texas 77013. Telephone: 713-451-5752) He was appointed by our Metropolitan and Diocesan Bishop, The Most Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma, as the Chairman of the Mar Thoma Zonal Assembly and will preside over the Assembly proceedings when the Diocesan Bishop is absent. We wish the Georges a very pleasant stay and fruitful service here.

## THE CHALLENGE OF THE PENTECOST

### A message by Leo Josef Cardinal Suenens

(Editor's Note: Recently I came across in my files the following record, of a prayer breakfast in the Dining Room of the U.S. Senate on March 3, 1976 which I was privileged to attend and record. Cardinal Suenens, a humble man of God, was one of Pope John's closest aides. He worked on the planning and the conduct of Vatican II. The 82 year-old Cardinal is at present the Archbishop Emeritus of Brussels, Belgium. For a number of years he was the Rector of the University of Louvaine in Belgium. Even though the message was given ten years ago, it has contemporary relevance.)

\*He started by prayer and then asked everyone to sing a hymn of praise, words of which he narrated.

When the Spirit leads, you will have to follow. Pope John said we are all novices as far as Vatican Council is concerned. In Vatican II there was only one person who had at least some prior experience in it. He was over one hundred years old and he was an alter boy in Vatican I. Referring to the charismatic renewal in America, he said: "If the Spirit is doing something it is decent to go and witness it and so I came here." He then referred to the whole movement as a new Pentecost. He said that he wrote a book recently entitled 'A New Pentecost'. Christians on their knees feeling the need for God and seeking

His guidance in openness; it is a new way of looking together as Christians. He then referred to a conversation he had with a prominent theologian who has written many books on the Holy Spirit. That theologian told him: "All my books on the Holy Spirit were in the head and not down in the heart." It is He who is praying in us. We have a renewed sense also that Jesus is alive. Christianity is not a philosophy of life. It is not an ideology. It is somebody. It is Jesus. To be a Christian means essentially to be connected to a person. He is our contemporary. The Spirit provides a new feeling that He is saving and healing me of my weakness, of my darkness. He did not come to solve problems; but He came to solve the fundamental problem of man. He then referred to a unique experience he had at the time of celebrating Eucharist recently. He uttered an extemporaneous prayer before the Eucharist. He said to Jesus: Lord, I am sorry for taking so many decisions without consulting you. We are discovering the realities of the working of the Holy Spirit. He then spoke about the great experience at the day of Pentecost a year earlier in Rome when over ten thousand people moved by the Spirit started singing and praying spontaneously. Pope Paul being apprehensive about possible consequences asked him whether such a celebration was going to be alright. He then reassured



the Pope. We have to discover what communion in Jesus Christ is. Christianity is not co-existence. That is a poor word. It is communion across everything that separates us. He then mentioned with enthusiastic support the Ann Arbor, Michigan Christian Community of about two thousand people from forty-five households which he visited recently. He commended such great Christian experiments. We do not have to invent something to convict and convince others. We have only to be normal in our apostolic commitment. In our catechism in Belgium to the question, what are we created for, the answer given is "To know God, to love God, and to serve God." In fact that is not enough. We are also created to make Him known, to make Him loved, and to make Him served. You are not alone in this calling. The power of the Spirit is with and within you. He will do greater things through us. What is required of us is only expectant faith.

During the question and answer period he made the following comments. The name charismatic movement is misleading. He had reservations in using the term 'movement'. With regard to the term 'charismatic' he said that is misleading. It points to the 'gifts' and not to the 'giver'. He narrated an incident in the life of Pope John. When Bishop Corson, the then Presiding Bishop of the

United Methodist Church met with him, Pope John asked how long did he think it would take to bring back visible unity. The Bishop answered: "We have been separated for over four hundred years. Maybe another one hundred years or two before that happens." Then the Pope said: "Corson, between you and me, it has been done." He then quoted one of Pope John's famous statements: "People have a tendency to complicate simple problems and I would like to simplify the complicated."

Answering a question on baptism, while emphasizing the place and meaning of infant baptism which was to remain intact as a sacrament, he stated that there should be a time for the adult to make a renewal and then spoke about the baptism of the Spirit.

In a humorous note he said that when reference was made to 'the chosen people' someone heard it as the 'frozen people'.

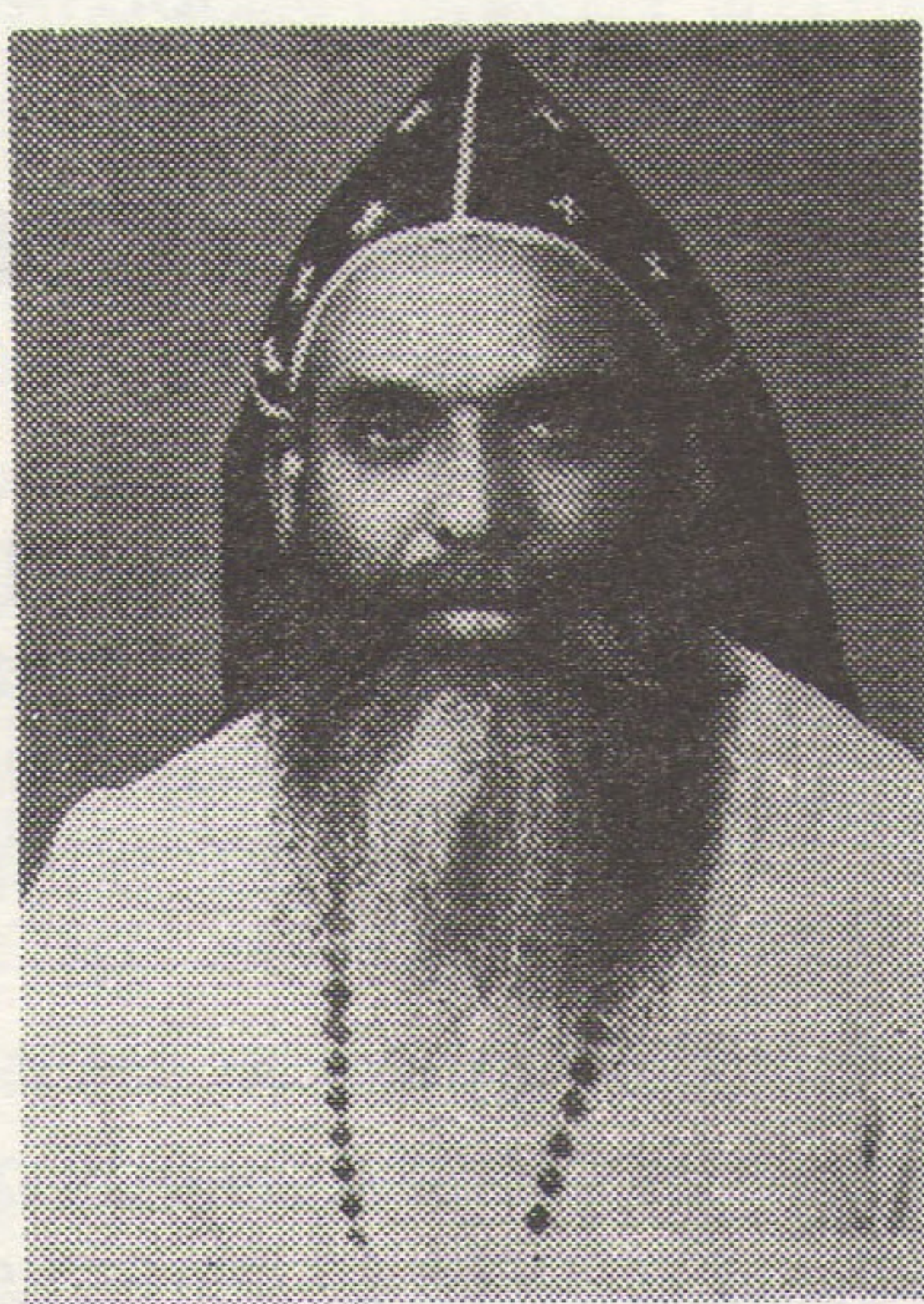
The Lord did not say that we should be the majority. We are to be the salt of the earth. That is not referring to the quantity but to quality.

He ended his comments with a note of optimism regarding Christian encounters in countries of Europe where the Communist movement is strong.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### HONORARY DOCTORATE FOR RT. REV. JOSEPH MAR IRENEUS

Rt. Rev. Joseph Mar Ireneus, the Diocesan Bishop of Delhi-Bombay Diocese of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Divinity degree by the Virginia Theological Seminary last May during its annual commencement exercises. Dr. Joseph Mar Ireneus Episcopa is a distinguished alumnus of the



Virginia Theological Seminary. His Lordship was honored for the outstanding service he renders to the Mar Thoma Church and sister churches in various capacities. Thirumeni's mother Maramon Palakunnathu Mrs. Lukose attended the convocation along with some of his friends in the United States from the Mar Thoma church. He was felicitated by many congregations.

### MUSIC CONCERT MAR THOMA CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA

The second Christian Musical Concert - Voices of Praise II - directed by the Rev. Jacob T. David and sponsored by the Youth League of the Mar Thoma Church in Philadelphia was conducted on Saturday, November 30, 1985 at 5:00 p.m. at the Messiah Lutheran Church on North Broad Street in Philadelphia. Reportedly, it was a 'sensational evening' filled with songs in Malayalam and English and attended by about six hundred people. This like the first concert, was a very successful venture. The congregation and organizers must be congratulated.

**Sunny Abraham  
Saju Mathew**





## CONGREGATION DAY IN WASHINGTON



The Mar Thoma Congregation of Greater Washington celebrated the Congregation Day on Sunday, January 12, 1986 at the St. Michel and All Angels Episcopal Church, Adelphi, Maryland. This occasion was marked by a joint service of the Mar Thoma congregation and the St. Michel and All Angels Episcopal Church. Rev. Winston Ching, the liaison officer of the Asiamerican Ministry of the American Protestant Episcopal Church conducted the Holy Qurbana using an English version of the Mar

Thoma liturgy. Rev. Ching was assisted by Rev. A.G. Mathew, Vicar of the Mar Thoma Congregation and Rev. Arnold Alrough, Vicar of the Episcopal Church. The service was followed by a public meeting and a luncheon. Over two hundred people attended the functions.

**Thomas Nainan**  
Secretary

## FUTURE ISSUES OF THE MAR THOMA MESSENGER

The Mar Thoma Messenger is the official organ of the Zonal Assembly of the Mar Thoma Church in North America. Even though we would like to publish this at least on a quarterly basis, the cost is prohibitive. However, we are hoping to publish two more issues this year, one in July and the other in November. The July issue will be a special number commemorating the sesquicentennial of reformation in our church. We would like to improve the quality of the Messenger. We need your active support for that. Following are some of the ways you can do that:

1. Sending articles for publication
2. Soliciting advertisements
3. Sending news brief items from your parish/congregation

4. Submitting news items about individuals which might be of interest to the general readership such as recognition awards, significant contributions to our church, institutions and/or community
5. Obituaries
6. Upcoming events of interest to the readership
7. Pictures of persons and events related to news items to be published
8. Financial support
9. Comments on the issues you receive
10. Using some of the materials in the Messenger for discussion in meetings
11. Prayerful support and encouragement to the contributors and the editorial committee



# മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായുടെ കത്തു്

കർത്താവിൽ പ്രിയരെ,

ഈ വർഷത്തെ മാരാമൺ കൺവൻഷൻ ദൈവകൃപയാൽ ഏറ്റവും അനുഗ്രഹകരമായി നടത്തുന്നതിനു് ഇടയായതിൽ ദൈവത്തെ സ്തുതിക്കുന്നു. കൺവൻഷന്റെ പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ട ഒരു പരിപാടി രാവിലെ തോറും നടത്തുന്ന ബൈബിൾ ക്ലാസുകളാണ്. ഇംഗ്ലണ്ടിലെ കെസ്വിക് കൺവൻഷനിൽ നാല്പതിൽപ്പരം വർഷം നേതൃത്വം നൽകിയിട്ടുള്ള റവ. ജോർജ്ജ് ഡങ്കൻ ദൈവവചനം പ്രയോജനകരമായി പ്രയോഗിക്കേണ്ടതു് എങ്ങനെ എന്നതിനെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കി സഭാപ്രവർത്തകർക്കായുള്ള ബൈബിൾ ക്ലാസ് എടുത്തു. വലതു കാലിൽ ഉണ്ടായ ദുസ്ഥമായ വേദന സഹിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു് ഓരോ ദിവസവും പന്തലിലേക്കു നടന്നുവന്നു് അദ്ദേഹം എടുത്ത ക്ലാസുകളും നൽകിയ ദൂതുകളും എല്ലാവർക്കും ആത്മീയ ശക്തി പകരുന്നതായിരുന്നു. വനിതകൾക്കായുള്ള ബൈബിൾ ക്ലാസ് ഹോശയായുടെ പ്രവചനം അടിസ്ഥാനപ്പെടുത്തി ഡോ. തിയഡോർ വില്യംസും നടത്തി. ക്രിസ്തീയ ജീവിതത്തിലെ പരാജയങ്ങളുടെയും ക്ഷീണങ്ങളുടെയും മദ്ധ്യത്തിൽ ദൈവസ്നേഹം വിജയിക്കുന്നതു് പ്രകടമാക്കി. അഖിലലോക സഭാകൗൺസിൽ സെക്രട്ടറി ജനറൽ ഡോ. എമിലിയോ കാസ്ട്രോ, മെതഡിസ്റ്റ് ബിഷപ്പ് ജെ. കെ. മാത്യൂസ്, ആർച്ച് ബിഷപ്പ് ഓഫ് കാൻറബറി ഡോ. റോബർട്ട് റൺസി എന്നിവരുടെയും ദൂതകൾ സാമൂഹ്യനീതിയേയും, സഭാഐക്യത്തെയും മിഷനറി ദൗത്യത്തെയും പറ്റി ഉൽബോധിപ്പിക്കുന്നവയായിരുന്നു. യുവജനങ്ങൾക്കായുള്ള യുവവേദി യോഗങ്ങളും കുട്ടികൾക്കായി ബാലശുശ്രൂഷാസംഘത്തിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തകർ നടത്തിയ പ്രത്യേകയോഗങ്ങളും ശ്രദ്ധേയങ്ങളായിരുന്നു. ബുധനാഴ്ച ഉച്ചകഴിഞ്ഞു് മദ്യവഴ്ജനയോഗത്തിൽ ഗാന്ധിജി യൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റി റിവൈസ് ചെയ്ൻസലർ ഡോ. ഏ. റി. ദേവസ്യ ശക്തിയേറിയ ആഹ്വാനം നൽകുകയുണ്ടായി. നമ്മുടെ തിരുമേനിമാരും യോഗങ്ങളിൽ അദ്ധ്യക്ഷത വഹിച്ചു. ദൂതകൾ നൽകിയും സഹായിച്ചു. പട്ടക്കാർ ക്രമപരിപാലനത്തിനായി നൽകിയ നിസ്പാർത്ഥവും ത്യാഗപൂർവ്വവുമായ സേവനം യോഗങ്ങളിൽ അച്ചടക്കം പൂർവ്വാധികംംംഗിയായി പാലിക്കുന്നതിനു സഹായകരമായിരുന്നു. കാലാവസ്ഥയും ദൈവം ഏറ്റവും അനുകൂലമാക്കി തന്നു. ഭയങ്കരമായ ചൂടുമാറി കളിർമയുള്ള ഇളം കാറ്റു് അനുഭവിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു് ജനങ്ങൾക്കു് യോഗങ്ങളിൽ പങ്കുകൊള്ളുവാൻ ദൈവം കൃപ ചെയ്തു.

സഭയിലെ നവീകരണത്തിന്റെ 150-ാം വാർഷികത്തോടനുബന്ധിച്ചുള്ള സമാപന സമ്മേളനം ഫെബ്രുവരി 22-ാം തീയതി ശനിയാഴ്ച കാലത്തെ യോഗത്തിൽ ഭക്തിനിർഭരമായ അന്തരീക്ഷത്തിൽ നടത്തപ്പെട്ടു. ആർച്ച് ബിഷപ്പ് ഓഫ് കാൻറബറി മുഖ്യപ്രസംഗകനായിരുന്നു. ഡോ. കാസ്ട്രോ ദൂതു് നൽകുകയും സി. എസ്. ഐ. മോഡറേറ്റർ ഐ. യേശുദാസൻ തിരുമേനി ചങ്ങനാശ്ശേരി ആർച്ച് ബിഷപ്പ് മാർ ജോസഫ് പവ്ലത്തിൽ, പ്രെസ് ബിറോറിയൻ സഭാപ്രതിനിധി ഡോ. ഇ. വൈകാംബ് ബെൻ എന്നിവർ ആശംസകൾ അർപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. കഴിഞ്ഞകാലങ്ങളിൽ ലഭിച്ച വിവിധ അനുഗ്രഹങ്ങൾക്കായി ദൈവത്തെ സ്തുതിക്കുന്നു. ഇനിയും നിർവഹിക്കാനുള്ള ദൗത്യത്തെപ്പറ്റി ആഹ്വാനങ്ങൾ ലഭിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. തൃതീയ കനകജൂബിലി സ്മാരകമായി സ്മരണികാഗ്രന്ഥം പ്രകാശനം ചെയ്യുകയും ഉണ്ടായി. സഭയുടെ ക്ഷണ പ്രകാരം വിവിധ സഭകളിൽ നിന്നും ക്രിസ്തീയ സംഘടനകളിൽ നിന്നും പൊതുസാമൂഹ്യരംഗത്തു നിന്നും അനേകനേതാക്കന്മാർ സമ്മേളനത്തിൽ സംബന്ധിച്ചതു് പ്രസ്തുത സമ്മേളനത്തിനു മാറ്റുകൂട്ടി. വിവിധ വർത്തമാന പത്രങ്ങളും അതു സംബന്ധിച്ച പ്രത്യേക പ്രസിദ്ധീകരണങ്ങൾ ചെയ്തു് സഹായിച്ചു. കലോചിതമായി ഇനിയും സഭയിലും സമൂഹത്തിലും ഉണ്ടാകേണ്ട പുരോഗതി, വിസ്തൃതമായ ഭാരതഭൂമിയിൽ ഇതര സഭകളോടൊത്തു് സുവിശേഷഘോഷണം നിർവ്വഹിക്കുവാനുള്ള ചുമതല എന്നിവ എല്ലാഘടയങ്ങളിലും ദൃഢമാകുന്നതിനു് ഈ മഹാസമ്മേളനം പ്രയോജനപ്പെട്ടു. ദൈവരാജ്യത്തിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനത്തിനായുള്ള പുതിയ സമർപ്പണത്തിലേക്കു ജനസഹസ്രങ്ങൾ ആനയിക്കപ്പെടുകയും ചെയ്തു.

മാരാമൺ കൺവൻഷൻ സമാപിച്ച ദിവസം വൈകിട്ടു് കോട്ടയം ജറുശലേം മാന്റേന്മാ ഇടവകയുടെ ആഭിമുഖ്യത്തിൽ ഡോ. യൂഹാനോൻ മാന്റേന്മാ മെമ്മോറിയലായി പണി തീർത്ത വിശാലമായ ഓഡിറ്റോറിയം കോംപ്ലക്സിന്റെ ഉൽഘാടനം ആർച്ച് ബിഷപ്പ് ഓഫ് കാൻറബറി നിർവഹിച്ചു. ഭാരതത്തിലെ വിവിധ ക്രിസ്തീയ സഭകളുടെ മേലദ്ധ്യക്ഷന്മാർ



പേൻ ആർച്ച്ബിഷപ്പ് ഓഫ് കാൻറബറിയിലെ സാന്നിദ്ധ്യത്തിൽ ഒരു കോൺഫറൻസ് ന്യൂഡൽഹിയിൽ ചർച്ച് ഓഫ് നോർത്ത് ഇൻഡ്യയുടെ കേന്ദ്രമായ സി. എൻ. ഐ വേനിൽ സമ്മേളിച്ചു. സി. എൻ. ഐ: സി. എസ്. ഐ, മാതൃകാ സഭകളിലേയും ഇൻഡ്യയിലുള്ള മെതഡിസ്റ്റ്, ലൂഥറൻ, ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് സഭകളിലേയും മേലദ്ധ്യക്ഷന്മാരിൽ പലരും ഡൽഹിയിലെ റോമൻ കത്തോലിക്കാ ആർച്ച്ബിഷപ്പ് രക്വയർമെന്റുകളിന്റേ ട്രിപ്പോയിൽ കമാന്ററും ഉൾപ്പെടെ 60-ൽപ്പരം സഭാ നേതാക്കൾ ഇതിൽ സംബന്ധിച്ചു. ഇൻഡ്യയിലെ സഭകളുടെ കൗൺസിൽ ജനറൽ സെക്രട്ടറിയും മറ്റും ചില അത്മായ നേതാക്കളും ഇതിൽ പങ്കെടുത്തു. ആഗോള വ്യാപകമായ സഭാഭേദം എന്നതിനെപ്പറ്റി കാൻറബറി ആർച്ച്ബിഷപ്പും ഇൻഡ്യയിലെ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ അതിന്റെ പ്രസക്തി എന്നതിനെപ്പറ്റി പൗലോസ് മാർഗ്രിഗോറിയോസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായും പ്രബന്ധങ്ങൾ അവതരിപ്പിച്ചു. സഭകൾ ഒന്നിച്ചു പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നത് യേശുക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ സാക്ഷ്യം നിർവഹിക്കുന്നതിന് ഏത്രമാത്രം ആവശ്യമായിരിക്കുന്നു എന്ന് പ്രത്യേകം ചർച്ചിച്ചു. സാമൂഹ്യ രാഷ്ട്രീയ രംഗങ്ങളിൽ നീതിയും സമാധാനവും സ്ഥാപിക്കുന്നതിനുവേണ്ടിയുള്ള ദൈവരാജ്യപ്രവർത്തനം വ്യാപിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിന് സമ്മേളിച്ച ചുമതലയെപ്പറ്റിയും പ്രയോജനകരമായ ചർച്ചകൾ നടന്നു. ഇത് അതിപ്രാധാന്യമർഹിക്കുന്ന ഒരു സമ്മേളനമായിരുന്നു.

നവീകരണത്തിന്റെ 150-ാം വാർഷികാചരണത്തോടനുബന്ധിച്ചു ന്യൂയിലുള്ള എല്ലാ ഇടവകകൾക്കും സ്വന്തമായ ആരാധനാലയം ഉണ്ടാകണമെന്ന് തീരുമാനം ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ട്. പ്രത്യേകിച്ചും പിന്നോക്ക സമുദായത്തിൽ നിന്നും 117 ഇടവകകൾ 1980-ൽ പുതുതായി അംഗീകരിക്കപ്പെട്ടു. ഇവയിൽ 101 ഇടവകകൾക്കും ആരാധനാലയങ്ങൾ നിർമ്മിക്കുന്നതിന് സാധിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ശേഷിക്കുന്ന 16 ഇടവകകൾക്ക് ഈ വർഷത്തിൽ തന്നെ ആരാധനാലയങ്ങൾ പൂർത്തിയാക്കണം എന്നത് നമ്മുടെ ചുമതലയാണ്, 50,000 രൂപയെങ്കിലും ഒരു ആലയത്തിന് കുറഞ്ഞത് ചെലവുവരും. അനേക ലക്ഷം രൂപ ചെലവാക്കി ദൈവാലയങ്ങളും പാരിഷ്വാളുകളും ഈ കാലത്ത് നമ്മുടെ ഇടവകകൾ നിർമ്മിക്കുന്നു. അങ്ങനെയിരിക്കെ ന്യൂയിലെ പാവപ്പെട്ട സഹോദരങ്ങൾക്കും ദൈവാലയം നിർമ്മിച്ചുകൊടുക്കുവാൻ കഴിവുള്ള ഇടവകകൾ അതിനു സന്നദ്ധരാകണം. മുഴുവൻ തുകയും നൽകുവാൻ സാധിക്കാത്ത പക്ഷം പകുതിയോ മറ്റു ഏതെങ്കിലും ഗണ്യമായ ഒരു ഭാഗമോ വഹിക്കുന്നതിന് ഇടവകകൾ ചുമതലപ്പെടുന്നത് സഹായകരമായിരിക്കും. എല്ലാ ഇടവകകളും ഈ കാര്യത്തിൽ പങ്കെടുക്കുന്നതിനുവേണ്ടി ഒരു കല്ലന ഉടൻ തന്നെ ഇടവകകൾക്ക് അയയ്ക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. എല്ലാവരുടെയും സഹകരണം ഇതിനായി അഭ്യർത്ഥിക്കുന്നു. നമ്മുടെ വരുമാനത്തിന്റെ ശോംശങ്ങൾ ക്രമമായി മാറ്റിവെച്ച് ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നതിന് എല്ലാവരും സന്നദ്ധരാകുമ്പോൾ ദൈവവേലക്കായി ആവശ്യമായ പണം ലഭിക്കുന്നതാണ്.

പുതിയ സുവിശേഷവേലസ്ഥലങ്ങളിലേക്ക് ആളുകളെ അയയ്ക്കണമെന്നും മുമ്പ് ആരംഭിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള സ്ഥലങ്ങളിൽ കൂടുതൽ പ്രവർത്തകരെ അയയ്ക്കണമെന്നും നാം തീരുമാനിച്ചതാണ്. അതിൻപ്രകാരം ഒറിസ്സാമിഷൻ ആരംഭിച്ച വിവരം അറിയിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടല്ലോ. വി. റ്റി. ജോൺ കസ്റ്റീശായും ചില സ്നേഹിതരും അവിടുത്തെ പ്രവർത്തനത്തിനായി പോകുന്നതാണ്. റ്റിബറ്റൻ അതിർത്തിയിലേക്ക് മാറാമൻ കൺവൻഷനിൽ സംബന്ധിച്ച ശേഷം മടങ്ങിപ്പോയ ഏ കെ. ജോർജ്ജ് അച്ചനോടും സഹപ്രവർത്തകരോടും കൂടെ പുതുതായി രണ്ടുപേർകൂടെ പോയിട്ടുണ്ട്. കൂടാതെ സത്നയിലേക്ക് 4, ഹോസ്കോട്ടയിലേക്ക് 3, പാലക്കാട്ടേക്ക് 3, മോപ്പാലിൽ 1, സീഹോറായിലേക്ക് 8, അങ്കോലയിലേക്ക് 1, എന്നിങ്ങനെ 20 ആളുകൾ കൂടെ അടുത്ത സമയത്ത് പ്രവർത്തനത്തിനായി പോയിട്ടുണ്ട്.

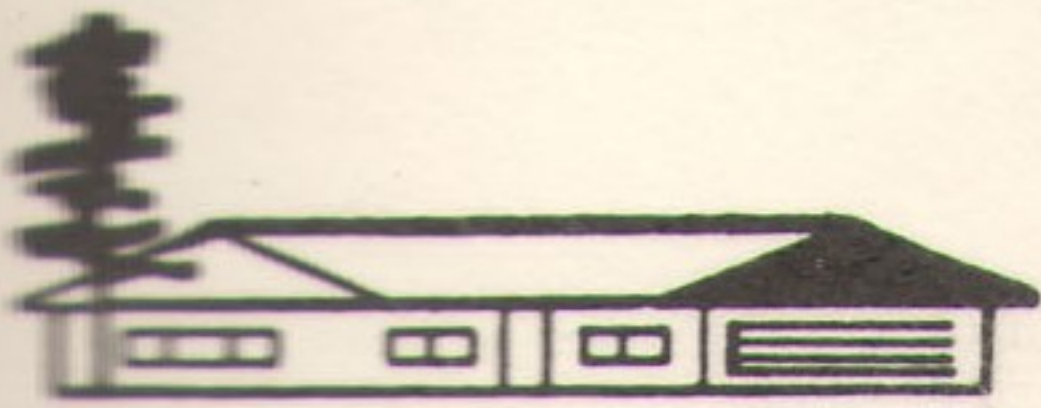
ഇപ്രകാരം വിന്യസനമായ ഭാരതഭൂമിയിലേക്ക് അനേകർ സുവിശേഷവുമായി പോകുന്നതിനുള്ള ഒരു മുന്നേറ്റം ഉണ്ടാകുവാൻ പ്രത്യേകം പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കണം. മഹാരാഷ്ട്രപ്രദേശത്തു് ഒരു പുതിയ വേല ആരംഭിക്കുന്നതിന് അഭ്യർത്ഥന ലഭിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഈ കാര്യങ്ങൾക്കായി സഭ ഒന്നാകെ കൂടുതലായി പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു.

മദ്യപാനം ലോകത്തിൽ എവിടെയും വരുത്തിവയ്ക്കുന്ന മഹാവിപത്തിനെക്കുറിച്ച് എത്ര പറഞ്ഞാലും മതിയാകുകയില്ല. പാവപ്പെട്ട കുടുംബങ്ങളാണ് ഇതുവഴി താരതമ്യേന കൂടുതൽ ദുരിതങ്ങൾ അനുഭവിക്കുന്നത്. വരുമാനത്തിന്റെ വലിയ പങ്ക് മദ്യത്തിനായി ചെലവിടപ്പെടുന്നു. നമ്മുടെ നാട്ടിൽ പാവപ്പെട്ടവരുടെ ആഹാരമാണല്ലോ മരച്ചീനി. അതും കൂടി ഉപയോഗിച്ചു മദ്യം ഉൽപാദിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിന് മൂന്നു പുതിയ ഡിസ്റ്റിലറികൾ കൂടെ കേരള സർക്കാർ അനുവദിച്ചു എന്ന് അറിയുന്നത് എത്ര സങ്കടകരം. ഈ വിപത്തിനെതിരായി നീതിബോധമുള്ളവരെല്ലാവരും ശബ്ദം ഉയർത്തുകയും പ്രവർത്തിക്കുകയും വേണ്ടതാണ്.

സ്ത്രീകളിലും കോളജുകളിലും വാർഷിക പരീക്ഷ എഴുതുന്ന ബഹുലക്ഷം വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് ആവശ്യമായ ദൈവകൃപനൽകട്ടെ എന്ന് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുകയും അവർക്ക് മംഗളങ്ങൾ ആശംസിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.

കർത്താവ് എല്ലാവരെയും അനുഗ്രഹിക്കട്ടെ.  
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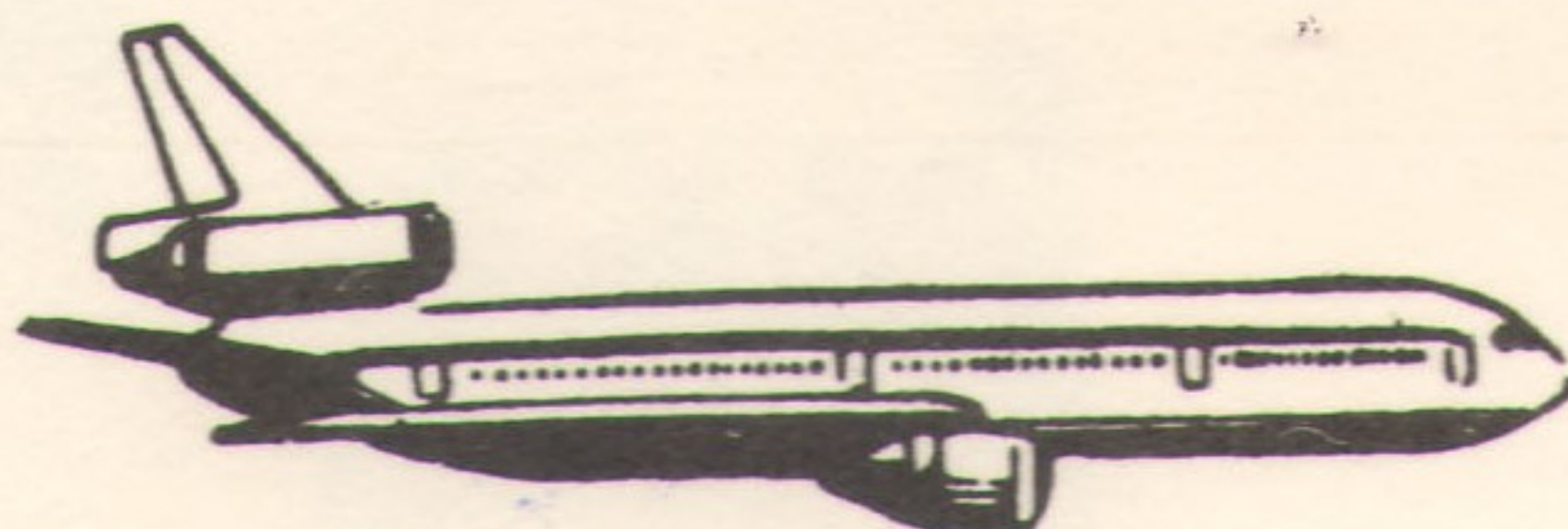
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