



MAR THOMA

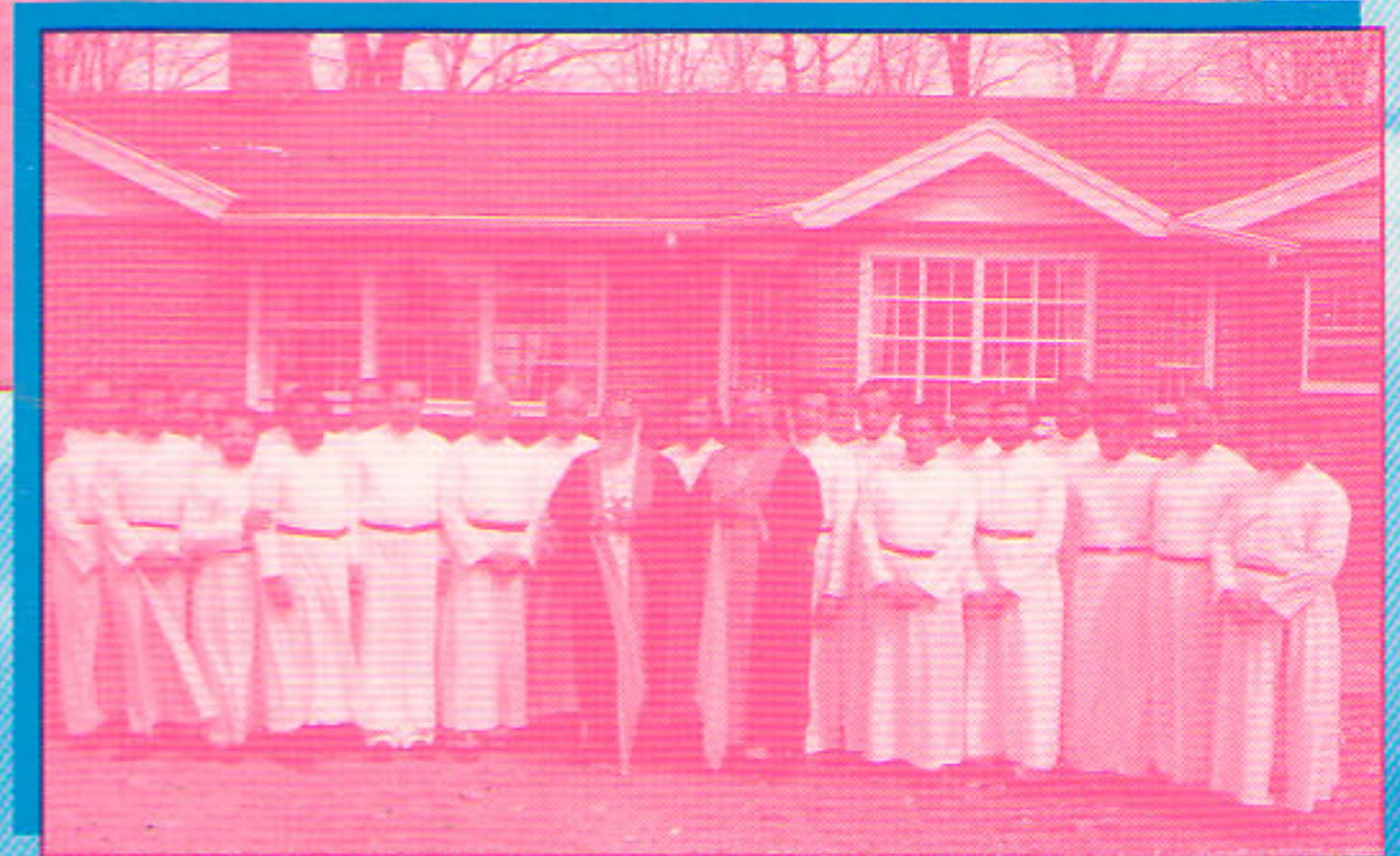
MESSENGER

A PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

APRIL 1994



Mar Thoma Center Dedication - Special Issue



**THIS
ISSUE**

Christian Response to Social Issues

Best Compliments

from

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Jeena & Julie



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FROM THE EDITOR

The dedication of the Mar Thoma Center on April 9, 1994 and the public meeting held in Philadelphia thereafter were events that would be recorded in the annals of our Diocese and that would mark yet another milestone in the growth of our Diocese. The presence of a resident Bishop in our midst not only to oversee and guide our activities in our Churches but also to share our joys and sorrows as members of an extended family, gives a new dimension and meaning to our church life. There is a sense of accomplishment in the minds of our people. Yet it's only the beginning! We have a long way to go!

The directions we take from now on, the goals we set and the missions we hope to accomplish would have a profound impact not only on our first generation Marthomites but also on the generations that follow us. There is no dearth of talents or resources in our diocese. In fact we have a large number of talented people in our diocese who are willing and able to spend their time and resources for the good of our Church and our community. The 1994 Diocesan Assembly took a variety of decisions which, if implemented in real earnestness, will go a long way in establishing our identity as a community with vision and high ideals.

The creation of a Youth Department to coordinate the activities of all youth organizations, conference committees, youth workers etc. is a welcome move. The 1992 Assembly declared the next five years as "years of the Youth". Much work still remains to be done for the youth and by the youth. The appointment of three Chaplains to work among our youth is a right decision at the right time. Although they will be working only in the Eastern and mid-Western Region to begin with, their appointments fulfil a long-felt need.

Similarly the decision to establish a Public Relations Office and an Ecumenical Relations Committee is very commendable. Mar Thoma Church in the West or for that matter in any part of the world cannot stand in isolation. We must continually expand our realm of knowledge and our field of vision through the thorough digestion and incorporation of new information. Our progress as a Church or as a community is not to be measured by the median income of our members but by the contributions we make to the community we live in and by the level of relationship we maintain with other churches. Joint services, meetings, retreats, dialogues, pulpit exchanges, counseling services are some of the areas in which the Ecumenical Relations Committee can concentrate on. Similarly, it's in our own interests that we establish our identity as a worshipping and witnessing community in this land of our choice. So long as everything goes smoothly for all of us, we may not need the help of anyone outside our church. But in times of crisis when we are faced with a stonewall of apathy and injustice, we need to know people who would stand by our side and see that justice and fairness was very much part of the decision making process. The Public Relations Office has a part to play in this.

We have so much potential. By working together and by keeping the interests of our diocese and our community a head of our own self interests, we can make this diocese as the most important diocese of our Church. We can accomplish a great deal of things that no other diocese has ever accomplished or attempted to accomplish. As Zacharias Thirumeni exhorted the Assembly members during their meeting in April by parodying Kennedy's famous statement 'ask not what the diocese can do for you, ask what you can do for the diocese', we too can ask ourselves "What can I do for the Diocese?"

A. Sasham Pattackal



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LETTER FROM THE DIOCESAN BISHOP

I am very happy to greet you all and share my thoughts and concerns through the pages of the *Mar Thoma Messenger* the official "tongue of the Diocese of North America and Europe". I have been shuttling among our Parishes between New York and San Francisco, talking and listening to people of different ages and sexes. I could establish some good ecumenical relationships with Bishops and Pastors of local churches too. I am happy that things are moving in the right direction.



The North America and Europe Diocese became an independent reality on Nov. 1, 1993. The presence of a full time resident Bishop, purchase of the Diocesan Center, establishment of about 38 Parishes, leadership of over 25 clergymen, membership of nearly 3,500 families and activities of different organizations of the Church make this Diocese a vibrant and effective one. The Dedication and Inauguration of the Mar Thoma Center on 9th April 1994 gives a new impetus to the progress of the Diocese. There is a new enthusiasm among the people that they own something and in turn they owe something to the Church.

The new Diocesan Assembly was a very good exercise of business and fellowship. Even the election of Council Members was a good learning process. We have sufficient leadership of Clergy, Lay, Youth, Women and Children among ourselves. All what we need is co-ordination and co-operation. I hope and believe that will be forthcoming in abundance in the coming years. We have plenty of persons with time, talent, skills and expertise. We need to pool human resources to build up the church. Similarly, we have a lot of people with a good sum of money. All that is required is to tap financial resources for the building up of the church. People with spiritual experience and excellence are numerous in this Diocese. How to use the same for the benefit of others should be a major concern.

Decision to appoint the Rev. Dr. P.G. George,

the Rev. Alexander M. Isaac and the Rev. Eapen Cherian as Chaplains to work among the Youth in different Regions should promote youth activities at all levels. Concern about participations of women in the affairs of the Church was well expressed in the Assembly, but that needs to be properly practiced at the local level. Establishment of the Public Relations Committee and the Ecumenical Relations Committee speaks much for the desire of our people to be related to other churches and political structures. The need and benefit of the *Mar Thoma Messenger* too was underlined in discussions and decisions. Hope the new Editorial Board would strive to make it more effective and to increase its circulation. Having got a good framework to begin with, it is our responsibility to share and shoulder the burden of the Diocese. We should have a clear vision and a sharp focus about the future. We have to set certain goals before us and commit ourselves to achieve them. We must be prepared to ward off all our squabbles and parochial tendencies. **From the establishment of structures and buildings we have to move towards the building up of a community - a community of hope, faith and love - the Kingdom Community. The center of this community is the resurrected Christ.**

Just now we have celebrated Easter, which signifies renewal - a new hope. The subterranean plants sprout at spring making the earth more beautiful and pleasant to live on. One who was buried and resurrected had opened up the door to eternity. All who become one with Christ enter into that Glory and rejoice with Him for ever. Easter brings a sense of new direction, hope joy and life. A New Life is offered to us in and through Jesus Christ. Should we live then in the present predicament of sin, sorrow and suffering? It is high time that we re-examine our faith expressions, mode of actions and patterns of behavior within the Church, family and working place. Should we not need corrections in various areas of our life. Corrections always improve our quality. Quality increases de-

mand. Are we wanted or discarded in the places where we want to establish?

Time has come to ask, what can I contribute to the building up of God's Kingdom in this world? Christ has called us to be His co-workers, "that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons" (Mk. 3:14-15). Church life has to be made more meaningful through worship, witness and service for which Christ has called us to be. What do we do in worshipping places? What is our witness among others? What service do we render to God and to the world?

In my last visit to one of the worship services, I asked a teen-ager why he didn't turn up for the service. Spontaneously came the reply, "There they come to show off, and for gossip". Church is the Body of Christ. We are called to show forth Him. The Church exists by its mission. We are called to "gossip the Gospel". In our Parishes, do we show forth Jesus Christ? Do we gossip the Gospel? Should we not do an introspection? As we dedicate the Mar Thoma Center in this Diocese, let us re-dedicate to show forth the Resurrected Christ and to gossip His Gospel. Christ is Risen! Christ has come! Christ will come again!

With Blessings and Prayers.

Yours in Christ's love

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus

**THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE
THE RT. REV. DR. ZACHARIAS MAR THEOPHILUS
DIOCESAN EPISCOPA**

ITINERARY

APRIL

23-24 Long Island Mar Thoma Church, New York
26-May 6 WCC Bucharest, Romania
7-19 Kerala: Episcopal Synod, Sabha Council, All India Bishop's Conference (Bangalore),
ECC Board Meeting, MTC-CSI-CNI Joint Council.
21-25 Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa, Montreal-Regional Youth Conference
27-28 Diocesan Council, Diocesan Center, Richboro
28-29 St. John's Mar Thoma Church, New York

JUNE

4-5 New Jersey MTC, N.J.
11 Asiamerica Cultural Festival, Episcopal Cathedral, Garden City, N.Y.
11-12 St. Andrew's MTC, New York.
18-20 Mar Thoma Church of Greater Washington - Parish Day
24-26 Mar Thoma Church of Greater Seattle
27-28 Calgary, Alberta, Canada
29-30 Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada

JULY

1-4 Edmonton, Alberta, Canada - Regional Family Conference
8-10 Regional (Eastern) S.S. Senior Conference, Rockland, N.Y.
15-17 Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston - 20th Anniversary Celebration
23-24 Ebenezer Mar Thoma Church, N.Y.
28-31 Mar Thoma Family Conference, Host: Staten Island MTC.

AUGUST

4-8 Family Conference, London, U.K.
8-12 National Consultation, Asiamerica Ministry, San Diego, California
13-15 Tucson, Phoenix
17-20 MarThoma Youth Conference, Host: Philadelphia MTC Youth League
19-21 Annual Conference of the Fellowship of Doctors and Dentists,
Warwick Conference Center, N.Y.
22-25 WCC London, U.K.
26-29 Boston MTC, Parish Retreat



CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO FAMILY AND SOCIAL ISSUES

V.T. Abraham, London, U.K.

God's Blueprint for the Family

God's kingdom rule is the essence of family life and the building of a community. We

see from the Bible that God is the architect of the family. "Unless the Lord builds the house it's builders labour in vain" (Psalm 127:1). This verse explains to us that all of life's securities and blessings are gifts from God rather than our own achievements. God created the family in the first place. "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female. He created them" (Genesis 1:27).

God instituted the marriage. God blessed them and said to them "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). God created the woman as a companion to man. The Lord God said, "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18).

God's Word contains all the instructions needed for the family. "The commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road. When you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

We are to build the family applying God's principles. In the book of Joshua chapter 24 we see Joshua appealing to the Israelites to trust, serve and worship the Lord and to put away the gods of the Amorites and the Egyptians their forefathers worshipped. Joshua then publicly makes the commitment that he and his household will serve the Lord only.

In the New Testament, St. Paul gives the rules for Christian households. "Wives submit to your

husbands as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter (provoke or exasperate) your children, or they will become discouraged" Colossians 3:18-21). As a husband, the man is told to love his wife and to teach her the Word of God (Ephesians 5:25/26), to be understanding to his wife (1 Peter 3:7), and to put his wife before anyone else (Ephesians 5:28-31). As a father, he is to love and forgive his children (Psalm 103:8-14), encourage and exhort his children (Colossians 3:21; 1 Thessolonians 2:11), discipline and instruct his children (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 13:24). As a provider, he is to work hard to ensure his family's welfare (Genesis 3:17-19; 1 Timothy 5:8). As a wife, the woman is told to submit to her husband (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18), respect her husband (Ephesians 5:33, 1 Peter 3:2),

complement and help her husband (Genesis 2:18). As a mother, she is to comfort and care for her children (Titus 2:4/5), show compassion to her children (Isaiah 49:15), be gentle and tender in caring for her children (1 Thessolonians 2:7), teach her children (2 Timothy 1:5; Proverbs 1:8), take spiritual leadership in the absence of man (Acts 16:14/15). As a homemaker, she is to be diligent in providing for her home (Proverbs 31:10). Children have the duty to honor their father and mother (Exo-

dus 20:28), obey them (Ephesians 6:1), appreciate them (Proverbs 31:28), caring for them when they are old (1 Timothy 1:5). Discipline must be exercised at home out of love to correct any bad behavior and to train them into good behavior.

"Life in the West puts our lives and our children's lives to the test."

Cultural Influences in the Family.

Life in the West puts our lives and our children's lives to the test. Young people can be torn between the two cultures, Westernized in school and Indian at home. This can lead to conflict of interests between them and their parents. Particular problems arise with children of school age as children's needs and adult aspirations come into conflict. Father and mother may be going to work, leaving the children to a nursery or a baby sitter. There is no time to

congregate in the morning, as the hurry and the preparation to go to work take precedence. In the evenings also there is less time to communicate as children are left in front of the TV watching their favorite programs and the violence on the screen. It is inevitable, therefore, that children model their lives according to a culture they see around them.

As children become teenagers they face the peer pressures in the sexual field and from drugs and alcohol etc. In such a world it is important for our teenagers to know how much they are loved, supported, prayed for and listened to at home. Parents who push their children to the background to live their own "selfish life to the full" cannot avoid a breakdown in relationships at a later stage. The transition from teenager to youth is even more difficult. The alternative life-styles of the West are often admired as children assert their independence demanding the freedom to go out, make their own friends and interests contrary to the values the parents cherish. Inevitably this brings some into contact with drugs, alcohol, pornography etc. In our own life, we feared this situation might arise as our children grew older. Suddenly they found Jesus who made a complete transformation of their lives. We did not have to mention even once what their behavior should be. We cannot make our children Christians (I mean born again Christians) or make them live according to our standards but we can prayerfully create a home in which Christian faith and life are nurtured and practised. We can easily ignore our children with all the things crowding into our lives because we are too busy. How can we help? Children need the parents' time. We need to spend time with them listening to their hurts, reasons for their particular behavior, building trust and affection. We need to love them as they are, and not for what we want them to be. We need to encourage them to develop their skills and interests rather than fulfilling our failed ambitions in their lives. They want to know that their own Dad and Mom love each other which becomes an expression of the parent's love to children. There should be constant discussion and communication about their needs, pursuits and ambitions at home especially during meal times.

Children should know they are accepted as they are, as the Lord accepts us. Our back home upbringing did not allow children to express their true feelings and concerns. And some of us were afraid of our parents especially the father. In some families everything has been open and free, while

in others very little was said except in grunts and half sentences. Showing affection through a loving Couch or a cuddles was rare indeed in some homes. We tend to go silent rather than bring our feelings into the open and discuss them. We need to communicate to each other in a way which gives us a freedom and openness. Parents growing old: For the younger generation, facing the realities of their parents growing old and failing in health, is a tremendous shock. Parents have always been there as support and protection. Suddenly the tables are turned. Then one day, the parents need the children's care and support. Paul tells Timothy "But if a widow has children or grand children, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grand parents, for this is pleasing to God" (1 Timothy 5:4). Each family has to introduce changes for the benefit of the elderly members, e.g. retirement flats, income support etc., if it is difficult for the parents to live with their families.

"Each family has to introduce changes for the benefit of the elderly members..."

Social Issues affecting our families today

1. Work and Unemployment

"That every man may eat and drink and find satisfaction in all his toil - this is the gift of God" (Ecclesiastics 3:13). The Lord God took

the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it (Genesis 2:8,15). Adam's descendants are pictured as building cities, raising livestock, making and playing musical instruments, and forging tools of bronze and iron.

John Stott, the contemporary theologian in his book on "Issues Facing Christian Today" states "Here then is God the worker, together with man the worker, who shares God's image and dominion. And there is Jesus the worker demonstrating at the carpenter's bench the dignity of manual labour". Pope John Paul II in his encyclical on "Human Work" entitled "Laborem Exercens" writes. "Work is one of those characteristics that distinguish man from the rest of the creatures whose activity for sustaining their lives cannot be called work. From the early chapters of Genesis, the church is convinced that work is a fundamental dimension of man's existence on earth. For this reason, human work is a key, probably the essential key to the whole social question.

Trauma of Unemployment: William Temple, the Archbishop, referring to the unemployed in the north

of England in the depression years wrote, "The gravest and the bitter injury of their state is not the physical grievance of hunger or discomfort, nor even the mental grievance of vacuity or boredom; it is the spiritual grievance of being allowed no opportunity of contributing to the general life and welfare of the community". John Stott had this to say further in his book, "On hearing that they have been sacked or made redundant, some people become angry, others feel rejected and demeaned. Their self image has suffered a bitter blow, particularly if their dependents they cannot now provide for. Unemployment brings tension and conflict to their family life. At the first stage is depression and pessimism. After remaining unemployed for several months and being repeatedly disappointed in their applications for jobs, their struggle and hope decline, their spirit become bitter and broken and they are thoroughly demoralized and dehumanized".

The Role of the Church: Christians must find a faithful response to the reality of unemployment. The Church can only be a faithful instrument of the will and purpose of God if they take the poor in our society seriously. The God of the Bible has a particular concern for the poor and vulnerable in society. Where families are diminished by their poverty, we are all diminished. Firstly, we as a church must change our attitude to the unemployed. Concern for the human lives lies at the heart of our belief in God. Secondly, the Church must take initiatives to help or fund suitable employment. Some of us can assist the unemployed, say, to prepare their resumes and how to present themselves at interviews etc. Thirdly the Church can develop and promote self development schemes such as study through evening classes or specific skills courses e.g. Computer literacy. The Church should also think of providing community services whereby the unemployed amongst us can provide services to other members such as redecorate homes, service cars or baby sit for our little ones. Fourthly, the Church must speak to counter the prejudices and power exercised by a privileged few or employers who act to the detriment of particular racial groups. The Church has a duty to focus attention on the social, emotional, spiritual and economic effects of unemployment and to raise the consciousness of the society on the human despair and hopelessness.

2. Marital Problems and Domestic Violence

We need to be aware that the family of today has both continuity and change. Change is reflected

"We need to be aware that the family fo today has both continuity and change."

in the pace of marriage breakdown and the increase in lone parenthood. In the West, we are seeing one in three marriages ending in divorce. We are also seeing the new phenomenon of young girls getting pregnant outside of wedlock at an alarming rate. Although we, as a community may not have the same level of problems as the host community, there are clear evidences of family rift and violence. Our families here are often separated from family support structures not able to receive the protection of parents, grand parents, brothers, sisters and friends. The pressures of life, financial problems and the adjustment required in an alien culture and hostile environment often accelerate matrimonial problems of our members or they become prone to heart problems and other stress related illness. Alcohol abuse can become an increasing problem for men and when confronted with acute pressures they may resort to violence.

The Church should take a lead here to identify the problems and provide counsel and support where necessary.

Divorce: John Stoll defines marriage as "an exclusive heterosexual covenant between one man and one woman, ordained and sealed by God, preceded by a public leaving of parents, consummated in sexual union, issuing in a permanent mutually supportive partnership and normally crowned by the gift of children". Our Lord's instruction on marriage and divorce is very clear.

"Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate... I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife other than for marital unfaithfulness and marries another woman commits adultery. (Matthew 19:6-9). The teaching of St. Paul is similar in 1 Corinthians 7:10-16. The Church should give positive guidance on these matters through Sevika Sanghom or Youth League. There should be thorough biblical teaching about marriage and reconciliation.

Mixed Marriages: Ezra 9:10 and Deuteronomy 7:1-6 are relevant to mixed marriages. Whether one should take a rigid attitude or an open attitude to inter-culture marriages is a matter for the individuals and the family depending on the circumstances. The church should also give guidance. Statistics prove that intercultural or inter-faith marriages are more prone to tension and conflicts ending in separation or divorce.

3. Drugs and Alcohol Addiction

Some drugs e.g. Tobacco and Alcohol are le-

gal, but the majority are not. All drugs have one thing in common; they are stimulants which influence our body. Their effect depends on the particular drug, frequency of use and the amount consumed. Major drugs are: Cocaine, LSD, Opium, Heroin, some Amphetamines and Barbiturates. Many youngsters including our own members experiment with drugs at some stage. There is an increase in the number of addicts, seizures and offenders caught by police. Drugs abuse is becoming common among students. Some get hooked on drugs having started the habit innocently, perhaps to fend off some extreme crisis moments or emotions in their lives. Alcohol and drug addiction leads to long term problems of illness, depression and violence. Police arrest, prosecution and conviction can ruin the education and future career prospects. The abusers find it difficult to regain control of their lives with the prospect of poorly paid work or long term unemployment. Addicts will require counselling or referral to specific agencies providing such a service. The writer has found many who were able to kick the habit once and for all when they surrendered their lives to the mercy and love of Jesus Christ. He takes away the need to drink or to take drugs completely as He becomes the master of our lives.

4. Sexually Transmitted Diseases/AIDS

We are created to enjoy our sexual life as ordained by God. Premarital sexual relationships or sex outside marriage or homosexual relationships are prohibited in the Bible. We read in Genesis (Chapters 13, 18 & 19) that Sodom and Gomorrah gave themselves to sexual immorality and perversion and God destroyed the towns. "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable (Leviticus 18:2). In the New Testament the Pauline texts give clear guidance. "Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones (Romans 1:26). "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolators nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexual offenders, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor the drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers will inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; also see 1 Timothy 1: 9/10). Sexually transmitted diseases such as Gonorrhoea, Syphilis, AIDS are contracted through promiscuous relationships. AIDS transmission can take place via either gay male sex or heterosexual sex. It can also be infected through sharing needles and syringes, through blood transfusions or from an infected mother to a baby. The virus attacks and damages the body's immune

and nervous systems and so making it defenseless against certain fatal diseases. There is no known medical cure for AIDS to date and so little is known about the rate of development of the HIV virus. The most important safeguard one can take is not to have any sexual relations outside marriage. If we do, we are sinning and interfering with our relationship with God. However, if we come across afflicted persons, we should not condemn them. Jesus attitude was one of compassion. Jesus condemned sin; yet He loved the sinner.

New Age Danger

The New Age movement is a confusing jumble of eastern religion, the occult, secular humanism, and alternative life-styles. People who are attracted to New Age are spiritually hungry and spiritually aware people who are not satisfied with science, reason or materialism. New Age teaches the answers they want to hear - the boundless limits of human potential, the freedom to choose whom they want and a turning into a person they really are. New Age is the religion of the self. It is the ultimate deception that the self is god. It is satanic. We need to teach and protect our young people from the danger of being drawn into the cult.

Conclusion

The healthy family is not one of fixed rules or firm rules but rather a flexible interaction in which each member is treated seriously. The atmosphere of the family should be one of love and acceptance, a haven where each person can retreat from the storms and pressures of society. It is inevitable that all of us go through relationship problems, emotional hurts and rejections at some stage in our life. At times like this, we need to receive the healing touch of Jesus, the Healer of our body, mind and soul, or be able to lead some body to Him. We can only do this, if we are fully committed to the Lord and rooted in the Word of God.

Dr. George Samuel in his booklet on Value Education writes, "Do not build your life on the instability of the temporal; but build your life on the stability of the eternal". St. Paul gives us the exhortation, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again; rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus". Amen! We would be richly blessed in our Christian lives and in our marriage and our family life, if we prayed together.

THE MAR THOMA CHURCH STATEN ISLAND

CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO

THE XII MAR THOMA FAMILY CONFERENCE

(THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE.)

HOSTED BY

THE MAR THOMA CHURCH STATEN ISLAND

P.O. BOX 060-189, STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK, NY 10306-0001

DATE : JULY 28 - 31, 1994

PLACE : SOMERSET RADISSON, Somerset, New Jersey.

THEME : "WAKE UP SLEEPER....." EPHESIANS 5:14

LEADERS : MOST REV. DR. ALEXANDER MAR THOMA METROPOLITAN

RT. REV. DR. ZACHARIAS MAR THEOPHILUS EPISCOPA
The Diocesan Bishop

REV. DR. RAYMOND C. ORTLUND
Maramon Convention Speaker, Author, Radio Ministry

MRS. ANNE ORTLUND
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Diocesan Bishop's Secretary

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WE DISAGREE BUT...

Rev. Eapen Cherian, Dallas, Texas

"They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company" Acts 15:39

It happened in the beginning of the first 'missionary journey.' The first missionary trip was considered a success and there was a general feeling that Paul and Barnabas should go on another missionary journey to strengthen the work launched. Then it happened! Paul and Barnabas clashed! Disagreed! Parted!

Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them but Paul keeping in mind Mark's desertion in the first missionary trip disagreed. It's not sure whether Mark was homesick or had some other personal reasons to leave the team. Paul could however convince Barnabas that Mark was not fit for the missionary trip. Barnabas on the other hand was a man with many good qualities. He deserves his name 'Barnabas' - 'son of encouragement'. He was aware of Mark's failure but for him, Mark must be given another chance to prove himself.

It seems that Paul's relationship with Barnabas had already been strained by the incident at Antioch when Paul clashed with Peter and the 'circumcision party' (Gal. 2:11-13).

The indifference or clash between Paul and Barnabas must have been rather intense. Luke clearly depicts the problem by calling it as 'sharp disagreement'. It was a deep wound in their relationship and they separated. One of the saddest spectacles in life is to see great pairs break up.

Christians and Conflict

The above incident reminds us of the disagreement we have in our relationship with people whether in home, in church or in other groups. It is sad that in most of the cases we end up with problems and separation.

Church The New Testament gives many examples of disputes in the Church. "There was a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest" (Luke 22:24). Disciples were fighting for position. Thessalonians refused to work and were trouble to others. Corinthian believers even went to court to settle the conflict.

Our parishes follow the same tradition with more vigor for fighting each other for silly things. Once a youth commented "It is fun to watch the general body meeting. better than football match. - The language used, the shouting..... really pathetic". The root cause of many problems in the parishes is the question who is the greatest? Leaders and self ordained leaders use any means to establish their greatness by forming parties and replacing Christian ethics by group ethics. Group ethics is often unhealthy and destructive. Anger, greed, perverse character, selfish motives, pride, crave for position, theological difference, jealousy, party spirit, etc. are some other reasons that cause rift between members.

Home In Bible there are many accounts of conflict in home. In Gen. 3 we encounter the first marital conflict, Adam's blaming of Eve. In Gen. 13, we see sibling rivalry ending in murder (Cain & Abel). In Gen. chapter 37, we see a family conflict that resulted in selling Joseph as a slave.

Some of our families are psychologically broken homes. The rift between husband and wife, parents and children in many homes destroy the harmony. Many parents are very much concerned about the gap between parents and children. Most of them blame 'cultures or circumstances' for the gap. But family which is the first and the foremost socializing unit of a child cannot escape by shifting the responsibility on 'culture'. Misunderstanding, communication gap, greed for money, failure to be a role model, lack of love, fellowship and care are some of the contributing factors for this widening gap. Disagreement between parents and children in some families start with the argument on the use of telephone and TV. Children with many friends keep the telephone busy for a long time, thus creating suspicion among parents. Parents react by screening telephone calls which in turn develop mistrust in parents.

A 16 year old boy said about his father, "He can talk to his friends for many hours, he invites his friends for parties and he goes for parties, but for me all these are restricted."

A father's complaint about his 18 year old

daughter, "I am worried about my daughter. Now she is living in an apartment with other friends. She hates us. We work hard day and night for her well being. But she spoiled everything -our money and name."

A 17 year old girl said, "I feel sorry for my parents. They have wasted their lives, dreaming about making more and more money. My father does not live life, he calculates it. He adds and subtracts and invests desperately. He is full of facts and figures — a regular IBM computer. My mother too shares in his search for 'gold'. And they have no time for themselves or for me."

Dealing with disagreement It is important to note that it is impossible for two persons to be without differences. We are all different from each other. Even the identical twins do not think alike. The real existence of man establishes the fact of disagreement. So instead of denying, ignoring or perpetuating them we have to deal with the differences positively.

Jesus, our Lord in his teachings made special references to the ways of resolving the disagreement. In Matt. 5:23-24, He says "thereforeand there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift." So if we are involved

in the rift and if we are the cause of the rift or we are equally responsible for the rift or if we feel that our fellow beings have something against us, we are supposed to take the initiative and ask pardon in the first place. And do it before coming to the altar. If somebody else is the cause of the rift, we may use the model which Jesus suggested in Matt. 18:15-17, "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, If he listens to you, you have won your brother over And on the other hand we have to 'forgive them as He forgives our trespasses'.

This simple model of conflict resolution of Jesus can be used in our family and in our church. But as two or more parties are involved in a conflict, use of this model doesn't mean that the conflict will be resolved. And it is true that many conflicts in family and in church are complex in nature. But surely, God will give result to our faithful efforts. We don't know how Paul resolved the disagreement, but it is true that Paul later accepted Mark as fellow worker (II Tim. 4:11) and sent instructions to welcome Mark (Col. 4:10). Paul also acknowledged Barnabas for his support in his ministry (I Cor. 9:6). In our relationship with others, let us learn to deal with conflicts whenever they arise with God's grace and remind ourselves that although we may some times disagree, we need not become enemies.

THIRD DEATH ANNIVERSARY

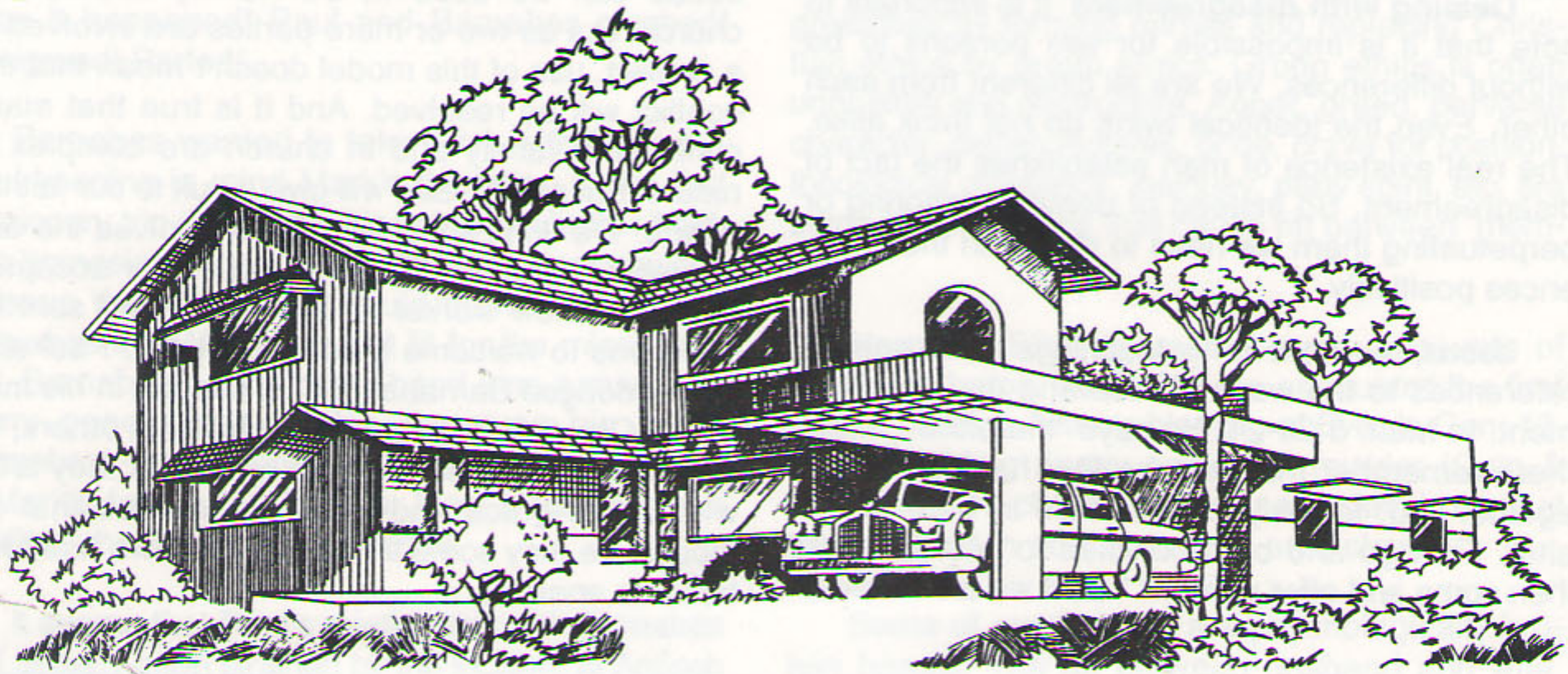


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MY EXPERIENCE AS A VOLUNTEER IN LIMA, PERU

Asha Mathew

Greetings from the city of Lima, where the sun doesn't seem to shine for six months straight, but at least it doesn't rain. I arrived here June 29th safe and sound. I spent one eventful night in Caracas, Venezuela where I know God protected me from any harm as I arrived late at night to an almost empty airport with my poor Spanish and was completely at the mercy and kindness of cab drivers and porters to help me find my way through the bureaucracy. Thankfully all were very kind and helpful, but I was very happy the following day to find ten to twelve people in Lima waiting to greet me even if they were complete strangers.

MISIUR or Mission Integral Urbano y Rural, which roughly translated means An Integrated Urban and Rural Mission was founded by a Peruvian, Pastor Pedro Arana Quiroz. He is presently the Director of Sociedad Biblica Peruana, but still closely involved in the direction and mission of MISIUR. Last year, MISIUR went through a period of some instability but now has a permanent director, Blanca Urrutia de Falconi. She is an organized and single-minded administrator setting MISIUR on more secure financial ground. Currently it receives funding primarily from Tear Fund chapters England, Holland and Australia, Hilfe fur Bruder and a Netherlands organization.

These organizations through MISIUR fund various projects in specific populations for a specified duration. Most of these projects are conducted in the shanty towns surrounding Lima, with a few scattered projects in the jungle of Peru. In Peru, more than half the population lives in the city of Lima, many of them in the shanty towns. The shanty towns are in varying stages of legality and development. Usually, the people invade a section of empty land privately owned or owned by the government. Initially, efforts including force will be made to remove them, but generally there are too many people to remove all of them. After this, follow years of paperwork and legal proceedings, some have houses of concrete with electricity while others are nothing more than collections of shacks where water is delivered once a week. These settlements stretch

for miles all around the city of Lima. It seems to be the government's tactic admission that it cannot provide housing for most people. However it is also unwilling to shift its tendency of allocating most funds to the city of Lima rather than the rest of the country and hence the people's continuous migration to the city.

Current MISIUR projects include: providing materials and technical assistance to families building latrines and water tanks, organizing and providing subsidized food for various community kitchens, directing Health and Leadership training classes for groups of women, providing a daily breakfast and recreation to children with poor nutrition. These

projects are conducted in partnership with the churches located in the shanty towns. Churches are chosen based on their proven interest in being actively involved in the projects. Current partners include the Assembly of God Church, the Nazarene Church, the Presbyterian Evangelical Church and the National Evangelical Peruvian Church. Previous projects include building homes in northern Peru after two earthquakes in 1990 and 1991, providing technical assistance

and initial materials for small graders and raising small far animals.

I went to the north of Peru, to the city of Moyabamba to see some of the completed work. I also visited a settlement of refugees who had fled from Ayacucho in the early eighties. Ayacucho is where the terrorists, Sendero Luminoso, began in earnest and these people fled the violence between the Sendero and government troops. Whereas before they lived in the sierra or mountain desert area, now they are living deep in the jungle, farming land given to them by the National Evangelical Council of Peru. Recently some families have begun to return to Ayacucho as the violence has subsided, but others have decided to continue farming their plots of land in the jungle. Pedro Arana Quiroz as director of the Council, mentioned that recently this settlement has caused them some concern as they now realize the kind of environmental damage involved in farming this land. However, he points out

"In Peru, more than half the population lives in the city of Lima..."

that in the midst of the terrible violence these people were facing, they were unable to offer a better alternative.

As my Spanish improves, I begin to follow the news more closely. The media is rather biased towards the government. Almost every day ten to twenty people are paraded across the screen in prisoner's garb as the reporter reads off the names of the newly captured terrorists. While some seem to announce themselves as such, shouting various slogans, others are clearly people taken under dubious circumstances. Recently the Sendero brutally massacred more than seventy people of the indigenous group, the Ashaninkas, in the jungle of northern Peru. While this is a terrible act, the media appears to spend most of its time decrying the atrocity without giving any background on the nature of the conflict. While outside sources indicate that government troops commit similar violent acts; this fact is almost never alluded to by the media here. I have noticed that even those people, who are happy with President Fujimori's apparent undercutting of the terrorists effectiveness, are willing to admit that many rights have been violated in the process and that one cannot believe that all those captured are terrorists or that in all cases the atrocities have actually been committed by Senderos and not the government. Most interestingly, the Ashaninka story exploded on the front pages here just as the congress was deciding whether to include in the new constitution an allowance for capital punishment for those convicted of crimes against the government.

As an Indian in Peru, I am generally mistaken for a Peruvian, which lands me in trouble when they start talking rapidly in Spanish. I am also one of the darkest people here as there are almost no Blacks in Peru. This has its advantages in that I am not a typical target for robbery as most obvious Americans are. However, it's also quite an experience, being automatically regarded as poor and/or uneducated in my daily interactions with everyone from the bus drivers to the store clerks. Here, Indi-

ans are always referred to as Hindus regardless of your religion. To say indio refers to the Indians of Peru. I try to explain that Hindu is not an appropriate name for all of us considering there are also Muslims, Buddhists and Christians, but no one here seems to comprehend the importance of this distinction.

Mostly MISIUR has put me to work translating various articles and educational materials from English to Spanish and occasionally from Spanish to English (but I'm not very good at English into Spanish). Also they have just acquired a computer and Word-perfect and I have been training them on the software. They are located in a some what cramped rented office but were recently awarded \$20,000.00 by the organization. Hilfe fur Bruder, which will go towards the purchase of a new office. They must relocate the office by the end of December. I am also accompanying the health team in their field work in the shanty towns. Mostly I have been observing their work and trying to help in simple things. My limited Spanish prevents me from doing such things as actually delivering a convincing public health presentation on the prevention of cholera or the importance of immunizations. However, the full time nurse has just left in order to attend seminary, so there should be more work for me to do in the health team. I have found that I need be assertive in my desire to do field work or I tend to get stuck in front of the computer doing translation.

The people I work with are committed and dedicated with a strong sense of having a two-fold mission of evangelism and social work. They complete each project striving to leave the community stronger in God's word as well as living a little better off. They teach the people to look for root causes and solutions to problems in their lives, families and communities. Overall I am happy to have chosen this organization. It is refreshing to work in an environment of trust and dedication; it's a sharp contrast to my last experience.

"They teach people to look for root causes and solutions to problems..."

(Asha Mathew of Boston is in Lima, Peru working as a volunteer with the International Christian Organization MISIUR for the last about one year. Asha is a graduate of Boston University with a degree in Economics and Latin American Studies.)

DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY MEETING

The annual meeting of the Diocesan Assembly was convened at Ramada Hotel, Trevese, PA from April 7-9, 1994. The Diocesan Bishop Rt.Rev.Dr.Zacharias Mar Theophilus presided over the meeting. 55 members of the Assembly, out of 69 members on the roster, were present at the meeting. Besides passing the Annual Report, Accounts for the year ending 1993 and the budget for 1994, the Assembly took some decisions, subject to the approval by the Synod, the salient of which are as under:

1. Rev.Dr.P.G. George, Rev.Alexander Issac and Rev.Eapen Cherian were appointed as Chaplains to work among the youth in addition to the responsibilities they are currently holding.
2. Diocesan Fund be raised from \$5.00 to \$12.00 per family
3. Endowments for Diocesan projects to be instituted at the diocesan level(minimum \$1000.00) and such list of endowments be published in the Mar Thoma Messenger.
4. The Diocesan Bishop to appoint a Committee each for Public Relations and Ecumenical Relations
5. The Diocesan Bishop to appoint the Editorial Board for the Mar Thoma Messenger.
6. A scholarship fund to be instituted for our youngsters who would like to enroll themselves in Seminaries so as to enable them to become future pastors.
7. All youth organizations, conferences and youth work in the diocese be brought under one organization called the Youth Department of the Diocese of North America and Europe.
8. A 'donors' list' of all those who contributed for the Diocesan Center be published in the Souvenir that would be published in connection with the anniversary of the Mar Thoma Center.

Election of Office bearers and Council Members.

Rev.Dr.P.G. George was elected unanimously as the Diocesan Secretary.

The following were elected by ballots to the Diocesan Council:

Diocesan Treasurer	-	Dr. John P. Lincoln, Lubbock.	
North East Region	-	Mr. Alex Thomas, Boston	
South East "	-	Rev. M.P. Yohannan, Philadelphia	
West "	-	Mr. T.A. Mathew, Houston	
Mid-West "	-	Dr.Mrs.Annamma Sadhu, Chicago	
Canada "	-	Mr. Varghese Pothen, Toronto	
From unrestricted regions			
- Rev. Ninan Jacob, Dallas -		Mr. Sunny Abraham, Philadelphia	- Mr. C.V. Samuel - Detroit



The Council Members with the Diocesan Bishop and Bishop Theodosius

Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius joined the Assembly's proceedings in the afternoon of the 8th. Thirumeni explained to the Assembly members the work being carried out at our diocesan project - Pondyerry Mission. Rev. Dr. Winston Ching, Canon Rev. Dr. Frederick Williams and Chris from Episcopal Church also joined the Assembly on the 8th. Rev. Dr. Ching and Canon Rev. Dr. Williams both spoke at the Assembly. Rev. Dr. Ching presented the Diocesan Bishop with a copy of the book "Christianity in the 21st Century". Thirumeni thanked the Rev. Dr. Ching for the gift and informed him and the Assembly members that the book will be the first one in the library that would be set up at the Mar Thoma Center shortly.

After two days of deliberations, the Assembly concluded its session with the hope that the tremendous potential that is available in our diocese, both in terms of human as well as financial resources, would be utilized for the benefit of our community, our diocese and the community we live in. Zacharias Thirumeni thanked the previous diocesan bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom, the Assembly and Council members, the Mar Thoma Center Committee members and all those who worked behind the scenes for their time, talents and efforts to bring this diocese to the level of what it is today. Thirumeni concluded his remarks by parodying Kennedy's famous words "Ask not what the diocese can do for you, ask what you can do for the diocese".
A. M.

-One picture is worth more than a thousand words - photos by Jacob Joseph, Toronto



The Diocesan Assembly Members.



The lady members of the Assembly with the Diocesan Bishop and Theodosius Thirumeni.

MAR THOMA CENTER INAUGURATED

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, our Bishop of the Kunnamkulam-Malabar Diocese told a gathering of more than 2,000 Marthomites that the Mar Thoma Church in North America had a greater role to play. "What God offers in and through the Church is 'New Humanity in Christ'. This finds expression in local communities," he said. Inaugurating the Mar Thoma Center of Diocese of North America and Europe on April 9, 1994, Theodosius Thirumeni added, "We have to uphold the best values of the East and West. We need to appreciate the God-given plurality. Based on faith, hope and love, we must foster Christian fellowship and friendship with all the people in and around us."

"Diversity is not disunity. World is a mosaic of different cultures, races, religions and languages. A Church which is truly catholic will be embracing all sections of people and also equipping all to participate in the corporate ministry," Bishop Theodosius said.

The public meeting held in the North East High School auditorium, Philadelphia was attended by representatives from most of our parishes including the ones in Canada and U.K. Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Zacharias Mar Theophilus presided over the meeting. The meeting started with the choir members of the Bethel Mar Thoma Church and the Mar Thoma Church of Philadelphia, present and past Assembly and Council members, parish priests, dignitaries from different churches, officials of the city and civic governments, and bishops entered the hall in a procession to music played by an inter-parish orchestra. The Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia choir members welcomed the dignitaries and all those



Procession



Choir members welcome the gathering.



Zacharias Thirumeni lights the candle

who gathered for the meeting in our traditional Indian way. Then Theodosius Thirumeni lighted a lamp symbolizing the motto of the Mar Thoma Church " Lighted to Lighten."

Those who spoke at the meeting offering felicitations on the occasion and also to RT. REV. DR. ZACHARIAS Mar Theophilus for his appointment as the Diocesan Bishop, included His Grace the Most Rev. Mathews Mar Barnabas of the Orthodox Syrian Church, the Rt. Rev. Franklin D. Turner, Suffragan Bishop, Diocese of Pennsylvania, the Rev. Cannon Dr. Frederick B. Williams, Diocese of New York, Hon. Ronald Castile, Justice Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Mr. Ralph McClellan, Assistant Manager Northampton Township, Dr. James Kurichy, Secretary, Ecumenical Fellowship of Philadelphia, Hon. Mayor John Abraham of Teaneck, N.J., Rev. Y. George from Toronto and Rev. Abey T. Mammen from U.K. The Rev. Dr. T.P. Abraham, the Diocesan Secretary, welcomed the guests and the Rev. Dr. P.G. George, Diocesan Bishop's Secretary gave vote of thanks. Mrs. Nirmala Abraham of the Mar Thoma Church of Philadelphia was the coordinator of the various programs of the meeting and the Rev. Dr. P.G. George was the master of ceremonies.

Earlier in the morning,, the Mar Thoma Center, the headquarters of the diocese, located at 744 Newtown Road, Richboro, Pennsylvania was dedicated in a solemn ceremony by the Diocesan Bishop RT. REV. DR. ZACHARIAS Mar Theophilus. Besides Theodosius Thirumeni, the Rev. Dr. Winston Ching and the Rev. Cannon Dr. Frederick B. Williams of the Episcopal Church, vicars of our various parishes and the Assembly members were present at the dedication service.

Abraham Mattackal



A section of the audience.



A little girl gives a welcome bouquet to Theodosius Thirumeni



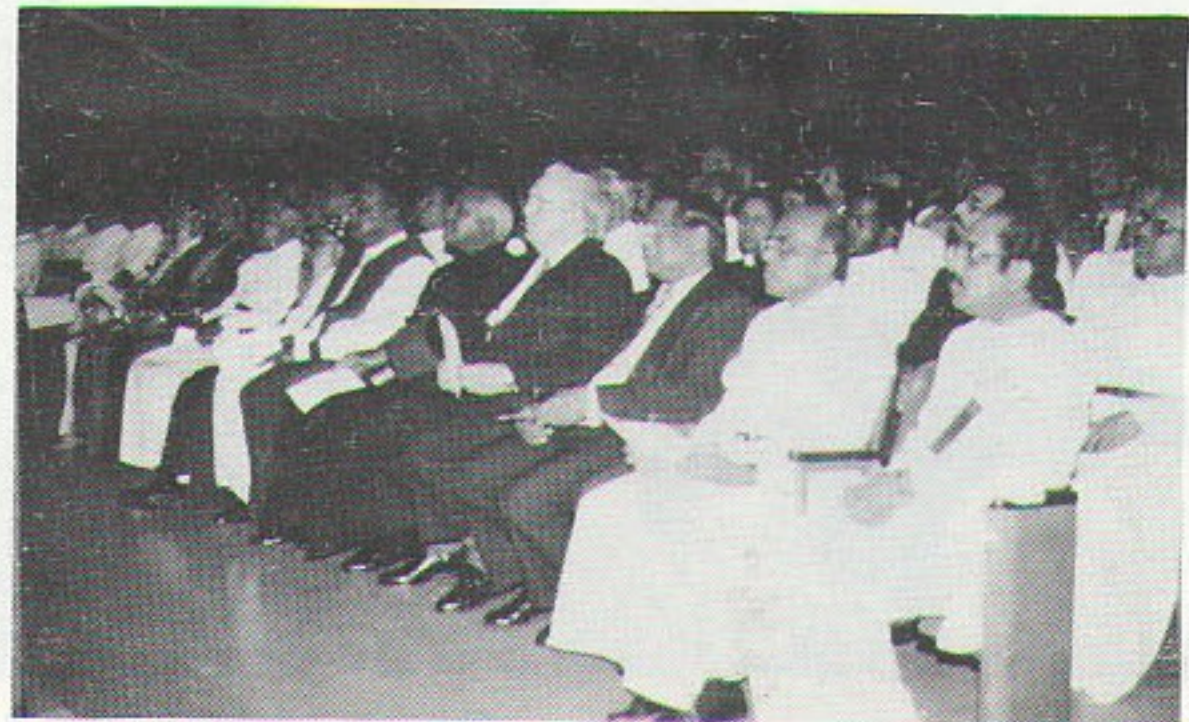
The Trinity Mar Thoma Church donates \$20,000.00 for Bishop's car at the meeting

MORE PICTURES -DEDICATION OF THE CENTER

(Photos by Jacob Joseph, Toronto)



The Service



A section of the audience at the meeting



"For everything there is a season,a time to laugh and a time to"

MAR THOMA CENTER DEDICATION

Photos by Jacob Joseph, Toronto

Those who spoke at the meeting offering congratulations on the occasion and also to His Rev. Dr. Williams of the Mar Thoma Church.



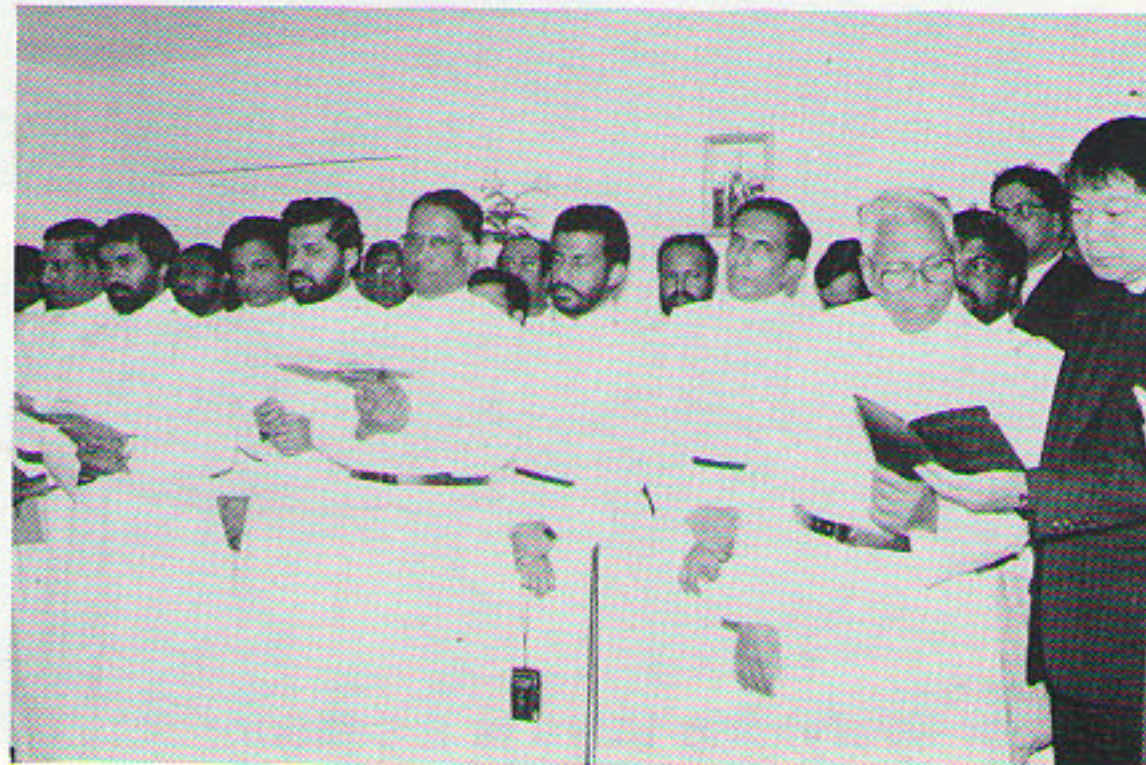
Bus rides

His Rev. Dr. James Kutchy, Secretary, Ecumenical Fellowship of Philadelphia, His Mayor John Abraham of Toronto, Rev. Dr. George Williams of the Mar Thoma Church, and other guests were present. The Rev. Dr. T.P. Williams, Secretary, welcomed the guests and the Rev. Dr. P.G. George, Diocesan Bishop's Secretary gave words of thanks. Mrs. Annala Abraham of the Mar Thoma Church of Philadelphia was the coordinator of the various programs of the meeting and the Rev. Dr. P.G. George was the reader of devotions.

Earlier in the morning, the Mar



Rev. Dr. Winston Ching and Canon Rev. Dr. Frederick Williams of the Episcopal Church



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GOOD SAMARITAN - One Act Play

Alex Thomas, Boston.

Characters:

Robber I, Robber II, Robber III, Robber IV, Traveler, Levite, Samaritan, Inn Keeper, Priest, One or two persons may act as donkey or may make other alternative.

(Four robbers, while awaiting the arrival of their prey, talk about how they are going to attack and steal money from the travelers).

Robber I - What a lousy day! We have been waiting for a catch for more than two hours. We haven't got even a nibble.

Robber II - We will pick up who ever comes first and do what ever it takes.

Robber III - We must strip search him if needed.

Robber IV - I could hold him down and if he resists we will have to beat him up.

Robber I - Let me make one thing perfectly clear. I will take 40% of what ever we get and you guys can share the rest.

Robber II - Hey! Be quiet. Some one is coming.
(a traveler enters - he asks for direction to go to Jericho)

Traveler - Gentlemen, I need some help. I am coming from Jerusalem. Could you tell me how to go to Jericho.

Robber III - (Looking for a reason to start up an argument or fight) Ya ya Certainly, if you could pay for the help.
How much do you have?

Traveler - I am a poor man. I have only a little money with me.

Robber IV - You are a liar. Let's see what you have got. - You want us to believe that you don't have any money with you.

Robber I - Show us your wallet (Robbers block the traveler from moving forward. Traveler shows reluctance to show his wallet.)

Traveler - Leave me alone.
(Robber IV holds the traveler. Robber II shows a knife. Robber III-strips the traveler's clothes - They all started beating him up. Robber I takes the wallet - counts the money. Finally they left the traveler half-dead.)

Robber I - Let's go boys. We have enough for the day.
(Thieves disappear - A priest come in. The priest sees the traveler who was lying down on the floor. The traveler has been crying for help. The priest paused for a moment and thought what to do.)

Priest - What happened to this fellow? Is he drunk? Or is he on drugs? In any case even if he is genuine he will have to wait for some one else. Otherwise, I will be late for church. After all I owe it to my congregation. Besides my robes may get soiled if I stay here to help him. Sorry fellow, I am in a big hurry. I am sure, someone else will be coming along. (The traveler cries

BIBLE WORD SEARCH

[Based on the Gospel of John]

"I AM Sayings of Jesus Christ as in NIV

S	H	O	B	T	S	P	K	L	G	J	N	W	K	P	L	S	M
N	S	H	I	E	K	Y	A	P	P	K	S	H	O	T	L	N	M
P	D	A	O	G	O	O	D	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	I	K
R	E	R	B	N	I	T	A	L	R	U	S	E	R	U	L	G	H
E	J	B	C	F	A	M	E	L	Q	R	S	K	J	T	I	D	T
S	C	H	R	I	S	E	R	N	K	L	E	M	O	H	F	S	T
U	A	A	C	G	A	P	B	T	E	F	S	H	X	C	E	E	F
R	U	E	V	I	N	R	R	U	R	T	L	I	F	P	W	A	C
R	J	L	K	S	P	B	Y	H	D	U	N	I	B	N	J	K	A
E	N	M	O	S	P	R	R	I	T	L	E	K	J	S	G	M	O
C	G	A	T	E	W	V	O	H	U	T	S	V	R	Y	A	W	P
T	X	K	V	M	U	J	G	K	L	J	V	I	I	N	P	T	R
I	S	K	D	C	S	I	F	I	U	D	I	S	J	N	E	R	U
O	G	O	O	B	L	I	F	L	O	O	K	H	O	D	E	U	T
N	E	C	T	D	Y	L	K	R	U	N	P	A	E	S	H	T	S
R	U	S	E	R	S	J	P	T	E	P	S	L	N	K	S	P	J

- 1 Jesus Said: I am the _____ of _____ [John 6:35]
- 2 Jesus Said: I am the _____ of the _____ [John 8:12]
- 3 Jesus Said: I am the _____ for the _____ [John 10:7]
- 4 Jesus Said: I am the _____ [John 10:11]
- 5 Jesus Said: I am the _____ and the _____ [John 11:25]
- 6 Jesus Said: I am the _____, the _____, and the _____ [John 14:6]
- 7 Jesus Said: I am the _____ [John 15:1]

Mrs. Mini John, Los Angeles

BIBLE WORD SEARCH FINDERS (JANUARY 1994)		
1	Shelby Mathew	Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston
2	Toby Mathew	Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston
3	Samuel Thomas	Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston
4	Sheba Susan Philip	Boston Mar Thoma Church
5	Arun Joseph Thomas	Boston Mar Thoma Church
6	Ajit Joseph Thomas	Boston Mar Thoma Church
7	Asha Deena Alex	Boston Mar Thoma Church
8	Anu T. Alex	Boston Mar Thoma Church
9	Patrick Manuel Philip	Boston Mar Thoma Church
10	Jerin Easow Philip	Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Edmonton
11	Jinsy A. Mammen	Mar Thoma Church of Los Angeles
12	Rajini Joseph Thomas	Mar Thoma Church, Seattle
12	Tony & Toby John Panicker	Mar Thoma Church of Oklahoma
13	Cynthia & Tricia Paul	Bethel Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia

BIBLE CROSSWORD PUZZLE

[Based on the book of Joshua, Judges & Ruth, as in NIV]

1				2					3			4
	5	6					7					
8		9	10					11				
								12				
						13	14					
								15		16	17	18
19												
20												
	21										22	
23												
	24											

ACROSS

- 1 Gideon built an altar to the Lord in Ophrah of the Abiezrites and called it ___. [Jud.6]
- 6 Husband of the prophetess Deborah
- 8 A man from a hill country of Ehpraim who had a shrine. He appointed a levite from Bethlehem as his priest.
- 12 A judge in Israel son of Joash. He was raised up by God to defend Israel against the midianites.
- 14 Son of Kenaz. As one of the judges of Israel he delivered the Israelites from the cruel oppression of cushan - Rishathaim - King of Aram.
- 15 Joshua led the people of Israel safely through this river in to the promised land.
- 19 At this place Joshua made a covenant with God for the people and drew up for them decrees and laws. [6 letters] [Jos.24]
- 20 "Out of the ___, Something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet" (Judges 14).
- 21 A woman of Jericho who promised Joshua's spies protected.
- 22 King of Bashan (Joshua 9).
- 23 Son of Gideon who became a judge over the Israelites and ruled for three years.
- 24 A Jude in Israel Son of Hillel. He led the Israel for eight years.

DOWN

- 1 Joshua was buried here. This place is also known as Timnath Heres. [Jos:24]
- 2 The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in this place where Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress. [Jud.6]
- 3 A left handed man the son of Gera from the tribe of Benjamin (4 letters).
- 4 A Zebulinite Judge who led Israel for ten years (4 letters) {Judges: 12}
- 5 The city of Hebron was formerly called like this [Jud:1].
- 7 A prophetess in Israel wife of Lappidoth.

- 9 Son of Jephunneh of the tribe of Judah. After the Israelites entered the promised land he received Hebron as his share of the land (5 letters) [Jos: 14].
- 10 Son of Carmi of the tribe of Judah. Through covetousness he kept some of the spoils of Jericho contrary to the commandment of God. (5 letters).
- 11 King of Heshbon [Joshua :9].
- 13 Wife of Elimelech and mother - in-law of Ruth.
- 15 Joshua sent two spies to explore the land of Canaan especially the city of
- 16 A Moabite woman. She was the grand-mother of Jesse the father of David.
- 17 A woman of the valley of Sorek. She was loved by Samson but betrayed him to the Philistines.
- 18 Father of Barak [Jud:4].

Mrs. Mini John, Los Angeles

BIBLE CROSSWORD PUZZLE WINNERS (JANUARY 1994)		
1	Sheba Susan Philip	Boston Mar Thoma Church
2	Asha Deena Alex	Boston Mar Thoma Church
3	Anu Alex	Boston Mar Thoma Church
4	Rajini Joseph	Mar Thoma Church, Seattle
5	Jinsy A. Mammen	Mar Thoma Church of Los Angeles

Cont'd from page 22)

and coughs. Priest leaves the stage. Then a Levite comes in. He also looked at the injured traveler for a moment and says:)

Levite - Hey! Some one has beaten this fellow up and very badly too. (Pause for a moment). If I stay here people might think that I have something to do with this. I am sure the police might be on their way. (To the traveler) you better cry louder for help. (Traveler cries - Levite leaves the stage. A Samaritan enters with a donkey. He saw the injured traveler. He was shocked. He shows sympathy. He lifts the traveler up and asks:)

Samaritan - Brother what happened to you? You are beaten up. Who did this to you? How did it happen? Do you have any relatives nearby? Where can I take you? (Traveler coughs).

Traveler - No. Sir. I am not from this area. I come from Jerusalem. I have no friend or relatives here. I was robbed and beaten up by four men. (coughs and cries).

Samaritan - Let me clean you up a little. And then I will put some wine and oil and bind up your wounds. (Samaritan does all that).

Traveler - Just imagine! A priest passed by a little while ago. He did not care to help. You are most kind. Thank you very much for your help.

Samaritan - Please do not thank me. We should thank God that your wounds are not any worse. Let me take you to a nearby Inn and you can take rest there until you are completely healed.

Traveler - But sir, please don't worry. You have helped me enough. I don't have any money to stay at the Inn.

Samaritan - Look here friend, God has placed us in this world to look after each other, especially when we are in need. So let me take care of this now. (They leave the stage, curtain falls)

NEWS FROM DIOCESE/PARISHES

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESAN SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Diocesan Committee held its annual meeting at St. Peter's Mar Thoma Church, N.Y. and elected officers for the new term. The fourteen member committee is comprised of the Diocesan Bishop, the President, Secretary, and Treasurer for each of the four regions, and a representative elected from the Diocesan Assembly. Present members of the committee are: The Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus (Patron), Rev. Thomas Alexander from New York (President), Mr. P.M. Jacob from Houston (Secretary), Mr. O.C. Abraham from Philadelphia (Treasurer), Dr. Mrs. Annamma Sadhu from Chicago (Sunday School Representative to the Diocesan Assembly), Mr. T.A. Abraham from Chicago (Diocesan Assembly Representative), Rev. George Mathew from Chicago, Rev. Eapen Cherian from Dallas, Rev. Mathew K. John from New Jersey, Mr. Babu T. George from Houston, Mr. Saji Mathew from Chicago, Mr. Thomas Mathew from New Jersey, Mr. Daniel Thomas from New York, and Mr. John K. George from New York.

The Committee discussed several proposals aimed at strengthening the various Diocesan level activities. Areas of initial focus will be increased communications, greater emphasis on teacher training, and making information/resource materials available to individual Sunday schools.

The 1994 Diocesan Sunday School examination for the Junior and Junior High divisions will be held on May 1, 1994. About 700 students representing 23 Sunday Schools, have registered for the examination. Trophies will be awarded to those who secure first, second, and third places. Certificates will be awarded to those with scores of 90% or higher.

P.M. Jacob,
Diocesan Sunday School Secretary

XV NATIONAL MAR THOMA YOUTH CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA & U.K.

This year the Conference will be held at George School in Newtown, PA from August 17-20, 1994. The speakers for the Conference will be Rev. Peter Pareria, Dr. Rev. William Barker, and Miss Vinitha Athyal. The theme of the Conference will be **THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD** with focus on Ephesians 6:10. The Conference will be divided into three tracks: Enlistment, Boot camp, and Tour of Duty. All delegates will be given the opportunity to identify their preference and they shall be placed in tracks according to availability. Descriptions of each track shall appear on the registration brochure. To be eligible to participate, all delegates must be Mar Thoma youths, ages 18 to 27 and/or have completed the twelfth grade. Details regarding the speakers, venue, cost, and eligibility to participate shall be found in the Conference brochure which will be sent out to all the parishes.

If you would like further information or have suggestions regarding the planning of the conference please contact any of the following:

Rev. M.P. Yohannan -	President,	(215) 927-3998,
Sunny Abraham -	Senior Advisor,	(610) 876-8011,
Fenu Cherian -	Vice President,	(610) 876-2368,
Sajini Mathew -	Secretary,	(610) 544-5591.

NEW JERSEY MAR THOMA CHURCH

The annual retreat of our Church was arranged on March 5, 1994. The theme for the retreat was "Christian Fellowship". Rev. Thomas George and Rev. Mathew John were the leaders.

A visit to the local Nursing Home was arranged on March 12, by the members of our Youth Fellowship.

A retreat for the members of the Executive Committees of both St. Peter's Mar Thoma Church, Teaneck and New Jersey Mar Thoma Church, Newark was arranged on April 10. Rev. Y. George of the Toronto Mar Thoma Church and Rev. Mathew John were the leaders.

A dedication service for all Sunday School teachers, office bearers of the auxiliary organizations and the Ex. Committee was conducted on Sunday April 17.



NJ Mar Thoma Church Sunday School Children who got 1st prize in Sunday School Regional Exam.

Andrew Pappachen

EMMANUEL MAR THOMA CHURCH, LUBBOCK, TEXAS

The year 1994 started with a three day worship in our newly built sanctuary. On the eve of December 31st a midnight candle-light service was conducted. On January 1st, being a Saturday, we had a prayer meeting. On January 2nd, Holy Communion service was conducted in English. All the parishioners and many guests attended the worship. Prayer meetings and worship services are conducted on Saturdays and Sundays of the month.

During the early spring break, March 11th, 12th, & 13th, the Texas/Oklahoma Center of the Western Regional Youth, Sevika Sanghom & Edavaka Mission conferences were conducted here at our church. This is the first time all the three organizations could conduct their meetings at the same time and place.

The main leader of the conference was Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus, our newly appointed Diocesan Bishop. The speakers were Rev. Y. George from Toronto, Canada; Rev. Mathew Joseph & Rev. Ninan Jacob from Dallas; Rev. Eapen Cherian from Lubbock. The theme for the conference was "Church, A community of faith, hope &



Sevika Sanghom Meeting

love." The sessions started with a sing along headed by Mr. Junior Vasquez of the Burning Heart Gospel Singers. All the speakers dealt the topics in depth, which was rejuvenating to the participations. There was a combined panel discussion arranged. Mr. George Poikail chaired as the main moderator. Many questions pertaining to family and church life were discussed. In the light of the discussion, the youth expressed their faith in the Mar Thoma church and were willing to shoulder the future of the church in this western hemisphere. During the close of the meeting many people rededicated themselves. Three young people came forward to dedicate their lives and commit themselves for theological studies and service as clergymen in the American society.



Talent Night - Youth group

The conference concluded with Sunday morning worship led by our Thirumeni. It was a joyous occasion for the guests and the hosts.

Dr. P. John Lincoln

MAR THOMA CHURCH OF GREATER WASHINGTON

The Mar Thoma Church of Greater Washington conducts services at the St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Adelphi, Maryland. Most of our members reside in the vicinity of the Washington Metropolitan Virginia. Our church membership continued to grow. We, now, have sixty five (65) registered families consisting of 296 individual members.

We have a great Sunday School program, flourishing Youth League, well organized Sevika Sanghom, highly spirited Edavaka Mission and a talented Choir Group. All these activities work cohesively under the vicarship of the Rev. Gaevarughese Mathew.

During the Holy week, combined services were conducted with the Baltimore Mar Thoma Church. Palm Sunday and Good Friday services were held at Baltimore and Easter Sunday Communion service was held in Washington.

We need a sanctuary of our own for our worship and other church related activities. We are looking for a church building to buy, if not available, we have to build one. To this extent, our Sevika Sanghom is sponsoring a variety entertainment program on May 28, 1994 to raise funds for the building project. We request your prayers to fulfil our desire.

Nava Roy

TRINITY MAR THOMA CHURCH, EDMONTON, CANADA

Watchnight service was arranged on December 31, 1993 at our church. It was an occasion for our members to rededicate their lives to Christ.

The annual meeting of the Sevika Sanghom was held on January 8, 1994 and the annual report for the year 1993 was presented by Mrs. Annamma Thengumpally.

The annual meeting of the Sunday School was held on February 13, 1994 and the annual report

for the year 1993 was presented by Mr. Rajan Daniel. Prizes were awarded to winners of both examinations and various competition.

The annual general body meeting was held on March 6, 1994 to transact different church businesses. The vicar Rev. Philip Easow presided the meeting. Mr. Jose Thengumpally presented the annual report and Mr. Joseph Abraham presented the accounts for the year 1993.

Rajan Daniel, Diocesan Assembly Member

ST. PETER'S MAR THOMA CHURCH, TEANECK, NEW JERSEY

On January 23rd Sunday our Sunday School anniversary for the year 1993 was held in our church. Mr. O.C. Abraham, Sunday School Co-ordinator for the Eastern Region was the Chief Guest.

On Sunday March 6th, our Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus visited our parish and celebrated Holy Communion. A dedication service for the office bearers of the church and its organizations was held on that day. A reception was given to our beloved Thirumeni after the service. Hon. Mayor of Teaneck, John Abraham, Rev. Richard Chasse of the Episcopal Church and various other guests were also present during this reception.

On March 19th, Saturday our parish hosted the Regional meeting of the Edavaka Mission. All Achens from this region and about 160 people attended this meeting. Rev. Geevarghese Mathew, was the main leader. The theme of the meeting was "fellowship".

Our parish also hosted the Regional Youth Fellowship meeting on Saturday, April 2nd. Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Episcopa was the main leader of this meeting. The theme was "Bearing the Cross". All Achens from this region and about 350 youth fellowship members attended this meeting. About 20 youths shared their life experiences and committed their lives to Jesus Christ.

Thomas Thuthikadathil, Secretary

MAR THOMA CHURCH OF LOS ANGELES

Our Sevika Sanghom celebrated its Anniversary on Sunday the 8th of January after service. Dr. Sakhi Athyal was the main speaker.

Our beloved Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Episcopa Thirumeni visited our parish from March 15 - 20. We celebrated his visit with great enthusiasm and joy. Thirumeni's visit provided us with a new motivation and encouragement towards the ministry and mission of the Church.

Besides three of the cottage prayer meetings in which we had opportunity to have more closer interaction and communication with Thirumeni on the 19th of March and we arranged a public reception and ecumenical meeting on the 20th after noon at our Church.

The Youth of our parish reflected on the theme, "Youth involvement in the Church - challenges and possibilities."

The public reception and ecumenical meeting was a new experience in our church life. Rev. Dr. G. Douglas Eberly, Rector, Grace Episcopal Church gave the key note address on the theme "Ecumenism in a culturally diversified context." Leaders/Pastors from Syrian Orthodox Church, Lutheran Church, Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church and representatives of some other Christian organizations like World Vision gave facilitations to Thirumeni and reflected on the theme. The city of Glendora protem Mayor,

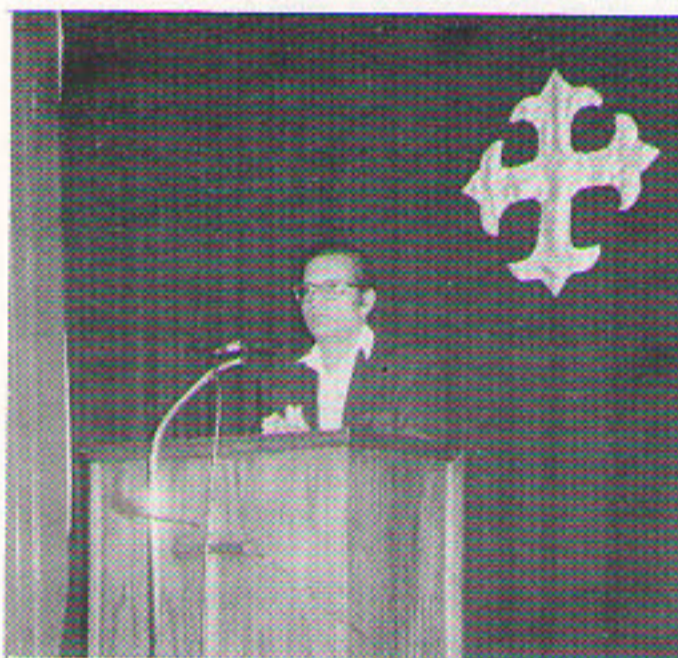
Mr. Marshall Moow presented a plaque to Thirumeni in honor of his visit to Los Angeles area. After the meeting we hosted a dinner for the guests at the Holiday Inn. The co-ordinator was Dr. Jacob O. Mathew.

We conducted the Sunday School annual talent competition on the 26th of March and Sunday School anniversary on the 3rd of April after service.

Rt. Rev. K.J. Samuel, C.S.I. Bishop for the East Kerala Diocese celebrated Holy Communion Service for us according to C.S.I liturgy on April 24th. He has reminded the congregation that it is the responsibility of every member to pray for and work towards the evangelization of India. He added that the Mar Thoma Church and the C.S.I. Church should join together towards this goal. Samuel Thirumeni prayed for God's help to enable our two churches to work together and send 2000 evangelists instead of 100 in 1995 when Maramon Convention celebrates its centenary. He also called upon the members to make it a habit of setting a part tithe from their income.



Our annual Convention was held from April 28th through May 1, 1994. Mr. George Varghese from Pullad was the speaker this



year. It was a real blessing to our members and also to the guests who attended the Convention from our sister churches. He dealt with a different theme each evening and for the concluding session on Sunday, May 1st. The themes for the four-day talks were -

- 1) Who is the blessed persons?
- 2) Who is the greatest in God's presence?
- 3) Is yours a sleeping church?
- 4) Our 'Aradhana' - Are we doing it as a Sunday morning routine?

About 90% of the people who attended the Saturday evening session and Sunday session, stood up and dedicated their lives to Jesus Christ.



Rt.Rev.Dr.ZachariasMar Theophilus with representatives from Episcopal,Lutheran,Presbyterian, Methodist, Syrian Orthodox Church, Kerala Catholic Church and World Vision after the Ecumenical Meeting held at Los Angeles.



The Rt.Rev.Dr.Frederick H. Borsch and The Rt.Rev.Dr.Zacharias Mar Theophilus at their meeting on March 17,'94 in Los Angeles

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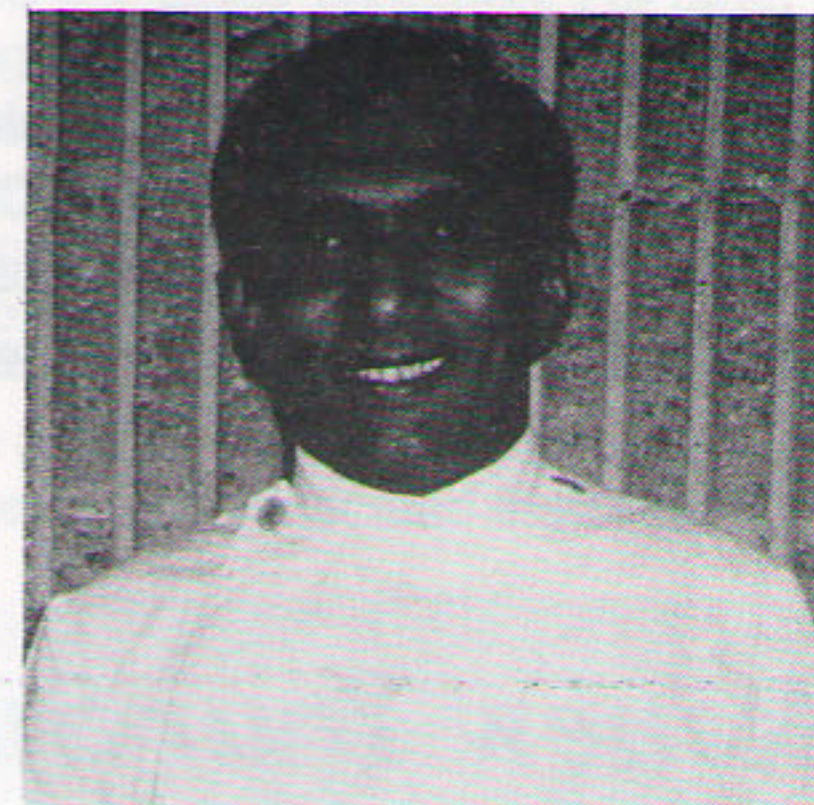
WELCOME TO OUR NEW ACHENS

Three new achen have joined our diocese in the last couple of months. The *Messenger* and its readers welcome these achen and wish each one of them the very best during their ministry in our diocese:

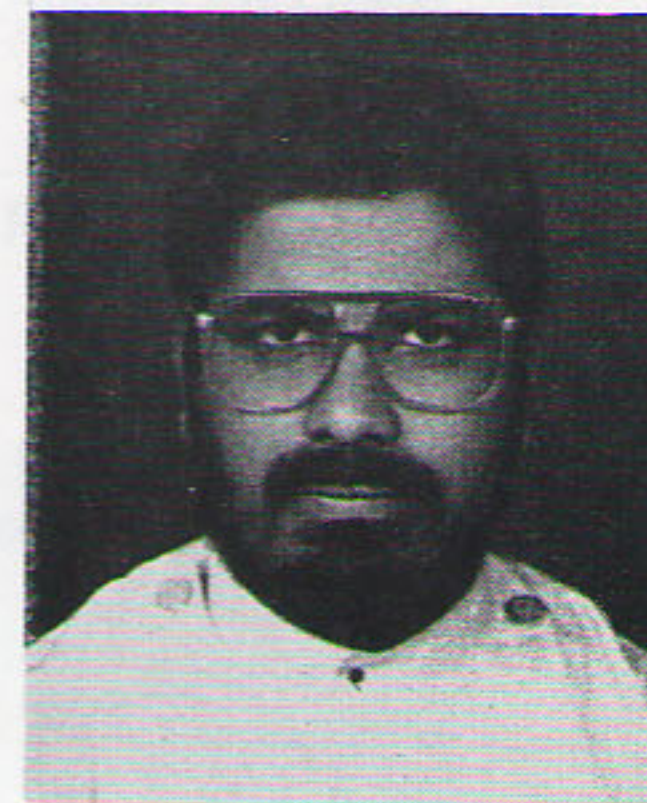
REV. RAJU GEORGE ANCHERY has taken over the parish responsibilities of the Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston from April 1994. He is from Kottayam. After graduating from Kerala University, he joined Tirupathi University for his post graduate studies. He also studied at U.T.C. Bangalore from where he got his B.D. degree. He took his M.Th. from Federated Faculty, Kottayam. He served as a part-time teacher at the Mar Thoma Seminary. He also served as Assistant Secretary of the Yuvajana Sakyam for three years and as Vice-President for two years. Anchery achen translated many books from English to Malayalam. He served in Punnaveley and Kozhenchery parishes. His wife Latha George is from Punalur. They have a son, Deepu 11 years and a daughter Shalin 7 years.



REV. OOMMEN PHILIP is the new vicar of the Long Island Mar Thoma Church. Achen is from Mavelikara, He is a graduate of the Christian College, Chengannur and took his B.D. Degree from Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam. Parishes that he served before he was transferred to New York, include Rajkot, Rourkela, Adoor and Calcutta. Kochamma (Jessy Oommen) is from Kidangannor. They have two daughters - Eliza 9 years and Sharon 2 1/2 years.



REV. JAMES THOMAS is our new achen for our Detroit Mar Thoma Church. He hails from Kayamkulam. Achen graduated from the Kerala University in 1982 and from Leonard Theological Seminary, Jabalpur in 1986. James Thomas achen served in parishes before he was transferred to Detroit, such as Bombay Colaba, Santa Cruz and Chengannur. Kochamma, Anita James, is from Elanthoor. They have two children -Jewel 4 years and Gem 2 years.



Rev. Y. George, Vicar of the Toronto, Kingston, Montreal and Ottawa parishes was transferred to New Delhi as Diocesan and Bishop's Secretary with effect from May 1, 1994. **Rev. Philip Varughese** is now serving as the acting vicar of the Mar Thoma Church of Toronto until such time a new vicar takes up the parish responsibilities. The *Messenger* and its readers wish both George and Varughese achen all the best.

FELLOWSHIP OF MAR THOMA PHYSICIANS & DENTISTS, NORTH AMERICA

*"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden,
and I shall give you rest"*

The third annual meeting and retreat of the Mar Thoma Physicians and Dentists, will be held August 19 through August 21, 1994.

Location: Warwick Conference Center, 249 Hoyt Road, Warwick, N.Y 10990. This is a mountain top retreat center of the Reformed Church located in the scenic lower Catskill of New York State. Facilities include 400 acre scenic nature land with hiking trails, tennis courts, basketball courts and play areas.

Speaker: The spiritual leader for this year's conference is
Bishop Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus

Please reserve August 19, 20 and 21 in your calendar.

Information, travel directions and registration forms will be mailed later.

For information please call:

Thomas Abraham, M.D (201) 670-8126,

John Abraham, M.D. (718) 273-7609,

Alex Thomas, M.D (215) 868-1879,

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MAR THOMA CONFERENCE 94 - MAR THOMA CHURCH, U.K.

Theme: "Let Christ Shine on you"

Venue: High Leigh Conference Center, Hoddesdon.

Date: 5th - 7th, August 1994

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the precious name of Jesus.

We have started preparations for our 12th Annual Conference. We want you to note the date in your diary and pray to participate in this very special event. Over the last few years the Lord has been speaking to us, through the prophetic ministry of His Word to warn us and to equip us amidst the crisis in the nations. Oh how much we need to hear and respond to God's Word. Our Lord says - as it was in the days of Noah - so shall it be in the last days. Jesus is the ARK in whom we need to take refuge. We are coming together at this 12th Conference, not just to hear the Word of the Lord - but to receive a new touch from the Lord - That Jesus may shine upon each one of us.

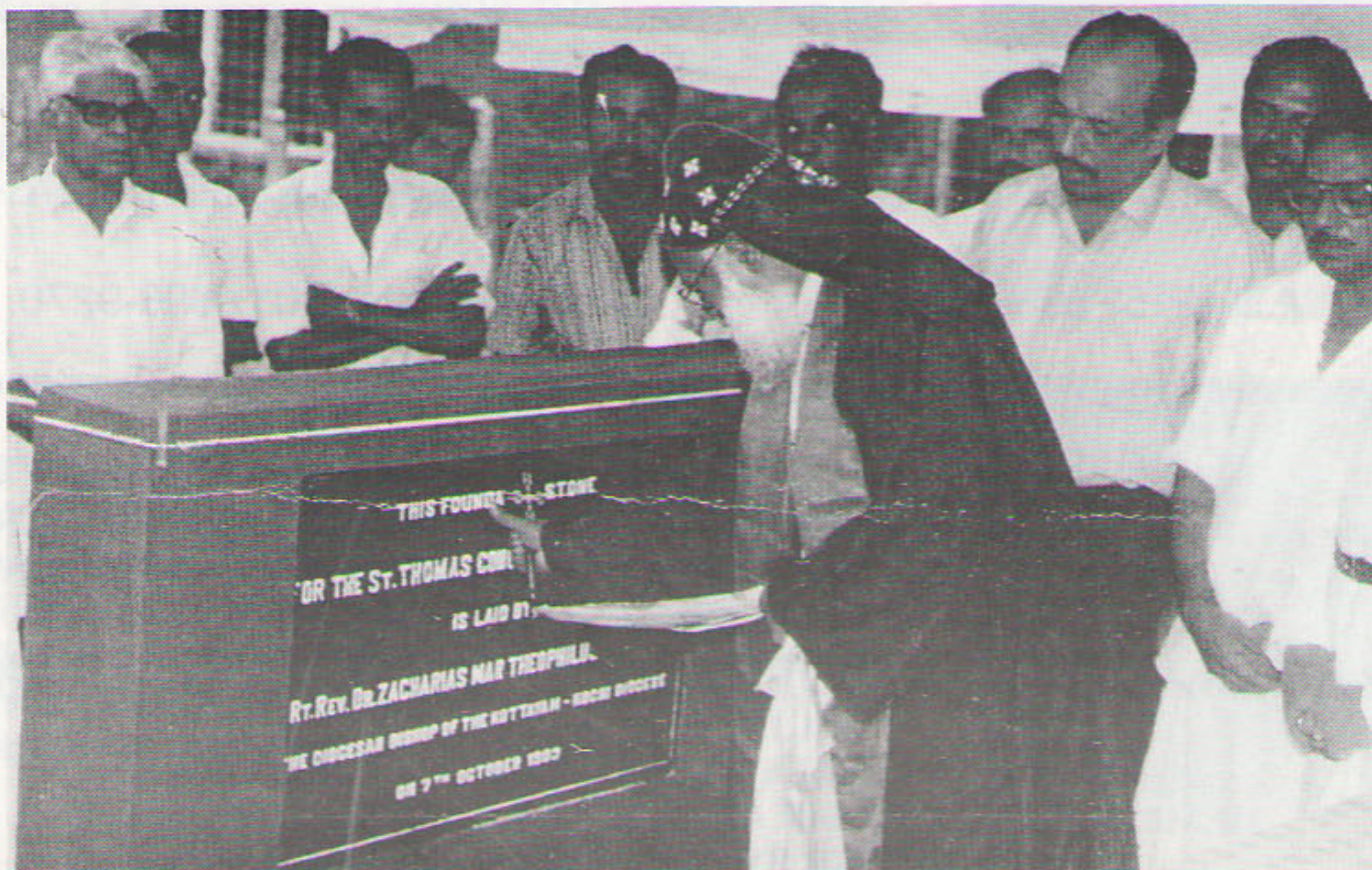
Please join hands with us and pray that this will be a very blessed conference.

We have booked the whole center (up to 200 seats) so that as many would get the opportunity to come to this great event. Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus will be one of the speakers of the conference.

We will keep you updated as we finalize the various details. In the mean time stay blessed and guard yourself from the spirit of discouragement.

Contacts: Rev. Abey T. Mammen - (081) 471-2446 Koshy Abraham - (081) 572-8929

AN APPEAL TO BUILD THE ST. THOMAS MAR THOMA CHAPEL IN KARUKARCHAL



Foundation stone being laid by Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus on Oct. 4, 1993

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the name of our Lord from a few scattered Mar Thoma believers in and around Karukachal/Champakara. We, the Mar Thoma people have been here for several years without a worship place of our own, though it has been a long cherished dream and vision of our forefathers for the past 50 years. Some of us have been traveling quite far to attend a Mar Thoma Church Service. In view of this great

need, we submitted a request to Zacharias Thirumeni, our Bhadrāsana Bishop to gather as a prayer fellowship and start collecting funds for building a chapel. On October 4, the permission was granted and we have been gathering as a prayer fellowship in the Mar Thoma homes. Mean while we spotted an ideal site about 10 cents at Karukachal-Kottayam (main) road. The Lord enabled us to raise Rs. 107,000/- with which we purchased the land and registered in the name of Zacharias Thirumeni according to the regulations of the Mar Thoma Church on 28-8-93. On 6-9-93, Zacharias Thirumeni blessed the congregation naming it as the "St. Thomas Congregation" and permitted the congregation to build the chapel. On October 7, 1993 Thirumeni laid the foundation stone of the chapel in the presence of over 500 people from Karukachal and Champakara with several Hindu leaders and Govt. officials attending. Thirumeni appointed Rev. J. J. George for occasional ministerial services.

As some of you know, Karukachal/Champakara is highly dominated by a Hindu community, hence the worship place could serve as an outreach to the neighboring community. Since there is no Orthodox/Jacobite or C.S.I. Church in this area, this would be an ecumenical worship place for people of other denomination as well.

We have built a small shed and started worship service. There are 15 Mar Thoma families but only four or five families are financially able to support. We have done our best in collecting Rs.25,000.00 more from our people and we need Rs.2 lakhs (\$7000.00) to finish the chapel. Therefore we now turn to our beloved Mar Thoma Church members and other friends from overseas to assist us in our humble effort to build a small chapel for spiritual growth and Christian witness for the glory of God. We count on you to give generously. May the Lord bless you and reward you all according to His riches in glory. Thanks in advance for your generous help. Please send your contributions to:

Dr. Mathew Oonnukallil, Eye Hospital, Karukachal, Kerala.

BOSTON MAR THOMA CHURCH

A joint service of the Mar Thoma Church and St. Mark Episcopal Church was held on February 13, 1994. Rev. Carol Fletcher of St. Mark and Rev. Alexander M. Isaac of the Mar Thoma Church gave effective sermons calling on people to come closer to God in their every day life.

The Sunday School children of St. Mark sang an action song in which the whole congregation took part. The Church was filled to capacity and the atmosphere in the church was sincere and friendly.

The joint church service was followed by a fellowship hour in the basement. Members of both churches brought their respective foods and so there was a mingling of East and West in the food that was served on this auspicious day.

The service and fellowship hour was such a grand success that many members of both churches did express the idea of more frequent joint services.

On the whole the occasion was a grand success and more such occasions where people of different cultures can come together to worship the living God should be planned and carried out all over U.S.A. When this happens the American people can relate more closely with the Marthomites and help to further strengthen our ties and one can be certain of both sides, picking up useful ideas from each other.

Philip Manuel, Boston

MATRIMONIAL

Marthomite parents invite proposals for their daughter 26 years, Indian born U.S. Citizen, 5'2" graduating M.D. with charming personality and pleasing manners from parents of Doctors, Engineers, or CPAs between 26-30 years. Doctors/Engineers from India doing residency or post graduate studies in U.S. are also considered. Marthomite, C.S.I or Jacobite preferred. Please reply to Box No. MC494 C/o The Editor, The Mar Thoma Messenger.

To our readers:

April issue being late.

The April issue of the Messenger is being mailed out to you rather late this time. While there were some extenuating circumstances for the delay, we wanted to include the details of the dedication and the inauguration of the Mar Thoma Center in Philadelphia on April 9, 1994. We also wanted to include the proceedings of the Assembly Meeting held from April 7-9, 1994.

Themes for the next two issues.

Last issue dealt with the theme "Christian response to Family Issues" and the current issue deals with the theme "Christian Response to Social Issues". The next two issues (July & October 1994) will deal with the following themes:

"Christian Response to Moral Issues" and " Christian Response to Global Issues"

Non-receipt of Messenger copies.

If you are sure that you renewed the subscription and that you didn't get the copy of the Messenger, we would very much appreciate if you would kindly drop in a line to the Treasurer Mr. Abraham Philipose, 11609 Malden, Cypress, Ca 90630 showing the date and amount of payment to enable us to correct our subscription list. Please note that we affix a red sticker at the time when your subscription is about to expire and if you fail to renew it, the name would be taken out of the list.

Articles for publication:

Please send us regularly articles of interests to our children and adults for publication in the Messenger. Parents should encourage their children to write articles/dramas/poetry etc. to the Messenger. Also please send us your comments on the articles published, editorials or on any other subject or subjects that are of interests to us in the form of 'Letter to the Editor'. It's in the best interests of our Church, our Diocese and our community that we exchange ideas, opinions and if need be, constructive criticisms. ...The Editor.

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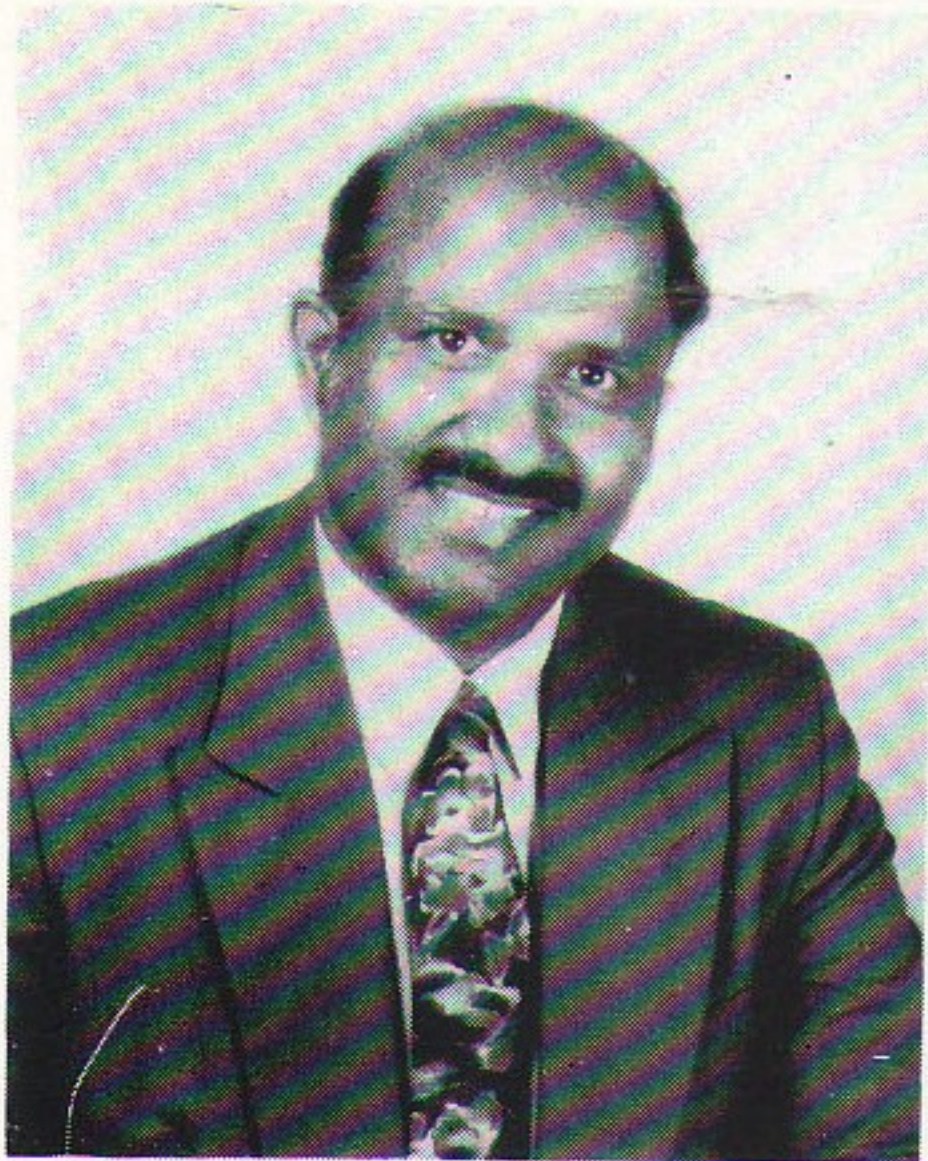
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Sadu Sunder Singh - Biography by P.K. Varghese	2.99
Puthiya Akasam Puthiya Bhoomi by Rev. Joseph Ayrookuzhy	2.00
1994 Maramon Convention Songs with Cassette tape	5.00

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We pay the highest interest rates allowed by law on money deposited in India. No bank can pay higher rates on Foreign Currency Non-Resident (FCNR) or Non-Resident External (NRE Rupee) accounts.

Multi-Currency option

FCNR deposits are available in a choice of 4 currencies - US Dollars, British Pounds, Deutsche Marks and Japanese Yen.

Foreign Currency (Ordinary Non-Repatriable) Deposit Scheme

5-year dollar denominated FCNR deposits repayable in non-repatriable rupees are available with attractive features such as high interest rate and the facility of gifting.

Fast, efficient service

You are a valued customer at SBI, not an account number on a computer screen. Our employees give you fast, efficient service with up-to-date account information. Deposit your money in India and get personal banking service with all the benefits of modern banking technology. Our computerized services are spreading in India to continually improve our services for you.

It's easy to bank with SBI

Open and operate your accounts by mail. Or call us toll free to get current interest and exchange rates, account application forms or for information about your personal banking needs.

Branches where you need them

When you bank with India, it is not good enough to have branches only in Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi and Madras. Your choice is not restricted to these 4 centers. You can choose from a wide choice of branches where you can open accounts.

You can benefit by banking with SBI

- * No income, wealth or gift tax in India
- * Low minimum balances; Low service charges for various services
- * FCNR and NRE deposits are fully repatriable in dollars

**CALL TOLL-FREE 1-800-227-4309
(for deposit schemes)**

STATE BANK OF INDIA where your
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