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MESSENGER

A PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

JANUARY 1994

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FROM THE EDITOR

Now that the Christmas and New Year celebrations are over, it's time to take a calm look back at 1993, list some of our achievements and failures and ponder over it to see that each of us has done our part to turn our failures into crowning successes. Those who are success oriented will continue to succeed despite the short term adversities they face in life. The challenge to succeed, no matter what they do, is often a driving force in their life. On the contrary, little will change for those who accept failure as a way of life. They scurry about seeking a way out of the maze of life. But even if they found an exit, it is almost impossible for them to alter the way of life. Like in the case of all individuals, we as a community, had our own share of success and failures. Compared to most other ethnic communities, we are success oriented and our achievements outweigh our failures. For many success is something that was not given to them on a silver platter, but behind each success story, one can find a series of struggles and obstacles each one of them faced on his or her road to success. Their perseverance and determination did not allow them to rationalize their failures by citing a host of drawbacks and excuses. Their impediments in life, rather than allowing it to become obstacles, became challenges to overcome.

With the establishment of a Mar Thoma Center in Pennsylvania and stationing of a diocesan bishop for our diocese from November 1993, we entered a new phase in our church life. There is a bishop in our midst for the most part of the year to understand our problems and our frustrations first hand, to share our joys and achievements, to motivate and give a new direction to our youth and above all to help us lead everyday a righteous and God-centered life. But we as

individuals and parents have to do our part as well. It's rather easy for any one of us to sit on the sideline and watch the events unfold. If the consequences are not of our liking, it's easy for us to criticize those who are involved in or part of the event. It's easier for us to point finger at others than at ourselves. We have to get involved- in anything and everything that affects us as individuals and as a community. Each of us is bestowed with different talents and unless our God given talents are used for the benefit of ourselves, our community and the community we live in, the purpose of our life in this transitory world remains unfulfilled.

Individuals have two divine gifts: intelligence and free choice. They can use them for positive or negative ends. One can curse the darkness or light a candle. We can either be a part of the problem or part of the solution. The former needs no talent or conviction nor does it need any sacrifice of time or money on our part. But to be a part of the solution often requires self-discipline, determination and selfless motives. For our children, we parents are their first role models. They emulate our examples from their early childhood on. In many a case, we as parents are to blame ourselves for not being able to be good role models for them. Merely complaining about inadequate resources available in the church will serve no useful purpose. That doesn't mean the Church doesn't have to provide us and our children resources such as Christian counseling centers, or youth workers etc. The surest way for anyone to become a loser is to wait for someone to take charge of his or her life. Those who wait will wait in vain. The ensuing year provides an opportunity not only for our young people but for all of us to assume responsibility for our own lives.



MAR THOMA SYRIAN CHURCH

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November 19, 1993

MESSAGE

I am very happy to greet you all through the Mar Thoma Messenger, the official publication of the Diocese of North America and Europe. As the new Diocesan Bishop, I am looking forward with great expectation the input and output of the Messenger in the coming years. The Messenger had contributed a lot in shaping the thoughts and deeds of our community during the past few years. I am very happy at the standard maintained so far and hope and wish it would improve more in giving challenges and making changes in the life and work of our people.



We are entering a new stage in the life of the Diocese with the presence of a resident Bishop. We have built up several Church buildings. We need to build up a more coherent, contributive and co-operative community. New community centered on Jesus Christ, inclusive of all God's people, should be our vision and focus in the coming years. I am sure children, youth, women, aged all will work hand in hand to build up this new community, the kingdom of God among the kingdoms of this world. My prayers, presence and participation will be with you till God permits.

With prayers and blessings,

Yours in Christ's love,

(Bishop Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus)

LETTERS FROM READERS

QUOTABLE QUOTES

One of your readers in the October issue refers to the amount of "useless trivial thoughts" that is to be found in the columns of the *Mar Thoma Messenger*. Whether or not you, in fact, publish such "trivial thoughts" is a personal and subjective judgement for the gentleman concerned, but a sure way of avoiding such criticisms would be not only to carry on with your high standards of selection and publication of materials, but also to print, each time, a list of people whose contributions you have rejected. The thought of possibly being included in a reject list may improve the quality of contributions. This is not a serious suggestion, but I do have a serious point to make and I do not think that you will "miss the point", because as far as many are concerned, the editor and the members of his board are doing a splendid job in publishing one of the most readable publications of our church and may it ever continue to be so.

Early this year, I had an opportunity to spend a very memorable evening with the Rt. Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom. Then I realized that this will be Thirumeni's last visit to us as our Diocesan Bishop and we were saying good bye to him. Like most people, I have been immensely proud of Thirumeni's ability as a communicator and his ability to educate people by pointing out common every day things in life in the context of the need to live out the Christian faith. Now we are going to miss his vision, humor and wit. I have often wondered why Thirumeni does not write and this may be because he has not got the time needed to sit and record his thoughts. One way round this problem is for us to recollect and record some of Thirumeni's memorable statements. His understanding of our social ironies and its interpretation to paint an almost visual and realistic picture of Christian teaching is amazing. His messages always have a very fresh and refreshing approach and it would be useful for the future generations if some of it could be published in some form or another in the *Messenger*. The following are some examples:

"I am helpless in a helpless society. Intercession is a costly encounter.

Very often Christianity becomes eccentric, but it must always be Christo-centric.

Prayer is not a prescription, prayer is a challenge for action and work is worship.

Christian should develop an aspirin personality, a man or woman designed for lowering temperature and pain.

Think of what you have and not what you lack.

Trying to face life without God is sin. God wants every body to obey

Him and He does not obey any one.

We are a chosen but frozen people.

Because of your past success you have relied too much on your memory of the past.

Be conscious of the consequences of your action."

Some one very clever once said, "How do I know I am right, unless I read what I wrote. How do I now I am right, unless I read what I say the next day."

Dr. Zac Varghese, London, U.K.

YOUTHS: KEEP THEM OR LOSE THEM

Most of the children of the first generation Indian immigrants are of college age. Many of them are going to college but few have finished. I think that they did not receive enough Christian education from our churches or pulpits. They got many promises but nothing materialized. How long do the young people have to wait for some changes?

Let me bring a few facts to our attention, few suggestions for action. As we all know, the United States is a place for higher education of all kinds. Most of our previous and recent Bishops have completed their higher education in the U.S or Canada, and many other clergies have also been educated in the U.S. The main speakers of our Maramon Conventions were from U.S. Now we have an affiliation with the Episcopal church. All of the above facts show that the U.S. is a country where exist ample opportunities for higher learning.

Therefore, my suggestion is that we should select some youth workers from U.S. Seminaries (who have no problem with language, accent, driving, or travel expenses). Select a few workers and try for a while; let us see how they are functioning. Further, ask our youths about their opinions and suggestions. I hope and pray that our leadership in Tiruvella will see this need and consequently implement programs to satisfy our children and young people. If not, we will lose our children from churches. Let us see the needs of the whole congregation rather than just one group. If we are not doing some thing right now, we are going to lose our children from our churches and see many unhappy parents. Our people came here and started prayer groups that grew in number and size to churches. Even when the U.S. economy was hurting, people came here and got jobs and are making a good living, so why not give back some of what we have received through hiring U.S. trained seminarians as our youth workers.

Joy Melethoppil, Detroit.

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN MTC/NURSING HOMES FOR THE ELDERLY

Two articles from the October issue of the *Mar Thoma Messenger* prompted this opinion. First, the role (participation) of women in our Church by Dr. K. V. Varghese. The author laid out statistical data to substantiate the deficiency of women representation, but failed

to rationalize the reason for it. In other words, inculcated the rationale with unsuited elucidations. The total count of women representatives at the Diocesan Assembly or Mandalam is not a conclusive indicator that Mar Thoma Sabha is restricting and discriminating women from administrative and leadership positions. It may not be the constitutional delinquency, (the presence of at least one woman representative justifies constitutional legitimacy), but on the other hand, it may be the individual discretion. What I want to say is, the provision is there, reach out and acquire it, if ambitious. Next, it was not quite clear what the author had in mind about the leadership positions. If it was a solicitation for the ecclesiastic role, I would say, thanks, but no thanks. Don't misunderstand, I believe in equality. However, it is depressing that we often 'mix-up' equality for discipline. Mar Thoma Sabha is not an "EOE" (Equal Opportunity Employer). Instead, she has always stood for the segregation of certain rudiments for the integral preservation of her infrastructure. Failure to the preservation of these rudiments, and the so called equal opportunity fanaticism, has led many of the Western Churches to debase from righteousness and to ordain priests even from a group who defies God's intended law of nature and practice unethical and unrighteous behavior. Therefore, preserve our culture with discipline!

Second, the idea of a "Nursing Home For Our Elderly" by Mr. Abraham Philipose. The idea is in fact good, but rather idealistic. When we talk about building a church, a school, retirement homes, and nursing homes (in this country) we are mistaken and confused about its binding functions and operations. Our priming has to be blamed for this frame of mind.

We have experienced (in the past) the monopolization and domestication of a parochial institution by members of the parish (where the institution dwells) for their benefits. That was our definition of the term "private" and to a great extent, we relished its fringe benefits too. The article titled "Nursing Home For Our Elderly" resonates Marthomites, or at least that is what the article proposed. We cannot segregate and restrict its utilization exclusively for the Marthomites. Being a Christian sanctuary, we cannot sidestep the principles involved, and therefore, must be just to members of other denominations, faith, religion, and race. In addition to that, we must comply with the state and federal nursing home mandates; we don't want to contend with the discriminatory enactment; the term private connotes (in this country) ownership and liability and not the domestication of an institution for a sect. These factors point out that we cannot run a nursing home for Marthomites alone, and now we are back to square one.

If we "find it extremely difficult to spend our 'sunset' years in an American Nursing Home," and if the net incomparability of the probable Mar Thoma Nursing Home will be equivalent to that of an American nursing home, as an alternative, why don't we look into the option of retiring to our home land - the "good old Kerala" or say, somewhere in South India? The first generation Marthomites still have sufficient time to build single family units; contract private organizations to build and operate retirement homes of their taste. For a good cause - "all rights, including ownership, administration, employment opportunities, and enrollment can still be reserved exclusively for and by the members."

Mathew Abraham, League City, Texas

A THOUGHT ON CHRISTMAS

Another year has gone by and we are in the early dawn of 1994. Awake and thank God for the new year and welcome with an over whelming joy, foreseeing the promises and possibilities that it brings. Let the messages and wishes we exchanged in Christmas time come true in our lives! May our dreams come true in the new year!

It is very significant that the new year comes immediately after the Christmas. The real meaning of the Christmas provides us with the inspirational thoughts which would help us to make new resolutions for the new year. Christmas is the celebration of God's love. The love of God expressed through the precious gift of his one and only Son, Jesus. Child is the most precious gift in one's life. God gave his precious to us. In its true sense it was not a lesser God, but God himself spared

for us in Jesus Christ. What an excellent gift! A real love expressed through action. "The word became flesh"! The giver became the gift. He gave himself to us. If we receive a gift we will try to give accordingly to the giver. In the Christmas season we exchanged gifts and messages to each other and to our loved ones. What did you give to your God? We had good carol songs, nice Christmas Eve celebrations and so on. These are good gifts to God, but not "the best and the precious". Our best and precious include we ourselves, our children, money, time, talents and many other blessings. Take a costly resolution in the New Year to give yourself and your household to God. The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few" (Luke 10: 2). Give your money and other material resources so that "there may be food in his house" (Mal. 3:10). Give your talents and time that it may make his body (Church) more effective.

(Rev.C. John's message to the LA parishioners. Reprinted from January Newsletter)



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CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO FAMILY ISSUES

Dr. Mrs. Sakhi Athyal, Los Angeles



Introduction

We as Christians are challenged to be faithful to the revelation of God without compromise. But at the same time we cannot ignore the challenge of the modern world, or live in the past. With integrity we need to submit to the revelation of yesterday within the realities of today. "It is not easy to combine loyalties to the past with sensitivity to the present. Yet this is our Christian calling: to live in the world but out of the world" says John Stott in his well known book titled *Involvement* (1984:15).

As Indians we face a variety of issues here in our adopted land. Some of them are similar to our motherland, but the majority of them are quite unique on their own. These issues are increasing in number as the society around us becomes more and more evil. Let us take a look at some of the issues from the Christian perspective and try to deal with them.

As Indians we face a variety of issues here in our adopted land. Some of them are similar to our motherland, but the majority of them are quite unique on their own. These issues are increasing in number as the society around us becomes more and more evil. Let us take a look at some of the issues from the Christian perspective and try to deal with them.

Husband and wife relationship

When we think of family issues let us start with issues relating to husband and wife. There are few cases of suicides among the wives in our community. There is the question of physical, psychological and mental abuse going on around us. Separation and divorce are becoming common among our Indian community.

What are the main reasons for these types of problems? We often forget the biblical understanding of the complimentary nature of men and women. Gen. 1:26-28 says "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him: **male and female** he created them. John Stott says "Because they have been created by God with equal dignity men and women must respect, love, serve and not despise, one another. Because they have been created complementary to each other, men and women must recognize their differences and not try to eliminate them or usurp one another's distinctive".

We emphasize the idea of headship in the Bible, and misunderstand the meaning of authority. "Husband's headship is more of care than control, more of responsibility than of authority. As the 'head' he gives himself up for her in love, just as Christ did for his body, the church. And he looks after her, as we do our own

bodies. His concern is not to crush her, but to liberate her. As Christ gave himself for his bride, in order to present her to himself radiant and blameless, so the husband gives himself for his bride, in order to create the conditions within which she may grow in to the fullness of her femininity" (Stott 1987:145).

When there is more selfishness than love, abuse takes place. There are many more reasons to cause these different problems, but the basic problem is selfishness.

Women are expected to be like servants doing all the house work, over and above their own jobs which makes them very tired. Some of them get tired of their lives and see this life as one from which there is no escape and commit suicide as an escape. A husband who sits and watches his wife struggling to finish the house work and does not give her a helping hand does

not know the meaning of love. **If only we can have the Christian understanding of relationship between husband and wife, which means loving each other and being ready to serve each other because of this love, then only can we solve a lot of issues in the family.**

"When there is more selfishness than love, abuse takes place."

We need to support each other in our growth, mentally, emotionally and physically. We need to share our burdens with each other and be real partners. The American culture makes us too busy and we grow apart from each other easily. To avoid this we need to

take time to lovingly care for each other and help each other to grow. We as couples need to pray together, even take time out to go for a retreat together. We need to develop spiritual disciplines such as prayer, meditation and fasting to grow as Christians as a family. We should also have fun together, by having picnics, outings and play games together. We need to take time to talk together and build a firm relationship. Time together should become an important priority in our lives so that we understand God's intention for men and women to complement each other.

Parents and Children

Our young people are also facing a lot of problems. They have identity problems because they are being juggled between two cultures while they go through great pressures in life. Parents are usually too busy to help them out. Some times we expect too much from our children and when they cannot reach these goals they feel very deeply distressed and inferior. Many times parents do not even know what is happening in their children's lives. As a result children enter into drug ad-

diction, drinking problems and other bad immoral practices.

Transferring Christian values to young people is very important. The book of Proverbs says that if you bring up the children in the way they should go, they will not depart from those ways. We cannot be like a police to them always guarding them but once we instill values from childhood they will learn to say "no" to things which are not right. From a young age we need to spend enough time with them so that they can learn to choose. Give them the opportunities to make choices, even in the simple situations. Discuss with them the pros and cons of choices. Examples from the lives of Joseph, Daniel etc. from the Bible should be taught at home during the family devotion time and other times of discussion about how they handled the temptations and frustration of life. Joseph could say "How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God". (Gen. 39:9). He could resist any temptation because he knew God and loved God. **Our young people need to reach that stage where they will love God and develop their own principles to stand firmly and resist temptation.** Communication is very important between parents and children. Many times a break down of communication is the reason for a lack of involvement in our children's problems.

The marriage matches of our children is another important issue we face in this adopted country. Our old culture of arranging marriages and the western cultural understanding of our adopted country of finding their own partners by dating has confused our young people. **One thing we have to realize is that there is no real right way or biblical way of finding partners for our children.**

Our cultural understanding of arranged marriages has worked well for our generations. It has a lot of advantages, but we also should be sympathetic and understanding with our children's confusion. They are in a new culture where they see marriages taking place through courting. It is true that there are lot of divorces happening in this country, but it is creeping into our own cultural marriages as well.

We should be ready for some compromise. Children should be able to talk about their desires and we should let them know what our expectations are ahead of time. I have talked to many young people who never had an idea of what their parents' expectations were for them in marriage. Parents expect their children to naturally know their mind. This will not work! We need to communicate to each other about what both sides want and come to some sort of understanding.

The young people today do not trust their parents' judgment as the last generation used to. This is partly because of the generation gap we have between the

parents and children. We also have a cultural gap. The only way we can close the gap is through communication. We need to sit down together and explain to each other exactly what we think and why we think in this way. Then we can come to some common understanding and compromise.

We need to pray about their marriage, ask God to guide us. Both the young people and parents need to do this. Gen. 24:12 & 63 shows that both the servant and Isaac spent time praying, meditating and asking God's guidance for help. We need to know the ideas our children have for marriage. In Gen. 24:57 we see Rebecca's family asking her about her will and opinion about her marriage. Biblically it is important that parents and children work together. If we love each other, we will share our burdens together and we will work together. Then it can be a blessing for one another.

We should look to the word of God to find solutions for our problems. Many of our problems were not there in the Bible, because culturally we are in a different situation now. But we have enough principles and guidance from the Bible. So if we depend on the word of God and love each other enough to share our burdens together, then we can solve a lot of problems together.

Retirement and old age

Another important problem which many of the Indians are going to face or are already facing, is old age. In our Indian custom the youngest son or one of the sons is expected to care for the parents.

This may not be practical in the U.S. or other western countries.

People need to learn to plan for their retirement and old age. It will be good if the children take the responsibility and takes care of the older parents. Americans do not pay for their children's college education fully as Indian parents do. They save their money for old age. Their children take grants from the government and pay it off later. This may be very hard for Indian parents to think of doing. It is time we have discussions about this problem with our children. **We can give them the choice of us supporting them on condition they take care of us and support us when we are unable to take care of ourselves.** The American culture definitely affects our children and we need to face up to it. By the way the young people react to this reality in our times of need, we can judge whether there is a possibility of them taking care of us later. Accordingly we need to plan for our future. May be it is time to think about an old people's home for Marthomites in the U.S. This could be a well-equipped place with good provisions for care. We should not be ignorant of the issues ahead of us.

What is the Christian response? The Bible says we should take care of widows and the poor. It also says

*"We should
look to the Word
of God to find
solutions..."*

that we should meet the needs of our family members. We should be alert that times are changing and traditions will not work any more. A husband or wife can die and one could be very lonely in her or his own house. So we need to seriously think about alternative arrangements. Even in Kerala itself, many parents are all alone in their houses without any children looking after them. At least some of them can afford to hire a servant to take care of their needs. In this country, when our children may be trying to work and earn their living, the time and energy to take care of their parents will be very little and one has to be understanding in this. But the children can also remember that the parents, when they had so much pressures in their lives earlier, took care of their children's needs and thus it is their turn to

do so now. As long as there is enough health, older parents are okay, but once they are sick and bed-ridden it is going to be very hard in this hectic culture. So we need to think of various other alternatives.

We surely do not have answers to all our problems. But God has given us His word and His wisdom to deal with our problems. The main thing is to keep in touch with God. We need to have a close relationship with Him, to know what His will is. And we need to feel His approval in every thing we are doing. God is interested and involved in every aspect of our life if we let Him. Our choice is to let God be the partner in every aspect of our lives and in every decision we make. Let Him be the guide.

(Mrs. Sakhi Athyal has a Doctorate in Women's studies (Women in Ministry and Mission in India) from Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. She was teaching in Union Biblical Seminary, India as an Assistant Professor of Missions for last 17 years. Recently she has joined the faculty of Azusa Pacific University, CA, as the Professor of Women's Concern and Christian Ministry.)

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GLOBALIZATION: THE CHANGING HANDS OF LEADERSHIP

Dr. George P. Alexander, Los Angeles



As our world becomes steadily smaller through advancements in transportation and communication, the need for more international understanding demands our attention. Many societies are in a state of rapid change, and many of the problems have been attributed to problems of transition. The

underlying assumption is that the *traditional* and *modern* are in competition, and in choosing one, the other is lost. Our world changes faster and more profoundly with every passing decade. And at the same time the need, opportunity, and means for evangelizing the world are increasing.

In this article I will address two questions: First, from my ministry perspective as an immigrant church leader, *why is a globalized perspective necessary or useful for ministry today?* Second, *how do I go about bringing a globalized perspective into my ministry?*

As the world cries out for justice and dignity, so do the Christian leaders — who are the future leaders of the worldwide church. Today the missions are not dead, but the leadership is changing hands. Until recently, many churches around the world seemed to believe that pioneer evangelism was the exclusive work of North American or European missionaries.

But, from a historical perspective, the Western church lost its grip on the challenge for world missions at the end of World War II. And ever since that time, its moral mandate and vision for global outreach has continued to fade. Yet most Americans still conceive of missions in terms of light-haired, light-skinned people going to dark-skinned, Third-World nations. Except for the annual “mission appeal” in most churches, many North American believers have lost hope of seeing the Great Commission of Christ fulfilled on a global scale. And although it has been rarely stated, the implication has been that if North American - or Western European-based mission boards weren't leading the way, then it couldn't happen.

However, from a purely statistical point of view, Christianity is a non-Western religion. Jesus, a non-Anglo baby

born to refugee parents fleeing to Egypt, became the Messiah of the world. All of his disciples were non-Anglo, and to them he entrusted the Great Commission. This reality has yet to impact the majority of people in the United States, but we will be experiencing it during the final decade of this twentieth century.

The major cities of the United States are beginning to look as though the world has moved to our very doorstep. More than 25 percent of Los Angeles' downtown real estates is owned by Japanese corporations. Americans say they prefer Japanese-built cars because they are more reliable and sensitive to the driver's needs. And many recent statistics point to the probability that the proportion of Christians in the world's population has increased in Asia more than in any other region.

The Methodist Church began in England, but now the world's largest Methodist congregation is in Korea — the Kwang Lim Methodist Church of over 12,000 people, pastored by Kim Sundo. The Presbyterian Church began in Scotland, but now the world's largest Presbyterian congregation is in Korea — the Young Nak Presbyterian Church with over 60,000 members, pastored by Park Chu-Choon.

In India, which no longer permits Western missionaries, more church growth and outreach is happening now than at any point in history! Northeast India was once a land of tribes and headhunters. Today, at least 75 percent of the population is Christian. In Burma, churches among the minority people were growing so fast that the Western missionaries were expelled, but the churches among the tribal peoples have kept on growing!

China is another good example of the new realities. When the Communists drove Western missionaries out and closed the churches in 1950, it seemed that Christianity was dead. But today the number of Christians has growth to an estimated 60 million — 60 times the size of the church when Western missionaries were driven out!

As America has fallen under the pervasive influence of the affluent society, the spiritual deterioration of the church in the United States has come into question. Such matters as easy divorce and remarriage, uninhibited sexual life-styles, corruption in business, decline in church membership — all these matters are being viewed with deep concern in churches overseas. One African friend, reflecting on all this, observed: “America needs to take

“...why is a globalized perspective necessary or useful for ministry today?”

her missionaries unto herself for a while and reflect on her own shortcomings, leaving us free to deal with ours.”

The Western way of thinking is different than that in many other societies. We in the West are biased toward Western ways of thinking. Such thinking is useful to other societies only to the extent that it can be translated into the culture of that society. The failure to differentiate between the gospel and Western culture has been one of the greatest weaknesses of Western Christian missions. Western missionaries too often have equated the gospel with their own cultural background. This has led them to condemn most native customs and to impose their own customs on Christian converts. Consequently, the gospel has been seen as Western. Third-World people have rejected it, not because of the lordship of Christ, but because conversion often has meant a denial of their cultural heritage and social customs.

The power and influence of Christianity's new leadership will be felt in a variety of ways: The top theological schools will be in Asia and Latin America; new questions on theology and praxis will emerge reflecting the social, economic, and political realities of Third-World living; few Anglos will occupy plenary posts at Christian conventions; presidents of denominations will have names that English-speaking Americans cannot pronounce; a European-based reading of church history will take a back seat to other traditions of world Christianity; and television evangelists of all races will be preaching to us in our living rooms. As the stature and glory of the West have been fading, the stature and sense of self in the Third World have been growing.

Christian leaders from the West are often stunned by the harsh words of Third-World Christian leaders who reflect on the North American Church. Were they, as Westerners, more attuned to the issues of the Third-World, they would quickly understand the need for humble listening. The church of the West has been too slow to denounce its complicitous role in the evils of the past. Emerging Christian leaders of the Third World distinguish between Christ and cultural/economic imperialism, and they refuse to cooperate with the latter. As the world cries out for justice and dignity, so do these Christian leaders — who are the future leaders of the worldwide church.

Developing a globalized perspective

We need to make a practice of deferring to non-Western opinions and ideas whenever our most basic theological convictions are not at stake. Western wealth and isolation have kept us from understanding the real issues of the Third World. Yet we continue to impose our agenda there. Few international Christian conferences are truly *international*: The programs, invitation lists, and venues are usually controlled by Westerners.

Presidents and professors of America's theological institutions need to acquaint themselves with the views of non-Western theologians. Even most theological schools of mission are not making this obvious adjustment. If seminaries and theological institutions do not choose to change these patterns, a very difficult road toward true partnership lies ahead.

Building bridges in the church

New faces, strange names, different theological concept. The globalization of the gospel will continue to increase our exposure to people who call themselves *Christian*, but whose ideas and behaviors are different enough from ours to cause us to withdraw, rather than pursue fellowship. Too often we end up labeling people unlike ourselves as “dangerous” or “liberal” — when, really, they are just *different*.

Thinking globally, acting locally

Theologies of church growth and strategies of evangelism that are dreamed up in America's suburban churches will soon become irrelevant in the multicultural, multinational environment of America's inner cities. In addition, poverty, homelessness, drug abuse, and violence have become as American as apple pie. American churches need to relocate to places of such urban hardship. Courageous church leaders will move their congregations into these areas, and they will discover a much richer Bible as they return to it for insights into their ministry. And they will find themselves much closer to other Christians from diverse backgrounds.

All of us, as Christians, have the option and privilege of locally living out the global implications of our faith. That ultimately, is what a *world Christian* is.

Conclusion

What brings all Christians together is the deep love of Jesus Christ, who has given us new life. Our lives have become an offering of thanks to Jesus, best expressed in our life-styles of compassion toward “the least of these” in our world. Our guide is the Scripture, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Specific labels are not as important in the days ahead as we begin to fellowship with the international Christian family. We should assume a humble posture of listening to and learning from each other. All of us bring strengths and deficiencies to the *hall of fellowship* and need to understand the perspective of each other. Fear has been a strong force in keeping us apart. A love for Jesus and a desire to understand more of his truth can overcome that fear and help launch us on an exciting journey with other *world Christians* who have been saved by Calvary love. We will be surprised to discover how many *brothers* and *sisters* we have in Christ.

(George P. Alexander is adjunct Professor of Intercultural Education at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena and Assistant Professor of Intercultural Studies at Biola University in La Mirada, California. He is currently involved in doctoral research on social science and comparative education at UCLA. Born in Sri Lanka, and brought up in India. Dr. Alexander has been actively involved with and has done extensive research on Asian Indian immigrants in the United States.)

CHRISTMAS, 1993

Dr. John Mathew, Dallas, Texas

Another Christmas is here, Christmas, 1993.
Vividly, I remember the first in Bethlehem
in the manger in the freezing night;
night's heavy blanket stifling every ray.
As a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, I lay.
I'd like to have my rebirth in a humble abode.
Where can I be born as the helpless babe to save all my children?

The world hasn't become a better place, I regret.
There's no peace anywhere: Bosnia where in my name,
in the name of the Prince of Peace, Christians gun down Muslims.
I came to convert all guns into ploughshares so that
there's no hunger in this world of mine. Ireland's sorrow's cup.
Where can I be born as the helpless babe to save all my children?

Jerusalem, the capital of my great ancestor David, doesn't
deserve the birth of God's son; in lieu of binding love,
my people have lethal guns of hatred pointed with the finger
ready to pull the trigger. The Palestinian Arab is also my child.
All people on this earth, my earth, are my Father's children.
I would like to have this Christmas in a humble abode of peace, love.
Where can I be born as the helpless babe to save all my children?

Beyond the manger, I see on the Hill of Grinning Skulls
blanched, rattling heap of bones on which the hot wind blows.
Once again, I've to bear the rugged cross to Calvary.
My birth, God's benevolent purpose, was to assure grace and peace;
the fragrance of love, concord, good will should blow till the end.
I would like this humble, cosmic birth in a tranquil abode.
I find no place on earth that has genuine peace to be born there.

MATRIMONIALS

Marthomite parents invite proposals for their daughter, 22 years, U.S. citizen, 5'4", studying for B.S. degree in Chemistry. Interested parties may please respond with recent (returnable) photo and full details to P.O. Box 118061, Carrollton, TX 75011-8061.

Parents invite proposals for their daughter 26 years, medical student, graduating in May 1994, Indian born, U.S. citizen from parents of doctors/engineers/CPA's between 26-30 years. Doctors/Engineers from India doing residency or post graduate studies in U.S. are also considered. Reply to Box No. MC/194 c/o The Editor, Mar Thoma Messenger.

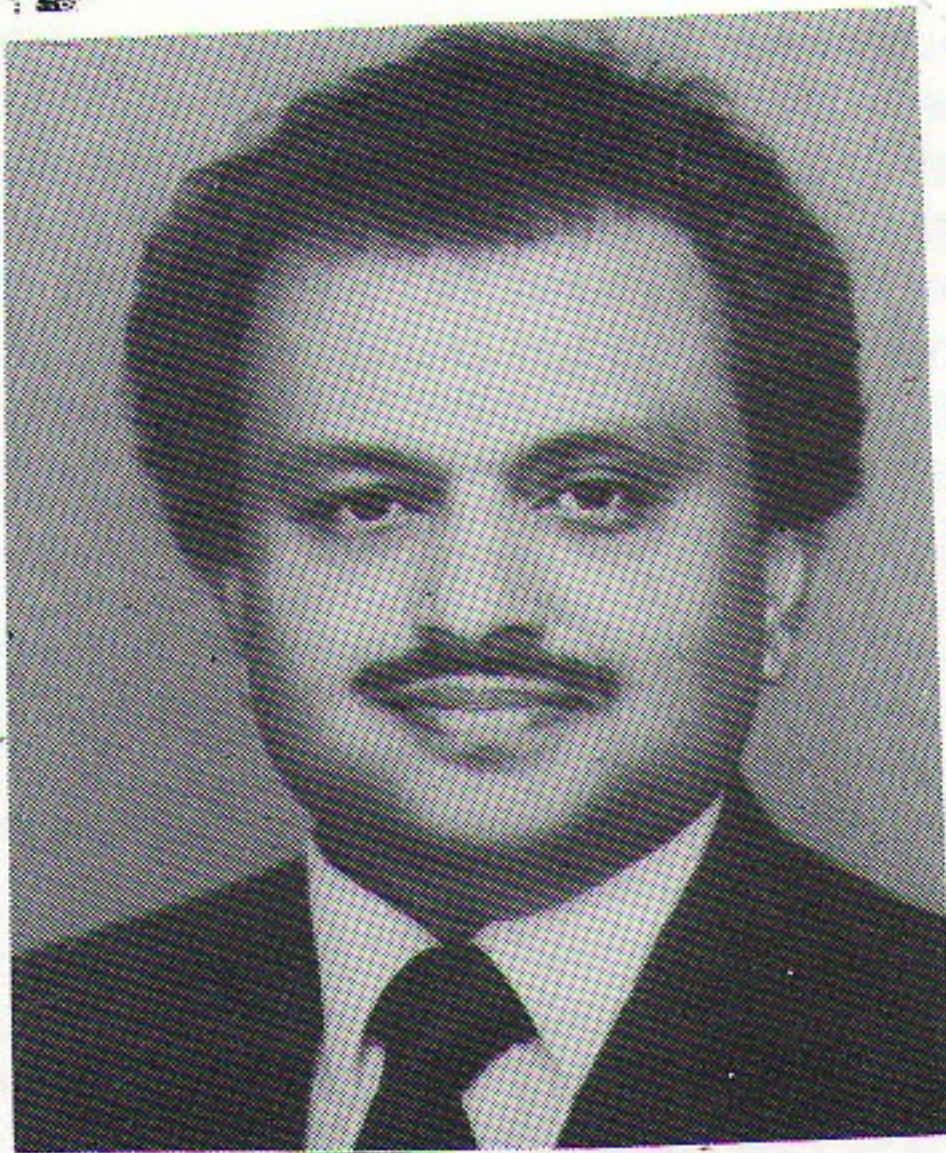
Correspondence invited with returnable photo from parents of God fearing professional boys, preferably Marthomites, for a beautiful girl of 25 years, fair, 5'4". Completed 5 years physiotherapy course and awaiting licence in April 1994. Reply to GM/194 c/o The Editor Mar Thoma Messenger.

Correspondence invited with returnable photograph from Mar Thoma/CSI boys for a beautiful Marthomite girl, 27 years old, gainfully employed in the computer field. Permanent resident of the United States. Reply to Box No. TML/194 C/o The Editor, The Mar Thoma Messenger.

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WINE SKINS - A MODERN DAY PROBLEM

Miss Jessie Joseph, Long Island, NY



“No one puts new wine into old wineskins, for the new wine bursts the old skins, ruining the skins and spilling the wine. New wine must be put into new wineskins” ...Jesus Christ

I was reading a book by Charles Swindoll called *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Change*, and

came across a chapter that dealt with old and new wine. Now, I have never seen a wineskin but apparently they were made of leather and were flexible. As they got older, they became less resilient and eventually leaked or even burst. So why is Jesus telling us this tip for taking care of wine? I don't think His main point is to encourage us to drink, but like the other parables, the meaning runs far deeper than that.

According to Swindoll, there are two main issues, the wine and the wineskin. One is no good without the other, but which is really more important? Well you don't have to put the wine in a wineskin — there were always jars. But what else can you do with a wineskin? Not much.

In this parable, found in Luke 5:37-38, Jesus is the wine, the Savior, the One that will quench our thirst forever. The wineskin represents tradition, religion, basically an empty vessel until its filled. Yet as we see, the Pharisee's traditions couldn't handle the new wine of the gospel. Healing on the Sabbath, eating and drinking with sinners, not washing their hands before eating — this new approach to ministry by Jesus and His disciples made those Pharisees fume until they burst and it was Jesus who suffered. After all, when a container breaks, the contents end up all over the place.

Getting back to today, this parable can still be applied, but with different characters. Ever since the Mar Thoma church came to North America, we've had to face the problem of what to do with this wineskin. As young adults, we are the new wine. And we are sitting in this old wineskin, trying to breathe, but we feel uncomfortable. All our lives, we have sat through English and Malayalam service, Sunday School, youth group meetings, choir practices, conferences, Good Friday services, church picnics and the list goes on. But if we look around, those of us who still go to church notice we don't have many peers. True some have moved away, but more often, people have stopped coming to church. Why? Good question. Wish I had an answer. The best one I could come up with is, we are the “new” adults, with different ideas that the church we grew up

with can't accommodate. We are used to an American society, having been raised and schooled here. As new wine, we are looking for a new wineskin, but we don't know what exactly it is that we want. Here lies the problem.

What do you want? I know what I need — a body of worshippers who really love the Lord and want to share that love with others; people of my age with whom I can relate to, who understand the joy of following Jesus. I don't think that is too much to ask of a church. But keep in mind, a church is not a building. It's people. And it takes each and every one of us to make a commitment to keep the church going.

According to Christ, church is not an option for Sundays. If you really love Christ, waking up early on Sunday to praise Him is not that much of a sacrifice. Not only that, but the church doesn't run by itself. It takes money. Sure we could continue depending on our parents to support the church, but as working adults, it is our responsibility too. You only make what you do because of God. Giving up a small percent is not going to break you.

What does this have to do with wineskins? Well if we are the wine, and the church is the wineskin, the church is supposed to adjust to us. But in order for that to happen, we have to make the change. But even before that can happen, we have to make a commitment to the church. This means your time and your money. Our generation tends to make the excuse “I don't have the time”. If we apply that kind of attitude to our daily life, the laundry would never get done, we'd never see our friends, and bills would never be paid. We have to make the time. Unfortunately, it is our relationship with God that gets neglected the most. When was the last time we spent quality time talking to God and reading His word? Shame on us. What kind of Christians are we? Busy ones? That's no excuse. Our God is not too busy for us and look at all the things He has to take care of. I'm sure His calendar is booked too.

Once we're involved with the church, we can make those changes- voting in General Body meetings, even representing our churches and designing a new order in the structure that caters to us. After all, we are the new generation. Without us, the church will cease to exist as we know it, which may not be a bad thing. But it would be sad if our kids don't have a church they can call their own.

But that's enough about the church. Let's talk about you what do you think of the wine?

(This article was originally published in the November issue of New Horizons - A Newsletter published for and by our youth in the Eastern Region)

FACE TO FACE WITH REALITY

Dr. Zac Varghese, London U.K.

As we reach the end of the 20th Century, looking back seems the done thing. It is a time to try to make sense of things. Just why are dreams of millions and millions of people in Asia and Africa shattered after the post-colonial period? How did tribal and narrow religious attitudes inflame emotions and set up irreconcilable barriers against brother and brother? Cain lifted his head several times to kill again and again, instead of trusting, loving, and caring. The answer to the age-old question, "Where is your brother?", is still, "Am I my brothers' Keeper?" The postwar period was an ideal time for humanity to move forward and take care of the "brother". A "wind of change" blew over the world, a new world was almost in sight, with institutions like the United Nations organization, self-governing independent democracies sprouting up all over the world, the World Council of Churches, Interfaith dialogues, Liberation theology, women's liberation, faster travel and communication in their place. Everything was in its proper place for a new world order. In the early part of the Century we fought two World Wars, the next 40 years were relatively peaceful with rumbling of a Cold War and the impending dangers of nuclear holocaust hanging over our heads.

In this Century, we had an occasional dream of seeing the birth of new stars: Tolstoy, Lenin, Tagore, Gandhi, Roosevelt, Churchill, Mao, Nehru, Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Theresa, and Gorbachev, to name a few, have temporarily given us some hope of a golden future. Now and then, we were given an opportunity to believe in the creation of a welfare state through political ideologies such as Communism, Socialism, free market ideologies of Capitalism, and through the adoption of other economic theories and their implementation. However, what we see towards the end of the Century is a shattered world where powerful democratic and liberal nations of this world are becoming paralyzed on-lookers of human tragedies in former Yugoslavia and other places. Although the breakdown of the Communist administration in the U.S.S.R. gave a partial hope in terms of a lull in the Cold War, the potential for disintegration of law and order and redistribution of deadly weapons of war in that part of the world still remains a big problem for a new world order. It will be really sad if we have to think that the hallmark of the 20th Century is the sight of distributing welfare food to starving children of Somalia under the protection of American fighter planes and gun ships. It will be impossible to forget about Hitler, Mussolini, Idi Amin, concentration camps, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and powerful war lords of Southeast Asia. We also should not forget about the potential violence and destruction that can arise from extreme religious fundamentalism and religious fanaticism, and Man's inhumanity

to Man and all God's creation.

Destruction of rainforests, industrial and agricultural pollution, destruction of the ozone layer, destruction of ecological balance, the population explosion, and robbing the inheritance of the future generations are all types of activities against the dignity of Man. Each of these activities is a crime against human rights and God's creation.

Against this gloomy picture we also should thank God for all the good things that have happened and are happening at the present time. Man has been able to fight the tyranny of many infectious diseases, slavery and the slave trade have been abolished, good industrial and employment laws have been established, equal opportunity schemes are being established for women, ethnic minorities and underprivileged, and a reverse discrimination for the poor in society and a positive bias for the poor is thought to be a creditworthy attitude to develop.

Because of the ease of communication and travel, many violent crimes and natural calamities happening in someone else's backyard have become problems for us to face in our own living rooms. The vast world has shrunk to a global village. This interdependence has become a burden for our conscience and this burden is the powerhouse needed for the development of global consciousness. Therefore, the destruction of a mosque in Ayodhya is no longer a little issue for the Indian government; it is a global issue. The detention of Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma is not a little local irritation for the Burmese; it is a global problem.

The violence and the indignity of the policy of apartheid in South Africa is a global problem too. The drought and famine in the Horn of Africa are our problems as well. The spread of AIDS, cancer, heart disease, and malnourishment have no known national or international boundaries. We begin to identify with human and animal misery irrespective of time and space. This is a saving grace and I do not believe for one moment that the development of this global consciousness is accidental.

This global awareness is a gracious gift and we need to accept this with utter humility. Awareness is just one step in the right direction. We need to take many more steps in integrating our work with that of our creator. Then we begin to enjoy what I call the symphonic orchestration of creation.

Christians must have played a part in the above thumbnail sketch of this world during this century. If we think that it is a significant contribution then we should kneel down and thank God for the opportunities that He has given the church. The identifiable body called Church

*"Awareness is
just one step
in the right
direction."*

is usually silent on many issues facing humanity. This silence is the weakest link of its mission in this troubled world of ours today. **The church is largely divided on birth control and issues related to giving voice to voiceless peoples of this world. It is divided about giving dignity and respect for womanhood in all areas of the organization of the church. The church may encourage its laity to say millions upon millions of "Hail Marys" without giving due respect and a proper identity for women.**

Planners of the world-over are already thinking of what will follow this century. So instead of a painful post-mortem of the 20th Century, influential image makers of the church should kneel down and submit themselves to the will of God for guiding the church to the next century.

How will the Mar Thoma Church look in the 21st Century and, more importantly, who will we look like? For the last 150 years or so we have been riding on the wave of a reformation. The glamour of that reformation is now fading. Largely due to the efforts of our present and the last two Metropolitans, other bishops, and a limited number of clergy and lay people, our church started to develop a global perspective. However in spite of our ecumenical involvement and representation on important committees of the World Council of Churches, we are still an "ordinary church" with some extraordinary claims.

Until the 1950's all efforts of the church were directed towards building secure parishes in Kerala. Then for the next 30 years or so, the church expanded its activities in other parts of India, Malaysia, and the Middle East. In the 1980's there was a further expansion of the church in the United States and Canada.

During the early part of the development of these parishes and development of the institutions of the church, many lay people played a very significant role. This amazing expansion was mainly due to the economic migration and placement of the lay people of the church to those parts of the world. In my childhood, I knew of the influence of lay leaders like K.K. Kuruvilla, C.P. Mathew, and C.N. Daniel, who contributed significantly to the growth of the church in Kerala. They were giants in the church, they had both secular and religious influence. There was a period when we had only two bishops. However, during this golden era of the church we had some great clergy who were builders of the church in every way. Since then we have had a new generation of clergy with university degrees and other qualifications. The administration of the church is carried out strictly on the basis of a written constitution. For various reasons, a written constitution and democratic institutions became necessary to protect the Mar Thoma Church from litigation and other related bothersome complications. However, this dependence on the written constitutions and development of the power of the elected representatives

of the church has affected the real progress of the church in many ways.

The Parliament of the church, Mandalam, and the Executive Council, Synod, have become arenas for letting out the steam of many failed political half-wits. They act out their political aspirations on the church's Parliament and they use political slogans and phrases in the debating chambers. Therefore we have presidents, council members, secretaries, resolutions, question time, points of order, study groups, and reports. They fight every issue like a local politician in the legislative assembly of the state. In spite of all this sham play, the ordinary laity of the church still have enormous faith and respect for their bishops. Bishops' words and dictates have more weight than any of the elected assemblies of the church. However, bishops are highly educated, kind, cultured, and diplomatic. They never ever knowingly contradict any of the decisions of the elected assemblies of the church. This writer very much hopes that this affection for the bishops and the authority and dignity that they carry with their office may continue forever.

Of course no one could have imagined the expansion of the Mar Thoma Church in such global terms. Therefore I am not certain whether the government of the church has had time to think out the strategies needed and to create administrative structures needed to satisfy the membership of a worldwide community of Mar Thoma Christians.

Those of you out there who think that it is not a significant problem are kidding themselves. The current indifference to the church's administrative style must at least in part be ascribed to a cultural gulf which can neither be attributed to ignorance nor bridged by conventional evangelism. To put it more clearly, those of us who are waking up from the anesthetic influence of the mother church in Kerala think that the church belongs culturally to a different world and unless we are able to share and feel something of the ethos of our contemporaries in the West, to stand where they stand, it seems irrelevant to think of a very limited Mar Thoma identity with or without an evangelistic zeal. On the other hand, if we were able to show a unique Eastern Christian life-style and identity when we meet our Western friends in work places or coffee bars, they may respond to a new way of worshipping. There will be no future for any restatement of our faith with a Western tag without a change of heart. This is also a problem for our children who are born and brought up in the West. I wonder whether the theologically minded may listen to what Paul Tillich had to say:

"We resist and distort the Word of God not only when we hear it but also when we say it. When we ask why our message of the Word of God is rejected we often find that they do not reject that for which we stand, but the way in which we stand for it. Many of those who re-

*"How will the
Mar Thoma
Church look
in the 21st
Century..."*

ject the Word of God reject it because the way in which we say it, is meaningless to them. They know the dimension of the eternal, but they cannot accept our name for it. If we cling to their words we may doubt whether they have received a word from the Lord. If we meet them as persons, we know they have."

Therefore, we urgently need a new language, a compassionate theology and a compassionate pastorate to meet the lay members of the church as persons. The time has really come to think of members of the church not as names printed in a current church membership list or register to send birthday cards, Christmas greetings, or letters to remind them of their responsibilities in giving a membership fee of some kind. **What is needed today in our churches in Kerala and particularly in the parishes of the Western countries is a dedicated group of militant laity to help with further development of lay ministry of the church.**

Some may find a contradiction in the phrase - lay ministry - because in ordinary conversation the words are used to describe someone who lacks the expert's knowledge and qualifications. Christians have used the term in a negative sense for centuries. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Churches defines the term as the members of the Christian churches who do not belong to the clergy. However, we should take more notice of St. Peter's definition of laity: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people..." (1 Peter 2: 9). Since they are the "People of God" they may "proclaim the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvellous light." There is nothing negative in St. Peter's assertions on behalf of lay people of the church. And yet we hear people excusing themselves by saying, "I am only an ordinary layman." When members of the Church face these realities, they cannot be just bystanders or fare paying passengers in the church. Then they will be able to join William Temple and say that, "The church is one society which exists primarily for the sake of those who are outside it."

Therefore, the church's greatest need today is for more laity who can fulfil a Christian calling in the places where they work and in homes where they live and in clubs where they spend their leisure. I am not pleading for more meaningless debates and militant attitudes in debating chambers of the church, but I am begging for the implementation of Christ's love and com-

passion in the world in which we live and every Christian is committed by his or her baptismal vows to "continue as Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his/her life's end." We need enormous humility, Christian charity, God's love and Grace to appreciate the presence of creative and renewing forces within our Christian communities which in the past have created history and will be writing history's next chapter.

It is very easy to be carried away in a critical and analytical way and to transfer all issues to others to worry about. Therefore, it is necessary to remind ourselves that the ultimate reality is God who is always revealing himself behind all issues. Father John Main, a Benedictine monk, devoted his life to introducing a meditative life-style to lay people. This really is a breakthrough and a new movement in the Western Christian circles. Contemplative prayer has been thought to be the concern of monks and nuns and to be out of reach of ordinary people doing mundane things in the world for mere existence. The life-styles and works of Fr. John Main and Fr. Bede Griffiths are influencing large numbers of lay people all over the world. The great change that is taking place today is the discovery that a contemplative life-style is open to everyone in the church, including the lay people. At one time monks and nuns stood around a contemplative life-style like human boundary walls, separating its holiness from laity. The barriers are now being broken down, thus opening the life of contemplation to lay people. Thus, slowly and steadily, the church should be moving towards the development of a lay ministry. This new movement may gradually evolve into a new renewed church focused on the realization of God on all aspects of human endeavor. This may help us to regain the "sense of being open to God". The message that we carry as members of the church is more important than the messenger; the message is everything and therefore do not let us confuse ourselves with our ego-centered messengers.

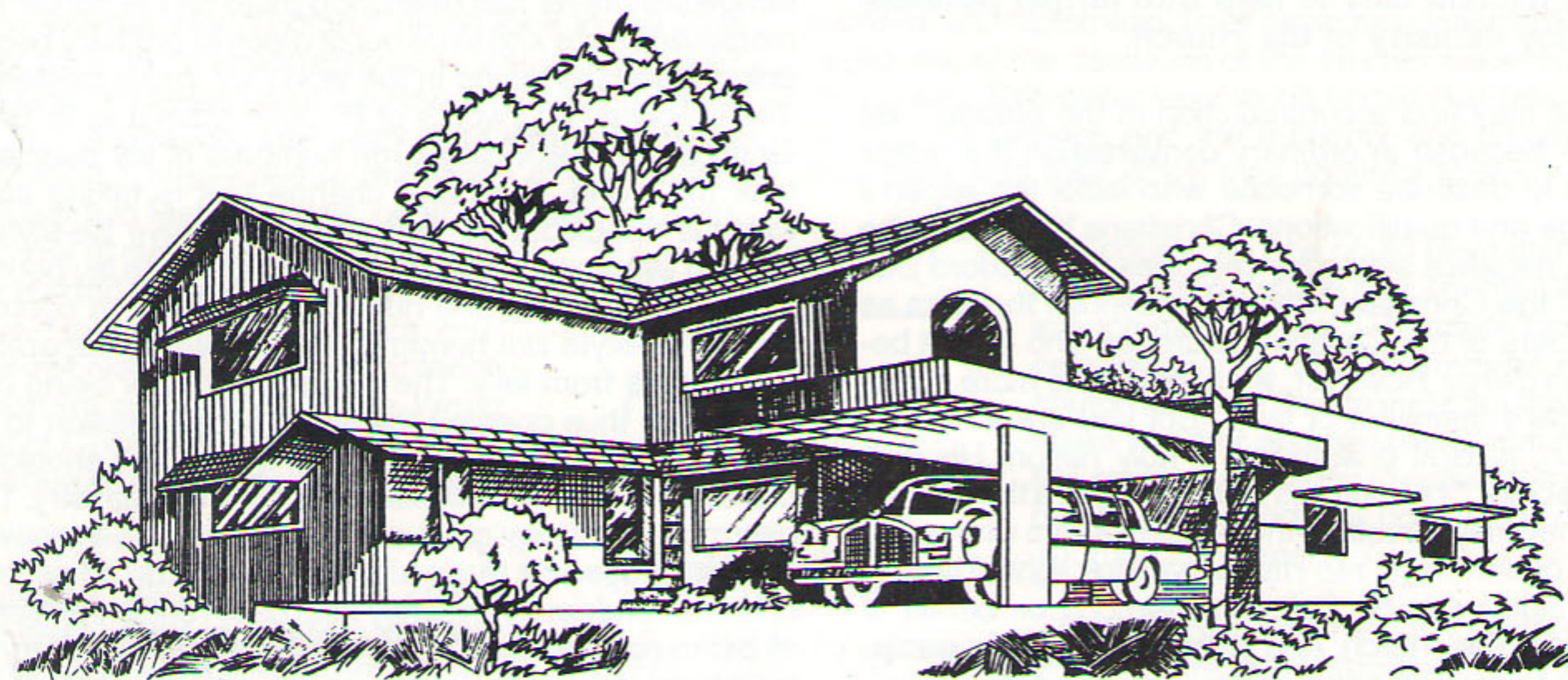
The time has come for us to give lay people of the church an opportunity to experience the peace and tranquility for themselves. Otherwise they will be living their lives in a make-believe world of a TV-watching generation. They only see life on an enclosed screen. The result of such an experience is frustration and dismay. Meditation and contemplation are a kind of spiritual socialism where everyone has the freedom and opportunity to be what God would like them to be by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

To our children readers -

Many of our children in our parishes donot get a chance to participate in the Bible Crossword Puzzle or Bible Word Search as their parents do not subscribe to the *Messenger*. We are so glad that you participate in the Puzzle and Word Search. We need to get all our children involved in this and we need your help. Please ask your friends to subscribe to the *Messenger* through their parents. A two year subscription will cost only \$15.00(\$20.00 for Canada & U.K.) which is less than the cost of a family lunch at your favourite fast food restaurent- Editor

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WOMEN OF OUR CHURCH - LET'S WAKE UP FROM OUR SLUMBER !

Mrs. Nirmala Abraham, Philadelphia

1993 has been the year of the Woman. The dawn of the New Year saw the emergence of Hilary Rodham Clinton. Here's a first lady, whose interest is not merely redecorating the White House or searching for a new pattern in China, but leading the Nation's Health Care Reform Committee. Moving along, we see Janet Reno, Attorney General as well as many new faces of women in the U.S. Senate. Even the U.S. Army is acknowledging that women can fly fighter jets!

In realizing the growing contribution of women, the World Council of Churches, has declared 1988-1998, as the Ecumenical Decade, proclaiming churches in solidarity with women. There is no doubt that women are in transition on a global level. Yet, how many of these changes have impacted our Mar Thoma women in North America?

Looking back at the changes in the life-styles of three generations of women - ourselves, our mothers and our daughters, we have experienced tremendous changes. Gone are the "kachamuri and chatta" worn for centuries by Syrian Christian women. We have moved through Saree, Salmar-Kameez, a Blue Jeans, Shorts and Bikinis! Education level has shifted from primary school to medical and law schools. Careers have moved from traditional housewives to professionals. Marriage age also has seen a sudden incline. My grandmother was a child bride at age twelve while my daughter may not settled down till her late twenties.

Life experiences have broadened. Our mother and grandmothers rarely moved out of Kerala while our children are globe trotters. To our foremothers, church and the community around was the entire focus of their lives but how about to our daughters? In order to understand the impact, especially on the young adults, we need to reflect on some of the trends in this society and its effect on the mission of the church.

The churches in North America are facing a "new social consciousness" as the "I" generation of the 80's have become the "we" generation of the 90's. Young people are searching for their identity and seeking for "spirituality". Young people are searching for an environment of "Caring and Sharing" ministry in the church. By the year 2000, more than half of the population in this country will be over 55 years of age. This in turn will pose ethical questions such as "Right to Die". The homeless, the minority, racism, sexism, all these are real issues as well.

We are all aware that the church is the mirror of the society in which it is part of. How are we redefining the mission of the church in this social context, I would like to focus on the crucial question - Year 2000, which way women! Are we going to lead the way as weaver's of change?

First of all, we need to ask ourselves what does the Lord require of us? We are all given different abilities and His plan for us is different. - There is no doubt that we are all weavers but we must find out from Him what design to weave. A weaver has to deal with the vertical and horizontal strands and study them carefully. Women, as weavers have to find the common threads. Our design may be simple or complex depending on how we cope with the changes around us. We need to move on. Yet, many women in transition are afraid to move on as active weavers of change. How do we break the silence? How do we empower these women? How can the church in its mission encourage women as change makers for effective witness in church and community?

"...women must have a vision or dream of what they want to accomplish."

First of all, women must have a vision or dream of what they want to accomplish - Each of us is unique and needs to create our own design. We must constantly re-imagine - Our dreams must be woven into reality. Secondly, women need to affirm or encourage the contributions of fellow women. We need to celebrate the rich varieties of women's ministries. We must see how Jesus affirmed the contributions of women in the Bible.

Thirdly, we need to develop women's leadership skills. More women need to be in decision making positions where policies are developed. Church must give equal representation for men and women in policy making bodies such as Diocesan assembly. Men and women need to learn to share leadership roles. This must be done in an environment of cooperation, not competition. Men must also encourage women to take more active role as Christ had done. We must also be role models and mentors to younger women.

Fourthly, we must strengthen our inner self through continued spiritual renewal. Women are value bearers in their Families. They reflect upon the past, examine the future and pass on the best from both worlds to their young ones - They have a crucial role as connectors, bearers of values between the young and old.

Women also need to be advocates when justice is threatened. They must become powerful agents of age. In a country where the number of domestic violence ex-

ceeds mugging, automobile accidents and rape combined, we need to look at these issues carefully. In crisis, women often turn first to their churches for support - How do we deal with these issues? We need to develop support groups where women can share ideas, concerns and insights. The Eastern Regional Sevika Sanghom has installed a 1-800 Hot line where persons in distress can call and seek professional assistance.

Women need to be more informed. Knowledge is power. We must constantly learn about the world around us. We must learn to ask questions - We must be able to speak with impact as well as sharpen our skills in listening.

We must realize that the process of change starts with each of us. We need to ask these questions to ourselves.

- Will our contribution be active or passive?
- Will we actively participate in the fight against domestic violence or will we passively sanction this

threat to women's survival?

- Will we actively challenge practices that deprive basic human rights to the less privileged?
- Will we participate in the revitalization of our church and the community around us?

In summing up, let us reflect on a poem titled "A mother turned woman" by Mrs. Aruna, Gnanadasan, Director of Women's department under Church and Community of the World Council of Churches. The poem (given below in its entirety) tells us the feelings of a helpless mother who watched her young daughter ill-treated and abused by her husband and finally burned to death as a 'dowry victim'. The story ends with a new conscious level when the mother breaks her apathy silence and proclaims "No longer will I remain entombed in silence - No longer will my daughter or any other daughter burn" Let us break the silence - let us be change makers. Let us weave the past to the future - Let us ask ourselves "what does the Lord require of me" and be effective weavers of change for the glory of His kingdom.

(This is the summary of a Paper presented at the Women and Ministry Session of the Family Conference 1993)

A Mother Turned Woman

(An epitaph - To my daughter, a dowry victim - From a mother turned woman.)

O daughter of mine
I love you
For a woman you have made of me.
No longer will I remain entombed in silence.
No longer will my daughter or any other daughter
burn.

I thank you
For teaching me the power of womanhood.
Believe me
I love you, I love you, I love you.

O daughter of mine
I loved you,
As you lay there as a baby, whimpering
Unwanted and uncared for.
I protected you from the cruel taunts and abuses
Hurling at me
For producing another useless, burdensome,
girl-child.

Believe me
I loved you.

O daughter of mine
I loved you,
As they displayed you to the lowest bidder
Overdressed you and powdered you, bejeweled you
To cover up your ugly flaws
They told me.

For the first man who was willing, they had to
give you away.

Believe me
I loved you.

O daughter of mine
I loved you,
As I saw you discriminated against always.
Less food, less clothes, less choices,
Less education and less medical care
They gave you.
For you were after all a worthless woman they said.
Believe me
I loved you.

O daughter of mine
I loved you,
When you said you could not go back.
Pleaded with me, cried endless tears,
Showed me the scars of the wounds he had
inflicted on you
I knew you would die
But I closed my eyes, my ears, my heart to your cries
Believe me
I loved you.

O daughter of mine
I love you
You lie there a heap of lifeless ashes
I feel the pain you bore as the flames devoured you
I hear with terror your shrill cries of pain
Forgive me my now useless tears,
My lack of courage, my silence when I should have
spoken.
Believe me
I loved you.

THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION OF THE MARTHOMITE PSYCHE

Simon Ninan, New York.

The great transformation or shall we say metamorphosis in people is knowing Christ and not just knowing about Christ. There is a critical difference; knowing about Christ is understanding history, significant contributions and events and tid bits of theology. Whereas knowing Christ is about an interpersonal relationship in which God and you are highly involved in constant communication via prayer. However, many Marthomites continue to live a life of vice, estrangement, disaffection, alienation, anomie, bedlam, and rampant disillusionment. We all want to know Christ but very few of us takes steps to obtain this end. This happens to be the only end in life that is worth attaining and maintaining. Knowing Christ like you know your brother, sister, mother, father, relative, uncle, aunty is the ultimate priority in our Christian lives.

For the majority of time; all we get on Sunday's conferences, retreats and etc. events is the typical run of the mill standardized preaching about Jesus Christ. Seldom do we get speakers, achos or bishops who tell us how to get to know Christ on an interpersonal level. Sure being born again is a one time experience and salvation awareness is on a daily basis; but many of us Marthomites are not even born again or aware of salvation. Wouldn't it be great if all Marthomites could see each other in heaven.

Feel rest assured that the Bible is the ultimate transcendental self help, how to do book, general Christian manual on how to operate; but supplemental lectures would do no harm. One can argue that getting to know Christ must come on an individual manner consisting of meditation on scriptures, praying with fervor and etc. But the ideal Mar Thoma church is one in which all members are born again, Rapture aware, salvation conscious and etc. How great would it be if all Marthomites were on God's side by dedicating, witnessing and making testimonies. Unfortunately, many members consider people who are zealous for Christ as heretics or crazies. Many youths are zealous for Christ in a moderate way and others however have no connection to Christ whatsoever. Pious youths and church members should go on a task to 'convert' other members to make sure they know Christ. No one is asking to force it down someone's throat, but a little friendly assertiveness and persuasion for Christ is functionally cool. Wouldn't you like the people you see at church to be there in heaven with you. The gift of knowing Christ must be shared with other like we share out talents with others. It is very hard to believe that a Christian person would not want to know Christ because they got a lot to lose; namely Eternal Life, Bliss and Peace with Christ. Its our mission to know Christ and encourage others to do so too.

The church preaches boldly about the Second Coming of Christ, but seldom do achos give sermons based on Rapture Awareness, How To Be Born Again, How To Merit The Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Adoration of Mary, Belief In Angels, Christian Stigmata, Social Praxis, Theory Behind Worship and etc. Rather much of the concentration in sermons is about Christ's or apostles' or founding fathers' or prophets' life, miracles, contributions. No one is saying that this practice is bad and as a matter of fact it is quite well and good, but we are arguing that a more proportionate amount of Born Again type lectures must be given as well. Also more opportunities to be saved, to be dedicated, to witness and give testimonies must be allotted. Some people can argue that too much witnessing, being born-again lectures and giving testimonies will be played out, boring or repetitive. Christ, however, does not think so because He says in Matthew chapter 10 versus 32 "If anyone declare publicly that he belongs to me, I will do the same for him in heaven"

If we continue to delude ourselves in the ordinary routine of church life in which children go to Sunday School, adults worship and Police Spy Uncles and Aunties monitor politically subversive dissidents, we will go astray from the life and teachings of our Lord God Jesus Christ. Youths have noticed this since the conception of the Mar Thoma Church in the New World. Youths have generically labelled this deficiency in the Mar Thoma church as it's lack of focus and spirituality. And you know what; our youth is right. The trend for us seems to be building structure such as purchasing churches or building churches or buying the diocesan center. However, if we don't back up our faith by being saved, Born Again, Rapture Aware and Salvation Conscious we will continue toward the path of consumerism and capitalism. The narrow path of Christ is not a yellow brick road, but a road less traveled. This less traveled road where one knows Christ is the road in which every Marthomite in the Western World must be on. Leave your Benz, Cherokee, Samari, Eagle, BMW, Lexus and Ambassador for the USA, Canadian, United Kingdom or the South Asian Indian Junkyard because you can't take that to heaven (you know) without paying a surcharge of Sin Taxes. The roots and culture of Christ is the all that we Marthomites need! So renounce and rebuke Satan/Beelzebub/Mephistopheles/Lucifer/Devil/Materialism/Patriotism/ Idealism/ Voyeurism and accept Jesus Christ as Lord and personal Savior. Say that you belong to Christ in front of two, a few, a crowd or conference and Christ will do the same for you in heaven in the company of angles, archangels and God. In this way your name will be secured in the Book of Life which allows you a one way ticket into the Nirvanic Shantih of Heaven.

BIBLE WORD SEARCH

[Based on the Gospels. JESUS FAMILY, BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD] as in NIV

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

Questions:

- Names of the three women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham to David
- Name for Jesus meaning "God with us"
- Who was the Roman emperor at the time of Jesus' birth
- The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a _____
- The three titles of Jesus found in Luke chapter two
- When baby Jesus was presented to the temple this man took Jesus in his arms and pronounced the hymn expressing his joy at having seen the messiah
- The home town of Jesus
- When Jesus was twelve years old, He went with His parents to Jerusalem for the feast of the _____

Mrs. Mini John, Los Angeles

BIBLE WORD SEARCH FINDERS (OCTOBER 1993)

Anu & Asha Alex	Mar Thoma Church, Boston
Sheba Susan Philip	Mar Thoma Church, Boston
Ajit & Ann Joseph Thomas	Mar Thoma Church, Boston
Samuel Thomas	Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston
Larry Varghese	Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston
Lesly Varghese	Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston
David John	Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Edmonton
Sam Rajan Daniel	Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Edmonton
Tony John Panicker	Mar Thoma Church, Oklahoma
Tobi John Panicker	Mar Thoma Church, Oklahoma
Maureen Elizabeth Mathew	Mar Thoma Church of Los Angeles
Maxine Mary Mathew	Mar Thoma Church of Los Angeles
Betsy Philip	Mar thoma Church, Philadelphia

BIBLE CROSSWORD PUZZLE

[Based on the book of Exodus; 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	25			26		27			28	29	30	31	
				32										
							33							
				34										

ACROSS:

- 1 Summary of the moral law given by God to Moses is called the _____
- 6 During the time of Moses, Israelites were slaves in this country
- 7 Older brother of Moses
- 9 A river in Egypt. Mother of child Moses placed him among the reed along the bank of this river.
- 11 A desert between Elim & Sinai. It was in this desert that Israelites started grumbling against Moses.
- 13 The place where the Israelites gathered together to worship God. This was made by God's command and according to His plans (Ex: 26).
- 17 Moses belonged to the house of _____ [4 letters]
- 18 "You shall not make for yourself an _____ in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below".
- 19 Father of Moses
- 21 When Pharaoh tried to kill Moses he fled from Pharaoh and went to live in _____.
- 24 Son of Moses. This name sounds like the Hebrew for 'an alien there'. [7 letters]
- 28 The eldest son of Aaron.
- 32 A priest in Midian who gave his daughter to Moses in marriage.
- 33 On this mountain Moses received from the Lord both the instructions and the law.
- 34 A title of Egyptian King in Biblical times.

DOWN:

- 1 Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp calling it the _____ [Ex:33]
- 2 The special food God gave daily to the Israelites until they reached the border of Canaan [5 letters]
- 3 A Hebrew word for bitterness. The first camp of the Israelites where Moses sweetened the water. [5 letters]
- 4 Father of Joshua
- 5 The Ten Commandments were written on the _____.
- 8 At Rephidim, Moses struck the _____ with his staff and water came out.

- 10 After the Israelites set out from Marah, they came to this place where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees.
- 12 God miraculously led the Israelites through the _____ and allowed the armies of pharaoh to perish in it.
- 14 God appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God _____.
- 15 When God heard Israelites' groaning He remembered His _____ with Abraham Isaac, and Jacob [8 letters]
- 16 The first plague upon the Egyptians was the plague of _____.
- 20 Sister of Moses.
- 22 An Egyptian Goddess. God asked the Israelites to breakdown their alters, smashed their sacred stones and cut down their symbols [Ex: 34:13]
- 23 A kind of bird. God sent flocks of them to feed the Israelites in the desert [5 letters]
- 25 A special garment worn only by priests [Ex:39]
- 26 It was in this mountain that God appeared to Moses in the burning bush. [5 letters]
- 27 This name sounds like the hebrew for "drew out"
- 29 The Ark of the Testimony was made of _____ wood [Ex:25]
- 30 One of the tribes of Israel. Oholiab Son of Ahisamach belonged to this tribe.
- 31 The first month of the Hebrew year. It was in this month that the Israelites came out of Egypt.

Mrs. Mini John, Los Angeles

BIBLE CROSSWORD PUZZLE WINNERS (OCTOBER 1993)	
Anu & Asha Alex	Mar Thoma Church, Boston
Sheba Susan Philip	Mar Thoma Church, Boston
Liza John	Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Edmonton
Sam Rajan Daniel	Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Edmonton
Maureen & Maxine Mathew	Mar Thoma Church of Los Angeles
Tony & Toby John Panicker	Mar Thoma Church, Oklahoma

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Saramma George 444 Cannon Lane Highland Village,TX75067 214-317-0532	P.P.Chacko 1105 Mondrian Terr. Silver Spring, MD20904 301-236-4184	OC&Nirmala Abraham 1758 Mendon Mill Rd. Rd.5, Hockessin,DE 19707 302-239-7119
Saramma Chandy 743 Hillsdale, Hillsdale, NJ07642 201-358-1108	M.K. Thomas 1219 River Road Teaneck, NJ 0766 201-836-5653	Joseph Mattackal 3 Whitehall Ln Garden City Park, NY11040 516-746-3458
George Thomas 121 Marcus Ave. Garden City Park,NY 11040 516-747-1180	Mathew V. Zacharia P.O.Box 196 Sparrow Bush, NY 12780 914-856-6546	Koshy Thomas 14706 Rancho Vista Houston, TX 77083 713-933-7537
Dr. P. T. Mammen, 19 Chateau Ct So. San Francisco, CA 94080 (415)873-107 2	Abraham Mattackal, 3105 Claremore Ave. Long Beach, CA 90808 (310)431-0046	

NEWS FROM DIOCESE/PARISHES

TRINITY MAR THOMA CHURCH, EDMONTON

The Vocation Bible School under the auspices of the Sunday School was held at our church on August 6, 7, and 8, 1993. Mrs. Ursula Neuherz from Calvary Community Church, Edmonton was the main leader. About 40 children participated and it was indeed a blessed time for them.

A special thanksgiving day service was held on October 10, 1993. A fund raising thanksgiving dinner was also arranged by the Sevika Sanghom on that day. Our parish observed November 14, 1993 as the Family Sunday. A large number of members participated in the holy communion and rededicated themselves.

Sunday School children led the worship service on November 21, 1993 under the guidance of the vicar Rev. Philip Easow as we observed the world Sunday School day. Mr. Rajan Daniel, Sunday School superintendent gave the message during the service.

Christmas Carol Singing Group visited every house on December 9, 10 and 11. Christmas Carol service was held on Dec. 24 and the vicar Rev. Philip Easow gave the Christmas message. The Sunday School children presented a tableau on December 25th, a special service commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ was held at our Church.

Rajan Daniel, Edmonton

EVENTS OF THE DETROIT MAR THOMA CHURCH FOR SECOND HALF OF 1993

In August, Rev. James Thomas was appointed as the full time vicar of our church. He replaced Rev. George Mathew who in turn had replaced Rev. E. J. Joseph earlier in the year. Rev. Thomas is having problems with his visa so Rev. Philip Varghese (Ret.) was appointed officiating vicar until Rev. Thomas is able to secure his visa.

The church has been continuing to meet on a regular basis during these past six months. The annual VBS and church Convention were held during late August and early September. These activities were a blessing to all the members of our parish. The Youth League, Sunday School and Choir played a very big role in these and several other activities. These activities include the Regional Sunday School gathering held in Chicago, Regional Youth conference held at Camp Micindoh in Michigan and the Christmas Carol service. Many members of our church were also very active in the Christmas Carol Rounding group. This group included approximately fifteen adults and ten youth members.

Our newly appointed Diocesan Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus, visited our parish on December 26th. His enigmatic leadership and enthusiasm, especially among the youths was very apparent. His Grace also attended the first few days of the Regional Youth Conference hosted by the Chicago Youth League between December 27th and December 30th.

By the grace of God, 1993 has been a year of blessing and growing for our parish. There is still a lot of growing to do for this parish. The hard work and earnest prayers of the families of our parish will continue to keep this parish growing in the Love of the Lord.

Mathew V. John , Secretary

'MISSION ACCOMPLISHED'

A home for our diocese, a place for our people



The Mar Thoma Center Committee gathers for the last time at the Diocesan Center with the new Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Zacharias Mar Theophilus

A DREAM COME TRUE



The Mar Thoma Center - The home for our new Diocesan Bishop Zacharias Thirumeni

(Photos by Mr. Jacob Joseph, Toronto)

1993 REPORT OF THE WESTERN REGIONAL SEVIKA SANGHOM- TEXAS/OKLAHOMA CENTER

The Western Regional Sevika Sanghom is geographically widely distributed. Hence, the activities are organized center-wise. The three different centers of the Western Region are:

- Center I — Chicago, Detroit, and Toronto
- Center II — Texas and Oklahoma
- Center III — Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle

The parishes under the Texas/Oklahoma center are:

1. Trinity Mar Thoma Church — Houston
2. Dallas Mar Thoma Church
3. St. Paul's Mar Thoma Church — Dallas
4. Emmanuel Mar Thoma Church — Lubbock
5. Mar Thoma Church of Oklahoma

This center had many activities during the year 1993. On March 13th, 1993 we conducted a meeting along with the regional youth and junior conference at Oklahoma Mar Thoma church.

<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Topic covered</u>
1. Rev. T. I. Joseph	Making the way for the Image of God
2. Dr. V. T. Samuel	Coping with Stress
3. Rev. Eapen Cherian	Relief of Stress

About 45 ladies attended the meeting and it was a great blessing and fellowship.

We have organized a one day retreat on September 18th, 1993 at the Dallas Mar Thoma Church. The theme was Christian Family. We were blessed with the presence of Dr. P.P. Job, a world renowned speaker.

Rev. Ninan Jacob conducted Bible Study. Rev. Eapen Cherian taught us about mutual dependence in a Christian family. One hundred and twenty people attended this meeting and everyone enjoyed the Christian fellowship and love.

We had a general body meeting after the retreat and elected a body for the activities of the Texas/Oklahoma center.

President — Rev. Ninan Jacob - Dallas Mar Thoma
Secretary — Mrs. Elizabeth John - Dallas Mar Thoma
Treasurer — Mrs. Leelamma James - St. Paul's, Dallas
Representatives — Mrs. Aleyamma Varghese - Trinity Mar Thoma, Houston
Dr. Annie Lincoln - Emmanuel Mar Thoma, Lubbock
Mrs. Sosamma Cherian - Oklahoma Mar Thoma

A leadership seminar was conducted on October 30th, 1993 at Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston. A total of 50 representatives from all parishes attended this seminar. We had four excellent leaders who explained the qualities of a Christian leader and taught us how to be good leaders. The speakers were Rev. T. I. Joseph, Rev. Eapen Cherian, Rev. Ninan Jacob, and Mr. George Cherian.

The members of our Texas/Oklahoma Center Sevika Sanghom are very enthusiastic and dedicated for sanghom activities. We pray that Almighty God strengthens us and our leaders (Achens) to do better work in His vineyard.

**Dr. Mrs. Annie Lincoln, Secretary,
Western Regional Sevika Sanghom**

XV NATIONAL MAR THOMA YOUTH CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA, & EUROPE

The Philadelphia Mar Thoma Youth League is honored to host the XV National Mar Thoma Youth Conference of North America and Europe. The Conference will be held August 17 - 20, 1994 at George School in Newtown, PA. The focus of the conference will be on Ephesians 6:10 — "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power." The Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Episcopa will preside over the conference. We are also asking all members of the Mar Thoma Churches to remember the Conference in prayer on Sunday nights between 9 pm and 10 pm. Specifically we ask for prayer in our search for speakers, strong youth leaders, and music leaders. By your prayers, we know that the Lord will work through us to provide a conference that will strengthen the delegate's walk with the Lord and their understanding of His Word. We extend special invitations to the youths of our sister churches on the West Coast, from whom we have missed participation in the past Youth Conferences. For more information please contact the Rev. M.P. Yohannan at (215)927-3998, Mr. Fenu Cherian at (610)876-2368, or Miss Sajini Mathew at (610)544-5591.

Sajini Mathew, Secretary

MAR THOMA FAMILY CONFERENCE

The XII Mar Thoma Family Conference of the Diocese of North America, U.K. and Europe, hosted by the Mar Thoma Church, Staten Island, N.Y. will be held from July 28 - 31, 1994. at the Radisson Hotel, Somerset, New Jersey. The theme for the conference will be "Wake Up Sleeper" Ephesians 5:14. The leaders of the conference include Rt. Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitan, Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus, Rev. Dr. Ray Ortlund, Rev. Geevarghese Mathew and Rev. Dr. P.G. George.

For more information, please contact Rev. Thomas George (718)370-7664, Mr. Thomas Mattapallil (718 698-9489 or Mr. Abraham Thomas (908)531-2533.

REGIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE - 1993

This conference was held at Michindo Camp Center in Michigan from December 27 - 30. Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Episcopa inaugurated the conference. Thirumeni challenged the youth members to give their ideas and suggestions to develop the Diocesan youth activities. The theme of the conference was "More to this Life". 150 delegates from Chicago, Detroit and Toronto parishes participated in the conference. We divided them into two tracks. The senior track was led by Dr. P.V. Cherian (Detroit) and the junior track was led by Mr. Geeve Mathew (Boston). Rev. George Mathew and Dr. P.V. Cherian gave the main talks. Mr. Geeve Mathew Mr. Mohan Zachariah and Mr. Sajeev Cherian led the singing sessions. This conference was a great blessing for all the participants from Canada, Detroit and Chicago. The next conference will be hosted by Detroit Mar Thoma youth group.

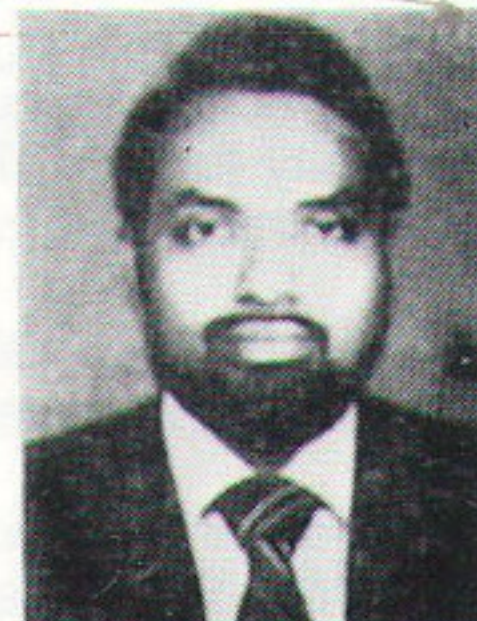
Rev. George Mathew, Chicago

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THE MAR THOMA CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA



Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus at the MTC of Philadelphia during the Christmas Carol Service

This year's Christmas celebration was a memorable one. A Junior Choir of 115 members filled the occasion with glorious music. Our Sunday School children presented a colorful pageant and captured the hearts of the audience. Our Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus gave the Christmas message. Thirumeni congratulated the youths and the Sunday School children for their active participation in church activities.

The parish conducted a cultural program during October to provide opportunity for our church members to present their artistic talents. The members from various church denominations attended this variety entertainment program.

The church has now 239 families with the addition of 14 new families during 1993. The newly formed Junior choir with 115 members revived our English service.

In May, the parish conducted the gospel convention. Rev. M. V. Abraham's leadership helped the convention attendees to rededicate their lives. The Parish conducted the annual family retreat in Buck's County States Park. Our Sunday School, with 245 students, is taking a lead in preparing our children to effectively participate in worship services. The Sunday School conducted a teachers' retreat program. The parent-teacher meetings provided many suggestions for both parents and teachers to involve more actively in the development of our children. Our Youth League has 130 members and meets regularly for Bible studies.

During 1993, our Edvaka Mission supported building of 9 houses in Kerala for the needy and helped the marriages of 4 girls in Kerala through Marriage Aid Fund. During 1994, our Edavaka Mission, under the leadership of Rev. M. P. Yohannan, is targeting to support the building of 14 houses for the poor and to help the marriage for 4 girls in Kerala.

Thomas Joy, Secretary



A section of the Youth Choir

EMANUEL MAR THOMA CHURCH LUBBOCK TEXAS

May —

- Rev. Thomas Alexander was transferred to the New York area and a farewell party was given in honor of him on the first Sunday of May.
- Rev. T. I. Joseph, the Vicar of Trinity Mar Thoma church, visited our parish on the last Sunday of May 1993.

June —

- On June 26th our Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom, Suffragan Metropolitan visited our parish and dedicated the newly constructed sanctuary, parish hall, and apartment for the parish

priest. Rev. Dr. Philip Varghese, St. Thomas College, Kozhencheri, and Rev. T. I Joseph were the two former vicars who attended the dedication service. Rev. Ninan Jacob and many of the Dallas Mar Thoma parishioners attended the service. We were also joined by many friends and well-wishers from both the Trinity Mar Thoma church, Houston and the Oklahoma Mar Thoma church. Local politicians and preachers from the Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Baptist, and Methodist churches were represented at the service. The prayers and love of all participants made this day a blessed one in the history of this parish.

- Our new Vicar, Rev. Eapen Cherian, took over charges as of this month.

November —

- Dr. P. John Lincoln was honored as a fellow of the Academy of Dentistry International, F. A. D. I., in San Francisco.

December —

- Dr. Annie Lincoln was honored by the American Medical Association for community service in New Orleans.
- The Christmas entertainment program produced by the children and youth was conducted on December 31st.
- The midnight service was conducted on December 31st under the leadership of our Vicar, Rev. Eapen Cherian.

Youth Conference:

We are planning to conduct the Texas/Oklahoma center's Youth, Sevika Sanghom, and Edavaka Mission meeting from March 11-13 here at Lubbock, Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus will be the main leader.

Rev. Eapen Cherian, Vicar

CHICAGO MAR THOMA CHURCH

Chicago Mar Thoma Church celebrated its 20th parish day on Sunday the November 14th. A special meeting was held in the church after the Holy Communion Service. Dr. David Siever of Chicago Trinity Theological Seminary gave the parish day message. Mr. Mathai P. Mathal presented the parish report. Mr. Davidson and Miss Shyn Itticheriya gave the felicitations. Rev. George Mathew gave the welcome address and Mr. N.M. Philip the vote of thanks. The youth group and Yuvajama Sakhyam members sang beautiful Malayalam songs. We also served the love feast for the participants.

On November 26th we had a special Thanksgiving Day service in which all the participants expressed their great thanks to God for all His blessings and they also dedicated their lives before God.

During Christmas time we have visited all the houses of our parish and sung Christmas songs. Christmas contoda was held on December 19th Sunday in which our English choir and instrumental choir presented their beautiful song. Christmas carol service was held on December 24th evening. Our New Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus episcopa gave the Christmas message. Sunday school students presented a beautiful Christmas play through which they conveyed the real meaning of Christmas. This play was written, directed and presented by Sunday school students. Malayalam choir and instrumental choir beautifully presented their songs in the carol service. Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilos Episcopa celebrated the Holy Communion service the Christmas morning. We also arranged a special meeting after the service to welcome our new Diocesan Bishop. Rev. George Mathew, Dr. M.V. Mathew and Miss Susan Ninan gave felicitations to Thirumeni. Mr. Mathai P. Mathai presented a token of our church to our Thirumeni.

The youth group arranged a soup kitchen on the Christmas eve to share the love of Jesus with the poor people. They also hosted the Regional Youth Conference from December 27-30 in Michigan.

The watchnight service was held on December 31st in which so many people dedicated their life before God and participated in the midnight Holy Communion service. The Edavaka mission of our church started a new mission field in Karnataka and we are now collecting \$5000 for that purpose. The Sevika Sanghom decided to support 4 homeless and our Yuvajara Sakhyam decided to support 10 homeless people in India. We have also invited applications from financially difficult students in India for awarding scholarships.

MAR THOMA CHURCH OF LOS ANGELES

Our Edavaka mission arranged a tour for its members to the San Dimas Retirement Center on Saturday, October 9th. Mr. P. M. Thomas, Edavaka Mission Secretary shared the word of God with the inmates. The members also distributed copies of New Testament Study Bible to the residents of the Retirement Center. Responding to the call for helping the earthquake victims, our parish collected about \$2000.00 and sent it to the metropolitan's Earth Quake Relief Fund in October.

A church picnic and Sunday school annual sports competition were held on the 13th of November in Cerritos Regional Park. A large number of parents, youth and children participated in the picnic which was coordinated by Mr. A.K. John.

This year we had two caroling groups - a youth group coordinated by Mr. Tom Karakad and an adult group coordinated by Mr. Thomas Mammen (La Verne) which made house visits during December to share the joy of Christmas. Our Christmas eve celebrations brought together a large number of our member and their friends to an evening filled with joy and happiness. The singing of carols, tableaux, plays by children and adults and the message given by the Chief Guest Dr. Donald Douglas Dean, Department of Intercultural Studies, Biola University, were the highlights of the evening program.

Our member welcomed the New Year with hope and commitment during the watchnight service on the 31st.

Rev. C. John, Vicar



A scene from the Christmas play



Youth Choir singing at the Carol Service



Tableau by Sunday School students



Dr. Donald Douglas delivering the Christmas Message

KERALA CULTURAL AND CIVIC CENTER'S AWARD GOES TO A MARTHOMITE FROM HOUSTON, TEXAS

At a gala banquet held in their honor, five distinguished Malayalees including Mr. P. Koshy Thomas, a member of our Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston were awarded for their outstanding contributions to the Indian community and American society. The function was held on November 6, 1993 in New York in the presence of over 500 guests including India's Ambassador to the United States Mr. Sidhardh Sankar Ray, India's representative at the U.N. Mr. T.P. Srinivasan, members of India's Parliament M.M. Jacob and E. Ahmed, Sahitya Academy winner Prof. Sanu, Hon. R. Balakrishna Pillai, Minister of Transportation, Kerala, Dr. K.J. Yesudas and Mr. John Abraham, the mayor of Teaneck, New Jersey. Besides Mr. P. Koshy Thomas, Dr. M. Anirudhan, Dr. George Thomas, Dr. Prema Mathai Davis and Mr. R. Unni Krishnan were the other recipients of the award.

Mr. P. Koshy Thomas along with his wife Moani and daughters Shessy, Sherly and Sherin immigrated to the United States in 1971. After living in New York till 1978, the family moved to Houston, Texas where his entrepreneurial spirit led him to many a business venture. In 1985 he moved into the publishing industry as a partner in an English weekly newspaper. Three years later he started his own newspaper the *Voice of Asia*. The *Voice of Asia* is now the leading Indian newspaper in the South.

Mr. Thomas is very active in the large Indian community in Houston. He is a Director of the Indo-American Charity Foundation and also a founding member and Director of the South Asian Chamber of Commerce in Houston. Thomas' daughters Shessy and Sherly are practicing attorneys and Sherine is a second year law student.

Abraham Mattackal



Mr. P. Koshy Thomas receiving KCCC award for journalism from Mr. P.K. Vasudevan Nair MLA and former Chief Minister of Kerala.

THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

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(On Study Leave in U.K.)

DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

List of the Diocesan Assembly Members(1994)

Name of the Parish	Name of Members	Name of the Parish	Name of Members
1. St. Andrews MTC, N.Y.	Mr. Stephen Jacob	17. Ebenezer MTC, Pelham	Mr. Geevarghese Thankachen
3. MTC Ottawa	Mr. Mathew Thomas	18. Trinity MTC, Houston	Mr. T.A. Mathew & Mrs. Achamma Mathew
4. MTC Kingston	Mr. Easaw Rajan	19. MTC Los Angeles	Mr. Abraham Philipose
5. Emmanuel MTC, Lubbock	Dr. P. John Lincoln	20. St. Johns MTC, N.Y.	Mr. Philip David
6. Epiphany MTC, N.Y.	Mr. Abraham Chacko & Mrs. Annamma Philip	21. St. James MTC, N.Y.	Mr. Kuruvilla Cherian
7. Chicago MTC	Mr. T.A Abraham & Mrs. Susamma Iype	22. MTC New Jersey	Mr. Daniel Varghese
8. Detroit MTC	Mr. C.V. Samuel	23. St. Peters MTC, Teaneck, N.Y.	Mr. George Philip
9. Canadian MTC, Toronto	Mr. Varghese K. Pothan	24. MTC Staten Island	Mr. Jacob Chacko
10. MTC San Francisco	Mr. Cherian Philip	25. MTC Philadelphia	Mr. Sunny Abraham & Mr. Saju Mathew
11. MTC Boston	Mr. Alex Thomas	26. Bethel MTC, Philadelphia	Mr. Eapen Daniel
12. MTC Baltimore	Dr. George Kurian	27. MTC South Florida	Mr. Abraham David
13. MTC Greater Washington	Dr. George Zachariah	28. MTC Chapel, Central Florida	Mr. Thomas Varghese
14. Long Island MTC	Mr. Varghese Oomen & Mr. Joseph V. Thomas	29. MTC U.K.	Mr. A.K. Thomas
15. Trinity MTC, Edmonton	Mr. Rajan Daniel	30. MTC Atlanta	Mr. Joseph Stephen
16. MTC Greater, Seattle	Mr. John Titus	31. MTC Oklahoma	Mr. Varghese Chandapillai
		32. MTC Ft. McMurray	Mr. E. Samuel
		33. St. Paul's MTC, Dallas	Mr. James Meppurathu

PS: Names of Assembly members from St. Thomas, N.Y. Mar Thoma Church, Rochester and Dallas Mar Thoma Church are still awaited.

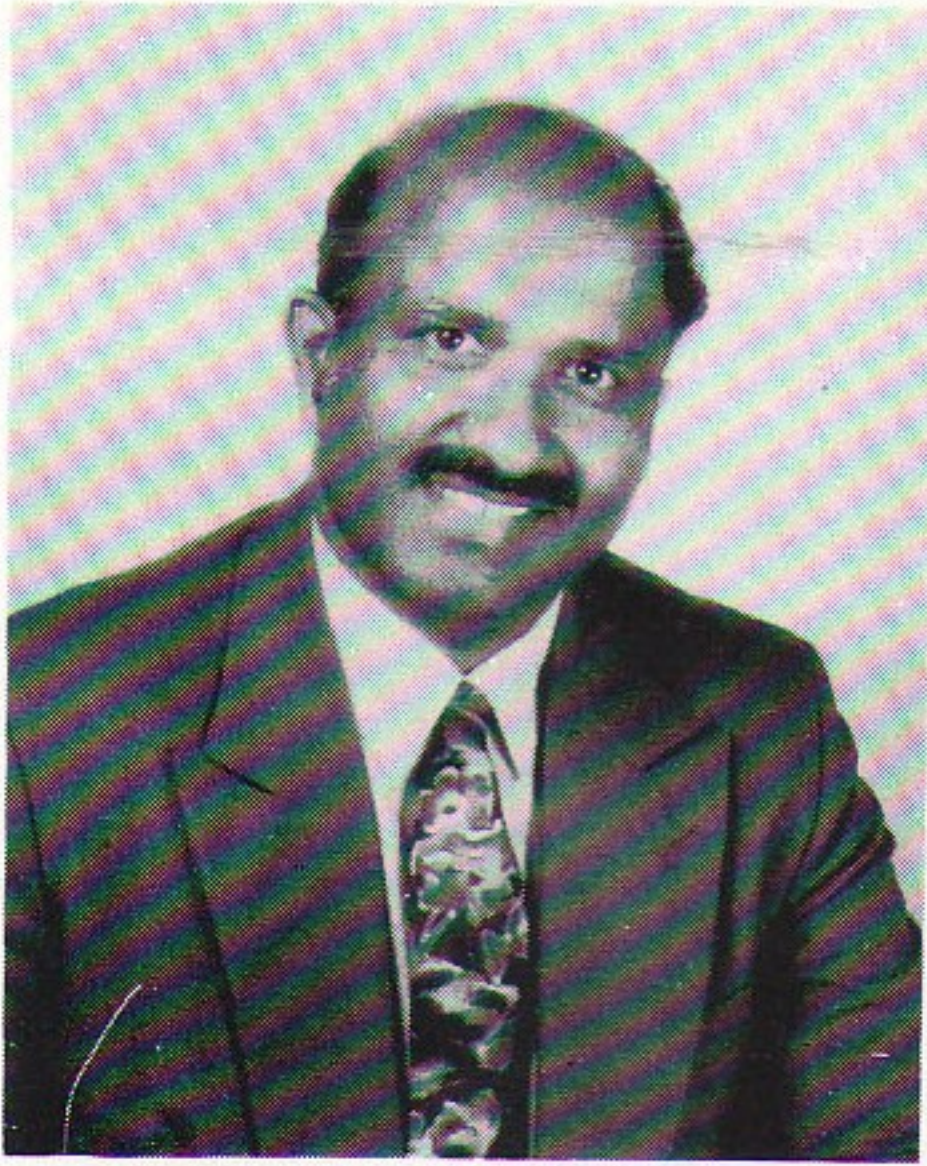
Sabha Council Members from our Diocese

1. Dr. Abraham C. Thomas
2. Mr. K.T., Thomas

Mar Thoma Church of Los Angeles, Los Angeles
Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Dallas

DIOCESAN BISHOP'S SCHEDULE - DECEMBER '93 TO APRIL 1994

December 9, '93	Arrival in New York
11	Yourh Meeting in New Jersey
11	Meeting of the Mar Thoma Physicians and Dentists' Association
12	Holy Communion Service at St.Thomas MTC, Yonkers
12	Meeting of the MT Family Conference Committee in Staten Island
13	Eastern Region Clergy Conference
14	Meeting with Rev.Winston Ching of the Episcopal Church, New York
18	Meeting of the Diocesan Center Committee & Diocesan Council at the Mar Thoma Center
	MTC Philadelphia - Christmas Carol Service
19	MTC Philadelphia-Holly Communion Service
24	MTC Chicago- Christmas Eve Service
25	MTC Chicago-Holy Communion Service.
25	MTC Detroit - Committee Meeting
26	MTC Detroit- Holy Communion Service
27	Detroit - Regional Youth Conference
31	Bethel MTC, Philadelphia- Watch Night Service
January 1, 1994	Trinity MTC Houston - New Year Service
2	Holy Communion Service
3	Departure to India - Contact address: Santhigiri, 11/488 Edathala North Alwaye 683564, Kerala Phone: 04854-26014 Fax: 0484-37022
7& 8	Meeting of Episcopal Synod
14 thru	
February 9, 1994	World Council of Churches - Central & Ex.Committee Meetings Johannesburg, South Africa
10& 11	Episcopal Synod meeting
12	Sabha Council meeting
13 to 20	Maramon Convention
23	Ecumenical Christian Center Meeting, Bangalore
March 1, 1994	Arrival in New York
4 &5	Council Meeting
11- 13	Regional Youth Conference, Lubbock, Texas
14-21	MTC Los Angeles & San Francisco
23	Eastern Region Clergy Conference
25-27	MTC Dallas
31	MTC Oklahoma
April 1, 1994	St.Paul's MTC, Dallas
3	MTC Staten Island
7 -9	Diocesan Assembly Meeting
9	Public Meeting in connection with the dedication of the Mar Thoma Center
10	Epiphany MTC, New York.
17	MTC South Florida



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