



MAR THOMA

# MESSENGER

A PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

JANUARY 1995

**RENEWAL OF  
OUR FAITH &  
SPIRITUALITY**



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## LETTER FROM THE DIOCESAN BISHOP

**Dearly beloved in Christ,**

1995 brings a lot of hope and encouragement as well as fears and disillusionment. Every event has a darker and a brighter side. We see the light or darkness, depending upon where we stand. We need a bright lamp and a sharp focus to see the realities in life in the coming year. Let us strive and hope to behold the brighter, positive and the better side of life in the coming year.

By the time this issue of the Messenger is released, the hundredth anniversary of the Maramon Convention in Kerala would be over. The convention has been a beacon of light in the socio-religious life of the Christian community in Kerala. The uniqueness of the convention is not in its mammoth attendance, but in its missiological and sociological impact on society. The Maramon has always imbibed and cherished the thrust of a spirit of Reformation ideals, which we need to foster in the coming years too. The messages from the platforms were always focused on repentance, reconciliation, and renewal at the personal and corporate levels. We need to recapture the spirit of Reformation all over the world where the Mar Thoma community has gone. As we celebrate the centenary of the Maramon convention as a church, a fresh look at our existence and expressions, vision and mission, liturgy and life should take place.

Spirituality comes out of the faith that we hold. Faith finds its expression from the spirituality that we cherish. Faith and spirituality are inseparable and intertwined. Faith experience gives faith expression through acts of spirituality. Renewal of faith will be reflected in the expression of spirituality. The spirituality of our times depends upon the nature and type of faith that we uphold and the cultural and social milieu. A relevant spirituality should effect and direct our thinking, feeling, and act-



ing. It will then touch our family, church and community life, shaping our present and future.

Integration of body, mind and spirit is essential for a mature personhood. Behind many immature behaviors are disintegrated personalities. Proper development of the body, mind and spirit must be given high priority in any individual's life. Christian education and secular education have great roles to play in building up matured, solid, and strong persons. Education is a process from cradle to tomb where children and adults need active participation. Sunday School, youth forums, and adult education of the church are of great importance. Primary and higher education of our members need more attention and concentration by all concerned.

Breakdown of marriages are increasing in an alarming proportion in our society due to various factors. Many separations, divisions, and divorces could be avoided if attention, guidance and support were rendered by the proper persons at the proper time. Sanctity, longevity, and exuberance of life in the family context has to be kept alive. All members of the family and their friends and relations should try their best to keep every family as a divine home in the human community.

Church is our extended family. We must remember that dissension in parishes are a scandal to the church. Differences of opinion have a place in any society. Differences should never lead to dissension and dissipation. As church is the body of Christ, it should be one and united. Members should cohere, correlate, and cooperate to achieve the ultimate goal of witnessing the Lord, the Lord of the Church. All parish members must be able to stand together and glorify God for what He has done to us. Let us go ahead in the new year with determination to stand together and to live to glorify Him who has created, sustained and redeemed us.

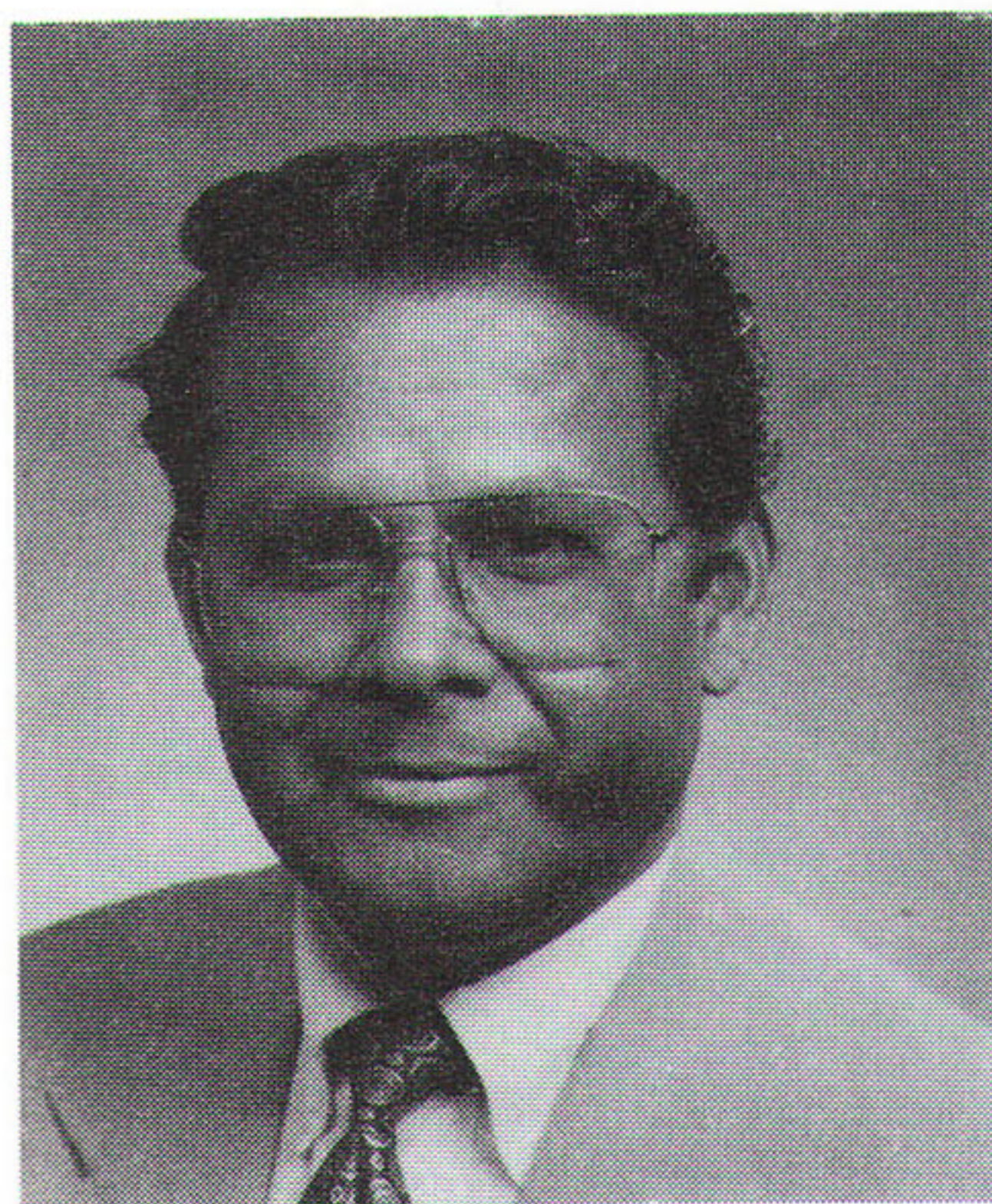
With blessings,

**Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Episcopa**



# REVIVAL OF FAITH AND SPIRITUALITY

Dr. Plammoottil V. Cherian, Ann Arbor, Michigan



## Introduction

I feel honored to have asked to write an article in this issue of the *Mar Thoma Messenger*, the theme of which is 'Revival of our faith and spirituality'. This theme is especially befitting on an occasion when the Mar Thoma Church is celebrating the centenary of the

Maramon Convention. The Maramon convention which began in 1895 sent echoes of the gospel of Jesus Christ in all directions of the world for the last hundred years. The Gospel messages that have been aired from the banks of Pamba River have been universal Christian truths and principles that are applicable to change human attitude and behavior as well as the quality of life in individuals. For this reason the convention is attended by not only Marthomites but also by members of other Christian denominations and other religions. May the Holy Spirit strengthen us to proclaim the eternal truths of the gospel, until He, of whom we preach returns.

## The modern arena of Life

The Russian born Alexander Solzhenitsyan recently commented on the root cause of modern problem. In his words "the West has been undergoing an erosion and obscuring of high moral and ethical ideals. The Spiritual axis of life has grown dim"<sup>1</sup>. Although, his words were specifically directed towards the United States and the Western countries, in my opinion it is a universal chronic problem. If we take a closer look at the facts and figures of the incidents of lawlessness, corruption, murder, homicide, suicide, sexual crimes and immorality, the general strikes, the political corruption, bribery, the prevalence of social injustices such as poverty, oppression and racism, they are very prevalent everywhere. Over fifty percent of marriages end up in divorce in the Western societies and their offspring's suffer a great deal, and ironically many of them end up in the streets. The rise in instability of marriages is on the rise even in communities in which it was alien. Lack of discipline, corruption, and addiction to drug, alcohol and sex is an epidemic of destructive forces that take control of the lives of tens of thousands of people. In the last three decades we have seen the slippery highways and the degraded by ways of the social, economic, political and moral arena of the society all over the world. The pews in the Church have become somewhat scanty worldwide. People have re-

sorted to all sorts of things in quest for satisfying the needs of the body and mind, and to fill the vacuum created by the moral degradation. Children are exposed to violence and to the often bizarre lifestyles of many of today's idols. As a result, beliefs and practices which were once unacceptable have become the values and norms of many among the present generation. "Our society, has been on a thirty year binge of value bashing", says Gary Bauer, President of the Family Research Council based in Washington, D.C.<sup>2</sup>. The erosion of values is not a unique problem in America or the West, it has grown to a state of malignancy in many parts of the world.

I have been in North America for the last twenty five years and what I have seen in general is the tossing of rules, restraints and the self discipline, increase in teen age pregnancies, acceptance of homosexuality, the preventive method of AIDS by safe sex philosophy and the crimes in the inner cities. The society today has a culture of degraded moral and social values overwritten by violence and perversion. While scientific technology has progressed business and economy have taken an upward turn and opportunities are abundant. The family values and the foundations of homes were infested with the notion of "any thing is OK". As a result, the number of families who preserved the values of family prayer, Bible Study, and uplifting the moral codes of ethics have decreased.

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*"The modern philosophy of 'political correctness' is dangerous thinking..."*

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While scientific technology has progressed business and economy have taken an upward turn and opportunities are abundant. The family values and the foundations of homes were infested with the notion of "any thing is OK". As a result, the number of families who preserved the values of family prayer, Bible Study, and uplifting the moral codes of ethics have decreased.

The modern philosophy of 'political correctness' is a dangerous thinking which does not distinguish between right and wrong. When Christians are silent before this thinking, we are conformed with the pattern of this world and that is the root cause of lack of spirituality in our lives. We live in a world of multiculturalism which embraces all religious beliefs and practices including cult, atheism, paganism, idolatry and homosexuality. Because all men are created equal, secular governments protect them under the law. The thinking of political correctness has created a color blindness so that we are unable to distinguish between what is morally right and wrong. Therefore the Church and the state have been blinded by the thinking that homosexuality, perversion, tendency to commit crimes, murder, rape and incest are embodied in the genetic make up of an individual. While it is true that there is a genetic disposition for all characteristics of human beings, the behavior and attitude are controlled by the conscience and modified by the environment we live in. Have the scientists ever wondered whether we have a genetic disposition to seek the truth and know God? Thus it appears that we have placed God and his teaching on



the shelves. At this particular time we need to analyze the meaning of faith and spirituality and rekindle them for a better understanding and for a more meaningful life.

### **Faith and Spirituality**

What is the Christian Faith? Rather than going into a theological discussion of the definition of faith, let me point out that what we recite each Sunday in the Creed is the Christian faith universally. Our faith is that the sovereign authority of this universe is God who exists in the triune nature as Father, Son and the Holy Spirit; that the Bible is the word of God inscribed under the direction of the Holy Spirit; that Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God himself, who was born of virgin Mary after being conceived by the Holy Spirit, died on the cross, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Through his atoning sacrifice he redeemed the world of its sin; that salvation is obtained as free gift through grace by those who believe in him; and that Church is the body of believers.

Faith is a confident belief in the truth, value or trustworthiness of a person, idea or thing. It is belief that does not rest on logical proof of material evidence. Faith is expressed toward God and others, as is said, "so the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses His servant"<sup>3</sup>. Faith is also an expression of our commitment to adherence to the principles set forth in the Bible, as illustrated by the Psalmist, "I believe in your commandments"<sup>4</sup>.

The substance of faith - that is the content of what we really believe is explained through out the New Testament and particularly in the Epistles. The author of the letter to Hebrews define faith as, "the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen"<sup>5</sup>. We also get a list of accomplishments of the deeds that Israelites achieved through faith in the same chapter <sup>6</sup>. Paul the Apostle describes the substance of faith as well as its rewards in many ways through out his Epistles. In an attempt to justify his mission to the non-Jews (Gentiles), Paul begins by pointing out that Abraham was righteous by having faith in God before he was circumcised, and therefore, is the father of the Gentiles who believe in the saving power of God, as well of the Jews. He further asserts that righteousness will be credited to those who have faith in God and that those who believe that God raised Jesus from the dead will be saved <sup>7</sup>. Thus we have a moral duty to believe, trust and obey God, and as reward we have promises of righteousness and salvation. The question is, are we living by faith?

One of the best known examples of faith is of Abraham, who wondered how God would make of him a great nation when he was old and his wife was barren, and the odds were against the biological and medical knowledge of human conception and pregnancy. The Lord asserted

that Abraham will indeed have offspring that will be as numerous as the stars in the sky. In response to this promise and all tangible evidence Abraham had absolute faith in God, and he credited it to him as righteousness <sup>8</sup>. Abraham's willingness to trust God in this and many other situations make him a prime example of the Biblical concept of faith. While God has been faithful in his promise towards Abraham, through out the Bible we find that Abraham's descendants struggle with the issue of how to continue as faithful obedient people. We who are sons of Abraham through faith have the same problem. On one hand Psalmist rejoice in the faithfulness of God <sup>9</sup>, and on the other laments the lack of faith shown by the people <sup>10</sup>. What we see today is that we are less obedient and less faithful than our forefathers and we feel that we can stand on our own. Prophet Habbakkuk affirms that "but the righteous will live by his faith"<sup>11</sup>.

In many of Jesus' miracles faith is the operating force.

Jesus was so impressed by the faith of the Centurion, that he healed his servant <sup>12</sup>. Jesus was amazed at the faith of those who carried the paralytic to his presence <sup>13</sup>. Jesus also points out that we must believe in Him. One of the best examples is seen in the incident when the father of a demon-possessed boy was brought to Jesus, he points out that all things are possible to the one who believes. The man replied, "I believe, but help me overcome my unbelief"<sup>14</sup>. It is in the same order that he said to Martha, Lazarus' sister before he was brought back to life." Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God"<sup>15</sup>. Therefore absolute belief, child like faith and unflinching obedience are needed on our part to experience the power of Jesus in our lives. Are we obedient, faithful and are we committed to Jesus Christ, as He was to God our eternal Father? Christ's obedience is the perfect model for our Christian living. "He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross"<sup>16</sup>.

Faith comes from purity of heart and unless we attain absolute purity we cannot recognize God. This our Lord Jesus taught us, when he said. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"<sup>17</sup>. Perhaps it is based on this teaching of Jesus Christ, that Mahatma Gandhi who had great admiration for the teachings of Christ once said, "when our faith becomes as great as the Himalayas and as pure as the snows on their peaks, we will be able to realize what is God".

### **What is Spirituality**

Spirituality is defined as the state, quality or fact of being spiritual - that is a sense of belonging to God. Spirituality is opposed to worldliness and materialism. To renew our spirituality means to refine us intellectually and morally that our thoughts, character, behavior and atti-

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*"In many of  
Jesus' miracles  
faith is the  
operating force."*

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tudes are Christ centered by which we can lead a Spirit filled life. Psalmist recollect and praise God for this moral refinement. "Thou has refined us as silver is refined"<sup>18</sup>. Spirituality is God given and not man made. It is a gift of God that we attain through, and only through the grace of Jesus Christ. One cannot gain a diploma or certification in spirituality and it is not a subject that one can look forward to becoming a professional spiritual. It is a quality that must fill and overflow from each faithful believer from an experience of the fulness of the Holy Spirit.

At a time when every thing is politically correct, theologians do not write much about spirituality, pastors do not preach much about it, and the religious Church goers do not practice much of it. We need to ask ourselves when the world around has confused religiosity with spirituality what is the real meaning of religion, and how to experience spirituality in our worship and daily lives. Apostle Paul exhorted that life of a Christian without the experience of the Holy Spirit is unchristian and below the dignity of a true believer. The manifestation of the Christian virtues of spirituality in Paul's view is "the fruit of the Spirit". It is interesting that one day during our regular weekly Bible Study, when we discussed the fruit of the Spirit, one thought that is the 'fruits' and not fruit in singular noun, because there are many virtues explained as the fruit of the Spirit. When it was pointed out that it is the fruit and not the fruits, it was an eye opener for all of us to note that Paul incorporated nine virtues into the singular noun which he described as the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control"<sup>19</sup>. It is not a multiple choice to pick any one of those virtues as the fruit in its completion, but is the collective integrity of all of these virtues that manifest as the "fruit of the Spirit". If we lack one of these, the Holy Spirit has not ripened in us to make its fruit complete within us. It is just like the ten commandments which is not a multiple choice to pick one, either. We may not break many of the commandments, but if we fail in one of those, we are not observers of the commandments.

### III. Religiosity Vs Spirituality

There is a confusion among the various Christian denominations at the present time about religiosity and spirituality. By being religious does not guarantee the gift of spirituality (although, that is what we often claim and are perceived by others). This has been an age old misconception and a real confusion in the minds of many church goers. Being religious with out being really spiritual is an aimless and hopeless journey through the roads of religion. The nation of Israel was greatly religious as we read through out the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments. The Pharisees and the scribes were very religious, very ardent in their beliefs and they had a zeal for their faith;

they knew the law, were very much involved in the synagogue, its administration and they were well pleased with others in their rituals and outward expression of faith of their religion. But they ignored God's righteousness and were far from reality. God promised them a messiah who will save them and bring them back to the righteousness of God. The prophets exhorted them of the impending dangers in replacing the substance of religion (that is spirituality) with outward expression of religiosity. Paul had a compassionate love to save them. He spoke very highly of their zeal for Judaism but he taught them against the dangers of lack of spirituality. He tried to preach to them that Christ is the righteousness of God and only through Him they will be made righteous.

We see in the various discourses between Jesus and the Pharisees that he warns them of their religiosity and their ignorance of the truth about spirituality and their contentious nature, and for these reasons Jesus considered them hypocritical. At times their religious nature was a show as pointed out by Jesus. "When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets that they may be honored by men"<sup>20</sup>. At other times their religiosity expressed ignorance and mere lip service. "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teaching are but rules taught by men"<sup>21</sup>. Jesus pointed out their worship was not motivated by love, but by a desire to appear holy and to increase their status in the synagogue and the community, and that they worshipped God for the wrong

reasons. We become outwardly religious when we (i) pay more attention to reputation than to inward character and integrity, (ii) carefully follow the traditions while our hearts are truly away from God, and (iii) when we emphasize our own virtues and abilities in order to promote our ego, but others sins and worthlessness. Thus according Jesus Christ all who play the part of religion in their worship, whether consciously or by ignorance are not worshipping in truth and in spirit.

Judas Iscariot was very religious. He followed Christ and was one of the disciples. He had the greatest teacher to learn from. He walked with Christ but Christ was not within him; he walked with the light, but the light was not in him. Although he was religious he did not realize the way he was following, the truth he was seeking and the life he was living. Yet he walked with Christ who is the way, the truth and the light"<sup>22</sup>. The pews in our Church may be full, one may be engaged in doing a lot of things in the Church and may serve on the committee. There is a great danger in just being religious and not spiritual. Unless one is absolutely pure in his heart he will not know Christ and experience spirituality.

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*"At other times  
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### How can we have a revival of faith and spirituality?

Paul observed this 'any thing goes right' philosophy in the early Christian Churches when he warned all generations of the dangers of being conformed to this world. We are very much conformed to the pattern of this world. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind"<sup>23</sup>. The Old Testament practice of sacrificing the animal for the remission of sins was according to God's law, before man kind was offered the Lamb of God for sacrifice, once and for all generations of man kind. But even in Old Testament God made it clear that obedience from the heart is much more important than ritualistic sacrifice. "Does the Lord delight in burnt offering and sacrifices in as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord. To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of the rams"<sup>24</sup>. A sacrifice was a ritual transaction between man and God that physically demonstrated a relationship between them. But if the person in the heart was not truly repentant and does not love and obey God, the sacrifice was a meaningless ritual. Religious ceremonies and ritual are empty and meaningless, unless offered with an attitude of love, obedience and purity of heart. Being religious (going to Church, serving on the committee and giving to charity) does not make us spiritual, if we do not act out of devotion, love and obedience to God.

God wants us to offer ourselves, not animals, as living sacrifices laying aside our own personal desires, and follow him, placing all our energy and resources at his disposal and trusting him to guide us. We are obliged to do this in view of God's mercy that he had offered to sacrifice Christ for our follies and to rescue us. Christians are not to be conformed to this world. The world we live in with its behavior and customs that are usually selfish and corrupt often challenge God's principles and moral code, as we see it today in a politically correct society. Many Christians agree that much worldly behavior is off limits. Our refusal to conform to this world must grow further deeper than the level of the behavior and customs of multi-cultural society. It must be firmly planted in our minds to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Only when the Holy Spirit indwells within us, reeducates us, and redirects our minds we are truly transformed. "Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires, (i.e. worldliness) but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their mind set on what the Spirit desires"(i.e. spirituality)<sup>25</sup>. "And if any does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ"<sup>26</sup>.

### Conclusion

Our lack of spirituality is self inflicted from our ignorance, our over indulgence in materialism and the cultural revolution that takes place around us. Our lack of under-

standing of the Word of God and our lack of enthusiasm to apply godly principles in life make the cloud thicker over our spiritual horizon. The good news is that what is self imposed can be self corrected. A process of restoration needs to be undertaken. The scripture teaches us numerous great lessons. Two of them we must always remember to strengthen us to rescue ourselves and others from the pitfalls. The first is, do not grow weary or lose heart in doing good <sup>27</sup>.

The second is that we are sojourners in this earthly kingdom, and our existence here has nothing to do with our ultimate belonging. We are citizens of the Kingdom of God <sup>28</sup>.

We often find fault with the (Western) culture for every thing that goes wrong in the society. We must realize that the truth of the matter is we have conformed to the pattern of this world. Whether we are of the east, west, north or south for Christians there is only one culture and that is the culture of Jesus Christ. It is to identify us with this culture that we are called heavenward. Our citizenship is in heaven. The characteristics of the culture of Jesus Christ will become evident when we lead a Spirit filled life. Those who belong to Christ, will bear the fruit of the Spirit. To rekindle spirituality, we must "get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice" from our heart, and we must loose our grip of worldliness.

Let us be imitators of Jesus Christ. We may not attain perfection, but let us press on toward that goal. That goal must be nothing short of experiencing the Holy Spirit in every sphere of our lives, that we may show to others around us Jesus Christ in us. Let us be strong in the Lord, grow in the grace, and be protected under His mighty wings. We must wear the full armor of God to receive His protection. Its components are, "the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the gospel of peace, shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit"<sup>29</sup>. The world should not separate us from the love of Christ. And let us not be ignorant of being only religious, without spirituality. "The Lord knows those who are His"<sup>30</sup>.

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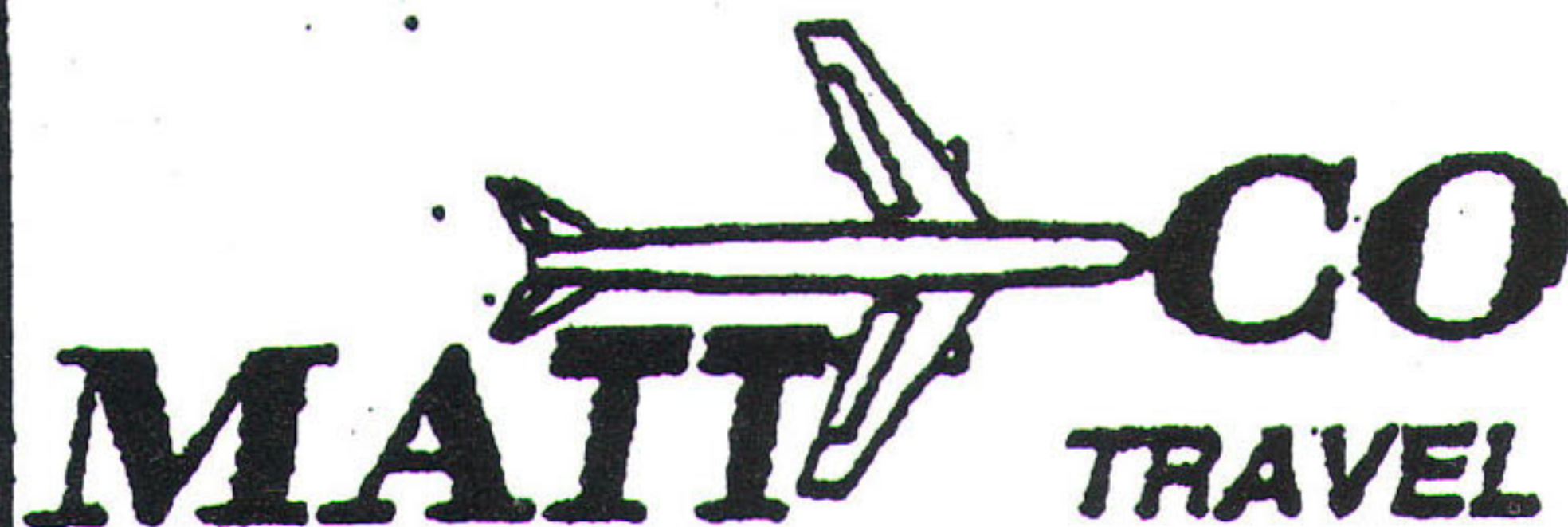
<sup>1</sup> Alexander Solzhenitsyan, as quoted by William J. Bennet, In *The Devaluing of America. The fight for our culture and our Children*. Focus on the Family Publishing. Colorado Springs, Colorado, 1994. <sup>2</sup> Gary Bauer, *In our Journey Home, What parents are doing to preserve family values*. World Publishing, Dallas, U.S.A. 1992. <sup>3</sup> Exod. 14:31; <sup>4</sup> Psa. 119:66; <sup>5</sup> Heb. 11:1; <sup>6</sup> Heb. 11:4-40; <sup>7</sup> Rom. 10:9; <sup>8</sup> Gen. 15:6; <sup>9</sup> Psa. 111:7; <sup>10</sup> Psa. 78:8; <sup>11</sup> Hab. 2:4; <sup>12</sup> Mat. 8:5-13; <sup>13</sup> Mat. 9:1-8; <sup>14</sup> Mar. 9:23-24; <sup>15</sup> John 11:40; <sup>16</sup> Phi. 2:8; <sup>17</sup> Mat. 5:8; <sup>18</sup> Psa. 66:10; <sup>19</sup> Gal. 5:22,23; <sup>20</sup> Mat. 6:2; <sup>21</sup> Mar. 7:5-8, cf. Isa. 29:13; <sup>22</sup> John 14:6; <sup>23</sup> Rom. 12:1,2; <sup>24</sup> I Sam.15:22; <sup>25</sup> Rom.8:5; <sup>26</sup> Rom. 8:9; <sup>27</sup> Gal. 6:9; <sup>28</sup> Phi. 3:20; <sup>29</sup> Eph.6:13-17; <sup>30</sup> 2 Tim. 2:19.



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I am His child, you are His child  
We all are children of the Lord.

1. He is the way, follow His way  
Love our friends and neighbors and foes  
Caring is giving to those who need  
Bring peace on earth by sharing our wealth

I am His child, you are His child  
We all are children of the Lord.

2. Cast, color and creed are all man made  
Though we all are made in His image  
Praying for you is praying for me  
Let's pray for all through out our life.

I am His child, you are His child  
We all are children of the Lord.

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## HOW MUCH ARE YOU WORTH?

Your real worth is not in what you have, but in what you are, and what is recognized by your services to those who need them.

The worthy whose worth excel all riches are those who live for others. More worthy than the self-indulgent are the self-giving. More praise worthy than being good is doing good. More valuable than glory is a good name.

As you give you'll get for what you gave. Recompense for your benevolent gifts is a gladdened heart and gratifying remembrances. You are worth only what you are good for.

How much are you worth as your brother's keeper?

How much are you worth as an example to youth?

How much are you worth as a friend to the friendless?

How much are you worth as a fighter of adversities?

How much are you worth as an inspiration to the despairing?

**-Sunshine Magazine**

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## THERE IS SPRING

William A. Ward

Where there are love and generosity, there is joy.  
Where there are sincerity and sacrifice, there is friendship.  
Where there are harmony and simplicity, there is beauty.  
Where there are prayer and forgiveness, there is peace.  
Where there are moderation and patience, there is wisdom.  
Where there are conflicts and crises, there is opportunity.  
Where there are wonder and adventure, there is growth.  
Where there are adoration and confession, there is worship.  
Where there are compassion and concern, there is God  
Where there are faith and hope, there is spring.

## MATRIMONIAL

Marthomite parents invite proposals for their 27 years old 5' 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" mechanical engineer son. Interested parties may please respond with details and a recent photograph (returnable) to Box No. PK/195, c/o Editor, Mar Thoma Messenger.

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Marthomite Parents based in Bombay, invite proposals for their Daughter, 25 years, 160 cms, Final year MBA, smart, attractive, with pleasing manners, at present working in Travel Industry from parents of Marthomite, C.S.I. or Jacobite boys of 29-30 years, professionally qualified, or individuals with established business, residing in North America or U.K. Please reply to: Mr. Sonny Mathew, 350 Webb Drive Apt. 112, Mississauga, Ontario-L5B3W4. Canada. Tel/Fax:(905)306-0327. Bombay-Fax(0091-22)202 2642/285 6160

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Proposals invited for an attractive Syrian Christian girl raised and educated in Canada and professionally employed. Preference will be given to a professionally qualified man raised in North America or U.K. Please reply with full details to Box No. PAO/J95, C/o The Editor, The Mar Thoma Messenger.

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Proposals invited for a Marthomite boy, U.S. Citizen, 24 years hailing from a respectable family. He is an Electrical Engineer, educated in North America and employed by a multinational corporation. Preference will be given for a girl with professional/post-graduate degree and upbringing in a God fearing Keralite family. Reply to Box No. TMC/094 C/o The Editor, Mar Thoma Messenger.



# THE MAGI AND THE STAR

Rev. Dr. M.J. Joseph, Kottayam, Kerala



In Matthew 2:1-2 we read: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold, 'wisemen' from the East came to Jerusalem saying "Where is one who has been born King of the Jews"? For we have seen his star in the East and have come to worship him."

A critical view of the story is that it is a literary fiction based only upon legendary motives and folklore analogies. However, the visit of the *magi* from the East is integral to the fabric of early Christian tradition and piety. There has been attempts to identify "the *magi* from the East".

The Greek '*magoi*' (Latin - *magi*) has been used in a good and bad sense. According to Herodotus,<sup>1</sup> the *magi* were originally a tribe of the Medes who became a priestly class among the Persians as the Chaldeans did in Babylon (Dan. 1:4). In this sense, they were 'wisemen' who can be called 'astrologers'. They were thought to have the power of interpreting dreams and visionary messages. The word later acquired the sinister sense of magician or sorcerer.<sup>2</sup>

It is quite unlikely that Matthew used it in this bad sense of 'sorcerer'. Raymond E. Brown thinks that the term '*magi*' refers to those engaged in occult arts, and covers a wide range of astronomers, fortune tellers, priestly augurers, and magicians of varying possibility.<sup>3</sup> Matthew's description of the magi as interpreting the rise of the star enables us to conclude that they were astrologers (NEB translates *magoi* as astrologers). But the debate continues to fix their identity. Scholars like Mann think that the Matthean *magi* are Babylonian Jews who practiced black magic and engaged in star worship.<sup>4</sup> They gave up the tools of their trade in homage to Jesus (cf. Acts 19: 18-20) Ignatius of Antioch draws out a message as: "from that time (i.e. the appearance of the star) all sorcery (*mageia*) and every evil spell began to lose their power; the ignorance of wickedness began to vanish away, the overthrow of the ancient dominion was being brought to pass since God was appearing in human form into newness of life eternal".<sup>5</sup>

The Christian use of Matthew is an apologetic against magic need not be read into the context here. As R.E. Brown thinks, "there is not the slightest hint of conversion or of a false practice in Matthew's description of the *magi*: they are wholly admirable. They represent the best of the pagan lore and religious perceptivity which has come to seek Jesus through revelation in nature".<sup>6</sup>

The task to locate the place of origin of the *magi* has raised several speculations. Matthew's reference to the place as *apo anatolon* (Matt. 12:2) is being understood in three localizations moving from the farther-most East towards Palestine. Moreover, the description of the gifts - gold, frankincense and myrrh (Matt. 2:11) provides clues to determine the location of their origin. The reference to the "rising of his star" (Matt. 2:2) shares a common belief of the period as birth of great men and great events, are associated with the appearance of the star (Num. 24:17).<sup>7</sup> However, it is impossible to identify a particular heavenly body as the star of Bethlehem.

The story of the *magi* and the star echoes the pentateuchal account of Moses, but combines this with the imagery of a Messiah descended from David. Just as Balaam in Num. 24:17 saw the star of David rise, the *magi* saw the star of the King of the Jews at its rising.<sup>8</sup>

Parthia or Persia is one of the widely held places in the East associated with the *magi*. In the early Christian art of the N.T., *magi* were depicted in the Persian or Parthian dress. When the Persian Army invaded Palestine in AD 614, it spared Bethlehem Church (Church of Nativity) because of a mo-

saic picturing of the *magi* as Persians.<sup>9</sup> Another argument in favor of the Persian localization comes out of the Zoroastrian background of the *magi* proposed by the Church Fathers beginning with Clement of Alexandria. According to the *Arabic Gospel of the Infancy*, there is a reference to the coming of *magi* to Jerusalem according to the prediction of Zoroaster A minor variant of the Parthian/Persian hypothesis is that the *magi* came from Commagene on the border area, North East of Syria.

The second option is Babylon which is based on the astrological implications of the rising of the star. The Babylonians are well known for their great interest and excellence in astronomy and astrology. The Babylonian exile of the Jews must have influenced the Babylonian astrologers about the Jewish expectation of the Messiah and a particular star associated with the King of Jews.

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*"The task to locate the place of origin of the *magi* has raised several speculations."*

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The third and the most favored location is Arabia based on the gifts offered by the *magi* to the Baby Jesus. Gold and frankincense are gifts that are associated with the desert camel trains coming from Arabia and from Sheba (cf. Is. 60: 6; Ps. 72: 15). Astrology was known to the Arabs. There were commercial relations between Israel and South Arabia, since Solomon's time. Justin, the Church Father makes a reference to the *magi* from Arabia as early as AD 160: "*Magi* from Arabia came to him" (Herod). Clement of Rome associated frankincense and myrrh with the East i.e. the districts near Arabia.

The gifts represent different aspects of Jesus as King, God and suffering redeemer. They also symbolize Christian response to the deity:- gold-virtue; incense-prayer; and myrrh-suffering. The gifts are related to the spirituality of the Christian life, filled with good deeds, prayer and sacrifice.

The appearance of a star to herald the birth of the king of the Jews - and its role to guide the *magi* to the place where the child lay has given rise to several conjectures.<sup>10</sup> Josephus, the Jewish historian, speaks of a star that stood over Jerusalem and of a comet that continued for a year at the time of the fall of the city. He says "God has a care for men and by all kinds premonitory signs shows His people the way of Salvation."<sup>11</sup>

There are three probable suggestions to solve the riddle of the star phenomenon. The appearance of a supernova or "new star" may correspond literally to Matthew's description of a star. But there is no record of a nova or supernova just before Jesus' birth date.<sup>12</sup> The theory of a new star is considered by scholars as a guess.

The second suggestion that has caught human imagination through out history is the appearance of a comet which moves in regular but elliptical paths around the sun. R.E. Brown thinks that the comet interpretation of Matthew's "Star" faces several difficulties as a comet is not a star. Moreover, a comet's appearance was considered to herald a catastrophe rather than heralding the birth of a salvific figure.

Another explanation is that there took place a planetary conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn as attested by Kelper. According to Kelper, there happened a planetary conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 7-6 B.C. Brown writes: "The claim has been made that this conjunction might lead Parthian astrologers to predict that there would appear in Palestine among the Hebrews a world ruler of the last days ..... But all of this is very speculative, for we really have no contemporary evidence justifying the reference to such a conjunction of planets as a "Star" or attaching a particular astrological effect to it even if there is later Jewish support for that".

What do the *magi* and the star teach us?

The *magi* are Gentile seekers who could represent God's revelation outside the law. The divine law is "written on their hearts" (Rom.2:15) Matthew probably wants to show that the *magi* who represent the Gentiles received a revelation through astrology.

The birth star associated with the King of the Jews brings them the good news of Salvation as it was through nature that God revealed himself to the Gentiles (cf. Rom. 1: 19-20, 2:14-15). This is only an imperfect revelation. "The Gentiles come to worship, but they must learn from the Jews the History of salvation". (cf. Matt. 2:2-6). The search for the truth must be continued, but the route to be followed must be sought diligently. The *magi* needed the support of the powers - religious and secular- to achieve their goal. Once the goal is realized, they do not co-operate with "the powers" which manipulate others. So "they departed to their own country by another way". (Matt. 2:12). So they had the courage to disobey the order of the king. To be on the side of the truth, means to have the courage to do truth and to risk oneself for truth.<sup>15</sup> The *magi* continues the search for the unknown, but the star facilitates it. Science and religion find a meeting place at the cradle as Christ is the wisdom of God (cf 1 Cor. 1:30). The wise men from the East fulfill their quest towards a new blending. The star of Bethlehem is the guiding force of our search towards truth and wholeness in the world.

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*"What do the  
magi and  
the star  
teach us?"*

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1. Herodotus (1,101 &1,132)

2 cf. Acts 8:9 (Simon the *magus*) and Acts 13:6, 8 (Bar-Jesus of Elymus the *magus*).

3 The Birth of the Messiah (An image book, Doubleday, New York 1979), p. 167.

4 Loc. cit.

5 Letter to the Ephesians, 19.

See J.C. Fenton, Saint Matthew (Penguin books, 1963), p.

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6 The Birth of the Messiah, p. 168

Matthew does not tell us how many there were nor what their names were. Based on the number of gifts presented to the child, it is inferred that they were three in number: Their names are given as Kasper, Balthasar and Melchior (Western tradition).

7 E.g. The fall of Troy and the birth of Alexander the Great.

8 The episode in Num. 22-24 involves the story of Balaam. The King of Moab, Balak, like the wicked Pharaoh of Egypt schemed to destroy Moses. Balak summoned "from the East" Balaam, a famous seer who was asked to use his arts against



Moses and Israel. Balaam was a non-Israelite and an occult visionary. Instead of cursing Moses and Israel, he gave a favorable vision of the future: "I see him, but not now; a star shall come forth out of Jacob and a scepter shall rise out of Israel (Num.24:17). Balaam had the emergence of Davidic Monarchy in mind. But later Judaism interpreted it as "an implicit reference to the Messiah", the anointed King of the Davidic descent.

<sup>9</sup> This was reported in a letter of AD 836, associated with the Synod of Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup> It is not quite clear based on Matt. 2:2<sup>b</sup> whether the star moved ahead of the *magi* till they reached Jerusalem. In 2:9 we read ..... the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was". The movement of the star is restricted to the second phase of their journey.

<sup>11</sup> Jewish War VI, V. 4-310. cf. Tacitus Histories v13. See R.E. Brown The Birth of Messiah, p. 170.

<sup>12</sup> The Church Father, Ignatius, gives an exclamatory note when he writes in Ephesians XIX 2: "A star shone in heaven

beyond all the stars, its light was beyond description, and its newness caused astonishment; all the other stars, with the sun and the moon, gathered in chorus around the star, but it far exceeded them all in its light".

<sup>13</sup> The Birth of the Messiah, p. 173

<sup>14</sup> cf. Raymond E. Brown, An Adult Christ at Christmas (The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1978), p.13. Matthew highlights a paradox in the drama of incarnation. The secular ruler, the chief priests and the scribes are all aligned against Jesus who has only God on his side. Those who have the scriptures reject Jesus while the Gentiles with the help of the Scriptures find and adore him. By offering scriptural guidance, the chief priests and scribes lend their support to Herod in the plot against the new born king!!

<sup>15</sup> The Lucan account of the Epiphany i.e. the visit of Mary and Joseph to the Temple for the ceremony of purification (cf. Lev: 12:2-8, Ex. 13:2, 12) is traditionally associated with Matthew's account of the visit of the *magi*.

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(Rev. Dr. M.J. Joseph was Professor of New Testament and former Principal of the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam)

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confused, broken, or just hopeless that His strength is perfect when yours is gone. He said "call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee." (Psalm 50:15). Oh, my friend, His name is Jesus. Yeah, people have all kinds of misconceptions about Him. I know how easy it is to get confused with a lot of doctoral talk. I came to Him so broken and hurt, that I was ready to die, but you know what? He has other plans for me. Great plans. He believes in me and has faith in me. He's promised to "...go before (me), and make the crooked places straight." (Isaiah 45:2) He's also promised never to leave me alone. I'm my mother's daughter alright. I don't know what the future holds, but I'm at peace in knowing who holds my future.

Finally in the words of the wonderful old pastor Robert Schuller, "In love's service, only broken hearts qualify. Trouble will never leave you where it found you. You are now credentialed to understand someone else's hurts" - maybe the same that you have experienced." Go ahead, I dare you to let Jesus "turn your scars into stars!" Maybe we'll meet one day on the streets of gold! Till then, His peace be with you friend. †



## CHRISTMAS 1994

Dr. John Mathew, Dallas

In Judea turmoil reigned.  
The haughty Romans were taskmasters.  
The zealous Jews groaned, gnashed  
their teeth, spat, wore tattered  
clothes, sat in hot ashes.  
Unpredictable turbulence seized,  
shook the world like roaring winds;  
like a hurricane tossing black waves,  
serpentine flashes, layered, roaring  
thunder reverberating, exploding in ears,  
terror-stricken mobs fleeing the hellish storm.

In Bethlehem, the clamorous, confused  
crowds shivering, seeking shelter from fury  
ran helter-skelter to find calm rooms, relief.  
Imperial Caesar's first census in Judea caused  
great commotion among the truculent, bitter Jews  
who from immemorial times complained against Yahweh.  
Like withered leaves ripped, the Jews ran and found no peace.

Pensive, old Joseph and his bone-weary wife Mary  
who rode a fatigued, shivering donkey  
at the fall of the awful night reeled from inn  
to inn as the whipping wind lashed, tore, shook;  
the daggers of the chilling cold pierced the core.  
The hapless pair found no refuge from the fury.  
The merciless, indifferent mob ignored  
the miserable pair in their great misery.  
The hidden Logos, the savior, they did not expect, see.

In that inhospitable night, lightless night,  
restless night, noisy night full of terrors  
in absolute darkness, in a miserable manger  
the Prince of Peace, the only begotten son,  
Love Divine was born, unseen, unnoticed flower.  
The rich and powerful did not notice history's turn.  
At the highest point of chaos, disorder,  
Cosmic order arrived: God became man.

In succorless, peaceless, restive 1994  
people with leaden-eyed despair look for  
order, comfort, consolation, tranquillity.  
We though find no peace, no joy, no rest, only chaos.  
We the anxiety-ridden, comfortless, the blind  
pray for peace, semblance of order, rest, relief:  
"Be born into this chaotic world in this year  
and give us cosmic hope, sunshine, a soft, soothing wind."



# ക്രിസ്തുവിനൊപ്പം കാലത്തിലൂടെ

**ഞാൻ** വകയാനിനടുത്തു പേരുർക്കുളം പ്രൈമറി സ്കൂളിൽ ഒന്നാംക്ലാസിൽ ചേർന്നപ്പോൾ റൈവമെന്നോ യേശുവെന്നോ പേരമെന്നോ ഒന്നും കേട്ടിരുന്നില്ല. വീട്ടിൽ

ത്ത് അതിൽനിന്നു മനുഷ്യവർഗത്തിന്റെ ആദ്യത്തെ അമ്മയെ സൃഷ്ടിച്ചതും ഒക്കെ സാമൂവൽസാർ എന്റെ കുഞ്ഞുമനസിൽ ആവിഷ്കരിച്ചു. അതു കഴിഞ്ഞാണു പാമ്പിനെപ്പറ്റി

## നിത്യചൈതന്യ യതി

തിന്നു മൂന്നു മൈൽ അകലെയുള്ള സ്കൂളിലേക്ക്, ദിവസവും രാവിലെ അമ്മ കൂട്ടിച്ചിട്ടു വേഷമാറ്റി പൊതിച്ചോറുമായി വിട്ടുപോയി ക്ലാസ് അധ്യാപകൻ സാമൂവൽസാർ എന്റെ വീടിന്റെ നടയിൽ എണെ കാത്തുനിൽപ്പുണ്ടാകും. കലഞ്ഞുരീതിനിന്നു നാലു മൈലോളം



പറഞ്ഞത്. മനുഷ്യരുടെ ആദ്യപിതാവു :തെറ്റുകാണിച്ചതു സത്രിയുടെ പ്രേരണയാ ലാണെന്നു പറഞ്ഞതു ചെറിയപ്രായത്തി ലും എന്നെ വ്യസനിപ്പിച്ചു. പെൺകുട്ടികളോട് എനിക്കു വലിയ സന്തോഷമായിരുന്നില്ല. ക്ലാസിൽ കേട്ടെഴുത്തിനും മനക്കണക്കണക്കിനുമെല്ലാം ശോശയും റാഹേലുമാണ് എന്നെ സഹായിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്. യോഹന്നാന്റെ മകൾ മേരിക്കുട്ടിയൊക്കെ എന്റെ ഹൃദയാപഹാരികളായിരുന്നു. അവരെല്ലാം ദൈവം ശപിച്ചു എന്നു കേട്ടപ്പോൾ വ്യസനം തോന്നി.

സാമൂവൽ സാറിന്റെ ബൈബിൾ കഥകളിൽ കൂടിയാണ് യേശു ആദ്യം എന്നിലേക്കു വന്നത്.

എന്റെ പിതാവ് ഒരു കവിയായിരുന്നു. അദ്ദേഹം ബൈബിൾ കഥകളും ബുദ്ധമത കഥകളുമെല്ലാം കവിതയാക്കി ഞങ്ങൾ മക്കളെ ചെല്ലിക്കേൾപ്പിക്കുമായിരുന്നു. മുടിയനായ പുത്രൻ, നല്ല ശമര്യക്കാരൻ, രാജപുത്രന്റെ കല്യാണം, ലാസറിന്റെ ഉയർത്തപ്പെടുന്നേൽപ്പ്, താലന്തുകൾ ഇവയൊക്കെ അച്ഛന്റെ കവിതയിൽകൂടി കാണാതെപഠിച്ചു മനസിൽ കൊണ്ടുനടന്നു. ആ കഥകളുടെ പിന്നിൽ യേശുവുണ്ടായിരുന്നു.

ക്രിസ്തസ് രാത്രിയിൽ കൂടൽപള്ളിയിൽനിന്നുള്ള പാട്ടുകാർ വീടിനു മുന്നിലൂടെ പോകുമ്പോൾ അവരുടെ ക്രിസ്തസ് ഗാനങ്ങളിൽനിന്നു 'ഹല്ലെല്ലൂ' എന്നതു മനസിൽ വന്നു പതിഞ്ഞു. അവർ തിരികെ വരുമ്പോൾ റോഡിൽ പോയിനിന്നു 'ഹല്ലെല്ലൂ' പാടാൻ എനിക്ക് അവസരം കിട്ടും.

ഹൈസ്കൂൾ ക്ലാസിലെത്തിയപ്പോൾ വള്ളത്തോളിന്റെ മഗ്ദലനമറിയം ഞാൻ കാണാതെ ചൊല്ലാൻ പഠിച്ചു. വള്ളത്തോൾ നാടകിയുമായി വരച്ചുകാട്ടിയ യേശുവിനെ ദാവന ചെയ്യുകയും പെൻസിൽ കൊണ്ടു വരച്ചുനോക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുമായിരുന്നു ഞാൻ.

കുറേക്കൂടി വളർന്നപ്പോൾ ബൈബിൾ സ്വയം വായിക്കാനും മത്തായിയുടെ സുവിശേഷത്തിലെ യേശുവിന്റെ ഗിരിപ്രഭാഷണം ഏറെ ഇഷ്ടപ്പെടാനും ഇടയായി. നാല് അപ്പോസ്തോലരും ചിത്രീകരിക്കുന്ന യേശുവിനെ എന്റെ സ്വന്തം രീതിയിൽ ചേർത്തുവെച്ചു ദൈവത്തിന്റെയും മനുഷ്യന്റെയും ഇടയിലുള്ള വ്യക്തിത്വം

നടന്നുവേണം സാമൂവൽ സാറിനു മുറിഞ്ഞകല്ലിലുള്ള എന്റെ വീടിന്റെ നടയിൽ വരാൻ. സാറിനന്നു 17 വയസ്. വളരെ മെലിഞ്ഞയാൾ. എന്നാലും അതിവേഗം തിലാണു നടത്ത. ഞായറാഴ്ചതോറും എന്നെ വീട്ടിലേക്കു വിളിച്ചു എനിക്കു ബൈബിൾ കഥകൾ ചൊല്ലാത്തുരുമായിരുന്നു അദ്ദേഹം. ദൈവം മൂന്നു ദിവസംകൊണ്ടു ലോകത്തെ സൃഷ്ടിച്ചതും ഏഴാം ദിവസം വിശ്രമിച്ചതും എഴുതിയിരുന്നു മനുഷ്യനെ ഉണ്ടാക്കിയതും വനെ ഉറക്കിക്കിടത്തി, വാരിയെല്ലെടു



NOTIFICATION FROM THE SABHA SECRETARY AS PUBLISHED IN THE JANUARY 1995 ISSUE OF THE SABHA THARAKA

### CLERGY TRANSFER TO PARISHES ABROAD

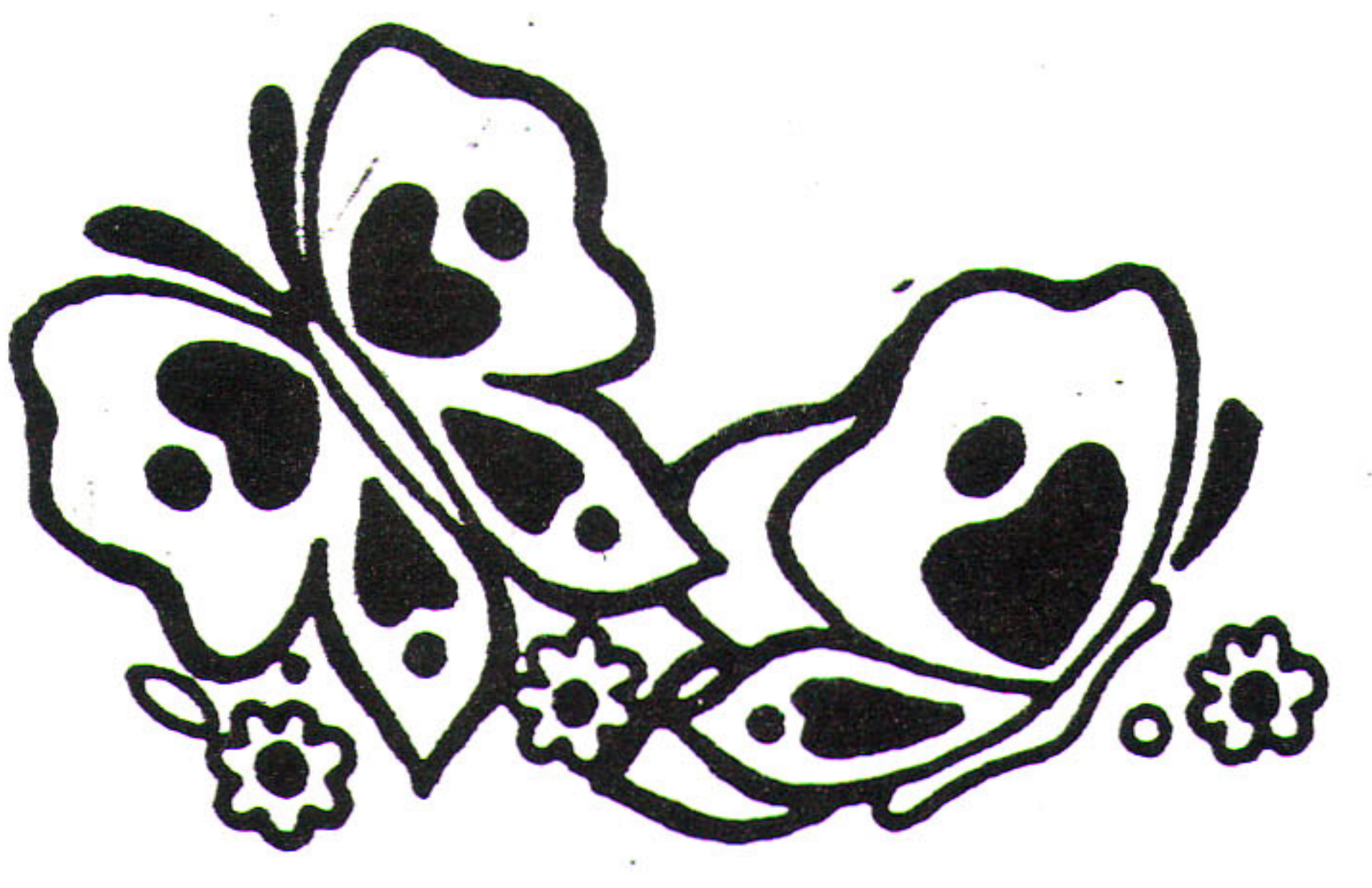
1. Only those who have completed 7 years of service be considered.
2. Preference be given to -
  - (a) Those who have not got other opportunities to go abroad.
  - (b) To Achens whose wives are not remuneratively employed.
  - (c) To those who have Rural/Mission Field experience.
3. During the period of service abroad all Achens should remit one month's total emoluments to the Fund to help the incapacitated Achens.

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ത്രത്തിനു സമ്മാനം ലഭിക്കുകയും ചെയ്  
തു.  
ചിത്രത്തെ പലരും ശ്ലാഘിച്ചെങ്കിലും

കുട്ടിക്കാലത്തു കേട്ട ക്രിസ്തീയ കഥകളിലൂടെ, കവിയായ അച്ഛന്റെ കാവ്യങ്ങൾ പകർന്നുതന്ന അനുഭൂതികളിലൂടെ. സ്വപ്നസമാനമായ ദർശനങ്ങളിലൂടെ ക്രിസ്തുവും ക്രിസ്തുമതവും തന്റെ മനസിനെ എക്കാലത്തും വലയം ചെയ്യുകയായിരുന്നുവെന്നു ഗൂരു നിത്യചൈതന്യയതി. സൗഹൃദത്തിന്റെയും ആശംസാസന്ദേശങ്ങളുടെയും ഗുരുവാണു കവി വിഷ്ണുനാരായണൻ നമ്പൂതിരിയെ ക്രിസ്തുമതം. അനുഭവങ്ങളെ ധന്യമാക്കി ഓർമ്മയിൽ തെളിയുന്ന ക്രിസ്തുമതം നാളുകളെപ്പറ്റി ഗൂരുവും കവിയും.

പുരോഹിതൻ എന്നെ ആകർഷിച്ചു. അവരുടെ ഉദാത്തമായ ചിന്തയും സൗമ്യമായ ജീവിതവും തുറന്ന മനസ്സും കണ്ടപ്പോൾ അങ്ങനെയുള്ള ജീവിതം നയിക്കണം എന്നാഗ്രഹിച്ചു. അവരെപ്പോലുള്ള ചില സന്യാസിമാരെ ശ്രീരാമകൃഷ്ണാശ്രമത്തിലും കണ്ടു.

വന്നിരിക്കുന്നതുപോലെ തോന്നി. വല്ല മതിഭ്രമവുമൊന്നെന്നു കരുതി കണ്ണു മുറുകിയിടച്ചുകിടന്നു. പിന്നെ കണ്ണുതുറന്നു നോക്കിയപ്പോൾ ഒന്നും കണ്ടില്ല. ഇതാവർത്തിക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങിയപ്പോൾ ഭയം മാറി. ഞാനെന്റെ ചിത്രത്തിൽ വരയ്ക്കാൻ ശ്രമിച്ച രൂപത്തിൽത്തന്നെയുള്ള യേശുവന്നടുത്തിരിക്കുന്നതായി തോന്നുമ്പോൾ

മാർ ഇവാനിയോസ് കോളജിൽനിന്നു ചിത്രം കാണാൻ വന്ന രണ്ടു പുരോഹിതന്മാർ അതിൽ രണ്ടു തെറ്റുകൾ കണ്ടുപിടിച്ചു. ഒന്ന് എന്റെ ചിത്രത്തിലെ യേശു മന്ദഹാസം തുടങ്ങിയതും. യഥാർഥത്തിലുള്ള യേശു ഒരിക്കലും ചിരിച്ചിട്ടില്ലെന്നും അദ്ദേഹമെപ്പോഴും ജനങ്ങളുടെ കഷ്ടതയും പാപജീവിതവും ഓർത്തു ദുഃഖിതനായിരുന്നിട്ടേയുള്ളൂവെന്നും അവർ ചൂണ്ടിക്കാട്ടി.



മറ്റൊരു തെറ്റു ഞാൻ വരച്ച യേശുവിന്റെ തലയിൽ പരിവേഷം കൊടുത്തിരുന്നില്ല. ഞാൻ ദൈവത്തെപ്പറ്റി കേട്ടിരുന്നതെല്ലാം കഥകളാണ്. എന്നാൽ മനുഷ്യനു കൂടുതൽ ശക്തിയുണ്ട്. യേശുവിനെ ഞാൻ മനുഷ്യപുത്രൻ എന്നാണു കരുതിയത്.

ശ്രീരാമകൃഷ്ണന്റെ ജീവചരിത്രത്തിൽ അദ്ദേഹത്തിനു കന്യകമറിയം ശിശുവായ യേശുവിനെ മാറോടു ചേർത്തു പിടിച്ചു നിൽക്കുന്നത് ദർശനമായി അനുഭവപ്പെട്ടു എന്നു വായിച്ചു. ആ സാധ്യത എന്നെ വളരെ ആകർഷിച്ചു. പിന്നീട് യൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റി കോളജിൽ പഠനത്തിനു ചേർന്നപ്പോൾ ശ്രീരാമകൃഷ്ണന്റെതുപോലുള്ള തപശ്ചര്യയിൽകൂടി യേശുവിന്റെ ദർശനം വേണമെന്നു കൊതിച്ചു.

അതു സത്യമാണെന്നു ഞാൻ കരുതി. അർപണബുദ്ധിയോടും ആദരവോടുംകൂടി ഞാൻ യേശുവിനോടു ചോദിക്കുന്ന ചോദ്യങ്ങൾക്കു ശരിയായ ഉത്തരം മനസ്സിൽ കിട്ടുന്നതുപോലെയും തോന്നി. പ്രായേണ യഥാർഥ ലോകവും യഥാർഥ മനുഷ്യരും യഥാർഥ സംഭവങ്ങളും നിരർത്ഥകമായിത്തീരുകയും അപൂർവമായ ഈ സ്വപ്നസമാന ദർശനങ്ങൾ ജീവിതത്തിൽ വലിയ ആഹ്ലാദനിമിഷങ്ങളായിത്തീരുകയും ചെയ്തു.

കോളജ് ജീവിതം കഴിഞ്ഞ് ഒരിക്കൽ ബാംഗ്ലൂരിലെ തെരുവിൽകൂടി നടക്കുമ്പോൾ മഴ പെയ്തു. വഴിവക്കിലെ കടയിൽ കയറിനിന്നു. അപ്പോൾ മഴ നനഞ്ഞ് ഒരാൾ എന്റെയടുത്തു വന്നു. ഞാൻ എപ്രകാരമാണോ യേശുവിനെ സ്വപ്നദർശനമായി കണ്ടത് അതേ ആശ്ചര്യത്തോടെ എന്റെ മുമ്പിൽ നിൽക്കുന്നതെന്നു തോന്നി. എന്നാലയാൾക്കു നീണ്ട മുടിയോ താടിയോ യേശുവിന്റെ വേഷവിധാനങ്ങളോ ഒന്നുമുണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല. കുറ്റിമിശകളായിരുന്നു. അതിൽ മഴവെള്ളം ഇറ്റിറ്റുവീഴുന്നതു നോക്കിനിന്നപ്പോൾ യേശുവിന്റെ അടുത്താണു നിൽക്കുന്നതെന്നു തോന്നി. ആ ദർശനം എന്റെ മനസ്സിൽ വലിയ പരിവർത്തനമുണ്ടാക്കി.

ഇറ്റലിയിലെ നേപ്പിൾസിലും ഫ്ലോറൻസിലുമുള്ള ക്രിസ്തീയ സന്യാസിമാരെപ്പോലെ കുളിമുറിയിലെ ഷവറിന്റെ കീഴിൽനിന്നു വസത്രമിട്ടുകൊണ്ടുതന്നെ കുളിച്ച്, അതുണങ്ങുംമുമ്പുതന്നെ യേശുവിന്റെ നല്ലയിടയൻ എന്ന ചിത്രം വരയ്ക്കാൻ ശ്രമിച്ചു. ബൈബിൾ വായിച്ചു

ഈ ചിത്രം ഞാൻ പൂർത്തിയാക്കി തിരുവനന്തപുരത്തു പ്രദർശനത്തിനുവച്ചു. എനിക്കതൊരു വെറും ചിത്രമായിരുന്നില്ല. എന്റെ തപസിന്റെ അടയാളവും യേശുവുമായിട്ടുള്ള എന്റെ സൗഹൃദത്തിന്റെ മുൻതിരിമർദ്ദാവനമൊക്കെയാണിത് എന്നു ചി

അതിനുശേഷം എല്ലാ ലോകവും ചേർത്തുവെച്ചാലും ഈശ്വരനു തുല്യമാകില്ല എന്ന് ഉറപ്പിച്ചു. വർഷങ്ങളായി ഞാൻ യേശുവിന്റെ വാക്കുകളെ വളരെ ആഴത്തിൽ വായിക്കാനും പഠിക്കാനും ഉൾക്കൊള്ളാനും ശ്രമിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇന്നെനിക്ക് യേശു ഈശ്വരനിൽനിന്നു ഭിന്നനല്ല. പ്രപഞ്ചസത്തയിൽനിന്ന് അന്യനല്ല. ചുറാനിലേർ ഗീതയിലോ വായിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന ദൈവവചനങ്ങളിൽനിന്നും അന്യനല്ല.



**അത്മ ഗീതം**

(പഞ്ചചാരം രീതി)

**ഉമ്മൻ ജോർജ്**

**സ്റ്റാഫോർഡ്**

കൃപിണിഞ്ഞിടുന്നു തൃപ്തദേ മഹേശ്വരാ കൃപാകരാ  
കനിഞ്ഞിടു നീ ഞങ്ങളിൽ ദയാലുവേ ശ്രീയേശുവേ  
സേനഹദീപമേന്തിയെന്നും ഭൃതലത്തേ ദീപ്തമാക്കാൻ  
വാഹനങ്ങളാക്കിടു നീ ഞങ്ങളെ ഈ പഥികരെ.

വെളിച്ചമേകി നിന്നിടാൻ തമസ്സിനെ അകറ്റുവാൻ  
തെളിച്ചിടേണം ഞങ്ങളിൽ പ്രകാശനാളം എപ്പോഴും  
ക്ഷമിക്കണം അഹന്തയും വിവേകശൂന്യ ചിന്തയും  
അമിതമായ മോഹവും തുടച്ചു നീക്കണം ഭവാൻ.

പവിത്രമാം ഭദ്രാസനം സമോദമേകും ആലയം  
സുവിശേഷ ശാന്തിയേകും ശ്രേഷ്ഠമാം നികേതനം  
ജനിക്കണം മനസ്സിലും ജഗത്തിലും നിരന്തരം  
ജനിച്ചു നിന്റെ നാമ മഹസ്സിനായി ഭവിക്കണം.

ധർമ്മ നീതി ബോധമോടെ പാരിടത്തിൽ ശിഷ്ടകാലം  
കർമ്മ നിരതരായി നിൻ യശസ്സിനായി വാഴുവാൻ  
ഏകചിത്തരായി ഞങ്ങൾ ഏവരും നിൻ സന്നിധാനെ  
പുകിടുന്നന്ദഗ്രഹങ്ങൾ ചൊരിയണ വിഭോ ഭവാൻ

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# CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE

Rajan Daniel, Edmonton, Canada



Science by definition is the use of observation, logic and sense of beauty to devise general principles about the natural world. Science and its applications have made the people of this generation the mightiest in power that this earth have ever known. Today most of us are willing to accept the fruits of the advanced technology such as computers, space research etc. with-

out understanding the fundamental laws that made them all possible.

Christianity finds all its doctrines stated in the Bible and one of the most arresting evidences of the inspiration of the Bible is the great number of scientific truths that have been hidden within its pages for centuries. The Christian faith is not founded on a wishful thinking or blind acceptance of tradition, but rather on a tremendous body of real objective evidence. The teaching of Christianity has maintained that Jesus was God in human flesh.

Science is the investigation and communication of natural revelation. God's revelation extends throughout all characteristics of the created universe. Apparent conflicts between science and theology have often arisen because of an attempt to find ultimate causes in nature or of an attempt to find secondary mechanisms in the Bible. With the revival of Greek learning in the medieval church, especially with the coming of Neo-Platonism and Aristotle, there was an attempt made to correlate science and religion. The clash between Galileo and the Cardinals in the seventeenth century rocked all of the Christendom and shook it to its foundation.

The ever widening horizons of astronomy have given us a greater demonstration of the power and the glory of the creator. All the current interest in space has increased the interest in the facts and beginning of the universe and has drawn many into the fields associated with the cosmological theory. As we know that the universe is made up of galaxies. These huge collection of stars are some times many light years in diameter and thickness and usually contain billions of stars. The solar system consists of nine planets surrounded by the sun. It is generally accepted today that all heavenly bodies move on such precise orbits that scientists can predict their exact locations at

any time. Our planet earth orbits the sun once every 365 days and rotates once on its axis in 24 hours. It does not seem reasonable to believe that all these heavenly bodies following their respective orbits to perfection could have developed from an accidental beginning. The universe and the solar system were designed and created by the Almighty God.

The Bible states that God's first act in creation of this universe was the creation of light (Genesis 1:3). Scientists have advanced a theory known as Big Bang Theory which proposes that the universe came into being a single great explosive event billions of years ago. This hypothesis assumes that at one time all matter existed at one place, then an explosion flung all of it out into space to cause the expansion. Supposedly that explosion produced such a glowing incandescence that the mass of light outweighed that of the matter that was left for millions of years. When

this glowing plasma had cooled down enough, dark photos of gas began to appear. In its account, the Bible tells us that the next act of God, after the creation of light was that He "separated the light from the darkness" (Genesis 1:4). The Bible's account, while not intended as a scientific treatise, is in full agreement with modern scientific theory. People refuse to accept the Bible version of the creation because they refuse to accept its moral implications. In Genesis Moses did not attempt to explain how the creation was developed, except to indicate that God ordered it into existence and God surveyed His handiwork and said it was "good".

veyed His handiwork and said it was "good".

The work of Charles Darwin (1809 - 1882) is one of the pivotal points in the history of scientific world. The greatest storm of all did not break until 1859 when he published his book "The Origin of Species" which explains the theory of evolution. It is a serious mistake to ignore, as many Christians seem willing to do, the implications and influence of evolution. The theory states that all living things are related. At the beginning there was one living cell and from this cell gradually evolved plants, fishes, amphibians, birds, mammals and finally man. According to this theory man appeared to be merely the product of natural process. But in Genesis 2:7 states that "And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. The scripture leaves no room for a story of long ages of development from lower types of animal.

The theory of evolution is essentially an attempt to

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*"God's revelation  
extends throughout  
all characteristics  
of the created  
universe."*

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explain the origin of all things in terms of processes which are still continuing and which therefore can still be studied in the present. It therefore ignores the Bible's account to a "completed creation". Evolution, by its very nature, is materialistic, it is nothing but an attempt to explain the facts of biology in terms of laws of nature without the supernatural power. The great number of "missing links" in the fossil record of evolution causes it to lose its reliability. But Christians need not despair or be afraid of. Consideration of what the Bible says on the subject will again show that the facts will not shake the Bible's account.

In the wonders of the nature we see God's laws in operation. In the beauty and abundance around us we see the magnitude of God's power and infinite detail of His planning. The psalmist David wrote, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork (Psalms 19:1). A good percentage of scientists and philosophers agree that God is the original and immutable force behind all creation, that He is the Master Dynamo that keeps all the world in motion, that He is the power without beginning or end. We can be grateful that much of the disharmony between science and religion is disappearing.

Christian churches have the responsibility to teach the full content of the message that God has revealed through the writers of the Bible so that those who follow Christ may do so in knowledge. Christian life is intended to be the living proof of the love of God, so that people might see the evidence of this love and turn to glorify God. The Trinity, the affirmation that Christians believe in one God, and yet this one God reveals Himself as the Father, the Son and

the Holy Spirit, is a mystery. This mystery of the Trinity lies in our inability to conceive of the nature of God except in the Being revealed in the Bible as God in Christ working through the spirit.

God caused the Bible to be written for the express purpose of revealing to man God's plan for his redemption. Sixteen hundred years were needed to complete the writing of the Bible. It was the work of more than thirty authors, each of whom acted as a scribe to God and under His divine inspiration they were able to see the great and enduring truths and to record them that other people might see and know them too. The message of Jesus Christ, our savior is the story of the Bible; it is the story of salvation. The greatest evidence of the inspiration of the scriptures lives in the fact that hundreds of prophecies contained in its pages have been remarkably fulfilled. In Deuteronomy, even before the Israelites entered the promised land, Moses predicted their future happiness in the land, their sufferings and punishments for disobedience and finally their world-wide dispersion and their eventual return. Today the country of Israel and the Jewish people stand as one of the most remarkable testimonies of all to the truth of the word of God.

Increasing scientific knowledge has brought about greater vindication and understanding of the Christian position. The Bible believer may very well use his God-given abilities graciously to show that the Bible provides the only unchanging answers about the origins of the universe, the earth, life, man and man's salvation. Our destiny is not intended to be in this earth but in the next world. Our sojourn here is simply a preparation for a more infinite life beyond the grave.

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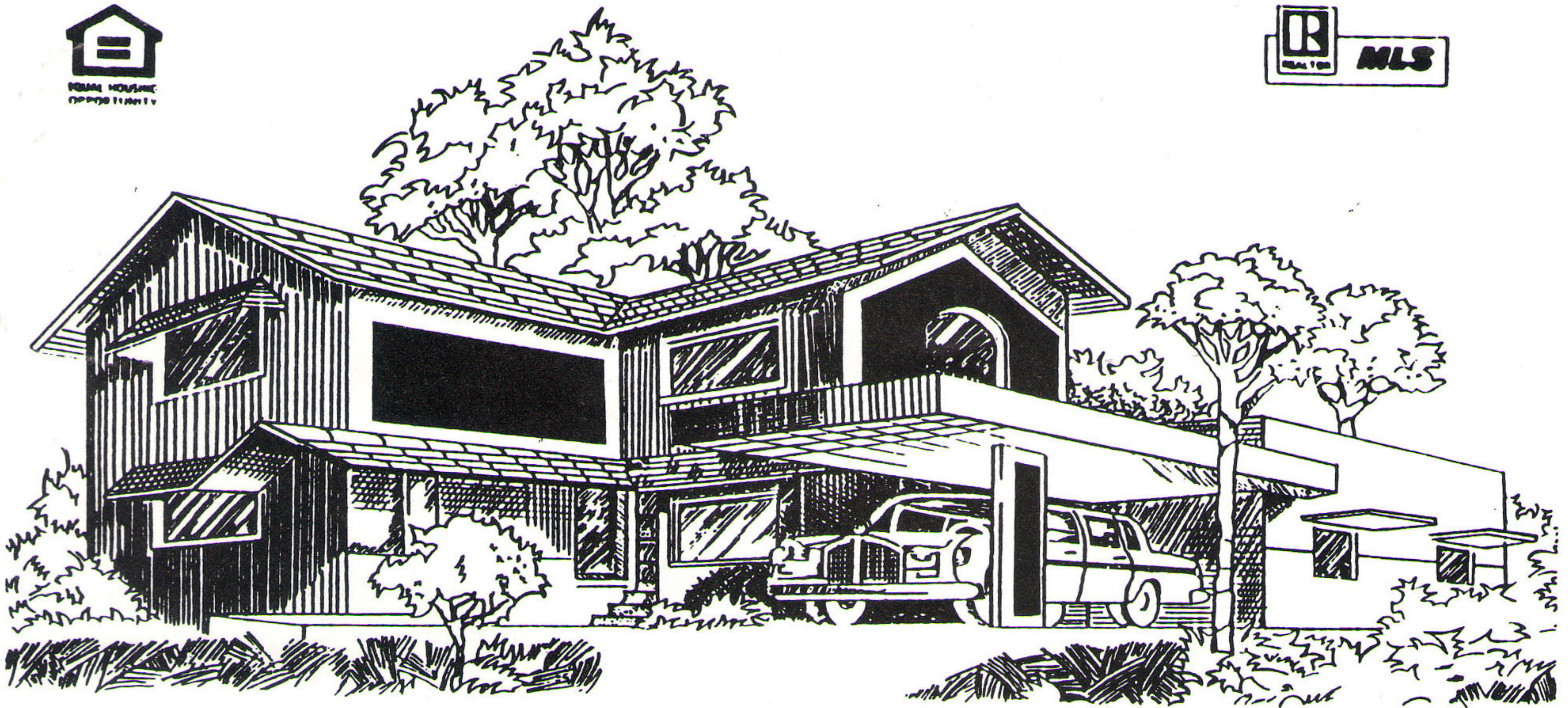


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Mid-western Regional Sunday School Jr. Camp held at Detroit in September 1994. Participants with the Rev. James Thomas and Mr. Mike Gulish.



behind due to extravagant spending.

Church is no exception. Denominations compare one another. Comparison exists among parishes of the same denomination. Church buildings, parish halls, education institutions, various centers named after late bishops, spring up on a competition basis taking pride in edifices rather than evangelization.

What happens in homes. People compare their homes, household appliances, furniture, ornaments and vehicles with that of others and make their own life miserable by pestering spouses to buy superior items not giving a moments thought whether there is real need or they can afford the purchases. If the spouses do not oblige result

is broken homes.

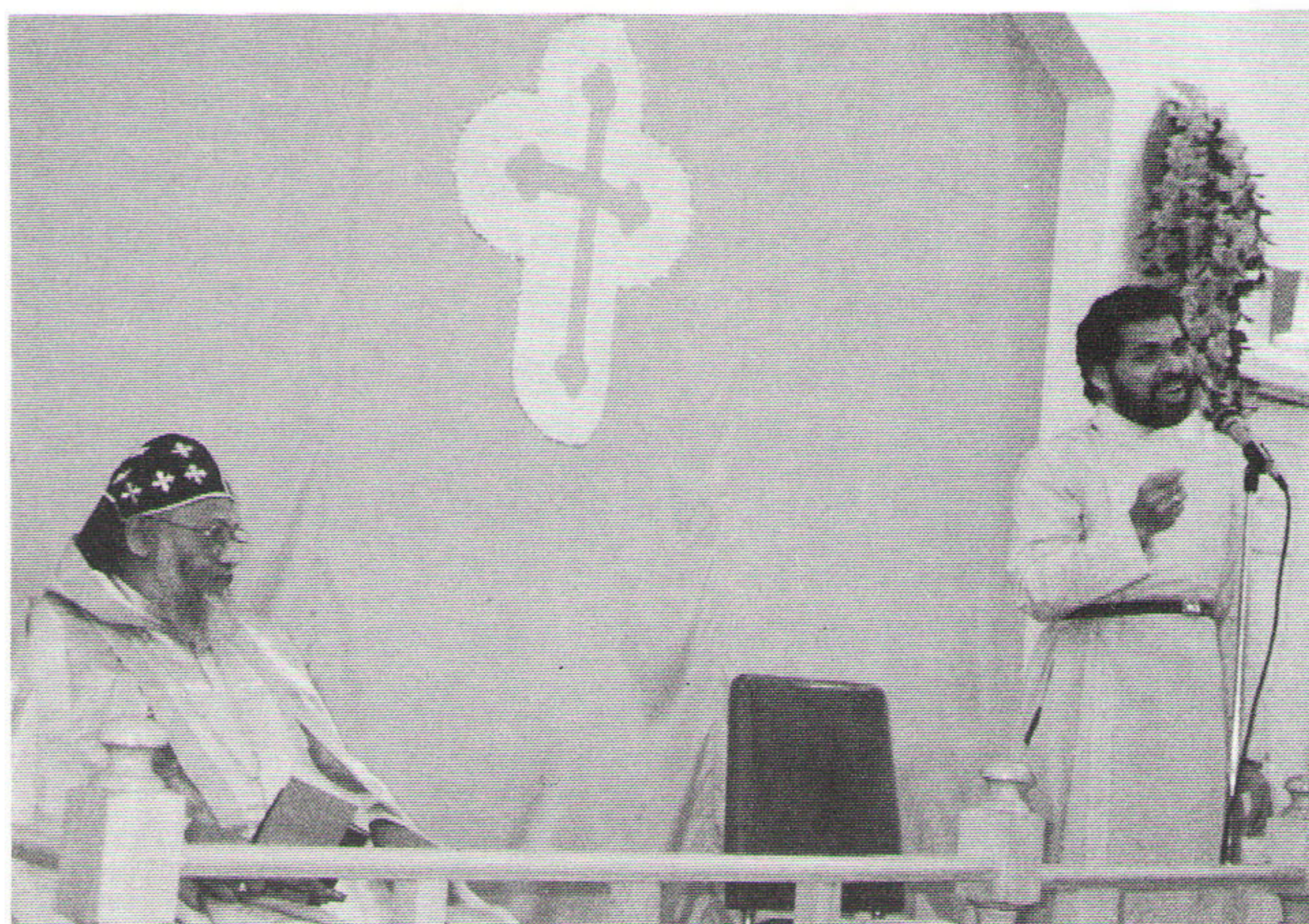
Instances of jealousy are recorded in the Bible as lessons to us. 'These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come'. ICor.10:11.

'Acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, discord, **jealousy** fits of rage, selfish ambition, orgies and the like. I warn you as before that those who live like this **will not inherit** the kingdom of God.' Gal. 5:19-21.

What is our ultimate aim? Kingdom of God. Then let us not forget our priorities.



Platinum Jubilee celebration of the Texas-Oklahoma Center was held on Nov. 12, 1994 at the Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston. A section of the audience.



Rev. George Mathew welcomes all who gathered at the meeting after dedication of the Bethel Mar Thoma Church, Chicago, on November 13, 1994.

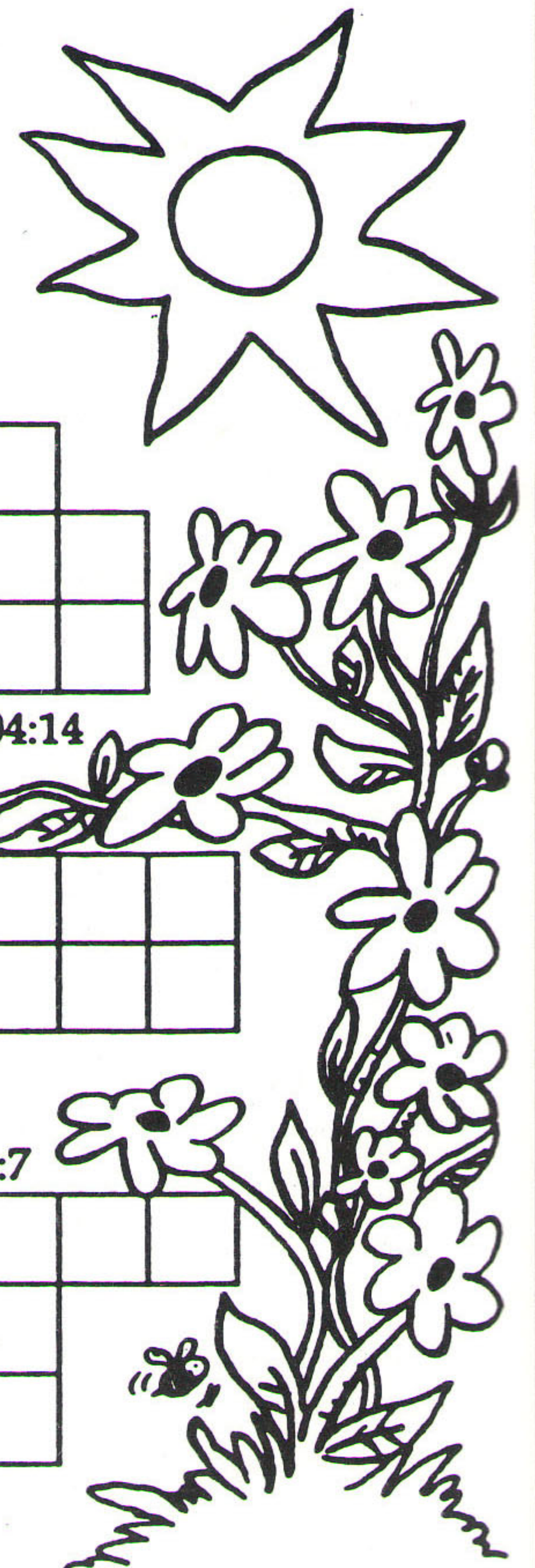
## Just for Kids

**"For everything there is a season..."**

—Ecclesiastes 3:1

There are many signs that tell us spring is coming! Use your Bible to find words that are "signs of spring." Fit them in the boxes below. Pick one word from each Scripture verse.

Matthew 5:45	S				
Genesis 1:20	I				
Psalms 23:2	G				
Psalms 104:17	N				
	S				
Song of Solomon 6:11	O				
Psalms 103:15	F				
	S				
Psalms 104:14	P				
Isaiah 55:10	R				
Ecclesiastes 7:1	I				
Revelation 21:5	N				
	G				



Answers are given elsewhere in this issue. Try to find out.



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# HOW CAN I BE A USEFUL CHRISTIAN

Annie Mathew, New York



First, and most important of all, a useful Christian devotes his/her life to the one and only true God. A true Christian basis his or her faith in his/her , and uses it for glorifying God. We can be useful Christians by doing important things. These important things are

placing God first in your life and devoting your time to him, witnessing to others, helping people in need, and developing a spiritual taste for things.

The first important element is placing God first in our lives. God wants each of us to use His word and teachings to live for Him. We have to be able to give God our undivided attention. God has filled our hearts with the Holy Spirit. As a result, we open our hearts to the world showing our praise and devotion to God. When we go through periods of change, or need, if we have kept a devoted life to God, we will be assured that god will be there for us, we do not have to be afraid. God strength overcomes any fear. We can stand firm. This devotion helps us stand firm through any ordeal we have to face,

The second element is witnessing. god said to his disciples, " I will teach you how to catch men. " This is the same that God wants us to do. he wants us to go out into the world and catch men, so that his word can be preached to everyone. God word works in us, and we gain the strength to go and tell others the wonderful things he had done for us. Witnessing can also bring us closer to others who are in need of spiritual growth just as much as we do. Jesus said, " Ye are the light of the world...let your light shine for others, that they may glorify your father in heaven." When we learn about God, we begin to glorify and

praise his name, because he fills a happiness in each one of us that no one else can. he shows us the way, the truth, and the life.

The fourth element is developing a spiritual taste for things. Going to church, praying, and worshiping all come from a spiritual taste. This spiritual taste has to grow within us. Then only we can use God's message to look at things from a different point of view. God's outlook gives us a new spirit that helps us see things as ways to improve it with God's help, or change it with God's word. This spiritual taste can also help us through our trouble times. It helps us look to God when we are in doubt.

As we can see, these four elements prove that we can be the true Christians God wants us to be. When other look at us, they will see a messenger of God and a believer of his word. God's spirit in many ways enables us to prove our faith. Without these four elements, our faith is worthless. Living for him and believing in his word and faith opens us to an abundant and blessed life. God gave each one of us the talent to speak, and preach his word. If we do not use our talents, we are worthless. We are not using the gift that God has given us to prove him as the true God. These talents must grow in us and work in us to show others that we bring good news from God. Only God has the power to change us. You must use this power to change our

lives and the lives of others. Living in God will be worth it. We will never have to seek happiness because we already have it through God's teachings. His teachings give us the strength to prove ourselves. Like the Sermon on the Mount, " Blessed are those who thirst for righteousness; they will find God's grace." We must seek this righteousness, then, and only then we will be blessed, and have a full life. Our life can never be full without God. God is our guide, let us learn to use his path. He will truly show us the way to eternal life.

---

*"We have to  
be able to give  
God our  
undivided  
attention."*

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(This article won First Prize in the Regional Sunday School Essay Competition held in November, 1994. Annie is a 10th grader and also a member of St. John's Mar Thoma Church, Queen's Village, New York - Editor.)



## " I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS ME."

(The following is a true story of a Marthomite girl in our diocese who turned around her life of utter despair and hopelessness into a life of hope, strength and peace. The article was originally published in the January 1995 issue of the "Crossroads", a youth publication of our Diocese. - Editor)

*"I can do all things through Christ Who gives me strength, but sometimes I wonder what He can do through me..."*

**I** sit now wondering... what part of my story do I tell them...?

There's a controversial song by the music group Depeche Mode, "Blasphemous Rumors" that says... "I don't want to start any blasphemous rumors, but I think that God's got a sick sense of humor. And when I die, I expect to find Him laughing." Pretty macabre, eh? Ok, so it is probably a little unorthodox, but I can't help myself pondering the thought. Before I mislead the reader to think that this article is being written by some kind of religious fanatic/rebel you should know that I am a fool for Christ. You should also know that I'm pretty unorthodox myself. I'm addicted to the pure, unconditional, no strings attached, sacrificial, love of my Lord and the best friend anyone could hope for, Jesus Christ.

When my mother died on the spot in a car accident she may not have known what the future would hold for her 3 daughters and her husband, but being the faithful servant of God that she was, I'm sure she knew exactly Who held their futures. My mother's death was a blessing in disguise. I was awakened to a lesson that would have a huge impact on the rest of my life. I awakened to the priceless value of life. About telling the ones close to me that I loved them - even if that meant stepping out of character and becoming more mature. It took a week or so for me

to realize that it had all really happened. When I came home from school I sat and waited for her to come home, like I always did; and for her to greet me tiredly, like she always did. But she never came. I didn't know my father very well. I mean I'd lived with him all my life, but he was just kind of there to complete the "family" picture. My sisters and I were very close to my mom and just scared obedient to my father. The wall that had always been between my father and I grew even higher and wider. I don't remember drawing particularly close to God at the time, but I guess even then.. He was close by preparing answers to the unspoken prayers lost in the void of my soul.

At some point in my late high school years I lost hope and faith in everything, and everyone. Unable to deal with the pain of reality, my father turned to alcohol to escape his problems. As years passed, my father became more dependent on alcohol. I felt betrayed and abandoned that my only parent could be so weak and unable to provide for me what my mother had given. Quickly, life became more and more meaningless day by day. School became a place to escape all the pressures of home. I went from A/B student to the complete opposite end of the spectrum, practically overnight. My attitude changed towards everything from school to church to life in general. It seemed everyone from my own sisters to my closest friends became strangers to me when, in reality, I'm the one that became estranged. I felt so alone. In my desperate search for love and meaning to fill the emptiness within me, I fell prey to a very reckless lifestyle. My whole life began to spin madly out of control right into college. When I finally became so withdrawn that I had driven a wedge even between my sisters and myself, I decided that I had nothing more to live for. Each day thoughts of suicide plagued my mind. Each time I was anywhere close to acting on one of these impulses, I'd hesitate imagining a lot

of blood and pain and how much misery my sisters would have to deal with after I was gone. However, nothing frightened me more than the idea of burning in eternal hellfire as atonement for my sin. And, yet I was so sure that the only place I wouldn't go wrong in the world was "six feet under".

You may wonder how I went from suicidal depressant to a "fool for Christ". One day as I sat flipping channels on a Sunday morning (as I had long given up going to church to seek comfort) I heard a strong voice bellow out "I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS ME". And with that he continued to speak, words bursting with such optimism and hope that I could hardly take my eyes of the screen. I had to have whatever it was that was making this man speak as if he had so much joy in him that he would explode. I learned that this elderly pastor's source of strength was Jesus Christ. Dr. Schuller's (the elderly pastor) words are stored in my heart forever. He said, "let your hopes, not your hurts, shape your goals! Not the disaster that's behind you, but your dreams that are before you". And somewhere around then I fell at the foot of the cross worn and exhausted from the battle my life had become. And I claimed the promise of Jesus Christ, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

I have one purpose for writing this article, friend. One reason I've shared some of the darkest, most shameful times in my life with you, someone I have never even met, or may never meet. I may not be able to change the whole world, but maybe I can help change someone's world. There's a Friend of mine that I'd like you to meet. The only Person who loves me enough to lay down His life me. I've turned my back on Him, ignored Him, lied to Him and cursed at Him, but He loves me just the way I am. He's told me to tell people that are lost,

.....cont'd Page 11



# BIBLE WORD SEARCH

(as in N.V) (Based on the Gospel of St. Matthew)

## The Beatitudes

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

Blessed are the poor in \_\_\_\_\_, for theirs is the kingdom of \_\_\_\_\_.

Blessed are those who \_\_\_\_\_, for they will be \_\_\_\_\_.

Blessed are the \_\_\_\_\_, for they will inherit the \_\_\_\_\_.

Blessed are those who hunger and \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_, for they will be \_\_\_\_\_.

Blessed are the \_\_\_\_\_, for they will be shown \_\_\_\_\_.

Blessed are the pure in \_\_\_\_\_, for they will see \_\_\_\_\_.

Blessed are the \_\_\_\_\_, for they will called \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

Blessed are those who are \_\_\_\_\_ because of righteousness, for theirs is the \_\_\_\_\_ of heaven.

Blessed are you when people \_\_\_\_\_ you, persecute you and falsely say all kind of \_\_\_\_\_ against you because of me. \_\_\_\_\_ and be glad because great is your \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the \_\_\_\_\_ who were before you.

### **BIBLE WORD SEARCH FINDERS**

Anu Alex	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Sheba Susan Philip	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Prathik Manuel Philip	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Samuel Thomas	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Houston
Sam Rajan Daniel	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Edmonton
Reny Koshy	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Houston
Betsy Philip	Mar Thoma Church Philadelphia
Jerin Easow Philip	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Edmonton
Tony John Panicker	Mar Thoma Church Oklahoma
Tobi John Panicker	Mar Thoma Church Oklahoma
Asha Deena Alex	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Toby Mathew	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Houston
Shelby Mathew	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Houston

### **BIBLE CROSS-WORD PUZZLE WINNERS**

Anu Alex	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Sheba Susan Philip	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Sam Rajan Daniel	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Edmonton
Reji Koshy	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Houston
Reni Koshy	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Houston
Larry Varghese	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Houston
Lely Varghese	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Houston
Jerin Easow Philip	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Edmonton
Tony John Panicker	Mar Thoma Church Oklahoma
Tobi John Panicker	Mar Thoma Church Oklahoma
Asha Deena Alex	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Toby Mathew	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Houston
Shelby Mathew	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Houston



# RELOCATING

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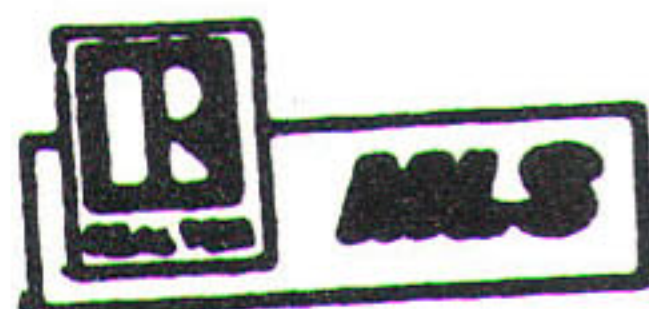
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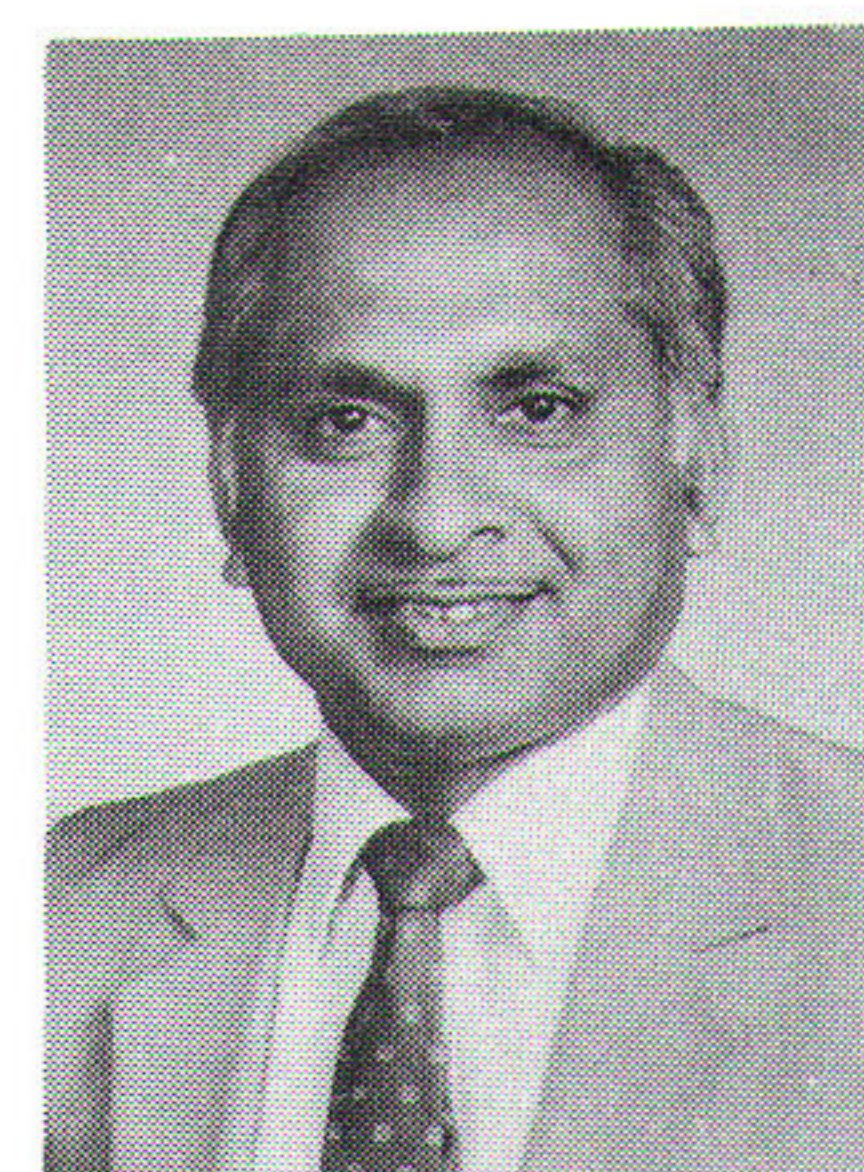
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# NEWS FROM DIOCESE/PARISHES

## **BRIEF REPORT OF THE WEEKEND SEMINAR HELD AT HOUSTON**

By God's Grace, the Texas Oklahoma Center Edavaka Mission, Youth League and Sevika Sanghom were able to conduct a weekend seminar at the Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston on 11th, 12th and 13th of November 1994. Over 300 people from Lubbock, Oklahoma, St. Paul's Mar Thoma Church-Dallas, Dallas Mar Thoma Church, Immanuel Mar Thoma Church-Stafford and Trinity Mar Thoma Church-Houston attended.

On 11th, Friday evening, Dr. J.T. Seamands, the former Missionary to India and the well-known Maramon Convention speaker talked on the subject "The Nature and the Mission of the Church." He took Acts 2:37-47 as the text.

A. What is the Church?

- \* It is not an organization but an organism.
- \* It is not an institution but an instrument in the hands of God - the Body of Christ.

B. What is the mission of the Church?

To carry on the mission that Jesus began;

- \* To serve the people
- \* To seek the lost
- \* To save the lost

C. Where is the mission of the Church?

- \* The whole world, beginning at Jerusalem (Home), going to Judea (neighborhood), unto Samaria (enemies) and to the ends of the earth.
- \* Each Christian and each congregation must have a world vision and a world concern.

D. Who is responsible for the mission of the church?

- \* Not only pastors and missionaries but the whole congregation - the Christians as a whole.



*Dr. John T. Seamands speaking at the seminar*

On 12th Saturday, after prayer by the Rev. T. I. Joseph, the Trinity Mar Thoma Church choir sang for 30 minutes. Rev. Ninan Jacob led the devotion and Mr. P.V. John led the intercessory prayer. Mr. Aldrin George, secretary of the Youth League introduced and welcomed all the leaders and the participants.

In his second address on Saturday morning, Dr. Seamands talked on the subject "the Holy Spirit". Ephesians 5:18 was the text.

"Be filled with the Spirit" It is a command.

What is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the believer?

- \* Every believer is born of the spirit
- \* Every believer is assured by the spirit
- \* Every believer is indwelt by the spirit

But every believer is not filled with the spirit because he has not made Christ, the Lord of His life.

He is resident but not president of that life. That life is not under full subjection of Christ.

- \* Purity of the heart

- \* Power for the service

When we give our all

Christ gives His all

After Dr. Seamand's talk, Mr. Thomas Kosy introduced and welcomed Dr. Nik Nikam MD. Dr. Nikam talked briefly on cholesterol, healthy eating habits, smoking, alcohol, exercise, stress, sense of humor etc.

The group divided into three viz. Edavaka mission, Sevika Sangham and Youth League after lunch; led by Rev. Raju George, Rev. Ninan Jacob and Rev. Eapen Cherian respectively. In his talk in the Edavaka mission group, Rev. Raju George Ancherry said, the Holy Spirit was active in the creation of the universe and thus she changed the chaos into cosmos. He also said at Babel the language was confused and the humanity were divided. But in Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came everyone understood the speech in his own tongue and the humanity was united. He further said the Hebrew word for Holy Spirit is 'Ruha' and is referred in feminine gender. So the Holy Spirit is feminine. At the end



of his talks, he invited questions from the audience and many people expressed displeasure in referring the third person in the Godhead as feminine; whereas the Bible clearly presents the Holy Spirit as masculine.

References :

Romans 8:11 Spirit of God I ICor. 3: 3 Spirit of the Living God

Romans 8: 9 Spirit of Christ I John 5: 7 Three are one

Eph. 4:30 Matt.12:31, Mark 3:29, Luke 12:10; John 14:16, 17, 26 and 16: 7, 8, 13 - Jesus clearly says, the Holy Spirit as He or Him.

A general meeting was held on behalf of the Sevika Sanghom to celebrate the platinum jubilee of the Mar Thoma Sevika Sanghom Rev. Ninan Jacob, Rev. T. I. Joseph, Dr. Mrs. Annie Lincoln, Mrs. P.I. George etc. spoke on this occasion about the history and work of the Sevika Sanghom.

In his third talk in the evening, Dr. Seamands read from Acts 2:4. "They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to":

1. Do
2. Go
3. Pray
4. Witness
5. Love

A concert by the Rejoice Ministries was one of the highlights of the evening. Their praise and worship performance was really enjoyed by young and adult alike. After the concert, the youth and the adults parted for separate testimony and dedication.

On 12th Sunday, after the Holy Communion and Dr. Seamands' final talk, Miss Bindhu Philip proposed vote of thanks. With prayer and benediction the seminar came to an end at 11:30 a.m.

**Thomas Koshy, Secretary**  
**Edavaka Mission, Texas, Oklahoma Center**

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## **DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE SOUTH EAST REGION SOUVENIR COMMITTEE**

South East Region Souvenir Committee meeting was held on December 17, 1994 at Bethel Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia. Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus presided the meeting. Mr. M.C. Alexander, convenor of the South East region Souvenir Committee extended welcome to all committee members. Representatives from New Jersey and Philadelphia Churches were present. Rev. Dr. P. G. George (Diocesan Secretary) Rev. Mathew John (Vicar of New Jersey Mar Thoma Church and St. Peters Mar Thoma Church), Rev. K. E. Easo (Vicar Bethel Mar Thoma Church) and Rev. M. P. Yohannon (Vicar Philadelphia Mar Thoma Church) also were present on this occasion. Separate fund raising programs are planned for New Jersey and Philadelphia. The fund raising event in New Jersey will be conducted on April 23, 1995 and in Philadelphia on April 29, 1995. Detailed programs will be developed by the co-convenors of both the states. Mr. Daniel Varghese and Mr. George Philip are the co-convenors of the New Jersey area and Mr. Thampy Chacko and Mr. P.T. Mathews are the co-convenors for Philadelphia area.

**M.C. Alexander, Convenor, South East Region**

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## **REGIONAL MEETING - DIOCESAN SOUVENIR COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

A meeting of the Vicars, Office Bearers, Assembly Members and Diocesan Souvenir Committee Members of the Mar Thoma Parishes in the North Eastern Region was held at 4 pm on Saturday November 19, 1994, in Staten Island. Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus presided over the meeting. Parishes in the North Eastern Region were well represented in the meeting.

In accordance with the decision taken by the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Souvenir Executive Committee, the region decided to hold a fund raising dinner on Saturday April 2, 1995, at a convenient location in the region.

It was conveyed to the participants that a souvenir including the Diocesan Center Donor list will be published on the occasion of the Diocesan anniversary. It is the responsibility of the Parishes that the list is published, corrected and updated before sending it to the Souvenir Committee for publishing.

**Jacob Chacko, Coordinator, North Eastern Region, Souvenir Committee**



# **MAR THOMA CHURCH TEAM VISIT TO GERMANY**

## **(Promoting an Ecumenical Relationship)**

A small team of Mar Thoma members (Rev. Zachariah John, Kochamma Sophie, V T. Abraham and Mrs. Thankamma Abraham) visited Germany from 12-23, August as the guests of the Evangelischen Kirche (Protestant Church) of Germany. The visit was the culmination of a five year ecumenical relationship carefully developed by our Thirumeni Rt Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus.

In 1983 a team comprising Superintendent Wolfgang Glade (equivalent to our Diocesan Bishop) and two ministers, the Rev. Alfred Kaunicke and the Rev. Hans Martin Frenzen visited Kerala as the guests of the Mar Thoma Church. They had a wonderful time visiting Tiruvalla, Kottayam, Cochin, the High Ranges and the Periyar Wild Game Sanctuary and meeting the Metropolitan and our Bishops and Achens. They reciprocated with a return invitation for our Bishops and senior Achens, but some how such a team could not be put together within the short notice given by the Germans. Since the opportunity to develop our relationship with the German Church may not be lost, Thirumeni asked us to go and represent our Church.

We were guests of the Evangelischen Kirche in Essen near Dusseldorf which is part of the North Rhine & Westphalia region of Germany. The Protestant Church in Germany is an alliance of the Lutheran Church, the Reformed Church and the Free Church with a membership in the region of 6.3 million people. There is complete unity in faith and administration although there may be minor doctrinal differences.

The Federal Republic of Germany has 16 States and has a population of some 80 million people after the unification. One third of the people belong to the Protestant Church, another one third are Roman Catholics and the remaining one third have no particular church affiliation.

The State collects through the payroll a church tax (state insurance) of about 9% which after administration costs is passed back to the Church. The funds are used to pay the salaries of Bishops and the clergy as well as the maintenance of churches and church managed institutions. Unlike our church, they do not collect subscription fees; very little money comes from offertory.

The Church (both Protestant and Roman Catholic) take on the responsibility of running hospitals, schools, orphanages, old peoples homes and kindergartens. About two thirds of all these institutions are managed by the church and one third by the State. The Church institutions are by far better managed and maintained.

The Bishop of the Protestant Church (equivalent to our Metropolitan) is supported by a number of Superintendents (similar to our Diocesan Bishops) who in turn will have a number of Parishes and institutions ministered by clergy. Our hosts took us to their hospitals, schools, old peoples homes and kindergartens. It appeared to us that the German institutions are well managed and efficiently run using the latest technologies, staff and equipment. We were also taken on a sight-seeing tour of wine growing area of the Rhine land, the Cologne Cathedral, the Maria Leach monastery and many other churches and castles. The highlight was a boat ride on the Rhine flowing through rugged hills and picturesque landscapes.

We were given the opportunity to meet Bishop Beiyer, the Church Board, the Ecumenical Committee and the Mayors of Essen, the city famous for the Krupp steel works. We also attended the Holy Communion Service at the St. Lukas Church with Superintendent Glade and addressed the congregation. We were given a warm welcome at a large public service at the Gruga Park where the Bishop gave the address.

On all these occasions, we were able to tell them about the Mar Thoma Church, its origin from St. Thomas time and of our missiological, educational, medical and other charitable activities. The Germans showed a keen interest in our Church, our culture and history. Many expressed the wish to visit Kerala in the near future.

The relationship established with the German Church needs to be further developed and fostered carefully. They would be willing to assist and support us in many of our institutional activities. They have indicated a five year financial support for GIRI DEEPTHI (The Tribal Home) in Cochin. They have also suggested an exchange program for clergies. A Mar Thoma Achen can have a two to three year program in Germany attached to one of their parishes. He can also minister to our Mar Thoma families in Germany. On their side, they have already nominated one of their ministers to spend a similar time in Kerala with our Church. The expenses of both Achens will be borne by them.

The Protestant Church of Germany has become some what complacent over the years. They look upon our Mar



Thoma Church to revive them. They see revival taking place in other denominations and other countries in Europe. We think that there is scope for us to send evangelists and missionaries to Germany in future.

Our Church should be looking outwardly to establish links and partnerships with the German Church. This cannot happen if we are too insular. The opportunity is there if we want to broaden the horizons through further visits, exchange schemes and mission activities for mutual support and for the extension of His Kingdom.

We are particularly thankful to Superintendent Wolfgang Glade of the Church in Essen who made the visit possible and gave us a most wonderful time in Germany.

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

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## MID-WESTERN REGION SUNDAY SCHOOL JUNIOR CAMP

A junior camp for the Sunday School students in grades four through eight in the midwestern region was conducted on September 24-25 at Detroit Mar Thoma Church. The theme was "Jesus And Me". Mr. Mike Gulish from "Bible Illustrations" was the main speaker. He had a unique and interesting way of presenting the gospel through a magic show and "Chalk Talk". All of the attendees enjoyed the program very much. Rev. Jaims Thomas led the devotion and Dr. K. Mathew Sadhu delivered the concluding message.

During the conference, the winners of the 1994 Diocesan Sunday School Examination from this region were recognized. Trophies were presented to the two first-place winners, Julie Mary Sadhu-Junior High class, and Justin Samuel Sadhu-Junior class (both from Chicago Mar Thoma Church). "Champion Ribbons" were distributed to those who got distinction.

There were about 55 participants. It was really a blessing for all who attended.

**Mr. Thompson David**  
Detroit Mar Thoma Sunday School Superintendent

**Dr. Annamma Sadhu**  
Secretary, Midwestern Region Sunday School

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## SEVIKA SANGHOM DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

### PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATION

The Diocese of North America and Europe geographically is very wide and it is difficult to conduct activities as in one unit. This Diocese is divided into two major regions, eastern and western. Since the regions are also very vast in area they are sub-divided into centers.

The Platinum Jubilee Celebrations were conducted in this Diocese between the months of October and December 1994.

### EASTERN REGIONAL PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATION

The Platinum Jubilee Celebration of the Mar Thoma Suvishesha Sevika Sanghom, Eastern Region, Diocese of North America and Europe, was held on  
January 1995



*The Diocesan Bishop addresses the gathering at the Eastern Region Platinum Jubilee Celebration*



conference of North America and Europe was held on October 8, 1994. The event was held at the main sanctuary of Philadelphia Mar Thoma Church and His Lordship the Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Episcopa was our chief guest.

The meeting started with the hymn "O God, our help in ages past" followed by prayer by Rev. P.P. Thomas of the Princeton Theological Seminary and a welcome song by the children of the Philadelphia Mar Thoma Church. The Sevika Sanghom presented a play, in which the Sevika Sanghom members from all the parishes participated, entitled "Yesterday - Tomorrow". The play gave insights and highlighted the history of the Mar Thoma Suvishesha Sevika Sanghom.

Mrs. Nirmala Abraham, the previous Secretary of the Diocesan Sevika Sanghom, gave a welcome speech as well as a brief report about the Sevika Sanghom. The introductory message by Rev. Mathai Joseph, President of the Sevika Sanghom, and a song by the Bethel Mar Thoma Church Sevika Sanghom followed the welcome speech.



*A section of the audience.*

Our beloved Thirumeni delivered the main message for this Jubilee celebration, after which, Rev. Dr. T.P. Abraham offered the felicitation and Mrs. Annamma Alex shared her memories and thoughts regarding her stay and service at the Vanitha Mandiram (held office of the Sanghom for 14 years).

The Jubilee Celebration came to a close at 4:00 p.m. after a vote of thanks by Mrs. Kunjamma Simon, Secretary, prayer by Rev. Kurian Thomas, and benediction by our Thirumeni.

The Western Region is divided into three centers:

- Center I — All parishes in Chicago, Detroit & Canada
- Center II — Five parishes in Texas and one in Oklahoma
- Center III — Los Angeles, San Francisco & Seattle.

The Platinum Jubilee Celebration of the Texas/Oklahoma center was held on November 12, 1994 at the Trinity Mar Thoma Church in Houston. This was like a mini-family conference. The Youth and Edavaka mission conferences were also conducted at the same time. Three hundred and thirty people attended the meeting. Rev. Ninan Jacob, the President of the Western Regional Sevika Sanghom, Rev. T.I. Joseph, Rev. Raju George, and Rev. Eapen Cherian, former president of the Sevika Sanghom, were the leaders of the meeting. Rev. Dr. John T. Seamonds, one of the old Maramon Convention speakers and a missionary to India for the past 40 years, was the main speaker.

The Jubilee celebrations kicked off with a group singing by the newly formed Immanuel Mar Thoma Church of Houston, followed with a prayer by the Rev. Raju George.

Mrs. Elizabeth John, Secretary of the Texas Oklahoma Center gave the gathering a warm welcome. Rev. Ninan Jacob and Rev. T.I. Joseph gave talks on the birth, development, and present activities of the Sevika Sanghom in India. These talks highlighted the eminent lady leaders of our church, their vision and mission. Following the talks the Dallas Mar Thoma church ladies choir members enlightened us with their melodious songs.

Dr. Annie Lincoln, the Diocesan Sevika Sanghom Secretary, gave a detailed report of the birth, development, and activities of the Sanghom in this hemisphere. She also informed the gathering about the need for the Platinum Jubilee Hall to be constructed in Kerala and the decision of the last general body meeting to send our share of Rs. 100,000.00. It was also announced that our Diocesan Sanghom donated uniforms for the use of Sevinies in 1994.

Mrs. Susan George, a representative from the Diocesan Assembly to the Diocesan Sevika Sanghom, gave a brief talk about the Sevika Sanghom of our Diocese. Mrs. Gracy Babu from Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston sang a solo elevating our thoughts of charity. Mrs. Chinamma John, Secretary of the Trinity Mar Thoma Church Sevika Sanghom, delivered the vote of thanks and the meeting concluded with prayer and benediction by Rev. T.I. Joseph.

**Dr. Annie Lincoln, Secretary, Sevika Sanghom -  
Diocese of North America & Europe**



## Diocesan Bishop Lays Foundation Stone For Immanuel Mar Thoma Church, Houston



Thirumeni blesses the foundation stone.

On Sunday, October 2, 1994, the Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus laid the foundation stone for Houston's new Immanuel Mar Thoma Church. The solemn, ceremony was attended by several hundred church members as well as priests and well wishers from sister parishes. Earlier that day, Thirumeni consecrated a temporary place of worship for the church and conducted its first Holy Communion service. In his message, Thirumeni urged the parishioners to build the new church on the foundation that is Jesus Christ. He reminded the members to remain focussed on the mission and vision of the church and to work together to make the church a community of faith, love, and hope for all the people.

Plans are underway to soon begin the first phase of construction which includes a beautiful sanctuary, a colonnade which houses the library, a parsonage, and necessary sports facilities. A master plan has been approved for the fourteen acre land located in Stafford, on the southwestern part of Houston. The first phase of construction is slated for completion by the summer of 1995.

At present Rev. Raju George and Rev. T. I. Joseph serve the Parish as its vicar and assistant vicar respectively.

P. M. Jacob



The Sunday School Children Singing at the VBS function



## DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE FIRST ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR & DONORS' DIRECTORY

We are pleased to inform you that we are preparing to celebrate the First Anniversary of our Diocesan Center in April 1995. In connection with the Anniversary Celebrations, we are publishing a Souvenir. This publication features the history, accomplishments, present status, pending and impending tasks of this Diocese, messages and articles from our beloved Bishops and other leaders. In addition, it highlights perspective of the Youth-the-Future of the Diocese, an updated list of contributions to the Mar Thoma Center and facts and features of the Mar Thoma Church.

We are planning to distribute about 5000 copies of the Souvenir in the United States, Canada and Europe. Please make use of this golden opportunity to promote and expand your business horizon across the Atlantic and beyond. We are soliciting the co-operation and support of Business Community and Individuals by sending your advertisements and compliments along with your check payable to "The Mar Thoma Church". The rates are given below:

Back Cover (4 Color) .....	\$2500.00
Inside Cover Pages - Front & Back (Two Color) .....	\$2000.00
Special Pages (Color) .....	\$1000.00
Full Pages (Family or Personal Compliments) .....	\$300.00
Half Page (Family or Personal Compliments).....	\$200.00
Business (Full Page) .....	\$500.00
Business (Half Page) .....	\$250.00

For Information, please contact any one of the following committee members:

Mr. T.A Mathew (Convener)	Tel:713-455-7469	Fax:713-487-7945
Dr. P. John Lincoln (Dioc.Treasurer)	Tel:806-797-9354	Fax:806-797-9354
Mr. Abraham Mattackal(Memeber)	Tel:310-431-0046	Fax:310-431-1111
Mr. C.V. Samuel (Member)	Tel:313-871-5905	Fax:313-524-6374
Mr. Jacob Chacko (Member)	Tel:718-698-6310	Fax:718-494-2399

**The following are the center co-ordinations for the Diocesan Center Fund Raising and Souvenir Committee. Please help them in their efforts to raise funds for the Diocesan Center.**

- Northeast Center - Mr. Jacob Chacko 718-698-6310
- Southeast Center - Mr. MC. Alexander 201-966-5519
- Mid-West Center - Mr. T.A. Abraham 708-668-4959
- Western Center - Mr. P.K. Thomas 713-933-7537
- Canada Center - Mr. Varghese K.Pothen 905-470-2885

### DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE FIRST ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR AND DONORS' DIRECTORY NOTICE

**ATTENTION DESIGNERS AND ARTISTS!!**

The Executive Committee for the Souvenir publication invites designs for the front cover of the Souvenir that will be published in connection with the anniversary celebrations of our Diocesan Center from members of our diocese. The Souvenir commemorates the anniversary of the establishment of our Diocesan Center in Richboro, PA.

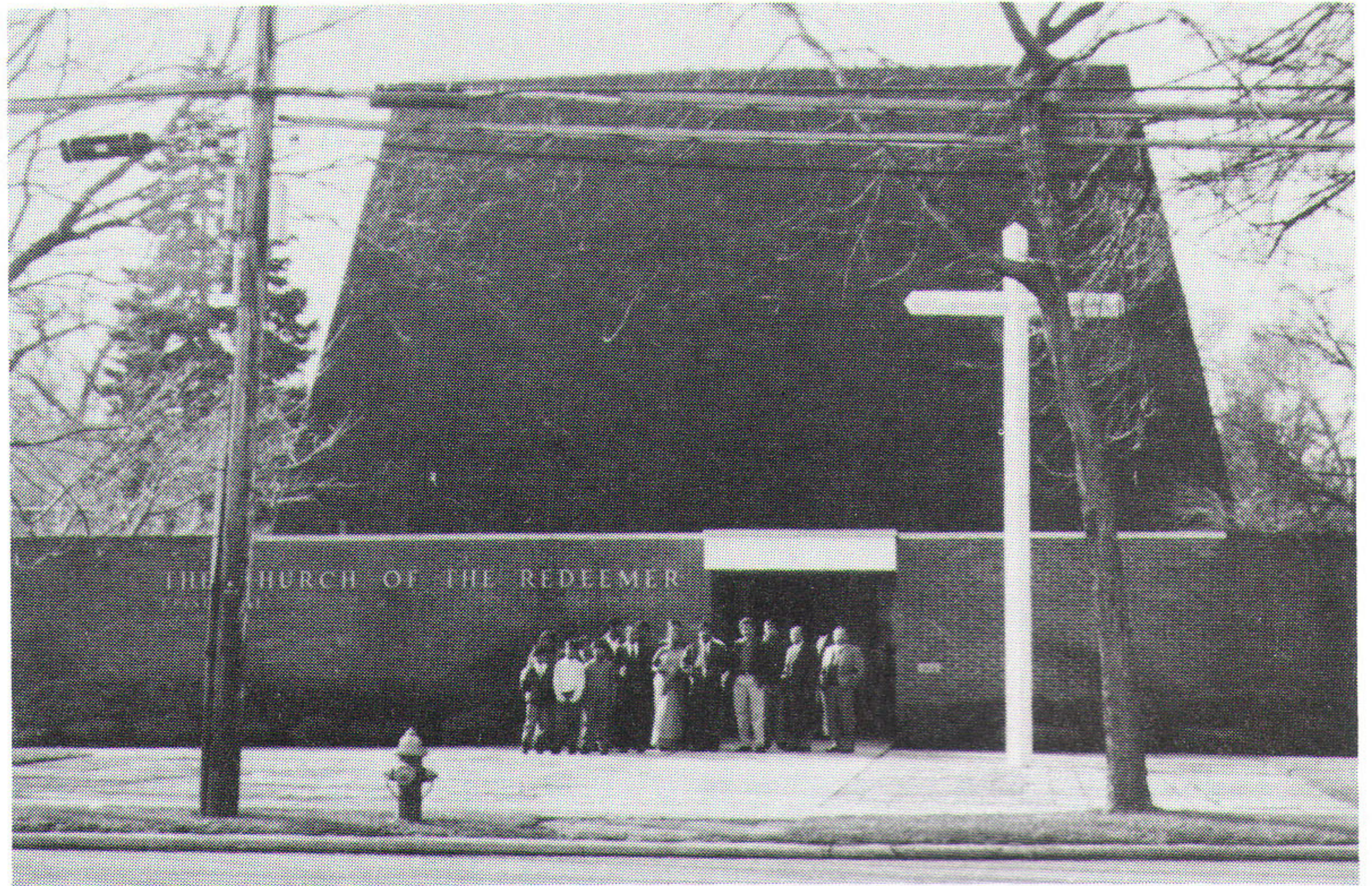
The cover design size is 8.5 x 11 inches and is going to be printed in full color. All entries must be received by March 15, 1995. Only one entry per person will be entertained. The person whose design for the front cover page is selected, will be recognized and given a plaque at a special function ( anniversary celebrations) to be held on July 2, 1995 in connection with the Family Conference in Dallas, Texas . Please mail your entries to - Mr. T.A. Mathew, Convener, 255 Castle Way Lane, Houston, Texas 77015 (Telephone: 713-455-7469 ).



# A DREAM COMES TRUE FOR THE LONG ISLAND MAR THOMA CHURCH

The Long Island Mar Thoma Church (New York) will soon have a permanent place for worship, the Episcopal Redeemer Church at Merrick, Long Island, New York. The Redeemer is a superbly designed modern building, located on a 3-acre land. The Redeemer became the temporary home of the Long Island Mar Thoma Church in January 1989. The Episcopal Diocese of Long Island has decided to sell the Redeemer Church and its land to the Long Island Mar Thoma Church and the latter has decided to accept the offer.

The Long Island Mar Thoma Church has launched a major fund raising program. The Hon. Minister of Kerala, Mr. K.M. Mani has inaugurated a raffle program. The occasion was blessed by the gracious presence of the Diocesan Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus. The goal of the raffle program is to sell over 5000 tickets at a cost of 100 dollars per ticket. There are 13 prizes including the first prize of a 1995 Lincoln Town Car. The Church is making all efforts to reach out to the Mar Thoma Community of North America in helping the sale of the raffle tickets. The Church seeks the prayers, support and cooperation of every Marthomite in the United States and abroad in making the raffle ticket sale a grand success.



*The Long Island Mar Thoma Church*

## DIOCESAN SUNDAY CELEBRATION

Diocesan Sunday was celebrated on October 9, 1994 Rev. Dr. T. P. Abraham conducted the service and gave the message.

A food sale was arranged after the service to raise fund for our Diocese. The Sevika Sanghom and Youth League took active participation. The leadership of Rev. Oommen Philip, Joseph V. Thomas (Diocesan Member) and executive committee members for making the food sale a success is greatly appreciated.

**Varughese Oommen, Diocesan Assembly member**

## THE RAFFLE DRAWING

The Raffle Drawing was held on Sunday Nov. 27 1994 at 2.15 p.m. in the Church Auditorium under the direct supervision of Fr. Romeo of the Catholic Church. The following Tickets have won the prizes.

1. First Prize Ticket # 2418
2. Second Prize Ticket #s 2148, 3295, 2330, 1105, 3387
3. Third Prize Ticket #s 1110, 1737, 2890, 1203, 3335, 3827, 4104.

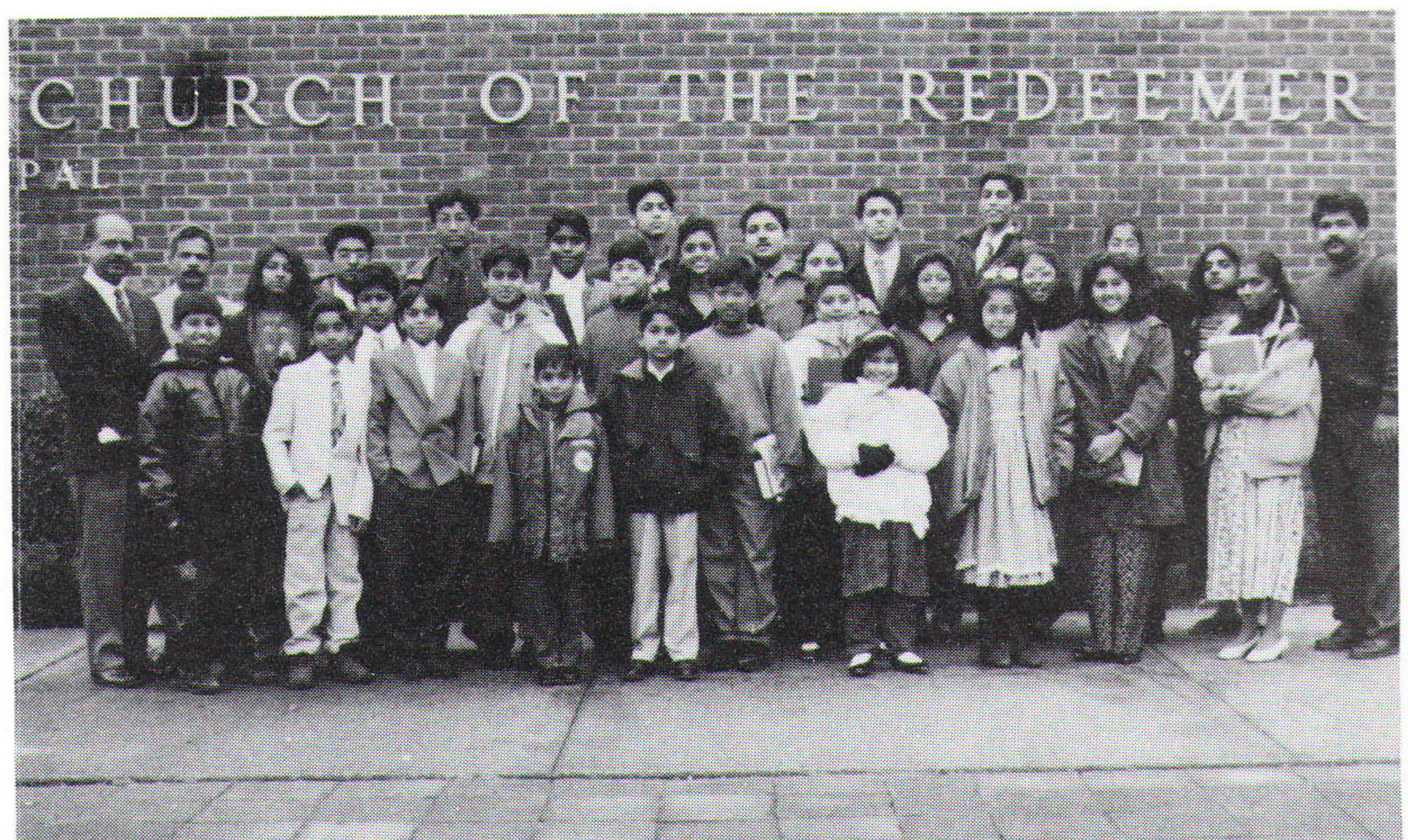
The Long Island Mar Thoma Church congratulates all the winners. Thanks are due to all those who have participated in the raffle program.

**Dr. Raju Abraham, Secretary**

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Long Island Mar Thoma Sunday School participated in the North East Region Sunday School competition which was held on November 12, 1994 at the St. John's Mar Thoma Church, Queen's Village. Our Sunday School children were awarded many prizes.

**Thomas B. Thomas, Head Master**



*The Sunday School Children*



## **DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE DEPARTMENT OF SACRED MUSIC -CHORAL WORKSHOP**

The Department of Sacred Music conducted its first Choral Workshop in the north east region on January 13 and 14, 1995 at the St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, New York. There were 30 participants from 5 parishes in New York and New Jersey area. The workshop focused on rehearsal techniques and sight singing and exercises in voice training. Mr. Geeve Mathew, Mr. Christy Mathew, and Rev. Aleander M. Issac served as leaders and resource persons. The Choral Workshop was really beneficial to the participants. The Department wishes to conduct similar workshops and follow-up meeting for choir leaders and choristers.

**Rev. Alexander M. Isaac, Chairman, Department of Sacred Music**

### **NOTICE**

**A Vaideeka Selection Committee** (Clergy Selection Committee) is constituted in U.S.A. to select prospective candidates from this Diocese for Theological Training. Those who have a definite call to the Ordained Ministry in the Mar Thoma Church and a University Degree are invited to apply. They may send their names and address with the recommendation of their Vicar to The Diocesan Secretary, Mar Thoma Center, 744 Newtown Richboro Road, Richboro. PA 18954-1718. Completed Application Forms should reach the Diocesan Office on or before 31st January 1995.

Applicant should be ready to appear for an Entrance Examination and an interview. Tests will be given in the following areas: Bible Knowledge, General Knowledge, Liturgy and Church History.

Mar Thoma Center,  
744 Newtown Richboro Rd.,  
Richboro, PA 18954-1718

**Rev. Dr. P.G. George**  
**Diocesan Secretary**

## **TRINITY MAR THOMA CHURCH, EDMONTON, CANADA**

The vacation Bible School under the auspices of the Sunday School was held at our Church from August 24 to 27, 1994. The Vicar Rev. Philip Easaw was the main leader. The theme was "Celebrate Jesus". It was indeed a blessed time for the children who participated.

Our Church celebrated its 3rd parish day on Sunday, October 2, 1994. A special meeting was held at the Church after the Holy Communion Service. Rt. Rev. Kent L. Genge of the Anglican Church gave the parish day message. Rev. M.A. Philip and Rev. Fr. George Daniel of Orthodox Church also attended the meeting. As part of the celebration we arranged devotional meetings on September 30th and October 1st. Rev. M.A. Philip gave messages on those two days.

Our Church observed Diocesan Sunday on October 9, 1994. A special service was held on that day led by Rev. Philip Easaw. Christmas Carol singing group visited every house on December 9th, 10th, and 11th. Christmas Carol service was held on December 24 in which our choir sang beautiful songs. The Sunday School children presented a tableau on that night through which they conveyed the real meaning of Christmas. The watch night service was held on December 31 in which many people dedicated their life before God and participated in the midnight Holy Communion Service.

**Rajan Daniel, Diocesan Assembly Member**

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## **MAR THOMA CHURCH OF LOS ANGELES**

The General Body meeting of the parish held on the 6<sup>th</sup> November, elected the office bearers and the Executive Committee for the year 1995.

The month of December was a month of joy and celebration. Two carol groups, one led and constituted by the



youths, and the other by the adults, visited almost all the homes in our parish and shared the message of joy, peace and reconciliation with our parishioners. The youth group was led by the Youth Secretary Miss Anu Mathews and Mr. Tom Karakkad and the adult group by Mr. Thomas Mammen (La Verne). On December 24, the whole Church gathered for the Christmas Eve service and it was a time of real worship, joy and celebration. Rev. Kenny A. Bowen of the Grace Lutheran Church in Glandora gave a wonderful message of Christmas and two choir groups, Sunday School Children and the adult performed carols, skits, drama and other talent programs based on Christmas event. Mr. Issac A George successfully co-ordinated the program.

From January 15-18, 1995 our Diocesan Bishop the Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Episcopa visited our parish. Dedication of our new parsonage was the main event of His Lordship's visit. Thirumen's visit always revives our Church life with new motivation and encouragement. The Sevika Sanghom held its annual meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1994. Mrs. Mini S. John gave the anniversary message.

The Youth League held its election for the 1995 on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January, 1995 and is proceeding with new strength and motivation.

Edavaka Mission conducted a fasting prayer on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 1994, and it was a time of self examination and rededication.

**Rev. C. John, Vicar**

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## **BOSTON MAR THOMA CHURCH**

A one-day family retreat was held on Saturday, January 21, 1995 at Fatima Shrine, Medway, from 10:00 AM to 7:30 PM. Our Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Episcopa led the retreat. 25 families attended. The theme for the retreat was "Discipleship". Rev. Alexander M. Issac led the morning devotion. Thirumeni characterized discipleship as the intimate relationship of the fellowship between Christ and the one who is called. Based on Luke 9: 46-56 Thirumeni appealed to form an alternate community where we can learn and practice to love our enemies. The group discussions were lively and productive. In the afternoon session Thirumeni met with the first communicants. It was followed by a session with parents which discussed problems in parenting. The retreat concluded after a talent evening program with the young adults and children leading the show.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Episcopa celebrated Holy Communion on Sunday, January 22, 1995 at the St. Mark's Church at 11:00AM. Thirumeni led the confirmation service for 12 first communicants. Thirumeni's visit turned out to be a blessing and rejuvenating experience to the parish.

**Rev. Alexander M. Isaac, Vicar**

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## **BETHEL MAR THOMA CHURCH OF CHICAGO**

On January 1, 1995, Chicago Mar Thoma Chapel became an independent parish under the name of Bethel Mar Thoma Church of Chicago. There are twenty families in the new parish. Rev. James Thomas, vicar of Detroit Mar Thoma Church will serve as the vicar of this parish also.

The chapel sanctioned about three years ago by the then Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom, Suffragan Metropolitan in response to the request of the Marthomites living in the far South suburbs of Chicago has been hitherto conducting Sunday School and worship services in a rented place. On September 1, 1994, we became the proud owners of our own building. A church building, belonging to the Apostolic Church was purchased in



***Bake Sale***



Frankfort, and remodelled. It was dedicated on Sunday, November 13, 1994, by our Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Episcopa. The long cherished dream of the chapel members thus became a reality. Thirumeni celebrated Holy Communion service the following day, at which time three of our youths took First Communion as well.

Things were happening so fast that one had to pinch oneself to make sure that it was real. All this happened by the grace of our Lord and the leadership and support of our thirumeni and the vicar Rev. George Mathew, which we very gratefully acknowledge.

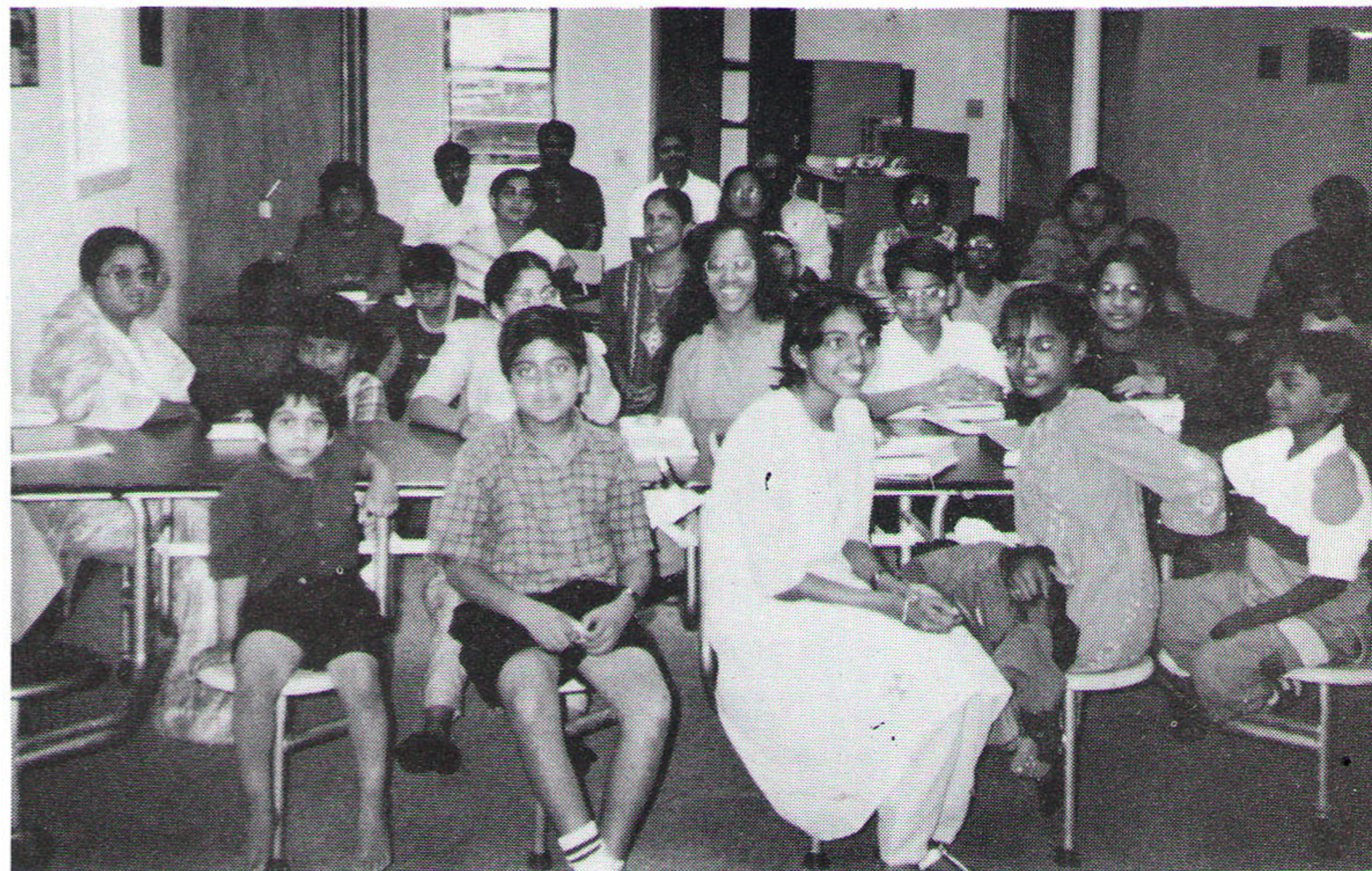
On December 31, 1994 the new year's eve and the eve of our becoming a parish, we held a 11-night prayer vigil 7:00 pm. through 7:00 am. the following morning.

About thirty members, including children. attended. This was a time of thanksgiving and supplication on behalf of all the members of the parish, the diocese, its leaders and the Mar Thoma Church and our leaders. It was a time of such blessing for all that the participants have decided to hold more often similar whole-night prayers.

Diocesan Sunday was celebrated on October 9, 1994. A bake sale was arranged by the Sevika Sangom to raise funds for the Diocese. Ten members signed up for the *Mar Thoma Messenger*.

In the 1994 Diocesan Sunday School examination five of our students got recognition, with two securing the Junior and Junior high first places and three others distinctions.

**Dr. Mrs. Annamma Sadhu, Diocesan Council Member**



**Sunday School Children**

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## MAR THOMA CHURCH OF SAN FRANCISCO

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus, Bishop of North America and Europe of the Mar Thoma Church was given a rousing welcome and reception by the Mar Thoma Parish and their many friends at the First United Methodist Church of Sunnyvale on Saturday, January 14.

The esteemed Bishop Theophilus was welcomed earlier in the day by The Rt. Rev. William Swing, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of California at a breakfast meeting he hosted at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco. Bishop Swing extended his personal invitation for Bishop Theophilus to participate in the interfaith service to be held at the Grace Cathedral, on June 25, 1995 at the 50th anniversary commemoration of the founding of the United Nations. Many other religious leaders from around the globe are expected to attend this event, including Pope John Paul II. President Clinton, and leading United Nations officials are expected to be present at this event. Since the United Nations charter was originally drafted at the initial meeting at the Grace Cathedral on Nob Hill in San Francisco this event is expected to be globally significant for the religious community as a whole. Bishop Swing gave a personal tour of the Cathedral and briefed him on the 20 million dollar renovation taking place at the cathedral.

The Rev. C. John, based in Los Angeles has pastoral responsibilities for the church here. When the new Bishop took up residence in Richboro, PA in 1994 the Mar Thoma community rejoiced in having their own leader in this hemisphere. The Rev. John inaugurated the formal liturgy which was presided over by the Bishop Theophilus. The largest attendance for a Mar Thoma community event was witnessed at this occasion. There were new communicants, and two children of Sabu and Suja Thomas of Santa Clara were formally baptized according to the tradition the church. Nicole - 2 and Nathan 16 days old were blessed by the Bishop and baptized in the church.

The grand parents P.T. and Rose Thomas and K.G. and Lisamma George served as God parents and sponsors. This was a major event for these families and friends. All the attendees were guests at a sumptuous dinner served by the Thomas family. Other dignitaries present included Northern California FIA President, Mr. Kalathil and Mrs. Marykutty Pappachen.

**Rev. Dr. P.T. Mammen**



## THE MAR THOMA CHURCH PHILADELPHIA

The Mar Thoma Church Philadelphia continues to flourish and grow and we thank God the Almighty for the abundant blessings He has showered on us.

This year we set a record of sorts when the Executive Committee of the Church for 1994 presented and passed the annual report and account for 1994 and the budget for 1995, three weeks into the New Year.

Our Church has also a new assistant vicar Rev. P.P. Thomas was appointed by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus as assistant to Rev. M.P. Yohannan to help primarily with youth work in the parish.

We arranged a music concert of "heart beats of Campus Crusade for Christian India" on October 22 at our Church. More than a thousand people from different churches attended the program. Our Resource Center has grown further during this year. We have lots of books, video cassettes and Bible reference books available for the spiritual and intellectual development of our members. In the month of December, members of our parish arranged a night long chain of prayer. We wish to continue this at least once a month. We also held a fasting and prayer cell at the church.

The Ecumenical Christmas program was held at the North East High School auditorium on December 18. Members of our parish actively participated in the program. Our member Mr. Thampi Chacko served as the program coordinator. Our Vicar Rev. M.P. Yohannan was the Chairman of the Ecumenical Christmas Celebration.

Our Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus was the chief guest. Our church took the leadership to present a colourful opening program. We celebrated our Christmas Carol Service on Dec. 24, 1994. Rev. P.P. Thomas gave the Christmas message. Our Malayalam Choir, English choir and combined prayer groups sang carols. Sunday school children also presented a program.

A joint retreat of the Edavaka Mission and the Sevika Sanghom was arranged on October 29 at our church. Dr. V. Thomas was the leader of the retreat.

Our Sunday School won the overall championship in the cultural competitions held for all the Sunday Schools in the region. The Yuvajana Sakyam of our church arranged a very successful choir festival competition for the prayer groups of the church. Ever rolling trophies were handed out to the winners and we hope to continue this as an annual event.

The Youth League of our church has completed a recording of the English service in its chant form. The chanting service is unique to the parish and has been appreciated by everyone. We hope that these tapes will help all our parishes to attract more of our youngsters and improve our services. We also hope that this would create a uniform matinee service in all our parishes.

**K.C. Jacob, Secretary**

**Sunny Abraham, Diocesan Council Member**

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## TRINITY MAR THOMA CHURCH, HOUSTON



*Scenes from the Bake Sale held on October 16, 1994 to raise funds for the Diocese.*



**THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE**  
**The Mar Thoma Church**

**The Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus**  
*Diocesan Bishop*

**The Rev. Dr. P.G. George**  
*Bishop's/Diocesan Secretary*

**Dr. John P. Lincoln**  
*Diocesan Treasurer*



**YOUTH DEPARTMENT**

*Mar Thoma Center*  
*744 Newtown Richboro Rd.*  
*Richboro, PA 18954-1718*  
*Tel.:(215) 579-9359*  
*FAX:(215) 579-7490*

4th January 1995

To All Achens  
and Members of the Parish

Dear Achen and Members of the Parish,

Wish you all a happy New Year!

The Mar Thoma Community is changing with every passing year and it affects us as a Diocese. These winds of change are also opportunities for ministry and mission in a meaningful and creative way. Let us yield to the new initiatives of the Holy Spirit to build a community of faith, love and hope.

One of the recent developments in our community is that there is an increase in the number of our young people entering the Universities and Colleges. Most of them are moving out of their homes to live in Campus atmosphere and to a new campus culture. There lies an opportunity to reach out to our young people. Youth Department in the first meeting has decided to do Campus Ministry. As a start in this direction, please fill out the given Form with the details of the student. Please send the forms to the Diocesan Center. We identify at least three groups of University Students:

- 1. Our Young people in the US and Canadian Universities*
- 2. Our Young people in Colleges and Universities abroad, especially in India*
- 3. Young people from India in North American Universities and Colleges*

The student themselves or the parents or a relative could fill out these forms. Please send the Forms to The Diocesan Center address. A Master List will be compiled and Achens, Senior Leader or Youth Leaders in the respective areas will be informed of these young people and they will in turn give Christian fellowship to them while they are in University Campuses.

Please pray for the Youth Department and the work among our young people.

With warm regards.

Yours in Christ's service

**The Rev. Dr. P. G. George**  
**Youth Chaplain**  
**Bishop's/Diocesan Secretary**



**MAR THOMA CHURCH DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE**

744 NEWTOWN RICHBORO ROAD • RICHBORO, PA 18954-1718 • (215) 579-9359

**YOUTH DEPARTMENT**

**YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY CONFERENCE**

**THEME:** "The Church in the 21st Century"  
**DATE:** JULY 6, 7, 8 AND 9, 1995 (Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday)  
**VENUE:** STONY POINT CENTER  
Cricket town Road • Stony Point, NY 10980 • (914)786-5674  
**LEADERS:** THE RT.REV.DR.ZACHARIAS MAR THEOPHILUS  
Diocesan Bishop  
THE REV. DR. WILLIAM P. BARKER

Participants are Youth from those who have a desire to join the full time Ministry of the Mar Thoma Church, those who would like to give Lay Leadership in our Churches and those who wish to enlarge their knowledge of the Bible, preaching and teaching skills through training.

**Contact for more details:**

Rev. Eapen Cherian (214)436-8877; Rev. Alexander M. Isaac (617)244-5762;  
Mr. Biju Thomas (201)836-5653; Mr. Gigi Tom (914)268-3532  
and Rev. Dr. P.G.George (215)579-9359

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**MAR THOMA CHURCH DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE**

**YOUTH DEPARTMENT - CAMPUS MINISTRY**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ MALE /FEMALE  
PROGRAM/DEGREE \_\_\_\_\_ YEAR \_\_\_\_\_  
UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE \_\_\_\_\_  
CAMPUS ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
HOME ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
.....  
DATE OF BIRTH (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME OF PARENTS: FATHER:.....  
MOTHER:.....  
OR GUARDIAN:.....  
HOME PARISH: ..... CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
COMMENTS (if any)  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address**

The Mar Thoma Center • 744 Newtown Richboro Road • Richboro, PA 18954-1718  
Phone No.: (215)579-9359 • Fax No.:(215)579-7490



# THE RT. REV. DR. ZACHARIAS MAR THEOPHILUS DIOCESAN BISHOP

## ITINERARY- 1995

### JANUARY

1 - 3	<i>New Year's Day</i>	Atlanta MTC
4 - 5		North Carolina
6 - 8		Tampa, Florida
12 - 14		San Francisco
15 - 18		Los Angeles - <i>Dedication of the Parsonage</i>
20 - 23		Boston
27 - 28		Lubbock - <i>Diocesan Council</i>
29 - 31		Oklahoma

### FEBRUARY

3 - 5		Immanuel MTC, Lubbock
7 - 13		WCC, Geneva
15 - 19		Maramon Convention
20		Episcopal Synod - Tiruvalla
21 - 28		Santhigiri

### MARCH

3 - 6		London
11		Sevika Sanghom Regional (Eastern) Conference, Mar Thoma Literature Society Meeting
12		Ebenezer MTC, Pelham, NY
18 - 19		Long Island MTC, NY/Edavaka Mission
24		Vicars and Office-Bearers Meeting-St.Thomas MTC
26		St. James MtC, NY

### APRIL

1 - 2		Staten Island, NY
8 - 9	Palm Sunday	Epiphany MTC, NY
11		St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, NY
13	Maundy Thursday	Chicago MTC
14	Good Friday	Chicago MTC
15 - 16	Easter	Seattle
22-23		St. Peter's, NJ
27 - 29		Diocesan Assembly - Philadelphia
30		New Jersey MTC

.....contd. "Just for Kids"

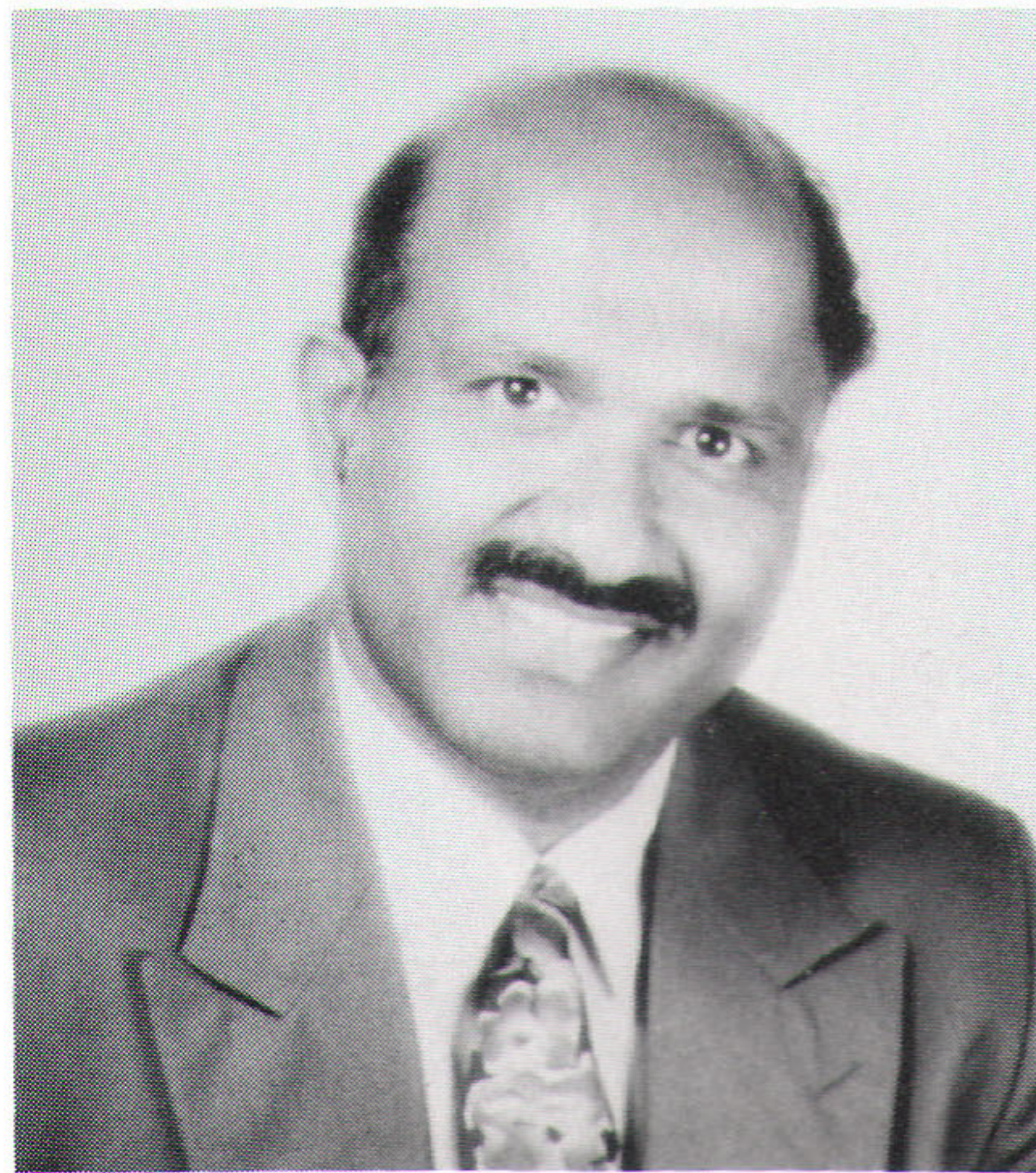
"Never decide to do nothing just because you can only do a little. Do what you can "

"There are people who will always come up with reasons why you can't do what you want to do. Ignore them."

sun; birds; green; nests; grass; blossoms;  
flower; leaves; plants; rain; birth; new; eggs

**Answers:**





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**YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED  
TO XIII FAMILY CONFERENCE  
(DIOCESE OF THE NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE)**

**HOSTED BY**

**MAR THOMA CHURCH OF DALLAS**

The Vicar and Members of the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas  
cordially invite you to join with us for the  
XIII Family Conference of the Diocese of North America & Europe  
of The Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church to be hosted by  
the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas.

**DATE**

**JUNE 29-JULY 2, 1995**

**VENUE**

**Hilton, Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport**

**THEME**

**"Affirming Christian Family Values in a Multi Cultural Society"**

**SPEAKERS**

**RT. REV. DR. ZACHARIAS MAR THEOPHILUS**  
(Diocesan Bishop, Diocese of North America & Europe)

**JOHN T. SEAMANDS**  
(Kentucky-Maramon Convention Speaker)

**SISTER JOAN CHUNKAPURA, PH.D.**  
(Director, TRADA, Kottayam, Kerala)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**REV. NINAN JACOB (214) 399-1475**  
**GEORGE POIKAIL 1-800-283-6226 & (214) 317-0532**  
**MATHEWS K. SKARIAH (214) 492-8077**  
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