

MAR THOMA

MESSENGER

A PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE OCTOBER 1995



CHURCH AS A COMMUNITY

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Cover: Epiphany Mar Thoma Church

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From the Editor

John Donne captured the true sense of community when he said, "No man is an island." No one becomes a "whole person" living in solitude. Community is a place where individuals become whole person.

Community is a collection of individuals bound together by common interests, beliefs or a cause. Though we use the word "community" to describe a "group, it also describes what people experience within the groups. This experience provide its members a sense of belonging, acceptance, and strength. The best biblical examples of community occur in the Book of Acts, the main features being, unity, concern for each other, sharing of belongings, frequent meetings, shared meals and worship together.

Church tend to institutionalize, but their true design is community. The whole community is strengthened by the individual talents and gifts of its members. Community thrives on honest and open communication. The community exists to listen, help and pray. God's spirit inspires a love and unity within the Church which Christians are to help maintain. Close relationships are formed between people who have learned to be realistic about their strengths and weaknesses and are willing to work at encouraging others.

Most of the churches that we bought, at one point, were either closed or in the verge of closing. These churches, probably, came about as a "community" felt the need for a church and built it. These churches probably flourished before they dissipated and finally vanished. But there are other churches where the buildings deteriorated, but as communities they continued to flourish. In one case, the building withstand the "church as a community" and in the other the "church as a community" withstand the buildings. What do we want our churches be; as a community that withstand the buildings or the buildings that withstand the community?

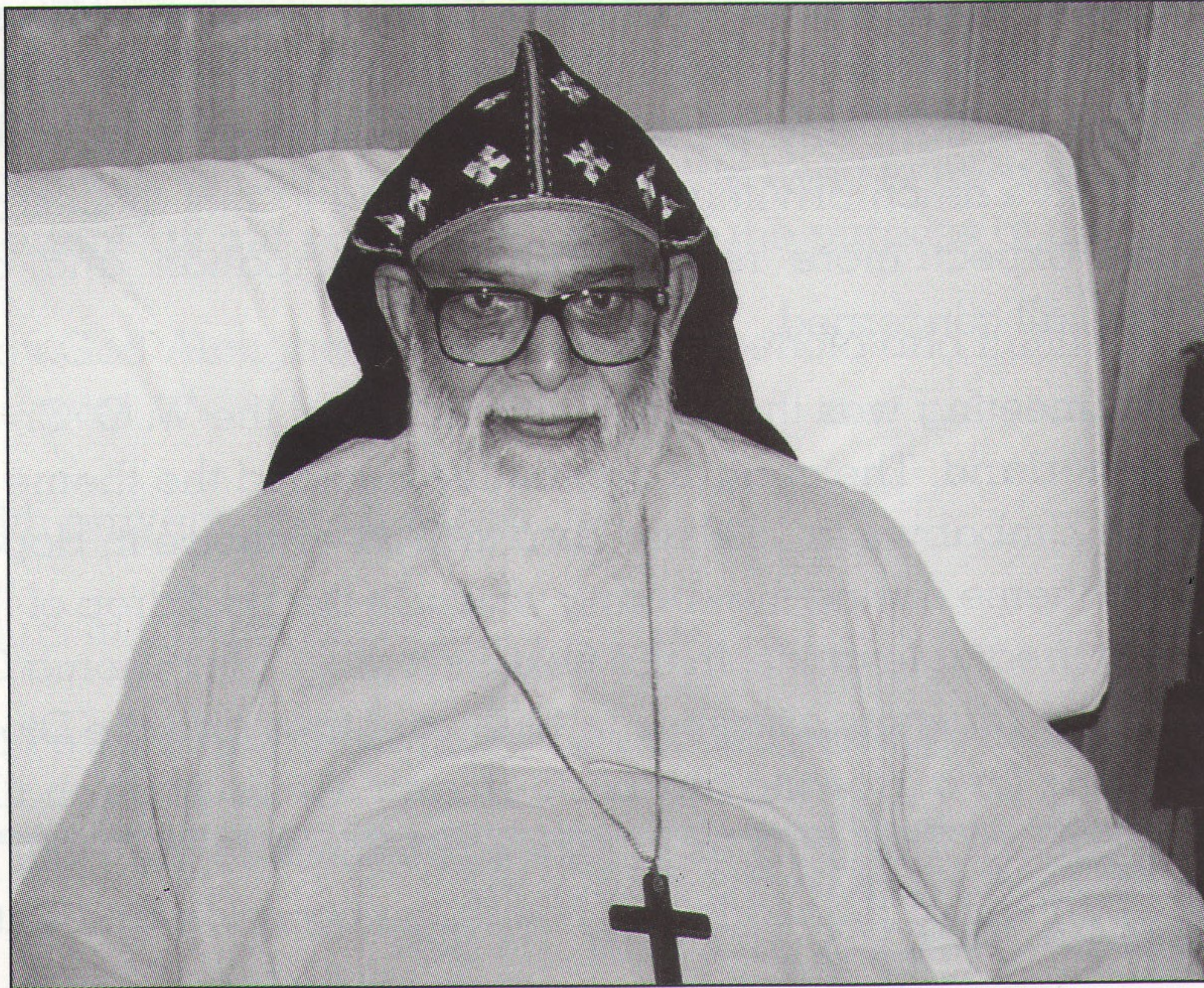
Paul says that there are three things that will remain or last forever; Faith, Hope and Love, and love is the greatest. (I Cor. 13-13) In a Life Magazine interview Archbishop of New York John Cardinal O'Conner said "I don't see how, without the gift of faith you would believe that He was Son of God. You can study the scriptures till your eyes fall out, and without the gift of faith you are not going to believe that Christ is the Son of God." Faith makes the difference. Lack of hope fragments the community. A radio host asked Mother Teresa, what can he do for her, and she answered, "If you really want to do something, talk to someone who thinks that he is alone and convince that he is not." We all plan for great things and fail to do simple acts of love. As history demonstrated, a Church as a community cemented on Faith, Hope and Love will withstand all the turmoil of uncertain future. Let our Church be a community of Faith, Hope and Love.

By the time the next issue comes out, we all would have celebrated Thanksgiving and Christmas. As the year comes to an end, let us thank God for all His blessings during the year. We wish you A Happy Thanksgiving, A Merry Christmas and a very healthy and prosperous New Year.

Abraham Thomas

Message from the Metropolitan

I am glad to see the parishes are getting established. More parishes have bought places of worship for them. Some are constructing church buildings. I was happy to conduct the dedication of the Epiphany church for which foundation stone was laid by me in August last year.



The participation of youth also is increasing and more meaningful. It is very necessary that they understand the meaning of their faith and appropriate its joy and power. Meetings of different organizations in zones or groups of churches also are being conducted. This is helpful to overcome isolation. In addition to the parishes already established,

the Diocesan Episcopa is taking active steps to organize new groups where smaller numbers of people live and need to meet together for fellowship. I see also the need for other churches and racial groups in the USA. This will make the sense of Christian Unity real. It will also show that churches can be of help to one another. Thus Christian witness and service will grow by working with members of other denominations also.

Our beloved Metropolitan The Most. Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma visited our Diocese from September 19 to October 1, 1995.

Letter From The Diocesan Bishop



Dearly Beloved in Christ,

In September, I had the privilege of attending two important meetings. The first was the Sabha Mandalam (General Assembly) of the Mar Thoma Church in Kerala, where it was decided that the council members be elected from each Diocese by their Mandalam members. The Diocese of North America & Europe will have at least three council members in the Sabha council. Similarly, the Mandalam decided, if there are more than one Mandalam members from any parish, at least one should be a woman. Those decisions give much privilege to women and to this diocese; but at the same time expect more responsibility, participation and greater contribution from all concerned.

The second meeting was the central committee of the W. C. C., held at Geneva in Switzerland. The central committee decided the theme for the next General Assembly, to be held at Harare in Zimbabwe in 1998 as "Turn to God—Rejoice in Hope". The churches all over the world will be studying the theme during the coming years. In the backdrop of the 50th anniversary of the W. C. C., a Jubilee theme has great relevance. In the next Assembly, Mar Thoma Church is privileged to have two more delegates from the Diaspora parishes in Gulf countries and the Diocese of North America & Europe. This is very encouraging for a growing diasporic church. We must be challenged to live out our ecumenical tradition and new calling. This calls us to take ecumenism to the local level. I hope the newly reconstituted committee for Ecumenical Relations will rise to the occasion and enter into new ecumenical endeavors.

The Mar Thoma Metropolitan has dedicated the newly built church of the Epiphany Parish on September 30, 1995. Numerous parishes in this diocese are going to dedicate their new church building in the coming months. In many parishes, this occasion brings jubilation, celebration, oneness and hope. But there are other cases of dissension, disintegration and disappointments. It is not the costly buildings that matter but the Christian witness that counts. We may have very costly church buildings in our possessions, but we might lose most valuable unity and peace if we do not care for deeper commitment. We may remain as a people of the building rather than the people of God. A radical introspection and a meaningful rethinking is essential in the above matters.

We have celebrated the Diocesan Sunday on October 8, 1995. That is the day kept apart to thank God for the growth of this Diocese. God has led us so far. We have gained a structural stability, financial viability and a spiritual possibility within a short span of time. We need to strengthen our organizational growth and activities in the coming years. Sunday School, Youth Department, Edavaka Mission, Sevika Sangham etc. need to make an impact in the life of the people for better. I hope, all concerned committees will make an earnest effort to get the best out of these organizations.

There are a number of Mar Thoma families residing in different locations of this Diocese. Since there are no parishes or priests nearby, they are uncared and left out from the main stream of the church. It is our responsibility to seek and share ministry to them. A fresh effort is being made to organize the scattered community of this Diocese. Those who do not find membership in any parish are to be guided, supported and strengthened by the nearby parishioners and priests. All should feel that they are wanted. All should search for the lost and the least. The nature of the church is all-inclusiveness.

The current issue of the Messenger is dealing with the theme "Church as a Community." The growth of extreme individualism and dwindling of close-knit community is the picture we see at the eclipse of the 20th century. Community is thoroughly divided all over the world on the basis of race, caste, color, religion, wealth, gender, language etc. There is no binding force to keep all people together. Church is the only alternate community where all could be bound by love and united in Christ. Church is *Koinonia*. It is a community of faith that cares, shares, gives, forgives and sacrifices for the betterment of all others. Church is a community of faith, hope and love. We need to re-examine our churches in the light of this perspective and re-orient all our parishes to achieve the purpose of the Church, locally and globally.

May God Almighty bless all of us to behold and fulfill His mission every moment of our life in the best possible way.

With prayers and blessings

Yours in Christ's Service,

Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Episcopa, Diocesan Bishop

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THE RT. REV. DR. ZACHARIAS MAR THEOPHILUS**

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November

3-5	Montreal
6-7	Ottawa
10-12	Kingston
13-14	Toronto
18-19	St. Andrews M.T.C., New York
25-26	St. Thomas M.T.C., New York

December

1-10	Episcopal Synod and Clergy Conference
16-17	Bethel M.T.C., Chicago
23-25	Immanuel M.T.C., Houston
30-31	Trinity M.T.C., Houston

January

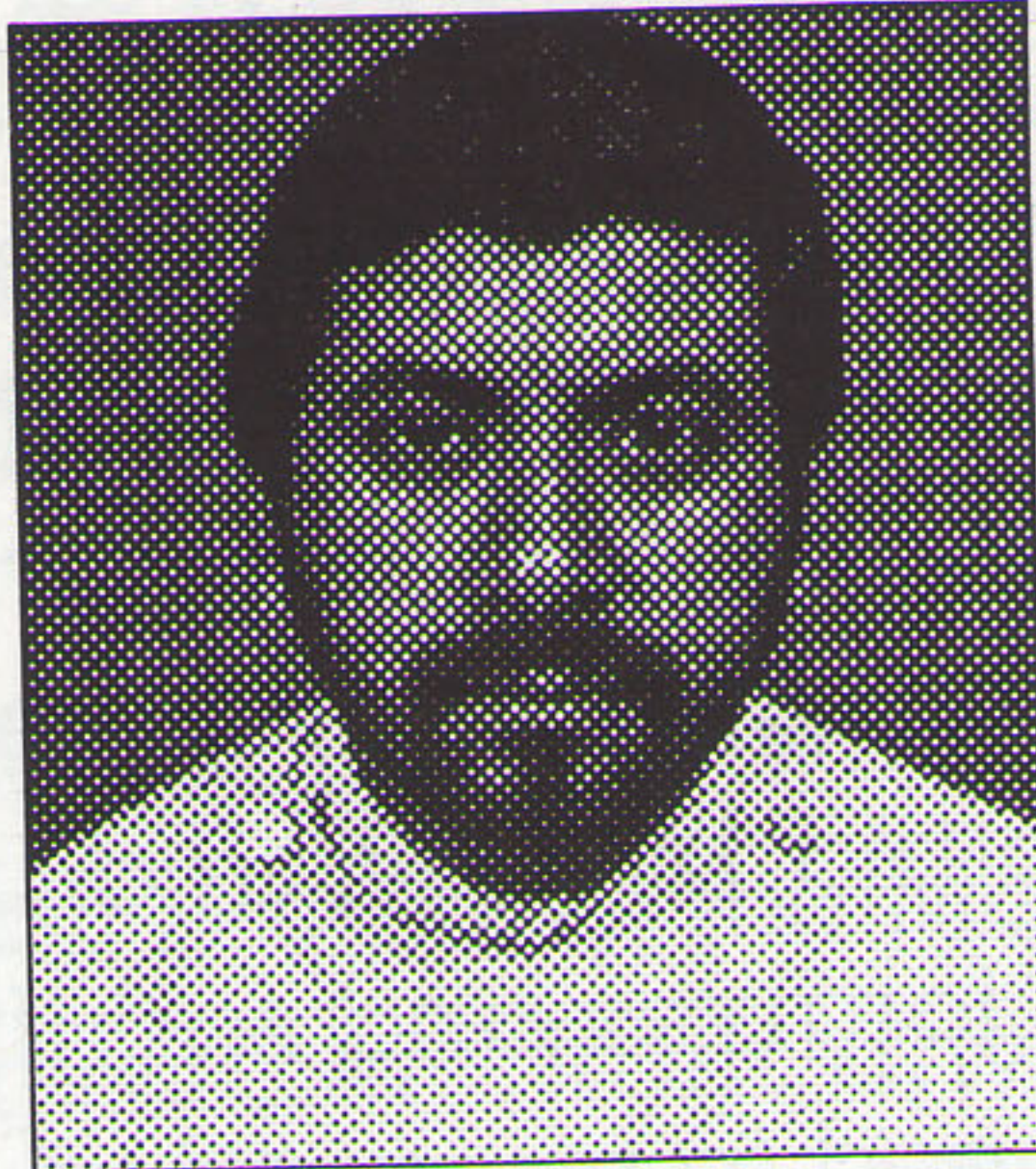
5-15	London, U.K.
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CHURCH AS A COMMUNITY

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Rev. Prakash K. George, Toronto, Canada

In the present world, we see domination and fragmentation of human society where all relationships have become increasingly depersonalized due to urbanization, and industrialization. The modern society has embarked on a new quest for rediscovery of community and identity. In this context church is called to witness the need of a wider human community. In the world around, we can see the struggles of special interest groups who are conflictual and competition for their respective identities. A search for individual identity is important but it must be for the enriching of our common identity. God has placed the church in this world as a sign of human community on a credible and believable sign of the community.



the Eucharist means participation in the whole personhood of Christ, including his life, death and resurrection, together with power and new life that flow from him. By using this metaphor Paul exhorts them to a life of mutual love and service or in their words to a life of fellowship. Paul has heard that the church at Corinth was divided into factions so that there was no unity and fellowship even in the celebration of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:18-22). The church of

Corinth was also torn with jealousy and strife (1 Cor 12-14). In his effort to solve this division, Paul compares the members of the church to the members of the human body. Just as in the body each member is important and needed to complete the whole, the church is the body of Christ. Each member was incorporated into the one body through baptism. All received the same Spirit when they were baptized and the Spirit has bestowed different gifts to each individual. Hence there is no occasion for boasting, for one Spirit is the source of whatever gifts one may possess. Just as the human body has many members, and each member has

a different function, so it is with the church as Christ's body. In the church there are many members each with his or her particular gifts and special function (Apostle, leader, deacon). Spiritual gifts are given for the common good. In the church every person is a member of Christ's body and should so regard himself. He is no longer his own, but is bound in most intimate and significant ways to one

another. His own body has become a member of church and this must determine what he does with it (Roman 12:4, 1Cor: 6: 13-19, Col 2:16-23). Each member, how unspectacular his role in the body may be, shares fully in the common glory and life. The life style of the members is a life for others and a life with others.

As members of the body of Christ the members of the church are joined in *koinonia* both with Christ and with each other.

Church as a *Koinonia*

The basic meaning of church as a *koinonia* is that it is a fellowship of believers based on a fellowship they have with God. The new Testament meaning of church as a *koinonia* is expressed most fully in the sacrament of Eucharist (1 Cor 10:16). All who participate in the

Church in the New Testament

The term church or Ecclesia appears one hundred twelve times in the New Testament. It is primarily used in the letters of St. Paul, in Acts of the Apostle and in Revelation. The word refers to a community of believers gathered together by God's action in Christ. The community belongs to God.

Body of Christ

The most dynamic and in some aspect, the most fully developed metaphor that the New Testament uses to describe the church is that of Body of Christ. From the time of St. Paul onward this image have been one of the most important sources for church's self understanding. It constitute one of the major focal point of discussion of the nature of church.

Paul appropriated the term as a tool for interpreting the nature of the church. Body or soma was used to mean unity and wholeness. The metaphor church as the body of Christ is shaped in Paul's discussion with opponents who tended to interpret Christianity in mere individualistic and spiritualistic terms. St. Paul uses this metaphor as a vehicle first for proclaiming the believers total dependence on Christ and secondly for exhorting them to a life of mutual love and service.

The constant dependence of the church upon its crucified and risen Lord was proclaimed in every celebration of Holy Qurbana (1 Cor 11: 26) Participants in

As members of the body of Christ the members of the church are joined in *koinonia* both with Christ and with each other.

fellowship with Christ are united in a common act of worship, and through him all are joined together in a common fellowship with one another. They are called servants of one another, to love their neighbor as themselves, to bear one another's burdens and to fulfill the law of Christ (Gal 6:2). They have to live as a Eucharistic community.

Church as a Eucharistic community, constantly calls its members to share and go beyond their resources to demonstrate true love. For many Christians, such description is an ideal, a dogma which is unobtainable. Yet *koinonia* is revealed in the New Testament as the distinctive sign of the church in its witness to the kingdom *koinonia* with God, with others and with the whole world should be a permanent necessity and a condition of our being.

The early church as a community

The early church though certainly not perfect was in many ways a model church and stands as an example to us of what the church ought to be. The distinctive element of the early Christian community was its quality of life which was expressed through their *Koinonia*. In the early church converts come from all walks of life and from different strata of society. There were aristocrats, soldiers, slaves, masters and servants, rich and poor, men and women. But the Gospel broke down all barriers. They were bound by a common Lord, common faith and common spiritual experience. They allowed no place for racial intolerance or social superiority. This life style grew out of intimacy and integrity and was one in which no one regarded things as their own. They saw greater good of the community and God's will above all personal achievements. "There must be no competition, no conceit, but everybody is to be self-sufficient. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that no body thinks of his own interest first, but everybody think of the other people's interest instead" (Phil 2:3-4). It was the togetherness that marked them out (Acts 2:42-47). *Koinonia* was the essential condition that marked the early church distinctive from other communities. This spirit of *Koinonia* enabled them to grow as a learning, praying and witnessing church.

The present church and *Koinonia*

For many, world is a confused and confusing place. The world is highly competitive, individualistic and lonely. Church is not often experienced as a place of *koinonia*. But it is a place of private activity where there is a little participation and understanding.

The church has to be a human community of men and women who struggle hard to translate their faith into action. For many, church has become one element in their quest for happiness. The church often appears cold and impersonal. It is especially tragic because it means we are not being the true church, we are missing what is essential that is *koinonia*. The fellowship of love, mutual respect and consideration. It includes both participation and association.

For *koinonia*, there is no need for us to organize, but it happens. In the story of Babel in Gen: 11 we see the effect of making a community through a common project. But it ends in confusion rather than communion. On the day of Pentecost a community developed, irrespective of their color, language, race and they experienced *koinonia*.

All were drawn into one fellowship in Christ. What the participants did was they made themselves available to the work of the Holy spirit. They were available to God and to others. In the Pentecost, we also see a radical openness to one another. They were open to each other. Even to those who does not consider at their level. This was an openness and sensitivity based on faith and love.

To be or not to be a community is not an option for the church. By nature, the church is a community and should experience communion. As a church we need to examine our life and worship and ask whether we share the very life of Christ. *Koinonia* must be an experience in our life not a theological abstraction.

Two main dangers which threatens the community life of the church are individualism and institutionalism. The problem of institutionalism has to be overcome through authentic interpersonal relationship which are direct and fraternal. Institution must serve the purposes of the church without entering into conflict with the fundamental nature of the church and its mission.

Individualism is an exaggerated sense of personal importance and responsibility which leads to neglect of brotherhood aspect of life in the body of Christ. It insists on one's own right rather than the well being of the community. The problem on individualism has to overcome through authentic relationship of mutual responsibility based on Christ's love.

We hear then that by nature church is a community which recognizes mutual dependence and communion with one another. A fellowship grounded in baptism, nourishes by the Eucharist. *Koinonia* is a gift and a calling to show the world that church is a credible and a believable sign of God's community in this world.

Koinonia was the essential condition that marked the early church distinctive from other communities. This spirit of Koinonia enabled them to grow as a learning, praying and witnessing church.

THE CHURCH AS A COMMUNITY OF FAITH, LOVE AND SERVICE

Dr. Mathew T. Thomas

An unknown source once wrote "A little poem" about a church community, in which...

Its members sleep a little late
They go to church a little late
Some, they'll chew their gum a little,
Joke a little, doodle a little.
Brethren tend to argue a little,
Commune a little, give a little.
After dismissal they gossip a little,
Go home and forget what little they heard,
And act like they cared but little,
For the most precious institution on earth -
The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
I may have exaggerated a little,
But very little,
And I think in some cases have omitted a little.
Brethren, will you think on this a little?

Sounds familiar? Any similarities? Perhaps, there are only a few. Such a description would not fit a church community that is governed by Faith in God, constrained by the Love of Christ, and inspired to Service by the Holy Spirit. Don't you agree?

The strength of church communities are sometimes assessed in accordance with their total membership, and their assets. To a degree, such measures are useful. However, the extent of the community's Faith, the endurance of their Love and the counsel they derive from the Holy Spirit in everyday affairs, would certainly be the best efficacy assessments of the power within a church community.

Faith

Since Old Testament times Abraham is considered the trend-setter of faith, not just because he accepted the truth of God's promises, but because he courageously acted on them. Though there are differences in the meaning of words such as faith, belief, and trust, Biblical faith includes a belief in things known to be true, an attitude of trust towards other persons, and entails a way of seeing things visible in a context of things invisible. How does a community attain such faith? There are probably several methods. However, the personal experience of a man of faith, Dwight L. Moody, illustrates



a simple yet important method by which every church community ought to strengthen its faith. Mr. Moody states, "I prayed for faith and thought it would strike me like lightening. But faith did not come. One day I read, Now faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. I had closed my Bible and prayed for faith. I now began to study my Bible and faith has been growing ever since."

Once such faith is achieved, it requires periodic reinforcement. Only then will the church community be able to cope with all its challenges and be reassured that its faith will not waiver in times of troubles and tribulations. Only that kind of faith, inspired by the word of God, would prepare that community to, "Go into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature", (Mark;16:15).

Love

All Biblical love is derived from God's love for mankind. It is commanded that man should love God, and human beings should learn to love their fellow-beings. Jesus Christ emphasized, "The first of all commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

Much can be stated about love, but how does the church community foster such a love? Such love must be learnt from our homes and then spread everywhere we go. Our preachers, teachers, leaders, and elders, should feel

compelled to demonstrate that their every action is always motivated by genuine love, love that breaks barriers, love that builds bridges and love that expects nothing in return.

Though it can take on so many forms, the essential nature of Love is always the same. As described by the writer R. T. Brooks, "Love for a suffering human being expresses itself as a caring or sharing of the other's affliction. Love for an enemy expresses itself as the active pursuit of reconciliation. Love for God expresses itself as awe and obedience... In all cases union is the theme, and in each

Our preachers, teachers, leaders, and elders, should feel compelled to demonstrate that their every action is always motivated by genuine love, love that breaks barriers, love that builds bridges and love that expects nothing in return.

case love is the richer and the stronger if it recognizes its kinship with the rest." Is such a love manifested in our church community's actions? It should. For as Paul emphasized time and again, the greatest of all virtues (particularly for a church community) is love.

Service

When faith is strong and love genuine, souls start aching to perform sincere service. Such yearning for service would include both the service of God and the service of humanity. Though service is not for show, true service would "show and tell."

In his book titled, "The Mar Thoma Church Heritage and Mission", the Most Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma, Metropolitan, states, "The message of the Kingdom of God calls upon us to serve others in all their needs—physical, mental and spiritual. This involves working with the integrated development of the community, to eradicate poverty and unemployment and to provide education and health care for all." Though, the exact nature of service may vary, it would be critical to find out if such service is inspired by the Holy Spirit — that invisible yet tangible force which stirs the lives of mankind and challenges them to noble actions. Our churches ought to provide a home where the spirit of Christ can dwell and where all men who love Christ can meet in that spirit. That spirit then would be the divine power coming from God and entering into the history of the world.

It is important for us to evaluate how we fare as a

community of faith, love and service. If we were to score ourselves on a scale of 1 to 10 where would we fall? What would a passing score be? If we pass, are we reassured of doing everything right? In what aspects do we fail? Every assessment of failure should compel us to return to the basics of studying the Bible, demonstrating love in all actions, and illustrating the spirit of sincere service.

Our church community has enormous strengths. Its leaders, its members, its principles, its discipline, its traditions, and its organizations have so much to offer. However, we must not deny that there are several factors that impede our growth. It is important for us as a community to identify such factors of weakness and address them in Faith, Love and the spirit of Service. That would empower us to rewrite the conclusion of our little poem to read thus...

As a church community we care a lot,
For the most precious institution on earth —
The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
For Faith in Him, we have a lot,
And Love of Christ is never lost,
Urging us to Serve with all we've got.
Brethren, will you think on this a lot?

Dr. Mathew T. Thomas is a Medical Doctor who currently works in the Clinical Investigations Branch of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. He is better known to many as "Dr. T". He is currently a member of the Mar Thoma Church of Greater Washington.

I expect to pass through this world
but once; and any good thing,
therefore, that I can do or any
kindness that I can show to any
fellow creature, let me do it now;
let me not defer or neglect it,
for I shall not pass this way again.

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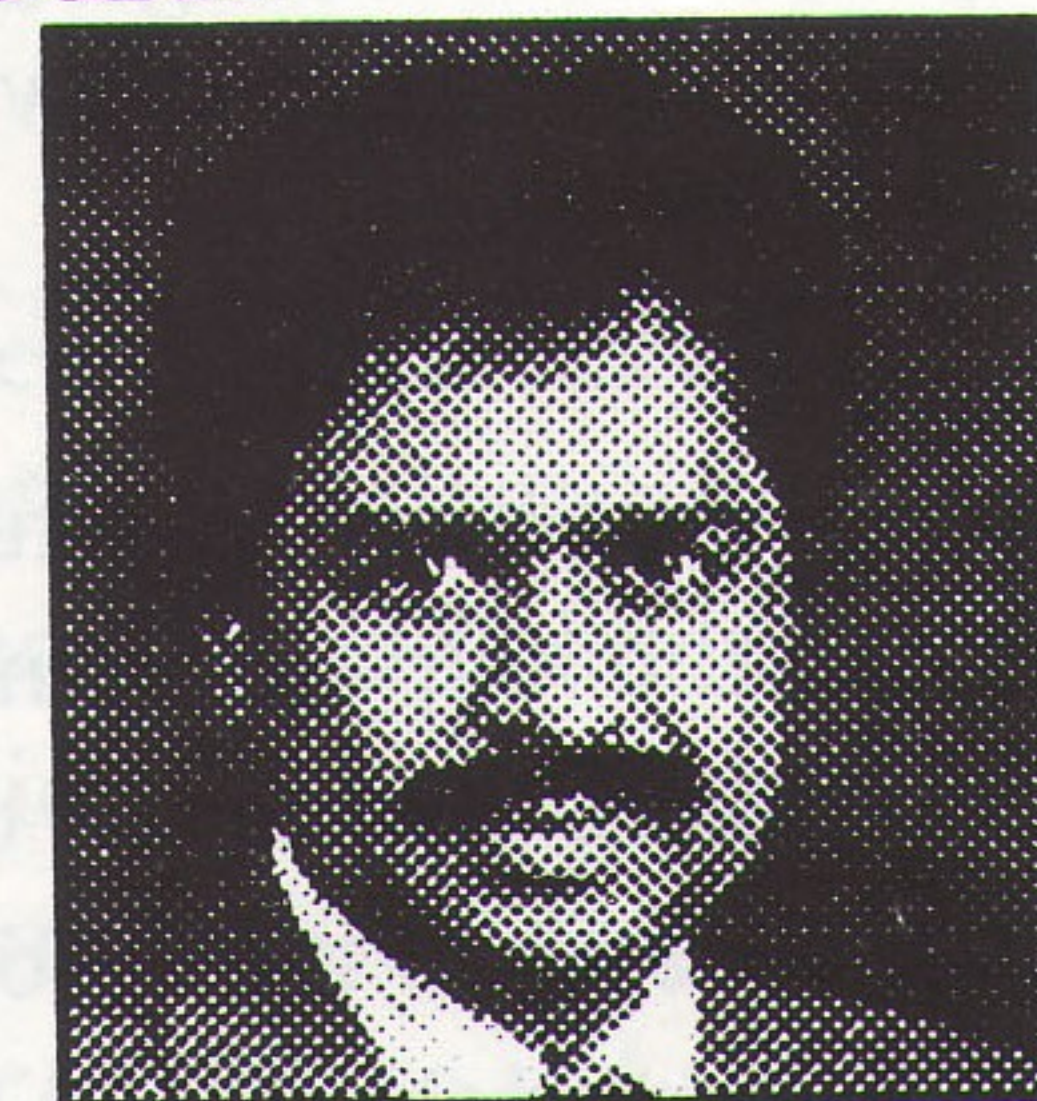


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Be on your toes...

The Most. Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitan is the 19th Mar Thoma and Thirumeni is completing 19 years as the Metropolitan. During this period the Mar Thoma Church witnessed exceptional growth. Messenger had the opportunity to interview Thirumeni during his recent visit to the Diocese. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mathew, Rev. Dr. P. G. George and Abraham Thomas joined in this exclusive interview held in New Jersey.

Messenger: Thirumeni you are completing 19 years in this October as the 19th Mar Thoma Metropolitan. The growth of the church during these years was exceptional. How do you evaluate the growth of the church?

Thirumeni: You have said that there has been a growth in the church in the last two decades. Growth of the church can be looked at from different points of view.

One is the numerical growth. It is natural that the church has grown in numbers. But another important thing is the outreach; how it has grown beyond the boundaries of Kerala to various parts of India and now extended to nearly all the countries of the world. As you know, we have now a Diocese in North America and Europe, and also another in Malaysia, Singapore and Australia. So, in extent, there has been a considerable growth.

The real growth of the church has to be estimated from the point of view of the mission of the church. The mission of the church is primarily the fulfillment of the command to take the gospel to others. In this respect, during the last twenty years there was a steady growth through the Evangelistic Association and other agencies for spreading the gospel. We have mission work in many states in India, even reaching up to the borders of Tibet. There have been additions to the fold from different language areas. During the last few years greatest number of converts have been from the Karnataka area. Through the work of our Ashrams in Madhya Pradesh people have come to accept the gospel in the Hindi area. During the last ten years, work had been going on in Orissa through the Niranam Mramon Diocese, and the people from the villages are coming to Jesus Christ. That is one aspect.

Another aspect of the fulfillment of the mission of the church is the help to the needy and the poor. Our Lord said "what you have done to the least of these of my brothers, you have done to me." So, service of the poor you can see in the developments in the homes for the destitute in various places like Kottarakara, Kumbanad, Ayroor, Anaprampal, Trichur and in the Ashrams. Also, the Sevika Sangham has been ministering to the orphan children and poor girls in girls' homes and poor boys in boys' homes and Salem House at Tiruvalla for orphan children.

In addition to that there has been development work through the Development Department of the church. In this, we have been helping the people in the backward areas. The hill tribes and the dalits are helped through our organization called CARD, Christian Agency for Rural Development which is a registered body under the Development Department. Fifteen projects are functioning efficiently to help poor people and backward people. In addition to that, there has been work for the disabled or what is called differently abled people, mentally retarded children, children suffering from polio, at Pattanapuram and deaf and dumb children in Kasarcode. These children have been specially selected for help through special institutions.

Another way in which help has been given is through the project for giving homes for the homeless. Late Metropolitan Yuhanon Mar Thoma gave the call for that. During the last twenty years, every year about 100 homes have been built for the homeless people directly through the church. Parishes and organizations like Youth League, Sevika Sangham have in addition to the central body contributed to the building of homes for poor people. About 4000 homes were built during the last twenty years.

Also the call has been given to help in the marriage of poor girls. Help is given to people in emergencies like flood relief, the work done in Maharashtra for the earth quake victims. A call was given to raise 15 lakhs rupees to help them and the response was with 40 lakhs rupees and homes were built for those whose houses were destroyed in the earth quake. So some of these are examples of how the church responded to the call to help the needy.

Another line of development has been in education. Colleges and Schools have been progressing. The Mar Thoma Church has six colleges for arts and science and many high schools and primary schools. For medical work, there are hospitals run by the church and by parishes. So the church has been growing steadily during the last twenty years in witness and service.

Messenger: People living in multi-cultural societies sometimes feel that the church is not flexible. Do you see the need for any change?

Thirumeni: I think what you mean by this is the problem faced by immigrants from India to the United States and other places in different cultural settings. The adjustments have to be made by the people living in these situations and I do not see what the church can directly do in that respect. But what we can do is to help the people to understand the problems and to adjust to different cultures. Something has been done to solve problems arising from such situations.

Messenger: The younger generation feel that our church is not flexible in our liturgy and is rigid in rules and regulations especially in the church's stand on marriages. Would you comment on that?

Thirumeni: Regarding the rules about marriages, the church has to take a stand not easily yielding to the different situations like the question of divorce. In America, I know that there is a very high percentage of divorce of marriages. But the church has taken the stand that divorce is not permitted. I do not see how we can easily adjust about that. The church regards marriage as a sacred bond for life, and therefore the church cannot allow divorce. But when the civil government gives permission for divorce, the church now has taken a stand that the innocent party in the marriage will be allowed to remarry through the church, when they have brought a verdict from the court for divorce. So there are limitations in which possible adjustments are made.

Messenger: How about interdenominational and interracial marriage?

Thirumeni: In the interdenominational marriages, we have allowed marriages with members of churches with which we have communion and also with other churches like the Methodist Church, and Presbyterian Church which are established churches. We have also given permission for marriage of members with Roman Catholic Church and St. Thomas Evangelical Church taking special permission from the diocesan bishop. But the question is about our men who want to marry in the churches which we do not recognize the ordination of priests. In such situations we do not allow marriage. Otherwise, there is possibility to get special permission from the bishop for such marriages.

Then in the matter of service forms, our church follows the ancient liturgy which we have received from the past, which are regarded as very solemn. That is about the holy communion. Regarding the public service, much freedom had been given to groups to have their form of service formed, and getting permission from the Metropolitan to conduct those services in conferences, camps and other occasions. So there is flexibility.

Messenger: Our Achens are transferred back to India as soon as they complete their term and get used to the new customs and culture. Is it not more beneficial to the diocese if they are transferred internally so that their training here can be utilized more before being transferred back to India?

Thirumeni: That is a policy which is to be decided by the Episcopal synod. The Achens coming from India have been transferred back to India after a short period. But situation may arise when we consider transferring internally in the diocese when Achens who are born and brought up in USA are available for work here.

Messenger: Many people representing organizations come here often for fund raising for various purposes. The funds which otherwise could have been used for the needs of the diocese have been used elsewhere. Would you comment on that?

Thirumeni: Help given to causes in India is helping the same church. It is not helping a different church. And so the money is given for the work of the church which they are members. That is the important thing. When projects will be started in USA, funds which are raised will be used here.

When we talk about giving money, there is no compulsory collection whatsoever in the Mar Thoma Church. People are approached to give contributions. If they are willing, they give; otherwise there is no compulsion. So the causes are presented for the good of the church and the work of the church.

When people give money it is used only for those purposes for which they gave the money. So there is no question of taking money away from somebody. People are asked to contribute money for the development of the diocese of America, and they do that. And they give contributions for the work of the church elsewhere also.

Messenger: Various organizations of the church have constitutions, but they are not enforced here. Has it been considered to bring all these organizations under the respective constitutions?

Thirumeni: The diocese has been formed only during the last few years. All organizations need constitutions, it takes time. Now all the organizations are under the control of the church. Different organizations have their own constitutions accepted by the church. But if changes have to be made, it will be considered according to the needs which arise. This is not for the diocese of America only but new situations arise where people in different language areas and different cultural groups are coming to the church. For example, the poor people in the villages of India and other language areas of India, like Karnataka, Hindi and other

areas. For these, we have to make adjustments in course of time. These are just recent developments which we have to face.

Messenger: We use the David C. Cook books in our Sunday schools. Would it be possible to use the Sunday School Samagam text books instead?

Thirumeni: This relates to question that was asked before, the question of adjusting constitution in different areas. The children in Sunday schools follow the syllabus prepared by the Sunday school Samagam. Because of different situations and cultural needs, changes may have to be made. That is why the Sunday school here are following a system different from the Sunday school Samagam. Nobody is against making adjustments in the local situations.

Messenger: Thirumeni, you have seen this diocese unfold during the last few years very rapidly. As you see the universal church and other churches what do you advise?

Thirumeni: The church has to be evaluated on the basis of fulfilling the mission of the church. The mission of the church as I mentioned early mainly consists of evangelism

and concern for the poor, and the needs of the people. So, that applies to this situation also. As situation changes, adjustments have to be made. For instance, the way in which you present the gospel to others. The world is facing really a great crises, regarding ecological situations. There must be a sense of urgency in our actions. We have to be always watchful and diligent in fulfilling our responsibility.

Messenger: Thirumeni, three years ago doctors advised you not to travel. This is your second visit to the USA during the past one year and you look very healthy. How is your health?

Thirumeni: Well, just before I started this journey I had a medical checkup and consulted the doctors and they said it is all right to travel. Three years ago I had difficulty, so they asked me to be careful and I took care and took necessary precautions. God graciously restored my health and so I think I can continue so long as God gives me health.

Messenger: When is your next visit to this diocese?

Thirumeni: Next visit to this diocese! Anytime when there is a need for such a visit.

- ☺ ഓരോ പേജിലും ഇംഗ്ലീഷും മലയാളവും വേദഭാഗങ്ങൾ രണ്ടു കോളത്തിൽ.
- ☺ കോളങ്ങളുടെ മദ്ധ്യത്തിൽ ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് റഫറൻസ് കോളം.
- ☺ റഫറൻസ് കോളത്തിൽ സമാന വാക്യങ്ങൾക്കു പുറമെ പ്രധാന പദങ്ങളുടെ മൂലഭാഷയിലെ അർത്ഥവ്യാപ്തി വ്യക്തമാക്കുന്ന ഹൃസ്വ പഠനം.
- ☺ 66 പുസ്തകങ്ങൾക്കും എഴുത്തുകാരൻ, കാലഘട്ടം, പശ്ചാത്തലം, വിഷയപഠനം, ലക്ഷ്യം, പുസ്തക വിഭജനം, സ്ഥിതി വിവരക്കണക്കുകൾ മുതലായവ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുന്ന വിശദമായ മുഖവുര മലയാളത്തിൽ.

ദാനിയേൽ ദ്വിഭാഷാ പഠന ബൈബിൾ

ഭാരതീയ ഭാഷകളിലെ ഒന്നാമത്തെ ഹാരലൽ ബൈബിൾ

മലയാള വാക്യത്തിന്റെ ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് പരിഭാഷയ്ക്കു വേറെ ബൈബിൾ അന്വേഷിക്കണ്ട.

രണ്ടു ബൈബിൾ ഒറ്റ പുസ്തകത്തിൽ

- ☺ പ്രത്യേക ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് കൺ കോർഡൻസും പദങ്ങളുടെ അർത്ഥവും.
- ☺ മലയാള വാക്യങ്ങളും ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് വാക്യങ്ങളും ഒറ്റ നോട്ടത്തിൽ ലഭിക്കത്തക്കവിധം നേർക്കു നേരെ.
- ☺ ഏതു പുസ്തകവും പെട്ടെന്ന് എടുക്കുവാൻ സഹായകമായ പുസ്തക സൂചിക (Index) ഓരോ പേജിലും.
- ☺ കൈയ്യിൽ കൊണ്ടു നടക്കാവുന്ന വലിപ്പം. (23cm x 16cm).
- ☺ രണ്ടായിരത്തോളം പേജുകൾ.

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Faithfulness in life brings fruitfulness

George Cherian, Tiruvalla

It is not God's mandate for all of us to be famous but he would rather have us all to be faithful. And as we remain faithful, God brings fruitfulness through our lives. In the Old Testament Joseph stands out as a good example for faithfulness. We see four distinct stages in the life of Joseph. And in all four stages Joseph was fruitful. It is no wonder that in the words of blessing his father Jacob says "Joseph is a fruitful vine" Gen. 49:22. Let us study those four stages.

Joseph as a son

His life at home was not easy. We see that his brothers hated him and they were jealous of him (Gen 37:4,5, and 8). In the midst of hatred he remains faithful. He did not compromise his values to avoid hatred and jealousy. He was a faithful son.

1. He was available when his father called him to go and inquire about the welfare of his brothers (Gen. 37:12 and 3). He knew that he was going to his brothers who disliked him. Yet he was faithful.
2. We also see that he went on until he found his brothers. Faithfulness is not doing the minimum but the maximum.

Joseph as a Slave

He was sold as a slave by his own brothers and he was made a servant at Potiphar's house. But Joseph remained faithful. His bitter experiences did not dilute his faithfulness.

He proved his faithfulness by a spirit of contentment in that state of life (Genesis 9:2) It is impossible for a discontented person to be faithful. A similar spirit is seen in the life of St. Paul. Writing from the Roman prison he tells the Philipian believers that he is satisfied "For I have learned in whatsoever state I am there with to be content" Phlipians 4:11.

Joseph was faithful also in all the things that were committed to him. Faithfulness also means doing all things well, not only the things we enjoy but also things which we do not enjoy much.

We also see that Joseph was faithful in temptation (Genesis 39:7-9). He had great freedom in the house. He could basically do what he wanted to do. There were no locked doors. But Joseph knew the limit. Faithfulness means saying "No" to the sinful invitations.

Joseph as a Prisoner

In his afflictions also Joseph remained faithful. He accepted the situation. (Genesis 39:20). Paul saw the thorn in the flesh as something God has given him (2 Cor 12:). We must see our sufferings as something placed in our hands by God himself.

3. He not only accepted his afflictions he served others in the prison (Gen 40:4). He was not limited by his inconvenience and the prison walls, he was faithful in serving others. Paul used his prison to write his letters which became valuable epistles in our hand. John Banyan used his prison days to write the famous book *PILGRIMS PROGRESS*. Faithfulness in a person will not waste his sorrows.

Joseph as a Ruler

Many people loose their faithfulness when they are exalted in life. When Joseph became the ruler, he remained faithful. He gathered grains for the famine days and then displayed them in two distinct ways.

1. He opened his resources to the needs of the people. Faithfulness is using our own time, money, influence, etc. for the needs of others. When we close our eyes to the needy world we become unfaithful to God who in his faithfulness lifted us up.
2. Joseph opened his resources to his own brothers who hated him and sold him as a slave (Gen 42:25) We see that Joseph filled up the sacks of his brothers. He was able to do this generous act because of two reasons.
 - a) He forgot all the bitter days in his life. Joseph says that God made him forget that hurt feeling. (Gen. 41:51) It is not possible to harbor bitter feelings, and yet be faithful. To be fruitful God must help us to forget the bitter feelings.
 - b) Joseph also forgave his brothers. We see that he embraced them and said comforting words. (Gen. 45:5). He did not hold their offences against them. Only a forgiving person can be faithful in his life. If we hold something against others we can never be fruitful in our life.

Joseph was truly a fruitful vine all through his life. What a good example to follow.

The voice from Beijing

Nirmala Abraham

It was high noon on Wednesday August 30, 1995. I am standing in the middle of Tianamen Square, Beijing. Ahead of me the Red Flag of the People's Republic of China flutters in the gentle Autumn breeze. The austere face of the statue of Chairman Mao stares at the passing crowd, while the green uniformed police stand in solemn guard. I am filled with emotions and awe as I wake up to the reality that I am here in Beijing for the next ten days to lend my voice to the thousands of women from around the world.



Mandela was brought all the way from South Africa and handed over to the NGO forum Convenor in a colorful ceremony. With the singing of the theme song "keep on moving forward" the festivities of the opening day ended.

The major events of the conference included addresses of some prominent women leaders around the world. Aug San Suu Kyi, Nobel prize winner and the head of the National Movement for Democracy in Burma was the key note speaker. She said "In societies where men are truly confident, women are not merely tolerated, they are highly valued." She added on "intolerance breeds insecurity, and without security there can be no lasting peace."

United States First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton attracted a large crowd despite a heavy down pour. She challenged the women: "It is your commitment, your energy, ideas and spirit, sense of purpose, and tenacity that will hold the governments to their commitments Your faces mirror the face of millions of women who are not here and their voices will be heard through yours".

Other famous women political leaders included; Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, President Vigdis Finnbogadotter of Iceland, Dr. Kazibwwe, Vice President of Uganda and madam Nguyan Thi Bina, Vice president of Vietnam.

Gertrude Mongelle, Secretary General of the Fourth World Conference on Women, reminded the world's governments that the mission of Beijing in for each government to set priorities, specify the resource, declare the steps to hold itself accountable for implementing actions in improving the status of women. She reminded each woman to be crusaders in the struggle.

UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghali said, "Women are the key to developments in every dimension. Equality, peace, and development must reach every woman on earth. When the rights and hopes of all the women are advance, so will all human society come to benefit."

More important than keynoters and president's wives were the deliberations and planning of the thousands of meetings in workshops, in big tents and small, outdoor tables over tea and yogurt bars expressing their determination to implement what the forum had begun. Perhaps most important of all were their stories. "My body was destroyed, my soul was destroyed" said a Korean woman, victim of what she described vividly as "a soldier's bestiality". My home was burnt, our men folks were shot right in front of us by the terrorists' said a Palestinian woman.

The Fourth United Nations Conference on Women, and parallel Non Governmental Organizations Forum '95 in Beijing was the largest and one of the most important international meetings of its kind in world history. Over 40,000 women representing 185 UN member states, international organizations as well as delegates of 2500 Non Government Organizations (NGO) came together to take rapid action to eliminate discrimination and violence against women. Their goal was to "bring together women and men to challenge, create, and transform global structures and processes at all levels through empowerment as well as to create a commitment to Equality, Peace, Justice, Inclusiveness and participation of all."

The overall theme of the conference was "Looking at the World through the eyes of a Women". Women came to Beijing representing all faiths and races. They came to hear fellow women who have spoken out, organized themselves, stood their ground, escaped destructive relationships and challenged systems that oppress women. they came with the understanding that violence against women is both personal and institutional. They came to challenge power relationship that fail to respect women's equality. Women from all parts of the world came to eliminate, economic, political, domestic, cultural, environmental, religious and sexual violence against women. They came to celebrate the struggle of sisters who have refused to become victims. They came to encourage collaboration between men and women towards equity and equality.

The ceremonial opening of the NGO Forum was at the Olympic Stadium, Beijing on August 30th. The cultural extravaganza presented by the Chinese was brilliant, beautiful and breathtaking. The highlights of the evening included an all women Symphony orchestra, a spectacular performance by six thousand youngsters as young as six years old; dancing, twirling, bowing, and covering the entire field in a sea of color and movement. About 20,000 doves and balloons ascended into the sky carrying a message of peace and unity. A peace Torch lit by President Nelson

Everywhere the anger was directed not at men but at the politics of hate and the patriarchal system. Women have allowed that to happen, they have been victims of it but it was obvious that time has come for liberation and equality. Men has been in charge of the media.... "it is not mainstream but mainstream" a woman said. "Media perpetuates the patriarchy and wipes out cultural diversity".

Though panels in the plenary sessions tackles the major perspectives - Women's right, media challenges, strategies for change in governments, globalization of the economy, and the rise of conservatism. More than 1700 workshops, 300 videos, 30 art exhibits and 17 performance workshops provided diversity of expression at the conference.

This wide diverse nature of the Forum was exemplified by the many causes, to which women addressed themselves: worker's condition in Central America, tourist promoted prostitution in Thailand, the dramatic increase of AIDS in African countries, increase incidents of bride burning in India, exploitation of migrant workers in Philippines- the outcry against violence, nation against nation, government against citizens, business against environment and individual against individual.

For many women, the outcry rose out of powerful religious convictions. Throughout the conference ran streams of the world's greatest religious: Protestants, Roman Catholics, Islam, Hindu, Buddhism, Judaism, Ba'Hai, each approaching different courses from a unique spiritual position. Yet, to many who attended a Workshop titled "Is religion friend or Foe of the Women" many questions remained unanswered.

The NGO Forum, perhaps, was not a place of monumental accomplishments, but a mixing, learning and experiencing. The continuing is "Determination", the kind that comes from the shock of recognition followed by the bitterness of understanding. Women who came not knowing, left with new awareness and a sense of the need to continue contact through networking.

The forum can be compared to a "Stream which by the end had become a river in floods, which in the title words of the theme song promised to 'Keep on moving forward'. Along the river has risen a mighty wave, it will not take away all injustice".



BEST COMPLIMENTS



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Mar Thoma Conference UK

V. T. Abraham

The 13th Mar Thoma Conference was held at the High Leigh Conference Center, Hoddesdon, a picturesque country town just outside London from 11-13 August 1995. The Conference proved to be a great time of enjoyment, fellowship, renewal and challenge in a family atmosphere, for 200 members who came from near and far. This year, it was particularly heartening to see many new faces from all over UK and many nationalities including USA, Germany, Malaysia, and Egypt. For the first time from Germany 16 of our people attended: there was also participation from our sister churches.

The theme of the Conference was based on Ezekiel 22:30 "WHO WILL STAND IN THE GAP" was most relevant and challenging in the context of our own life and society. God is looking for men and women who are prepared to stand in the gap, with prayer, supplication, and intercession on behalf of others so that the blessing of the Lord would come to many.

Although we missed the presence of our Diocesan Bishop or one of our Thirumenis, we were blessed by some very good leaders who took the Bible study and main theme presentations.

The Sessions were organized in four groups (1) English Preferred Group led by Rev. Vera Sinton of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford and Rev. George Kovoov of CNI and of Sally Oak Colleges, Birmingham (2) Malayalam Preferred Group led by Rev. P.K. Koshy and Rev. G Varughese (3) Youth Group led by Evangelists Kumar and Laura Selvakumar and Mr. Joshua Jamaluddin. (4) The Sunday School Group led by Colin and Helen Brice and assisted by Susanna Hove Sharon Canipta and our own teachers. Volunteers provided the Creche support.

June George led the worship assisted by Dr. Bobby Thomas, Clive and Janina Waterman. The Holy Communion Service was celebrated by P.K. Koshy Achen, assisted Rev G Varughese, Rev V.V. Alexander and Rev. Abey T. Mammen. G. Varughese Achen gave the message.

Theme Presentation: The city of God was meant to be a place with walls (a place of security) a center of government (cooperation and justice) with a temple in the center (holiness and true values). But the City of God was like worthless dross, power hungry politicians, cynical priests, corrupt officials, hypocritical prophets, and cruel and insecure people (Ezekiel 22: 17-29).

The City of God was in desperate plight; the walls were breached, the wrath of God was about to pour in and there was no one to stand in the gap. The Lord says, He looked, He searched, and He 'found nobody grieving for the spiritual condition of God's people (Ezekiel 22:30-31).

The parallel situation is given in Hebrews 12:1-29 as to what we have to do following Jesus, who stands in the gap for us. The Christian life is like running God's race, training in God's family and having citizenship in God's city. Jesus

endured the opposition, shed his blood and became mediator of a new covenant for us. He calls us to let go of our weights and entanglements, to strengthen weak arms and knees, to live at peace without bitterness to anyone and to be thankful, worshipping God in awe and reverence.

Group Discussion: In the group discussion 1. we were asked to talk about the situations we experience today i.e., in our church, our family, community, work situations and national life. What are the signs of hope? What are the things that most grieves and angers God about our lives? We are asked to consider whether there is safety, justice, and holiness. And what are the discouraging signs? Are the idol worship, exercise of corrupt power and false values?

The picture of our Christian lives and the pressures we face in a hostile world were the subject of group discussion 2. In belonging to God's family, we were asked to consider our attitude to the cities and societies in which we live and the impact we can give! How far have we resisted sin? When God disciplines us for our good as Hebrews 12:4 says, how can we comfort someone who is depressed and inclined to think God is punishing him or her all the time?

Seminar: The penultimate session was an interesting and lively seminar led by Mr. Zachariah Abraham who gave the whole conference participants an opportunity to express their own understanding and the biblical perspectives on the "Judgment of God".

Summary: This was one of the most blessed conferences we had. All who came were refreshed by the Word of Life and renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit. During the thanksgiving and celebration night on Saturday, so many gave their life to Jesus or rededicated themselves.

Congratulations are due to the Conference team and the Vicar Rev. Abbey T. Mammen who put on many hours of hard work in organizing the conference. Above all the success of the Conference was due to the travail and tears shed by the conference and resource team, and supporters in prayer and intercession — "standing in the gap".



BIRTH OF JESUS

A one act play: Alex Thomas, Boston Mar Thoma Church

Characters:

Baby Jesus, Joseph, Mary, Angel, Shepherd I, Shepherd II, Shepherd III, Wiseman I, Wiseman II, Wiseman III and Narrator(s) Add more people as appropriate for singing.

Scene I

(Mary sits and does some stitching at her home)

Narrator: (Reads from behind the curtain) For about 60 years, Palestine, the home of the Jews has been ruled by the Romans. Romans appointed Herod, a clever but cruel man to rule the land. The Jews hated him, because they were taxed heavily but had no voice in the government. The Roman soldiers made the Jews do all the heavy work. Jewish people believed that as prophet Malachi said, God would send someone first to prepare them for the arrival of the deliverer. Elizabeth, wife of Zachariah gave birth to John who prepared the way for the coming of Jesus. Mary, Jesus' mother was a cousin of Elizabeth.

(An angel comes to Mary. when the angel comes to the stage, show some lighting and thunder sound. Focus light on the face of the angel)

Angel: Peace be with you, Mary! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you.

Mary: Who are you? How do you know my name?

Angel: I am an angel from God, Can't you recognize me. (Mary bow down in respect and the angel blesses her by placing his hand on her head. She stays on her knees).

Mary, don't be afraid. God has chosen you to be the mother of his son. His name will be Jesus. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David. His reign will never end.

Mary: (Very humbly) I am the Lord's servant and I will do anything he asks, but I am a virgin. How then is this possible? Moreover, I am engaged to Joseph.

Angel: The Holy Spirit will come on you and for that reason, the Holy child will be called the son of God. I will appear to Joseph and tell him not to be afraid to take you to be his wife.

Mary: Hope I am not dreaming. It's hard to believe all this.

Angel: Trust Mary, do not question God's will. (After taking a few moments) Maybe this will convince you. You know your relative in Judah, Elizabeth is barren and is beyond child bearing age. But she is bearing a child. Remember always that there is nothing that the God cannot do. (After looking at Mary and making sure that she is convinced, preparing to leave) God be with you.

(While Mary see off the angel, off the lights on the stage, completely so that it will look like as if the angel has disappeared. Mary then sits and thinks about what has happened. Then slowly starts stitching again. Some background music will be helpful at this time. Joseph enters. Mary gets up and greets him)

Mary: Oh, Joseph, I am glad that you are here now.

Joseph: Me too. Mary I have a surprise for you. You see, I took a nap and an angel appeared to me in my dream and told me that you are chosen to be the mother of His son. We must call the child Jesus, because He will save the people from their sins. It makes me happy that the good Lord has chosen me.

Mary: Oh, Joseph, you are understanding; God will help us. (After a pause) Joseph, I will be going to Judah to visit my cousin Elizabeth.

Joseph: Whatever you say, Jesus' mother to be, but don't stay there too long, our wedding date is only three months from now.

Mary: I don't know how to thank you for your generosity.

(Curtain)

Scene II

Narrator: Mary and Joseph are now married. They now live in Joseph's house, beside his carpenter shop.

When the curtain opens, Mary is cutting vegetables. Joseph enters. Mary should appear pregnant).

Mary: Oh, you look very tired and worried. What has happened?

Joseph: Not much Mary. (After a pause looking at Mary) Mary I have some bad news. Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken through out the Roman Empire. Since I am a descendant of David, I must go to Bethlehem to register. But how could I go, leaving you all alone in this condition.

Mary: I will go with you. I am sure that God will be with us.

Joseph: Are you sure?

Mary: Most certainly, let me get dressed while you pack up.

(Curtain)

Scene III

Narrator: The journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem takes several days. After a tiresome journey, Joseph and Mary reached Bethlehem. The city was so crowded that there were no rooms in the inns around there. when Joseph told one Inn keeper that Mary is expecting and she needs a place to rest, the inn keeper offered a small area in his stable. Joseph was reluctant but was persuaded by Mary to accept it. The time came for her to have her baby. Mary gave birth to her first born son wrapped him in clothes and laid him in a manger. Some shepherds were spending that night in the fields taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shown over them. The angel said to them, "Fear not; for I bring you good news of great joy for all the people. For to you is born in the city of David, a savior, who is Christ the Lord. You will find the baby lying in a manger." (This portion can be read by the person who act as the angel earlier. After this, it is appropriate to praise God by singing relevant songs).

The shepherds could hardly believe what they had seen and heard. They set out to look for the Savior. They found him in a manger. Now we will see Jesus with Joseph and Mary. The Shepherd arrived to see him.

Shepherd I: (Knocking from outside) May we come in?

Joseph: Please do (Three shepherds came in and greeted Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Joseph turns the lamp a little so that its light falls on the manger. The shepherds look at baby Jesus reverently).

Shepherd II: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom He is pleased!"

Shepherd III: We were told by an angel that the Savior has been born. (Looking up) Thank you Lord for letting us see him. (The shepherds go back after greeting Jesus once again. They sing praises to God while going out. Joseph starts cleaning up and Mary takes care of baby Jesus).

Narrator: Soon after Jesus' birth, three Wisemen from the East who studied the stars came to Jerusalem and asked "Where is the baby born to the king of the Jews? We saw his star when it came up in the east and we have come to worship him," King Herod was very upset when he heard about this. King Herod called for his chief priests and scribes and asked them whether there is anything in the sacred books about a baby which will become king of the Jews. They told him that the Savior will be born in Bethlehem. Then King Herod secretly sent for the Wisemen and found out from them the exact time the star appeared and told them to come back and tell him where the Savior is so that he may also go and worship him too. But he really intended to kill the baby Jesus as soon as he found out where the baby was. The wisemen set out for Bethlehem and the star they saw in the east again led them to Bethlehem. The star stopped above a house. They went into the house and saw baby Jesus.

Wiseman I: May we come in. We have come from the east to worship the royal baby.

Mary: Please come in. (All three of them came in and kneel down in front of Jesus)

Wiseman II: We brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. (They place it in front of Jesus, one by one)

Wiseman III: I am happy that we can go back to Jerusalem and tell King Herod where he can find the baby.

Wiseman II: Well, we have a long way to go. Let us take leave now. (They greet Jesus again and leave the stage. Mary and Joseph spread a sheet and go to sleep).

[The group may sing the song "We three kings of"]

Narrator: The wisemen returned to their country by another route because God had warned them in a dream not to go back to king Herod. Herod waited for the return of the Wisemen but after a while he realized that the Wisemen were protecting baby Jesus.

An angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said (angel's voice) "Joseph, Joseph, wake up. Herod is looking for the baby in order to kill him. Get up, take the baby and Mary and escape to Egypt"

(Joseph wakes up, then calls Mary).

Joseph: Mary, Mary, get up quick. We have to leave this place immediately. An angel has told me that King Herod is looking for Jesus to kill him. I was told that we should go to Egypt and stay there.

(They hurriedly pack up every thing and leave the stage. While they do that the narrator says:

Narrator: This trip to Egypt fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet, "I called my son out of Egypt." Mathew 9:15

(Curtain)



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XVI MAR THOMA YOUTH CONFERENCE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

Sajeev P. Cherian, Secretary

From Friday, August 11 to Sunday, August 14, 1995, over 230 Mar Thoma youths gathered at Michindoh Ministries Conference Center in Hillsdale, Michigan for the XVI Mar Thoma Youth Conference of Diocese of North America & Europe hosted by the Detroit Mar Thoma Church. The theme of the conference was "Jesus is Still All Right" and the goal was to better understand the relevance of the gospel in our modern society. Programs included main talks focused on the Lordship of Christ and tracks intended to meet more specific needs. "The Lord Explores" track examined the basics of the Christian faith and emphasized on moving towards Christian maturity. The "Christler L.H.S." track sought to empower attendees to discern God's will for such areas of life as career choice, marriage, and ministry.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus, our Diocesan Bishop, inaugurated the conference. Rev. Jeff Porte, Pastor of Preaching at Third Reformed Church in Kalamzoo, Michigan, delivered a series of talks aimed at changing our

view of the gospel; specifically that our faith in the Lord Jesus is not merely a part of our life, He is our life and that we should no longer "compartmentalize" Him. Dr. Mary Lou Codman Wilson, director of Asian Community Team and adjunct faculty at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, led the "Christler L.H.S." track and ministered to those seeking the Lord's leading for crucial decisions. Mr. Paul Yu, youth and worship leader at East White Oak Bible Church in Bloomington, Illinois, led "The Lord Explorer" track and presented with practical ways of becoming a mature believer and persuasive arguments as to why such maturity is profitable. In addition to these leaders, our Achens, senior resource persons, and many others gave leadership and guidance. The conference concluded with Holy Communion Service.

The 1996 conference will be hosted by the Dallas Mar Thoma Church and the 1997 conference will be hosted by the Chicago Mar Thoma Church.



*"Every believer is
a church builder"*

*"The time to do
God's will is now!"*

With Best Compliments
From
ZACHARIAH P. THOMAS (Babu)

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എല്ലാ സഹായങ്ങൾക്കും നന്നി. തുടർന്നും നിങ്ങളുടെ
ദ്വൈതസഹായം പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കുന്നു.**

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ZACHARIAH P. THOMAS (BABU)

DEDICATION OF EPIPHANY MAR THOMA CHURCH

Mathew Varghese, Secretary, Epiphany Mar Thoma Church

It was an added blessing to have our Metropolitan with us at all major occasions; presiding over the general body meeting that made the decision, inaugurating the fund collection drive, laying the foundation stone, and dedicating the church building.

The ceremony comprised of dedication service and a public meeting on Sept. 30, 1995. Dedication service started with a procession. The service was led by the Most Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitan, and was assisted by Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus, the Diocesan Bishop, and the clergy in the region.

The public meeting that followed the dedication service was inaugurated by the Metropolitan. Other invited guests included Rt. Rev. Mathews Mar Barnabas, Diocesan Metropolitan of the Malankara Orthodox Church, Rev. Dr. Winston Ching of the Episcopal Church, Rev. Fr. Yohannan Sankarathil, Cor-Episcopa, Arch Deacon Shamhart of Episcopal Church, and Rev. Thomas Oommen CSI, and Rev. Roy Tvr dick of the Gates of Haven Catholic Church, Ozone Park, and a number of our neighbors. Felicitations were offered by the guests and gifts were presented by our sister parish representatives.

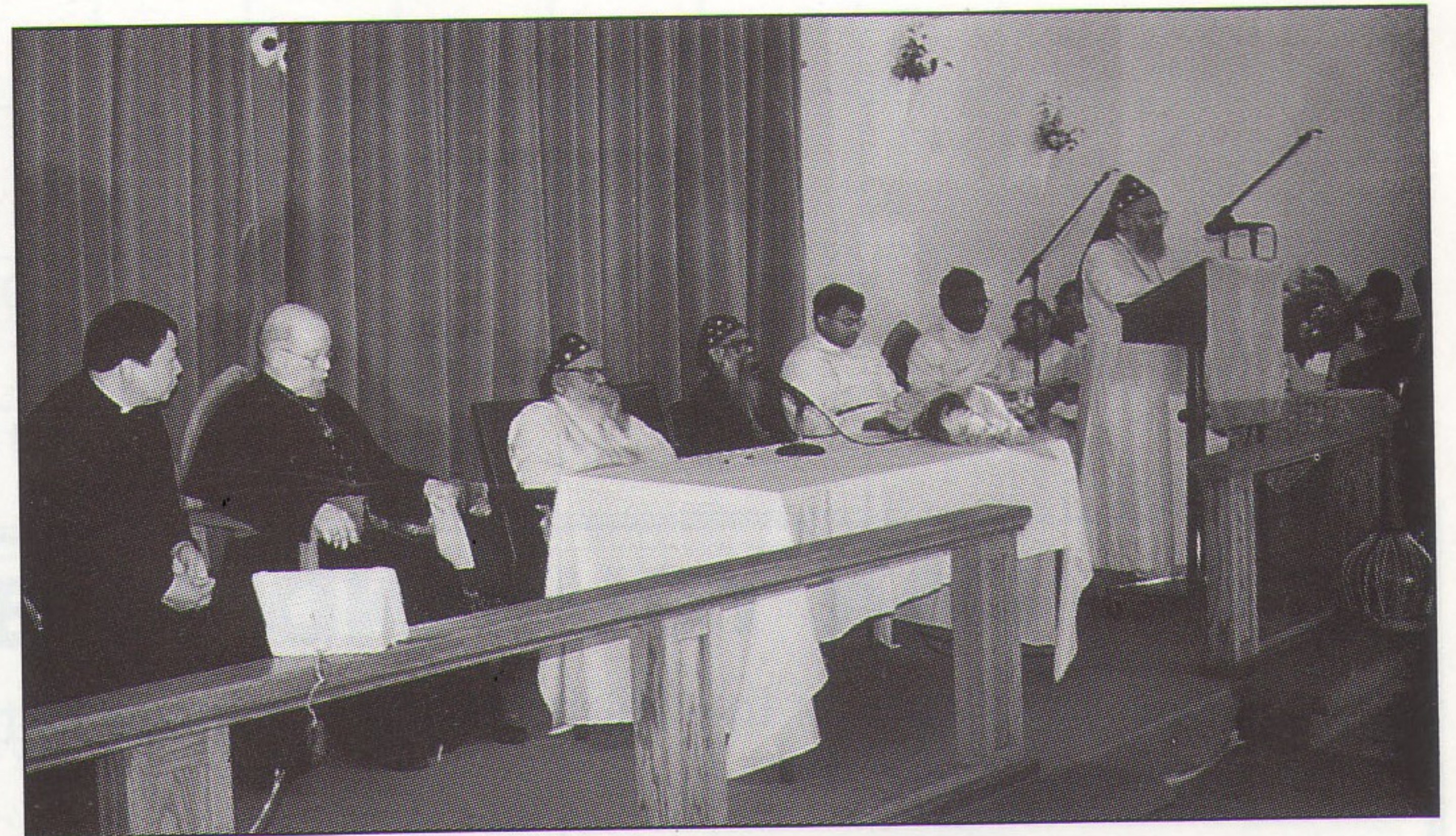
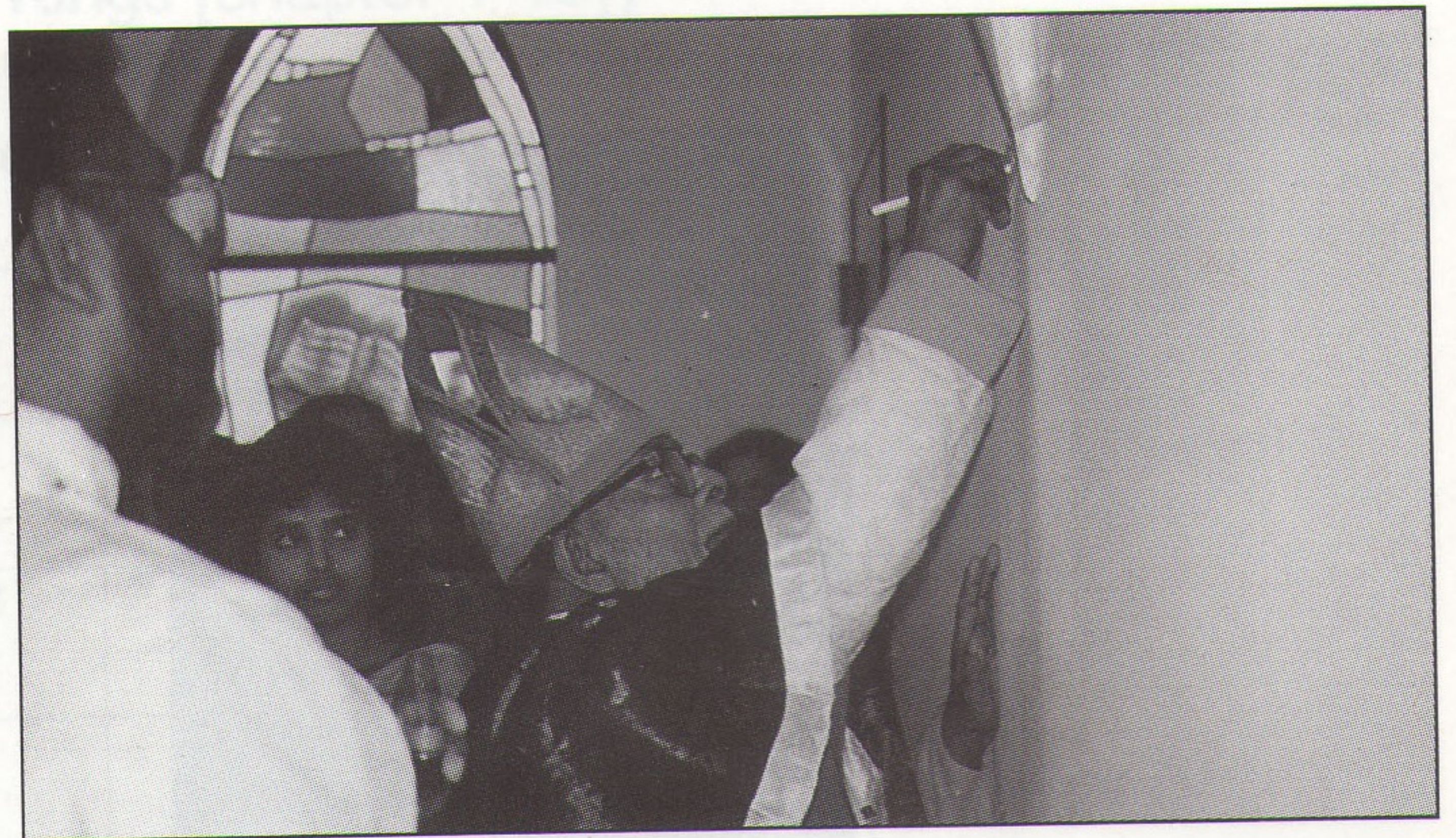
The Diocesan Bishop released the souvenir by presenting a copy to the Metropolitan. Youth choir presented a dedication song. The dedication program was concluded with the unveiling of the dedication plaque by the Metropolitan.

The Metropolitan celebrated Holy Communion Service on October 1 and presided over the parish Day celebration. The diocesan bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus was also present.

By the turn of the 80's a small group of parishioners from Queens, Brooklyn and Long Island longed for a worship place closer to their residence and the petition was approved by the Metropolitan. The "Epiphany Episcopal Church", with which we have cordial relations, allowed us to use the church building, that had remained closed for a long time. We started worship in this church in July, 1981 with about 90 families. Subsequently, the church was bought from the Episcopal Church and became the first parish in North America to own a church building.

Rev. N. M. Cherian and Rev. Jacob Thomas, Rev. Georger Mathew, Rev. Dr. P. J. Philip, and Rev. Thomas John served the parish as Vicars. The present Vicar Rev. T. P. Koshy was instrumental in the construction of the present building.

With heartfelt gratitude, we remember the guidance of our former Diocesan Bishops, the late Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Mar Athanasius Suffragan Metropolitan and Rt. Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Suffragan Metropolitan. Our present Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus was a source of encouragement throughout the construction.



(More pictures on page 36)

**First and Third place winners (missing from last issue) of the
Diocesan Sunday School Exam — 1995**



Suja Chacko
First Place (Junior)
Trinity MTC, Houston



Jasmine Samuel
Third Place (Junior)
Trinity MTC, Houston

CAN YOU FIND 16 BOOKS OF THE BIBLE?

(Circle 16 books of the Bible as they appear in the paragraph below. Watch out, this could be tricky!)

ONCE MADE A REMARK ABOUT THE HIDDEN BOOKS OF THE BIBLE. IT WAS A LULU. KEPT PEOPLE LOOKING SO HARD FOR FACTS AND FOR OHTERS IT WAS A REVELATION. SOME WERE IN A JAM. ESPECIALLY SINCE THE NAME OF THE BOOKS WERE NOT CAPITALIZED. BUT THE TRUTH FINALLY STRUCK HOME TO NUMBERS OF READERS. TO OTHERS IT WAS A REAL JOB. WE WANT IT TO BE A FACINATING FEW MOMENTS FOR YOU. YES, THERE WILL BE SOME REALLY EASY ONES TO SPOT. OTHERS MAY REQUIRE JUDGES TO HELP THEM. I WILL QUICKLY ADMIT IT USUALLY TAKES A MINISTER TO FIND ONE OF THEM AND THERE WILL BE LOUD LAMENTATIONS WHEN IT IS FOUND. A LITTLE LADY SAYS SHE BREWS A CUP OF TEA SO SHE CAN CONCENTRATE BETTER. SEE HOW WELL YOU CAN COMPLETE. RELAX NOW FOR THERE REALLY ARE SIXTEEN NAMES OF BOOKS IN THE BIBLE IN THIS STORY.

*"If you're living only for yourself,
you're wasting your time."*

*"Real friends are there
when you need them."*

BIBLE CROSSWORD PUZZLE

AS IN TODAY'S ENGLISH VERSION
(based on the book of II Kings [chapter 1-15])

Mrs. Usha Thomas Alexander (New York)

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

Across

- The God of Philistine city of Ekron.
- He reigned in Israel after Ahaziah.
- Elisha's servant.
- He succeeded Jehu.
- The King of Israel to whom Elisha ordered to shoot him with the arrows.
- Hoshea is the son of _____
- He assassinated Pekah and became the king of Israel.
- Menahem ruled in Samaria for _____ years.
- Menahem was the son of _____
- Pekahiah ruled Samaria _____ years.

Down

- The prophet from Tishbe to whom Ahaziah sent an officer with 50 men for his recovery.
- Elisha returned from Jordan to this city.
- The commander-in-chief of the Army of the King of Syria.
- Elisha told Naaman to wash himself seven times in river _____
- The son of Jehoshaphat and grandson of Nimshi who became the king of Israel.
- The King of Judah who visited Jehoram.
- _____ succeeded Joash on the throne of Israel.
- Kings Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham were all buried in this city.
- Ahaziah's mother.
- The last of Jehu's dynasty.
- _____ assassinated Zachariah.
- Shallum ruled in Samaria for _____ month.

BIBLE WORD SEARCH

AS IN TODAY'S ENGLISH VERSION
(based on the book of Acts of Apostles)

Mrs. Usha Thomas Alexander (New York)

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

1. The people of Jerusalem call that field _____ which means "Field of Blood."
2. One among the two proposed to serve as an apostle in the place of Judas, is known by three names Joseph, Barsabbas and _____
3. The one who was chosen in the place of Judas, and added to the group of eleven apostles.
4. At _____ gate of the temple, at three o'clock in the afternoon, Peter and John healed a lame man.
5. A Levite born in Cyprus, whom the apostles called _____ which means "one who encourages."
6. Ananias' wife's name..
7. The name of a Pharisee, who was a teacher of the law and was highly respected by all the people, stood up in the Council.
8. The bodies of Jacob and his sons were taken to this place and buried.
9. At the age of forty Moses fled from Egypt and went to live in this land where he had two sons.
10. In the desert near this mount, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush.
11. The name of the apostle who explained the book of prophet Isiah to the Ethiopian official.
12. The name of a believer in Damascus who placed his hands on Saul and prayed.
13. In Joppa, there was a woman who got this name, and its meaning is "a deer"
14. At this place the believers were first called Christians.
15. After setting free from the prison, Peter went to the home of Mary and knocked at the door. This servant girl recognized his voice.
16. The people of Lystra gave this name to Barnabas.
17. The people of Lystra gave this name to Paul.
18. The name of a woman from Thyatira, who was a dealer in purple cloth was converted by Paul.
19. Paul left Athens and went to Corinth, there he met this Jew who born in Portus and his wives' name is Prescilla.
20. The name of the island where Paul and all the prisoners were safely ashore on the way to Rome.

Bible Word Search Finders (July 1995)

Arun Thomas	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Ajit Joseph Thomas	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Anu T. Alex	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Asha Deena Alex	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Sheba Susan Philip	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Prathik manuel Philip	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Blesson Idiculla	The Mar Thoma Church Staten Island
Jay Mathew	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Houston

Bible Cross-Word Puzzle Winners (July 1995)

Arun Thomas	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Ajit Joseph Thomas	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Anu T. Alex	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Asha Deena Alex	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Sheba Susan Philip	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Prathik manuel Philip	Mar Thoma Church Boston
Blesson Idiculla	The Mar Thoma Church Staten Island
Jay Mathew	Trinity Mar Thoma Church Houston

DEADLINE FOR ANSWERS DECEMBER 23, 1995

DEDICATION OF THE MAR THOMA CHURCH OF GREATER WASHINGTON

Dr. George K. Zachariah, Convener, Dedication Committee

Members of the Mar Thoma Church in Washington started their worship jointly with the church of South India and Syrian Orthodox church members in 1972. The first formal service of our church was conducted in Washington on March 26, 1973 when Dr. Alexander Mar Theophilus Suffragan Metropolitan (our present Metropolitan) came here. For a few years until 1981 services were conducted on an ad hoc basis when our Bishops or Achens visited Washington. The first committee was elected in September 1981 when Thomas Mar Athanasius Thirumeni visited. Rev. A.P. Athyal, Rev. Abraham Thomas, Rev. A.G. Mathew, Rev. Euyakim I. Cheeran, Rev. George Varghese, and Rev. Johnson Varghese served as vicars for short periods of time. Rev. Geevarughese Mathew became vicar in 1989 until his departure on November 1, 1995. We used the facilities of the St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal church for worship from 1981 until July 16, 1995 when we moved to the newly acquired church facility located at 322 Ethan Allen Ave., Takoma Park, Maryland, close to St. Michael's Church.

The renovated sanctuary was dedicated on Saturday, October 21, 1995 by our Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus and assisted by ten priests. The service was attended by over 500 people. After the service a public meeting was held. Zacharias Thirumeni presided and gave the keynote address. Rev. M.P. Yohannan gave the invocation. Dr. George K. Zachariah spoke about the occasion. Mr. Lalu Mathew read messages from dignitaries. The Vicar welcomed the gathering. Dr. Thomas Ninan introduced the guest speakers. Rev. Dr. H.B. Huffmon of Drew University, Hon. Ida Ruben, State Senator of Maryland, Hon. Kathy Porter of Takoma Park City Council, Mr. John Augustus of the Embassy of India, Rev. Canon Dr. Michael Marrett of the Episcopal Church, Rev. Thomas Poovanal of the Malankara Catholic Church, Rev. Alexander Kurien of the Orthodox Church, Rev. Dr. P.G. George, Diocesan Secretary, Mrs. Gracy Stephen, President of Ecumenical Council of Kerala Christians and Mr. John Attumalil, of the Mar Thoma Church of Baltimore and several representatives of various Mar Thoma Churches in the eastern region spoke. Mr. Rajan Ninan, Editor of the Dedication Souvenir, presented a copy to the Diocesan Bishop for release and Thirumeni released it. The church choir, Sunday school children and the Youth sang songs during the proceedings. Mr. George Varghese, church secretary, proposed the vote of thanks. Following the meeting, lunch was served in the Fellowship Hall.



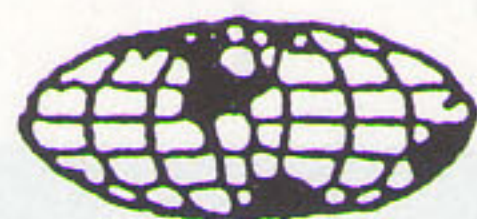
(More pictures on page 36)



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SABHA NEWS

SABHA PRADHINIDHI MANDALAM

The Sabha Pradhinidhi Mandalam held its sessions from September 7 to 9, 1995 at Tiruvalla. Our Diocesan Episcopa the Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus and few of the Mandalam members from this Diocese attended the sessions.

The Mandalam considered the revision of the constitution and the following significant decisions were made:

1. The Diocesan representatives to the Sabha Council are to be elected from and by the Mandalam members of respective dioceses. Our diocese will have three representatives in the Sabha Council.

2. Parishes that have more than one Mandalam member has to have at least one woman member.

ANNUAL CLERGY CONFERENCE

The Annual Clergy Conference will be held at Charal Mount from 27th to 30th November 1995.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC)

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches met in Geneva, Switzerland from 14th to 22nd of September, 1995. Our Diocesan Bishop who is a member, attended the Central Committee. The Committee decided that "Turn to God, Rejoice in Hope" be the theme of the eighth WCC General Assembly, to be held in Harare, Zimbabwe, Africa from August 24 to September 7, 1998.

Dr. M. M. Thomas, a former Moderator of the WCC Assembly presented a paper entitled "Humanizing the

Structure of Global Governance." Miss Jessy Joseph of the Long Island Mar Thoma church also attended the meeting as a steward and gave leadership in worship.

The WCC General Assembly will have more representations from the Mar Thoma Church. The Mar Thoma Church in Diaspora will have two additional representatives, one from the Gulf region and another from the Diocese of North America and Europe.

EASTERN REGION SEVIKA SANGHOM

The Eastern Region Sevika Sangham meeting, hosted by the Staten Island Mar Thoma Sevika Sangham was held on October 28, 1995 at the Christ Episcopal Church, Staten Island. About 200 members attended the meeting. Rev. P. D. Mammen and Rev. P. M. Thomas were the main leaders. Mrs. Rachel Thomas gave the devotional message.

The winners of the essay competition and Bible Quiz competition held during the last regional meeting were awarded trophies. Bidding farewell, the Sevika Sangham presented a plaque to Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mathew.

The Eastern Region Sevika Sangham is now re-organized into two Centers; The North Eastern Center and The South Eastern Center. Rev. Mathai Joseph and Rev. M. P. Yohannan are appointed presidents of these regions.

Mrs. Kunjamma Simon
Secretary, Eastern Region Sevika Sangham



DIOCESAN NEWS

NOTICE

The Vaideeka Selection Committee (Clergy Selection Committee) invites applications for Theological Training for the year 1996 from those who have a University degree and a definite call to the ordained ministry in the Mar Thoma Church. Completed applications forms with recommendations from the Vicar should reach the Diocesan Center before 15th January 1996. For application forms and more details please contact Rev. Dr. P. G. George, Diocesan

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

Applicants should appear for an entrance examination and interview. Tests will be given in the following areas: Bible knowledge, General knowledge and English.

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

TWO NEW PARISHES IN FLORIDA

The Episcopal Synod approved two parishes in Florida. The Mar Thoma Congregation of Tampa, Florida is raised to the status of a parish and is now known as St. Mark's Mar Thoma Church, Tampa, Central Florida. The other new

parish is The St. Luke's Mar Thoma Church, West Palm Beach, South Florida. Congratulations to the members of St. Mark's Mar Thoma Parish and St. Luke's Mar Thoma Parish.

NEW COMMITTEES ARE FORMED

Three new committees are established in the diocese to plan and organize special activities in the respective areas. Members of the following committees are appointed by the Diocesan Bishop.

The Ecumenical Relations Committee.

This committee is formed to widen the ecumenical base of our church in North America and responsible to arrange meaningful relationships with other churches.

Rev. Oommen Philip	Chairman
Mrs. Nirmala Abraham	Convenor
Mr. Joseph Mattackal	New York
Dr. George Zachariah	Washington D. C.
Mr. George Poikail	Dallas
Mr. George Philip	New Jersey
Dr. Mammen C. Jacob	Florida

Public Relations Committee.

This committee is created to explore and implement ways to bridge our church with the wider American Society/Community so as to create a rapport with Government agencies wherever possible.

Rev. George Mathew	Chairman
Mr. O. C. Koshy	Convenor

Mr. P. K. Thomas	Houston
Dr. P. T. Mammen	San Francisco
Mr. Kuruvilla Cherian	New York
Mr. Alex Thomas	Boston
Dr. Thomas Joseph	Toronto
Mr. M. C. Alexander	New Jersey

Endowment Committee.

This committee is created to raise endowment funds for the various projects and programs of the diocese, especially the missionary projects here and overseas.

Rev. Eapen Cherian	Chairman
Mr. T. A. Mathew	Convenor
Dr. John P. Lincoln	Lubbock
Mr. O. C. Koshy	Seattle
Dr. M. V. Mathew	Chicago
Mr. P. T. Mathew	Philadelphia
Mr. Varghese P. Varghese	Staten Island
Mr. M. K. Thomas	New Jersey

MAR THOMA YUVAJANA SAKYAM, EASTERN REGION

The 1995 Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam Eastern Regional Conference was held on September 1-3, 1995 at the Camp Cayaga, Pocono Mountains, Pennsylvania. About 120 youths attended the conference. The theme of the conference was "The Kingdom of God". The conference

was inaugurated by Arch Bishop Mar Nicholovas Zachariah. Dr. Thomas Vadakethundiyl and Mr. S. K. Abraham were the main leaders.

Rev. K. E. Easow, President

MISSION TOUR TO INDIA (YOUTH EXCHANGE VISIT PROGRAM)

A few years ago a small team of young people from this Diocese visited different institutions and projects of the Mar Thoma Church in Kerala. It was a very rewarding experience for those who participated. The Diocesan Youth Department is now planning a Youth Exchange Program to visit mission centers in India. If you are interested in medical mission, evangelism, rural development, resource sharing schemes etc., please contact the Diocesan Center; you will be given opportunity to participate in related projects. If you have any other interests, we will do everything possible to accommodate your special interest.

Since more and more young people are in universities and they are choosing different areas for their learning and career, such an exposure will be of advantage in their future life.

CONTACT:
YOUTH DEPARTMENT
DIOCESAN CENTER
744 NEWTOWN RICHBORO ROAD
RICHBORO, PA 18954-1718

CAMPUS MINISTRY UPDATE

Since the diocese decided to establish a Campus Ministry about a year ago, a significant number of students have come forward to build a ministry. The students are now being organized into area prayer fellowships. In each area, a leader from among the students coordinate the prayer fellowship. If you have not already done so, please join the campus ministry and we urge you to send your name and

address/e:Mail address to Rev. Dr. P. G. George at the Diocesan Center or to Dr. John Abraham, 3200 Elkhart, W. Lafayette, IN 47906. Phone (317)463-5209, e:Mail at abraham@msi.umn.edu (till 6/30/96) or e:Mail at jabraham@ecn.purdue.edu from 1/1/96.

Dr. John Abraham, West Lafayette, Indiana

VOLUNTARY EVANGELIST'S ASSOCIATION, EASTERN REGION

The Eastern Region Voluntary Evangelist's Association meeting was held on October 7, 1995 at the Epiphany Mar Thoma Church, New York. Mr. George Cherian and Dr. George Samuel were the main leaders. About 200 people attended the meeting. This was the third meeting held during the year. A half day retreat was also held for the

office bearers and committee members of Edavaka Mission of the region.

The Voluntary Evangelist's Association of the Diocese of North America and Europe now supports three missions at Pondicherry, Karnataka and Cambodia.

P. V. Varghese, Secretary

FIRST ANNIVERSARY DONORS' DIRECTORY (Addendum)

Dr. Arlexander Thomas, Louisville, Kentucky \$500.00

Area Carpet Bethel Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia

Photocopy Machine Dr. John K. Thomas and Mr. Jose K. Thomas, The Mar Thoma Church Staten Island.

"Living for Christ requires dying to self."

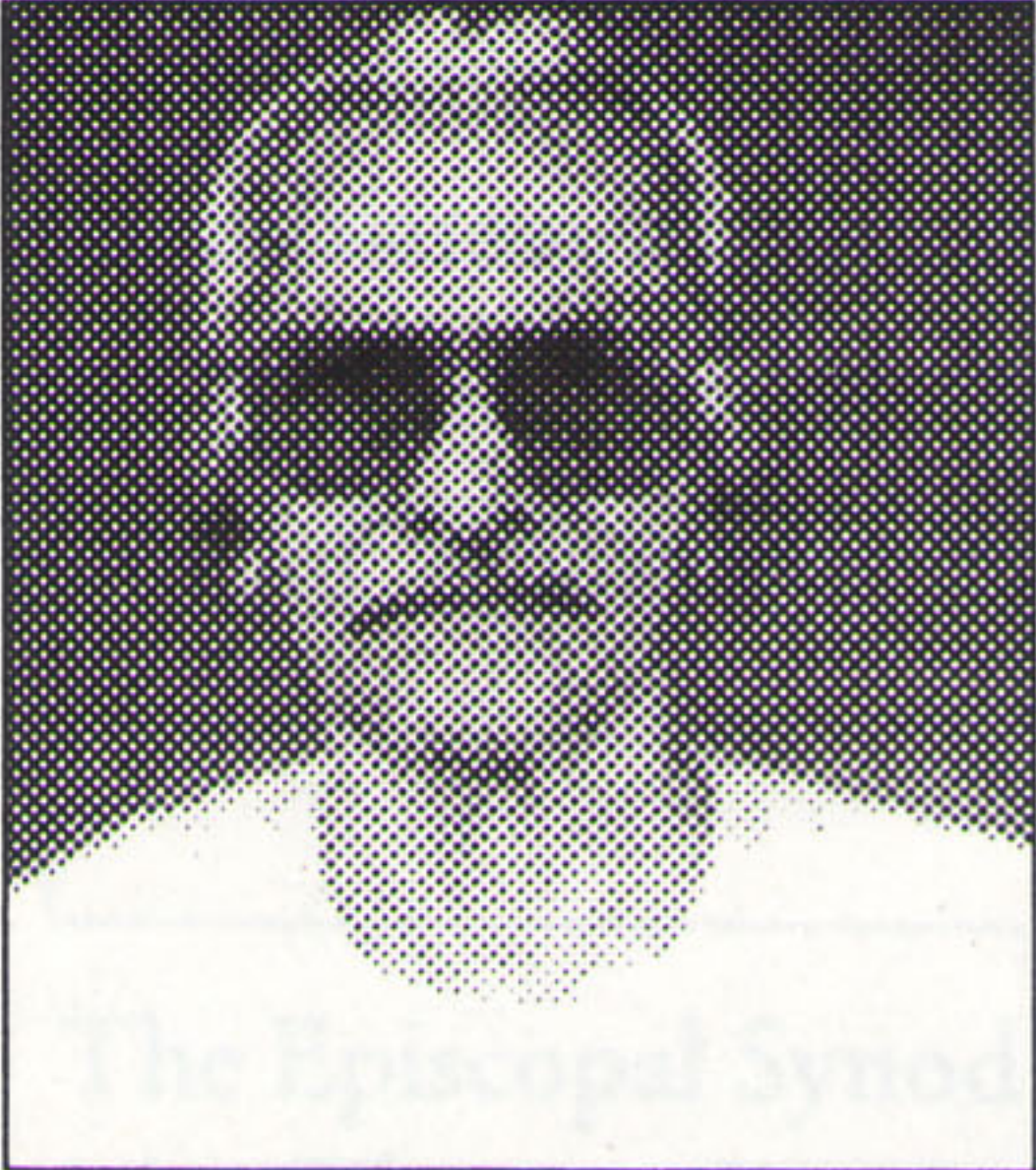
WORLD SUNDAY SCHOOL DAY 1995

The 1995 World Sunday School Day will be observed on November 19, 1995 and a general meeting of the North East Region will be held on Sunday, November 19, 1995 at 2:30 p. m. at the Epiphany Mar Thoma Church, Ozone

Park, New York. Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus will be the main leader.

Jose K. Thomas, Convenor

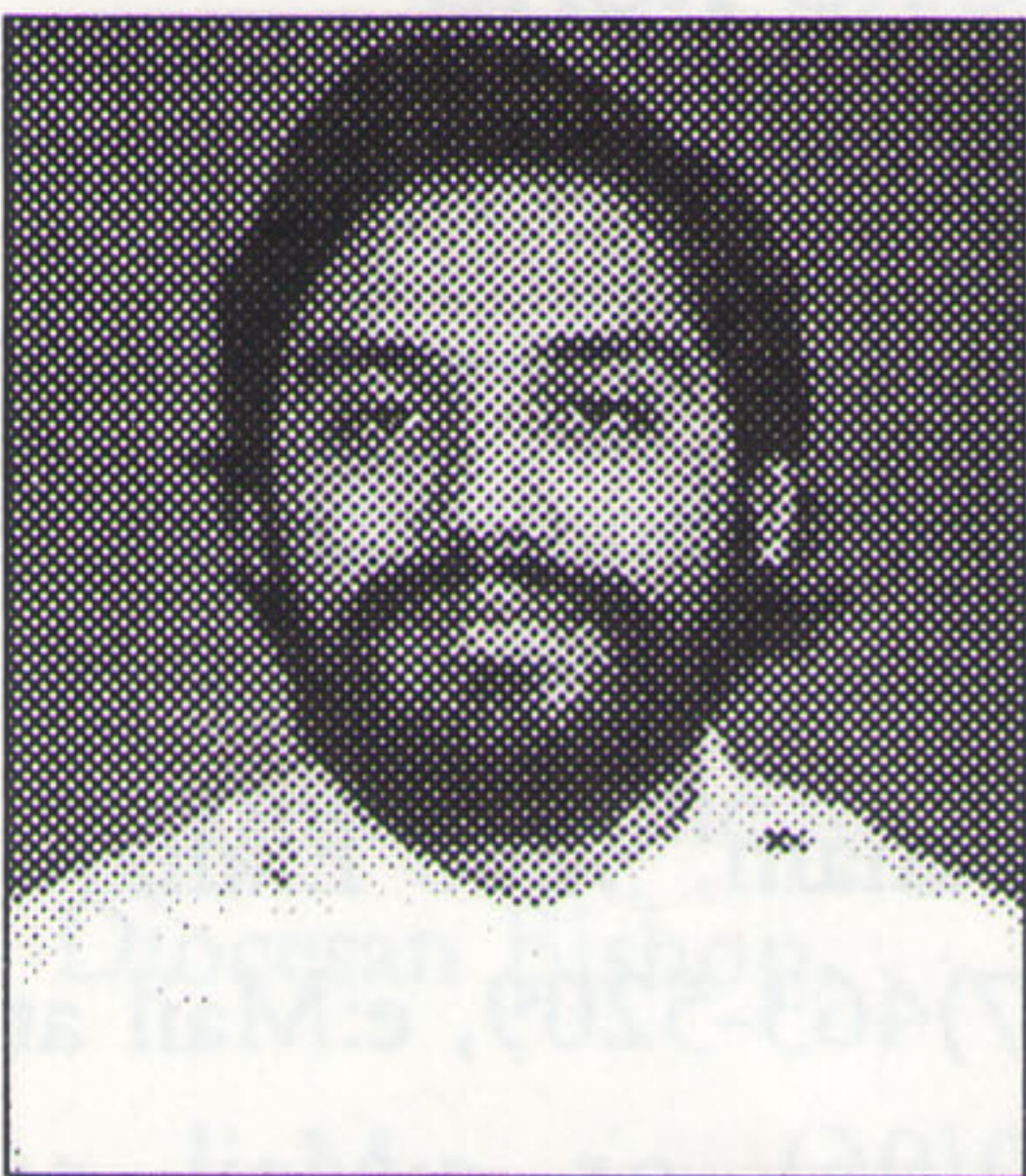
84 YEAR OLD MAR THOMITE AT THE WORLD VETERANS ATHLETIC CHAMPIONSHIP



Mr. Thomas Kunnuthara, Karakkal, Tiruvalla represented India at the World Veterans Athletic Championship held at Buffalo, New York in July and finished fifth in the walking competition. He continually won several gold medals during the

last seven years in India. He is a businessman and a social worker and is very active in the Kerala Association for Non-Formal Education and Development and in the movement against Alcoholism and Drug abuse. He is the president of the Public Servants Christian Association. The Messenger congratulates him for his accomplishments.

REV. M. O. OOMMEN JOINS THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



Rev. M. O. Oommen Jr. joined the Princeton Theological Seminary for the Master of Theology (Th. M) Degree in the area of History of Religions. Achen is the son of Rev. M. O. Oommen Sr. from Trivandrum. He comes to us from the Jerusalem Mar Thoma Church in New Delhi. Mrs. Biji Susan (Kochamma) and their little daughter Meghna are in Trivandrum.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FUND

The General Body of the Youth Conference resolved to set up a Fund with surplus amount from the Youth

Conference. This fund will be used for the development of Youth in this diocese.

REV. OOMMEN PHILIP AND THE LONG ISLAND MAR THOMA CHURCH IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Long Island Catholic, a publication of the Diocese of Rockville Center, New York of the Roman Catholic Church, interviewed Rev. Oommen Philip, vicar of Long Island Church and carried an extensive report on "Roots in India." The publication quoted Achen on several issues, especially on our emphasize on family virtues and values.

Referring to the uncertainty surrounding the purchase of the Long Island Mar Thoma Church, the paper quoted Father Robert A. Romeo, associate pastor of the Church across the street, "They (the Mar Thomites) are fine neighbors. It would have been a loss to the community to loss that Church." Father Romeo attended our church services to show solidarity.

As the Chairman of the Ecumenical Relations Committee, Rev. Oommen Philip maintained a close relationship with local churches. Congratulations to Rev. Oommen Philip.



Picture as appeared in the Long Island Catholic

PARISH NEWS

MAR THOMA CHURCH NEW JERSEY

The parish celebrated its 14th anniversary on Sunday, June 4, 1995. Rev. Dr. P.G. George was the chief guest. It was a day of thanksgiving and joy. Rev. Mathew John and Trustee Mr. George Zachariah gave messages and Sunday School children conducted many programs on that occasion. A dedication service for all office bearers was also conducted.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa visited our parish on Sunday June 11, 1995. Thirumeni celebrated the Holy Communion and gave an award to the High School and College graduates of 1995. A retreat for Executive Committee members was held.

Our Parish picnic was conducted on July 15, Saturday at Shepherd Lake Park, New Jersey. Our parish actively participated in the first anniversary celebration of the Mar Thoma Diocesan Center and Fund Raising Dinner on April 23, at Ramada Inn, New Jersey.

Our Youth Fellowship hosted the Eastern Regional Youth Conference on April 8, 1995. Their teamwork, cooperation and commitment made the conference a great

success. Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Episcopa, Rev. Dr. P.G. George and Rev. Prince Singh were the main leaders. All Achens from this region participated.

Rev. Mathew John
Alex George, Secretary



Picnic — 1995

ST. PETERS MAR THOMA CHURCH, NEW JERSEY

On Sunday, January 22, 1995 the Sunday School anniversary for the year 1994 was held in our parish. Rev. Prince Singh (Princeton Seminary) was the guest speaker.

Our Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus visited our parish on April 23 and celebrated Holy Communion. Twenty-three youths received First Communion on that day. A retreat was conducted on Saturday, April 22, Zacharias Thirumeni and P.G. George Achen were the main leaders. A dedication service for all office bearers was also conducted.

Our parish actively participated in the First Anniversary Celebration of the Mar Thoma Diocesan Center and Fund Raising Dinner on Sunday, April 23 at Ramada Inn, New Jersey.

The Edavaka Mission Convention was held on June 8-10 at our church. Rev. P.P. Thomas (Princeton) was the main speaker. Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa visited our parish and celebrated Holy Communion.

Rev. Mathew John
Thomas Thuthikadathil, Secretary

BETHEL MAR THOMA CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA

The church published a photo directory. The directory has pictures of organizations, historical events, family photos along with other details of all the members of the church.

The Sunday School anniversary was held on Sept 16, 1995. Rev. V. T. John, Yuvajana Sakhyam General secretary and Rev. M. O. Oommen of Princeton seminary were the

main leaders. The annual convention was held from October 5 to 8, 1995. Rev. Dr. P. G. George inaugurated the convention. Mr. George Cherian of Navajeevodhayam was the main speaker.

Rev. K. E. Easow

"Little aggravations reveal the size of our faith."

THE MAR THOMA CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA

Grandparents day was celebrated on July 22 with Holy communion and Rev. Dr. K. P. Mathai was the main leader. The Vacation Bible School was held from July 7 to 9 and from July 15 to 16. Annual convention was held from August 17 to 20. Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Episcopa inaugurated the convention. Mr. George Cherian was the main speaker.

The Edavaka Mission Retreat was held at the Reading Retreat Center from August 4 to 6. As in the previous year, the Edavaka Mission is raising funds for 15 homes and marriage assistance to 6 girls. The Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus paid an episcopal visit on September 24, 1995.

Mammen T. Abraham, Secretary & Sunny Abraham, Assembly/Council member.



Diocesan Bishop with the Executive Committee Members

BOSTON MAR THOMA CHURCH

A joint worship service with the St. Mark's Episcopal Church was conducted on Sunday, June 25, 1995 at the St. Mark's Church Burlington. Rev. Carol Flett of Episcopa Church and Rev. Alexander M. Isaac of Mar Thoma Church gave homilies. There was a social get together after the service.

The family retreat was held from August 4 to August 6, 1995 at the 'Singing Hills' christian Conference Center, New Hampshire. Rev. Dr. David Midwod and Rev. Gary McClenthen led the retreat with several sessions on the theme "Learning to Live Together in Tough Times."

Vacation Bible School was organized jointly by the St. Stephen's Knanaya Syrian church and the Boston Mar Thoma Church from August 11 to August 13, 1995. Very

Rev. Dr. Abraham Thomas, Rev. Alexander M. Isaac and Geeve Mathew gave leadership.

Varghese Mathai, Secretary, Boston Mar Thoma Church



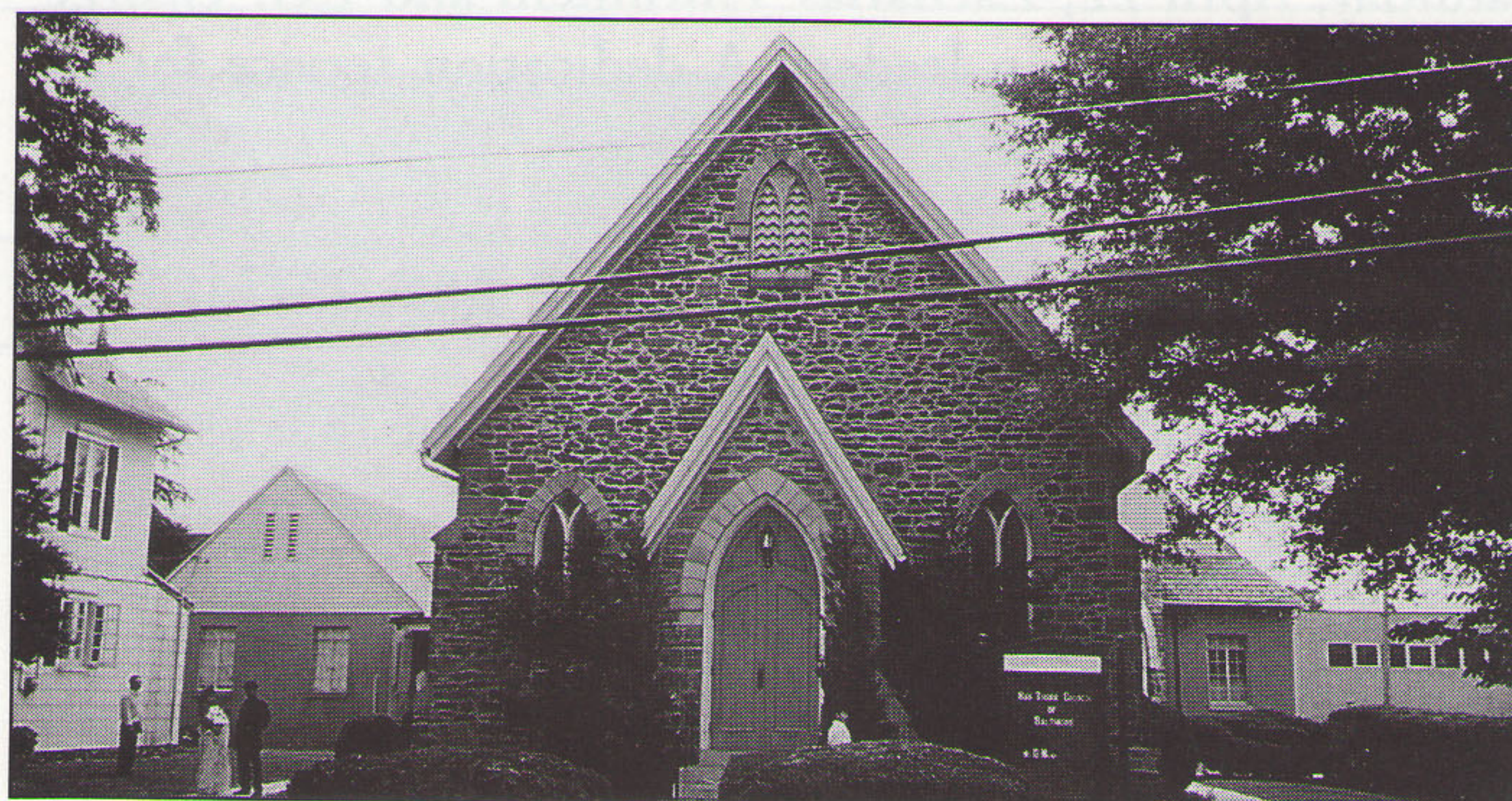
V.B.S. Jointly organized by Boston MTC & St. Stephens Kananya Church

BALTIMORE MAR THOMA CHURCH

The Baltimore Mar Thoma Church purchased a Church Building from Ames Sudbroke Methodist Church in Pikesville, Baltimore on September 23, 1995. The Most. Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitan celebrated the Holy Communion on September 27, 1995.

The facility includes a church which can comfortably accommodate two hundred people, a large fellowship hall with a large kitchen. 22 large rooms and a five bedroom parsonage along with ample parking area.

Dr. George Kurian



THE CANADIAN MAR THOMA CHURCH TORONTO

A variety entertainment program for fund raising was conducted on September 23, 1995 at Stephen Leacock auditorium. A drama "Kumbassarum" written by Kuriakos and presented by members was the main attraction.

Under the guidance of Rev. Prakash K. George, Malayalam learning classes are offered to youths and children. The classes are being expanded to the Mississauga area also. These classes are well attended.

Cherian Edichandy, Secretary

MAR THOMA SERVICE IN MINNEAPOLIS

October 8 was a day of joy among the Mar Thomites in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota. The first Mar Thoma Holy communion service was celebrated by the Diocesan Secretary Rev. Dr. P. G. George at the Creekside Community Center in Bloomington, Minnesota. Over fifty people including members of sister churches attended the service. A request to establish a Mar Thoma Congregation in the Twin Cities area is made to the Diocesan Bishop.



After the First Mar Thoma Holy Communion Service, Oct. 8, 1995

MAR THOMA SERVICE IN NORTH CAROLINA

The first Mar Thoma Service in North Carolina was conducted by the Diocesan Secretary Rev. Dr. P. G. George on September 10, 1995. About sixty people including members of sister churches attended the service. The Malayalee Christian community in this area often conducts common worships.



After the First Mar Thoma Holy Communion Service, Sept. 10, 1995

CHICAGO MAR THOMA CHURCH

Rev. P. P. Thomas joined the Chicago Mar Thoma Church in September as its Assistant Vicar. Achen completed his studies at Princeton University in August and is now doing his doctoral studies at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Chicago. His wife Binu and daughters Jincy and Jeena have joined him recently.

As part of the Campus ministry, the youth group visited the UIC in Champaigne on October 7 and 8. The Yuvajana Sakhyam arranged a regional camp in Indiana on September 1-3. Rev. George Varghese gave the leadership.

The Sunday School teachers had a retreat on October 6, 1995. Edavaka Mission celebrated Sept. 25-Oct. 1 as the Mission week in which they had retreats on every evening in the church.

On September 23, The Sevika Sangham observed the grandparents day. In honor of grand parents there was a

fellowship meeting and a free medical check up offered to all grandparents.



*Grandparent's Day Celebration of Sevika Sangham (Chicago)
Free Medical Check-up to Grandparents*

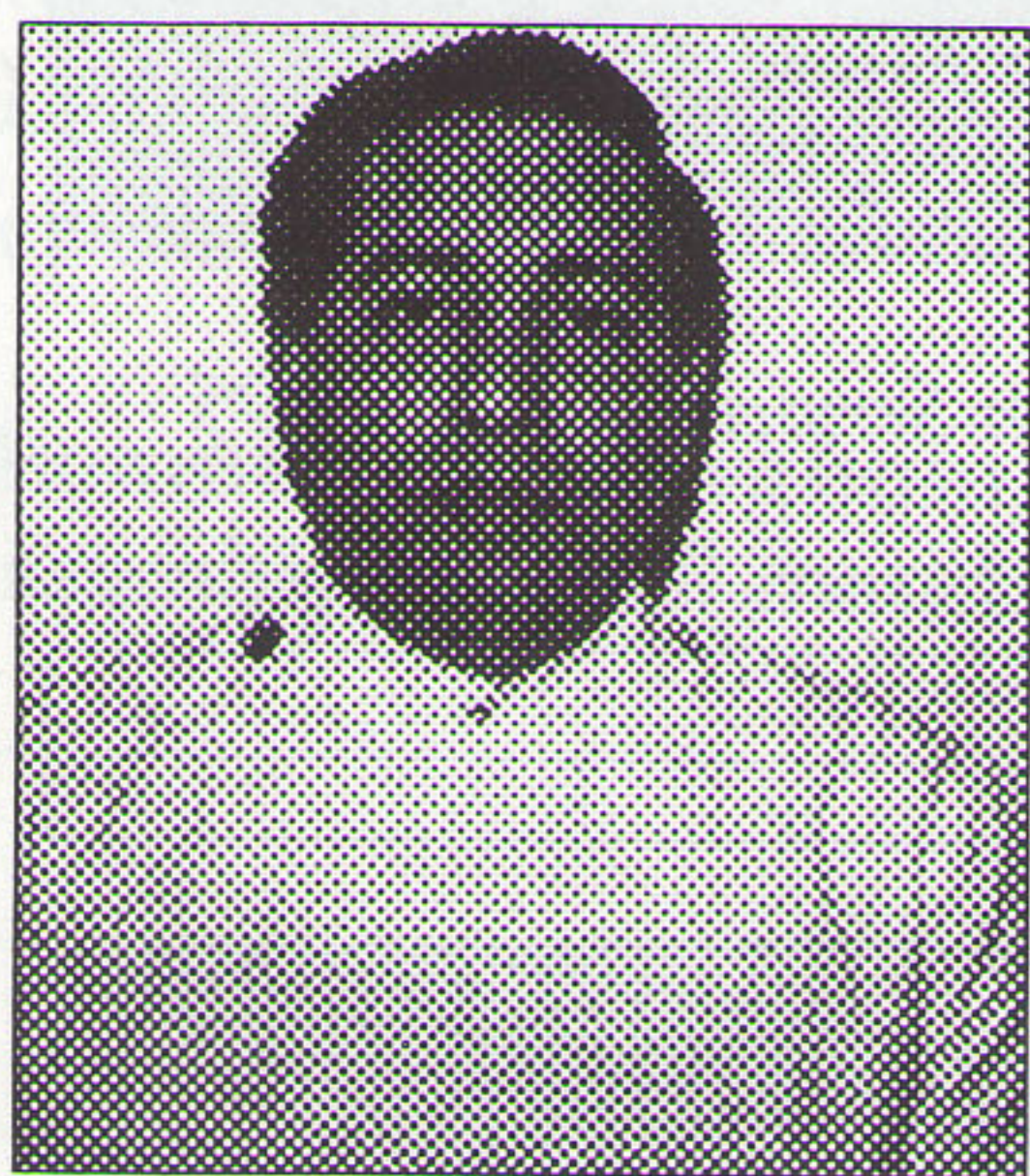
MAR THOMA CHURCH OF GREATER WASHINGTON

After six years of outstanding leadership and distinguished service to the two parishes in Baltimore and Washington, our Achen Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mathew is leaving for Bombay on November 1 to be the vicar of the Santa Cruz Mar Thoma Church. The Washington parish held a farewell meeting on Sunday, October 29, after Holy

Communion service conducted by Rev. Oommen Philip, vicar of Long Island Mar Thoma Church. Various representatives spoke on behalf of their organizations. A monetary gift and a plaque were presented to Achen.

George Varghese, Secretary

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES TO REV. DR. GEEVARGHESE MATHEW



Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mathew received his Ph.D. in Old Testament from Drew University, New Jersey. We extend our hearty congratulations to Achen for his academic excellence. Achen made significant contributions to the Messenger. Achen is transferred to St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Santacruz, Bombay as of November 1, 1995. We express our sincere thanks and wish him and his family all the best.

DEDICATION OF EPIPHANY MTC—Cont'd from page 23



MTC OF GREATER WASHINGTON—Cont'd from page 27



LIST OF MESSENGER PROMOTERS

The following individuals are appointed as the Messenger Promoters of their respective churches by the Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Episcopa.

Mr. T. A. Abraham
Chicago Mar Thoma Church, Chicago, IL

Mr. Sunny Abraham
Philadelphia MTC, Philadelphia, PA

Mr. Abraham Chacko
Epiphany MTC, NY

Mr. Jacob Chacko
Staten Island MTC, NY

Mr. Varghese Chandapillai
Oklahoma MTC, OK

Mr. Kuruvila Cherian
St. James MTC, NY

Mr. Eapen Daniel
Bethel Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia, PA

Mr. Rajan Daniel
Trinity MTC Edmonton, Canada

Mr. Abraham David
South Florida MTC, Florida

Mr. Philip David
St. John's MTC, New York

Mrs. Susan George
Dallas MTC, Texas

Mrs. Susamma Iype
Chicago MTC, Illinois

Mr. Stephen Jacob
Montreal MTC, Quebec, Canada

Mr. Jacob John
Immanuel MTC, Stafford, Texas

Dr. George Kurian
Baltimore MTC, Maryland

Dr. P. John Lincoln
Emmanuel MTC, Lubbock, Texas

Mr. Abraham Mathai
St. Andrews MTC, New York

Mr. Abraham Mathew
Dallas MTC, Dallas, Texas

Mrs. Achamma Mathew
Immanuel MTC, Stafford, Texas

Mr. T. A. Mathew
Trinity MTC, Houston, TX

Mr. Saju Mathew
Philadelphia MTC, Philadelphia, PA

Mr. James Mepurathu
St. Paul's MTC, Dallas, TX

Mr. Varghese Oommen
Long Island MTC, Merrick, NY

Mrs. Annamma Philip
Epiphany MTC, Ozone Park, NY

Mr. Cherian Philip
San Francisco MTC, CA

Mr. George Philip
St. Peter's MTC, New Jersey

Mr. Abraham Philipose
Los Angels MTC, CA

Mr. Varghese K. Pothan
Canadian MTC, Toronto, Canada

Mr. Easow Rajan
Kingston MTC, Ontario, Canada

Mr. C. M. Samuel
Detroit MTC, MI

Mr. E. Samuel
Ft. McMurray, Alberta, Canada

Mr. Geevarghese Thankachan
Ebenezer MTC, Pelham, NY

Mr. Alex Thomas
Boston MTC, MA

Mr. Joseph V. Thomas
Long Island MTC, Merrick, NY

Mr. Mathew Thomas
Ottawa MTC, Ontario, Canada

Mr. A. K. Thomas
Mar Thoma Church, London, UK

Mr. K. M. Thomas
Atlanta MTC, GA

Mr. John Titus
Greater Seattle MTC, WA

Mr. Daniel Varghese
New Jersey MTC, NJ

Mr. Sosamma Varghese
St. Thomas MTC, Yonkers, NY

Mr. Thomas Varghese
St. Mark's MTC, Tampa, Central Florida, FL

Dr. George Zachariah
Greater Washington MTC, Washington D.C.

Mr. Mathew V. Zachariah
St. Thomas MTC, Yonkers, NY

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എന്റെ ദേവാലയം.

(മാളിക മുകുളേറിയ മന്നന്റെ തോളിൽ..... എന്ന രീതി)

ഏകാന്തമായ വീഥിയിൽക്കുകിലാ
ത്രീയേക ദൈവ നാമത്തിലങ്ങനെ
ധ്യാനത്തിലാണു യോഗിയേപ്പോലിതാ
സ്ഥാനം തെറ്റാതെ നില്ക്കുന്നെൻ ആലയം.

മുറ്റത്തു പച്ചപ്പൂൽത്തകിടികളും
ചിട്ടയിലുള്ള കുറ്റി ചെടികളും
ചാരത തണൽ ഈവക ഏകുവാൻ
ഓരത്തിൽ നീളെ വൃക്ഷലതാദിയും
വേലി ചാടുന്ന കാലികളൊക്കെയും
കോലുകൊണ്ടു മരണം വരിയ്ക്കുപോൽ
ഏതു ചോരണം തന്ത്രത്താൽ വീഴ്ത്തുവാൻ
വാതിലിൽ ചില കൂവുന്ന യന്ത്രവും.

ചുറ്റിലും നല്ല കമ്പി വലകളും
അറ്റു പോകാത്ത ചങ്ങല പൂട്ടിലും
ബന്ധിച്ചീവിധം ഈ വഴിത്താരയിൽ
കത്തിച്ചു രാവിൽ വൈദ്യുത ദീപവും
ആഴ്ച വട്ടത്തിൻ ആദ്യ ദിവസത്തിൽ
വീഴ്ചയില്ലാതെ എത്തുന്നു ഏവരും
സ്തോത്ര ഗീതങ്ങൾ പാടിയും ധ്യാനിച്ചും
സ്തോത്ര കാഴ്ചകൾ അർപ്പിച്ചു സർവ്വരും.

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മിത്രങ്ങളായി വന്നവരിൽ ചിലർ
ശത്രുക്കളായി തീരുന്നു മാത്രയിൽ
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ചേരികളായി മാറുന്നു മാനുഷർ

കുത്തിനിറച്ച കുറ്റിയിൽ നിന്നങ്ങു
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ആർദ്രമാകുന്നു മാനസം ചിന്തയാൽ
ഈറനാകുന്നു നേത്രങ്ങൾ കണ്ണിരാൽ
ഈശ്വര മാർഗ്ഗമെത്രയോ ദുഷ്കരം
നാശത്തിൻ പാത ഏറെ വിശാലവും.

ഈശ്വരൻ മനസ്സാകുന്ന ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ
ശാശ്വതനായി നിന്നു വിളങ്ങുമ്പോൾ
മോഹങ്ങൾ നമ്മെ വിട്ടു പിരിയുന്നു
സ്നേഹഭാവങ്ങൾ ഉള്ളിൽ വിരിയുന്നു

ഉമ്മൻ ജോർജ്

MATRIMONIAL

WANTED GROOM

Marthomite parents invite serious marriage proposals, from parents of medical doctors, engineers with masters, or other professionals for their pharmacist daughter, 24 yrs, 5' 4", attractive, pursuing a Doctor of Pharmacy degree. We are looking for an ambitious and hard working young man below 30. Interested parties please respond with background information and recent photograph to:

P.O. Box No. 141008
Staten Island, NY 10314-1008

Marthomite parents invite marriage proposals for their God fearing daughter 25 years old (Height: 164 Cm). Born and brought up in Poona. Now working at Poona, willing to relocate. Post graduate plus Computer Education. Marthomites, CSI and Jacobites preferred. Interested parties please write with details and a recent photograph to Box No. OCT01 c/o The Editor, Mar Thoma Messenger.

Marthomite parents invite marriage proposals for their daughter 27 years old, MD (graduated from US medical school and doing residency) 5' 6", from God fearing christian boys with similar education (professionals 25-30 yrs). Please respond with full details, returnable recent photograph and telephone number to Box No. OCT02 c/o The Editor, Mar Thoma Messenger.

Marthomite parents invite proposals for their daughter, medical doctor, doing 2nd year residency in Ophthalmology, good looking and well mannered. 27 years 5' 2", Indian born U.S. citizen from parents of doctors, engineers with post graduate degrees, CPAS between 27-30 years. Doctors/Engineers from India doing residency or post graduate studies in U.S. are also considered. Marthomites, CSI, Jacobites preferred. Please write to Box No. OCT03 c/o The Editor, Mar Thoma Messenger.

Marthomite Parents invite proposal for their 25 year old daughter. U.S. citizen, recently graduated from Medical School in India and pursuing M.D., looking for Post-Graduate, engineer, or doctor, age under 30 years. Interested parties please write with recent photograph (returnable) to: Box No. OCT04 c/o The Editor, Mar Thoma Messenger.

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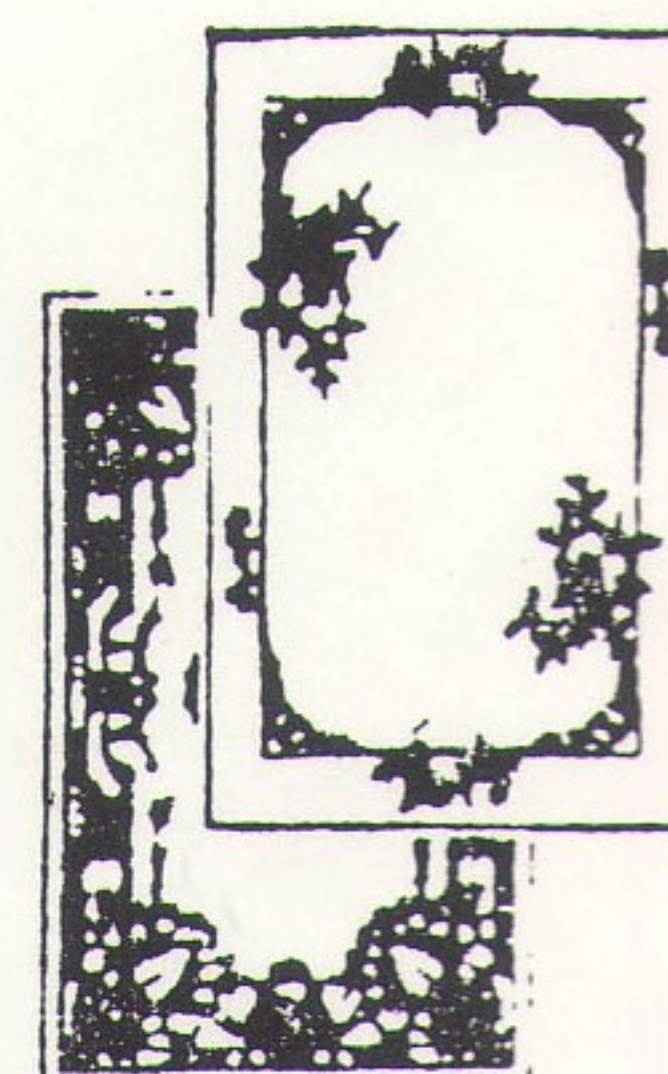
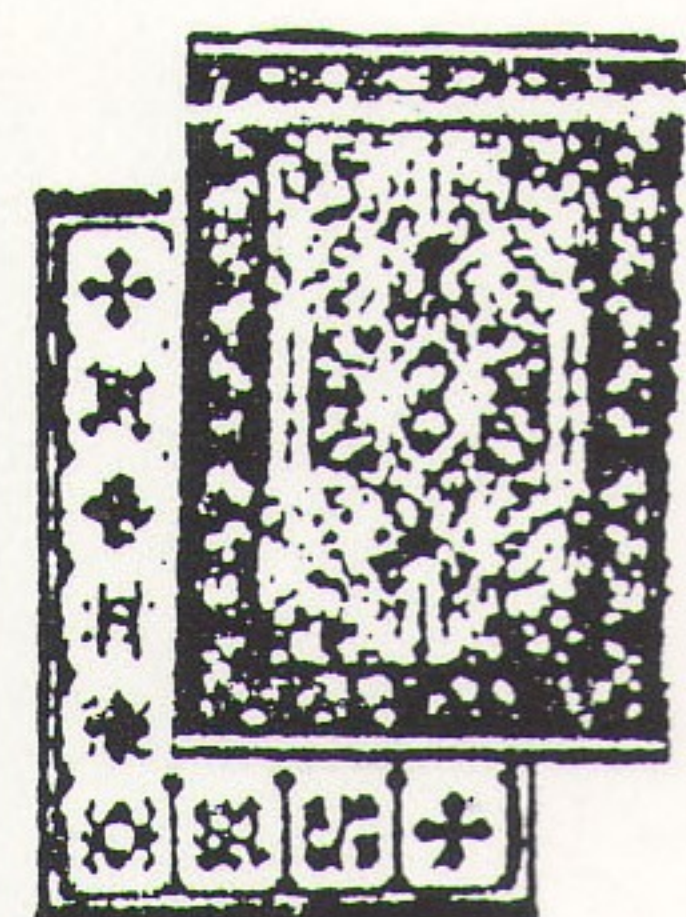
Dinner: 5:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Sundays: 3:00 - 10:00 p.m.

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July 4 - 7, 1996

THEME: *Rooted And Built Up In Christ*

LEADERS: The Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Episcopa
The Rt. Rev. Geevarghese Mar Athanasius Episcopa
Rev. A.T. Zachariah

For Information:

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