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A PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

JULY 2003



MM

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Message from the Diocesan Bishop

July 21, 2003



Dearly Beloved in Christ,

This summer has been busy with many retreats and conferences. All these are meant for our spiritual growth and maturity. Spiritual growth has to be reflected in our action, especially in terms of our sensitivity to the community around. Growth towards God is explicitly manifested as growth towards the neighbor. But our concerns end up as relief work rather than developments. We need to understand the clear distinction between the two. Relief work is addressing the consequences of evil while development is meant to eradicate such type of evil. Hope and pray that we as a diocese will involve into developmental programs and activities.

The XXI Family Conference was hosted by the South Florida Mar Thoma Church and I commend the vicar and members of the parish for organizing it in the best possible way. I acknowledge the hard work behind and God has rewarded their prayer and concerted efforts. The theme **"Thy Kingdom Come"** was well exposed by the leaders of the conference. The presence of the Suffragan Metropolitan, Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Irenaeus was indeed a great blessing. Sessions were arranged for various age groups and were well organized. The conference was a great blessing to all those who participated.

The Sunday School conference of the Eastern Region also went on very well this time and a good number of students attended the conference. The theme **"What Does the Lord Require of You"** was a real challenge to the participants and helped them to see that commitment to Christ is not confined to our worship alone but participating in the mission of God in the world. **"My Grace Is Sufficient"** was the theme for the conference of the Association of the Physician's and Dentists of the Mar Thoma Church and the conference went on well. I thank God for all those who sacrificially contributed for the success of these conferences.

The Mexican Mission is progressing very well and I am happy that there is good response from most of the parishes of the diocese. The letters received from the mission volunteers after their mission visit is very exciting and encouraging. God willing, we would like to have the closing ceremony of the summer mission by August 24, 2003, and I urge all of you to visit the island during that time. We will be continuing our long term mission in the island and other parts of Mexico. Please continue to pray for this mission and I am looking for youths who can serve as missionaries in those areas.

We also sent a medical team to another part of Mexico and a team was sent to Alabama to work among the Native Americans. God is granting us immense opportunities and we need to avail ourselves to participate in His mission. The field is ripe but laborers are few. Are we available? Let us pray together and respond to this invitation.

The Kingdom of God on earth will be a reality only when we are ready to actualize it through our participation. May the Lord bless and strengthen us for this mission.

It is unfortunate that the Episcopal Church has elected a gay bishop. The Church is called to be the salt of the earth, called to preserve the values of the Kingdom of God. Sad to say, we conform to the patterns of the world and make a mockery of the gospel. The trends that we see in churches today are frightening and very disturbing. Let us pray that the leaders of the church will discern God's will and thereby facilitate the furtherance of the Kingdom of God.

Yours in His Service,
Coorilos Methrachen

തലമുറകളോടുള്ള

ഉത്തരവാദിത്വം



മിസിസ് രജി സാര ജോസഫ്
സൗത്ത് ഫ്ലോറിഡ മാർത്തോമ ചർച്ച്

സഭയുടെ അഭ്യുന്നതി, സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ വളർച്ച, കുടുംബത്തിന്റെ പുരോഗമനം ഇവ എല്ലാം തന്നെ ഇന്ന് യുവതലമുറയിൽ നിക്ഷിപ്തമാണ്. ഈ യുവതലമുറ നടക്കേണ്ടുന്ന വഴി ബാല്യപ്രായത്തിൽ തന്നെ അവരെ പഠിപ്പിക്കേണ്ടതും, ആ വഴിയിൽ തന്നെ നടത്തേണ്ടതും അവരുടെ ഓരോ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും ശ്രദ്ധിക്കേണ്ടതും മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ ചുമതലയാണ്. ആ വഴിത്താരയിൽ ആദ്യത്തെ നാഴികകല്ലാണ് യഹോവാഭക്തി.

“യഹോവാഭക്തി ജ്ഞാനത്തിന്റെ ആരംഭം” (സദൃശ്യം:9:10) യഹോവാഭക്തി ജ്ഞാനോപദേശമാകുന്നു. മാനത്തിനു വിനയം മുന്നോടിയ്ക്കുന്നു. (സദൃശ്യം:15:33) ജ്ഞാനികളുടെ നവോസുഖപ്രദം (സദൃശ്യം 12:18) ജ്ഞാനം മുത്തുകളെക്കാൾ നല്ലതാകുന്നു. (സദൃശ്യം: 8:11) യഹോവാഭക്തി ദൃഢമായ ഒരു വിശ്വാസവും ഉണ്ട്. യഹോവാഭക്തി ദോഷത്തെ വെറുക്കുന്നു. (സദൃശ്യം: 8:13)

ചുരുക്കത്തിൽ യഹോവാഭക്തി എല്ലാവിധ തെറ്റുകളിൽ നിന്നും, പാപങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നും നമ്മെ കാത്തു സൂക്ഷിക്കുന്ന ഒരു പരിചയം, കോട്ടയും ആകുന്നു.

എന്നാൽ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ആരംഭത്തിൽ തന്നെ താളം തെറ്റി, ഒരു പരാജയമായി മാറി, നിരാശാഭരിതരായി അതിനെ തള്ളി നീക്കുന്ന പലരും ഇന്ന് നമ്മുടെ ഇടയിൽ ഉണ്ട്. ഈ പരാജയത്തിനുള്ള മുഖ്യകാരണങ്ങളിൽ ഒന്നാണ് ലഹരിപദാർത്ഥങ്ങളുടെ സ്വാധീനം. സമ്പന്നതയുടെ മകുടിയിൽ ജീവിക്കുന്ന നാം എത്രയോ ആത്മീകമായി വളരേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇന്ന് സമൂഹത്തെയും കുടുംബത്തെയും, സഭയെയും കാർന്നു തിന്നുന്ന ഒരു ഭീകരരോഗമായി മദ്യാസക്തി രൂപം കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയാണ്.

വീഞ്ഞ് പരിഹാസിയും മദ്യം കലഹക്കാരനും ആകുന്നു (സദൃശ്യം: 20:1)

ഇന്നത്തെ യുവതലമുറ കഷ്ടപ്പെട്ട് സമ്പാദിക്കുന്ന പണം ലഹരി പദാർത്ഥങ്ങൾക്കായും, മദ്യത്തിനായും ചിലവഴിക്കുന്നത് എത്രയോ ശോചനീയമാണ്. നമ്മുടെ ചുറ്റുപാടുമുള്ള, ആവശ്യത്തിലിരിക്കുന്ന സഹോദരങ്ങളെ വിവിധ തരത്തിൽ സഹായിക്കുവാൻ ഈ പണം കൊണ്ട് കഴിയും. മദ്യപാനം കൊണ്ട് നശിച്ചുപോയ പഴയ തറവാടുകൾ എത്രയധികം! മദ്യത്തിന്റെ അധീനതയിൽ പെട്ടുപോയ മക്കൾക്കുവേണ്ടി കണ്ണുനീരൊഴുക്കുന്ന മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെയും, ഭാര്യമാരുടെയും എണ്ണം ദിനം പ്രതി വർദ്ധിച്ചുവരികയാണ്. ആത്മാവിനെയും ശരീരത്തെയും നശിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ഈ മദ്യപാനാസക്തിയുടെ ആരംഭം എവിടെ നിന്ന്? മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ അനാസ്ഥയും ദൈവഭക്തിയിൽ മക്കളെ വളർത്തിക്കൊണ്ടുവരാത്തതുമാണ് ഇതിന്റെ മുഖ്യകാരണം.

മക്കളെ എങ്ങനെ വളർത്തണം? വിശുദ്ധ വേദപുസ്തകത്തിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ ഇതൊന്നു വിശകലനം ചെയ്യാം.

1. ദൈവഭക്തിയിൽ മക്കളെ വളർത്തിയെടുക്കുക.

1 കൊരിന്ത്യർ 3:16-17 ൽ “നിങ്ങൾ ദൈവത്തിന്റെ മന്ദിരം എന്നും ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ആത്മാവ് നിങ്ങളിൽ വസിക്കുന്നു എന്നും അറിയുന്നില്ലയോ? ദൈവത്തിന്റെ മന്ദിരം നശിപ്പിക്കുന്നവനെ ദൈവം നശിപ്പിക്കും. ദൈവത്തിന്റെ മന്ദിരം വിശുദ്ധമല്ലോ? നിങ്ങളും അങ്ങനെ തന്നെ“. ആ വാക്യത്തിന്റെ അർത്ഥം മാതാപിതാക്കൾ മക്കളെ ശരിക്കും പറഞ്ഞു മനസ്സിലാക്കണം. ദൈവത്തിന്റേതായ ശരീരമാകുന്ന മന്ദിരം അശുദ്ധമാക്കരുത്. അത് വിശുദ്ധമായി സൂക്ഷിക്കണമെങ്കിൽ ആത്മാവിനെ നശിപ്പിക്കുന്ന മദ്യം, മയക്കുമരുന്നിന് എന്തിനവ ഉപയോഗിക്കരുത്. എന്തുകൊണ്ടെന്നാൽ ദൈവം അശുദ്ധമായ മന്ദിരത്തെ നശിപ്പിക്കും.

2. മാതാപിതാക്കളും മുതിർന്നവരും കുട്ടികൾക്ക് ഒരു മാതൃകയായി ജീവിക്കണം.

മക്കളുടെ മുന്നിൽ മദ്യമുപയോഗിക്കുന്ന മാതാപിതാക്കൾക്ക് അവരോട് എന്തു ഗുണദോഷം നൽകാനാവും?

3. ദുഷ്ട സംസർഗ്ഗത്തിൽ നിന്നും മക്കളെ കാത്തുസൂക്ഷിക്കുക.

ദുഷ്ടന്മാരുടെ ആലോചനപ്രകാരം നടക്കാതെയും പാപികളുടെ വഴിയിൽ നിലക്കാതെയും, പരിഹാസികളുടെ ഇരിപ്പിടത്തിൽ ഇരിക്കാതെയും, യഹോവയുടെ ന്യായപ്രമാണത്തിൽ സന്തോഷിച്ചു അവന്റെ ന്യായപ്രമാണത്തെ രാപ്പകൽ ധ്യാനിക്കുന്നവൻ ഭാഗ്യവാൻ (സങ്കീ: 1:1-2). സ്കൂളിൽ പഠിക്കുന്ന കാലം മുതൽക്കേ, മക്കളുടെ കൂട്ടുകാർ ആരൊക്കെയാണെന്ന് മനസ്സിലാക്കണം. ദു:സ്വഭാവികളായ കൂട്ടുകാരിൽ നിന്നും ചെറുപ്പം മുതൽക്കേ കുട്ടികളെ വേർതിരിക്കണം.

1 കൊരിന്ത്യർ 5:11-ൽ “എന്നാൽ സഹോദരൻ എന്നു പേർപെട്ട ഒരുവൻ ദുർന്നടപ്പുകാരനോ, അത്യാഗ്രഹിയോ, വിഗ്രഹാരാധിയോ, വാവിഷ്ഠാണക്കാരനോ മദ്യപാനോ പിടിച്ചുപറിക്കാരനോ ആകുന്നുവെങ്കിൽ അവനോട് സംസർഗ്ഗം അരുത്; അങ്ങനെയുള്ളവനോടുകൂടെ ഭക്ഷണം കഴിക്കു പോലും അരുത് എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നു.

4. വീട്ടിൽ കുടുംബപ്രാർത്ഥന അത്യാവശ്യം

മുടങ്ങാതെ രാവിലെയും വൈകിട്ടും അപ്പനും അമ്മയും മക്കളുമൊന്നിച്ച് വിശുദ്ധവേദപുസ്തകം വായിച്ച് പാട്ടുകൾ പാടി പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കണം. “നിങ്ങൾ പരീക്ഷയിൽ അകപ്പെടാതിരിപ്പാൻ പ്രാർത്ഥിപ്പിൻ” എന്ന് ലൂക്കോസിന്റെ സുവിശേഷം 22:40 ൽ കർത്താവ് നമ്മെ പഠിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. "A family that prays together stays together" എന്നാണല്ലോ.

5. മദ്യപാനത്താൽ നശിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നവർക്കുവേണ്ടിയും അവരുടെ കുടുംബങ്ങൾക്കുവേണ്ടിയും കുടുംബപ്രാർത്ഥന സമയത്ത് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുക.

അപ്പോൾ കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളുടെ മനസ്സിൽ മദ്യപാനം കൊണ്ടുള്ള തിന്മകൾ ആഴമായി പതിയും. അതിന്റെ വികൃത മുഖം എത്ര ദയനീയമാണെന്ന് അവർക്ക് മനസ്സിലാകും. ഇത് മദ്യപാനത്തിൽ നിന്നും ഒഴിഞ്ഞുനിൽക്കുവാൻ അവരെ സഹായിക്കും.

6. ദിവസവും ഒരു നേരമെങ്കിലും (രാത്രിയിൽ) കുടുംബമായി ഒന്നിച്ചിരുന്ന് ഭക്ഷണം കഴിക്കുക.

ആ സന്ദർഭങ്ങളിൽ അവരുടെ പ്രയാസങ്ങളും പ്രശ്നങ്ങളും ചോദിച്ചു മനസ്സിലാക്കുകയും അതിന് പ്രതിവിധി പറഞ്ഞുകൊടുക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുക. മാതാപിതാക്കൾ തങ്ങളുടെ പ്രശ്നത്തിൽ പങ്കുചേരുന്നതുകൊണ്ട് അവർക്ക് ആത്മവിശ്വാസം വർദ്ധിക്കുകയും, പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ വരുമ്പോൾ പങ്കുവെയ്ക്കുവാൻ ധൈര്യം കാണിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യും. അപ്പോൾ എന്തെല്ലാം ചെയ്തു കൂടാ, എന്തെല്ലാം ചെയ്യണം എങ്ങിനെ ചെയ്യണം എന്ന് മക്കളെ സ്നേഹത്തോടെ ഉപദേശിക്കുവാൻ സാധിക്കും.

7. വിശുദ്ധകുർബ്ബാനയിൽ കുടുംബസമേതം പങ്കുകൊള്ളുക

ആൺകുട്ടികളെ ചെറുപ്രായത്തിൽ തന്നെ വിശുദ്ധകുർബ്ബാനയിൽ ശുശ്രൂഷകരായി മാറ്റുക. “ഞാനും എന്റെ കുടുംബവുമോ ഞങ്ങൾ യഹോവയെ സേവിക്കും” യോശുവ 24:15 ഇതിൽ നിന്നും കുടുംബമായി ആരാധിക്കേണ്ടതിന്റെ ആവശ്യകത മനസ്സിലാക്കാം. പള്ളികളിൽ നടക്കുന്ന ആത്മീക കൂട്ടായ്മകളിൽ കുടുംബത്തോടെ സംബന്ധിക്കണം. ഭവനങ്ങളിലേക്ക് തിരിച്ചുവന്നാൽ അതിനെപ്പറ്റി വിശദമായി ചർച്ച ചെയ്യാം, പ്രസംഗം എന്തായിരുന്നു, എന്തിനെപ്പറ്റിയായിരുന്നു എന്നും ചോദിക്കാം. തൻമൂലം ആരാധനയിൽ ക്രമമായും ശ്രദ്ധയായും ഇരിപ്പാൻ കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾക്ക് സഹായകരമാകും.

8. കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളെ നിർബന്ധമായും സൺഡേസ്കൂളിൽ ചേർക്കണം.

ഇതുമൂലം സഭ കല്പിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന നിയമങ്ങൾ അനുസരിച്ച് നടക്കുവാനുള്ള വ്യഗ്രത കുട്ടികൾക്ക് ലഭിക്കുന്നു. വിശുദ്ധവേദപുസ്തകത്തെയും, സഭയെയുംപ്പറ്റി പഠിക്കാനും സാധിക്കുന്നു. ദൈവഹിതം തലമുറകളെ അറിയിക്കുവാൻ തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കപ്പെട്ട പ്രവാചകന്മാരുടെ സ്ഥാനമാണ് മാതാപിതാക്കൾക്കുള്ളത്.

“നിന്റെ മക്കൾക്ക് ഉപദേശിച്ചുകൊടുക്കണം” എന്നു പറയുമ്പോൾ പ്രകടമായ ഒരു പ്രവാചക ശുശ്രൂഷ മാതാപിതാക്കളെ ഏല്പിച്ചു. “നീയോ ഇന്നവരോട് പഠിച്ചു എന്നു ഓർക്കുകയും ക്രിസ്തുവിങ്കലുള്ള വിശ്വാസത്താൽ നിന്നെ രക്ഷയ്ക്കും തിയാക്കുവാൻ മതിയായ തിരുവെഴുത്തുകളെ ബാല്യം മുതൽ അറിയുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നതുകൊണ്ടു നീ പഠിച്ചും നിശ്ചയം ഇരിക്കുന്നതിൽ നിലനിൽക്ക” എന്ന് 2 തിമൊത്തി:3:14 അപ്പോസ്തലനായ പൗലോസ് ഉപദേശിക്കുന്നു.

9. കുടുംബപാരമ്പര്യത്തിന് പ്രാധാന്യം കല്പിക്കുക.

ഏതു സാഹചര്യത്തിൽ ജീവിച്ചാലും, കുടുംബപാരമ്പര്യവും, അതിന്റെ മാനവും, ഗൗരവവും എന്താണെന്നും അത് കാത്തുസൂക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിൽ വ്യക്തികളുടെ പങ്ക് എന്താണെന്നും കുട്ടികളെ ചെറുപ്രായത്തിൽ തന്നെ പറഞ്ഞു ധരിപ്പിക്കണം. മത്തായി 1:1-16 വരെയുള്ള വാക്യങ്ങളിൽ ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ പാരമ്പര്യത്തെക്കുറിച്ച് എഴുതിയിരിക്കുന്നു. അതുപോലെ ഓരോ ക്രിസ്ത്യാനിക്കും പാരമ്പര്യമുണ്ട്. അതിന്റെ മഹത്വം മനസ്സിലാക്കുകയും അതനുസരിച്ച് ജീവിക്കുകയും ചെയ്താൽ, എവിടെ ജീവിച്ചാലും കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾ വഴിതെറ്റുകയില്ല.

10. മാതാപിതാക്കൾ മക്കൾക്കുവേണ്ടി കണ്ണുനീരോടെ പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കണം.

ഇടവിടാതെ കണ്ണുനീരോടെ പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്ന മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ മക്കൾ ഒരുനാളും നശിക്കുകയില്ല. നമുക്ക് ലഭിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന ദൈവകൃപകൾ നമ്മുടെ മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ കണ്ണുനീരിന്റെ ഫലമാണ്. മക്കൾക്കുവേണ്ടി സ്തോത്രകാഴ്ചകൾ ദൈവാലയത്തിൽ അർപ്പിക്കുന്നത് അനുഗ്രഹമാണ്. ഈയോവ് 1:5 ൽ മക്കൾക്കുവേണ്ടി ഹോമയാഗം കഴിച്ചും മക്കളെ ശുദ്ധീകരിച്ചും വന്ന ഒരു വാത്സല്യപിതാവിനെ കാണാം. മർക്കോസ് 7:25-30 വരെയുള്ള വാക്യങ്ങളിൽ അമ്മയുടെ പ്രാർത്ഥന കേട്ട് യേശു കൊച്ചുമകളുടെ ഭൃതം പുറത്താക്കിയതായി സാക്ഷിക്കുന്നു. ഹന്നായിക്ക് ശമുവേൽ ബാലനെ ലഭിച്ചത് എങ്ങനെ? 1 ശമുവേൽ 1:10-20.

11. നോമ്പ്, ഉപവാസം ഇങ്ങനെ സഭ കല്പിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതെല്ലാം മാതാപിതാക്കളും മക്കളും ചേർന്ന് അനുഷ്ഠിക്കണം.

ഉപവാസത്താലും, പ്രാർത്ഥനയാലും എസ്റ്റേർരാജ്ഞി എങ്ങനെ യഹൂദജനത്തെ രക്ഷിച്ചു എന്ന് എനോക്കിമാവിന്റെ പുസ്തകത്തിൽ വ്യക്തമാക്കിയിരിക്കുന്നു. എസ്റ്റേർ 4:16 നെഹമ്യാവ് തന്റെ ജനത്തിന്റെ സ്ഥിതിയറിഞ്ഞ് ഉപവസിക്കുകയും പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. (നെഹ : 1:4)

12. സിനിമകളുടെയും, ടി.വിയുടെയും ആധിക്യം മക്കളിൽ വരാതിരിക്കാൻ പ്രത്യേകം ശ്രദ്ധിക്കണം

പല സിനിമകളിലും, സന്തോഷകരമായ കുടുംബത്തേയും സ്നേഹിതൻമാരെയും ചിത്രീകരിക്കുന്നതിനു വേണ്ടി വീട്ടിലും, കോളേജ് പരിസരത്തിലും, ക്ലബുകളിലും ഇരുന്ന് ലഹരിസാധനങ്ങൾ ഒന്നിച്ചിരുന്ന് ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന സീനുകൾ കാണിക്കുന്നു. ഇത് കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളുടെ മനസ്സിൽ നൽകുന്നതെന്ത്? അത് അവരെ വഴിതെറ്റിക്കുന്നു.

13. എപ്പോഴെങ്കിലും മക്കൾ മദ്യം കുടിച്ചെന്ന് അറിഞ്ഞാൽ കർശനമായി ശാസിക്കുകയും ചെയ്ത ശിക്ഷകൾ നൽകുകയും ചെയ്യുക.

വടിപ്രയോഗം കൂടെ നടത്താം. തെറ്റില്ല. സഭ്യ: 23:3-14, “ബാലന് ശിക്ഷ കൊടുക്കാതിരിക്കരുത്. വടികൊണ്ട് അടിച്ചാൽ അവൻ ചത്തുപോകയില്ല. വടികൊണ്ട് അവനെ അടിക്കുന്നതിനാൽ നീ അവന്റെ പ്രാണനെ പാതാളത്തിൽ നിന്നു വിടുവിക്കും“. എന്നാലും വടിപ്രയോഗത്തിന് മുൻപ് തെറ്റിനെപ്പറ്റി ബോധ്യപ്പെടുത്തുകയും, അതിന്റെ ദുഷ്യഫലങ്ങൾ മനസ്സിലാക്കുകയും ചെയ്യണം.

14. വളർന്ന മക്കളെ സ്നേഹിതരുടെയോ, ബന്ധുക്കളുടെയോ വീടുകളിൽ രാത്രി താമസിക്കുവാൻ അനുവദിക്കരുത്. രാത്രി മക്കൾ മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ അഭാവത്തിൽ അവിടെ എന്തു ചെയ്യുന്നു, എന്ന് അറിയാൻ സാധിക്കുകയില്ല, അത് വലിയ ആപത്തിലേക്ക് നയിക്കും.

15. രണ്ട് കുട്ടികളെ താരതമ്യപ്പെടുത്തി നമ്മുടെ കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളെ കുറ്റപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിനേക്കാൾ, നമ്മുടെ കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളിൽ മറഞ്ഞുകിടക്കുന്ന കഴിവുകളെ ഉണർത്തി, വളർത്തിയെടുക്കുക. പ്രോത്സാഹനം ആവശ്യമുള്ളിടത്ത് മടി വിചാരിക്കാതെ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുക.

16. കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളുടെ മുമ്പിൽ നാം മറ്റുള്ളവരെയും, സഭയെയും പറ്റി കുറ്റം പറയാതിരിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുക. നമ്മുടെ മാതൃകയില്ലായ്മ അത് വെളിപ്പെടുത്തും.

17. പ്രായം ചെന്ന മാതാപിതാക്കളെ സ്നേഹിക്കുക, ബഹുമാനിക്കുക, സംരക്ഷിക്കുക, ഗുരുക്കന്മാരെ ബഹുമാനിക്കുക എന്നിവ ഭവനത്തിൽ നിന്ന് പഠിക്കേണ്ടതാണ്. ഭവനത്തിലുള്ള പ്രായമായ മാതാപിതാക്കളെ ശുശ്രൂഷിക്കുന്നതും, സ്നേഹിക്കുന്നതും കണ്ട് വളരുന്ന കുട്ടികൾ ഈ ചുമതല നിർവ്വഹിക്കേണ്ടതിന്റെ ആവശ്യം മനസ്സിലാക്കുകയും ഭാവിയിൽ പ്രായമായ സ്വന്തം മാതാപിതാക്കളെ ശുശ്രൂഷിക്കുവാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യും.

18. ശോംശം മാറ്റിവെച്ച് നല്ലകാര്യങ്ങൾക്കും സുവിശേഷവേലയ്ക്കും സഭാപ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്കും നൽകുന്നതിന് മാതാപിതാക്കൾ മാതൃക കാണിച്ച് കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളെ പഠിപ്പിക്കുക (അപ്പോ പ്ര: 5:1-10)

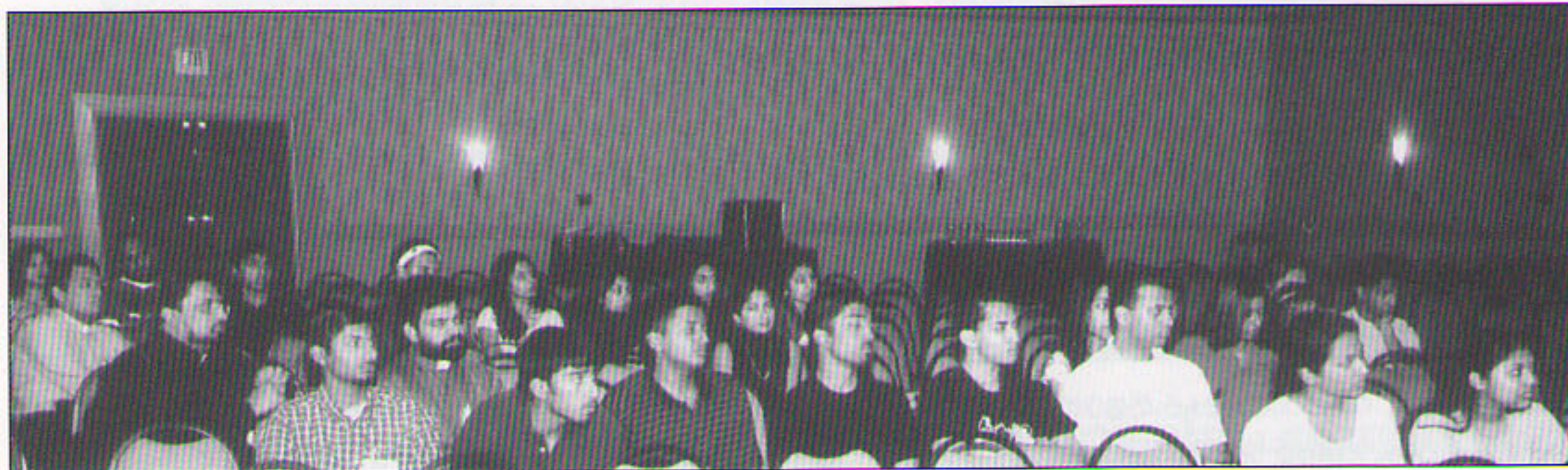
ഒരു വ്യക്തിയും നശിച്ചുപോകരുത് എന്നതാണ് ക്രിസ്തീയസഭയുടെ തത്വം. ആ നിലയിൽ ഓരോ ഇടവകകൾക്കും അവയിൽ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുന്ന ജനങ്ങൾക്കും മാതാപിതാക്കന്മാർക്കും, സഭാധ്യക്ഷന്മാർക്കും കുട്ടികളെ വളർത്തിയെടുക്കുന്നതിൽ സമപങ്കുണ്ട്. “ബാലൻ നടക്കേണ്ടുന്ന വഴിയിൽ അവനെ അഭ്യസിപ്പിക്ക”, അവൻ വൃദ്ധനായാലും അത് മറക്കുകയില്ല സഭ്യശൃവാക്യം 22:6.

അമേരിക്കയിലെ ഇളം തലമുറയുടെ ഭാവി നമ്മുടെ കൈകളിലൂടെ ശക്തമാകണം. അതിനായിട്ടാണ് ദൈവം നമ്മെ ഈ സ്ഥാനത്ത് ആക്കിയിരിക്കുന്നത്. അങ്ങനെ നമ്മുടെ യുവതലമുറയെ നേർപാതയിൽ നയിക്കുവാൻ ദൈവം നമ്മെ ഒരുകൂട്ടെ.

Help From the East: The Destiny of the Mar Thoma Church in the West

Rev. Kemper Crabb

Talk given at the XXI Mar Thoma Family Conference held in Weston, Florida.



Youth session



Christ Jesus expects that disciples baptized into His Name are to obey all things that He has commanded, which means everything in the Bible He authored by His Holy Spirit (Second Peter 1:19-21). The scope of discipleship, then, touches every area of our lives individually, since Scripture addresses every area of existence by principle, precept, or example. To truly begin to see the breadth of what is here being commanded, we must look at verse 19 and ask the question, "Who is Jesus really commanding to be Discipled here? Who is the target of the goal of discipleship?"

Jesus commands the Church here to disciple not just individuals (though individual discipleship is certainly involved), but to disciple "all nations." The Greek word translated as "nations" in English is "ethne", the same word for which English derives its word "ethnic." By this is meant not just the individual, the family, and the Church, but also the civil government, educational systems, the marketplace, courts of law, the arts and entertainment, the military, every aspect of a nation's culture, even down to every last thought, must be made captive to Christ's Word (Second Corinthians 10:4-5), so that God's Will will be done "on earth as it is in Heaven," as His Kingdom comes.

You'll also notice that this Command to disciple the nations is extended to every nation: "disciple all the nations," Jesus tells us. Thus, the scope of the Great Commission takes in every aspect of every nation; it extends to the whole world.

This is in keeping with the Vision of the end of time we are given in Scripture (Isaiah 60; Revelation 21:22-22:2), where all the nations of the earth worship before the Holy Trinity. This Vision is the end-time fruition of the advance of God's Kingdom, as the Gospel reforms and refines culture after culture as they bow in salvation and conform themselves by God's Power to His Word.

On the Last Day, all human cultures will stand together, discipled and refined by Christ's Word to reflect a com-

posite Image of God in Man, as each culture brings its own unique strength, emphasis, and expression of God's Discipleship in their culture, so that the fullest possible reflection of God's Image will be seen in His Creature. On that Day, the words of the prophet Habakkuk will finally be fulfilled: "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." His Kingdom will then be come in all its fullness.

With these Truths as a backdrop, I turn now to a question that is in many of your minds: Why is a white priest of the Western Church, an outsider to your culture and communion, speaking to you concerning the Mar Thoma Church? Well, the simple truth is this: against all expectation, I believe that I know the destiny of your Church in the West. God has sent the Mar Thoma Church in this time as a desperately needed gift to the Western Church and culture.

Since it is the Church that acts as salt to preserve culture and society (Matthew 5:13), and since the Church is to function as light to drive the darkness of a culture and society away (Matthew 5:13-16), the deformation and backsliding of the Western Church has not only failed to retard the drift of the West away from Biblical foundations of society and culture, but has actually accelerated that drift by preaching and living out non-Biblical values under the guise of what seems to be Christianity by its language, but is actually the opposite of what Christ commands the nations to be discipled towards.

The resultant current Western society is one in which family is devalued, the supernatural (including the possibility that God in the Flesh resurrected from the dead) is flatly denied, millions of children are murdered in the womb, wealth is valued far above other people's needs, and our societal institutions of civil governance, education, finance, entertainment, and the arts progressively deny the Truth and Values of Scripture, denying even that there are any transcendent absolute truths at all.

Raised among Baptists, I am eternally grateful that I was taught the necessity of a living relationship with Christ, to revere and obey God's Word above all things. I eventually became an Episcopal priest, seeking to move other Evangelicals like myself in the same direction, while simultaneously seeking to move non-Evangelical Episcopalians toward greater faithfulness to God's Word.

Imagine my surprised joy when I began to realize that a church such as I believe the Western Church should be, a Church both Biblical and evangelical as well as fully committed to the ancient worship, governance, and theology of the Early Church already existed, and that this Church's members had been worshipping Christ even during the centuries my ancestors were sacrificing humans to European gods just as dark and perverse as Kali has ever been. I was even more excited to learn that there were growing numbers of Mar Thomites already in the West, putting down roots, and raising their families here. Why does this fact fill me with hope? Because the Mar Thoma Church is a true Bridge-Church, bridging not only Evangelical and Ancient Traditional emphases, but bridging the East and the West, as well, sent as a gift from God to model their insights, balance, and Biblical Tradition to the Church here in the West.

The Mar Thoma Church offers its Christian culture informed by pure Worship and Scriptural Teaching with its familial stability, emphasis on the balance between the individual and corporate aspects of the Church, non-reductionistic and non-rationalistic view of the world, its connectedness between faith and full-orbed practice, its familial orientation, and its insistence on justice for all people.

It combines in itself the balance of the best of the East and West, and, because it preserves in itself the Eastern purity, it offers to the West what the West desperately needs as a corrective in terms of an ethos that Westerners can appreciate, relate to, and absorb into the West as a corrective to the radical individualism, rationalism, and reductionism that have been the cancer eating at it in earnest for the last seven centuries.

It also offers a supreme example of Biblical Culture that is multi-racial (Persian, Hebrew, Tamil, Aryan, Dravidan, Arabian) formed by centuries of adherence to its ancient Christian Tradition, a model for multi-racial and racially-obsessed Americans as an example of the fact that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek.

For the momentous insights and practices of the Mar Thomites to begin to effect the changes in the West for which they have such potential to do, they must be expressed in ways that are accessible to, and understandable by, Americans and other Westerners. This is a task which must be accomplished by succeeding generations of Mar Thomites, those who have deep understanding of both the Eastern Christian culture of the Mar Thoma Church and of the Western culture into which they have been born.

Historically, the first generation of immigrants into a culture new to them spend the majority of their time and effort establishing their community and providing for their families, consequently having little time to truly blend in with their

adopted culture. Unfortunately, the second generation, the children of the original immigrant community, in most cases end up identifying so strongly with the culture into which they were born that they largely walk away from their parents' culture, seeking to blend into the culture around them as much as possible. It is normally the third generation of an immigrant community that returns to their cultural roots, learning from their grandparents the nature of their origins, and beginning in earnest the task of interpreting and blending the culture of origin with the culture around them.

For the last two years, I've spent a good deal of my time (with the help of your Thirumenis and Achens) urging your youth, the second generation of the Mar Thoma Church in America, not to walk away from your Church, but to realize what a treasure it is to them and to their American culture, a gift from God. I've urged them to learn deeply the history, theology, worship, and practice of their Church, so that they can begin to express those things in ways that will most greatly impact the Church and culture of America.

I do this for two reasons. First, I believe that they will not find a more Biblical or balanced Church in the West, and that they would personally suffer spiritually for abandoning the Church they've been raised in. The second reason I do this is because, even though the values and essence of the Mar Thoma Church will eventually be integrated into the West by the third (and succeeding) generations of the Marthomites, the loss of the second generation would indeed set the work and development of the Mar Thoma Church in America back an entire generation.

This would be bad enough, even if it only affected your Church alone. The truth of the matter is, though, that the loss of an entire generation of Godly influence to the Church and culture of America might be disastrous to them. The situation in the West is worsening daily, and we are running out of time to turn the tide. The West desperately needs the light and yeast and salt of the Mar Thoma Church's faith and practice in accessible expressions as quickly as possible. My fear is that the Western Church and culture cannot afford to lose a generation's time of influence.

This is a difficult and unusual time for your Church in this country, caught as you and your children are between two cultures. Your children desperately need to know all they can about your faith and practice, not only in terms of what those are, but also in terms of the Scriptural reasons behind that faith and practice. I beg you to exert yourselves as much as possible to teach them these things.

It is also true that your children need your love, guidance, and, very importantly, your trust, as they begin the long process of translating the heart of your faith into renewed Western expressions. This is a very difficult task, for both generations. It is, though, a vital and necessary task.

I believe that God has sent your Church to the West as a gift to help turn the West back to His Lordship. I believe that the actions of these generations of Mar Thomites will affect America and the West for centuries to come. I believe that this is the destiny of the Mar Thoma Church in America.

Will you help us? Will you fulfill your destiny as a chosen group of people? ■

"Thy Kingdom Come:" Bible Study Outline

Rev Sham P Thomas

Three preliminary observations regarding the conference theme may help to clarify the concept of the kingdom of God.

"Kingdom of God" may bring in two images of the king and kingdom. The image of God as "King" might have been meaningful at a time when kings were around, if only to remind the potentates that there is someone even above them. However, today the imagery of King is less communicative and also may reinforce the idea of kingdom as a geographical area on which a King is in dominion. Kingdom of God in its real sense evokes the divine activity of God or Reign of God rather than king or kingdom.

Since "Kingdom of God" is an activity of God it has not been static but dynamic. All the kingdom parables of Jesus share various shades of this dynamism. The reign of God is growing like a mustard seed, is leavening like yeast etc. indicate this dynamic nature of the Reign of God.

The Rule of God is that of God, not ours. It is God's gift, not our construction. In this sense the terms that we normally use like, 'building up the kingdom' has no biblical basis as such. We can enter, seek, long for, pray for and witness to the Kingdom but cannot build it. This realization, that is the reign of God is not something that we build up, can humble us from making tall claims and also deliver us from the temptation to equate the earthly empires with that of the Kingdom of God.

Bible Study I The Priority of the Reign of God

Matthew 6

"Thy Kingdom come" is part of the Lord's prayer. Prayer reveals our desire, expectation, hope and commitment. We pray to God, we acknowledge that the rule of God is a gift. We are to say this prayer confidently because God's reign has come into the world in Jesus the Christ. We are also to pray expectantly because the rule of God will be fulfilled in the coming again of Christ.

This prayer is a political plea and a critique. We plead to God that God's reign may come on earth because of a realisation that the existing kingdoms on earth are not according to the will of God. Otherwise the need for another reign wouldn't arise. More than the mere absence of



God's rule in the present world, it may even point to the possibility of the worldly empires working against the reign of God.

The priority given to the Reign of God is the distinctive character of the Lord's prayer. The very structure and content of this prayer reveals this contention. The first three petitions: Hallowed be your name, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as in heaven look forward to a life and world which prioritise God's name, rule and will as the most important elements in life.

The priority given to God's rule distinguishes the Lord's prayer and praying this prayer distinguishes Jesus' followers from others. Pharisees would pray to shine before others and gentiles would pray to get the answer that they want. In praying, the disciples are not to seek their own glory nor their own will but the reign of God.

The reign of God demands certain stances and decisions. Jesus put three sets of options before the disciples: between two types of treasures (Vs. 19-21), two conditions of life (Vs. 22-23) and two masters (Vs. 24). One can give priority to accumulating wealth on earth and can have eyes set on them and worship Mammon. The other option is to invest in heaven by worshipping God and setting eyes upon God and lead a life in light.

Such choices would decide the character of our life. The characteristic of a Kingdom life is worry-free existence. The disciples are to recognise the unproductive, unnecessary and unworthy preoccupations about food, drink, clothing etc. Those who give priorities to these are gentiles. Since they do not believe in God they seek unlimited food, dress and shelter and hence would lead a worry-filled life. Instead of living as gentiles we are called to live as disciples by seeking God's rule and His righteousness. The priority in our life decides whether we are gentiles or disciples of Jesus Christ.

Disciples are to seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness (v. 33). What is promised as a result of seeking God's rule is revealed in the second part of the Lord's prayer (v. 11-13). Accordingly, what we can hope for is a new resource of sustenance (daily bread) and a new type of relationship of forgiving and being forgiven. We are also given the possibility of resisting the temptation that lures us away from God's rule and righteousness.

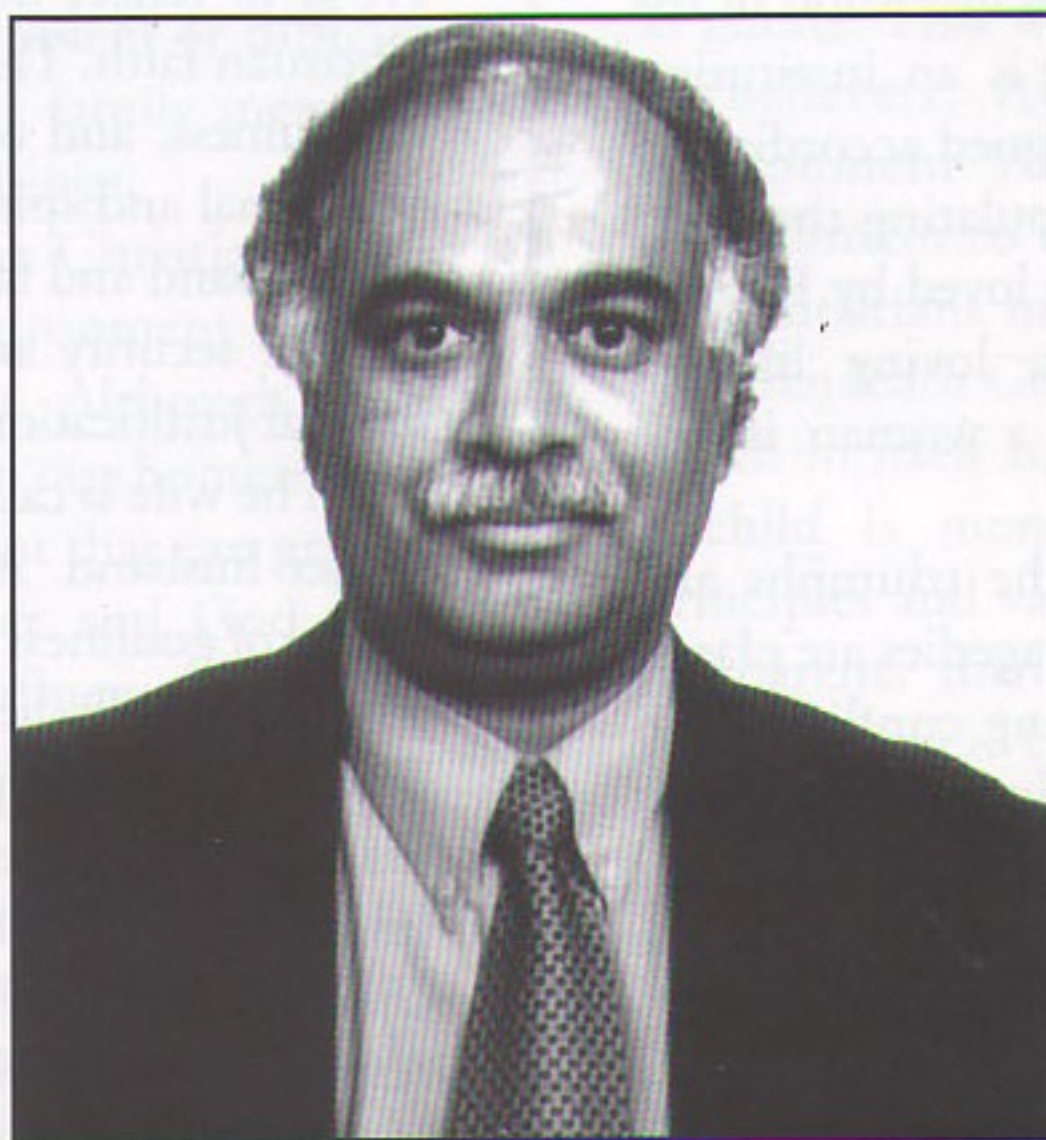
In order to seek God's rule and righteousness we would need to recognise its distinctive features.

(To be continued on next issue)

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Revitalization of the Family

Mathew Varughese, St. Mark's Mar Thoma Church of Central Florida, Tampa

Family as an institution has been in existence ever since man started living as a social being. In every community, family continues to be the main, and arguably the most important social and economic institution. It motivates individuals to be productive members of society, while providing economic and emotional support to its members. We all look to our families for guidance, support, and a sense of belonging. Family is not only an institution, but also a social system that provides a set of norms, values, and roles for the overall good of the society. What each person brings to the family and how each person contributes to the relationships with other individuals in the family determines the reality within each family.

For Christians, family is not merely an invention of the society or just a social necessity, but it is an institution founded by God himself. Family was designed according to God's plan and it is God's agency for populating the earth with people who would love God and be loved by Him. It is to be formed exclusively through a loving lifelong marriage covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God.

The Bible is filled with stories of the triumphs and tragedies of families. Numerous biblical tragedies are played out in the context of families (e.g.: sibling conflict: Cain and Abel; marital strife: Jacob and Rachel; adultery: David and Bathsheba). When people fail to fulfill their proper functions or roles that are attached to their status in the family, they and their families suffer. It is common today for both parents to become too busy in the pursuit of their respective careers. As a result, the care of children is delegated either to day care centers or to a maid. Whatever little time of interaction the parents have with their children is used mostly for supervising their homework or preparing them for exams. As long as their children obtain good grades in every test, parents consider themselves to have successfully fulfilled their role as parents. But when the turbulent years of adolescence arrive, the parents find themselves terribly estranged from their children. Instead of looking to their parents, the children look to their friends, their peers or to the internet to find the guidance, help, and answers they need. And thus the failure to build a strong family bond at the early stages begins to take its toll.

The Bible is very clear as to what God expects of the husband, wife, father, mother and children. The husband is primarily called by God to love his wife. The self-giving love of Christ for the Church is the model that the husband ought to emulate. Secondly, the husband is called to honor his wife. Many family problems between spouses and parents and children would be resolved if these two principles alone were practiced. A husband must remember that his wife is a joint heir with him for the grace of God. She is an expression of God's favor and grace. Every Christian husband should view his wife from this perspective of God's extended love towards him. The husband is to provide leadership as he models the Christian faith (beliefs and way of living) before his family. He is to reflect in his life the character and virtues of the Christian faith. This happens when he lives a life of integrity, faithfulness, and obedience to God. The physical, material, emotional and spiritual needs of the family are to be met by the husband and father to the very best of his ability. He is to provide security and protection for his family. There is no biblical justification for not meeting these needs.

The wife is called by God to love, respect, and be faithful to her husband. As a wife and mother she is to be a role model of godliness and do her best to meet the family's needs. The Bible calls her inward character her beauty. She is to model purity and possess a gentle and quiet spirit. She is to manage her home, speak with wisdom, and demonstrate prudence. She is to assist her husband in nurturing their children. If the father is not a Christian she is to take the full responsibility to rear her children in the ways of the Lord.

Both parents are called by God not only to meet the material and physical needs of the family but also discipline their children appropriately. Appropriate discipline is not abuse, but an authentic expression of love and concern. Yet parents need to be sensitive, not reacting harshly in anger, avoiding expressions of discipline that would scar the spirit of the child.

Children should obey and honor their parents. Honor is not merely a verbal affirmation of the parent, but a lifelong pattern of living that does not bring distress, embarrassment, or reproach, but rather happiness, pride, and respect for the parent. Throughout the lives of their parents children are under divine obligation to be a loving support for them.

I hope that in the coming years our church will continue to grow and that more youths will be actively involved. I would also love to see more outreach and ministries targeting the communities we live in. I think that it would be awesome to one day have people of various backgrounds worshipping together. The Messenger is a great tool we have to share our opinions and thoughts, and to get to know what is going on in our various churches.

Tisha John, Bethel MTC Frankfort, IL

In a Christian family, the members must be firmly committed to one another, regardless of how they may feel about one another. Feelings change all the time. A wife may sometimes feel irritated by her husband's habits. A mother may sometimes feel upset with a child who is disobedient. Siblings sometimes quarrel with each other over personal belongings, or exhibit "sibling rivalry". If the quality of family life depended upon feelings, it would very soon end up in terrible jeopardy. But if there is commitment between members of the family to one another, then family life would still remain strong and steadfast, despite any change of feelings.

Even if all members in a family are deeply committed to one another, it would still not be a Christian family without commitment to Christ. A Christian family is one where the father, mother, sons and daughters are all growing in their love and commitment to Christ; it is a home where all family members look to God for help whenever they have to deal with any problem or difficult situation in life; and it is a home where family members praise and thank God for His daily blessings.

To help build this commitment, the Christian home should be one that provides an environment that is conducive for cultivating commitment. Although there may be no idols or altars to other gods in our homes, there are many things in the home environment that can gravely affect our commitment to one another and God. The Christian home today faces powerful influences from the world, and we cannot close our eyes and pretend that these strong influences are not there.

These influences are through various media that are found in every household: The television, radio, internet, CD or cassette player, books, magazines, journals, newspapers, pictures and posters on the walls and even calendars. Now all of these can be very useful to us, and keep us informed about what is going on around us. We cannot afford to live in the world today without being informed through the various channels of media available to us. But if we are not careful about regulating what we

allow these media to bring into our homes, then our home environment could very well influence our children and us to think, feel, speak and act the way the world does, instead of the way we should.

We cannot stop the world's influence from coming into our homes one way or the other. But we can teach our children to take what is good and right and to reject what is bad and wrong. We can do this by expressing our own comments and remarks on what they see, hear and read in the media. We must be prepared to express approval or disapproval appropriately, but always immediately if we want to have the best impact.

Our homes must be filled with materials that are educational and edifying, and that communicate the right attitudes and values. We can drown out the world's influence in our homes simply by increasing the output from good and enriching media. Invite Christian friends and Christian leaders like your own pastor to your home as guests. This will teach children to prefer the company of believers. All these will help to create a home environment that is conducive for cultivating real commitment to the Lord.

Christians must find time for family devotions. Our children learn God's Word when they go to Sunday school which in itself is a wonderful accomplishment. However, a child is more likely to remember and regard the principles and values when they are taught to him/her by his parents than when they are taught to by a Sunday school teacher. Hearing the same truths from the lips of one's parents add assurance, confidence and familiarity to what the child learns.

The emphasis of the biblical model for the family is one of reciprocity (mutual sharing, giving, and receiving). This occurs out of love, respect and concern for others from within the family. ■

A paper presented at a panel discussion on Revitalization of the Family during the III South-East Regional Mar Thoma Family Conference held at the Christian Retreat Center, Bradenton, Florida from November 21-24, 2002.

1. My suggestions to improve the contents of the Messenger: I think it would be a good idea to add inspirational/motivational stories or poems. I like the structure and current contents of the Mar Thoma Messenger. Messages from aches and thirumenis on biblical history and applications of Bible in the present world are always a pleasure to read.

2. My opinion on the "Future of the Mar Thoma Church in USA"

Drawing from our church's history, I have no doubts that Mar Thoma Church will continue to grow and expand in the future. We have come a long way from A.D. 52, as we now span several continents. My main concern is that our growth must not merely be physical or political but rather spiritual. Spirituality was the reason behind the founding of our Mar Thoma Church and we must continue to maintain its spirituality despite all hurdles that may come our way in the future. As Jesus says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and everything shall be given unto you." (Matthew 6:33)

Jojoy Koshy, Youth Fellowship Secretary, St. Paul's MTC, Dallas

Role of Women in Post-modern Society

Following is an extract from the papers presented by the three panelists; Rev. George Jose, Mrs. Betsy Abraham and Mrs. Susan Johnson in the Women's seminar at the XXI Mar Thoma Family Conference in Florida on July 4, 2003. The panelists addressed the issue from three different angles and Mrs. Nirmala Abraham was the moderator for this seminar. The panelists responded to written questions from the participants and the seminar was an overall success.



From Left to Right: Mrs. Betsy Abraham, Rev. George Jose, Mrs. Susan Johnson and Mrs. Nirmala Abraham.

Social & Cultural Challenges to Women

Mrs. Susan Johnson, St. Mathew's Mar Thoma Church Toronto

From time to time social scientists develop theories to explain the nature of the society we live in. Post-modernism is one such theory. This society has certain distinct characteristics. For example: a heightened awareness about identities—both individual and subgroup; emphasis on individual identities threatening the solidarity of families; existence of multiple identities and realities or in other words, multiple perspectives.

Paradoxically, there is a contradicting tendency that is widespread—called globalisation. Some of the characteristics of globalisation are: the growth and spread of multinational companies with tremendous economic power and integration of international markets for goods, services and commerce; emergence of global, commercial, civil and regulatory institutions; growth and spread of information technology and the mass media; increased migration of people—both refugees and legal immigrants.

Contradictions are not new to our era. What is unique to our era is that there is much more awareness about the forces that impact our lives. One of the consequences of this is that some people embrace religion as they feel that only God can lead them in this chaotic world—others have turned away from God because they feel totally alienated.

In the context of a diasporic population like ours, we struggle to establish ourselves economically and socially in North America. We want to be part of our new country

while retaining our culture and traditions. Women have contributed significantly to social development in Kerala, especially through their participation in the fields of healthcare and education. Malayalee women are thus better positioned to meet the challenges of the post-modern world.

As immigrants to North America, our women face two major challenges: balancing home and career and bringing up our children in a multicultural environment.

We know that in spite of mostly middle and upper class origins, immigrant women get reassigned in terms of their class positions as they enter a highly race and gender conscious labour market. We also want to uphold and extend our ideals about women's roles and responsibilities in our culture to the next generation. This includes the ideals of co-operation and family loyalty, where family obligations take precedence over personal interests; acute sense of interdependence among parents, siblings and children; duty-based moral codes as opposed to individual based. However, in the North American context, continuity and change—old and new values co-exist in terms of cultural values, practices and family patterns. In our Malayalee culture, the transfer of gender myths from the home culture to domestic life in North America is very pervasive. This, along with the pressures of immigration and balancing home and employment, create tremendous stress for a great number of women.

Secondly on the issue of raising our children; our greatest challenge is dealing with the socialization of our children who are exposed to the North American liberal values, peer pressure and their own learned disdain for our traditional ways. Many mothers find it difficult or impossible to even communicate with their children on these issues. We fail to admit the fact that our children have their own views about marriage, family and career. Sometimes, agreeing to support our children's decision to marry their partner of choice is a test of our will. We know for a fact that our children enjoy the benefits of both the worlds and it saddens us when they do not recognize or value that.

The Bible gives examples of women who could be role models for us. In the New Testament we see that Women accompanied Jesus in His ministry. Some of the named women are Mary—mother of Jesus, the Samaritan woman, the Cannonite woman and Martha and Mary. Some of the un-named women are: the poor widow (Mark 12:41-44), the woman who anointed Jesus with expensive perfume (Matt. 26:6-13).

What Lessons can we learn from these women:

1. Readiness to accept God's will—acceptance

Like Mary, mother of Jesus who said: "I am the Lord's servant, may it happen to me as you have said". In our lives it means acceptance of who we are, through self-knowledge. This happens through self-reflection—know about our weaknesses and strengths, our hopes and fears for ourselves and others. We must explore how to overcome our weaknesses and feel empowered about our strengths and have a positive attitude. Even when a problem seems difficult, with prayer and determination try to overcome the obstacle.

2. Sharing Jesus' words and deeds—witnessing

The Samaritan woman went and related her story to her townsfolk and the people came to hear Jesus. Similarly, witness Jesus to our families, share his blessings, learn to pray, be grateful, be forgiving, be non-judgemental and treat others as you like to be treated.

3. Believing in God's power—faith

The Cannonite woman pleaded with Jesus to cure her and Jesus answered her: "You are a woman of great faith. What you want will be done for you". Even when your prayers are not granted, try to see the greater will of God.

4. Generosity—sharing

Like the poor widow who gave everything she had and the woman who anointed Jesus with the most expensive perfume, can we share our wealth and possessions with the less fortunate ones?

5. Caring

Martha and Mary welcomed Jesus to their house and ministered to Him. Similarly, be in touch with your own feelings and the feelings of others. Successful parenting requires us to be in communication and relationship with our children, whatever age they may be.

I would like to give three practical tips to respond to the different crisis we face in our lives:

Consciousness is about our understanding of God's presence—in us, around us, and in others.

Confidence in God's power. This gives us a sense of self-efficacy—ability to face difficult challenges.

Connection to God through constant prayer—this gives us the power to survive difficulties.

In conclusion I want to say that all Christian women are called to serve the Lord according to the gifts and abilities with which He has blessed them and in the stations in life in which He has placed them. Therefore, they should not seek to cultivate favour, win praise and gather merits, attain status and honour and exert power. Everything must be done for the greater glory of God.

(Based on a paper by Dr. Usha George, Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto and a member of the Canadian Mar Thoma Church, Toronto)

Mar Thoma Church

Mar Thoma Church is: • Apostolic in origin • Catholic in nature • Orthodox in faith •
 • Evangelical in principle • Ecumenical in outlook • Oriental in worship •
 • Democratic in function • Episcopal in character •

Psychological Aspects

Betsy Abraham, Dallas Marthoma Church, Grand Prairie

It is important for us women to ask ourselves how we feel about being a woman. The answer to this question reveals our attitude to our personality. Are we happy, proud and satisfied or are we sad, frustrated and depressed. Positive feelings lead to positive thoughts, positive energy and behavior. Women are in a transition period. Older generations were family oriented. Due to the education and social changes now they have become career oriented. Some women of the postmodern society think that family is an obstacle in the pursuit of their career.

Results of Women's Education

Women became aware of themselves, their strengths, skills, talents; self awareness of their rights in decision making at home, church and at workplace; economic freedom and property rights; awareness of their body and physiology.

Women changed from traditional gender role stereotype to egalitarian gender role stereotype.

Traditionally, men are breadwinners and women are homemakers. Men held authority and were considered superior. In the egalitarian gender roles, men and woman are equals. Women have proved their efficiency in almost all professions. They are actively involved in political and social life too. Women have even ventured into outer space.

Changes in basic concepts of male and female psychology. Psychological characteristics of men are dominant, independent secure, self confident, adventurous, organized and assertive. Whereas feminine characteristics are submissiveness, dependent, less self confident, insecure, shy etc. These differences are not based on biological factors but socio-cultural conditions. These are personality traits that men and women acquire according to the culture and society they are brought up in.

Mental Health of Women of Post-Modern Society

There are women who are proud and happy of their growth and achievements. At the same time increased suicide rate among women show that they face a major emotional crisis.

Some Crisis Areas

Women face more problems due to increased workload and responsibilities. They struggle to balance different roles. They experience a lot of stress, guilt, fear and anxiety.

Men are more traditional and expect their wives and other women to behave in the traditional way. This leads to a lot of conflicts. Women feel depressed, angry, helpless and worthless.

Pressures of their inner conflicts: Due to the transition, they are confused about how they should behave, react and what is appropriate and inappropriate.

Coping Strategies

Some women become rebellious, expressing their emotions in a destructive way while some adapt to the situation thinking that there is no escape from their existing situation. They make life more miserable for themselves and others.

Some women resort to adjustment by using intellectual reasoning, understanding and acceptance. This leads to changes in their attitude and approach to various situations and some behavioral changes.

For example:

Relaxation: Holding Jesus as a friend, they ventilate all their feelings to Him; engaging in yoga and other exercises; involving in hobbies.

Resolve their own conflicts by proper reading and learning

Become assertive and prepare themselves for yes and no answers (positive or negative response) and develop higher self-esteem

Express themselves fully as women, thus glorifying God's purpose in their lives

Develop their strengths, skills, talents, communication skills etc.

Bring up their children, both boys and girls without any discrimination

Become aware of their property rights

Educate and empower other women

Life is our gift from God... Our gift to God is how we live our lives!

ആധുനിക ലോകത്തിൽ സ്ത്രീജന പങ്കാളിത്തം - വേദപുസ്തക വിശകലനത്തിൽ

(റവ. ജോർജ്ജ് ജോസ്, ഇമ്മാനുവേൽ മാർ തോമാ ചർച്ച്, ഹ്യൂസ്റ്റൺ)

നഃ സ്ത്രീ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യമർഹിതി (സ്ത്രീ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം അർഹിക്കുന്നില്ല)

മനുസ്മൃതിയിലെ ഉപദേശമാണ് മുകളിൽ ഉദ്ധരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. സമൂഹത്തിൽ സ്ത്രീക്കുള്ള പങ്കും സ്ഥാനവും നിർവ്വചിക്കുന്നതിന് മതപ്രമാണങ്ങളും വേദോപദേശങ്ങളും നിർണ്ണായകമായ ഒരു ഘടകമാണെന്നുള്ളത് നിഷേധിക്കുവാൻ പാടില്ല. പുരാതനകാലംമുതൽ ഭാരത സമൂഹത്തിൽ സ്ത്രീക്ക് പുരുഷനോട് തുല്യത കല്പിച്ചിരുന്നില്ല. "സ്ത്രീ അബലയാണ്, അവൾ ചപലയാണ്", ഇതവിധ സങ്കല്പങ്ങൾക്ക് സ്ഥാനം ലഭിച്ചത് ഹൈന്ദവമതത്തിലെ മനു പോലെയുള്ള മഹർഷിമാരുടെ "നഃ സ്ത്രീ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യമർഹിതി" യെന്ന ഉപദേശം കൊണ്ടായിരിക്കാം. സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ വളർച്ചയിൽ പുരുഷൻ അന്നസമ്പാദകൻ, സ്ത്രീ ഗൃഹപാലക എന്ന രീതിയിലുള്ള ഒരു സാമൂഹ്യക്രമമാണ് രൂപപ്പെട്ടത്. മക്കളെ പ്രസവിക്കുക, അവരെ വളർത്തുക, ഗൃഹകാര്യങ്ങൾ ശ്രദ്ധിക്കുക ഇതു മാത്രമാണ് സ്ത്രീ ധർമ്മമെന്ന് ചിന്തിച്ചിരുന്ന ഒരു സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമാണ് നാം.

സ്ത്രീകൾ പഴയ നിയമ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ

നമ്മുടെ വിശ്വാസത്തിന് ആധാരമായ വിശുദ്ധവേദപുസ്തകം യഹൂദാ സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ മത-സാംസ്കാരിക-രാഷ്ട്രീയ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ രൂപപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുള്ളതാണ്. യഹൂദാ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിലും മതപ്രമാണങ്ങൾ സമൂഹത്തിൽ സ്ത്രീക്കുള്ള സ്ഥാനവും, പങ്കും നിർണ്ണയിക്കുന്നതിന്റെ അളവുകോൽ ആയിരുന്നു. ഉല്പത്തി 1: 27 ൽ മനുഷ്യസൃഷ്ടിപ്പിന്റെ വിവരണമനുസരിച്ച് ആണും പെണ്ണുമായി ദൈവം മനുഷ്യനെ സൃഷ്ടിച്ചുവെന്ന് കാണുന്നു. ഇവിടെ പുരുഷനും സ്ത്രീയും തുല്യരാണെന്നും, രണ്ടുപേരും സൃഷ്ടികർത്താവിന്റെ സാദൃശ്യം പങ്കുവെച്ചവരാണെന്നും വ്യക്തം. എന്നാൽ ഉല്പത്തി 2:19ൽ കാണുന്ന മനുഷ്യസൃഷ്ടിപ്പിന്റെ മറ്റൊരു പാരമ്പര്യം "സ്ത്രീ പുരുഷന് ഒപ്പമല്ലാ പിന്നാലെയാണ്" എന്ന ചിന്താഗതിക്ക് വഴി ഒരുക്കിയോ എന്ന് തോന്നിപ്പോകും. കൂടാതെ ഉല്പത്തി 3.6 ൽ ആദാമിനേക്കാൾ മുൻപ് ഹവ്വ പാപത്തിൽ വീണു എന്ന് സാക്ഷ്യപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ, "സ്ത്രീ അബലയാണ്, അവൾ ചപലയാണ്" എന്ന ചിന്താഗതിയേയും സ്ത്രീക്ക് പുരുഷനോടൊപ്പം തുല്യത അർഹിക്കുന്നില്ല എന്ന വാദത്തേയും, സാധൂകരിക്കുന്നുവെന്ന് ചിന്തിക്കുന്നവരും ഉണ്ട്. കൂടാതെ, പത്രോസ് അപ്പോസ്തലൻ ലേഖനം എഴുതുമ്പോൾ 1 പത്രോസ് 3: 7 ൽ സ്ത്രീകളെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള പരാമർശം പുരുഷമേധാവിത്വ സമൂഹത്തിൽ സ്ത്രീകളുടെ പങ്കിനും, തുല്യതക്കും, എതിരായി ഉപയോഗിക്കപ്പെടാവുന്ന "ഓങ്ങുവടിയായി" തീർന്നുവെന്ന് സംശയിക്കാം. പത്രോസ് ഓർമ്മിപ്പിക്കുന്നു "സ്ത്രീ ജനം ബലഹീന പാത്രമെന്ന് ഓർത്തുകൊൾക".

എന്നാൽ പഴയ നിയമ പാരമ്പര്യം ആകമാനം പരിശോധിക്കുമ്പോൾ manual labor തങ്ങളുടെ ഉത്തരവാദിത്തങ്ങളുടെ പ്രധാന ഭാഗമായിട്ട് യഹൂദാ സ്ത്രീകൾ സ്വീകരിച്ചിരുന്നുവെന്ന് കാണാം. പുരുഷമേധാവിത്വമുണ്ടായിരുന്ന യഹൂദാ സമൂഹത്തിൽ സ്ത്രീകളുടെ അവകാശങ്ങൾ നിഷേധിച്ചിരുന്നില്ലായെന്നത് സവിശേഷ ശ്രദ്ധ ആകർഷിക്കുന്നു. ആവർത്തനം 27: 1 - 8 ഇതിന് വ്യക്തമായ തെളിവു നൽകുന്ന ഒരു സംഭവം വിവരിക്കുന്നുമുണ്ട്. പഴയനിയമചരിത്രത്തിൽ പ്രവാചകിമാരായി മിറിയം, (Exodus 15:20), ഹൂൽദാ (2 Kings 22:14) എന്നിവർ ശുശ്രൂഷ നിർവ്വഹിച്ചുവെങ്കിൽ ദൈവോദാര പ്രവാചകിയായും, ന്യായാധിപയായും, പ്രവർത്തിച്ചുവെന്നത് യഹൂദാ സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ മത-രാഷ്ട്രീയ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ അവഗണിച്ചുകൂടാത്ത സ്ത്രീജന പങ്കാളിത്തത്തിന്റെ ചൂണ്ടുപലകയാണ്.

സ്ത്രീകൾ പുതിയ നിയമ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ

യേശുവിനോടുകൂടെ 12 ശിഷ്യന്മാർ തന്റെ ശുശ്രൂഷയിൽ പങ്കാളിത്തം നൽകി യാത്ര ചെയ്തിരുന്നുവെങ്കിൽ ഏതാണ് അത്രത്തോളം സ്ത്രീകളും - പല തുറയിൽ പെട്ടവർ - യേശുവിന്റെ പരസ്യശുശ്രൂഷയിൽ പങ്കുകാരായി ചേർന്നിരുന്നു. പുതിയ നിയമത്തിന്റേയും ആദിമ സഭയുടേയും ചരിത്രത്തിൽ സ്ത്രീകൾക്കുള്ള സ്ഥാനത്തിനും പങ്കിനും പുതിയ ഒരു അദ്ധ്യായം തന്നെ രചിക്കപ്പെട്ടുവെന്നു കാണാം.

(1) Women were last at the cross. Mark 15:47 (2). Women were first at the tomb. John 20:1 (3) Women were first to proclaim the Resurrection. Mathew 28:8 (4) Women were the first to witness to Jews. Luke 2:37

(5) Women were the first to greet the Christian Missionaries in Europe. Acts 16:14

ആദിമ സഭയുടെ വളർച്ചയുടെ പ്രാരംഭഘട്ടത്തിൽ സ്ത്രീകൾ നിർവഹിച്ച പങ്ക് സവിശേഷ ശ്രദ്ധ ആകർഷിക്കുന്നു. അവരിൽ ക്രൈസ്തവ സഭയിലെ ഫേബ (Rom. 16:1), Priscilla, Aquila (Rom.16:3), Tryphena, Tryphosa (Rom.16:12), Euodia, Syntyche (Phil. 4:2) തുടങ്ങിയവർ സഭാപ്രവർത്തനത്തിലും സഭയുടെ വളർച്ചയിലും നിർണ്ണായകമായ പങ്ക് വഹിച്ചവരായിരുന്നുവെന്ന് വി. പൗലോസ് തന്നെ സാക്ഷ്യപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. ചുരുക്കത്തിൽ സ്ത്രീജന പങ്കാളിത്തം ഇല്ലാതെ ഒരു ആദിമ സഭയോ സഭാ ചരിത്രമോ ഇല്ലായെന്നു സ്പഷ്ടം.

ആധുനിക കാലത്തിലെ വെല്ലുവിളികൾ

ഈ നൂറ്റാണ്ടിൽ ആധുനിക സംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെ ശക്തമായ വേലിയേറ്റത്താൽ സ്ത്രീകൾ - പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് പ്രവാസ സമൂഹത്തിലെ സ്ത്രീജനങ്ങൾ - സമൂഹത്തിലും കുടുംബത്തിലും നേരിടുന്ന വെല്ലുവിളികൾ വളരെയേറെയാണ്.

ജനിച്ചു വളർന്ന നാട്ടിൽ നിന്ന് വേരുകൾ പറിക്കപ്പെട്ട സ്ഥിതി. എന്നാൽ ഈ നാട്ടിൽ വേർ കാര്യമായി ഓടിയിട്ടുമില്ല. അതിന്റേതായ സംഘർഷങ്ങൾ ഒരു യാഥാർത്ഥ്യമായി നില കൊള്ളുന്നു.

- A) ശാസ്ത്ര സാങ്കേതിക വിദ്യയുടെ പാരമ്യത്തിൽ നിൽക്കുന്ന ഈ കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ സ്ത്രീകൾക്ക് മാതാക്കൾ എന്ന നിലയിൽ തങ്ങളുടെ വിശ്വാസപൈതൃകം (faith heritage) തങ്ങളുടെ മക്കളിലേക്ക് സംവേദനം ചെയ്യുകയെന്നത് (faith communication) ഒരു വെല്ലുവിളിയായ് നിൽക്കുന്നു.
- B) Micro-chip, Cybernet, Internet, ഇവയെല്ലാം communication രംഗത്ത് വിപ്ലവം സൃഷ്ടിച്ചുവെങ്കിലും ദശാബ്ദങ്ങൾക്കു മുൻപ് ജോലിസമ്പാദനത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി ഇവിടെ എത്തിയ സ്ത്രീകൾ ഇന്ന് മാതാക്കൾ എന്ന നിലയിൽ, രണ്ടാം തലമുറയുമായുള്ള ബന്ധത്തിൽ ഒരു communication gap - ൽ ആണെന്ന ചിന്ത അവരെ അന്യസ്ഥരാക്കുന്നു. പ്രവാസ സമൂഹത്തിലെ രണ്ടാം തലമുറ, വിശ്വാസം, വംശം, സംസ്കാരം ഇവയുടെ സീമകൾ മറികടന്ന് വിവാഹബന്ധത്തിൽ ഏർപ്പെടുമ്പോൾ മാതാക്കൾ ആണ് സത്യത്തിൽ നഷ്ടബോധത്തിലും ഇച്ഛാഭംഗത്തിലും ആയിത്തീരുന്നത്.
- C) Capitalistic system and Consumerist culture, നാം ശീലിച്ചുവന്ന രീതിയിൽ നിന്നും മൂല്യത്തിൽ നിന്നും നമ്മെ അന്യവൽക്കരിക്കുന്ന ഒന്നാണെന്നു പറയുമ്പോൾ സ്ത്രീകൾ ആണ് അതിന്റെ വലിയ ഇരയായിത്തീരുന്നത്. ആവശ്യമില്ലാത്തവയെ പിടിച്ച് ഏൽപ്പിക്കുകയും അത്യാവശ്യമില്ലാത്തവയെ അടിച്ചേൽപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന കമ്പോള സംസ്കാരം ആഗോളവൽക്കരണത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി നിലകൊള്ളുന്നു. അങ്ങനെ സ്ത്രീകൾ ചൂഷണം ചെയ്യപ്പെടുന്നു. ഇതിനെ എപ്രകാരം അതിജീവിക്കാൻ കഴിയുമെന്നത് സ്ത്രീകൾക്ക് മുൻപിലുള്ള വെല്ലുവിളിയാണ്.
- D) വേദപുസ്തകം വെളിപ്പെടുത്തുന്ന സ്ത്രീത്വം സൃഷ്ടികർത്താവിന്റെ ദിവ്യസ്വഭാവം പങ്കുവെക്കുന്ന ഒന്നായിട്ടാണ് (sharing the divine nature). എന്നാൽ ആധുനിക കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ സ്ത്രീ ഒരു കച്ചവടച്ചരക്കായി മാറിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയാണ്. ദൈവമന്ദിരമായ ശരീരം പ്രദർശിപ്പിച്ചും, സ്ത്രീ ശരീരത്തിന്റെ ആകാരഭംഗി ആഭാസമായി എടുത്തു കാട്ടിയും, സ്ത്രീത്വത്തെ വിലപനയ്ക്കുള്ള ഉപാധിയാക്കുന്നുവെന്നത് ആഗോള പ്രതിഭാസമായിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു.

മുകളിൽ ആധുനിക ലോകത്തിൽ സ്ത്രീകൾ - പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് പ്രവാസ സമൂഹത്തിലെ സ്ത്രീകൾ - നേരിടുന്ന വെല്ലുവിളികളിൽ ചിലത് ചൂണ്ടിക്കാണിച്ചു. ഇവയ്ക്ക് ഉടനടി ഉത്തരങ്ങൾ നല്കുക പ്രയാസമാണ്. വിശ്വാസമെന്നത് ഒരു സാഹസികതയും, ഒരു അന്വേഷണവുമാണ്. ദൈവകരങ്ങളിൽ ജീവിതം എറിഞ്ഞുകൊടുക്കുന്ന സാഹസികത, ദൈവത്തോടൊപ്പം നടക്കുന്ന തീർത്ഥയാത്ര. അവിടെ നിന്നും വെളിപ്പെടുന്ന സത്യങ്ങൾക്കനുസരിച്ച് ജീവിതത്തിലെ വെല്ലുവിളികളെ നമുക്ക് അഭിമുഖീകരിക്കാം.

When we've done what we can—God will do what we can't.

The XXI Mar Thoma Family Conference - 2003



Inaugural Procession

The 21st Mar Thoma Family Conference of the Diocese of North America & Europe, hosted by South Florida Mar Thoma Church, was held in Weston at the Wyndham Resort Center & Spa. The conference started on Thursday July 3rd and ended on Sunday July 6th. The main leaders included the Suffragan Metropolitan of Mar



Inaugural Procession (Kerala Thanima)

Thoma Church Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Irenaeus, Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, Rev. Sham P. Thomas, Rev. Kemper Crabb, Diocesan Youth Chaplains and many other members of the Clergy and lay leaders.



Conference Choir

The inaugural session was blessed by the presence of all the above leaders, other religious and civic dignitaries including Thomas Mar Athanasius Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church, Steven Ferrante representing the Brovrad County Government and former Vicar General Rev. A. C. Kurien.

The conference center was well decorated with familiar South Indian greenery and welcome signs. The Bishops and



The Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Irenaeus Suffragan Metropolitan inaugurating the XXI Mar Thoma Family Conference by lighting the "Nilavilakku."

other distinguished guests were welcomed with "Thalapoli" and specially composed music. The inaugural session was followed by a colorful stage presentation by a joint team from South Florida and New Jersey based on "Salvation & His Kingdom", directed by Mr. P. T. Chacko, New Jersey. A separate session for youth was led by Mr. Shino John.

Special mention goes to the well organized conference choir who led the singing sessions with inspirational music



Opening Worship—Bishops and Achens

related to the theme. The highlights of this conference included Sight-seeing Tours, Special Worship Services, Bible studies, Theme talks, Group Discussions, Testimonial sessions, Seminars on Role of Men and Women in a Post-Modern Society as Role Models, Symposium on Youth issues and Senior adults, Elaborate sports programs, very entertaining Talent Presentations, Organizational meetings,



Opening Worship—Achens

Recognition & Award Ceremonies, Book Release and Choir competition. The Long Island Mar Thoma Church won the first place in the Choir Competition followed by St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, New York in the second place and Bethel Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia at third place. Special stalls and booths were set up for Diocesan Christian Literature Society, Mar Thoma Messenger, Sabha Tharaka, Mexico Mission Project, 2004 Family Conference in New York, Dicesan Sevika Sanghom, etc.



Inaugural Meeting Dias



Inaugural Session—Candle Dance



Theme Presentation

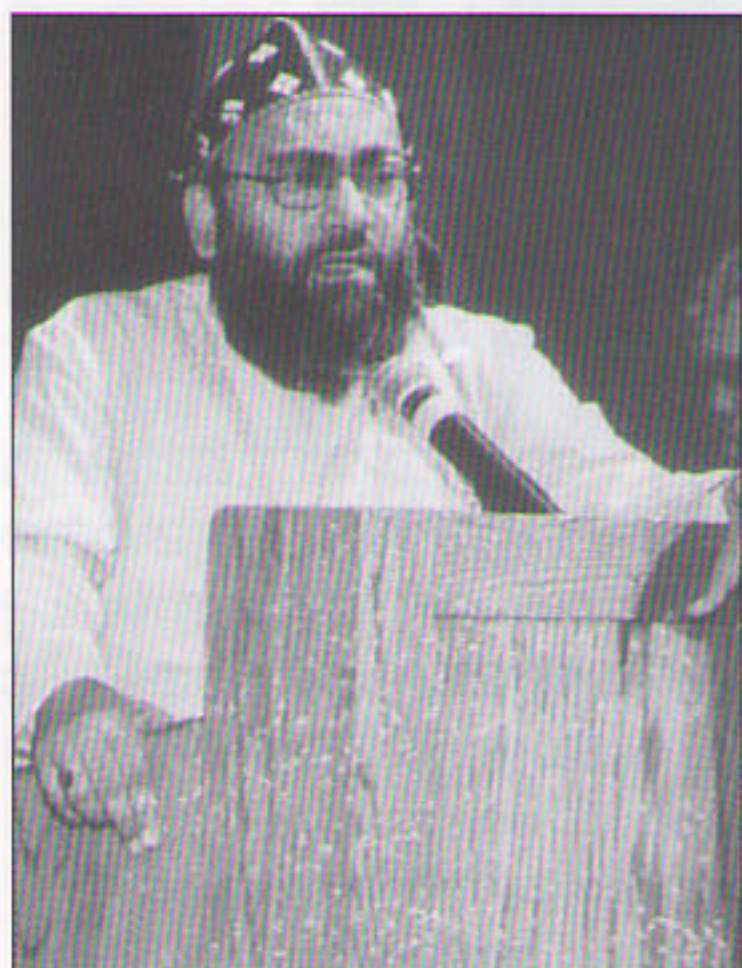
The Sunday Holy Communion was well attended by local Marthomites along with the conference participants.

During the concluding session, Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, Rev. Dr. K. A. Abraham and Rev T. K John were congratulated on their completion of 25 years of Priesthood.

The organizers and the vicar of South Florida MTC, Rev. Joseph Mathew deserve praise for the immense success of this conference.



Souvenir releasing—Conference Convener Dr. Mammen C. Jacob giving a copy to Rev. Kemper Crabb.



Presidential address—The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa.



Session—Main Talk



Suffragan Metropolitan with the cast of "Redemption and His Kingdom"



Sports.....

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

The Children's program started on Friday 4th July at 7:30 a.m. Convener Mrs. Reji Sara Joseph extended welcome to the C.E.F. workers and the kids. There were 55 children and 4 C.E.F. workers. They led the children in singing,



Children's Picnic to "Butterfly World"

bible quiz, missionary stories and crafts. The Suffragan Metropolitan spent 45 minutes with the children and taught them songs and stories. Rev. Saji Joseph gave a small message based on the theme "Thy Kingdom Come." On Saturday morning there was a picnic to "The Butterfly World." At the dedication time 28 children accepted Jesus as their "Lord and Savior."

TEENAGE PROGRAM

The teenage program group was for children aged 10 to 16. Praise and Worship, Talk, Bible Study, Group Discussion



.....and Games

and Bible Quiz were the main events. The main theme was: How can you prepare for the Kingdom to Come? A lack of focus can cause a person to get distracted. The main leaders were Rev. Raju Philip, Rev. Roy Thomas, Rev. Saji Joseph and Rev. Dr. John Joseph.

The issue of peer pressure was the topic for the panel discussion. Group discussion was conducted for boys and girls separately. The Bible Quiz helped the teenagers learn more about the Bible in a fun way and interact with others at the same time.

YOUTH PROGRAM

The youth sessions were sequentially arranged for singing, praise and worship, meditation talk, dedication sessions, debates, counseling and "Meet the Bishop with Suffragan Metropolitan". Main talk delivered by evangelist Rev. Kemper Crabb based on the theme "Thy Kingdom Come" was spiritually uplifting and challenging for the youth as an invitation for future gospel activities. Musical performances and guidance provided by "True Life Disciples" Christian band from Miami enriched the Praise and Worship sessions. The leadership provided by hosting Vicar, Rev. Joseph Mathew, Rev. John George, Rev. Raju Philip, Rev. Isaac P. Johnson, Rev. Saji Joseph, Rev. Dr. John Joseph and Mr. Shino John were highly commendable and beneficial for the youth. The subject for panel discussion was "Choosing a Life Partner—Challenges in the Western Context."



Final blessing in Communion



Silver Jubilee of ordained ministry—Rev. Dr. K. A. Abraham, vicar of St. Thomas MTC, NY, receiving congratulatory award from Suffragan Metropolitan.



Passing the torch to next year's president.



Silver Jubilee of ordained ministry—Rev. T. K. John, vicar of MTC of Oklahoma and Kansas, receiving congratulatory award from Suffragan Metropolitan.



Family Conference – 2003 Executive Committee with the Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos and Vicar Rev. Joseph Mathew.



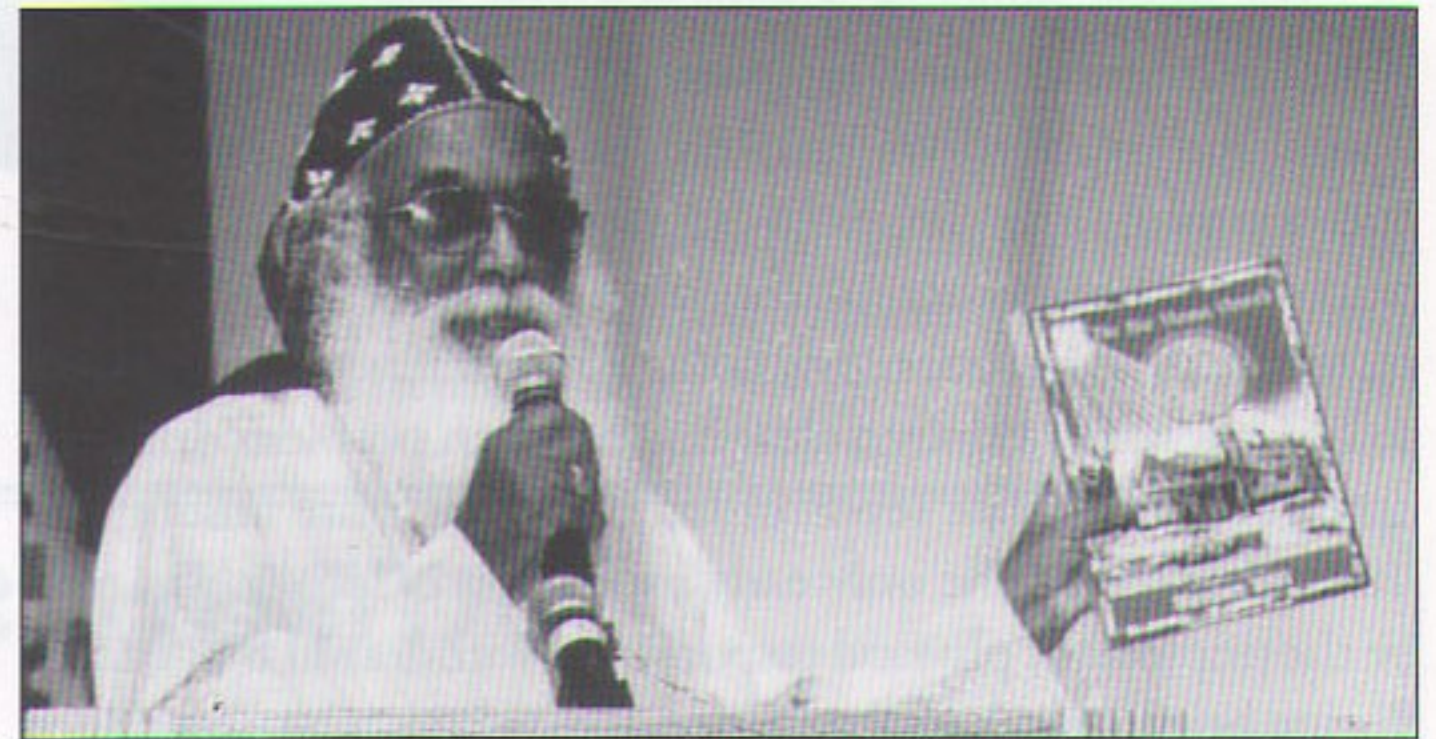
MAR THOMA MESSENGER AWARD FOR OBTAINING MAXIMUM SUSCRIBERSHIP: Mr. T. A. Mathew of Trinity MTC, Houston, receives award from Suffragan Metropolitan. Mr. Benjamin George of St. John's MTC, NY and Attorney Lal Varghese of MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch, not seen in the picture, were also recipients of the prize.



MAR THOMA MESSENGER MAXIMUM SUSCRIBER PERCENTAGE AWARD: Mr. Benny Mathew of St. Andrew's MTC, NY, receives award from Suffragan Metropolitan.



Diocesan Bishop with the office bearers of the Voluntary Evangelists' Association at their Booth.



Suffragan Metropolitan releasing the revised Diocesan Telephone Directory -2003.



Diocesan Bishop with the members of the Editorial Board, Managing Committee and Promoters of the Mar Thoma Messenger/Sabha Tharaka at the Sabha Tharaka/Messenger Booth.



Suffragan Metropolitan with the Chief Editor Mr. Eapen Daniel (third from left), Sabha Council member Varkey Abraham (second from left) and members of the Managing Committee and Promoters of the Mar Thoma Messenger/Sabha Tharaka at the Sabha Tharaka/Messenger Booth.



Suffragan Metropolitan releasing the Book "Glimpses of Mar Thoma Church History" by giving a copy to Very Rev. A. C. Kurian.



Suffragan Metropolitan launching a Website for the Sabha Tharaka. (L to R): Varkey Abraham, Sabha Council Member; Suffragan Metropolitan; Diocesan Bishop; Diocesan/Bishop's Secretary Rev. Dr. John Joseph; Mr. T. A. Mathew, Promoter; John Thomas, Sabha Council Member and Promoter.

Alcoholism

Mariamma Abraham (Lalitha), New York

Alcoholism is a chronic, progressive and often fatal addiction that is on the rise. The Chemistry of alcohol allows it to affect nearly every cell in the body including those in the central nervous system. Prolonged exposure to alcohol makes the brain cells to adapt to responses that are alcohol dependant and display withdrawal symptoms in its absence.

For many individuals who are addicted to alcohol, it started as a temporary escape from home and work situations, emotions, people and surroundings or as a social acceptance behavior. The severity of the disease is also influenced by factors such as genetics, psychology, cultural background and so on. It is hard to draw a clear line between problem drinking and alcoholism. The levels of harmful effects are among the measuring tools. The only early indication of alcoholism may be the unpleasant physical responses to withdrawal that occurs during brief periods of abstinence. Individuals who experience long term depression, anxiety, insomnia, chronic pain or work and home related stress, may start the use of alcohol for temporary relief. Over a period of time they increase the dose and frequency of use. It changes to a normal behavior and a daily event. Similar issues occur with use of drugs also.

At later stages the quantity and frequency of consumption goes beyond control. Body's tolerance increase along with higher doses and at later stages it takes more to "feel the effect". Many miss work or their assigned schedules and activities. Many may change the type of liquor they use and also may switch from wine to beer to vodka to home made and street sold types. They even undergo periods of non-use, which may not last very long. Incidents of violence, spousal abuse, traffic accidents and other behaviors are associated with moderate drinking problems.

Alcohol Use and Abuse

Experts now define levels of alcohol use by how harmful it is as well as how dependant a person becomes. (One drink is considered as: 12 oz beer, 6 oz of wine or 1.5 oz of 90% proof liquor.)

Moderate Drinking

Little less than or equal to 2 drinks per day for men or one drink a day for women

Heavy Drinking

21 or more drinks per week for men and 14 or more drinks per week for women.



Harmful Drinking

Harmful drinking occurs when alcohol consumption exceeds the above standards and results in physical and emotional problems. Although these individuals are not alcohol dependant yet, they inflict family and social problems.

Alcohol Abuse

One or more of the following alcohol related problems over a period of one year; Failure to report to work, problems with the law, starting of abuse and fights in family and community.

Alcohol Dependence

The individual experience three or more of the following alcohol related problems over a period of one year. Increased quantities of alcohol needed to produce effect, Withdrawal symptoms, Unable to stay alcohol free for given amount of time, giving up significant leisure or work activities, continuing drinking in spite of the knowledge of its physical or psychological harm to one self or others.

What causes Alcoholism

The common factors for alcoholism include but not limited to, Biological nature, Genetics, Social Culture and Mind Set Up (Psychology).

Genetic traits play an important role in any chronic disease including alcoholism. It affects men and women equally. But genetics alone cannot make an individual an alcoholic.

Mental and emotional Stress is a major factor in an individual's progression to dependency. It is also associated with freedom and loss of inhibition that offsets the tedium of daily routines. When alcoholics try to quit drinking, the brain seeks to restore what it perceives to be its equilibrium. Then the individual display symptoms of depression and anxiety which make them to return to drinking.

Codependency is one of the most difficult problems facing a person with alcoholism. Being around people who are able to drink socially without danger of addiction makes the alcoholics to drink more to escape from resulting isolation, loss of enjoyment, low self esteem etc. To preserve marriages to alcoholics, spouses often build their own self images on surviving or handling their mates difficult behavior and then discover that they are threatened by abstinence.

Social and Cultural Pressures are factors that encourage drinking. The Media portrays the pleasures of drinking, through advertisements. The medical benefits of light drinking also are frequently exaggerated.

How serious is Alcoholism

About 100,000 deaths a year can be wholly or partially attributed to drinking, and alcoholism reduces life expectancy by ten to twelve years. Next to smoking, it is the most common preventable cause of death in USA.

Liver Disorder: Continued alcohol use causes the liver enlargement and cirrhosis. Upto 35% of heavy drinkers develop alcohol hepatitis.

Gastro Intestinal Problems: Alcohol can cause diarrhea and hemorrhoids. It can cause Ulcers especially when consumed with medications such as Aspirin, Ibuprofen etc. Alcoholism results in cases of Pancreatitis also.

Heart Disease & Stroke: The effects of alcohol on heart disease vary depending on consumption. Evidence strongly suggests that light to moderate alcohol use, particularly grape wine consumption protects the heart. The benefits are strongest in people at high risk for heart disease and may be fairly small in those at low risk. On the other hand, large doses of alcohol can trigger irregular heart beats and raise blood pressure, even in people with no history of heart disease. Alcohol may also increase the risk of hemorrhagic stroke (caused by bleeding in the brain) although, as with the heart disease, it may protect against stroke caused by narrowed arteries.

Skin, Muscle and Bone Disorders: Osteoporosis (loss of bone density), muscular deterioration, skin sores and itching are associated with severe alcoholism.

Hormonal effects: Alcoholism increases levels of the female hormone estrogen and reduces levels of the male hormone testosterone. ■

ഗിരി പ്രഭാഷണം

ഉമ്മൻ ജോർജ്ജ്, പുത്തൻകുരിശ്

ഗാലലി മലകളിൽ സഹസ്രങ്ങളെ പണ്ടു
 ആത്മീയ വിഭവത്താൽ സംപ്രീതരാക്കി ഭവാനർ
 നിസ്തുല സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെ അതുല്യ പ്രഭാവത്തെ
 ക്രിസ്തുവിൽ കണ്ടു ജനം പ്രബുദ്ധരായി തീർന്നു
 അവശർ അദ്ധ്വാനിപ്പോർ കാരണവും കാംക്ഷിക്കുന്നോർ
 വിവശർ ആശ്വാസത്തിൻ മാർഗ്ഗങ്ങൾ തിരയുവോർ
 വശ്യമാവചസ്സിൽ നിന്നൊഴുകും സുധാരസം
 അശിച്ഛാരൊട്ടുനേരം നിർവൃതരായിനിന്നു
 എത്രയോ ആചാര്യന്മാർ എത്രയോ പ്രവാചകർ
 എത്രയോ രക്ഷകന്മാർ കടന്നി മാർഗ്ഗേ പോയി
 കേട്ടില്ലീവിധമെന്നാൽ അവരിൽ നിന്നെന്നാനും
 കേട്ടവർക്കുള്ളിൽ നിന്നും ഉയർന്നു നിശ്ശ്വാസങ്ങൾ
 സാമൂഹ്യ ബഹിഷ്കൃതർ അധമർ നിരാശ്രയർ
 സാമൂഹ്യ നീതിക്കൊപ്പം ഉയരാൻ കഴിയാത്തോർ
 വന്നലച്ചവരുടെ കാതിലന്നാദ്യമായി
 മനപോൽ, 'ഭാഗ്യവാന്മാർ' എന്നുള്ള മധുമൊഴി
 ആരിവൻ സ്വർഗ്ഗരാജ്യം ഞങ്ങൾക്കു നൽകിടുവാൻ
 ആരോരുമില്ലാതിങ്ങു അലയും അബലർക്കായി
 അനേ ന്യം നോക്കിയവർ വിടർന്ന മിഴികളാൽ
 പിന്നവർ ശ്രവീച്ചവൻ മധുര പ്രഭാഷണം
 ദുഃഖിക്കേണ്ടിനിമേലിൽ ഭാഗ്യവാന്മാരെ നിങ്ങൾ
 ദുഃഖമകന്നു നിങ്ങൾക്കാശ്വാസം ലഭിച്ചിടും
 സൗമ്യതയാലെ നിങ്ങൾ ലോകത്തെ നേടിടുവിൻ
 ഭൗമിക മാർഗ്ഗമെന്നും നശ്വരം സ്മരിച്ചിടൻ
 നീതിക്കായ് ദാഹിപ്പോരെ ഭീതിവേണ്ടിനിമേലിൽ
 നീതിയാൽ നിങ്ങൾക്കു ഞാൻ തൃപ്തി നൽകിടും തീർച്ച
 കരുണ അതാണെന്റെ രാജ്യത്തിൻ നീതി കേൾപ്പിൻ
 കരുണ കാട്ടി നിങ്ങൾ ആ നീതി കാത്തിടുവിൻ

ഗാലലി മലകളിൽ ധനിച്ചാ പുതു ശബ്ദം
 ചാലക ശക്തിയായി ജനങ്ങൾ ഉത്സുകരായി
 ദൈവത്തെ ദർശിച്ചിടാൻ അലയും ജനങ്ങളെ
 ദൈവം വസിച്ചിടുന്നു ശുദ്ധമാം ഹൃദയത്തിൽ
 തുറപ്പിൻ ഉൾകണ്ണുകൾ തുറന്നു കണ്ടിടുവിൻ
 കരുണാമയനായ ദൈവത്തെ ദർശിച്ചിടൻ
 വന്നിടും സമധാനം ഉൾത്താരിൽ എന്നേക്കുമായി
 തന്നിടും നിങ്ങൾക്കവൻ പുത്രന്റെ പദവിയും
 കേട്ടിടൻ ജനങ്ങളെ സശ്രദ്ധം നിങ്ങൾ എന്നെ
 കേട്ടപോലെത്തല്ല പ്രാപിപ്പാൻ സ്വർഗ്ഗരാജ്യം
 എൻ നീതി നടപ്പാക്കാൻ ഏവരും മുതിരുമ്പോൾ
 അനീതി തലപൊക്കും കഷ്ടങ്ങൾ ഏറിവരും
 ഒരുകൂറും വഴി നീളെ കെണികൾ നിങ്ങൾക്കായ്
 വിരിക്കും അതിൻ മീതെ തിന്മയിൻ വിരിപ്പാവും
 ഞെട്ടല്ലെ സഹജരെ കഷ്ടത്തിൻ കഥ കേട്ട്
 നഷ്ടമാവില്ല സ്വർഗ്ഗോം വലുതാം പ്രതിഫലോം
 കടന്നു പോയി ബഹു വിശുദ്ധർ ഇതുവഴി
 കടുത്ത ഉപദ്രവം ഏറ്റവർ പുകി സ്വർഗ്ഗം
 ഇടയും ലോക നീതി സ്വർഗ്ഗത്തിൻ നീതിയുമായി
 ഒടുവിൽ എന്റെ രാജ്യം പുരിതമാകും ഭൂവിൽ
 വരുവിൻ സഹജരെ പുൽകുകി പുതു ചിന്ത
 വരുമാ സ്വർഗ്ഗരാജ്യം സമതോം സാഹോദര്യോം
 ഉണ്ടോരോ മനസ്സിലും ദിവ്യമി തിരിനാളം
 കണ്ടെത്തിൻ അതു നിങ്ങൾ തണ്ടിന്മേൽ പ്രതിഷ്ഠിപ്പിൻ
 പരത്തട്ടവചുറ്റും അറിവിൻ വെളിച്ചത്തെ
 പരന്റെരാജ്യം ഭൂവിൽ വരട്ടെ അതിവേഗം

History of the Mar Thoma Church

Rev. Sunni E. Mathew, Los Angeles, CA

PORTUGUESE PERIOD

Beginning of connection

The second half of the fifteenth century is marked for the great sea voyages and discovery undertaken by the maritime nations of Western Europe. This led to the establishment of colonies and these maritime nations becoming colonial powers. Spain and Portugal became the pioneers in this operation. They both upheld the faith according to the Roman Catholic understanding. According to the Roman Catholics, Pope is the supreme authority both spiritually and temporally on the earth. In the fifteenth century, the Pope issued the bulls concerning the Padroado. They gave Portugal and Spain the sole authority to sail the sea, to conquer new lands and to take possession of the riches of those nations. In response to this authority conferred by the Pontiff, they were asked to earnestly work for and support the Christianising of those nations (especially in the faith of Rome). As a continuation to Padroado, Pope Alexander VI in 1493 drew the line of demarcation, called "line of Tordesillas" down the map of the Atlantic Ocean south of Azores Islands. That was oriented to settle the rivalry between these two nations, which in turn would have affected the interest of Rome. Consequently, Portuguese got authority in the East for colonial, commercial, political and religious expansions and hence they tried to find the sea route to India and once they did, India came under their dominion.

One of the purposes behind the Portuguese in establishing a new route to India was profitable trade. During this period the overseas trade with the West was with in the hands of Mohammedan Arabs. As in the case of any trade category, the middle men were extracting much of the profit. Indian goods especially spices were a delicacy in the European market. In the context of Portugal becoming a naval monopoly, it was quite intelligible to start direct trade with India whereby profit could be maximized and Europeans could get the goods at a cheaper price. The first encounter with Kerala came with the visit of Vasco da Gama who came to Kozhikode (Calicut) in the year 1498. This event created long lasting effects not only on the political history of India, but also a decisive and far reaching tremor on the life of the St. Thomas Christians of Malankara.

Vasco da Gama returned to Portugal and returned once again in the year 1502 with reinforcement. Those who came in pursuit of trade were warmly welcomed by the Syrian Christians as well as the native kings. They were



given footing to carry out trade. Once they established trade centres, they started fortifying them. Under the pretext of protecting the trade centres they started bringing in military reinforcement. Not much later their military and naval power was exerted on the political structure of the country. A Portuguese colony was officially established in India in 1505 and had its centre at Cochin. Following the conquest of Goa in 1510, the capital of Portuguese India was shifted to Goa in the year 1530. As the power of the Portuguese stabilized, the number of Christians also increased. In 1534 the territory of India was separately placed under the bishopric of Goa.

Every year hundreds or even thousands of Portuguese came to India. Most of them were merchants or soldiers. Albuquerque, the conqueror of Goa zealously promoted marriages between the Portuguese and the natives. This gave rise to the half-breeds called "Eurasians". It was adopted as a way to win people to Christianity. The popes repeatedly exhorted the Kings of Portugal to carry out their responsibility to the missions with earnest efforts. Therefore, the fleets to India carried many religious and secular priests. Franciscans and Dominicans were the pioneers in missionary endeavours in Portuguese India. King John III of Portugal appealed the Pope to give permission to the newly formed Society of Jesus (Jesuits) to go to India. The first among the Jesuits to come to India was Francis Xavier. The Portuguese especially Jesuits started Schools, Colleges and hospitals. As for the Padroado understanding they started diligently working for bringing out Christian mission (more precisely latinization) in an organized way. They started working among the non-Christians. They brought the city of Goa under Christian influence. The greatest catch was on the Pearl Fishery Coast where the Paravas became Christians "as a group in order to protect themselves against the threat of the Mohammedans". In Kerala they started to concentrate on the Syrian Christians who were already Christians but did not fall under the Roman Catholic fold.

Portuguese and the Syrians

When the Portuguese came to India, they met the Syrian Christians. The first encounter could have been on commercial grounds. The Syrians were the main custodians of the spice-trade and production. Following the powerful emergence of the Arabs in the Arabian Sea, the Syrians were left with no option but to sell the products to them on the terms of the Arabs. Now when the Portuguese came, it gave them a chance to get out of the monopoly of the Arabs.

When both found that they belong to the same religious faith, it became easier. The Portuguese also were enthusiastic, for the reason that this common platform could help them establish themselves over the Arabs in the trade. Hence the initial relationship between both were very cordial.

As mutual knowledge grew, the difference between them became more evident. Portuguese understanding as per Roman Catholic perceptions, considered Pope as the universal head of the Church. For them the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church was the standard for all Christians. They felt that the practices and doctrines of the Syrians that were different from that of theirs, as heretical. Hence they deemed it necessary to correct the Syrians according to Roman Catholic understandings.

Various difference found objectionable by the Roman Catholics

Various differences that the Portuguese found with the Syrians are:

The Syrian Christians had ecclesiastical allegiance with the Church of Persia. They acknowledged the Patriarch of the East as their head. They considered him with more reverence than any others. They prayed for the Patriarch in their liturgy and not for Pope. For the Roman Catholic Church, none other than Pope could be the head of the Church.

The Syrian way of administering the sacraments created confusion among the Portuguese. They gave confirmation at the time of Baptism itself in the form of "mooron abhishekam" (anointing with chrism), where mooron symbolically represent the presence of the bishop. But the Portuguese gave the confirmation at a later period. As a result the Portuguese thought that the Syrians omitted Episcopal confirmation.

The Syrian way of administering communion was also different. They used the method of "intinction", that is placing the bread in the wine and the two are given together by means of a spoon. But as per the Roman method, the celebrating priest receives the bread and wine separately and all other communicants receive the bread only.

The Syrian parochial clergy were married. But the Roman Catholic Church insisted on celibacy.

The Roman Catholics held the doctrine of Purgatory. According to their understanding, after the death, the souls of the faithful go to a place where they suffer a painful purification by fire. It is only after a sufficient punishment that they are admitted to heaven. They also maintain that these souls are eased or delivered from Purgatory through the prayers and offerings of the Church on earth. But such a doctrine was totally alien to the Syrian Church here.

The Portuguese venerated the images of the Lord, Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints. The Syrians did not practice this veneration. They had no other images apart from the cross and they did not perform any action suggestive of worship towards that.

Many other differences were also there. The above mentioned are some of the examples. It should be noticed that the Syrians were preserving eastern or early customs. They could not be charged as heresy. But in the eyes of the Portuguese these practices appeared very defective. For that reason they maintained that they should be corrected. Efforts to this end were taken up from a very early period.

Latinization through seminaries

After the establishment of the bishopric at Goa, the efforts were intensified. In 1541 Fr. Vincent de Lagos, a Portuguese Franciscan opened a school for Syrian boys at Cranganore. After a few years, it was turned into a seminary at the instance of the first bishop of Goa, John de Albuquerque. The intention was to train the Syrian Christian youths for priesthood. It was quite clear that the intention was to Romanise the students. Fr. Vincent taught them Latin and instructed them in the doctrine and ritual of the Roman Church. The students were not taught Syriac, their liturgical language, nor were they allowed to wear the Syrian dress. But the endeavour failed following the refusal of the Syrian bishop to ordain the students of the seminary to the Church.

But the Portuguese learned from this experience. The Jesuits started their seminary at Vaipicotta (South of Cranganore) in 1581. They were careful to teach Syriac and the Syrian liturgy. They also allowed the students to keep their Syrian dress. But they were keen enough to teach the students the doctrines and practices of the Roman Church. ■

Children brought up in church are seldom brought up in court.

Apostle Thomas and the Doubting Incident Narrative:

Just a Case of One Man's Doubt or a Guide to Exemplary Spirituality for the Church?

Dr. Kuruvilla Cherian Amprayil, Detroit Mar Thoma Church

Apostle Thomas was one of the twelve apostles of the Lord. We the Mar Thoma Diaspora take pride in acknowledging his preaching the Gospel on the Malabar Coast in the first century, and being his spiritual descendants. Over the centuries, however, it appears that most of western Christendom have been less charitable to him, calling him "Doubting Thomas" and branding him a skeptic. This is based on the biblical narrative where he would not believe the Lord was resurrected unless he could personally see Him and touch Him. Some thinkers have shown some degree of magnanimity in stating that "Thomas doubted that we may not have doubts", but this still does not clear the stigma that has been attached to the apostle's name. Is the "Doubting" epithet for Thomas justified? Was the Thomas incident in the Bible intended just to highlight the apparent disbelief of one man, or is there a deeper message concerning spirituality for the universal Church? Let us therefore study and analyze the facts related to each of these, in a proper historical and spiritual perspective.

Thomas the Disciple

There are several references to Thomas in canonical as well as other sources which may serve to give some insight into the character of the person, the disciple Thomas. His name was Hebrew or Aramaic for "twin", and he was also known as "Didymus" (Greek for "twin"), as he probably had a twin; however, it is not known who his twin was. According to Eusebius, his real name was Judas and therefore we may see him referred to as Judas Thomas in some writings. He is believed to have been a carpenter by profession according to the description in The Acts of Thomas, an apocryphal book, written probably in the 3rd century; this also provides some description about him and his early missionary journeys. However, confining our attention to canonical sources, we see that there are several references to him in the New Testament scriptures. He is mentioned once each in Mathew, Mark, Luke and Acts, and about eight times in John. In the list of the apostles he is mentioned together with Matthew in Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15 and with Philip in Acts 1:13. Little else is recorded about him in these books, but John's gospel provides clearer insights into his personality traits.

We meet him first in John 11:7-16. When Jesus announced His intention to return to Judea to visit Lazarus, the other disciples immediately warned against it, reminding Him of the great danger of returning to the area



of Jerusalem where His enemies were waiting to kill Him. Only Thomas said, to his fellow disciples, "Let us all go along with the Teacher, so that we may die with him!"

This demonstrated his unquestioning loyalty to Jesus and unselfish courage. We see him again in John 14:4-7. After listening to Jesus, but not quite understanding His words "You know the way that leads to the place where I am going", he asks, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; so how can we know the way to get there?" Thanks to Thomas, we got the answer, "I am the way, the

truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me." Here we find a Thomas not afraid to ask questions, with a desire to know his Lord and His mission better.

The most familiar and memorable encounter with Thomas can be found in John 20:19-29. We read that Thomas was not with the other disciples when Jesus first appeared to them after His resurrection, and when told about it he said, "Unless I see the scars of the nails in his hands and put my finger on those scars and my hand in his side, I will not believe." It was this incident involving Thomas that elicited some of the greatest of Jesus' words of encouragement and promise: "How happy are those who believe without seeing me!". We also read what happened when Thomas did see Jesus.

He not only believed, but with the famous confession of faith "My Lord and my God!" declared most explicitly the Humanity and Divinity of Jesus.

These scripture passages clearly show Thomas to be loyal to his Lord and Master, unselfish and courageous, outspoken and not afraid to question but also willing to realize his faults, accept the truth and declare it unequivocally.

Thomas the Only Doubter?

The incident narrated in John 20:19-29 has earned him the contentious nickname Doubting Thomas, but how fair is it to assign him the appellation "Doubter"? Was he the only disciple who doubted the Resurrection? The answer may be found in the scriptures. Mathew 28:17 mentions what happened when the risen Lord appeared to the disciples: "When they saw him, they worshiped him, even though some of them doubted." Mark 16:11 & 13 mentions two further instances of disbelief of some of the disciples. When Mary Magdalene reported the risen Lord's appearance to her, it is written "...when they heard her say that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe her."

Later after the risen Lord had appeared to two of them as they walked into the country, "They returned and told the others, but they would not believe it". Luke 24:11 mentions that when Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James and other women told the apostles about the Lord's resurrection, the response was: "the apostles thought that what the women said was nonsense, and they did not believe them".

It is evident that the later 'tradition' referring to only Thomas as "Doubting" was unfair. It would therefore appear that John's intention in dealing with the Thomas doubting incident in detail in his gospel was not just to highlight the apparent disbelief of one disciple when others too were guilty of the same fault.

Thomas and the Time of John's Gospel

It is generally accepted that Apostle John was the writer of the Gospel which bears his name. According to Irenaeus (pupil of Polycarp who was a disciple of Apostle John), John wrote this Gospel in Ephesus after the other Gospels had been written. The generally accepted date of writing is around AD 80-90; John would have been one of the last surviving disciples of the Lord then. By this time, however, the church had expanded to the west, as has been documented well by Luke and other historians. But perhaps less well documented is the fact that the Gospel did move east as well, even while Paul was opening his mission in Europe. Apostle Thomas was the key and leading figure in the eastward movement, as has been recognized by modern church historians. For example, Dr. T.V. Philip, the noted Mar Thoma church historian currently based in Australia, mentions in his book "East of the Euphrates" that "While Paul and other Christian missionaries were converting Greeks, Romans and the barbarian tribes in the west, there was equally a great movement of Christianity to the east, Edessa, Persia, Arabia, central Asia, China and India". Major contributions in this missionary enterprise came through Thomas, Addai (a disciple of Thomas), Aggai and Mari (disciples of Addai) and others. The key role of Thomas in the great eastward movement of the Gospel was surely known to the other apostles and this would have included John. However, by the time John wrote the Gospel with the doubting narrative around AD 80-90, Thomas would have left for his heavenly abode (AD 72 according to tradition) as also most other apostles. It is unlikely that John would have ventured to record the unflattering aspects of the faith of a fellow apostle who subsequently became a leading champion of the faith, especially after his death unless there was a greater purpose and deeper message, more than just a report of one man's doubt.

The Thomas Incident as a Guide to Exemplary Spirituality

Thomas did have doubts. But would we have acted differently, if we had seen the hanging, bleeding, limp, dying body of Jesus, if we knew for sure the sentence of "crucifixion" meant nothing less than "death", and if we saw

that motionless, helpless, lifeless body being placed in a tomb, a huge stone rolled to completely close the entrance and soldiers posted to guard that entrance? I don't think our reaction would have been any better. As outlined earlier, the initial reaction of several other disciples were not too different either.

Therefore, portraying the initial disbelief of just one of them, Thomas, must not have been John's sole motive in including the account in his gospel, while the others had not mentioned it. John himself states the purpose of his writing his gospel in John 20:31: "But these have been written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through your faith in him you may have life."

John's gospel narrative of the doubting incident also presents two essential human characteristics "of the individual as well as the ecclesia" which are necessary for building up and strengthening the Church and nurturing exemplary spirituality:

- a. As an individual: Thomas, in spite of his doubts, did not keep aloof from the rest of the fellowship. Even though he did not quite believe what the rest of the disciples had said, he was prepared to go to them, and partake in their fellowship. He had a genuine desire to find out the truth about the Lord; he did not allow his personal ego and difference of opinion with the others to stand in the way.
- b. As a believers' community or ecclesia: The rest of the disciples, though they knew that Thomas did not believe their witnessing of Jesus' resurrection then, did not prevent him from joining in their fellowship. He was not excommunicated or ostracized for not fully aligning with their faith perspective.

They did not allow a difference in faith perspective to stand as an obstacle, to keep away, one who was genuinely seeking the truth about the Lord.

It was to such a community that the resurrected Lord, the Eternal Truth, revealed himself! At the time of John's narrative, during AD 80-90, the church was entering a critical phase. There were new converts and growth for the movement, but there were internal problems developing as well. It was almost a generation after the Lord's resurrection and ascension, and probably the majority of those who had seen and experienced the Lord first hand had passed on. Of those remaining and the believers of the next generation, the initial faith of some may have slipped and given way to doubts, while for some others the focus appeared to gradually shift from the Lord and his teachings to human personalities and practices. Several New Testament scriptural passages exhorting the faithful against divisions may be found; for example, we can see Paul appealing earnestly through his epistles written in AD 56-57 to forget the divisions based on personalities, practices and differing faith perspectives and come together focusing on nothing else but Christ.

John's Gospel which was written later (around AD 80-90), would have been not only stressing the need for

unwavering faith, but also pointing out that when the disciples sought the Lord genuinely with a mutually accommodative and reconciling attitude, the entire community was blessed and spiritually strengthened by His presence.

The term spirituality implies not merely the activity of man's spirit alone, but also to the whole of man's life as inspired and guided by the Spirit of God as well. Every thought, word, and deed of a Christian must therefore be spiritual. This means that everything one thinks, says and does must be inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit so that the will of God the Father might be accomplished as revealed and taught by Jesus the Christ, the Son of God.

Similarly, spirituality in the Church implies collectively conducting everyday activities in communion with God, guided by the Holy Spirit so that the will of God the Father might be accomplished as revealed and taught by Jesus the Christ, the Son of God.

This spirituality perspective is very much relevant to the Church today, as it had been in the first century. Perhaps the best continuing example of an accommodative non-judgmental attitude enabling individuals to experience

fellowship with God is the Mar Thoma practice of open communion to anyone (irrespective of denomination) who is a believer and repents of his/her sins. This is an act of genuine Christian spirituality which its sister orthodox churches have not been able to practice. Another unique historical example worth mentioning is that of mutual help involving a sister church "The Independent Syrian Church of Thozhiyoor."

The Mar Thoma and Thozhiyoor Churches have helped each other in times of crisis by consecrating a Metropolitan for the other, although the doctrinal positions are not mutually accepted in full. Isn't it genuine Christian spirituality which enabled a Church to keep aside doctrinal differences to extend the hand of Episcopal authority to enable the sister Church too to have a consecrated leader, to help them continue to grow in the love and fellowship of God Almighty? However, there are areas where our Church can do better, especially regarding relationships with other Christian Churches who may be adhering to different faith perspectives by extending the hand of Christian love, acceptance and fellowship, rather than considering them as heretics! ■

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Report of the Mexico Mission Summer Program

Mrs. Leila Thomas, Mission Coordinator



The Lord said "Whom shall I send and who will go for us." Here are the teams ready to go.



Team ready to go.

The Sub Committee and the Projects

To fulfill the need to reach out to the community around us, the Mission Board of the Diocese was established in 2001. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos had a vision to extend the mission work of the Mar Thoma Church among the Native Americans in Mexico. Consequently, a sub committee under the Mission Board of the Diocese was formed in the summer of 2002, with the main objective of presenting the Gospel of Christ through words and the service of love. The "Adopt an Island" project was presented at their first meeting in November 2002 at the Sinai Center. On Thanksgiving Day of 2002, a team visited the island of Puntilla Norte under the leadership of Rev. Dr. John Joseph, Diocesan Secretary. The island is one among six islands off the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. Puntilla Norte is the biggest island with a population of forty-five families. The natives living on these islands are primarily fishermen with no income during the winter months. The existing houses are made of sackcloth and cardboard and live in dangerously unhygienic conditions. Considering their sad plight, the sub committee felt the need to "adopt" this island, and provide basic amenities. The first program was to build forty-five homes. A letter was sent to all the parishes to raise funds to build these homes and for volunteers to help in building them.

A working committee was appointed in Houston with Rev. T.V. George as the President, and Mr. P.M. Jacob as the convener. The Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Metropolitan Jubilee Mexico Mission Project was inaugurated on January 25, 2003.

Mexico Mission Summer Program

The committee felt that every Marthoma member of the parishes of the Diocese of North America and Europe should be physically and emotionally involved in this first mission work of the Diocese.

Promotional material to create awareness of the mission, such as a new website, brochures, Prayer magnets, and

a video presentation and training manual for volunteers were prepared by Mr. Sam George. The Mission to Parish Team under the leadership of Rev. Dr. John Joseph presented this mission project as they visited different parishes. An eight-member exploratory team under the leadership of Rev. C.A. Varghese visited the island during the first week of April, and submitted recommendations.

The objectives of the summer program are:

1. Building a community center/school house
2. Constructing forty-five houses for the island
3. Conducting VBS
4. General education—developing social skills
5. Providing health, hygiene, and medical care, and conducting a health survey

The response to the summer program was overwhelming. All forty-five houses were sponsored. Volunteers in Mission from parishes all over North America and Canada have responded to go to Mexico.

The first team consisting of twenty members from the Baltimore Mar Thoma Church along with Rev. George Mathew worked on the island from May 29th to June 1st.

June 5th–June 8th—we had two teams from Dallas MTC Farmers Branch and Chicago MTC. Rev. Raju Philip was in Mexico for one week and worked with the teams.

June 12th–June 15th—two teams went from Immanuel MTC Houston, and Bethel MTC in Philadelphia went. Rev. George Jose enjoyed playing soccer with the children on the island.

June 19th – June 22nd—A team of twenty members with Rev. T.V. George worked on the island and donated spontaneously for the immediate need of a ramp.

July 10th–13th—A team from Los Angeles MTC and Philadelphia MTC. Rev. Sunni E. Mathew led the Los Angeles team.

July 17th –20th—Team from St. Thomas MTC, New York
The teams built homes, conducted VBS and health surveys,



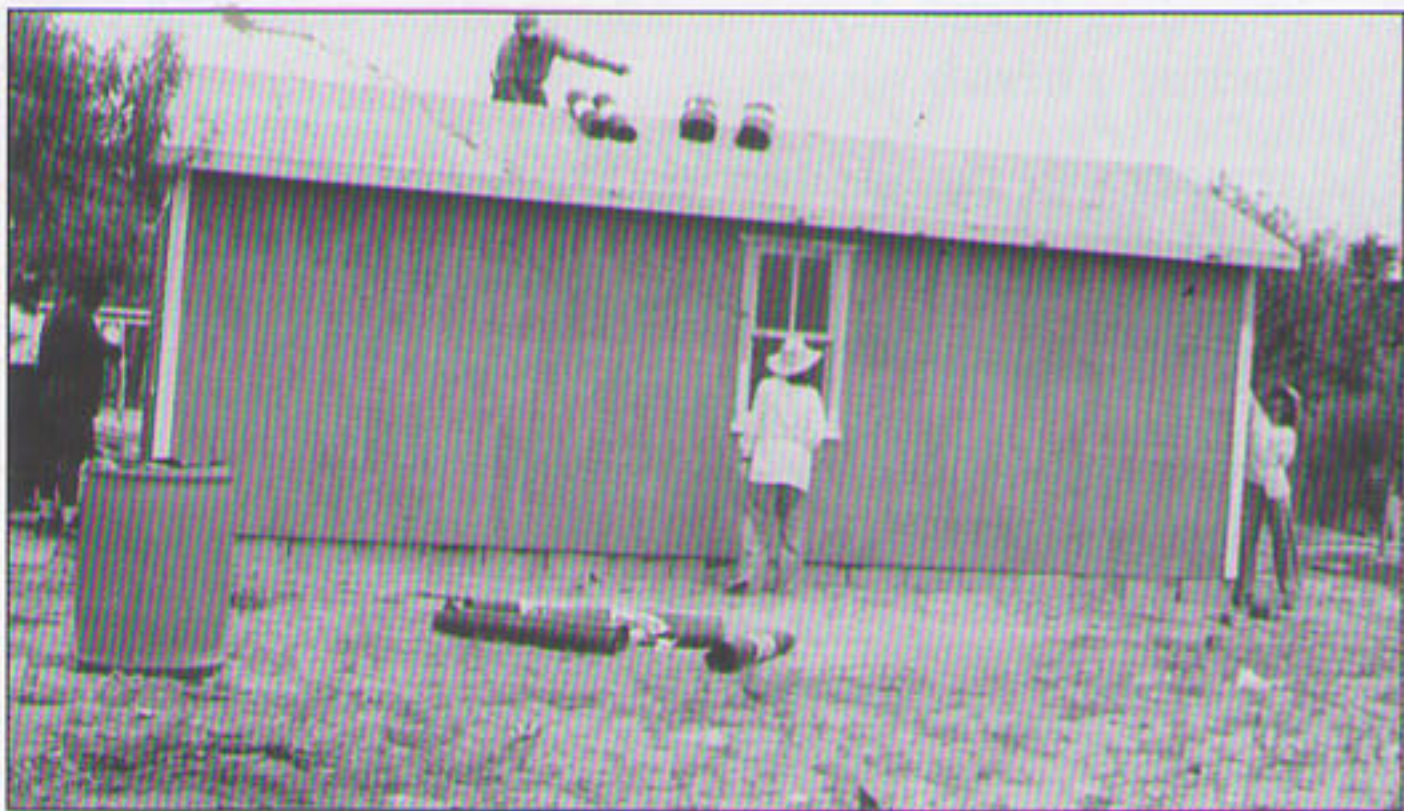
V.B.S. Classes

had good communication with the people on the island, though the language was different.

The schedule for the rest of the summer program is as follows:

- July 24th to 27th:* (1) MTC of Greater Seattle
 (2) MTC of Greater Washington
- July 31st to August 3rd:* (1) Ascension MTC, Philadelphia
 (2) MTC of Dallas Farmers Branch
- August 7th to 10th:* (1) Detroit MTC
 (2) Carmel MTC, Boston
- August 14th to 17th:* (1) Epiphany MTC
- August 21st to 24th:* (1) Chicago MTC, 2nd group

90 Mission Volunteers went to Mexico in the last 5 weeks. 120 volunteers are scheduled to go in the next 7 weeks. 30 houses have been built. After all the homes are completed, a



Bethel MTC, Philadelphia

dedication and closing ceremony with Holy Communion will be held on the island on August 24th 2003.

Future Plans of the Mexico Missions Project

Short Term Plans

1. Providing Drinking Water— The water and soil are being tested and the possibility of drilling a bore well to obtain pure water is being considered.
2. Providing a Generator—with a capacity of 10,000-12,000 watts.

3. Flooring of the Houses—with cement and concrete
4. Prayer groups—If the youth from the community could be motivated to start a prayer group and meet every week

Long Term Plans

1. Education of the native children.
2. Alternate Income Generation by providing vocational training.
3. Provide a shelter home or a hostel on the mainland.
4. Hygiene and health education by providing toilets and sanitary facilities, trash disposal, and teaching oral hygiene.



Preparation of lunch.

5. To establish some medical facilities on the island or to work on the mainland with the help of the existing hospital. To meet members of the Rotary Club and to seek aid for buying medical equipment.

I take this opportunity to thank our Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos and Diocesan Secretary Rev. Dr. John Joseph for their leadership and guidance and



The Lord has provided a shelter. The finished homes—all in a neat row.

the convener Mrs. Nirmala Abraham and the committee members for their valuable support.

Praise and thanks to God for giving us this opportunity to "Go Light The World". ■

FIRST MEDICAL MISSION TO MEXICO—May 8-10, 2003

Abey Mathai, Alice Mathews, Mariamma Thomas

“Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8

On May 8, 2003 the first Medical Mission team to Mexico from the Diocese of North America and Europe was organized consisting of 13 volunteers (an MD, a PA, nine RNs, an RT, and an RTPT) from four different parishes of our Diocese. Mrs. Mariamma Thomas was the team leader.

At the U.S.-Mexico border, we were met by Ms. Beth Dudley, the coordinator of the Partners In Mission of the United Methodist Church, and Willie, the local coordinator. Willie who is a pleasant dedicated Christian worker gave us a brief orientation to the house where we would live and plan activities for the next two days. We were shown the large pharmacy storage room where the PIM keeps the medicines for the clinic. We sorted out meds for the next day in large plastic bins.

Following prayer and devotion at 7 am and breakfast, we loaded the vans with supplies and started out for our first clinic in Reynosa at Agua De Vida Methodist Church. It was a small Methodist church where we set up the triage area, assessment area, exam and consulting areas, pharmacy area, and the discharge and teaching areas. Registration was done outside the church as people waited patiently in the courtyard. We had four interpreters as none of the team members knew enough Spanish. At 9 am we officially opened the clinic with prayer. That one day alone, we saw a total of 94 patients who were mostly children and women. They had various ailments such as abdominal pain, fever, diarrhea, lice, malnutrition, arthritis, worms, scabies, etc.

The following morning we set out to Lerio de los Valles Baptist Church. We set up the triage, assessment area, exam and consulting areas, pharmacy area, and the discharge and teaching areas inside the little church. Registration and triaging were conducted under the tree, as there was no



Participants of the first Medical Mission team.

space inside. We treated a total of 74 patients that day. We stopped the clinic by 1:30 pm, as it was Mother's Day in Mexico.

We said our farewell to all the volunteers and translators who made it a very successful and meaningful trip. We reached Houston by midnight.

Medicines Commonly Used:

1. Antibiotics- Augmentin, Amoxicillin, Cipro, Cefzil
2. Vitamins- Pre-natal, Children's vitamins, Polyvisol
3. Eye drops, Eardrops, Immodium, Tylenol, Skin lotion and cream, Robitussin, Pepto-Bismol, Advil, Motrin, Allegra, Anti-parasite agent

Participants:

Dr. Aleyamma Mathew, MD (CA)
Mr. Abey Mathai, PA (TMC-Houston)
Mr. Chacko Nellickal, RTPT, (TMC-Houston)
Mr. Thomas Koshy, RT (TMC-Houston)
Mrs. Annamma Mathew, RN (CA)
Mrs. Gigi Mathew, RN (Farmers Branch- Dallas)
Mrs. Bridgeth Thomas, RN (Farmers Branch-Dallas)
Mrs. Mariamma Abraham, RN (IMC, Houston)
Mrs. Sarah Thomas, RN (IMC-Houston)
Mrs. Achamma Chacko, RN (TMC-Houston)
Mrs. Alice Mathews, RN (TMC-Houston)
Mrs. Saramma Mathew, RN (TMC-Houston)
Mrs. Mariamma Thomas, RN (TMC-Houston)

The Mar Thoma Diocese of North America and Europe has a great calling to heal the sick and feed the poor in Mexico, as freely our Father in heaven has given us and freely we shall give back. The local team members of the Methodist Partners In Mission were very helpful, courteous, and encouraging as this was our first trip. Our time and resources were well spent and we heard the voice of Jesus in our hearts – “whatever you did for the least of these, you did for Me” – Matthew 25:40. ■



Treating the patients.

Mission Activities Among the Native Americans in Alabama

In connection with the Native American and Mexico Mission Ministry of the Mar Thoma Diocese of North America and Europe, we undertook a Summer Mission project spanning 6 days (June 15-21) with the Choctaw tribe of Native Americans in Mobile, Alabama. It was an honor to coordinate this mission project with the Aldersgate Methodist Church, Mt. Vernon, Alabama, led by their dynamic pastor Rev. John Evangelisto.

Our team consisted of 11 members:

From the Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia—Mr. O.C. Abraham, Mrs. Nirmala Abraham, Mr. Varughese Abraham (Johnny), Julie Abraham, Sara Mathew, Joel James, Sam Mathew Tharakan and Shiny Kuruvilla.

From the Staten Island Mar Thoma Church—Tessy Jose

From the Atlanta Mar Thoma Church—Mary Bincy Abraham and Prakash Thomas.

Despite government assistance, a large percentage of the Native Americans still experience poverty, joblessness, and health problems. Choctaw Indians are only a small tribe now, concentrated mostly in Alabama and Arkansas.

Understandably, due to a sad historical past, they are instinctively suspicious of outsiders. Yet they welcomed us into their midst with warmth. During our stay, we undertook the task of organizing a Vacation Bible School. We utilized games, skits, visual aids, and music as means of communicating our message. The theme of the VBS was "Shining with God's Love" and we were able to connect our Mar Thoma motto of "Lighted to Lighten" to the VBS presentation. VBS was conducted from 8.00 AM till 1.00 PM for children ranging from ages 3-10 years. In the evening from 5.00 PM to 9.00 PM, we conducted Bible study, devotion, discussions, and music for children ages 11-18. Over 120 children and adults participated daily in the program. The music ministry under the leadership of Mr. Varughese Abraham, was very unique and effective.

The families and other members from this parish provided transportation to whoever wanted to attend the VBS. During our stay, parents and numerous volunteers went out of their way to provide home-cooked meals for all the children as well as the team.



Children attending VBS



Team members

Mrs. Nirmala Abraham choreographed a Liturgical dance which encompassed an array of dance movements both from our culture as well as their native culture, symbolizing our oneness in Christ. Mr. & Mrs. O.C. Abraham prepared a gourmet lunch for all the participants which included, chicken curry, tandoori chicken, mango mousse, papadum and vegetable rice.

We were also invited to attend their annual heritage celebration (Pow Wow). We participated in their parade, and were also invited to dance with them during their inaugural ceremony. We were recognized by the chief of the tribe and other members of the community as guests from India.



Team member with children at the Annual Heritage Celebration (Pow Wow)

We learned that this community is very close knit, children respect the elders, and are very trusting of each other. The church is the center of their daily activities and it is there that they come together as a family. The young people were willing to volunteer to keep their church clean and hospitable for anyone who came. We were able to build strong relationships with the parents and children in a short time. It was indeed a challenge, yet a humbling experience during which we gained perspective into their community and family values.

We would also like to place on record our thanks to our dear Achen Rev. Sunny George, (Philadelphia) and Rev. Simon Behanan (Atlanta) for their leadership and encouragement, and all our parish members as well as other friends who supported us financially and spiritually. ■

Reported by the Native American-Albama Team

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

Rev. Dr. K. A. Abraham, St. Thomas MTC, New York

The Spirit of God, the third person of the Holy Trinity, is the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of Trinity is only an attempt of the early Church to reflect on the mystery of God in the light of their experience with God as God in creation, God in redemption and God in renewal.

In the Eastern Church, the fourth century fathers-Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory the Nazianzen and Basil the Great-have made their significant contributions to the articulation of the doctrine of the Trinity. God the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit has always been the faith of the Church. Hence, the filioque clause, i.e. the double procession of the Holy Spirit (from the Father and the Son) which is found in Roman Catholic and other Western churches is not accepted here. The concept of perichoresis (co-inherence)-one God-head exists simultaneously in three persons—is integral to the Eastern understanding of Trinity. (Ref. the author's article in Gleanings, p.30)

1. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CREATION

The Spirit of God is the one who creates life; i.e., cosmos out of chaos (order out of disorder). The same Spirit is given to Adam when God breathed the life-giving breath into his nostrils (Gen. 2:7). This makes man/woman unique within the created order. Here it should be noted that this breath of life is given to the whole of humanity. This divine element within the human enables him to transcend himself and also to go beyond his earthly existence.

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN JESUS CHRIST

The Christ-event is to be seen within the framework of the saving event of God for this world. The whole life and ministry of Christ were in the power of the Spirit of God. Though he was born of the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit descended on him like a dove at his baptism (Lk.3:22) to empower him in his mission. Instead of making exclusive truth claims about himself or engaging in ecstatic exercises, Jesus manifests the power of God in His ministry such as preaching ministry, teaching ministry and healing ministry.

Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit is found in Jn. chapters 14-16. In John's gospel, the Greek word "paraclete" is used for the Holy Spirit. (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7-8). This is translated as helper, guide, comforter, healer, counselor and advocate.

The function of the Spirit according to these portions are briefly the following: the Spirit of truth who reveals the



truth about God (Jn. 14:16-17)

the Spirit as the interpreter of the Word (Jn.14:26)

the conscientising function of the Spirit (Jn. 16:8)

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH

Though the Spirit of God has been active ever since the creation of this world, the same Spirit came on the disciples of Christ like a mighty wind from above to empower them for the continuation of God's mission in the world. The miracle of Pentecost is the miracle of communication. Hence Pentecost is also known as Babel reverse. When the apostles received this new "energy from above", they could speak a new language-the language of love, concern, compassion and fellowship cutting across their linguistic and cultural limitations. This is the language that we need in the life and ministry of the Church in our times too. Here we have to distinguish between the "event of Pentecost" and the "experience of Pentecost". The event of Pentecost is once-for-all where as the experience of Pentecost should always be there in the life of the Church.

4. SYMBOLS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Symbols such as water, dove, oil, wind and fire are used for the Holy Spirit in the Bible. These represent the different operative dimensions of the Spirit. In some of today's spiritual circles, very often, any one of these symbols is almost absolutized! This is a distorted understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit.

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND RENEWAL

Holy Spirit always initiates and nurtures the process of renewal in the Church and in the world. The baptism of the Holy Spirit has to do with our proximity to the work of the Spirit. In Jn. 3:8 our Lord points out that the work of the Spirit is totally unpredictable. Rather than emotional or ecstatic experiences, the work of the Spirit is to be seen in terms of illumination, edification and liberation from all forces of sin and evil in this world.

6. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LITURGICAL TRADITION

In the order of worship for Holy Communion, the special prayers addressed to the Holy Spirit are known as "the epiclesis". This is not an attempt to bring the Holy Spirit

down on the elements of the Lord's Supper but a symbolic attempt to be more aware of the presence of the Spirit.

In the Baptismal liturgy of our Church, the water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit goes together. The second part of the liturgy is for the anointment of the Holy Spirit. Here, counting on God's grace, the child is anointed with oil (mooron) which symbolizes the Spirit. In other words, confirmation goes along with baptism. The LIMA document of WCC on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry says that "The Holy Spirit is active in, before and after baptism."

7. THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is always the empowering Spirit. The power from above is given to witness Christ and his Kingdom (Acts.1:8). The Greek word "marturia" for

witness denotes both witness and martyrdom. In other words, the Holy Spirit empowers us to be costly witnesses.

CONCLUSION

The Holy Spirit is our divine energy, the spiritual fuel for an authentic life in the world. We cannot possess or privatize the Spirit. The Church does not have the monopoly of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit are given to the believers for the edification of the community of faith (I Cor. 12:7) and for the good of all. The Holy Spirit has been given to us by the grace of God. Rather than waiting for the Spirit to come again, what is of greater importance is our availability for the work of the Spirit in and through us. We are to be constantly guided by the Spirit of God who empowers us, challenges us and opens up new possibilities in our journey of faith. ■

TEN NOTABLE SIGNS OF A GOOD CHRISTIAN FAMILY

1. Strong, faithful, and trusting relationship between spouses.
2. Healthy eating habits and clean living conditions, regardless of how small or big their house may be.
3. Healthy emotions including proper expression and sharing of joy and sorrow.
4. Healthy and happy relationship among the members of the family.
5. Atmosphere of warmth and support, even when one member is at fault, not feeling well, or in any other situation.
6. Activities of common interest that will encourage all-around health and happiness.
7. Clear communication among members of the family, keeping everybody in the loop.
8. Problem solving handled as a team.
9. Prayer and Worship together
10. Time management and sharing of household chores including cooking and cleaning.

Matrimonial

Parents with younger son recently arrived in U.S. on immigrant visa and settled in Dallas/Fort Worth, invites proposals from parents of professionally qualified Marthomite/CSI/Jacobite boys who came to USA in recent years, for their daughter aged 23, 5' 3.5" height, fair and slim, God fearing and with excellent moral values, completing her MBA in September from Bangalore, India. Please respond with all details at email: philip_abraham@sbcglobal.net. or call: phone 817-498-4011.

Philadelphia domiciled Marthomite parents (migrated from Chengannur), invite marriage proposals for their slim, beautiful, God-fearing, 25-yr old daughter (5' 5") wheatish complexion, intelligent, family oriented, Psychology graduate and now awaiting results Masters in Psychology (from Gandhi University, Kottayam). She had her schooling in Bombay. Speaks Malayalam fluently, besides English and Hindi. We are looking for a cognate alliance from young professionally educated employed non-Catholic Christian Malayalee boys (prefer US settled) with good personality, morals and spiritual values. If God-willing we wish to get her wedding solemnized in Kerala during August. Interested parties may please respond to E-mail ID: mathewsquare@aol.com or call or email: eapen.daniels@uphs.upenn.edu Tel. 215-662-8962.

Uncle invites matrimonial proposals for 25 yr. old niece 5' 5" Very Attractive, God fearing, family oriented and with high moral standards, presently working for a reputed pharmaceutical company in a high ranking job in Philadelphia area. Graduated with Masters Degree in Analytical Chemistry from M. Gandhi University in Kerala. Interested parents of boys professionally employed in USA and of similar personal values, please contact via email: kaviyoor@aol.com or mailto:danielea@uphs.upenn.edu

Well settled Marthoma parents in USA invite marriage proposal for their daughter 25 years old, God fearing, 5 feet tall, outgoing, fair complexion with good moral, spiritual and high family values and US born citizen. She finished her bachelors (BS) in computer science and is working in the IT (computer) field for a major corporation in NYC. We invite proposals from God fearing Marthomites or Jacobites, professionally qualified boys, ages (25-30) (Doctors, Pharmacist, Engineers, CPA), with good family background. Please respond with a scanned photograph to gcpalex@yahoo.com

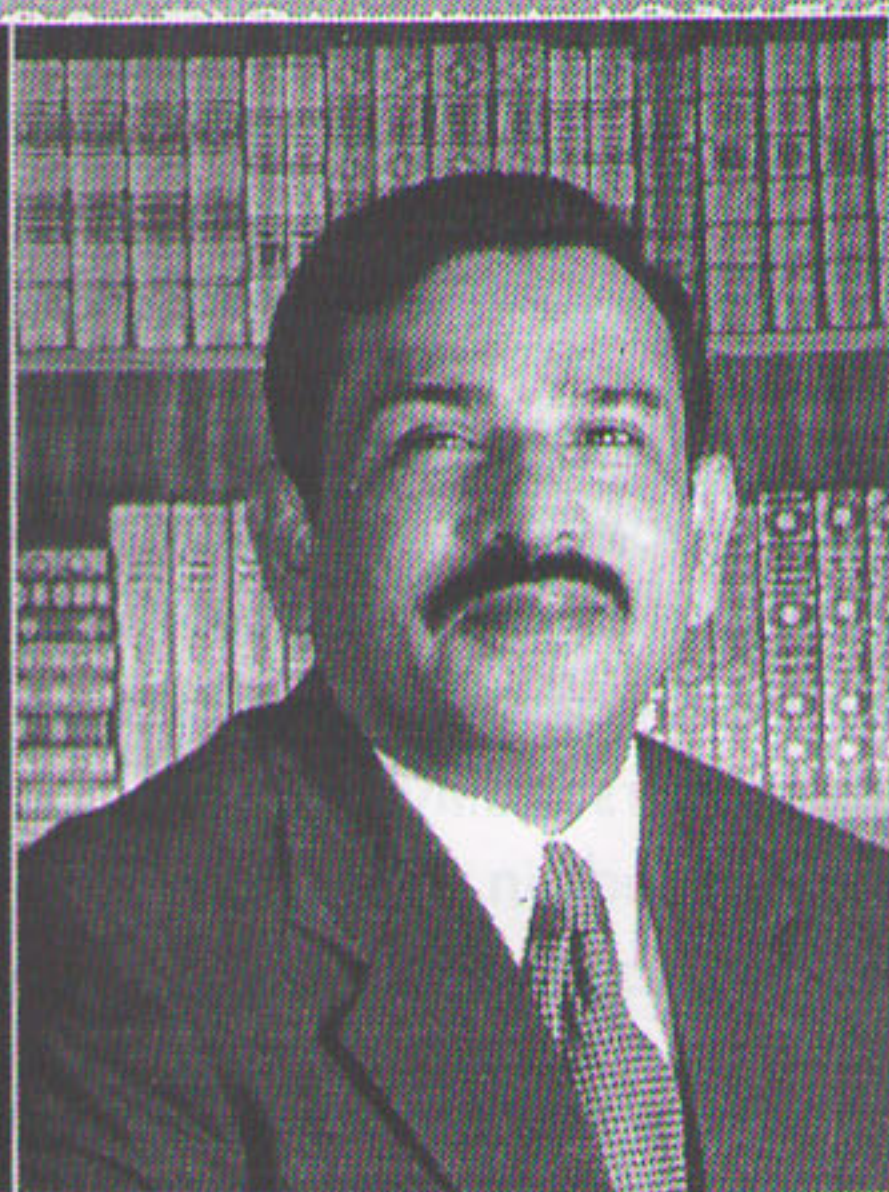
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തൊഴിയൂർ സഭയുടെ Most Rev. ജോസഫ് മാർ കുറിലോസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായുമായി ഒരഭിമുഖം

മലബാർ സ്വതന്ത്ര സുറിയാനി സഭയുടെ(തൊഴിയൂർ) സീനിയർ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്താ Most Rev. ജോസഫ് മാർ കുറിലോസ് തിരുമേനി അടുത്ത സമയത്ത് നടത്തിയ അമേരിക്കൻ സന്ദർശനത്തിൽ മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭയുടെ Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas Farmer's Branch, Long Island, Sanfransisco എന്നീ ഇടവകകൾ സന്ദർശിക്കുകയുണ്ടായി. Long Island ഇടവക സന്ദർശന വേളയിൽ അനുവദിച്ചു കിട്ടിയ സമയത്തിനുള്ളിൽ Messenger-ന്റെ മാനേജിംഗ് കമ്മറ്റി അംഗം Rev. K. P. Sabu, Editorial Board അംഗം Mr. Koruthu Mathew എന്നിവർ ചേർന്നു നടത്തിയ അഭിമുഖ സംഭാഷണത്തിന്റെ വിശദാംശം താഴെ കുറിക്കുന്നു.

ചോദ്യം: സാധാരണതന്ത്രിയേയും സമ്പൂർണ്ണ സമർപ്പണത്തിന്റേയും വിനയത്തിന്റേയും ഉടമയായ അഭിവന്ദ്യ ജോസഫ് മാർ കുറിലോസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായോടൊപ്പം ചെലവഴിച്ച നിമിഷങ്ങൾ ധന്യ നിമിഷങ്ങളായി ഞങ്ങൾ കരുതുന്നു.

ചോദ്യം: തൊഴിയൂർ സഭയുടെ ഉല്പത്തി എങ്ങനെ? ഈ സഭ മലബാർ സ്വതന്ത്ര സുറിയാനി സഭ എന്നറിയപ്പെടാൻ കാരണമെന്ത്?

ഉത്തരം: 1763 -ന് ശേഷമുള്ള കത്തോലിക്കർ അല്ലാത്ത മലങ്കര സഭയിൽ നിന്നും അന്നത്തെ സാഹചര്യ സമ്മർദ്ദ തന്ത്രങ്ങളെക്കൊണ്ട് കൊച്ചിരാജ്യം വിട്ട് ഓടിപ്പോകേണ്ടി വന്ന കാട്ടുമങ്ങാട്ട് അബ്രഹാം മാർ കുറിലോസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായാൽ 1772-ൽ മലബാറിന്റെ തെക്ക് കിഴക്കറ്റത്തുള്ള തൊഴിയൂർ ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ സ്ഥാപിതമായതാണ് തൊഴിയൂർ സഭ. കുന്നൻ കുരിശ് സത്യത്തിന് ശേഷമുള്ള പുരാതന മലങ്കര സഭയിൽ നിന്ന് വേർപെട്ട ആദ്യ സുറിയാനി സഭാവിഭാഗമാണ് തൊഴിയൂർ സഭ അഥവാ മലബാർ സ്വതന്ത്ര സുറിയാനി സഭ.

മാതൃ സഭയായ അവിഭക്ത മലങ്കര സഭയിലേക്ക് കോട്ടയം പഴയ സെമിനാരി സ്ഥാപകനായ പുലികോട്ടിൽ ജോസഫ് മാർ ദിവാന്യോസ്യോസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായടക്കം 1816-നും 1825-നും ഇടയ്ക്ക് മൂന്നു മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്താമാരെ വാഴിച്ചു കൊടുക്കുവാനും മലങ്കരസഭ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായുടെ പദവി രണ്ടു തവണ അലങ്കരിക്കുവാനും ദൈവികപദ്ധതിയനുസരിച്ച് തൊഴിയൂർ സഭയുടെ അഞ്ചാമൻ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായ്ക്ക് സാധിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്.

മലങ്കര സഭയിൽ നിന്ന് അന്നത്തെ സഭയ്ക്ക് കത്തുള്ള അനാചാരങ്ങൾക്കെതിരെ ഒരു നവോത്ഥാനം വേണമെന്നാഗ്രഹിച്ച് മലങ്കര മാർത്തോമ്മാ സുറിയാനി സഭ വേർപെടേണ്ടി വന്ന 1863-ൽ തൊഴിയൂർ സഭയുടെ സ്വന്തം കൈക്കലാക്കാൻ മലങ്കര സഭ നല്കിയ കേസിൽ തൊഴിയൂരിലെ സുറിയാനി സഭ മലബാറിലെ ഒരു സ്വതന്ത്ര സുറിയാനി സഭയാണെന്ന് കോടതി വിധിക്കുകയുണ്ടായി. അന്നു മുതലാണ് തൊഴിയൂർ സഭ മലബാർ സ്വതന്ത്ര സുറിയാനി സഭ എന്ന പേരിൽ അറിയപ്പെടാൻ തുടങ്ങിയത്.

ചോദ്യം: തൊഴിയൂർ സഭയ്ക്ക് മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭയുമായുള്ള ബന്ധം എന്ത്?

ഉത്തരം: മലങ്കര മാർത്തോമ്മാ സുറിയാനി സഭയുടെ ആദ്യ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായായി അറിയപ്പെടുന്ന പാലക്കുന്നത് മാത്യൂസ് മാർ അത്ത നാസ്യോസ് തൊഴിയൂർ സഭയ്ക്ക് 1856-ൽ ജോസഫ് മാർ കുറിലോസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായെ വാഴിച്ചു നൽകിയ സമയം മുതൽ, ആ രണ്ടു പിതാക്കൻമാർ തമ്മിലുള്ള സ്നേഹബന്ധം പിൻകാലത്ത് 1894-ൽ

തീത്തുസ് ഒന്നാമൻ മാർത്തോമ്മാ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായെ വാഴിച്ചു കൊടുത്ത സംഭവത്തിന് കാരണമായിട്ടുണ്ട്. 1893-ൽ മലങ്കര മാർത്തോമ്മാ സുറിയാനി സഭയിലെ തോമസ് മാർ അത്തനാസ്യോസ് തിരുമേനി പിൻഗാമിയെ വാഴിക്കാതെ കാലം ചെയ്തപ്പോൾ, തൊഴിയൂരിലെ ജോസഫ് മാർ അത്തനാസ്യോസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായും ഗീവർഗ്ഗീസ് മാർ കുറിലോസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായും വധഭീഷണിയെപ്പോലും തൃണവൽക്കരിച്ചാണ് കോട്ടയംചെറിയ പള്ളിയിൽ എഴുന്നള്ളി മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭയ്ക്ക് എപ്പിസ്കോപ്പസി നിലനിർത്തുവാൻ തീത്തുസ് ഒന്നാമനെ വാഴിച്ചു കൊടുത്തത്. അന്ന്, ഇന്നത്തെ അമേരിക്കൻ ഭദ്രാസന എപ്പിസ്കോപ്പാ അഭിവന്ദ്യ യുയാക്കീം മാർ കുറിലോസ് തിരുമേനിയുടെ കുടുംബമായ ചീരൻ കുടുംബാംഗങ്ങളും പാറമേൽ കുടുംബാംഗങ്ങളും രക്ഷാകവചം തീർത്തുകൊണ്ടാണ് തൊഴിയൂർ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്താമാരെ കോട്ടയത്തേക്ക് കൊണ്ടുപോയത്. 1935 മുതൽ 1986 വരെ മലങ്കര മാർത്തോമ്മാ സുറിയാനി സഭയുടെ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്താമാർ മലബാർ സ്വതന്ത്ര സുറിയാനി സഭയ്ക്ക് അഞ്ച് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്താമാരെ വാഴിച്ചു നല്കിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. (കാലം ചെയ്ത അലക്സാണ്ടർ മാർത്തോമ്മാ വലിയ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായാണ് 1986 ആഗസ്റ്റ് 27-ന് ബലഹീനനായ എന്നെ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായായി വാഴിച്ചത്.)

ചോദ്യം: ഇരു സഭകളിലേയും ആചാരനുഷ്ഠാനങ്ങളിൽ വ്യത്യാസം ഉണ്ടോ?

ഉത്തരം: ആചാരനുഷ്ഠാനങ്ങളിൽ ബാഹ്യമായി മലങ്കര മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭയും തൊഴിയൂർ സഭയും തമ്മിൽ ചില വ്യത്യാസങ്ങൾ ഇന്നും ഉണ്ടെങ്കിലും ക്രിസ്തുവിലുള്ള അടിസ്ഥാന വിശ്വാസം മുറുകെ പിടിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് നാളിതുവരെയും പരിപൂർണ്ണ സോദരീ ബന്ധത്തിൽ നിലനില്പാൻ ദൈവം സഹായിച്ചു എന്നുള്ളത് പ്രസ്താവ്യമായ കാര്യമാണ്.

പുരാതന മലങ്കര യാക്കോബായ സുറിയാനി സഭയിലെ വിശ്വാസാചാരങ്ങൾ തന്നെയാണ് തൊഴിയൂർ സഭയുടേതും.

ചോദ്യം: തൊഴിയൂർ സഭയുടെ അംഗസംഖ്യ എത്ര?

ഉത്തരം: 11 പൂർണ്ണ ഇടവകകളും 5 ചാപ്പലുകളുമടക്കം 16 പള്ളികളും 12 വൈദികരും വലിയ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായടക്കം രണ്ട് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്താമാരും ഏകദേശം 22000 ആളുകളും ഈ സഭയ്ക്കുണ്ട്. ഇടവകകൾ ഇല്ലാത്ത സ്ഥലങ്ങളിൽ തൊഴിയൂർ സഭയിലെ അംഗങ്ങൾക്ക് ഏത് പൗരസ്ത്യ പാരമ്പര്യമുള്ള എപ്പിസ്കോപ്പൽ സഭകളിൽ ആരാധനയ്ക്ക് അനുവാദം നല്കിയിട്ടുണ്ടു.

ചോദ്യം: തൊഴിയൂർ സഭയുടെ എക്യുമിനിക്കൽ വിഷൻ എന്താണ്?

ഉത്തരം: പൗരോഹിത്യ പാരമ്പര്യ സഭകളിലെ വൈദികർക്കും വിശ്വാസികൾക്കും തൊഴിയൂർ സഭയുടെ അനുഷ്ഠാനമനുസരിച്ച് വിശുദ്ധ കുർബ്ബാന അനുഭവിക്കുന്നതിന് യാതൊരു തടസ്സങ്ങളുമില്ല. ഇതു തന്നെയാണ് ഈ സഭയുടെ ഉദാത്തമായ എക്യുമിനിക്കൽ ദർശനം. ലോകത്തിലെ എക്യുമിനിക്കൽ പ്രസ്ഥാനങ്ങൾക്ക് മുന്നോടിയായി ഭവിച്ച ഒരു മാതൃകയാണ് മലങ്കര മാർത്തോമ്മാ സുറിയാനി സഭയും സ്വതന്ത്ര സുറിയാനി സഭയും തമ്മിലുള്ള ബന്ധവും പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും.

ചോദ്യം: തിരുമേനി ഇപ്പോൾ അമേരിക്ക സന്ദർശിക്കുന്നതിന്റെ ഉദ്ദേശം എന്ത്?

ഉത്തരം: ഇപ്പോൾ ഞാനിവിടെ വന്നത് California-യിലെ Presono എന്ന സ്ഥലത്ത് 'മാർത്തോമ്മാ ഓർത്തഡോക്സ്' സഭയുടെ ത്രിദിന സമ്മേളനത്തിൽ തൊഴിയൂർ സഭയുടെ ചരിത്രത്തെപ്പറ്റിയും കർമ്മാനുഷ്ഠാനങ്ങളെപ്പറ്റിയും ഇഹമൈനയിക്കുന്നതിനും, കാനഡയിലെ Church of England -ന്റെ സസ്കാച്ചുവാൻ ഡയോസിസിലെ വൈദികരുടെ ഒരു സമ്മേളനത്തിൽ പങ്കെടുക്കുന്നതിനും വേണ്ടിയാണ്.

ചോദ്യം: ഇത് തിരുമേനിയുടെ ആദ്യ സന്ദർശനമാണോ? ഈ സന്ദർശനത്തിൽ മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭയുടെ എത്ര ഇടവകകൾ സന്ദർശിക്കുവാൻ സാധിച്ചു?

ഉത്തരം: 1996-ൽ അമേരിക്കയിൽ ആദ്യ സന്ദർശനം നടത്തിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഈ പ്രാവശ്യം Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas Farmers Branch, Long Island, San francisco എന്നീ ഇടവകകൾ സന്ദർശിക്കുവാനിടയായി.

ചോദ്യം: K.P.യാഹന്നാൻ ബിഷപ്പായി അവരോധിക്കപ്പെട്ടതിൽ തിരുമേനിയുടെ അഭിപ്രായമെന്ത്?

ഉത്തരം: ഒരു കാലത്ത് പൗരോഹിത്യത്തെ വിമർശിച്ചും അംഗീകരിക്കാതെയും ഇരുന്നവർ, ഇന്ന് ആ

പൗരോഹിത്യത്തെ ആദരിക്കുകയും ആ പദവി സ്വീകരിക്കാൻ പല വഴികൾ തെരഞ്ഞെടുക്കുകയും ചെയ്തതിൽ ദൈവത്തെ സ്തുതിക്കുന്നു.

ക്രൈസ്തവ സഭകളുടെ ഔദ്യോഗിക പദവികൾ അലങ്കരിക്കുന്ന ശ്രേഷ്ഠ മഹാപുരോഹിതർ തങ്ങൾ ആയിരിക്കുന്ന സഭയുടെ ചട്ടങ്ങളെ ധിക്കരിക്കാതെ മുന്നോട്ടു പോകുന്നത് സഭയുടെ പുരോഗതിയ്ക്ക് നന്ദായിരിക്കും എന്നു മാത്രമെ എനിക്കു പറയാനുണ്ട്.

ചോദ്യം: അമേരിക്കൻ-ഇറാക്ക് യുദ്ധത്തെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള തിരുമേനിയുടെ അഭിപ്രായമെന്ത്?

ഉത്തരം: ക്രൈസ്തവ വീക്ഷണത്തിൽ കാര്യകാരണങ്ങൾ എന്തായിരുന്നാലും യുദ്ധം ഒരു പരിഹാര മാർഗ്ഗമായി കാണുന്നില്ല.

ചോദ്യം: തൊഴിയൂർ സഭാ കേന്ദ്രം എവിടെയാണ് സ്ഥിതി ചെയ്യുന്നത്?

ഉത്തരം: തൃശൂർ ജില്ലയിലെ കുനംകുളത്തിനടുത്തുള്ള തൊഴിയൂർ ഗ്രാമത്തിലെ 'അഞ്ഞൂർ' എന്ന സ്ഥലത്താണ് തൊഴിയൂർ സഭയുടെ ഭദ്രാസന കേന്ദ്രവും അരമനയും സ്ഥിതി ചെയ്യുന്നത്.



The Most Rev. Joseph Mar Coorilos Metropolitan of the Malabar Independent Syrian Church with Messenger Managing Committee member Rev. K. P. Sabu, Vicar, Long Island Mar Thoma Church and Mr. Koruthu Mathew, Editorial Board member.

Many books can inform, but only the Bible can transform.

SUMMER CAMPS & SUMMER FUN

Lisa Tillery, Philadelphia

Ah!! the start of summer: no school for children and fun time for all. No more uniforms for many school children and new summer clothes for everyone. Time for ice creams, theme parks, joy rides and water ice. But for many working parents it is also a time to spend extra cash to send their children to summer camps. Weather you are a working parent or a stay at home parent, you still like to see your children attending some sort of summer programs that will help you to get a break and help the children to make new friends and learn new things.

Today there are plenty of choices between the type and style of summer programs including summer camps. There are camps which are sports oriented, education oriented, discipline oriented, health oriented and also total personality oriented. Many camps conduct extra field trips and site visits that will enhance the children's general knowledge levels. These of course are plus factors.

Many camps provide accommodation through out the summer while many others only have day camps where the participants leave in the evening. Usually the day camp registrations are filled by late April to early May.

If you are not planning to send your children to summer camps, it may be a good idea to develop a schedule (Don't over schedule) at home that are understood and accepted by the children involved as well as the parents.

The activities should include:

Reading (assign number of books or articles)

House keeping (cleaning plus other household chores)

Play times (sports activities and computer time)

Visit with friends and family (sleep over with parental guidance only)

Creativity time (crafts, coloring/painting, cooking)

Project time (to finish some pending house projects for Dad and Mom like painting the house, cleaning the garage or washing the cars etc)

Discovery time (short day trips or week end trips with parents or family) and

Community activities (organized by the local community group or local government).

Summer is also a time to know your children better and communicate with them more effectively by working closer. During summer, especially school children are free from the stress and worry of home works and also they get their required sleep. Simply going for a walk with them or taking them to the museum or the zoo helps them to develop better personal relations. ■

BOOK REVIEW



Glimpses of Mar Thoma Church History

For a community that prides itself on its scholastic penchant, 'Glimpses of Mar Thoma Church History' is indeed a fitting tribute. "History is not centered around events but around people," says Philipose Mar Crysostom Mar Thoma Metropolitan in the foreword to this book. That is precisely how the authors have synopsised the book. The authors have narrated the dynamic history of the Mar Thoma Church from 1837 to 2000 under the leadership of each of our thirumenis from Metropolitan Mathews Mar Athanasius to the Most Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan. However, they have included a brief chapter on the early history of the church from our legendary origins in the first century up to the spiritual revival in the 19th Century, which set the pace for the eventual chrysalid reformation and thence of an ancient apostolic church.

Authors Dr. Zac Varghese Kaniseril and Mr. Mathew A. Kallumpuram display a rare depth of knowledge of the Mar Thoma Church and its leaders. To add to that, they also possess an equally deep awareness of the political life of Kerala which is closely interwoven with the history of our church. This makes this book a fine read for a generation of diaspora Marthomites and anyone else who might be curious about this lesser orthodox church from the east but alien to

its culture and climate. By the same token, this book is not for the intellectually meek. Written by scholars, it speaks to scholars in the language of scholars. So be prepared for a day in an intellectual theme park with numerous fast paced rides through the minds of some visionary leaders of the last century. The following excerpt contains a taste of the theme and style of 'Glimpses of Mar Thoma Church History'.

"Metropolitan Mathews was all along pursuing the reformation of the church by preaching the undiluted gospel and salvation brought about by the oblation of Jesus Christ on the Cross, encouraging the people and the clergy to study the Bible in Malayalam translation. He celebrated the Holy Communion in Malayalam, administering bread and wine separately. He ordained only educated and qualified young men who were able to study and preach the gospel. He enjoined parishes to maintain the correct records and accounts. He rid church life of certain unscriptural practices and festivals. All these were in keeping with the reforms of Abraham Malpan. In Manarkatt church there was a huge celebration in September venerating a statue of Virgin Mary on the pretext that it would enhance the fertility of women and the celebration often got out of control. The Metropolitan visited Manarkatt and removed the statue, and abolished the festival. This created hostility from vested interests that benefited financially from this and other festivals in the Church. Further Antiochan Kurilose and some of his supporters created problems in Puthupally by disrupting the Holy Communion service by clergy who followed Kaithayil Geevarghese Malpan, a former vicar of Puthupally, a reformist leader and colleague of Abraham Malpan."

Overall, this is a book that claims a spot on the shelf of every student of Christian history in South Asia. For a community going through a period of teething pains in an alien environment, this book presents several parallel situations from our eventful history. It might help some uninitiated readers, however, if the authors could expand the glossary of terms to include a few more ecclesiastical argots found in the book. To sum up, here is a book that every Mar Thomite could get a perspective from and find many reasons to take pride in being a Marthomite. **Vinod Varghese**



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Pre-Marital Counseling

Rev. George Varghese
Mar Thoma Counseling Center, Kottayam

(Extracts from talks given at the Youth Meeting/Pre-Marital Counseling Held in Long Island, NY in May 2003)

What is family

A small unit knit together on the basis of a unique relationship. It is a covenant relationship based on interdependency. Family is the basic unit of Kingdom of heaven on earth.

Basic Needs of a Family

Love

Love is not mere feelings, but willingness to sacrifice for others. Love is transforming, expressive and sacrificial. Basic need for love is to be met in family.

Care & Protection

Members of the family, even if it is limited to two, should feel secure in the presence of other(s) in the household. Family should never be a place to blame one another. Never try to hurt each other through words or deed.

Husband wife relations

Sex is a divine gift, which is to be handled carefully. Oneness is being felt at the time of physical union. This union without love becomes a ritual.

Pre-marital and extra marital physical unions are outside God's divine plan and are not tolerated by God as well as God's people. Sex is not mere a physical act but a process towards oneness through love relationship. Sex for men may be a physical act, but for women it is of the mind.

Need for Spiritual Nourishment

This is another basic need that has to be met in the family set up. Praying together, Bible reading and meditations, attending worship services together are all very important aspects.

This creates a serene environment within the family, which helps the individuals to grow up in spiritual, mental and physical health.

Choosing a Partner

Many when looking for a partner, come up with a long list of known good behavioral patterns and characters. The most common words are love, look, education, intelligence, money and so on.

As we can see from the practical world, it is not possible to meet all these requirements in one person.

It is advisable to make sure you have some comparison between the male and female in looks, educational qualifications and intelligence, financial aspects, family backgrounds, religious backgrounds and faith patterns. Always seek God's guidance, parental advice and grown ups wisdom. In some cases it may be necessary to seek medical advice also.

Intimacy

Barriers of Intimacy

Low self esteem; Guilt; Suspicion; Busy life style; Lack of communication; Infidelity; Comparison

It is important to deal with these barriers and develop stronger intimacy to enhance your family life.

Areas of Intimacy include; Emotional intimacy (developed through sharing emotions) Intellectual intimacy (common interest in discussion subjects and lifestyles) aesthetic intimacy (developed through appreciating each others way of dressing, interior decorations etc.) Crisis intimacy (when one person is faced with a problem, the support and guidance the other person give without blaming one another) and spiritual intimacy (developed through praying, Bible reading, worshipping and meditating together)

Communication

It is an important factor in relationship. Listening to each other and sharing every aspect of your daily life is very important in strengthening the relationship. We communicate from head level and gut level. Head level communication helps us to gather and pass on information where as gut level communication (feeling level) helps strengthen relationships. Parallel communication strengthen relations while cross communication breaks relations.

It is important to find time to communicate freely. TV, Internet, Computer and other items should not block our communication. At least one hour per day should be used for 'Family Communication' where all members of the family are to be present. ■

Begin to weave and God will give you the thread.

REFLECTION

Surya Balakrishnan (6th Grade)

I wrote poems before, on different topics. Each time I write, I think about the topic and how I feel about it and think of apt words to express myself. I thought of writing myself when I saw my father editing a cassette for "Diocese of North America & Europe Mission Project" which shows children who are deprived of basic needs of life in Mexico. Then I analyzed my situation and came to the fact how lucky I am. God has given me everything including very loving and caring parents, wonderful teachers like Mrs. Perchiballi, Mrs. Hillebrand and good friends. Then I felt like writing this poem and later it got published in the Scholastic.com. My parents read it and it made them very happy. The tears of Joy from my mother's eyes gave me encouragement.



I thank God for all the things I have and I pray for those who don't.

Myself.....Surya

*The luckiest person on earth
I will address me as
Cause I am one
My name itself suggests
How sunny a person I am
I am glad my parents
Gave me a unique name.*

*I am the luckiest person on this universe
To be born to a father and mother like my parents
They love and take care of me
They try to keep me happy
And are always there for me*

*I am the luckiest person in New York
To get teachers like our
Ms Schwartz, Mrs. Steinhawer
Mr. Wilkolaski, Mrs. Hillebrand
Mrs. McCabe, Mrs. Foerderer
Who likes, teaches and care for me.*

*I believe I am the luckiest person
As I am an OPTIMIST*

APRIL WINNERS AND ANSWERS. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL WINNERS!!!

Bible Cross-Word Puzzle Winners (April 2003)

1. Accamma Jacob, FL
2. Ajin John, MI
3. Alex Vaidyan, NY
4. Anika Sara Chacko, Detroitl
5. Annamma John, Fl
6. Athira John, NY
7. Christopher Chacko, Detroit
8. Elsa Varghese, MI
9. John Mathew, MI
10. Justin Vaidyan, NY
11. Mariamma Zachariah, NY
12. Noble George Abraham, Fl
13. Omana Rajee, NY
14. Philip Mathew, Canada
15. Tindu Mathew, Detroit

ANSWERS

ACROSS

1. PROSTITUTE
2. COMMANDER
3. ALTAR
4. MARCH
5. CITYWALL
6. MIDDLE
7. RED CORD
8. DISCOURAGED

DOWN

9. VALLEY
10. EGLON
11. STILL
12. TRUMPETS
13. TERRITORY
14. EBUL
15. CIRCUMCIAE
16. ACCIDENTALLY
17. HAILSTONES
18. JORDON
19. OCCUPIED
20. FAME

Bible Word Search Winners (April 2003)

1. Accamma Jacob, FL
2. Ajin John, MI
3. Anika Sara Chacko, Detroitl
4. Annamma John, Fl
5. Athira John, NY
6. Christopher Chacko, Detroit
7. John Mathew, MI
8. Mariamma Zachariah, NY
9. Noble George Abraham, Fl
10. Philip Mathew, Canada
11. Tindu Mathew, Detroit

ANSWERS

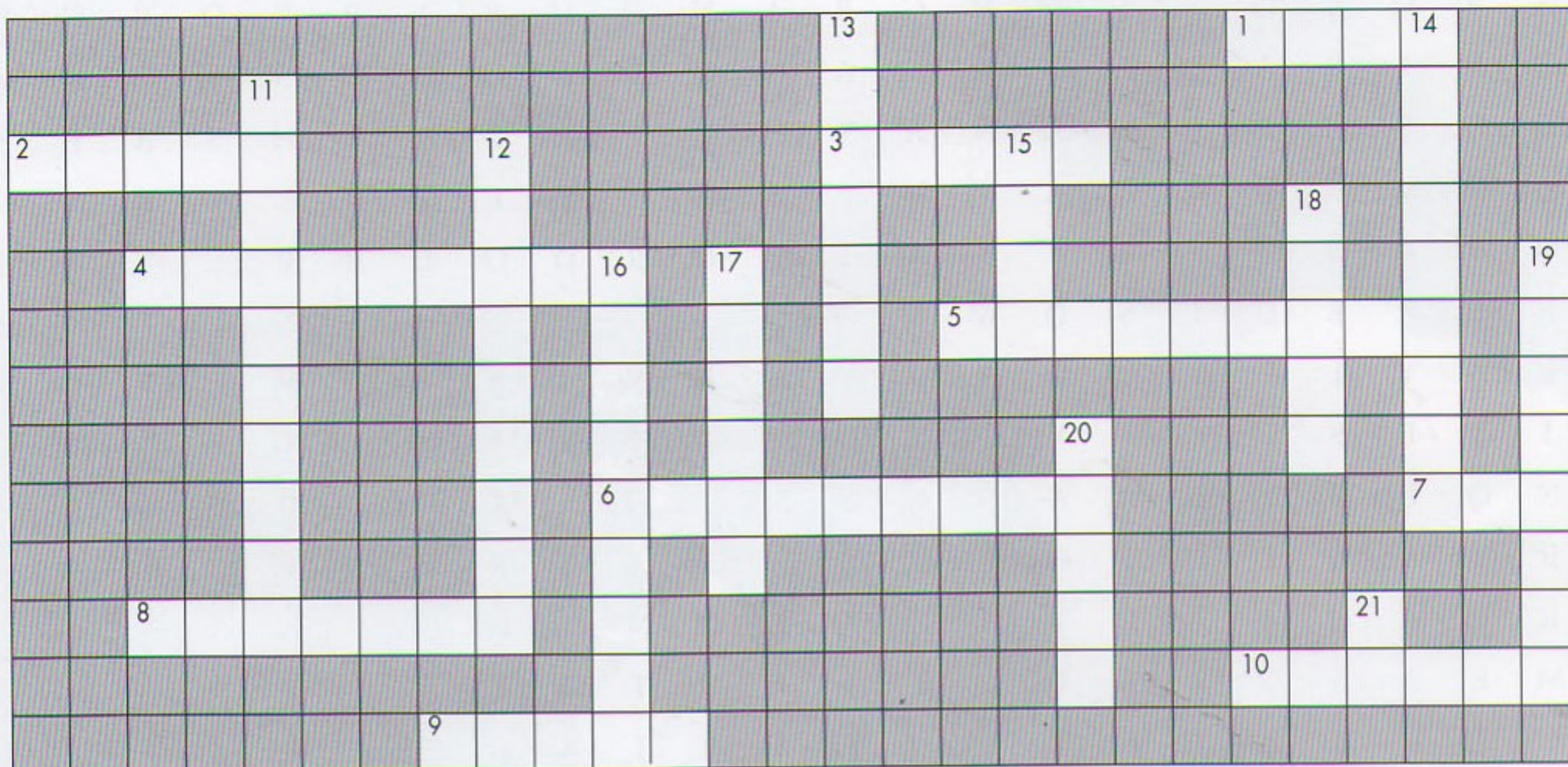
1. ACACIA, GILGAL
2. ADVANCE, GUARD
3. DESTROYED
4. SHOUT
5. CAMP
6. JUDAH
7. ZERAH
8. ZAHDI
9. MEROM
10. ANAKIM
11. GIBEON
12. BABYLONIAN CLOAK
13. CRIPPLED
14. TROUBLE VALLEY
15. JEBUSITES
16. TIMNATH SERAB
17. THIRTEEN
18. SHECHEM
19. FOREIGNGODS
20. LORD

BIBLE CROSS WORD PUZZLE

AS IN THE TODAY'S ENGLISH VERSION

(based on Isaiah Chapters 1-39)

Mrs. Suma Varghese (New York)



Across

- The Lord warned Isaiah: I, the Lord Almighty, am holy; I am the one you must _____.
- The person who will be saved from the Lord's wrath will be like the _____ of an Oak tree.
- God has pronounced a _____ on the earth because the people have defiled the earth.
- I cannot stand your New Moon Festivals, your Sabbaths and all your religious gatherings; they are all _____ by your sins.
- The emperor of Assyria will lead the _____ naked away from Egypt and Sudan.
- The _____ of Jerusalem and Judah will be held against them.
- One of the cities in Egypt, will be called "the city of the _____".
- The Babylonians left the city of Tyre in ruins for _____ years.
- The sovereign Lord was calling you to weep and _____. Instead, you laughed and celebrated.
- Put no more confidence in _____ men. What are they worth?

Down

- The Lord asked the rulers of Jerusalem to see that justice is done—help those who are _____, give orphans their rights and defend the widows.
- The new king who will arise from among David's descendants will rule his people with justice and _____.
- "The plans God makes are wise, and they always _____".
- As the sparkling dew _____ the earth, so the Lord will revive those who have long been dead.
- King of Babylon was brought down like a bright morning _____ fallen from heaven.
- The fading glory of the proud leaders will _____ like the first figs of the season, picked and eaten as soon as they are ripe.
- When there is peace in Judah and Jerusalem, great nations will _____ their swords into plows.
- "My people of Israel, you have been threshed like _____ but now I have announced the good news to you".
- The Lord will give this sign to the descendants of David. A young woman who is pregnant will have a son with the name _____.
- "You, Lord, give perfect _____ to those who keep their purpose firm and put their trust in you".
- The cities destroyed in the land of Moab were: _____ and Kir.

BIBLE WORD SEARCH

AS IN THE TODAY'S ENGLISH VERSION
(based on Isaiah Chapters 1-39)

Mrs. Suma Varghese (New York)

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


- Here on Mount Zion the Lord Almighty will prepare a _____ for all the nations of the world.
- The _____ should be the eyes of the people.
- Son of Amoz _____.
- The Lord will not listen to the prayers of the rulers and the people of Jerusalem because their hands are covered with _____.
- Jerusalem which planted sacred gardens will wither like a dying _____.
- "In days to come, many people will come streaming to the _____ where the temple stands".
- Lebanon was known for these trees _____.
- Israel is the _____ of the Lord Almighty
- The Lord Almighty shows his _____ by doing what is right, and He reveals His holiness by judging His people.
- These were calling out to each other that the Lord Almighty is holy. They are: the _____ creatures.
- Isaiah heard the Lord saying this: "Whom shall I send? Who will be out _____?"
- The son of Jotham and the king of Judah was: _____.
- These kings of Syria and Israel, attacked Jerusalem. They were: _____ and _____.
- _____ was Isaiah's son.
- Isaiah's son was named 'quick loot-fast plunder' as a sign to warn the destruction of Damascus and _____.
- These three nations will be a blessing to all the world. They are: Israel, Egypt and _____.
- The Lord warned _____, the manager of the royal household, that he would be brought down from his position.
- The words written on the strong foundation of the Zion will be as follows: 'Faith that is firm is also _____'.
- The measuring line of Zion's foundation will be _____ and its _____ is honesty.
- Poor and humble people will once again find _____ which the Lord, the holy God of Israel gives.

ATTENTION ALL CONTESTANTS!!!

Please mail your answers to:

Mrs. Suma Varghese, 103-10 104th Street, Ozone Park, NY 11417

DEADLINE FOR ANSWERS September 30, 2003



He Holds us in the palm of his Hand.....

Psalms 95:7

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DIOCESAN/PARISH NEWS

A TRIBUTE TO COORILOS THIRUMENI ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS PRIESTHOOD



Suffragan Metropolitan congratulating Diocesan Bishop—25th year of ordained ministry. Rev. Dr. K. A. Abraham (Right) and Rev. T. K. John (Left) are also celebrating their Silver Jubilee. (See pictures on pg. 20)

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, our Diocesan Bishop completed 25 years since his ordination as a priest of the Mar Thoma church in May 2003.

The Mar Thoma church is fortunate to have many able Archbishops and Bishops to provide leadership to the church. Euyakim I. Cheeran, a member of Arthattu Kunnankulam Mar Thoma Church, who had committed to full-time ministry, was ordained as a priest of the Mar Thoma Church on May 16, 1978. Rev. E. I. Cheeran was consecrated as an Episcopa of the Mar Thoma Church on December 9, 1989 and given the name Euyakim Mar Coorilos.

Rev. Cheeran has served as the vicar of following parishes before he was nominated as an Episcopal candidate: Kottayam Jerusalem (Assistant vicar); Thiruvarp; Palarivattom; Bangalore-Jalahali; Bombay-Colaba; Staten Island-NY; Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia-Bethel; Baltimore and Florida.

From 1990 to 1997, Thirumeni served the Adoor-Mavelikkara Diocese as the Diocesan Bishop. From 1997 to 2001 Thirumeni served as the Diocesan Episcopa of Ranni - Nilackal Diocese.

Thirumeni took over as the Episcopa of the Diocese of North America & Europe in 2001 and has sustained the vigor and vitality of our diocese. Thirumeni gives special attention to all the organizations of this diocese. His outstanding contribution to this diocese is the 'Mexico Mission' which is now the successful starting point of an outreach mission of our diocese.

Thirumeni is known for developing and maintaining excellent personal relationships with people of all ages and is therefore, very much loved by all.

During a felicitation at the Mar Thoma Family Conference, Mrs. Susan Johnson (Daughter of former Vicar General Very. Rev. P. M. Thomas) and Mr. Jose Varghese, council members of

the diocese, pointed out the exceptional qualities of Thirumeni that makes him stand out:

Steadfast faith and prayerful life; Simplicity; Punctuality; Zeal for Evangelism; Passion for social justice; Facing difficult situations with courage and hope; Overflowing love for humanity; Burning desire to help the downtrodden; A champion of the disabled.

Examples of thirumeni's outreach ministry are: Asha Bhavan Pidavoor, Deepti Balika Bhavan-Harippad, Jyothis-Mavelikkara, Conference Centre for Youth-Adoor, Half-Way Home-Ranni/Nilackal Diocese and most recently the Mexican Mission project.

Thirumeni is working diligently for the further growth and advancement of the Diocese of North America and Europe now. We congratulate Thirumeni on his Silver Jubilee and sincerely pray for God's continued Grace and blessings in his future ministry and praise and thank God for providing such an eminent spiritual leader to the Mar Thoma Church and Christians around the world.

DIOCESAN YOUTH MISSION TOUR TO INDIA

The third North American Diocesan tour to various mission fields of India for the youth is projected to be conducted in January 2004. Interested youth may send applications to the Diocese through proper channel, we will follow the rule of first come first serve. For more information, please contact Mrs. Mariamma Thomas (281) 431-2555 or emailto: mariammatx@aol.com

OUR NEW ACHENS

REV. T. K. JOHN is the new Vicar of MTC of Oklahoma & Kansas

Native Place: Mukhathala. Nedumpana.

Wife: Molly, Daughter Julie (19 years old, St. John's



University, NY) Son Justin (13 years old, 8th Grade) B.A. from Kerala University, MA from Andhra University and B.D. from Serampore University

Ordained in 1978 and served at Nilambur area, Pazhanji, Jalahalli, Vishakhapatnam, Palarivattom, Cheppad & Pallipad etc.

Served as Superintendent of Deepthi Balika Bhavan, Pallipad.

REV. P. L. JOSEPRAKASH is the new Assistant Vicar of Chicago MTC

Native Place: Kaithakuzhy, Kollam

Wife: Lizy, Son Isaac Jose (8)



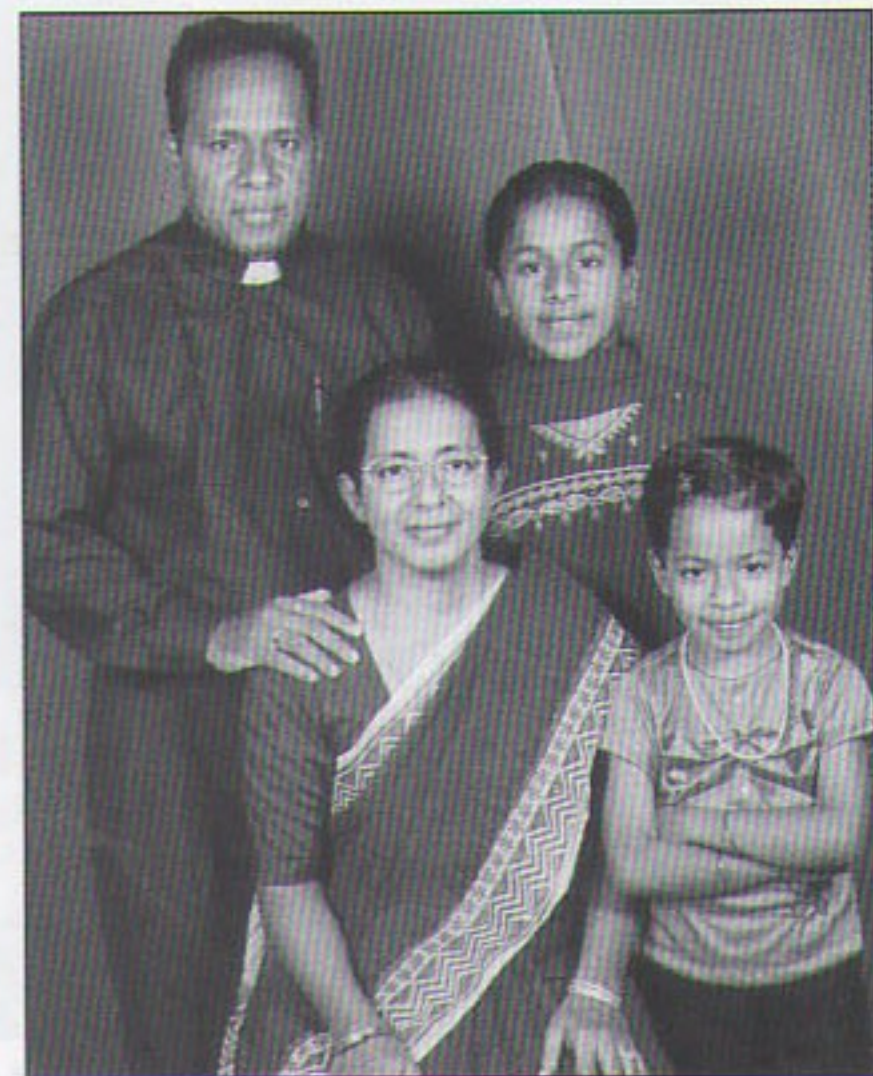
College: B.A. from S.N. College, Kollam. M.A. from University College, Trivandrum, M. Phil. R.D. University, Jabalpur & B.D. from Mar Thoma Seminary, Kottayam. Ordained in July 1993.

Served as Vicar in the following parishes, Thannithodu, Thekkuthodu & Manneera, Patna MTC & Patna St. George, Ambalakara, Andoor, Mathaimukku & Ummannoor, Pullanchery, Karunечи & Chokkad.

REV. SAJU ZACHARIAH is the new Vicar of Dallas St. Paul's and Iowa Congregation.

Native Place: Ayroor.

Wife: Sweety,
Children Anpu
(13) & Serene (7)



College St. Thomas College, Kozhenchery. B.D. from St. Leonard's Theological College, Jabalpur. Counseling Training from United Theological College, Bangalore. Ordained in 1991 Worked as Counselor at Nava Jeevan Kendram, Malayalapurza.

Served the following Parishes: Inchakad Bethel & Kalayanad Salem; Chaliakkara Immanuel & Nellippally St. Paul's; Ilampal St. thomas (Punalur); Bombay Bassien Rd & Tarapur MTC; Baroda Bethel & Anand St. Thomas.

REV. REJI K. PHILIP is the new Vicar of MTC of Greater Seattle, St. Thomas MTC, Vancouver and MT Congregation Portland

Native Place: Pullad

Wife: Annie Reji Philip, Son Asher (3 yrs old), daughter Abiya (7 months)



College: B.Sc from Mar Thoma College Thiruvalla; B.D. from Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam; Diploma in Clinical Pastoral Counseling from Serampore University.

Served as vicar in the following parishes: Peechi, Vadekkencherry, Ponnani, Kadavallur, Tirur, nchakkad, Karikom, Andoor, Puthur, Mylomkulam. Also served as Principal, Mukti English Medium School, Chavakad and as Administrator of Deenabandhu School for Mentally Retarded Children & Deenabandhu Home for Senior Citizens, Kunnamkulam.

BETHEL MAR THOMA CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA



Thirumeni and vicar Rev. John Mathai with first communicants.

MEXICO MISSION TRIP—JUNE 12-15, 2003

On June 12th, 2003, members of our church along with the Houston Immanuel Church had the privilege to travel to the island of Puntilla Norte located off the coast of Mexico. By God's grace, we were able to share the love of

Jesus Christ with the people of the island and make an impact for eternity. The following description summarizes our work on the island and is a reflection of a moment in time that we will cherish in our hearts forever.

Primary duties on the island included house construction, vacation Bible school for children, food preparation, medical surveys, and recreational activities. By God's grace, we enjoyed tremendous success in these activities, since God opened up many doors for interaction and sharing. A small group of our team members had the opportunity to travel to various homes and pray with some residents. Afterwards, some said that it was their first time praying out loud. Touched by many stories like this, we made a commitment to remember the people of Pontilla Norte in our prayers. We are privileged to have taken part in this trip and are seeking God's will to return for a second trip to the island. Our prayer and hearts desire is that the people of the island will come to know the fullness of love and joy that Christ has to offer, and we are confident that God will use his faithful servants to make this happen on the island.

Dennis John, Youth Fellowship

WINNER: NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



John Varghese (s/o Mrs & Mr. Varghese T. John, Thengumthottathil, Kuriannoor) received the outstanding National Achievement Award. This recognition provided by Toyota is awarded to 100 students out of 10,000 applicants from across USA, based on Academic Excellence, Outstanding Leadership and dedication to Community Service. John had the honor to attend the award winning ceremony conducted by TOYOTA at the Kentucky Derby Museum Hall, Louisville, Kentucky, where he was awarded the scholarship by U.S. Representative Charlie Hoffman of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. John will be attending Rice University, Houston, Texas, in the coming fall, where he will double-major in Biochemistry and Economics. He is a member of the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch.

TRINITY MAR THOMA CHURCH, HOUSTON

Fourteen members from our parish attended the Medical Mission program in Mexico on May 7 to 9, 2003. Another group of 15 members went to Mexico to build 5 houses sponsored by our parish on June 19 to 21, 2003. Church

annual convention was held from Friday, June 13 to 15 and Mr. George Cherian, Navajeevodayam, Tiruvalla was the speaker.

T. A. Mathew, Secretary

When you can't sleep, don't count sheep. Talk to the Shepherd.

FIRST AND SECOND PLACE WINNERS OF THE DIOCESAN SUNDAY SCHOOL EXAM – 2003

JUNIOR – GRADE 5

First Place



REBECCA VARGHESE
St. Stephen's MTC, NJ

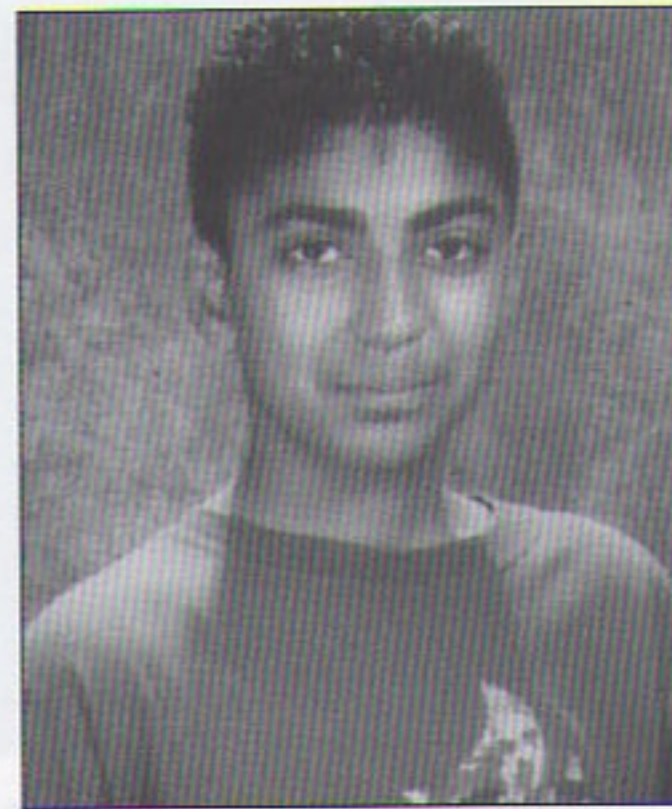
Second Place



BRIAN BINOY
Immanuel MTC, Houston

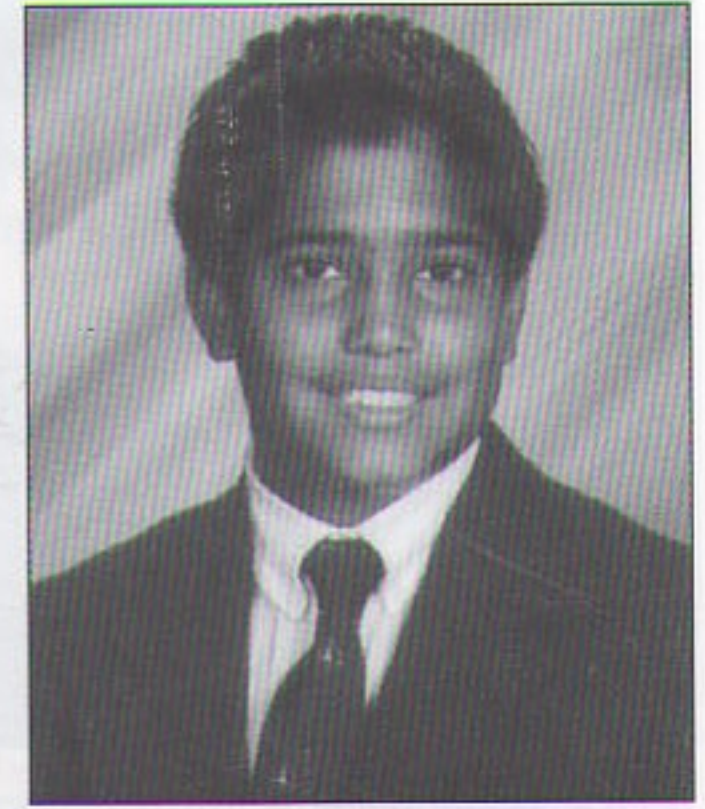
JUNIOR HIGH – GRADE 8

First Place



TITUS KURIAN
Ebenezer MTC, NY

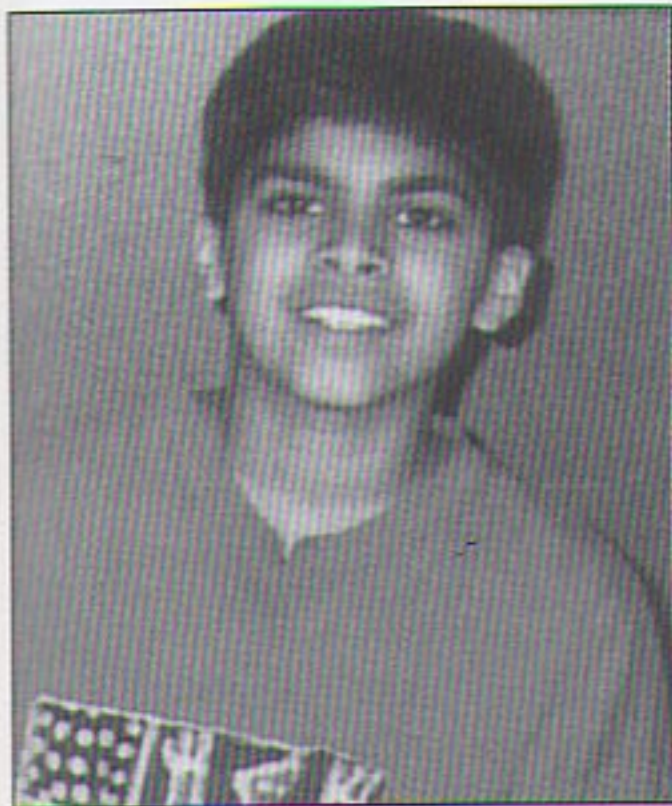
Second Place



ALEX THOMAS, JR.
MTC NJ, Randolph

JUNIOR – GRADE 6

First Place



CHRISTOPHER CHACKO
Detroit MTC

Second Place



JOSLINE ALEX
MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch

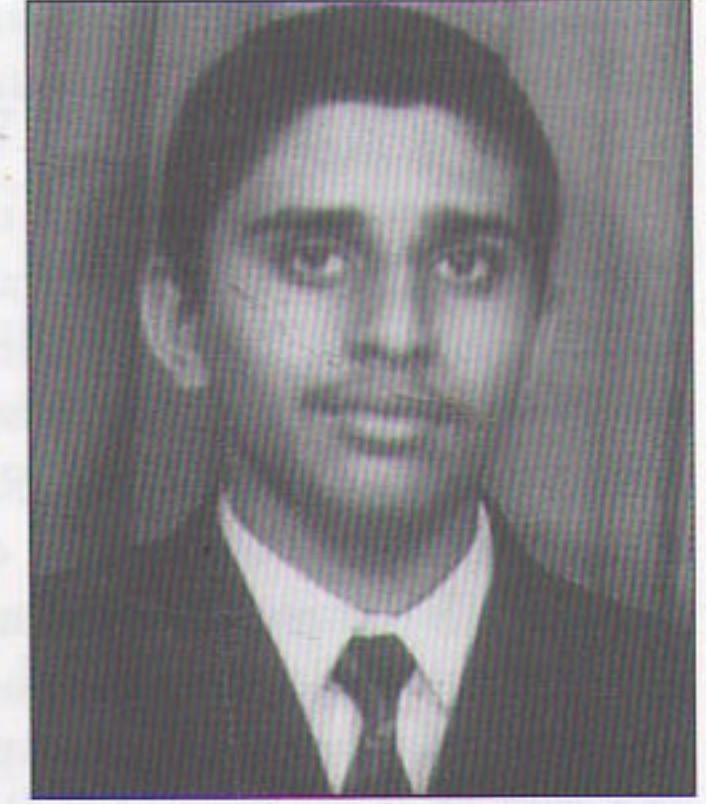
SENIOR HIGH – GRADE 9

First Place



BLESSY ABRAHAM
Epiphany MTC, NY

Second Place



SHANE VARGHESE
St. Mathew's MTC, Toronto

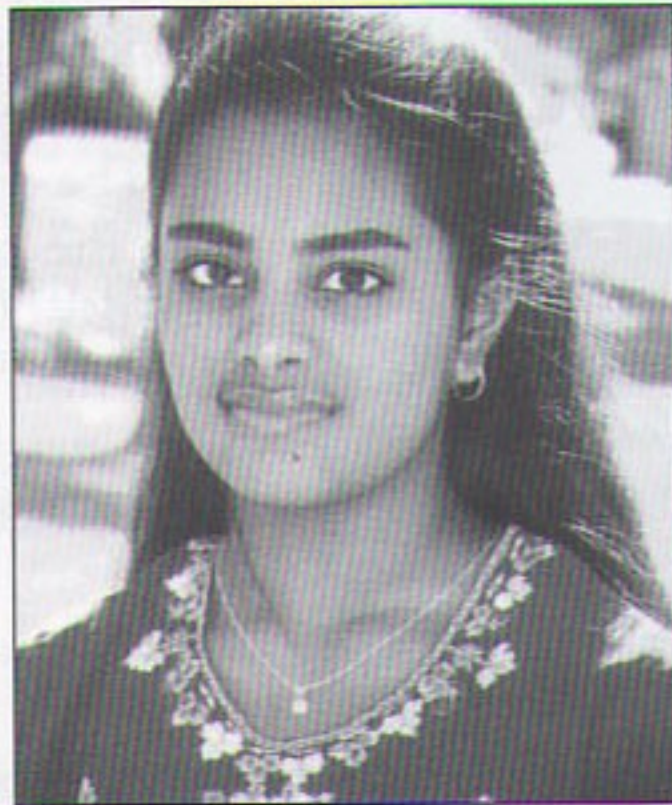
JUNIOR – GRADE 7

First Place



NANCY VARGHESE
St. Peter's MTC, NJ

Second Place



ALEENA CHERIAN
St. Thomas MTC, NY

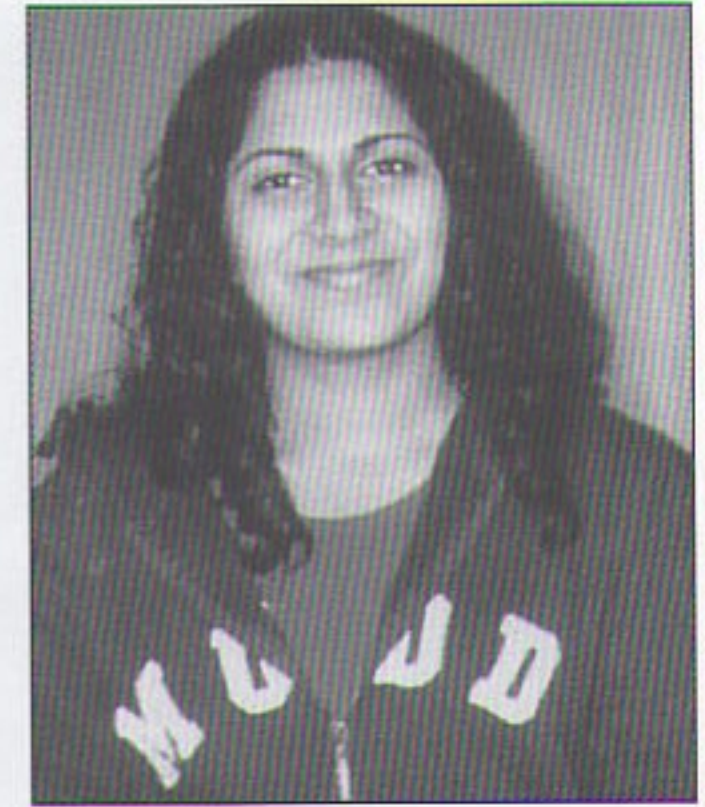
SENIOR HIGH – GRADE 10

First Place



JUSTIN JOHN
Epiphany MTC, NY

Second Place



CHRISTEENA KURIAN
Ebenezer MTC, NY

Overall Points

Epiphany MTC, NY–First Place • Detroit MTC–Second Place • St. Johns MTC, NY–Second Place • St. Peters MTC, NJ–Third Place



A New Generation of Marthomites: The First Communicants pose for a picture with the Vicar, Rev. Samuel M. Samuel, and the Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, after the ceremony.

The last few months have been rife with events at the Staten Island Mar Thoma Church. The Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos visited the parish on Sunday, March 23, 2003, and initiated thirteen first communicants into holy communion.

A raffle to raise funds for the new church building was inaugurated on Sunday, June 29, 2003, by the diocesan secretary Rev. Dr. John Joseph, by selling the first raffle ticket booklet to Mr. Thomas Paul of the CSI church. Rev C. A. Varghese was present at the function and felicitated the church.

Staten Island MTC was venue to one day of the Three-Day Regional Convention of the Edavaka Mission Northeast Region. Evangelist Samuel Ganesh was the main speaker. More than two hundred people attended the event and heard the venerable



Church Building Fund-Raising Raffle: This pioneering team of eight led the sales by buying \$1000.00 worth of tickets each, seen here with Rev. Dr. John Joseph, Diocesan Secretary, Rev. C. A. Varghese, Vicar of Epiphany MTC, NY, and Rev. Samuel M. Samuel, Vicar, Staten Island MTC. From left to right: Front row: Babu Varughese, Thomas K. Jose, Thomas Paul, Dr. John K. Thomas, Jacob Chacko and Mathai John. Back row: Varughese P. Varughese and John K. Mathai.



the Edavaka Mission sponsored the lunch on Mothers' Day and the Sevika Sanghom reciprocated in kind on Fathers' Day.

The month of July came to a close with the commencement of an exciting four-day long Vacation Bible School. More than 100 children, including a few from neighboring Malayalee churches, participated in the VBS.

Rev. Samuel M. Samuel, Vicar

The Taste of Victory: A beaming girls' basket ball team along with coach Tony Abraham Chacko, captain Jenny Varughese, and vice captain Betty Jacob holds up the Diocesan Youth Basketball Tournament Trophy.

evangelist expound the Word. The Suffragan Metropolitan, The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Irenaeus graced the occasion with his presence. It was a joyous time for the parish. A jubilant girls' basket ball team rolled into town with the Diocesan Youth Basketball Tournament Trophy, hosted by St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Yonkers, having vanquished six teams from the Northeast and Southeast regions of our diocese, all in a single day. The otherwise unsung heroes of parenting were honored on Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day. The youth presented flowers and made heartfelt speeches as tributes to their mothers and fathers. The men of

MISSION PROJECT OF THE LONG ISLAND MAR THOMA CHURCH

Mission is of God and Jesus Christ is the model and norm of the Church's Mission. In the ministry of Jesus the word and deed are held together in terms of the command to love God and to love one's neighbor. Therefore the Mission of the Church is obedience to the Great Commission and Great commandment. The Long Island Mar Thoma Church is privileged to support fully the following mission project from 2002.

Ambasamudram Mission

It is a mission field of the Trivandrum – Quilon Diocese. Ambasamudram is a place 31 miles east of Schengottai in Tamil Nadu, close to the Kerala boarder. This is a center of Cotton Mills. The Mission started in 2000. One acre of land was purchased for the mission field to construct a mission house and an assembly hall for seekers. A Balawadi (pre-primary education center) is functioning with two staff to look after the children of that area. The villagers are mostly agricultural laborers. They are economically back-

ward and very poor. The Evangelist, Mr. Varghese Zachariah, visits the houses of the villagers, conducts prayer meeting for the adults and scripture class for children. Six Christian families of the Madura Coats Pvt. Ltd. are actively involved in the activities of this region. Rev. Mathew Varghese, Avaneeswaram is the missionary Achen of this mission field.

Sponsorship of Children at JYOTHIS, Mavelikara

Long Island Church is sponsoring 10 children of Jyothis School for mentally retarded (A Home of Love), Puthiyacavu, Mavelikara. The Sevika Sanghom of this parish is also sponsoring 3 children.

The parish conducted a Fest in order to raise the fund for Mission Project. The Parish could also support three other mission fields partially during the year 2002.

Chacko Mathew, Secretary

Rev. K. P. Sabu, Vicar

THE DETROIT MAR THOMA CHURCH—FAMILY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

The Detroit Mar Thoma Church conducted a Family Enrichment program on Saturday May 10, 2003. This year's theme and workshop was 'Anger Management: Taming the Beast.' In addition to vicars Rev. Sonny Thomas, Rev. P. Chacko, and Rev. Philip Varghese the workshop leader was Mrs. Kunjumol Cherian, a certified Biblical Counselor and a member of the National Christian Counselors Association. While we often talk about salvation, repentance, renewal or Christian family life, topics such as anger and its dangers that disrupt our family, social and spiritual life are not adequately addressed. Kunjumol Cherian gave us valuable insights into the various forms of anger, the hidden ways we express it based on psychological and biblical perspective. The root cause of anger includes hatred, jealousy, guilt, pride and these may develop into outburst of rage and fury and sinful actions. At a time when the daily news in a given day is more about violence, abuse and murder than peace or the fruit of the Spirit, understanding the many forms of anger and its danger is very important.

The second half of the session dealt with 'Scriptural instructions on Anger.' Based on Biblical foundations the leaders instructed that we must surrender our emotions to

be guided by the Holy Spirit and that we must bring our life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We must not let the sun go down in our anger (Psalm 4:4; Ephesians 4:26) lest the devil gets the opportunity to destroy our demeanor, family, social and spiritual life. We should be quick to listen and slow to speak and slow to become angry. (James 1:19, 20). A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word turns up anger. (Pro. 15:1). The workshop also explained the practical ways to deal with angry children. The program helped us to evaluate the hidden forms of anger and the level of pride we may have that could lead to sinful actions.

In his introductory remarks Vicar Sonny Thomas stressed the importance of controlling our emotion of anger for a healthy life. In the concluding remarks, Rev. Philip Varghese expressed satisfaction in addressing the issue and pointed out that understanding anger and how to control it is very important in Christian life. The program was a real blessing to all those who attended. The meeting was concluded with prayer and benediction by Rev. P. Chacko. Mr. K. K. George welcomed the gathering and Mr. Santosh Thomas proposed the vote of thanks.

K. K. George, Secretary

*"A clean conscience makes a soft pillow.
Nothing ruins the truth like stretching it."*

SOUTHWEST REGION SUNDAY SCHOOL, EDAVAKA MISSION, AND SEVIKA SANGHAM CONFERENCE

The VIII Southwest Region Sunday School, Edavaka Mission, and Sevika Sangham Conference, hosted by the Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston, was held from March 21 through 23, 2003. The theme for the conference was "Abide in Christ and Make a Difference", based on John 15:5, "I am the vine, and you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him, will bear much fruit". The conference was overflowing with registrants from parishes all over the Southwest Region, namely from Houston, Dallas, Lubbock, and Oklahoma, and estimated to about 290 participants. Rev. Dr. Koshy Muthalaly, Professor in Adult Studies, South Nazarene University, Bethany Oklahoma, and Mr. Robert Tyler, Executive Director, Child Evangelism Fellowship of Greater Houston were the guest speakers. Along with our guest speakers, Rev. George Jose, Rev. John George, Rev. Dr. C.A. Abraham, Rev. T.V. George, and Mrs. Lizy Mathew (wife of Rev. P. Mathew) graced us with their presence, talks and prayers. We were also privileged to have ecstatic entertainment programs by the Blues2Joy, a local musical group, and the A.D. Players, a Christian theatrical group from Houston. The following are just the highlights of the conference.

The Conference Inauguration took place on Friday, March 21, with praise and worship led by the Trinity Mar Thoma and Immanuel Mar Thoma Sunday Schools, followed by the Inaugural Address by Rev. George Jose, President of the Sunday School, Southwest Region. The Trinity Mar Thoma Sunday School staged the Conference Theme Presentation. Afterwards, we were honored to have

Rev. Dr. Alexander Koshy Muthalaly deliver the Keynote Address.

Saturday, March 22, was elated with stellar programs. It began with singing, devotion, and prayer. One of our guest speakers, Mr. Robert Tyler, presented the Theme Talk. There were spiritually thrilling theme activity sessions for the children, led by Mrs. Litty George (wife of Rev. George Jose) and Mrs. Reena John (wife of Rev. John George). In the meantime, Mr. Robert Tyler, who discussed about "Effective Methods of Presenting Christ", led the Teachers' Workshop. After lunch, there was the spiritually moving Students' and Teachers' Dedication Service led by Rev. John George, Youth Chaplain of Houston. Outdoor activities were conducted for the children to take pleasure in. The Talent Evening was made spectacular by presentations by various parishes. In the evening, the Blues2Joy performed an inspiring and melodious musical concert. Following the concert, the A.D. Players gave a couple of eye opening theatrical dramatizations, namely "Forever News", portraying live, on the scene reports from the Garden of Eden, Noah's Ark, Mount Moriah, and the empty tomb; and "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe", a production of the famous children's classic by C.S. Lewis, dramatizing the life and death struggle for control of Narnia and the triumph of good over evil.

The conference concluded on Sunday, March 23, with Holy Communion Service, graced by Rev. John George and Rev. T.V. George.

Gina Mathew, Houston

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS TO MAYOR ROY ABRAHAM OF U.K.



Councillor Roy Abraham is the first Malayalee to be elected as a Mayor in the UK. Although he was involved in politics as a student since the 1970's, he became actively engaged in politics in 1995 when he was elected in May of that year as a Councillor on the Chesham Town and Chiltern District Councils.

The election of Councillor

Abraham in 1995 was ground breaking, as he was the first Asian and a non-English person to be elected in the Chiltern District that was predominantly politically conservative. Roy is a member of the Liberal Democrats party.

Roy is actively involved in the local and wider community issues and has a keen interest in the revitalisation and redevelopment issues of the town. In addition to his full time job as a Business & Finance Officer with The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, he is an active participant in his various public duties as a Town Mayor, and also as a School Governor where his children are students. He has the ardent support of his wife Susan and his two daughters Natasha (17) and Tanya (15) to enable him to straddle the family and public roles seamlessly.

Roy is the son of the late Mr. M. K. Abraham of Kochupurakal, Kumbanad and Mrs. Annamma Abraham, Malayilparabil, Kumbanad. He was born in Tanzania, and educated in, Kenya, India and the UK. His wife Susan is the daughter of the late Mr. Thomy Koshy of Nellimootil, Adoor and Mrs. Sarah Koshy, Ancheril, Kottayam.

Roy Abraham and family are members of the St. John's Marthoma Church, UK.

SEATTLE MAR THOMA CHURCH, WASHINGTON



Treasurer Mr. P.M. Mathew accepts the plaque from Thirumeni



Thirumeni and vicar Rev. George John with first communicants.

Our diocesan bishop Coorilos Thirumeni visited the Seattle Mar Thoma church on November 3rd, 2002. Thirumeni congratulated the church for being a model church by being prompt in managing the affairs of the parish during 2001. His grace presented the church with a plaque in acknowledgement of this achievement. Thirumeni celebrated the Holy Qurbana in our church and five youngsters accepted first communion from him on that occasion.

With God's grace we were able to pay off our mortgage on the church building by the end of 2002. It was no small achievement for about thirty financially participating families to raise over \$500,000.00, in two and a half years, with practically no contributions from outside our parish.

Diocesan assembly member, Thomas Mathew

ST. PAUL'S MAR THOMA CHURCH, DALLAS



Coorilos Thirumeni, Vicar Thomas Mathew Achen and Rasma Kochamma with the 19 young participants of First Holy Communion.

On March 7, 8, and 9th the Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa visited our parish and blessed us with his presence. Upon his arrival, Tirumeni met with the Youth Fellowship on Friday night. Tirumeni reminded the youths that, "evangelism is the vocation of all the Marthomaites". On Saturday morning Tirumeni participated in a joint meeting with Sevika Sangam and Edavaka Mission. At 10:00 a.m. bishop attended the WORLD DAY OF PRAYER, which is a

global ecumenical movement of prayer by women. Later in the evening Tirumeni conducted the evening worship and met with Yuvajana Sakyam members at the parish. On Sunday morning, Tirumeni conducted the Holy Qurbana in Malayalam and administered the sacrament of Confirmation to 19 youngsters in our parish. Following the Qurbana Bishop conducted a Q&A session with the parishioners. Bishop congratulated the Sunday school for being **NUMBER ONE** in the South West Region. After the session a reception luncheon was conducted for all that those who participated in the service. During the afternoon Bishop visited the sick and needy in our church, later met with executive committee members. Tirumeni concluded his official visit on Sunday evening.

P. P. Cherian



1940 – 2003

MR. V. I. PAUL known as Babu, one of the early members of the Detroit Mar Thoma Church was called to eternity on May 18, 2003 in Warren, Michigan; leaving his beloved wife Molly, son Jaison, daughter Jaya, son-in-law Ajith and grandson Ryan. Funeral service was held at the Detroit Mar Thoma Church on May 22, 2003. Rev. Sonny Thomas,

Rev. P. Chacko and Rev. Philip Varghese presided over the funeral services.

Babu was born in Karakkal, Tiruvalla on September 10, 1940 as the youngest of the four children of the late Vellucherial Iducalla and Achiamma. After his schooling, he moved to Bombay, Middle East and then came to Detroit in 1978. Wherever he went, he was very active in Mar Thoma Church and one of the founding members of the Detroit Mar Thoma church. Also he was very active in community activities. Music was an integral part of his life and he enjoyed playing the tabala. He was a member of the Detroit Mar Thoma church choir and active participant in the Regional Choir Festival.

He will be deeply missed by his family, friends and church members.



1924 – 2003

COMMANDER P. M. VERGHESE (Ret'd)

On Sunday June 29th 2003 he passed away, while preaching the sermon at St. James Mar Thoma Church in Rockland, New York. As he addressed the question from Jeremiah 5:11, "But what will you do in the end?" he went on to explain the answer found in Philippians 3:1, "Finally, my

brothers rejoice in the Lord!" After repeating these words several times he was suddenly called to his eternal home.

P. M. Vergheze was born on March 2, 1924 as the second of six children of the late M. E. Pappy and Annamama Pappy of Modathara house Kayamkulam,

Kerala. At the age of 25 he became a commissioned Royal Indian Navy Officer. As a Naval officer he traveled around the world and retired in 1980 and moved back to Kayamkulam. Ever since his retirement, he and his wife Grace very often visited his children in Kuwait and USA.

He lived every day of his life for the Lord in utmost humility, simplicity and integrity. Wherever the Lord placed him, his passion for Christ and Mar Thoma Church was expressed through his writings, poetry, sermons and Bible studies. He contributed several articles to the Mar Thoma Messenger.

He is survived by his wife Grace Verghese and children: Dr. George Verghese & Dr. Susan Verghese, Dr. Anna Mathew & Nalonnil Mathews; Mathew Verghese (Winny) & Sheila Verghese, and eight grandchildren.

His body was taken to Kayamkulam and the funeral took place at Salem Mar Thoma Church, Kayamkulam, Kerala on July 5th, 2003.

MARIAMMA ABRAHAM

(mother of Dr. Thomas Abraham (Kunju) was called to eternity on February 5th 2003. Mariamma was married to Mr. M. T. Abraham of Meladathu Kadamanpathilil, Ayroor and blessed with Children Kunju (Dr. Thomas Abraham), Annie, Ally and Jo, ten grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Her simple but great faith helped her serve the Lord through her gener-



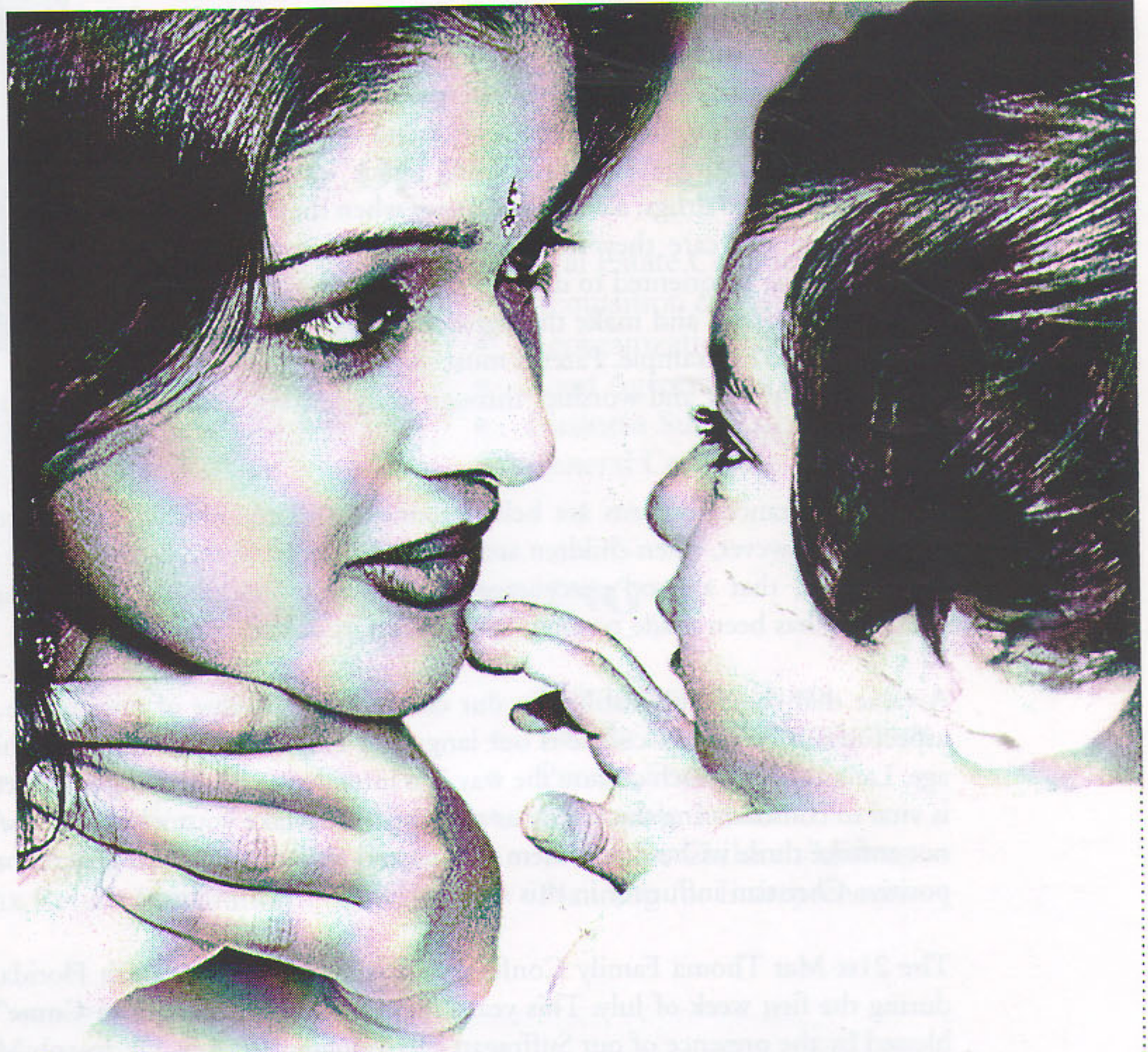
1916 – 2003

ous and tireless dedication to family, friends, church and community. Having lived in India, Malaysia and New Jersey, she will be greatly missed by all those she generously and graciously touched with her golden singing voice, culinary delectables and close caring friendship.

Funeral Service was conducted on Feb 10th at St. Peter's Mar Thoma Church and the burial was at George Washington Memorial Cemetery in Paramus, NJ. Diocesan bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorlos Episcopa and several Achens led the services.

Live life so that the preacher won't have to lie at the funeral

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on technology...*



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Family is the basic unit of the society, its purpose being to propagate an atmosphere of love, care, faith, encouragement, appreciation, support and discipline. In modern culture, where many undesirable behaviors have become normal in society, it is a difficult task to uphold proper traditional values. In many parts of the world, teenage suicide is on the rise. This scary trend is mostly due to lack of faith and courage in overcoming crisis situations. Many youngsters turn to drugs, alcohol and gangs when they cannot attain the support and care they need and in turn become depressed. Children must be oriented to develop strong faith, so that they can overcome obstacles and make the right decisions. This requires the parents to lead by example. Parents must show their children how to lead a life of prayer and worship, through daily prayers, meditations, sharing and sorting through problems together.



In many instances, parents are held responsible for the violent and destructive actions of their children. However, when children are recognized for good deeds, the parents are rarely given credit. I am proud that a good percentage of Malayalee children are high achievers. Much of their prosperity has been made possible by the support of loving parents.

A value that should be instilled in our children is the value of our culture. The most influential aspect of our culture of course is our language. This should be taught to children at a very young age. Language can teach culture the way it is intended to be. Time spent together in a family setting is vital to consolidating the family as a strong unit. Make your wishes for the children clear, but do not enforce those wishes upon them. I hope and pray that our next generation will become a strong positive Christian influence in this society.

The 21st Mar Thoma Family Conference was hosted by the South Florida Mar Thoma Church during the first week of July. This year's theme was "**Thy Kingdom Come**". The conference was blessed by the presence of our Suffragan Metropolitan Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Irenaeus, Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos and many other guests. I take this opportunity to congratulate Rev. Joseph Mathew and all those who worked with him to make this a memorable and successful conference. The annual family conference is a common forum for Marthomites from different parts of this Diocese to come together and spend a few days in retreat. It propagates the unity and solidarity of our laity and clergy and thus makes our church and its various activities stronger and visible in this community. I encourage all Marthomites to attend this annual conference which can be a glorious break from routines and will in turn enrich us with faith, hope, encouragement and self-awareness.

"It is the individual who is not interested in his fellow men, who has the greatest difficulties in life and provides the greatest injury to others. It is from among such individuals that all human failures spring"

— Adler

Eapen Daniel

ABRAHAM MATHEW & ASSOCIATES

ATTORNEYS AT LAW*

Practice focusing on:

BUSINESS & CORPORATE LAW

- Litigation – Dispute Resolution
- Business Formation: Corporations-Partnerships
Limited Liability Companies-Joint Ventures
- Shareholder and Founders Agreements
- Employment and Consulting Agreements
- Software and Licensing Agreements
- Real Estate Contracts and Leases
- Acquisition & Sale of Businesses
- Reorganizations and Liquidations
- Loan Agreements & Promissory Notes
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- Estate & Trust Administration
- Trustee Services
- Estate & Gift Tax Return Preparation
- Life Insurance Trusts
- Family Limited Partnerships
- Private Foundations
- Charitable Trusts
- Trusts for Children/Minors
- Planning for Entrepreneurs



Abraham Mathew, Attorney

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AS 55%**

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