



MAR THOMA  
**MESSENGER**

A PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

OCTOBER 2003

**DIASPORA AND VOLUNTARY  
EVANGELISTS' ASSOCIATION SPECIAL**



**“..... Attempt Great Things for God”**

# *Real Estate Investors !! Residential / Commercial*



## **Abraham & Co.**

Earn over **15%** on your investments !!

Invest in commercial Real Estate

**Two Locations**

7322 S.W. Fwy.,  
Suite # 1100  
Houston, Texas 77074

1747 Texas Pkwy  
Missouri City  
Texas 77489

**Tel: 713-981-4800**

**Tel: 281-499-6767**

**George Abraham** GRI, CRS, CIPS

[www.abrahamrealtors.com](http://www.abrahamrealtors.com)  
E-mail: [george@abrahamrealtors.com](mailto:george@abrahamrealtors.com)

A Leading Real Estate Firm ..... You can Count on  
"23 years of Trust & Service"



# Mar Thoma Messenger

The official publication of the  
Diocese of North America & Europe

**VOL. XXII No. 4**  
**October 2003**

## EDITORIAL BOARD

**Rev. Dr. John Joseph**  
Diocesan Secretary  
516-377-3311  
Fax: 516-377-3322  
marthoma@aol.com

**Eapen Daniel**  
Chief Editor  
Philadelphia, PA  
215-364-5459  
eapen.daniels@uphs.upenn.edu

### Associate Editors:

**Rev. Dr. K. A. Abraham**  
New York, NY  
914-376-6530  
kaabrahamachen@yahoo.com

**Abraham Mattackal**  
Los Angeles, CA  
562-420-8817  
Fax: 562-420-6528  
Abramat@aol.com

**Anil Mathew**  
London, UK  
44-208-393-1508  
anil@nellimala.fsnet.co.uk

**Koruthu Mathew**  
Long Island, NY  
516-621-0832  
kmathew@optonline.net

**Dr. Usha George**  
Toronto, Canada  
905-887-6626  
u.george@utoronto.ca

## MANAGING COMMITTEE

**Rev. K. P. Sabu**  
Long Island  
516-377-9803  
sabuachen@yahoo.com

**Anil Joseph**  
New York  
845-426-0329  
aniljoseph@msn.com

**Benny Mathew**  
New York  
914-378-8028  
chunackaraben@aol.com

**Gigi Tom**  
New York  
845-268-3532  
gigitomelr@aol.com

**James T. Philip**  
Manager  
718-761-1295  
Fax: 718-761-1723  
jtphilip@aol.com

**Lal Varghese**  
Dallas  
972-874-7909  
attylal@aol.com

**Vinod Varghese**  
New York  
917-685-4890  
vweditor@hotmail.com

### Mailing Addresses:

Mar Thoma Messenger  
Sinai Mar Thoma Center  
2320 S. Merrick Avenue  
Merrick, NY 11566

Eapen Daniel  
165 Springflower Court  
Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

James T. Philip  
175 Sheraden Avenue  
Staten Island, New York 10314

The Opinions expressed in the articles in this publication are solely those of the respective authors and is not endorsed by the Diocese of North America & Europe or its office bearers.

## CONTENTS

Message From the Diocesan Bishop .....	2
Message From the Metropolitan (Reprints from Tharaka) ..	3
The Miracle of Faith or Miracle-Oriented Faith? Rev. Dr. K. A. Abraham .....	4
History of the Mar Thoma Church Rev. Rev. Sunni E. Mathew .....	6
Will the Diaspora Community Ever Become the Local Community Dr. Zac Varghese .....	9
Every Marthomite is an Evangelist Roy C. Thomas .....	12
Evangelism at the Work Place—A new Perspective Dr. John K. Thomas .....	13
The Great Commission T. A. Mathew .....	13
Kolakote C. J. John Upadeshi C. V. Samuel .....	14
When Almighty God Intervened A Miracle Happened in My Life Jacob Joseph .....	15
Holistic Spirituality George J. Poikail .....	18
Sadhu Kochukunju Upadeshi Mrs. Susan John .....	20
Eppozhum Santhoshippin Thomas Philip .....	23
Nammude Mission Fieldilode Oru Yathra Abraham Mathew .....	24
Diaspora Community: Its Relevance and Needs Attorney Lal Varghese .....	26
Religious Fundamentalism: It's Consequences P. V. Varghese .....	27
EDT Abraham Kurien .....	30
Following Your Dreams Lisa Tillery .....	33
Youth Corner .....	36
Kids Corner .....	42
Bible Cross Word Puzzle .....	43
Diocesan/Parish News .....	45

## REGIONAL PROMOTERS

**Benjamin George**  
New York, NY  
516-616-5565

**Thomas Varghese**  
Atlanta, GA  
770-736-5216  
thomasfly6@aol.com

**C. V. Samuel**  
Detroit, MI  
586-268-8007  
cvsamuel@hotmail.com

**Varghese George**  
Washington, DC  
301-924-5777  
gvarghese@howard.edu

**T. A. Mathew**  
Houston, TX  
713-455-7469  
mathewthottinal@hotmail.com

**Dr. Zac Varghese**  
London, UK  
44-208-951-5273  
zvarghese@rfc.ucl.ac.uk

**Thomas Mammen**  
Los Angeles, CA  
562-431-6469  
tvmammen@msn.com

**Zachariah Mulamootil**  
Toronto, Canada  
905-279-4602  
zmulamootil@yahoo.com

### Advertisement Rates:

	Four Issues	One Issue
Back Cover	\$2,000.00	\$525.00
Front/Back Cover Inside	\$1,500.00	\$400.00
Inside Full Page	\$ 500.00	\$150.00

The last issue of the Messenger was delayed to some subscribers due to tardiness by the Postal Service. However, the Managing Committee expresses our sincere apologies to the readers for this inadvertent delay. Your patience and continued support is appreciated.

# Message from the Diocesan Bishop

October 27, 2003



Dear Beloved in Christ,

Greeting in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

After a hectic summer with programs and activities we are entering into the quietness of the winter season. Let this be a time of reflection and evaluation of our experiences and interactions. By interiorizing, we will definitely be able to lead a meaningful and purposeful life. In our personal, as also church life, we need to diligently search and measure our spiritual growth. If there is no substantial growth or if we are truly lagging then we need to repent and seek for a revival. Isaac dug again the wells his father Abraham had dug years before (Genesis 26: 15-19). Likewise, we also need to re-dig some spiritual wells in our lives so that as a Diocese we will be effective in our witnessing and ministry. Be reminded that digging is hard work whether it is in the physical or the spiritual realm.

If we are to be successful in this spiritual re-digging process we will have to give it a very high priority in our life.

This issue of the Messenger is set apart as Diaspora and Voluntary Evangelists' Association special. We remember the Mar Thoma Community scattered in different parts of the world, outside Kerala. The fourth Sunday of November is set apart as Diaspora Sunday to remember and pray for them. The dispersion of God's people is not a recent phenomenon but was seen from the early stage of the Church. This is to be seen as a mechanism of reaching out to people who never had the privilege of hearing the Gospel. From the local and familiar setting we are sent out so that we can be the light and salt, there by participating in the furtherance of the Kingdom Of God.

The Diocese of North America and Europe is placed as a Diaspora community in this part of the world to shed the light of the Gospel. We can integrate ourselves with the community around by being sensitive to the needs of the community around. Even when we are expected to uphold the rich values that we have inherited, we should have the humility to receive what is good in this community and society.

There are so many of our dear brothers and sisters living with out any fellowship and facilities to worship. Let us set apart sometime to remember them and pray for them so that God will be their source of strength all through.

I am happy to learn that Edavaka Mission is active in most of the parishes. This organization is primarily expected to maintain the spiritual climate of the parishes. Since parishes constitute the Diocese, the life and growth of the parishes has a direct implication on the growth of the Diocese. This year the Diocesan Edavaka Mission had organized a National Conference at Dallas which was well attended. I commend the office bearers for their leadership. The participation and leadership of the local, regional, zonal and diocesan mission units in various mission activities of the Church is commendable and I thank all those who sacrificially contributed for this great cause. The Diocesan Council of the Edavaka Mission has decided to assist a major project of the church which is the renovation of the Kallisserry Mallika. I urge the support of all parishes for this project.

The summer mission program of the Mexican Mission had its concluding program on August 24, 2003 and it was well attended by the representatives of various parishes of the Diocese and by the local people. By the grace of God we completed 45 houses for the islanders during this summer and nearly 225 volunteers participated in the summer program. I thank and praise God for all the people who contributed for this great mission. We are planning for long-term projects in Mexico and I look forward for your continuous prayer and support.

The developments that took place during the past Sabha Mandalam, leading to the postponement of the Mandalam, was most unfortunate and painful. Instead of pointing fingers at each other let us pray so that this trend will never become a precedence in our church. We need to pray consistently and diligently for the church leadership and the rest of the people so that we will be guided by divine wisdom.

As we are preparing for the elections of the new office bearers and committee members of the parishes, let us do it with prayer so that people of commitment and vision will be elected for the glory of God. Parishes should also pay the dues to the Diocesan office as well as to the Sabha office in due time, as we are coming to the close of the financial year.

Let us thank God for all the mercies we have received all through the year and strive to be faithful stewards in everything God has entrusted us.

May God bless you all.

Yours in His Service,  
Coorilos Methrachen

# Message from the Metropolitan

Today pollution is increasing in every facet of life. Water, air, food are meant to sustain human life. But sadly, they have degenerated into life-destroying causes. Is the Church just a helpless onlooker in this dying world? Or are we living witnesses to the Christ who conquered death? The church should evolve into Christian witnesses who can boldly, like Jesus, say; "Today you shall sit with me in heaven." The Church should be seen as inventing and executing new methods to reach this goal. Such programs should be an integral part of the activities of every parish.

The transformation of the Church is a crying need of the modern world. Artificial fertilizers and pesticides have made our vegetables into grenades. Organic manure is the means of defusing this bomb. To make available such farming material in the market is also an expression of compassion and service.

Self-financing educational institutions have been proliferating in every field of higher education. This is a good sign in itself. However, some evil lurks behind the curtain at a deeper level. We should not fall into the temptation of making education a consumer product and reaping huge profits. Teachers involved with such educational institutions and those who receive a share of their profits, should be constantly aware of their responsibilities too. They should act with the conviction that education is a responsibility of the society and of the Church. To make society aware of this obligation should be a duty of the Church.

Grades XI and XII of school education were earlier categorized as Pre-Degree in colleges. This move from college to school of grades XI and XII has had an impact on the activities of SCM, which has been very active amongst the college students since a very long time. Hence the SCM has decided to expand its ministry to the Secondary Schools. Authorities are trying to open SCM units among the XI and XII graders. We need enthusiastic participation from our clergy and parish members to this end. This is the formative period in our children's lives laying the foundation for their future. Therefore it is our Christian duty and need to reinforce the activities of the SCM.

Our Church Council has published a book titled "Mathaparivarthanam Mathabahulathayude Paschathalathil" ("Religious Conversion In The Context Of Religious Pluralism") for the Mandalam. It was presented in the Mandalam meeting for study. Every diocese should make this book the subject of careful study. Not mere speeches based on this book, but study classes based on this should be taken up. A comprehensive report on the studies conducted should be sent to the Church headquarters. The diocesan bishops should give this matter due importance.

Our Sabha Mandalam was supposed to convene from September 9 to 11. The Mandalam convened on the 9th. However, after the prayer and the Presidential address, a discrepancy in the point of order was raised and consequently the meeting was terminated. The Church Council met on September 23rd and decided to hold the Mandalam meeting again in December on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. I am deeply saddened because the Mandalam meeting had to be terminated prematurely. It is not possible at this stage to identify the individuals responsible for this. This matter is being studied and the findings will be disclosed to the church members. I accept my responsibility in this incident and profoundly regret it. I apologize to God and the people of my church. May the good Lord who can transform every life incident into a blessing abide with us. Let us look up to him for guidance. Let us not accuse each other but submit ourselves with a humble and contrite heart to fulfill the Lord's will. Let us pray for a renewal and spiritual infusion in our church and work towards that end.

Special offertories for the recognized institutions should be faithfully contributed to those institutions. The Mandalam had decided on this. It is not right that we keep a portion of it for ourselves. Is that not a form of cheating? The parishes who do this should refrain from doing so immediately. The amount received as offertory should be given to the respective institutions in toto. The Achens are requested to pay due attention to this matter.

Today we see some destructive trends in Kerala: disintegration, power hunger, desire to destroy others, insincerity, putting selfish and partisan motives above the greater good of the nation, and so on. These trends have seeped into our church also. We should trample such trends that will lead to the destruction of the church. I have been asked by many in the media if the prosperity of our people and our church has diminished our dependance on God and obedience to His will. Are we being an example to the world or is the world being our model?

May God bless us all.

Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Metropolitan

# The Miracle of Faith or Miracle-Oriented Faith?

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

These days we have several high-tech mega crusades, para-churches and cults in Christian spiritual circles. All of them make several exclusive claims for themselves. Their main theological notion is "faith because of". Faith becomes strong when there is physical healing, promotion in job, success in business etc. Christ is portrayed here as a mere object of our worship and even as a "God of our making"! This is only an aberration of the Gospel of Christ who always preached and lived the Kingdom of God which is the ultimate state of perfection. The values of this Kingdom are peace, justice, righteousness, sacrifice, fellowship and so on. These values are always in conflict with the values of the contemporary ethics of the market such as profit, success, pleasure, competition etc. In Habbakuk 3:17-18 we read "Even though the fig trees have no fruit and no grapes grow on the vines, even though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no corn, even though the sheep all die and the cattle stalls are empty, I will still be joyful and glad, because the Lord is my savior." We can call it "faith in spite of." This miracle of faith is found in all genuine expressions of faith. This is also a realistic understanding of the crisis situations in our life.

## 1. The healing miracles of Christ

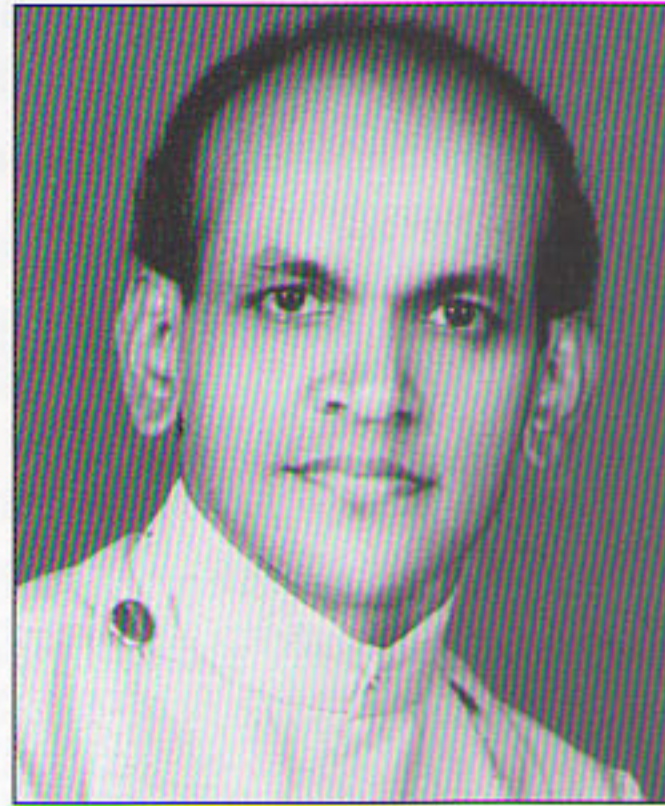
In the Gospels we have three categories of healing: in the first category the person who needs healing takes the initiative (Mk.10:46-52, Lk.5:12-14); in the second category the community takes the initiative (Mk.21:5, Lk. 8:22-26) and in the third category Jesus takes the initiative (Lk. 6:6-11, Lk. 12:10-17; Jn.5:1-15). A careful study of these portions will reveal that the healing instances were all manifestations of the Kingdom of God that Jesus taught and lived

- negation of the social taboos of his times
- liberative deeds of God in the world
- promotion of life and its values over and against the powers of evil and sin

Some scholars are also of the view that the healing miracles of Christ were a clear negation of the "Esculapian cult"; a cult of healing in the Roman Empire which only enslaved people further.

## 2. Paul's "thorn in the flesh"

Apostle Paul had some severe problems in his life. He understood it as "the messenger of satan" and "thorn in the flesh". He prayed for healing (2 Cor12:1-10). What was given to him was not physical healing but the all embracing grace of God which enables him to say "When I am weak then I am strong." Very often Paul's thorn in the flesh is understood as a physical ailment in the life of Paul. But a careful reading of 2 Cor. 11:22-29, gives us a different picture. Here the apostle



gives an account of his sufferings. When compared to these shattering experiences and the mental trauma, a physical infirmity is nothing. Just as anybody else weak as he was in the context of these adversities, Paul is in a deep crisis of faith in his life. In the light of his renewed experience with the grace of God, he declares thus: I am content with my weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and difficulties for Christ's sake (2 Cor. 12:10). This is definitely the miracle of faith over and against the miracle oriented faith.

Yes, as Dr. Konrad Raiser the general secretary of the World Council of Churches rightly points out "Our faith is always swimming against the current. It is a resistance movement against fatalism and resignation".

## 3. Healing within the community of faith (James 5:13-16)

God is the one who gives healing. The ministry of healing is given to the Church. Healing ministry is not to be considered as the private practice of a few so-called charismatic leaders. Outside the framework of the community of faith healing can become a cult. Here healing is wholeness; the well being of the person within the community of faith. Individual problems have social roots and social problems have individual roots Health is not merely the absence of disease. It is a positive, harmonious inter-relationship of one's body, mind, spirit and environment. According to the W.C.C. document on the "Meaning of life", "Health is a harmony or balance within creation, a concept that includes all that is, uniting and overcoming the rationalistic separation that makes healing into a process of mechanistic manipulation of human bodily functions".

What is recommended here is to "confess sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed." (vs. 16) In the Malayalam translation, the word which can be translated as "saved" that is used instead of "healed" sounds more meaningful. In other words, healing is not to be seen as an end in itself; it should be seen within the framework of God's saving deeds in the world. Our intercessory prayers are not the attempts to make use of God for our selfish needs. Rather, those are the occasions when we make ourselves available for God's work and also attempts to restore our broken relationships within the community of faith. The following words of Bishop William Temple sound relevant in this context:

We are not, in our prayer, trying to suggest to God something He has not thought of. The proper outline of a Christian's prayer is not, "Please do for me what I want" but "Please do in me, with me and through me what you want".

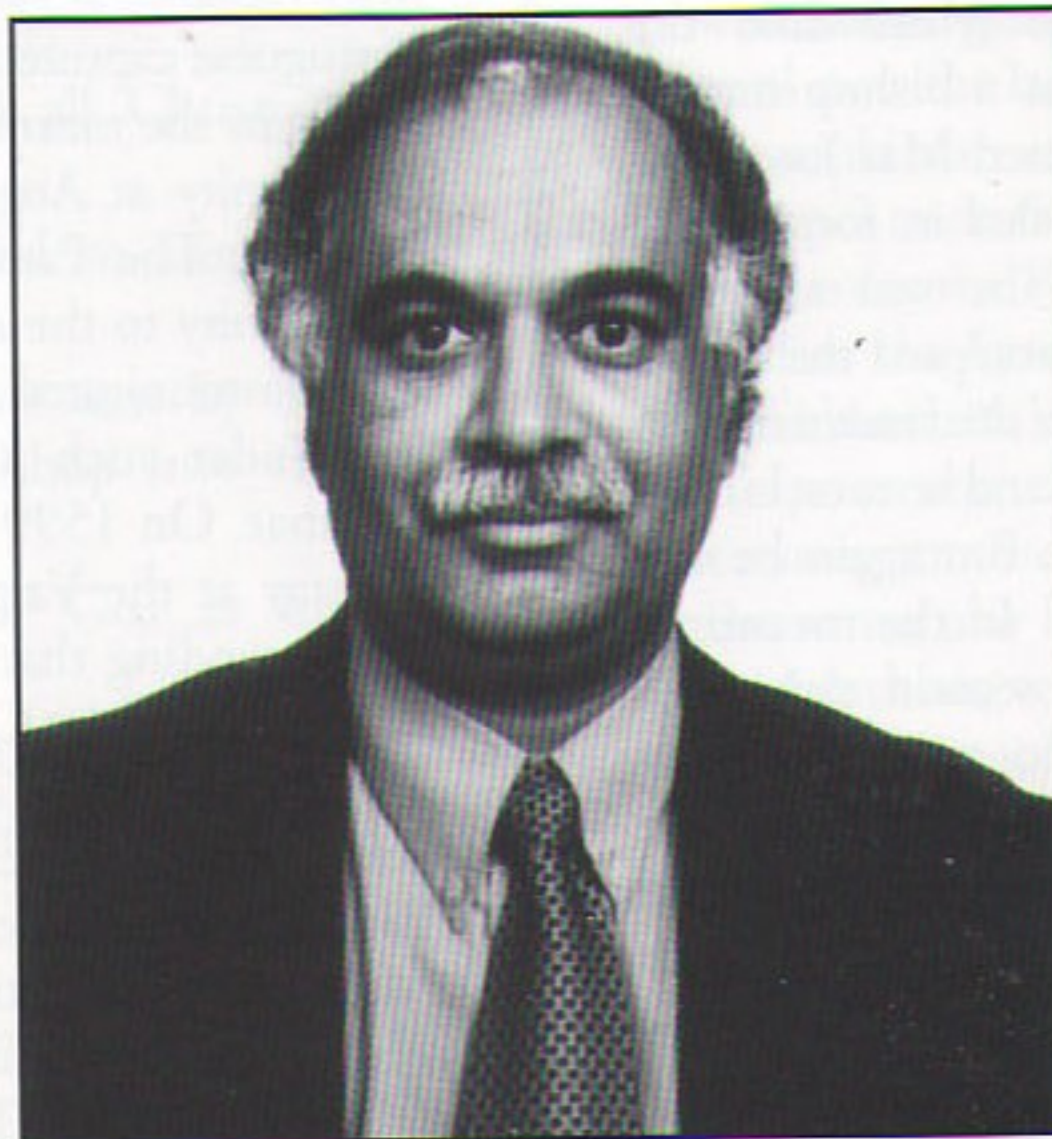
The exodus of believers from the mainline churches to healing crusades and to neo-Pentecostal groups has always

*(Continued on page 11)*

# Welcome to Atlanta!

*If you are planning to move to Atlanta, please call me  
for your relocation assistance with:*

- Residential
- Commercial
- Business Investments



**Thomas Varughese**

(Mathewkutty, Omalloor)  
Georgia Licensed Real Estate Agent

**Thank you for having "Georgia on your mind..."**

**Global Brokers**

6355 Jimmy Carter Blvd.  
Suite 1  
Norcross, Georgia 30071

Office: (770) 736-5216

Cell: (678) 557-3029

Pager: (770) 768-1103

Fax: 770-447-8843

email: thomasfly6@aol.com

# History of the Mar Thoma Church

Rev. Sunni E. Mathew, Los Angeles, CA

## Persian bishops during the time

During this time, there occurred a division in the Persian Church. Following the death of Nestorian Patriarch Simon Bar Mana in 1551, a group of bishops ordained the nephew of Simon as the successor. But another group refused to accept this. They selected John Saluka. The Roman Catholic missionaries (Franciscans) working there influenced them. With the help of the missionaries, Saluka went to Rome and was consecrated as Patriarch. When he came back, he was imprisoned and later killed. His followers consecrated Abdisho as successor. The new patriarch sent two bishops Mar Joseph and Mar Elias together with some Roman Catholic prelates to India. The Portuguese authorities kept the Persian bishop in a monastery at Goa. Meanwhile the Nestorian patriarch Simon Bar Danha sent a bishop named Mar Abraham to Malabar. Portuguese released Mar Joseph to deal with the Nestorian bishop. He succeeded in forcing the Nestorian bishop out of Malabar. When he was alone in Malabar, Mar Joseph left the Latin rite and accepted the Syrian rite. It was this Joseph who refused to ordain the students from the seminary of Fr. Vincent. He was caught and sent to Lisbon for trial. But he succeeded in coming back. But again he was accused and sent to Europe where he died. In the meantime Mar Abraham reached Malabar for the second time. He continued in office till his death in 1597.

From the beginning the Portuguese sought to bring pressure on Abraham. He was called to attend the second provincial synod at Goa in 1575. But suspecting this as a device to bring him within the reach of the Portuguese, he declined to attend. But during 1577 the relationship between Mar Abraham and the Jesuits grew friendly. It was during this friendly period that the seminary at Vaipicotta was established. In 1579 another Nestorian bishop Mar Simon appeared in Malabar. Mar Abraham sought the help of the Portuguese. Simon was arrested and deported to Europe. In response, Abraham attended the third provincial synod of God in 1585. A whole session of the synod was devoted to Syrian diocese. The synod decreed that Syrian candidates for the priesthood were not to be ordained without the permission of the Bishop of Cochin and the Portuguese King should do their appointments. Jesuit Fr. Francis Roz was appointed as advisor to Abraham. Even though Mar Abraham signed the documents, following this the relationship started deteriorating. He showed no willingness to carry out the decision of the synod. Roz accused Abraham of heresy. In retaliation Abraham refused to ordain students of the Jesuit seminary in 1590. These developments were reported to Rome.

## Archbishop Menezis and forceful methods

In 1595, Menezis was appointed as the Archbishop of Goa. Pope Clement VIII in the same year ordered the Archbishop of Goa to investigate against Abraham. But Abraham became seriously ill



during this time. He died in 1597 leaving the administration in the hands of Archdeacon George. On Abraham's death Menezis found that the chief obstacle is over. He thought of appointing Roz as the administrator of Syrians. But wise counsels persuaded him to abandon that idea. In 1597 the Pope authorised Menezis to appoint the Archdeacon as the administrative head of the community. The Archbishop requested the Archdeacon to make a profession of the Roman Catholic faith. Archdeacon questioned the interference of the Roman delegates. When Mar Abraham was sick, letters were sent to Persia

requesting for another bishop. Archdeacon was expecting one bishop to come. But sensing the situation Menezis employed strict vigilance at various ports including the port at Ormuz. The Portuguese captured all the clergies and prelates who came from Persia. In the meantime Archdeacon convened a meeting of the community at Angamali. He won their support and wrote a Padiyola. The Padiyola clearly declares the allegiance of the community to the Archdeacon and the Patriarch. This decision was communicated to all the churches.

Under such a situation, Menezis made plans to visit Malabar. On 1599 February 1st he arrived at Kochi. During his stay at the Vaipicotta seminary he became infuriated on understanding that the Syrians commemorated the Patriarch as the head of the Church in their liturgy. He said that the title of universal pastor and the head of the Church could only be attributed to Pope. He ordered that anyone that pray for Patriarch would be excommunicated. He mustered political backing through the support of the local kings of Kochi, Alangattu etc. He made intensive plans to execute his intentions like the following:

- Visit all the churches in Malabar.
- Expel all heresies and schisms from it.
- Teach the Roman Catholic faith.
- Destroy all books that contain heresy.
- Call a Synod of the Church to make necessary decisions so as to bind the Church.

Menezis started visiting Syrian Christian Churches. There was severe opposition in almost all places against the introduction of Western rites and practices. By all available means Menezis tried to suppress the opposition. He used gifts and presents to lure away many to his side.

Without the permission of the Archdeacon or the request of the yogam Menezis ordained 38 Syrian Christian Youths as priests at Udayamperoor. At Kaduthuruthy also he ordained many. These were gross violation of the age-old traditions of the Church, for the Syrian Church priests were ordained only through the request of the parish assemblies called yogam. But Menezis had different intentions. He did this as a new way of winning himself followers. He chose young men from noble families who had influence over the community. He made them



to give in writing promising obedience to Menezis as Archbishop and allegiance to Pope as supreme head of the Church. They were also demanded to renounce Nestorianism and the Patriarch. He also instructed the people in the Roman Catholic faith and administered the sacrament of confirmation.

Apart from this strategy he used political influence to execute his intentions. With the support of the local kings, Menezis cornered the Archdeacon. Archdeacon was left with no option but to come under his obedience. Menezis requested the Archdeacon to subscribe to ten articles presented to him.

The abjuration of the errors of Nestorians

A declaration that there is no separate margam of St. Thomas and doctrine of St. Peter but only one gospel of Christ.

Acceptance of the confession of faith, which the Archbishop sent from Goa.

All Syriac books to be delivered either for corrections or for burning.

To accept the Pope as the head of all Christian Churches.

To excommunicate the Patriarch and to stop all connections with him.

To admit no bishop other than those sent by the Pope and recognised by the Archbishop into the diocese.

To acknowledge the Archbishop of Goa as his ecclesiastical superior.

To convene a Synod representing all Churches.

The Archdeacon should accompany the Archbishop on a tour through the diocese.

It was decided to call a synod at Udayamperoor on 20th June 1599. Archdeacon and Archbishop sent separate letters to the parishes. In his circular Menezis quotes the letters of Pope Clement VIII to support his authority. The local kings also gave orders to the churches to attend the synod. They warned that failure to send representative would lead to confiscation of the properties of those Churches. Just before the synod Menezis ordained 50 more priests. Through that he ensured almost 2/3 support of the clergy. The total number of clergy that attended the synod was 163. Though the Archdeacon had the support of the community, he had to yield to the pressures of the Portuguese and the local rulers.

## The Synod

The synod started on Sunday, 20th June 1599, at Udayamperoor. Everyday there was two sessions. Total number of participants was 813. This included 133 priests, 20 deacons and 10 sub-deacons. On 9th itself Menezis and Roz had prepared the draft of decrees to be submitted to the synod. They covered all main Roman doctrines and sacramental teachings according to the Trent Council of 1564. Before the beginning of the synod, Menezis called 8 Cathanars of greatest reputation. He read to them privately all the decrees he had

drafted for the synod. He discussed with them on the matter. This was done to get their support. With Menezis an armed escort under the captain and other officials of the Portuguese settlement were also present.

## After the Synod

The Synod lasted for seven days. During those days the Syrian Church in India accepted under pressure the rule of the Portuguese hierarchy. It also accepted the doctrine and many of the customs of the Western Church. As a consequence they had to repudiate their age-old allegiance to the Patriarch. They also had to abandon many of their traditional customs. At the same time they were to maintain some of their old customs like the usage of Syriac liturgy. Even in that case, they had to make many changes in accordance with the Roman Catholic faith.

There are various reasons behind this taming of the Christians of Malabar. One of the reasons was that they were without a bishop and were ill organised to meet the Portuguese aggression. Another reason was that the Portuguese were powerful that guaranteed the safeguard of the ports and kept control over the land by exerting pressure over the local rulers. They could also exert tremendous pressure as they controlled the pepper trade that was important for many Syrian Christians as well as for the Kings by fetching them enough revenue.

After the Synod Menezes continued his visitation of the Syrian churches. During this visitation he made arrangements to impose the decrees of the Synod of Diamper. It is interesting to note that there exists two sets of decrees. One is in the vernacular language and another in Portuguese tongue. The Malayalam version was read in the Synod and passed with proper signing of the participants. The Portuguese version contains many decrees more that are not found in the Malayalam version. Menezes tried to impose the latter. He also ordered all the books of the Syrians to be examined and purged. If they were found to have gone far in heresy, he ordered them to be burnt. Angamali the seat of Syrian bishops had large collections of books and documents. He caused most of these valuable documents to be burnt. As a result we have now so little or even no written evidence of the history of Syrian Church in India before the sixteenth century.

On receiving the news that the King of Portugal had died, Menezes returned to Goa. Francis Roz was consecrated at Goa in 1601 as the bishop of Syrian Christians. Roz had good knowledge of Syriac and Malayalam. He was also familiar with the life of the Malabar Christians. His energy and competence led to trouble. Archdeacon and Roz got into tension for it was a new situation in Malabar that a bishop engaged himself in the daily governing of the Church. Consequently the archdeacon began to complain about Roz and the Jesuits. In 1624 Roz died. The next archbishop was Stephen de Brito. He was a man of mild disposition and was in good terms with the people and the archdeacon. In 1637 archdeacon George died and was succeeded by his nephew Thomas.

## Coon Cross Oath

The third archbishop, Francis Garzia was set to reassert the authority. As a result his relationship with Archdeacon

Thomas became difficult. Though many attempts were made to compromise they failed. Meanwhile, the Malabar Christians tried to contact the Persian Church for a bishop. In 1652 a foreign bishop from Syria arrived in India. He is commonly known as Ahatalla. But he fell into the hands of the Portuguese. They detained him at Mylapore. But he was able to meet two deacons from Malabar who had gone to the shrine of St. Thomas. He told them who he was and entrusted them with a letter to the Malabar Church announcing his arrival. There is controversy regarding the content of the letter. Syrian Christians claim that the letter nominated Archdeacon Thomas as their bishop. Soon it came to be known that Ahatalla was taken to Goa. On the way the ship stopped at Cochin. Knowing that the ship contained Ahatalla, a large crowd gathered at the Portuguese fort to demand the release of Ahatalla. But the Portuguese shut the gates and even turned the canons on the crowd until the ship left the port. Meanwhile rumour spread that Ahatalla was drowned in the sea. Passions arose and the Syrians in fury broke into a revolt. They gathered outside the Church of Mattancheri and swore an oath, relinquishing connections with the Roman Catholic Church. This famous incident took place on the 3rd January 1653. 54 years after the Synod of Diamper majority of the Syrian Christian community broke away from the Portuguese.

In May 1653 the revolted Syrians held a council at Alangad. They discussed about their future. Chances to get a bishop remained remote. So, based upon the authority of the letter of Ahatalla Archdeacon Thomas was elevated to the position of bishop. But the normal pattern of consecration was not possible. Therefore, 12 priests laid hands on him in consecration. Afterwards he came to be known as Mar Thoma I. In the course of time, the propaganda mission of the Catholic Church under the Carmalitan engaged themselves

into action. As a result of their propaganda many Syrians started doubting the consecration of Mar Thoma. The Carmalites lured many Syrians back into the Roman Catholic fold. Fr. Joseph Sebastini and Fr. Vincent Maria gave leadership. In 1661 Fr. Joseph Sebastini was made bishop and apostolic administrator of Malabar. Under Joseph and the Carmalites a determined attempt was made to get many who were with Mar Thoma. They succeeded to a great extent. But many who objected to the high handedness of the Jesuits and wanted to maintain the autonomy of the Indian Church remained firm. The net result was that the Indian Church that remained in unity for many centuries, now became divided.

Padroado means the right to present candidates to bishopric and other ecclesiastical offices by the state. At the same time it is obligatory for the State to uphold the faith of the Roman Church and to maintain, staff and equip churches and missions.

The Pearl Fishery Coast extends from Kanyakumari (Cape Comerin) to the island of Pamban (Rameswaram). Paravas were fishermen and were considered untouchables. Pearl fishing was an organised industry there. Arabs were the chief traders and they controlled the industry. Arabs were staunch allies of Pandyas who ruled over the villages of Paravas and they paid considerable amount of revenue to the rulers. As a result, the Kings took no notice of the extensive exploitation of the Paravas. Since Arabs held the monopoly in trade there, the fishermen had to sell the catch as per the terms and conditions fixed by the Arabs. This resulted in constant tensions between the Paravas and the Arabs. Following the rape of a parava woman some Arabs were murdered. In retaliation the Arabs systematically massacred the paravas. Paravas got in touch with the Portuguese through Joao de Cruz, a Hindu convert from Calicut. Patronage was offered in response to their Christianisation. ■

## Leadership

Dr. George K. Zachariah, Washington D.C.

In ancient Wales in the far-off days the warriors of the land were rushing through the wilderness to defend their homes and win peace and security. Suddenly they reached a raging river across which they were powerless to go. There was no bridge and to cross the angry waters was impossible. In this time of desperate need came one of the guardian giants of the Welsh. He laid down his great body across the torrent and over him the men walked to safety and to the land where they would be. Afterward the giant was heard to say **“He who would lead the people must be a bridge”**.

Jesus' idea of a leader is a person who is there above all to serve, to put oneself out, to enable others to lead. The title of the Pope above all is “the servant of the servants of God”. One can truly serve any organization only if he/she serve it freely, and one can serve it freely only if he/she look steadfastly beyond it for the source, norm and meaning of one's life. One shall understand the lesson of taking charge without taking control. It is proven that the more we pray

and meditate, the more we develop a divinely inspired intuition. I consider my recent chance to serve the Ecumenical Council as a great privilege and as a God-given opportunity. The power and affection of others influenced me greatly.

The covenantal relationship developed the notion of leadership as letting be enabling people to be themselves.

One must reinforce the “authority of service” as distinguished from the authority of appointment or election.

**“You cannot demand leadership by special privilege, but you can earn that leadership, if you walk with dignity, labor with integrity, prepare with dedication, produce with intensity, serve with selflessness and pray with persistence and power.”** (H. Beecher Hicks Jr.)

**“It is a mark of a certain milieu that lesser people can become instruments for things greater than themselves”** (Eric Hoffer). ■

# "Will the Diaspora Community Ever Become the Local Community?"

Dr. Zac Varghese, London

**T**he Most Rev Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Metropolitan raised this question in 2001. The key elements in this important question are diaspora, local, and community. The word linking diaspora and local is community; community is the bridge that we need to build to have social cohesion and meaningful relationships. In building this bridge we need to think about identity, mission and integration. Rowan Williams, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, put the question of identity at the centre of his enthronement sermon. The secret of true identity according to him is the simple fact that "We are made to be God's children and to find our most profound freedom we need to surrender to him." As a mission-oriented Church, it is worthwhile to think about our strength and resources as a community before we enter into a dialogue with our host communities about mission and integration. It is as part of the recognition of our unique identity that Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos was given a significant place at the enthronement ceremony of the new archbishop of Canterbury in February 2003.



live and survive. Local community organizations provide organizational structures for housing, education, healthcare and law and order. These communities provide possibilities for the socialization of the next generation, as they learn limits of behaviour suitable and acceptable to that host community. Immigrant churches can either interact with this reality, or ignore it thereby placing themselves at the fringe of the society, rather than in the mainstream. Many of these issues are hardly noticed and seldom articulated, as it is not part of our pastoral concerns, but has a significant impact on future generations of diaspora communities.

Community is a place where we respect, protect, and greet one another's aloneness. When we allow our aloneness to lead us into solitude, we learn to appreciate the solitude of others. Solitude, whether it is associated with physical space or not, is essential for our spiritual growth. Initially, solitude can be very frightening because in solitude we parade our demons, our addictions, our hatred, our selfishness and our innate need for recognition and approval. But if we do not try to escape from our solitude, we will meet the one who says: "do not be afraid, I am with you, and I will guide you through the valley of darkness." This is what the Psalmist felt in his solitude: "Even though we walk through a valley, as dark as death, we fear no evil, for thou art with us. Thy staff and thy crook are our comfort." Solitude makes us claim our centre and empowers us to call others to theirs. Therefore solitude meeting solitude is what community is all about. In such a place there is no domination.

All human beings are alone. Each of us is unique; no other person will totally feel like we do, think like we do, or act like we do. This aloneness is the other side of our uniqueness. The question is whether we let our aloneness become loneliness or whether we allow it to lead us to solitude. Loneliness is painful, destructive and suicidal. Solitude is peaceful. Loneliness makes us cling to other people, structures, and organizations in desperation. When we feel lonely we keep looking for a person or persons who can take away our loneliness. Our lonely hearts cry out, "please hold me, touch me, speak to me, and pay attention to me and so on." But very often we find that the person we expect to take our loneliness away cannot give us what we ask for. Often that person feels oppressed by our demands and runs away, leaving us in despair. As long as we approach another person from our loneliness no mature relationship can develop. Clinging to one another in loneliness is suffocating and eventually becomes destructive.

## Do we have a Mar Thoma community in the West?

We need to decide whether the diaspora community that we are talking about these days is a community at all from the above

## What is a community?

Community is a group of people who live in a particular area or who are alike in some way. Community can make us think of a safe togetherness, shared meals, common goals, joyful celebrations, and reunions. It also calls forth images of sectarian exclusivity, and self-satisfying isolation. Here I am discussing a very basic, primary grass root community, the paradigm on which all other communities should be built. The basic unit of any community is the family, which is analogous to the basic cellular unit in a multicellular organism. Jesus himself was a member of a human family, a perfect model to contemplate. No longer does membership of the family depend on blood relationships. The love expressed on the cross creates a new set of covenant relationships. The sovereignty of God in this new covenant relationship renders all persons equal before God. There is a difference between the Old and New Testament understanding of this covenant relationship. In the Old Testament, it was between a 'chosen people' and 'their God' which excluded others; in the New Testament understanding the blessing of 'chosenness' extends to everyone so that love, forgiveness and self-sacrifice are fully realized in that covenant relationship.

Within the unit of a family we need to observe certain fundamental rules for social cohesions and survival. A family that is out of control can destroy itself and in the process may destroy the whole community as well, just as an unregulated cell growth leads to cancer and so forth. A balance between 'protective genes' and 'destructive genes' provides that survival edge for living organisms. It is now clear that the subject of family cannot be considered outside the context of community in which families

perspective or whether it is a lonely hearts club of some sort where there is absolutely no serious communication from the centre of one's being to the centre of the other being. A community without such spiritual communication is a dead community. Our stories are only interesting insofar as it has a bearing on other stories and can be easily accommodated into a common framework. Such stories can be weaved only out of a common experience. The late George Brown, the British foreign secretary, once talking about immigrants said, "If we scratch our skin deep enough, every English person may see an immigrant underneath." People see belonging is an important aspect of community building. Therefore, the very first thing to do in becoming a community is to identify common interests and working for the common good of the people. However, the first question raises a series of other questions: are we a community? If not, why not? What are the rules of becoming a community of people? This probably was the purpose of the Metropolitan's question in the first place; he is a genius in making us think and do the necessary mental and physical work in achieving certain objectives.

### **Some special aspects of a Christian community**

In order to be a member of a community, we must learn to forgive. Forgiveness is the cement of community life. Forgiveness holds us together through good and bad times, and it allows us to grow in mutual love. Without forgiveness there is no freedom. Forgiveness is an act of liberation. As long as we do not forgive those who offended us, we carry them with us as a heavy baggage. Forgiveness liberates not only the offender but also the offended. We should not despise others because they are different to or less fortunate than ourselves.

### **Who hurts us?**

When we feel rejected, abandoned, abused, manipulated or violated, it is mostly people who are very close to us who hurt us; it is our parents, our friends, our spouses, our neighbours, our pastors and our teachers who are hurting us in a major way. The recent revelation of sexual aberrations of a few Catholic priests in America is an example of a bond of trust being misused for momentary self satisfaction and at the same time setting alight a chain reaction against the whole established Church. The tragedy of life is that those who love us wound us most. 'Friendly fire' is more damaging than enemy's fire. In solidarity with our Christian brothers and sisters we need to pray for both victims and perpetrators of this tragedy. Forgiving does not mean forgetting.

The other aspect of community life is in giving and receiving. No peace is possible when the community remains divided into two groups: those who are givers and those who are always at the other end of receiving. These words from Pope John Paul II offer a powerful advice: "Nobody is so poor that he or she has nothing to give, and no body is so rich that he or she has nothing to receive." Giving is very important in the life of a community: giving insight, giving support, giving money, giving time, and most of all giving ourselves. Giving is not only about generosity but also about humility. I have a deep resonance with Rev. Valson Thampu's thoughts on this: "We must practice charity only to express the compassion of God, not to advertise our goodness. We need to be totally selfless, lest our egoism poison our charity and

thus hurt its recipients." If we shame the recipient with the manner of our giving then we will be shaming ourselves. Writing a cheque is not giving, receiving a cheque is not receiving. There are lots of people out there who are perfectly willing to do humanitarian work with someone else's cheque book. But such people should learn to carry the person along with his cheque for the work ahead. Middlemen are neither givers nor receivers: therefore, the spirituality of sacramental giving and receiving is totally lost due to meddling of the middlemen.

Receiving is often harder than giving. But receiving is just as important as giving, because by receiving we reveal to the givers that they have gifts to offer. When you say, "thank you, you gave me hope; thank you, you gave me reason to live; thank you, you allowed me to realize my dream;" we make givers conscious of their unique and precious gifts. Some times it is only in the eyes of the receivers that givers discover their gifts. Giving is not a superficial act; it is an involvement and an engagement. When someone gives us a book to read but we never read it, that gift is really not received; when someone offers us an idea but we do not respond to it, that idea is not truly received; when someone introduces us to a friend but we ignore him or her, that friend does not feel well received. Receiving is a sacred experience. It means allowing the other to become part of our lives. It means daring to become dependent on the other. It asks for the inner freedom to say, "Without you I wouldn't be who I am." Receiving with heart is therefore, a gesture of humility and love.

### **Could we be a diaspora and local community at the same time?**

We must empty the cups of our lives completely to be able to receive fullness of life from God. Emptiness and fullness at first seem complete opposites. But in spiritual life they are not. In spiritual life we find fulfilment of our deepest desires by becoming empty for God. Jesus showed this on the cross. The giver and the receiver became one at the same time. When He had given all away to His father, He cried out, "It is fulfilled" (John 19:30). He who lifted on the cross was also elevated and lifted into resurrection and glory. He who had emptied himself and humbled himself was raised up and "given the name above all other names" (Philippians 2:7-9). Therefore it is important to empty ourselves of our arrogance, pride, prejudices, and pretensions to become a part of the community that we want to build.

You may be able to think of your youth and think of that special magic moment, which made a change in your life of falling in love with someone in silence. It is probably in an absolute silence that you decided to give and receive. Some times we seek happiness in being different from others, we often feel happy in telling others that we are not like others out there. We try to widen the difference between them and us. When you receive an award, a gold medal, a better sales figure, a better balance sheet, applause or a compliment, you experience the joy of being different. You are smarter, more popular, more beautiful, more intelligent, and it is that edge that brings joy to your life. But as you grow older and wiser, very soon you realize that the beauty that you were very proud of once was only skin deep when wrinkling sets in or the wonderful memory that paraded your intelligence once is

vanishing because of Alzheimer's disease or whatever. True joy is in the union of souls; it is the joy of finding common interests; and it is the joy of belonging to a community of common folk. It is the joy being with others as a friend, and a fellow traveller. The question to ask then is this, by the above yardstick; do we have a real community?

When we peacefully reflect on the community that we belong to and analyze in the light of the above considerations, we may realize that what we have created and continue to build is not a real community but a lonely-hearts club. Therefore, we have an absolute and immediate need to rediscover our aloneness in our parishes, parish organizations, fellowship meetings, and edavaka mission prayers. Most of the time people are engaged in destroying the reputation of others in one way or the other. Even our silence at times when we hear damaging things about a person or an organization is a passive encouragement for destroying their reputation. C. S. Lewis wrote: "The load, or weight or burden of neighbor's glory should be laid back on my back, a load so heavy only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken." We need humility to parade the reputation of others and honoring the reputation of others should become a sacramental obligation in our lives. This will help us to see uniqueness of every member of our community and their worthiness in building His Kingdom. Spiritually we should remain in a diasporic existence at all times, but in our day to day encounter with our neighbours we should fulfil our local commitment as responsible members of local communities. We must build a community not with our

indifference, but with our involvement. Involvement is costly as Jesus has taught us through His ministry. There is no gain without pain; there is no crown without a cross.

I learnt an amazing African expression when I went to Africa for the last general assembly of the World Council of Churches in Harare; the expression is "Ubuntu", which means that a human being is a human because and through other human beings. In other words, I am what I am because of you. Let us allow the new Archbishop of Canterbury to speak to us on this: "We only become completely human when we allow God to remake us. Like the conservationist in the art gallery, God works patiently to remove the grime, the oil and the dust of ages and let us appear—as we say—in our true colors. Wonderful, yes; but it means also that God will lay bare all the ways we hide from Him and each other, all the sad and compromised and cowardly things we do to stop ourselves being human." Often between success and failure or between life and death, there is a thin line and that thin line is our involvement, our 'God-restored humanity'. Human beings are created for community living; wherein the uniqueness of the individual finds its fulfilment. Within this collective model, the benefits of such relations are found in equality and mutuality. This understanding is the key to community building. This involvement is the very essence of the story of the Good Samaritan that Jesus told. Let our silent meditations and spirituality help us to build this inclusive community where we can be both diasporic and local at the same time. ■

## **The Miracle of Faith or Miracle-Oriented Faith?** *(Continued from page 4)*

been mainly in search of healing. Notwithstanding all the distorted teachings of these groups, their advertisement and propaganda; a realistic assessment of this phenomenon will show that the common reasons are the following:

- lack of Pastoral care and spiritual support to our people in their crisis situations of life
- lack of Biblical foundations in life
- lack of spontaneity in the life and worship of the mainline churches
- failure of the leadership to cater to the diversified spiritual needs of the believers

### **4. The issue of privatization of healing** (Mtt. 7:21-23)

We have here a judgement criterion of the so-called miracles supposedly done in Christ's name! The question to be asked is whether the miracles are really within the framework of the Kingdom of God or are they manifestations of the Kingdom and whether the miracle performer and the participants have the preparedness to be obedient to the will of God.

Rather than mere personal consolations the healing miracles of Christ were all paradigmatic events. For example, woman with the issue of blood, healing of the leper, exorcism, miracles on Sabbath and so on. These are instances when Christ challenges the inhumanity, rigidity, superstitions, strict legalism and perfectionism of the religious hierarchy of His times. On all such occasions He brings human dignity and

human perfection to the fore. We should not make a dichotomy between medical healing and faith healing. Let us constantly remind ourselves that the cult of healing and also the commercialization of healing are all aberrations of the Gospel of the Christ.

In the context of the onslaught of healing crusades and commercialized healing cults, we need to develop a fresh awareness of God's grace. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the former philosopher president of India, in his book *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, rightly reminds us: "In situations that test us the depths of life are revealed. Tense moments of crisis are also moments of grace." Though the concept of "disciplinary evil" or fatalism are to be questioned in the light of the providential care of God, such situations can make us either better or bitter.

What we need in our times is not the love for miracles, but the miracle of love which will always enable us to be sensitive to the needs and plights of others — the lost, least, neglected and marginalized. Only in our participation in the healing ministry of God in the world we are also healed. Let us humbly acknowledge the fact that we are not on our own and that we are all accountable to God and to the community at large. Let us close these reflections with the following words of C.S. Song, the Taiwanese theologian "What we need today is a strong faith in tomorrow despite the bitter disappointments of yesterday and the cruel realities of today." ■

# Every Marthomite Is An Evangelist

Roy C. Thomas, Diocesan Secretary, Marthoma Voluntary Evangelists Association

**A**braham Marthoma Metropolitan in his Missionary zeal and far vision started the Marthoma Voluntary Evangelists Association in 1924. Thirumeni proclaimed "every marthomite is an evangelist". That was the beginning of a great mission within the Marthoma Church. At that time the Church already had another organization, Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association that provides and support paid evangelists to work in different mission fields.



Thus a question arose among people to the relevance of Marthoma Voluntary Evangelists Association. The Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists Association has a different style of mission work. It is a work force of Voluntary Evangelists in Parishes who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and would like to spend time evangelizing among people at their work place. Voluntary Evangelists do not expect or get any monetary payment for their work. Our Lord Jesus Christ entrusted his disciples to be living witnesses. "But you will receive power when Holy Spirit comes on you; you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth". This was accepted as a motto and added in the official emblem of Marthoma Voluntary Evangelists Association. **"YOU WILL BE MY WITNESS"**.

## EDAVAKA MISSION

Edavaka Mission is the parish-level body of the Voluntary Evangelists Association and they form the grassroot level workforce of the association. Edavaka Mission has been mainly concentrating its activities on a seven-point agenda: Intercessory prayer, Bible study, Sharing experiences, House visit; Serving the poor and the needy, Conducting prayer meeting and Evangelizing people of other faiths.

## REGIONAL & ZONAL VOLUNTARY EVANGELISTS ASSOCIATION

Our diocese has a hierarchy which is slightly different from other areas. Different parishes in a region work together under a regional banner, organizing regional activities. Zonal committee coordinates the activities of various regions and our diocese is divided into two zones: the Eastern, and Western Zone.

## DIOCESAN VOLUNTARY EVANGELISTS ASSOCIATION

The Diocesan Council comprising of both zonal office bearers and executive committee of the Diocesan Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists Association under the leadership of Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa. Thirumeni oversees the functioning of Voluntary Evangelists Association of our Diocese. Diocesan council of voluntary evangelists association organized a National Conference this year in Dallas and expects to make this an annual event.

## MISSION FIELDS AND ACTIVITIES

The Diocesan Voluntary Evangelists Association is sponsoring Hoskot Mission, Chalissery Mission, Mexican Mission and Kallisery Kadavil Malika renovation.

We were able to provide a seven seater van to Half Way Home (Prathyasa Bhavan) in Ranny.

We thank God for the opportunity to join in the mission work of this diocese through Voluntary Evangelists Association. We are thankful to Thirumeni, Diocesan Council, Clergies and all who work and support the activities of this association of our diocese. It is the responsibility of every marthomite of this diocese to remind themselves to be witnesses for our Lord and work for the fulfillment of Abraham Marthoma's vision: Every marthomite is an Evangelist. ■

## MISSION TRIP TO INDIA

The Western Zone Edavaka Mission is arranging a Mission Trip to India by the end of January, 2004.

If you are interested please contact:

Abraham Mathew @ **214-321-7561**.

# Evangelism at the Work Place — A New Perspective

Dr. John K. Thomas, Secretary, Eastern Zone MTVEA

**T**he motto of the Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelist's Association inscribed on its emblem, "You will be my witness," is unfortunately applicable to the life style of only a select few in the Marthomite community when Abraham Mar Thoma Metropolitan envisaged "Every Marthomite as an Evangelist".

When we look into any sector of work situations, we see people who are unsatisfied, selfish, and do not hesitate to use deceptive methods for selfish gains. At one time or other, there have been moments when we have sighed and asked ourselves "Will there be an end to all this?" We do hope for a change in the state of affairs, but it is possible only when the love of God — the true love of our Lord Jesus Christ, found on the cross, will become an essential element in lives of people.

Most often, we Syrian Christians are saturated with sermons from childhood on. Paradoxically, we rarely find our words and actions in agreement. We may be able to attribute this problem as a failure of 21st century Christians.

Our presence in the workplace or community should be persuasive in nature to draw people to Christ. Saved by the Grace of Christ, we must shine so that we may reflect His light to others. By our lifestyles, we should be living witnesses to those working with us. Even if we are unable to give scholarly lectures on the Word of God, simply being unique in our behavior, attitudes, and level of maturity, forces others to learn from us and reexamine their own lives in introspection. Regardless of our field of work, if we complete it with responsibility, sincerity, and loyalty as if we are doing it for Christ, it will be a living witness for Christ. An ounce of practice is worth more than tons of preaching.

In today's world, the influence of money, which determines the depth of relationship among people, is often a curse rather than a blessing. People talk in terms of money; relationships are often compromised at the expense of money. But is this what is expected of us from our Lord?

Another area of thought should be our ability to speak boldly when we see of injustice or wrongdoing in our workplace. Even if ten people shout in support of a wrong, it does not indicate a right course of action. A true Christian will be bold enough to reject what is not true and take the extra step to defend the right. Whatever sector of work we engage in, we must be careful not to injure relationships. If it turns out to be our mistake, we should take a sincere effort to accept the responsibility and reconcile with the person concerned. In the present day world where relationships collapse due to our egoistic attitudes, mutual respect and acceptance should always be projected in our attitudes, as a symbol of Christian witness. This will only add greatness to our personality. We must also fight against injustice and cruelty in our society. In response to this, Cardinal Norman said, "you need light — not the keenest eye can see in the dark; though your mind be the eye, the Grace of God is the light."

Renowned Evangelist Rev. Dr. Martin Alphonse said, "If you are a Christian, live like a Christian". This must be a guiding thought in everyone's mind and a practicing truth for all active members of Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelist's Association, and for that matter — all Christians.

In summary, wherever we may be at work, let us try to believe that we are not there by accident, but by the divine plan of God. So let us live as true Christians and true witnesses for our Lord in the years to come. Let Almighty Lord help us and bless us all. ■

---

## The Great Commission

T. A. Mathew, Houston

*"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, son and Holy Ghost."* (Matthew 28:19)

**J**esus gave His disciples the great commission, "Go, make disciples, baptize and teach" before His ascension into heaven. Jesus dispelled the doubts of His disciples and gave them the authority that is most high. This authority was given to Jesus, by the Father and Jesus entrusted his followers to expand and continue the mission with this great authority. The commission to proclaim gospel throughout the world is not just an order, but a pronouncement of victory by the risen Savior. We Christians are to carry out this great duty with that authority.

Go ye is actually a participle and conveys not a command to go, but the assumption that the listener will automatically be going. In the Gospel of Christ there is

always a compelling "Go". This is to go not to any designated place, but all over the earth and to make disciples from all nations. Preaching the gospel is not limited to a particular area or a group, but to all people.

**Make Disciples:** this by proclaiming the truth concerning Jesus. A true disciple is to accept and submit to the authority and control of the Lord life long. When Jesus called us to be His disciples, He assured us that all our needs will be met and thus He proclaimed to be the great provider.

**Baptize:** Jesus told His followers that those who believed were to be baptized in water in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit. This reconciles the believer with Christ and the Triune God.

Baptizing the converted disciples is the first step of outward obedience to the Lord and brings acceptance into the local congregation.

**Teach:** This is a command where proclaiming the truth come in play. Spreading the Gospel in its entirety, with assurance of the second-coming of Jesus is expected of every follower. Despite the problems, Jesus asked His followers to spread out to the wide world with the light of life. Reaching all the nations is not based on literary education, rather on

conviction. Jesus promised His presence with the believer to the end of times.

As Christians in this post-modern society, it is our duty to teach and spread the Gospel. We are planted as messengers of the great Commissioner. Work hard while there is still day. Once darkness come upon us, we may not be able to continue this mission. Make disciples and let the process continue until we reach every corner of all the nations. ■

## **Kolakote C. J. John Upadeshi: A Reminiscence of a faithful servant of God**

### **The First Traveling Secretary of the Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelist Association**

C. V. Samuel, Detroit, Michigan

**S**ince this issue of the Mar Thoma Messenger is dedicated to Diaspora and Edavaka Mission, it is very appropriate to remember Kolakote John Upadeshi who was one of the founding leaders of the Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelist Association. A celibate by choice, he contributed valuable life service to the Association. Kolakote Upadeshi is one of those forgotten lay leaders of our church and today very few people in our church know about Kolakote Upadeshi who spent his whole life in the ministry of the Lord for the Mar Thoma Church.

Inspired by the availability of Bible in Malayalam, many like-minded people of our church in and around Ayroor, Kuriannor, Maramon and Kozhencherry got together at Chayal Mar Thoma Church in Ayroor for monthly fellowship meetings. Kolakote Upadeshi took an active part and gave leadership in the formation of these fellowship meetings. He was an active participant in preaching and teaching along with his contemporary evangelists like Sadhu Kochukunju Upadeshi and Punchamannil Mammen Upadeshi.

In 1924 an annual fellowship meeting was held at Sehyon Mar Thoma Church in Ayroor under the chairmanship of Dr. Abraham Mar Thoma Metropolitan. In that meeting the Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists Association was formed with a seven-point program: Bible study, intercession, sharing of experience, house visits, serving the sick and needy, conducting prayer meetings and gospel work among people of other faiths. Rev. C. P. Philipose Kasseesa more commonly known as "Ayroorachen" was its first president and Sadhu Kochukunju Upadeshi was the first secretary. Kolakote C. J. John Upadeshi was the first Traveling Secretary of the Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists Association. He served the Association in that position for a long time. He traveled far



Kolakote C. J. John Upadeshi

and wide to Mar Thoma parishes to organize parish-level units of the Association, which is now known as Edavaka Mission.

Kolakote Upadeshi was born in 1880 in the Cherukara Kolakote family of Ayroor as the youngest son of Kolakote Yohannan. When he was about six years old, he fell victim to polio and one of his legs was completely paralyzed. For the remaining 89 years of his life, he moved around with much difficulty and pain with the help of a walking stick.

At an early age he committed his life for Christ and became an evangelist. Although he received very little formal education he had good communication skills in Malayalam and was fluent in Tamil. He was brought up under the reformation influence of our church leaders like Ayroorachen and Abraham Mar Thoma.

Kolakote Upadeshi was also a teacher at Abraham Mar Thoma Memorial Bible Institute more commonly known as the Kompadi Bible Institute. My close interaction with Upadeshi was in 1962 at Kompadi Bible Institute when I was a student there for three months. At that time, Upadeshi was about 82 years old. He taught us church history and the Acts of the Apostles in a small classroom next to his one-room living quarters in the Bible institute. Due to his age and handicap to move around, it was my privilege for three months to bring him his meals to his room from the cafeteria. I had many opportunities to talk with Upadeshi about his life and ministry with Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists Association. I was very touched by his simple way of life and deep faith in God. Still memories are so fresh and so endearing in my mind about Upadeshi, a short, thin saint of a man wearing a collarless half-sleeved white shirt, with one leg totally paralyzed, sitting on his bed praying at all times.

He authored two books about the Life and Witness of Apostle Paul. He died in 1975 at the age of 95 and was buried at the Chayal Mar Thoma Church in Ayroor. ■



# When Almighty God Intervened A Miracle Happened In My Life

Jacob Joseph, St. Mathew's Mar Thoma Church, Toronto, Canada

*"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save;  
Neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear" Isaiah 59:1*

## **"I have never seen so much love and concern for a fellow Christian"**

Our Coorilos Thirumeni said, as he embraced me while I was recovering at home after my heart transplant. On 10th of October 2002 (6 days after my 53rd birthday), a miracle happened and my life was transformed. I came to be known as 'the miracle man' in London Health Sciences Center. When my beloved wife Valsa asked the pioneer surgeon Dr. Neil MacKenzie, what my chances of survival were, after a long pause he said "may be one percent".

I was his 495th heart transplant patient. After four cardiac arrests, my heart was beating just faintly and I was not expected to survive unless a new matching heart became available in 48 hours. Considering my deteriorating condition, I was placed as the #2 candidate in Canada to receive a heart transplant, if a matching heart become available anywhere in the country. That was changed very soon to #1 status, because I was slowly sliding away. Do I need to emphasize here the urgency of it at anymore?

There were chain prayers in our parishes in Toronto, and also our parishes in USA, UK and India for a miracle to happen to save my life. Friends from all walks of life prayed so intensely for me. The hospital lobby and chapel was crowded with hundreds of people at all times, day and night and everybody was praying. Family members and friends came to the hospital from near and far. It was a sea of love with burdened hearts and prayers for God's intervention. After 24 hours, the doctor told Valsa that there may be a chance for a new heart but the transplant team has to fly 4 to 5 hours and examine an accident victim somewhere far away. There was a ray of hope for my family and everyone else. I will be always indebted to that donor family all my life.

After several hours the heart retrieval team phoned back and talked to the transplant team and said, the retrieved heart was a good match for me and they were flying back with it. Preparations for my surgery was under way.

In anticipation of the arrival of the new heart, Valsa waited patiently trusting in God completely. After about 5 hours, as she stood watching outside, the ambulance arrived from London airport with the retrieval team and the new heart. As the team ran to the OR with a small cooler and the heart in it, she also ran after them as far as she could



witnessing everything as it unfolded in front of her eyes.

She completely trusted in God that a miracle is about to happen. God heard her cries for help and He provided.

The surgery was completed in 5 hours, my family and all those who were at their side waited patiently to hear the good news. When Dr. MacKenzie called Valsa to talk to her, she was very excited but the news was not good; as the transplanted heart failed to beat on its own. This was not a hopeful situation.

But they did not lose hope, and decided to pray even more strongly for they believed completely that God will not fail them. Everyone prayed even more intensely and asked God to intervene quickly.

Doctors attempted to revive the new heart every 24 hours, and after 48 hours the doctor called my wife and told her to spend as much time she wants with the children beside me. He also told her they could only keep the patient on the Heart-Lung machine for a maximum of 48 hours, and there is a risk of brain damage after that; but in this case they had decided to keep me on the ECHOMO machine for another 24 hours and would try ONE LAST TIME.' Then the next day—third day after the transplant, they took me to the OR once more for a final attempt to see if the new heart will pump on its own when the machine was removed. Valsa and the kids joined the praying crowd in the chapel. The moment of truth was at hand "Will the Almighty God intervene?"

Few hours later, my dear friend (Thampi-Varkey) came and told Valsa that the Doctor is calling her and she ran with him to the ICU not knowing what to expect, hoping that a miracle has already happened. Dr. MacKenzie took her to the side room (he had a faint smile on his face for the first time) He said to her, 'Sara, I have no medical explanation for what has happened today, your husband's heart is working as it should'. With a sigh of relief, thanking God for this miracle, Valsa said to the doctor, I have an explanation for this "SURELY IT IS THE POWER OF PRAYER".

As I regained consciousness in early December, I was able to look at my beloved wife's face for the first time since

September 30th, that's when I was taken by ambulance from Hamilton to London. She tells me that my first words to her were 'I love you', and according to her the next thing I asked her was 'Did we get mortgage for our new church property? I believe that God put me to a deep sleep and allowed me to join with everyone in our collective efforts; occupying my mind during these 3 months were thoughts about acquiring the 50 acres of land for our church. (The church building committee was in the middle of negotiations when I became ill) Valsa said that she sent e-mails to both St. Mathews's Mar Thoma Church and The Canadian Mar Thoma Church requesting for chain prayers, several churches in our diocese, and other christian denominations prayed for my recovery. THEY ALL PRAYED! AND GOD ANSWERED. How much love for a fellow Christian! What a great faith in a God who hears our prayers and one who provides when we ask; putting our trust in Him completely. I was out of danger and was on a path of slow but steady recovery, with the gift of a new life. During my recovery, I had a stroke which affected my eye sight, and my ability to hold a pen to write, my left side was very weak and I could hardly stand straight even with a walker, then there was a seizure and above all, I was revived 4 times after 4 cardiac arrests before my surgery.

In spite of all these complications, God healed me completely enabling me to drive to church by myself after a few months. During my recovery, I remember many things that gave me strength and joy. One special moment was when I was informed that the Christmas carol singers from our church is coming to the hospital to sing. I was taken on a wheelchair to the chapel and placed at a distance to avoid contact with anyone, then they all came and sang. What a joy it was? Small children were told to stay outside; but I remember when a few little ones cleverly sneaked inside the chapel to see Thampi uncle, when the adults stepped outside. They were also praying for me. I cannot describe the smile on their faces. May God bless them. Our Zacharias Thirumeni, Theodosius Thirumeni and other bishops sent e-mails every week asking for updates on my condition. Our dear Mathew Thomas achen, T. S. Thomas achen and several families came very often to the hospital during those winter months driving from Toronto in severe weather 2-3 hours drive one way to pray for me and give hope and strength to Valsa & kids. Dr. Zac Varghese, U.K. and Mr. C. V. Samuel, Detroit

were the e-mail warriors letting the world know, updates on my condition and requests for prayer. Achen and many families from Detroit church often visited my family in the hospital to comfort them.

Rev. Sam Thomas in London came very often and gave me Holy communion in my hospital bed. I have no words to express my thanks especially to all Malayalee people in London for their wonderful love and care for my family, especially the family of Thampi and Babu for taking care of Valsa in their home during these months. The special prayers that started in our churches for me still continues as a prayer group to pray for all the sick in our midst. I am privileged to be part of a very large prayer family, stretching beyond Canada. I pray for all of you because I am blessed with your love and fellowship. All my friends in Hamilton, Toronto and other places, christians and non-christians alike have prayed for my recovery. May God bless them. Prayer like a wild fire spread around the world through friends, requesting to pray for me and they did. When all these prayer requests reached up to heaven, God Almighty intervened and granted their wish and spared my life. In London Hospital they used to call me 'miracle man', but I call myself a man 'touched and healed by God' I believe that He has saved my life for a special purpose, I completely surrender to Him to fulfill His purpose through me. GOD was with me; as I passed through the valley of the shadow of death, and He did not allow me to be alone or be afraid about anything. Every breath I take is a gift of God, I know.

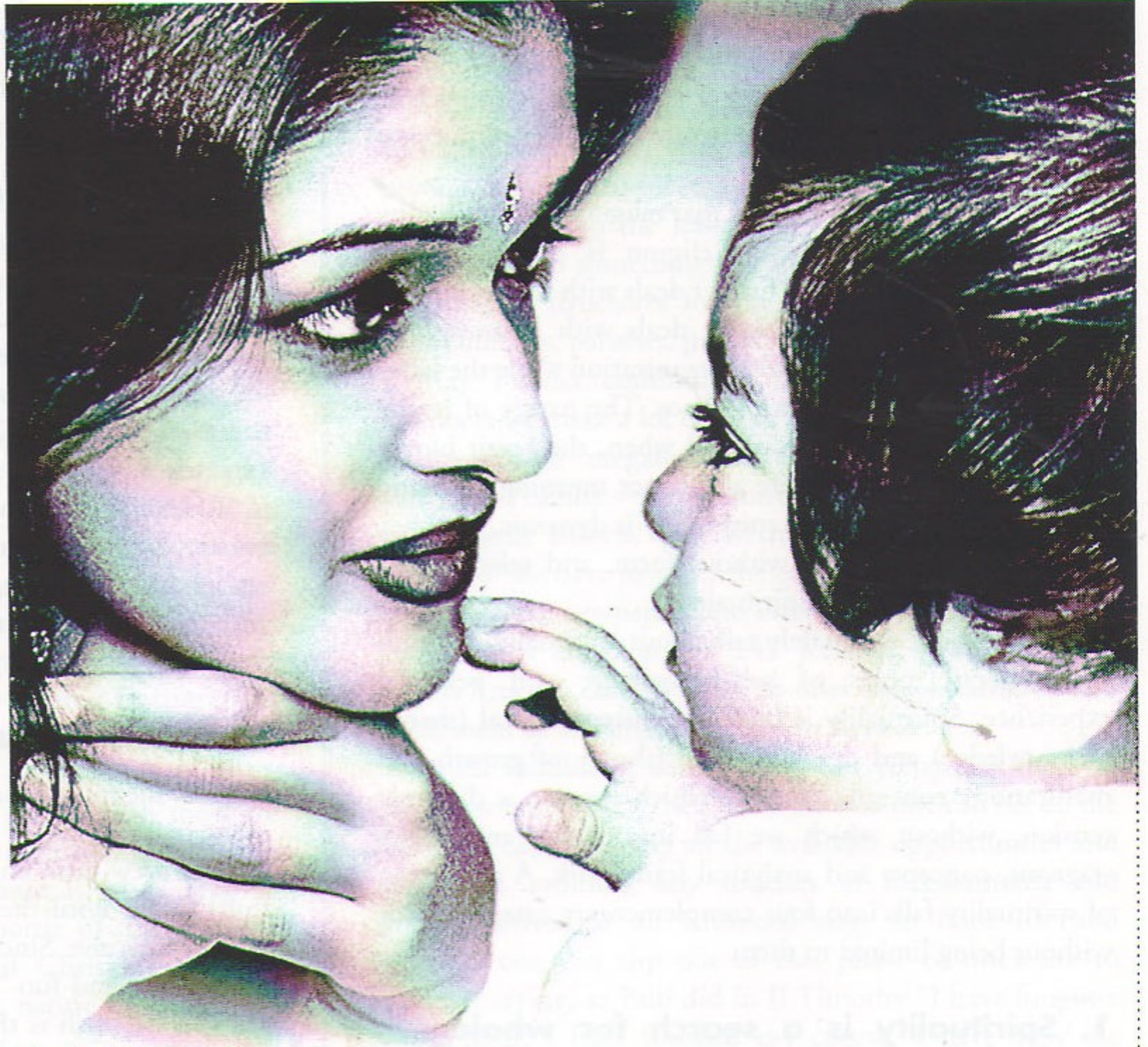
Let's love this awesome God more dearly, be with Him more closely, and give ourselves to Him more freely. "He is the potter and we are the clay" Let Him mould us in His hands. Allow Him to shape us the way He wants us to become, so that we can be useful vessels for His glory.

I have no words to express my love for you all. Go ahead, point your finger at me and say to the other, 'Look at him, there is some one alive and well, because God heard my prayer too'. I am surrounded by your love and fellowship. My life is blessed because of you, because you prayed and cared, and cried for me. Let's strive to be Christians of a special kind, a chosen people for His name's sake. May God bless all the little children, the youth, the adults and the achen's of our parishes everywhere, who have prayed for my life. It's your Love and Faith that healed me.

With God's Love in my new heart, I thank You all. ■

*"Kindness is difficult to give away because it keeps coming back."*

*Some forms of communication do not depend on technology...*



*...for everything else there's V3-Global.*

The significance of an efficient and dependable telecommunications provider is valued today more than ever. V3-Global understands this more than anyone. That is why we offer you the best technology and service to ensure clear and instant connection for all your long distance calls.

Use our access number and PIN number to call from any phone in US, no switching, no prepayment and no minimum usage.



Open your account today!  
Call- 1-800-617-4634  
[WWW.v3-global.com](http://WWW.v3-global.com).



▼ India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka 39 cents, ▼ US & Canada 4.9 cents, ▼ W Europe 6.9 cents.

# Holistic Spirituality

George J. Poikail, Coppell, Texas

**T**he concept of spirituality is as wide as the ocean and as narrow and as distilled as the “lingering dewdrop under the daisy” that Wordsworth talked about. And yet, the experience of spirituality and the search for wholeness are as old as humanity’s coming into self-consciousness, after our species began. Our discussion here needs to be concise due to the nature of its limited purview and the editorial dictat.

Right away, it must be said that religion and spirituality are two different matters. Religion is external while spirituality is internal. The former deals with rituals, rubrics and conformity while the latter deals with meaning and growth. The former deals with organization while the latter is mature enough to live with chaos. The nature of reality itself is chaos, over which, if and when, the Spirit blows, forms appear, sustaining life and hence meaning. Religion tends to be stagnant while spirituality is dynamic. And yet, life cannot be sustained without form, and religion is a necessary evil to sustain spirituality.

One cannot adequately talk about spirituality without the dialectic poles of self-knowledge and personal experience. Spirituality is both an epistemological (theory of knowledge) and developmental (theory of growth and maturation) concern, both of which assume a dynamic tension, without which we fall into static, and hence stagnant, concepts and analytical framework. A discussion of spirituality falls into four complementary categories but without being limited to them.

## 1. Spirituality is a search for wholeness and meaning

In our tradition, as well as other religious traditions, stories abound, recalling the Fall from unity into division, from Oneness into many and from community into individuation. That is what the story of Adam and Eve tells us, about an experience when a created person decided to exercise his/her freedom to choose and in doing so, ended up in separation and alienation. And yet, without that choice, humanity would have been a photocopy of the creator and both the creator and the created would have been impoverished and diminished. Freedom to choose presupposes the possibility of alienation and without that choice an individual person can never gain selfhood, respect, and dignity. Those who have read Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *Grand Inquisitor* and D.H. Lawrence’s and Nicholas Berdevyey’s commentary on it would recognize that this conflict between the divine imperative to obey and the human imperative to become is the source of human

predicament. Human dignity can be maintained only with human freedom to choose, even against the wishes of the creator, but in making those choices and in becoming alienated and then becoming reconciled, both the Creator and the Created are enriched.

The Christ event, reconciling “the whole world unto Himself” (2 Corinthians 5:10) is the central means of becoming spiritual. Jesus of Nazareth became so transparent, through his being and choosing, to the will of the creator, and thus becoming willing to die in order to accept the natural consequences of being a man committed to do the will of God; he became the expression of God’s reconciliation with man. As an individual person with freedom to choose, I want to be myself, go my way and “do it my way” and yet God calls me through the Christ to an experience where his way could also become my way. This is a search and joy that “Jesusologists” would not understand, and most Marthomites that I know are caught up in the static Greek metaphysics of the Nicene Creed with its language of “substance”, to understand this dynamics. What a pity!

## 2. Spirituality as a pilgrimage with the Christ

For me, the most evocative part of the record of the Christ event in the Bible is the latter part of Luke 24:15 “Jesus himself drew near, and walked with them”. I never started really living until the risen Christ himself drew near and walked with me. Since that instance, I happen to have the greatest joy and fun “walking with Him and talking with Him”. The truth is that, while the disciples were running away from Jerusalem to Emmaus, Jesus as the Christ followed them. They were leaving the scene of action because they did not want to face the consequences of Jesus who became the Christ. They doubted and were arguing. But Jesus “drew near and walked with them”. He did not argue in order to show that they were wrong and he did not tell them, “Here, boys. I am the Christ.” No such drama. They walked and they talked. O God, what a joy, what a pleasure, to have a pilgrimage with the Savior! And then (Luke 24:30-32) it happened.

The fearful disciples “constrained” their stranger to spend the evening with them. “Abide with us” they said and then “he took the bread, and blessed it, and broke it and gave it to them” (24:30) “and their eyes were opened” and they said one to another “did not our hearts burn within us”. (32) And they “rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem”. (33) To me, this is the greatest joy of being a person with whom the Christ is willing to walk and talk until my eyes are opened. I experience and I know

and I am, and I shall remain a witness to the greatest joy of human life, the Christ "walking and talking" with me. Without this experience, the whole abstract discussion about spirituality" would be pointless. The last paragraph in Albert Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus* that begins with "He comes to us" is recommended reading to illustrate this.

### 3. Spirituality is experiencing growth

A biological and botanical principle is that if something does not grow, it dies. And yet I hear people standing up and giving their testimonies, "I gave my heart to Jesus". I wonder, what happened since then? Some of them are still stagnating in the cesspool of their selves and it is pathetic to watch, especially when they get caught up in their own contradictions. When people call themselves "Christians" and then behave so "unChristlike" we all wonder as to what is happening. They are not bad people. They simply have not grown from the point when they first confronted the Christ. Growth requires going through transformation, by the renewing of our spirit and being not conformed to this world (Romans 12:2). Stagnant life stinks and stagnant people bring the odor of death to a community. If you read this, I am sure that you can think of such people who refuse to grow.

Growth requires openness to new knowledge and experience. Growth involves risk. My greatest frustration as a psychotherapist is to communicate to my patients or audience that growth involves pain (cf. Scott Peck, MD, *The Road Less Traveled*) and more people than most are satisfied with their status quo, with their concept of what Fanny Cosby's Blessed Assurance Jesus is Mine says, as though one can "own" Jesus in a bottle of one's limited person and thus, claim the eternal Christ as personal possession. But that is the demonic nature of evangelical fundamentalism and sectarian beliefs.

### 4. Spirituality is a journey towards fulfillment

Anything that begins must end. Should it end at the same level or at the same quality as it began? The nature of reality is that through a dialectical process, nature or reality itself is moving towards a point of fulfillment.

From a paleontological and theological point of view, Teilhard de Chardin argued this point very well in his *Phenomenology of Man* and other books. Reinhold Niebuhr struggled with this issue in *The Nature and Destiny of Man* and even Immanuel Swedenborg who had great influence on Carl Gustaf Jung argued for some sense in which a human person, as the apex of the evolutionary cycle, is the epitome of creation. Or, if you read Rudolf Otto in *The Idea of the Holy*, or Martin Buber in *I and Thou* you will come to the conclusion that the growth that is natural and required of a person is towards fulfillment. That fulfillment is both personal/individual and collective,

of what Jung calls the "rhizome" of "ontogenetic" or phylogenetic fulfillment. But, in whichever way you look at it, the search and move towards fulfillment is the motor of our existence. Biologically and sociologically we achieve this by providing the best for our children and by making sure that they do better than what we have done. But then what? Do we then develop age-related diseases such as osteoporosis and Alzheimer's and waste our lives before we keel over? Or do we search for ways to move towards fulfillment as Erikson has argued?

We are going to be most miserable unless we have a structure of meaning with a sense of fulfillment that is beyond our external successes. We are one of the greatest of people, similar to the Jews, who had struggled from our nothingness to somethingness and built up economic and institutional structures for the generations to come. We have churches, parishes, priests, bishops and a name and for a Mar Thoma community that has roughly 25,000 members we make a lot of noise and at times we seem to be afflicted with megalomania. I am reminded of two cartoons: Peanuts — "We don't win any baseball games", says Charlie Brown, "but we have fun discussing them". Pogo — "We have just met the enemy! It's us!" As someone who reads the newspapers and information about the Kerala "diaspora" I laugh at the 247 Keralite organizations in North America that are vying to offer succor, salvation and fulfillment to Keralites and then to Kerala!

Real fulfillment comes when one recognizes that, no matter what, one has tried to be the best one can be, do the best one can do, using all the available opportunities and resources, avoiding any touches of megalomania and having arrived at an advanced stage in one's life and pursuit, one can slip out of this phase of one's life to another saying, as Paul did in II Timothy "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith". (II Timothy 4:7).

I am so grateful for Paul for not saying, "I have won the fight". Then it would have excluded jokers such as me who have not won much but who, as Charlie Brown says, are having a heck of a lot of fun playing the game. And since this writer, unlike some of his fellow Marthomites, does not fully grasp all that Christ means and, since he is still running between Jerusalem and Emmaus, and, since he still lives with the expectation of the imminent and continuing revelation of God through the Christ who was in Jesus, and is still the abiding Christ, no matter what all the eventualities are, he closes these notes with "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus" (Revelations 22:20). To quote the late Jackie Gleason, "How Sweet It Is!" ■

George Poikail is a retired psychotherapist who is volunteering his time providing psychotherapy at the American Indian Center in Euless, Texas while also engaged in writing books and is soon to be moving from Coppell, Texas to Silver Springs, Maryland.

# സാധുകൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞ് ഉപദേശി

ഒരു യഥാർത്ഥ സന്നദ്ധ സുവിശേഷകൻ

Mrs. Susan John, Philadelphia

ഇരുപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ പ്രഭാത യാമങ്ങൾ കേരള ക്രൈസ്തവ ചരിത്രത്തിലെ അവിസ്മരണീയമായ ഒരേടാണ്. പ്രേഷിത പ്രവർത്തനത്തെക്കുറിച്ച് നവീന അവബോധമുൾക്കൊണ്ട് ക്രൈസ്തവജീവിതത്തിന് കൂടുതൽ തിളക്കമേകാനുള്ള ശ്രമമാണ് ഈ ഘട്ടത്തെ ശ്രദ്ധേയമാക്കിയത്. തിളക്കമാന പ്രസ്തുത ഘട്ടത്തിന്റെ ചൈതന്യപുണ്ണമായ മുഖമാണ് സാധുകൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞ് ഉപദേശി പ്രതിനിധാനം ചെയ്യുന്നത്.

ആദ്ധ്യാത്മിക സംസ്കാരത്തെ പരിപോഷിപ്പിക്കുന്ന പമ്പാനദിയുടെ തീരത്ത് ഇടയാറന്തള മുത്താനാക്കൽ ഇട്ടിയുടേയും ഇടയാറന്തള പേരങ്ങാട്ട് മറിയാമ്മയുടേയും മകനായി കൊ.വ. 1059 വൃശ്ചികം 22-ാം തീയതി സാധുകൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞ് ജനിച്ചു. ആറു പുത്രികൾക്കു ശേഷം പ്രാർത്ഥനയുടെ ഫലമായി ഭൃജാതനായ പുത്രനാണ് കൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞ്. ക്രൈസ്തവന്മാർക്കും നിറഞ്ഞു നിന്ന പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ അദ്ദേഹം വളർന്നു.

ഇടയാറന്തള കുറുംപുറത്ത് എം.റ്റി. എൽ. പി. സ്കൂളിലാണ് പ്രാഥമിക വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന് ഹരിശ്രീ കുറിച്ചത്. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ സ്കൂളിലെ പേര് എം.ഐ. വറുഗീസ് എന്നായിരുന്നു. ശൈശവവിവാഹം നിലവിലിരുന്ന അക്കാലത്ത് 12-ാം വയസിൽ കുറിയന്നൂർ വട്ടപ്പന തോമസിന്റെ മകൾ ഏലിയാമ്മയെ വിവാഹം ചെയ്തു. വിവാഹശേഷം കുറുംപുറത്ത് സ്കൂളിൽ അധിക ദിവസം പഠിച്ചില്ല. പമ്പാനദിക്ക് അക്കരെ പുവത്തൂരിൽ രണ്ടുക്ലാസുമാത്രമുള്ള ഇംഗ്ലീഷു സ്കൂളിൽ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം തുടന്നു. രണ്ടു വർഷത്തിനുള്ളിൽ സ്കൂൾ നിലച്ചു പോയതുകൊണ്ട് 14-ാം വയസ്സിൽ ഔപചാരിക വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം അന്തരിച്ചു.

കൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞിന്റെ 15-ാംമത്തെ വയസ്സിൽ മാതാവു നിര്യാതയായി. ശരീരസുഖം വേണ്ടത്രയില്ലാതിരുന്ന പിതാവിന് സഹായത്തിനായി വിധേയം കൂടുതൽ ക്ഷീണിതനാക്കി. കൂടുംബത്തിന്റെ ഭാരം പേറുന്നതിന് കൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞ് നിബ്ബിതനായി. കൃഷിയായിരുന്നു മുഖ്യജോലി. കടുത്ത സാമ്പത്തിക ക്ലേശം കൂടുംബത്തെ തളത്തിയിരുന്നു. പഠിക്കാനുള്ള തൃഷ്ണ കെട്ടടിങ്ങിയിട്ടില്ലാത്ത കൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞ് കൃഷിപണികൾക്കിടയിൽ കൊഴിഞ്ഞു കിട്ടുന്ന വിശ്രമവേളകളിൽ വൃക്ഷത്തണലിലിരുന്നു പുസ്തകം വായിക്കുക പതിവായിരുന്നു. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ 20-ാംമത്തെ വയസ്സിൽ പിതാവ് സ്വഗൃഹത്തായ്. ഇതിനോടകം കൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞ് ഒരു പിതാവായിത്തീർന്നു.

കൃഷിക്കൊണ്ടു മാത്രം ജീവിക്കാൻ കഴിയാതിരുന്ന അദ്ദേഹം ജറുവുളിക്കച്ചവടം ആരംഭിച്ചു. ദയാദ്രമനസ്സായിരുന്ന അദ്ദേഹത്തിന് ആ രംഗത്ത് കുറെ കടം മാത്രമാണ് ശേഷിച്ചത്. അടുത്തുള്ള ഒരു സ്കൂളിൽ അദ്ധ്യാപകവൃത്തിയിൽ ഏല്പിച്ചു എങ്കിലും അധികം തുടന്നില്ല.

നന്നേ ചെറുപ്പത്തിൽ തന്നെ അദ്ദേഹം അരുമനാഥനായ ക്രിസ്തുവിനുവേണ്ടി ജീവിതമപ്പിച്ചിരുന്നു. കരിമ്പിനു ജോലി ചെയ്യാനും മറ്റും പോകുമ്പോൾ തലയിലുള്ള തൊപ്പിയിൽ വേദപുസ്തകഭാഗങ്ങൾ സൂക്ഷിച്ച് വിശ്രമസമയത്ത് അവ വായിക്കുകയും പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു വന്നു. കരിമ്പു ചുറ്റാൻ പോകുമ്പോൾ അടുത്തുള്ള പറമ്പിലെ കരിമ്പു വീണു കിടക്കുന്നതുകണ്ടാൽ അത് ശരിയായി ക്രമീകരിച്ചിട്ടേ തന്റെ തുടന്നുള്ള ജോലി ചെയ്യുമായിരുന്നുള്ളൂ.

പകൽ മുഴുവൻ എല്ലാമുറിയെ പണിയെടുത്തിട്ട് വൈകിട്ട് റാത്തൽ വിളക്കുമായി സുവിശേഷ പ്രവർത്തനം നടത്തുമായിരുന്നു. പ്രാർത്ഥനകൂട്ടങ്ങൾ നടത്തുക, കുട്ടികൾക്കുവേണ്ടി യോഗം ക്രമീകരിക്കുക, സന്ദേശങ്ങൾ അദ്ധ്യാപനം നടത്തുക തുടങ്ങി ഇടവകയിലെ ആത്മീയപ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ അദ്ദേഹം സജീവമായി പങ്കെടുത്തിരുന്നു.

ഇടവക പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടിരുന്ന കൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞിന് കൈത്താങ്ങൽ നൽകിയിരുന്നത് ദിവ്യശ്രീ ആനിക്കാട്ടു തോമസ് കശീശായും ശ്രീ കെ. വി. സൈമൺ സാറുമായിരുന്നു. ഇവരുടെ കൂട്ടുപ്രവർത്തനത്തിന്റെ ഒരു വേദിയായിരുന്നു ഈ.സി. എന്ന് യൂണിറ്റി- ഇടയാറന്തള ക്രിസ്ത്യൻ ഫെലോഷിപ്പ് യൂണിറ്റി എന്നറിയപ്പെട്ടിരുന്ന ക്രിസ്ത്യൻ ഭാര്യ സമ്മേളനം. 17 അംഗങ്ങളുണ്ടായിരുന്ന സംഘടനയുടെ ചെയർമാൻ ശ്രീ കെ. വി. സൈമണും, സെക്രട്ടറി ശ്രീ കൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞുമായിരുന്നു. 1081-ൽ ആണ് ഈ. സി. എഫ് യൂണിറ്റി ഒരു സംഘടനയായി രൂപപ്പെട്ടത്. സംഘടനയുടെ ആഭിമുഖ്യത്തിൽ സമീപ പ്രദേശങ്ങളായ കിടങ്ങന്നൂർ, നാൽക്കാലിക്കൽ, മെഴുവേലി, മാലക്കര, കൂഴിക്കാല, പരപ്പുഴ തുടങ്ങിയ സ്ഥലങ്ങളിൽ പലപ്രാവശ്യം പരസ്യയോഗങ്ങൾ ക്രമീകരിച്ചു. സംഘടനയുടെ യോഗങ്ങൾ അനേകം പേരുടെ മാനസാന്തരത്തിനും ക്ഷീണിത വിശ്വാസികളുടെ ശക്തികരണത്തിനും ഉതകിയിട്ടുണ്ട്.

ദിവസവും മണിക്കൂറുകൾ അദ്ദേഹം പ്രാർത്ഥനയിൽ ചിലവഴിച്ചു. പ്രാർത്ഥനയ്ക്കു ശേഷമേ ഏതു കാര്യവും തീരുമാനിക്കുകയുള്ളൂ. 1081 ക്കിടകം 8-ാം തീയതി എന്നെയും എന്റെ കൈയിൽ ഏൽപ്പിക്കപ്പെട്ട സകലത്തെയും എന്റെ രക്ഷകന്റെ മുൻപിൽ കാഴ്ച വെയ്ക്കുന്നതിന് നിശ്ചയിച്ചു എന്ന് ഡയറിയിൽ കുറിച്ചു.

1085 മുതൽ 1088 വരെ കൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞിന്റെ ജീവിതത്തിലെ അഗ്നിപരീക്ഷണങ്ങളുടെ ഘട്ടമായിരുന്നു. ആത്മസംഘർഷവും പീഡയും അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ശാരീരികവും മാനസികവുമായ ആരോഗ്യം തകർത്തു. ശരീരം നാനാരോഗങ്ങളുടെ ആവാസകേന്ദ്രമായി. ദാരിദ്ര്യം വീട്ടിൽ തേർവാഴ്ച നടത്തി. ആ കാലഘട്ടത്തെ ബാലായുടെ ദിവസങ്ങൾ എന്നാണ് അദ്ദേഹം വിശേഷിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. ഭാര്യയും മക്കളും അവരുടെ വീട്ടിൽ പോയി. പല പ്രിയപ്പെട്ടവരും കണ്ടും കാണാതെയും പോയി. നാട്ടുകാരും വീട്ടുകാരും പരിഹാസത്തിന്റെ കുരമ്പുകൾ തൊടുത്തു വിടാനും മറന്നില്ല. ഇതിനിടയിൽ രണ്ടാമത്തെ പുത്രൻ ശമുവേൽകൂട്ടി സ്വഗൃഹത്തു ചെന്നു. ദുഃഖത്തിന്റെ പാമ്പാത്രം തന്റെ കരങ്ങളിൽ ഏൽപ്പിക്കുക എന്നതാണ് കത്താവിന്റെ ഹിതം എന്നും ആ പാമ്പാത്രം സസന്തോഷം കൈനീട്ടി വാങ്ങുകയാണ് തന്റെ കർത്തവ്യമെന്നും ഗ്രഹിച്ചു.

വേദപാരായണവും ചിന്തയും പ്രാർത്ഥനയും മാത്രമായി ജോജ്യപേയങ്ങൾ. ബാലായുടെ താഴ്വരയിൽ പ്രാണപ്രിയനോടുള്ള സഹവാസമാണ് അദ്ദേഹത്തിന് ആത്മധൈര്യം പകർന്നത്. ഉത്തമഗീതമായിരുന്നു അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ പ്രധാന ധ്യാനവിഷയം. സകല സുഖാനുഭോഗങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നും കൃപ എന്ന വേർതിരിച്ചപ്പോൾ എന്റെ ആത്മാവിന് ആഹ്ലാദമായിരിപ്പാൻ പ്രേമകാന്തൻ എനിക്ക് ചൂണ്ടിച്ചു കാണിച്ചുതന്ന ദിവ്യസംഗീതമായിട്ടാണ് ഉത്തമഗീതത്തെ അദ്ദേഹം ചിത്രീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ സന്നിധാനത്തിൽ സ്വയം അപ്പിച്ച അദ്ദേഹം പ്രാണപ്രിയന്റെ മുൻപിൽ ശുലോംകാരിയായി മാറുകയായിരുന്നു. ഇവിടെ അദ്ദേഹം മിസ്റ്റിക് അനുഭൂതിയിൽ ലയിക്കുകയായിരുന്നു.

ഏക ആശ്രയസ്ഥാനമായ ദൈവം തന്റെ പ്രകാശം അയച്ച് ദിവ്യോപദേശങ്ങൾ അരുളിയതായി അദ്ദേഹത്തിന് അനുഭവപ്പെട്ടു. ദിവ്യവെളിപ്പാടുകളിൽ നിന്ന് ശക്തിയാർജ്ജിച്ചു കൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞ് സുവിശേഷ പ്രവർത്തനത്തിന് സമ്പൂണ്ണമായി സമർപ്പിച്ച് കൊ. വ. 1080-ൽ 7 ദിവസം പരിപൂണ്ണമായി ഉപവസിച്ച് കാത്തിരുന്നു. സുവിശേഷ വേല നിന്നെ ഏല്പിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു

എന്ന ദിവ്യോദ്ദേശ്യം അദ്ദേഹത്തിനു വ്യക്തമായി. വീണ്ടും ഒരഞ്ചു ദിവസം പ്രാർത്ഥനയും ധ്യാനവുമായി കഴിച്ചുകൂട്ടിയ അദ്ദേഹം ഏക ആശ്രയസ്ഥാനമായ ദൈവത്തിന്റെ കരങ്ങളിൽ ഒരായുധമായിത്തീരുക അതാണ് തന്റെ ജീവിത സൗഭാഗ്യം എന്ന് അറിഞ്ഞു.

ബാലായുടെ ദിനങ്ങളിലെ വേദാദ്ധ്യായനവും ധ്യാനവും ഇപ്രകാരം പറഞ്ഞവസാനിപ്പിച്ചിരുന്നു. വിശ്വാസിയെ സ്വന്ത ഇഷ്ടത്തിന്റെ യാതൊരു മങ്ങലും നിന്നെ പിടിക്കാതിരിപ്പാൻ നീ കരുതിക്കൊൾക. ഏതു മഹാവ്യാകുലത്തോടുകൂടെ നീ ദൈവസന്നിധിയിൽ ചെന്നു പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്ന സംഗതിയിലും 'എന്നാലും എന്റെ ഇഷ്ടമല്ല, നിന്റേതാകട്ടെ' എന്നു പറയുവാൻ സന്തോഷമേയുള്ളവനായിരിക്ക.

ഒരു മഹാത്യാഗിയുടെ - ജ്ഞിക്കു മാത്രം കഴിയുന്ന പരിവർത്തനത്തിന്റേയും പരിത്യാഗത്തിന്റേയും മാഗ്മ്മാണ് അദ്ദേഹം ജീവിത വൃതമായി സ്വീകരിച്ചത്. 30 വയസ്സിനോടടുത്ത കാലത്ത് സ്വീകരിച്ച ജീവിതവൃതങ്ങൾ ജീവതാന്ത്യം വരെ നിഷ്കഷയോടെ പാലിച്ചിരുന്നു. ജീവിത സുഖങ്ങളോടുള്ള വിരക്തി ഭക്തിജീവിതത്തോടുള്ള ആസക്തിയിൽ നിന്നും ഉടലെടുത്തതാണ്.

ഭക്ഷണകാര്യത്തിൽ പാലിച്ചിരുന്ന നിയന്ത്രണം അതികഠിനമായിരുന്നു. ഏതെങ്കിലും ഭക്ഷണപദാർത്ഥങ്ങളിൽ താല്പര്യമുണ്ടെന്നു മനസ്സിലായാൽ അത് വെട്ടിപ്പോയിരുന്നു. പകൽ സമയത്ത് വെള്ളം പോലും കുടിക്കാതെ പുണ്യമായി ഭക്ഷണം വെട്ടിപ്പോയി. ഒരു മാസം പത്തൊൻപതു നേരം മാത്രമേ ഭക്ഷണം കഴിച്ചിരുന്നുള്ളൂ. ഒൻപതു ദിവസം ഭക്ഷണം കഴിച്ചാൽ പത്താമത്തെ ദിവസം രാത്രിയിൽ വെള്ളം മാത്രം കുടിക്കും. അത് ഭക്ഷണത്തിന്റെ ദശാംശമാണ്. വ്യാഴം മുതൽ ഞായർ വരെ ദിവസങ്ങളിൽ ആകെ രണ്ടു നേരമേ ഭക്ഷണം കഴിക്കുമുള്ളൂ. വെള്ളം കൂടും വെള്ളമുണ്ടും വെള്ള നേരിയതും മാത്രമേ സാധു ധരിക്കുമായിരുന്നുള്ളൂ. മുണ്ടിനു കര പോലും പാടില്ലെന്ന് നിബന്ധമുണ്ട്. സാധു ഞായറാഴ്ച ജോലി ചെയ്യുമായിരുന്നില്ലെന്നു മാത്രമല്ല കുലി വണ്ടിയിൽ കയറുക പോലും ചെയ്യുമായിരുന്നില്ല.

പ്രാപഞ്ചിക സുഖവജനത്തെ കുറിച്ച് അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ പ്രമാണം എന്തെന്ന് ഉപവാസത്തെക്കുറിച്ച് പരാമർശിക്കുമ്പോൾ വ്യക്തമാകുന്നു 'ദൈവമുന്മാകെ അനുഗ്രഹം ലഭിക്കുന്നതിനും മനസ്സിനെ ദേഹാസക്തിയിൽ നിന്ന് തിരിച്ച് ആത്മാവിനോട് ശ്രദ്ധ വരുത്തുന്നതിനും ഭക്ഷണവെട്ടുന്നതും സഹായിക്കുന്നു. മാത്രമല്ല ആത്മീകാസക്തിയുടെ പ്രസന്നത ദേഹത്തിൽ വ്യാപിക്കുന്നതിനും ഉപവാസം ഉതകുന്നു. ദൈവം നൽകുന്ന മന:ശക്തിക്കും ദേഹബലത്തിനും യുക്തമാം വണ്ണം വെട്ടുന്ന മാചരിക്കുന്നത് ആത്മമരണത്തെ വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നതാകുന്നു'.

സുവിശേഷപ്രവർത്തനത്തിനു നിയുക്തനായിരിക്കുന്ന എന്ന ഉൾവിളിയോടും 'ഏക ആശ്രയസ്ഥാനമായ ദൈവത്തിൽ അപ്ലിതമായമനസ്സോടും കൂടിയാണ് സാധു സുവിശേഷ പ്രഘോഷണത്തിനിറങ്ങിയത്. എന്റെ ഏക ആശ്രയസ്ഥാനമായ ദൈവം എന്ന ശൈലി പ്രസംഗത്തിലുടനീളം സാധു ആവർത്തിക്കുമായിരുന്നു. പ്രേഷിതവൃത്തിയിൽ വ്യാപൃതനായതോടുകൂടിയാണ് കൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞ് 'സാധുകൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞ്' എന്ന പേരിൽ പ്രസിദ്ധനായത്.

യഹോവയുടെ വചനം..... എന്റെ അസ്ഥികളിൽ അടയ്ക്കപ്പെട്ടിട്ട് എന്റെ ഹൃദയത്തിൽ തീ കത്തും പോലെ ഇരിക്കുന്നു എന്ന പ്രവാചകന്റെ അനുഭവമായിരുന്നു സാധുവിന്റെയും പ്രേഷിതപ്രവർത്തനത്തിൽ. സാധുകൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞ് സ്വീകരിച്ചപ്രധാനമായും പ്രസംഗവേദിയായിരുന്നു. കേരളത്തിലങ്ങോളമിങ്ങോളം മാത്രമല്ല, തെക്കേ ഇന്ത്യയുടെ വിവിധ ഭാഗങ്ങളിലും വിശ്രമമില്ലാതെ സഞ്ചരിച്ച് 30 വർഷത്തോളം സുവിശേഷം അറിയിച്ചു.

സാധുകൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞിന്റെ പ്രസംഗവേദി ആത്മീയ ഉണർവിന്റെ പ്രഭാവലയം കൊണ്ട് അനുഗ്രഹിതമായിരുന്നു. സാമാന്യ ജനങ്ങളെ ലക്ഷ്യമാക്കിയിരുന്നു അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ പ്രഭാഷണങ്ങളധികവും. ഉണർവിന്റെ പ്രധാന ലക്ഷണങ്ങളായി കണ്ടുവന്നത് (1) അഗാധമായ പാപബോധം. (2) പരിശുദ്ധാത്മാവിലുള്ള സന്തോഷം. (3) രക്ഷിക്കപ്പെടാത്തവരെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള ഉള്ളുരുക്കം, (4) ശക്തിയേറിയ സാക്ഷ്യം എന്നിവയായിരുന്നു. സാധുവിന്റെ പ്രേഷിതപ്രവർത്തനത്തിലുടനീളം വെളിപ്പെട്ടശക്തിയുടെ ഉറവിടം പ്രാർത്ഥനയായിരുന്നു. 1097, 98, 99 വർഷങ്ങളിൽ നടത്തപ്പെട്ട യോഗങ്ങളിൽ പരിശുദ്ധാത്മാവിന്റെ വ്യാപാരം അതിശയകരവും അപാരവുമായി നടന്നു. മദ്യം, ക്ഷുദ്രപ്രയോഗം തുടങ്ങി സ്തോത്രപാപങ്ങളാൽ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ഭൂരിഭാഗവും ചെലവഴിച്ചവർ കണ്ണുനീരോടും മാറത്തടിയോടും കൂടി തങ്ങളുടെ പാപങ്ങളെ കുറിച്ച് അനുതപിച്ച് കർത്താവിനെ രക്ഷിതാവായി പരസ്യമായി ഏറ്റുപറഞ്ഞു.

പ്രസംഗങ്ങളിലും ഗീതങ്ങളിലും സാമൂഹിക തിന്മകൾ ചൂണ്ടിക്കാട്ടി വിമർശിച്ചിരുന്നു. ദ്രവ്യാഗ്രഹത്തിനും ചൂഷണത്തിനും അനീതിക്കുമെതിരെ സാധുവിന്റെ നിലപാടു വ്യക്തമാക്കുന്ന മൂന്നു കൃതികളാണ് :

- (1) സ്ത്രീധനത്യാഗം.
- (2) ലേലചിട്ടിദോഷം.
- (3) വ്യാപാരയജ്ഞം എന്നിവ.

നിലവിലുണ്ടായ സ്ത്രീധന സമ്പ്രദായം, ലേലചിട്ടി, വ്യാപാരരംഗത്തെ അനീതി എന്നിവയെ ഒരു പ്രവാചകന്റെ ധീരതയോടെ അദ്ദേഹം എതിർത്തു. പൊന്നുതൂക്കുന്ന തുലാസിൽ എന്നപോലെ ആൺമക്കളുടെ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തേയും നിലം പൂരയിടങ്ങളേയും പൂരകളേയും അലമാരകളേയും ഒക്കെ തൂക്കി സ്ത്രീധന തുക കല്പിക്കുന്ന ദുഷിച്ച സമ്പ്രദായത്തിന് അറുതി വരുത്തുന്നതിനുവേണ്ടി 'സ്ത്രീധനത്യാഗപ്രസ്ഥാനം' ആരംഭിച്ചു. ദൈവം തന്നിട്ടുള്ള ആൺമക്കളുടെ കല്യാണം സ്ത്രീധന പിശാചിനെ കൂടാതെ നടത്തുവാനും ദ്രവ്യാഗ്രഹികൾക്ക് പെൺകുട്ടികളെ കൊടുക്കുകയില്ല എന്ന് ശപഥം ചെയ്യുവാനും അദ്ദേഹം ആഹ്വാനം ചെയ്തു.

കിടപ്പാടം പണയം വെച്ചു ചിട്ടിലേലത്തിൽ വിളിച്ചു വഴിയായാധാരമായ കുടുംബങ്ങളുടെ ദയനീയ ചിത്രം സാധുവിന്റെ മനസ്സിൽ പതിഞ്ഞിരുന്നു. ധനമോഹികളായ സമ്പന്നർ പാവപ്പെട്ടവരുടെ നിസ്സഹായതയെ ചൂഷണം ചെയ്യുന്നതിനെ അദ്ദേഹം എതിർത്തു. അനീതിയുടെ കുലികൊണ്ട് നിലം പൂരയിടങ്ങൾ നേടുന്നവരുടെ കൂട്ടത്തിൽ കാണാൻ യാത്രക്കാരായ നാം ഒരു നേരത്തേക്കെങ്കിലും സ്ഥലം പിടിക്കരുതെന്ന് അദ്ദേഹം അഭ്യർത്ഥിച്ചു.

ഒരു സത്യക്രിസ്ത്യാനിക്ക് വ്യാപാരരംഗത്ത് സ്വീകാര്യമായ നടപടികളും പ്രമാണങ്ങളും എന്തൊക്കെ ആയിരിക്കണമെന്ന് വ്യാപാരയജ്ഞം എന്ന കൃതിയിൽ വ്യക്തമാക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ന്യായധിപതി നിന്റെ തൂക്കത്തിലും അളവിലും സൂക്ഷിച്ചു നോക്കിയിരിക്കുന്നുവെന്നും ... ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ദൃഷ്ടിയുടെ കൃഷ്ണമണി എടുക്കാനാകട്ടെ അതൊന്നു മറച്ചു പിടിക്കാനാകട്ടെ ഏതു സമർത്ഥനായ വ്യാപാരിക്കും സാധിക്കയില്ല എന്നതാക്കീതും അദ്ദേഹം നൽകുന്നു.

വഴിയാത്രക്കാരെ അതിഥികളായി സ്വീകരിച്ചു സൽക്കരിക്കുന്നതിന് ഏല്പിച്ചുത്തീയതാണ് സാധുസഹായസംഘം. അനാഥരേയും പരദേശികളേയും പരിരക്ഷിക്കുന്നത് ക്രൈസ്തവധർമ്മത്തിന്റെ പ്രധാനഭാഗമായി സാധു കരുതിയിരുന്നു. അനാഥ സംരക്ഷണത്തിന് തുടക്കം ഇട്ടത് വീട്ടിൽ തന്നെയായിരുന്നു.

തെക്കൻ തിരുവിതാംകൂറിൽ കോളറ പടന്നു പിടിച്ചപ്പോൾ കൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞും സഹപ്രവർത്തകരും ജീവൻ ത്യജ വർഗ്ഗങ്ങളിലൊരാൾക്കും രോഗികളുടെ ഭവനങ്ങളിലെത്തി അവരെ പരിചരിച്ചു. മുതശരീരങ്ങൾ മറവു ചെയ്തു. അനാഥകുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളെ പോറ്റിപ്പുലത്തി ഭക്ഷണം വിതരണം ചെയ്തു. അനാഥകുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾക്കുവേണ്ടി മാത്താണുടം, ഇടയാറന്തൂള, കീഴ്വാൽ പൂർ, കുറിയന്നൂർ, കലയപുരം എന്നിവിടങ്ങളിൽ അദ്ദേഹം അനാഥാലയങ്ങൾ സ്ഥാപിച്ചു.

സാമ്പത്തിക പരാധീനതമൂലം വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം ലഭിക്കുന്നതിന് മാഗ്മ്മില്ലാതിരുന്നവർക്ക് മലയാളം, തമിഴ്, ഇംഗ്ലീഷ്, സംസ്കൃതം, ഹിന്ദി എന്നീ ഭാഷകളിൽ സാമന്യജ്ഞാനം ലഭിക്കുന്നതിനുവേണ്ടി സൗജന്യ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം ആരംഭിച്ചു. മുത്ത

സാക്കൻ പുരയിടത്തിലുള്ള സുവിശേഷാലയത്തിലാണ് ക്ലാസുകൾ നടത്തിയിരുന്നത്. ഇടയാറന്തുള മരത്തോമ്മ ഹൈസ്കൂൾ സ്ഥാപനത്തിനു മുഖ്യപങ്കു വഹിച്ചത് സാധുകൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞായിരുന്നു. ഇടവകയുടെ നിബന്ധത്തിനു വഴങ്ങി സ്കൂളിന്റെ മാനേജറായും അദ്ദേഹം സേവനമനുഷ്ഠിച്ചു.

സാധുകൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞ് ഉപദേശിയുടെ നാമം അവരതമം നേടിയിരിക്കുന്നത് ആശ്വാസഗീതങ്ങളിലൂടെയാണ്. യഹോവ ദൈവത്തോടുള്ള ആശ്വാസഗീതങ്ങൾ എന്നാണ് ഗ്രന്ഥനാമം. ആഴമായ ആത്മീയാനുഭവങ്ങളിൽ നിന്ന് ഉറവെടുത്ത ഗാനങ്ങളാണ് അവയെല്ലാം. ഭക്തഹൃദയത്തിൽ അരുളുന്ന സമാശ്വാസമാണ് അവയുടെ അന്തർധാര. ആനന്ദമുണ്ടെന്നിടാനന്ദമുണ്ടെന്നിടേക്കു മഹാരാജസന്നിധിയിൽ .... എന്ന ഗാനത്തിൽ ആനന്ദ നാടിനെ പ്രതീക്ഷയോടെ ഉറ്റുനോക്കുന്ന ഒരാത്മാവിന്റെ ഹൃദയത്തുടിച്ചുകൾ മുങ്ങിക്കേൾക്കുന്നതിന് സാധിക്കും.

എന്റെ ദൈവം സ്വർഗ്ഗസിംഹാസനം തന്നിൽ....  
എന്റെ ദൈവം മഹത്വത്തിൽ ആദ്രവാനായ് ജീവിക്കുമ്പോൾ ....  
പൊന്നേശു തമ്പുരാൻ നല്ലൊരു രക്ഷകൻ...

എന്നിങ്ങനെ അനുഭവത്തിന്റെതീവ്രതയിൽ നിന്ന് ഉടലെടുത്ത ഗാനങ്ങളിലെല്ലാം കൃസ്തുവിലുള്ള ആഴമായ വിശ്വാസം അടിയുറച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ സ്നേഹത്തേയും സ്വർഗ്ഗീയ ആനന്ദത്തേയും ധ്യാനിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് സ്വർഗ്ഗീയ അനുഭൂതിയുടെ ലഹരിയിൽ മുഴുകി നിന്ന് രചിച്ച ഗാനമാണ് ക്രൂശിന്മേൽ ക്രൂശിന്മേൽ കാണുന്നതാമിതാ എന്ന ഗാനം. കത്താവിൻ പക്ഷത്തു നില്പാൻ ആരുണ്ട് എന്ന് നാമകരണം ചെയ്തിരിക്കുന്ന ഗാനം സാമൂഹിക പരിഷ്കരണം ലക്ഷ്യമാക്കി രചിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതാണ്. വിഷയ വൈവിധ്യമുള്ള അനേകം ഗീതങ്ങളും ആശ്വാസഗീതങ്ങളിലുണ്ട്.

പരദേശിയാണു ഞാൻ എന്ന ചിന്ത അദ്ദേഹത്തെ എന്നും ഭരിച്ചിരുന്നു. വേദപ്രമാണങ്ങൾ ജീവിതവ്രതമായി കരുതിയിരുന്ന മോക്ഷയാത്രികനായിരുന്നു സാധു. ആശ്വാസദൂതൻ, പ്രഭാതദൂതൻ, ക്രൈസ്തുവലോകം എന്നീ പത്രികകൾ അദ്ദേഹം പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിച്ചിരുന്നു. പ്രസിദ്ധീകരണങ്ങളുടെ ലക്ഷ്യം പ്രത്യാശയുടെ സന്ദേശം നൽകുകയെന്നതായിരുന്നു.

മലങ്കരസഭയിലെ ഉണർവ് യോഗങ്ങളുടെ മുഖ്യപ്രസംഗികനായിരുന്ന റവ. റ്റി. വോക്കർ സായ്പ് തിരുനൽവേലിയിൽ താമസിച്ചിരുന്ന മിഷൻ ബംഗ്ലാവിൽവെച്ചാണ് സാധുവിന്റെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ തെന്നിന്ത്യമോക്ഷപ്രയാണസംഘം ആരംഭിച്ചത്. തെന്നിന്ത്യസുവിശേഷവിഹിതപ്രസ്ഥാനം എന്നാണ് പ്രാരംഭകാലത്ത് പ്രസ്ഥാനം അറിയപ്പെട്ടിരുന്നത്. കൊ.വ. 1110-ൽ കലയപുരസീയോൻകുന്നിൽ വെച്ച് മോക്ഷപ്രയാണ മഹായോഗം ആരംഭിച്ചു. ഈ യോഗം വഷത്തോറും നടത്തി വന്നു. മോക്ഷപ്രയാണ സംഘത്തിലെ അംഗങ്ങൾ വിവിധസ്ഥലങ്ങളിൽ നിന്ന് 'യേശുശരണം' വിളിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് സാധുവിന്റെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ കലയപുരത്തേക്ക് നീങ്ങിയിരുന്നു. മോക്ഷപ്രയാണസംഘത്തിന് പാടുന്നതിനുവേണ്ടി 'ഞാൻ മോക്ഷപട്ടണം പോകുന്നു എൻമുൻപിലുണ്ടേശു എന്ന ഗാനവും അദ്ദേഹം രചിച്ചു.

ലോകാവസാനവും ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ പുനരാഗമനവും വിളിച്ചറിയിക്കുന്നതിന് യുഗാന്തമിഷൻ രൂപീകരിച്ചു. കവലകളിൽ സുവിശേഷാലയങ്ങൾ സ്ഥാപിച്ചു. അടുർ, കൊട്ടാരക്കര, വെണ്മണി, പുലമൺ, ചങ്ങനാശ്ശേരി, പന്തളം, മാത്താണഡം, തിരുവനന്തപുരം തുടങ്ങിയ ടൗണുകളിൽ മുറി വാടകയ്ക്ക് എടുത്തു. സുവിശേഷാലയങ്ങളിൽ ഓരോരുവരെ പ്രേഷിപ്രവർത്തനത്തിനു ചുമതലപ്പെടുത്തിയിരുന്നു. അരുമനാഥനായ ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ മഹത്വപ്രത്യക്ഷതയ്ക്കുവേണ്ടി സഭയെ ഒരുക്കുന്നതു കടമയായി അദ്ദേഹം കരുതിയിരുന്നു.

ഋഷികളുടെ ഭാരതത്തിൽ ആശ്രമങ്ങൾ പ്രേഷിപ്രവർത്തനത്തിന് സഹായമാകുമെന്ന് അദ്ദേഹം വിശ്വസിച്ചു. ലൗകികാതിപ്രസരത്തിൽ നിന്ന് മുക്തരായി സന്യാസിത്വം വരിച്ച മോക്ഷയാത്രികരുടെ സംഘങ്ങളാണ് ആശ്രമങ്ങളിൽ താമസിച്ചിരുന്നത്. അനാഥശാലകൾ നടത്തിയിരുന്നതും ആശ്രമങ്ങളോടനുബന്ധിച്ചായിരുന്നു. ഇടയാറന്തുള, കലയപുരം ഉതിമുട്ട്, നെല്ലിമൺ, അയിരൂർ, വെണ്ണിക്കുളം, തിരുനൽവേലി, മാത്താണഡം, വെണ്മണി കുഴിക്കാല, കവിയൂർ, ഉമയാറ്റുകര എന്നിവിടങ്ങളിൽ അദ്ദേഹം ആശ്രമം സ്ഥാപിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്.

സകല മനുഷ്യരുടേയും മുമ്പാകെ സംപ്രീതിക്കു യോഗ്യനായ മാതൃകാ പുരുഷനാണ് ക്രിസ്ത്യാനി. ദൈവത്തിനും മനുഷ്യക്കും പ്രീതിയേറിയ വർത്തനങ്ങളുടെ നൂറുമേനി വിളയുന്ന വയൽപ്രദേശമാണ് ഒരു സത്യക്രിസ്ത്യാനിയുടെ ജീവിതരംഗം. പുതിയ ആകാശത്തിനും പുതിയ ഭൂമിക്കും വേണ്ടി ഒരുങ്ങി കാത്തിരിക്കുക എന്നതായിരുന്നു അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ സന്ദേശം.

അക്ഷീണ പരിശ്രമത്തിന്റെ പരിസമാപ്തി ആയിരുന്നു കൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞ് ഉപദേശിയുടെ ജീവത സായാഹ്നം. 1120-ാം ആണ്ട് അവസാന മാസങ്ങളിൽ ക്ഷീണിച്ച ശരീരത്തോടും ഉണർന്നമനസ്സോടും സാധു രാമനാധുജില്ലയിൽ എത്തി സുവിശേഷ ഘോഷണം നടത്തി. ഒരു മാസത്തേക്കായിരുന്നു പ്രവർത്തന ക്രമീകരണമെങ്കിലും ഒന്നര ആഴ്ചക്കു ശേഷം നാട്ടിലേക്കു മടങ്ങി. ശരീരാസാസ്ഥയും വളരെയുണ്ടായിരുന്നുവെങ്കിലും നാട്ടിൽ ചില യോഗങ്ങളിൽ പങ്കെടുത്തു പ്രസംഗിച്ചു. അന്ത്യനിമിഷം വരെ നല്ലപോർ പൊരുതി അയച്ചവന്റെ വേല വിശ്വസ്തയോടെ നിർവ്വഹിക്കുകയായിരുന്നു ലക്ഷ്യം. തന്റെ ചുമതലയിൽ നടന്നു വന്ന സ്ഥാപനങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചും തറവാട്ടുമുതലിനെക്കുറിച്ചും എല്ലാം ക്രമീകരണലേഖകൾ തയ്യാറാക്കി വെച്ചു.

ബലഹീനനായി കിടപ്പിലായപ്പോൾ പ്രാർത്ഥനയിലൂടെ തിരുഹിതം തേടിയിരുന്ന സാധു മൂന്നു ദിവസം ഉപവസിച്ചു. മരണത്തിന്റെ നാഴിക സമീപിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു എന്ന തിരുഹിതം വ്യക്തമായി. അടുത്തു നിന്നിരുന്ന പ്രിയ ശിഷ്യനോട് 'ചാക്കോ, ഞാൻ മരിച്ചു പോകും!' "അന്ത്യ അഭിലാഷങ്ങൾ അറിയിച്ചു. മരണാനന്തര കമ്മങ്ങൾ പോലും വ്യക്തമായി പറഞ്ഞു. വെള്ളമുണ്ടും മവളുണ്ടു്. ഒരുക്കി വെയ്ക്കുന്നതിന് ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടു.

1121 വൃശ്ചികം 15-ാം തീയതി വെള്ളിയാഴ്ച മുക്ത തളം കെട്ടിയ നിമിഷങ്ങൾ. വളരെ നേരിയ സ്വരത്തിൽ ഇതാണോ മരണം..... മരിക്കുന്നില്ല.....ഞാൻ വിശ്രമിക്കട്ടെ എന്നു പറഞ്ഞുകൊണ്ട് സാധു നിത്യവിശ്രമത്തിലേക്കു പ്രവേശിച്ചു. ഇടയാറന്തുള-ളാക സെന്തോം സെമിത്തേരിയിൽ ലളിതമായ ഒരു കല്ലറയിൽ സാധുവിന്റെ മൃതദേഹം സംസ്കരിച്ചു. സാധുവിന്റെ നിദ്ദേശപ്രകാരം കല്ലറയിൽ കുറിച്ച വാക്കുകൾ:

'ഇടയാറന്തുള സാധു കൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞുപദേശിയുടെ മൺകുടാരം'  
ആത്മാവു നക്ഷത്രഗോളങ്ങൾക്കപ്പുറം കത്താവിനെ എതിരേല്പാൻ പോയിരിക്കുന്നു. എന്റെ കത്താവിന്റെ വരവിൽ ദിവ്യകുടികാഴ്ചയിൽ എല്ലാവരുമായി കണ്ടുകൊള്ളാം.

ജനനം 1059 വൃശ്ചികം 14  
മരണം 1121 വൃശ്ചികം 15

(കടപ്പാട് - Rev. Mathew Daniel)  
പുസ്തകം : സാധുകൊച്ചുകുഞ്ഞ്



# എപ്പോഴും സന്തോഷിപ്പിൻ തോമസ് ഫിലിപ്പ്, ന്യൂയോർക്ക്

മിനുഷ്യൻ എന്നും സന്തോഷം അനുഭവിച്ച് ജീവിക്കണമെന്ന് സ്നേഹവാനായ ദൈവം ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നു. എപ്പോഴും സന്തോഷിപ്പിൻ (1തെസ്സ. 5:16) എന്നാണ് ദൈവം നമ്മോടു പറയുന്നത്. രോഗവും ദുഃഖവും കഷ്ടതയും പ്രശ്നങ്ങളും പ്രതിസന്ധി ഘട്ടങ്ങളും ആപത്തനർത്ഥങ്ങളും നിരന്തരം വേട്ടയാടുന്ന അനുഭവങ്ങളിലൂടെയും വിധിയുടെ ക്രൂരമായ പ്രഹരങ്ങളേറ്റും വേദനതിന്നു ജീവിക്കുന്ന മനുഷ്യൻ എങ്ങനെ സന്തോഷിക്കും? (നിങ്ങളുടെ ജീവനായിക്കൊണ്ടും ശരീരത്തിനായിക്കൊണ്ടും വിചാരപ്പെടരുത്. ആകാശത്തിലെ പറവകളെ നോക്കൂവിൻ; അവ വിതക്കുന്നില്ല, കൊയ്യുന്നില്ല, കളപ്പുരയിൽ കൂട്ടിവെയ്ക്കുന്നതുമില്ല; എങ്കിലും സ്വർഗ്ഗസ്ഥനായ നിങ്ങളുടെ പിതാവ് അവയെ പൂലർത്തുന്നു; അവയെക്കാൾ നിങ്ങൾ ഏറ്റവും വിശേഷത യുള്ളവരല്ലയോ? വിചാരപ്പെടുന്നതിനാൽ തന്റെ നീളത്തോട് ഒരു മുഴം കൂട്ടുവാൻ നിങ്ങളിൽ ആർക്കു കഴിയും? (മത്താ. 6:25-27). വിഷാദ ചിന്തകൾ നല്ലതല്ലെന്ന് യേശു ഇവിടെ ചൂണ്ടിക്കാണിക്കുന്നു. ആകുല ചിന്തകൾമൂലം സംഖ്യാതീതങ്ങളായ ദിനം പ്രതി ലോകത്തിൽ നിന്നും നശിച്ചുപോയ്ക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നത്. എല്ലാ ദുഃഖങ്ങളും വേദനകളും കണ്ണുനീരും ഒരുനാൾ ദൈവം തന്റെ മക്കളിൽ നിന്നും തുടച്ചുകളയുമെന്ന് അവൻ വാഗ്ദാനം ചെയ്തിരിക്കുന്നു. അതുകൊണ്ട് ദൈവവിഷയമായി ചിന്തിച്ച് മനുഷ്യർ സന്തോഷമുള്ളവരായി ജീവിക്കണമെന്നാണ് ദൈവം ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നത്.

ജീവിതത്തെ സന്തോഷകരമാക്കി തീർക്കുവാൻ നമ്മുടെ ചിന്തകൾക്ക് ശക്തിയുണ്ട്. നമ്മുടെ ചിന്തകൾ നന്മ നിറഞ്ഞതാണെങ്കിൽ അതു തീർച്ചയായും നല്ല ഫലങ്ങൾ പുറപ്പെടുവിക്കും. മറിച്ച് നമ്മുടെ ചിന്തകൾ അധമമായിട്ടുള്ളതാണെങ്കിൽ അത് അധമഫലങ്ങൾ തന്നെ പുറപ്പെടുവിക്കും. മനുഷ്യൻ എന്തു ചിന്തിക്കുന്നുവോ അതാണവന്റെ ജീവിതമെന്ന് എമേഴ്സൺ പറഞ്ഞു. അശുഭകരമായ ചിന്തകൾക്ക് നമ്മെ രോഗത്തിലേക്കോ, നിരാശയിലേക്കോ, അന്ധകാരത്തിലേക്കോ, നാശത്തിലേക്കോ ഒക്കെ നയിക്കാനുള്ള ശക്തിയുണ്ട്. മനുഷ്യന്റെ ജീവിതപരമ ജയങ്ങൾക്കും താഴ്ചയ്ക്കും ഉയർച്ചയ്ക്കും ഒക്കെ കാരണം അവൻ തന്നെയാണ്. മറ്റാരുമല്ല. വള്ളത്തോൾ ഈ സത്യത്തെ മഗ്നലന മറിയത്തിലൂടെ ഇങ്ങനെ ചിത്രീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു:

'മർത്യനെ കീഴ്പ്പോട്ടു തള്ളുന്നതായാൾ താൻ  
മറ്റാരുമല്ല കരേറ്റുവതും'

സന്തോഷം നാം ഉണ്ടാക്കുന്നതാണ്. ഏബ്രഹാം ലിങ്കൺ ഒരിക്കൽ പറഞ്ഞു 'എത്രയധികം സന്തോഷം ജനങ്ങൾ ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നുവോ അത്രയധികം സന്തോഷം അനുഭവിക്കുവാൻ അവർക്കു കഴിയുമെന്ന്'. അധർമ്മിക പ്രവർത്തികൾ കൊണ്ടും യേക്കരങ്ങളായ പാപങ്ങൾ കൊണ്ടുമൊക്കെ മനോഹരമായ മനുഷ്യജീവിതത്തെ നരകതുല്യമാക്കിത്തീർക്കുന്ന അനേകരുണ്ട്. പ്രേമ സംഗീതത്തിലൂടെ ഉള്ളൂർ പാടി 'നമുക്കു നാമേ പണിവതു നാകം, നരകവുമതുപോലെ' എന്ന്. അനിഷേധ്യമായ മഹൽ സത്യമാണിത്.

പണം കൊണ്ട് സ്വായത്തമാക്കാവുന്നതാണ് സന്തോഷമെന്ന് വിശ്വസിക്കുന്നവരുണ്ട്. പണം കൊണ്ട് വാങ്ങാവുന്നതല്ല. ധനസമൃദ്ധിക്കൊണ്ടും ആരും സന്തോഷം അനുഭവിക്കുന്നില്ല. ധനം ഇല്ലാത്ത അവസ്ഥയും അങ്ങനെ തന്നെ. ധനം വർദ്ധിക്കുന്നതോടും അതിലുള്ള ആശയും അതനുസരിച്ച് വർദ്ധിക്കുന്നു. പത്തു കിട്ടിയാൽ നൂറെന്നും, നൂറു കിട്ടിയാൽ ആയിരമെന്നും, ആയിരം കിട്ടുമ്പോൾ പതിനായിരം വേണമെന്നുമുള്ള ആശയുടെ കെട്ടുപാടിൽ തുങ്ങി കഴിയുന്ന മനുഷ്യൻ ഒടുവിൽ മരിക്കുമ്പോൾ ഉടുതുണിപോലും കൊണ്ടുപോകാനും കഴിയുന്നില്ലെന്നും ജ്ഞാനപ്പാനയിലൂടെ പുന്താനം പറഞ്ഞു. ഉള്ളതുകൊണ്ട് സംതൃപ്തിയോടെ ജീവിക്കുന്നവൻ ധനവാൻ എന്ന് ജപ്പാൻകാരുടെ ഇടിയിൽ ഒരു പറച്ചിൽ ഉണ്ട്. ഇത് വലിയൊരു സത്യമാകുന്നു. ലോകസുഖങ്ങൾ ആവോളം ആസ്വദിച്ച് സുഖത്തിന്റെ മടിത്തട്ടിൽ കഴിയുന്ന ആധുനിക മനുഷ്യന് ഇന്ന് സന്തോഷമില്ല. സമാധാനം ഇല്ല. ഉറക്ക ഗുളിക കൂടാതെ അവൻ ഉറങ്ങാനും കഴിയുന്നില്ല. എന്തൊരു വിരോധാഭാസം! എന്തൊരു അരാചകാവസ്ഥ മനുഷ്യന്റേത്!

പകയും വിദ്വേഷവും അസൂയയും ഒക്കെ മനസ്സിൽ കരുതിവെച്ച് ജീവിക്കുന്നവർക്കും യഥാർത്ഥമായ സന്തോഷം അനുഭവിക്കാൻ സാധ്യമല്ല. വിദ്വേഷം കൊണ്ട് ആരും ഒന്നും നേടുന്നില്ല. സ്വാർത്ഥതയും അതുപോലെ തന്നെ സന്തോഷത്തെ ഹനിക്കുന്നു. സന്തോഷം ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നവർ തെറ്റുകളും ദോഷ ചിന്തകളും ഉപേക്ഷിക്കേണ്ടതാണ്. 'ദുഷ്ടൻ തന്റെ വഴിയെയും നീതികെട്ടുവൻ തന്റെ വിചാരങ്ങളെയും ഉപേക്ഷിച്ച് യെഹോവയിൽ കലേക്ക് തിരിയട്ടെ'(യെശ. 55:7). സന്തോഷം ജീവിതത്തിന് വേണ്ടത് ഇതാകുന്നു. ലളിതമായ ജീവിതം, സാധുക്കളെ സഹായിക്കുക,

മറ്റുള്ളവരോട് കരുണയുള്ളവരായിരിക്ക, എല്ലാ മനുഷ്യരേയും സ്നേഹിക്കുക, ഹൃദയശുദ്ധിയോടു കൂടി ദൈവത്തെ ആരാധിക്കുക, കൂടുതൽ സമയം പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുക. ഇതൊക്കെ അത്ഭുതകരമായ വിധത്തിലുള്ള ആനന്ദത്തെ നമുക്ക് പ്രദാനം ചെയ്യുന്നതാണ്.

സത്യത്തിന്റേയും നീതിയുടേയും പാതകളിൽ സന്തോഷം ഉണ്ട്. സത്യസന്ധനായ മനുഷ്യൻ ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ഉൽകൃഷ്ട സൃഷ്ടിയാകുന്നു എന്ന് അലക്സാണ്ടർ പോപ്പ് പറഞ്ഞു. സത്യം സർവ്വാരാധ്യമായ സഭാവശ്യമാണ്. മനുഷ്യന്റെ മാനുഷ്യതയുടേയും മഹത്വത്തിന്റേയും - മുലകല്ല് ഇതാകുന്നു. ദൈവത്തെ ഏറെ സന്തോഷിപ്പിക്കുന്ന തിരുമുൽക്കാഴ്ചയും ഇതു തന്നെ. വിശുദ്ധ യോഹന്നാനാൻ എഴുതിയ മൂന്നാം ലേഖനം നാലാം വാക്യത്തിൽ നമുക്കതിനെ ഇങ്ങനെ വായിക്കാം 'എന്റെ മക്കൾ സന്തോഷത്തിൽ നടക്കുന്നു എന്നു കേൾക്കുന്നതിനേക്കാൾ വലിയ സന്തോഷം എനിക്കില്ല'. വിസ്താരഭയത്താൽ ചുരുക്കുന്നു. നീതി നിർഭരമായ ജീവിതങ്ങൾ അനുഗ്രഹീതങ്ങളും ആനന്ദപൂർണ്ണങ്ങളുമാകുന്നു. ശലോമോൻ പറഞ്ഞു 'നീതിമാന്മാരുടെ പ്രത്യാശ സന്തോഷമാകുന്നു' എന്ന്. ദാവീദും ഇതു തന്നെ പ്രസ്താവിച്ചു 'ഉല്ലാസത്തിന്റേയും ജയത്തിന്റേയും ഘോഷം നീതിമാന്മാരുടെ കൂടാരങ്ങളിലുണ്ട്' എന്ന് (സങ്കീ. 118:15). ദൈവം ഉള്ള ഭവനങ്ങളിൽ സന്തോഷം ഉണ്ട്.

യഥാർത്ഥമായ സന്തോഷം ദൈവത്തിൽ നിന്നും ലഭിക്കുന്നതാകുന്നു. എന്തുകൊണ്ടെന്നാൽ സർവ്വസന്തോഷത്തിന്റേയും മുലസ്രോതസ്സ് ദൈവം ആകുന്നു. ലോകം നൽകുന്ന ക്ഷണികമായ സന്തോഷത്തേക്കാൾ ഒക്കെ ഉന്നതവും ഉദാത്തവും ഒരിക്കലും മധുരമി നഷ്ടപ്പെടാത്തതും എന്നേക്കും നിലനിൽക്കുന്നതുമായ സന്തോഷത്തെയാകുന്നു ദൈവം മനുഷ്യന് നൽകുന്നത്. ഈ മഹാസന്തോഷത്തെ യഥായഥം രൂപിച്ചറിഞ്ഞ തന്റെ ഭക്തൻ ആനന്ദഭരിതനായി അവനെ ഇങ്ങനെ പാടിസ്തുതിച്ചു 'നിന്റെ സന്നിധിയിൽ സന്തോഷ പരിപൂർണ്ണതയും നിന്റെ വലത്തുഭാഗത്ത് എന്നും പ്രമോദങ്ങളും ഉണ്ട്' (സങ്കീ. 16:11).

ആശയർ അനുനിമിഷം തകർന്നുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ആയിരമായിരം മനുഷ്യാത്മാക്കൾക്ക് ആശ്വാസവും പ്രത്യാശയും സന്തോഷവും നൽകുവാൻ യേശുക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ സ്നേഹത്തിനു കഴിയും. അവന്റെ സ്നേഹം ആനന്ദമാകുന്നു. അവന്റെ രാജ്യവും നിത്യാനന്ദമാകുന്നു. തന്റെ മക്കൾ എപ്പോഴും സന്തോഷം അനുഭവിച്ച് ജീവിക്കണമെന്ന് സ്വർഗ്ഗസ്ഥനായ ആ നല്ല പിതാവ് ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നു. ഫിലിപ്പിയർ 4:4 -ൽ പൗലോസ് അപ്പോസ്തോലൻ അത് വീണ്ടും ഇങ്ങനെ രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നു 'കർത്താവിൽ എപ്പോഴും സന്തോഷിപ്പിൻ; സന്തോഷിപ്പിൻ എന്നു ഞാൻ പിന്നെയും പറയുന്നു'.

## 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 email to: mariammatx@aol.com

# നമ്മുടെ മിഷ്യൻ ഫീൽഡിലൂടെ ഒരു യാത്ര.....

എബ്രഹാം മാത്യു, ഡാളസ്

2001 ഡിസംബറിൽ മദ്ധ്യപ്രദേശിലുള്ള സൽന, സീഹോറ എന്നീ സ്ഥലങ്ങൾ സന്ദർശിക്കുവാൻ ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് ഇടയായി. തൃപ്തികരമല്ലാത്ത ആരോഗ്യസ്ഥിതിയിലായ എന്റെ ഭാര്യയുമായി ഇത്തരമൊരു യാത്ര സുവിശേഷത്തിന്റെ ദിവ്യവും മഹത്വവുമായ വഴിയിലേക്കാണ് ഞങ്ങളെ നയിച്ചത്. സൽനയിൽ റവ. ഡോ. ഫിലിപ്പ് വർഗ്ഗീസിന്റെ ചുമതലയിൽ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്ന സ്കൂളും സമീപ പ്രദേശങ്ങളിൽ ലഘുലേഖ വിതരണവും ബൈബിൾ ക്ലാസുകളും അനേകരെ രക്ഷയിലേക്ക് നയിക്കുന്നു.

സീഹോറയിലുള്ള ആശ്രമവാസികൾ സമീപപ്രദേശത്തുള്ള ഗ്രാമങ്ങളിൽ ബാലവാടികൾ, സ്കൂൾ എന്നിവയിലൂടെ അനേകരെ ക്രിസ്തുവികളേക്ക് നേടുവാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ട്. ആശ്രമത്തിനടുത്തുള്ള ഒരു ആദിവാസി കോളനി സന്ദർശിക്കുന്നതിനിടയായി. നല്ല തണുപ്പുള്ള സമയമായിരുന്നെങ്കിലും പാദരക്ഷയില്ലാതെ, വെറും ഒറ്റ വസ്ത്രങ്ങളും ധരിച്ച് ഏകദേശം നൂറോളം ആദിവാസികൾ ഒന്നിച്ചു വന്നു ചേർന്നു. എഴുത്തും വായനയും അറിയാത്ത ഇവർ ബ്രദർ തങ്കച്ചനോടൊപ്പം ഹിന്ദിയിൽ പാട്ടു പാടി ഭയഭക്തിയോടെ പ്രാർത്ഥനയിൽ പങ്കെടുത്തു. കർത്താവിന്റെ പ്രാർത്ഥന ഏറ്റുചൊല്ലി. തൊഴിലവസരങ്ങളില്ലാതെ കഷ്ടിച്ച് ഒരു നേരത്തെ ഭക്ഷണം കഴിച്ചു ജീവിക്കുന്ന ഇവർ ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടത് അവരുടെ കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളെ പടിപ്പിക്കുവാനുള്ള സൗകര്യം നൽകണമെന്നതായിരുന്നു. അവിടെ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്ന ബാലവാടി അദ്ധ്യാപകന് മാസം 500 രൂപ കൊടുക്കാനില്ലാത്തതിനാൽ നിന്നു പോയി. അതിനുള്ള ഒരു വർഷത്തെ പണം കൊടുത്ത് അവരുടെ ആഗ്രഹം നിറവേറ്റാൻ സാധിച്ചു. ഇതുപോലെ മറ്റു സ്ഥലങ്ങളിലും ബാലവാടികൾ ആവശ്യമായിട്ടുണ്ട്. പ്രായമായ പെൺകുട്ടികളെ വിവാഹം ചെയ്തതുകൊണ്ട് നിവൃത്തിയില്ലാത്ത കുടുംബങ്ങൾ അനവധിയാണ്. അവരുടെ ഏക വരുമാനമാർഗമായ പശുവിനെ വിറ്റായിരിക്കും ചിലർ വിവാഹം നടത്തുക. കേവലം 5000 രൂപയുടെ സഹായം നാം കൊടുത്താൽ ഒരു പെൺകുട്ടിക്ക് വിവാഹിതയായി കുടുംബ ജീവിതം ആരംഭിക്കുവാൻ സാധിക്കും.

2002 ജനുവരിയിൽ കർണാടകയിലുള്ള ഹോസ്കോട്ട്, ദാവനഗള്ളി, ശിവാപുര, എന്നീ മിഷ്യൻ സെന്ററുകൾ റവ. ജോൺ മാത്യുവിന്റെ സഹായത്തോടെ സന്ദർശിക്കുന്നതിനു സാധിച്ചു. മിഷ്യൻ ഹോസ്പിറ്റൽ, നേഴ്സിംഗ് സ്കൂൾ, കൃഷ്ണരോഗാശുപത്രി എന്നിവയെല്ലാം ഭംഗിയായി നടക്കുന്നു.

ശിവാപുര മിഷ്യന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനം ഹോസ്കോട്ട് മിഷ്യന്റെ ഭാഗമായിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ 4 വർഷമായി അതു സ്വതന്ത്രമായി പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നു. ബാംഗ്ലൂരിൽ നിന്നും 45 കി. മീ. ദൂരത്താണ് ഈ സ്ഥലം. 350-ൽ അധികം ആളുകൾ ആരാധനയിൽ പങ്കെടുക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. റവ. സി. വി. മാത്യുവിന്റെ ദീർഘവീക്ഷണത്തിൽ പല പുതിയ പരിപാടികളും അവിടെ നടക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. 8 പള്ളികളും 10 സുവിശേഷകരും ഇവിടെ ഉണ്ട്. ശിവാപുരിയിലെ ഒരു ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്ന സുവിശേഷകൻ തങ്കച്ചന്റെ ഭവനത്തിൽ അച്ചനുമൊത്ത് പോകുവാൻ സാധിച്ചു. ചെറിയ ഒരു മുറിയിൽ 40-ൽപരം ആളുകൾ ആരാധയിൽ സംബന്ധിക്കുന്നു. നന്തഗുഡി എന്ന സ്ഥലത്ത് ഒരു ആരാ നാലയം പണിയുന്നതിനായി കല്ലിട്ടിരുന്നു. 8 വർഷമായിട്ടും പണി നടന്നില്ല. ഞങ്ങളും അച്ചനും കൂടാതെ ന്യൂയോർക്കിൽ നിന്നെത്തിയ ജെറോമി എന്ന ചെറുപ്പക്കാരനും കൂട്ടായി പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുകയും സഹകരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. ജെറോമിയാകട്ടെ 10 മോട്ടോർസൈക്കിൾ വാങ്ങുവാനുള്ള പണം തന്റെ കൂട്ടുകാരിൽ നിന്നും ശേഖരിച്ച് നൽകി.

2003 ഫെബ്രുവരിയിൽ നന്തകൂടി ഞങ്ങൾ സന്ദർശിച്ചപ്പോൾ അവിടെ പണികഴിപ്പിച്ച പള്ളിയിൽ 120-ൽപരം ആൾക്കാർ ആരാധിക്കുന്നു. തയ്യൽക്ലാസുകളും, ബൈബിൾ പഠനവും ഭംഗിയായി നടക്കുന്നു. അടുത്ത മൂന്നു ഗ്രാമങ്ങളിൽ വിശ്വാസത്തിലേക്ക് വന്നവർ പള്ളികൾക്കായ് സ്ഥലം നൽകിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഇവിടെയും ചാപ്പൽ നിർമ്മിക്കേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു.

കർണ്ണാടകയിൽ കമ്പാഷൻ ഇന്റർനാഷണൽ എന്ന അമേരിക്കൻ സ്ഥാപനത്തിന്റെ സഹായത്തോടെ നടത്തുന്ന ചൈൽഡ് ഡവലപ്മെന്റ് സെന്റർ ഞങ്ങൾ സന്ദർശിച്ചു. ഗ്രാമങ്ങളിൽ നിന്ന് കുട്ടികളെ ശേഖരിച്ച് വസ്ത്രവും ഭക്ഷണവുമെല്ലാം നൽകി പഠിപ്പിക്കുകയാണ്.

ആന്ധ്രാപ്രദേശിലെ ചഗലമാരി, നർസാപുരം എന്നീ സെന്ററുകളും ഞങ്ങൾ സന്ദർശിച്ചു. ടി. ബാബു അച്ചന്റെ കുടുംബത്തോടുകൂടി ഞങ്ങൾ രണ്ടു രാത്രി താമസിച്ചു. ഒരു മുറിയും അടുക്കളയും ഒരു ബാത്ത്റൂമും മാത്രമുള്ള പാഴ്സനേജ്. അച്ചന്റെ ചുമതലയിൽ 9 പള്ളികളും 13 സുവിശേഷകരുമുണ്ട്. ഒരു മോട്ടോർ സൈക്കിളിൽ യാത്ര ചെയ്ത് അച്ചൻ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ തുടരുന്നു. ഞായറാഴ്ച 3 പള്ളികളിൽ അച്ചൻ കുർബ്ബാന നടത്തുന്നു. ബാക്കി പള്ളികളിൽ ഇട ദിവസങ്ങളിലും. ക്ഷയരോഗികൾ ധാരാളമുള്ള ഈ ഗ്രാമങ്ങളിൽ അവരുടെ ആവശ്യത്തിനായി ഒരു സമഗ്ര പരിപാടി തയ്യാറാക്കുകയാണ് അച്ചൻ.

ഇവിടെയുള്ള ജനങ്ങൾ കൂട്ടായി വസിക്കുന്നു. ഒരുതരം അടിമ സ്വഭാവത്തിലാണ് ഇവരുടെ തൊഴിലവസരങ്ങൾ. തെലുഗു ഭാഷയിലൊരു ബൈബിളിന് 80 രൂപയാണ്. 40 രൂപ മിഷ്യൻ സെന്റർ കൊടുക്കും ബാക്കി 40 രൂപ അവർ തന്നെ ഉണ്ടാക്കിയാണ് ബൈബിൾ വാങ്ങുന്നത്. മാർത്തോമ്മാസഭയുടേതായ ഒരു പാട്ടുപുസ്തകം തെലുഗു ഭാഷയിൽ പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. എന്നാൽ അതിനാവശ്യമായ 24,000 രൂപ ഉണ്ടാകേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു. 100 ബൈബിളിന് 180 ഡോളർ കൊടുത്താൽ നിർധനരായ വിശ്വാസികൾക്ക് ബൈബിൾ സൗജന്യമായി കൊടുക്കുവാൻ സാധിക്കും. മുത്തല്ലൂർ എന്ന ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ നമ്മുടെ വകയായി 3.5 ഏക്കർ സ്ഥലമുണ്ട് അവിടെ ഒരു കിണർ കൂഴിച്ച് മോട്ടോർ വച്ച് ഗ്രാമത്തെ വരൾച്ചയിൽ നിന്നും രക്ഷിക്കാൻ 55,000 രൂപയുടെ ആവശ്യമുണ്ട്.

ചഗലമാരിയിൽ റവ. ആർ. കെ. ഏബ്രഹാം പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നു. 7 പള്ളികളും 11 ഇവാഞ്ചലിസ്റ്റുകളും അവിടെയുണ്ട്. അച്ചൻ താമസിക്കുന്ന പാഴ്സനേജിനടുത്ത് ബോയ്സ് ഹോസ്റ്റൽ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നു. ഇവിടെ ഇനിയും പള്ളികൾ പണിയേണ്ടതായുണ്ട്. തൃച്ഛമായ കുലി ലഭിക്കുന്ന ഗ്രാമവാസികൾ അടിത്തറ കെട്ടിയിട്ടിരിക്കുന്ന രണ്ട് സ്ഥലങ്ങൾ കാണുവാനിടയായി. ഒരു ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ ദേവാലയവും അടുത്തുള്ള പുല്ലുമേഞ്ഞ കുരകളും ഒരു ദുഃഖ വെള്ളിയാഴ്ച തീ പിടിച്ച് നശിച്ചു പോയി. അടിത്തറ കെട്ടിയിട്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ദേവാലയത്തിന്റെ പണി പൂർത്തിയാക്കാൻ ലോസ് ആഞ്ചലസ് ഇടവകയിലെ ഒരംഗം അവിടം സന്ദർശിക്കവേ വാഗ്ദാനം നൽകിയിട്ടുണ്ട്.

ആരെല്ലാം എന്തെല്ലാമെഴുതിയാലും നേരിൽ ഈ വേലസ്ഥലങ്ങൾ പോയിക്കൊണ്ടാതെ ശരിയായി മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ സാധിക്കില്ല. പോയിക്കൊണ്ടുവരുന്നവരുടെ ജീവിതത്തിൽ പുതിയ അനുഭവങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടാകും എന്നതിൽ സംശയം ഇല്ല. 2004 ജനുവരി 31-ന് കർണ്ണാടകയിലുള്ള മിഷ്യൻ സെന്ററുകൾ സന്ദർശിക്കുവാൻ ഒരു മിഷ്യൻ ടൂർ ഇടവകമിഷൻ സംഘടിപ്പിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് കൂടുതൽ വിവരങ്ങൾ മെസഞ്ചറിൽ കാണുക.

നിങ്ങളുടെ ചിന്തയ്ക്കായി ചില നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ വയ്ക്കുന്നു.

1. നമ്മുടെ ഭദ്രാസനത്തിൽ 5385 കുടുംബങ്ങളുണ്ട്. ഒരു വർഷം 10 ഡോളർ കൊടുത്ത് മിഷ്യൻവേലയിൽ പങ്കാളികളാകുമെങ്കിൽ 53850 ഡോളർ ലഭിക്കും, എത്രയോ വലിയ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ നടത്താം.
2. നമ്മൾ ഭവനങ്ങൾ വാങ്ങുമ്പോൾ ഒരു സാധു വിശ്വാസിയെക്കൂടി ഓർക്കുക. 30,000 രൂപ ദാനം ചെയ്താൽ അവർക്കൊരു പാർപ്പിടമാകും.
3. നമ്മളുടെ മക്കളുടെ വിവാഹം നടത്തുമ്പോൾ 10,000 രൂപ ദാനം ചെയ്യുമെങ്കിൽ നിർധനരായ രണ്ടു പെൺകുട്ടികൾക്ക് കൂടി കുടുംബ ജീവിതം നേടിക്കൊടുക്കാനാകും.
4. നമ്മുടെ കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾ ഗ്രാഡുവേറ്റ് ചെയ്യുമ്പോൾ 25,000 രൂപ ഒരു സാധുവിന്റെ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിനായി കൊടുക്കുക. നമ്മുടെ കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾക്ക് അങ്ങനെ നാം നല്ല മാതൃകയാകുക.

Abraham Mathew 214-321-7561  
Treasurer, Marthoma Evangelical Association, Western Zone.



Child Development Center in Sivanapura



Members of the Christu Jyothi MT Chapel members with Rev. C. V. Mathew.

# SEE YOUR WEDDING PHOTOS ONLINE. FIRST TIME EVER.

We are bringing the convenience of Digital Photography  
to Traditional Wedding Photography. First Time Ever.

[www.fotomagic.net](http://www.fotomagic.net)

**PASSPORT PHOTOS  
WHILE - U - WAIT  
FREE 8X10  
WITH STUDIO PORTRAIT**

*Surya*  
**fotomagic**  
professional photographers

FINEST IN PHOTO & VIDEO COVERAGE  
INDOOR & OUTDOOR FAMILY STUDIO  
B/W & COLOR ENLARGEMENTS  
PHOTO RESTORATION  
EXPRESS PHOTO LAB  
PASSPORT PHOTOS

**RESTORE OLD PHOTOS  
WITH OUT NEGATIVES**

**CALL BALU MENON  
OR UMA MENON**

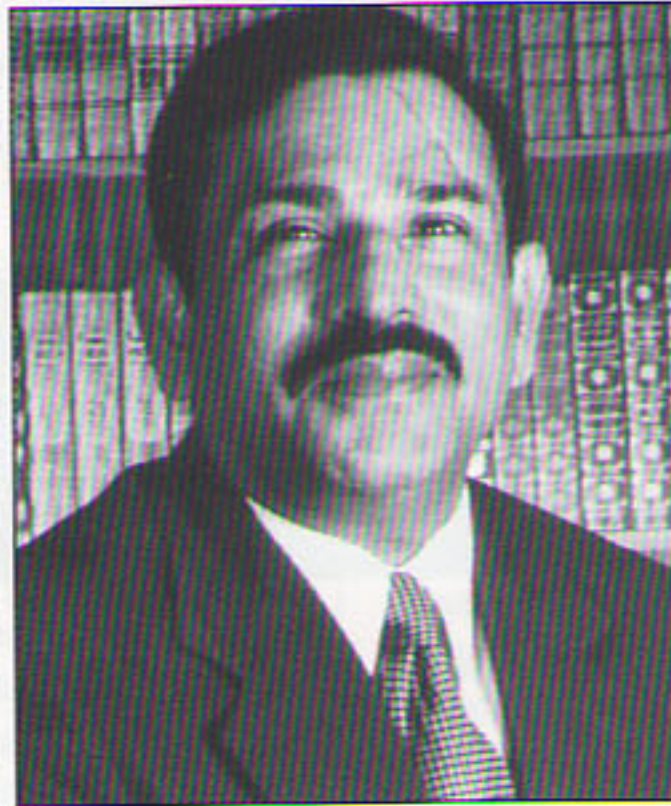
1623 Hillside Ave  
New Hyde Park, NY  
(516) 775-0400  
[www.fotomagic.net](http://www.fotomagic.net)



# Diaspora Community: Its Relevance and Needs

Atty. Lal Varghese, Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch, Dallas

**T**he term "Diaspora" is a Greek word which means "dispersion" or "scattering" or "sowing". The root words of Diaspora is in the Latin - dia = through, and speirein = to scatter or sow. The Hebrew equivalent word for Diaspora is Galut which means "exile". In Malayalam it is commonly known as "Pravasikal". Thus Diaspora means dispersed or scattered seeds to propagate new generations in new environments and unfamiliar cultures. Jews are a Diaspora community scattered all over the world who longed to return to Israel.



We have a large number of Mar Thoma Diaspora community scattered all around the world, many without the privilege to attend local Mar Thoma parishes, since there is none in close vicinity. They are the extended wing of the established Diaspora communities who have access to local Mar Thoma parishes. I am sure some of these Marthomites have a longing for their home land, hoping to return to Kerala in the future. Mar Thoma Diaspora communities are present today in the United States of America, Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Middle East, and more recently in South America. We became a Diaspora for reasons other than Jewish Diaspora. We need to understand and recognize the Diaspora community, due to their plight from homeland, their intention to, resettle in homeland, culminate in the future generation its rich religious and cultural heritage and our vision and mission about the homeland from where we have been dispersed. In addition to these mere geographical and sociological aspects of this dispersion, we need to consider the providential and spiritual side of this migration. We are not forced out, but we voluntarily left our motherland or we need to believe that we have been sent. This 'sendness' is critical to establish our spiritual mission in places where we live.

The election and calling of the Mar Thoma Church must be traced from the calling of Abraham, to understand its historical purpose and the relevance of the Diaspora Community. Hence we are told that the election was given over to the Church with the Great Mission. "Go into all over the world and preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15). We, the Mar Thoma Church, have the great tradition of being elected by Jesus for ministering the Gospel through his most rational disciple St. Thomas. Our call and election as a Diaspora Community is clear and unequivocal; to proclaim the living Jesus Christ in the community where we live, and to pass on the rich tradition and heritage of our

culture to our future generations. What we need to do as a Church to help this Diaspora Community to do the duties entrusted to them. We need to recognize and equip the Diaspora Community and the extended Diaspora Community who have no access to parishes to do their roles according to God's plans wherever they are living. Our Syrian Christian heritage, strong family ties, our moral codes of behavior as individuals, families and community, our ethical standards in marriage and interpersonal relations, emphasis on

monogamy and chastity, sexual purity and avoidance of sexual perversions and our emphasis on living on the word of God are unique and is the solution to the decaying society all over the world. No other culture in the world can give these to this country except us. It is because of this uniqueness; we are placed as a Diaspora Community at this historical moment.

Marthomites are no longer a local community within the bounds of Kerala. It has spread its wings across the world and I am sure, God has specific plans for these great pilgrims. There are two kinds of Diaspora Marthomites, those who have access to local parishes, and extended Diaspora Marthomites, those who do not have access to local parishes. Both of these Diaspora Marthomites should not be ignored anymore by the Church as a whole. They have given valuable contributions to our church in the past, and still providing great contributions to our church. We need to recognize the Diaspora Community as an official part of our Church and a Sunday should be permanently declared as Diaspora Sunday every year, and extended Diaspora community should be invited by the local parishes to attend Service on the Diaspora Sunday, and they should be given the opportunity to participate in all meaningful ways in the service on that Sunday. There should be special order of service prepared and distributed for that Sunday to be used in all parishes. They should be part of our pastoral care and our gratitude to God for his abundant blessings on our community. This is also to remember our humble beginnings as a Diaspora Community around the world, and grown to number of churches all over the world, and keep it in the memory of our children. Diaspora Sunday should be actively encouraged as a significant and it should be an event in the calendar of the Church. Our Diocese should be congratulated for establishing such a Sunday on the fourth Sunday of every November, but we

*(Continued on page 28)*

# Religious Fundamentalism: It's Consequences

P. V. Varghese, Epiphany Mar Thoma Church, New York

If the 20th century world feared the rivalry between Capitalism and Communism would spiral into a nuclear war, the 21st century world is witness to horrible scenes of mindless bloodshed resulting from Religious Fundamentalism worldwide. Millions of lives have been wasted throughout history in the name of religion. However, the 21st century is different in that more devastating crimes are being committed with accuracy and much more loss of human lives. An example of this is the tragedy of September 11, 2001.

Religious Fundamentalism mixed with politics is a deadly combination. Hatred for people of other religions and the violence that is committed against them is spreading like a virus around the Globe.

The consequence of Islamic Fundamentalism is a matter of grave concern for the future of the world. Now Islamic Fundamentalism is being matched by Hindu Fundamentalism in India. India is known as a land where people of all religions used to co-exist without much violence and bloodshed in the past. At the time of independence the country was split based on religion. The seeds of communalism were sown and we are reaping the consequences of it. Politicians have seen the benefit of inciting communalism and religious fervor. Gujarat is an example. Political parties are expected to bring a stable government, which is supposed to promote developmental projects, public education, and the total upliftment of society. Instead, corrupt politicians mixed politics and religion together to polarize people based on religion, caste, etc. to further their personal agenda.

The "Rathiyatra" by Advani brought BJP to power in India. Ironically, religion plays a dehumanizing role in the hands of fundamentalists. While no religion promotes murder, the fundamentalists have given themselves permission to burn, loot, rape, torture, and kill innocent people.

In India, Muslim Fundamentalism is being matched by Hindu Fundamentalism of the likes of Sangh Parivar striving for "Hindutva". People of other faiths are labeled as 'Unpatriotic' and are subjected to all forms of inhuman treatments.

Hinduism is a faith with a wide diversity of thought and beliefs with tolerance for different, even contradictory viewpoints. Its hallmark is its inclusive and all-embracing philosophy. It is believed that majority of Hindus in India still uphold this idea.

However, the "Hindutva" propounded by the RSS, Sangh Parivar and other communal elements is a violent sectarian movement seeking to create "Hindurashtra" in many ways similar to the Nazi idea of an 'Aryan' Germany. It seeks to eliminate minorities such as Christians and Muslims or marginalize them in society. In the latest Gujarat communal violence Muslim houses, business and colonies



were selectively looted ransacked and burned. More than 2,000 Muslims were burned or hacked to death. More than 200,000 people still live in refugee camps in appalling living conditions refusing to return to their homes for fear of their lives.

The viciousness and ferocity of the attack on hapless women and children with the alleged connivance of the BJP government had a pre-taste of ethnic cleansing. A number of International Human Rights Organizations pointed to the complicity of the State Government in this atrocious crime.

Gujarat is described as a successful experiment by the Sangh Parivar and is considered to be the first step in declaring India a "Hindurashtra".

## Fascism in its worst form is reappearing in modern India

Communal violence between Hindus and Muslims used to occur in different parts of India on different occasions. After the BJP Government came to power in India attacks against Christians and Christian Institutions in different parts of India is becoming common occurrence. Gujarat leads in the number of attacks against Christians

Christians, who have a long history of running educational institutions imparting literacy in a land of millions of illiterates, giving medical aids where millions have no access to even primary health care, touching lives of millions of 'untouchables' are accused of giving inducement to lower castes to convert them to Christianity. It is very sad indeed when a nation's government condones atrocities against its own citizens, who have been loyal to their country for centuries.

The worst incident, which former President K.R. Narayanan referred to as belonging to the world's inventory of black deeds, happened in the State of Orissa when Australian Missionary Dr. Graham Staines and his two little children Philip and Timothy (10 & 6) were burned alive while they slept. Dr. Staines had been working among lepers for over 30 years along with his wife and children. He had that kind of love for the country and the people. He radiated the love of Christ and served the needy in one of the most inhospitable conditions in India.

Indian history is being rewritten by the Sangh Parivar by labeling Christians and Muslims as remnants of foreign invaders. They hope to "Saffronize" the educational system rewriting the educational curriculum and distorting history.

The Irony is that while hundreds of Swamis, Gurus and religious leaders come to the U.S., U.K and other western countries and collect millions of dollars, preach and propagate Hindu religion and enjoy all the benefits of freedom; they go back to India and unleash hatred against

innocent people of other faiths. Large amounts of money collected under the pretext of Charity is diverted to finance such fundamental organizations, which commit such crimes.

In India people were divided into upper and lower castes based on the "Chaturvarna", After being subservient to the upper class for a long period of time, when the lower caste people were educated and made aware of their rights, the upper castes felt threatened and accused Christians of destabilizing their lifestyles.

### **Emancipation of human beings is a basic tenet of Christian religion**

So many people are silent today on the rise of Fundamentalism and its ramifications. Many of us who are here from India in this magnificent land of wealth and opportunity is engrossed in our personal lives. Silence is not golden at this time!

*"First they came for Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a communist. Then they came for Jews, I didn't speak up because I was not a Jew. Then they came for Catholics, I did not speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me and none was left to speak up for me"* (Rev. Martin Niemoller)

Hindu and Islamic Fundamentalism should not be encountered with Christian Fundamentalism. It will be totally against the teachings of Jesus Christ and Biblical principles. It should be encountered with selfless love of God manifested on the cross. People should be made aware of the gravity and magnitude of the situation. Suitable and sufficient political pressure should be exerted. Persecutions should not deter us in continuing our basic and primary task of preaching the Gospel to every creature to the utmost part of the world. ■

---

## **Diaspora Community: Its Relevance and Needs** *(Continued from page 26)*

need to reinforce its impact and influence. We should encourage the mother Church to establish such a Sunday for all Mar Thoma Christians.

A center in Kerala should be designated and dedicated as the first Diaspora Center of the Mar Thoma Church, so that the Diaspora community who lacks roots in Kerala may be attracted to visit Kerala, and to stay at the Center, and to have a first hand experience and knowledge of our Church, its rich history and traditions. When we think of what had happened to Jews in Germany during holocaust or Asians in Uganda or Mar Thoma Christians in Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion, we immediately understand the importance and the urgent need for a Diaspora Center. Now we may feel secure in our countries of adoption but a political tragedy in 50 or 100 years may change the landscape and it is important to consider and provide for this eventuality. Joseph saw the famine before it occurred; therefore, he was able to save a whole generation and a nation. The leaders of our Church should think about this very seriously, and should see that it has been implemented as token of appreciation for the future Diaspora generation living outside Kerala. Most of the other religious faiths have recognized its Diaspora Communities, and is catering to their needs by providing Diaspora Centers, and other related services through such centers.

Majority of the Marthomites, may not think now seriously about the importance of recognizing Mar Thoma Diaspora Community living all over the world, and the importance of having Diaspora Centers in our homeland, to cater to their needs. it is not just a building, it is an idea, it is a mutual pledge that in times of adversity that we may have a home away from home. We have a father or mother

waiting to receive us back at home in case we may be forced to return for no fault of ours. It may not happen in our life time, it may not happen in our children's life time. But it may happen because of our skin color say in 50-500 years from now. But we should not put it away from our psyche this knowledge and this possibility. This is what Diaspora centre is all about, it is a concept for providing everything to build that concept and extent that possibility form 50 years to 500 years. This concept will also help the second generation Diaspora Marthomites to know about their roots, its faith and the rich tradition of our Church.

It is high time that the Church leaders should awaken and recognize the Diaspora Community and to dedicate a new place as the first Diaspora Center in Kerala for our future generation. Our young people can use this Center as a source for building their knowledge about the faith and practices of our Church. Establishing Diaspora centers in Kerala to cater the needs of the Mar Thoma Diaspora Community all over the world is an immediate need. We could use any existing facility that is under our church's control. This Center should have the information about the Diaspora Community all over the world. Let us pray that the good Lord may provide such opportunities to our future generations and in the future through our Church for a connected-community, connected to home land with strings of love, loyalty, and commitment, which has been neglected for more than half a century. We need action now, we need an urgent dialogue now, I challenge the younger generation to take this up and make it a reality. It may be also a comforting thought for our older folks to know that there always will be home away from home for them to return to, just in case..... ■

# Matrimonial

Marthoma doctor parents invite proposal from doctors and post graduate engineers with high moral and family values for their daughter who is 22, 158cms, fair, soft-spoken, god fearing. At the moment she is doing her masters in information tech. here in the UK. If interested contact us with details and a recent picture. email to: sjacobuk@yahoo.co.uk

---

Uncle invites proposals for 27 year old nephew, tall, handsome with high moral values, finishing up Medical residency in NY (MD Graduate from New York) from parents of Christian girls with Medical degree (MD) and with similar Christian values. Please email short bio-data & recent photo to: danielea@uphs.upenn.edu or mail: Editor/Messenger 165 Springflower Ct., Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006.

---

Well settled Marthoma parents in USA invite marriage proposals for their 27 year old son, 5'7" tall, fair complexion with good moral, spiritual and high family values and US born citizen. He completed his bachelors (BS) in Computer Science, Master of Science in Management (MIS) and currently pursuing a law degree. Currently working at a well known major IT corporation in New York. We invite proposals from God fearing Marthomites/CSI/Jacobites professionally qualified girls (Pediatricians, Pharmacists, Nurse Practitioner, BSC Nurse) with good family background. Please respond with a recently scanned photograph to mli693@yahoo.com

## **Diocese of North America and Europe of The Mar Thoma Church Job Opportunity Posting**

**Title:** Part time Mission Coordinator

**Respond by:** 12/15/2003

**Location:** Sinai Mar Thoma Center, 2320 Merrick Avenue, Merrick, NY 11566

### **Essential Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. Provide leadership, supervision, and coordinate the mission activities of the Diocese of North America and Europe
2. Work with Mission Board and various mission committees to formulate short term and long-term strategies
3. Liaison with other Mission organizations in this country
4. Identify and prepare project reports for federal funding

**Qualification:** Must be a committed Christian with a burden or a heart for mission work, must be a self-starter with at least 1 year experience in mission work, working knowledge of general office administration, thorough understanding of Microsoft Office, prepare and maintain budget, detail oriented, able to work in a team environment, able to effectively manage time, communicate and work efficiently and effectively with mission volunteers.

**Forward Resume to:** Rev. Dr. John Joseph, Diocesan Secretary, Sinai Mar Thoma Center, 2320 Merrick Avenue, Merrick, NY 11566

# EDT

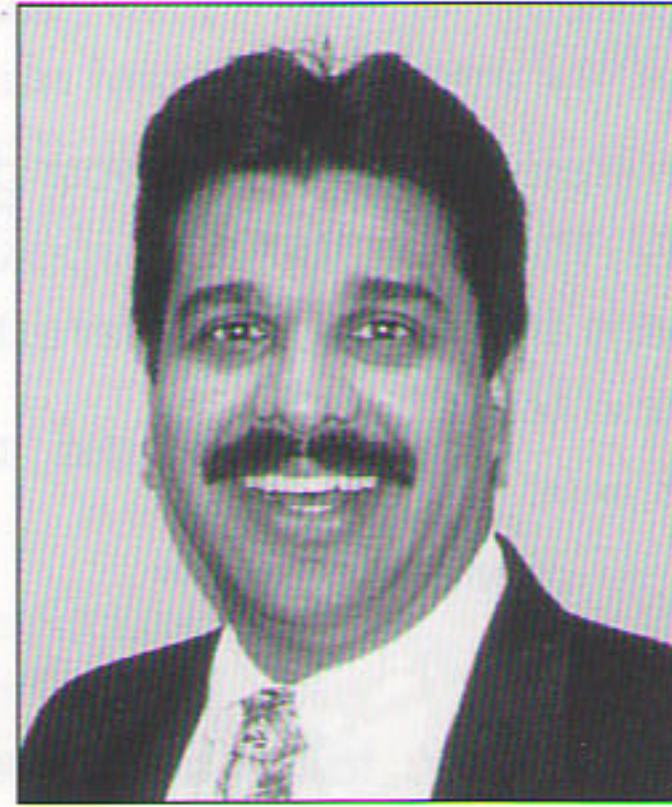
Abraham Kurien

**EDT** stands for **E**ffective **D**evotional **T**ime. It is not my intention to use this article to heap criticism on anyone or assume a holier-than-thou- attitude. My aim is to convey to all those who read this article the benefits and great blessings that pour down on us when each of us strive to practice EDT.

EDT is very difficult in one sense primarily because it has to do with discipline and self-learning. The process might be similar to learning a subject in school. The essential difference in EDT is that, the exercise needs to be powered by God by the power of His Spirit for us to understand the Word of God. Anyone can read the Word of God from cover to cover. However, we will all be groping in the dark unless God's spirit gives us the wisdom to understand it. The biggest need is to retain what one reads, and that comes through EDT.

I have always been fascinated by the book of Psalms and the deep inner meaning the book has to offer. My favorite chapter in the book of Psalms is Chapter 119. This Chapter is not only is the largest chapter in the Bible but also it deals with the Word of God, a subject very dear and near to my heart. I will now attempt to help formulate an overall plan for EDT using Psalms Chapter 119 as an aid. Psalms Chapter 119 has certain key verses which is very beneficial to any person who needs a pragmatic approach in developing an EDT. Let us briefly dwell on a few key verses in this long chapter. On a cursory glance through the chapter, one would observe there are 176 verses in the entire chapter. I would encourage the reader to take up the challenge in reading the entire chapter. The task might seem gigantic but if one would make an attempt to read the chapter, one would find that there are so many treasures to be discovered in this single chapter on the whole issue of the Word of God. I believe this one chapter offers more insights about the Word of God than any other chapter in rest of the 66 books.

The author of Psalms 119 is not known. Many scholars feel there were several authors who penned the verses in this long chapter. There are many scholars who feel David did pen a few verses in this chapter but that information is not established. Verse 12 of this chapter says that one needs to ask God to teach us His Word. I feel that should be the first thing to do when one sits down to read the Word of God. There are often pre-conceptions and premises in our mind, on the particular chapter we are about to read. The ideal course of action would be to let God infuse the thoughts about His Word into us. This is because it was God who inspired and helped author the verses in the Bible.



The next aspect one would observe in Verse 13 is that one should recount with one's lips the Word of God. I must be honest to admit that as a child, I did not enjoy going to Sunday School or VBS, but those classes had a profound influence on my life later on. I had to memorize the Scriptures in these classes and consequently, I have been blessed to this day by the Word of God remaining with me. The devil tends to deceive us with worldly thoughts, but if we, like Jesus during the great temptation in the desert, ground ourselves in

the Word of God, we have a potent weapon to thwart the assaults of the enemy. This line of strategy helps if we take the time not only to read the Word but also to memorize the Word periodically. Verse 15 it says we are to meditate on the Word of God. Meditation forms a key element in understanding the Word of God. The mind tends to process billions of information every day. As we meditate on the truth of the verse and take notes, we retain more of what we read.

The next verse 16 states that one should not neglect reading the Word. Our present modern day living comes with a packed schedule. Time is a commodity that all of us yearn to have in plenty and sadly many of us including me have not been good stewards of our time. Sadly, we often tend to drop or neglect the time that we should have kept aside for God. We tend to either neglect or procrastinate reading the Word and understanding the Word of God, on a daily basis. This becomes our biggest drawback because the further we get from reading the Word of God on a daily basis, the more damage we are inflicting on our relationship with God. Thus, it would be a good idea to come up with a daily schedule to read the Word of God and try as far as possible to stick to the schedule even if it calls for some sacrifice and struggle. An occasional failure to keep to the schedule should not discourage us. The focus should be on getting back on track.

Moving along to Verse 18, we should ask God to open our eyes that we may see great things in the Word of God. This should be something we should strive for on a daily basis. God's Word has insights for every situation in our lives. The reality of the Word and its implications, if applied in our lives helps us gain perspective into a situation that we might not have experienced before. As one tends to discover and relish the profound truths in God's word, verse 19 becomes a reality. The verse states that we need to be consumed with an intense desire to know more about the Word of God. This should be the passion that drives us.



Nothing in this whole wide world matters more than knowing God and His truths in reading the Word of God. Verse 24 states that God's word becomes our counselor and we gain insights from the Word of God.

The next verses beginning from Verse 33 to Verse 37 simply states that our hearts and our minds need to be aligned with the Word of God. The verses 89-91 states that God's word stays firm, and nothing, not even the passage of time is going to change God's Word. The world has seen so many changes and ever so often many modern day thinkers have assailed the Word of God for not being in tune with the times. The fact is although the world has changed since the time the authors first wrote the Scriptures, what has not changed is a loving God's relationship with His children. Verse 105 states that God's word is a lamp and light in our paths. I am not certain how many of us have appreciated the presence of a flashlight or a torch on a dark day. I have experienced living in darkness during the electricity load-shedding days in Kerala.

Similarly God's Word offers us a light to travel through the crookedness and dangers of this world. The only safety we can have is the protection that God's Word provides on a daily basis. The same idea is conveyed in Verse 131 which states that God's word provides light and enables even the simple minded to understand.

In conclusion, I focus on Verse 165. The verse states that God bestows great peace on those that love His word and nothing can make them stumble. The truth offers great comfort because time and again there will be issues and matters in life that perplexes us and makes us anxious. The Word of God strengthens us during those adverse times, and elevates us to a sense of peace and well-being. As the world strives and struggles today to find peace during uncertain times, the Word of God offers us an antidote to be at peace. My big question to all of you reading this article is that how many of us want to have that peace today as we make EDT a priority in our lives? ■

## "Why me?"

Aswathi Varughese, Chicago Marthoma Church

*Tragedy strikes*

*Death has reared his fearful head*

*I cry tears of anguish "feel the loss". live the pain*

*E V E R Y D A Y*

*And ask "Why me?"*

*Soft on the wind a whisper of comfort*

*Only "TRUST"*

*Haunting memories bring sleepless nights*

*Doubt and Despair*

*Fear and Terror rend fragile calm*

*"Again I ask". Why me?*

*Quietly on a silver moon beam a sigh of reassurance*

*Only TRUST*

*Thunder rolls*

*Lightening strikes*

*The world outside is drenched with tears of sorrow*

*Unscathed in my safe haven I marvel*

*And whisper "Why me?"*

*A rainbow radiates HIS LOVE*

*Grim battle lines form*

*Suicide bombings strike terror*

*Buildings aflame with injustice*

*Cocooned in my nest I fear—*

*And wonder—Why me?*

*A church bell peals HIS message of PEACE*

*And the world awakens to the truth—*

*GOD is in control!*

Justice  
is being  
served,  
to the  
Asian  
Community

**Lal Varghese**  
.....  
Attorney at Law

Immigration,  
H1-B,  
Fiance Visa,  
work Permit,  
Green Cards,  
Student Visas,  
Visitor Visas,  
K-1, K-3,  
V Visas, Etc.

Not Certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization



Tel (972) 788-0777 Fax (972) 788-2202  
Direct Line: (972) 788-1555  
E-mail: attylal@aol.com  
<http://www.indiaimmigrationusa.com>

LAW OFFICES OF LAL VARGHESE PLLC, 5050 QUORUM DR., SUITE 241, DALLAS 75254-7054

# Following Your Dreams

Lisa Tillery, Philadelphia

**T**here are times when I gaze out the window of my job and wonder what would it be like to pursue my dream of becoming a writer, and how can I make it happen.

One day my supervisor and I were having an enlightening conversation about our lives and she told me that she's been at her job for 25 years, and if she had a chance to do some things differently she would've seized the moment. I thought to my self; that my supervisor, my parents and so many other people out here would've, if given the right opportunity, pursued a love that they so longed for.

What does a person have to do to realize their passion for what they really want to do? Your dreams are everything, make no mistake that we do make mistakes, but we see them, live through them and try to avoid them if we ever come across that stumbling block again. There are too many people especially women who have not for many reasons pursued something they had a passion for. I was reading a copy of a famous celebrity's magazine and in it she emphasized the word passion. She said that every time she thinks of this word she has to say it out loud p-a-s-s-i-o-n and when you say it to yourself you feel a little tingling sensation in your heart.

Passion is like a craving. For example let's take food, sometimes we want something sweet but if you're like me I've been trying to cut down on the sweet tooth and no matter what I try to eat in place of that sweetness it's just not enough and I find myself thinking about that sweetness again. You have to satisfy it or it will keep lingering, and I think that it is safe to say that passion goes hand-in-hand with a craving. If there is something that you absolutely love to do and if it is all you can think about eat, sleep, day and night than you have to satisfy that passion.

Your cravings may not stop at careers you may want to pursue, but it may also include some type of sports activities like hiking or kayaking, traveling to places like the Grand Canyon in Arizona, the Niagra falls, or even outside the country to exotic places. These are just a few adventures out there that await many of us. So why are we so afraid to see where our passions can take us?

I had a chance to sit down one-on-one with my co-workers and I asked the question "If you had a chance to pursue your dream job what would it be?" I was amazed at the answers that I'd received—a fashion designer, food critic, night club owner, pediatric nurse and a person that

designs video games. These careers for the most part are outstanding but at some point I wanted to ask what happened? What made them not pursue their dreams head on? Often times fear plays a major role in what we decide to do or what challenges we take on. But what makes us keep that fear in our brain is that we always second guess ourselves in our hearts.

We know we can but then in our minds there is a little voice that goes off in our heads that says yeah, I can do it, but what if? The buts, and the what if's are a person's downfall. If you keep having doubts that you can't accomplish what it is that your heart desires that in the years to come it will always eat you up inside and you'll often wonder what if? Funny, there's that what if again, the what if's can play both sides of the fence if you let it, it can bring you self-doubt or it can make you go for it—little by little, inch-by-inch, but it is up to you to decide which fence you choose to cross over. Our Christian faith will mostly guide you through here.

I woke up one morning and at first I started to stay right there in bed, but something inside of me yelled "get up" and I did. I went downstairs, did my exercise routine and I felt refreshed, so much that I felt like I wanted to cry—the trauma that I've put my mind and body through was unbelievable and the fact that I let self doubt truly rule my life for so long is devastating on the mind that it filters down to the body—physical. I've put so much negative pressure on my brain and procrastination in my step that I felt drained literally. Because I was too afraid to pursue my passion that I pushed myself into what I feel is a 34 year rut. It will take time for me to break free of this rut but I'm doing it and I'm starting to feel better about myself so much that I'm back to exercising, I'm getting into my writing and I'm back to opening up my soul.

I recently heard a quote from a motivational speaker and he said that when he was in the 2nd grade his teacher said to him "Quit being a quitter." Strong words for such a simple statement. It takes so much courage to fight for your passion with faith and will power and then all you need to do is to "Get into the zone." You have to make up in your mind that what you desire will come to light. It may take you awhile to get there, but the way the months are going pass so fast that in no time the passion that you have in your heart will play a big part in you wallet. But you have to want it bad enough—even if you have to take baby steps to get there. And as they say Rome wasn't built in a day. ■

*"A lot of kneeling will keep you in good standing"*



**9537 Bustleton Avenue, Philadelphia , PA 19115**

**Target Your  
Career Goals  
With America's  
Fastest Growing  
Nursing Agency.**



**TOP PAY FOR  
RN, LPN, CNA  
RESP.THERAPIST**

**NOW RECRUITING CGFNS GRADUATES FROM INDIA**

Visit our web site  
[WWW.Healthcarestat.com](http://WWW.Healthcarestat.com)



*Manilal Mathai  
President*

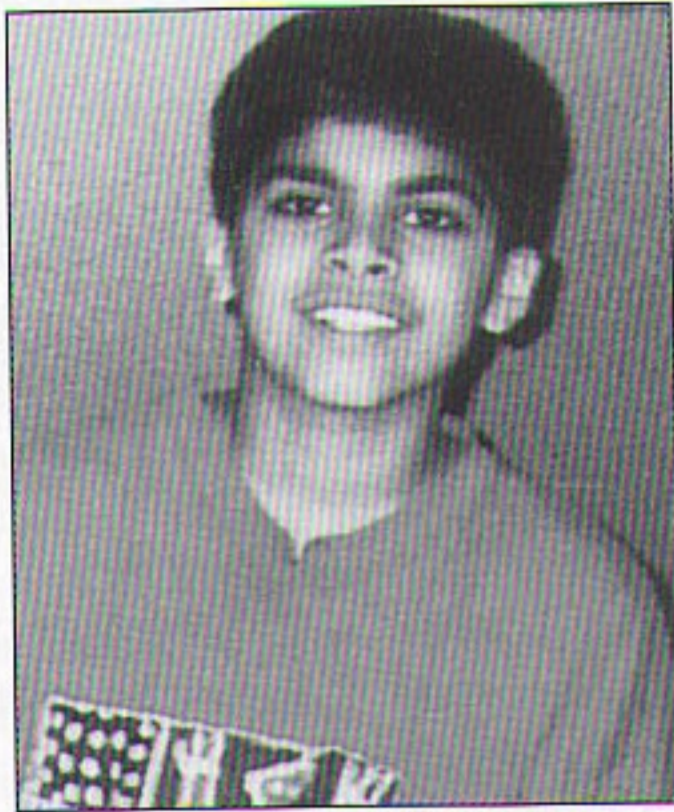
Phone: 215-676-2700  
Fax : 215-676-2734  
Pager : 215-207-3000  
Toll free : 1-877-675-2700  
E-Mail : [healthcarestat@aol.com](mailto:healthcarestat@aol.com)



**MAR THOMA MESSENGER ESSAY/POETRY COMPETITION WINNERS**

**POETRY/JUNIORS**

*First Place*



**CHRIS CHACKO**  
Detroit MTC

*Second Place*



**AJIN JOHN**  
Detroit MTC

*Third Place*



**IVY ABRAHAM**  
Chicago MTC

**POETRY/SENIORS**

*First Place*



**ROBIN JOHN KARIKOTTU**  
Immanuel MTC, Houston

*Second Place*



**RUNCIE CHACKO**  
Detroit MTC

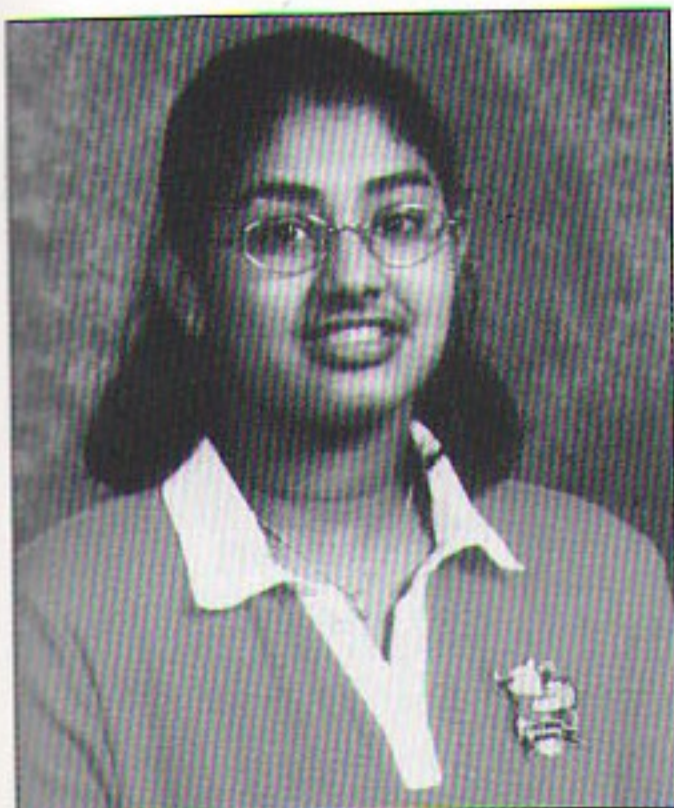
*Third Place*



**PRATHIK MANUEL PHILIP**  
Carmel MTC, Boston

**ESSAY/JUNIORS**

*First Place*



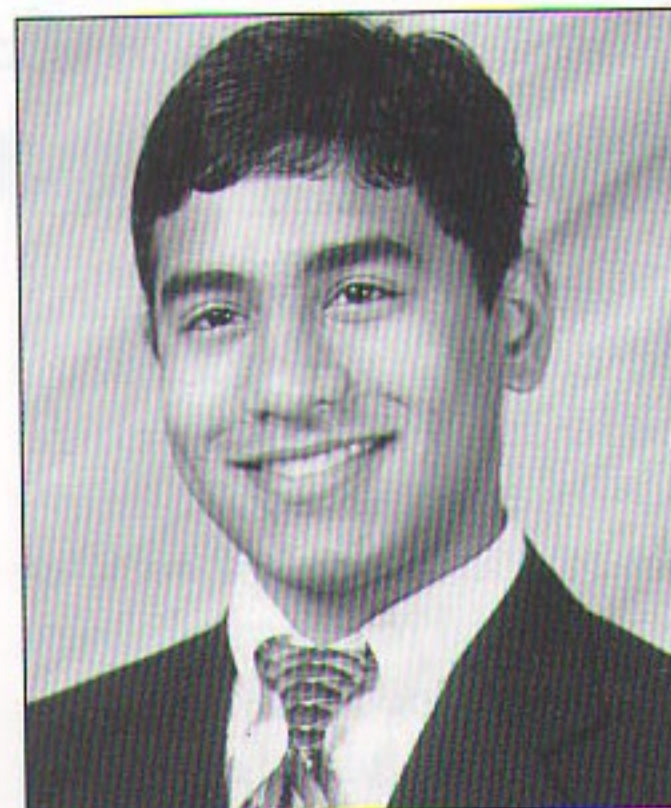
**ELSA VARGHESE**  
Detroit MTC

*First Place*



**ANIKA CHACKO**  
Detroit MTC

*Second Place*



**SIBY SAMUEL**  
Chicago MTC

*Third Place*



**ANISHA JACOB**  
Bethel MTC, Frankfort, IL

## My Expectations of the Mar Thoma Church in North America

Elsa Varghese, Detroit MTC

Juniors—1st place winner—Mar Thoma Messenger Essay Competition—2003

**A**s a worldwide church, the Marthoma church is a faithful church with a belief so strong that nothing can break us. The Mar Thoma church supports others to seek God, and in making them understand better about Him. The members of the church should believe, have faith, a good spirit, and a good heart.

The Mar Thoma church holds a strong faith, which cannot be broken easily. Every Marthomite plays a role in our church to keep our faith together. Each one is a missionary, they stand together and fall together, together we worship and praise God. I expect the Mar Thoma church to enlighten us to have a strong belief in our faith, to stand proud of what we believe in. If no one believed and people started converting to a different religion, we wouldn't be united, we have to remain together and stand majestic. As a Mar Thoma church, we have to spread our faith to others, our determination will help accomplish more.

The Mar Thoma Church should encourage children to pray and devote time to God. Learning about God will expand our knowledge about Him, realize more of the wonders and miracles He can do for us. I expect the Mar Thoma church to educate children about God, teach them more about the bible, the stories, and guide them in the right direction. As children get older, they will understand the formation of our church and pass it down to the generations to come. I insist the church to hold activities to better encourage children also to help them get involved and have a greater relationship with God.

We, as Marthomites, have to worship and praise God often to help us gain a more valuable relationship with God.

The Marthomites are the ones who completes and makes the church whole. The church is not just a building, it is a place of devotion and adoration. It is the house of the Lord, and we should respect and consider it in an admirable way. If we use the church to socialize and entertain ourselves, then it would not be used in the right manner. The church should never be used for the wrong reasons. I expect the Marthomites to follow the rules given. The church is a holy place, we dedicate the church to the Lord.

I anticipate the Marthomites to comfort people in need or people with difficulties. I count on the Mar Thoma Church to pray for the sick. I expect the Mar Thoma Church to help the indigent ones. The Mar Thoma should give support whenever it is needed.

I expect the Mar Thoma Church to instruct us to respect others beliefs. There is no, I, but, We. We honor and glorify God together. I hope the Mar Thoma Church will teach everyone to be compassionate and never to be selfish. The Mar Thoma Church is a Missionary. Along with other goals, one should be to spread the gospel about Jesus Christ our savior, son of God, to the ones who don't know about God or His work.

My expectations of the Mar Thoma Church is not immense but rather achievable. The Mar Thoma Church is a universal church. The church should assist, comfort, and guide all of us. I expect every Marthomite to help our church when in necessity, so our church will grow and our faith will increase. ■

## Missionary Vocation of the Mar Thoma Church in North America

Anika Chacko, Detroit MTC

Seniors—1st place winner—Mar Thoma Messenger Essay Competition—2003

**D**iversity has always distinguished North American society from other world communities due to the influx of immigrants, broad socio-economic range, and blended cultures. It is also reflected in the multiple attitudes and paths toward life that Americans explore. One well-traveled road is religion. For many believers, spirituality is the forum that provides purpose in their lives. The Mar Thoma Church has been a rapidly flourishing influence in the religious arena. Our unique motto, 'Lighted to Lighten', sets us apart from the multitude of

religious sects. This mission statement reflects our indelible emphasis on evangelistic work. Just as a fire exists by burning, the church exists for its mission. Our purpose as Marthomites is to lighten the load of others by imparting to them the joy of life with Christ. We support the less fortunate not only spiritually, but also financially and emotionally. We illuminate the path of others who are lost in the darkness through our actions as true Christians. When they are lighted with the love of Christ, it will reflect on others, and this chain of faith and service will continue.

All missionary efforts originate at the home front. Mission work is the embodiment of sacrifice. Mother Teresa once stated, "Sacrifice to be real must cost, must hurt, must empty us of ourselves." The ongoing sacrifice of self for the community creates an emotionally strong being who is rooted in Christ. One must relinquish their individual preferences for the overall benefit of the community. Missionaries sacrifice their pride in order to maintain harmony. Yet they must possess the fortitude to stand alone in their beliefs and not conform to the majority. Missionary work demands steadfast love for the church and its people that surpasses the love for family and close friends. Genuine missionaries venture outside their comfort zones into unknown areas. Through their zealous work, they proclaim the good news of the Gospel. Mission work requires the dreams and tireless faith of a visionary. Missionaries must envision the future and adhere to common goals when success seems unattainable to the majority. Yet their dreams must not be furthered by motives of self-exaltation.

My own church is a living testimony to the faithful efforts of unappointed missionaries. When I reflect on the original circumstances of my church, I am amazed by the progress we have made. We grew from less than twenty families renting a church in Detroit to having approximately two hundred active families in our own church. Our Sunday school took place in a soup kitchen; we worshipped behind barred windows. But from there emerged a strong core of Christians who believed in the future of our church. Every Sunday, I find new unacknowledged leaders who exemplify the tenets of missionary work. They are the women who tirelessly cook and clean for Easter Sundays and Christmas lunches. They never ask for recognition; they sacrifice for the good of the community. They are the committed Sunday school teachers who freely volunteer their time and effort to mold the minds of our future generation. They are the choir directors who believe in the potential of the group to glorify God despite all tribulations. All these unacknowledged persons are motivated by the sheer joy of serving others. To me, these self-appointed missionaries exemplify the true meaning of missionary vocation.

As our North American diocese has expanded over the past thirty years, our understanding of missionary work has also deepened. We have remembered the principles of the founding fathers of our church and applied them to the present. St. Thomas was the cornerstone of Christianity in India. Missionary zeal replaced the fears of 'Doubting Thomas' after Jesus' death. He relinquished his comfort zone and explored the unknown territory of India. Many Anglican missionaries, such as Thomas Norton and Benjamin Bailey, traveled to India in the 1800s. However, St. Thomas is distinguished as the first missionary to arrive in 52 A.D. The eventual result of his sacrifice was his death as a martyr. Without St. Thomas, we would've never become the disciples of Jesus. In honor of this great apostle, we should reciprocate our many blessings without

reservation. For as Jesus said when he commissioned the twelve apostles, "Freely you have received, freely give." (Matthew 10:8c)

Abraham Malpan, who reformed our church, was also focused on missionary work. He spread the Gospel throughout India instead of limiting the good news within Kerala. Another prominent bishop, Abraham Mar Thoma Metropolitan, exhorted every Marthomite to become a missionary. To promote this, he established the Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists' Association. His life goal was to mold the Marthomites into a pioneer evangelistic church among the Christian communities of India. Through the Reformation of our Church as well as Western contact, ashrams and evangelical centers flourished. Moreover, the Mar Thoma Church follows Jesus' principles of Christian service through its many mission fields, hospitals, and schools. In the parable of the Last Judgment, Jesus reminds the disciples, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine you did for me." (Matthew 25:40) Jesus further expounded, "Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me." (Matthew 25:45)

Presently, our diocese is broadening these principles we are expanding our missionary work outside India and across the world. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he stated, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19) We have gone past the traditional soup kitchens with novel projects such as the Mexican Mission, which permits the younger generation to assume active missionary roles in the Western Hemisphere. The future leaders of our Church have a new opportunity to share the blessings they have received. We, the youth, will be Jesus' "...witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8b) We have the incredible chance to touch the lives of the less fortunate through our personal faith and life stories.

As Marthomites, we are to shine in a world that is clouded by uncertainty and evil. For Jesus said, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16) We as Christians are to ameliorate the clashes of humans with divided cultures and beliefs. In this age of terrorism, the human race is clinging to God. Christianity is an oasis amidst the chaos of our world. Our mission is to lead others to experience the inner peace of Christ. Whether we are conveners of ground-breaking projects or volunteers for local church committees, we are all missionaries. A famous singer once said, "It's not how many people you know when you die, its how many people you've touched with your heart." Our goal in life should be to reach out to others instead of being self-centered-to be the helping hands for all regardless of race, age and social barriers. ■

# Keep Watch

Chris Chacko, Detroit MTC

Juniors—1st place winner—Mar Thoma Messenger Poetry Competition—2003

*It was a starry night, a clear night,  
Ten virgins held glowing lights,  
It was a starry night, a blissful night,  
Ten virgins danced with glistening lights.*

*The lamps were swinging,  
The virgins were giggling,  
The flames reflected their shiny eyes,  
Their faces glowed with joyous smiles.*

*The bridegroom was soon coming,  
The ten virgins eagerly waiting,  
The air filled with much expectation,  
Their hearts brimmed with great anticipation.*

*Of the ten merry virgins,  
Five were wise virgins,  
Merrily danced with lighted lamps,  
With jars of extra oil for their lamps.*

*The other five were foolish virgins,  
Indeed very unwise virgins,  
Blissfully danced with lighted lamps,  
With no extra provision for their lamps.*

*The bridegroom was running late,  
The virgins could no longer wait,  
They became drowsy and nodded to sleep,  
They fell into a very deep sleep.*

*At midnight a cry rang out,  
A booming voice shouted out,  
At last the bridegroom is here,  
Come and meet him out here.*

*Soon the virgins woke up with much exuberance,  
Trimming their lamps with great diligence,  
The foolish virgins discovered much to their dismay,  
Their lamps were quickly flickering away.*

*Pleaded the foolish virgins,  
To the five wise virgins,  
"Please, please give us some of your oil,  
Our lamps are running out of oil."*

*Their pleas quickly met with rejection,  
Their hearts were filled with dejection,  
Fearing sufficient supply of oil,  
They were told to buy their own oil.*

*So while the foolish virgins went out,  
The long awaited groom came out,  
Went the five wise virgins to the wedding feast,  
Ready with lighted lamps for the joyous feast.*

*The door was shut behind the bridal party,  
When the five foolish virgins returned with frenzy,  
They pounded the door for a second opportunity,  
With relit lamps they pleaded for mercy.*

*"Sir! Sir! Open the door for us," they cried,  
"I tell you the truth I do not know you," the master replied,  
"So keep watch," warns Jesus,  
"Because we do not know the hour or the day," reminds Jesus.*

*Therefore let us not give our second best to Jesus.  
Let us be ready for the second coming of Jesus,  
Let us be diligent and wary each and every moment,  
For we must meet our master in the most unexpected moment.*

## The Parable of the Sower

Robin John Karikottu, Immanuel MTC, Houston

Seniors—1st place winner—Mar Thoma Messenger Poetry Competition—2003

*The farmer sowed seeds hither and there,  
some fell on the path and became prey to the birds of the air.  
Others fell on rocky ground,  
where there was no soil to be found.*

*The sun's heat  
parched and beat, these plants that had no root.  
Still, others fell among thorns,  
where they were choked and left forlorn.*

*Yet, others fell on good ground,  
where the crop began to abound.  
The seeds took root, they had a stout hold,  
and produced a hundred fold.*

*Come and hearken  
this wisdom. If thine hath ears, then listen.  
The bids of the air*

*is Satan, who comes and leaves everything bare.  
The seeds on the path are those who receive the message, but  
do not understand,  
so the seed is snatched.*

*The seed that fell on rocky places is a man who receives,  
but is not rooted because he is persecuted, by the world's cares  
and deeds.*

*The seed that fell among thorns is one who receives the mes-  
sage, but is choked by life  
and its worries that fill him with strife.*

*The seed that fell on good soil is the man who receives the  
message, he hath wisdom,  
and has understood.*

*He yields a crop a hundred fold;  
many times that which was sown.*



# Birthright: A Challenge to the Mar Thoma Youth of America

Rev. Kemper Crabb

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

**M**any of you have heard me speak of the incalculable potential of the Mar Thoma Church for the healing and restoration of America and the Western world. I've made no secret of the fact that I believe your Church to be a gift of God from the East for this culture. The Mar Thoma Church embodies a unique and Biblical bridge between Evangelical and ancient Eastern Spirituality, Worship, and Theology.

It combines in itself the balance of the best of the Eastern and Western Traditions, and, because it preserves in itself the purity of Eastern purity, it offers to the West a corrective to the radical individuality, rationalism, and reductionism that are eating away the heart of both the Western Church and culture.

Its Biblical worship, enshrined in the thaksa of Mar James, its emphasis on balance between the individual and the corporate aspects of the Church, its evangelistic drive, and its insistence that Christianity should affect and change society at large are all emphases we in the West desperately need.

The faith and practice of the Mar Thoma Church is one of the purest expressions of what the Bible prescribes for the Body of Christ on the earth to that exists. I realize that many of you don't realize this to be true, but I submit to you that the reason you don't realize this is because you don't really know the theology, history and practice of your Church, having taken it for granted from birth, and, as much as possible, ignored it through much of your lives. It should be a burning shame to you that I, an American-born white outsider, should know the history, belief, and practice of your Church better than most of you do. You are in no legitimate position to judge the state of your Church if you don't really know it.

Most of you are unaware that the Mar Thoma Church was the foundation of one of the first Christian kingdoms on the earth, and represents in the Christian culture it effected in Kerala an example of how the Gospel can peacefully change the world. The reformers of your Church, especially Abraham Malpan and Matthew Mar Athanasius are personal heroes of mine, as St. Anselm and St. Francis should be yours, since the history of the Church, East and West, belongs to all of us. You should know your history, brothers and sisters.



Another reason you may not recognize the Biblical foundations of Mar Thomite faith and practice is that you may not know the Biblical theology that undergirds them. Those of you who have heard me speak of the Biblical theology that formed the Holy Qurbana have some inkling of what I mean. Yet there are a number of books available to you that amply explain the Biblical principles and commands that gave rise to your faith and practice. It's also true that your thirumenis, achens, and any number of learned lay uncles and aunties

would love to teach you these things if you would but ask.

The value of your Church to the West, as I say, is inestimable. But do you, the second generation of the immigrant Mar Thomites, see the value of this gift to us in America?

- Like most 2nd Generation immigrants born into a country with a different culture, you are as comfortable with the culture you've been born into and raised in.
- You tend to see the flaws of your native culture in light of differences in the culture-at-large, and it chafes at you.
- Like most 2nd Generation immigrants, you are perhaps embarrassed by aspects of your parent's culture, and it seems a very attractive proposition to walk away from those old-fangled fuddy-duddies to acceptance in that glittering, exciting dominant culture outside the walls of your tradition.
- What you don't see clearly enough are the weaknesses and defects in the culture you wish to walk into; the rootlessness and self-fixation on pleasure and position.
- The 3rd generation of immigrants, the children of your generation, will be all too familiar with the larger culture's defects, and will flow back toward the very culture you wish to escape, long experience and immersion in it having made them much wiser.
- I'm here to ask you to reconsider any walking away from the Mar Thoma Church and tradition. All of the things you see that you want in other churches are traditions that already exist in your Mar Thoma heritage: The Evangelical witness of the Gospel to those who don't know Christ, the emphasis on Christian social relief, the Ancient Structure and Worship and stability of the Early Apostolic Church.

- You may say to me, Kemper, it doesn't seem much that way to me. I have two things to say to that:

**1. Your evaluation of the value of your church or any church must be ruled by what Holy Scripture says, not how you feel about it. By Scriptural Standards, the Mar Thoma Church is very pure in much of its practice, one of the most balanced traditions as expression of the Faith that has ever existed in the longer Church's history.**

- To which you may say, "Doesn't seem like it to me."
- Which brings me to the 2nd point. These are not normal times for the Mar Thoma Church in America. For the decades since your parents immigrated, they have been completely engaged in establishing the church in America, with establishing their families, and raising you all, in the context of a culture that was not their own, a first-generation immigrant task.
- You, their children, who have grown up as the children of two cultures, your parent's and America's, who understand instinctively and are much more comfortable than your parents and aches, wonder why your Church seems so restrictive and insular in this culture.
- You all have never seen your Church engage American culture in a major way. No one has. The first real engagement your Church has had here is its Engagement with you all, the children of both their own and this culture.
- The Church here is only beginning to function in this culture, and nobody knows yet exactly what that will look like. Why?
- Because it is the task of American-born Marthomites to figure that out, since they are the ones who understand the best of both cultures and how to minister to both cultures with the treasures of Wisdom, Worship, Theology, and way-of-life brought from your homeland which offers such life and correction to your new culture.
- That job, figuring out how the Church is to function here, is largely yours with the advantage of your aches, thirumenis, aunts and uncles to help you be wise as you do so.
- A secret. I'm old. I'll probably die before you do. So will all the people you think are so irrelevant. Then you'll get your chance to blow it.
- You will be the aches and Church committee leaders and parents and aunts and uncles who will take up the

task of adapting your Church's desperately-needed tradition to their culture.

- If you don't walk away (if you do, your children will be the ones who realize your Church's progression in America, but it would be decades later).
- I know many of you chafe at what you think is the failure of your Church to meet your needs in your new culture. you think the other churches are doing such a better job.
- But, folks, the other churches have been here in their culture a long time (helped to from it), and 1). they're not doing such a hot job, in case you hadn't noticed, America is getting more, not less, pagan, and, 2). many from those Churches are looking for a church just like this, as I did. You will, too, if you all go out there for long.
- The Mar Thoma church, I believe, is destined to affect this culture radically, once it gets the chance; the chance I'm hoping you'll give it.
- But let me say two things. One, Mt. 20:26-28 "Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave-just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."
- First, it's not all about you and your needs. It's about god and His Purposes, and the needs of others.
- Second, if you are thinking you're powerless, and are all resentful, Jesus says the path to power is service. Do you serve your Church? in the humble things (do you even know the history of your Church?)?
- As Scripture says, "in your patience you possess your souls." Your Church will adapt. If you are patient, and will serve, you will help shape how it does so.
- (Gen. 25:27-34) The tale of the birthright of Esau, which he traded away for a bowl of stew, should speak volumes to you. Before you trade your Mar Thoma birthright away for a bowl of modern American stew, please be careful to understand both the importance and the excellence of your birthright, and the lack of substance in the modern American stew you think is so fulfilling. Open your eyes, my brothers and sisters, and, as Jesus commanded us to do in John 7:24, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge a righteous judgement." Take up your destiny for your own, your Church's, and America's sake. ■

*"A family altar can alter a family"*



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

Psalms 95:7

Tel: 214-634-8687  
Fax : 214-634-0559  
Toll free: (800) 381-TOUR

Cruise our web site at  
<http://www.skypasstravel.com>

2730 Stemmons Freeway  
Suite 310 West Tower  
Dallas, Texas 75207  
Branch Offices:  
Houston, Austin, Bombay

( Best Fares ) + ( Best Service ) + ( Great Values ) = ( Skypass )

**SKYPASS**  
**TRAVEL, INC.**

*"your Passage is our Priority"*

# KIDS CORNER

## My visit to Balika Bhavan

Catherine Philip, St. Peters Marthoma Church, NJ

On July 2003, I was truly privileged to visit Balika Bhavan in Elanthoor, Kerala, India. I participated in the evening prayer worship and also had dinner with the girls. Balika Bhavan is a home for girls who were brought and placed here by their parents due to financial and social circumstances. The Marthoma Church then takes responsibility of these girls and helps in educating them and meeting their daily needs.

However, this was my second visit to the Bhavan. I was ten years old, the last time I visited them. My older sister and brother collected funds from our friends, church members and relatives. The money was used to buy and donate items of daily use for the girls. During that visit, we spent a day with them—playing, singing etc. They even taken the time to put on a brief show for us, with many of the girls performing for us their various talents, singing or dancing etc. It was breathtaking, even at a young age, to see these girls with huge smiles across their faces and to know that just coming there to see them made their day just that much better and brighter. No words could express how I felt that day. All I knew was that this ambiguous feeling just came across me



that made me feel incredible. I had realized then that this was something that I would want to do when I was older. Now, five years later, with the help of the Lord Almighty, I have achieved what I had set out to do.

When my father first mentioned to me about the proposed trip to India in the summer, I jumped at the opportunity of helping these girls in the Bhavan. I knew that this was a “once in a lifetime” chance that God had presented to me. So, I started as soon as possible and on my first day, accumulated roughly \$400 with the help of many members of St. Peter’s Mar Thoma Church. By the time our family was ready to go to India, I had collected well over \$800. With these funds, we were able to provide many things for the girls and the school. Although I was not able to spend as much time with these wonderful kids as I wanted to, I was still able to see them for a few hours and socialize a bit, even though my Malayalam was not as fluent as other children. Going and seeing these girls once more was undoubtedly one of the highlights of my trip that made it worthwhile.

This event in my life really gave me a better perspective of what I wanted to accomplish in life. It has showed me how important it is to help others in their time of need. I always had a love to assist people with their problems, but I never had real experience with it. I have always taken all of God’s blessings for granted, but such experiences truly help us to understand the many blessings we enjoy daily. ■

### JULY WINNERS AND ANSWERS. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL WINNERS!!!

#### Bible Cross-Word Puzzle Winners (July 2003)

1. Ajin John, MI
2. Alex Vaidyan, NY
3. Anika Chacko, Detroit, MI
4. Athira John, NY
5. Accamma Jacob, FL
6. Chris Chacko, Detroit, MI
7. Justin Vaidyan, NY
8. Omana Rajee, NY
9. Philip Mathews, Canada

#### ANSWERS

##### ACROSS

1. FEAR
2. STUMP
3. CURSE
4. CORRUPTED
5. PRISONERS
6. PREJUDICE
7. SUN
8. SEVENTY
9. MOURN
10. MORTAL

##### DOWN

11. OPPRESSED
12. INTEGRITY
13. SUCCEED
14. REFRESHES
15. STAR
16. DISAPPEAR
17. HAMMER
18. WHEAT
19. IMMANUEL
20. PEACE
21. AR

#### Bible Word Search Winners (July 2003)

1. Ajin John, MI
2. Alex Vaidyan, NY
3. Anika Chacko, Detroit, MI
4. Accamma Jacob, FL
5. Chris Chacko, Detroit, MI
6. John Mathew, MI
7. Justin Vaidyan, NY
8. Omana Rajee, NY
9. Philip Mathews, Canada
10. Tindu Mathew, NY

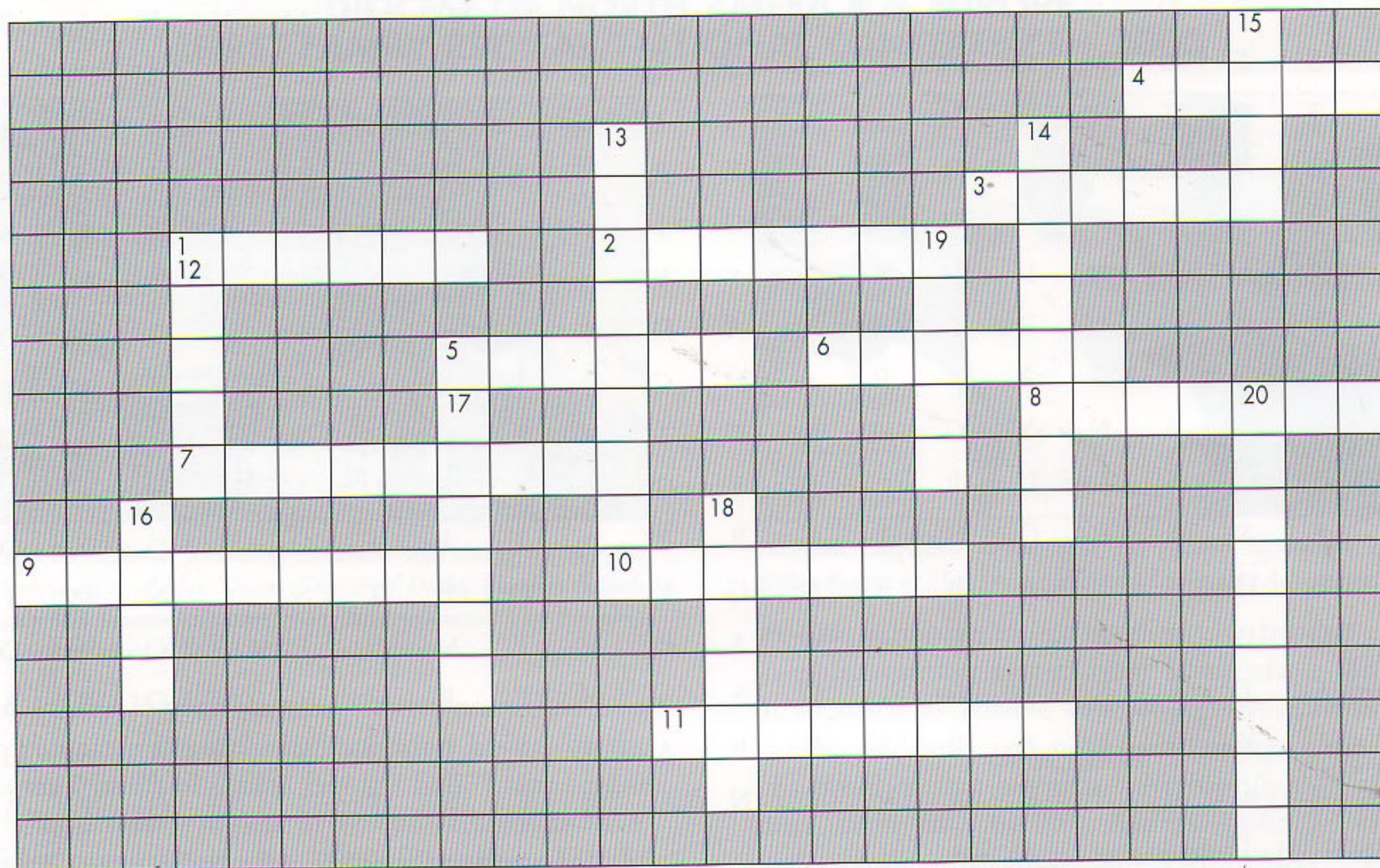
#### ANSWERS

1. BANQUET
2. PROPHETS
3. ISAIAH
4. BLOOD
5. OAK
6. MOUNTAIN
7. CEDARS
8. VINEYARD
9. GREATNESS
10. FLAMING
11. MESSENGER
12. AHAZ
13. REZIN, PEKAH
14. SHEAR JASHUB
15. SAMARIA
16. ASSYRIA
17. SHEBNA
18. PATIENT
19. JUSTICE, PLUMBLINE
20. HAPPINESS

# BIBLE CROSS WORD PUZZLE

AS IN THE TODAY'S ENGLISH VERSION  
(based on Isaiah Chapters 40-66)

Mrs. Suma Varghese (New York)



## Across

1. "..... I am coming to \_\_\_\_\_ the people of all the nations".
2. He took the place of many \_\_\_\_\_ and prayed that they might be forgiven.
3. The people of Israel went away captive because of their sins and they were sent away because of their \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The Lord's servant can strengthen the \_\_\_\_\_ because the sovereign Lord has taught him what to say.
5. "When you pass through deep \_\_\_\_\_, I will be with you."
6. He has \_\_\_\_\_ me and sent me to bring good news to the poor, to heal the broken hearted ..... and freedom to those in prison."
7. "I have tested you in the fire of \_\_\_\_\_, as silver is refined in a furnace. But I have found that you are worthless."
8. "The mountains and hills may \_\_\_\_\_ but my love for you will never end."
9. He \_\_\_\_\_ gave His life and shared the fate of evil men.
10. Those who trust in the Lord will find their strength \_\_\_\_\_.
11. The earth will wear out like old \_\_\_\_\_ and all its people will die like flies.

## Down

12. "All mankind are like \_\_\_\_\_. They last no longer than wild flowers."
13. How wonderful it is to see a \_\_\_\_\_ coming across the mountains, bringing good news, the news of peace!
14. The Lord, who rules and \_\_\_\_\_ Israel, the Lord Almighty has this to say: 'I am the first, the last and the only God.'
15. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my \_\_\_\_\_ and thoughts above yours.
16. "..... the word that I speak will not fail to do what I \_\_\_\_\_ for it ....."
17. "My temple will be called a house of \_\_\_\_\_ for the people of all nations."
18. "Do not be afraid when people taunt and \_\_\_\_\_ you."
19. The heavens will disappear like \_\_\_\_\_."
20. "If only you had listened to my commands! Then \_\_\_\_\_ would have flowed for you like a stream that never goes dry."

# BIBLE WORD SEARCH

AS IN THE TODAY'S ENGLISH VERSION  
(based on Isaiah Chapters 40-66)

Mrs. Suma Varghese (New York)

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

- 1, 2. The gods of luck and fate: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is the Lord's throne.
- 4, 5. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ will make Jerusalem strong.
6. The Israelites went to live in this place as foreigners: \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7, 8. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ were the two countries which took the Israelites by force.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ is a legendary sea monster, which represented the forces of chaos and evil, and was sometimes a symbol of Egypt.
10. "I, the \_\_\_\_\_, was there at the beginning, and I, ..... will be there till the end."
- 11, 12. God makes us to feel the force of his \_\_\_\_\_ and suffer the violence of \_\_\_\_\_ if we don't live as He wants us to live and obey the teachings that He gave us.
13. God preserved the people of this nation to be a 'light' to the nations. It is \_\_\_\_\_.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ will order that Jerusalem be rebuilt and that the foundations of the temple be laid.
- 15, 16. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ were the Babylonian gods.
17. "Your earliest ancestor sinned. Your leaders ..... So I brought \_\_\_\_\_ on Israel; I let my own people be insulated."
18. Isaiah warned king \_\_\_\_\_ that everything in his palace would be carried off to Babylonia.
19. The king of Babylonia who sent presents to the king Hezekiah when he was sick was: \_\_\_\_\_.
20. The sovereign Lord will take care of his people like a \_\_\_\_\_.

## ATTENTION ALL CONTESTANTS!!!

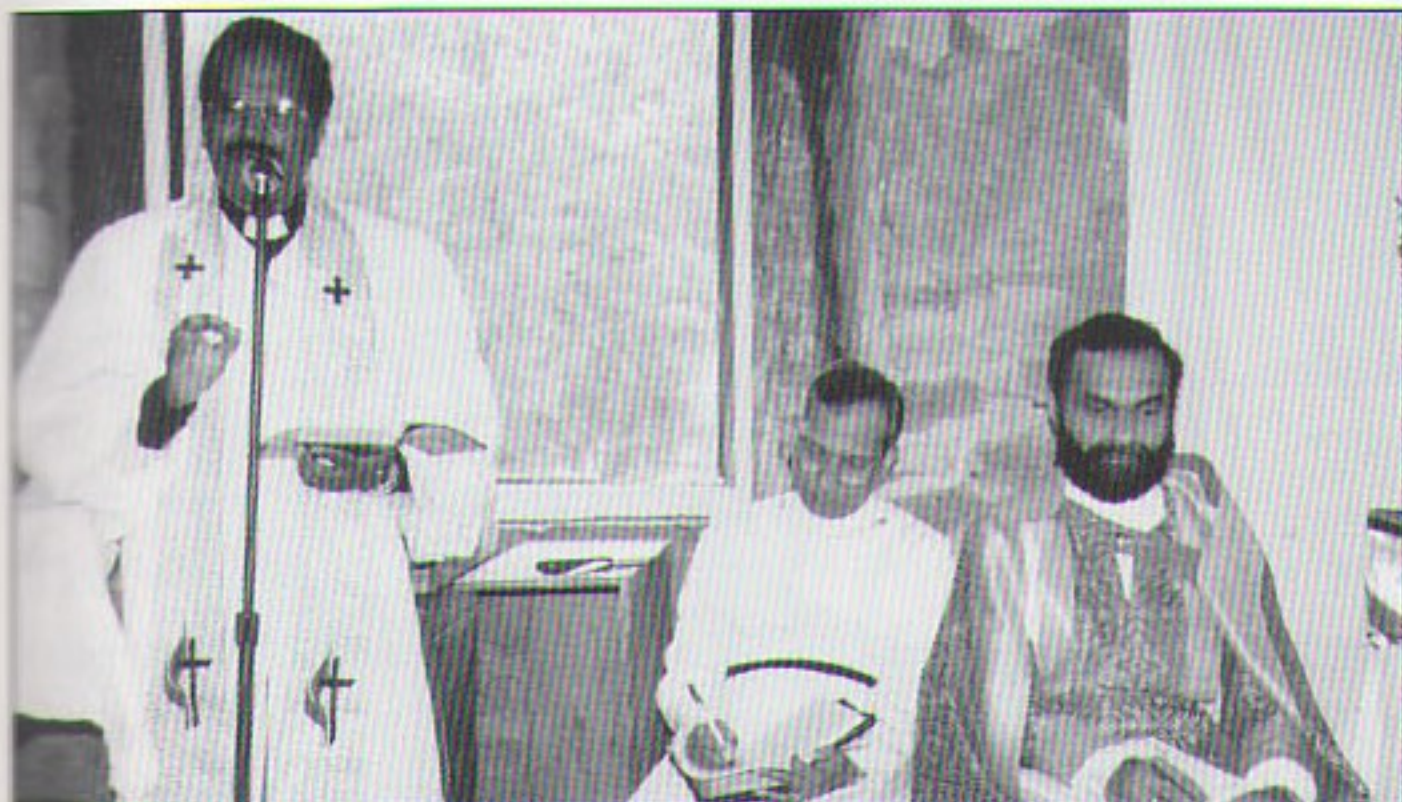
Please mail your answers to:

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

**DEADLINE FOR ANSWERS December 31, 2003**

# DIOCESAN/PARISH NEWS

## MAR THOMA VOLUNTARY EVANGELISTS' ASSOCIATION DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE FIRST FAMILY RETREAT/NATIONAL CONFERENCE - 2003



*Rev. Dr. Martin Alphonse presenting the theme and sitting left to right Rev. P. Mathew vicar of Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch and Diocesan Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists' Association Vice President Rev. John Mathai, vicar of Bethel MTC, Philadelphia.*



*National Conference Leader Rev. Dr. Martin Alphonse with Diocesan Office Bearers of Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists' Association.*

The first Family Retreat/National Conference of the Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists' Association hosted by the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch was held at YMCA Camp Grady Spruce at Possum Kingdom Lake, Texas from August 29 to 31, 2003. The theme for the conference was "Living Happily Ever After — Building Up Strong Christian Marriage & Family". Rev. Dr. Martin Alphonse (Maramon Convention Speaker) was the main leader, and presented the theme. Rev. John Mathai Diocesan Parish Mission Vice President led the Bible classes and singing session along with George Varghese (Jayan) of Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch. The Holy Communion service was also held at the camp led by Rev. John Mathai along with Rev. P. Mathew, and Rev. Martin Alphonse. Mr. Abraham Mathew was the Convener, and Mr. Thomas Andrews was the Joint Convener of the retreat. Diocesan Parish Mission Secretary Mr. Roy C. Thomas and Western Zonal Parish Mission Secretary Mr. T. A. Mathew along with a group of dedicated volunteers from the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch helped make the retreat a success. A souvenir edited and published by Mr. Roy C. Thomas was released at the inaugural session.

In this day and age, a consistent dose of biblical truth mixed with God-given

wisdom is missing in our families. Our families need fresh insights from our ever-relevant Lord, whose Word is still unsurpassed as reliable counsel for any generation. Our families and marriages need to be strong in the Lord and His Word so that we may "Live happily ever after." The three main talks by Rev. Martin Alphonse were about understanding Marriage and Family, Revitalization of Relationship, and Decision in Favor of The Real God. Marriage and family is instituted by God and the law to govern that institution is divine love. Marriage is a shared gift, a sanctifying process and a life-long celebration. The sole remedy for the inevitable conflicts within families is forgiveness. There are Christian and family values that are to be handed over to generations.

There was also a marriage enrichment workshop to improve communication and relationship and also an intercessory prayer session to emphasize the need for prayer in our individual and family life. Nearly 150 members attended the retreat from various parishes of the diocese.

**Rev. P. Mathew, Vice President  
Western Zonal Parish Mission**



*Participants with leaders*

## OUR NEW ACHEN

### REV. JOHNSON VARUGHESE

Vicar: MTC of St. Andrews & Ebenezer, New York

Native Place: Elavumthitta

Home Parish: Kuzhikala MTC

Wife: Elsy; daughter: Edwina (7 years old, 2nd grade);  
son: Jesse (5 years old, Kindergarten)

Education: B.A. St. Thomas College, Kozhencherry; M.A.  
University of Kerala; B.D. MT Theological Seminary,  
Kottayam

Ordained in June 1994 and served as vicar of Malad Bethel  
and Colaba Salem, Mumbai; and Konny St. Thomas and  
Vakayar Christos.

Served as the Bishops' Secretary, Trivandrum-Quilon  
Diocese.



## ST. ANDREW'S MAR THOMA CHURCH, YONKERS, NEW YORK

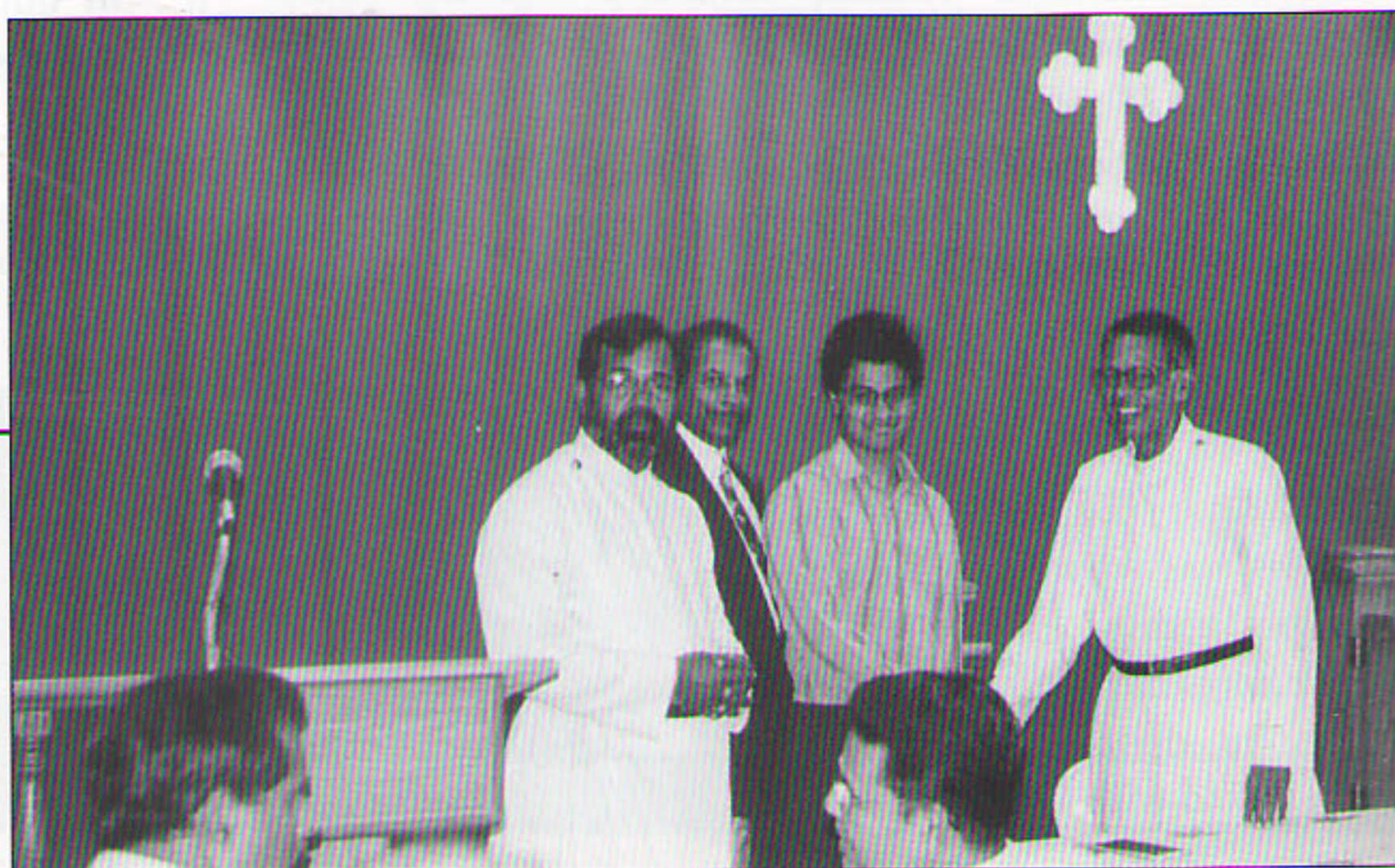


The first communicants with the  
Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim  
Mar Coorilos and Vicar Rev. Johnson  
Varughese after the ceremony.

## THE CANADIAN MAR THOMA CHURCH, TORONTO - 2003 MERIT AWARD

Pravin Mathew Thomas receiving the  
award from Rev. A. P. Jacob.

Others, Left to Right: Rev. T. S. Thomas  
(Vicar), and Varughese Olipattu (Trustee)





## TRINITY MAR THOMA CHURCH, HOUSTON, TEXAS



*The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa and Rev. T. V. George (vicar) with the First Communicants.*

The VBS was held during July 17 ñ 19, 2003. About 150 students from our parish and sister parishes attended the VBS. Vicar Rev. T. S. George and Students chaplain Rev. John George were the main leaders. For this years VBS Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa visited our parish in July. Thirumeni attended the closing ceremony of our VBS. Holy communion was celebrated on Sunday. Eleven of our youths received First Communion from Thirumeni that day.

Our 29th Parish day was celebrated on July 20th. 2003. Rev T. V. George did the welcome speech and Secretary Mr. T. A. Mathew presented the report. Rev. T. I. Joseph also was present and gave a felicitation during the public meeting. Meeting came to a closing with the vote of thanks by accountant Mr. Abraham George. Lunch was served for all those who were present.

53 members from our parish attended the Holy Communion service held on the Island of Puntilla Norte in Mexico on Sunday August 24th, 2003. Trinity Mar Thoma Church was able to built 5 houses and a boat ramp for the Island.

Our Annual church picnic was held on Saturday Sept 27th 2003. About 500 members attended the picnic. Sports and Games were organized for all age groups and barbecue lunch was served.

Our Sevika Sanghom held a one day retreat on Saturday, October 5, 2003. Mrs. Lizy Alexander (wife of Rev Alexander Thomas) was the main speaker.

Edavaka Mission conducted the annual convention from October 30th through November 2nd. Well known speaker Mr. Samuel Ganeshan was the main speaker for this blessed event.

**T. A. Mathew, Secretary**

## THE 12TH ANNUAL MID-WEST REGIONAL CHOIR FESTIVAL-2003



*Malayalam choirs of Chicago and Detroit Mar Thoma Churches.*

The 12th Annual Mid-West Regional **ChoirFest-2003** was held at the Detroit Mar Thoma Church on Saturday, July 26, 2003. Each year, different parishes in the region host the choir festival. These choir festivals are an occasion of great joy and celebration for the choir members to sing for the glory of God without the tension of competition. When the Diocesan Council met on January 26, 1991, it was decided to have Choir Fesetival in the different parts of the Diocese and further decided to eliminate competition from the festival. The Choir festival program is comprised of song presentations by the Malayalam and English choirs of participating parishes in the region. Each choir is given the chance to perform three songs each in

Malayalam and English accompanied by their own instruments. This year's **ChoirFest** was a memorable experience of inspiring devotional songs, music, gospel message and worship. Each choir group was given plaques and choir members were presented with a certificate of appreciation. With an audience of about seven hundred people, it was an occasion to renew friendships and make new friends and to have fellowship dinner together. The Very Rev. A. C. Kurian, Vicar General was the chief guest and delivered the message.

**Shaji Eapen, Malayalam Choir Leader,  
Detroit Mar Thoma Church**



*English and Malayalam Choirs of the Detroit Mar Thoma Church.*



1950 – 2003

**PHILIP DANIEL** (Rajumon) was born on October 20, 1950 and entered eternal rest on August 19, 2003. He was the youngest child and only son of the late Annamma and K. G. Daniel of Ovilthazhaemuriyil House, Angadical North, Pathanamthitta, Kerala, India. He was married to Rachel P. Daniel (Santhamma) on June 25, 1973 and then

immigrated to the United States in 1976. He earned his BS in Microbiology from the University of Texas at Arlington and was employed at Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas as a Medical Technologist since 1980. He served as an Executive Committee Member of the Kerala Association of Dallas, as the Carrollton North Prayer Group Leader, as the Secretary of the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch, as the Secretary of the Kerala Ecumenical Christian Fellowship of Dallas, and as a judge for the Dallas Regional Science Fair. He is survived by his wife Rachel P. Daniel (Santhamma), and children Neil P. Daniel (Tony), Christopher P. Daniel, Cindy P. Daniel, and daughter-in-law, Rekha J. Daniel; sisters Leelamma Varghese (Chittar, Kerala), Mariamma Qureshi (Dallas), Sosamma Eapen (Carrollton), and Ponnamma Samuel (Carrollton). The memorial service and funeral service was held at the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch, Dallas, and he was laid to rest at Hilltop Memorial Park in Carrollton, Texas on August 23, 2003.

**ANNAMMA THOMAS** was born on January 3, 1921 and entered into eternal life on October 14, 2003. She was born to the late Mr. Mathai Puthampurathu and the late Mrs. Aleyamma Mathai of Chengannur and got married to the late Mr. Karote Thomas of Keezhuvaipur. She came to the United States in 1980 to live with her older daughter Leela and help care for her two sons. In 1988, she moved to Staten Island to live with her younger daughter Lilly and her family.



1921 – 2003

She was a member of the Staten Island Mar Thoma Church for the past few years. Wherever she lived, Annamma was loved and respected for her care and compassion.

She is survived by her two daughters Leela and Lilly, son-in-laws Soman and Kunjumon, and 4 grandchildren.

Funeral service was held at the The Mar Thoma Church Staten Island by Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, Diocesan Secretary Rev. Dr. John Joseph, Rev. C. A. Varghese and many other clergies from the tri-state area. She was laid to rest at Fairview Cemetery in Staten Island, New York on October 16, 2003. Relatives from all over the USA and Canada came to attend the wake and funeral.

**ALEYAMMA SAMUEL** (M. J. Aleyamma teacher) whose soul went to rest in the Lord on August 9, 2003, was born on March 15, 1934 to the late Mr. Yohannan Joseph and the late Mrs. Mariamma Joseph, Mattackal house, Uthimoodu. She was married to Mr. T. G. Samuel, Thachanalil house, Poozhikkunnu, Ranny on May 25, 1959.

She held various degree; 'Shastri' (Sanskrit), 'Vidwan' (Hindi), 'Sahithya Visharad' (Malayalam), Bachelor of Arts (English) and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed). She retired after 27 years of service as a Hindi teacher in S. C. High School, Chellackadu, Ranny. She also was a gifted speaker, writer, a strict disciplinarian and alover of languages.



1934 – 2003

The Samuel family immigrated to the United States in January 1980 to join her youngest brother Mr. Joseph Mattackal. She was an active member of St. John's MTC in Queens Village. She was a dedicated Sunday School teacher.

She is survived by her husband Samuel, son Munna, daughter-in-law Beena and grandchildren Elizabeth and Justin, three brothers and two sisters.

She had a large crowd of visitors like Bishops from Mar Thoma Church, Malankara Catholic Church, N.Y., Achens of various churches of different denominations, students relatives and friends from all over America, at home, hospital, funeral home, church and funeral ground.

New York City Mayor also sent his honour guard and gave her a very respectful guard of honor at the St. John's Mar Thoma Church funeral service.

Funeral service was held on Monday, August 18, 2003 at the St. John's Mar Thoma Church, Queens Village, New York, and she was laid to rest at Nassau Knolls Cemetery in Port Washington Blvd., Port Washington, New York.

May the Lord console the bereaved families in their hour of grief.

## 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 MTC—Tessy Jose

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



Back row: Mary Bincy Abraham, Shiny Kuruvilla, Julie Abraham, Tessey Jose, Sara Mathew, Nirmala Abraham

Front row: Prakash Thomas, O. C. Abraham, Rev. John Evangelisto, Varughese Abraham, Joel James, Sam Tharakan

## SOUTHWEST REGION SUNDAY SCHOOL COMPETITIONS



The 2003 Southwest regional Sunday school competitions were held at the Immanuel Mar Thoma Church, Houston on October 11, 2003. This was an occasion for students from the Dallas Farmers Branch, Dallas St. Paul's, Dallas Grand Prairie, Oklahoma Mar Thoma Church, Houston Trinity, and Houston Immanuel Mar Thoma Church Sunday Schools to come together and showcase their God-given talents and glorify God's name.

Nearly all the Achenas from the region — Rev. T. I. Joseph, Rev. T. V. George, Rev. P. Mathew, Rev. Saju Zachariah, Rev. John George, Rev. Saju Joseph, and Rev. Saji Cherian of the St. Thomas C.S.I. Church attended the conference and provided inspiring leadership. Southwest region secretary Mr. Cherian Alexander, coordinator Mr. V. T. Abraham, and treasurer Mr. Thomas Philip were present to help conduct the competitions.

The day's activities started with singing and welcoming of the participants by the Immanuel Sunday school superintendent Mr. Sunil John. This was followed by a fitting keynote address by Rev. George Jose, the vicar of the Immanuel parish and president of the regional Sunday school. Competitions were then conducted in singing, elocution, and Bible quiz. Individual and collective performances exhibited

superb quality and received warm applause from the audience for their artistic excellence. Winners of the various competitions were honored for their accomplishments with trophies during the recognition session. Houston Immanuel Mar Thoma Church received the rolling trophy for the most overall points scored while Trinity Mar Thoma Church came in second. Mr. Cherian Alexander, in his vote of thanks, appreciated the Immanuel Mar Thoma Sunday school for their gracious hospitality.

All in all, the conference went very well and provided a great mix of spiritual and physical nourishment for all who attended. More than the programs and activities, the conference offered an avenue for delegates to renew, establish, and exchange bonds of love and friendship.

P. M. Jacob, Convener

## "FOLLOW ME" XXIV NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE



The XXIV National Youth Conference was held on August 7-10, 2003 at Texas Women's University in Denton, Texas, and hosted by the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch. The theme of the conference was **"Follow Me,"** based on Christ's command in Matthew 4:19, *"Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men."*

The conference was led by Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, Rev. P. Mathew (Vicar), Rev. Raju P. Zachariah, Rev. Saji Joseph, Rev. John George, Rev. Issac Johnson, Rev. Alexander Thomas, and Rev. Martin Alphonse.

Our diocesan bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, inaugurated the conference with a powerful message, challenging the delegates to search within themselves and remove any obstacles hindering their ability to faithfully answer the call of Christ.

The main speaker, Rev. Martin Alphonse, delivered his message in three parts: Part I - The Foundation of Our Faith, Part II - Living and Applying My Faith in Christ, Part III - Being a Witness for Christ.

To supplement the main talks, a series of seminars were offered. The seminars offered were: 'Fishermen's Delight - Worship in the Mar Thoma Church', 'License to Fish - Elements of the Faith,' 'Navigating the Seas - Bible

Study and Life Application,' and 'Cast Your Nets - Mission of the Christian.' These seminars were led by Rev. P. Mathew and Liju Varghese, Rev. Martin Alphonse, Rev. John George, and Rev. Alexander Thomas respectively. Each morning began with a worship service and devotional. Morning devotionals were led by Rev. Saji Joseph and Rev. Raju P. Zachariah.

In addition to the talks and seminars, a panel discussion on inter-faith relations, our role in the church, and absolute truth was also held. The panelists were Rev. Martin Alphonse, Rev. Issac Johnson, Anil Cherian (Chicago), and Lena Joseph (Houston). To create a more intimate setting, breakout sessions were held, where delegates were separated by gender and age to discuss issues they face and how they can better deal with them while on their spiritual journey. Leaders for the breakout sessions were Tina Ninan (Dallas), Lena Joseph (Houston), Tobby Koshy (NY), and Charles Abraham (NY).



On Friday evening, a Texas-style BBQ dinner, followed by a lively entertainment program, "Friday Night Live" (FNL), under the stewardship of the Farmers Branch Youth Fellowship. Sports, leisure time, and morning & evening prayer/meditation provided the delegates with a well-rounded retreat experience.

The conference concluded on Sunday morning with Holy Qurbana, led by Coorilos Thirumeni, the closing program, and the final fellowship meal. We sincerely thank all of our leaders, whose zeal, and tireless efforts were contagious. Also, a special thanks to the Farmers Branch Volunteer Team, who helped with this year's conference.

On behalf of the XXIV National Youth Conference Committee, we wish the St. Peter's MTC, New Jersey all of God's blessings as they host the XXV National Youth Conference.

**Wesley Mathews**



## WESTERN REGIONAL & ZONAL ONE-DAY SEVIKA SANGHOM RETREAT

For the very first time, on September 6th, 2003, the Mar Thoma Church of Los Angeles hosted a joint one-day Sevika Sanghom retreat under the auspices of both the Western Region and Zone. As such, members of the Western Zone as well as Western Region attended the retreat. They included members from Oklahoma, Dallas, Houston, Chicago, as well as Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle. Rev. George K. John presided over the retreat. The theme for the occasion was **"The Stages of Christian Family Life."**

The day began with songs and scripture readings. The San Francisco and Los Angeles choirs lead the congregation in song, while Mrs. Molly Mathew and Mrs. Mariamma K.

atomized individuals who merely happen to be in a group. Mrs. Rachel Mathew delivered the annual report for the year 2002 after Rev. John's message.

The main speakers of the retreat were Mrs. Sheba Sunni, Kochamma of the Mar Thoma Church Los Angeles, and Rev. Dr. C. A. Abraham, vicar of the Grand Prairie Church in Dallas, TX.

Mrs. Sheba Sunni based her talk on the gospel of Mathew 19:3-6 and Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:18. She made the following points in her talk. First, family life is God's plan. It is an institution wrought by God. Second, it is a gift of God that ought to be treasured. And lastly, families should be united in God's love. Kochama also pointed out that an obstacle to a well-formed family life is selfishness. If unchecked, it will asunder families.

In his talk on the family, Rev. Dr. C. A. Abraham stated that family life is a glimpse of heaven on earth. He maintained that it should be a place of unconditional and sacrificial love. He claimed that family life has four stages. First, the coupling stage—the stage where husband and wife no longer are individuals, but are now a couple. Second, there is the parenting stage, where husband and wife take on the role of parent and guardian. Third, there is

the recoupling stage where husband and wife reunite as couples when the children are grown. And lastly, there is the single stage where one member of the couple passes away.

After the messages, Rev. S. George, Vicar of the Chicago Mar Thoma Church, offered an intercessory prayer and Mrs. Betsy Abraham, Kochama of the Grand Prairie Church gave a craft lesson. Following a short discussion, Mrs. Ponnamma Ninan, Vice President of the Western Region, delivered the vote of thanks.

**Rachel Mathew**

**Western Regional & Zonal Sevika Sanghom Secretary**



*Participants with Achens.*

Oomen read their respective scripture readings. Rev. Sunni Mathew, vicar of the Mar Thoma Church of Los Angeles, delivered the opening prayer and Mrs. Ammini Samuel delivered the welcome speech. Rev. Sunni Mathew's children, Sumitha and Sujit, performed for the congregation by reciting a poem.

Rev. George K. John, vicar of the San Francisco Church and President of the Western Region, delivered a short introductory message to start the retreat. Using Psalms 128 as his primary text, he spoke on the high value of family life and the need for families to live as a family unit and not merely as

## DIOCESAN SEVIKA SANGHOM COMMITTEE MEMBERS



From Left to right:

*Mrs. Dr. Annamma Sadhu, Trustee*

*Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa, President*

*Rev. Dr. C. A. Abraham, Vice President*

*Mrs. Rachel Mathew, Secretary*

*Mrs. Anamma Joseph, Assembly Member*

## VALEDICTORIANS - 2003

Extracts from Valedictory address—Agnetha Elizabeth Jacob and Christopher Samuel

**AGNETHA ELIZABETH JACOB:** To the Class of 2003, congratulations. I want to read you what I think is a very relevant verse from the Bible. In Corinthians 13:11, Paul advises, "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things." Four years ago, we came into this high school as children and we leave today as adults. We are no longer the future. We are a very real and influential part of today. We are no longer the next generation. We are this generation, as Nancy Davis once said. As such, it is imperative that we leave behind these thoughtless days of adolescent ways; that we shed our cloaks of apathy and start caring. We must recognize that our time is here and now.

I sincerely hope that we act as responsible adults and take our role as citizens of this world seriously. In the words of Mohandas K. Gandhi, "We must be the change we wish to see in this world." Most of us have the power to vote and we should all exercise that power in the immediate future. Voting is not a privilege...it is a responsibility. Your vote may not seem to matter in national affairs but in our village, it means everything. Vote and you decide what the school budget will be used for and the needs that it will address. Vote and you can decide who our board members are. Vote and you can decide who our village representatives are, who are local congressional people are. Voting may not be radical, it may not be dramatic, but it is nevertheless the means by which we can implement the "changes we wish to see in this world." So exercise that right and elect leaders who



will seek the truth and speak the truth always.

Though we are graduating, as students who owe their educations to this high school, we are somehow obligated to return and make changes. What is considered to be Port Chester's greatest strength? Just look around you. It's obvious—diversity is considered our greatest strength. But what is diversity? Diversity is a function of demographics, of where we live. As a community we must use our skills to make sure that in the future, our diversity translates into equal opportunity for all.

Diversity means change for a lot of people. Let us not be afraid of change because change is a good thing. Everyone talks about national politics, about how we would run the country and about how we would solve the perpetual warfare in the Middle East. Everyone talks about changing the world, but nobody thinks of changing our world, the village of Port Chester. I'm here to tell you that we may not be able to change the world, but we can change our community. This year, many students took an active role in changing this community. Some or rather one girl started the GSA, some started the recycling project, and many began petitions to redress what they felt was wrong with the community. It is time for changes so let us be active in our community. As Zach de la Rocha said about change, "It has to start some place. It has to start sometime. What better place than here, what better time than now?"

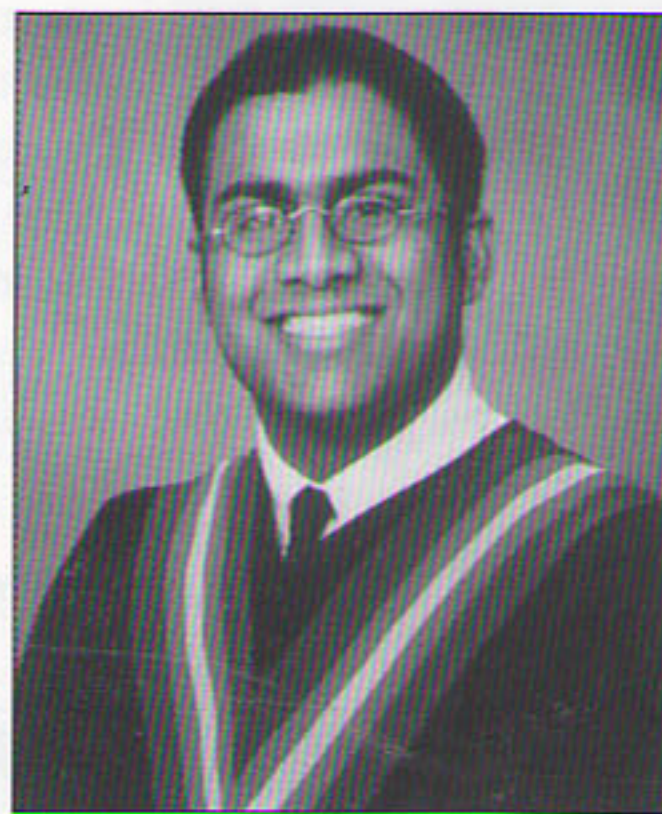
Agnetha Elizabeth Jacob is the daughter of Abraham Jacob & Annakutty Jacob of Ebenezer Mar Thoma Church, New York.

**CHRISTOPHER SAMUEL:** We have finally reached the last step on the journey called High School and I would like to officially welcome you all to Commencement 2002. Good evening respected administrative staff and teachers, distinguished guests, parents, friends and most importantly the graduates of 2001/2002.

When we look back on the years there's no doubt that we have truly conquered high school and we have many people to thank for that including our parents, teachers and fellow peers. Thank you to the parents and siblings who stuck by us through thick and thin and were always there to support us (especially financially). To the teachers who spent countless hours out of class encouraging us and pushing us to meet our true potentials and to the friends who were always there to talk, laugh and cry with.

A Chinese proverb says that if you want to plan for next year, grow rice, if you want to plan for 20 years grow trees, if you want to plan for the future, grow people. As corny as it may sound we are the future and I believe we are the cream of the crop. We are the future doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers, firefighters, politicians, policeman, programmers, accountants, mechanics, journalists and... professors, chefs, plumbers... and so on. We will soon rise to the top and it will be our duty to lead this country into the future.

My advice to the grads is to continue to do as we have in high school and that is to grow. Get involved in as much as you can and



work hard at whatever you do. Most importantly, don't be afraid. As Franklin D. Roosevelt once said "The only thing to fear is fear itself". Reach out on a limb and experience life to the fullest. Don't be afraid of falling off the rollercoaster of life. Just learn from every experience and settle for nothing less than the best that you can be.

On a personal note, I would like to thank all those who made a difference in my high school career. Thanks to my Mom and Dad for being my support system throughout my life. To my sister for the love, encouragement and help all the way through. Thanks to the teachers like Mr. Qureshi who took the time out of their busy schedule to support, encourage, and mentor me. To my friends, you know who you are, thank you for all the laughs and the tears, you truly did make high school worth it. Finally, to the Lord God Almighty, who has carried me and blessed throughout the entire journey.

So finally, grow as people (not in terms of the Frosh 15, 15 pounds that is), but grow your minds and after that the sky is the limit. Finally, let's follow the tradition where we all fling our caps into the air to signify the official end of high school as we know it. So here we go... 3, 2, 1 Congratulations Graduating Class of 2001-2002.

Christopher Samuel is the son of Jacob Samuel & Susan Samuel of The Canadian Mar Thoma Church, Toronto, Canada.

## FIFTH NATIONAL YUVAJANA SAKHYAM CONFERENCE – LOS ANGELES, CA



*Participants of the Fifth National Yuvajana Sakhyam Conference in Los Angeles.*

The Fifth National Conference of the Yuvajana Sakhyam of the Diocese of North America & Europe was held from May 23rd to May 25th 2003 hosted by the Los Angeles Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam at the Cottontile Conference Center. The theme of the conference was "Formation of Faith in the context of Mixed Cultures". The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa inaugurated

the conference. Rev. Samuel M. Samuel, Secretary Mr. Gigi Tom, and Mr. Jose Varghese gave felicitations. Rev. Sunni E. Mathew gave the welcome speech and Ms. Annie Varghese gave the vote of thanks. Mr. Koshy Philip was the Master of Ceremony. Rev. Dr. K. A. Abraham was the keynote speaker for the three-day conference. Rev. S. George led the Bible Study. Dr. Thomas Mathew was the moderator for a symposium led by Rev. K. P. Sabu, Mr. Iype C. Varghese, Mr. John Thomas, and Ms. Anni Varghese. A campfire, Talent Night, and arts festival added mirth to the Conference. A committee comprising of Rev. Sunni E. Mathew (President), Mr. Easow Oommen (Vice President), Mr. Koshy Philip (General Convenor), Mr. Babu George Mathew, Ms Annie Varghese (Joint Convenors), Mr. Gigi Abraham (Treasurer) gave leadership to the Conference.

## YUVAJANA SAKHYAM CELEBRATES 70TH ANNIVERSARY



*From Left to Right: Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, Rev. C. A. Varghese, Rev. Dr. John Joseph, Rev. Isaac P. Johnson, Rev. Johnson Varghese and Rev. K. P. Sabu.*

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the 70th Anniversary Celebrations of the Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam and the 70-day long prayer yajna on October 19, 2003, New York Long Island MTC, the diocesan bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos exhorted the youth to utilize the wealth of blessings and capabilities that the Lord has given them, in the most creative way. Rev. K.P. Sabu, Vice President, Yuvajana Sakhyam Eastern Zone, presided over the function.

The function started with a song by the LI MTC Yuvajana Sakhyam, lesson reading by Miss Mariamma Ninan and prayer by Rev. C.A. Varghese. The diocesan secretary Rev. Dr. John Joseph, Rev. Thomas Philip, Rev. Isaac P. Johnson, Mr. Gigi Tom gave felicitation speeches. Rev. Johnson



*Yuvajana Sakhyam 70th Anniversary Choir.*

Varghese and Rev. Roy Abraham graced the occasion by their presence. Mr. Shaji Peter and Ms. Susan Varghese spread the joy of the occasion with their melodious songs. As part of the celebrations, it was decided to work in conjunction with the Chengannur Trinity Yuvajanasakhyam to send Christmas gifts and the message of Christmas to 150 families in the Pandavanpaara Harijan Colony which falls under the diocese of Chengannur-Thumbamon.

The special choir comprising of Yuvajana Sakhyam members of parishes falling under the Eastern Zone, led by Rev. Johnson Varghese and Mr. Varghese Chacko sang songs. Mr. Jacob T. Chacko gave the welcome speech and Mr. Shaji Mathai gave the vote of thanks. The ceremony came to a close with a prayer by Mr. John Skariah and blessing by Thirumeni.

## CLOSING FUNCTION OF THE MEXICO MISSION SUMMER PROGRAM

"To God Be the Glory for the Great Things He Hath Done".

It was indeed a great achievement for the Native American and Mexico Mission Sub Committee of the Mission Board and the Diocese to conduct a mission program for 3 months on the island of Puntilla Norte, off the coast of Mexico. The summer program concluded with the closing function conducted on Sunday, August 24th 2003.



*Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos conducting the Holy Communion Service.*

### Participants for the Closing Function

Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, the Diocesan Bishop reached Matamoros on Friday. Rev. S. George, Rev. George Jose, Rev. Samuel M. Samuel and Rev. C. A. Varghese were the Vicars who attended the function. Approximately 120 members from different parishes attended the closing program. 24 members from Chicago MTC with 2 members from Canadian MTC were the last team of mission volunteers. Other participants were Dr. P. John Lincoln, Diocesan Treasurer, and Council members, Mr. P. M. Jacob, Mrs. Leelamma Isaac, Mr. Jose Varghese, Mr. Philip Thamban, and Mr. Thomas Varghese. Mrs. Mariamma Thomas and Dr. Jessie sub committee members, members from Staten Island MTC, St. John's MTC, UK, 37 members each from Immanuel MTC and Trinity MTC, members from Epiphany MTC, members from Brownsville and Canada were also present. Mr. Babu Varkey and Omana helped in taking the members across the border. Jonathan Kurien worked on the island for 2



*Members kneeling on the sands of Puntilla Norte to receive Holy Communion.*

months to receive the different teams. Mr. P. T. Abraham from Epiphany MTC was present to receive the last team. Dr. Anisha Abraham and other members of the Medical Mission team led by Mrs. Mariamma Thomas stayed back to attend the closing function.

Guests from Mexico included Senor Frontiano from the Security Department and his wife; leader of the 6 islands Bisque Marie, leader of the island of Puntilla Norte, Jeannie. Other guests included the Program Coordinators for the Border Outreach Program from the United Methodist Mission, people on the island as well as from neighboring islands.

### Working behind the scene

Rev. Dr. John Joseph, the Diocesan Secretary was unable to attend the closing function in person but his constant prayers gave strength for the entire program. He was one of the first persons to visit the island. Mrs. Nirmala Abraham the Convener, Mr. George Chacko, Dr. Thomas Kurien and Rev. C. A. Varghese were part of the exploration committee. Mr. Sam George was present for the inaugural function and was responsible for the promotional material and the Manual. Dr. George Abraham along with Dr. Jessie made sure that first aid was available to all the teams and also designed the Health Survey forms. Mr. Anil Joseph



*The Presidential address.*

kept a close watch on the budget and the accounts. Ms. Lesley Thomas helped with the Spanish translations. Ms. Merry George coordinated between the sub committee and the Mission Board. Mr. Saji Varghese sent his valuable suggestions by e-mail. Rev. Sunny Mathew and Rev. Philip Mathew visited the islands with their teams. Rev. T. V. George, President of the working committee was a constant source of help in Houston.

Mr. George Kurien (Baby) and his family contributed significantly to this Mission program by their sacrificial service to the team members as also to the people of the Island.

### Closing Function, August 24th 2003

At the coast boats were ready for the 15-minute boat ride to the island of Puntilla Norte in time for the service.





*Worship song by the children of the island.*

Holy Communion Service. The Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, conducted the first Holy Communion Service on the island of Puntilla Norte at 9 AM. An altar was specially made and a tent and chairs were arranged for the service. Rev. George Jose gave the message. The choir was led by the youth from Immanuel MTC. The songs and Nicene Creed were translated in Spanish, courtesy of Mr. P. M. Jacob who is also Convener of the working Committee. It was a poignant moment to witness our members kneeling on the sands of the island to receive the Holy Communion from Thirumeni. We need to praise and thank God for enabling us to witness His Glory in a land far away from our homeland.

**Meeting:** A meeting was conducted soon after the service. Rev. C. A. Varghese welcomed the gathering. Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos gave the Presidential address. The keys of the houses were then handed over by Thirumeni to the leader of the island who in turn called each family and gave the keys. Dr. P. John Lincoln, Mr. P. M. Jacob and the Director of the Security Department gave felicitations. In between the messages the choir sang songs and the children of the island did a body worship. A token of gratitude (Study Bible) was presented to Mr. George Kurien (Babychen) for his dedicated and committed service. He took the complete responsibility in receiving the different team and arranging the building of the houses. The Mission Coordinator, Mrs. Leila Thomas, proposed vote of thanks.

**Inauguration of the Mar Chrysostom Jubilee Technical Institute:** Soon after the meeting Thirumeni inaugurated the technical institute in a house designated for the purpose. Epiphany MTC donated 4 sewing machines and a person was identified to teach tailoring to the women of the island.



*The Technical Institute.*

**Lunch:** Lunch was prepared on the island for all the dignitaries, guests and members and the people of the island and the neighboring islands. This was possible due to the effort of Babychen's wife Susan and her team of dedicated members like Gita, and Mani. Members of the Immanuel MTC, Houston and Dr. Lincoln sponsored the lunch.

**Adieu:** After lunch the members talked to the people of the island, visited the houses and bid farewell. Chicago MTC mission volunteers under the leadership of Mr. Jacob George stayed back to clean the island and they left the next day.

**Gratitude:** It is time to thank God for guiding and helping us to conduct the Summer Program. 45 homes were built, health surveys were taken, VBS was conducted, health and hygiene was taught. He protected each and every mission volunteer during their travel and while they worked on the island. Approximately 225 mission volunteers from 20 parishes all over North America, Canada and the United Kingdom took part in the Summer Mission Program.

### **Closing function lays the foundation for future short and long term plans**

Inspired by the summer program the committee discussed and recommended future plans like:

- providing drinking water
- providing a generator or alternate energy supply
- encouraging worship



*Coorilos Thirumeni giving the keys to the houses in the Island to the owners.*

- educating the children on the island and sponsoring them for education on the mainland
- providing uniforms, shoes and school furniture
- finding alternate means of income generation
- medical and dental work
- acquiring land and providing a hostel or shelter for the children to pursue further education.

This is a day to be remembered in the history of the Mar Thoma Church, a day that marks the beginning of a mission in yet another foreign land. A day that enables every mission volunteer to proclaim; "I am proud to say that I am a Marthomite".

**Mrs. Leila Thomas, Mission Coordinator**

The United States of America, despite a short history compared to the rest of the world, is rich with events that shaped this country in many ways. Within a short span of a couple of centuries, there have been momentous events that involved the settlers, the colonies, the slaves, the gold rush, the civil war, the world wars and so on. Unfortunately, all these events cost countless innocent lives and unimaginable suffering. Every major occurrence changed the political and social outlook of communities inside and outside United States. It affected the world economy. The present technical advancement and the economic prosperity that we enjoy in this land are outcomes of continued struggle and sufferings of many unsung heroes and perished multitudes.



We as a Diaspora community often tend to forget the past history of this land and also tend to ignore our present obligations in the new surroundings. We cling together as small units with limited dynamism and vigor. We praise our past, heritage, and culture, but do not promote its propagation. We act like pilgrims, but with limited vision. We toil to acquire material things that will not help nor matter to our second generation and the individuals of the community. It is time that we realize our potential and move forward with open mindedness and Godly vision.

We have to “think outside the Mar Thoma church” and we have to support the community that we are in, leading it to achieve its full potential. We as a church and as individuals can do many things in conjunction with the local community and civic organizations. I can see that wherever we started going out into the community, we are being recognized as sincere group(s) with no intention of exploitation. God definitely will help us to overcome our limitations and will guide us through, if we trust in Him and initiate our projects without personal motives.

The Voluntary Evangelists Association is a very dynamic organization of the Mar Thoma church. From our humble beginnings, we have come through many victories that we never even dreamed of. We helped many of those who were on the verge of mental and physical incapacitation. We have been the light that enlightened many needy individuals. In our new surroundings, let us continue to be that light that our forefathers have lighted. Instead of repeating the words “Every Marthomite is an Evangelist”, let us be evangelists with silently and creatively work to lead others to the Great Light. We know that without sowing, we will not reap. As mentioned in the Bible, we live in houses that we did not build, we drink from wells that we definitely did not dig.

Let’s thank God for all His provisions and let us work together, for His glory, in and around the community that we all live in. Let our presence be known in a Christian way and let us shine with Heavenly glow.

**Eapen Daniel**

*We must not hope to be mowers,  
And to gather the ripe gold ears,  
Unless we have first been sowers  
And watered the furrows with tears.  
It is not just as we take it,  
This mystical world of ours,  
Life’s field will yield as we make it  
A harvest of thorns or of flowers.*

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

# 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
- Business Succession Planning
- General Corporate Advice

## ESTATE PLANNING

- Wills & Trusts
- Probate
- Will Contests/Trust Litigation
- 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

**ESTATE TAXES CAN BE AS HIGH  
AS 55%**

We can reduce and/or completely eliminate this tax  
**Call now for your FREE consultation!**

**TOLL FREE (888) 278-7878**

For further information on the services we offer or to schedule an appointment, please feel free to contact us.

\*Attorneys Licensed in California only

Tel: (310) 478-4349  
Fax: (310) 312-6680

11300 West Olympic Boulevard, Suite 800, Los Angeles, California 90064



**FRANK BENUCHI SHOES  
ERIC SHOES  
EXCLUSIVE AGENT FOR U.S.A.**

*Best Wishes From*  
**Varkey Abraham & Family**

**Erick Shoes Inc.**  
216-11 Jamaica Avenue  
Queens Village, New York  
**Tel. 718-465-2860**

**Abraham & Son Inc.**  
**Shoe Tech U.S.A. Inc.**  
**A&S Properties Inc.**

**Mar Thoma Messenger**  
Sinai Mar Thoma Center  
2320 S. Merrick Avenue  
Merrick, NY 11566

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
MERRICK, NY  
PERMIT NO. 198