



# MAR THOMA MESSENGER

A PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

APRIL 2004



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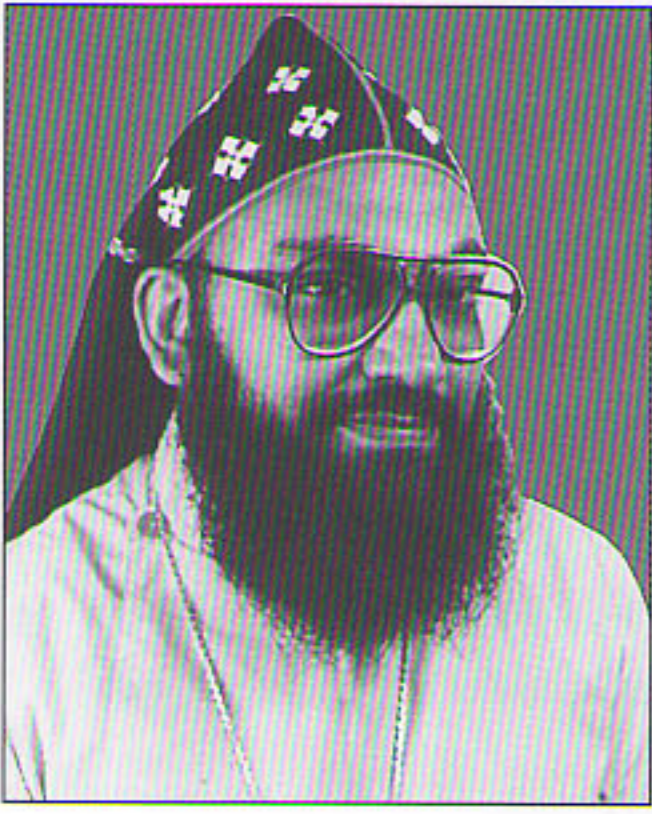
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# Message from the Diocesan Bishop

April 26, 2004



Dearly Beloved in Christ,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As a Diaspora community our hearts throb in tune with the psalmist in 137 who said "By the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the poplars we hung our harps, for these our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy, they said, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!' How can we sing the song of the Lord while in a foreign Land?" Today the community around, specifically the youths of this land, demand a new song from us. The entry of our church into the community of the Native Americans and among the people of Mexico to understand and cater to their needs is an answer to this query.

The rampant growth of irresponsible individualism in today's world, individualism that ignores the common good is a dangerous trend. Everywhere we see selfishness and self centeredness. Consumerism promotes a culture of accumulation and greed. It is totally against the culture of giving. It also promotes a culture of competition. Each day we hear about violence from different parts of the world. Terrorism has become a nightmare to governments and it has taken so many innocent lives. Religious fundamentalism and communalism is a curse of the era. Even certain Churches have endorsed homosexual marriages in churches. The position of the President of this nation stating that Christian values and family relations be maintained is to be applauded. In strong words we have to condemn the unbiblical way of human relationships and teach future generations the sanctity of marital relationship.

In this context, we have to evaluate the mission work we have initiated in Mexico and among the Native Americans. Last summer, with the help of our parishes we built 45 houses and 2 Community centers for the people of the island that we adopted. I appreciate the wholehearted cooperation of all our members, especially the youth. We have a long way to go in this mission. We have to provide them with drinking water, electricity, means of daily living, etc. As an appreciation of the service we have provided, the Mexican government has expressed their willingness to give 20 acres of land to the project. My dream is to develop that land for the education of the children of the island and vocational training for the people.

Each parish has to be involved in the community where they are placed because the mission of love that started in Jerusalem was carried on to Samaria and then to the ends of the world. As a worshipping community we must be a serving and a witnessing community. Therefore each parish should find some field of ministry locally.

What does the cross symbolize and signify in a post-modern society? Does it evoke the frightening memories of the crusades or the tender reality of love? The cross is the symbol of victory, not by might but of overcoming evil through suffering and forgiving. The cross calls all of us to a re-reading and re-evaluation of the journey we make and to a renewal of the path we tread.

The Diocesan Sunday School is making a significant leap by developing its own curriculum in association with the Sunday School Samajam of the Church. This laborious task is undertaken by the representatives of various Sunday Schools under the able leadership of Prof. T. M. Thomas. I commend and appreciate the team and pray that God will actualize their efforts at the earliest.



The qualitative and quantitative growth of the Diocesan official publication "The Mar Thoma Messenger" is now known to all of us. The hard work of Mr. Eapen Daniel as the Chief Editor and Mr. James T. Philip as the Manager and their team is well acknowledged. I urge each one of you to assist in the growth of this publication.

We have entered a new phase in the growth of the Diocese by dividing it into zones at an organizational level. This has facilitated more participation and decentralization of events and activities. I appreciate the efforts of all office bearers and members of different committees who have contributed substantially in the growth of the Diocese.

The by-laws of all the organizations of the Diocese were prepared and the Metropolitan has approved them. Copies of the by-laws were distributed to all achen during the clergy conference.

By appointing more Youth Chaplains we are concentrating more on the youth ministry as they are the future of the Church. I have noticed that some youngsters are crossing over to other denominations after their marriage and we are trying to address this issue very seriously. At the same time, the number of unmarried youngsters is also increasing. These social issues are discussed in the pre-marital counseling programs, which we have organized in various parts of the Diocese. There are others within our community who are in search of a meaningful spirituality. Spirituality is a totality of a God-guided life, and it is a lifestyle that helps us to lead a life faithful to God and society.

One of the major issues which we now need to focus on is to cater and minister to the elderly people of this Diocese. A report in this regard will be presented during the session of the Assembly Meeting.

This year 19 achen are leaving this Diocese and an equal number are joining us. I gratefully acknowledge their ministry and appreciate their contribution to the growth of this Diocese. During my parish visits I always stayed with the Achens and they have always welcomed me and treated me as a member of their family. I wish and pray that their ministries will continue to be a blessing.

Rev Dr. John Joseph was serving as the Diocesan Secretary and Bishop's secretary for the last three years. His efficient leadership will be forever remembered and gratefully appreciated by this Diocese. Personally he was a great help to me in many ways. His family comprising of Shirley Kochamma and children always made Sinai Center a home for me. I am deeply thankful to them.

Rev. Dr. K. A. Abraham will take charge as the new Diocesan Secretary and Bishop's Secretary from May 1st. His many years of service as a parish priest and professor at the seminary will be an asset to this Diocese. I welcome him and Kochamma and look forward to his leadership in his new capacity.

To sum up, I would like to express the thinking of Keith A. Russel who said that to be a Christian is to be a new kind of human being in a new kind of community. His Grace the Metropolitan in his inaugural address at the Maramon Convention declared this year as the "Year of Repentance and Rededication". So at the parish level we need to organize special meetings aiming at repentance and rededication. As a Church we have to confess that we have fallen and not grown up to the expectation of the dear Lord. Only a radical change in the attitude and life of our people and parish can bring revival and revitalization in the life of the church. So let us rededicate our lives and strive to fit into His master plan.

May God bless you.

Yours in His Service,  
Coorilos Methrachen



# Message from the Metropolitan



Dearly Beloved in the Lord,

The annual meeting of the Communion of Churches in India was held at our Santhigiri Ashram from March 7-9, 2004. Our Church hosted the meeting.

A reception committee led by Bishop Isaac Mar Philoxenos made all the arrangements for this. The opening ceremony was held at Elamkulam Jesusalem church hall presided by the Arch Bishop of Ernakulam of the Latin Catholic Church. The leaders of three Churches lit a lamp together at the opening ceremony and proclaimed that the fellowship of these three churches will be known as the Communion of Churches in India. The decision for this was reached earlier by the teams from each of these Churches.

The decision to name this a Communion was based on the fact that the Church is in essence a communion. The Trinity is a communion. To realize a larger identity without losing our own identity is real communion. Communion is a gift of the spirit, a filling of the spirit. Everyone including the Clergy and laity should make an effort to see this communion grow at a regional level. We should pray passionately for the progress of this Communion. It will be ideal if we could witness together.

The second Sunday in November will be observed as the Festival of Unity of Communion of Churches in India. It will be a good idea to conduct the Holy Communion Service according to the CSI or CNI liturgy in the Marthoma churches. Also it will be wonderful if these denominations could have a common Holy Communion service. These three denominations use the same lectionary at present. Efforts are underway to introduce a common liturgy also.

The cross is a holy sacrament from God to Man. It symbolizes the fierce battle between Good and Evil. We are reminded of the ultimate victory of the Lord on the cross; The world that moved away from God, a God who embraces the world that forsook him, His eternal Love that gave up His only begotten son as a sacrifice for the salvation of mankind; Mankind that is in dire need of Divine grace; the thief who is taken into Heaven—these are some thoughts to meditate on that will give us Hope and Peace.

The year 2004 is being observed as the Year of Penitence and Dedication. Penitence is a stepping stone to reconciliation. Reconciliation is the door to heaven. I hope the Passion Week this year was a time of renewed Dedication for everyone.

Each one of us should be perceived as partakers and beneficiaries of the cross. May the Lord help us to affirm in the Holy Spirit that, "I entrust my soul in your hands to keep".

April 22 was Earth Day. The Earth is a creation of God and His gift to us. The Earth is made for Man and we call it Mother Earth. From Earth was Man made. There is an indelible bond between Man and Earth. We are the Sons of Earth. The Earth's healing powers are used in Nature therapy.

April 30th is Anti-Child Labor Day. Many organizations are focusing on children and women today. We must not forget that women and children are two weak links in our society.

This year, along with the Centennial Celebrations of our Sunday School Samajam, we are also observing 2004 as the Year of the Child. It is our responsibility to give them our love and to work for their betterment.

Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Metropolitan

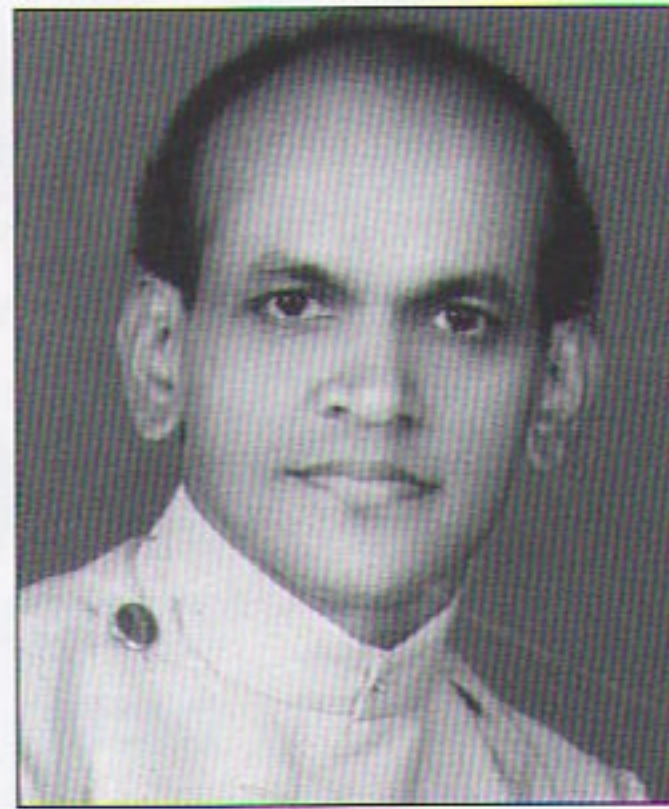
Translated and Reprinted from Sabha Tharaka



# The Ministry of Reconciliation

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

**O**urs is a broken world. This brokenness is reflected very much in the personal and social life of our times. Violence and terrorism are the twin evils which very often seem to take humanity to the brink of disaster. The tragic events of September 11 have definitely created a cleavage in our world which has yet to be healed. What looms large in our social fabric is very often the so-called "hate campaign." Here the law of revenge is projected as the final word. In this context, more than ever, the world demands from us a rediscovery of the ministry of reconciliation.



## 1. The task of reconciliation

Reconciliation is basically the restoration of broken relationships at different levels. This is God's doing in the world. Ever since creation, the Spirit of God has been active in the task of reconciliation—between God and man, among men and between man and nature.

The Christian approach to war has always been a pertinent question. How do we interpret the wars of the Old Testament? Very often the Biblical literalists justify war because in the Old Testament, the people of God had to fight several wars against the "enemies of God"! As pointed out in the first article of this series on, "The interpretation of the Bible," there are two schools of thought within the Bible.

**One:** *The particularist school of thought*

**Two:** *The universalist school of thought*

Some of the exclusive texts of the Old Testament which portray God as the "God of war" and so on are to be seen within the first school of thought. These texts are to be interpreted in light of the self-understanding of Jews as the only chosen people of God; whose historical mission was construed by the annihilation of other pagan communities from the face of the earth. This polemical and confrontationist approach was not supported by the prophets. They emphasized the universality of God's love, God's preferential concern for the less privileged and marginalized. Micah envisioned a situation in which there would be no war or violence. The prophet said: "He will settle disputes among the nations, among the great powers near and far. They will hammer their swords into ploughs and their spears into pruning-knives. Nations will never go to war, never prepare for battle again. Everyone will live in peace, among his own vineyards and fig trees, and no one

will make him afraid." (Micah 4:3-5). The task of the chosen community was to promote reconciliation and the furtherance of life at all levels.

## 2. The vision of a reconciled community

In the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, the message of reconciliation is projected as one of the specific task of the Messiah. Unlike the royal messianism of Judaism, the restoration of broken relationships and the renewal of creation are emphasized in Isa. 11:1-9 and 65:17-25. In the prophetic vision of the "new age", all contradictions due to human sin are ultimately overcome. According to Dr. S. Kappen, the new heavens and new earth are nothing but our heavens and earth divinised. What emerges here is a reconciled community where all the chaotic forces are finally transformed. The question here is how can we manifest this hope in our historical action and options. Can the church create social forces which would be "the first-fruits"—the approximate historical manifestations of this prophetic vision?

## 3. The wider family of God

St. Paul presents God as the absolute homemaker; the one who is always in the process of creating his wider family on earth. The ultimate purpose God revealed to us in the person and work of Christ is that the entire creation and humanity would be fully united into one family of God. (Eph. 1:9-10). In this wider family of God, all man-made "walls of partition" are transcended (Col. 3:11; Gal.3:28). Reconciliation is God's initiative in Christ (11 Cor. 5:17-18). The emergence of this new family involves pain, struggle and suffering. Rom. 8:19-26 talks about the "groanings" for the new birth within the universal family of God namely those of the whole creation, humanity and the divine Spirit. Dr. M. M. Thomas points out that, "The church of Christ is called to articulate this three-fold groaning of nature, humanity and God and to work with the Spirit as mid-wife to make the birth happen fragmentarily now and fully at the end".

## 4. Cross as the pattern of Reconciliation

The symbol of the cross reminds us of God's reconciling work in the world. In Eph. 2:16 and Col. 1:10 the reconciling power of the cross is brought to the fore. As pointed out earlier in one of the studies on, "The pattern of



the cross and resurrection”, the cross was the inevitable consequence of the mission of Christ. It is only in our clear stances with Christ in the ministry of reconciliation, that we become the real followers of Christ on the way of the cross. In other words, rather than any cultic observance of the Passion of Christ, our preparedness to be broken with Christ for the ministry of reconciliation is what makes our faith significant.

Jesus Christ challenges us with new questions in our areas of professional excellence. He wants us to be his agents of reconciliation within the church and outside the church. The resurrection of Christ points out that God will not

allow sin and evil to have the final word in history. Nevertheless, in the process of reconciliation, the forces of sin that are embedded in today's socio-political systems are not to be condoned. The report of the Commission on Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa is a case in point. The Commission was appointed immediately after the sweeping victory of the African National Congress. Rather than promoting any polemical attitudes and triumphalism, the Commission underscored the necessity of reconciliation to heal the wounds created by the Apartheid regime. These words are to be heard afresh in our contemporary situations of violence and conflict. ■

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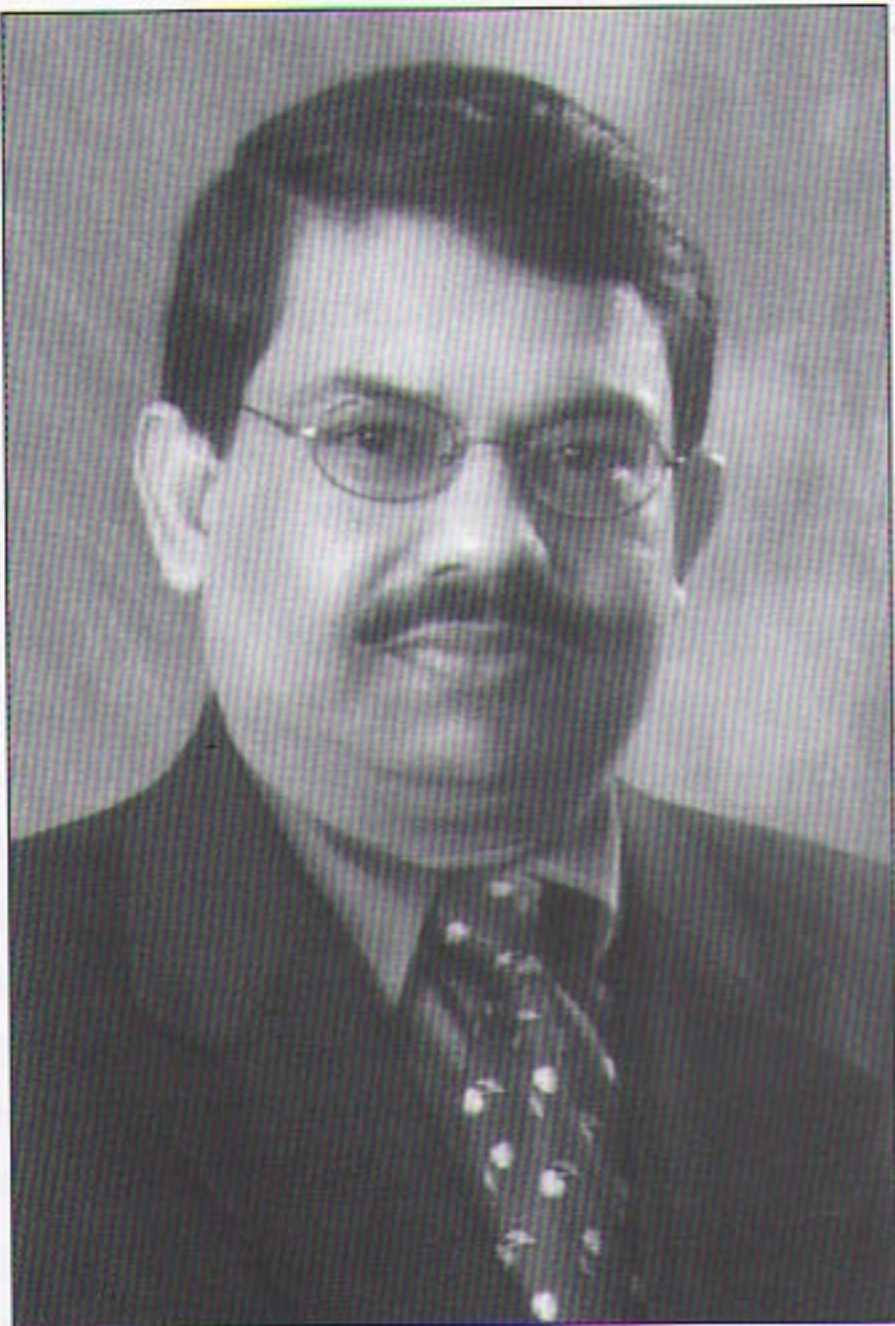
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വളരെ പ്രതീക്ഷയോടെയാണ് മാതാപിതാക്കൾ മക്കളെ വളർത്തിക്കൊണ്ടുവരുന്നത്. കുട്ടികളുടെ വളർച്ചയിൽ വളരെ പ്രാധാന്യം അർഹിക്കുന്ന കാലയളവാണ് കൗമാരപ്രായം. (13-19). വളരെ സൂക്ഷ്മതയോടെ കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യേണ്ട സമയം. ഭാവിജീവിതത്തിൽ വളരെ സ്വാധീനം ചെലുത്തുന്ന ഈ കാലഘട്ടം പലവിധത്തിൽ ഈ കാലഘട്ടം വളരെ പ്രാധാന്യം അർഹിക്കുന്നു.



ദ്രുതഗതിയിൽ ശാരീരിക വളർച്ചയുണ്ടാകുന്ന സമയമാണിത്. ശാരീരികഘടനയിൽ സംഭവിക്കുന്ന മാറ്റങ്ങൾക്കനുസൃതമായി മാനസികമായും മാറ്റങ്ങൾ സംഭവിക്കും. തങ്ങളുടെ വ്യക്തിത്വങ്ങളെ

ക്കുറിച്ച് പുതിയ ഒരു അവബോധം കുട്ടികൾക്കുണ്ടാകുന്ന പ്രായമാണിത്. സാഹചര്യത്തിനനുസരിച്ച് വികാരപരമായ ഉയർച്ചതാഴ്ചകൾ ഈ പ്രായത്തിൽ സ്വാഭാവികമായും ഉണ്ടാകും. മാതാപിതാക്കളിൽ നിന്നും വ്യത്യസ്തമായ ശൈലിയും മൂല്യങ്ങളും അനുവർത്തിക്കാൻ താല്പര്യപ്പെടുന്ന സമയമാണിത്. അതുപോലെ മാതാപിതാക്കളെയും മറ്റുള്ളവരെയും ആശ്രയിച്ചു കഴിഞ്ഞിരുന്ന അവസ്ഥയിൽ നിന്ന് കുട്ടികൾ കൂടുതൽ വ്യക്തിസ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്ന അവസ്ഥയിലേക്ക് മാറുന്ന കാലയളവാണ്. ബന്ധങ്ങളിലെ പിരിമുറുക്കം (Relational Tension) ഈ കാലയളവിൽ സാധാരണയാണ്. Teenage Rebellian എന്ന് ചിലർ ഇതിനെ വിശേഷിപ്പിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. പൊതുവെ Teenage rebellian ന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനം Parent-teen ബന്ധത്തിലെ പിരിമുറുക്കം ആണ്. Teenage Rebellian കാരണങ്ങൾ പലതും ചൂണ്ടിക്കാണിക്കപ്പെടുന്നു. ശരീരത്തിലെ ചില ഹോർമോണുകളുടെ പ്രവർത്തനം കൊണ്ടാണ് കുട്ടികൾ വ്യത്യസ്തത പുലർത്തുന്നത് എന്ന വാദം നിലവിലുണ്ട്. Opposite Sex നോട് മുൻപില്ലാതിരുന്ന ഒരു പ്രത്യേകത ഈ പ്രായത്തിൽ സ്വാഭാവികമായും ഉണ്ടാകും. കൂടുതൽ വ്യക്തിസ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നതുകൊണ്ട് എന്തിനേയും എതിർക്കാനുള്ള പ്രവണത കൂടുതലാണ്.

Sygmound Frouid ന്റെ Theory of Personality ആണ് ഇതിനാധാരം. അദ്ദേഹം പറയുന്നു A child's quest to be detached from parental control is the root cause of teenage rebellian. ആത്മാഭിമാനക്കുറവ് (Poor self esteem) ചിലരെ മദ്യപാനികളാക്കും. മയക്കുമരുന്നിനടിമകളാക്കും. ആരോഗ്യപരമായി ആത്മാഭിമാനം ഉള്ള വ്യക്തികളിൽ മാത്രമേ Physical Co-ordination ശരിയായി വളർച്ച പ്രാപിക്കുകയുള്ളൂ. അമേരിക്കയിൽ Teenage Issues ന്റെ പ്രധാന കാരണങ്ങളിൽ ഒന്ന് Self esteem ഉയർത്താനുള്ള അമിതമായ പ്രവണതയാണ് എന്ന് ചിന്തിക്കുന്നവർ ഉണ്ട്.

Teenage Rebellian ന് കാരണമാകുന്ന ഘടകങ്ങൾ

### 1. ഒരു ധർമ്മിക സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ അഭാവം (The absence of Moral Community)

കുടുംബങ്ങളുടെ നിലനില്പ് തന്നെ തകർന്നുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ഒരു സാഹചര്യത്തിലാണ് നാം ഇന്ന് ജീവിക്കുന്നത്. ധർമ്മിക മൂല്യങ്ങൾ നൽകി കുട്ടികളെ വളർത്താമെന്ന് മാതാപിതാക്കൾ ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നു. എങ്കിലും അവർ വളരുന്ന സാമൂഹ്യ അന്തരീക്ഷം പലപ്പോഴും അതിന് യോജിച്ചതല്ല. അടുത്തകാലം വരെയും യെഹൂദാ ക്രിസ്തീയ മത ധർമ്മികത നല്ല കുടുംബ

ങ്ങളെയും സാമൂഹ്യബന്ധങ്ങളെയും കെട്ടിപ്പടുക്കുന്നതിൽ നല്ല പങ്ക് വഹിച്ചു. മാതാപിതാക്കൾക്ക് അറിവില്ലാതിരുന്ന മേഖലകളിൽ സമൂഹം നല്ല മാതൃക കാട്ടി. ഇടവകയും, സഭയ്ക്കും, സഭയ്ക്കും, അയൽക്കാരും, സ്കൂൾ ടീച്ചേഴ്സും എല്ലാം ധർമ്മികമായ ഉപദേശം നൽകി പരിപോഷിപ്പിച്ചു. കുടുംബത്തിൽ കുറവുണ്ടായിരുന്നത് സമൂഹം നൽകി. ഇന്ന് അപ്രകാരം അവകാശപ്പെടാവുന്ന ഒരു ധർമ്മികസമൂഹം ഉണ്ട് എന്ന് പറയാൻ കഴിയില്ല. കുടുംബം എന്ന സ്ഥാപനം തകരുന്നു. ധർമ്മിക മൂല്യങ്ങൾ ഉയർത്തിപ്പിടിക്കുന്ന സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ അഭാവത്തിൽ, ലഭ്യമാകുന്ന ധർമ്മികത ശരിയെന്ന്

കരുതി അതിനെ സ്വീകരിക്കുന്ന കുട്ടികൾ തെറ്റിലേക്ക് വഴുതിപ്പോകുന്നു.

### 2. മാധ്യമസാധീനം (Influence of Media)

ഇന്ന് നമ്മെ ഒരു പരിധിവരെ നിയന്ത്രിക്കുന്നത് Print and Electronic Media ആണ്. ടിവിയിൽ കൂടെയും ഇന്റർനെറ്റിൽ കൂടെയും ലഭിക്കുന്ന മൂല്യങ്ങൾക്ക് പ്രായപരിധിയില്ല. മീഡിയായ്ക്ക് പിന്നിൽ ഒരു വ്യവസായ ശൃംഖല ഉണ്ട്. സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ നന്മ എന്ന ലക്ഷ്യത്തിൽ നിന്ന് ലാഭകേച്ചവടം എന്ന ലക്ഷ്യത്തിലാണ് എല്ലാ മാധ്യമങ്ങളും പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നത്. നല്ല Family Value's ഇല്ലാത്തയിടങ്ങളിൽ, Moral Community ഇല്ലാത്തയിടങ്ങളിൽ മാധ്യമങ്ങൾ നൽകുന്നതിലെ 'നെല്ലും പതിരും' തിരിച്ചറിയാതെ കാണുന്നതെല്ലാം നല്ലതാണ് എന്ന് കരുതി സ്വീകരിക്കുന്ന കുട്ടികളുടെ എണ്ണം വർദ്ധിക്കുന്നു.

### 3. വിവാഹമോചനം (Divorce)

കുടുംബബന്ധങ്ങളിലെ തകർച്ച ഏറ്റവും കൂടുതൽ സാധിക്കുന്നത് കുട്ടികളെയാണ്. വളർച്ചയുടെ ഘട്ടത്തിൽ മാതാപിതാക്കളിൽ നിന്ന് ലഭിക്കേണ്ടത് ലഭിക്കാതിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ വഴി തെറ്റുക സ്വാഭാവികം. വിവാഹമോചനം ചെയ്ത മാതാവോ പിതാവോ വീണ്ടും വിവാഹം കഴിച്ചാൽ Teen ന്റെ മുറിവ് വർദ്ധിക്കും. പുനർവിവാഹം നടക്കുമ്പോൾ താൻ ഉപേക്ഷിക്കപ്പെട്ടതായി കുട്ടികൾക്ക് തോന്നാം. വിവാഹമോചനം കുട്ടികളിൽ ഉണ്ടാകുന്ന വേദന പ്രായപരിധിയനുസരിച്ച് വ്യത്യസ്തമായിരിക്കും. ചില കുട്ടികൾ ജീവിതത്തിൽ നിന്നുതന്നെ ഒളിച്ചോടിയെന്ന് വരാം. ചിലർ ബന്ധങ്ങളിൽ നിന്ന് പിൻമാറും. എന്തിനും വഴക്കിടുന്ന പ്രകൃതവും ചിലരിൽ വളരും.

### 4. ആരോഗ്യപരമല്ലാത്ത ബന്ധങ്ങൾ (Unhealthy relationship)

ഏതൊരു കുട്ടിയുടേയും വളർച്ചയുടെ നാളുകളിൽ മാതാപിതാക്കൾ നായികാനായകന്മാരാണ്. ആദ്യഗുരുക്കന്മാർക്കും ആദ്യ മാതൃകയും മാതാപിതാക്കളാണ്. മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ സ്വന്തമായ അസ്വസ്ഥത കാരണം കുട്ടികളെ ശരിയായി കരുതാനോ സ്നേഹിക്കാനോ കഴിയാതെ വരാം. തങ്ങളുടെ പ്രതീക്ഷയ്ക്കൊത്തുതന്നെ കഴിയാത്ത മാതാപിതാക്കളിൽ നിന്ന് ആ പ്രായത്തിലുള്ള കുട്ടികൾ ഇത്തരം സാഹചര്യങ്ങളിൽ അകന്നു പോകാൻ സാധ്യത കൂടുതലാണ്. സാവധാനം മാതാപിതാക്കളിൽ നിന്ന് ലഭ്യമായ മൂല്യബോധത്തിൽ നിന്നും



അകന്ന് തന്റെ തന്നെ മാനസിക നിലനില്പിനായി ഒരു Rebal role ലേക്ക് നീങ്ങാൻ സാധ്യതയുണ്ട്. മാതാപിതാക്കൾ മക്കളോടുള്ള സ്നേഹത്തിൽ വ്യത്യാസം കാണിക്കുന്നു എന്ന് തോന്നിയാൽ ഇതേ പ്രതികരണം ഉണ്ടാകും. ഒരാളെ കൂടുതൽ കരുതുന്നു എന്ന തോന്നൽ മറ്റെയാളിൽ വിരോധം ഉളവാക്കും.

**5.പൊരുത്തപ്പെടാത്ത ഗുണവിശേഷങ്ങൾ (Conflicting Temperaments)**

ഓരോ വ്യക്തിയിലും ജന്മനാ ചില പ്രകൃതങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ട്. മാതാപിതാക്കളുടേയും മക്കളുടേയും ഗുണവിശേഷങ്ങളിൽ വ്യത്യാസം ഉണ്ടാകും. ഓരോ ഗുണവിശേഷങ്ങൾക്കും ശക്തിയും ദൗർബല്യവും ഉണ്ട്. ഓരോ കുട്ടിയും അവരിൽ തന്നെ വ്യത്യസ്തനാണ്. അവന്റെ അത്യുല്പാദന മനസ്സിലാക്കുക. ഓരോ കുട്ടിയുടെയും Rebellias Nature ൽ വ്യത്യാസം ഉണ്ട്.

മാതാപിതാക്കളാണ് കുട്ടികളിൽ ഏറ്റവും സ്വാധീനം ചെലുത്തുന്ന വ്യക്തികൾ. മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ സംസാരം, ജീവിതചര്യകൾ, പെരുമാറ്റം എല്ലാം കുട്ടികളിൽ സ്വാധീനം ചെലുത്തും. കുടുംബനാഥൻ ശരിയായ രീതിയിലല്ലെങ്കിൽ Teens കുടുംബത്തിൽ നിന്ന് മാനസികമായി അകലും. കുടുംബബന്ധങ്ങളിലെ പാളിച്ച മാറിയാൽ ഒരു പരിധിവരെ Teenage ന്റെ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളും മാറും. കുടുംബബന്ധം ശക്തമായിരുന്നാൽ സമൂഹത്തിൽ നിന്ന് എത്ര ശക്തമായ കൊടുങ്കാറ്റുടിച്ചാലും ഒരു പരിധിവരെ ടീനേജ് പ്രശ്നങ്ങളെ പക്ഷമായി കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യാൻ കഴിയും.

**എന്താണ് പരിഹാരം?**

കൗമാരപ്രായത്തിൽ കുട്ടികളെ നിയന്ത്രിക്കുക അത്ര എളുപ്പമല്ല. എന്നാൽ ചില കാര്യങ്ങൾ മാതാപിതാക്കൾക്ക് ചെയ്യാൻ കഴിയും. മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ സ്വാധീനം വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുക. Build your credibility. ചില നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ ചൂണ്ടിക്കാണിക്കട്ടെ.

**1.Pay attention to your spouse**

**(പങ്കാളിയെ ശ്രദ്ധിക്കുക, കേൾക്കുക)**

ജീവിതപങ്കാളിയെ ശ്രദ്ധിക്കുക. പരസ്പരം ശ്രദ്ധിക്കുക, സംസാരിക്കുക. മാതാപിതാക്കൾ സന്തോഷത്തോടെ ജീവിക്കുന്നത് കാണാൻ മക്കൾ ആത്മാർത്ഥമായി ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നു. കുടുംബബന്ധം ശക്തമാക്കാൻ എടുക്കുന്ന ഓരോ ചുവടും മാതാപിതാക്കൾ-മക്കൾ ബന്ധത്തെയും ശക്തികരിക്കും. ഒരു മിച്ചുള്ള ജീവിതമാതൃക Teenage ൽ ചെലുത്തുന്ന സ്വാധീനം വലുതാണ്.

**2.നിഷേധാത്മകമായ സമീപനം**

**പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുക**

Negative approach കുട്ടികളുടെ മാനസികനില തകർക്കും. നല്ലതു ചെയ്താൽ പ്രശംസിക്കുക. നന്നായി ചെയ്തതിനെ അംഗീകരിക്കുക. Teens മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ പ്രോത്സാഹനം ശ്രദ്ധിക്കുന്നു. Try to become an encouraging parent and develop a style of encouragement. Real encouragement flows out of relationship ഒരു നല്ല വാക്ക്, ഒരു പുഞ്ചിരി ഇത് അംഗീകരിക്കുന്നതിനും പ്രശംസിക്കുന്നതിനും തുല്യമാണ്. പറയുന്നത് ആത്മാർത്ഥമായിരിക്കണം.

**3. വാക്കുകളിൽ സത്യസന്ധത പുലർത്തുക.**

പറയുന്ന വാക്കുകളും പ്രവർത്തിയും തമ്മിൽ പൊരുത്തപ്പെടാതിരുന്നാൽ Teenage ന്റെ മാതാപിതാക്കളിലുള്ള വിശ്വാസം നഷ്ടമാകും.

**4. നല്ല തീരുമാനങ്ങൾ എടുക്കാൻ സഹായിക്കുക.**

ഒരു തീരുമാനമെടുക്കുമ്പോൾ എന്തിന് തീരുമാനമെടുത്തു എന്നാണ് മുൻ തീരുമാനത്തിന്റെ ഭവിഷ്യത്ത് എന്ന നിശ്ചയം ഉണ്ടായി. തീരുമാനങ്ങൾ കൈക്കൊള്ളുവാൻ Teens നേയും പങ്കാളികളാകുക. നല്ല തീരുമാനങ്ങൾ എടുക്കാൻ പ്രേരിപ്പിക്കുക. ചില വിഷയങ്ങളിൽ അതിർവരമ്പുകൾ വെയ്ക്കുമ്പോൾ അതിന്റെ ഉദ്ദേശം എന്ത് എന്ന് വ്യക്തമാക്കി കൊടുക്കണം.

**5. സ്നേഹം പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കുക.**

കുട്ടികളോടുള്ള സ്നേഹം പല മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ ഉള്ളിൽ സംഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നു. ഒന്നും പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കില്ല. സത്യസന്ധമായി സ്നേഹം പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. വിലക്കേണ്ടത് സ്നേഹത്തോടെ പറഞ്ഞ് വിലക്കുക. അധികാരവും ശക്തിയും കൊണ്ട് കുട്ടികളെ വരച്ചവരയിൽ നിർത്താവുന്ന പ്രായമല്ല Teenage എന്ന് മനസിലാക്കുക വിവാഹസംബന്ധമായ ചിന്തകൾ ഉണ്ടാകുമ്പോൾ പക്ഷമായി ചിന്തിച്ച് തീരുമാനം കൈക്കൊള്ളാൻ സഹായിക്കണം. വിവാഹവും കുടുംബജീവിതവും ടീനേജിന് ശേഷമാണ് നല്ലത്.

**6. (തെറ്റ് പറ്റിയത് പങ്ക് വയ്ക്കുക)**

തെറ്റുകൾ സംഭവിക്കാത്ത മനുഷ്യജീവിതമില്ല. വീഴ്ചകൾ ഉണ്ടാകുന്നത് സ്വാഭാവികമാണ്. തെറ്റ് പറ്റിയാൽ അത് സമ്മതിക്കുവാൻ എന്നും മാതാപിതാക്കൾക്ക് കഴിയണം. അങ്ങനെ ചെയ്യുമ്പോൾ കുട്ടികളുടെ മുൻപിൽ മാതാപിതാക്കൾ ചെറുതാകുന്നില്ല, മറിച്ച് അവരുടെ Credibility വർദ്ധിക്കും.

7. മാതാപിതാക്കൾ മക്കൾക്ക് തുറന്ന് സംസാരിക്കുവാൻ അവസരം നൽകുകയും അവരുടെ സ്ഥാനത്ത് നിന്നു കൊണ്ടു പ്രശ്നങ്ങളെ കാണുവാനും കേൾക്കുവാനുള്ള മനോഭാവം പ്രത്യേകം കാട്ടുകയും വേണം. തങ്ങൾ എപ്പോഴും കുട്ടികളെ കേൾക്കാൻ തയ്യാറാണ് എന്ന സന്ദേശം മാതാപിതാക്കളിൽ നിന്നും കുട്ടികൾക്ക് ലഭിക്കേണ്ടിയതാണ്. തുറന്നു പറയാനുള്ള അന്തരീക്ഷവും കേൾക്കുവാനുള്ള സന്നദ്ധതയും കുടുംബാന്തരീക്ഷത്തിൽ നിന്നും ലഭിക്കണം

**8. ഉത്തരവാദിത്തങ്ങൾ ഏൽപ്പിക്കുക.**

കുടുംബത്തിലെ ഉത്തരവാദിത്വമുള്ള അംഗമാണ് എന്ന് തിരിച്ചറിയാൻ ചില ചുമതലകൾ കുട്ടികൾക്ക് നൽകണം. കുടുംബത്തിലെ അന്തരീക്ഷം കുട്ടികളുടെ വളർച്ചയിൽ ഏറെ സ്വാധീനം ചെലുത്തുമെന്ന യാഥാർത്ഥ്യം ഉൾക്കൊണ്ടു കൊണ്ടു ഭവനത്തിൽ വേണ്ട മുൻകരുതലുകളും തിരുത്തലുകളും നിർവ്വഹിപ്പാൻ ഓരോ മാതാപിതാക്കളും തയ്യാറായാൽ ഒരു പരിധിവരെ കൗമാര പ്രായത്തിലെ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളെ അതിജീവിക്കാം. ഭവനം എല്ലാ വ്യക്തികൾക്കും തുറന്നു പറയാനുള്ള വേധിയായി മാറുമ്പോൾ ബന്ധങ്ങളിൽ കാര്യമായ മാറ്റങ്ങൾ സംഭവിക്കും, പ്രത്യേകിച്ചും കൗമാരപ്രായക്കാരായ കുട്ടികൾക്ക്. ഇപ്രകാരമുള്ള സാഹചര്യം ക്രിസ്തീയ ഭവനങ്ങൾക്ക് കഴിഞ്ഞാൽ കുട്ടികൾ ദൈവം നൽകിയ വിലയേറിയ ദാനമാണെന്ന് തിരിച്ചറിവും മാതാപിതാക്കളിൽ സംജാതമാകും.

*God is always in our lives even when we think that God is absent and silent. There are times when you are in trouble and God sends His people to help you in a flash.*

Gijoe Thomas, Bethel Sunday School, Philadelphia



# History of the Mar Thoma Church

Rev. Sunni E. Mathew, Los Angeles, CA

## Further Conflicts within the Church

In the last issue we read how historical situations forced the Indian Church to come under the control of the Jacobite Patriarch. This could have been from the thirst to exert their power by the Syrian Patriarch. It could also be the product of hostility developed against the Mar Thoma from the unforeseen circumstances the Syrian Bishops fell into. The Syrian prelates were able to come to India on a Dutch ship. But when they came to India, the Dutch demanded the cost to be remitted in full before they were released. Therefore the Metropolitan had to pay by taking contributions from various parishes and by selling some properties of the Church at Niranam. The bishops who were kept at custody naturally were angered at the Metropolitan. They brought up allegations that the Metropolitan did not have proper consecration and insisted he be consecrated by them. Through a compromise formula, Mar Thoma acknowledged the supremacy of the Jacobite Patriarch, but was not re-consecrated. In response, the foreign bishops agreed not to ordain any priests or deacons without the consent of the Metropolitan.

Mar Thoma V died in 1765. But before his death he consecrated his nephew as Mar Thoma VI. The new Mar Thoma, in response to the intermittent difficulties incurred with the foreign bishops, succumbed to their pressure to obtain a re-consecration by their hands. Mar Gregorios and Mar Ivanios re-consecrated Mar Thoma VI. He was given a fresh title of Mar Dionysius, which could have been from his longing to be consecrated by foreign bishops. It may also have been from his eagerness to avoid the accusation that his consecration was not valid. However, reasons behind this are not clear.

## Formation of Independent Thozhiyur Church

During his time Mar Gregorios also consecrated a Ramban from the Kattumangattu family. He was given the title Mar Koorilos. This action of Gregorios was against the norms and came between Mar Thoma V and Gregorios. Hence it resulted into a major conflict in which Mar Dionysius objected the actions of Gregorios. The Dutch commodore was called in as an arbitrator. He ruled against Koorilos who was forced to leave the place and he established the see at Thozhiyur. It is quite interesting that the Bishop of the Church of Thozhiyur did not own allegiance to the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch or to any other. The church at Thozhiyur established itself as an independent church.



## Advent of the British

His time on the see was also a period of intense political turmoil. It was also during his time that Col. Macaulay was appointed as the first British resident in Travancore. Mar Dionysius' nephew Mathan Ramban succeeded him in 1808. He took the title Mar Thoma VII. During the time of Mar Thoma VII, an amount of 3000 star pagodas<sup>1</sup> were invested with the British East India Company. This fetched an annual interest of 8%. In the meantime, another prelate from Syria by the name Dioscorus came to Malabar. Hearing about his arrival, Mar Dionysius sent some priests and laymen to meet him and bring him to his residence at Kantanad. They maintained good relations but the harmony and peace lasted only for a very short time. Dioscorus slowly started making problems for Dionysius. Finally Col. Macaulay intervened and Dioscorus was sent back. In fact, conflicts within the Church gave chances for the British resident to intervene. Historical events one after another gave enough room for outside forces to take control over the Indian Church. British intervention, which was the result of unfortunate conflict, developed into further conflicts which resulted in the breaking of unity in the Church.

## British Connection and its effects on the Antiochene Connection of the Malabar Church

Meanwhile the British started taking interest in the Syrian Church of Malabar. In fact, the situation of conflict prevailing in the local Church gave them enough room to enter into the life of the Church. It was during this time Claudius Buchanen, the Chaplain in Bengal, came to Kerala. This was the art commission of the government of Bengal. Buchanen's intention was to find manuscripts and to take assistance from the Syrian Christians to translate the Bible into vernacular languages. Dionysius was fascinated by this interest from the Chaplain and decided to give assistance of priests who were well versed with Syriac language. Their acquaintance led to the co-operation between the Indian Church and the British. The Metropolitan made it clear that there wouldn't be any action to undermine the basic principles of the Indian Church. Buchanen agreed that there wouldn't be any action from the side of the Anglican Church to subdue or scale down the authenticity of the Indian Church. Meanwhile under the supervision of the Metropolitan Kayamkulam Philipose Ramban translated the four Gospel books into Malayalam. These were printed from

<sup>1</sup>This is equivalent to Rs. 10,500.



Bombay. So the first translation of the Bible to Malayalam was from Kayamkulam Philipose Ramban at the advice of the Metropolitan Dionysius.

In the year 1809 Mar Dionysius expired. During the time of his illness, he consecrated his nephew as Mar Thoma VIII. On the fortieth day of the demise of Mar Dionysius, a council was held at Kantanad. The council appointed Pulikottil Itoop (Joseph) Ramban and Kayamkulam Philipose Ramban as advisors to Mar Thoma VIII. The council also made some decisions regarding the running of the Church in the future. Some of the important ones among them are like, the decree that everyone should go and participate in the Holy Communion on Sundays and other festival days, start schools to teach children and deacons on biblical understanding and faith matters, appointing committee to govern the parish in financial matters, etc. In the meantime Maccaulay left residency. Col. Monroe succeeded Maccaulay in 1810. Two very important events related to him are the functioning of the Seminary and the plan for collaboration of CMS in the work of the Syrian Church.

There arose a dispute regarding the interest on the amount deposited with the British East India Company. Col. Monroe ruled against the Mar Thoma VIII. Metropolitan became frustrated and he expired. Before his death he consecrated Mar Thoma IX. In the second decade of the 19th century, Pulikottil Joseph Kathanaar took initiative to start a Seminary. Monroe gave encouragement. Monroe also made arrangements for Joseph to draw the interest of the investment with the East India Company lying accumulated for three years. But according to the agreement only the Metropolitan could draw the interest. Therefore arrangements to elevate Joseph to episcopate were made. Metropolitan of the Syrian Church of Thozhiyur was requested to consecrate him. The community duly elected him and Philexinos of Thozhiyur Church consecrated him as Dionysius II. This again precipitated the question of validity. Konat Malpan raised the question on the validity of the priestly succession maintained by Thozhiyur Church. But through the political power of the British colonial government Dionysius II received a royal proclamation acknowledging him as the Metropolitan of the Indian Church. Mar Thoma IX was forced to relinquish his authority. This is how the political power exerted its presence felt over the ecclesiastical authority. In fact British resident was very instrumental in creating this unfortunate precedence.

During the establishment of the Seminary also there was some problem. Those in the North argued for the seminary to be established at Kantanad, while those in the

South demanded that the Seminary should be established in Niranam. Finally they came to a compromise to have the seminary at a middle point. That is how Kottayam was selected upon. The Travancore government donated the land for building the Seminary.

Pulikottil Dionysius requested Col. Monroe to make available some missionaries to help teaching in the Seminary and to work among the parishes. It could be from his zeal to develop the Syrian Church in its fervor. Or it could be the result of the relationship that made him the Metropolitan through the influence of political power. Whatever may be the reason, Church Missionary Society sent three missionaries. They are Norton, Baker and Fenn. In 1818 the Church received CMS missionaries at Mavelikkara. Many people were not sure about the designs of the missionaries. This might have been rooted on the visualization of the probable effects. But the missionaries assured the Metropolitan that they did not have any intention of turning the Church into Anglican fold. Mar Dionysius II expired in 1816. Mar Philoxenos of Thozhiyur Church again helped the Syrian Church. Punnetra Kurien Kattanar was consecrated as Punnetra Dionysius (Dionysius III). He co-operated with the missionaries until his death in 1825. Philexinos of Thozhiyur Church also consecrated Dionysius IV. By that time a strong group of people who disliked the program of co-operation emerged. They became restless and they sent a letter to the Patriarch in Syria to send a bishop to control the Church. Now the Patriarch received an opportunity for involving in the affairs of the Church and sent Mar Athanasius in 1825. He visited the resident and presented him his credentials. Even though he was allowed to visit the parishes he was denied permission to exercise authority. But Athanasius tried to bring the Seminary under his control and with the approval of the Indian bishop the government asked Athanasius to leave the country.

Meanwhile new missionaries replaced the first group of missionaries. Along with that tension between the missionaries and the Metropolitan aggravated. Their critique of the Malabar Church from a purely evangelical understanding found many things wanting. The new missionaries were impatient and rash in their approaches. Those who were disappointed by the expulsion of Athanasius now became sufficiently strengthened by the support received from the Metropolitan. Matters became worse and passions began to generate. That resulted in conflict between the missionaries and the Metropolitan which lead to further division in the Church. That we will discuss in the next issue of Messenger. ■

*God will carry you through trials and temptations, if you have strong faith.*

Roby Thomas, Bethel Sunday School, Philadelphia



# Biblical Approach to Homosexuality

Atty. Lal Varghese, MTC of Dallas, Farmers Branch, Dallas

**P**ope John Paul II celebrated his 25th anniversary as the head of the Roman Catholic Church, which is Christianity's largest denomination. The process began to declare Mother Theresa as a Saint by the Pope. It has been a quarter century of enormous changes, and few have been more significant, for the church and mainstream Protestant denominations, than the withering of the Christian faith all over the world from its basic beliefs about marriage and procreation. The preamble of a new, unfinished constitution for the new European Union omits any mention of Christianity or even God among the cultural forces that shaped Europe, although the Pope and other Christian leaders raised vehement objections.

Europeans are moving well ahead of Americans, and more aggressively challenging traditional Christian teachings by providing civil recognition for same-sex couples. Despite stern opposition from the Vatican, the French, Belgian, Dutch and German governments have granted same-sex couples legal entitlements and protections, and Britain is considering it, too. We are seeing such trends in United States also, where legal actions are being fought against separation of Church and State, to omit the use of the word God in the pledge of allegiance, and removal of the carved monument of the ten commandments from the rotunda of Alabama Supreme Court, and such other biblical monuments to be removed from public places, and are forced to find safe and secure places in churches, and monasteries. Legislations were passed by different states to recognize homosexual marriages and families, and most states accept the civil union between the same sex people with all privileges of married couples. Finally Episcopal Church has appointed a homosexual as its Bishop, which has created much protest and even possible split in the American Anglican Episcopal Church.

The continued tension between contemporary attitudes and traditional church teachings has forced the leaders of the worldwide Anglican Communion to debate the acceptability of openly gay bishops in their church. Representatives from congregations in the developing world have threatened to break the church into two if their Anglican Church authorities move to that permissive direction. The arguments in favor and against homosexuality have caused a lot of confusion in the minds of our young generation as to the true biblical approach to this subject, and about our stand towards this issue. So let



us examine what the Bible says about homosexuality and traditional concept about marriage and procreation.

God had a purpose in creating human beings as revealed in Genesis 1:27-28 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the seas and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that

move upon the earth." After the great flood, God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, which also shows God's real intention was that man should unite with woman and multiply in order to replenish the earth. The LORD said to Abram, Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto a land that I will show you: And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So God intended Abraham and his kindred to multiply so that a great nation is born, to be blessed by God. God wanted man and woman unite together to become families of the earth to blessed by Him. If one thinks sensibly, it is easy to see that God created male AND female for a reason. The rationale behind God's creation should be to populate the earth, and to rule the earth, and over every living things on earth.

Abraham dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly. But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, where are the men who came in to your house this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them. So by lying with those men who came to Lot's house the people of Sodom sinned against God. The LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. So it is clear that God does not like the wickedness of man, and therefore destroyed the city of Sodom and Gomorrah.



Leviticus 18:22, 20:13 (Leviticus Laws), I Corinthians 6:9, Romans 1:26-27, and the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in old testament—none approve of loving, consenting homosexual acts as we know them today. But those passages should be taken in its original meaning and spirit to deal with the issue of homosexuality in church—whether to have homosexual priests and bishops to lead and serve God's chosen people, and to teach and guide them from sinful human nature. Leviticus 18:22 states the principle: "You [masculine] shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination." Leviticus 20:13 adds the penalty: "If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them." In I Corinthians 6:9 Paul does not refer to homosexuality directly. However, the original Greek word often quoted as sexual immorality, that Paul used was "porneia" which means "a harlot for hire". In Corinth in the temples of Venus, the principal deity of Corinth, where Christians went to worship, a thousand public prostitutes were kept at public expense to glorify and act as surrogates for the fertility Gods. Paul in unequivocal terms condemned the practice of sexual immorality during his time.

Romans 1:26-27 mentions homosexual acts performed by people who are clearly described as heterosexual. The men in the NT patriarchal culture exerted dominance not only over women, but over younger males as well. Such an act was regarded as an "abomination" for several reasons during that time, and is still relevant now. There are many verses in the old testament regarding this sin, but one that is very timely is that which is found in the first chapter of Romans: "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever."

Whatever the rationale for those who support homosexuals, the texts leave no room for much maneuvering for such people. The Bible says persons committing homosexual acts are to be executed, and this is the unambiguous command of the Scriptures. The meaning is clear: anyone who wishes to base his or her beliefs on the witness of the Old Testament must be completely consistent and demand the death penalty for everyone who performs homosexual acts. It is unlikely that any American court will ever again condemn a homosexual to death, even though the Scriptures clearly commands it. Old Testament texts have to be weighed against the New Testament texts. Consequently, Paul's unambiguous condemnation of homosexual behavior in Rom. 1:26-27 must be the centerpiece of any discussion on this subject. For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with

women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

So also in Romans 12:12-14 it says: the night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put you on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof. In I Corinthians 6:9-10 it says: Know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortionists, shall inherit the kingdom of God. I Corinthians 7:2 says: Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

Again Genesis 5:19-21 says: the works of the flesh are manifest, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. In Ephesians 5:3 says but fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becomes saints; and verse 5-8 it reads as for this you know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. You should not be therefore partakers with them. For you were sometimes in darkness, but now you are the light in the Lord: walk as children of light.

Colossians 3:5-6 says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience." I Thessalonians 4:3 also says for this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication. I Peter 1:14-16 reminds us "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he who has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, be you holy; for I am holy." I Peter 2:11-12 say "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." I Peter 4:2-3 asks that we no longer should live the rest of our time in the flesh to the



lusts of men, but to the will of God, for the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.

A homosexual Episcopalian group estimates over 100 gay men and lesbians have been ordained as priests and deacons in the US Episcopal Church. Canon Gene Robinson, a homosexual in a committed relationship, was elected bishop of New Hampshire in 2003 by the American Episcopal Church, who is a member of World Council of Churches (WCC) in which Mar Thoma Church is also a member. We the Mar Thoma Christians, who claim to be

descendants of St. Thomas, and who claims the eastern tradition, culture, and values should wake up and strongly protest against the trends in the Episcopal Churches and other churches in United States. Probably God might have sent us here in this land to stand up against these unbiblical teachings and interpretations so that this nation may not become another Sodom. So let us teach ourselves and others that the true biblical approach is to live as God wanted us to live in His text, and not to follow the modern trends of this culture. May God guide the universal Church in the right direction so that His name may be glorified. ■

## The weaver's tapestry

Krupa Daniel, Philadelphia MTC



*Vivid colors that glaze the sky and earth  
Contrast with soft muted tones.  
Sweet and sharp aromas waft  
Up and off flowers, fruits and seas.  
Giant tidal waves, imperious mountains  
Stark canyons, and lush scenic plains;  
All steal one's breath away!  
Spicy, tangy and flavorful ambrosia  
Abounds in number and variety.  
Bird calls, chimes, symphonies and arias  
Ebbs and crescendos and surrounds.  
But most glorious and significant of all  
Is the fellowship with each other and God!  
Ah, am I not but a much loved strand  
in the weaver's hand.*

## Mar Thoma Valedictorian Award

In 1996, the Diocesan Assembly decided to establish the Mar Thoma Award for all High School Valedictorians belonging to the Mar Thoma Church. Over the past seven years, the Diocese has honored over 20 young people in various parishes with this award.

For the year 2004, please submit the nominations, through your vicar or assembly members, to the convener of the committee on or before July 5, 2004. Kindly attach proof of valedictorian status. Nominations can be sent to:

John Kunchandy  
9734 Glenhope Rd.  
Philadelphia, PA 19115  
(215) 676-4929

The awards will be presented at the 2004 Mar Thoma Family Conference in New York.



# New Sunday School Curriculum for North America

Dr. T. M. Thomas, Convener, Curriculum Committee

The dream of having our own curriculum for this diocese, an impossible task for several years, is being realized now. The Sunday Schools of North America, through the diocesan structure, have launched a project to develop a new curriculum. Preparations had been going on for the last two years and now writing of lessons has started. The plan is to write new books based upon the Mar Thoma Samajam Curriculum of the All India Sunday School Association.

Our plan is to publish twelve books for twelve grades. At a meeting presided by our Diocesan bishop prior to the Florida Family Conference (July 3, 2003), I presented a report for the previous year and the plan for the future. A document was prepared and copies sent to all Sunday Schools in North America inviting teachers, superintendents and Achen for the meeting along with my letter dated June 10, 2003. It was decided to form committees and write five lessons for each grade prior to the next Family Conference in New York in July 2004. The remaining 25 lessons (total 30 lessons in one class) would be completed by summer 2005.

Soon, twelve committees were formed, at least one in each Center. There are nine Centers in the Diocese, five in the Eastern Zone and four in the Western Zone. One book was assigned to each committee for the task. All these committees have an Achen as chair, a junior teacher (of the second generation) as convener and one or two senior teachers. Later, two or three members will be added for a total of six or seven.

Guidelines were given to all committees regarding the writing of the lessons. The material will be the same as that of the Samajam Curriculum used in India. It includes the theme in general, divided into six sections (subtopics). The Bible Reading is the same as found in Samajam books. However, each lesson is rewritten in a different format which is developed for the Diocese. While writing the lessons in the new format, the cultural context or the forces of this culture must be taken into account as well as the style of language. The work book idea is incorporated in each lesson, depending upon the grade or age. Hence, there is no separate work book. All students are expected to have a copy of the book to use, along with the teacher. A Samajam book published in India will be a resource book for the teacher.



*Diocesan Sunday School Council Vice President Rev. Alexander Thomas and Curriculum Committee Convener Dr. T. M. Thomas.*

The theme of the Samajam Curriculum and the Diocese is: "Being God's People in God's World". This theme is divided into six sections and they are: 1. God's Wonderful World; 2. God's Wonderful People; 3. God's Purpose for God's World; 4. God with God's People; 5. God's Work Among God's People and 6. Our Mission in God's World. There are five lessons in each section; hence, a total of thirty lessons for every year.

The five lessons we have selected for the next academic year (2004-2005) are in Section Three. These lessons are different for each grade, but they are placed under a common topic for all grades. The common topics in Section Three (for next year) are: 1. Nature of God; 2. God in Fellowship with Human Beings; 3. Broken Relationships; 4. Reconciliation; and 5. Eternal Purpose in Life.

In order to equip the committee members to write the lessons, I conducted three workshops at three distant locations, instead of bringing all to one place which may be the ideal arrangement. Besides committee members, other interested persons were included in these workshops. These workshops were conducted at New York (January 24, 04), Philadelphia (Feb 28, 04) and Houston (March 20, 04) each for 2-3 hours. About twenty participants attended these meetings. If anyone would like to get a copy of the materials distributed, please contact me. There will be another meeting at the 2004 Family Conference in New York which is open to all committee members and interested participants.

Please refer to the Conference Program for the exact time and location.

However, we have to understand that the work ahead is not easy, but a daunting one. Since we have members committed to the goal, I believe that we can accomplish this task. I spent considerable time with Samajam President, General Secretary and Curriculum Committee members last summer in India discussing the matter with them, and was assured of their support for our project. Together we can celebrate the Centenary of our Sunday School Samajam. God will work through us in bringing every child to Jesus, the motto of our Sunday school. ■



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# Sunday School—A Youth Perspective

Smitha Abraham Varampath, The MTC Staten Island, New York

*So they said to him, "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?"* John 1: 22

**A** frustrated student in my Sunday School class complained to me one day, "I don't see the point of coming here every week, I've heard that story already!" Oddly enough, I had the exact sentiments about Sunday School when I was growing up. So what made me come back after all these years and repeat those same old stories to kids who would rather be watching cartoons or rather yet, sleeping? As another student exclaimed once, "You don't have to tell me, I saw the movie!"

Growing up in the immigrant culture of New York, I am accustomed to people asking me where I came from. It is usually one of the first questions asked when you meet someone new. I have been asked that question many times by many people, and often in Spanish! Over time and in different situations, that question takes on several meanings. For me, it has become more than an attempt to categorize a person according to country of origin. It subtly asks a variety of other questions like "What language do you speak?", "What is your background?", and even, "What religion are you?" In effect, it asks the age-old identity question, "Who are you?"

Attempts at answering this only in one way or only in another are often very difficult, especially for second-generation youths. So while we are proud of our Indian heritage, we are also aware of American viewpoints. We are Christians. We are Indian-Americans. We are Malayalees. These seemingly contradictory identities make up who we are. I believe our Church, especially Sunday Schools, have a vital role in establishing a shared identity among the Malayalee Christian youths in America.

Sunday School is also important in our shared Christian experience. Our Christian identity supersedes all of whatever else we might think of ourselves. So the question now becomes: "Who are you really?" Those "same old stories" I learned in Sunday School years ago take on a new

meaning and reveal truths that I never understood when I was younger. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross has a deep significance for me that I had not appreciated before, and the power of prayer fully is realized now more than ever. Unfortunately, many of our youths today flounder in the cross-currents of an identity crisis. There are many who do not know who they are really. Some do not believe, and some others used to believe but are now disillusioned. How did this come about? What does this tell us about how we as a Sunday School, as a Church, and as a community should change in order to address the unique needs of our growing Indian-American identity?

It is time for an introspection. Is the Sunday School curriculum reflective of what we want our youth to learn? Is the Church well equipped to handle the needs of youth ministry in this context? Are we setting the right examples for our children? Do we realize what message has been received when our youth see the vicious church politics at play? Will we disregard the voice of the youth, which is the voice of the future, in the decisions of the Church?

As youth, we were once in the background. We are now the backbone of a rejuvenated organism. We have an identity. We are the Indian-American Mar Thoma Church. Now the question is: "What do you have to say for yourself?"

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest." Matthew 9:37-38

What we do is intrinsically a part of what we have to say about ourselves. In what manner you can, join up—let your light shine. If you can sing, join the choir. If you can teach, be a Sunday School teacher. If you can lead, we need leaders! To give credit where credit is due, many of the youths in the church today work in whatever capacity they can with whatever is available to them; but we need more of them! So, Sunday School actually does work! Our parents built the Church, let us pave a new path towards it. The time is already here for us to step up and receive this heritage, this identity that is ours. Then we can finally say to those who ask, "This is who I am. Now, who are you?" ■

*"The Holy Spirit makes a man a Christian, and if he is a Christian through the work of the Holy Spirit, that same Spirit draws him to other Christians in the church. An individual Christian is not Christian at all."*

R. Brokhoff



# My Sunday School

Sheryl Thomas, The New Jersey Mar Thoma Church

**F**rom pre-school onwards, we have been repeatedly taught the same stories and the same verses, with additions as the years went by. I always used to question why we kept learning the same stories and how we were learning anything new if it was the same old stuff. One day, my best friend and I were talking about the Bible, referring to some stories. I mentioned a particular detail of a certain story she did not recognize. A few months later, that same friend noticed me studying for the Diocesan exams with Dr. Alex's huge packet full of information and she asked me what I was doing. When I told her about the annual test and the amount of information on it, she told me that in her Sunday school, they did not go into that many stories in the Bible. She also mentioned that she did not consider the Bible as something that you had to read, but as a gift from God. I told her the Bible is surely a gift from God, but also a way to know God. God would not inspire writers to write so much if it were not meant to be read. Before then, I did not have a true value for our classes. I realized that day how wonderful our Sunday school is. It not only gives us knowledge about a great deal of the Bible, but gives us an appreciation for God's gift to us.

When I was asked to write about our Sunday school, I thought of all the times I faced problems in my life and was



sure that I would get through it. I thought back on the teachers and friends that guided me. Most of all, I thought about the imprint Sunday school lessons have left on my life. My relationship with God is not perfect, but never have I doubted the existence of God. Whenever I face difficulties, I automatically look back on the lessons I learned in Sunday school and despite anger or disappointment, I know in my heart that everything has a purpose and reason. Personal faith has allowed me to believe in those lessons, but Sunday school has imprinted them in me.

As a senior in high school, the future seems to be looming ahead and not a day goes by that I do not think of what it holds. From the days of playing with toy fire trucks and dolls to these days of college applications, we all dream of the future and careers we want to pursue. When the time comes close to actually make a decision it is tough to commit to something that may affect the rest of your life. This year, as I fill out applications for college, I look at the choices before me and I wonder how I can know which is right for me. I come back to the reassurances I have heard my entire life about God having a plan. I do not need to worry because He will guide me on the right path. I would like to thank our Sunday school for helping me remember that assurance. ■

## How Sunday School Has Influenced Me

Tiji Thomas, The New Jersey Mar Thoma Church

**I** was very fortunate and lucky to grow up in a Christian family. As young as I could remember, I would attend church and Sunday school every Sunday. In the early years, I was informed about the Bible stories that we all know and hear about and how great and loving our God is. Sunday school taught me the meaning of the Bible stories and how God helped people in the Bible through rough times.

But, as the years go by, you start going more in depth and have a greater knowledge of the Bible. We realize that it is not only a story but becomes more analytical and symbolic. Stories become more real and we have a greater appreciation and apply it to our daily lives.



When growing older, you do not forget what you have learned in Sunday school. It continues to grow and flourish even when going away to college, it becomes crucial and you never forget the Word of God. Without Sunday school I for one would be lost. Even though Sunday school is basically over by the 12th grade, we still continue to have youth classes and learn more about the teachings of God. It is very encouraging to have a mentor who is always there to encourage you and lead you during your spiritual walks with God.

As I am in college now, I have experienced trials and faced temptations. I had to adjust to so many things such as dorming, moving to a new state, meeting new people, making friends, etc. I would never forget to pray, nor did I lose track of those Bible stories that helped me greatly



throughout my exams and through my friendships both old and new. I especially love the story about the talents. Everyone has a special talent that God gave them to share with others. If we are not sharing these talents, then how are we spreading the love of God? It can either be through singing, speeches, being a teacher, a leader in your church, a priest, etc. The important lesson is our love for God, which should be our most important talent for God. I like it when we go over the stories we learned from way back when I was a child. We used to look at things through a child's perspective, but now, we see greater and better things. We realize there is so much to a certain story one could not even imagine it back then as a young child.

A famous quote by Nelson Mandela states, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". Educating young children in Sunday school and bringing them up with Christian values can change their life as well as that of others. As times goes on, I now see all the younger kids and how they have such a love and yearning for God. Our Sunday school is a great place to know God and knowing and learning when you are a child is best. You can grow up with the Lord and share with others. I will never forget what I have learned in my younger years because I have implemented these teachings in my life now. Sunday school was, and still is, a big part of my life as it has allowed my life to change and I hope that everyone who attends will be touched by the Word of God in this way. ■

## Essence

Ancy George (Los Angeles, CA)



I get washed by the blue waters,  
And I feel the coolness of it.  
I get stamped by dirty feet,  
But no one notices it.

I get touched by tiny fingers,  
who build me to a house.  
I get walked over by sweaty feet  
That leaves its mark behind.

I get pushed in the sea floor,  
And get pushed out by waves.  
I get burned by the Sun  
And no one knows the heat I bear for days.

I get sat on; spat on  
Walked on; slept on.  
And nothing's felt by another  
And I remain unheard.  
But when I feel the touch of a child,  
Or by souls in love or souls that find peace at shore,  
I find my essence, my God-given essence.

Do you wonder what I am?  
I am a grain of sand,  
Sand on which form peals  
Not by my strength  
But by His touch.

Yes, that's me and you,  
Broken vessels of His,  
Rejected, walked over,  
Carried by pain,  
By fiery trials that seem to hurt in vain.

Honey, His touch can make a difference,  
To a sand unnoticed,  
It's a pearl that adds much worth.  
You and me are His sands,  
And His touch "the pearl"  
A set of broken vessels,  
Yes, that is our essence,  
Our God-given essence



# Renewal of our Christian Service

Sibby Matthew, The Mar Thomas Church of New Jersey

**S**econd Corinthians 4:13-18 is a passage taken from Paul's letter to the believers at Corinth. A preface to the book says that Paul writes this letter to calm the disagreements, restore unity to the congregation and to re-establish his role as a leader to the church at Corinth.

What we read is part of the passage about 'Treasures in Jars of Clay'. God's mercy is helping the Corinthians to continue their ministry and Paul reminds them not to lose heart. Some of our Bibles explain this because false teachers were trying to take over the church in Corinth. Paul is defending the gospel and his ministry. The knowledge and power they have is from God but with that comes suffering. He reminds the Corinthians that Christ's sufferings will continue through them. They will endure the frustrations of a sinful world like Christ did but by enduring them, they will reveal Christ's glory as well.

In verses 13-15 of the passage, we understand that by keeping their faith strong, the people of the church should spread the news about Jesus and the glory of God. In verses 16 and 17, Paul is encouraging them to keep strong. Are they really wasting away? I think Paul uses this term as not physically wasting away, but probably emotionally. The troubles that the Corinthians faced may have caused them to be vulnerable to emotions like depression or discouragement. But, despite outward suffering, Paul reminded them that those who have Christ in their heart were inwardly strong.

In verse 18 we read, "so we fix our eyes on not what *is* seen, but on what is *unseen*. For what is *seen* is temporary but what is *unseen* is eternal". This reminds me of a verse that most of us know by heart—Hebrews 11:1 — "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see".

Right, so we should focus on our faith in God and the promise of salvation He gives us. "For what is seen is temporary"—what is temporary? Paul might be referring to the suffering that we read about—the emotional and even physical suffering that each believer experiences. What else is temporary?—Our physical lives; our bodies will waste away but the Holy Spirit in us never will.

These verses help us reach a focus point—**Renewal of our Christian Service.**

Most of us are in this renewal mode for the New Year. We start off with New Year resolutions like, "I promise to share with my brother or sister", or "I promise to keep my mouth shut when I get angry at my wife" or "I promise to exercise every day". But what about resolutions regarding



our duty as Christians?

By Christian service, I mean the efforts we make to spread the Good News. Missions to other countries are definitely a large part of this but, I would like to focus on our efforts and services within our church community, I feel it is necessary to go out to others to teach about Jesus and the Bible but more importantly, each person must have a solid foundation—and that foundation for most of us is our church family.

So what are some duties that we have in our church? Some of us are office bearers, some of us are in Sunday school and some of us are in choir. Our duties can range from simply being an active participant and role model in the church liturgy—to volunteering to cook something for an event—to going to choir practice.

I read an article in Focus Magazine that asked the reader whether they were part of an audience or part of a congregation when they were in church. Let us ask ourselves that question: When you come to church are you actively serving and praising God with your church family or are you sitting back waiting for God to come to you? Do you criticize the choir for not being loud enough or do you open your hymnbook and sing because God deserves to be praised louder? Do you wait for someone to ask you to donate to meet the needs of the church or do you realize your blessings and give accordingly?

Many times we look at what others are doing and we feel that we can never do as much as they do. But our service for Christ does not have to be judged in comparison to others.

For example, 2 Kings 5 tells the story of Naaman. Naaman was commander of the army of Aram. He was a valiant soldier and a victorious leader but his one weakness was his leprosy. In one of their victories, Naaman's soldiers captured a girl to be a servant for Naaman's wife. The servant girl learned that Naaman had leprosy and shared her belief to her mistress that a prophet in Samaria could heal him. So Naaman got permission from the king of Aram to travel to Israel. There, Naaman met the prophet Elisha and was told to wash himself in the Jordan River seven times—and thus, he was healed! From then on, Naaman promised to worship only the God of Israel.

So, think about it. My Women's Devotional Bible helped me to realize this: If that young servant girl did not tell her mistress about Elisha and her faith, then the commander of the army would not have been led to realize the God of Israel. Therefore, do not ask yourself, "how am



I doing in comparison to others?" but do ask yourself, "how am I doing with what God has given me?" In the parable of the talents, each person was given an amount of money "according to his ability". So it is each person's duty to use what he or she has been given to help the church for God's glory.

The following excerpt from the book, *A Call to Prayer*, cited in Focus Magazine is noteworthy: "No one would argue that Christian service is important. Serving on committees and developing programs that help the church carry out its mission is vital. But we tend to be so activity-oriented that we often forget that the heart of Christianity is a relationship with a person, the person of Jesus Christ." This essential relationship often takes a backseat to our Christian service. Restoring this missing element in our prayer lives will rejuvenate us spiritually and enable us to carry on in our service to the Lord.

There is a lot of discussion today about burnout in the church. Among those who serve, care and give of themselves there seems to be a point of breakdown. An exhaustion, physically and emotionally as well as spiritually, saps them of their strength to continue service. I believe that many of the problems relating to burnout can be overcome by a restoration of relationship in prayer. It is what we might call "intimacy with God in prayer".

So, after reading this, let me ask— "Have you ever felt burnt out?" May be you have felt exhausted physically, emotionally and/or spiritually. May be lack of participation from others or conflicts with others have spurred this burned out feeling. I can say for myself that I have felt burnt out.

Paul's advice to the Corinthians can help us in this case. "Do not lose heart". Though outwardly we may feel that we are wasting away we can be renewed inwardly day by day. How? Well first we can be conscious of our attitude. We have become disheartened when differing opinions and behaviors prevent things from going smoothly. But Philippians Chapter 2 tells us "If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being in one spirit and purpose". Like-minded— does this mean that we won't have differing opinions or behaviors? No—the chapter goes on to say to have attitudes like Christ and be accepting and loving of each other. Our church shares one spirit and one purpose.

How else can we be renewed day by day? The only answer was read from the excerpt and this is, intimacy with

God in prayer. Prayer—we know this is the key to our relationship with Jesus. There are so many articles and books about prayer from which I have collected three basic ideas on how to renew our prayer lives:

Spend more time with God. Time—it's such a simple concept. It is so easy to devote it to everything BUT prayer. It is amazing that we can spend an hour watching TV or talking on the phone but how hard is it for us to spend an hour with God? Throughout the gospels we read that Jesus spent time talking to His Father.

Next, spend-time with people in love with God. What better a place than our own church to do this? I know especially the youth fellowship, including myself, are challenged because we prioritize so many other things before a bible study. Jesus chose men that loved God to be around Him all the time.

And, lastly, get to know Him more in His Word. We can communicate with God better when we know Him better—and the Bible is the tool that reveals Him to us.

I have noticed our involvement in our church community can really affect our relationship with the Lord and our fellowship with each other, and vice versa. But despite our troubles of burning out, we can go back to 2 Corinthians verse 17, for our light and momentary troubles help in achieving an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

I would like to share how the renewal of Christian service is related to me personally. As I mentioned before, I have felt burned out within our church community. There have been times where I have felt burned out in all three aspects—physically, emotionally and spiritually—and I feel that all three are linked.

I had lost interest in all the things I was involved in— Youth fellowship, Sunday school, choir—I began to notice changes in the way things were run from when I was younger. For example, maybe it's just me but when I look at the kids younger than me, I think, "Wow if I did that when I was their age, my parents would have spanked me even before we reached home!" and when I look at parents much younger than mine, I realize that times are changing and ways of thinking are changing. I have realized that what worked in the past might not work in the future.

In doing this study, I realized that it is in doing Christian service that you realize what God has given you, what you can do to improve yourself and what you can give to others. I am still adjusting to changes have realized that my previous attitude distanced me from being intimate with God and my attitude should be more like-minded. I pray that you do not lose heart and that you focus on what is unseen in your efforts to serve Christ this year. ■

*"See God in every person, place, and thing, and all will be well in your world."*

Louise Hay



# Attitudes—The Inner Lens

Mrs. Reena John, Houston

What do you mean by Attitudes? Attitude is the perception of mind. It is how you see the things through the eyes of your mind. The Malayalam word is "*Manobhaavam*" that also clearly explains the meaning of attitude that is "*manasinte bhaavam*." Being a person [girl] growing in close relationship with God, we are expected to have certain attitudes so that our life reflects the character of Christ. Here I would like to discuss about the attitude in relation to three aspects.



## 1. Attitude towards God

**How should be the attitude towards God?** The blueprint is given by God in Old Testament in Deuteronomy 6:4-5 which mentions about loving God with your whole body, mind, and soul. How is it expressed? It is expressed in three different ways.

**Attitude of reverence.** The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, as mentioned in Proverbs. What does it mean? Do we have to have an attitude of fear? No, it is not being afraid of God, but giving Him due worth. How do we give Him due worth? As in Psalms 145:3, great is the Lord, He is the most worth of praise, His greatness is beyond discovery. So worship is the recognition of who God is and of who we are in relation to Him. So attitude of reverence leads to proper worship.

**Attitude of trust**—Psalms 33:21, "In Him our hearts rejoice, for we are trusting in His holy name." It means recognizing that God is trustworthy and then trusting Him above all. As we grow in relationship with Christ, we believe, but our attitude should be to believe more [as the prayer of the father of the demon possessed boy in the New Testament, "Help me in my unbelief."]. As a pastor remarked to a young boy who was strong in faith, to lean hard on someone who will be able to carry his weight, and that is to lean on Christ. But we seem to trust on other things with our weights more easily than the Lord. The attitude of trust leads to rejoicing of heart.

**Attitude of thanksgiving**—Psalms 9:1 "I will thank you Lord with all my heart. I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done." Being thankful to God is honoring him through our praises. If we grow in relationship with Christ, our attitude of thankfulness will reflect Christ in our life. In New Testament, we find Jesus acknowledging the faith of one leper out of the ten who came back to thank Him. As mentioned in the above verse, attitude of thankfulness leads to witnessing.

## 2. Attitude towards ourselves

Proverbs 23:7 "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." An attitude towards life is a reflection of the inner person. Everyone

experiences hurts and disappointments. The response to these setbacks will determine their influence on one's life. If bitterness, aggression, or withdrawal is the reaction, it will prove to be a destructive influence. If they are met with the attitude that these situations are opportunities for personal and spiritual growth, their influence will be just that. It is easy to say so, but difficult to do, and we can easily be discouraged unless we walk in daily fellowship with Christ. We can have three decisions of a.) hold on, b.) do not run, c.) take one step more. Why is it important to have a healthy attitude? As mentioned in the

above verse, all the reactions will be the result of our attitudes. As Norman Wright has said, "Two men looked out from prison bars, one saw mud, the other saw stars. And that leads to how the person experiences life in prison." So the proper attitude of oneself will lead to the display of true character of Christ in one's life.

## 3. Attitude towards others

Many a times, we find spiritual people good with themselves, but can never adjust with others. That is because of wrong attitude towards others. We should understand that we would never be able to control every situation in life. There will be people who will bother us, many will frustrate us, but what should be the attitude of a believer. In Philippians 2:5, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." And this is in terms of your relationship towards others. One of the toughest place to show good attitude is at home. Often being around the same people can lead to lack of respect and appreciation for them. It is easy to take family for granted when you know them so well. While no family is perfect, there are certain things that you can do to help things out a little. While we are teenagers, I know that the world can seem to be horrible, especially the family. And some days we may think that there is no way out or will not make it through. So it is natural for us to slam doors, talk disrespectfully, and roll our eyes while talking to our parents. But being in relationship with Christ, our attitude should be different. Just stop, think, and analyze the situation and apply the attitude as seen in the verse mentioned above. Now why I emphasize on family because that is the place where it is the most difficult to follow the right attitude. If it goes right there, then it will be smooth everywhere.

So what is the result of these positive attitudes? If we have a good attitude towards life and others, it will surely keep us above the spiritual standards and we can bring some good in the lives of the people around us. And by doing this, we can surely gain one more soul for Christ. ■

"Attitudes" is a topic from a Women's Bible Study Series  
Reena John is the wife of Rev. John George, Youth Chaplain, Houston



# Let Us Sing Together

George C. George (Jeoju), St. Mathew's MTC, Toronto, Canada

A recent article in "The Scientific American" called, "Cosmic Symphony" reported a proposition that sound waves powerfully shaped the early universe. New observations of the cosmic microwave background radiation detected by microwave telescopes show that the early universe resounded with harmonious oscillations. Though the scientific debate may continue, many a song have been written on the heavenly echoes of music.

Like the soul and the spirit, music cannot be seen but people to different depths can sense it. A good analogy is found in ground water prospecting in places where water is scarce, for digging a well. There are scientific methods for water prospecting which are usually 70% dependable in accurately finding a ground water source. But there is a non-scientific method used even in North America called "Water Witching" and it is 99% dependable in hitting an underground water source right on. Some people, ordinary in all aspects, can sense the presence of an underground water source when walking on the ground carrying a stick, a metal rod or a key chain and often they feel vibrations in their body! Similarly, original music is felt in the hearts of people in a blissful way and as they sense it, they can express it as a song or an instrumental composition after developing it on a musical structure (Scale/Ragam and Rhythm/Thalam).

Original music is a composition, a tune or a style that was never expressed before and it is distinguishable from a "crafted work" by its power to capture the minds and survive the test of time. The sense is a gift from God, not a skill and cannot be created using academic knowledge or technological gizmos. Nor is it inherited by default or geographically restricted. The world witnessed expressions of this intuitive talent through the songs made by the Beatles like, "All you need is love". Those who have listened to "Rabindrasangeeth", a style developed by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, would cherish the divine presence brought by those tunes. Original Christian hymns have a great power to give hope and comfort to a weeping heart. Also, singing harmony perfectly, bring tears of joy in people's eyes.

The Mar Thoma church has traditionally supported and nurtured original music written by remarkable individuals endowed with original musical talent. Thousands of believers over the generations have been singing the songs of Sadhu Kochukunju Upedesi, Yustus

Yusef, Mosavalsalam, V. Nagel, P. V. Thommi and Rev. K. P. Philip. These songs are the musical and theological articulation of their true-life experiences. There is no doubt that incidences of divine presence in life kindled their creative talents. "Negro-spirituals", are songs evolved from the real life experiences of African Americans. They expressed their hope in difficulty, their faith in God, love and unity—through powerful songs. It is interesting to note that Negro-spiritual songs like "Amazing Grace" can be played using only the black keys of a piano.

Leo Tolstoy wrote in "War and Peace", "The most difficult thing, but an essential one is to love Life, to love it even while one suffers, because Life is all, Life is God and to love Life means to love God." Worship songs can transform a person's attitude towards life.

Music is a universal language and it has no cultural barriers. An imaginative musical mind can perceive the traditional Malayalam songs in the western singing background, adding harmonies and accompaniment using creativity, to make it a revolutionary style of singing in gospel music. Few Marthoma Church choirs in the USA have already moved in this direction. As colors add radiance to a picture, harmonies and accompaniments add expressions to a song. Adding variety in worship singing invites more participation and exposes the trans-cultural dimensions of Christianity. There are many variety of styles that could create a vibrant worship atmosphere—Choral singing, Barbershop harmony arrangements, Indian semi-classical, Traditional Malayalam Christian songs and innovative styles, Gospel pop songs (Songs by Glad, Michael W. Smith, Amy Grant etc.) and new compositions. As original Christians, let us sing together the hope that we have seen in Christ. ■

*"Sing joyfully to the Lord you righteous*

*It is fitting for the upright to praise him*

*Praise the Lord with the harp*

*Make music to him on the ten stringed lyre*

*Sing to him a new song*

*Play skillfully and shout for joy".*

Psalm 33

*Whenever a man is ready to uncover his sins, God is always ready to cover them.*

anonymous



# Back to the Basics

Ajay Thomas, Epiphany MTC, New York

**V**ince Lombardi, arguably the greatest football coach in American history, employed a simple principle that carried him to unparalleled success. He demanded his players return to the fundamentals of the game. When a ball was thrown, catch it; when caught, run with it; when dropped, jump on it. His charge was simple—Return back to the basics!

Today, it is the obligation of the Mar Thoma Church to assist each parishioner to do the same. We live in a society that has been swept in the flow of pluralism and Christians, struggle to swim against the tide. Society now permits and even endorses issues that a generation prior would have trounced. Here, the Mar Thoma Church, created to stand out, must never seek to fit in. However, an authentic difference must go beyond our exterior Eastern oriented worship to our fundamental core. The Church must issue the call to return back to the basics of Biblical teaching. This need is profoundly evident in the Church's teaching and the laymen's understanding of soteriology (doctrine of salvation) as well as the supremacy of Christ.

The Mar Thoma Church has prided itself as a bridge church—its pillars rooted in both Oriental and Evangelical Christianity provides a seemingly safe passage between Evangelicalism and Eastern Orthodoxy. Not having placed itself fully in either camp, the Church has been able to accommodate ideas of both worlds. While this may have ecumenical benefits, a common lay-person like me is often left confused in matters of theology such as soteriology, where the two camps clearly hold variant viewpoints. Surely, Eastern Orthodoxy does not join in the Protestant rallying cry of justification by faith alone. Interestingly, influenced by the Christian Missionary Church (CMS), it was to such a cry that the founders of the Mar Thoma Church originally responded. Further, Evangelical thought teaches that salvation, though already accomplished in eternity, is actualized in time and space when an individual accepts Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. As Bishop Stephen Neil rightly said:

“Conversion is the beginning of real Christian life. Christian nurture, education and worship may be valuable preparations. But no one is or should be called a Christian until he has personally encountered God in Jesus Christ, until he has personally repented, until he has personally accepted God's gift of salvation through faith in Christ, until by faith he has individually been born again. The reality of the Church in the world depends on there being enough people who have passed through this experience and through whom it can be passed on to others.”

Therefore, this confession of personal faith holds great weight in Evangelical circles, as is evident with its emphasis on altar calls (call to personal decision and repentance).

On the other hand, Oriental Orthodoxy, while it acknowledges the prominence of faith, incorporates various elements to salvation not accepted in Evangelicalism. While Evangelicalism clings to altar calls, Oriental Christianity clings to the altar itself. An observant pastor once remarked that one can discern the pulse of a church simply by examining its physical structure. When one stands in the middle aisle and gazes forward, an altar that is fixed in the center is usually focused on sacraments. On the other hand, if there is a pulpit in the middle, that church is focused on preaching. The proper balance of course would be to find one behind the other, both being at the very core. Yet as it stands, while the Evangelical tradition emphasizes the preaching of the Word, the Eastern tradition emphasizes the administering of the sacraments. For instance, Oriental understanding of salvation accommodates baptismal regeneration. That is, a person is saved or grafted into the heavenly community through infant baptism by the covenant extended to Christian parents. The communalism of the East extends salvation to the children of believers, prior to any personal confession of faith, as is deemed necessary by the individualism of the West. This Eastern understanding, as accepted by the Mar Thoma Church, would find no friend in Evangelical Christianity. This then begs the question, where does the Church stand? What is the Church's understanding of salvation? Are we saved in our personal confession of faith or through a covenant extended to our parents? While the St. James liturgy is profoundly useful for worship, it does not fully answer these questions and so the Church must. It is not my intention here to conduct an exhaustive evaluation of soteriology, but merely to consider again where we position ourselves on this fundamental point of Christian doctrine. While it may be most comfortable and accommodating to lie in the middle, the Mar Thoma Church is forced to take a stand on such points or be doomed to vagueness and ambiguity in its doctrine.

Likewise, the Church must also reinforce its high view of the supremacy of Christ. Pluralism has become the dominant theme of our times and tolerance the key phrase. Yet as the old adage reminds us, a people that stand for nothing will fall for everything. The summons of modern culture is to passively accept all religions as equal in substance and significance. Here the Church has remained hazy at best. The primacy of Christ and Christ alone as a means to salvation, has not been adequately stressed.

A short time ago I attended my parish for Christmas Eve service. The chief guest and orator for the evening was an unconverted Hindu. Now, I will be the first to commend the speaker for various accomplishments and achievements throughout her life. Her efforts in the social arena are to be commended and even copied. However, I sat for a half hour hearing a social message with not one



reference to Christ. Here we were, a whole Christian congregation gathered to celebrate the birth of the Savior, and His name was not mentioned, not even once. The book of Acts teaches us that, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12)." How then for the Christmas Eve message, could we have so blatantly ignored this great name? It occurred to me, the Mar Thoma Church would never permit a Hindu to serve communion or conduct a baptism. How can we hold such a high view of sacraments and such a low view of preaching? How can we casually tolerate, no rather, intentionally invite an unbeliever to serve the Christmas message? The fault is by no means with the speaker, but with we the body who invited her to such a role.

If ever a society needed to hear the clear truth regarding the exclusivity of Christ, it is ours. Yet so often the Mar Thoma community has bought into and preached religious pluralism. The message that Christ alone is the way, truth, and life must be unashamedly proclaimed. Even as Luther shouted, "Faith alone" in the midst of his legalistic culture, the Mar Thoma Church must shout, "Christ alone" in the midst of her pluralistic one. Any compromise in this area will be detrimental to our Church.

I recently heard of an astute observation made regarding the Episcopal Church. Today, the issue over homosexuality has virtually torn the church in two. It has made front-lines in the media and has been the topic of

great conversation and controversy. However, it was reported that years ago, segments within the Episcopal Church eased their convictions regarding the exclusivity of Jesus Christ in regards to salvation. At that time, not even the smallest fraction of hysteria seen today was stirred. Instead compromise to pluralism was pronounced victor. Inevitably, when the Church accepted an alternative means to the understanding of salvation, it was only a matter of time before it accepted an alternative means to the understanding of marriage as well. The conclusion then is not that pluralism will lead to something worse like homosexuality; no, pluralism itself is most terrible. However, not only will it corrode our unseen core, but will rear its ugly head to the surface of our daily lives.

The time has come for the Mar Thoma Church to take a stand. We must assess afresh to what pole we are drawn. Do we find ourselves rooted in Evangelical or Oriental Christianity? To claim both is virtually the same as claiming neither. Further, is Jesus Christ the "only way," and if so, do we have the courage to explicitly pronounce Him as such? There is no doubt that the Lord has richly blessed and used the Mar Thoma Church. It is with this sincere prayer that He will continue to do so that this article has been written; words motivated not by criticism, but by concern. Nonetheless, it is surely time for us to once again hear the charge of Vince Lombardi. Better yet, may we once again hear the call of Abraham Malpan, and return back to the basics. ■

## Matrimonial

Marthomite parents seeking boys for daughter, 28 yrs, 5' 2", God-fearing, Master's teacher, born/brought up in U.S. Seeking Marthomite/CSI boys, 28-32, born/brought up outside Kerala now living in U.S. with a firm foundation in Christ. All replies be sent to Rockzgal@aol.com with a recent picture.

Marthomite parents settled in USA invites marriage proposals for their 24 year old U.S. born daughter. She is a Teacher in USA and has a Masters in Teaching. We are looking for a professionally qualified boy from Marthomites or C.S.I. In interested please respond with bio-data and a recent photograph to: Mar Thoma Messenger, Box GT 11040, Sinai Mar Thoma Center, 2320 S. Merrick Avenue, Merrick, NY 11566.

Marthomite parents well established in the U.S. for over 30 years invite proposals for their 27 year old daughter, 5' 9", tall, slim, fair, and beautiful, born and raised in the U.S. She finished medical school from a prestigious school in India and is currently completing her internship at a distinguished hospital in the U.S. She is God-fearing with excellent morals and a very family oriented attitude, intelligent with a wonderful sense of humor. We are looking for a tall Marthomite boy raised in the U.S. equally educated, with a great family attitude, God-fearing presence, and abundant sense of humor. Interested parties please respond with a recent photograph to tmdj@yahoo.com or to Mar Thoma Messenger, Box ST21042, Sinai Mar Thoma Center, 2320 S. Merrick Avenue, Merrick, NY 11566.

Proposals invited for 27 year old good looking Marthomite doctor (MD) with high moral values (born and brought up in USA) and excellent character, from parents of girls with similar education (completed MD or in residency) of any denomination. If interested, please contact: coolsamy22@yahoo.com.



# The Impact of Youth Fellowship and the Future Marthomites

By Neena Jube

*Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6*

**A** child is taught by word, example, and experience. Experience is probably the most important because of its long-range effect. Sunday School is one experience that has taught me so many important lessons, values, and morals. Through Sunday School, I've learned that the only person that I can turn to, no matter what I do, is God. Even though I sin against Him, He will be there for me with His hands wide open. He will be there with me always on my journey through life. He will carry me during my rough times and help me make my decisions and lead me to the right path. Even if we have learned about God's path, some of us choose to be like lost sheep, and we begin to walk erratically from this path. As a youth, I believe the Youth Fellowship, like the Sunday School, is one experience that may unexpectedly turn our life around, and may help each one of us to follow the right path; the path towards God. One may ask what youth fellowship is. According to the Webster dictionary, fellowship is the condition of sharing similar interests, ideals, or experiences, as by reason of profession, religion, or nationality. However, according to many of the Marthoma youth today, fellowship has a deeper and additional meaning. Youth fellowship, to me, is a place of comfort and spiritual healing with the guidance of other Christians, and most importantly a place to bond and be part of a big family with my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

In today's society, the Marthoma Church recognizes that our youth are on their own journey of faith and need a place to explore that faith in relationships with God and others. From the moment we first entered our church and through our high school years, Sunday School and the Youth Fellowship have made me and many others feel connected to the parish life. We learned to accept God in our life and to be part of God's family. In addition to involving parish life, we have programs and activities specifically designed for our spiritual growth and development.

The Youth Fellowship has been well known for having a large and still growing group. Many people may ask questions pertinent to the success of the Youth Fellowship and its poignant and influencing place in spiritual support. To answer this question we must understand the three principles that the Youth Fellowship is based on: worship, services, and witness.

Worship is essential in our lives, which includes daily bible reading and meditation, attending and taking special

parts in Sunday service, participation in family prayers and initiating it in those families where there is no prayer. Worship is not a ritual, but instead it is time for all of us to gather and praise God with all our heart, mind, and soul. Worship is not only on Sunday in church, but it should be part of our lives everyday. Jesus says in John 4:23, "true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks." God doesn't care where we worship, but instead how we worship. That is what Jesus is asking us to do in John 4:23; to worship God with all our hearts and minds and remind us to manifest Jesus in our life. I personally can say that I have seen many of the youth influence each other to praise God daily and establish a genuine and true worship. Before becoming a member of the Youth Fellowship I believed that Bible Studies and worship were boring and unnecessary. However, my opinion has changed recently and I see things in a different perspective. Bible studies and discussions about God's work and God's place in our lives has been a reawakening and a whole new realization.

Service is a motto of fellowship. Many of my fellow Christians have a desire to aid those who are unfortunate and in need of some guidance. The Youth Fellowship is a place where we can work as a group to fulfill such desires and be the Good Samaritan of today's society. Every year, our Youth Fellowship goes to nursing homes to sing carols to the elderly and disabled to enlighten their minds. In addition, our fellowship has been known for establishing a mentoring program, where the older generation guides the younger youth during their troublesome and confusing times. Jesus told His disciples before He was crucified that it would be a burden to be His followers and to be Christians. Jesus was one hundred percent correct. Being a true Christian is not the easy way of life to live, but with guidance from others, I know I am not alone on this journey of Christianity. As growing youths, we face many temptations and Satan is everywhere tempting us to take up the diabolical path. Whenever I fall astray, my older peers and friends are there with guidance and help me move on the right path. "You and I are not alone; we have God walking with us and carrying us during our tribulations, and we have each other as well". These are the words of our mentors encouraging and confirming our faith in God. Such guidance will help us to build a good character and establish imperative values that will make us stronger when we make our own decisions.

Witness is another crucial and significant part of the basis of Youth Fellowship. After going to Bible Studies,



Family Conferences, Junior Conferences, VBS, youth retreats and other events, I have seen and witnessed with my very own eyes God's work and the work of the Holy Spirit transforming people. Attending at some of these events, I feel as if I am a changed person. Sometimes it is overwhelming and amazing to see God's work in process. Witness helps people express their feelings and motivate others to go to God, and experience God's presence in their own lives. It is a poignant experience when words can not be used to express such emotions and one must experience God's work themselves to comprehend it all.

As the Youth Fellowship grows bigger, I feel that the members attention is diverted from basic principles to other secular things. Priorities are changing and sometimes we may focus more on personal enjoyment rather than spiritual nourishment. We should not forget our basic principles to overcome obstacles and shortcomings. We have a responsibility to this world to spread God's love and to show others what it means to be a genuine Christian by manifesting Jesus in our own lives through practicing our basic principles daily. ■

## Sometimes!

Soby Mathew, Seattle Mar Thoma Church

Sometimes we sit and stare outside  
Sometimes we think out of our mind  
Sometimes we know how things turn out  
But Marthoma Church will never fade out!

Sometimes things don't seem to be real  
Sometimes things ain't always what you feel  
Sometimes we think we are wrong  
But Marthoma Church will  
always stay strong!

Sometimes our hate lets out  
Sometimes we are in doubt  
Sometimes we run out of ideas  
But Marthoma Church will always be near us!

Sometimes you think the world is yours  
Sometimes you're sick and you don't have cures  
Sometimes you're weak but you can still fight  
Lets cut out the but and go straight to  
"Marthoma Church is tight"!

## The Light

Sini Mathew, The Philadelphia Marthoma Church

I want to be the reflection that shines your light.  
Open my eyes Lord fill me with the truth.  
In this corrupting world that is here today but will be gone tomorrow,  
make me clean, purify me Lord and make me whole.  
Make me Holy in your sight Lord; in your sight make me Holy.  
Make me the extremist. I want to be extreme. I want to be extreme for you, Lord.  
Make me the crazy fool who is blinded by the light. Use me to glorify your name.  
Break me and mold from who I want to be into whom you want me to be.  
Help me to distinguish between the way things are and the way they should be.  
Help me Lord to change this world more through the way I live and less through what I say.  
Let my actions speak LOUDER than my words.  
Every person that I meet let them be touched by your truth that is within me.  
Father, I want to do things that will change the way people feel, think, and live this life.  
I want to be the mirror that reflects your light.



# One Body

On March 21, 2004, St. Paul's Mar Thoma Church located in Mesquite, TX saw more than 100 Mar Thoma youth gather together to celebrate a Joint - Communion service with sister Dallas churches, The Mar Thoma Church of Dallas at Grand Prairie and The Mar Thoma Church of Dallas at Farmers Branch. With Diocesan Secretary Rev. Dr. John Joseph leading the service and a choir consisting of members from all three Dallas-area churches, the ceremony was a true reflection of the goal of TriYouth.

Tri-Youth: a ministry partnership of 3 Youth Fellowships

Written by Reena Thomas, Grand Prairie MTC and Designed by Alex Philip, Farmers Branch MTC.



www.triyouth.org

## Dallas Youth Ministry > > >

July, 1985, the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas began worship in Grand Prairie, TX. Three years later St. Paul's MTC, Dallas was formed in Mesquite, TX. In 1996, the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch was established.

TriYouth - a Dallas based youth ministry focused to maintain an ongoing fellowship and sense of unity amongst the youth of the three Mar Thoma Churches through teaching, prayer and worship.

The TriYouth started with regular Tuesday Bible Study from August 2002, under the leadership of Youth Chaplain Rev. Saji Joseph. Today it has grown into a multi-faceted ministry serving over 500 families through the formation of Jesus' IMPACT program in 2004.

During his visit to Dallas in June 2003, our Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa engraced the Jesus' IMPACT proposal. On December 2003 the new TriYouth Council and Managers were elected. Through the IMPACT initiatives, TriYouth has extended its outreach by encompassing the following areas:

- I** - Invitation
- M** - Mentoring
- P** - Prayer and Worship
- A** - Activities
- C** - Church and Community
- T** - Teaching the Scripture

TriYouth is the result of a myriad of youth from all different ages, all different churches, and all different points in their life. It strives to represent the Dallas Mar Thoma youth and unify them through a common purpose by exploring our beliefs and traditions. While TriYouth is still a work in progress, it is a great reminder that we are not isolated churches but an integral part of a much larger faith-One Body.



Each leg of Jesus' IMPACT has a committee. Mar Thoma youths of the entire Dallas region (Grand Prairie MTC), Sheena Philip as Secretary (Farmers Branch MTC), Treasurer (Farmers Branch MTC), Parish Secretary (Grand Prairie MTC) and Jane Chandy (Farmers Branch MTC) & J. Joseph (Grand Prairie MTC) and Jorge (Appu) Wilson (Farmers Branch MTC) are the youth community that meets the needs of all youth through prayer, support and cooperation that has proved to be a true reflection of the One Body.



tools. Appu Wilson from St. Paul's MTC was instrumental in the formation of the TriYouth Council. Bobby Mathew (Grand Prairie MTC) led a mission to the youth. Youth Chaplain Rev. John George Achen and Rev. Dr. John Joseph from St. Paul's MTC Youth Fellowship was instrumental in the formation of the TriYouth Seminar.

### Passion Week booklet

Last year's TriYouth Council also published Passion booklets to all three churches, which were distributed to different youth in each of the parishes. The TriYouth has opened up avenues of communication between the youths and families within the three churches.





team led by its team manager to create programs that hope to spiritually benefit the youth. The 2004 TriYouth Council consists of Lisa Mathew as Vice-President (Farmers Branch MTC), Julie Cherian as Joint Secretary (Grand Prairie MTC), Lijoy Philipose as representatives: John (Jiju) Manaloor (Grand Prairie MTC), Kezia Cherian (St. Pauls MTC), and the Youth Fellowship secretaries: Siby Philip (Grand Prairie MTC), Shawn Alexander Wilson (St. Pauls MTC) under the leadership of Saji Joseph Achen help foster a Mar Thoma youth fellowship. By working with all three youth fellowships, TriYouth has built an inclusive network of youth that is a great resource for the Dallas area youths.



### Leadership Seminar

The TriYouth Council also organized a Leadership Seminar earlier this year at St. Paul's MTC where leaders and officers from each of the three Dallas fellowships met and shared ideas and information as well as learned valuable leadership skills. The seminar's Convenor and Moderator was Rev. Dr. John Joseph Achen. The Houston Fellowship presented the Main Talk. The St. Paul's MTC was instrumental in hosting the Leadership Seminar.



### 1. Invitation

Shijo Philip from Farmers Branch MTC has undertaken the formidable task of creating a census of all youth in the Dallas area. With a comprehensive list of youths, this can be a great resource to the individual youth fellowships, the rest of the IMPACT teams, as well as the Region.

### 2. Mentoring

Sheeba Eapen from Farmers Branch MTC is working on bridging the age gaps through an established mentoring program called the "Big Sister Big Brother" program.



and distributed Easter cards. The articles were submitted from various churches and are just some of the ways of communication and fellowship amongst churches.



### 3. Prayer and Worship

Steven Mathew from Farmers Branch MTC organizes monthly local campus visits. These visits are geared towards the college community and bring Praise & Worship combined with a powerful message to those that live away from home. The team also organized the International Day of Prayer, a 48-hr Youth Chain of Prayer on March 5-7th.

### 4. Activities

Alex Philip from Farmers Branch MTC is focused on creating a SportsRetreat (Basketball, Volley ball) to help bring the youth together in a fun, safe atmosphere.

## THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

On February 28, over 150 youth and families from all three churches watched Mel Gibson's *The Passion of Christ* with a follow-up discussion at the weekly Tuesday night Bible study. The Dallas Mar Thoma churches were able to engage in the movie's striking depiction of Christ's last hours together as a community.



### 5. Church and Community

Jorge (Appu) Wilson from St. Pauls MTC headed the Joint Communion service where youths from all three parishes came together to celebrate Holy Communion. Grand Prairie's Achen Rev. Dr. C.A. Abraham, St. Paul's Achen Rev. Saju Zechariah and Youth Chaplain Rev. Saji Joseph assisted Rev. Dr. John Joseph Achen, who led an empowering message on missionary work. Farmers Branch's Achen Rev. Philip Mathew, and as per invitation the three parishes' Mandalam, Assembly and Council members were also in attendance. In appreciation of their service, a Farewell ceremony was conducted for Rev. Dr. John Joseph, Rev. Philip Mathew and Rev. Dr. C. A. Abraham all of whom will be leaving later this year.



### 6. Teaching the Scripture

Reena Thomas from Grand Prairie MTC is involved with Bible study, forming a Teen Area Bible Study (TABS) once a month that is geared specifically for the 12-17 crowd. The interactive Bible study follows a 10-lesson plan aimed at provoking discussion amongst teens and strives to incorporate leaders and host houses from each parish. The Tuesday night Bible study that meets

every week at the Farmers Branch MTC with discussions led by Saji Joseph Achen or guest speakers every fourth Tuesdays. Some of the guest speakers have included: Rev. Sunni E. Mathew (Los Angeles MTC); Rev. P. M. Mathew (Sihora); Mr. Alex Kolath; Mrs. Tebra Kolath; Mr. Jorge (Appu) Wilson; and Mr. Dan Varkey.



## YOUTH CORNER

# How the Mar Thoma Church Has Affected Me

Neetha Daniel, Seattle Mar Thoma Church

**T**he Marthoma church has been my church ever since I could remember. I attend the Marthoma Church of Seattle. For years we didn't have a church building and in the year of 2000 we purchased our own church building. Together we have come to rebuild and improve the church as a congregation. The youth has become more involved with the church activities. Being a part of that it has taught me what togetherness is.

When I was younger I would go to church because I was forced to. I would always try to get out of going to Sunday school in the morning. I remember our Achen once asked, "Why do you go to church?" I used to think because I have to. My answer to that question today is "to worship God and to grow spiritually." The Marthoma church has helped me have a deeper fellowship. The messages are a way to spread the good news of the Lord. The Marthoma church also helps me identify where I am in my walk with the Lord.

Our youth group is not big, we are a small group but exceedingly strong. We meet every Friday for different activities such as Bible study, Bible games and inspirational sessions with our Achen. Our group is like one big family;



we can all depend on one another and have a strong bond. We enjoy doing community activities such as the Union Gospel Mission of Seattle, Caroling at retirement homes and are always ready to donate our time and service. Being a part of the youth group has given me a way to be more involved with my church. It's a part of my inspiration and faith and has affected me greatly.

The Marthoma church has given me a chance to become a strong leader. For the last two years they have let me be a praise and worship leader for our youth. Our youth has started a new junior choir. We get together before the youth meetings on Fridays and sing the songs we sing for our church services and also learn new praise and worship songs. It has taught me how to be more responsible, by having to pick the songs for worship and lead our choir with the songs on Sunday mornings. It gave me a chance as a young individual to be noticed. There is so much excitement among the youth. I have learned that you can only change people's view of you when you seek to fulfill your own vision. I thank and Praise God for everything. ■

## 2004 West Coast Regional Youth Conference

*Theme: "CHRIST-CENTERED LIFE STYLE IN TODAY'S WORLD"*

**"I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me" Philippians 4:13**

*Venue: Valley of Blessing (Camp Berachah) in Auburn, WA*

*Date: June 24-27, 2004*

*Main Speakers: Rev. Saji Joseph & Dr. B. J. Prashantham*

*Hosted by: Mar Thoma Youth of Seattle, Mar Thoma Church of Greater Seattle, WA*

*Contact: Marthomayouthseattle@hotmail.com*

*Website: <http://www.seattlemtc.org>*







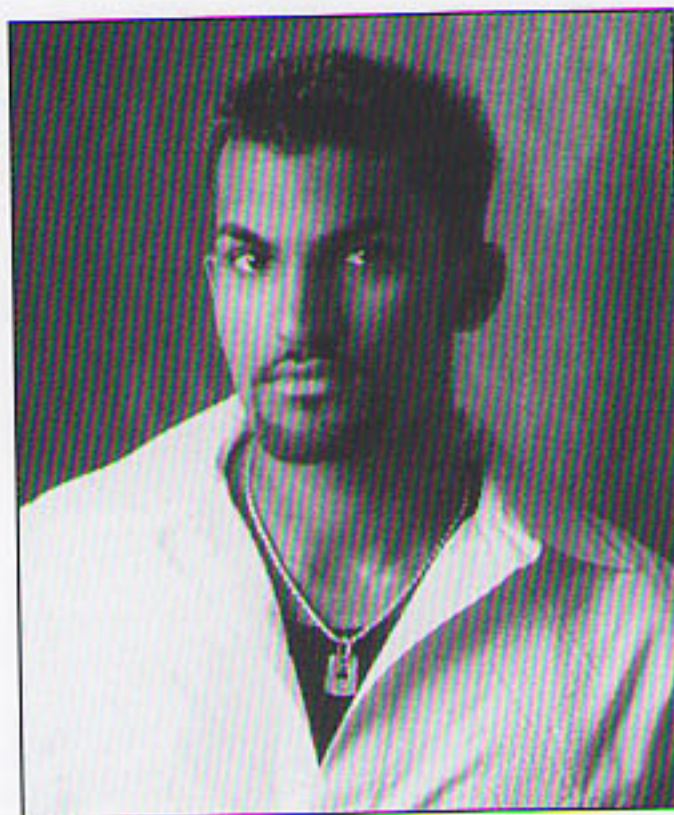
# A Heart Fixed on Jesus

Bonney Thomas, Seattle Mar Thoma Church

*"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus".* Philippians 2:5

What if, for one day, Jesus were to become you? What if, for twenty-four hours, Jesus wakes up in your bed, walks in your shoes, lives in your house, do everything that you would do? With one exception, nothing about your life changes. What if, for one day, Jesus lives your life with his heart? Your heart gets the day off, and your life is led by the heart of Christ. Think about it, what would you be like? Would people notice a change? Would your enemies receive more mercy from Christ's heart than from yours? How would you feel to have a heart like Jesus Christ? Would you still do, what you had planned for to do for the next twenty-four hour? Do we know what it's like to fix our eyes on Jesus? Pause for a second and think about your schedule. With Jesus taking over your heart, would anything change?

If you were a car God wants to control your engine. If you were a computer, God wants to claim the software and the hardware. But you are a person. So God wants to change your heart. God's plan is to help us become more and more like His son, and we should spend time getting to know Jesus' heart. God loves you just the way you are right now. If you think His love for you would be stronger, if your faith were, you are wrong. If you think His love would be deeper, if your thoughts were, wrong again. Don't ever confuse God's love with the love of people. The love of people often increases with performances and decreases with mistakes. Not so with God's love. He loves you right where you are. But He refuses to leave you that way. His heart was pure, peaceful, purposeful and spiritual. That's the kind of heart God wants us to have. Jesus took His instructions from God. It was His Habit to go to worship. It



was His practice to memorize scripture and read bible. His times of prayer guided Him.

*"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and the perfecter of our faith"* Hebrew 12:2.

There are times when we see. There are times when we observe. There are times when we notice changes, and then there are times when we study. Most of us know what it means to see a new car, or new boyfriend or girlfriend. But do we know what it's like to see Jesus or do we know what it's like to fix our eyes on Jesus. We live in a time where life is so busy and responsibilities are so many. It is often so hard to focus on anything when there are so many things to do. Yet our focus will decide our life. You must fix your eyes on Jesus not on Jennifer Lopez or Rani Mukerjee or any other human beings. To fix our eyes on Jesus is important and it is the key to whether we stand or fall as a Christian. When we fix our eyes on Jesus we can ask God's help in times of loneliness and sadness. The fisherman fixes his eyes on the boat; the boy fixes his eyes on the girl. The disciple fixes his eyes on the savior. So ask yourself these questions. Who am I? What is the purpose of me in this world? As a Christian it's our responsibilities to go out and spread the word of God. I once asked a girl, "Why are you so religious?" she replied with "I'm not, I just love God, you have to stop being so religious and start being open to the living God." That's the kind of attitude we should all have. Don't be ashamed to say I love God. Jesus is the ultimate model for every person. Thank the Lord for all the times He has tracked you down in life and allowed you the joy of discovering that He was walking right beside you along the way. May the Lord be with you all and helps us to have Peace and Love in our relationship with others. ■

## The Mar Thoma Messenger Annual Essay/Poetry Competition 2004

Essay/Juniors: **What can Mar Thoma Church do to help Homelessness and other social issues in USA.**

Essay/Seniors: **"Christian efforts to overcome violence with special reference to our Youth ministry"**

Poetry/Juniors: **Psalms, lessons for my daily life.**

Poetry/Seniors: **I see Christ in the world around me**

*Juniors* – 10 to 14 years as of June 30, 2004

*Seniors* – 15 to 20 years as of June 30, 2004

Essays not more than 1500 words. **Deadline May 15, 2004.** No extension of the deadline. Participants to sign and send along with their essays a declaration that he or she hasn't received any help whatsoever from anyone in the preparation of the essay. First, Second and Third prize winners will be awarded prizes at the 2004 Family Conference in New York.

Send your entries to:

Messenger Essay/Poetry Competition  
c/o **Mr. Abraham Mattackal**

2719 Studebaker Road • Long Beach, CA 90815  
Phone: 562-420-8817 Fax: 562-420-6528



## Life's Journeys

Nobin Vaidian, St. Thomas MTC, NY

Life is a journey  
Goes on forever  
To reach your goals  
Is your main objective  
Obstacles come in way  
But always surpass them  
You will get closer to your goal  
Every second of your life  
Time is running out of your grasp  
But can you run toward your goal  
Or to fall and give up  
Remember one thing to never give up  
Strive toward your goal  
For you will be rewarded  
Your success is waiting and  
Your future is waiting  
When you look back  
You laugh at the obstacles  
Because you reached your goal  
When all else has failed  
You have succeeded and your  
Journey is now complete.

## Courage Is My Hope

Reny Varughese, Epiphany Mar Thoma Church, NY

Courage is my hope,  
In the darkest night.  
The most powerful strength,  
To all my fright.  
Courage keeps me standing,  
Both brave and tall.  
Courage picks me up,  
Each time I fall.  
Courage is coward,  
Turned inside out.  
It keeps me believing,  
Without a doubt.  
Courage is my shield,  
In times of battle.  
Courage is my light,  
In the path of hope.  
Courage is my confidant,  
To climb a rope.  
Courage gives me strength,  
For another day,  
To keep on believing,  
And go my way.  
Courage is the hero inside of me,  
To save, to rescue,  
And set captives free.  
Courage is the strength,  
I inherit within,  
The God given hope,  
That will help me WIN!

## What is Passion?

Jason Thomas, Epiphany Mar Thoma Church, New York

**T**wo Weeks ago I went to see Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of The Christ* and I was amazed in what I saw. Couple of days later at school my English Professor Mr. Harris gave us the definition of the word passion. He told the class that passion is considered the suffering of someone for others. Then after hearing that I remembered in the movie how Jesus was a true example of passion by dying on the cross for our sins. That Jesus did not have to do this, yet he did this for the saving for all of humankind.

So what is passion? Passion is the love of others, it also means lust sexual love, even it means a love for something. Still the ultimate definition of passion is Jesus Christ and his death on the cross, and when the Church is going to celebrate Good Friday and Easter the meaning of passion becomes more clear. I hope that all of you go and watch this film, and by watching this film that you too will see for yourself the ultimate example of passion of Christ dying on the cross for salvation and forgiveness of us all. That to me is the true meaning of passion. ■





**Susan Varughese**, St. Thomas MTC, Yonkers, New York

## He lifted Me Up

There I lay motionless, as if in a deep sleep.  
Doctors all told my family and friends...  
That there is no hope for this child.  
My family and friends held strong to their faith,  
For they believed in the Lord  
That the Lord who raised Lazarus up from the dead  
Would surely raise this child of His up as well.  
And one day to the doctors, and nurses disbelief,  
That is exactly what He did for me.  
He lifted me up from the darkness  
He slowly restored my voice and strength  
They said-I would not walk again-  
But the Lord gave me my legs back  
To be able to walk and run again.  
He lifted me up from that darkness  
Where I lay motionless  
To be a living testimony for Him  
That the Father who raised Lazarus  
Was the same Father who raised me up from that deep sleep.  
To stand before Him  
To sing praises to Him with the voice He restored for me.  
To speak before mankind of His wonderful miracle  
A miracle that so many thought was impossible  
But NOT IMPOSSIBLE for our Father.

AND:

## Your Special Knight

Since you were young  
You've had many fantasies  
Especially those dealing with  
Who that special someone would be  
That special knight  
Who would carry you into the sunset  
You've had your mind set

That falling in love would happen this way  
And he would look like this  
And the first time you saw him  
That you would know it was him  
You would know that...  
This was your special knight  
But as you get older  
You realize fantasies are just that  
And nothing more  
Some may be fortunate  
And have their fantasies come true  
But those even MORE fortunate  
Are the ones who are patient  
Who let God reveal their knight to them  
You may have all these expectations  
But there is only one person  
Who would be perfect for you  
For God knows who he is  
For He has already picked him out for you  
And when you are ready  
He will reveal that person to you  
All we have to do  
Is get beyond our stubbornness  
And believe in God's choice  
That he's the one,  
It may start out as friendship  
And that friendship will grow  
It will grow to a feeling more intense  
A love so beautiful  
For it was rooted in Christ  
And when united in Christ  
Nothing can ever break it apart  
For he is your knight  
Hand picked by God himself  
And that is the greatest fantasy  
The fantasy for all to look forward to.



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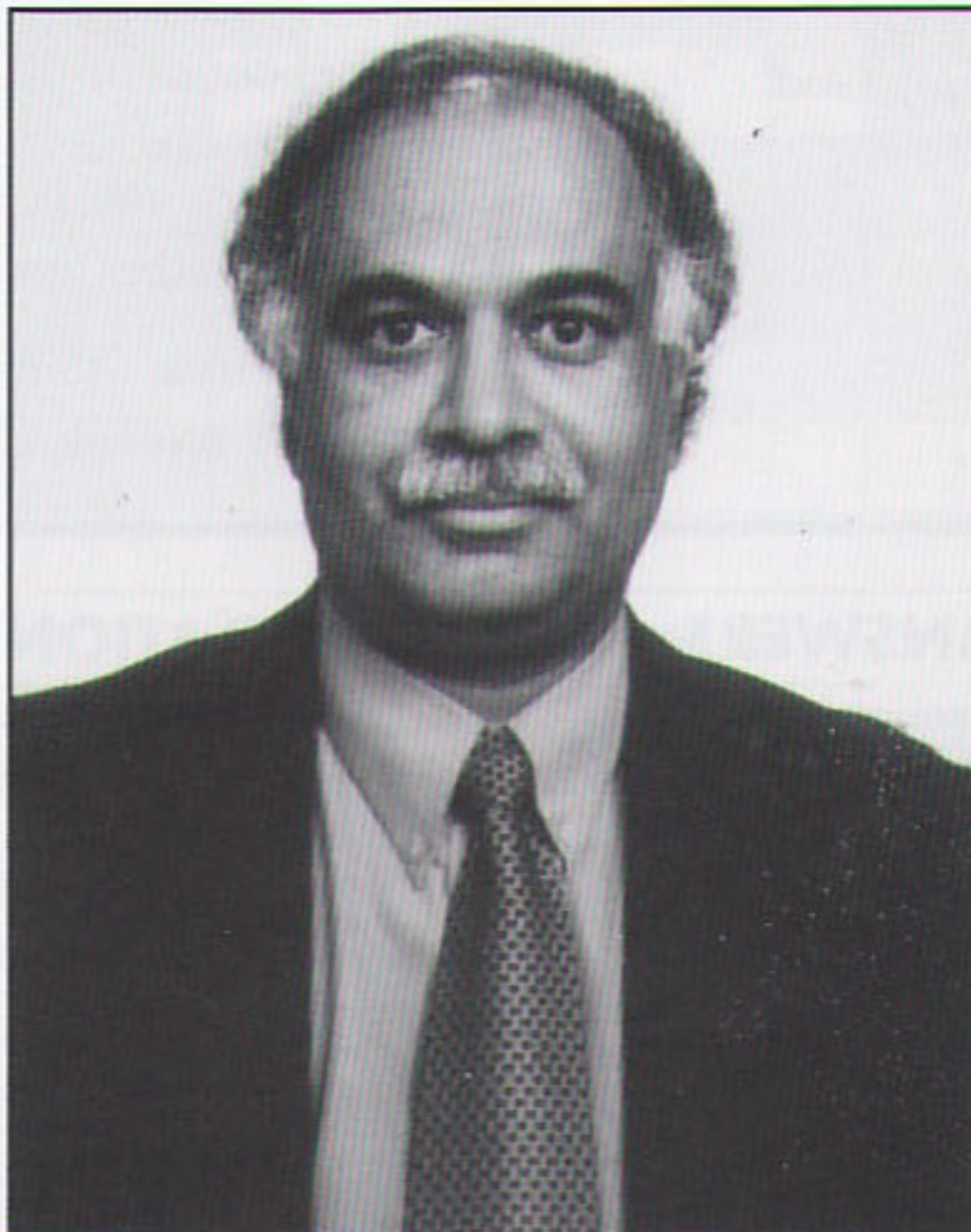


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*Thank you for having "Georgia on your mind..."*



## The Atheist and the Bear

Mathew Abraham, St. John's Marthoma Church, Queens Village, New York

An atheist was taking a walk through the woods.

"What majestic trees! What powerful rivers! What beautiful animals!" he said to himself. As he was walking alongside the river he heard a rustling in the bushes behind him. He turned to look. He saw a 7 foot grizzly charge towards him. He ran as fast as he could up the path.

He looked over his shoulder and saw that the bear was closing in on him. He looked over his shoulder again, and the bear was even closer. He tripped and fell on the ground. He rolled over to pick himself up but saw the bear right on top of him, reaching for him with his left paw and raising his right paw to strike him.

At that instant the Atheist cried out: "Oh my God!..."

Time stopped.

The bear froze.

The forest was silent.

As a bright light shone upon the man, a voice came out of the sky: "You deny my existence for all of these years, teach others I don't exist, and even credit creation to a cosmic accident. Do you expect me to help you out of this predicament? Am I to count you as a believer?"

The atheist looked directly into the light, "It would be hypocritical of me to suddenly ask You to treat me as a Christian now, but perhaps could you make the BEAR a Christian?"

"Very well," said the voice.

The light went out.

The sounds of the forest resumed.

And then the bear dropped his right paw, brought both paws together and bowed his head and spoke:

"Lord, bless this food, which I am about to receive from thy bounty through Christ our Lord Amen." ■

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

#### Bible Cross-Word Puzzle Winners (January 2004)

1. Ajin John, MI
2. Aleyamma Mathai, Epiphany
3. Anika Chacko, Detroit
4. Christopher Chacko, Detroit
5. Jain T. Joseph, St. John's, NY
6. John Mathew, Detroit
7. Justy John, St. James, NY
8. Ronald P. Mathew, St. John's
9. Sherin Thomas, Philadelphia
10. Sosamma Jacob, Epiphany, NY
11. Sosamma John, Canada
12. Susan Thomas, Epiphany, NY
13. Tindu Mathew, Detroit

#### ANSWERS

- ACROSS**
2. BODY
  3. PLEASES
  6. SABBATH
  9. RESURRECTION
  12. PRAISE
  15. EVIL
  16. SPIRIT
  17. PERFUME
  19. APPROVAL
  22. COMPLETE
  23. GRACE

#### DOWN

1. CONDEMN
2. BAPTIZES
4. EXTERNAL
5. WASTE
7. JUDGE
8. FREE
10. SPOILS
11. OBEY
13. ETERNAL
14. WINE
18. EARTHLY
20. WORSHIP
21. RESPECT
23. GLORY

#### Bible Word Search Winners (January 2004)

1. Ajin John, MI
2. Aleyamma Mathai, Epiphany
3. Alex Vaidyan, St. Thomas, NY
4. Anika Chacko, Detroit
5. Annamma John, St. Luke, FL
6. Athira John, St. John's NY
7. Christopher Chacko, Detroit
8. Jain T. Joseph, St. John's, NY
9. Jean George, Horeb, CO
10. Jeffrey John, Epiphany, NY
11. John Mathew, Detroit
12. Justy John, St. James, NY
13. Nobin Vaidyan, St. Thomas
14. Omana Rajee, MTC S.I., NY
15. Ronald P. Mathew, St. John's
16. Sosamma Jacob, Epiphany, NY
17. Susan Thomas, Epiphany, NY
18. Tindu Mathew, Detroit

#### ANSWERS

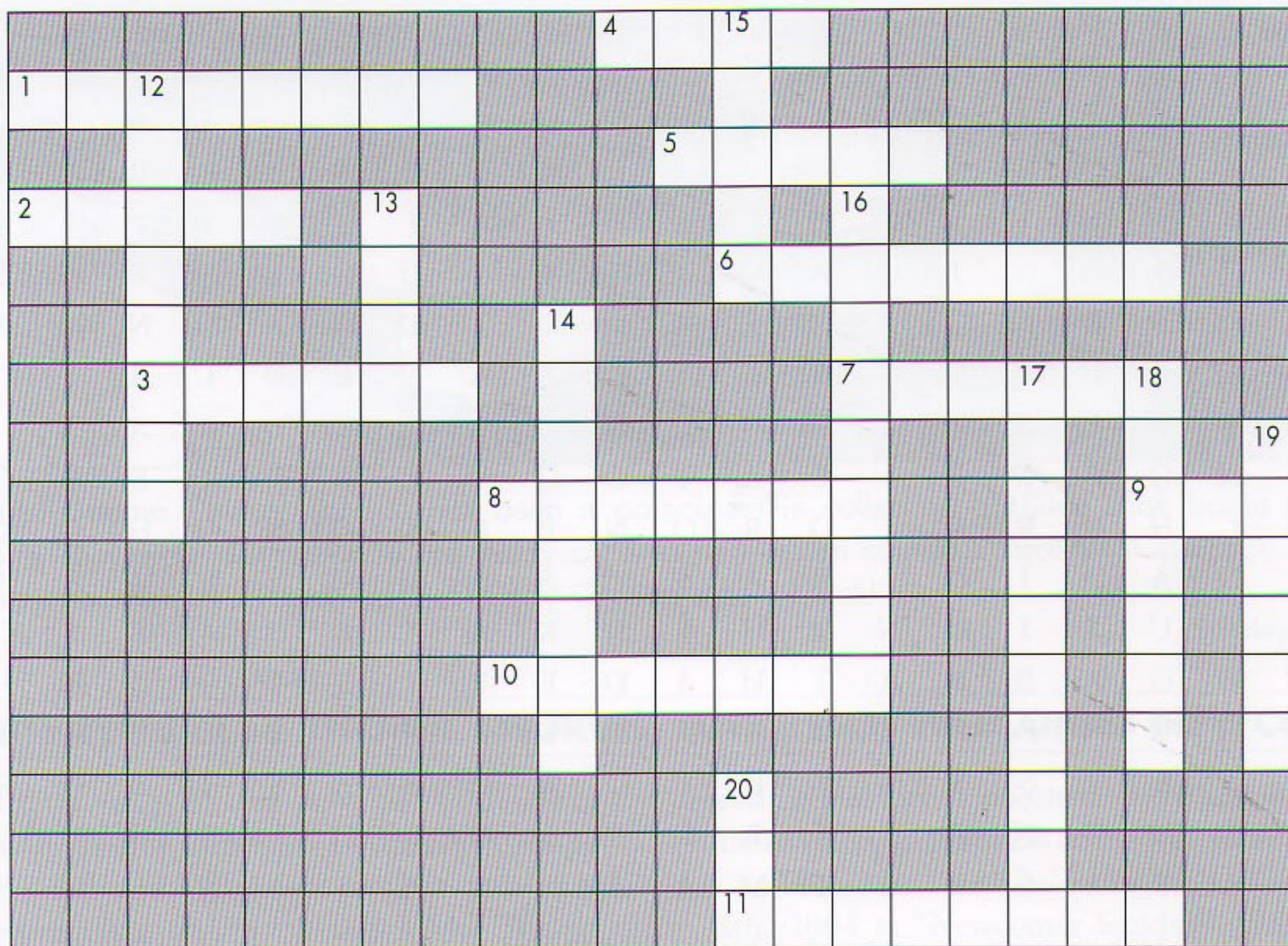
1. JOHN
2. VOICE
3. BETHANY
4. LAMB
5. DOVE
6. RABBI
7. ANDREW
8. PETER
9. BETHSAIDA
10. NATHANAEAL
11. WINE
12. NICODEMUS
13. AENON
14. SYCHAR
15. SAMARITANS
16. CAPERNAUM
17. BETHZATHA
18. TEMPLE
19. SIMON ISCARIOT
20. PHARISEE
21. SILOAM
22. SYNAGOGUE
23. SHEPHERD
24. WINTER
25. LAZARUS



# BIBLE CROSS WORD PUZZLE

AS IN TODAY'S ENGLISH VERSION  
(based on John Chapters 13-21)

Mrs. Suma Varghese (New York)



## Across

1. Jesus appeared to seven of his disciples at Lake \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Jesus said, "\_\_\_\_\_ is that I leave with you, \_\_\_\_\_ I do not give it as the world does."
3. Jesus said, "\_\_\_\_\_ It is better for you if I go away, because if I do not go, the \_\_\_\_\_ will not come to you."
4. Pilate wrote a notice and had it on the cross. It read: 'Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the \_\_\_\_\_.'
5. Jesus told Pilate that he was born and came into the world to speak about the \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Jesus told Thomas: "stop \_\_\_\_\_ and believe."
7. Jesus said to his disciples, "..... \_\_\_\_\_ will give you whatever happiness will be complete."
8. Jesus said, "I, your Lord and \_\_\_\_\_, have just washed your feet; you, then, should wash one another's feet."
9. Jesus prayed, "..... Father, keep them safe by the power of your name ..... so that they may be \_\_\_\_\_ just as you and \_\_\_\_\_."
10. Jesus stepped forward and asked the people who came to arrest Him, "who is it that you are \_\_\_\_\_ for?"
11. "Jesus answered them, \_\_\_\_\_ but be brave! I have \_\_\_\_\_ the world!"

## Down

12. Jesus said, "I am the real vine and my Father is the gardener ..... and you are the \_\_\_\_\_."
13. Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth and the \_\_\_\_\_."
14. Jesus did not answer when Pilate asked him this question: 'Where do you \_\_\_\_\_?'
15. Jesus replied that He was handed over to the Jews because His kingdom does not belong to this \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Jesus said "Put your sword back in its place ..... that I will not drink the cup of \_\_\_\_\_ which my father has given me."
17. Then He breathed on them, and said, 'Receive the \_\_\_\_\_.'
18. A \_\_\_\_\_ crowed when Peter denied Jesus three times.
19. Jesus claimed that he had never said anything in \_\_\_\_\_ and he had always spoken publicly to everyone.
20. Jesus told Pilate that he got authority over Him only because it was given to him (Pilate) by \_\_\_\_\_.



# BIBLE WORD SEARCH

AS IN TODAY'S ENGLISH VERSION  
(based on John Chapters 13-21)

Mrs. Suma Varghese (New York)

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

1. "Didn't I see you in the garden?" \_\_\_\_\_ the person who asked this question to Peter was a \_\_\_\_\_ of a high priest.
2. The total number of big fish caught from Lake Tiberias which Simon Peter hauled ashore was \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A disciple of Jesus who was from Cana in Galilee was: \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The Hebrew word for 'teacher' is: \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The secret followers of Jesus who took his body for burial were: Joseph of Arimathea and \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Besides Mary, the mother of Jesus, two other women stood close to the cross of Jesus. They were: Mary the wife of \_\_\_\_\_ and Mary \_\_\_\_\_.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the chief priest.
8. The Hebrew word for the stone pavement where Pilate sat on the judgement seat is: \_\_\_\_\_.
9. After His prayer in the garden, Jesus went across this brook: \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The temple guards, the chief priests and Pharisees came to arrest Jesus. They were armed and carried \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
11. The high priest's slave, whose right ear was cut off by Peter was: \_\_\_\_\_.
12. The disciple who requested Jesus, "Lord, show us the father; that is all we need", was: \_\_\_\_\_.
13. The following quote was made by \_\_\_\_\_: "..... I am going to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it were not so."
14. "Lord, we do not know where you are going; so \_\_\_\_\_."
15. Jesus' disciple who was in charge of the money bag was: \_\_\_\_\_.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ was the disciple who begged Jesus: "Lord, do not wash only my feet, then! wash my hands and head too."
17. Jesus told His disciples that He would call them as \_\_\_\_\_ instead of servants as He had told them everything He heard from His Father.
18. The one who reveals the truth about God and leads us all into truth is the \_\_\_\_\_.
19. Jesus did not want to take his followers/disciples out of this world. He asked God to keep them safe from the \_\_\_\_\_.
20. The person who advised the Jewish authorities that it was better that one man should die for all the people was \_\_\_\_\_.

**ATTENTION ALL CONTESTANTS!!! NEW ADDRESS!!!! ONLY FOR THIS ISSUE!!!**

Please mail your answers to:

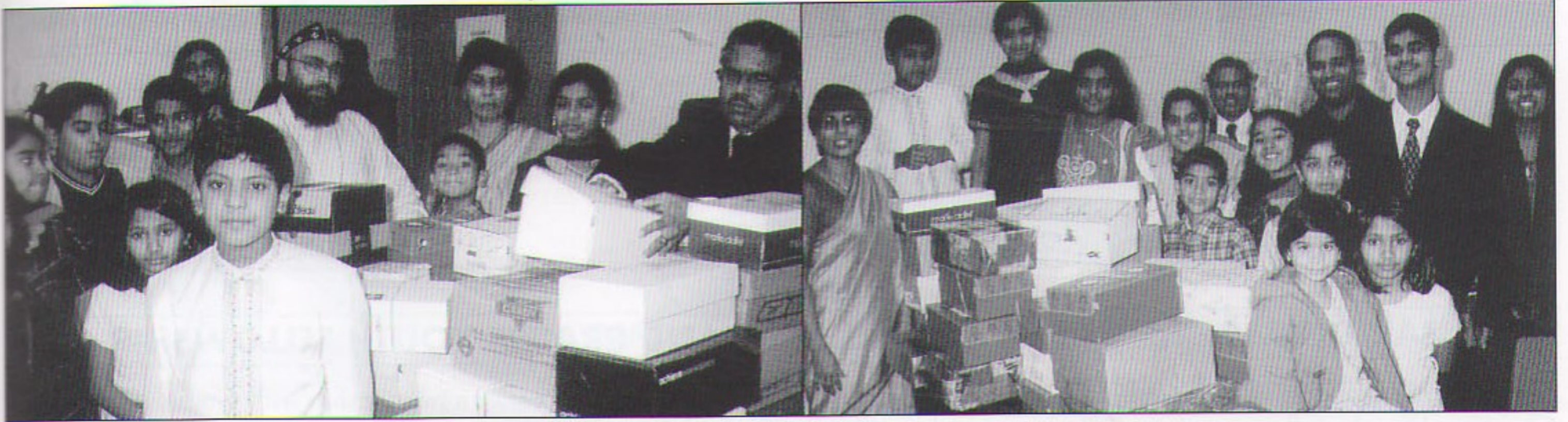
**James T. Philip, 175 Sheraden Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10314**

**DEADLINE FOR ANSWERS June 30, 2004**



# DIOCESAN/PARISH NEWS

## THE CANADIAN MAR THOMA CHURCH, TORONTO



The Canadian Mar Thoma Church, Toronto has been a participant in collecting gift-filled shoe boxes for the last three Christmas seasons. They were distributed to the needy children of war-torn countries through "Operation Christmas Child" which is a project of Samaritan's Purse, led by Dr. Billy Graham's son, Franklin.

**Sunday School Secretary**

## ST. MATHEW'S MAR THOMA CHURCH, TORONTO, WELCOMES NEWCOMERS

From the early 1950's, when the first wave of Marthomites started to arrive in North America, till today, Canada continues to see an influx of Malayalees. In light of the fact that most new members to the St. Mathew's Mar Thoma Church are newcomers to Canada, a "Newcomers Guidance Cell" was formed in 2003.

The primary objective of the Guidance Cell is to assist the new immigrants to the Parish to settle in. As with most Mar Thoma Churches in North America, the core of this Parish is comprised of first-generation Malayalees. So, they have realized that new immigrants require the most help during their first few weeks/months in Canada. The Guidance Cell launched a "Welcome Kit" which includes a welcome letter to the parish, contact information for any assistance, registration and licensing requirements for various professionals and information on successful job search. The Guidance Cell members meet and greet every new comer to the Parish after the church service and hands-in a Welcome kit, which is a good source of information on the variety of resources that are available to them. The Guidance Cell also offers "Ride assistance" to the newcomers so that they can participate in the Sunday service.

Since the St. Mathew's Mar Thoma church is blessed with members who are specialized in various trades and professions, the Guidance Cell took the initiative to form a "Resource Pool" of those members who are interested to volunteer their time and resources to assist the new-comers. Newcomers who require information on certain professions

and employment opportunities in certain specialized areas are directed to members of the "Resource Pool" for advise.

This year, the Guidance Cell designated February 8th, 2004 as "Newcomer Sunday". On that day a short meeting was held after the Holy Communion service during which time all new members who joined the parish after its formation in July 2001 were asked to introduce themselves and their families to the congregation. The Guidance Cell also arranged an Employment workshop for the new immigrants that day. Dr. Sathya Gnaniah, Employer Outreach Specialist from Human Resources Canada, was the guest speaker. His topic "Overcoming Obstacles to Employment" touched on the many hurdles facing new immigrants. Dr. Sathya, being an Indian immigrant himself, recounted the difficulties he had faced in getting into the Canadian work force. He also spoke about the hidden job market (often over 80%), the importance of communication skills, networking and last but not least about references from previous employers. The resume, according to him, is to get the interview. "Getting the job depends on how well you do in the interview."

The Newcomers Guidance Cell hopes to continue its mission with the summer months as that is the time when most new immigrants arrive in Canada. They also plan to have more employment-related workshops for new immigrants.

**On behalf of the Newcomer's Guidance Cell**

**Abe Verghis, Toronto**



## MESSENGER PROMOTER BENJAMIN GEORGE HONORED FOR EXEMPLARY SERVICE



Mr. Benjamin George was honored with an award in appreciation of his exemplary service at the JFK International Airport. Mr. Benjamin George received the award at a grand ceremony held on March 22, 2004 at Radisson Hotel at JFK Airport. He is a member of St. John's MTC, Queens Village, NY and one of the Diocesan Assembly members of the parish.

## MAR THOMA CHURCH OF DALLAS AT GRAND PRAIRIE YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Building and maintaining relationships is an integral part of Christian life. As followers of Christ, we must love our neighbor, be devoted to our brothers, and most important, pray for and with one another. The Mar Thoma Church of Dallas Grand Prairie Youth Fellowship is committed to these ideals and works to build relationships with God, among our fellow youths, and within the entities of our church. Under the guidance of Rev. Dr. C. A. Abraham Achen, we strive to create an environment of love, strength, and devotion. For if our center is not in God, then the relationships that we have built are in vain.

Our GP youth fellowship has focused its efforts on helping its approximately 100 youth forge relationships with

Working towards a relationship with God is integral, but it is also necessary to have a Christian support team. As stated in Romans 12:10, "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves." Our youth group has developed activities through which we can support each other as well as the community. We support such charities as the Asha Bhavin Orphanage in India, volunteer our time to help disadvantaged children, work in soup kitchens, and have conducted a book drive for Cook's Children Hospital in Ft. Worth, TX. Additionally, we have scheduled and held various activities to promote fellowship within the youth, which include relationship-building games stressing the importance of communication, weekly emails encouraging

various activities, Easter egg hunts, Super Bowl parties, Summer Retreats, Banquets, and picnics.

Furthermore, in order to develop and sustain strong relationships within the church, the GP youth fellowship has also planned activities with other organizations within the church. The youth fellowship, along with members of the Executive Committee and the congregation, combined efforts to paint our church nursery. We have also planned a trip to the

Fort Worth Zoo to encourage involvement from Sunday School students. Overall, this year's youth group has tried to build on the foundation that has been left to us by previous years. Every church has struggles with problems that arise and although we don't force participation, we are working on creating a sanctuary for those youth that desire to build the essential relationships that are necessary in Christian life.

"We strive to create an environment of love, strength, and devotion. For if our center is not in God, then the relationships that we have built are in vain."

**Siby Philip, Secretary of the Grand Prairie Youth Fellowship**



*Grand Prairie Youth Fellowship – Easter 2002*

God as our center. We hold bi-monthly Men's and Women's devotionals geared towards the needs of men and women striving to live a Christian life in a secular world. Our cottage prayers enable the youth to collectively build the foundation of our relationships with God and among one another. However, realizing that nothing is stronger than prayer, we also devoted the month of March as our official Prayer Chain month. Within the month, youths prayed every day for our church, its future, and our fellowship. Like many churches, our church has encountered its share of challenges, however through the prayer and mercy of Christ we are continuously working to ensure that these situations will only make us stronger.



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## ST. PAUL'S MAR THOMA CHURCH YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

*And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)*

St. Paul's Mar Thoma Church Youth Fellowship has always been guided by the same question that inspired the prophet Micah. This young fellowship represents the grand aspirations of a parish that was established only sixteen years ago. Our fellowship plays a major role in the life of the parish and inspires us through our journey of life. Every step of our journey we ask the question, what does the Lord require of us?

In this journey, we encourage our youths to employ the requirements of seeking justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God. We as a fellowship realize that these requirements are a bare minimum. So then the question remains, what does the Lord require of us?



The last few years of St. Paul's Youth Fellowship was characterized by transformation of leadership. As the younger youths of the parish have matured into leaders, the leaders of yesterday have grown into role models. With this new driving force, our Youth Fellowship is reaching goals far beyond the required minimum.

In the Fall of 2003 our Youth Fellowship hosted the Southwest Regional Youth Conference. Over 100 youths from the Southwest Region participated in a weekend retreat that focused on the treasure that is found in earthen vessels (II Corinthians 4:7). The many insightful keynotes delivered by our guest speaker Mr. Reggie Favors along with meaningful small group discussions and inspirational praise & worship sessions helped youths to discover that our lives are mere earthen vessels, waiting to be broken to discover the treasure of Christ inside. This event had a powerful impact on our fellowship as younger youths fulfilled the leadership roles often held by the older youths. These older youths were now able to serve as mentors to many of the younger youths. This helped bridge an age gap among our youth and brought unity within the fellowship as a whole.

Our fellowship also has regularly scheduled programs such as the weekly bible studies led by our Rev. Saju Zachariah and our Youth Chaplain Rev. Saji Joseph. It is under the watchful guidance of these Achens that many of our events are planned and executed. Other regular programs include weekly basketball and volleyball practice and quarterly church cleanings. These programs offer our

youths both young and old a variety of opportunities to seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.



Under the watchful eyes of the past we look ahead to the future with many new and innovative ways to travel beyond the bare minimum requirement. We are planning to host a banquet during the summer and a charity event for the American Cancer Society in the fall. The newly designed St. Paulalooza was a different experience to our youths. This overnight weekend event allows the youths to play games, discuss problems, and study the bible in a relaxed and accepting environment among their peers. The most recent St. Paulalooza focused on the Greek phrase *Opus Dei*, meaning work of God. The youth have realized that although there are many differences among us the craftsmanship of God binds us all together. This weekend retreat helped bring a greater cohesion to our youth fellowship.

The St. Paul's Youth Fellowship is made up of over forty youths who are united in their vision and ready to take



on the largest of tasks. The goal of our fellowship is to take our youth to the next level by challenging them to be active in the Youth Fellowship and grow spiritually not because it is required of them but because they want to. What does the Lord require of us? We submit ourselves to this spiritual growth that will help us to never be satisfied by the mere minimum requirement of Christianity but to always ask, what more can we do? It is with this philosophy that the St. Paul's Youth Fellowship continues in our journey.

For more information about St. Paul's Youth Fellowship please visit our website at [www.stpaulsyouth.com](http://www.stpaulsyouth.com).

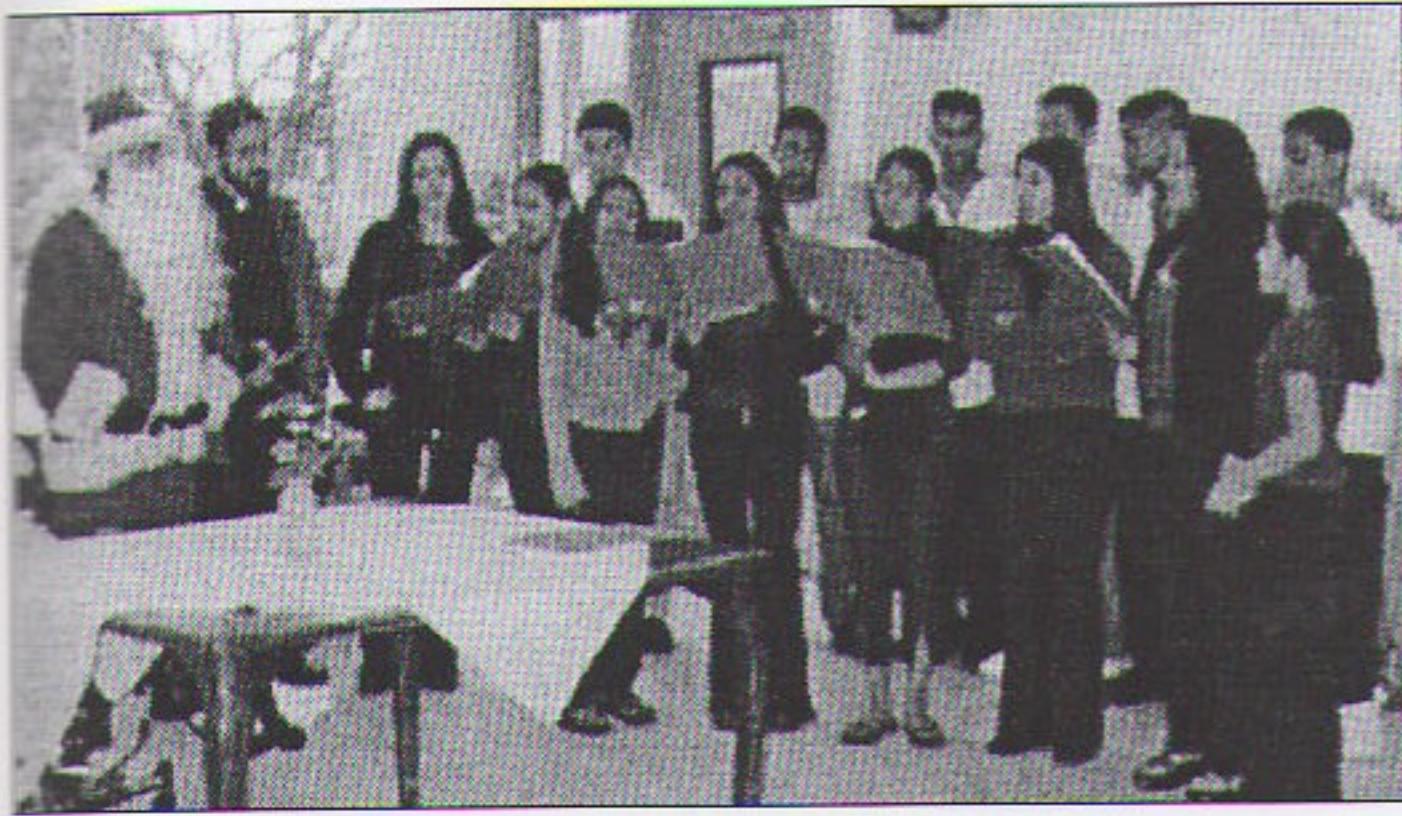
**Appu Wilson, YF Secretary**



## MAR THOMA CHURCH OF GREATER SEATTLE YOUTH FELLOWSHIP OUTREACH PROGRAMS

### NURSING HOME CAROLING

On December 23rd, Tuesday 15 Youth members and Rev. Reji K. Philip of Seattle Mar Thoma church went to Regency Nursing home to spread our Christmas spirit with



the residents. We sang a number of Christmas hymns and also went from room to room caroling for the patients who were unable to walk to the meeting hall. When we sang



“Angels from Above” to Esther Miller, an 85 year old resident, she in tears said, “I felt like I was in heaven and angels were singing to me.” We filled everyone’s heart with joy and happiness. Our youth had a good time as well as good experience with the elderly.

### UNION GOSPEL MISSION

On December 27th, Saturday evening a team of 24 youths and our vicar Reji K Philip went to Union Gospel Mission to help out the homeless people in our Seattle community. The UGM is one of the biggest missionary fields in



Washington State. We had four people serving the meals while four others were washing dishes. The rest of the crew were interacting with the homeless people, singing Christmas hymns and passing out the meals. As some of us worked in the back serving the food on the plate, the UGM members shouted “AYORA”. None of us really knew what it meant, but it just felt great saying it and being happy as a group there. It was a very great experience and pleasure as a youth to help out our community. It was a great pleasure and joy as a youth to help out in our community.

This year has been one of incredible growth for the youth of the Mar Thoma Church of Greater Seattle. The Seattle youth group consists of 46 members ranging from 12 years old to 28 years old. The youth group met every Friday at 7:00 p.m. Youth meetings consisted of a variety of different activities, which included Bible Studies, Counseling, Cottage prayers, Praise and Worship, Group prayers, Outreach programs and many more exciting events. The leadership of Rev. Reji K. Philip has prompted an extensive class and Achen actively participated in our youth activities and outreach programs. We pray that we will be able to grow together as a youth loving God and spreading His word to people around us.

**Nisha Mathew, Secretary**

## **Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelist's Association Diocese of North America & Europe National Conference – 2004**

The 2nd National Conference of the Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelist's Association, Diocese of North America & Europe will be held on August 27–29, at Bishop Claggett Center, 3035 Buckeystown, Maryland. The main leaders of the Conference are Rev. Dr. Valsan Thampu, Rev. Dr. K. A. Abraham, Rev. Sabu Koshy and Rev. John Mathai. All Edavaka Mission members of our Diocese are encouraged to attend this Conference. Please uphold this Conference in your prayers.

**Roy Thomas, Diocesan Secretary-MTVEA**



## SIXTH NATIONAL YUVAJANA SAKHYAM CONFERENCE

The Sixth National Yuvajana Sakhyam Conference of Diocese of North America & Europe is to be held on Friday September 24–26, 2004, hosted by St. James Mar Thoma Church of Rockland, New York. The theme of this year's conference is **"Keep Alert, Be Firm in Your Faith"** I Cori. 16:13. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa, Rev. Sabu Koshy (Washington, D.C.), and Rev. T. A. Varghese (former General Secretary, MT Yuvajana Sakhyam) will be the main leaders. The conference will offer separate sessions for children and adults. For more information please contact Rev. Johncey George at (845) 362-8158 or Mr. John Mathew at (845) 365-8289.



*Registration Kick-off of the Sixth National Yuvajana Sakhyam Conference. Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa receiving the first registration from Diocesan Yuvajana Sakhyam Secretary Mr. Gigi Tom in the presence of Rev. Johncey George, Vicar; Mr. John Mathew, General Convener; Mrs. Mariamma Ninan, Joint Convener; and Mr. George T. Karakal, Registration Convener.*

**John Mathew, General Convener**

## BEST WISHES AND SAFE JOURNEY TO REV. DR. JOHN JOSEPH & FAMILY



Rév. Dr. John Joseph, former Secretary to the Bishop and Diocesan Secretary, left for India on April 20, 2004, along with his wife Shirley Kochamma. His two sons Ruben and Roshen stayed back to finish the school year.

He was seen off at the airport by many relatives, friends and parishioners with whom he and Kochamma had developed emotional and spiritual ties over the last four years. As with all partings, it was laden with teary eyes and heavy hearts.

Representatives of the Mar Thoma Messenger also were at the airport to wish Achen and Kochamma Bon Voyage.

We wish them the very best in their future ministry and everywhere they go.



## SOUTHWEST REGIONAL YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

**Websites:** Southwest Region [swryf.org](http://swryf.org); Farmers Branch [fb youth.org](http://fb youth.org); Oklahoma [mtoyf.net](http://mtoyf.net); St. Paul's [stpaulsyouth.com](http://stpaulsyouth.com); Trinity [tmcyf.org](http://tmcyf.org); Dallas Tri-Youth [triyouth.org](http://triyouth.org)

the state of Texas when the Oklahoma Youth Fellowship hosted it. This year's tournament will be held on July 16th-18th and the Farmers Branch Youth Fellowship will host it.



The tournament offers the youth of the Southwest Region an opportunity to compete in basketball and volleyball in a spiritual atmosphere and promises to be an enjoyable weekend of fun and fellowship. This year we are changing the format of the tournament

to put an extra emphasis on the Friday night Praise and Worship session.

The St. Paul's Youth Fellowship hosted the 2003 Regional Conference. The 2004 conference will be held on October 29th-31st at Camp Cho-Yeh in Livingston, Texas. Trinity Mar Thoma Church will be the host parish.

The Regional Christmas Carol Service was held on December 27th, 2003 at Immanuel Mar Thoma Church in Houston. The honorary guest, Dr. Betty Divine, who is the director of the United Methodist Church choir, gave an inspired Christmas message. The Regional choir and each

In early October 2003, we launched our own regional website, [www.swryf.org](http://www.swryf.org). This website serves as a conduit to update our members with news and information from the region as well as the diocesan, zonal, and local parish levels. The site was designed to keep everyone updated on the activities and ongoing programs of the 8 churches and 5 congregations in this region. We hope it will be used as a forum to unite a growing region that now extends from Texas to Colorado to Iowa. In addition to various links, the website includes information on missions, conferences, sports tournaments, as well as a message board designed to discuss key issues facing the youth of the Mar Thoma church. We take great pride in the on line library that we have created. The library provides an array of resources on different topics from the Mar Thoma Church Constitution and Youth Fellowship By-Laws to the English Holy Communion service in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint files to a songbook filled with Christian songs. It also helps our youth build up their spirituality and knowledge of the Mar Thoma Church. We also gave each youth fellowship within our region web space to host their own website to further our goal of building fellowship within their own church and between their sister churches.

In 2003 for the first time ever, the Southwest Regional Youth Fellowship Sports Tournament was held outside of



individual youth fellowship performed a number of Christmas songs to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The youth of this region were fortunate to have the opportunity to come together and praise the Almighty for His blessings throughout the past year.



We are glad to have two youth chaplains in our region that are faithfully ministering to our youths. Rev. John George and Rev. Saji Joseph have been a great resource to the region and the individual churches. They have played leading roles in the leadership seminars, regional conferences, Bible studies, and bringing churches together in Christ.

Kindly keep the youth of this region and all our upcoming activities in your prayers.

**John Manaloor, Regional YF Secretary**

### IMMANUEL MAR THOMA CHURCH

The Youth Fellowship of Immanuel Mar Thoma church is continually trying to grow closer in fellowship through social and spiritual events. We have coordinated with our sister parish, Trinity, in bringing together the youths of both churches to a round table forum where we can speak



about topics that concern us. Tuesday Night Topics, which is lead by our youth chaplain Rev. John George, is held on the first Tuesday of each month. We (Immanuel and Trinity) are also trying to implement a long-term mentorship program at both churches to strengthen the fellowship of the younger members of our respective Youth Fellowships. Immanuel is also starting to work closely with our Young Family Fellowship for activities in mentoring, fellowship, Bible studies, fund-raising, and various other projects to continue building a stronger church core.

**Sharon Jacob, YF Secretary**

### MTC OF DALLAS AT FARMERS BRANCH

After hosting the National Youth Conference last year, the Farmers Branch Youth Fellowship remains busy with a packed schedule for 2004. This year we are hosting the Southwest Regional Sports Tournament on July 16th-18th, as well as our own youth retreat in the summer. On March 19th, we held a farewell banquet for our Rev. P. Mathew & family that included many entertaining acts from our parish, as well as skits and speeches in their honor. Friday night Bible Studies are a regular event among our youth as well as Tri-Youth Bible Studies every Tuesday night

with the other Dallas parishes. Currently, our church is undergoing construction for its continued expansion and as a youth fellowship, one of our priorities this year is to provide our support and commitment toward this important goal. This year promises many opportunities to strengthen our bond with God as well as the fellowship we share within our YF.

**Shaun Alexander, YF Secretary**

### TRINITY MAR THOMA CHURCH

All glory and honor to our God Almighty for all the blessings He has showered upon the Trinity Mar Thoma Church Youth Fellowship. We have been blessed abundantly throughout the past years and are anxious to see what the Lord has in store for us this year. Under the guidance of our achen, Rev. T.V.

George, and our youth chaplain, Rev. John George, the TMCYF has continued to grow in faith and fellowship. In every event that the Youth Fellowship participates in, we always strive to be in accordance with two essential things: our mission and vision.

The mission of the TMCYF is: "To foster the ongoing growth of the youth and work toward their continual integration into the life and ministry of the Mar Thoma

Church." Our vision is: "To strengthen the bonds between Christ and His people, by creating an atmosphere where youth mature in faith, through the central focus of worship." Our mission was created as such because it is our calling as a youth fellowship to provide our youths with the tools they need to grow in their relationships with Christ. We offer numerous Bible studies, prayers, and community services so that our youths will have opportunities to learn and mature in their own individual walks. Once our youths have a solid foundation in Christ, they will be able to spread their faith, within and outside the Mar Thoma Church. Our vision was established as such because it is important to provide an environment where our youths can grow not only in faith, but in fellowship as well. Monthly activities and cottage prayers help our youths to initiate and cultivate relationships with each another. These friendships are extremely important in any Christian's life, for God commands us to always be surrounded by wise counsel of those of the same faith, so that we will always have someone to help us when we struggle. "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who falls when he is alone, for he has no one to help him up." (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)





The TMCYF has grown in a way that only the Lord could have provided. We pray that the Lord continues to bless our Youth Fellowship so that we may be shining examples of Him in this world. "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp-stand, and it gives light to all who are living in the house. Let your light so shine before men, so they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

**Lisa Philip, YF Secretary**

Members of the YF of Trinity MTC, Houston.

## CHICAGO MTC & ST. THOMAS CHICAGO

Our Youth Fellowship has evolved in spirit and in numbers over the past few years. Year 2003 was an awesome year; it was one of many blessings, trials, and lessons learned. As this new year is slowly unfolding, we as a youth fellowship are trying to find specific areas of need within our youth fellowship and our parish. We developed a mission statement; one that we use to identify areas of special attention and that we use to gauge all of our youth events. It is as follows: As the 2004 Youth Fellowship Committee we aim to reconnect the youths of our church with Christ, rebuild our community, and ultimately respond to God's call.

This statement has been used in planning our meetings, designing and implementing our events, and even in bridging relationships within our church. The latter has been what motivated the addition of particular activities for 2004.

As a means of meeting an issue of specific importance to us, we have planned for a conference geared toward

youth members between the ages of 12 and 18 of both Chicago parishes. The One-day Conference is modeled after the National Youth Leadership Conference, which we experienced hosting this past January. Many leadership and service opportunities, however, tend to focus on older and more experienced members of our youth fellowships. This conference aims to train our younger members who are interested in future leadership positions in our youth fellowship. Conference attendees can choose to train in areas of Bible Study, Worship, and Outreach. With proper guidance we hope to engage younger members in more active roles in our youth events and to use them as examples to the future members of our youth fellowship, those who are younger and will soon look up to them. In accordance with our mission statement, our prayer for this conference is that younger youth members can find their talents and passion, and serve Christ with what He has provided.

**Sibi Varghese, Secretary-Chicago MTC Youth Fellowship**

## TRINITY MAR THOMA CHURCH, HOUSTON

Diocesan Sunday was celebrated on March 7, 2004. Rev. Dr. John Joseph, the Diocesan Secretary celebrated the Holy Communion Service. A special service was conducted and special offertory was also collected for the Diocesan fund during the occasion. Worship services were held on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday during the Passion week. Holy Communion services were held on Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday. Good Friday Services were held and

refreshments were served to everyone after the service. A farewell meeting was arranged for Rev. T. V. George and Family on Sunday, April 25, 2004, and lunch was served to everyone after the meeting. Achen and family left to India on Tuesday, April 27, 2004. We really appreciate and thank Rev. T. V. George, Jessy Kochamma Ajith and Ashish for their dedicated services to our parish and to the Diocese.

**T. A. Mathew, Secretary**



## BETHEL YUVAJANA SAKHYAM, PHILADELPHIA



*Musical Evening organized by choir and Yuvajana Sakhyam on March 8, 2004. From left to right: Megha Jacob, P. T. Chacko, Rev. John Mathai and J. M. Raju.*

Bethel's Yuvajana Sakhyam is an active organization focused on worship, study, witness, and service.

Monthly prayer meetings are held at our members' houses or in the Church. These meetings generally consist of prayer, songs, bible study, main speech by our Vicar, theme discussions and fun activities. This year we have tried

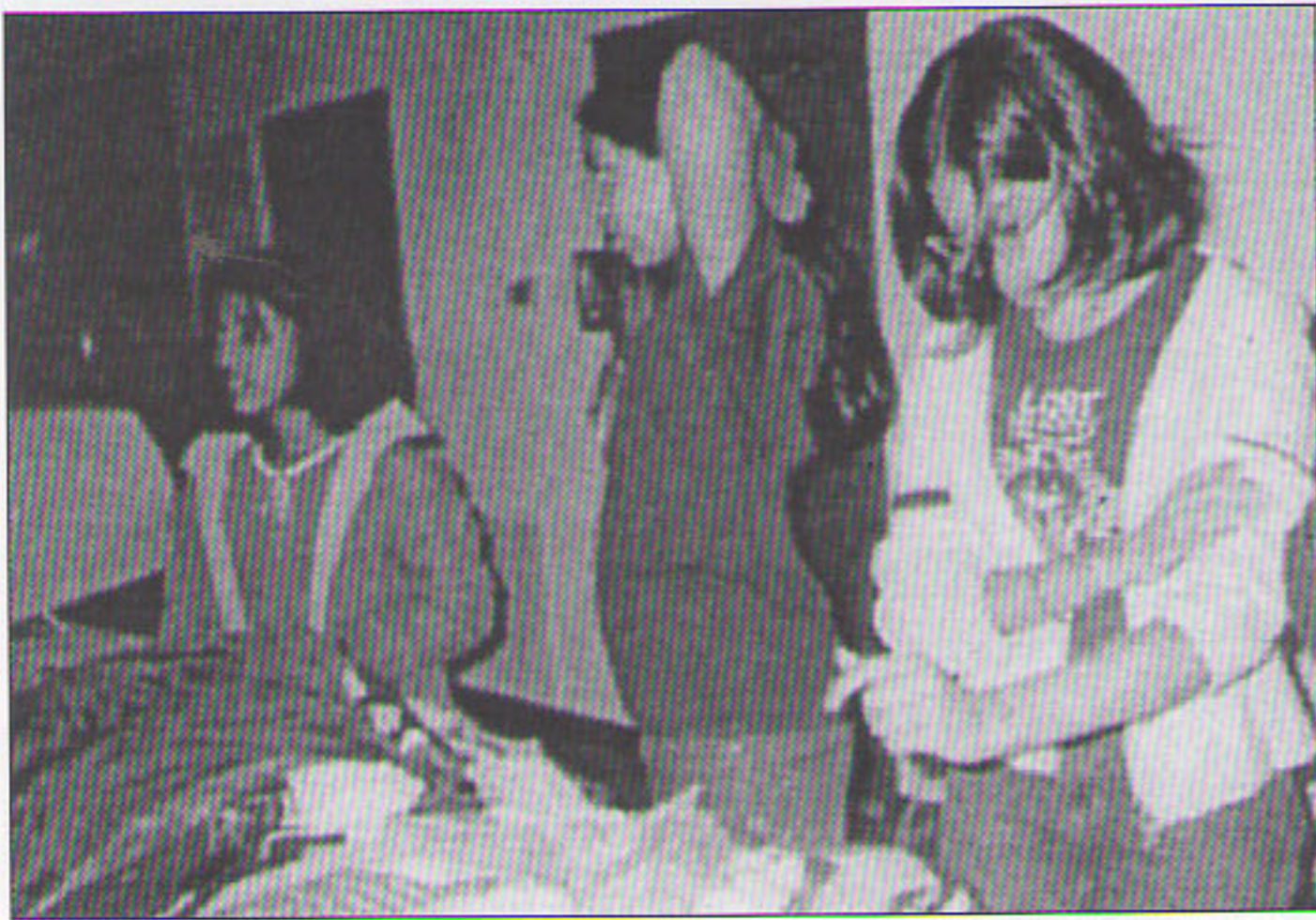
to enhance the prayer meetings by having a more structured Bible study including bible quizzes and included a selected topic for each month presented either by the Vicar, Sakhyam members, or special guests. These topics generally center on practical Christian living.

We have collected substantial funds over the last two years towards charity work—marriage aid fund, "Homes for the Homeless" in India, and educational assistance for those in dire need in India. We hope to continue our charity program annually, based on needs and requests. This year our yuvajana sakhyam hosted the "Regional Kalamela", which turned out to be a wonderful event. Our Sakhyam choir participated in the regional Christmas Choir competition.

We have a website owned, designed and maintained by our sakhyam volunteers. <http://www.Bethelyouth.org>. This site provides useful information about Bethel church activities and its organizations.

**Jothy Varughese, Secretary**

## MAR THOMA CHURCH OF OKLAHOMA YOUTH FELLOWSHIP CHURCH RUMMAGE SALE



"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:23-25)

Hebrews 10:23-25 is the guiding verse behind our fellowship and the activities that we do. From working with kids with disabilities, to our monthly praise and worship sessions, to playing flag football, we desire to "spur one another on toward love and good deeds." Particularly, our fellowship wants to grow in Community Service—to show Christ's love to the community around us.

On November 15, 2003, the Mar Thoma Church of Oklahoma Youth Fellowship conducted a Church Rummage Sale with all proceeds going to "Jesus House" (a



soup kitchen and help center for the less fortunate in the Oklahoma City Metro Area). The Rummage Sale pulled in involvement from most of our youths, the parents, and our community. Our parents really came through for us by donating tons and tons of clothes, electronics, tools, toys, and other household items. Our community also helped out by just coming to help, to buy things, and some even came by just for conversation. They learned a lot about our church and us. In turn, we got to know our community better. In the end, we raised over \$500 for "Jesus House." We still had a lot of items left over, so the remaining items were divided between Jesus House and the Salvation Army.

The Rummage Sale was a huge success and has spurred our youths to keep involvement with the community. This year, we plan on working with Habitat for Humanity, Jesus House, and Special Care (school for kids with disabilities).



## FOUNDATION STONE BLESSING OF THE MAR THOMA CHURCH STATEN ISLAND



*Rev. Dr. John Joseph laying the foundation stone for the new Staten Island Mar Thoma Church building on April 14, 2004, as Vicar Rev. Samuel M. Samuel, Treasurer James T. Philip and Secretary Jose Varughese look on.*

The foundation stone blessing of the Mar Thoma Church Staten Island was officiated by Rev. Dr. John Joseph, Diocesan Secretary of the Diocese of North America and Europe, at 5 p.m. on Wednesday 14 April 2004, in the presence of about 200 parishioners, several other well wishers from neighboring parishes and other sister churches.

Rev. Samuel M. Samuel, Vicar of the Parish was accompanied by Rev. P. M. Mathew from Sihora Ashram, Rev. John P. Oommen, Rev. K. A.

Abraham, Rev. Johnson Varghese, Rev. Raju Philip Zachariah and Rev. Roy Thomas to bless the momentous event of the Parish.

Representatives from the office of New York State Senator Hon. Seymour P. Lachman, NYS Assemblyman Hon. John W. Lavelle, and New York City Councilman Hon. Michael E. Mahon were present at the solemn ceremony.

The Honorable Borough President James P. Molinaro sent his greetings and best wishes to the members of the Parish.

The Mar Thoma Church Staten Island was established in 1981, with 23 families at a rented space. In 1990, the Parish moved to their own worship place at 134 Faber Street, in a renovated building. The membership of the Parish rapidly increased and therefore the Parish decided to demolish the old building and build a new building to seat up to 500 people. This 2 million-dollar project is planned to be funded basically through voluntary donations from its members and by other fund-raising projects.

The event was given due coverage by prominent Malayalam newspapers, the Staten Island Advance and Asianet.

**Jacob Chacko, Church Building Committee Convener**



*The foundation stone blessing ceremony was attended by many clergy members in addition to the large congregation that showed up despite the inclement weather. Rev. P. M. Mathew, Rev. Raju P. Zachariah, Rev. Dr. John Joseph, Rev. Johnson Varghese, and Rev. Roy Thomas pose for a picture with Mr. Jacob Chacko, Church Building Convener, and other members of the parish.*

*If God is Your "Potter" and you are His "Clay", what a beautiful work of art He will create each day!*

Tara Williams, N.C.



## DETAILS OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN MISSION SUMMER PROGRAM

Native American and Mexico Mission Sub-committee received invitation from the Mount Vernon Native American—(Choctaw) Church in Alabama to come back again this year for mission work in partnership with them. Providing leadership for their Vacation Bible School and Day Camps for Youths, sharing the Mar Thoma heritage, witnessing our faith and understanding their great culture, are our goals for this year also. This week-long project is scheduled from June 13th to 19th 2004.

We also received another invitation from the Oklahoma South Eastern Presbytery to provide Vacation Bible School, Mini Health Clinic, and some church construction project. This will be in a town called Smithville, Oklahoma about 190 miles from Dallas as well as from Oklahoma City.

Volunteers for healing, teaching and music ministry, with ability to play instruments, to lead recreational

activities, and play games like basketball are welcome. This project will also be at the same time: June 13th to 19th 2004.

*Objectives:* To conduct VBS for around 150 children for a week in the month of June 2004 in Mt. Vernon, Alabama or in Smithville, Oklahoma.

*Team:* Teams of 12 to 15 members from one parish or combination of more than one parish. Mission Volunteers should be above 18 years.

*Expenses:* Travel and expenses for food and lodging for a week. Food and lodging will be approximately \$30 per day.

**Volunteers should be 18 years or older. Volunteers may give their names to the Vicar of their respective parish. For more information, please contact Mrs. Leila Thomas. e-mail: mc@marthomamission.org**

## MEXICO MISSION

### Objectives

- To build 38 houses on the Fantasia island off the coast of Mexico. The cost of each house will be \$1500. The cost of flooring for each house will be \$250. This can be sponsored by parishes or by individual members. Please inform us as to how many houses you would like to sponsor.
- To conduct VBS classes on the islands of Pontia Norte and Fantasia.
- Building 2 community centers. (The cost will be the same as for the houses).
- Developing social skills and vocational skills
- Provide improved health, hygiene and dental care for the inhabitants of these islands.

### Summer Program

Teams of 20 members, (all members can be from one parish or a combination of 2 or 3 parishes). Minimum age limit

16 years. Children between the ages of 14 to 16 to be accompanied by parent(s). Should have a valid US passport or an Indian passport with green card.

*Days:* Wednesday to Sunday of each week starting from June 2nd to the last weekend of August 2004 (except the weekend of the Family Conference). The teams to reach Brownsville or Harlingen airport in Texas by the afternoon of Wednesday and return any time on Sunday.

*Expenses:* Airfare to Brownsville or Harlingen. We will make arrangements for travel, food and lodging for the 4 days in Mexico. Each team will also be providing food for 3 days to the islanders. The average expense for each team member will be approximately \$ 200. These expenses will be maintained by the team leader from each church.

*Dates:* Each week will be allotted to a different parish. If a specific week is convenient to you please inform at the earliest.

**For more information, please contact Mrs. Leila Thomas by e-mail: mc@marthomamission.org**

## MEDICAL MISSION WORK IN MEXICO

*Objectives:* To conduct medical checkups and administer medicines to people in remote villages of Mexico in partnership with the Methodist Mission Volunteers.

*Teams:* Teams of 12 to 15 members each comprising doctors, physician assistants, pharmacists and nurses.

*Days:* Thursday to Sunday. Reach Houston on Thursday. Work in the village on Friday and Saturday and return on Sunday.

*Expenses:* Airfare to Houston. \$100 to be given to the Methodist Mission to cover the cost of medicines. \$ 50 for food, lodging and boarding. \$ 70 for travel to and fro from Houston to the village in Mexico.

**For further details contact Mrs. Mariamma Thomas in Houston, tel. no. 281-431-2555.**

Volunteers interested in any of the above programs may give their names to the Vicar of their respective parish.



## WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

### SOUTHWEST CENTER B, HOUSTON

On March 13th the Mar Thoma Sevika Sanghom Southwest Region B celebrated the World Day of Prayer at Immanuel Mar Thoma Church. Women from the Trinity and Immanuel parish attended this meeting and took active participation in the worship and bible readings. Rev. T. V. George, Rev. George Jose and Rev. John George blessed this occasion with their presence. Our Youth Chaplain, Rev. John George gave an inspirational message relating to how we can build up a believing community in any situation, take responsibility for our actions, and how to face situations with prayer. Litty Kochamma led the intercessory prayer for the women in Panama and women all over the world.

**Alice Jacob, Sevika Sanghom Secretary-IMC**

### SOUTHEAST CENTER A, PHILADELPHIA

This year the World Day of Prayer was conducted on March 6th 2004. worship service was hosted by the Suvishesha Sevika Sanghom of the Philadelphia Mar Thoma Church. The theme of the meditation was "Women building the future through faith." The three Mar Thoma churches in Philadelphia were in attendance. A total of about 60 members participated in worship and prayer

The prayer group members of Panama prepared the worship service that all participated in. We enjoyed a great slide show presentation on our brothers and sisters in Christ in Panama, thanks to Mrs. Nirmala Abraham. Their culture and history give us all a sense of bonding with our brothers and sisters and their struggles as a church.

The message was given by our beloved youth chaplain, Rev. Isaac P Johnson. In attendance also were Rev. Sunny George, Rev. Alex Thomas, and Rev. John Mathai. Thanks to all who attended and all those who helped make this day a success. May God bless you all.

**Emily Jose, Sevika Sanghom Secretary -Philadelphia MTC**

### MIDWEST CENTER, CHICAGO

Chicago Mar Thoma Sevika Sanghom conducted World Day of Prayer on Friday March 12th at church. This year we used a special order of worship booklet provided by the Diocese, under the leadership of our vicar, Rev. S. George. Achen discussed with us about different cultures around the world, especially people in Panama. He conversed about their culture and life style. Achen gave a wonderful message based on Numbers 27:1-11 and John 20:1-13, about the daughter's of Zelophehad and Mary Magdalene. During his message, people are encouraged to become aware of the whole world and no longer live in isolation. People should be enriched by the firm faith, willing to take up the burdens of others, and pray for them. Some of the women leaders who lead the country in different ways are Mother Theresa, Indira Gandhi, and Margaret Thatcher etc. Women are the main unit of the family and also play an important role in the future of upcoming generations. The meeting was concluded with prayer.

**Sally Varghese, Secretary**

## OBITUARIES



1948 - 2004

**Mrs. Aleyamma Yohannan** (Kunjumol) was born on September 14, 1948 and was called to eternity on March 26, 2004. She was born to Mr. Geevarghese John and Mrs. Aleyamma John, Maruthikunnel, Thurithikadu, Kollooppara, Kerala. She was married to Mr. Baby Yohannan and have two children, Binu and Binie. They came to the

United States in 1986 as a family and lived in Houston ever since. She was a dedicated member of Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston and attended church regularly. She was a loving wife to Baby and a devoted mother to the children. She is survived by three sisters and one brother in India. Memorial service was held at Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston on Saturday, March 27th and was laid to rest at South Park Funeral home on Monday, March 29, 2004.

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

**Mrs. Kunjunjamma George** was born on April 13, 1951 in Ramapuram (Poonthuru-thiyil), Kerala (India) to the late Mr. and Mrs. P. E. George. She was the fifth child out of seven children. George Thayiel (Raju) married Kunjunjamma on November 29, 1976. They have two children. In November 1994 Kunjunjamma and her family immigrated to the United States.



1951 - 2004

Kunjunjamma was a teacher in Bharanickavu, India where she taught upper level classes. She was an active member of the St. John's Mar Thoma Church in Queens. She enjoyed working with the youth of the church and encouraged her children to do the same. Kunjunjamma is survived by her husband George Thayiel, her two sons Santhosh and Shibu Thayil, her brothers P.G. John, P.G. Mathew, P.G. Abraham, and sisters Ponnamma Thomas, Rajamma Thomas, and Valsamma Joy.



# THE 109<sup>TH</sup> MARAMON CONVENTION

19-02-04 രാത്രിയോഗം

## സഭ - ചലനാത്മക സമൂഹം

റെറ്റ്.റവ.ഡോ.യുയാക്കീം മാർ കുറിലോസ് എപ്പിസ്കോപ്പാ



സഭ ശോഷി ചിരിക്കുന്നു. സഭയ്ക്ക് അതിന്റെ ഗതകാല മഹത്വം മാത്രം പുകഴാൻ: കഴിഞ്ഞ കാല മഹത്വത്തിൽ നാം പലപ്പോഴും ജീവിക്കുന്നു. ഇന്ന് നാം ഉൾപ്പെട്ടു നിൽക്കുന്ന സഭ എങ്ങനെയാണ്? ലോകത്തിന് പ്രകാശമായിത്തീരുവാൻ സഭ വിളിക്കപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. ബന്ധങ്ങൾ ഇല്ലാത്തതിടത്ത് ബന്ധം നൽകിയത് ക്രിസ്തുവാണ്. ഈ ശുശ്രൂഷ സഭ തുടരണം. വ്യക്തമായ ലക്ഷ്യത്തോടെ ദൗത്യത്തിന് വിളിക്കപ്പെട്ട ആദിമസഭ ക്രിസ്തുവിനു ചുറ്റും കാണുന്നു (ലൂക്കോ.8:1).

സഭ എന്ത്? എന്തായിരിക്കണം? ദൗത്യം? അടിസ്ഥാന സ്വഭാവം?

### 1. Church in an inclusive Community സഭ വിവേചന രഹിതമായ സകലത്തെയും ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുന്ന സമൂഹം.

ലോകം ഒരു Mosaic Community ആണ്. സഭയും അങ്ങനെയാണ്. വ്യത്യസ്തതകൾ വളരാനുള്ള മുഖാന്തിരമാകണം. ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ വേർപാടിന്റെ നടുച്ചുവർ ഇടിച്ചുകളഞ്ഞു. എല്ലാവരും ക്രിസ്തുവിൽ ഒന്നാകുന്നു. സമ്പന്നർ, ദരിദ്രർ...etc. ഏവരും സഹയാത്രികർ, എല്ലാവരും തുല്യർ. ഇന്ന് സഭയ്ക്ക് ഇത് അവകാശപ്പെടാമോ? എല്ലാവരും സഭയിൽ തുല്യരാണെന്ന് പറയുവാനുള്ള ധൈര്യം ഉണ്ടോ? സുറിയാനി-ദളിതർ, കുലിപ്പണിക്കാർ, ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥർ-തുല്യരായി കാണാൻ കഴിയുമോ? യേശുവിന്റെ കൂടെ യാത്ര ചെയ്തവരുടെ സ്വഭാവം തുല്യതയായിരുന്നു. സ്ത്രീകളുടെ സ്ഥാനം എന്ത്? നവീകരണ സഭയിൽ സ്ത്രീ ഇപ്പോഴും തിരശീലയ്ക്ക് പുറത്ത്. ആദിമസഭയിൽ സ്ത്രീകളെയും ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തിയ കർത്താവ് ഇന്ന് എവിടെ തുല്യത.

### 2. Church is a Eucharistic Community സഭ നന്ദികരണവരുടെ സമൂഹം

സൗഖ്യം ലഭിച്ചവർ നന്ദി കരേണുന്നു. ജീവിതത്തിൽ തിരിഞ്ഞുനോക്കുന്നവർ നന്ദി പറയുന്നു. എല്ലാം ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ദാനം-ദൈവം തന്നതല്ലാതെ ദൈവം അറിയാതെ ജീവിതത്തിൽ യാതൊന്നുമില്ല.

ആരാധന എന്നാൽ മുറിക്കപ്പെട്ട അപ്പത്തിനു (സമൂഹത്തിനു) മുന്നിൽ കർത്താവിന് നന്ദി കരേണവരുമ്പോൾ കൂട്ടമാണ്. കർത്താവ് ലോകത്തിൽ വന്നത് ശുശ്രൂഷിക്കാൻ. യേശുവ് നോക്ക് ചേർന്ന് യാത്ര ചെയ്യുന്നത് നന്ദി കരേണ

നത്തിന്റെ ലക്ഷണം. വായ്കൊണ്ട് നന്ദി പറയാൻ എളുപ്പം. ശുശ്രൂഷിക്കുന്നതിലൂടെയും യേശുവിനോട് കൂടെ യാത്ര ചെയ്യുന്നതിലൂടെയും നന്ദി പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കണം. പൗലോസിന്റെ ജീവിതാനുഭവം - ക്രിസ്തുവിനുവേണ്ടി സകലവും ചെല്ലും ചവറും എന്ന് എണ്ണുന്നു.

### 3. Church is an offering and sharing community. (സഭ പങ്കിടുന്ന സമൂഹം)

ആദിമസഭ (അപ്പൊ.പ്ര.4:32-35) ഹൃദയം നന്ദിക്കൊണ്ട് നിറഞ്ഞപ്പോൾ ഉള്ളത് ആവശ്യക്കാരനുമായി പങ്കിടുന്നു. നാം നമ്മുടെ താലന്തുകൾ പങ്കിടുന്നുണ്ടോ? ധനം? കഴിവുകൾ? നാം കാര്യവിചാരകൻ മാത്രം. ഉടയവന്റെ ഹൃദയം (താല്പര്യം) അറിഞ്ഞ് വിനിയോഗം ചെയ്യുക കാര്യവിചാരകന്റെ ഉത്തരവാദിത്വം. തന്നതിനനുസരണമായി നാം പങ്കിടണം. നമുക്കുള്ളത് മറ്റുള്ളവരുടേതാണ്. പങ്കിട്ടതിന്റെ സന്തോഷം അനുഭവിച്ചവനാണ് ക്രിസ്തു. മറ്റുള്ളവർക്കുവേണ്ടി പങ്കിട്ടതിന്റെ സന്തോഷം ക്രിസ്തു അനുഭവിച്ചു. സഭ മറ്റുള്ളവർക്കുവേണ്ടി ആയിരിക്കണം. അങ്ങനെയുള്ളവർക്കു മാത്രം പ്രസക്തി.

### 4. Church is a healed community. (സൗഖ്യം പ്രാപിച്ചവരുടെ സമൂഹമാണ് സഭ)

ഇരിക്കേണ്ടിടത്ത് ഇരിക്കാത്തത് നഷ്ടം. ആയിരിക്കേണ്ടിടത്ത് ആകാത്തത് നഷ്ടം. ആയിരിക്കേണ്ടിടത്ത് ആകുന്നതാണ് സൗഖ്യം. കണ്ടെടുക്കപ്പെടുന്നതാണ് സൗഖ്യം. നാം സൗഖ്യം പ്രാപിച്ചവരാണോ? കണ്ടെടുക്കപ്പെട്ടവരാണോ? ആയിരിക്കേണ്ടിടത്ത് ആയവരാണോ?

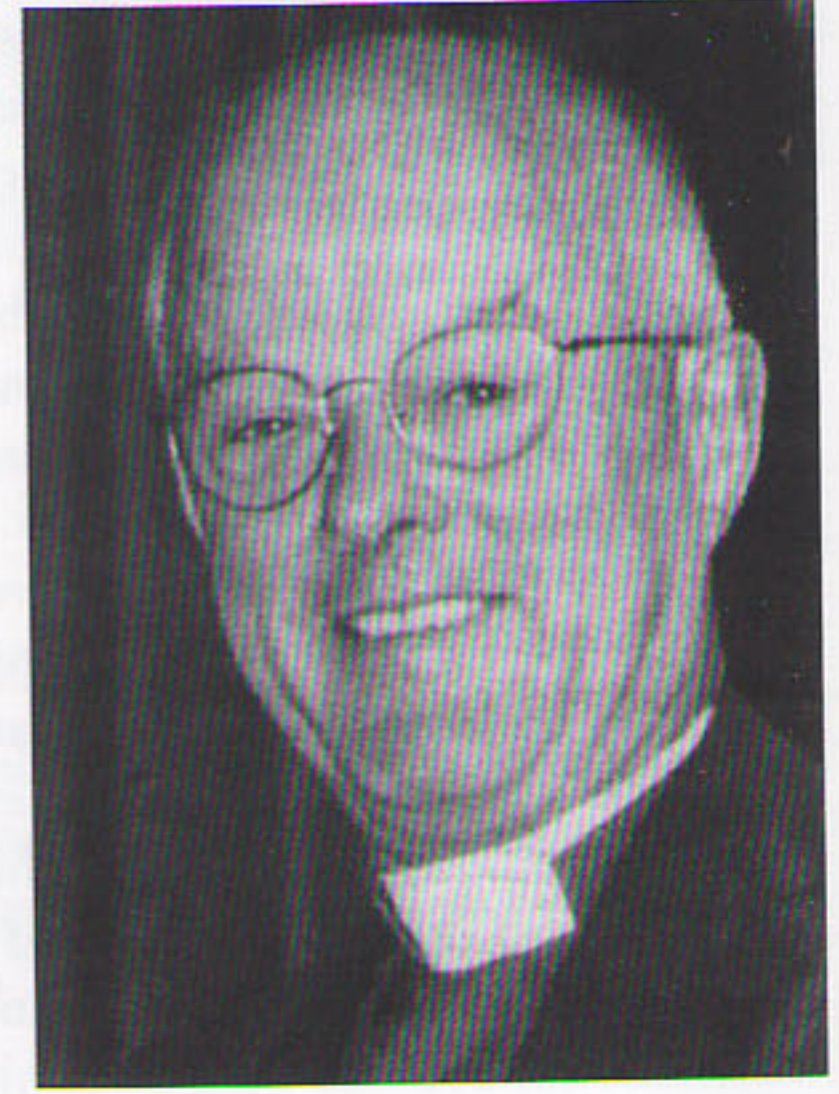
സൗഖ്യം പ്രാപിച്ചവർ സൗഖ്യം നൽകാൻ ബാധ്യസ്ഥർ. സൗഖ്യത്തിന് നാം വിഘാതമായി നില്ക്കുന്നു. നമ്മുടെ സാർത്ഥക കാരണം (ബർത്തിമായി, 4 ആൾ ചുമന്ന പക്ഷവാതക്കാർ) സൗഖ്യദായകത്തേക്കാൾ ഉപദ്രവമുണ്ടാകുന്ന സമൂഹമായി നാം മാറി. മുറിവുകളുള്ള സൗഖ്യദായകനാണ് ക്രിസ്തു. ഈ മുറിവുകൾ നമ്മുടെ ജീവിതത്തിലും സംഭവിക്കാം. ചരിത്രം നമ്മെ ഓർമ്മിപ്പിക്കുന്നത് അതാണ്. നാം പതരൂത്. മുറിക്കപ്പെടാതെ ലോകത്തിന് സൗഖ്യം നൽകാൻ സഭയ്ക്ക് സാധ്യമല്ല. നാം ലോകത്തിന് സൗഖ്യം നൽകാൻ വിളിക്കപ്പെട്ടവർ.

### 5. Church is a Moving Community (സഭ ചലനാത്മകതയുള്ള സമൂഹം)

ചലനാത്മകത സഭയ്ക്ക് ആവശ്യം. സഭ

ഇന്ന് നിശ്ചലമാണ്. അതുകൊണ്ട് അത് ചാവുകടലിന് തുല്യം. ജീവന്റെ തുടിപ്പ് ഇല്ല. സഭയുടെ അടിസ്ഥാന സ്വഭാവം വീണ്ടെടുക്കണം. എവിടെ സൗഖ്യദായക ശുശ്രൂഷ ആവശ്യം അവിടെ സഭ എത്തിച്ചേരണം. എവിടെ ദൈവരാജ്യശുശ്രൂഷ ആവശ്യം അവിടെയാണ് സഭയുടെ പ്രസക്തി. ആദിമസഭ ആവശ്യക്കാരനെ അന്വേഷിച്ച് വഴിവിട്ട് യാത്ര ചെയ്തു (ശമര്യായ്ക്കി). വഴിപിഴച്ചവളെ യഥാസ്ഥാനപ്പെടുത്തി. ശവക്കല്ലറയിൽ അന്വേഷിച്ച് ചെന്നു. പക്ഷവാതക്കാർ-കുളക്കര, കുന്നിയായ സ്ത്രീ, വരണ്ട കൈ-സിനഗോഗ്. ആവശ്യക്കാരന്റെ അടുത്തേക്ക് സഭ യാത്ര ചെയ്യണം. യേശുവിന്റെ കണ്ണുകളിലൂടെ ലോകത്തെ കാണണം. ഇടവകയുടെ യാത്ര ആരാധനയിൽ അവസാനിക്കുന്നു. ആരാധനയിലൂടെ പുതുശക്തി പ്രാപിച്ച് ചുറ്റുപാടിയിറങ്ങാൻ എന്തുകൊണ്ട് സാധിക്കുന്നില്ല? ആവശ്യമുള്ളവരുടെ ഹൃദയത്തിന്റെ തുടിപ്പ് ഉൾക്കൊള്ളാൻ കഴിയാത്തതുകൊണ്ടാണോ? സമൂഹത്തിലേക്ക് യാത്ര ചെയ്യണം.

ഇന്ന് സഭയുടെ മുമ്പിൽ രണ്ട് തരത്തിലുള്ള വെല്ലുവിളികളാണുള്ളത് (1) സുവിശേഷീകരണം (Evangelisation), (2) പുനർസുവിശേഷീകരണം (Re-evangelisation). ഈ വെല്ലുവിളികളോട് മുഖം തിരിഞ്ഞ് നില്ക്കുകയല്ല, ക്രിയാത്മകമായി പ്രതികരിക്കുവാൻ സഭ സന്നദ്ധമാകണം. ആദിമസഭയുടെ സ്വഭാവം നമ്മിലുണ്ടാകണം. ഈ വർഷം അനുതാപത്തിന്റെയും പുനഃപ്രതിഷ്ഠയുടെയും വർഷമായി സഭ ആചരിക്കുമ്പോൾ യേശുവിന്റെ ഹൃദയത്തിന്റെ തുടിപ്പ് ഉൾക്കൊണ്ടുകൊണ്ട് സമർപ്പണത്തോടെ ദൗത്യ നിർവ്വഹണ പന്ഥാവിൽ മുന്നേറാൻ സഭയ്ക്ക് കഴിയണം. എഫെസോസിലെ സഭയോട് കർത്താവ് പറഞ്ഞതുപോലെ ആദ്യസ്നേഹം നാം വിട്ടുകളഞ്ഞു. അതുകൊണ്ട് നാം അനുതപിക്കണം.



Speaker: Bishop John Gladwin (U.K.)

*Keep your light shining bright and strong. You may never know who will find their way out of the darkness, because of your light.*  
Judy Peck



# കരുതലിന്റെയും ആർദ്രതയുടെയും സംസ്കാരം രൂപപ്പെടുത്തുക

“ദരിദ്രന്മാരോട് സുവിശേഷം അറിയിപ്പാൻ കർത്താവ് എന്ന അഭിഷേകം ചെയ്കയാൽ അവന്റെ ആത്മാവ് എന്റെ മേൽ ഉണ്ട്. ബദ്ധന്മാർക്ക് വിടുതലും കരുതലിന്മാർക്ക് കാഴ്ചയും പ്രസംഗിപ്പാനും പീഡിതന്മാരെ വിടുവിച്ചയപ്പാനും കർത്താവിന്റെ പ്രസാദവർഷം പ്രസംഗിപ്പാനും എന്ന അയച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു”  
(ലൂക്കോ.4:18)

ഈ കാലങ്ങളിൽ ആഗ്രഹങ്ങളും മോഹങ്ങളും എന്നത്തൊക്കെയും വർദ്ധിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. ദൈവികശബ്ദവും പ്രതീക്ഷകളും അറിയുവാൻ ആർക്കും സമയമില്ല. ദൈവതാല്പര്യം എന്തായിരുന്നാലും, ദൈവത്തെ ഹേമിച്ച് കാര്യങ്ങൾ സാധിക്കുവാനുള്ള മനുഷ്യത്വം രൂപമല്ലായിരിക്കുന്നു. വേദപുസ്തകത്തിൽ മാർത്തയുടെയും മറിയയുടെയും അനുഭവം ഈ കാര്യത്തിലേക്ക് വിരൽ ചൂണ്ടുന്നു. ഇവരുടെ ഭവനത്തിൽ യേശു എത്തിവന്നു എന്ന അറിവ് മറിയക്ക് ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. മറിയ യേശുവിന്റെ ശബ്ദത്തിനനുസരിച്ച് കാര്യങ്ങൾ ക്രമീകരിച്ചപ്പോൾ മാർത്ത സ്വതാല്പര്യങ്ങൾക്ക് മുൻതൂക്കം നൽകി കർത്താവായ യേശു ലോകത്തിൽ വന്നു എന്ന് വ്യക്തമാക്കുന്ന വാക്യമാണിത്.

എപ്രകാരമാണ് സുവിശേഷദ്രവ്യം നിർവ്വഹിക്കേണ്ടത്? പാപം മൂലം ഈ ലോകത്തിന് നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ട ഏറ്റവും വലിയ നിധി പരസ്പരബന്ധമാണ്. കരുതലും ആത്മീയ സംസ്കാരവും നമുക്ക് നഷ്ടമായിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇതാണ് ഇന്നിന്റെ ദാരിദ്ര്യം. നമുക്ക് നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ട മറ്റൊരു നിധി തിരിച്ചറിവാൻ. സുവിശേഷം നൽകുന്ന ഏറ്റവും വലിയ സന്ദേശം തിരിച്ചറിവാൻ. മുടിയനായ പുത്രൻ പേക്കോലമായി മടങ്ങിവന്നപ്പോഴും അപ്പൻ തിരിച്ചറിഞ്ഞു.

## ദൈവം എന്തുകൊണ്ട് നമ്മെ തിരിച്ചറിയുന്നു?

സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെ ആധികാരികമായ പ്രകടനം കരുതലാണ്. ഭാരതമനസാക്ഷിയെ പിടിച്ചുകുലുക്കുന്നത് ക്രൂരതയാണ്. ദൈവസ്വഭാവം കരുതലിന്റേതാണ്. കൂട്ടായ്മ അടുത്തുവരുന്നതിന്റെ പ്രതീകമാണ്. അകൽച്ചയിൽ അടുക്കലിന് സാധ്യതയില്ല. അകൽച്ച ക്രൂരതയിലേക്ക് വഴി തെളിയിക്കുന്നു. അന്വേഷണം കരുതലിന്റെ ആധികാരിക തലമാണ്. പഴയ നിയമത്തിൽ ആദിമ മനുഷ്യനെ അന്വേഷിച്ചു ചെല്ലുന്ന ദൈവത്തെ കാണാം.

## അനീതി കാണുമ്പോൾ ചോര തിളയ്ക്കുന്ന ദൈവം

കരുതൽ സംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെ പ്രകടമാണ് അനീതിയോടുള്ള പോരാട്ടം. പ്രിയ പുത്രനെ ലോകത്തിലേക്ക് ദൈവം അയച്ചത്, ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ലോകത്തോടുള്ള കരുതലാണ്. കരുതലിന്റെയും സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെയും സംസ്കാരം ലോകത്തിന് അന്യമല്ല എന്ന് വിളിച്ചറിയിക്കണം. അത് തെളിയിക്കുന്ന സംഭവമാണ് പുത്രനെ ലോകത്തിന് നൽകിയത്.



റവ. ഡോ. വൽസൺ തമ്പു (നൂഡൽപ്പി)

ശുശ്രൂഷ ചെയ്യുന്നവനെ അപമാനിക്കുന്ന സ്വഭാവം ലോകത്തിന്റേതാണ്. യേശു ലോകത്തിൽ വന്നത് ശുശ്രൂഷിപ്പാനാണ്. അതിന്റെ പരിണാമമാണ് സുവിശേഷം: കരുതലുവന്നുള്ള കരുത്ത് നൽകിയാണ് ദൈവം മനുഷ്യനെ സൃഷ്ടിച്ചത്. ഇതിന്റെ തകിടം മറിച്ചിൽ ഉല്പത്തി നാലാം അദ്ധ്യായത്തിലെ കയീൻ, ഹാബേൽ സംഭവത്തിൽ കാണാം.

## കരുതലിന്മാർ എന്തുകൊണ്ട് സാധിക്കുന്നില്ല?

സമ്പത്തില്ലാത്തതിനാലാണ് നാം ദരിദ്രരെ കരുതാത്തത്, ദാരിദ്ര്യത്തോട് പ്രതികരിക്കാത്തത്. എന്നാൽ സമ്പത്ത് ഇല്ലാത്തതിനാലല്ല, കരുതൽ നഷ്ടമായതിനാലാണ് പ്രതികരിക്കുവാൻ സാധിക്കാത്തത്. ശമര്യക്കാർക്ക് അപരനെ കരുതിയത് സമ്പത്തുണ്ടായിട്ടല്ല. നമുക്ക് വേണ്ടത് കരുതലിന്റെ മനസ്സാണ്.

ലൂക്കോ.16: ധനവാന്റെയും ലാസറിന്റെയും ഉപമ നിത്യതയിൽ പട്ടിണി അനുഭവിച്ച ധനവാനെ കാണിക്കുന്നു.

ദരിദ്രന്മാർ സുവിശേഷം അറിയിക്കണമെങ്കിൽ

### 1. ആർദ്രതയുള്ള വ്യക്തിത്വം

പത്ത് കന്യകമാരുടെ ഉപമ: എണ്ണയില്ലാത്ത വിളക്ക് കരുതൽ ഇല്ലാത്ത വ്യക്തിത്വത്തിന്റെ ചിഹ്നമാണ്. വർഗ്ഗീയബോധം നമ്മുടെ മനസ്സ് അടച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു.

ആത്മീയ വ്യക്തിത്വം മറ്റുള്ളവരെ കരുതുന്നതാണ്. അതിനാണ് യേശു ഈ ലോകത്തിൽ വന്നത്. അന്വേഷിച്ച് കണ്ടെത്തുന്നതാണ് വ്യക്തിത്വത്തിന്റെ ചൈതന്യം. നമ്മുടെ വ്യക്തിത്വമാകുന്ന വിളക്കിൽ എണ്ണയില്ലാത്തതാണ് കരുതലില്ലാത്ത സമൂഹം രൂപപ്പെടാൻ കാരണം. കരുതലിന്റെയും അന്വേഷണത്തിന്റെയും ആർദ്രതയുടെയും എണ്ണയാണ് പരിശുദ്ധാത്മാവ്.

### 2. കരുതലിന്റെ സ്വഭാവം ഭവനങ്ങളിൽ നിലനില്ക്കണം.

വീർപ്പ് മുട്ടിക്കുന്ന അനുഭവം ഇന്നത്തെ ഭവനങ്ങളിൽ നിറഞ്ഞുനില്ക്കുന്നു. സക്കായിയുടെ ഭവനം അനുഗ്രഹിക്കപ്പെട്ടതും ദരിദ്രർ ലോകത്തുണ്ടെന്ന് കണ്ണുതുറന്ന് കണ്ടതും യേശുവിനെ സക്കായി കണ്ടുമുട്ടിയതുമുലമാണ്. കരുതലുള്ള ഭവനം മണലിന്മേൽ അടിസ്ഥാനമിട്ട ഭവനമല്ല, പാറമേൽ അടിസ്ഥാനമിട്ടതാണ്. മണൽ എന്നത് സ്വയകേന്ദ്രീകൃതവും, പാറ എന്നത് ഐക്യത്തിന്റെ പ്രതീകവുമാണ്. ഇന്നത്തെ മനുഷ്യൻ മണലിന്റെ സ്വഭാവമാണ്. ഭാരതത്തിന് സൗഖ്യം ലഭിക്കണമെങ്കിൽ ഒന്നിച്ച് ആവശ്യമാണ്.

### 3. ആർദ്രതയുള്ള മതബോധം ഉണ്ടാകണം

മതബോധത്തിലെ ലക്ഷ്യം മോഹങ്ങളിൽനിന്നുള്ള വിടുതലാണ്. ആവശ്യബോധത്തേക്കാൾ ആഗ്രഹത്തിന് മുൻതൂക്കം നൽകുന്ന മനുഷ്യൻ ഈ ലോകത്തിലുള്ള തെല്ലാം തന്റെ ആഗ്രഹപൂർത്തീകരണത്തിന് ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നു. ആഗ്രഹംകൊണ്ട് സംഭവിക്കുന്നത് അന്ധതയാണ്. ആഗ്രഹംകൊണ്ട് കണ്ണടഞ്ഞുപോയ മനുഷ്യന് അവനവന്റെ ആവശ്യങ്ങളെ അറിയുവാൻ സാധിക്കില്ല. ആഗ്രഹങ്ങളെ അതിജീവിച്ച് ആവശ്യങ്ങളെ തിരിച്ചറിയുന്ന പരിജ്ഞാനമാണ് ആത്മീയതയിൽകൂടി സംഭവിക്കേണ്ടത്.

### 4. നീതിബോധമുള്ള രാഷ്ട്രീയ സംസ്കാരം ഭാരതത്തിനുണ്ടാകണം.

രാഷ്ട്രീയം പരിപാവനമായ ഉത്തരവാദിത്വമാണ്. ഇന്ത്യൻ പാർലമെന്റ് കത്തീഡ്രലിനെക്കാൾ പവിത്രമാകണം.

ദരിദ്രന്മാർ സുവിശേഷം അറിയിക്കുവാൻ മനസ്സലിവിന്റെയും കരുതലിന്റെയും ആർദ്രതയുടെയും സംസ്കാരം ഈ ലോകത്ത് ഉണ്ടാകേണ്ടത് ദൈവിക താല്പര്യമാണ്. ചുമതലകൾ ഏറ്റെടുക്കുവാൻ പറ്റാത്ത ആത്മീയത വർഗ്ഗീയമാണ്.



# പർവ്വത പ്രസംഗത്തിന്റെ പൊരുൾ തേടി....

മുഖ്യപ്രഭാഷണം: റവ.ഡോ.മാർട്ടിൻ പോൾ അൽഫോൻസ്

പരിഭാഷ: റവ.ഡോ.കെ.വൈ.ജേക്കബ്

മത്തായി 5:1-12

ലോകചരിത്രത്തിൽ വളരെ പ്രസക്തമായ ആശയങ്ങൾ സമ്മാനിച്ച വേദഭാഗമാണിത്. ആദ്യത്തെ 12 വാക്യങ്ങളെ ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തി 'ഭാഗ്യവർണ്ണന' എന്ന ആശയത്തെ ഉയർത്തിക്കാട്ടുന്നു. ഭാഗ്യവർണ്ണന എന്നാൽ 'ആയിതീരുന്ന അനുഭവമാണ്'. വളർച്ചയും പുരോഗമനവും നമ്മുടെ മനോഭാവത്തെ ആശ്രയിച്ചാണ്. യേശുവിന്റെ പർവ്വത പ്രസംഗ ധ്യാനത്തിലൂടെ നമ്മുടെ മനോഭാവങ്ങൾക്ക് മാറ്റമുണ്ടാകണം.

സഭയുടെ സകല ഉദ്ദേശവും പർവ്വതപ്രസംഗത്തിൽ അടിസ്ഥാനപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. യേശുവിന്റെ സഭ വളർത്തപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നതും വളരപ്പെടേണ്ടതും ഈ ഉപദേശത്തിലാണ്. രാഷ്ട്രപിതാവ് മഹാത്മാഗാന്ധിജിയെയും, ഇന്ത്യൻ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യപ്രവർത്തന സരണികളെയും സാധിനിച്ചത് യേശുവിന്റെ ഗിരിപ്രഭാഷണമാണ്. ഇതര രാജ്യങ്ങളിലും, മാർട്ടിൻ ലൂഥർ കിംഗിന്റെ നവീകരണ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലും ഈ ഭാഗം തീവ്രമായി സ്‌പർശിച്ചിരുന്നു. ഇന്ന് പരസ്പരം വാശിയും വൈരാഗ്യവും വർദ്ധിച്ചതും വെച്ചുപുലർത്തുന്ന രാജ്യങ്ങൾ, സഭകൾ, സമൂഹങ്ങൾ, കുടുംബബന്ധങ്ങൾ എന്നിവയ്ക്ക് രൂപാന്തരം നൽകുവാൻ ഈ ഭാഗം പര്യാപ്തമാണ്. പർവ്വതപ്രസംഗത്തിന്റെ സവിശേഷതകൾ ബഹുലമാണ്.

### 1. ആധികാരികത

യേശുവിന്റെ പഠിപ്പിക്കലുകൾ എല്ലാം ആധികാരികമായിരുന്നു. യേശു ഇരുന്നു പ്രസംഗിച്ചു (ഉപദേശിച്ചു) എന്ന് മത്തായി രേഖപ്പെടു

ത്തിയതിൽ വളരെ അർത്ഥതലമുണ്ട്. എബ്രായ സമൂഹത്തിൽ റബ്ബിമാർ നിന്നു പഠിപ്പിക്കുന്ന കാര്യങ്ങൾ പ്രാധാന്യം കുറഞ്ഞവയും, ഇരുന്ന് പഠിപ്പിക്കുന്നത് പ്രാധാന്യമേറിയതുമായ കാര്യങ്ങളാണ്. (മത്താ.23:1-3) ഗിരിപ്രഭാഷണം ഇരുന്നു പറഞ്ഞത് അത് ആധികാരികമായതുകൊണ്ടാണ്. രാജാധിരാജാവായ യേശു കർത്താവ് താൻ ചെയ്യുവാൻ പോകുന്നതിന്റെ പ്രകടനപത്രികയായി പർവ്വത പ്രസംഗത്തെ അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നതുകൊണ്ട് ഈ ഭാഗത്തെ 'മൗലിക അവകാശ രക്ഷണുരേഖ' എന്ന പേരിലും അറിയപ്പെടുന്നു.

### 2. അത്യുല്യത

ക്രൈസ്തവർക്കു മാത്രമല്ല നാനാജാതി മതസ്ഥർക്കും അനുകരിക്കാവുന്ന ഭാഗമാണ് ഗിരിപ്രഭാഷണം. ഇതാണ് ഗിരിപ്രഭാഷണത്തിന്റെ അത്യുല്യത. കർത്താവിന്റെ പർവ്വതപ്രസംഗം ഒരു തത്യാശാസ്ത്രസംഹിതയെക്കാൾ താൻതന്നെ ഒരു തത്യാശായി രൂപപ്പെട്ടു. യേശുവിന്റെ സ്വഭാവം മുഴുവൻ ഈ ഭാഗത്ത് വെളിപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. ഈ ഭാഗത്തെ അധികരിച്ചുള്ള പഠിപ്പിക്കലാണ് സുവിശേഷത്തിന്റെ പ്രസക്തി. യജമാനന്റെ അതേ സ്വഭാവത്തിലായിത്തീരുന്നതാണ് ശിഷ്യത്വം. ഈ ലോകത്തെ ക്രിസ്തു സ്വഭാവത്തിലേക്ക് കൊണ്ടുവരുവാൻ ഈ ഭാഗം ആഹ്വാനം ചെയ്യുന്നു. യേശു ഒരു പ്രമാണത്തെയും അനുകരിച്ചില്ല, ആയതിനാൽ യേശു വാങ്ങ് പ്രമാണം. അതുകൊണ്ട് യേശുവിനെ അനുസരിക്കുക.

### 3. പരസ്പരബന്ധം

ഈ ഭാഗത്ത് 9 തവണ ഭാഗ്യവാൻ എന്നു പറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നു. ഒന്ന് മറ്റൊന്നിൽനിന്ന് അകലുന്നില്ല, മറിച്ച് എല്ലാ പ്രമാണങ്ങളും ഒരേ അർത്ഥത്തിൽ സമന്വയപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. തന്മൂലം ഏതെങ്കിലും ഒന്ന് തെരഞ്ഞെടുത്ത് പഠിക്കുക സാധ്യമല്ല.

മത്തായി 5:3-ാം വാക്യം ആത്മാവിൽ ദരിദ്രരായവർ ഭാഗ്യവാന്മാർ.

ആരാണ് ദരിദ്രർ?

കഠിന ദാരിദ്ര്യത്തിൽ കഴിയുന്നവർ എങ്ങനെ ജീവിക്കും. അങ്ങനെയുള്ളവർ അപരരെ സമ്പൂർണ്ണമായി ആശ്രയിക്കുന്നു. ആത്മാവിൽ ദാരിദ്ര്യം അനുഭവിക്കുന്നവർ ദൈവത്തിൽ സമ്പൂർണ്ണമായി ആശ്രയിക്കുന്നു. ഇപ്രകാരം കഴിയുന്നവർക്ക് ലഭിക്കുന്ന പ്രതിഫലം സ്വർഗ്ഗരാജ്യമാണ്.

5:4-ാം വാക്യം. ദുഃഖിക്കുന്നവർ ഭാഗ്യവാന്മാർ. അവർക്ക് ആശ്വാസം ലഭിക്കും....

ഈ ലോകത്ത് ദുഃഖിക്കാത്ത ആരും തന്നെയുണ്ടാവുകയില്ല. എന്നാൽ യേശു പരാമർശിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന ദുഃഖത്തിന്റെ കാരണം തീവ്രമായ സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെ പ്രതികരണമാണ്. ആധുനിക സമൂഹം കരയുവാൻ ആളുകളെ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നു. ഏതു സാഹചര്യത്തിലും തീവ്രമായി ദുഃഖിക്കുവാനുള്ള കരുത്ത് ലഭിക്കുന്നത് സ്നേഹത്തിൽനിന്നാണ് (തുടരും).

# വചനപഠനത്തിന്റെ ആവശ്യകത

റവ.ഡോ. വൽസൻ തമ്പു

ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ അർത്ഥം അന്വേഷിക്കുന്നവരാകണം മനുഷ്യസമൂഹം. അർത്ഥരഹിതവും യാത്രനികവുമായ കാര്യങ്ങളിൽ ദീർഘമായി തുടരുവാൻ സാധിക്കയില്ല. മനുഷ്യസ്വഭാവത്തിന്റെ ദൈവികമായ അന്തസ്സത്തെ കരുതലിന്റേതാണ്. ആത്മീയ ഗോളത്തിൽ എന്തു ചെയ്താലും അർത്ഥം അറിഞ്ഞ് ചെയ്യണം. ഇന്നിന്റെ പ്രശ്നം ചെയ്യുന്ന കാര്യങ്ങളുടെ അർത്ഥം അറിയാതെ പോകുന്നതാണ്. ആചാരങ്ങളുടെ അടിമയാകരുത് മനുഷ്യൻ. ക്രിസ്തുവിൽ പ്രകടമായ സൗന്ദര്യം സ്വതന്ത്രമായി ചിന്തിച്ചു എന്നുള്ളതാണ്. മനുഷ്യസ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തെ ഹനിക്കുന്ന എല്ലാ ആചാരങ്ങളെയും ചോദ്യം ചെയ്തു ക്രിയാത്മകമായ ബുദ്ധിയേശുവിൽ വിളങ്ങി. വെല്ലുവിളിക്കുന്ന ബുദ്ധിയേശുവിന്റേത് മാത്രമാണ്. വചനത്തിന്റെ വെളിച്ചം ഉള്ളിൽ കടന്നാൽ വ്യക്തിത്വം രൂപാന്തരപ്പെടും.

### ദുഃഖിയുടെ ഉപമ

വിത്ത് വചനത്തെ ചിത്രീകരിക്കുന്നു. പല സാധ്യതകളും ഉള്ളിൽ ഉള്ള വസ്തുവാണ് വിത്ത്. കർഷകന് ലോകത്തോട് പ്രത്യേക ബന്ധമുണ്ട്. ദൈവം നല്ലത് എന്നു പറഞ്ഞു. നല്ലത് എന്ന് പറയുമ്പോൾ ശബ്ദത്തിന്റെ പൂർണ്ണതയിൽ ഉള്ള അർത്ഥം അറിയണം. സ്വതന്ത്രമായി ചിന്തിക്കുവാൻ കഴിയുന്നവരാണ് മനുഷ്യർ. മറ്റുള്ളവർക്കടിമയാകാതെ സൃഷ്ടിപര

മായി ചിന്തിക്കുന്നതിൽകൂടി വ്യക്തിത്വവളർച്ച സാധ്യമാകണം. വിത്ത് ഭൂമിയുടെ ഉള്ളിൽ നൂഴ്ത്തത് കയറി മറ്റുള്ളവർക്ക് പ്രയോജനമുള്ള ഫലം പുറപ്പെടുവിക്കുന്നു. യോഹ.12:24 ഗോതമ്പുമണി അതിന്റെ സത്യാം നഷ്ടപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിലൂടെ ഫലം പുറപ്പെടുവിക്കുന്നു.

### സ്വയത്യാഗം

സ്വയം ത്യജിക്കാത്തത് തന്നെത്തന്നെ എടുത്തു കാണിക്കുന്നു. ഇത് മാധ്യമങ്ങളുടെ യുഗമാണ്. എല്ലാവരും എന്തെങ്കിലും, എവിടെയും ഞാൻ ശ്രദ്ധിക്കപ്പെടണം എന്ന മനോഭാവമാണ്. ഇതിന് മാറ്റം വരണം. ശ്രദ്ധയ്ക്ക് അർഹതയുണ്ടാകുവാൻ തക്കവണ്ണം ദൈവമേ എന്നെ വളർത്തണം എന്നു പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നവരാകണം. ഇത് സാധ്യമാകുന്നത്, ക്രിസ്തുവിനോടുള്ള ബന്ധത്തിലും സമർപ്പണത്തിലുമാണ്.

### വചനവും നാമും തമ്മിലുള്ള ബന്ധം

ദൈവം മനുഷ്യനെ സൃഷ്ടിച്ചത് (1) അതിരില്ലാത്ത സാധ്യതകൾ നൽകിയാണ്, (2) ഉള്ളിലുള്ള സാധ്യതകൾ അപ്രമേയങ്ങളാണ്.

ഇന്ന് മനുഷ്യർ സ്വയം ശപിക്കുന്നവരായി തീർന്നിരിക്കുന്നു. എന്തില്ല എന്നതിനെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള വേദനയാണ് നമ്മെ ഭരിക്കുന്നത്. നമ്മിൽ

അന്തർലീനമായിരിക്കുന്ന സാധ്യതകൾ കണ്ടെത്തി പരിപോഷിപ്പിക്കണം. സ്വയം അറിയണം നാം ആരാണെന്ന്? വചനം ഒരു ക്ഷണമാണ് (മത്തായി 5:48) പൂർണ്ണത പ്രാപിക്കണം. ഉല്പ.3:1-9

### ഹവ്വയും സാത്താനുമായുള്ള അഭിമുഖം

സാത്താൻ ഹവ്വയെ പഠിപ്പിക്കുകയാണ് ഈ പഴം നിന്റെ ദൈവമാണ് എന്ന്. ഇന്ന് പലർക്കും വയറാണ് ദൈവം. പൂർണ്ണതയിൽ നിന്ന് അപൂർണ്ണതയിലേക്ക് ആദി മനുഷ്യൻ ഒളിച്ചോടി. ഇന്ന് ഭാര്യ-ഭർതൃബന്ധം അതിന്റെ പൂർണ്ണ അർത്ഥത്തിൽ മനസ്സിലാക്കുന്നില്ല. നിസാരമായതിൽ പിടിച്ച് പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ സൃഷ്ടിക്കുന്നു. ആന്തരികമായി നാം അറിയണം. ഇന്ന് വിജ്ഞാനം വർദ്ധിക്കുകയാണ്. എന്നാൽ വ്യക്തിത്വം മുരടിക്കുകയാണ്. യോഹന്നാൻ 10:10 സമൃദ്ധിയായ ജീവൻ വ്യക്തിത്വത്തിന്റെ പൂർണ്ണതകരണമാണ്. ലോകത്തിൽ കൈവരിക്കാവുന്ന ആത്മീയ നേട്ടം വ്യക്തിത്വത്തിന്റെ സൗഖ്യമാണ്. ഇന്ന് വ്യക്തിത്വം കുഴിച്ചു മുടുകയാണ്. ക്രിസ്തുവാകുന്ന തലയോളം വളരണം. വചനം അനുഭവത്തിലൂടെ മനസ്സിലാക്കണം. ദൈവവുമായുള്ള ബന്ധത്തിൽ വ്യക്തിത്വത്തിന്റെ പൂർണ്ണത കൈവരിക്കുവാൻ യത്നിക്കാം



# മൂല്യബോധമുള്ള തലമുറ - സാമൂഹ്യ തിന്മയ്ക്ക് പ്രതിവിധി

മൂല്യബോധമുള്ള ഒരു തലമുറയിലൂടെ മാത്രമേ സാമൂഹ്യതിന്മയ്ക്ക് എതിരെയുള്ള പ്രവർത്തനം ഫലവത്താകുകയുള്ളൂ. പമ്പാനദിയുടെ മണൽത്തീരത്ത് അലയടിച്ചുയർന്ന വചനധാരയുടെ ശക്തിയാൽ അനേകം തിന്മകളെ മണ്ണിൽ കുഴിച്ചുമുടിയ പാരമ്പര്യം മാറാമൺ കൺവൻഷന്റെ പ്രസക്തി വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. ക്രിസ്ത്യാനിയുടെ ജീവിത മിതത്വം, ദേശീയബോധം ഇവ സമൂഹത്തിനു മുമ്പിൽ മാതൃകാപരമായിരിക്കണം. ദീർഘദർശനം ഉള്ളവരിൽ മാത്രമേ സാമൂഹ്യപ്രതിബദ്ധത കാണുവാൻ കഴിയൂ. നഷ്ടപ്പെടുന്ന അനേക ജീവിതങ്ങളുടെ മദ്ധ്യേ ഒരു ജീവിതരക്ഷ അനുപേക്ഷണീയവും വിലപ്പെട്ടതുമാണ്. ആഴത്തിൽ വേരുന്നിയ ആത്മീയതയിൽ കൂടിയാണ് സാമൂഹ്യതിന്മയെ പ്രതിരോധിക്കേണ്ടത്.

മഹാത്മാഗാന്ധിയുടെ ജീവിതം നമ്മുടെ പര്യായമായി തീർന്നതിനാലാകട്ടെ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ജീവിതമൂല്യങ്ങളിൽ പാലിച്ച യഥാർത്ഥ നിഷ്ഠയാണ്. സാമൂഹ്യതിന്മയോട് അദ്ദേഹം കാട്ടിയ സമീപനം യേശുക്രിസ്തുവിൽ പ്രകടമായ അതേ ഭാവമാണ്. ക്രൈസ്തവരുടെ ഉന്നതദർശനമായി സമ്പൂർണ്ണ മദ്യനിരോധനം ഉണ്ടാകണം.

നിത്യേന മാറുന്ന ലോകത്തിൽ പഴമ നഷ്ടപ്പെടുകയാണ്. ഇവിടെ ഭൂതകാലത്തിലേക്ക് ഒരു തിരിഞ്ഞുനോട്ടം അനിവാര്യമാണ്. മനുഷ്യാസ്ത്രംപോലും വ്യവസായവൽക്കരിക്കപ്പെട്ട ഒരു സംസ്കാരം വളരുന്നു. വികസനമാണ് മാറ്റത്തിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനം എന്ന ചിന്ത വളരുന്ന ഈ യുഗത്തിൽ നമ്മയ്ക്ക് പര്യാപ്തമായ മാറ്റമാണ് ഇന്നിന്റെ ആവശ്യം. സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിന്റെ ദുരുപയോഗം സാമൂഹ്യ മൂല്യ ക്രമത്തിന്റെ തായ്വേർ അറക്കുന്നതാണ്. ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം സഭ അനുഭവിക്കണം. സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിനായി ക്രിസ്തു നമ്മെ സ്വതന്ത്രരാക്കി (ഗലാ.5:1).

## ഡോ. ജോസ് പാറക്കടവിൽ

മൂല്യബോധം സമൂഹ നിർമ്മിതിക്ക്. കൂത്തുണ്ടൂർ മുല്യങ്ങളിലധിഷ്ഠിതമായ ജീവിതത്തിൽ വളർത്തുവാൻ കടപ്പെട്ടവരാണ് മാതാപിതാക്കൾ. വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ പ്രക്രിയപോലും മുല്യാധിഷ്ഠിതമായിത്തീരണം. പ്രലോഭനങ്ങളെ അതിജീവിക്കുന്ന തലമുറയാണ് ഇന്നിന്റെ ആവശ്യം. 'മേടിക്കൽ' വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന് അഡ്മിഷനുവേണ്ടി കോളജിലേക്ക് ചേക്കേറുന്നവർ മുല്യച്യുതിയുടെ ഉദാഹരണമാണ്. സത്യത്തിനും നീതിക്കുംവേണ്ടി നിലയുറപ്പിക്കുന്ന തലമുറയെ വളർത്തുവാൻ കൂടുംബത്തിനും സഭയ്ക്കും കടപ്പാടുണ്ട്. ജീവിതംകൊണ്ട് ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ സാക്ഷികളാകണം. അങ്ങനെ സഭ വളരുവാനും കാരണമായിത്തീരണം.

ഇരുപത് വർഷങ്ങൾക്കു മുമ്പ് മൂന്നുനിൽ ഒരാൾ മദ്യപിച്ചിരുന്നു എങ്കിൽ ഇന്ന് അത് ഇരുപതിൽ ഒന്നായി വളർന്നിരിക്കുന്നു. സഭ ലോകത്തിനൊപ്പം നീങ്ങുന്നതിനെക്കാൾ ലോകത്തെ മാറ്റുവാൻ സഭ ശ്രമിക്കണം.

സമൂഹ മാറ്റം സഭയിലൂടെ ഒരു വ്യക്തിയുടെ ഉള്ളിലും സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ ചുറ്റുപാടിലും മാറ്റം ഒരു സാധാരണ പ്രക്രിയയായി തീർന്നു കഴിഞ്ഞു. ജാഗരൂകരായ ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് മാത്രമേ ക്രിയാത്മകമായ സമൂഹ മാറ്റം സാധ്യമാകയുള്ളൂ. കല്പനകളുടെ ഉടയവനെ മറന്ന് പ്രതികരണമില്ലാത്ത സ്വർണ്ണവിഗ്രഹങ്ങളെ നാം പ്രതിഷ്ഠിച്ചിരിക്കുകയാണ്. സർവ്വ മോടിയോടും കൂടിയ സഭയാണ് ഇന്ന് ജനത്തിന് താല്പര്യം. ഇത് സാമൂഹ്യ പ്രതിബദ്ധത നഷ്ടപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. അനിവാര്യമായ മാറ്റം അഥവാ പരിവർത്തനം സഭയ്ക്ക് ഉണ്ടാകേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു. സാമൂഹ്യതിന്മയെ ഉന്മൂലനം ചെയ്യുവാൻ സാമൂഹികവും ശാരീരികവും മാനസികവുമായ ചിന്തകൾ ഉണ്ടാകണം. സാമൂഹ്യതിന്മയോടുള്ള സഭയുടെ കാഴ്ചപ്പാടും ബോധ്യവും ഒരു സമൂഹ നിർമ്മിതിക്ക് സഹായിക്കുന്നതാകണം. അവിടെ മാറ്റം ഉണ്ടാകും എന്നതിൽ സംശയമില്ല. തലമുറയ്ക്ക് മാതൃകയായിരിപ്പാൻ നമ്മുടെ ജീവിതത്തിൽ പരിവർത്തനം ഉണ്ടാകണം.

ക്രിസ്തു നൽകുന്ന ആത്മീയ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം അനുഭവിച്ച് ജോസഫിനെയും ദാനിയേലിനെപ്പോലെയും വളരുന്ന ഒരു പുതിയ സമൂഹമായി നാം തീരണം. സമൂഹത്തിൽ വ്യത്യസ്തരായിരുന്നുകൊണ്ട് ലോകത്തിൽ തിന്മകളെ ഉച്ചാടനം ചെയ്യുന്നവരാണ് യഥാർത്ഥ സാമൂഹ്യദാർശനികർ. ക്രിസ്തുവിൽ വെളിപ്പെട്ട ഈ മാതൃക സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ നന്മയിലേക്ക് വളരുന്ന മാറ്റത്തിന് കാരണമായിത്തീരണം.

ക്രിസ്തു നൽകുന്ന ആത്മീയ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം അനുഭവിച്ച് ജോസഫിനെയും ദാനിയേലിനെപ്പോലെയും വളരുന്ന ഒരു പുതിയ സമൂഹമായി നാം തീരണം. സമൂഹത്തിൽ വ്യത്യസ്തരായിരുന്നുകൊണ്ട് ലോകത്തിൽ തിന്മകളെ ഉച്ചാടനം ചെയ്യുന്നവരാണ് യഥാർത്ഥ സാമൂഹ്യദാർശനികർ. ക്രിസ്തുവിൽ വെളിപ്പെട്ട ഈ മാതൃക സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ നന്മയിലേക്ക് വളരുന്ന മാറ്റത്തിന് കാരണമായിത്തീരണം.

## സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെ പൂർണ്ണത - ദൈവമഹത്വത്തിന്റെ പ്രതിഫലനം

ഐസക് മാർ ക്രിമീസ് തിരുമേനി

സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെ പൂർണ്ണത സകലത്തെയും സാംശീകരിക്കുന്ന ദൈവമഹത്വമാണ്. 'ഞാനും പിതാവും ഒന്നായിരിക്കുന്നതുപോലെ നിങ്ങളും ഒന്നാകേണ്ടതിന്' എന്ന മഹാപുരോഹിത പ്രാർത്ഥന സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെ പൂർണ്ണതയുടെ പ്രകാശനമാണ്. ദൈവമഹത്വത്തെ മനുഷ്യമഹത്വമായി തീർക്കേണ്ടതിനാണ് യേശു ഈ പ്രാർത്ഥന നടത്തിയത്. പകരുന്നതിനെക്കാൾ പങ്കിട്ടെടുക്കുന്ന മഹത്വമാണ് യഥാർത്ഥ സാരം. എന്നാൽ ഈ മഹത്വം ഏറ്റുവാങ്ങിയ ക്രിസ്തീയ സമൂഹം ഇന്ന് വിഭജനത്തിന്റെ തലങ്ങളിലേക്ക് തിങ്ങിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളെ പീഡിപ്പിക്കുന്ന അനേകം പരിഭവം വെളിപ്പെടുത്തുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിലും ക്രിസ്തുവിനെ കീറിമുറിച്ച് പീഡിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ശാരദാമഹിത സത്യത്തെ ദൈവമഹത്വം തിരിച്ചറിയണം. ദൈവിക തന്മ പങ്കുവെക്കുന്ന ക്രിസ്തീയ സമൂഹമാണ് ഇന്നിന്റെ അതിയാവ്യത്. തളരുന്നവരുടെ പ്രത്യാശയായി സഭയ്ക്ക് നിലകൊള്ളണം. കാൽവിലെ മർദ്ദിത മനുഷ്യ ഓരോരുത്തിന്റെ തീർപ്പ്നത വെളിവാക്കുന്നതുപോലെ സമൂഹത്തിലെ മർദ്ദിത മനുഷ്യകളിൽ സ്വർവ്വംശത്തിന്റെ തിരിയാളം തെളിയണം.

ദൈവസ്നേഹത്തിന്റെ പൂർണ്ണത വെളിവാക്കുന്ന മഹത്വം മാതൃസമൂഹം സ്വായത്തമാക്കണം. ഏകശരീരത്തിന്റെ അംശികൾ ഏകഭാവമുള്ളവരായി ദൈവികനന്മയുടെ പങ്കുകാരായിത്തീരുന്ന ഒരു സമൂഹം സഭയുടെ പൊതുലക്ഷ്യമായിത്തീരണം. അങ്ങനെയാകുമ്പോൾ സമൂഹം ജീവസുറ്റതായിത്തീരും.

## യേശുവിലേക്ക് എത്തിച്ചേരുക

കുര്യാക്കോസ് മാർ സേവേറിയോസ് തിരുമേനി

ലോകത്തിന്റെ പാപത്തെ ചുമക്കുന്ന ദൈവകുഞ്ഞാടായ യേശുവിലേക്ക് എത്തിച്ചേരുന്നതാണ് യഥാർത്ഥ എക്യുമിനിസം. സഭ വ്യത്യസ്തമെങ്കിലും ഒരേ വിശ്വാസത്തിന്റെയും ഒരേ പൈതൃകത്തിന്റെയും അവകാശികൾ എന്ന ചിന്ത കൈമുതലാകണം. 'ക്രിസ്തു ഒരുവൻ' ലോകത്തെ

## എക്യുമെനിക്കൽ സമ്മേളനം

ഒന്നായി കണ്ട യേശുവിലൂടെ സഭ ലോകത്തെ കാണണം. സ്നേഹം എന്ന അടിസ്ഥാനമൂല്യത്തിൽ വളരുന്ന സമൂഹത്തിൽ മതങ്ങളുടെ വേർതിരിവില്ല. ക്രിസ്തു സഭയുടെ ജീവനുള്ള കല്ലുകളായിത്തീരാനാണ് ദൈവം നമ്മെ വിളിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നതെന്ന ബോധ്യമുണ്ടാകണം. ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ അനവരതമായ കൃപയാണ് ഐക്യത്തിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനം. ആർഷഭാരതത്തിന്റെ ഉന്നതമായ സംസ്കാരം നിലനിർത്താൻ ഒരുമയുടെ പാഠങ്ങൾ നാം പഠിക്കണം. സഭയുടെ ദൗത്യം യേശുവിൽ എത്തുക എന്നതാണ്.

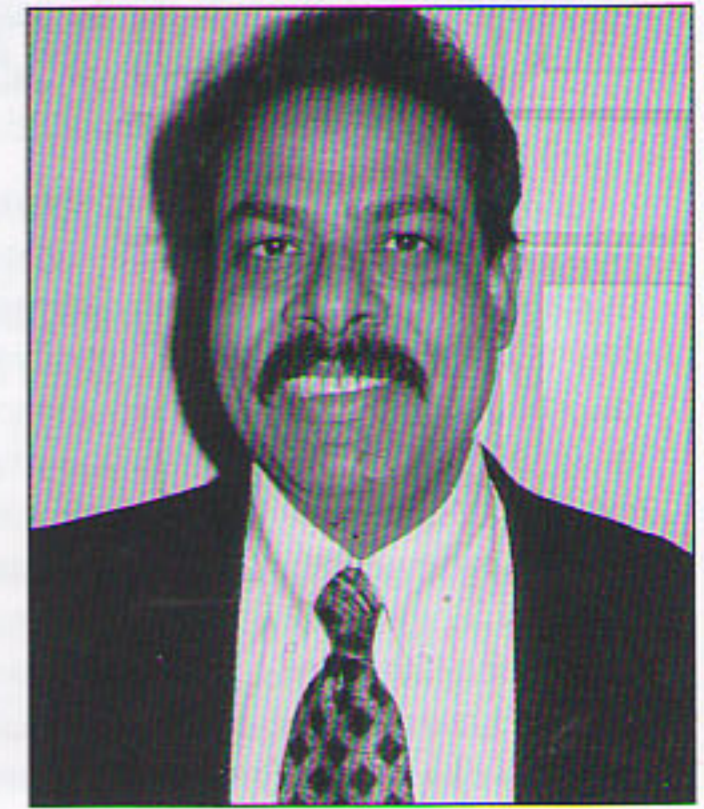
## ഭൂമിയുടെ പൂർണ്ണത - യഥാർത്ഥ രൂപാന്തരാനുഭവം

ബിഷപ്പ് ജോർജ്ജ് ഐക്യൻ

റോമർ 12:2. രൂപം നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ട ഭൂമിയെ പൂർണ്ണതയുള്ളതും ബന്ധങ്ങളുടെ വിചേദമില്ലാത്ത അനുഭവമാക്കിത്തീർക്കുന്നതുമാണ് യഥാർത്ഥ രൂപാന്തരം. ഉദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ പൂർണ്ണമാകുമ്പോൾ രൂപവും പൂർണ്ണമാകും. കലവറയില്ലാത്ത സ്നേഹത്താൽ ദൈവത്തെ ആരാധിക്കുന്നതിലൂടെ നന്മയും പ്രസാദകരവുമായ ദൈവഹിതം പൂർണ്ണമായിത്തീരുന്നു. ആരാധനയിലൂടെ ദൈവവുമായി ബന്ധം സ്ഥാപിക്കേണ്ട മനുഷ്യൻ ദൈവത്തിൽനിന്ന് ഓടി അകലുന്നതുകാരണം ലോകത്തിന്റെ രൂപം നഷ്ടപ്പെടുന്നു. ഇത് ചൈതന്യത്തിന് വഴി തെളിയിക്കുന്നു. സ്നേഹത്താൽ പരസ്പരം വളരേണ്ട മനുഷ്യർ വിഭവംകൊണ്ട് ദൈവത്തിൽനിന്നും ഓടി അകലുകയാണ്. പ്രദേശിക തലങ്ങളിലുണ്ടാകേണ്ട ബന്ധങ്ങളാണ് സഭാജീവിതത്തിന്റെ മൂലകളും. വ്യത്യസ്ത പാരമ്പര്യങ്ങൾ പുലർത്തുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിലും സഭ തന്മയിൽ ഒരു കൂടുംബമാണ്. കൂടുംബത്തിന്റെ സമ്പൂർണ്ണ സൗഖ്യം ആരോഗ്യമുള്ള സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ പ്രതിഫലനമാണ്. സൗഖ്യമുള്ള സഭ ക്രിസ്താനുഭവം പ്രകടമാക്കുന്നു. ബന്ധങ്ങളുടെ വിചേദിക്കപ്പെടാത്ത സമന്വയമാണ് സൗഖ്യത്തിന് മുഖാന്തിരമായിത്തീരുന്നത്. സ്ഥിരമായ പരിശ്രമത്തിലൂടെ പ്രകൃതിയുമായും സമസ്യഷ്ടികളുമായും സമഗ്രമായ ബന്ധം പുനഃസ്ഥാപിക്കണം. വി.പൗലോസിന്റെ ഈ സമഗ്രവീക്ഷണം രൂപാന്തരമുള്ള ലോകത്തിനായുള്ള ആഹ്വാനമാണ്. ദൈവഹിതം പൂർണ്ണമാകുന്നതിലൂടെ രൂപമുള്ള ലോകവും സൗഖ്യമുള്ള സഭയും ആരോഗ്യമുള്ള സമൂഹവും സംസ്ഥാപിതമാകുന്നു.



We hear a lot about leadership in the secular world as well as in the religious arena. The Mar Thoma Church has always been on the forefront when considering vigor and growth in spirituality, Biblical teachings, evangelization, community services, and worship services. The Old Testament describes the leadership of individuals mainly in a quest for land and power. Great Hebrew leaders like Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and David combined spiritual and secular powers. From their models evolved tribal leadership. Later the Greeks and Romans transformed leadership to its best to fit the time and need. Romans were known to “rule”, where the opportunity existed. There are arguments that the Catholic hierarchy is a mirrored image of the religious side of strict ruling. Daniel Wren in his book, “The Evolution of Management Thought,” states that there is an overwhelming number of protestants among business leaders, entrepreneurs, skilled laborers, and more highly trained technical and commercial personnel.



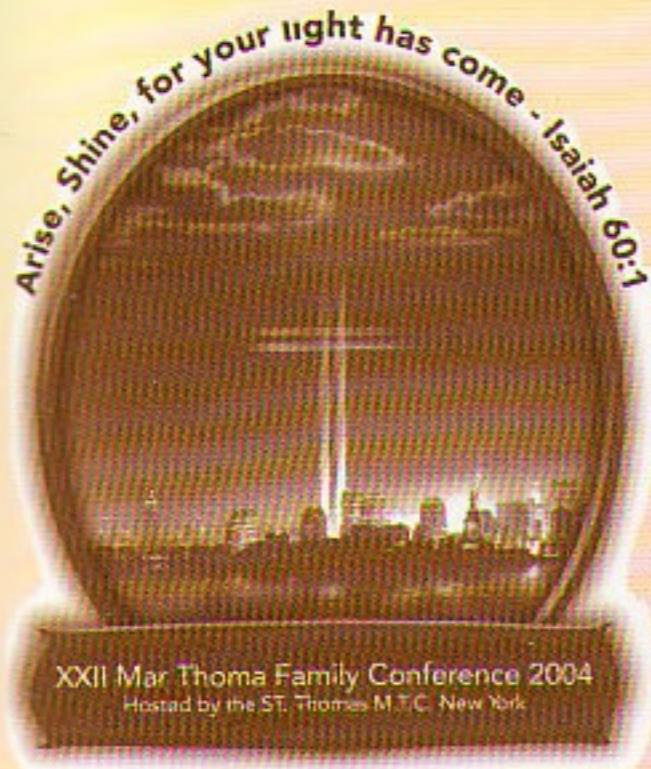
Today we look at leaders assessing their qualities based on our life practices, social and personal needs. Leaders are the most criticized, no matter what level they are at. For co-workers and followers, leadership is the guiding light. If the leader is confused, the followers are to stumble. It is a basic requirement for any leader to understand organizational missions and goals, availability and utilization of resources, and a road map to get to the destination. Leader effectiveness is determined by what people do, not by some inherent personal characteristics. The Life styles of individuals and communities evolved through generations and along with it emerged changes in leadership styles. The need for change in leadership styles became inevitable with socio-economic revolutions. Managing change and managing people at the same time, is no longer an easy task. The leader must act as a team leader, a reformer, and facilitator. According to many leaders, this is no small agenda to accomplish, especially since “business as usual” does not stop as the new role develops.

Leonard Sayles who is the author of “The Working Leader,” and a senior manager at the Center for Creative Leadership says: “You need to keep redesigning and adapting the processes, with the power and autonomy people can have”. This is achieved by identifying breakthroughs, becoming a good role model, and overcoming the organizational barriers which prevent success. One must understand operational strategies and participate at all levels by exploiting technical and organizational expertise. The new leader has to be a practical visionary and a master of change. We must change with the times and adapt to this new world. Our church is no longer an entity with a local identity, but is now a global organization with great potential. I hope and pray that God will continue to pour His blessings on our leaders and our people.

*“Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got a hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations”* (George Bernard Shaw).

**Eapen Daniel**





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