



MAR THOMA
MESSENGER

A PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

JULY 2006



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Mar Thoma Messenger

The official publication of the
Diocese of North America & Europe

VOL. XXV No. 3
July 2006

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Cover Design: **Biju T. Mathew, Houston**

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	2 Years	5 Years	Life
USA	\$20.00	\$50.00	\$300.00
Canada & UK	\$20.00*	\$50.00*	\$300.00*

*Plus Postage

Advertisement Rates:

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

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Message from the Diocesan Bishop



Dearly Beloved in Christ,

I am happy to salute you again through the Messenger and thank God for the blessings showered upon us. I offer my sincere greetings to all newly arrived Achens and the members of their families, and wish them many years of fruitful ministry ahead.

The Family Conference is credited to be the single biggest annual gathering of our people of this diocese and is known for eloquent sermons and speeches. The conference has earned its popularity from illustrious speakers who come from far and near. I hope that this year's Family Conference will open up immense possibilities for our families and bring challenges for our people. I

appreciate the sincere effort of the vicar and members of the Chicago Mar Thoma Church in organizing this event.

The family, which is the nucleus of our lives, will become still narrower in its scope. Members of many families are devoid of affection and compassion for one another. Integrity and oneness in the family will become still rare. This scenario may look unduly pessimistic. At this juncture the purpose of the family conference looks apt and relevant.

I applaud all the organizers of the 27th National Mar Thoma Youth Conference to be held from August 10-13, 2006 in Toronto, Canada. On the younger generation lies the responsibility to uphold the faith, traditions, and rich heritage they are heirs to. I commend the vicar, Youth Fellowship members, and the members of the parish for their efforts.

The National Sevika Sanghom Conference, National Yuvajana Sakhyam Conference and Edvaka Mission conference are planned to be hosted by the Detroit Mar Thoma Church, Bethel Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia; and Epiphany Mar Thoma Church, New York, respectively. Let us all pray these conferences be a great blessing, and I express my gratitude to the hosting parishes for the elaborate arrangements. I am sure the involvement and leadership of the participants will benefit the church at large.

A special Jubilee issue of Messenger will be released in October. I am counting on every one's support in this matter to make this issue a great one. In all walks of life, joy is a fruit of which labor is the seed. We cannot enjoy the taste of any fruit without sowing its seeds and nursing the plant. True labor has its own reward. Duty done properly carries with it its own reward, and that reward is inner satisfaction. Duty done fills the heart with a spiritual joy. However, fear, pride, suspicion and jealousy lead to disappointment. We need to be grateful to God, for all that we enjoy on this journey together.

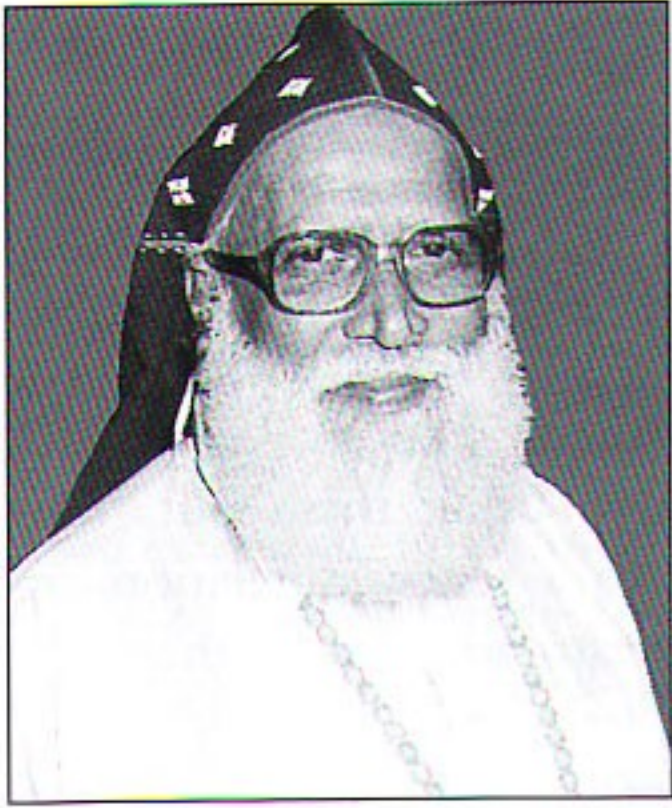
May God bless you all.

Yours in His ministry,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Coorilos Metrachan", written over a horizontal line.

Coorilos Metrachan

Message from the Metropolitan



Dearly Beloved in Christ,

May 1st was International Labor Day. Labor or work is a responsibility and a privilege bestowed up on us by God. The Universe, Creation, the Garden of Eden, all are God's work. God appointed Man to continue His labor; ordered us to toil in and tend to His garden. Physical labor is a divine ministry. Everything else followed that chronologically. We should realize that work is pure and destined by God. Some Greek scholars used to believe that mental work was more valuable than physical work. God's solace is for those who toil and carry their burden.

Work can also be disobedience and waywardness. To work knowing God's will is a blessing. One reason that cheating, greed, and exploitation is on the rise is the ignorance of the holiness of labor. Utilizing one's skills where it is needed most to help those who need it most is real work. Do we accept the laborer as the backbone of society? What is his place in the social setup? Once a father on his deathbed told his sons that he had buried a treasure in their yard for them. The sons did not ask him where he had buried it. After his death, they dug up the yard but to no avail. However, seeing that they had tilled the entire yard in the process, they farmed on the land and reaped a great profit. Thus they found the treasure. The laborer is the one who finds the treasure that God buried in the earth and gives it to society. The laborer is not a nuisance but a blessing. Both employers and employees have to understand this truth and work in harmony.

July 3rd was St. Thomas Day. St. Thomas worked as a missionary hero in India but people who did not understand his work killed him. When we remember him, what should come to our mind is the Christian duty to spread the Gospel. It is high time all the churches of India work in unison to let the whole of India know and experience the savior Jesus Christ.

Many parishes received new vicars in May. All parishes should wholeheartedly cooperate in their ministry. Ministry in parishes should become an obsession for the clergy.

The family is the fundamental unit of the society and the church. Its purity, character, and growth is an integral element for the stability and betterment of both society and the church. Therefore I call your attention to the following matters.

Every family should dedicate time to worship every day. We should take this as our main activity for this year.

Every parish should conduct premarital counseling and first communion classes every year. This is a great need of the hour.

It would be a good idea to sit as a family in the church during Sunday service. This is just a suggestion, not an instruction. Those who want to continue as it is now are free to do so. However, when we worship as a family, it improves the participation of children. At least some parishes should implement this. Segregation of women and children should be avoided.

May the grace, love, and care of our Lord be with us all always.

Philipose Mar Chrysostom
Mar Thoma Metropolitan

Translated and Reprinted from Sabha Tharaka

Spirituality of New Creation (II Corinthians 5:17-20)

Rev. Abraham P. Varkey, Atlanta MTC

On November 4th, 1995, in Tel Aviv, he addressed a large crowd in a peace rally and sang the "Song for Peace" with them. As he was about to get into the car, he was assassinated by a Jewish terrorist. He was none other than Yitzhak Rabin, the prime minister of Israel who gave his life for a renewed relationship between Jews and their Arab neighbors.

Paul's Corinthian correspondence arose with an apologetic purpose against his opponents who questioned his divine authority. In II Cor. 5:14-21, Paul uses the language of reconciliation, to strengthen his arguments, so that the Corinthians should accept him as a divine apostle. The problem of broken relationships between God and human beings raises the need for reconciliation. Jesus Christ restored the believer into the reconciled relationship of peace with God, so that a new creation has evolved. The old pattern of relationship and values has gone. As God's mouthpiece, Paul calls the Corinthians to a renewed relationship within the Church and also with him as reconciled people of God. Hence the theme of reconciliation is addressed to the believers, with the view to restore relationships.

From verses 17 to 19 I would like to highlight two thoughts:

I. Jesus' Death And Resurrection Renews All Human Relations

In the first ten verses of II Corinthians 5, Paul shares his confident hope in resurrection, which strengthened him in all his trials and sufferings. In the following verses, Paul describes the consequences or effects that Christ's death and resurrection brought upon the believers: "a new life" (14-15); "a new way of knowledge" (16); "a new creation" (17).

The Greek word "haste" (v. 17), which means "therefore", is a consequence from verses 14-15. So it is clear that the "new creation" referred in v.17 is the result of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The new creation referred to in verse 17 is not another creation, but it is new in the sense that it is radically changed or transformed. In the light of Christ Event, Paul says that the new creation has already come. It is not a future event.

In the statement "All this is from God" (verse 18a), Paul relates two concepts—"new creation" and "reconciliation"—so the initiative for the coming of the new creation is taken by God. That is, the new creation is evolved by God's reconciling work through Jesus Christ.

Paul's idea of new creation has close connection with Isaiah 43:18-19. "Remember not the former things nor



consider the things of old. Behold I am doing a new thing."

Here the prophet announces God's promise of restoration to the people of Israel, who are in Babylonian exile. God takes initiative not only to bring them out from bondage, but also to a renewed relationship with them. God's restoration made them the new people of God (the new creation).

Thus Isaiah's promise of the restoration of broken relationships was fulfilled by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That

is, Christ's death and resurrection removed the condition of separation between God and sinful people, resulting in the inauguration of a new people of God, a new creation.

Verse 17b, "The old has passed away, behold, the new has come" refers to the effect of the arrival of the new creation. Hence old relationships, characterized by knowledge according to flesh has gone. Instead, a new and right relationship to God and fellow beings has come. As part of the new creation, one should be free from self-centered life and should come to live for Christ-centered values. So a believer has to evaluate things by the spiritual standards of the new world. As Christ's delegate, he calls us to realize the presence of the new creation, so that it makes a difference in our relationships and in our outlook.

It is an age hungry for the healing of broken relationships. Modern market culture prompts us to lead a self-centered lifestyle, and to accumulate more, without considering the need of others. The old value system of "caring and sharing" with our fellow beings has given place to one of "cheating and annexing."

Because of modernization and urbanization, relationships itself have become mechanistic. In this context, even religion and spirituality have become commodities to satisfy one's own needs and desires. Even faith has become a private affair.

But by participating in Christ's death and resurrection, we have to fight against these. That is, we should become the media manifesting the reality of new creation in the midst of self-centered life.

II. Christ's death and resurrection renews the relationship between human beings and the rest of creation

Paul says that reconciliation through Christ is not limited to the realm of human beings alone, because God

reconciled the whole world. So the whole creation is included in the salvific act of God.

The Greek word "tis" (v.17) can also be translated as "anything" or "something." So according to v.17, everything in the universe can become "new" because of Christ's death and resurrection.

In v. 18, Paul uses the personal pronoun "us." It makes clear that Paul's primary focus of reconciliation is human beings. But in v. 19, the impersonal pronoun "world" is used. Here Paul enlarges his vision so that reconciliation of God extends not only to all persons, but also to all creation, animate and inanimate. In Pauline theology "cosmos" is the sum total of the created universe. It includes both human and non-human creation.

Paul's thinking is based on the fact that the fall of man brought a curse upon all of the created world. So, with the restoration of humanity the whole created order will also be restored. Thus, humanity and the rest of creation are mutually related in the fall as well as redemption.

Paul's idea has close connection with Isaiah 43:20. "The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I will give water in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people."

Here the prophet announces that the restoration of the people of Israel from Babylon also includes the transformation of nature. This transformation and renewal

of nature is part of the salvation of the people of God. The renewal of nature takes place in order to give a peaceful journey to the restored community. Thus reconciliation according to Paul is God's gift to humanity and the whole creation.

But human beings were ignorant of God's purpose of creation. Instead of being in harmony with the rest of creation, he himself became the destructive force of God's beautiful creation. Since Protestant Reformation the individual aspect of salvation has been overemphasized. Even Christian theology neglected the concern for creation. Thus developed an aggressive manipulation of nature. Today environmental problems are many. The well-being and survival of life on earth is being threatened.

Though the harmony in creation was lost because of human sin, Paul speaks about the entire creation's rightful hope for deliverance. So, an enriched relationship between human beings and the rest of creation is needed for harmony in the created system. For Paul, reconciliation is peace with God, other human beings, and the rest of creation. Thus, a new attitude to the environment has come. So the mission is not merely for human beings, but for the whole of God's creation.

God's reconciling activity is complete. But the message is yet to reach the creation as a whole. That is the ministry entrusted to us. ■

Are We There Yet?

XXVII National Mar Thoma Youth Conference Toronto

August 10th to 13th 2006

Hosted by:

Canadian Mar Thoma Youth Fellowship Toronto
At the University of Guelph

Speakers:

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa

The Rt. Rev. Joseph Mar Barnabas Episcopa

The Rev. Dr. M. J. Joseph

(Director, E.C.C., Bangalore and Former Principal, Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam)

Theme:

I press on toward the goal to win the prize which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:14)

Register online today at:
www.mtcyouth.org/national2006

The Relevance of Charismatic Offices in a Church Context

Rev. Thomas John, Washington D.C.

God's plan of action in history concerning the church did not happen spontaneously and in a systematic manner. The spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to the other nations was not at all a planned and orderly process; rather it emerged through trials and risks, through hesitations and discussions, and through compulsion and reaction. The power of the spirit enabled certain leaders to establish the church as a dynamic reality.

The nature of church as a dynamic reality is well described in the Acts of the Apostles. They led a common life having one heart and one soul (Acts 2:42, 4:32-35). The Jews were asked to embrace Christianity honestly and in full sincerity. The story of Ananias and Saphira is narrated briefly to illustrate this point (Acts 5: 1-11).

The seven 'Servants of the Table' (deacons) were charismatic individuals with good repute, filled with spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3). They belonged to the 'Hellenist' group, who were split on the issue of the caring of widows with the Hebrews. The seven servants were ordained to serve at the table. Stephen was one among them, richly blessed by the Lord and full of power. He performed great miracles among the people and became the center of attention. He witnessed Jesus and defended himself for the same cause. Although Stephen was appointed to serve at the table, he put on the vestments of a preacher and spread the story of salvation. This contradicted the basic understanding that deacons were to serve at the table while apostles were to preach.

However, this understanding was again questioned when the spirit of Jesus inspired Philip to preach the gospel among the Samaritans. Philip, one among the seven, though unauthorized by the official church in Jerusalem, preached fruitfully amongst the Gentiles (Acts 8: 6, 8: 13, 8: 24). But later, Philip (not one of the twelve) was responsible for taking the gospel to the Gentiles and the twelve approved his ministry and followed his path. The Charisma endowed upon the Church made them to be called Christians (Acts. 11: 26). The same church sent Saul and Barnabas to preach the gospel among Gentiles (Acts 13:1-3) and Philip continued his journey to meet the Ethiopian Eunuch and from him to every town, preaching the good news.

After describing the variety of gifts (1 Corinthians 12: 4) and unity in ministry, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to



have a stronger fellowship with 'love', a higher gift. Jesus expressed His ultimate love by exemplary living and the death on the cross. All ecstatic expressions are not charismatic (1 Corinthians 12:1-3) and all charismatic expressions are not ecstatic. Ecstatic behavior is not necessarily charismatic unless it bears witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Charismatic Apostolate

A. Harnack distinguished charismatic ministries such as those of apostles, prophets, and teachers, which were universal in scope, and administrative ministries such as those of Presbyters, Bishops, and Deacons, which were local in scope. Both these categories enjoyed charisma. The apostles were delegates (2 Cor. 8:23 and Philipians 2:25). But, in 1 Cor. 12: 27, the apostles were those who established the church, the local community. They were specially commissioned in addition to the group of 'twelve'. The authority of the prophet was the authority to prophesy under inspiration and never extended beyond inspiration. A recognized group of teachers (Galatians 6: 6) were passing on the tradition (Romans 1, Cor. 4:17) and interpreting the tradition (Galatians 3: 16, Romans 1: 1).

Deacons were those who engaged in service (Philipians 1: 1). The titles elders (presbyters) and bishops were used synonymously or interchangeably for same functions. During the New Testament times, the title Presbyter (older) was not inferior to Episcopos or the Bishop (1 Peter 5: 1, 2 John 1, 3 John 1).

Episcopos (Greek) is best translated as 'overseer' and it refers to some leadership role and administrative or financial responsibility. Eucharist is the ceremony of thanksgiving undertaken by the Episcopos. The Pastorals developed the concept of charisma of office. Through ordination it is conferred on the leaders (1 Timothy 4:14, 2 Timothy 1: 6).

Post-Apostolic Period

The charismatic order of the apostolate continued through the second century. The Roman government persecuted many Christians. Some believers denied Christianity when persecuted and later, a few apologized and returned to Christianity. The apologists who defended Christianity were from the rank of philosophers and their

interpretations aided in the development of theology. These were charismatic individuals filled with the Holy Spirit. Justin Martyr stated:

“Straight away, a flame was kindled in my soul; and a love of the prophets and of those men who are friends of Christ... I found this philosophy alone to be safe and profitable”.

Justin Martyr filled with the Spirit, wrote the book “Apology” addressed to the Emperor Antonius Pius, defending Christianity. Christians looked upon themselves as a separate group of people, whose citizenship is in heavenly Jerusalem. Christian life was ascetic, legalistic and kind towards widows, poor and the orphans. To be a Christian means to be a charismatic individual who possesses spiritual gifts to strengthen the church. It is evident that there were a few elitists in Corinth. Paul had a clear conviction that all baptized in Christ drank of the

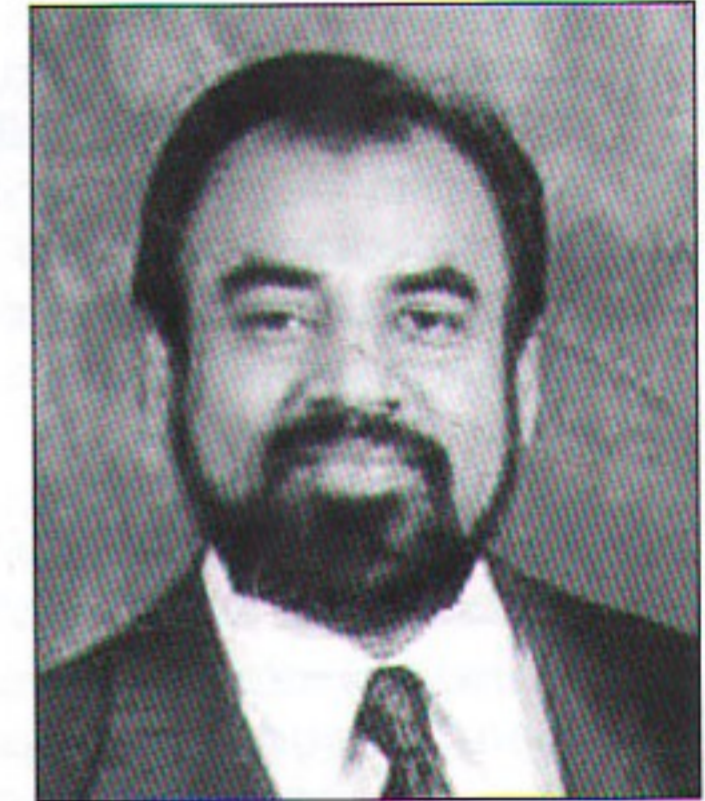
same spirit. Paul concludes with the following three points:

1. A Charismatic Church recognizes that the gift of God’s spirit is given to every Christian, not just a fortunate few.
2. Charismatic spirituality accepts spiritual gifts for practical application and ministry, not simply for possessing.
3. A truly charismatic church knows that Christian unity is not a personal achievement, but a remarkable gift from God

Gifted and nurtured by God’s spirit, the church exists neither to enable Christians to reach the peaks of ecstatic spiritual experience nor to bless private piety, but to glorify Jesus as the Lord, to live by God’s life-giving spirit, and to express their gifts in its intended means for the common good. ■

The Only Way

Elias Abraham, Baltimore, Maryland



*The median strip is drawn,
Where, on one side, thorns of love spread,
The other brims in emeralds of vileness.
The sun, till this day shines,
The moon and the stars, too.
Everything that moves and breathes
Accepts the thorn,
When man seeks the coveted stone.
The image is lost on him,
'The cross with handle' is his theme.
He never minds
The profanity.
When his sons and daughters fall*

*On the sword,
A terrible smile distorts his lips.*

*The golden Eye from heaven
Beholds
'The joy of their glory
And the desire of their eyes.'
Great waters roar
Before they cover them.*

*Cross is not far away,
To live a life
Worthy of the Lord.*

സ്പന്ദനങ്ങൾ

റവ. സി. ജോൺ, കുറത്തികാട്

‘തൊഴിലാളി’ എന്നാൽ തൊഴിലിനെ ലാളിക്കുന്നവൻ എന്നർത്ഥം. ഒരു പിതാവ്/മാതാവ് മകനെ (മകളെ) ലാളിക്കുന്ന ചിത്രം മനസ്സിൽ തെളിയുന്നു. തന്റെ മകനോട് (മകളോട്) ഉള്ള സ്നേഹം, കരുതൽ, അവരുടെ വളർച്ച, ഉയർച്ച, യശസ്സ് ഇതെല്ലാം മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ ലാളനയിൽ ഉൾച്ചേർന്നിരിക്കുന്നു. മക്കളെ ലാളിക്കുന്നത് ഭാരമായി കരുതുന്ന മാതാപിതാക്കളുണ്ടോ? സ്വന്തം മക്കളെ സ്നേഹിച്ച് മടുക്കുന്നവരുണ്ടോ? പ്രതിഫലം മോഹിച്ച് ലാളിക്കുമോ?

ഒരാൾ ചുവപ്പോ, നീലയോ, കാക്കിയോ, വെള്ളയോ യൂണിഫോമിട്ട് അതിന്മേൽ ഒരു തൊഴിലാളിയുണിയന്റെ പേര് തൂന്നിപ്പിടിപ്പിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് തൊഴിലാളിയായുകയില്ല. ‘ഇക്വിലാബ് സിന്ദാബാദ്’ എന്ന് കണ്ഠം പൊട്ടി, ദിഗന്തം മുഴക്കി വിളിച്ചാലും തൊഴിലാളിയായുകയില്ല. മറ്റൊരാൾ ഒരു വെള്ളക്കുപ്പായം ഇട്ട് ബെൽറ്റും കെട്ടിയാൽ അച്ചനെന്തു വിളിക്കാം; അതുകൊണ്ട് ദൈവജനത്തിന് ഒരു ഇടയനാവുകയില്ല. വേറൊരുവൻ എം. ബി. ബി. എസ് പാസ്സായി വെള്ളക്കോട്ടും ഇട്ട് സ്നേഹസ്കോപ്പും അണിഞ്ഞാൽ ‘ഡോക്ടർ’ എന്നു വിളിക്കപ്പെടും; രോഗിക്ക് യഥാർത്ഥ വൈദ്യനാവില്ല. ബി. എഡ്/ടി.ടി. സി പാസ്സായി പി. എസ്.സി/സ്കൂൾ മാനേജർ കനിഞ്ഞാൽ ഏതെങ്കിലും സ്കൂളിലെ അധ്യാപകനാകാം, ശമ്പളം വാങ്ങാം; ശിഷ്യരെ സൃഷ്ടിക്കുന്ന ഗുരുക്കന്മാരാകാൻ കഴിയുകയില്ല.

സമൂഹത്തിൽ വിധാംസകമല്ലാത്ത ഓരോ തൊഴിലും ദൈവിക ദൗത്യവും ദൈവ നിയോഗവുമാണ്. അപ്രകാരമുള്ള ഏതു തൊഴിൽ ചെയ്യുന്നതും ദൈവിക ദൗത്യത്തിലുള്ള പങ്കാളിത്തവും നിയോഗത്തിനുമുന്വിലുള്ള അനുസരണവും വിധേയത്വവുമാണ്. കൃഷിക്കാരനും, കർഷകത്തൊഴിലാളിയും, ചുമട്ടുകാരനും, അലക്കുകാരനും, ബാർബറും, ആശാരിയും, മുശാരിയും, കൊല്ലനും, എൻജിനീയറും, ഡോക്ടറും, അധ്യാപകനും, വൈദികനും, ബിസിനസ്സു കാരനും എന്നുവേണ്ട ലോകത്തിന്റെ സൃഷ്ടിപരമായ പരിപാലനത്തിനുള്ള എല്ലാവേലയും ദൈവിക വേലയാണ്. വചനം പറയുന്നു; “യഹോവയായ ദൈവം മനുഷ്യനെ കുട്ടിക്കൊണ്ടുപോയി ഏദൻതോട്ടത്തിൽ വേലചെയ്യുവാനും അതിനെ കാപ്പാനും അവിടെയാക്കി” (ഉൽപ്പത്തി 2:15). മനുഷ്യനെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള ദൈവോദ്ദേശ്യം സുവ്യക്തമാണ്. വേല ചെയ്യണം. പരിരക്ഷിക്കണം. പണിഞ്ഞ് നശിപ്പിക്കരുത്. പണിത് പരിരക്ഷിക്കണം. നാം ചെയ്യുന്ന തൊഴിലിനെ സ്നേഹിച്ചുകൊണ്ട്, ലാളിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ജോലിചെയ്യാൻ സാധിക്കുമ്പോഴാണ് നാം യഥാർത്ഥ തൊഴിലാളി (ദൈവിക വേലക്കാരൻ) ആകുന്നത്. പണിഞ്ഞും പണിയാതെയും നാം നശിപ്പിച്ച നമ്മുടെ പാടങ്ങൾ, ഫാക്ടറികൾ, ആശുപത്രികൾ, സ്കൂളുകൾ, പൊതുമേഖലാ സ്ഥാപനങ്ങൾ നമുക്ക് നേരെ കൊത്തനം കുത്തുന്നു.

പണിഞ്ഞ് നശിക്കുന്നവരുണ്ട്. ഇവരെ ജോലി ഭ്രാന്തന്മാർ (Workaholics) എന്നു വിളിക്കുന്നു. സ്വന്തം ശാരീരിക-മാനസിക-വൈകാരിക- ആത്മീയ ആരോഗ്യം, കുടുംബം, ബന്ധങ്ങൾ ഇവയെല്ലാം വിസ്മരിച്ച് ജോലിയിൽ വ്യാപൃതരാകുന്നവർ. ‘ജോലിയെ വേൾക്കുന്ന യുവതലമുറ (The young who marry Jobs)’- ഈയിടത്തെ ഒരു ആനുകാലികത്തിന്റെ തലവാചകമാണിത്. അതി സാങ്കേതികതയുടെ ഈയുഗത്തിൽ രാത്രിയെ പകലാക്കി ജോലിചെയ്യേണ്ടിവരുന്ന ബി.പി. ഒ. ജോലിക്കാർ, ഐ.ടി. പ്രൊഫഷണൽസ്. പതിനാറും ഇരുപത്തിനാലും മുപ്പത്തിയാറും മണിക്കൂറുകൾ തുടർച്ചയായി ജോലിചെയ്ത് നട്ടെല്ലൊടിയുന്ന നേഴ്സിംഗ് ശുശ്രൂഷ ചെയ്യുന്ന സഹോദരിമാർ. അർച്ചാൺവയറിനു വേണ്ടി മാത്രമാണോ ഈ അത്യധ്വാനം! ഈ പരക്കം പാച്ചിൽ! എല്ലാറ്റിനും ഒരു നിയന്ത്രണം വേണം.

ആധുനിക ലോകത്തെ കുടിയേറ്റങ്ങളേറേയും നടക്കുന്നത് തൊഴിലുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടാണ്. നമ്മുടെ സഹോദരങ്ങൾ നടത്തുന്ന സാഹസിക കുടിയേറ്റങ്ങളുടെ പ്രത്യക്ഷ ഫലമാണ് കേരളീയ ക്രൈസ്തവ സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ ഭൗതിക വളർച്ച. കേരളത്തിലേക്ക് മറ്റ് സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നുള്ള കുടിയേറ്റം നടക്കുന്നുണ്ടത്രേ! കുറഞ്ഞ ‘കൂലി, അമിത ജോലി, ഇടനിലക്കാരുടെ ചൂഷണം, തൊഴിലുടമയുടെ ചൂഷണം, ബാലവേല, പാർപ്പിട പ്രശ്നം മറ്റ് അനുബന്ധ സാമൂഹിക പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ ഇവയൊക്കെ ഇതിന്റെ മറവിൽ തഴയ്ക്കുന്നു.

വേലചെയ്യേണ്ടത് ഏദന്റെ കാഴ്ചപ്പാടിലാണ്. വിലക്കപ്പെട്ട കനികൾ ഭക്ഷിക്കാൻ മുതിരരുത്. അനുസരണക്കേടിനാൽ മറുതലിച്ച് ശാപഗ്രസ്തനായ മനുഷ്യന്റെ അധ്വാനം അവന് കഷ്ടതയായും അസഹ്യതയായും (മുഖത്തെ വിയർപ്പ്) പരിണമിക്കുന്നു (ഉൽപ്പത്തി 3:17-19). അവന്റെ അധ്വാനത്തിന്റെ പാർശ്വ ഫലമായി മുളളും പറക്കാരയും മുളയ്ക്കുന്നു.

ശുശ്രൂഷിക്കുന്നതിൽ ആനന്ദം കണ്ടെത്തുന്ന പട്ടക്കാരുന്മാർ. രോഗിയെ സ്നേഹിക്കുന്ന ഡോക്ടർമാരും നേഴ്സുമാരും. തന്റെ കൈവേലയിലെ പൂർണ്ണത കണ്ട് സന്തോഷിക്കുന്ന എൻജിനീയർ. ഉഴുതുമറിച്ച ഭൂമിയിൽ പുതുന്നാമ്പുകൾ കണ്ട് ആഹ്ലാദിക്കുന്ന കൃഷിക്കാരനും കർഷക തൊഴിലാളിയും. ലാളിക്കുന്നവന്റെ പ്രതിഫലം അവന് ലഭിക്കുന്ന ആത്മ സംതൃപ്തിയാണ് (Job Satisfaction). എന്നാൽ അതുമാത്രം പോരാ. മുന്തിരിത്തോട്ടത്തിൽ വേലക്കാരെ വിളിച്ചാക്കുന്ന ഭൂമി പരയുന്നത് ശ്രദ്ധേയമാണ്, “നിങ്ങളും മുന്തിരിത്തോട്ടത്തിൽ പോകുവിൻ; ന്യായമായത് തരാം.” (മത്ത. 20:1-16). ന്യായമായത് കിട്ടണം, കൊടുക്കണം. എന്താണ് ന്യായമായത്? തൊഴിൽ ദാതാവും തൊഴിലാളിയും ചേർന്ന് ഒരു തുക പ്രതിഫലമായി പറഞ്ഞാത്തു. തൊഴിൽ ചെയ്യുന്നവന്റെ അന്തസ്സോടെയുള്ള ജീവനത്തിന് ഉതകുന്നതാവണം പ്രതിഫലം. എല്ലാവർക്കും ജോലി. എല്ലാവർക്കും ജീവനം. അതാണ് ദൈവിക നീതി.

ദൈവത്തിന്റെ വിശ്വമെന്ന പണിശാലയിലെ തൊഴിലാളികളാണ് നാം എന്ന അവബോധം. ഇവിടെ നാം ചെയ്യുന്ന ഓരോ തൊഴിലും ദൈവികമാണെന്ന തിരിച്ചറിവ്. ചെയ്യുന്ന തൊഴിലിനെ സ്നേഹിച്ച്, ലാളിച്ച്, പരിപോഷിപ്പിക്കുവാനുള്ള ആത്മാർത്ഥതയും ആത്മാർപ്പണവും. ഇവയുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ പുതിയൊരാകാശവും പുതിയൊരു ഭൂമിയും സാധ്യമാണ്. ♦

Faith and Practices of the Mar Thoma Church

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The faith of our church is rooted in Tradition, Scripture, and Liturgy. It is difficult for us to compartmentalize faith into systems of belief; rather it is a way of life (Bishop Kallistos Ware). That way of life challenges us to deeper knowing of the Reality so that more meaning emerged for authentic life. The intention here is to briefly explain the foundations of our faith.

FAITH

When we think of faith we have to distinguish between faith and the verbal formulation of faith. The first shows "the unchangeable quality and given-ness, whereas the second is relative to the context in which we live, and therefore, changeable" (J. Russell Chandran). The relationship between the two is important. The word faith is used in two senses; firstly, our relationship to God with complete trust and commitment, and secondly, the relationship in the form of creeds and doctrines.

Throughout the history of Christian tradition, we see concerns to uphold true faith. Many biblical passages shed light on this aspect. In Jude verse 3, we read, "I found it necessary to take up my pen and urge you to join in the struggle for that faith which God entrusted to his people once for all" (REB). The context for such a comment is the threat to the faith as handed down by the Apostles. There were distortions of faith and heretical teachings. Paul warns the Corinthian church about heretical teachers and their teaching (2 Cor. 11:4 ff). He was shocked at the faith of the Christians at Galatia (Gal 3:1). Apostle John gives strong warnings against false teachers using the expression anti-Christ to describe them (1 John 4:1 ff). Different interpretations distorted the apostolic faith and caused divisions within the Church.

Even today the Church is divided according to the interpretation about the views on faith. Paul reminds us that faith is not human accomplishment; rather it is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8). We can identify three guidelines on this matter in the Bible.

Firstly, confessing Jesus as Lord is faith. Apostle John affirms that the main mark of the Holy Spirit is the confession of Jesus Christ. "Every spirit which acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit which does not thus acknowledge Jesus is not from God" (1 Jn. 4:2-3). We are called to confess the historic Jesus as Lord and Christ.

Secondly, confession of Jesus Christ as Lord empowers us to unite and not to divide. Jesus Christ came to this



world to heal and unite humanity. In Eph. 2:14-16, Apostle Paul describes Jesus as "our peace" who removes all barriers.

Thirdly, faith invokes a way of life. The Gospel of John speaks of three components in our response to the truth that is revealed in Jesus Christ, namely, believing, knowing, and doing. The verb "doing" is not just having right beliefs but the right way of life. According to Apostle James it is faith in action. It is practicing the love of God in our day-to-day life. It is an inclusive lifestyle embedded in the love of Christ.

FAITH IN GOD

Faith in God is one of the affirmations made not only by Christians but by all religious people. Christians all over the world affirm this fact in the Nicene Creed recital. When we experience natural calamities, unmerited suffering, injustice, inequality, persecution by tyrants, death of innocents, we ask why God allows these things to happen to human beings. This question comes from those who believe in a God of love. The Bible affirms that God, in his love brought this world into being and shares His freedom with His creation. Once the God of love grants freedom to His creation there is a self-limitation of what He would do when that freedom is abused. The only way He responds to abuse of freedom is through love. When we confess our faith in God, it affirms the following:

God is Creator: Both the Apostolic and Nicene Creeds affirm that God is the creator of all things visible and invisible. The affirmation of the Bible maintains the absolute-ness of God as the creator of all things *ex nihilo*, out of nothing. The essential meaning of creation is not concerned with the origin of the world but its continuing dependence on God (Maurice Wiles). At the same time God is still continually involved in the works of creation (John 5:17). God of creation liberates human beings from the clutches of oppression and bondage, enabling the creation to enjoy the freedom. This is the message of Exodus.

God is One: The Bible reveals the truth that God is One, and the diverse forms of creation proclaim that there is only One God (Ps.19). He is the source and sustainer of all things. The oneness of God is not an arithmetical unity but of the corporate-ness of inter-personal relationships within the godhead. Divisiveness is a denial of the oneness of God. The oneness is supra-personal or the beyond-personal char-

acter. It also reminds us that God is beyond male-female polarization. God is beyond gender.

God of Hope: The Bible also affirms the fact that God of history is the God of hope. Several individuals and communities mentioned in the Bible proclaim this affirmation as true and authentic. The life of Abraham and the experience of the Israelites are a few examples of this fact. God of the Bible is a future-oriented God. In Matt. 5:48, Jesus said, "You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." The word "perfect" means bringing to an end or completeness. It implies an orientation towards an end or a goal. God leads us and the whole of creation to fulfillment, which implies that God is a God of hope.

FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

The God of creation and hope is made known to us through the Son, Jesus Christ. The name Jesus Christ itself needs interpretation and understanding. Jesus was the personal name given by the earthly parents and the title Christ represented the confession made by those who believed that Jesus was the long expected Messiah, the anointed one. 'Christo' is the Greek word for the Hebrew Messiah. From the Gospels and the liturgy of the Church, we get the answer to the question, 'Who was Jesus?'

Jesus was fully Human. The humanity of Jesus was not different from our humanity. In the Gospels we find several instances of Jesus giving expression to feelings similar to ours (Mk. 3:5, 6:6, 10:14, 6:3; Jn.. 11:35; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 4:15). All these references provide instances that depict the human nature of Jesus. Based upon the biblical testimony, Norman Pittenger points out that "there can be no Christianity without the humanity of Jesus. He was born, he lived and worked, he suffered and died; and all this as a

man." Though he shared our humanity, he was sinless in his being. Committing sin is not an essential element of being human (J. Russell Chandran). In Christ we have the revelation of authentic humanity.

Jesus was fully Divine. The different titles conferred to Jesus by the New Testament—Christ, the Messiah, Son of Man, Lord—not only express faith in human Jesus but also the divine reality. The first three Gospels proclaim Jesus as the inaugurator of the Kingdom of God. He not only preached the Kingdom of God but also announced that through his ministry the sovereignty of God was being inaugurated. According to the Gospel of John, He is the giver of Eternal life or abundant life. Again John confessed him as the Word of God (Jn.. 1:1-5). In Col. 1:15-20, Paul professes Christ as the image of the invisible God.

Jesus is the living God. An integral part of Apostolic faith was the affirmation that God raised Jesus from death. He is our ever-living Lord and is seated at the right hand of God. It should be noted that the resurrection faith was not grounded on the empty tomb, but on the experience of the disciples and the early believing community. In the Nicene Creed, we proclaim that Jesus Christ is the living God. According to the Gospel, there is a difference between the Cross and the Resurrection. The crucifixion was seen by all. It was a secular event. But the Resurrection was known only to the believers. Only by their witness others have evidence of the resurrection. Hence the affirmation challenges us to proclaim to the world that Jesus is the living God. ■

References:

The Orthodox Way, Bishop Kallistos Ware.

I Believe, Russell Chandran

Eastern Orthodoxy Through Western Eyes, Donald Fairbairn

VOLUNTEERS WANTED!!!

Native American Mission is planning to send a team to Hauma Indian Nation, Hauma, near New Orleans, Louisiana, in the Fall of 2006.

They have requested assistance from church groups in their reconstruction efforts of the homes destroyed by Katrina.

For more information please contact:

Nirmala Abraham

Telephone: (302) 239-7119

email: ocnimala@verizon.net

Living a Life Worthy of the Lord and Our Calling

Dr. George K. Zachariah, Mar Thoma Church of Greater Washington

“As a prisoner in the Lord’s cause, I beseech you, beg you, urge you all to walk in a way becoming to the high vocation or calling with which you have been called. Accept life, its situations and challenges with lowliness (meekness, humility), gentleness and patience (long-suffering) making allowances for one another because you love one another. Make it your aim and be careful to maintain (preserve) eagerly the unity of the Spirit within the framework of peace. You will inevitably be at peace with one another. You all belong to one body, of which there is one Spirit, just as you all experienced one calling to one hope. ‘One body, one Spirit’, is the principle on which you all have been called together into one active fellowship. There is one Lord, one faith, one plan of action, one baptism (initiation), one God, one Father of us all, who is the one over all, the one working through all and the one living in all.” (Eph 4:1-6, a paraphrase)

“We have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” (Col 1:9-10)

Paul’s Letter to Ephesians, the so called ‘Queen of the Epistles’ from which our theme is taken focuses on the believer’s responsibility to walk in accordance with his heavenly calling in Christ Jesus. Especially note chapter 4 verses 1-16. Ephesians 4 is a great biblical passage emphasizing the growth toward Christian maturity in a continuing experience of the Christian life. Verses 1-6 deals with worthy lives, 7-12 with saving lives and 13-16 with growing lives. It is a letter of encouragement to grow together in maturity in Him appropriating every spiritual blessing in Christ through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It was also written to make believers more aware of their standing in Christ because this is the only basis for their practice on every level of life.

The apostle challenges us to ‘live a life worthy of our calling’. What is our calling? Our calling is God’s Holy Spirit empowered invitation to salvation and abundant life in Christ. We are not asked to live so that we will merit or deserve our calling, but we are to live in a manner that is worthy of it. In fact, the term ‘worthy’ does not suggest that man is deserving of God’s call. It suggests that God’s plan and our acceptance of it be demonstrated by our life-style.

A calling is in essence a summons. The latter term is to be preferred because it conveys notions more fully of the



urgency of the voice, and of the authority of the voice that speaks to us. All the summons are precise, concentrated and gathered. Paul characterizes it as the ‘high calling of God in Christ Jesus’. What a phrase! We are called to live a life that measures up or corresponds to the standard God set when He called us. That is the purpose behind the call. It is the life of Christ to which we are summoned. It is the death of Christ by which we tend to obey the summons, and it is the Spirit of Christ by which we are enabled to do so. In Jesus Christ

we see the possibilities of humanity realized and we have the pattern of what we ought to do and are called thereby to be. It implies also that we are given the power to realize it.

Christ is our standard. He is our lesson and our Master. Learn Him and of Him. That is the Alpha and Omega of all right knowledge, of duty, and of all right practice of it. Learn Him, His self-sacrifice, His self-confidence, His untroubled calmness, His immovable patience, His continual gentleness, His constant reference of all things to the Father’s will. To imitate and follow Him is true blessedness; to resemble Him is indeed perfection. Jesus said, ‘Abide in me and I shall abide in you’. Thomas Merton wrote, “whatever I may have written, I think it all can be reduced in the end to this one truth: that God calls human persons to union with Himself and with one another in Christ.” To live worthy of our calling means then allowing God through Christ to live in us according to His will.

Recall some of the words that describe what we are called to be: ‘holy’—set apart unto God’s service; ‘without blame’—not causing others to stumble; ‘one of praise to God for His glory’ as you have been accepted by God. There should be a way of viewing our life that would make it the proper channel of sanctity or holiness that God wants it to be. Holiness is God’s stamp upon a person, His mark by which He says, ‘This person belongs to Me’. Our condition of being holy is that we should know whose we are and whom we serve. ‘Ye are not your own, Ye are bought with a price’ We are His workmanship. We are created in Jesus Christ unto good works. Before a person can respond by faith to Christ, he must first sense God’s claim on his life.

Paul specifically mentions five virtues, which we must demonstrate in our daily walk or conduct: Lowliness (a healthy humility); meekness (gentleness); long-suffering (patience); peace and unity (we have the one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one hope); and love (by being available to others). Christian unity—its simpler name is

Christian love. "Love is the name of our journey. It is love that measures our stature. There is no smaller package in all the world than that of a person all wrapped up in himself...If Christ is God's love personified, the church is God's love organized." (William Sloane Coffin) Everything relates back to Christ, our Lord. The most common confession among early Christians was the statement, Jesus Christ is Lord.

When I choose wisely and follow through courageously I can expect that I am doing the will of God. This is the sense of vocation. God has designs for me and I have to fulfill those designs. This tremendous truth, when firmly grasped, can have a revolutionary impact upon our thinking and living. Every vicissitude becomes

transformed by it. Everything that happens to us becomes recognized as a foreseen contribution to the development and implementation of that plan.

Our calling is where we find out our personal dignity. A man's life is full of all sorts of voices calling him in all sorts of directions. Some of them are voices from inside and some of them are voices from outside. Let our prayer be that of George Herbert:

*"Teach me, my God and King
In all things Thee to see;
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for Thee."*

Testimony of a Soldier

Sharon Chackalamannil, New Jersey Mar Thoma Church

*You may not notice me, for I look like the rest
I'm a student, a worker, a mother, or a son
You'll see me in my jeans or my Sunday's best
And won't realize who I really am until my work is done*

*My invisible armor is strong, and I heave in deep breaths
With virtual sweat on the brow, and blood on the cheek
Marching daily in this valley of the shadow of death
Evil conspires with vengeance that they seek*

*I have gone through battles, very many so far
Internal, external, and everything in between
You see these cuts and bruises, from my lifetime of war
Yet I found a Refreshing, my Commander made me clean*

*At times the enemy has tried to pull me down
They pinned me to the ground and persecuted me
Though I received every blow, and every pound
My Commander's love reminds me that I am still free*

*They attempted to use intimidation as their prime way
And forced me to take my Commander's name in vain
But I chose to speak only what I was ordered to say
In the heat of the night, in the torrents, and rain*

*"I am a soldier, first division in the Army of God
Serial numbers Mark 16:15, Ephesians 6:11.
Your efforts are futile, for you are only a fraud,
The Commander already declared victory from heaven."*

*The enemies cringed in fear and utter craze
They let loose on me the thick chains of temptation
For up above, they see my Commander in full rage
The Holy Spirit had fired a missile of redemption*

*So rescued I was, and ready to finish this race
Wearing my breastplate of righteousness still intact
Readjusted the truth buckle around my waist,
Putting on the helmet of salvation gleaming my Commander's pact*

*I returned to the trenches, armed with what the Authority gave
The solid shield of faith, the Spirit's piercing sword
I am a living testimony of the evident truth that only One can save
The Commander, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.*

Simple Thoughts on 'Live a Life Worthy of the Lord'

Dr. Elsy Mathew, Los Angeles

"Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway" (Proverbs 8:34)

Our Father in Heaven gave us a short life on earth. It is our choice to live it, to enjoy it, and to be fruitful in it.

Let us take a moment to reflect on our life, past, present, and future. Are we happy with our current life? Are we pleased with what we accomplished in the past? Are we looking for a brighter future, a life of hope and joy? "You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand" (Psalm 16:11)

We need to know our roots, our identity in Christ. "You a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to the Lord" (1 Peter 2:9). As children of the King of Kings, Creator of Heaven and Earth, what kind of life does our Heavenly Father expect from us?

Life of Holiness

"Be holy because I am holy" (Leviticus 11: 44). Avoid sexual sins, drug addictions, and alcoholism, because our body is the temple of God.

Walk in the Spirit

Our whole life should be a life of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. Be guided by the Spirit.

Read the Bible Every Day

Keep living words always in your mind, which will constantly cleanse you from your past sins.

A Prayerful Life

A prayerful life is a life of blessings. Learn to hear God's sweet voice clearly and it will help in doing his will.

Bible Says...

"Seek me in the morning and you will find me." Have a quiet meditation with God every morning. Fix your eyes on Jesus, who is the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12: 2).

Receive the Power of Jesus

Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.' (Matthew 28: 18).



Identify the Gifts and Talents God has given you

1 Corinthians 12 talks about spiritual gifts. Pray for God's grace to reveal our gifts and to use it for the glory of God.

Be Fruitful

God expects us to bear fruits, fruits that will last. A tree is recognized by its fruit. Galatians 5: 22-26 talks about the fruit of the spirit. "Bear fruit which prepares us to do God's work with power and love." Our task is to live a life

that is pleasing to God, nothing else. "For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the Lord" (Proverbs 8:35). Abraham lived a life pleasing to God due to the fact that God was with him. Enoch walked with God. David, a man after God's own heart, was God's best friend. We need to live a life of obedience.

Discipleship

Be a disciple of Jesus and receive the anointing. Anointing provides us with God's Strength: a) The power to do God's will (Acts 1:8); b) Gifts received through anointing; c) Freedom by anointing (2 Corinthians 3:17)

Now the Lord is a Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Be Alert. Stand Firm. Press On.

We are living in end times. The devil's work is everywhere. Everywhere we look, there is evidence of Satan's works such as war, disease, and suffering. The devil with his strategic plans tries to stop us from reaching our goals and does all that is within his power to destroy us. "The enemy pursues me, he crushes me to the ground; he makes me dwell in darkness like those long dead" (Psalm 143:3).

To win over the world that we live in, he gave himself as a sacrifice. The Lord says, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:8).

Equip Yourself with the full armor of God

Receive new anointing daily, anointing which breaks every yoke. Let us consecrate ourselves and our family daily so that we can be "like a tree planted by streams of water which yield its fruit in season" (Psalm 1:3). ■

Inclusive Faith Community

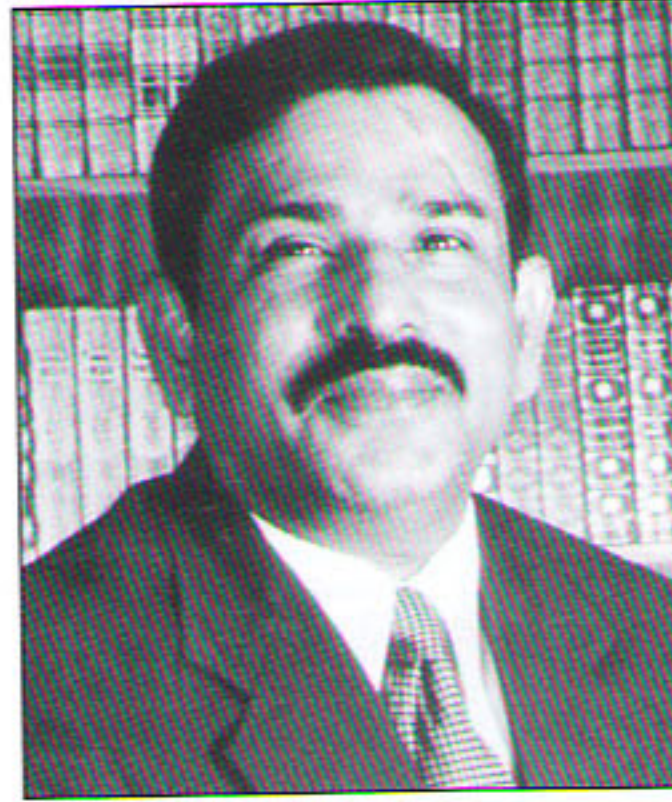
Atty. Lal Varghese, Diocesan Council Member, MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch

Inclusive faith means the salvation to all mankind proclaimed in the scriptures by the prophets, Jesus and the Apostles. Inclusive faith community's mission should be nothing other than Jesus Christ's mission on the earth. John 12:47 says: "He came not to judge the world but to save the world," and not just a part of it. Throughout church history, there were always been those who had great faith to take the declarations of Christ's teachings seriously and literally. Now, this great faith has been ridiculed as ridiculous and questions the authenticity of the scriptures. Most Christians today do not take seriously the scriptures which plainly state that when Jesus is finished with His work on earth, He will "reconcile all things unto Himself...whether in heaven or earth." (Col. 1:20). Christ is in deed and in fact, the Savior of both the whole world and the "especially" ones, that is, the church. (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14)

In 1 Timothy chapter 2, Paul exhorted to "pray for all men." Most of the "little faith" churches believe that Jesus will only save a handful of those whom He died for. But Jesus fulfilled God's will and desire: "God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:4) Paul warned that most of the church would fall away from this glorious truth. He warned there would be those inside the church who would draw disciples after themselves. (Acts 20:30) Today there are over 30,000 denominations dividing the body of Christ and fighting each other. We ignore Paul's warnings not to divide, yet we do it anyway, proving that most Christians "honor Christ with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him." (Isaiah. 29:13; Matt. 15:8)

The early believers of Christ and the church leaders taught universal salvation. St. Basil the Great, in the fourth century wrote, "The Christians say that there is to be an end of punishment to those who are punished." St. Jerome wrote in the same century, "I know that most persons understand by the story of Nineveh and its king, the ultimate forgiveness of the devil and all rational creatures." St. Augustine, while teaching eternal torment wrote, "There are very many who though not denying the Holy Scriptures, do not believe in endless torments."

The history shows that the majority of the early church believed that all would eventually be saved. The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge by Schaff-Herzog says, "In the first five or six centuries of Christianity there were six theological schools, of which four (Alexandria, Antioch, Caesarea, and Edessa, or Nisibis) accepted



universalism; one (Ephesus) accepted conditional mortality; one (Carthage or Rome) taught endless punishment of the wicked." A most crucial and important point in church history was when Emperor Constantine militarized and politicized the church. The teaching of Hell became a more powerful weapon of control than a loving God who loved all mankind. At that point the teaching of universal salvation began to be stamped out through severe persecution. That resulted in what the church created due to its

deviation from the biblical truth which is known as the "The Dark Ages."

Before the Dark Ages, the church was vibrant with the teaching of God's love for all mankind. The second major church council composed of hundreds of bishops from the entire church met in Constantinople in 381 AD and elected Gregory of Nazianzus, an avowed Universalist, as president proving clearly that the great majority of the church leadership in the fourth century believed in universal salvation. But today universal salvation is considered a heresy in most denominations. The early church better versed in the original languages of the Scriptures and stayed closer to the apostles' teachings and thoughts.

Well-known theologians and great men and women have embraced the "larger hope" for the whole universe through the spread of gospel. Abraham Lincoln believed and practiced it. Perhaps Lincoln's belief in the salvation of all mankind was his driving force to end slavery in US. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence believed it. Famous theologians like Karl Barth, B.F. Westcott, and William Barclay embraced the doctrine of inclusiveness.

Those who embrace this scriptural doctrine today are conservatives, serious followers of the scriptures and are usually more versed in church history and the original languages of the Bible than the average Christians. They believe that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life and they are very scripture-centered. Those who believe in the "Doctrine of Inclusion" show greater faith in God's love, mercy, and power to save from sins, and the eternal life. Another trait of these believers in the glorious gospel is that they believed that denominationalism spoils the witness and concept of one Lord and Savior and church as one body in earth. Even within parishes people fight each other for positions, and for selfglorification. We need to understand that the teaching and preaching of Lord Jesus Christ never was intended for any selfish motives or self

glorification or to attain any position in this world. Jesus incarnated in to this world so that we may be redeemed from our sins so that we can have eternal life in heaven. This is for the whole world and for any selected group of believers of any particular denominations.

Nearly 50 years ago, during his first major crusade, Billy Graham faced different yet similarly daunting impediments to his ministry. Graham warded off withering attacks from Reinhold Niebuhr, fundamentalists, and

segregationists. The remarkable response to Graham's preaching effectively marginalized the extreme ends of the theological spectrum and helped carve out a prosperous middle ground for the burgeoning civil rights and evangelical movements. Graham preached Gospel for the universe and not to any particular denomination or church, and he preached the same way for more than 50 years now so that whole world may be saved at the end. Do we preach or practice like the early church did? ■

Live as Children of Light

Anna Thomas, St. Peter's MTC, Teaneck, NJ

God showed us his amazing love through the sacrifice of his only son, Jesus Christ. Christ was sent to earth to live among men and then to be hated, tortured, and killed by men. God did all this to His only son to show us His abundant love. John 3:16 is memorized by millions of people everywhere to remember this great love. We have been given a gift that cannot possibly be repaid. Or can it?

How do we repay this undeserving, magnificent gift? Accepting Jesus as our personal savior and repenting for our sins is the first thing that we need to do. Christ has already died for our sins and has given us a way to eternal life. It is up to us now to surrender ourselves to Christ and live a life worthy of the Lord.

In Ephesians 5:1-2, Paul urges the believers in Ephesus to imitate Christ. Model themselves as Christ in their everyday lives. After we have accepted Christ, we are to model the behavior of Christ in our everyday lives. Not an easy thing to do. Think about the first thought that comes to your mind after someone else gets the dream job that you always wanted? What about the laziest or the dim-witted person who gets the raise or promotion that you think you really deserve? Or the thought that comes to you when you see your favorite, and more importantly, very expensive, sweater on the floor after your sister has "borrowed" it? Paul asks us to spread the love that God has showed us, in our everyday actions.

We are also to live as children of light. Ephesians 5:8 says, "For you were once in darkness but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light." Light makes everything visible, therefore our purpose is also to expose the corruption, deceit, and injustice in the world. We are called to be advocates for the lowly, the downtrodden, and the exploited. Many of us are comfortable in our little circle of friends, coworkers and community. But in essence, Christ has called us to be activists, just as He was, 2000 years ago.

Also, as believers, we are to make the most of every opportunity (Ephesians 5:16). Every moment is an opportunity that is to be used for the glory of God. Even mundane moments like the commute to work, lunch hour, and coffee breaks can be valuable opportunities that we can use to worship and witness His name. It sounds fanatical but we have been given the gift of life. What else is there to do but in everything, give thanks? Let's make use of the precious moments to exalt our Creator.

II Corinthians 5:17 says "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone and, the new has come!" Once Christ is in us, we are new beings. Our lives, our purpose and our actions should reflect that change. We have been given a gift that is priceless, so our purpose in life is to live a life worthy of the Lord. ■

I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.

C. S. Lewis

PERFECT 37 TOURS AND PILGRIMAGE

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Day 1 and 2 Departure and Arrival in Venice: Your pilgrimage begins as you depart the USA and arrive in Italy. You'll be met by our representative and transferred to your ship in the port of Venice for dinner and overnight.

Day 3 At Sea: Today will be a full day at sea. Biblical lectures and plenty of other onboard activities will set the tone for the day. There is an indoor pool and health club, great beauty salon, and plenty of deck space to just sit and watch the beautiful Adriatic sea that glides beneath you.

Day 4 Corinth: This morning we dock in Patras, Greece, and travel to Corinth (Acts 18:1-18), a city that inspired many of Paul's most familiar letters. You will visit the Archaeological Museum, the Market Place, and Temples. Walk among the ruins and stand on the Bema where Paul stood. Read Paul's letters to the Corinthians and visualize his address to the Gentiles as he began the task of building Corinth's church. Imagine where Aquila and Priscilla lived and where they had their tent making business.

Day 5 Athens: The architectural splendors of the ancient city of Athens are as magical as ever. Follow your guide on a journey to the ancient Acropolis where you will see the Propylaea, the Parthenon and the Erechtheum. View Mars Hill where Paul preached the gospel to the intellectual Athenian community of his day (Acts 17:15-34). View the ruins of the Agora, ancient market place and center of Athenian public life, where Paul preached to the skeptical Athenians. You will view the Olympic Stadium, where the modern Olympics began and where the games returned in 2004.

Day 6 Thessaloniki and Kavala: The New Testament books of Thessalonians are Paul's correspondence with the people of this church. In Thessalonika, visit St. George's Basilica, traditionally believed to be built over the synagogue where Paul preached. View the Old City Ramparts, and the Galerius Arch that rises over the Via Egnatia. Walk to the monastery built over the sight of Jason's House. This afternoon we visit Neopolis (Kavalla), one of Greece's most picturesque mainland ports. Paul landed here with his disciples, Timothy and Silas. You will see the Roman Aqueduct and Acropolis. In Philippi, Paul was moved to preach his first evangelical sermon in Europe to women who had gathered at the river. Among them was Lydia, a cloth merchant, who became the first Christian to be baptized on European soil. Visit the place where this event is remembered and see a crypt dating from the Roman period, which is thought to have served as a prison for St. Paul. You'll also see the famous Acropolis, the Market Place, Basilica and the Theater. Reboard the ship for dinner and overnight. Sail for Dikili.

Day 7 Dikili and Pergamum: Disembark at the port of Dikili and travel to Pergamum. Christianity reached Pergamum very early and the church was addressed by John the Revelator (Rev. 2:12-17) as one of the Seven Churches. The inhabitants of the city were condemned for their doctrines (Rev.2:14-15) and those who overcame were promised a "white stone" and a "new name" (Rev. 2:17). The first Christian to die at the hands of a Roman state, Antipas, was put to death in Pergamum. As you enter the Royal Gates, you'll see the Temples of Athena and Trajan. You'll explore the Grand Theater, the Gymnasium and Health Center. You'll also view Pergamum's famous Library.

Day 8 Ephesus: Today you will journey to Ephesus, where Paul spent three years of his ministry. It was to this community that Paul may have written his Epistle to Ephesians. You will visit the ancient Agora and imagine where Demetrius, the silversmith, sold his silver shrines of the Greek goddess Artemis. You will enter the Great Theater and have a communion service in the place where Paul witnessed faithful for Christ. During the night, the ship will set sail for Patmos.

Day 9 Patmos and Athens: When you awake, you will be docked in the harbor of the Island of Patmos. Disembark after breakfast for a field trip on the island. No record indicates that Paul ever visited Patmos. Visit the Monastery of St. John, high on the mountain overlooking the entire island. Visit the Grotto of the Apocalypse where the exiled Apostle John lived and wrote the Book of Revelation and other correspondence to the early church. During the night, the ship will return to the Port of Piraeus in Athens.

Day 10 Disembark and Return Home or Begin Post Tour: After an early breakfast, you will be transferred to the airport for your international flight. You will return home with new images and new appreciation for the life and teachings of Paul and John.

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2. Superior Inside Cabin, 2 lower bed – avg. 142 sq. ft.
3. Superior Inside Cabin, 2 lower beds – avg. 142 sq. ft.
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5. Superior Oceanview Cabin, 2 lower beds – avg. 142 sq. ft.
6. Premium Oceanview Cabin, 2 lower beds – avg. 142 sq.ft.
7. Deluxe Inside Suite, 2 lower beds – avg. 265 sq. ft.
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PERFECT 37 TOURS AND PILGRIMAGE

DOING MORE TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU!!!

Living A Life Worthy of God

John Thomas, Immanuel Mar Thoma Church, Houston, TX

The worth of a commodity, a service or an investment is generally measured in terms of what a buyer is willing to pay for it. A buyer buys it with the anticipation that his/ her purchase will be pleasing to him/ her by growing in value, giving him/ her comfort or by generating more wealth for him/ her. If the purchase continues to live up to the expectation of the buyer, he/ she will do everything to enhance its worth. If the purchase fails to maintain its value, the worth of the purchase will go down. The buyer may be forced to sell it, sometimes for a lower value than he/ she paid, in order to cut his/ her losses.

It is more complex to determine the worth of human life. An example of a worldly perspective would be litigations involving wrongful death, where the courts often attempt to determine a victim's monetary worth on the basis of the "earning potential" or "lost earnings." Is earning potential the true measurement for a human being's worth?

From a Christian perspective, the Bible gives us clear indication of our worth to our Lord. Our challenge, as a part of the faithful community is how to live our life in a manner that maintains our worth to our Lord?

What is our worth to our Lord? The Bible clearly states the price that our Lord has paid for us (1 Peter 1:18-20). It is the priceless "blood of the Lamb"—that has a worth higher than the value of any commodity that a human being can ever put a price tag on. Another interesting aspect of this transaction is that the same price was paid for every human being regardless of race, status, power, looks, wealth or intelligence. In other words, in God's eyes the wealthiest person and the poorest person on earth have the same worth – the highest worth.

The Lord, who has paid the ultimate price for us, expects His "purchases" to be pleasing to Him and to maintain and increase its worth to the Lord.

How do we maintain our worth to our Lord? Again the Bible comes to our aid with clear instructions. Apostle Paul (Col. 1:10-14) offers the clues to a lifestyle that we can adapt to maintain our worth and be pleasing to the Lord, such as: Bearing Fruit in every good work: The type of fruit one bears is a good indication of what is one's relationship to God (Matthew 7:16-17). God expects everyone to bear good fruit, according to his/her ability, while utilizing the blessings the Lord has given to him/ her. It is not the extent of the results that matter, but the effort that one has put in to bear fruit for the Lord (Luke 19:11-27).



Our Lord is patient, willing to wait for us, uphold us and give us every opportunity to bear fruit (Luke 13:7-9). However, not bearing fruit for the Lord is unacceptable. The Bible clearly indicates the Lord's attitude towards one's failure to bear fruit for Him (Luke 3:9, John 15:2, Matthew 21:18, 21:43, 25:26, 27).

Growing in the knowledge of God: Any relationship will strengthen and grow as the parties involved will come to know and understand each other better. Also, any non-growing relationship will become stagnant and will eventually fail.

Our faith is an intimate "I-Thou" relationship with God. The Lord expects us to maintain a strong, growing relationship with Him, through a better knowledge of God (2 Pet 3:18), which can be attained by studying the Word of God and through the experience of our daily relationship with God. The Word of God helps us to understand who God is and our life experiences help us to understand His grace.

Being Strengthened in the Lord's Power in order to have great endurance and patience: Christian life was never meant to be easy. Hardship and suffering in Christian life is not only inevitable, but are also considered as necessary factors in order to grow in one's relationship with God. The Christian approach to hardship and suffering is one of endurance and patience rather than that of complaining and questioning (Romans 5:3-5).

Apostle Paul warns us about uphill battles and potential hardships in Christian life (Eph. 6-12). We are also granted the strength to overcome the challenges through our prayers and our relationship with God (Eph. 3:14-21).

Joyfully Giving Thanks to the Father: Worship is a form of giving thanks to the Lord. Worship in truth and spirit is always pleasing to God. An essential part of a healthy relationship with the Lord is showing our gratitude for His grace.

God has chosen us as a privileged community that has received mercy, and expects us to worship Him, to give thanks to Him and to proclaim His greatness (1 Peter 2:9-10).

Sharing the inheritance with saints: God's ultimate purpose for our redemption is to give us the inheritance to His Kingdom. Our responsibility is to uphold ourselves worthy of sharing that inheritance. The cornerstone of the hope and faith of Christian life is being in the Kingdom of God. It is this hope that helps us to overcome the trials and tribulations in our life (1 Peter 1:4-7).

Challenges in today's world: As long as we live in this world, continuous challenges to our faith are expected. As Christians, we readily accept these challenges as a necessity for the strengthening of our faith and ultimately sustaining our worth for our purchaser.

Challenges to our faith can come from internal and external sources. Internal challenges come in the form of doubts in the face of hardship and suffering, different teachings and/ or interpretations of theology, actions of other people and so on. External challenges come in the form of peer pressure, affluence, world events and so on.

Our survival in the face of the challenges would depend upon the strength of the foundation of our faith. A strong foundation could successfully overcome the challenges—

both internal and external. A self-controlled, upright Christ-centric and dependent lifestyle is essential for strengthening the foundation of our faith (Titus 2:12-14). Our strong personal relationship with God and the continuous guidance of the Holy Spirit ensure a strong, sustained faith.

It is the duty of every Christian to live a life that is absolutely worthy of our Lord, who purchased us with the ultimate price—the life of His son. We also have a duty to prepare our next generation for this noble responsibility. The standards for such a life is impossible, but the effort itself is fulfilling.

Let us pray that our Lord's grace sustains us in our faith and strengthens us to lead a life worthy of the Lord and be pleasing to Him. ■

Book Review

(Sam George's Coconut Generation: Ministry to the Americanized Asian Indians)

Dr. T. M. Thomas, New York

The theme of the book poses the question of the identity of second generation Asian Indians, known as the Coconut Generation. This identity has three aspects: the Indian, the American and the Christian. Indeed, they are three sub-cultures exerting their influence, shaping Indian youth. During infancy and childhood, the basic attitudes, values and dispositions are formed and at this stage the primary factor is the family and its "cultural religion". But during adolescence, the stage of identity formation (the fifth of the eight stages of life, according to Erik Erikson, the leading Harvard Psychologist on Life-Span Studies), a young person finds identity as part of his/ her youth culture of the times, thus becoming an American youth.

The author, Sam George, who I know personally, is the most competent person to explore this theme and make valuable contributions to Indian youth, both at theoretical and practical levels. Sam was born and brought up in Andaman Islands, nurtured by his Christian parents and the Mar Thoma Church there. After his higher education in Madras, specializing in computer science (before computers were widely used), he secured a job drawing a very high salary as a software specialist and traveled to various countries including the United States. Later, he gave up his job to minister to the young families in India. In this context, he continued his studies in America, at Fuller and Princeton theological colleges. Now, he travels to many countries related to his ministry. He has close contacts with young people of different denominations. He listens to their needs and leads them to Christ, the central passion of



his life in my observation (read more about his life in this book, pp.4-5).

Under the general theme the author discusses several specific practical and theoretical questions and issues. He makes use of his life experiences of working with the youth. He is knowledgeable of relevant authors and authorities in the field. Several issues are raised for discussion. Demographics of Indians in America, compared to other countries, is valuable (pp.16-36). The much-debated question of bi-culturism is raised in chapter 4. The differences between two generations are tabulated on page 100-101. The chapter asking the question: "Believe, Belong, Behave: which comes first?" (p.107) presents both the traditional and missionary understandings. The author discusses the "struggles" of second generation Asian Americans and makes his observations and gives answers. The Biblical perspective on issues is special to this book that deals with sociological and cultural issues. The author is a "passionate" Christian and he strongly advocates it through his scholarly discussions of practical Christianity (p.162).

In conclusion, let me recommend the book for discussion groups comprising the Second Generation Asian Americans of various denominations including the Mar Thoma Church. Also, parents of first generation Asian Americans can gain insights from this book on relating better with their children. My major criticism of the book is the title. Being a first generation Indian American, let me say that I do not like the title of the book because it seems to convey a self-righteous implication. ■

Golden Jubilee of the Mar Thoma Community in the United Kingdom and Europe

"How can I repay the Lord for all His gifts to me?" (Psalms 116:12)

Dr. Zac Varghese and Rev. John Thomas, London, UK

The word 'jubilee' comes from the Hebrew root 'yobel' and refers to the ram's horn calling people to worship and celebration. As Moses was preparing the people of Israel to cross over to the Promised Land, God commanded that every 50th year be celebrated as a year of jubilee. The mandate for the jubilee can be found in Leviticus (25: 1-11). There is very little evidence that the ancient Israelites actually observed this mandate. The elements of the Jubilee are rest, forgiveness, freedom and thanksgiving; the association with the 'Day of Atonement' means that jubilee includes forgiveness of all kinds—personal, communal, spiritual and economic.



We also see Jesus announcing a jubilee in a synagogue in Luke 4:18-19: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has sent me to announce the good news to the poor, to proclaim release for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind; to let the broken victim go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." This was long ago, but Jesus' words to the Church today are the same. The spirit of the Lord is upon the Church, calling us to a jubilee living, which means using our resources, our intelligence, imagination, generosity, and love to bring the good news of liberation to the suffering humanity. Jubilee acknowledges God's amazing grace and His abundant blessings; it is a special and perfect time for thanksgiving.

Therefore, the focus and emphasis for the Golden Jubilee of the Mar Thoma community in the United Kingdom and Europe is thanksgiving. One can trace occasional worship being conducted in London according to Mar Thoma rites to 1930. In this context, we are the second oldest Mar Thoma diaspora community, the first being the community in Malaysia and Singapore. However, it was in 1957 that Rev. V. V. Alexander started a regular worship service according to Mar Thoma rites at the chapel of the Indian YMCA at Fitzroy Square, which continued there for 21 years. We fondly remember the blessing our community received for a whole year (1975-76) from Rt. Rev. Easow Mar Timotheos. Thirumeni conducted services for us on a regular basis when he was studying at St. Augustine's College at Canterbury. We celebrated our



first twenty-one years in England in 1978 with Metropolitan Alexander Mar Thoma; at that time it was an ecumenical community involving all Christian denominations from Kerala. In 1978, we became a parish of the Mar Thoma Church and our first vicar was Rev. Philip Varughese, and by the grace of God

Rev. V. V. Alexander still continues as an emeritus vicar. Then for a period of fourteen years we conducted our worship services at the St. Mary's Newington Church of England (C-o-E) parish church where Rev. Dominic Walker was the vicar, who later became a bishop. We celebrated the Silver Jubilee of the Mar Thoma Community in UK in September 1982 in the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Runcie, Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Mar Athanasius Suffragan Metropolitan and fourteen Anglican and other bishops, and a host of other dignitaries including the Indian High Commissioner. It was indeed a very blessed occasion, which gave us substantial confidence in growing as a vibrant community. Bishop Dominic Walker of the C-o-E gave tremendous leadership for our Silver Jubilee celebration and other activities in the early years of our existence in London as a parish.

Since then the growth of the parish in London has been phenomenal. In 1996, we were able to establish two parishes: St. Johns parish at Hounslow and St. James Parish in the City. In 2004, St. Johns parish was able to establish regular services at Bristol, Liverpool, and Manchester and occasional services in other cities and town with the help of an additional clergy. In 2006, a new congregation was established in London and another in Bristol. Both parishes also arrange occasional services in other towns and cities in the United Kingdom to cater to the spiritual needs of our community. We also have congregations now in Belfast, Dublin and Edinburgh. The community in the UK is also involved in arranging occasional services in Germany and Switzerland. All these prayer groups and congregations have the potential of becoming parishes within the next five years or so. Our membership and assets have grown over the years and we have very vibrant and committed youth groups and auxiliary women's organisations. It is in the

context of this amazing growth that we are planning the Golden jubilee of the whole Mar Thoma community in the United Kingdom and Europe.

Now we have our own church buildings and parsonages and we congratulate the members of St. James Parish for their vision and courage in purchasing a five acre site in a university campus south of the city of London. Both parishes are involved in helping many charitable and mission works in India. For example, St. Johns Church adopted a village in Munnar and leased agricultural land for the villagers to cultivate. After three years of continued support these villagers are now selling the produce of their farms in Cochin and have become relatively self-sufficient. These villagers are now helping other nearby villages. This project, the Giri Deepti Farmer's Trust (GIFT), is a programme jointly conducted with the Mar Thoma Kottayam-Cochin Diocese and is a new way of getting directly involved with people who need our help and encouragement. Mission is not an armchair philosophy or arm's length charity or cheque book giving. Jesus Himself made the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, and the lepers clean and whole. This was a servant-leader who did not keep a safe distance from those whom he came to serve. Now, there is quite a safe distance between pulpit and pews. An equally important contribution of the Mar Thoma community in these islands is the way we have provided and continue to provide support and fellowship to new immigrants. This is a unique form of ministry, which is carried out by establishing prayer groups in various towns and cities. Both clergy and laity should be congratulated for his great service. We are sure that other Dioceses can learn from our experience.

Over the last fifty years, our community has thus established itself in this country. Our members continue to contribute to the fields of education, medical and health care, information technology, business, law and order, accountancy, social service, politics and community relations. Many of our members also give active leadership in their local C-o-E and other parishes. This is helping us develop a very active ecumenical collaboration with other churches. Therefore, we as a community are very proud of our identity and heritage; this identity gives us the courage and stability to integrate with other communities in this country. We also feel that we are not just economic migrants and we believe that we are here for a Divine purpose. Golden Jubilee is about this history, understanding of God's plan for us and the commitment of our community to His purposes.

It is now time for reflection and stock-taking. We know the story of the ten lepers who received blessings from Jesus; only one returned to give thanks to our Lord. Thanksgiving means expressing our indebtedness to God for the abundant blessings that we receive every second of our lives. The source of that blessing is the salvation that we received

through the cross and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. This miracle of salvation is with us at all times and helps us to remain grateful to God for all His actions on our behalf. How can we give thanks to God for all his blessings? Firstly, thanksgiving is honouring God; secondly, thanksgiving is a personal commitment; finally, thanksgiving is a public declaration of our faithfulness to God, a declaration of loyalty to His kingship and His Kingdom. His glory is our concern now and at all times. Giving thanks to God is not reading a few thanksgiving Psalms in our Sunday worship, it is not what we say in our revival meetings, and it may not even be what we do. Giving thanks to God is about who we are in our heart, in our whole being; that is where giving thanks begins. The Golden Jubilee that we are planning for 2006-07 is a time for the public declaration of thanks to our Lord in various ways for the tremendous blessings that we enjoyed in past, are enjoying at present and are hoping to enjoy in the future.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Suffragan Metropolitan will inaugurate our celebrations on 6 August 2006 at the Indian YMCA, London, in the presence of invited religious and civic dignitaries. Then a final thanksgiving service and dinner will be held on 14 April 2007 in the presence of Metropolitan Chrysostom Thirumeni, Suffragan-Metropolitan Irenaeus Thirumeni, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, Anglican and other bishops and civic dignitaries.

We started this write-up with the Old Testament mandate, which spoke about emancipation, freedom and restoration. For us this probably means opting out of the rat race to think and thank God for a moment. It is about finding time to prioritise our obligations and responsibilities to the community in which we live now and also to our mother church and mother country. In the original mandate that we quoted at the beginning it was said that in the Jubilee year "Every man of you shall return to his patrimony, every man to his family." Therefore, we considered it as a God-given opportunity for us to think about a worthwhile jubilee project in addition to various celebrations that we have planned locally.

We are a diaspora community and subsequent generations need to know the stories of our migration and settlement. History has taught us the fate of many diaspora communities in this world. How can we ever forget the Holocaust and the fate of Jews in Germany, Poland and Russia, or the Asians in Uganda, or the hardships of our own people in Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion, or the ethnic cleansing in the Balkans? Although our people in countries outside India have apparent prosperity now, in later years a political tragedy of Hitler's dimension can create untold damage to our communities for no fault of theirs. As Louis Armstrong sang, "The only sin is my skin." It is important to think how Joseph cared for a whole nation by carefully providing and planning for the famine years in Egypt.

We are trying to establish an Alzheimer's support centre at Maramon, Kerala. Within the UK, we plan to support the Richard House Children's Leukaemia Hospice as part of our Jubilee celebrations.

Therefore, with joy in our hearts we welcome all members of the Mar Thoma Church of the Diocese of North America and Europe and throughout the world to share our experiences in our Golden Jubilee year. If any of you happen to be in London during our Golden Jubilee celebrations, please write to us and feel free to join us. We gratefully remember our old members and past vicars now living in other parts of the world including the United States and Canada and request them to join in our thanksgiving. We are grateful to all our past and present members, our lay leaders, our clergy and our bishops for their help and continued support for the growth of our

community. We also offer our thanks to the past and present leadership of the C-o-E, other Churches, and the civic community for making us welcome in this country with their love and friendship. We particularly thank our patron, Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Metropolitan, our Diocesan bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, Rev. V. V. Alexander, Rev. Thomas P. Koshy, Rev. Gigi Thomas, Rev. Benu John, the members of the Golden Jubilee committee and executive committees of our parishes, congregations, and prayer groups for their advice and hard work towards making these functions very successful.

We offer thanks to Almighty God for these fifty years and pray that He will bless the Mar Thoma communities throughout the world and our fellowship in Jesus Christ, our Lord, redeemer, and protector. ■

Live a Life Worthy of the Lord

N. M. Philip, Chicago

Life worthy of the Lord calls for genuine trust in
The Lord who sacrificed as ransom for our sins;
Acknowledge Son of God as only name on earth,
Who is able to save and the one worthy of trust.

Life worthy of the Lord commands intense faith,
Determination, confidence and hope in the Lord;
Blessed is the man whose faith is placed in Him,
Such a man will not wither in life's scorching heat.

Life worthy of the Lord entails adherence to the
Word of God, the infallible roadmap for holy living;
The absolute spiritual nourishment to those who
Seek guidance from the source of eternal wisdom.

Life worthy of the Lord involves earnest prayer to
Praise the Sustainer for His unfailing love and care;
Adore His name above everything seen or unseen,
For He forgives debts and provides our daily wants.

Life worthy of the Lord requires heartfelt sacrifices,
Of worldly things at times considered most important;
For the riches of the world are transient and unreal,
But heavenly treasures will neither rust nor perish.



Life worthy of the Lord demands absolute surrender,
Of body, mind, belongings, attitudes, temperament;
Will to submit everything totally to mighty Creator,
To break, shape and mold as handy tools of His liking.

Life worthy of the Lord obliges loving our neighbors,
With a compassionate eye and a charitable heart;
Console the sick, comfort the poor, lift the fallen,
Wipe tears and share blessings with those in need.

Life worthy of the Lord stipulates loyal perseverance,
To withstand life's trials, tribulations, persecutions;
Relying not on our strength, power, wisdom or merit,
But drawing from God, the source of perpetual power!.



LIVING HOME



"To handle yourself use your head, To handle others use your heart"

— Eleanor Roosevelt

HOME & GARDENING TIPS

MRS. SHIRLEY CHACKALAMANNIL, NEW JERSEY MTC

Frequently asked questions about indoor/outdoor gardening**

1. *The poinsettia plant from last year is still growing well, but it did not bloom this Christmas. What went wrong?*

Answer: Poinsettia plants need to be in the total darkness for long periods of time per day. During the fall season, place the plant in total darkness from six pm until eight am everyday for about forty days. Start in early October. By controlling the "days" and "nights" in this way, the plant will develop flower buds if the necessary conditions for growth are met. Such factors to keep in mind are watering, fertilizing and temperature which should be provided at the optimum level.

2. *In summer months when the indoor plants were placed outside, the leaves scorch. How do we avoid it?*

Answer: If you are sure that the plant need full sunlight then you keep the plant in a shaded area for at least a week. In this way, the chlorophyll in the plant tissue will get adapted to the new surroundings gradually. Afterwards, leave the plant in the sun, and the plants will do fine. Be careful - some indoor plants need only indirect sun.

3. *During winter the leaves of Rhododendron droop and curl. Is it a disease?*

Answer: No, it is just a normal, healthy mechanism for the plant to reduce transpiration during the freezing temperature.

4. *The catalogs suggested pinching out the terminal bud of the hardy mums. What is a terminal bud?*

Answer: The top-most bud on a shoot or a stem is the terminal bud. Pinching out the growing tip (the terminal bud) will allow the plant to produce lateral or side buds to grow so that the plant will be bushy and thick with many stems carrying the flowers.

5. *We purchased a gardenia full of flower buds from a local nursery, but it lost all of its buds (they just fell off) after two weeks inside the home. Why?*

Answer: Bud dropping is usually due to the sudden change of environment. In this case, the flower buds were initiated in a brightly lit area with high humidity in the nursery. Therefore, the change in light intensity and humidity in the home may be the reason for the loss of buds.

6. *The Lemon plant in a container near the window is growing well but is not flowering and there are no lemons growing either. What could be the reason for this?*

Answer: Citrus plants need long hours of full sunlight. Increase the duration of light by using plant lights or fluorescent lights to initiate the flowering.

7. *Does coffee increase the acidity of the soil?*

Answer: Not in a significant way. But it provides the soil limited quantities of organic matter and potassium.

8. *What is the best time to transplant house plants?*

Answer: Usually it is the spring time, when the roots start growing actively because of the longer daylight.

9. *How can one tell if or when a house plant needs to be transplanted?*

Answer: Water the plant in the pot and carefully take it out of the pot. If the outer surface of the root ball is comprised of thick dry roots, then repot it with a soil mix of the same type. If the roots are moist and have a healthy look, put it back into the same pot. The need for transplanting depends on the growth habitat of individual plants. Some plants like to be pot-bound where they thrive with short intervals of dry periods while some need extra room in the pot for their root growth.

10. *During the winter months, some of the indoor plants have fine webbing over the leaves and flower buds. What causes this and what is the remedy for it?*

Answer: The webbing is usually a sign of spider mites. During the winter months the air in homes are dry enough for the spider mites to increase their infestation on plants. There is no guaranteed protection from these pests, but you can keep the spider mites under control by spraying the plant with insecticidal soap and rinsing it thoroughly by water. You could do this in your bathtub. There are miticides available in nurseries but if you have young children in your home, just keeping your plant clean and adding a bit more humidity in the room (using a humidifier along with a circulating fan) will sustain the plant until the summer. In the summer you could spray your plant with the chemical miticides outdoors.

11. *Many of the indoor tropical plants develop a case of white fly infestation in the end of spring season. What is the best way to contain the white fly?*

Answer: In the cases of some indoor plants, it is not very easy to contain the white fly. For example the tropical plant, Hibiscus, is very susceptible to white flies. Clean the plant with an insecticidal soap but be sure that you thoroughly

**The answers are provided after consultation with the faculty and the greenhouse staff of the Department of Plant Science/Plant Pathology, Rutgers University, New Jersey.

rinse out all the soap from the Hibiscus plant since its leaves are very sensitive to such chemicals. Hanging a yellow sticky tape (available in garden centers) above the plant will help to catch the adult flies. Using a hot pepper wax spray on the plant is also help to contain the white flies.

12. *What are some of the indoor plants that need only a limited quantity of water so that someone who travels a lot could enjoy an indoor garden when they are at home?*

Answer: Snake plant, Yucca Pendulata, Agave, Pony Tail Palm and different kinds of cacti are good choices for indoor garden that needs only limited quantity of water.

13. *Does the water treated with water softener harm the indoor plants?*

Answer: The water softener can cause sodium build up in the soil mix which can harm the plant in the long run. Collected rain water is a good alternative. If you prefer using the water that is treated with the softener, remind yourself to give the plants a good flush with rain water once in a while so that the excess amount of sodium will leach out of the soil mix. When summer arrives, do not forget to repot the plant with fresh soil mix in order to get rid prevent the build-up of sodium.

14. *In the winter months the indoor curry plants have tiny brown bumps on its leaves and stem. Also, I noticed a seen sticky white substance on the leaves and around the pot. What are these things and how can I get rid of them?*

Answer: The tiny brown bumps are most likely the insect called scales. The sticky substances on the leaves and around the pots are secretions from the scales. If they are not controlled, they could cause enough damage to its leaves which eventually leads to the destruction of the plant. Since the curry leaves are often used for edible purposes, it would be wise not to use any chemically preventive measures. By carefully washing the leaves and stem with insecticidal soap that is made for edible plants, the scales can be controlled. In the summer, repotting the plant with fresh soil mix and leaving it in the sun and rain will help get rid of the infestation by the scales. If such a situation was regarding an ornamental plant, there are systemic insecticides you can purchase from any garden center.

Flower arrangement *(continuation from the last issue)*

Style: Traditional mass-style

There are different methods to do the flower arrangement. Here, we will be making an all-sided circular design, also known as traditional mass-style arrangement. The "mechanics" used in this dried flower arrangement are: brown floral foam, anchor pin, medium or heavy gauge stub wire and floral tape. Since no setting clay or glue is used in this method, it is easy to rearrange the flowers in case you make a mistake on the first try. The traditional mass style is known to have originated from Europe during the Renaissance Period. There are some basic features for this style that we should know of before we start the

arrangement. The mass-style arrangement has no distinct focal point but the transition (changes within the arrangement) should be uniform and gradual. In other words, the color and size of the flowers should blend together rather than have a sharp, clashing contrast between them. Through this method, the arrangement will have a uniform theme of color and an even, symmetrical mass all around.

Method

Preparation of the dried plant material for the arrangement

If the stem of the dried flowers and foliage looks brittle or too short, then bind the stem with medium or heavy gauge stub wire of appropriate length. These false stems made of wire should be wrapped around with floral tape in order to make it look more natural. Make sure the floral tape overlaps so that the wire is fully hidden.

Choose a vase that will have the appropriate size and proportion in relation with the finished all sided design (as it was stated in the previous issues).

Step 1: Cut the floral foam to fit the size of the container. The cut foam should be about half an inch below the rim of the vase.

Step 2: Secure the foam in the vase with an anchor pin (also known as a frog). This foam will be the one that will hold the arrangement in its place.

Step 3: With an all sided design, it is helpful to arrange the foliage first at equal intervals so that you will be able to control the transition in your arrangement. This also will help to define all sides of the arrangement and help to maintain the uniformity within the arrangement. To establish the height of the arrangement, either insert a stem of a dried foliage or a stem that carries a small bud that is of the appropriate length in the center of the brown floral foam in the vase. So this stem will be your reference point for the height and width of the arrangement.

Step 4: Next insert the stem that carries the flowers near the rim of the vase that extend out horizontally or slightly downward to establish the width of all sides. You may have to alter the length of the stems in order to match the central stem (the foliage or the bud)

Step 5: Insert additional stems with flowers and the foliage to fill out the circular format on all sides. You may have to turn your arrangement constantly during the process by placing it on a rotating disc you will be able to turn the vase with ease. This way you will not neglect any side, and your design will end up symmetrically circular on all sides.

Step 6: Insert the filler flowers and foliage last to help complete the style and shape (for example usually roses come with baby breath flowers and foliage. These plants are typical filler materials)

Pictures of different styles of arrangements along with tips for fresh flower arrangements will be on the next issue of The Mar Thoma Messenger.

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- Will provide you all of the above services and much more with knowledge (real estate, mortgage and vastu sastra) and experience demonstrated thru performances of diligence, reliability, integrity and dedicated work.



***** Call for a free consultation *****



How to Care for Dogs

Dr. Thankam Mathew, B.Sc., M.V.Sc., Ph.D., FISCD

Benefits of keeping pets:

Pets teach children to become responsible by acting as a care taker. It can help children develop discipline, acquire self esteem and social skills, and develop compassion and empathy. Pets can supplement health benefits for children and adults by decreasing anxiety and blood pressure. Animals, therefore, act as psychotherapists when owners unload their problems and fears to them since they are supportive listeners. This can add longevity while enduring or after recovering from a major illness by giving company and may even reduce abnormalities such as high serum triglycerides. Pets also reduce the loneliness feeling in the house, providing protection to people by their behavior like barking and reaching to the new person in affection. For example, dogs provide companionship to handicapped people confined to wheel chair. In addition some people with animals feel a spiritual fulfillment and oneness with life and nature. Again, this is commonly seen in dogs which can search and detect a criminal / thief with their strong smelling power.

Before taking a pet to home:

A pet animal or bird should be a welcomed guest to all in the family.

Keeping pet animals and birds is a past time for everyone especially, for people trying to escape from the stressful life of the daily routine. For instance, dogs are the best friend of humans. They like to be loved and to love. If you show love to a dog, in return, it will show greater love, with faithfulness and gratitude. Dogs are known for their watchful eyes alert ears protecting the life and property of its master / mistress, detecting the friends and foes and expressing its gratitude with its wagging tail – a sign of happiness and gratitude. Through the close association with its master / mistress it understands all human feeling. Only when you keep a dog you will know how much pleasure it gives to you and your family and how much it reduces the tension in our day to day life.

Before you decide to keep a dog or any other pet animals, it is preferable to consult a nearby veterinarian and we should know certain important facts about a pet animal. It is always good to buy a puppy from an owner who keep pet animals in a hygienic environment, and protected by vaccinations against rabies and against other conditions like worm infections, ticks, fleas, ringworm etc. Puppies and kittens should be taken from their mother once they are weaned at six weeks of age. Because they get the natural antibodies against various diseases through their mothers milk during the first six weeks of life. It is also easy to guide them properly for, toilet training, feeding, and to obey orders when they are young.

Present to the Children: Don't give pets to children below 5 years of age because they will not understand the responsibility

of keeping a live animal as a pet. They should be able to differentiate a toy from a pet animal. If they like to keep pets make them understand that the need to take responsibility in feeding, grooming, and walking the animals.

Toilet training: The first training they require is to pass urine and stools in a specific place (in the yard, in pots, or with dry litter). When it passes stool or urine in the wrong place, gently but firmly scold the puppy by saying "bad boy!" and remove it to the place where you expect it to defecate and urinate. With gloves on, clean the area with disinfectant and use some deodorant so that the puppy will not be tempted to pass stool in the same place with the previous smell.

Obedience Training: It is always better for one person in the family to train the dog or take the help of a dog trainer. Try to use only a single word command like "come" "go". "good", "no" etc. When ever the pet obey, you should reward him by giving him a pat on the back, saying "good" and give some biscuits etc. When the pet disobeys, say "NO" with stern and loud voice. Beating or spanking the dog is unethical and must be avoided.

Feeding training: Feeding should be from a separate food tray and clean water bowl. Never train them to take the food from the table while the family is eating. For adult dogs give only light food in the night to help them stay vigilant. If possible, feeding should be done by a single person to as a way of training the dog to never take food from strangers. Provide plenty of clean water all the time.

Diseases Transmitted:

The diseases communicable from animals to humans are called zoonotic diseases. They can develop from the following: 1. parasites; 2. bacteria; 3. viruses; 4. fungi; 5. mites, and ticks. The common parasitic diseases are caused by round worms, tape worms, giardia, coccidia, and toxoplasma. The parasitic infections are generally caused by the contamination of food with feces and urine of the pets. Common bacterial infections are: Salmonellosis, Colibacillosis, and Leptospirosis. Common fungal infection is ring worm infection, caused by contact with infected skin. The most prevalent viral infection, rabies, is transmitted by the bite of an infected animal to another animal. Due to health reasons never allow a pet to lick on the face of the owner/ children. Never kiss a parrot on its beak as it can cause psittacosis, a common infection, and always wash your hands after grooming or petting the pets to prevent infection. ■

For more information, read Dr. Mathew's book:

Barbour, Elie K. and Thankam Mathew. Zoonoses and the Contribution of Diseases-Free Pets to Human Health: A guide for Pet owner. Thajema Publishers, 31 Glen view Dr, West orange NJ 07052 USA

Alabama—How Sweet It Is! Native American Mission Trip—June 11-16, 2006

Reena Thomas, Dallas



Alabama Missions 2006 Group with Thirumeni

Mount Vernon, Alabama:—I didn't know what a Native American church was like. I didn't know how we were going to help a church put on a weeklong VBS. But all my questions were answered when we pulled up outside the church on Sunday afternoon and out came running 8-year-old Brianna Weaver, arms open wide, smile beaming on her face, screaming, "They're here! They're here!" I knew at that moment that this mission trip was more than I expected.

The Native American Mission began 4 years ago because of the vision of our Diocesan Bishop Mar Coorilos. Mrs. Nirmala Abraham, the Diocesan Mission Board Convener, initiated the Mission to the Native Indians in Alabama and Oklahoma through contacting Methodist and Presbyterian churches in the US. Aldersgate Methodist Church where we ministered has only about 75 members from the Choctaw tribe and is located in a small, rural town outside of Mobile. The church lacks adequate leadership and resources to organize a summer VBS for its children. However, for the last four years with the assistance of the Mar Thoma church volunteers, this church was enabled to bring Christ's love and serve its community through VBS program. The Native Indian children, from ages 4-14, youths

and parents eagerly anticipate the VBS week led by the Christian Indians from the East.

Twenty one volunteers from around the Diocese including our Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, Jason Thomas, Diocesan Council member and Convener to Mexico Mission, and Ashley George, Youth's representative to the Diocesan Assembly, lead the VBS program with the theme: "Fiesta!" Our team was able to minister to over 110 children every day for five days.

The volunteers included: Sabu John, Jobcy & Jency John Thomas, Ancy Baby, Preety & Princy Kuriakose, Pritha Varghese, Sean Koshy, Tina Jones, from Atlanta MT Church, Bincy and Betty Vattakunnel (Trinity MTC, Houston), Reena Thomas (Carrolton/Grand Prairie MTC, Dallas); Liju Abraham and Ann Cherian



Ann Cherian—Epiphany MTC, New York, with her VBS Class.



Thirumeni speaking to the youth in Alabama

(Epiphany MTC, NY); Amy Abraham; Alicia Mathew and Dr. Thomas Mathew from MTC of Greater Washington and Mr. O.C. Abraham from Philadelphia MTC who led the Team.

Every morning, children sang their hearts out at the Sing A-Long led by Sabu, Betty, and Alicia. At the opening session, each day's memory verse and themes, such as "Jesus Is Our Friend", "Jesus Is Our Leader", "Jesus Is Our Savior" were introduced. Arts and Crafts allowed children to express their creativity through dream catchers and posters. Bible Adventures captivated classes with Bible lessons, interactive Bible plays like Lazarus and his resurrection. There were times set apart for class discussions and to present participants' personal daily challenges. There were evening study sessions and discussions for the older youths (ages 15 and above). Sabu led these intimate discussions. An average of 8-10 youngsters regularly attended these sessions. The sessions included a viewing of a clip from The Passion of the Christ, an impromptu talk show skit about Christians and their non-Christian friends, as well as small group time where we discussed the challenges of being a Christian in today's world.

Our Diocesan Bishop Coorilos Thirumeni took part in the Alabama Mission from June 13th Tuesday to Thursday June 15, which was an added blessing. He talked with the youth participants, inviting them to accept the gift of love and salvation that Christ freely offers to every one. Thirumeni conducted a Bible study also for the adults of the church. Along with O.C. Abraham, Dr. Mathew Thomas, Jason Thomas and Ashley George, he visited

New Orleans to see areas impacted by Katrina. The team also visited the Huama Nation headquarters and conducted a meeting with the Hauma Indian leaders to assess their needs. Thirumeni's presence reminded us of the ongoing efforts of the Mar Thoma church to meet the needs of troubled communities within the U.S.

On Thursday evening, we did something I have always wanted to do ... throw candy and beads along a parade route! At the community annual Parade, we were invited to ride upon the Aldersgate church trailer truck turned makeshift 'float'. Adults and children line up along the streets with bags in hand (and some innovative ones

with inside-out umbrellas) ready to catch whatever goodies may come their way. It was the perfect chance to see the surrounding community, relate to our VBS kids outside of church and even marvel at them ride their ATVs!

Friday's VBS ended with each class performing skits, singing songs, or playing their guitars on stage for the Final Day program. One of the highlights was the Indian Fashion show. Female members of Aldersgate proudly wore our 'salwars' and looked dazzling as they appeared on stage. Our trip ended at the annual paw-wow, a weekend-long event hosted by the local Choctaw community. Many came dressed in traditional Native American costumes and danced to the strong drumbeat that served as background music to vendors selling genuine leather wallets, incense pipes, and even bows and arrows.

For six days, Aldersgate church in Mount Vernon, Alabama was our home. We not only conducted VBS within these church walls, but we cooked and ate our meals,



VBS participants and Mission members

sang songs, planned activities, and formed long lasting relationships. In a matter of moments, we were embedded into the Choctaw community and welcomed whole-heartedly. I'll never forget, the love of the children, the VBS director—June Weaver's infectious laughter and Southern quips ["He's as good-looking as a ham sandwich!], being silly with all the volunteers; a special kid in my class for whom I'll be praying because he dreams of attending Harvard one day. I didn't know what to expect on this mission trip, but I know now that Alabama will always remain a 'sweet home' for me. ■



Bishop Euyakim Mar Coorilos & Mr. O.C. Abraham with Chief Taylor of the Choctaw Indian Tribe in Mt. Vernon, Alabama.

Follow The Ten Commandments for a Life Worthy of the Lord

Anita Mathew, St. Peter's MTC, Teaneck, NJ

Christians are often told that they should make their beliefs obvious to the world through their actions. However, many wonder how they can do this. How do you live your life the way that God wants you to? What can we as Christian do and not do? To find out, we must look to the Bible, the most obvious guide to self-conduct.

Let us first refer to Exodus Chapter 20, where we see the Ten Commandments. These can be considered the basis of Christian behavior. They clearly outline how God wants us to conduct ourselves as His children. The Ten Commandments have become a moral standard for Christian and non-Christians alike. Among other places, they are referred to in U.S. courtrooms and legislative chambers.

To live a life following the Lord, the Ten Commandments can be considered the most basic and obvious instructions.

In the book of St. Matthew, Jesus states the two most important ones. The first is "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 23:37). This verse commands nothing else can be worshiped aside from the Lord our God. The Lord needs to be the first priority in our lives. The second verse states, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). The second verse is often known as the Golden Rule. It says that one should treat his or her neighbor with the same care and respect that one exercise among themselves. Many do this by donating to charities and helping others in need.

This verse is also expanded on in Luke 5:27-36. Even love for enemies is expected by the children of God. Although human instinct tells us to retaliate when attacked, we must keep the love of our Lord alive in us, no matter how hard this may seem. No verse states this better than Luke 6:27-28 which says "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who mistreat you."

There are many examples in the Bible where we can learn how to conduct ourselves in a pleasing manner to the Lord. A particularly well-known parable is that of the "rich young man" (Mark 10:17-31). A wealthy young man, eager to inherit eternal life, asks what he must do to attain it. When Jesus asks him if he has followed the Ten Commandments, he replies that he has. However, when Jesus tells him to sell his worldly possessions and follow Him, the young man cannot leave his riches behind. The rich man leaves and does not return to Jesus. We must remember not to be like this man and follow God no matter what comforts we might have to give up. The rewards in Heaven are thousand times more priceless than anything in this world. If the Lord calls, we cannot hesitate; we must offer ourselves completely to Him.

If we completely submit ourselves to Him, we stand to inherit the eternal life. As long as we keep God as our first priority and follow His words, then we will be considered His children, we should all strive to do this and be a blessing to the Lord. ■

Live a Life Worthy Of Lord

Shawn P. Alexander (Age 14), Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston, TX

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the council of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in seasons and his leaf does not wither (Psalms 1:1-4). As Christians, we all must live a life worthy of the Lord; it's our responsibility as God's children. This responsibility is not an easy thing, and it is to be taken seriously. It is not given to us when we are born, but when we are more mature and ready, because when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior we also accept the responsibilities of being a devoted Christian. When we are devoted to the Lord, we must live in a manner that shows in our lives that we are God's children. That means we must show our devotion in every waking moment of our lives.

"To live a life worthy of the Lord we need, first and foremost, to be obedient to His will in our lives" (Sylvia Penny). To be obedient and to follow His will we must have faith, because if we don't have faith there is no point in calling ourselves Christians. Faith in Christianity means we are confident by trusting and relying on God. We believe that no matter what we are put through on this planet, our faith will always be what protects us from submitting to temptations and evil desires.

Life is always challenging and obstacles are strewn on our way. We should climb the steps of our life with strong faith and great admiration for the Lord. If our faith is strong as the house that was built on the rock, we will prevail. But, what good is faith if we have no deeds? It is like having oars but no boat. Faith is useless if we have no good deeds and deeds are useless without performing them through our faith in Jesus Christ. Deeds aren't measured by how much we give but what we can offer from the resources God provided to us.

We Christians have to be more compassionate to other living beings that are less fortunate and needy. I would like to recall a great soul who devoted her life for the poor. She walked through the disease and hunger-stricken streets of Calcutta. Mother Teresa not only lived a life worthy of the Lord, but also shed the Light of Christ on thousands of people who were less fortunate. Our Lord and Savior Jesus lived for a shorter time on this planet. His life changed millions of lives in that era and centuries after, and His legacy continues. Even though His disciples and followers looked on Him as Master, He always wanted to be a servant or a good friend. How many of us, wanting to lead a Christian life or to be a Christian leader, can live His way of life? Our life is fruitful when others benefit from our actions. What a great life Jesus showed us! Do we come up to our Lord's expectations? As Girzone states, we must use "...our failings and weaknesses, as humiliating as they are utilized by God to accomplish His wonders within us, and evolve as the engine that drives us to become the instruments of His miracles of grace to others" (92). Our lives are a testimony to others of Christ's divine and unconditional love, and through God's utilization of such failings and weaknesses, we are instruments hired to complete the mission of sharing the Gospel.

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). Like a wildfire that spreads quickly, and kindles everything in its path, our faith can spread through thousands of other souls and minds.

Though there are lots of religions in this world, we as Christians have a distinct and genuine mark from the rest by believing the truth that Jesus is the only Way, the Truth, and the Life to salvation and eternal life. To spread this Good News, we must fulfill our duties as ambassadors of Christ's kingdom. If we don't live up to the standards, we are an embarrassment to God's kingdom. Always remember your words are in vain if your actions are not held accountable to them. We have to live according to God's plan and not ours, because God has a different plan for each of us. Remember that the Christian path is not always a bed of roses or a comfort zone. At times it is laid out with thorns and rocks. Most people will divert from this path because they can no longer tolerate the hardships or, as in many cases, are lured by temptations. We will be weak at times of despair and darkness. We will feel like there is no hope to move on. Often we feel that we are alone, isolated and helpless but we are not if we live in spiritual power. There is great hope on the horizon. We must live as though we are an indestructible force of God. We must be deeply devoted to the Lord Almighty to have this type of power. If we are this deeply devoted, the devil won't even think of trying to tempt us.

We Christians must count our blessings more than our misfortunes. Abundance of wealth and earthly pleasures are often counted as gifts from God. But are they the true reward given to us for being true followers of Jesus Christ? Do they follow you to the journey to eternity? We should answer these questions throughout the journey of our life.

As the story of the talents in the Bible indicates, we believers must be the servant who doubled the talents and pleased the master. Don't be the foolish one who buried the talents and was sorry when the master showed up. We all are granted and given many talents. We have to use our talents wisely, and live a life worthy of the Lord. Then we will experience our great Lord shower us with an abundance of joy and blessings. ■

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Leena Vadaketh, Ascension MTC Church, Philadelphia

If you are looking for a fun creative product that will engage your child's imagination, then you will be pleased with a new product introduction from Crayola called Color Explosion. Color Explosion products are kid-focused, featuring an element of surprise, along with fun and creativity.

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paper is covered with a unique black overcoat. As kids use special clear-ink markers to draw pictures and patterns, the ink actually removes the black overcoat to reveal colors beneath. The new paper and marker effect is great for showing off special school projects or just to have fun with drawing and color. Color Explosion products are sold at key retail chains like Wal-Mart, Target, Kmart and ToysRUs.

A Family That is Worthy of the Lord

Krista Vadaketh, Grade 5, Ascension MTC, Philadelphia

*Families are people who care about each other
They will always help one another
Families will make sure no one is down
And also that no one is wearing a frown
Family is the most important element of life
They will help anytime when in strife
A family is created of a mom, a dad, and their children
Yet, a family is never complete without Christ on high
With Christ, a family can never be untied*

*Family will never let each other down
Or turn another down
A family has the power to make a difference
This can make the world brilliant
I'd like to sum it all up
With a nice close-up
God is the ultimate one
Who can make your family life be a fruitful one?
"One that is worthy of the Lord."*

The 2006 Youth Mission Trip to various Indian mission fields is tentatively scheduled for the second week in September. If you are interested, please contact Mrs. Mariamma Thomas at:

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Fulfilling the life long ambition of many Malayalees in the United States and Canada, a retirement project unmatched by many standards has been rooted in Texas. This project is the absolute solution to our old age worries in this country. We are receiving hundreds of comments from our community members appreciating us on the success of this effort. The shares of this partnership have been sold out. Now, registration for the house purchase is in progress. A few more houses are left in the first phase. Please, call us and register immediately if you are dreaming to retire and live in this wonderful place.

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- Outdoor swimming pool, tennis court, jogging track and parks.
- Chapel with meeting facility
- Clinic with full time physician, nurse, and ambulance service
- House keeping and linen services, building and lawn maintenance, transportation

FEATURES OF KAIRALI PROJECT

- Houses are custom built with safety features for senior citizens
- Security is available twenty four hours within the gated community
- Weather (warmer temperature with less humidity) is very appropriate for old age
- Management is superb and will include residents suggestions with highest priority
- Malayalee retired personnel in US is just started only, indicating higher demand and higher real estate value for your house in the future
- Since there is complete maintenance available, houses can be used as winter homes or vacation homes
- Rental opportunity is also open and assistance to rent your house will be provided
- Future developments include a Banquette Hall, an Assisted Living Facility and a Nursing Home

A retail shopping center is in plan to be developed within the project. Many businesses are already in contact with us to start within our project. In a few years, we expect that this project will be a fully self sufficient one in itself.

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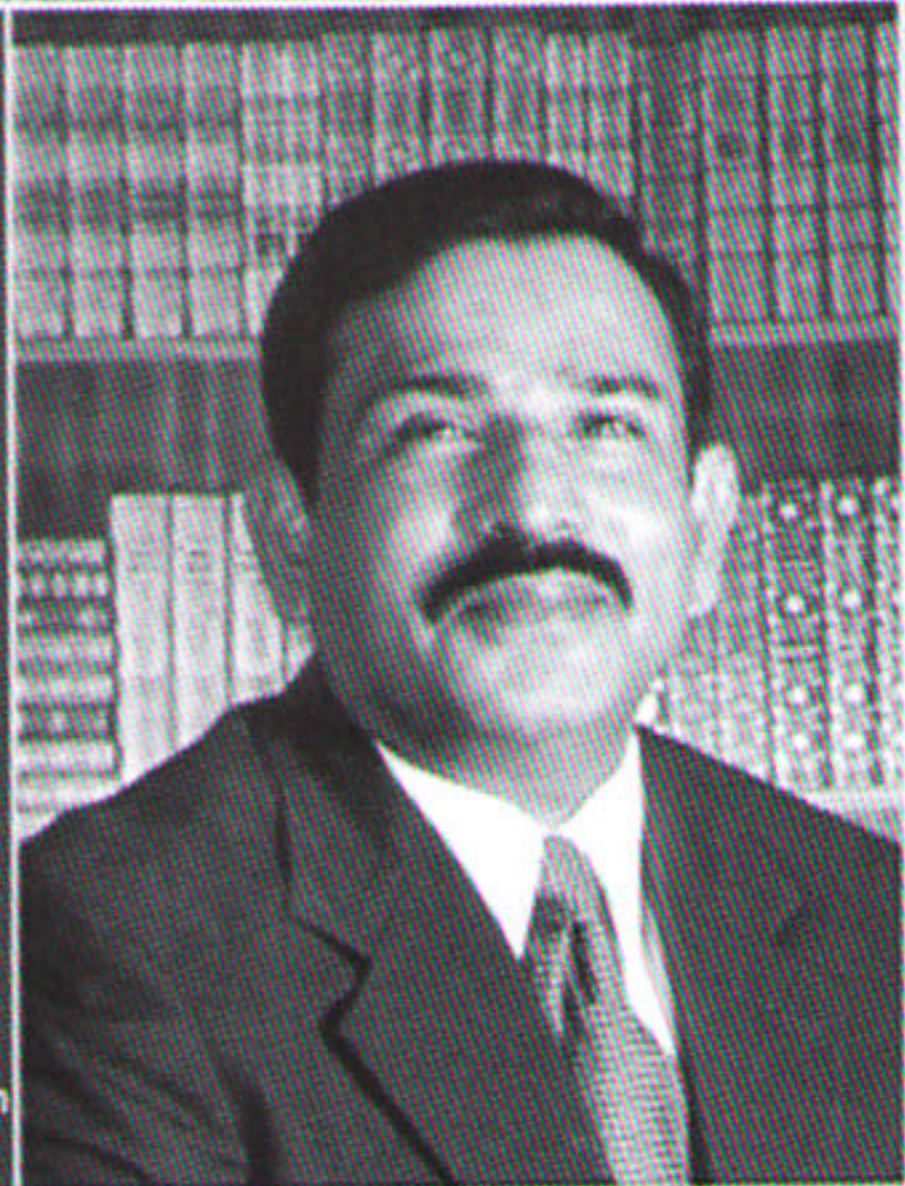
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I am

Jojo John, St. Peter's Mar Thoma Church, Teaneck, NJ

*I am a young, growing, teenager.
I wonder what will happen in future years.
I hear when people need someone to listen.
I see the Pistons winning a Play-off series
I am a young, growing teenager.*

*I pretend to be someone famous.
I feel angry at times over nothing.
I respect those who respect me.
I admire those who should be admired.
I am a young, growing, teenager.*

*I understand that nothing happens exactly how you plan it.
I say, "Keep your expectations high, and dream big".
I dream of a world without hatred.
I try my best to help those in need.
I believe that everyone and anyone deserves a second chance
I am Jojo John.*

OCTOBER WINNERS. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL WINNERS!!!

Bible Cross-Word Puzzle Winners (January 2006)

1. Achamma Chacko, Trinity MTC, Houston
2. Alex & Justin Vaidyan, St. Thomas MTC, NY
3. Aleyamma Kurien, Canadian MTC, Toronto
4. Aleyamma Thomas, MTC of San Francisco, CA
5. Annamma Samuel, Trinity MTC, Houston
6. Annie Wilson, St. Mathews MTC, Toronto
7. Athira John, St. John's MTC, NY
8. Daniel P. Thomas, MTC of San Francisco, CA
9. Jayashree Thomas, Sugarland, TX
10. Jeena Jacob, New Jersey MTC, Randolph, NJ
11. Justin Mani, The MTC Staten Island, NY
12. Justy and Jerry John, St. James MTC, NY
13. Kevin Cherian, St. Paul's MTC, Dallas
14. Kunjumole Jose, Chicago MTC
15. Mariamma Mathew, Sparks, NV
16. Mariamma Ninan, New City, NY
17. Mariamma Thomas, Trinity MTC, Houston
18. Migy & Pushpa Mathew, Oklahoma MTC
19. Molly Abraham, MTC of Greater Washington, D.C.
20. Omana Rajee, The MTC Staten Island, NY
21. Ponnamma Mathew, Philadelphia, MTC, PA
22. Ponnamma Ninan, MTC of San Francisco, CA
23. Sally Abraham, Epiphany MTC, NY
24. Saramma Poikail, MTC of Greater Washington, D.C.
25. Shobi Mathew, Detroit MTC
26. Susan John, MTC of San Francisco, CA
27. Susan Thomas, Epiphany MTC, NY

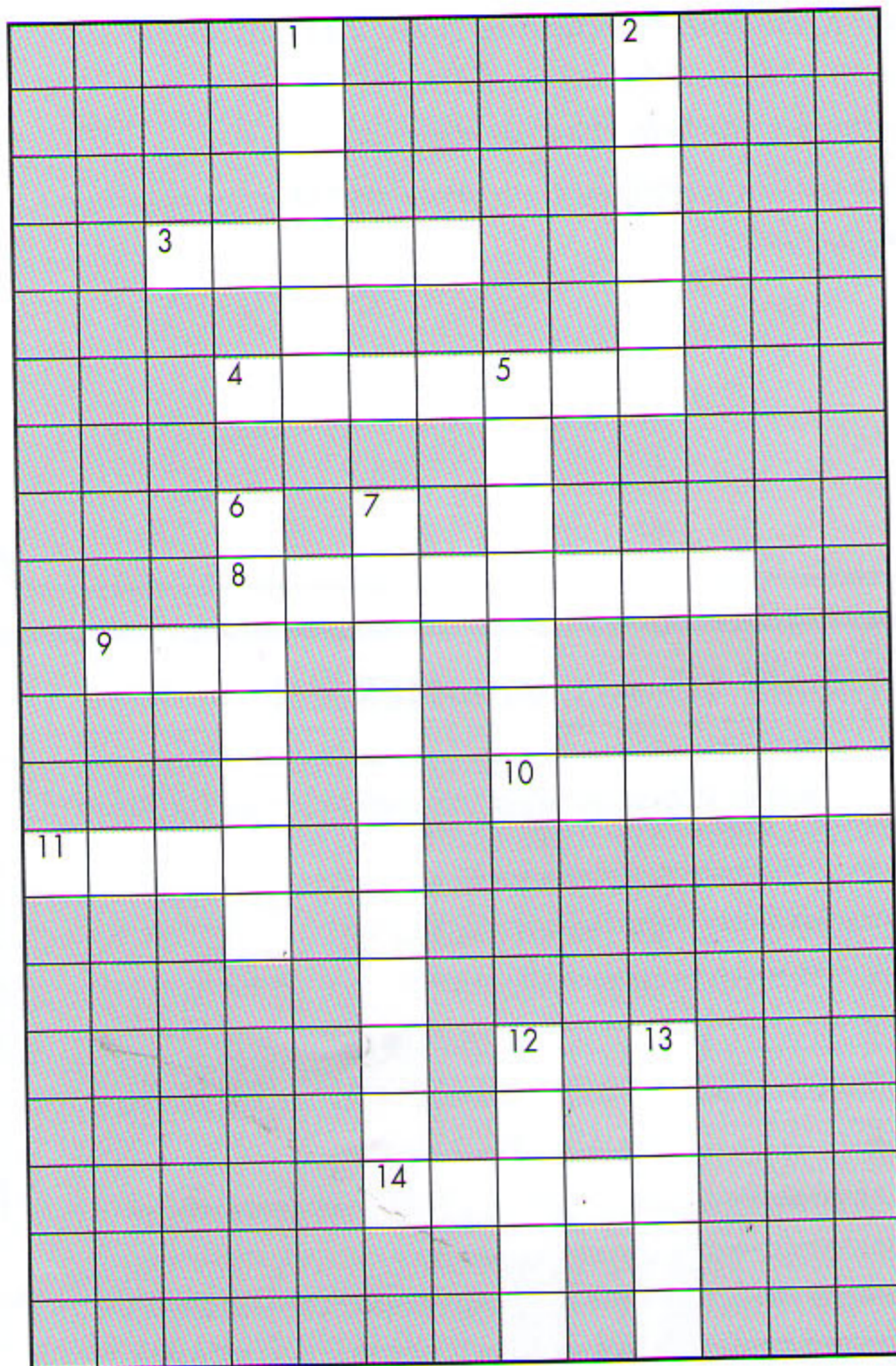
Bible Word Search Winners (January 2006)

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9. Jayashree Thomas, Sugarland, TX
10. Jeena Jacob, New Jersey MTC, Randolph, NJ
11. Jibin Abraham, Colorado Horeb MTC
12. Justin Mani, The MTC Staten Island, NY
13. Justy and Jerry John, St. James MTC, NY
14. Kevin Cherian, St. Paul's MTC, Dallas
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17. Mariamma Ninan, New City, NY
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21. Ponnamma Ninan, MTC of San Francisco, CA
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23. Saramma Poikail, MTC of Greater Washington, D.C.
24. Shobi Mathew, Detroit MTC
25. Susan John, MTC of San Francisco, CA
26. Susan Thomas, Epiphany MTC, NY

BIBLE CROSS WORD PUZZLE

AS IN TODAY'S NIV
BOOK OF JOSHUA: CHAPTERS 1-10

Mrs. Joel M. Zacharia (New York)



Down

1. _____, the son of Nun succeeded Moses.
2. The Lord's servant asked Joshua to gather all the Israelites to cross the _____ river into the land promised by God.
5. The ark of the covenant was carried by the priests, who were the _____, and as their feet touched the river's edge, the waters stopped flowing.
6. The commander of the Lord's army asked Joshua to take off his _____, near Jericho, as he was standing on holy land.
7. The Gibeonites were punished for deceiving the Israelites and had to serve as _____ and water carriers for the rest of their lives.
12. Name the woman who protected the two spies from Shittim in her home against the people of Jericho.
13. The _____ stopped the day after the Passover at Gilgal.

Across

3. _____ was stoned and burned as a punishment for violating the covenant of the Lord.
4. While attacking the land of Ai, Joshua held out the _____ in his hand as a sign to the Israelites to set the land on fire.
8. The kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, were the five kings of the _____.
9. The _____ stood still in the middle of the sky as Joshua said this to the Lord in the presence of the Israelites.
10. At Gilgal, Joshua set up twelve _____ picked from the middle of Jordan by each of the tribes as a memorial to the future of how the Israelites crossed the Jordan on dry ground.
11. Joshua built an altar to the Lord and thereby renewed the covenant on this mountain.
14. Two kings, _____ and Og, were attacked and killed by the Israelites.

ATTENTION ALL CONTESTANTS!!!

DUE TO LIMITATION OF SPACE WE ARE UNABLE TO INCLUDE "WORD SEARCH" IN THIS ISSUE. THE NEXT ISSUE (OCTOBER) IS A SPECIAL SILVER JUBILEE ISSUE, AND WE WILL NOT HAVE CROSS WORD PUZZLE AND WORD SEARCH IN THAT ISSUE ALSO. HOWEVER, WE WILL RESUME THE COLUMN STARTING FROM JANUARY, 2007. PLEASE BEAR WITH US AND WE ARE SORRY FOR THIS TIME DELAY.

Please mail your answers to:

Mrs. Joel M. Zacharia, 28 Graves Street, Staten Island, NY 10314

DEADLINE FOR ANSWERS December 31, 2006

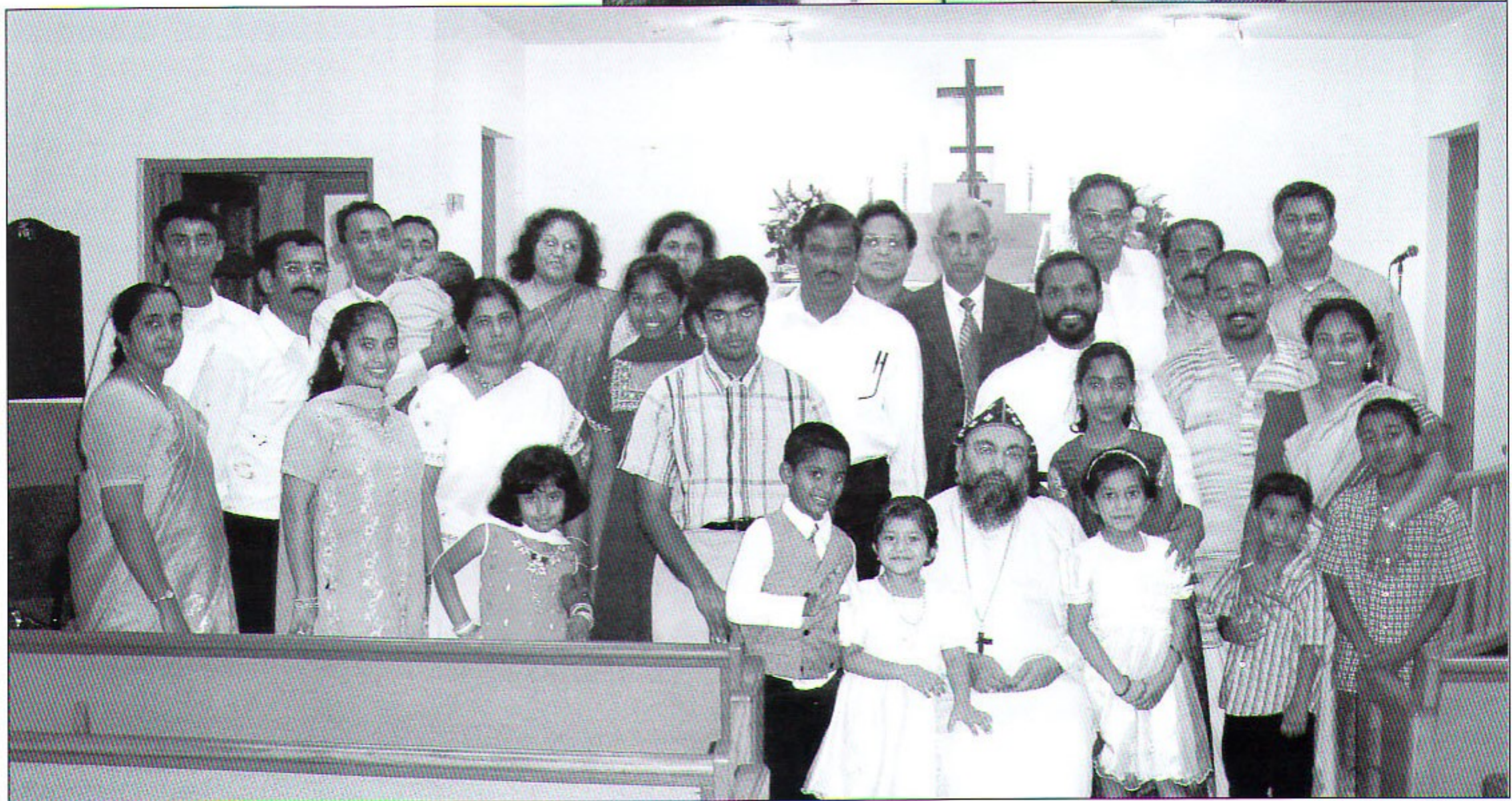
DIOCESAN/PARISH NEWS

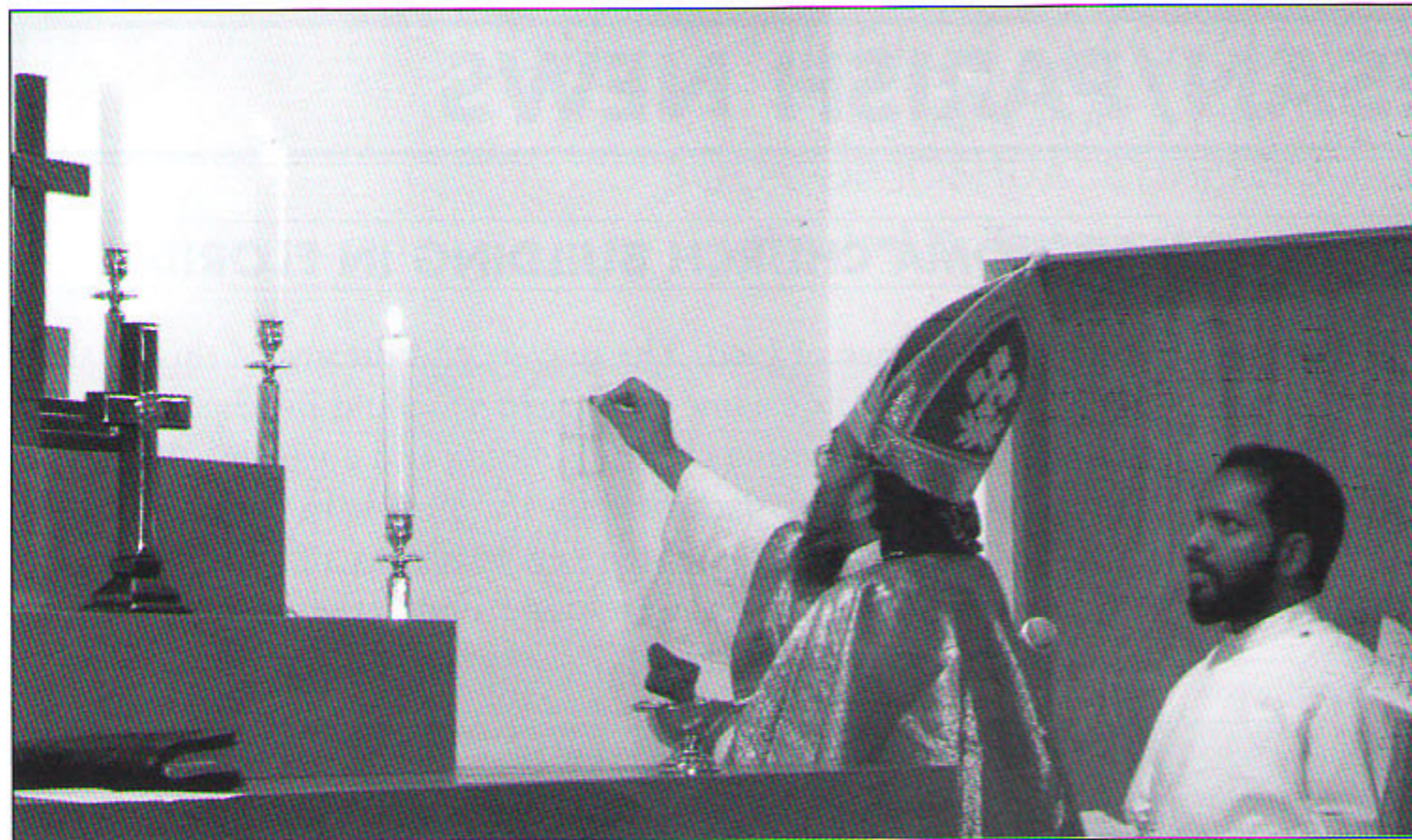
THE DEDICATION OF THE FOURTH MARTHOMA CHURCH BUILDING IN FLORIDA



ful Grace of God. The prayers and dreams of this smallest congregation came true when we could purchase a plot of 1.36 acre with a church building and a parish hall at 8654 Griffis Road, Jacksonville, FL 32234, in February, 2006. The construction of the new Madbaha and other necessary renovation works were done under the supervision of a building committee.

Jacksonville: July 9th, 2006 marked a unique milestone for the Diocese of North America and Europe when one of the smallest congregations of our Diocese, the Jacksonville Mar Thoma Church (Florida) dedicated their newly purchased church building to the Glory of God for sacramental purposes and proclamation of the Word of God. From the humble beginning in 1997 we have been experiencing the wonder-





this great achievement. Rev. Sam Abraham, Rev. Jose Maniyangattu, Rev. Mark Eldredge, and Mr. V. S. Mathew felicitated on the occasion. Mr. Alex Varghes and Sherin Chacko presented the Church dedication Souvenir. Mr. Johny Jones (Secretary) expressed the vote of thanks. A fellowship dinner was served after the meeting.

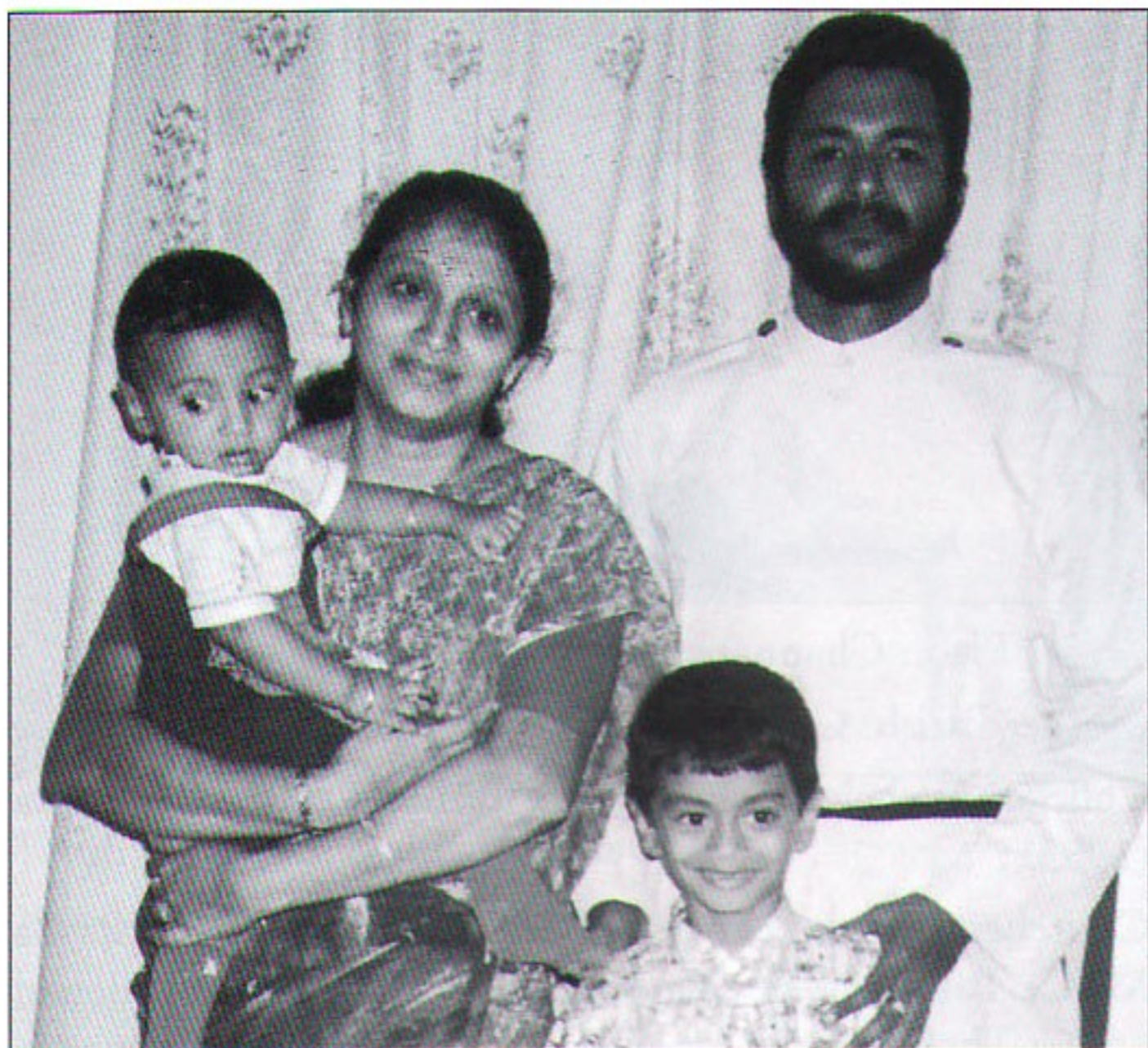
Rev. T. K. Alexander Tharakan, Vicar,

Our diocesan Episcopa, Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilose Thirumeni lead the dedication service with the presence of the Vicar Rev. T. K. Alexander Tharakan, Rev. Sam Abraham, Rev. Jose Maniyangattu, Rev. Mark Eldredge and a well attended gathering. The dedication service was started with the traditional procession around the new church singing—"Senayin Yahovaaye.....". After the dedication service, Coorilose Thirumeni celebrated the Holy Communion in the new church which was followed by a public meeting. Rev. T. K. Alexander Tharakan (Vicar) welcomed the gathering and made the introductory speech. Thirumeni in his speech congratulated the Vicar and members for



OUR NEW ACHENS

REV. ABRAHAM P. VARKEY, Atlanta MTC



Native Place: Niranam, Kerala

Mother parish: Jrusalem MTC, Niranam

College: Mar Thoma College, Thiruvalla; IGNOU, New Delhi (MBA – Human Resources Management); BD: Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam

Churches Served: Ebenezer MTC & Zion MTC, Seethathodu; Bokoro MTC (North India); St. Thomas MTC, Kanam & Ebenezer MTC, Vazhoor

Wife: Rachel Abraham (Vechoochira); Abhishek V. Abraham (8) Son; Adarsh Joe Abraham (2) Son

REV. BINU JOHN, New Jersey MTC, Randolph



Native Place: Kottackupurathu, Elanthoor, Kerala.

Mother Parish: Elanthoor St.Thomas M.T.C.

College: St. Thomas College, Kozhencherry; BD: MT Seminary, Kottayam (1993)

Parishes served: Thalachira Salem, Kokkadu St.Johns, Chakkuvarackal Immanuel, Podiyattuvila St.Thomas, Kattickallaruvu St.Pauls, Thonikadavu Christose, Neerattukavu Salem, Jodhpur, Bikanir, Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Surendranagar, Thalavady Padinjarekkara, Karikuzhy Salem, Kanakappalam Jerusalem, Vechoochira St.Johns.

Wife: Silu John, B.A., B.Ed., Koippallil, Kerala; Daughter: Nanma Ann John (7th Grade); Son: Naveen Ninan John (1st Grade)

REV. JAMES THOMAS, Dallas Sehion & Horeb, Colarado



Native Place: Konni, Kerala

Mother Parish: Konni Poovanpara Salem M.T.C.

College: Catholicate College, Pathanamthitta (B.A); Bombay University. (M. A); B.D: Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam (1989)

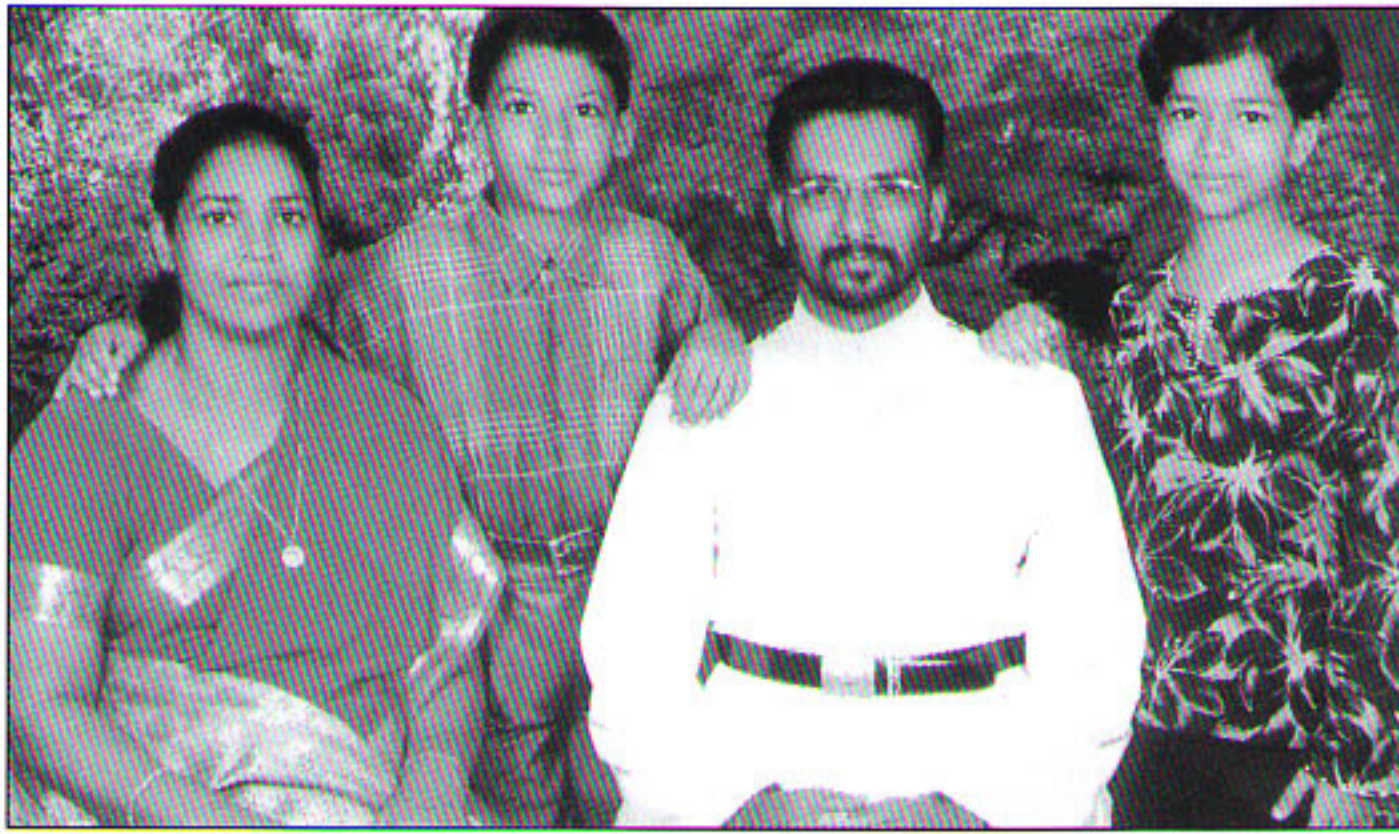
Parishes Served: Neduvallor, Cherupuzha, Parappa; Mannamaruthy, Vattarkayam; Thevalakkara Hebron, Thazhava; Chennithala St.Peters, Gramam; Cherukole (Mavelikara); Vengal Salem.

Wife: Mariamma James B.Sc., B.D., MTh (She was serving as New Testament teacher at Episcopal Jubilee Institute of Evangelism Thiruvalla)

Place: Chettikulangara

Daughter: Jaya Mariam James (10th); Son: Jobin Thomas James (7th)

REV. JOHNSON C. JACOB, St. Andrew's & Ebenezer MTC, NY



Native Place: Kumbanad, Kerala (Salem MTC, Kumbanad)
College: Mar Thoma College, Thiruvalla; B.D. from MT Seminary, Kottayam-1989

Churches Served: Thalachira Salem, Podiattuvila St. Thomas, Chackavarackal Immanuel & Kokkadu St. Thomas; Alahabath & Vara nazi MT Churches; Naranam-moozhy St. Thomas, Nilackal; Koodal Bethel; Athirumkal Salem; Punaloor St. Thomas; Kaithode Bethel; Also served as committee member for Mar Thoma Suvishesha Sangom, Mar Thoma Sunday School Smajam, Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam etc.

Mini Johnson (Wife)

Jorim J. Johnson (11) Son

Jemimah A. Johnson (10) Daughter

REV. JOHNSON PHILIP, St Thomas, Chicago



Native place: Kundara, Kerala

Mother parish: Kundara Salem MTC

College: Fatima Matha National College Quilon (M.A. Sociology/Philosophy); B.D. MT Seminary, Kottayam, Kerala

Parishes served: Singrauli, Rewa, Chalissery, Kadampanad, Baroda, Pollachi (Church & Mission Field), Valparai

Wife: Sherly Johnson, B. Sc. B. Ed. (West Kallada)

Children: Feba K. Jones (14) & Febin P. Jones (12)

REV. K. GEORGE, St. James and Bethany MTC, NY



Native Place: Channapetta, Kerala

Mother Parish: Channapetta Bethel

College: Anchal St John's; B.D.: Bishop's college, Calcutta (1993)

Churches served: Ashtamudi Immanuel MTC; Inchavila MTC; Panayam St. Thomas MTC; Peringalum Bethel MTC; Thalachira Salem MTC; Podiattuvila St. Thomas & Kokkadu St. Thomas MTC; Karthikappally MTC & Thrikkunnappuzha Mission Field; Nilgiri MTC, Coonoor.

Reena George (Wife); Jennis George (10) Son

REV. MATHEW K. JACKSON, St. Johns, NY



Native place: Ayoor, Kerala

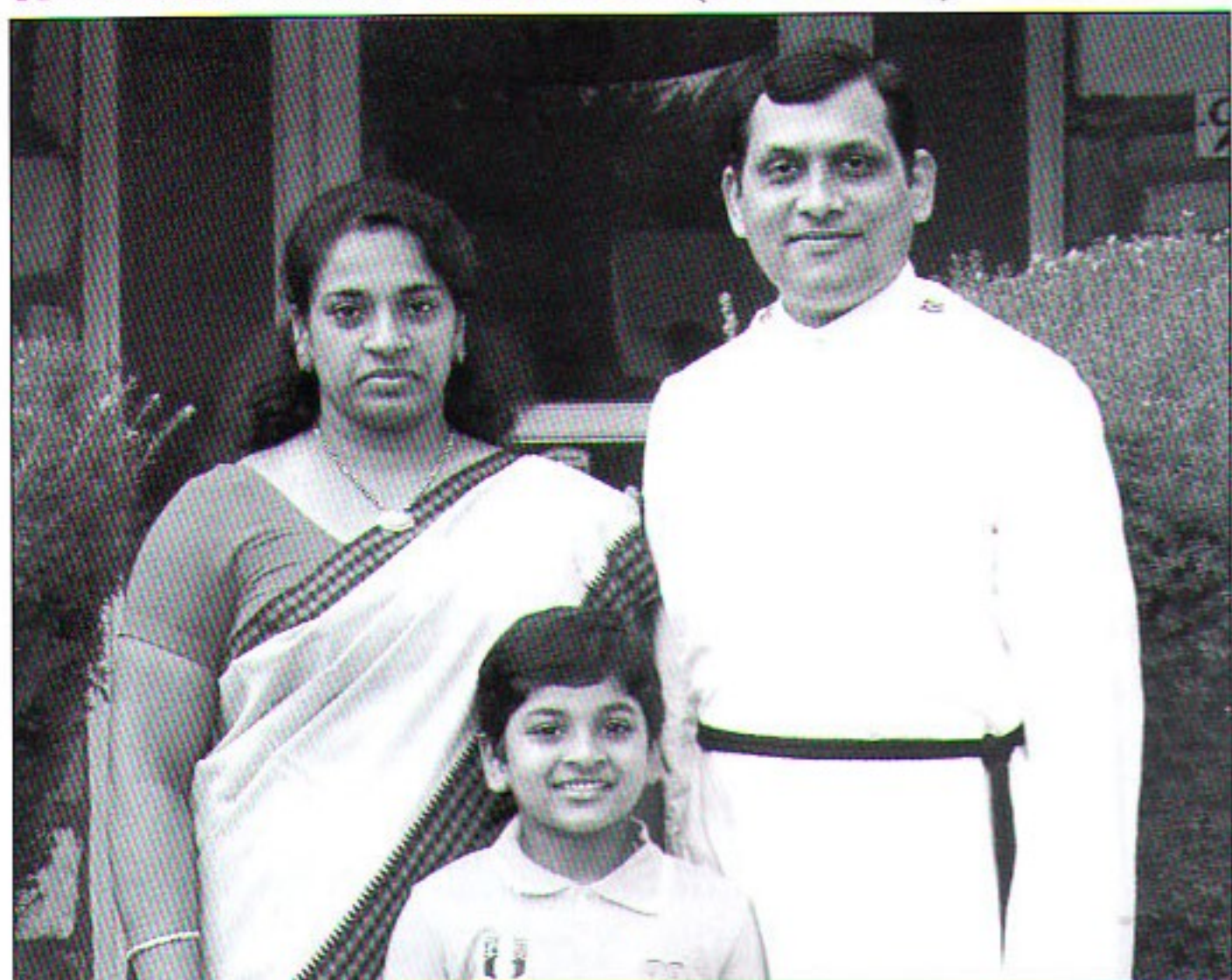
Mother parish: Peringallor M.T.C., Kerala

College: Pune University (M.A); Sardar Patel University (L.L.B); B.D. Serampore University (1995)

1995-97: Dalli-Rajhara M.T.C, Rajnandgoan M.T.C.; 1997-99: Anand M.T.C., Bharuch M.T.C.; 1999-02: Nasik St. Thomas M.T.C.; Nasik Road St. Thomas. M.T.C.; Ojhar M.T.C.; Bhusawal M.T.C.; 2002-06: Director, Mar Thoma Centre; Pengamuck M.T.C, Chelakkara St. Stephens M.T.C.

Wife: Sobha Mathew M. A. (Kozhencherry, D/o. Rev . P. Chacko); Sharon Mary Mathew (9) Daughter; Sheba Mathew (3) Daughter.

REV. MATHEW SKARIAH (Sam Achen)



Youth Chaplain, South-Eastern region
Native Place: Thiruvalla, Kerala
Mother Parish: St Thomas MTC, Thiruvalla
College: Mar Thoma College, Thiruvalla (B.A); Madras Christian College (M.A.–Political Science); B.D.–Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam (1998)
Parishes Served: Thalavoor Center (4 Churches); Gandhidham & Bhuj (Gujrat, India); Goregaon St. Peter's (Mumbai)
Wife: Jisha Mathew (Adoor, Kerala)
Son: Reuben Mathew (6)

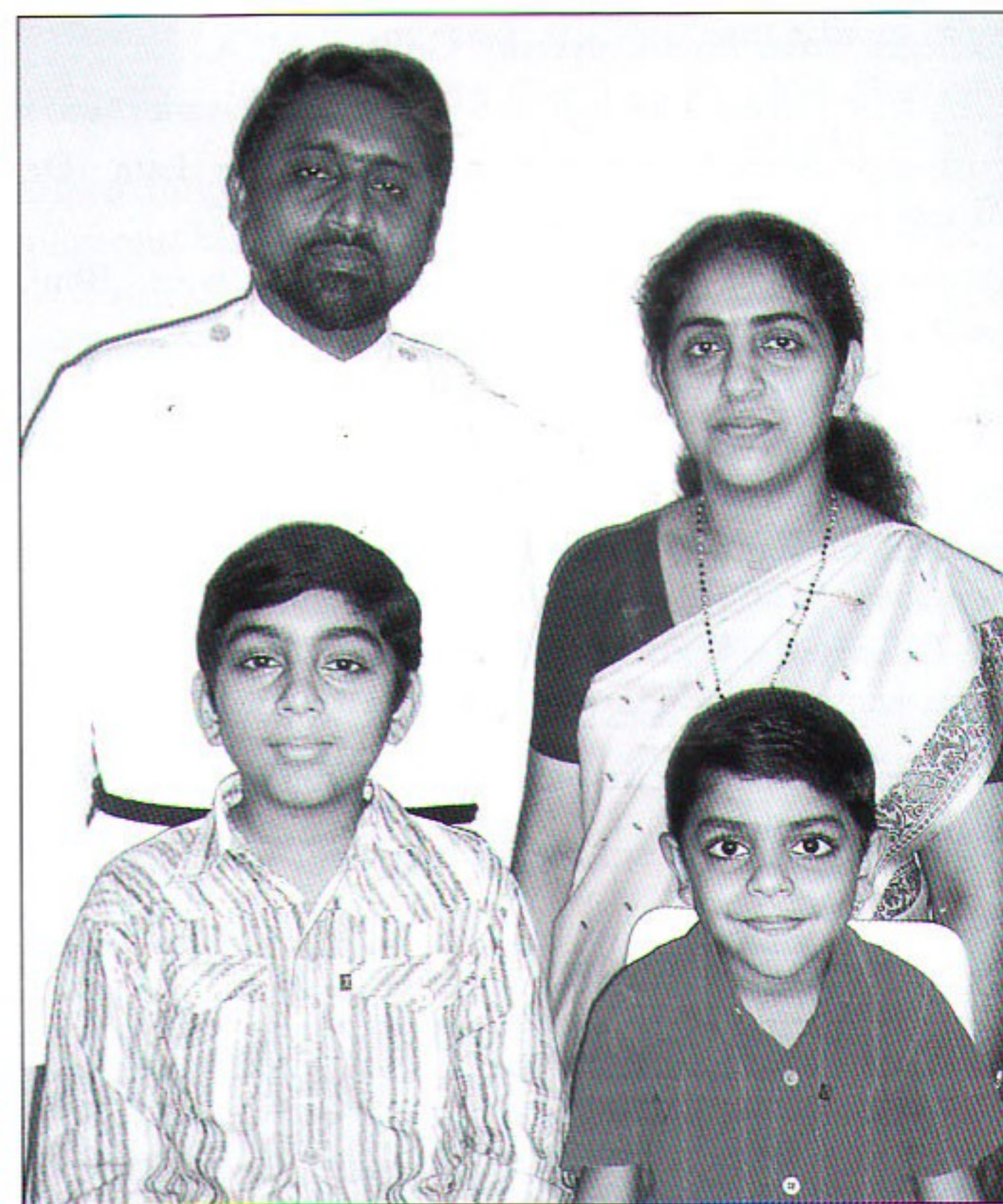
Parishes: 1997-2001 Neeleswaram Immanuel (Kottarakara); Puthur Immanuel; Mathaimukku Immanuel; Pulamon Bethel; Parancode Holy Trinity; Ummannur St.Paul's; 2001-2003 Dehu Road Ebenezer(Pune); Lonavala Congregation; Rasayani Congregation; Lonavala Missionary; 2003-2006 Bassein Road St. Thomas (Mumbai)

Also served as executive committee member of Yuvajana Sakhyam, Sevika Sanghom and Sunday School Smajam.

Wife: Boby Sam; Place: Ranny

Children: Christina Anna Sam 6 years; Sheba Susan Sam 4 years.

REV. SHAJI M. THOMAS, St Thomas MTC, Delaware Valley



Native Place: Chungathara, Kerala
Mother Parish: Immanuel MTC, Panamannu
College: Chungathara Mar Thoma College; BD: Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam
Churches: Rangat St. Johns MTC & Betapur St peters MTC Andamans; Jerusalem MTC Kottayam (Assistant Vicar); St. Thomas MTC, Munnar; Moriah MTC, Ericadu
Mochana De-addiction Counseling Center (Associate director)
Sobha Mary Shaji (wife) Kumplampoika; Ashish T. Mathew (10) son; Joel T. Mathew (5) son

REV. SAM ABRAHAM, St. Luke, FL & Hermon, Atlanta



Native Place: Kottanad, Pathanamthitta (Dist)
Mother Parish: Kottanad Trinity (Arayuzham)
College: Kozhencherry St. Thomas (B. A.-History); B. D: Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam
Ordinatio: July 08, 1997

REV. SKARIAH JOHN: Youth Chaplain, Houston



Native Place: Anand, Gujrat

Mother Parish: St. Thomas MTC, Anand, Gujarat

College: Sardar Patel University, Gujarat (M. A.)

B.D. Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam (1997)

Positions: Served as the Chaplain to The Late. Dr. Alexander Marthoma Valiya Metropolitan 1997

Project manager of Mar Thoma Relief Service, Bhuj, Gujarat. 2001-2003

Principal of Mar Thoma Higher Secondary school, Indore, M.P. 2003-2006.

Parishes Served: St. Thomas MTC Valiakavu, Mannarathara Bethlehem Ranny, Bharuch Immanuel & Ankleshwar Jerusalem MTC Gujarat, Vapi MTC and Valsad Bethel MTC Gujarat, Nagda MTC and Indore MTC, MP.

Wife: Jisha Skariah Bsc. B.D. Anchery, Kottayam.

Children: Christy Merin Skariah (6) Daughter ; Abel John Skariah (2) Son

REV. THOMAS JOHN, Washington D. C



Native Place: Kumbabhad, Kerala

Mother Parish: Koorthamala MTC

College: St Thomas College, Kozhencherry; B.D.: MT Seminary, Kottayam (1995)

Parishes/Fields: Missionary-Palghat Mission Filed & Administrator of BAJM Hospital.

'Acharya-in-charge' Christhudasa Ashram; Pattamala MTC and Vettikavala MTC; Dadar MTC, Mumbai (Bombay) (Pioneered Mission work in Maharashtra during this tenure); Served as Vice President of Bible Society of India, Mumbai and Convener of Ecumenical Clergy fellowship & Executive member of Maharashtra Council of Churches.

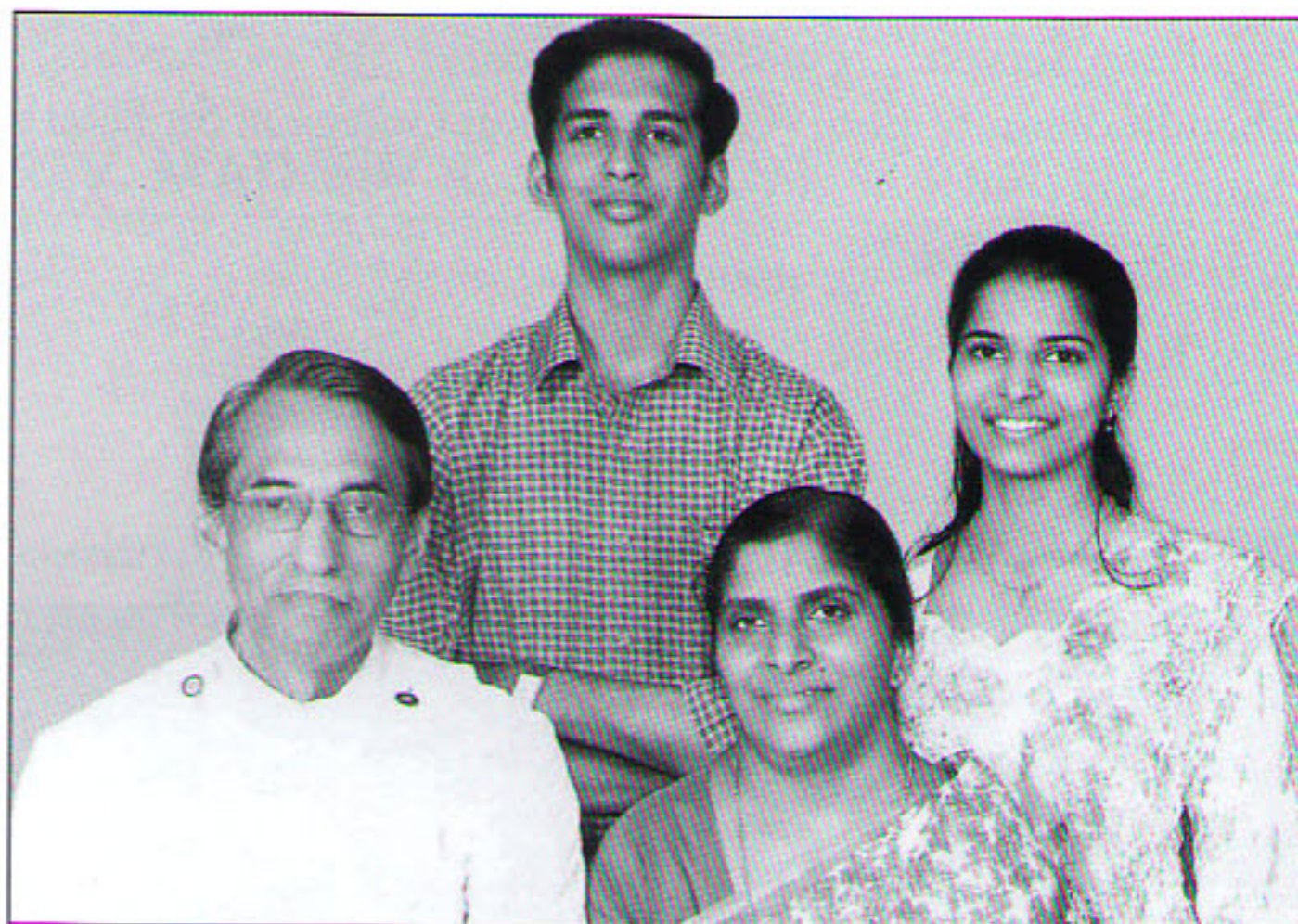
Achen authored many books and articles such as: Churathiluyarunna-Samkeerthanam (Malayalam); Sabhadouthyam-Uttaradhunikathayil (Malayalam); Kapyarupadesi (Malayalam); Anuthapathinte Antharangam (Malayalam); Olivemount (Malayalam); Baptism on the cross (English); The church is charismatic (English)

Achen served as the Editor of following publications: Yuvadeepam; Varthapatrika; Suvarthapatrika; Navajeevan souvenir; Mahamarm

Achen served as Diocesan Council member of all three dioceses he was part of, during his tenure in India.

Wife: Sucky Jolly Thomas; Rejily Mary Thomas (Daughter); Elza Thomas (7) Daughter

REV. VARGHESE K. MATHEW, Oklahoma



Native Place: Kuttapuzha, Thiruvalla

Mother Parish: Kuttapuzha MTC

College: Mar Thoma College, Thiruvalla; Sardar Patel University (B. Ed); BD: Serampur Theological Seminary (1976)

Churches Served: Punaloor Edamon MTC & Urukunnu Ebenezer MTC; Vialathala Salem MTC; Anthiankavu Salem MTC; Perayam (Kundara) MTC; Kallada Nilamel MTC; Kaithacodu Bethel MTC; Visakhapatnam; Jagadapur; Ayroor Carmel; Edapavoor Bethel; Vazhuthakadu Salem (Trivandrum); Puthukulangara MTC Molly Varghese (Kottayam)

Smitha Ann Varghese (22) Daughter, Kerala; Sumodh Mathew Varghese (19) Son, Kerala .

VALEDICTORIAN-2006

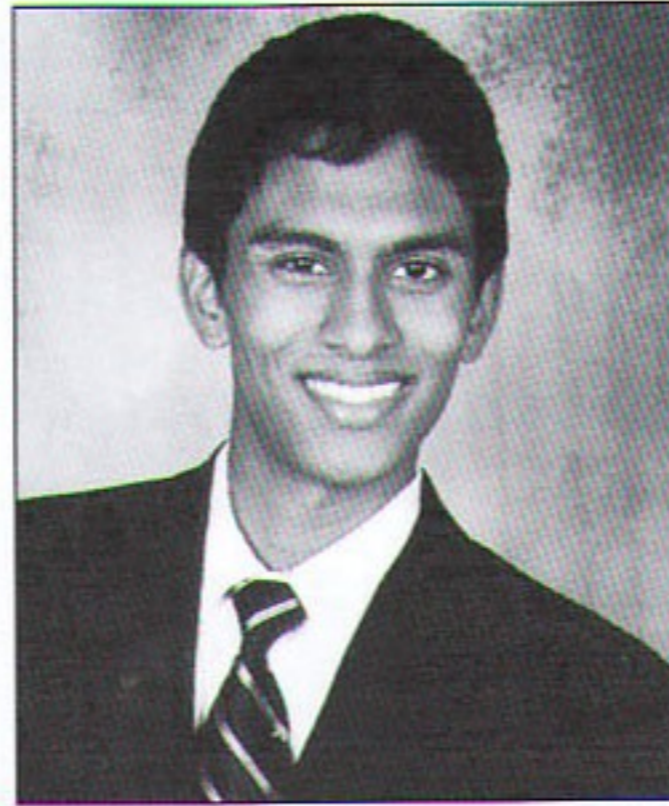
VALEDICTORY ADDRESS—MERRIL RAJU POTEET HIGH SCHOOL, MESQUITE, TEXAS

Dear Teachers, Administrators, Board Members, Family, Friends, and Class of 2006, Congratulations! Graduation Day will live like a memoir in our hearts and minds forever. Classmates, our time is now, but we must first acknowledge those who have played such vital roles in our lives. Teachers, we thank you for molding us into the priceless works you see before you. Your efforts, though sometimes unnoticed, create our future and shape our world. Parents, your courage and faith are the sources of our inspiration. Your support, guidance, and encouragement led us on this path, a path that has brought us here today, where we can take pride in our accomplishments and seek our future successes. Mom and Dad, thank you for always being there and pushing me to do the best of my ability. I would also like to thank my brother and sister for their help and support. Above all thank you Jesus Christ for allowing me to be here today.

As a collection of stories we are all different, but what binds us together is the front cover; our teachers and back cover, our parents. When picking up a book, people tend to examine the picture on the front and turn to read the summary on the back before opening it. Our parents, like the back cover, are the ones that provide us with background and heritage; the support and the foundation. As clichéd as it may sound, books cannot be judged by their front cover. As students we often ignore and diminish the value of our teachers, without taking into account, how much influence they thrust on us. They introduce new ideals and offer novel experiences.

The chapters between these bindings chronicle the many events of our lives. We started with storylines that began as early as kindergarten and now we sit here today at the end of chapter twelve. During these chapters we encountered many obstacles, exhilarating experiences, and some life-changing moments. But today, we are beginning a new chapter.

Ursula K. LeGuin once wrote, "The only thing that makes life possible is the permanent intolerable uncertainty of not knowing what comes next." These mixed pages are formed from the eclectic abundance of opportunity and



personal understanding. The obstacles we face in life are only a temporary writer's block. We can overcome obstacles by forging ahead and moving on. As we follow our dreams, seek fresh knowledge in the journey ahead. Use history and our experiences as a tool to engineer a new and superior future. Create a generation and a world that has never been seen.

We came together as a class, forming friendships and sharing lives. From this moment on we must turn to a new page and follow our own inspiration. Many people have

helped form the first chapters of our lives. Faced with numerous blank pages, we now hold the pen in our hand.

Saint Augustine once stated that "the World is a book, and those who do not travel only read a page." As we venture our separate ways and break the bonds of time, the words of the past bring melody to a future we dream. Remember, Pirates of 2006 we are the scribes of our future. A wise philosopher once said, "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and few to be chewed and digested. Others are to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention." Our books are only partially written, and it is up to us to give them meaning and a happy ending.

Thank You and God bless us, the Class of 2006.

(MERRIL SONAJ RAJU is the oldest child of Raju Varghese and Alice Raju of Ambanattu House Chennithala, Mavelikara. These proud parents are celebrating the outstanding achievement of their son who graduated as Valedictorian of his senior class with a perfect 4.0 GPA from Poteet High School, Mesquite, Texas. Among his other outstanding achievements during his progress to class valedictorian was membership in the prestigious 99 club from 10th grade to 12th grade. He served as a member of Hope Club, and the National Honor Society and was cited for outstanding contributions in the Science Club, Student Council and for distinguished achievement at the UIL Science and Math competitions. Merrill is well-rounded as demonstrated by his leadership in the Christians in Fine Arts program, performance in the Orchestra and his accomplishment in Tae Kwon Do. He is an active member of the St. Paul's Mar Thoma Church, Dallas, Texas and is currently serving as Secretary of Youth Fellowship. Merrill has been accepted to the Southern Methodist University in Dallas for science major.

Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil.

By Billy Graham

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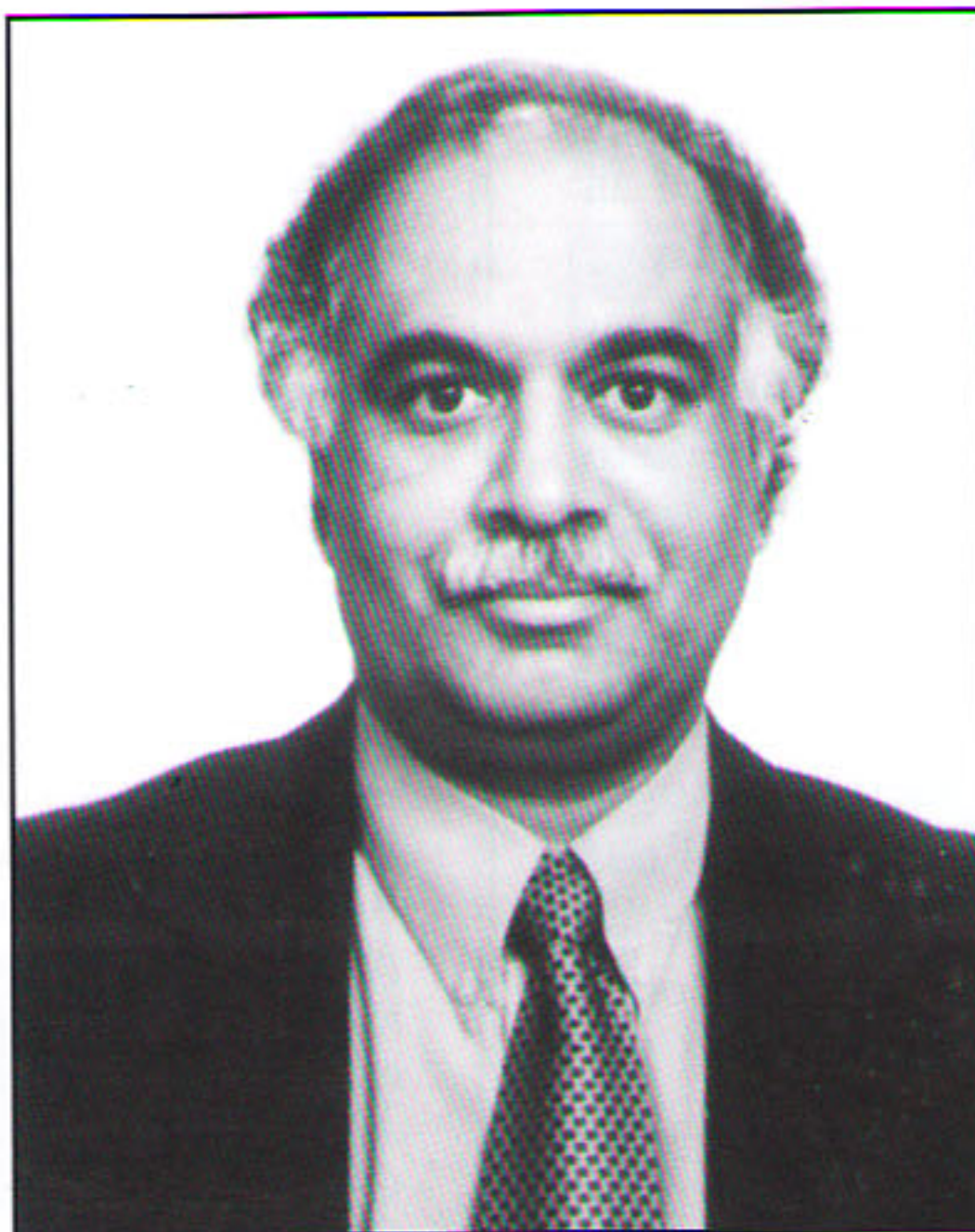


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**MAR THOMA CHURCH OF GREATER SEATTLE HONORS
MR. O. C. KOSHY AND DR. SARAMMA KOSHY**



L to R: Dr Saramma Koshy, Mr. O.C. Koshy, Dioseasan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos and Mr. John Titus.

Mar Thoma Church of Greater Seattle honors Mr. O. C. Koshy and Dr. Saramma Koshy at the auspicious occasion of the Parish Day Celebration at 7:00 p.m. on the 23rd of May 2006 for rendering invaluable service with commitment and commendable stewardship. They were also recognized for their distinguished community service, generous financial support and outstanding leadership. The Diocesan Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos unveiled their portrait in the church Fellowship Hall.

Neeni George, Secretary

CONGRATULATIONS TO MR. T. P. MATHEW OF MTC OF DALLAS, FARMERS BRANCH



Mr. T. P. Mathew has been elected as the Chairman of the Texas State Business Advisory Committee of the Republican Party. Mr. Mathew who has been involved with many cultural and charitable organizations of North Texas, is a former President of the Indian Association. He has also

been the Kerala Association President, Dallas Public School Asian American Committee Chairman, and Dallas Indian Lions Club Director.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. SARAH SAMUEL OF MTC OF DALLAS, FARMERS BRANCH

DR. SARAH SAMUEL SELECTED AS 2006-2007 CONGRESSIONAL FELLOW

Dr. Sarah Samuel, daughter of Dr. Varghese P. Samuel of Lufkin, a member of the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch was selected to be the American Dental Association's 2006-2007 congressional fellow. The fellowship offers a year of opportunity on the staff of a member of Congress or congressional committee as a health policy aide. Dr. Sarah Samuel, a general practice dentist, is a graduate of the Baylor College of Dentistry and holds a bachelor degree in biology from the University of Texas. The selection committee cited her private practice, public health, academic and residence experience as well as her boundless enthusiasm and interest in working on Capitol Hill for the good of the dental profession and the need to

promote oral health. The fellowship is administrated by the American Association for Advancement of Science in cooperation with the American Dental Association (ADA) as a sponsoring agency. ADA congressional fellows bring a wealth of professional experience to the legislative process, heightening awareness of lawmakers to oral health issues while assisting congressional hearings, preparing issue briefs, writing speeches or engagements in other legislative changes.



ST. JOHN'S MAR THOMA CHURCH, NEW YORK



Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos and Rev. Mathew K. Jackson with the St. John's Mar Thoma Church, New York, first communicants.

BETHEL MAR THOMA CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA



Bethel Mar Thoma Church has initiated a new church building project. As part of fund collection, a grand musical evening is planned for Saturday August 19th, 2006 with world -renowned Malayalam musician Dr. K. J. Jesudas.

Photo showing the inauguration of the Music Concert Coupon Sale with Dr. George Chacko receiving the first coupon from Rev. Susiel Varghese, Vicar of Bethel Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia.

Rev. Susiel Varghese, Vicar

IMMANUEL MAR THOMA CHURCH, HOUSTON, TEXAS



Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos and Rev. Varghese Mathew with the Immanuel Mar Thoma Church, Houston, first communicants.

EPISCOPAL VISIT AND FIRST COMMUNION

Our beloved Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos visited the parish from the 6th to the 10th of April. Thirumeni conducted the Holy Communion service on Sunday. Twenty-seven children took their first Holy Communion. Prior to taking the communion all the first communicants attended the preparatory class led by the Vicar. A parish meeting followed the worship service and the Diocesan Bishop got an opportunity to learn about the current activities of different organizations of the parish including prayer groups. Thirumeni attended various meetings within the parish during this visit. Thirumeni congratulated the members for the great support provided to the parish as well as to the diocese. On this occasion Mr. Mathew Varghese (Wilson) was presented with a memento from the Diocese for his exemplary service in promoting the Mar Thoma Messenger in this region.

Rev. Varghese Mathew, Vicar



Mr. Mathew Varghese (Wilson) receiving the Messenger Award from Coorilos Thirumeni for promoting the maximum subscriptions in the Messenger Month.

NORTH EAST REGIONAL PEER MENTORING CONFERENCE 2006



The North East Regional Peer Mentoring Conference was held at Bethany Mar Thoma Church from June 2nd to June 4th 2006. Bethany and St. James Mar Thoma Church

Youth Fellowships hosted this Conference jointly. This Conference was hosted to promote the Peer Mentoring Program in all the churches of the region. The theme of the Conference was chosen from Prov. 11:14 "Where no counsel is, there people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety".

The main speaker was Dr. Jason Park. Mr. John Thomas and Mr. Ryan Jacob led the Discussion Group. Rev. K. George (Vicar of St. James and Bethany Mar Thoma Church) and Rev. Biju S. Cherian (Youth Chaplain NE Region) were present during the Conference.

Biju Achen led the devotional talk and conducted the Holy Communion Service on Sunday. Forty-six senior youths of this region attended this conference and were blessed.

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Letter to the Editor

While reading Mr. Abraham's letter to the Editor (April 2006) on re-encroaching of unchristian customs in our church, my mind wandered to a statement made by Rev. A. T. Zachariah Achen (during his tenure in London) who was the main convention speaker in the Northeast United States, a few years back. Achen said, in India, influenza is an everyday affliction to the masses whereas in the Western Countries it was "afluenza" that is overwhelming. Whatever is the cause our internet-era is more and more affluent in knowledge and wealth. It is well and good for anyone to have enough materials for comfortable living. Generations ago when we were poor, there were no multi-tier

floor lamps to inaugurate a building or an occasion. There were no public meetings along with a consecration of a Church. Only very simple, fervent and tearful prayers made the occasion very blessed. Shall we ask ourselves whether we are moving away from the original manifestation of our forefathers? Our affluence should be for glorifying God and to do the will of God in the world. As Christians there is no need to follow the crowd and try to imitate or please others but try to imitate Jesus Christ.

Easo Daniel (New Jersey MTC)

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. THOMAS KANNANKARA ABRAHAM (ROSH) OF CHICAGO MTC



Dr. Thomas Kannankara Abraham (Rosh), Chicago Mathoma Church completed his doctoral degree (Ph.D.) in Chemical Engineering from the Ohio State University on December 11th 2005. He Completed his B Tech with first rank from Kerala University in 1997. He is the son of Mr. K. T. Abraham and Mrs. Annamma Abraham, Abudhabi Marthoma Church. Dr. Thomas family hails from kollam. He is a committed member of Chicago Mar Thoma Church. Now he lives at Chicago with his wife Anita Joy and daughter Rebecca Ann Thomas.

Rev. Daniel Varghese, Vicar

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. ELIZABETH PANSY RYAN OF ROCHESTER MTC



Congratulations to Elizabeth Pansy Ryan daughter of Thampi and Liziamma Mathai who received doctorate in Molecular Toxicology from University of Rochester in May 2006. Presently Elizabeth is employed at the University Of Rochester, New York as Research Asst. Professor in Cancer Control and Prevention training Program.

Matrimonial

Marthomite parents invites proposals for their daughter, doctor (DO) doing second year residency in a reputed hospital in NY, from marthomite, jacobite or CSI boys who are God fearing, and have good habits with similar qualifications (MD, DO, MS in engineering, CPA or Lawyers). Girl is 25 years, 5 feet 5 inch and medium in complexion. Loving and easy going personality. She is born and brought up in U.S. Kindly reply with a photograph and a short biodata to btsrosejt@yahoo.com.

Editorial

We often receive advice from people around us. "Focus on values. Use good judgment. Be open and assertive. Be calm." These are all excellent points, except in select situations in which these statements do not depict the events occurring in real time. Many prisoners who have committed crimes later confess that they did it "on the spur of the moment." Peter cutting the Roman Soldier's ear off during the trial of Jesus Christ is an example of such an act. Peter was close to Jesus and knew all about right behavior, but he could not control himself at that moment. Controlling one's own emotions is an art in itself. "Thapasya" (prolonged meditation), "yoga" (body alignment), and "worship", along with clean living habits, enabled the ancient men to live a life "beyond reach", perfect in every manner. It is well documented that Jesus underwent 40 days of rigid fasting and meditation. The Tibetan monks work diligently to instill these same values into their lives from very early on. Although the modern man complains about his lack of time and energy, there are endless possibilities open to those who try hard enough.



Richard Bolles (1981), wrote about the "three boxes of life" namely "the world of learning", "the world of work", and the "the world of retirement." In most cases, the middle box (the world of work) is wider than the other two and may not intertwine with them for many individuals. A college student may look forward to graduating and to beginning full-time employment, but soon realizes that student life was more enjoyable than work. A ripened worker will look forward to retirement, only to realize that work was more productive and satisfying. The addition of leisure and enjoyment to all three boxes and making learning a life-long goal were what made many individuals outstanding. Are we able to examine our life patterns and rearrange priorities?

The Mar Thoma Church and many other mission and worship oriented churches grew steadily due to the untiring support and giving mentality of its members, especially those who practiced tithing. Yet, in these days, we hear many of our members complaining about "endless collections." Many arguments arise when individuals do not want to part with the 'their' money. It is a proven fact that, if we could donate at least five percent of our net income (tithe being ten percent), we would be able to support most of our church activities with open minds. It seems that many who complain about "collections" are the ones who support the church the least, yet they tend to keep their voice high. It is time for us to break this pattern and resume the giving and supporting mentality of our forefathers.

I am very glad to see that our mission fields in Mexico, Alabama, and other locations are growing well. I am sure that more individuals will get involved in these great projects by donating their time and support. I welcome the new Achens who came to serve in this diocese for the next three years. I hope and pray that their service will be truly fruitful for the members of this diocese and for the Mar Thoma church as a whole. Congratulations to Rev. Joseph Oommen who is our new Diocesan secretary and Bishop's secretary, and I wish him the Lord's blessings. I welcome Rev. Manoj M. Zacharia (New York) and Rev. Thomas John (Washington DC) to the Messenger family as new appointees to the editorial and advisory board respectively.

Eapen Daniel

ഡോ. ഏ.കെ. തര്യൻ

അഥവാ

ഭാരതീയ ആൽബർട്ട് ഷെഡ്ഡ്സർ

റവ.ഡോ. കെ.വി. മാത്യു

മിഴ്നാട്ടിലെ ഗ്രാമീണരുടെ നിലവിളി കേട്ട് ആതുര ശുശ്രൂഷയ്ക്ക് ഇറങ്ങിത്തിരിച്ച ഡോ. തര്യൻ ഏപ്രിൽ 23 ന് നിത്യസ്വസ്ഥതയിലേക്ക് വിളിക്കപ്പെട്ടു.

വിയനായിലെ ഉന്നത മെഡിക്കൽ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിനു ശേഷം മടങ്ങിയെത്തിയ അദ്ദേഹം ഏതാനും നാളുകൾ മിഷൻ ഹോസ്പിറ്റലിൽ ജോലി ചെയ്തു. ഡോക്ടറായ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന് പണമോ, പ്രശസ്തിയോ ആയിരുന്നില്ല ലക്ഷ്യം. വൈദ്യ സഹായം ഒട്ടും എത്തിയിട്ടില്ലാത്ത ഗ്രാമാന്തരങ്ങളിലേക്ക് പോകുവാൻ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ഹൃദയം വെമ്പി. 50 കി.മീ. വിസ്തീർണ്ണതയിൽ വൈദ്യസഹായം ഇല്ലാത്ത ഡിൻബിഗലിന് സമീപം ഒടൻചരത്രം ഗ്രാമം അദ്ദേഹം തെരഞ്ഞെടുത്തു. 'ഒന്നുമില്ലായ്മ'യിൽ നിന്ന് യേശു ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ മനസ്സിലിവും, ഗാന്ധിജിയുടെ ദർശനവും കൈമുതലാക്കി അദ്ദേഹം സേവനം ആരംഭിച്ചിട്ട് 50 വർഷം കഴിഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നു. തെക്കേ ഇന്ത്യയിലെ 'രണ്ടാം വെല്ലുൾ' ആയി ആ ചെറിയ സംരംഭം ഇന്ന് വളർന്നിരിക്കുന്നു. ഡോ. തര്യന്റെ ആശ്രമ തുല്യമായ ജീവിത ശൈലിയും, മോശെയുടെ സൗമ്യതയും, യേശു ക്രിസ്തുവിലൂടെ വെളിപ്പെട്ട ദരിദ്ര ജനതയോടുള്ള സ്നേഹവും കണ്ട് ആകർഷിതരായ അനേകം യുവജനങ്ങൾ അദ്ദേഹം തുടങ്ങിയ ക്രിസ്ത്യൻ ഫെലോഷിപ്പ് ആശുപത്രി പ്രവർത്തനത്തിൽ പങ്കാളികളായി. ഇന്ന് 93 ഡോക്ടർമാരും, അതിനൊത്ത നഴ്സുമാരും, 50 ൽ പരം സാമൂഹ്യ പ്രവർത്തകരും ഒരുമിച്ചു ചേർന്നുള്ള ആതുര സേവനം സമീപ ഗ്രാമങ്ങളിലെല്ലാം വ്യാപിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. ഗ്രാമങ്ങളിലെ രോഗ പ്രതിരോധ ശുശ്രൂഷയിൽ അവർ വളരെ മുന്നേറി. ഒടൻചരത്രത്തിലും, അംബിക്കൈയിലുമുള്ള മെഡിക്കൽ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ അനേകം യുവജനങ്ങൾക്ക് സേവന മേഖലയിൽ പരിശീലനം നൽകിവരുന്നു.

മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭയിൽ ഉത്തമ മാതാപിതാക്കളാൽ വളർത്തപ്പെട്ട ഈ യുവാവ്, ക്രിസ്തീയ ദർശനം ഭാര

തീയ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ പ്രജ്ഞാഗതലത്തിലാക്കുവാൻ ജീവിതം സമർപ്പിച്ച ഒരു മഹാനായിരുന്നു. സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യ സമര കാലത്ത് ഗാന്ധിജിയുടെ ആഹ്വാനം സ്വീകരിച്ച വരിൽ ഒരാളായിരുന്നു അദ്ദേഹം. ഭാരതത്തിന്റെ ഹൃദയം ഗ്രാമങ്ങളാണ്. ഗ്രാമീണരുടെ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യമാണ് ഇന്ത്യയുടെ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം. ആഫ്രിക്കൻ ഗ്രാമങ്ങളിലേക്ക് പോയ ആൽബർട്ട് ഷെഡ്ഡ്സറെപ്പോലെ ഭാരതീയ ഗ്രാമീണ ജനതയുടെ സമഗ്ര വിടുതലിനായി അഹോരാത്രം പണിയെടുത്ത കർമ്മധീരനായിരുന്നു ഡോ. തര്യൻ.

നീതിയും സമാധാനവും സമൂഹത്തിൽ കൈവരുന്നതിന് യത്നിച്ച ശാന്തി ദൂതനായിരുന്നു അദ്ദേഹം. ഇന്ത്യൻ ശാന്തിസേവാ സമിതി(I.F.O.R) അധ്യക്ഷനായിരുന്ന അദ്ദേഹം ഭാരതത്തിലും, ലോകമെമ്പാടും സമാധാന ദൗത്യവാഹകനായി യാത്ര ചെയ്തു. ആശ്രമ പ്രസ്ഥാനങ്ങളുടെ കൂട്ടായ്മ ശക്തിപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിന്, ഭാരതീയ ആശ്രമ ശൈലിയിൽ ഒരു തപോവര്യനെപ്പോലെ ലാളിത്യത്തിന്റെ മുഖമുദ്രയണിഞ്ഞ അദ്ദേഹം പ്രയത്നിച്ചു. സഭയിലും, സമൂഹത്തിലും അനുരഞ്ജനത്തിനായി അദ്ദേഹം അഭിലഷിച്ചു. അനീതിക്കെതിരായി പത്രങ്ങളിലും, മാസികകളിലും അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ തുല്യ ചിലിച്ചു. ഹിന്ദുവിലും പീപ്പിൾസ് റിപ്പോർട്ടറിലും മരണത്തിന് തൊട്ടു മുൻപെഴുതിയ കത്തുകൾ പ്രത്യക്ഷപ്പെട്ടു. ശാന്തനും, മൃദുഭാഷിയുമായിരുന്ന അദ്ദേഹം അഭിപ്രായങ്ങൾ സധൈര്യം പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിൽ ഒരിക്കലും രണ്ടാമനായിരുന്നില്ല.

ദേശസ്നേഹിയായിരുന്ന അദ്ദേഹവും സഹപ്രവർത്തകരും നന്ദപാദ ഡോക്ടർമാരായി ഗ്രാമങ്ങളിൽ സേവനത്തിന്റെ മാതൃക കാട്ടി. ദൈവരാജ്യ പ്രവർത്തനത്തിന് സ്വയം വേർതിരിക്കപ്പെട്ട ഒരു കുടുംബമായിരുന്നു ഡോ. തര്യന്റേത്. ഭാര്യയും മക്കളും അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ മാതൃക പിന്തുടർന്ന്, സഹകാരികളായി. ♦



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