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A PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

JULY 2008

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WE ARE SO SORRY!!!!

DUE TO SOME UNAVOIDABLE CIRCUMSTANCES WE ARE UNABLE TO INCLUDE **"CROSS WORD PUZZLE** AND **BIBLE WORD SEARH"** IN THIS ISSUE. WE WILL RESUME THE QUIZES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE.

MAR THOMA MESSENGER

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Message from the Metropolitan

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

The Church has entered a new financial year. In this period, the Church, the parishes, the various institutions, and the organizations of the Church go through a reflection of their attained hopes, and the unfulfilled dreams. Having received grace from God, let us enter into the blessedness of the new year with renewed optimism. Let us seek for the grace to move forward to the realms of transformation. The annual general body meetings, election of the new office bearers, especially of the representatives of the Sabha Mandalam and the Diocesan Assemblies were held in this period. It is gratifying to note that those who are faithful in the activities of the Church, and who are inclined to do things according to God's will, have been elected. Election complaints were rather less. Steps have been taken to remedy the complaints.

The memorial lecture of the late Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitan was held in Kottarakkara. Swamy Agnivesh who had been the president of the World Council of Arya Samaj delivered the lecture based on the topic, 'Parliament of Religion and Seven Point Social Revolution.' The closing ceremony of the Navathy project in connection with the celebration of the 90th birth day of Chrysostom Valya Metropolitan was held at Kottayam. The keys to the 1500 houses were given to the owners of those houses by L. K. Adwani, the Opposition Leader of the Indian Parliament. Special congratulations to the Suffragon Metropolitan who was giving commendable leadership to this project, and to Rev. P. T. Thomas, the General Convener of the Navathy Home Project. I want to extend my gratitude to those members of the Church, who cooperated with the project selflessly and to those who helped in the accumulation of the necessary materials for the mega housing project. I praise the Lord for His blessings and grace for enabling us, through this project, to show our cooperation and companionship to the needy persons of different religions in our society, thus expressing our Christian responsibility to them without bias.

The Mexico Mission of the North American Diocese is a great and notable step in the ecumenical scene. The Western missionaries in the 19th century had declared themselves 'to be the torch bearers who entered into the dark continents of Asia and Africa from the luminous West.' But a missionary conference held in Mexico in the 20th century corrected this declaration as 'Sunlight from all places to all places.' The ninety houses built for the needy local people under the Mexico Mission of the North American Diocese of the Mar Thoma Church, in connection with the Navathy Program of the Valya Thirumeni, is the culmination of the reality of this discovery by the Mexican conference mentioned above. Let us make the prayer in our Qurbana Thaksa meaningful, that grace be showered on us to journey as new beings into the new world, carrying the lighted torch.

After the inaugural ceremony, the Valya Metropolitan, while returning to Texas, became physically weak. He was admitted in the Houston Methodist Hospital for further checkup. Though Thirumeni has regained his health now, he is advised to take proper rest. While the Valiya Metropolitan was in the hospital, the former trustee of the Church, Mr. K. Varghese, the priests, and the members of the church in Houston were very helpful. Koorilos Thirumeni and I spent our time in the hospital, till the Valya Metropolitan's health condition became better. He participated in the Holy Communion service in Houston and delivered the message.

May 1st was the day of the Festival of the Ascension of our Lord. Eleventh of May was the day of Pentecost. The forty days meditation of the Church beginning from the day of the Festival of Resurrection confirmed the reality of Resurrection. Some followers of our Lord were frightened when they came to know that Jesus appeared, after resurrection, to some who were doubtful, and cleared their doubts by calling them personally. He revealed himself to those fellow travelers going to Emmaus, by breaking the bread and giving it to them. They returned to the town in the same night. At the same time ten disciples entered the closed room and spent the night in great fear. Removing their fear and instilling in them courage and strength, Jesus breathed on them and sent them out. Thomas, who had not met Jesus yet, was still doubtful. After eight days Jesus appeared to Thomas who was standing among other disciples and removed his doubts. With doubly redoubled faith Thomas was able to proclaim, "My Lord and my God!" Again the disciples failed and sought their hereditary occupation. The Lord met them again. He asked them whether they loved Him more than the worldly aspects in which they put their faith now. He derived from them the right responses, and leading them to the utmost satisfaction and blessedness, vanished among clouds. He strengthened us by the grace of the Holy Spirit to become witnesses of His resurrection. This is the gift of the Pentecost. The mystery of the Pentecost is thus revealed. We were given the boon to build up a new world along with God. This is the blessedness, the possibility, and the message of the Church. We are called up to become the co-workers in this construction process. May God help us to keep up this grace for ever with utmost caution and vigilance.

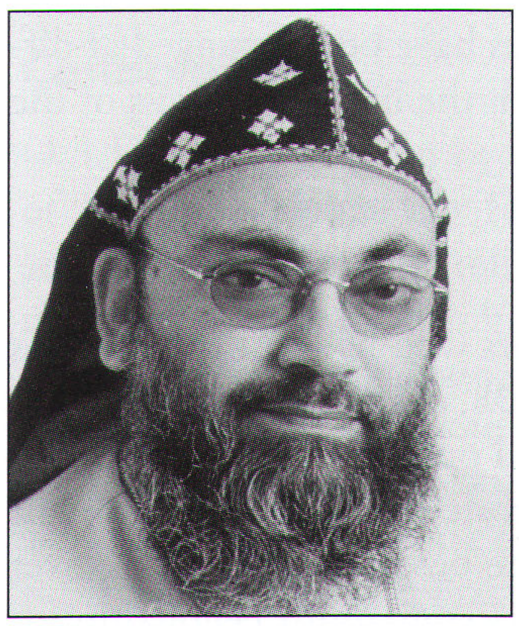
Grace be with you all.

Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan

Translated and Reprinted from Sabha Tharaka

Presidential Address

DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY MEETING JUNE 13TH 2008



Respected Achens and dearly beloved in Christ,

I consider it as a great privilege to address the Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of North America and Europe of the Mar Thoma Church this year also. This is the first meeting of the newly constituted Diocesan Assembly for the tenure 2008- 2011. I once again extend a warm welcome to you all to this Assembly. I pray that through your contributions, deliberations and advices, this Diocese will be able to venture through new avenues and become more dynamic and active than ever.

This is a decisive year in the political history of United States as the nation prepares to elect a new President. Let us pray that in all the process only God's will be done.

We live in a society where we see people suffering because of religious intolerance, broken relationships, and insensitiveness to human needs, etc. On one side there is accumulation of wealth by a few while on the other side there is poverty and misery, knowledge and technological improvements on the one side, ignorance and darkness on the other, longing for nobler things and creativity on one side, baseless arguments and criticisms on the other. The present Economic condition of this nation is affecting one and all and is a big concern today. It is in this context the mission of the church as a transforming community is very important. We are called by the King who extends his boundaries to form a new community. This boundary was extended through His positive response to the need of the community or to the people who were thrown to the peripheries of the society. Christ challenges us to venture in to find out whether we are neighbors to anyone in need. We can become a neighbor only when we have passion and humility. These two virtues do not always come together but they must come. We need a passion for leading our society from the present wounded situation. And we need humility to understand how prejudices—of believers against unbelievers, and unbelievers against believers—have obstructed our path and blurred our vision. In Luke 10: 24ff, we see these two virtues in the Samaritan who on his journey quickly responds to the need of a stranger. C. S. Song in his book *'Christian Mission in Reconstruction'* says about the Levi and the Priest, that 'their religion made them incapable of compassion'.
Their irresponsibility led them to deny God. The problem here is not rejection of person on the road but rejection of God by God's own people. "The final enigma of history," Reinhold Niebuhr wrote, "is therefore not how the righteous will gain victory over the unrighteous, but how the evil in every good and the unrighteous in the righteous is to be overcome." As a missionary church let us renew our call and commitment to be agents of transformation in this part of the world by rededicating ourselves to the will of the Master.

Organizational Witness

Our Diocese is functioning in various organizational levels catering to the needs of different age groups. These organizations cater to the needs of people of all age groups and help in building up citizens who strive for justice peace and integrity of all creation. I am glad to acknowledge that various organizations such as Sunday School, Youth Fellowship, Yuvajana Sakhyam, Sevika Sangham, Edavaka Mission, Young Families Fellowship, Senior Citizens Fellowship, Doctors Fellowship, Nurses Fellowship, to cite a few, have contributed in their own levels to the smooth functioning of the Diocese. It is noteworthy that this year we had national conferences for almost all the organizations.

Pastoral Ministry

We have been blessed with the ministry of achens in our Diocese who are rendering selfless pastoral services in the respective parishes that they have been assigned by the Diocese. Also the ministry of the Youth Chaplains is worth mentioning as they are solely catering to the needs of our youths in parishes and in the campuses where the children are studying. This year we have appointed a new Youth Chaplain in Chicago area. I take this opportunity to thank all the achens who got transferred after completing their fruitful ministry in this Diocese. Especially at this time, I recall with gratitude the services rendered by Rev. Joseph Oommen who was serving as the Diocesan Secretary and Bishop's Secretary for the last two years. His efficient leadership will ever be remembered and appreciated by the Diocese. Rev. Biju S Cherian joined as the Diocesan Secretay/ Bishops Secretary from April 22nd, 2008. I welcome achen and wish his ministry and leadership will be a great blessing to the Diocese. I also wish to welcome all the new achens who joined this diocese last month. I pray that their ministry will enrich the various activites of

the Diocese.

Laymen's Leadership

Our Diocese initially began with the initiative taken by the lay leaders whose tireless efforts led to the formation of small prayer groups to congregations later develop into parishes and ultimately to a Diocese. However the lay leadership in the life and functioning of the parish is diminishing day by day. To equip and encourage lay leadership, programmes have been arranged at different levels. Kindly encourage everyone to participate in the lay leadership program through which the life and witness of the community be revitalized.

Mexico Mission and Mission among the Native Americans

Last year during the Assembly meeting we could take a decision in building houses for the islanders who had lost their homes in the devastating hurricane that destroyed the coastal islands of Mexico in 2005. On May 10th 2008, our dreams could be fulfilled as God enabled us to hand over keys of the houses built for our brothers and sisters in the land purchased by our Diocese. The place has been named as Colonia Mar Thoma (Mar Thoma Colony/Community). It was a historic event that even brought the attention of the government of Mexico. Our Valiya Metropolitan and Metropolitan graced the occasion by handing over keys to the islanders. Also on that day, foundation stone was laid in the land purchased by the Diocesan Youth Fellowship for building a hostel and a mission center. I thank all the parishes of this Diocese in whole heartedly supporting this project. Last year we had VBS being conducted in the island. Also Christmas presents were collected and given to the children in the island. The Diocesan Youth Fellowship also organized the first ever Missions Conference in Mexico in the month of March 2008 during the Passion Week. It was a blessing for everyone who attended it. I know each parish is involved in supporting missions in India. I urge each parish to identify local mission field and must involve in it making our existence as a worshipping community meaningful for ourselves and the community around us as well. Mission among the Native Americans is also commendable. This year a weeklong VBS programme was conducted. Also as a result of our close association the Native Americans have shown interest in visiting our parishes. This is a good sign of their acceptance and approval of our involvement in that area. Involvement in these missions by each and every parish is warranted. Our own children must be trained accordingly from the very childhood itself making the dream of Abraham Mar Thoma 'Every Mar Thomite is a missionary' a reality. I thank God for the participation and leadership of our second generation in the mission outreach programme and pray that more people may get involved in it whole-heartedly.

Navathy Celebration

Our beloved Valiya Metropolitan His Grace Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan celebrated his 91st Birthday on the 27th of April 2008. As a mark of Tirumeni's Navathy celebration and acknowledging Tairumeni's missionary enthusiasm and love for the downtrodden of the society, our Church decided to build about 2000 houses for the homeless in India. As of today we as a Diocese could raise $9,99814.89 (Nine Lakhs ninety nine thousand eight hundred and fourteen Dollars and Eighty Nine cents) towards that cause. This was 1/5th of the total collection our Sabha could raise. I thank all the parishes and everyone who whole heartedly participated in this project. Also the houses built in Mexico were given to our Valiya Metropolitan as a Navathy gift of our Diocese to him.

Theological Education

This year two more youths from our Diocese are going to join The Mar Thoma Theological Seminary Kottayam for theological studies. We already have two youths pursuing their theological studies in Kottayam. I appreciate the parents and parishes in building up and encouraging our youths for the full time ministry in our church. It is my vision that within 10 years at least 50% of the Achens of this Diocese must be from this place itself.

Youth Chaplain Residence

The ministry of the Youth Chaplains has been a blessing to all especially our youths. This year God enabled us to purchase a house for the Youth Chaplain in New York. I thank all the parishes and the Youth Fellowship of the North East region for their sincere support in the purchase of this house.

Reception to our Valiya Metropolitan and the Metropolitan

We as a Diocese had decided to felicitate Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan on being elevated as the Valiya Metropolitan and also on his Navathy and Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma on being elevated as the

21st Metropolitan of our Church. Accordingly receptions were arranged in regional levels at Houston, Dallas, Chicago and Canada and the Diocesan Reception was arranged at New York. The participation of everyone made this event a grand success and blessing. Let us thank God Almighty for the Good life and leadership qualities of our Metropolitans and pray that they may continue guiding us relying on the Grace of the God Almighty.

Condolence

Our Diocese was taken by shock in the beginning of this year because of the unexpected demise of C. P. Wilson achen, Vicar of The Philadelphia Mar Thoma Church, on Jan 25th 2008. Achen had joined our Diocese in May 2007. He was a very active and dedicated ordained minister of our Church who served our Sabha in different capacities. My utmost gratitude goes to the members of the Philadelphia Mar Thoma Church and the members of the other parishes in Philadelphia and nearby places for the leadership in organizing the wake and other related services. Your sacrificial participation was an outward expression of your Christian witness and your love towards the servants of God who serve you. The body was flown to India where the funeral service was conducted. Let us thank God for the great services achen had rendered to our church and the community in the short span of his life time on earth and find peace and strength in out Lord who is the author and sustainer of our life. Achen is survived by his wife Pracy and two children. Kindly uphold the bereaved members of the family in your valuable prayers.

Conclusion

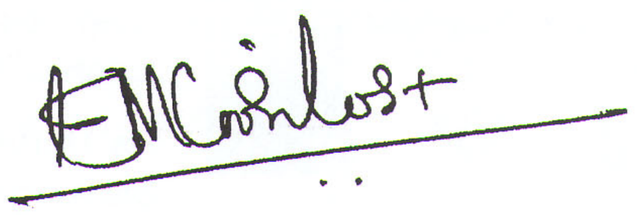
Let me take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to the outgoing Assembly members and the Council members for your wholehearted cooperation in the smooth functioning of the Diocese for the last three years. Especially to the Diocesan Secretary Joseph Oommen achen, the treasurer Mr.T.A.Mathew and office bearers for your support and timely advice and the auditors and members of various sub committees for your sincere co-operation in the various activities of this Diocese.

Let the coming days be a time for us to rediscover our calling and our strength to respond to the challenges of today and to do so in close co-operation within our communities and communities of other faith and without the fear or suspicion that we would lose our own identities and common basis in Jesus Christ if we go beyond our own circles. It is only when we are sure of our faith in Him, we could move beyond the borders that He crossed when He encountered the Syro-Phoenician women (Mt 15:21ff. and Mk 7:24ff.). He wanted us to go beyond these borders when he sent us in the world as a whole (Mt 28:16ff). Let Mexico Mission be a stepping stone for us in renewing our commitment to become neighbours for others. I would like to close with the closing prayer of the Ninth Assembly of the WCC which took place in Poroto Alegre, Brazil in 2006.

By the power and guidance of your Holy Spirit, O God,
may our prayers never be empty words
but an urgent response to your living Word -
in non-violent direct action for positive change,
in bold, clear, specific acts of solidarity, liberation, healing and compassion,
readily sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.
Open our hearts to love and to see that all people are made in your image,
to care for creation and affirm life in all its wondrous diversity.
Transform us in the offering of ourselves so that we may be your partners in transformation
to strive for the full, visible unity of the one Church of Jesus Christ,
to become neighbours to all,
as we await with eager longing the full revelation of your rule
in the coming of a new heaven and a new earth.
God, in your grace, transform the world. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Amen.

May God Bless us.

Yours in His Service,



Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos
Diocesan Bishop

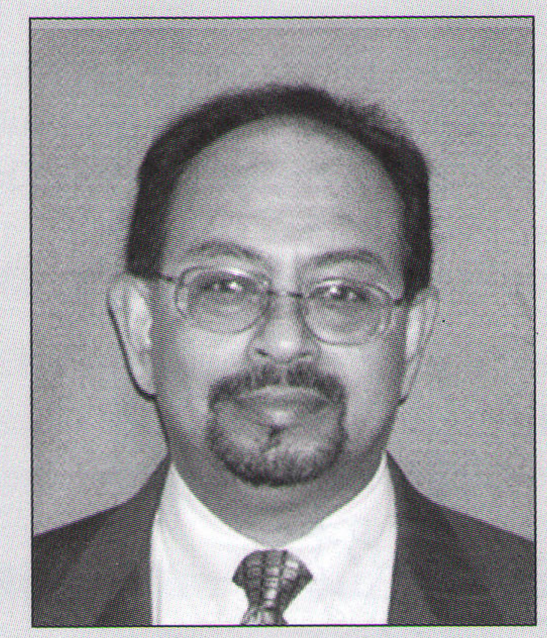
'Colonia Mar Thoma'—Keys Handing Over and Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony Held on May 10, 2008

By God's grace, the keys handing over ceremony of the houses built in the Mexico Mission field was held on May 10, 2008 in the presence of the Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan, the Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, Hon. Ingenero Erick Silva Santos, the Mayor of Matamoros, Sra. Mariza Castaneda De Silva, wife of the Mayor and President of Sistema DIF Matamoros, Mr. Jorge Camorlinga Cuerra, President of the Comite Campesino of the City of Matamoros. The houses were built and handed over as part of the Navathy celebrations of Chrysostom Valiya Metropolitan under the leadership of the Mission Board of the Diocese of North America & Europe of the Mar Thoma Church. Rev. Vinoy Daniel, Vicar of Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch is the Vice President and Mr. Jason M. Thomas, Diocesan Council Member, is the Convener of the Mission Board. A local working committee under the leadership of Rev. T. S. Philip, Vicar of Immanuel Mar Thoma Church, Houston along with the Diocesan Treasurer, Mr. T. A. Mathew, coordinated all the programs on May 10, 2008, including lunch for all those who attended. The place where the houses are built is named *'Colonia Mar Thoma'* as part of the Mexico Mission Project.

As per the decision of the Diocesan Assembly, 3 hectors (7.5 acres) of land in mainland Mexico was purchased to build houses for the islanders who have lost their houses due to hurricane and resettle them in the main land. The land where the houses are built is about 20 miles from Matamoros City near the costal area, which is on the border of Mexico close to the U.S. city of Brownsville, Texas. One hector (2.5 acres) of land was also purchased near the highway, about 11 miles from Matamoros City for a mission center and to construct hostels for the children of the islanders. The Diocesan Youth Fellowship raised about $46,500.00 to buy the land for the mission center. This land will be developed as a mission center, with a residence for the mission coordinator, with place for the youth of the Diocese to stay and work among the islanders and their children and also with facilities for technical training for the adults. One member of our Diocese contributed about $19,500.00 to buy the land to build the houses for the islanders. Both parcels of land were purchased in the name of a civil organization named ***'Chrysostom Mar Thoma Mexican Association'*** and registered with the Mexican government. The Diocesan Episcopa is the President of this civil organization and all the Diocesan Council members will serve as the Board of Directors of the organization.

The Diocesan Youth Fellowship has sponsored the project of building the hostels for boys and girls of the islanders. This is planned as a facility where our youths can undertake mission trips throughout the year especially during summer and other holidays. The construction of the hostels is expected to begin once all 90 houses are built in *'Colonia Mar Thoma'* and the islanders are resettled in the mainland. Presently children do not have access to good educational facilities. There are about 200 children of different ages without even basic facilities. The goal is to provide these islanders, who are mainly fishermen, with a house of their own, basic education to the children, and other necessities like drinking water, electricity, and medical help. The construction of the houses began in October 2007 and is almost complete. The size of each house is 24' x 12' with concrete floor and built with concrete bricks; the four corners of the houses are pillars of iron and concrete. The

Reflections on Chrysostom Thirumeni



Valiya Metropolitan had studied with my father at Eraviperoor St John's High Shool and has proudly introduced me to various people at different occasions as the son of his class-mate. My Dad had expressed his joy and satisfaction of spending time with Thirumeni during our house warming in August, 1990. I remember going to the airport to pickup Thirumeni and his refusal to have me pick up his bags. He absolutely insisted on carrying his own bags. A year later when father died in an accident in India Thirumeni was in Seattle to console us. His remarkable sense of humor was very evident when he introduced me at our family gathering in Kumbanad as the "person who repairs Bin-Laden's weapon" which of course was the aircraft. Since I was in the aircraft repair business, and Bin-Laden used few aircrafts as a weapon to destroy World Trade Center, the audience was totally stunned for few minutes until they understood Thirumeni's joke.

As Thirumeni is celebrating his Navathy, on behalf of our family we wish Thirumeni God's Blessings for his continued ministry in our community both in India and abroad.

John Titus, Seattle, WA

roof is of concrete slab instead of shingles, to be resistant to ordinary hurricanes that may occur in that part of the world. The cost for one house is approximately $3,100. Funds are being raised from various parishes in our diocese. Several parishes, organizations and individuals have already responded to the request and the Diocesan Council expresses its sincere thanks to all who have already contributed to this noble cause.

About 200 people from different parishes in the Diocese attended the function held on May 10, 2008. The program began with song by the members of the Trinity Mar Thoma Church and Immanuel Mar Thoma Church of Houston followed by prayer by Rev. Vinoy Daniel, Vice President of the Diocesan Mission Board. Rev. T. S. Philip, Convener of the local working committee in Houston welcomed everyone to the function. In his presidential address, Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, Diocesan Episcopa expressed sincere thanks to all those who wholeheartedly supported this new mission project of the Church. Thirumeni said it was the will of God to begin this mission field, which was revealed in a dream to Thirumeni. This dream became a reality by handing over the keys of houses to the islanders on this great historic day of the Diocese and the Church.

The islanders sang two Malayalam songs, 'Ethratholam Yehova Sahayichu' and 'Karuthannavan Njanallayo', which was a touching occasion for those who attended the event. Mr. Ingenero Erick Silva Santos, Mayor of the City of Matamoros, Sra. Mariza Castaneda De Silva, wife of the Mayor and President of the Sistema DIF Matamoros, Mr. Jorge Camorlinga Cuerra, President Comite Campesino, Rev. Biju Samuel Cherian, Diocesan Secretary and Mr. Ashley George, Diocesan Assembly Member representing the Diocesan Youth Fellowship, gave felicitation speeches. The felicitations were followed by a song and skit by children of the islanders, followed by a song from the members of the Dallas parishes.

The Valiya Metropolitan, in his speech said that in his 90 years of life, this is the most memorable day witnessing the handing over of keys to the islanders by the Diocese of North America as part of his Navathy celebrations. The Valia Metropolitan expressed his thanks to Coorilos Thirumeni for his leadership and vision for establishing the mission field of the Mar Thoma Church outside of Asia.

The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma, in his message expressed gratitude to God almighty for enabling him to be part of this great historic event and expressed thanks to the members of the Diocese for undertaking this new mission project. The Mar Thoma Metropolitan along with Mr. Ingenero Erick Silva Santos, Mayor of the City of Matamoros and Sra. Mariza Castaneda De Silva, President of the Sisema DIF Matamoros handed over the keys of the houses to the islanders. The representative from the islanders expressed sincere thanks to the members of the Mar Thoma Church for helping them with a place to live with their family. Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos handed over gifts to Mr. P. T. Abraham and Mr. George V. Kurien in appreciation of all the leadership and help rendered in fulfilling God's plan and making *'Colonia Mar Thoma'* a reality. Mr. T. A. Mathew, the Diocesan Treasurer, expressed thanks to everyone who supported this mission project and also those who attended the function from different parishes of the Diocese. Lunch was served to everyone in attendance at the ceremony.

Prior to the key handing over ceremony, the Mar Thoma Metropolitan inaugurated a Chapel and a tailoring institute built in *'Colonia Mar Thoma'*. The foundation stone for the mission center in the land purchased within the city limits was laid by Mar Thoma Metropolitan in the presence of Valiya Metropolitan, Diocesan Episcopa and all believers from various parishes of the Diocese.

The Mission filed has been named *'Colonia Mar Thoma'* (Mar Thoma Colony) and the name the streets in the colony will be named after the Apostles, as per the suggestion made by the Diocesan Council. The Mission Board web site is ***www.marthomamission.com*** where information can be obtained about this new mission project. As stated in Matthew 19:26 "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." It is only through the grace of God that the beloved Coorilos Thirumeni had the vision of starting a mission field, where the members of the Diocese can participate in mission activities so that they can grow in the love of God and faith in the Church. ■

Reflections on Chrysostom Thirumeni

As we conclude the " Navathy" celebrations of His Grace Philipose Mar Crysostom Valia Metropolitan, I praise and thank God for enabling Thirumeni to live a life in accordance with his calling and leading the Mar Thoma church for the past 6 decades with an open mind, abundant Grace, courage and wisdom. Thirumeni's most recent visit to the Mexico Mission Colony and his North American tour underscores his passion for mission work and his love and care for the Mar Thoma community. Thirumeni's life and witnessing has touched the lives of many and I hope and pray that the Good Lord may continue to use him for His Glory and the extension of His kingdom on earth for years to come.

Susan Johnson, Toronto

VALIYA METROPOLITAN'S NAVATHY CELEBRATION—*'COLONIA MAR THOMA'*

"Colonia Mar Thoma" gate at the entrance of the colony in Mexico.

A ceremonial welcome to the Metropolitans.

Islanders singing the Malayalam song "Ithratholam Yahova Sahayichu" at the function.

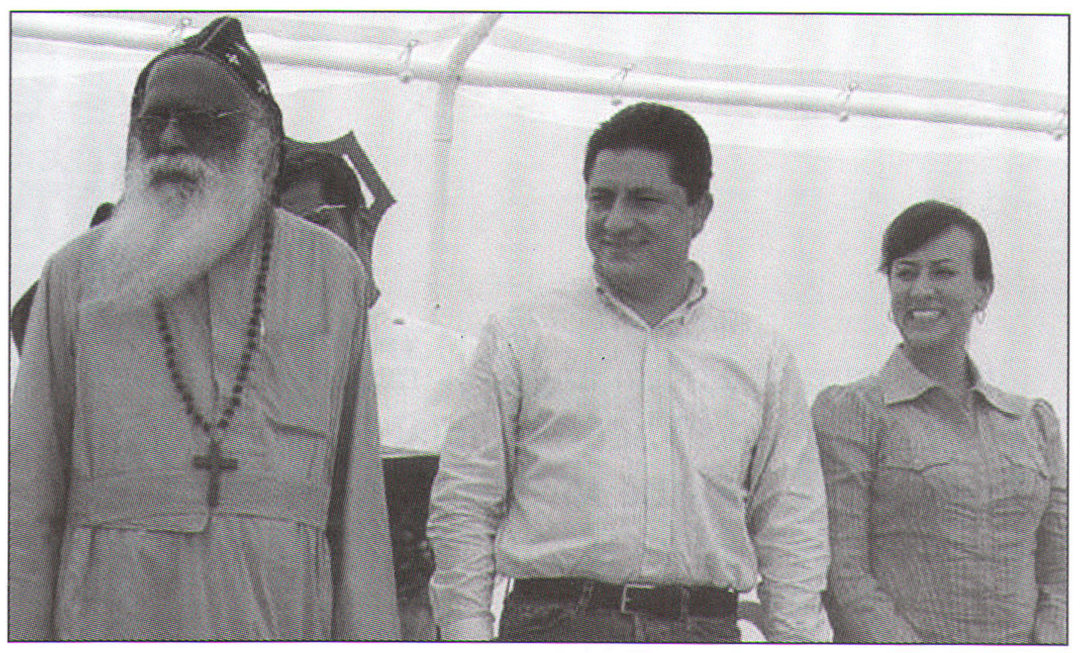
The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan speaking at the function.

Coorilos Thirumeni and Mr. Ashley George handing a symbolic key to Valiya Metropolitan.

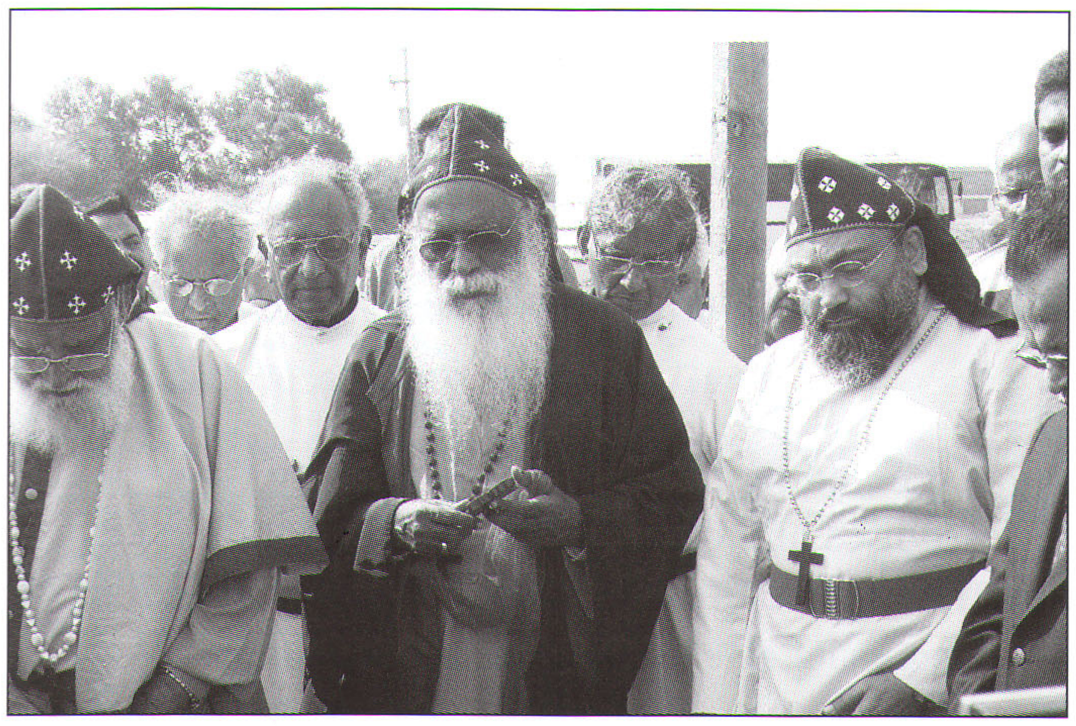
A view of the audience who attended the key handing over ceremony at "Colonia Marthoma" in Matamoros, Mexico.

VALIYA METROPOLITAN'S NAVATHY CELEBRATION—'COLONIA MAR THOMA'

Diocesan Council Members who attended the function with Metropolitans.

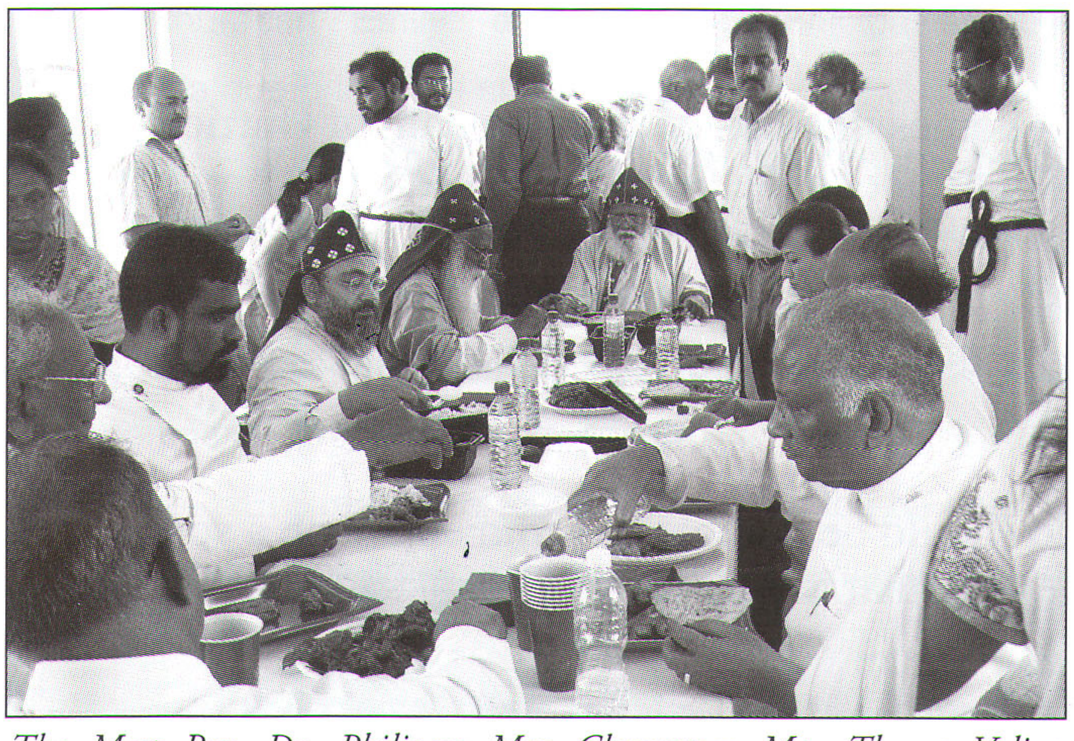


The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan with the mayor of Matamoros honorable Erick Silva and his wife Marisa Castaneda.



The Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan reciting Kauma prior to the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of the Mexico Mission Center.

Our Achens with Valiya Metropolitan, Metropolitan and Diocesan Episcopa.



The Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan, The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan and The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa having lunch with Chief Guests after the key handing ceremony at Matamoros, Mexico.

The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan blessing the foundation stone for the Mexico Mission Center.

GOBIERNO MUNICIPAL DE
MATAMOROS
2008 — 2010

Directorate of Social and Business Communication. Matamoros, Tampalipas, Mexico
To the people of The Mezquital Islands who lost their homes in Hurricane Emily. May 11, 2008
Erick Silva and the Indian Bishops hand over Bulletin 210H
some of the houses in the "Mar Thoma Colony".

The mayor of Matamoros, Erick Silva, and a group of Bishops from India gave 90 houses to the families of the Mesquital that were devastated by Hurricane Emily. With this, one act was demonstrated that both communities understood that the service provided to these poverty-stricken individuals was a reflection of a job with high feelings of humanity.

The houses that were constructed by this Christian Community forms part of a colony named " Mar Thoma Colony", that is located on the 18.5 kilometer by the highway that runs to Port Mesquital, today known as Puerto Matamoros.

For this function the mayor of Matamoros, was accompanied by his wife Maria Castaneda de Silva and the local deputy Alfonso Sanchez Garza.

Upon his arrival to the "Mar Thoma" Colony, Silva Santos was greeted by the Indian Community. Individuals came all the way from India to participate in the festivities and observe the exchange of the keys, while others came from all over the United States of America. They were dressed in their traditional Indian clothes and accessories.

The President of the Municipality of Matamoros was accompanied by his wife Marisa Castaneda, and by the Global Bishop of the Orthodox religion "Philipose Mar Chyrsostom" whom in his 90 years of age has provided services for people in need all over the world.

Also present for the festivities were Bishop Joseph Mar Thoma and Euyakim Mar Coorilos. The construction of each house costs approximately $5000.00.

After the exchange of the keys to the families who lost their homes that had been in the path of Hurricane Emily, the President of the Municipal government gave his gratitude to the religious mission that brought help to this much needed community.

This event speaks about two sister cultures like Mexico and India "two communities that understand the providing help for those in need is the most important".

Silva Santos added, "today all the governments of the world should be humble governments with a social sense; for those governments that worry for those who have less, that is why we give thanks to you and your religious community on behalf of me and my wife.

The President of the Municipal invited all the Indian people to get to know Matamoros because it is a city rich in history, generosity, and tradition. It is full of nice and cordial people who will always appreciate the support they have offered to the people of the Mesquital.

GOBIERNO MUNICIPAL DE
MATAMOROS
2008 — 2010

DIRECCIÓN DE COMUNICACIÓN SOCIAL Y PRENSA

A personas de El Mezquital que perdieron sus viviendas con "Emily"

Boletín 210
H. Matamoros,Tam.
11 de mayo 2008

Entregan Erick Silva y Obispos de la India, casas en la Colonia "Mar Thoma"

El alcalde Erick Silva Santos y un grupo de Obispos de la India entregaron 90 casas a familias del área de El Mezquital que fueron afectadas con la presencia del huracán "Emily", esto, en un acto en donde quedó demostrado que los dos pueblos entienden que el servicio a los semejantes, es el reflejo de un trabajo con alto sentido humano.

Las casas que fueron construidas por los hindúes, ahora forman parte de la colonia denominada "**Mar Thoma",** ubicada en el kilómetro 18.5 por la carretera que conduce al puerto El Mezquital, hoy, Puerto Matamoros.

A ese lugar el Presidente Municipal fue acompañado por su esposa Marisa Castañeda de Silva y por el diputado local Alfonso Sánchez Garza.

A su arribo a la colonia "**Mar Thoma",** Silva Santos fue recibido por hombres y mujeres de la India, algunos de ellos, llegaron ex profeso de ese país para constatar la entrega de viviendas, algunos otros, radican en los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica, pero siguen conservando sus tradiciones hindúes, como lo es la vestimenta.

En el presidium el Presidente Municipal fue acompañado por su esposa Marisa Castañeda y por el Obispo mundial de la religión ortodoxa **Philipose Mar Chrysostom**, quien a sus 90 años de edad promueve la ayuda a los más necesitados de todo el universo.

También estuvieron presentes en la entrega de las viviendas construidas con un costo aproximado a los 5 mil dólares cada una, los obispos **Joseph Mar Thoma, Y Euyakim Mar Coorilos.**

Al hacer entrega de las llaves a las familias beneficiadas que perdieron su pequeña vivienda durante el paso del huracán "Emily", el Presidente Municipal agradeció a los integrantes de esa agrupación religiosa por la gran ayuda que brindan a sus semejantes.

Este evento, dijo, habla de dos culturas hermanas como son la de México y la India "dos pueblos en donde entendemos que el servicio a nuestros semejantes es lo más importante".

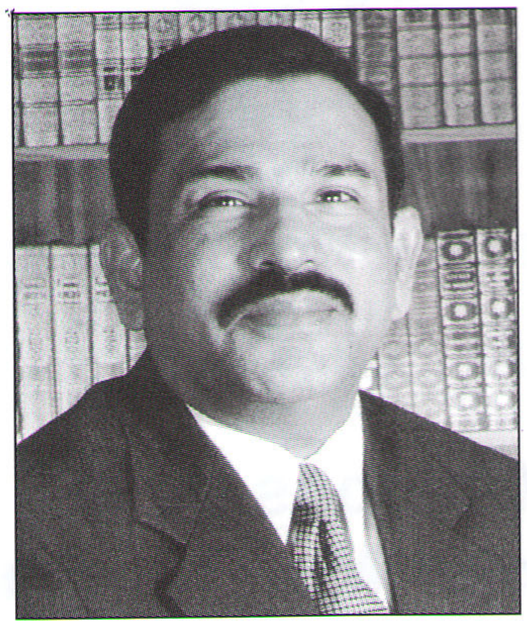
Silva Santos agregó, "hoy los gobiernos de todo el mundo, deben ser gobiernos humanos, con sentido social; gobiernos preocupados por los que menos tienen, por eso, en nombre de mi esposa Marisa y de un servido les damos las gracias todos ustedes".

El Presidente Municipal invitó a los hindúes a que conozcan Matamoros, porque es una ciudad con historia, generosa, con tradiciones y con gente amable y cordial que por siempre les agradecerá el apoyo que brindan a los semejantes.

La colonia **"Mar Thoma",** también cuenta con taller de costura, con escuela técnica, y con algunos otros salones que permitirán elevar la calidad de la educación de las familias de todo ese sector de El Mezquital.

Colonia Mar Thoma—Our Mission Field in Mexico

Lal Varghese, MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch



Mar Thoma Church has grown, as a global Church and Marthomites became a Diaspora Community, consequently there arose the need to establish mission fields in the places where we reside so that we can be the light to those who live in darkness around us. The word 'Diaspora' means 'dispersion' or 'scattering' of a particular group of people. Mar Thoma Diaspora includes both the original migrants and those born to them. With this in mind under the leadership Coorilos Thirumeni the Diocese of North America & Europe decided to begin two mission fields, one among the Native Americans residing in United States and the Mexican mission field in Mexico outside the Diocese so that we can be the true witnesses of our Lord Jesus Christ at places where we are planted by God. The real intention behind establishing these mission fields is that our youths especially those who are born and being raised in this Diocese may have access to mission fields near to them in order to fulfill the vision of Abraham Mar Thoma that 'every Mar Thomite is a missionary'.

The Diocese has undertaken the mission among the Native Americans and the Mexico Mission since 2001 under the able leadership of Coorilos Thirumeni. The first mission team visited Mexico in 2001 and provided them with the basic necessities like food, clothing, healthcare etc. Since then it was an ongoing regular process to these two mission fields by conducting vacation Bible schools, and providing the people with the basic medical care, food, clothing etc. The Diocesan Youth Fellowship is actively involved in the Mexican Mission project and based on their detailed assessment of the basic needs of the islanders plans are being made to cater their needs in a timely manner. The Diocese has adopted two islands consisting of about 90 families and with about 150 children. They live below the poverty line and their only means of living is the income from fishing except during the winter season. During the winter months they are unable to go for fishing and they live in utter poverty.

In Coorilos Thirumeni's own words 'We should love those who cannot return the same in the way we share our love.' 'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful'. Being merciful to others by providing them with the means to live in this world is the mission entrusted to us by Jesus Christ. It is also impossible not to feel admiration for the splendid work, which the Mar Thoma Church is doing. It is without doubt on the whole keen and active and, as an example of what a truly indigenous Indian Church can be and do, gives a great hope for the future. We need to strive forward to give hope to the world in order to continue as a Church founded and committed for mission. If the Church loses its passion for mission, it loses its commitment.

The mission of the Church is the mission of Jesus Christ revealed through the teachings of Holy Bible. Today the mission is carried out by the Church all over the world where God plants us. We as a Church must take up the challenge to be instruments of God's mission. The earlier missionaries to India were William Carey from England (1761-1834) and Stanley Jones from United States (1884-1973). Abraham Mar Thoma (1880-1947) took the leadership in sending missionaries to various parts of India to preach the gospel. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitan (1913-2000) who served as the Missionary Bishop of the Church with a prophetic vision and concern for the poor still lingers in our memory. Late Dr. Yuhannon Mar Thoma Metropolitan, late Dr. Mathews Mar Athanasius, and late Dr. Thomas Mar Athanasius took the leadership of the mission activities of the Church.

According to late Alexander Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan Thirumeni, every Diaspora Community should become a local community and quoted the Episcopal Encyclical of 1952 "…….. for a fuller and vaster realization of the truths and principles for which the Church stands, the Church must be willing to lose itself." We need to empty ourselves for the betterment of others. The mission is the manifestation of God's redemptive love revealed in the reconciling work of God in Christ. The word 'mission' originated from the Latin word 'mittere' which means to send. Just as Christ was sent to the world, Jesus has sent His disciples to the world so that it may know Him. Mission is something that belongs to the very nature of God, and it is God's mission by being in the world and affirming the human. Mission is no more sharing the good news of God alone, but sharing our resources with others who lack such

resources and helping them to build their lives and community. Mission is more in being and doing than preaching and at the same witnessing Christ in our lives. The three-fold task of the Church – *Koinonia* (fellowship), *Diakonia* (ministry), and *Kyrugma* (proclamation) makes the mission of the Church holistic in each context. The preaching of the Word of God is expected to create a community of communities rooted in the love of God as revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The challenge of the time is to reach out to the world by helping others to have their own means to sustain their lives in this world. Especially in a society where more individualistic thoughts govern each individual, we need to reach out to the community around us and those who live closer to us with the resources provided by God to help them. The missionary outreach programs of the Church are both personal and social, involving evangelism and social development. The concern of the Church should extend to the welfare of all individuals and their salvation to be realized in their social life, employment, physical growth, cultural and their economic development. The mission of the Church is not only to present the Gospel as the power of God to save individuals, but also to change the social structures by providing them the basic needs. That is the challenge taken by the Diocese of North America through its Mission Board by having two mission fields established, one among the Native Americans and the Mexico Mission. Both these mission activities are coordinated by the able leadership of Coorilos Thirumeni under the Mission Board of the Diocese. Rev. Vinoy Daniel, Vicar of MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch presently serves as the Vice President of the Diocesan Mission Board. The active involvement of the youth of this Diocese in the mission activities of the Church is greatly admirable.

The Diocesan Youth Fellowship has undertaken the challenge to build a mission center where the children of the islanders can stay and attend the schools and have the basic education. Presently they live with their parents in the remote islands in small huts made up of wood, tin or plastic with no facility for education. With this in mind the Diocese has purchased two parcels of land in the main land, one approximately about 7 acres where we are building the 90 houses as part of the celebrations of the Navathy of our Valiya Metropolitan and another parcel of land of about 2 acres to build the Mission Center and the hostels for the children. The mission field where we built the houses is named in Spanish as *'Colonia Mar Thoma'* ('Mar Thoma Colony') and the same was formally inaugurated by our Valiya Metropolitan Most. Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom on May 10, 2008. The keys to the 90 houses were handed over to the people of the Mesquital by our beloved Metropolitan Most. Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma and the Mayor of Matamoros and his wife at the same function and attended by a large number of members from various parishes and clergy from the Diocese. The mission of the Church began at 'Kadavil Malika' in Kerala has now reached to Mexico by the establishment of the new mission field *'Colonia Mar Thoma'*. Foundation stone for the mission center was laid by Most. Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma on May 10, 2008 in the presence of Valiya Metropolitan and Coorilos Thirumeni. We hope and pray that this mission field may help our generations to become part of the Mar Thoma Church and continue in its thrust for mission for the years to come.

The mission of the Church is mission of God which makes the life of the Church meaningful. Mission must be interpreted as the initiative of God, ratified in the incarnation of His only begotten son and activated through Holy Spirit. Ministry is the praxis of mission which is the expression of God's plan—love towards the wounded humanity. The goal of mission is nothing less than the unity and reconciliation of all creation in Christ. The aim of mission as Karl Barth puts it "is not personal salvation, but the consummation of all creation in Christ." The nature of God's mission is a sharing one. In sending and sparing His only son, we see the extreme form of sharing of God's love. Church becomes meaningful only when it identifies with the anguish, groaning and aspirations of the people. The ministry of the Church will be fulfilled when the Church

A view of the land we bought within the city of Matamoros to build the hostel for the island children to go to school.

A view of the houses and the Parish Hall we built for the Islanders.

participates in the act of self-emptying. According to Dr. M. M. Thomas "The Church should come to the forefront in breaking the human made barriers which make the ministry cumbersome. Church is a reconciling community which brings the renewal of humanity. The ministry of the Church thus transcends geographical and cultural barriers." Christian ministry is plural and diversified in nature. As Christ is the Lord of the universe there is no area which goes outside the lordship of Christ. The Church, as the body of Christ, has to become 'the Church of the poor', not the 'Church for the poor.' The Church needs to go beyond its pulpit and sanctuary to the communities around it to transform the life of others.

At the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin in 1966, John Stott stated, on John's version of the Great Commission: By His birth, by His life and His death, God's Son identified himself with us. He did not stay apart from us or aloof from us. He made himself one with us...Now he says to us "As the Father sent me into the world, so send I you." If the Church fails to obey the implications of this command it will be the greatest weakness in the mission entrusted to us. Jesus calls us to identify with those whom we are called to serve. We are called to identify with people in their hopes and fears, and when called to do so, to share their physical conditions.

According to E. Stanley Jones: 'the most miserable people in the world are the people who are self-centered, who don't do anything for anybody except themselves. They are centers of misery with no exceptions. On the contrary, the happiest people are the people who deliberately take on themselves the sorrows and troubles of others. Their hearts sing with a strange wild joy, automatically and with no exceptions. We are structured for the outgoingness of the love of the Kingdom.' Our mission should be a transforming mission to change the life style of the people around us. So, let us be the happiest people by taking the sorrows and troubles of others so that our hearts sing with a wild joy with no exception.

A view of the members from different parishes attending the function with our bishops.

The leadership and vision of Coorilos Thirumeni and the whole hearted support of the members of the Diocese especially the youths made it possible to establish the two mission fields in the continued faith journey of the Church in its mission activities. Being the members of the Church we should be able to share and care for the needs of the community in and around we live. That is what exactly we are doing for our generations to come, to be the witness of our Lord Jesus Christ and to continue in the faith journey of the Church in the community they live. The Church should transcend the national and cultural barriers and it should be universal and open to all. According to Valiya Metropolitan Chrysostom Thirumeni 'We often use the term 'identity' to establish that we are different from other people, identity, on the other hand, should contribute to the well being of the community. Identity is to ensure that you are not lost; it ensures that you are recognized in the community. If you are alienated from the community, you lose your identity.' Abraham Mar Thoma's burning passion for evangelism, his zeal for spreading the Gospel throughout India once said 'It is far better to burn out than rust out.' We hope and pray that the mission among the Native Americans and Mexico Mission will strengthen our generations spiritually to be the witness of our Lord Jesus Christ and may enable them to continue in the faith journey of the Mar Thoma Church. Let us take the challenge of emptying ourselves to bear the burdens of our brothers and sisters who live around us so that we see the glory of God through our mission activities by spreading the light to those who live in darkness. ■

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Pastor of Pastors
"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me"?

Rev. Thomas John, Washington D. C.

Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd asked the above question to His Father-God with utmost passion and pain. If Jesus could ask such a question, what about a poor ordinary man of God asking many questions!

Deepak Chopra, in Time magazine, asked a significant question, "Millions of people turn to the Dalai Lama for inspiration, but to whom does Lama turn to"?

The flock always has an awesome expectation about their pastor but the expectations of a pastor are often ignored. Here in this essay I am trying to analyze briefly the problems and issues of pastors for what and from whom they need pastoral care. And also I wish to focus indirectly on a person who served the church as a minister for sixty four years as a pastor and a pastor of pastors.

The word pastor is derived from the Latin word pastor meaning shepherd. But pastor is considered as the official position within a protestant congregation. The term pastor is related to the positions of priest or bishop within the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. In New Testament the term pastor is related to the role of elder and not considered synonymous with the biblical understanding of priest or minister.

The usage of pastor comes from its use in the Old Testament. This Hebrew word ra'ah is used 173 times with two different meanings such as the feeding of the sheep (Genesis 29:7) and spiritual feeding of human beings (Jer. 3:15).

In the New Testament the Greek word poimen is used and is normally translated pastor or shepherd. Jesus Christ called himself the Good Shepherd in John 10:11. In the New Testament the term pastor was used as a reference to presbyters (common term used for pastors in protestant circles) and it was used mostly as a title for bishops (epi-skopos).

In Acts 20:28, we see; "keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy spirit has made you overseers (epi-skopos), be shepherds of the church of God.

In 1 Peter 5:1-2, "to the elders among you I appeal as fellow elders witness of Christ's sufferings....be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers.

Not to lord over the flock in their charge but acting as bishops willingly. In short, not only ministers but bishops are also shepherds or pastors. As the bishops are overseeing all others they can be considered as Pastors of pastors. But "when the Chief shepherd appears you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away" 1 Peter 5:4.

This crown is for all who diligently shepherd the flock. And also as we see in 1 Peter 2:9, all the people of God are royal priests.

Three fold Order of Ministry
(Matt. 23:34).

The history of Christianity points to a divinely ordained ministry with valid apostolic succession as Bishops, Priests (minister, pastor) and Deacons. There are still debates on valid apostolic succession for exempting Paul, Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Silas (2 Thess: 1:1&2:6), Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7). A person ministering to a particular congregation or a religious group is called a pastor. But generally speaking, a minister is a person who is authorized by a church to perform clergy functions. There are various functions assigned to a minister (pastor) such as teaching of

Reflections on Chrysostom Thirumeni

I met Rev. Dharmishtan at Trivandrum in 1944. Again, met him in Malaysia as Bishop, Rt. Rev. Philipose Mar Chrysostom in 1958; thereafter many times officially and otherwise in Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and in India during these 4 decades. It is a pleasant memory to nurse in my mind.

Recently met him in U.S. in 2008. A personality among great Mar Thoma Metropolitans who loves his people and loved and respected by his people. Praise the Lord.

P. T. Chacko (Malaysia), St. Peter's MTC, NJ

beliefs, performing sacraments and conducting services such as Baptism, Holy communion, Confession, Wedding, Spiritual guidance and Funerals. Ministers performing in other roles may be referred to as elder, chaplain, preacher and other charismatic offices. Deacons were assigned for special functions and they could be ordained as Priests in due course. Bishops are ordained Priests consecrated for overseeing and shepherding the spiritual flock. But more administrative powers are vested on the Diocesan head, the Bishop.

A Five fold Order of Ministry (Eph. 4:11)

The Five fold order of Ministry is a basic system derived from the functional ecclesiastic services rendered among the first century Christian community. They are Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher.

Who is a pastor?

Usually a brow raising question arises about a minister mainly is he to minister or to administer? But to be very clear, administering is only part of ministering. The roles of minister are different and vary from context to context. Then in simple terms who is a pastor? Our assumption and understanding is that a pastor is an Achen, Father, Pithav, Priest, Minister, but all are one in essence. However unfortunately neither the fathers nor the children understand the real meaning and do not always behave appropriately as they deserve.

A pastor of pastors is the pastor who gives and who can give pastoral care to the pastors. A pastor of pastors is basically a pastor with the qualities required to nurture pastors. Pastors who face and suffer many problems are relatively un-attended and less cared to mend or correct until the problems attain severeness.

A pastor is a guide, counselor, mentor, intercessor, dhyana-guru, promoter, and enhancer. But at the same time as an ordinary human, a pastor needs all these services because there is anxiety, crisis, struggle and worry while dealing with various problems and situations in connection with his administration and faith affirmation.

Problems of pastors

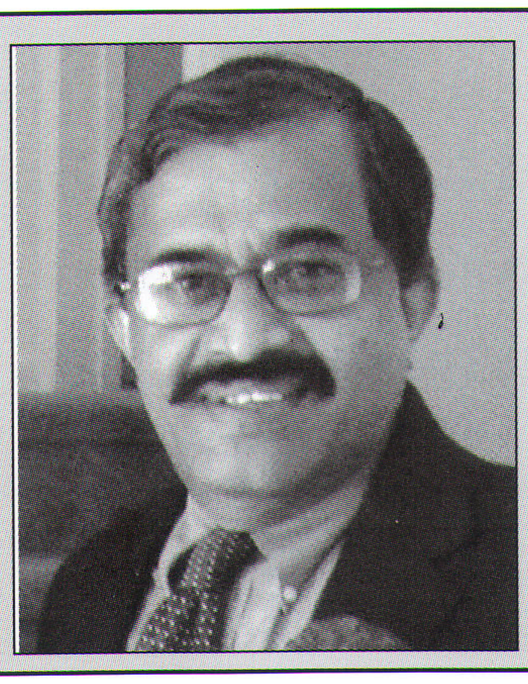
Psychological issues

Being in public service within a set religious group, pastor's children enjoy provisions such as appreciation, recognition, rewards, pampering and promotions but at the same time they undergo emotional disturbances. In the case of Mar Thoma Pastors, the frequent transfers bring adjustmental problems with space, relationships, recess and schooling. The change in academic requirements and change of teachers with different orientation and change of second languages give more stress to the children to cope with.

The main prominent and frequent problem with the children is with their friendships. The children who are still in the school find it difficult to accommodate a new peer and knowingly and unknowingly gradual seclusion develops and that lead to being introverts. The agony and pain involved in their interaction create pressure and intimidation. Another difficulty among the children of pastors is that they are not supposed to behave as other children do. Those include their behavior, attire and association. Hence they suppress their desires, passions and all other behavioral tendencies.

Why a pastor needs pastoral care?

A pastor has a lot of inhibitions. He is forced to suppress many of the human instincts such as emotions, feelings, desires and needs. All these must occur for molding a personality that fits the expectations and needs of the community that one serves. That itself creates tension within the personality of a pastor. The reasoning and attitude of many who try to find a pastor as a model and a mentor are the following: pastor who is involved in shepherding ministry should follow the steps of the Good Shepherd and such a pastor need not have any issues of that sort and even if any shall be dealt with the principles of the



Reflections on Chrysostom Thirumeni

A song is not a song until it is sung; A bell is not a bell until it is rung; A divine humor is not so laughable until we capture it from our beloved, one and only, Mar Chrysostom! By virtue of Thirumeni's Maramon childhood classmate Annamma's son, I had a few opportunities to converse with this very friendly intellectual and spiritual giant. To me, those moments were truly very blessed and inspirational. My hearty salute to the Valiya Metropolitan!

Raju Ayrookuzhy, Los Angeles

Good shepherd. But the truth is very plain and realistic that the pastor who minister and administer shall be liable to many ill feelings. Many pastors are becoming sick not because of lack of exercise and gluttony but of stressful lifestyle and strenuous interaction. The demarcation between the role of a pastor and a layman is becoming unclear and that brings up disrespect and confrontations. Hence it is to be remembered that 'Prevention is better than remedy'. However it is worth approaching and wise to have somebody reliable always to share and get relaxed as a result. Nevertheless I am not disregarding the role of laymen being a support in rendering effective pastoral care and feel the care and also inviting the pastoral care from expected ministers.

Whenever Jesus Christ had problems and issues, He turned to His Father God irrespective of time space and place. "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will but as you will" (Mat 26:39.)

Social Issues

A pastor has a lot of inhibitions of his own and with his family life. The family members of a pastor are always not supposed to do or deal with many things that an ordinary person does. That itself gives pressure in the life of a pastor's family. Many human instincts are suppressed and feelings are monitored by others. Frequent transfers from a place to another incompatible place itself would give pressure to the pastor's family. The change of language, schools, teachers, etc would create tension and difficulty among the pastor's children as I told earlier. As the church is growing globally, consideration of these factors is needed before their transfers and placements.

In order to alleviate situations among the children of serving pastors, pastoral care should be offered in a different way. The attachment to certain schools and teachers also develop a sort of confidence and security within the children but location transfer of the parent may hamper their flow of formation and development. The social status of pastors in the community also leads to a certain level of withdrawal among them. The social status of the community he represents and works for are invariably related and reciprocally affected. The pastor and his family have to adjust and prepare to maintain the status quo. A pastor needs pastoral care more than any one else because he is always dealing with issues of people with emotion and sentiments not with logistics and legality. But even when legal and regulatory measures are applied stringently he might face challenges and troubles.

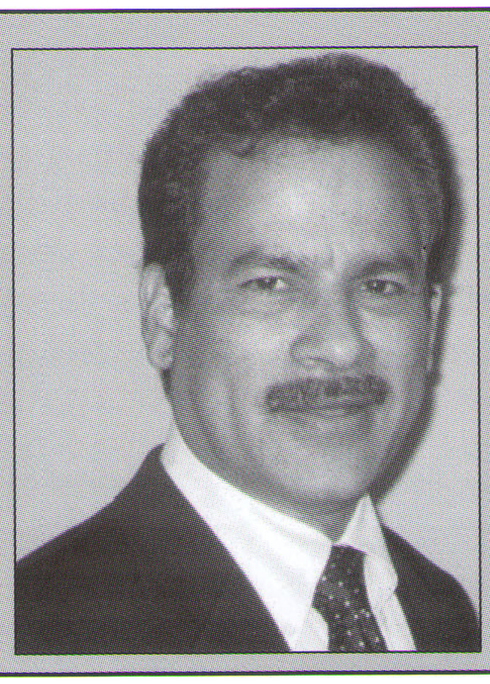
Economic Issues

Scheduled transfers cause additional financial burden such as acquiring admissions in well accepted schools of academic institutions. The financial stability of pastors differs for various reasons. The needs of pastors also vary from person to person according to their physical, social and economic status. Also pastors with extra curricular ministry such as book-CD-sale, brokerage, and so called convention-speaker make extra income to boost their financial status. Some pastors attempt out-of-ordinary programs and life practice applications to generate extra income.

The fortunate few born with adequate financial stability, others with their spouses working and some others with foreign assignments may enjoy better financial gains. Ministry of Pastors whose spouse work, may circumvent within the locality of spouse's job. Late Alexander Marthoma was a proponent of discouraging beth-kiyamos from doing secular job and encouraged to help in full time ministry. Thirumeni used to say, the beth-kiyamo is supposed to assist in the ministry of the Bar-kiyamo as she is the daughter of covenant and the pastor the son of covenant. A pastor family dedicated for the service of the pastoral needs of the flock shall be available to them always as a family. Perhaps they may have to face problems in connection with their ministry.

Theological Issues

The new millennium has witnessed widespread acceptance to ecumenical endeavors all around the world. The numerical increase of member churches in WCC and the overwhelming acceptance of Vatican towards other denominations and religions have given ecumenism a new



Reflections on Chrysostom Thirumeni

Chrysostom Thirumeni is indeed God's gift to the Mar Thoma Church. He is a person of extraordinary intellect, a visionary and a free thinker who is not afraid to think outside the box. He is well known for his eloquence and exuberant words of wisdom. There are very few like him who can powerfully communicate Biblical truths and their application in the context of God's grace. His messages are reassuring to people as he constantly emphasizes that the present is more important than the past. We are truly blessed to have such an authentic servant leader, gifted with a wise and discerning mind, as our Valiya Metropolitan.

P. M. Jacob, Immanuel MTC, Houston, TX

dimension. However in grass root level these ideas still remain as farce because the bread is not broken for all faithful and the mooron is not poured for all believers and the banns are not made for all baptized. Are we uniting to remain divided?

Syncretism was questioned and forbidden by Jewish religion from the time of Torah onwards. But Jesus Christ accepted people of all kind. Fundamentalism and fanaticism always jeopardized the developmental process of the world. Being secular in a pluralistic world is wiser than remaining as a fundamentalist. But becoming a Christian and finding Christ in plurality is the universality of theism. Fraternity which is taught generally in almost all religions are again questioned when it comes to particular situations. Is fraternity compartmentalized? Is love confined to certain limits?

New-wave spirituality offering prosperity and emotional ecstasy attract people in different ways. Even valuable efforts exerted in the traditional ways find no attraction. As there is no visible organic growth in the traditional church anticipated on apostolic mission based on the scripture and seeing the only biological (numerical) growth, subsequently brings down the ministerial satisfaction of a pastor. How can we improve for a relevant adaptable open ministry?

In Western countries the interaction of our church with certain other churches which officially recognize gay and lesbian marriages even for bishops and clergy are raising issues concerning the faith and affinity towards the scriptural values. Are we liable to submerge in to such a flood of non-biblical heresies?

Reflections

A pastor and his family must be given much care to strengthen his morale and confidence to work boldly. At least once in three months they must be given psychological support through various means in contact with other priests and also with their congregations. Retreats to clergy families, exposures, refreshing courses, devotional exercises, quality improvement trainings, target specification and management of events, refreshing of administrative skill and association with various authorities also should be arranged to develop the skills and value of the pastors. Chrysostom Valiyathirumeni was always arranging such programs and enriching and occupying the clergy without having much stress and tension. As the numerical strength of pastors has increased, even in the Diocesan level special school of courses and relaxation exercises and exposures should be arranged and introduced. In order to have a permanent and continuing system certain official arrangements could be maintained in the church and properly evaluated for its result. Thirumeni always encourage and motivate the pastors and assist them to find out their talents and traits to develop further. He insists to use the available means to equip and to be contemporaneous instead of looking for degrees and grades. Also reading in depth, devotion and meditation which lead to contemplation, alternate medicines and holistic approaches are always advocated.

Thirumeni spends hours together with pastors to share in groups, crack jokes and assist to find ventilation for their grievances and suppressed feelings. Frequent visits, outing to nature friendly places and openings to brush up and refresh ideas and mind are often created to ease the tension and stress.

Suggestions

- Frequent fellowships of pastors and family.
- Increase confidence among the pastors to share and care.
- Help each other to grow and sustain.
- Arrange opportunities to have fun and relaxation.
- Appoint trained reliable pastors for counseling pastors.
- Develop rapport and confidence by psychologically supporting the needs of the pastor.
- Keep incessant watch on pastors and find out their strength and weakness and assist them to grow.
- During issues and problems, enhance the morale and self esteem to confront with reality and to avoid the feeling of abandonment. ■

Reflections on Chrysostom Thirumeni

As a member of the Diocesan Council from 1990-1993, I have been forutnate enough to know Thirumeni on many levels. From Suffragan to Metropolitan, to Valiya Metropolitan, I have witnessed his unyielding love for the Church, his charisma, and more importantly his humility. He is the cornerstone of this Diocese and we are forever indebted to his contributions to the Mar Thoma Church.

Varughese P. Varughese, Staten Island MTC, NY

RECEPTION TO METROPOLITANS AT HOUSTON

The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Celebrating Holy Communion Service.

Immanuel and Trinity Mar Thoma parishes in Houston jointly arranged a reception to the Mar Thoma Metropolitans—the Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan and the Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma on May 11, 2008. Our Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa and Conservative Anglican Church Bishop, Dr. Dale Augustine Climie along with several clergy blessed this auspicious occasion. The event was hosted at the Trinity Mar Thoma Church following the joint Holy Communion ser-

vice as planned by the joint reception committee of both parishes. Rev. T. S. Philip, Vicar of Immanuel Mar Thoma Church, Rev. M. J. Thomaskutty, Vicar of Trinity Mar Thoma Church, and Rev. Skariah John, Youth Chaplain for the southwest region gave the guidance and leadership as needed for this joint event.

On May 11th Sunday, the Holy Communion Service was led by the Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma. During the service, sermon was given by the Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan. Thirumeni encouraged everybody to follow the true Christian doctrines in everyday life for being infallible. The presence of several clergy was a blessing indeed. Trinity Mar Thoma Church Malayalam Choir made the service very melodious by singing beautiful songs.

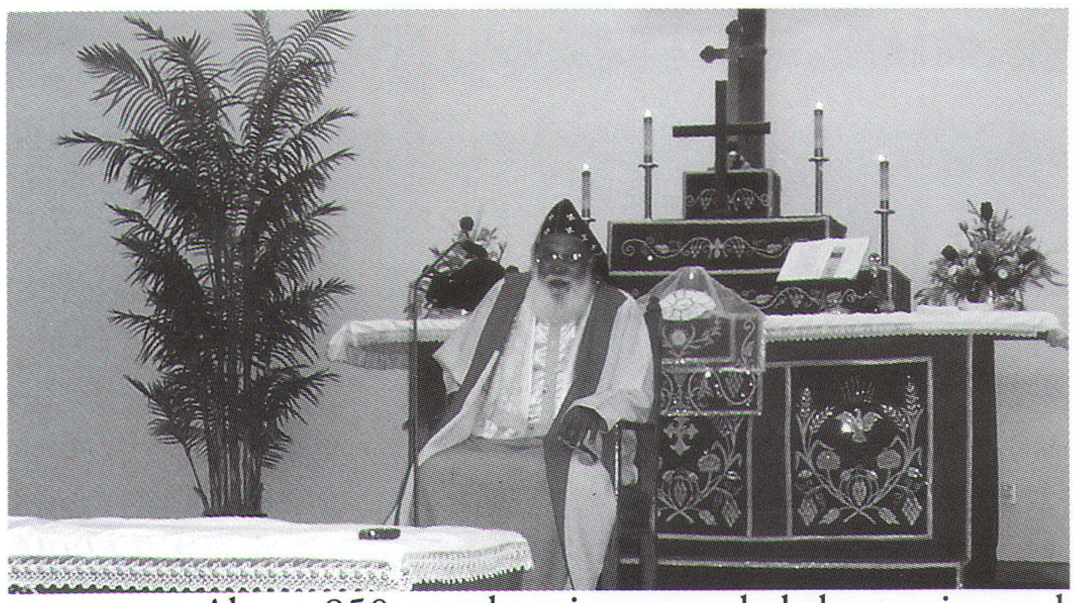
The Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Valiya Metropolitan gving the sermon during the communion service at Immanuel MTC Houston, TX.

The reception meeting started immediately after the Holy Communion Service with a special song of Immanuel Mar Thoma Church Malayalam Choir. Mr. Philip Abraham

(secretary, IMTC) welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa presided over the meeting, and in his presidential address, Thirumeni greatly appreciated the legacy and invaluable services of the

Conservative Anglican Church Bishop, Dr. Dale Augustine Climie, The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan and The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa at the public meeting.

Metropolitans for the enrichment of the Mar Thoma Church. Rt. Rev. Dr. Dale Augustine Climie, Rev. Biju S. Cherian, Rev. T. S. Philip, Mrs. Betsy Varghese, and Mr. Sam Thomas gave felicitations to the Metropolitans. During the reception, the Trustees of both parishes presented special gifts to the Metropolitans. In his speech, the Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma reminded everyone about the great leadership we have received in the past, the need to stay focused on the mission of the church, and called for the unity of the church as we face new challenges every day. Mr. Abraham George (secretary, TMTC) expressed gratitude to everyone who worked towards the success of this event and commented that this event is a milestone in the history of the Mar Thoma Churches in Houston. This historical event was a blessing to everyone. About 850 marthomites attended the service and reception. Lunch was served to everybody afterwards. ■



Rev. M. J. Thomaskutty, Convener

Thoughts that cannot be Faded by Age from the 'Golden Tongue'

Composed by Grace Thomas, Immanuel MTC, Houston

According to C.S. Lewis the greatest miracle after the incarnation was the sacrament.

What is a sacrament? It is identifying with Christ. So, according to you, what is the greatest miracle of Jesus? Did you say resurrection? If so, let me ask you the next question: According to the Bible, was Jesus the first person to be resurrected? NO. We read about prophets who have resurrected. Prophet Elisha for example prayed to God and revived the dead boy of the family who let him stay at their house. We also read about the people whom Jesus himself resurrected. According to Thirumeni, the world's greatest miracle is God becoming man. The second one is that God created the world.

"In the beginning there was _____" What did you fill in the blank with? The correct answer is "In the beginning, there was nothing but God." God created cosmos out of chaos and then out of the cosmos he created the universe and so forth, eventually he created the earth. To create man, however, he changed his mode of operation: He did follow the pattern he had used to create everything else. He didn't say "Let there be man" as he did "Let there be light." He created man in his own image. He took dust from the earth and did so. So now, what is dust? In short and simple terms, dust is the sum total of all that you don't want. In other words, God used something that was useless and unwanted to create 'man', something so precious and important. God takes the unwanted things and makes it the most precious thing.

God created the body of man with dust. Then what did he do? He breathed life into the body and thus formed a living being - Human Being. Life belongs to God. Where was the woman when he created man? If you said that woman wasn't created yet, you are WRONG! How did God create woman? God created woman from the rib of man. So where was woman when God made man? She was in the rib of man. Therefore, woman was not made later and man was not made earlier than woman. They were both made together at the same time. Only matter, woman was more protected than man since she was in the rib of man, which is protected by the body.

The way to heaven is through the world. No one can go to heaven without going through the world. Can you name anyone who had managed to do so? Jesus went to heaven but he too came to the world. Who did he take with him when he went to heaven? The thief on the Cross. Your past is not important. Only your present is important. Pilate gave the people the chance to choose between Barabbas and Jesus. Both Barabbas and Jesus mean "Son of the Father." Therefore, the choice is between the authentic Barabbas and fake Barabbas, and the people chose the fake one.

The consummation of history is in Jesus. Does Jesus love the world or the church more?

If your answer was the church, you are WRONG! The answer is that Jesus loves the world. It is written in the Bible. John 3:16 begins stating this as a fact. "For God so loved the world...." But nowhere in the Bible does it state that God loves the church. The church is for the world. Does God love our Achen or the guy in Kerala prison sentenced for death row more? If you chose either one, you are wrong! God loves them both. He doesn't love anyone more than the other. All are equal in His sight. God loves all of us equally. It is us that can't do the same! ■

Editor's Note: Selections from the message of our beloved Valiya Metrapolitan delivered at the Immanuel Mar Thoma Church Houston, during the worship service on May 18, 2008.

Reflections on Chrysostom Thirumeni

The Most Rev. Dr. Philapose Mar Crysostom Valiya Metropolitan is known to me since 1960 while my sister Aleyamma Mathew was working in the slums near Sihora Ashram and I was a nursing student in Jabalpur. I was closely associated with Sihora Ashram at that time and I had several occasions to be with Thirumeni when he visited the Ashram. During the past 50 years, he has solemnized our marriage, our daughter's Baptism, and then 25 years later, he solemnized our son's marriage.

On May 9th, 2008, we all went to Mexico to witness the key handing over ceremony of the houses built in our Mission field as part of the Navathy celebrations in our Diocese; unfortunately upon his return from Mexico, Thirumeni became very ill. He was admitted at Methodist Hospital where I was working for the past 24 years. God gave me the strength and opportunity to take care of our Beloved Thuriumeni, for three nights. Amazingly at the age of ninety-one years, Thirumeni made a remarkable recovery with grace of God and prayers of so many believers.

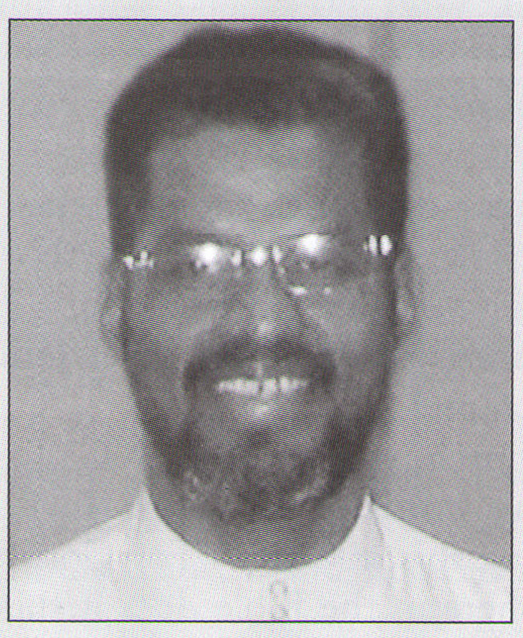
On the third day morning at 5:00 a.m., Thirumeni got up, with a little help from us and Rev. T. S. Philip. Immediately, Thirumeni asked for a Bible and a devotional book and spent his time in devotion. Then he spent some time to pray with all of us. It was after the prayer that he asked for, a cup of coffee. It became clearly evident to me that regardless of strength or wellbeing, Thirumeni begins his day by spending time with the Lord.

Thirumeni's love for less fortunate and neglected ones is so strong that it makes him happy to be with them and to help the needy and to improve their wellbeing. The Navathy Project is the best gift our Church could give to Thirumeni on his 90th birthday. Amazingly and by God's grace we were able to not only achieve the goal initially set, but exceed the expectation of everyone.

I pray for the Thruimani's good health and well being. Whatever time God gives to his life, he will use every second of those moments to make someone else' life better and continue doing the Lord's work. May the Lord keep him safe and let us all pray for his wellbeing.

Kunjamma George, Trinity MTC, Houston

Reflections on Chrysostom Thirumeni



The Mar Thoma Church is blessed by several eminent bishops who serve as our spiritual heads. His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom, Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan, is a great blessing for our Church and has proven to be a capable leader, who continues to use his God given talents to serve the Church in every way.

It is amazing to see that an individual who is of ninety years of age still comes across to all as one with the heart of a child. My family and I had the great privilege of serving him in Houston last month when His Grace had been sick and was staying at the Parsonage. Though it was a time of great concern and worry for many of us, I consider it to be one of the greatest blessings in my life. His attitude towards illness, pain, and suffering is commendable, and I have truly learned a lot through this experience. I have interacted with him on several occasions, and each time, his openness, compassion, and sincerity of heart have always affirmed that he is a great gift to our Church. There is no doubt that his smile, love, and affection is for all faithful children of God regardless of age, cast, color, and denomination.

His Grace is a faithful shepherd, a spiritual leader, a gifted orator, a dynamic enabler, and one with a compassionate heart. His commitment to the Lord and to the Church is an example for all of us. I thank God for who he is and give glory and thanks unto Him for his past ninety years of life as a servant of God. I extend my warm wishes and felicitation as we celebrate the Navathy of our Valiya Metropolitan, and may God grant him many more years of fruitful life to continue as the spiritual head of our Church.

Rev. T. S. Philip, Vicar, Immanuel MTC, Houston

DALLAS REGION JOINT HOLY COMMUNION AND RECEPTION TO VALIYA METROPOLITAN AND MAR THOMA METROPOLITAN

The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan celebrating Holy Communion Service.

The Dallas region joint Holy Communion and reception to Valiya Metropolitan and Joseph Mar Thoma was held on May 18, 2008 at Dallas Convention Center, situated in the heart of Dallas Downtown. Approximately 1750 people attended from various parishes including other Churches. The Holy Communion Service began at 9:00 a.m. followed by the reception to our Thirumenis.

It was really a great moment for all four Mar Thoma parishes to come together and plan such an auspicious occasion to honor our beloved Thirumenis. As stated in Ecclesiastes, 'to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.' While our beloved Chrysostom Valiya Metropolitan was unable to join us in Dallas because of health reasons, the believers expressed sincere gratitude to Thirumeni for his willingness to visit the believers in the United States by traveling all the way from Kerala despite Thirumeni's age and health. The believers in Dallas thank God for enabling Thirumeni to complete ninety glorious years of life, fifty-five years as a bishop of the Mar Thoma Church, and sixty-four years as an ordained servant of God and prayed for Thirumeni's full recovery so that the rest of his time in the United States will be a joyous occasion for all believers.

It was a joyous occasion for the believers in Dallas to have our newly enthroned Metropolitan, the Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma in Dallas for the first time after being elevated as the 21st Mar Thoma. Being a fearless, tireless, and dedicated servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, Joseph Mar Thoma will ably lead the Church into the future. The entire program is planned and executed under the

Vicars in Dallas region with the Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan and Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa.

The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma leading prayer at the public meeting.

leadership of our Coorilos Thirumeni, who is a man of prayer and a servant of God with a compassionate heart. The initiation of the Native American mission and Mexico Mission stands as examples of Thirumeni's concern for those less fortunate.

Dr. William B. Lawrence, Dean of Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, Rev. Mark Herbener, former Bishop of the Lutheran Church, Dr. William J. Abraham, faculty from the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Dr. Carolyn Brettell, the Dean of Dedmen College at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Dr. Jerry Middents and Mrs. Carole Middents, representing the Presbyterian Church were among the dignitaries who attended the program.

All four parishes in Dallas under the leadership of Rev. Vinoy Daniel, Convener of the Regional Committee & Vicar of Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch, Rev. Johnson George, Facility Committee Convener and Vicar of Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Carrollton, Rev. C. K. Koshy, in charge of the Combined Adult and Youth Choirs and Vicar of St. Paul's Mar Thoma Church, Rev. James Thomas, in charge of the Holy Communion Service and Vicar of Sehion Mar Thoma Church worked hard for the success of the program. Rev. Jaisen Thomas was the Master of Ceremonies who is the newly appointed Dallas Region Youth Chaplain.

Rev. Vinoy Daniel, Convener, Regional Committee

View of the audience at the reception metting.

വരുന്നു ഞങ്ങൾ തിരുസവിധേ..

(മാർത്തോമ്മാമെത്രാപ്പോലീത്താമാർക്കു ഡാലസിൽ നൽകിയ സ്വീകരണത്തിൽ അവതരിപ്പിച്ച അനുമോദനഗാനം)

Andrews Anchery, MTC of Dallas, Farmers Branch

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ഞാൻ അറിയുന്നു.... എന്നെ അറിയുന്നു.... ക്രിസോസ്റ്റം തിരുമേനി

Mrs. Saramma Verghese, St. Mark's MTC, Tampa, Florida

ആർക്കും ചിരിക്കാനാവും. പക്ഷെ ചിരിപ്പിക്കുന്നവർ എണ്ണത്തിൽ വളരെ കുറവാണ്. ഈ ന്യൂനപക്ഷത്തിൽ പെടുന്നു ക്രിസോസ്റ്റം തിരുമേനി. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ പേര് കേൾക്കുമ്പോൾ തന്നെ ഹൃദയം കൊണ്ടെങ്കിലും ചിരിക്കാത്തവർ തിരുമേനിയെ അറിയുന്നവരിൽ ആരുമുണ്ടെന്നു തോന്നുന്നില്ല. വെറുമൊരു വിനോദപ്രകടനമല്ല, അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ഫലിതങ്ങൾ. സാധാരണക്കാരന് ഗ്രഹിക്കാൻ കഴിയുംവിധം ലളിതവൽക്കരിച്ച്, നവീനാശയങ്ങൾ ആവർത്തനവിരസതയെന്യേ വാരിവിതറുന്ന പ്രഭാഷണങ്ങളാണ് ആ സ്വർണ്ണനാവുകാരന്റേത്. ഈ കഴിവ് ദിവ്യമായ ഒരു സിദ്ധിതന്നെ.

ക്രിസോസ്റ്റം തിരുമേനിയെന്ന നമ്മുടെ വലിയ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായുടെ വ്യക്തിവൈഭവത്തിന് ഒരു സവിശേഷതയുണ്ട്. അന്യരുടെ ആവശ്യങ്ങളും പ്രതിസന്ധികളും മനസ്സിലാക്കി അവരെ പിതൃതുല്ല്യം സഹായിക്കുക എന്നതാണ് ആ പ്രത്യേകത. മതമെന്നോ, സമുദായമെന്നോ, ധനികനെന്നോ സാമൂഹ്യ നേതാവെന്നോ ഉള്ള യാതൊരു പരിഗണനയും അദ്ദേഹത്തിന് ഒരിക്കലുമില്ല.

മറക്കാനാവാത്ത ഒരനുഭവം എനിക്കും ഉണ്ടായിട്ടുണ്ട്. തിരുമേനി റാന്നി നിലയ്ക്കൽ ഭദ്രാസന എപ്പിസ്ക്കോപ്പയായിരിക്കുന്ന കാലം, ഞാൻ ഭദ്രാസന സേവികാസംഘം ട്രഷറാറായി നിയമിക്കപ്പെട്ട് മൂന്നു വർഷക്കാലം പ്രവർത്തിക്കേണ്ടി വന്നതിന്റെ ആദ്യവർഷം.

വർഷാവസാന മീറ്റിംഗിൽ കണക്ക് അവതരിപ്പിക്കെ അതെഴുതിയതിലുള്ള ചില പിശകുകൾ അംഗങ്ങൾ ചൂണ്ടിക്കാട്ടി എന്നെ മൗനയാക്കി. എന്റെ വിഷമാവസ്ഥ മനസ്സിലാക്കിയ തിരുമേനി അവരോടു ചോദിച്ചു, ആരെല്ലാമാണ് നിങ്ങളിൽ സി. എ. പാസ്സായവർ. ആരും തന്നെയില്ല. ഈ ട്രഷറാർ നിങ്ങളെപ്പോലെ ഒരാൾ. തിരുമേനി തുടർന്നു, നിങ്ങൾ ശമ്പളം കൊടുക്കാതെ ഏല്പിച്ച ജോലി സത്യസന്ധതയോടും വിശ്വസ്തതയോടും അവർ ചെയ്തു. ആർക്കെങ്കിലും പറയാമോ ഇതിൽ കളവു കാണിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടെന്ന്. സദസ്സിൽ നിശബ്ദത. അങ്ങനെ ഞാൻ രക്ഷപെട്ടു.

അൽപമാത്രമായ സത്യത്തിലും, അനൽപമായ അതിശയോക്തിയിലും, നിരൂപണാത്മകമല്ലാത്ത അഭ്യൂഹത്തിലും നാം ദൈനംദിനം കഴിഞ്ഞുകൂടുന്ന ഈ ജീവിതത്തിൽ ആദ്ധ്യാത്മികതയുടെ യാഥാസ്ഥിതികനായി ക്രിസോസ്റ്റം തിരുമേനി നിലകൊള്ളുന്നു. അന്ത:കരണ നിലീനമോഹങ്ങളെ മറന്ന്, അന്തർഗ്ഗതങ്ങളെ അനാദരിച്ച്, ത്യാഗത്തിന്റെ വിശുദ്ധ പാതയിലേക്ക് ഇരുകൈകളും നിവർത്തുന്ന തിരുമേനിയുടെ സ്നേഹസ്പുരണം നമ്മുടെ സഭയെ സംവരണം ചെയ്തിരിക്കുന്നു. ആ ദിവ്യ സാന്നിദ്ധ്യത്തിനു നന്ദി. ദീർഘായുഷ്മാനായി വാഴട്ടെ എന്ന് ദൈവത്തോട് ഞങ്ങളുടെ അകൈതവമായ പ്രാർത്ഥന.

COMBINED WORSHIP SERVICE AND NAVATHY CELEBRATIONS IN CHICAGO

The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan celebrating Holy Communion Service.

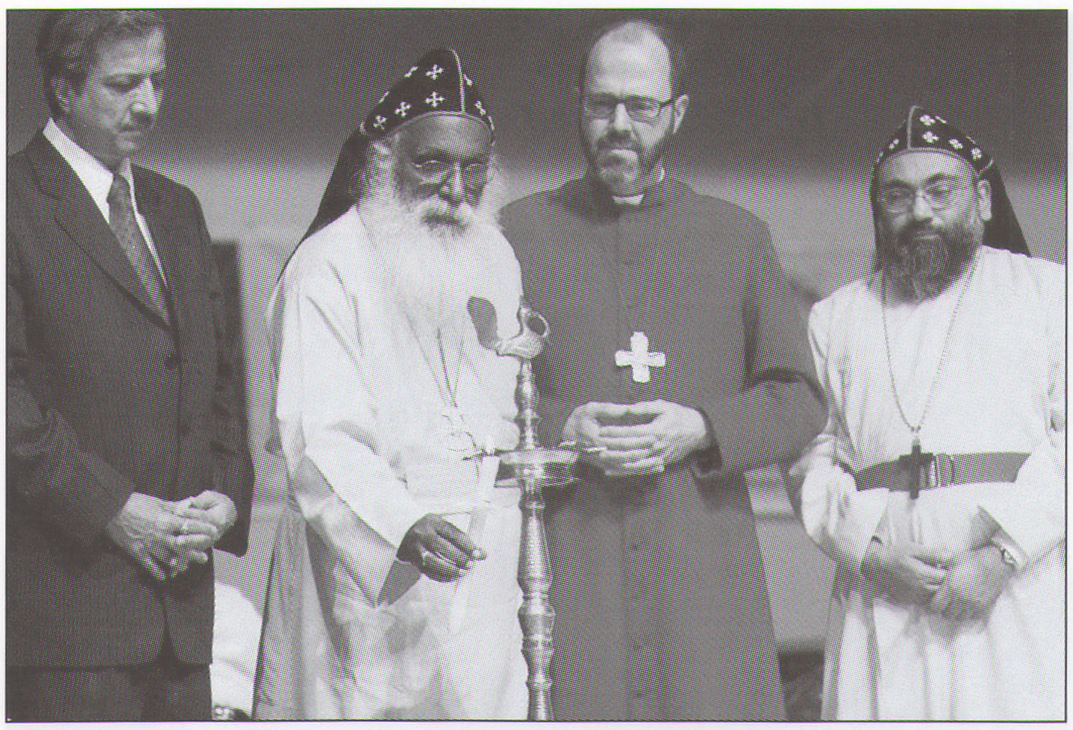
On May 25, 2008, Chicago saw the largest gathering ever of Marthomites in the region at the combined Holy Communion and reception to our visiting Metropolitans, His Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan and His

Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma, accompanied by our Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa. Although the Valiya Thirumeni could not be personally present due to health related travel restrictions, the whole community joined in felicitating and honoring our beloved Valiya Thirumeni in his absence. The presence of the Hon. Indian Consul General, Mr. Ashok Kumar Attri, and the Episcopal Bishop, His Grace the Rt. Rev. Jeffrey D. Lee, added color and serenity to the ceremonies.

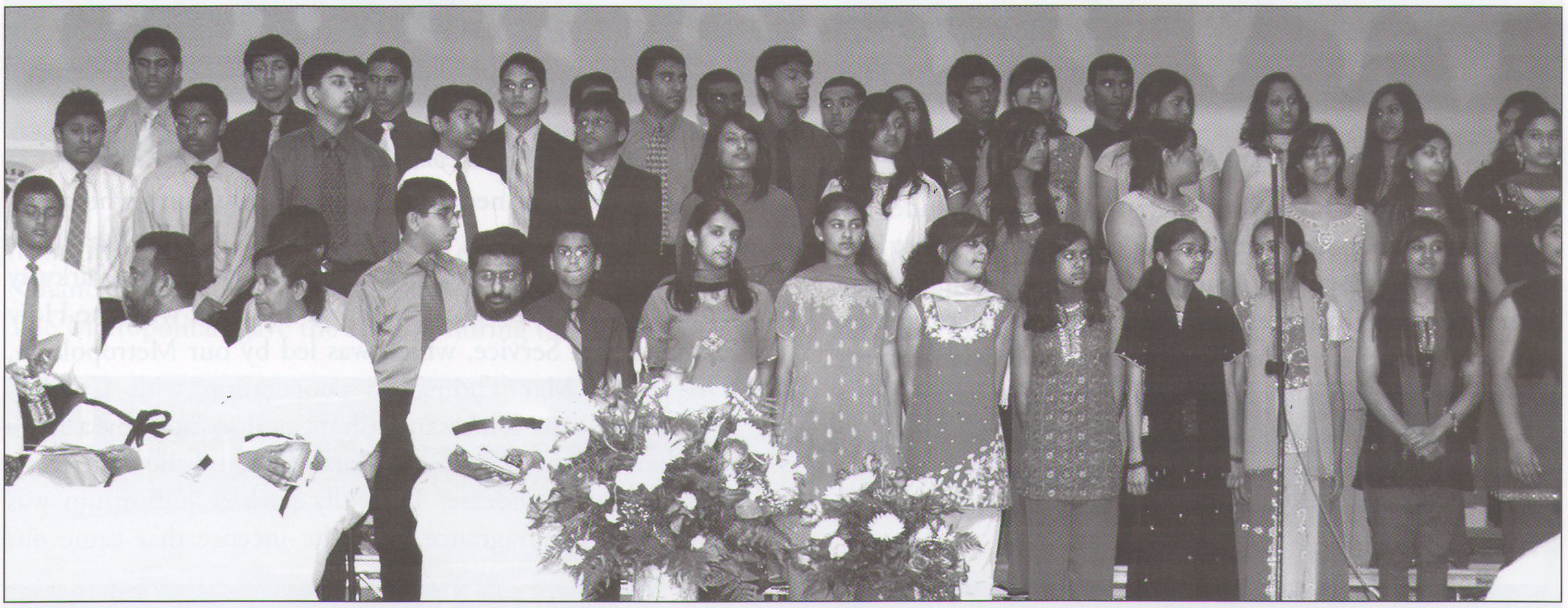
By the grace of God, the event, organized by the Chicago Mar Thoma Church, St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, and Bethel Mar Thoma Church, was a great success in all respects. God helped us find an excellent facility, the 1600 seat auditorium at the Evanston Township

High School along with ample parking and cafeteria facilities. The executive committees of all three churches united with one common goal and worked hand in hand under the excellent leadership of Rev. Daniel Varghese, Vicar, Chicago Mar Thoma Church who served as the General Convener. During the preparation phase that lasted more than a trimester, all the committee members spent several hours of their time and put to use their God-given talents for the glory of God. At the culmination of the events, we were all proud to have delivered such a well coordinated and fruitful event by God's grace and the hard work of all involved.

His Grace the Metropolitan celebrated Holy Communion that began at 9 a.m. with Coorilos Thirumeni, Rt. Rev. Jeffrey Lee, Rev. V.T. John, Rev. Daniel Varghese, Rev. Johnson Philip, Rev. Roy Mathew, Rev. Philip Varghese, and Rev. Varghese Mathew, Youth Chaplain of the



Lighting of the traditional Indian Lamp by the dignitaries.
From L to R: Chicago Indian Consul General Hon. Ashok Kumar Attri; The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan; The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey D. Lee, Episcopal Bishop; and The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa, Diocesan Bishop.



Youths singing during the reception meeting.

Chicago region, assisting with the services. The public meeting started immediately after the Holy Communion service around 11:00 a.m., and the Indian Consul General, Mr. Ashok Kumar Attri, joined the celebrations. The meeting began with a beautiful and melodious song by the English choir and prayer by Rev. V. T. John. Rev. Daniel Varghese welcomed the audience followed by presidential address by Coorilos Thirumeni and the lighting of the traditional Indian lamp by the dignitaries. The Malayalam choir sang a beautiful song congratulating the Valiya Thirumeni as he is celebrating his 90 years of blessed life and reminiscing the ways in which each one of our Thirumenis is leading, guiding, and shepherding the church.

We enjoyed the enlightening and stimulating speeches delivered by Bishop Lee and Mr. Ashok Kumar Attri. Their knowledge of our church and her leaders was amazing. Rev. Johnson Philip, Vicar of the St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church and several members and youth representatives from the three churches delivered congratulatory speeches and expressed their heartfelt felicitations to our Thirumenis. The Metropolitan, in his reply speech, thanked the Marthomites in the Chicago area and shared his vision and goals for the future of the Church. As a short video message by the Valia Thirumeni was played as he could not be present, the congregation felt his presence in their midst. The meeting concluded with vote of thanks, prayer, and benediction by Rev. Philip Varghese followed by delicious lunch for all those attended.

We express our sincere gratitude to our Thirumenis for providing us with such a rare opportunity and blessing us with their presence. We acknowledge our gratitude to members of all three churches who prayed, participated and supported this great event. ■

Rev. Daniel Varghese, Convener

View of the audience at the reception ceremony.

GLOWING RECEPTION TO OUR BELOVED METROPOLITANS IN NEW YORK

The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Celebrating Holy Communion service at the Dewitt Clinton High School, Bronx, New York.

The reception in New York on Sunday, the June 1st, 2008 to honor and felicitate His Grace The Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan on being elevated as the Valiya Metropolitan and His Grace The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan on being consecrated as the 21st Mar Thoma Metropolitan of the Mar Thoma Church, turned out to be one of the most memorable and colorful events in the history of the Diocese of North America and Europe of the Mar Thoma Church.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa administering the Holy Communion at the Dewitt Clinton High School, Bronx, New York.

The well planned and organized ceremony which was hosted by the Diocese of North America and Europe at the Dewitt Clinton High School, 100 W. Mosholu Parkway South, Bronx, New York, began at 9.00 am. with the Holy Communion Service, which was led by our Metropolitan, Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma, in cooperation with Coorilos Thirumeni, our Diocesan Bishop, and assisted by a huge number of Achens from the North East and the South East regions of the Diocese. The fully packed auditorium was filled with the fragrance from the incense that came out

View of the audience at the Holy Communion and reception ceremony.

Dignitaries on the Dias at the reception meeting.

from the temporarily raised and consecrated Madbaha (Chancel), providing a blissful and heavenly atmosphere. The Metropolitan gave the sermon during the Service.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa, the Diocesan Bishop, presided over the grand reception meeting that followed the Holy Communion. Thirumeni

View of the audience at the reception ceremony.

The Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan giving his reply speech at the reception.

welcomed the distinguished guests and the audience. He remembered in his speech about the vision of the Mar Thoma Church which was able to give 2000 houses in India and 90 houses at Matamoros, Mexico to needy families irrespective of caste and creed, in connection with the Navathy Celebration of the Valiya Thirumeni. He also said that Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan is a very active and vibrant Metropolitan who never hesitates to take brave and wise decisions in critical situations. Thirumeni hoped that the Mar Thoma Church, under the leadership of Joseph Mar Thoma, will continue to grow in God's Grace and blessings. He thanked God Almighty for having given this Diocese the opportunity for honoring our Metropolitans who are rendering their selfless service to the Church.

The dignitaries on the dais other than our Thirumenis were, Most Rev. Zacharias Mar Nicholovas, Metropolitan of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, Rt. Rev. Eldo Mar Titus Metropolitan, Syrian Orthodox Church, Rev. Alexei Khamin of the Episcopal Church, Mr. Cherian Thomas, Consul (Visa), Consulate General of India, New York, and John C. Thomas, Diocesan Council Member.

*On behalf of the Diocese, the Rev. K. George, Vicar, St. James and Bethany MTC, New York and Mr. T. A. Mathew, Diocesan Treasurer, presenting an **'Amsa Vadi'** and **'Sleeba'** to honor the Valiya Metropolitan.*

The Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa conducting the welcome speech at the reception meeting.

Most Rev. Zacharias Mar Nicholovas Metropolitan, in his felicitation address said that the Mar Thoma Church is blessed with great spiritual leaders. It is really a very great step that we are now able to gather on an ecumenical platform. Rt. Rev. Eldo Mar Titus Metropolitan of the Syrian Orthodox Church shared his memories of the connection with the Metropolitans. Both Rev. Alexei Khamin of the Episcopal Church, and Mr. Cherian Thomas, a member of the Mar Thoma Church and the consul in the Indian Consulate in New York, spoke on the occasion, felicitating the Metropolitans. Mr. John C. Thomas spoke on behalf of the Diocesan Council. Different organizations were also represented in felicitating our Metropolitans.

Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan, in his thoughtful as well as humor-filled reply speech said, "Everything is good. My greatest blessing is that I was born as a Marthomite who belongs to the Mar Thoma Church. And the Church is grounded in Love. What is Love? Love is God." He quoted from a poem written by the British poet, Matthew Arnold. There are dead wood,

*On behalf of the Diocese, the Rev. Biju S. Cherian, Diocesan Secretary and Dr. T. M. Thomas, St. Thomas MTC, New York, presenting an **'Amsa Vadi'** and **'Sleeba'** to honor the Mar Thoma Metropolitan.*

fish, and boats in the river. Mar Thoma Church is like the boat which moves toward the correct destination carrying people. Valiya Thirumeni's flashes of humor caused ripples of laughter in the audience. He congratulated Euyakim Thirumeni, our Diocesan Bishop, for the various activities that go on in different areas of our Diocese.

The mammoth meeting had a luminous beginning because of the melodious songs sung by the two youth choir groups (of 75 members each) selected from the North East and the South East regions of the Diocese. Their performance really elevated the audience to Elysian heights of happiness and joy.

Our Diocese honored our Valiya Metropolitan and Metropolitan by presenting to them an *'Amsa Vadi'* (Episcopal Staff), *Sleeba* (Cross carried in hand by our Bishops), and Maala (necklace worn by our Bishops).

Rev. Biju S. Cherian, the Diocesan Secretary and the General Convener of the reception program said the vote of thanks. During the time of vote of thanks Biju Achen called upon Mr. T. A. Mathew the Diocesan Treasurer to give a momento on behalf of the Diocese to all four invited chief guests. The closing prayer was done by Rev. Samuel Santhosham, Vicar, Baltimore Mar Thoma Church. The meeting came to a blessed end with the Metropolitan's benediction followed by a fellowship lunch. A gargantuan crowd of 3000 people attended this grand ceremony. ■

Rev. Biju S. Cherian, Diocesan Secretary
Elias Abraham, Baltimore MTC

IX Mar Thoma Suvishesha Sevika Sanghom National Conference

The Seattle Mar Thoma Sevika Sanghom welcomes you to attend the 9th National Mar Thoma Women's Leadership Conference. The conference provides an opportunity for women to gain new insights on their role in the church and in the building up of the Kingdom of God.

The highlights of the conference this year include motivational messages, in-depth Bible studies, interactive small group discussion and stimulating track sessions. Come and be blessed!

THEME:

Daughters of Jerusalem: A relevant response to a rising generation (Luke 23:28)

***DATE:* October 9-12, 2008**

***VENUE:* Best Western Tacoma Dome Hotel**

2611 East E Street • Tacoma, WA 98421

***CONFERENCE LEADERS:* His Lordship, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos**

Mrs. Jisha Skariah • Rev. Biju S. Cherian • Rev. Daniel Varghese

For more information please contact:

Rev. Roy A. Thomas, *Vicar:* **(253) 813-1840**

Mrs. Kusumam Titus, *Convener:* **(253) 630-5948**

മംഗളാശംസ

(Diocese of North America & Europe)

ആയിരം മനസ്സുകൾ അണിഞ്ഞൊരുങ്ങി
കസവിട്ട കനവുകൾ ഉണർന്നൊരുങ്ങി
മനസ്സിൽ ഗംഗാതലമൊഴുകി
ഇന്നല്ലോ ഇല്ലത്തിൽ സംഗീതമേള!

ദേവന് ഗീതികൾ പാടാം
എണ്ണിയാൽ തീരാത്ത നൻമകൾ ചൊല്ലി
ദേവന് ഗീതികൾ പാടാം

കലമണ്ണിൽ കർത്തൻ കടഞ്ഞെടുത്തു
കാഞ്ചനക്കലയുള്ള മാർക്രിസോസ്റ്റം
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മാനത്തെ മഴവില്ലായ് മരുവീടുവാൻ

നവതിയിൻ നിറവിൽ
മധുരമാം മൊഴിയിൽ
ചൈതന്യതേജസ്സിൻ വൻ പ്രതിഭ
ദൈവത്തിൻ സരസനാം സുവിശേഷകൻ

പൂവാടിപൂത്തു മാരാമണ്ണില്
പൂവായ് വിരിഞ്ഞു ജോസഫ് മാർത്തോമ്മാ
പൂർവപിതാക്കളാം ഭക്തരിൻ നിരകളിൽ
പൂമാല കോർത്തല്ലോ പാലക്കുന്നത്

വേദസുഗന്ധം
പാരിന് വീശാൻ
സൗരഭ്യധൂപം ദേവനുയർത്താൻ
വേദാന്തരെത്തുന്നു കാലാകാലേ

ഭക്തരാം പ്രിയപിതാക്കളെ
നിങ്ങൾക്ക് നേരുന്നു ഭാവുകങ്ങൾ !
ദൈവം കനിഞ്ഞാൽ കനിയാത്തതില്ല
തൻ കരംതൊട്ടാൽ തഴയ്ക്കാത്തതില്ല

രചന: പി.റ്റി. ചാക്കോ (മലേഷ്യാ)
സംഗീതം : ജെ. എം. രാജു

New York . . . . . June 01, 2008

RESPLENDENT RECEPTION TO THE MAR THOMA METROPOLITANS IN TORONTO

The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan and The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa were given a hearty reception in Toronto, under the auspices of the Mar Thoma parishes belonging to the Canada Eastern Region.

The reception Programs were held on June 8th at the Versailles Convention Center in Mississauga. Rev. Alex P. John, Vicar of the St. Mathews Mar Thoma Church welcomed the gathering. Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, the Diocesan Bishop of North America and Europe, delivered the presidential address.

Rev. Terrance Edward Finley, the retired Arch Bishop of Toronto, Mr. R. L. Narayan, the Indian High Commissioner, Mr. Sathish Metha, the Indian Consul General in Toronto, Mrs. Susan Johnson, Sabha Council Member of the Mar Thoma Church, Rev. Manoj M. Zacharia, Vicar of the Canadian Mar Thoma Church, Dr. Helna Oak-Ridges Marcum MPP, Dr. Ruby, Brampton-

Springdel MPP, and Mr. Louis, Oak-Ridges Marcum MP spoke on the occasion. The message from Mr. Dalton Megwanty, the Ontario Premier, was read by Mr. Amrit Mangatt, MPP. Mr. Samuel Thomas introduced the senior members of the Mar Thoma Church.

The programs began with the Holy Qurbana Service by the Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan and the Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa, as main celebrants.

Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan and Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa were honored with plaques presented by Mr. C. M. Thomas and Mr. Jobson Easaw respectively. In the absence of Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valya Metropolitan, who is celebrating the Navathy, Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan received the plaque for Valya Thirumeni from Mr. Philip Varghese.

Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma, in his reply, called for the support and prayer of the believers for the success of the future programs of the Church such as the starting of a nursing medical college for the employment and prosperity of young women, starting institutions for the care of the old, and taking effective steps for the well being of those who suffer from Alzheimer's disease.

The wonderful devotional songs sung by the 90 member combined choir of the Canadian Mar Thoma Church and the St. Mathews Mar Thoma Church were among the main attractions of the program. Rev. Cannon Peter Graton of the Anglican Church gave leadership for the closing prayer. Mr. Samuel Pappy, the convener of the reception committee, said the vote of thanks. Mr. Jacob Joseph and Ms. Elizabeth Thomas were the masters of ceremony. The main organizers were the Canadian Mar Thoma Church (Toronto) and the St. Mathews Mar Thoma Church (Brampton). Hundreds of believers, belonging to the parishes of Kingston, Ottawa, and Montreal made the reception program colorful and memorable.

Jaison Mathew, Toronto

Why and How I Remember Chrysostom Thirumeni

Philip Althomsons

The ordination ceremonies I have ever attended in my life were of our three Thirumeni's, Alexander Thirumeni, Thomas Thirumeni, and Chrysostom Thirumeni, in 1953, and my brother's ordination as an Achen two years later. It was an event spiritually so rich and inspirational that deeply touched my young mind as a teenager then and I never forget the vows and dedication they have taken in these ceremonies in the midst of the people they intend to serve.

In 1964 I met Thirumeni again in Kuwait and I never forget his witty answer to a question about our two Thirumeni's watching the movie 'Ten Commandments'. "We have to safeguard our people from bad Cinemas, so we have to see first and decide whether it is good for you all to watch it or not." Thirumeni added that Valiya Methrachen sent them to watch it before they could recommend for our youths. It was "news" that Mar Thoma Thrirumenis went to watch cinema 45 years ago! Spontaneous, witty, and philosophical responses are quite natural for Chrysostom Thirumeni and that became his "trade mark". Thirurmeni embraces changes always without losing the tradition and human values.

I have had some great opportunities to have conversations with Thirumeni and it will be too lengthy to explain and quote all his comments and stories that I have learned. When Thirumeni visited us in 1991, I had an opportunity to reiterate his stories during our long ride to Chicago. I told him of his simple stories that I have learned over the past 45 years and how it made me to relate those stories to some simple truth of our lives.

Plato explained about Socrates about 2500 years ago, " … before we began to see and hear and use our other senses we must somewhere have acquired the knowledge that there is such a thing as absolute equality; otherwise we could never have realized, by using it as a standard for comparison, that all equal objects of sense are desirous of being like it, but are only imperfect copies." I do not need to compare, refer or quote Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle for our experiences of lives today, I have used Thirumeni's stories in my conversation and speeches several times since then. Thirumeni's stories of simple people's (Mathaichens and Mariammas) lives and behaviors make us to laugh and learn the lessons of lives for all; some basic principles of his philosophy. Thirumeni sets his own standard and I always consider him as a great thinker and philosopher.

As we celebrate his life in our midst and the legacy he has left behind, I wish Thirumeni, along with thousands of believers, a longer healthy life for us to enjoy his philosophical mind; the pearls of wisdom. ■

Mission Trip to India

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.
Colossians 3:17

It is with great pleasure that we announce the next mission trip to India in October 2008. We are planning to visit our mission fields in Calcutta and the Tibetan border. Calcutta is where Mother Teresa worked in the slums of India to spread the Gospel. The Achens in these areas will make all accommodations for us. Our days will be spent in prayer and sharing the Gospel with the villagers in these areas. If time permits, we will also visit the believer's homes and spread the Word and pray with them. The trip is scheduled for 2 weeks, leaving US in mid-October and returning towards the end of October.

In order for this trip to be successful, we need 4-5 youths to devote their time, energy and passion for Christ and attend this trip. It will be a memorable experience for attendees and supporters.

Please contact **Mrs. Mariamma Thomas**, member of Trinity MTC, Houston as soon as possible at **832.606.4346**, **281.431.4335** or mariammatx@gmail.com if you are able to attend or for additional information or if you have any questions.

STORY

Jonathan, The Heroic Prince

Elias Abraham, Baltimore

Jonathan felt tired. His head ached. He was trying his best to recollect the events that had passed by. He remembered his brothers- Abinadab and Malki-Shua- leaning against two big rocks. They were bleeding profusely. Where are they? Are they dead? Or somebody might have carried them away to safety?

He could not think clearly. Everything seemed to be very hazy. He saw the crimson sky slowly trying to hide its beauty under the cover of the approaching darkness. The purple flowers that smiled with confidence gave the area a kind of ethereal beauty. Mount Gilboa has its fame because of these Iris flowers...

Mount Gilboa. How often, Jonathan thought, David and I walked in homely pleasure through the thick forest of Gilboa! David, on one occasion, had said, "Look Jonathan, you are a prince. It is not advisable to move around with a guy like me. Your father, the king, hates me. I am an ordinary person and a shepherd. Let us forget our friendship and not meet again."

Jonathan had laughed heartily when he heard this comment. He had explained to David that nothing, in this world, could destroy their friendship. Friendship is a special gift from heaven. It is the balm of a helpless life. And he would forsake anything in this world to keep his friendship with David. Even the throne of Israel he would give up...

David was now looking at Jonathan with wide eyes. Why should he offer to me this selfless love? He is really risking his life for me. He said to the prince, "Forget about all this and live your life. You need to enjoy and help your royal father to rule the country well."

Jonathan smiled and embraced his friend. He said to David, "Whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you."

Jonathan remembered the dramatic moments of the past when he said to the young man bearing his armor, "Come, let's go over to the enemy camp on the other side." His servant, Karmi, was very brave. They were climbing the cliff.

Jonathan said to Karmi, his armor bearer, "We are going up to make the enemies see us. We will cross over to the men and if they say, 'Come up to us,' we'll climb up, because that will be our sign that the Lord has given them into our hands."

Everything went well as he desired. The Philistines challenged them and shouted, "Come up to us and we'll teach you a lesson." The victory fell on Jonathan...

The prince tried to open his paining eyes. He felt a kind of jolt coming from within. War is cruel and it brings misery, he thought. In his inner mind he saw what had happened. The Philistines had surrounded them. He saw the king, his father, trying to find out a way to overpower the enemies. But Jonathan's experienced eyes visualized the inevitable. Defeat was very near. Saul has lost his soul. The moment has at last come where God's wrath would act on Saul. Samuel had predicted it. Saul is the salt without the saltiness.

Jonathan felt a soft murmur in his right ear. Before him he saw his beloved wife, Rachel, sobbing. Her beautiful cheeks were wet with tears. He remembered the days when he courted her. She gave him Mephibosheth whom he loved dearly. His own son. Where is he now? He wanted to hold his wife's hand. But the mutilated hand did not obey the commands of its master. He saw his beloved's figure, as a silhouette, slowly vanishing in the thickening darkness. Was it a dream that originated in his weakened brain?

Jonathan now thought of the futility of life. Man struts and frets, boasts and barks, fights and kills..... for no reason. One day he has to leave. Leave from this world. Just now David stood beside him. The hero of the nation, the king hereafter. Jonathan tried to smile, but the effort failed. Oh, David! How dearly we loved! You are a poet, a singer, a soldier, a leader, and a great friend. Thank you, David. Though my father planned in several ways to kill you, God did not allow it. God, of course, has a plan for everything. Michal, my sister, is your wife. In that way too, we are bonded. My only grief is that I will not be there to witness my friend being crowned. God chose David from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over His people Israel. Yes, David's throne will be established forever. Adieu, my friend...

Some shadows seemed to emerge from the darkness of the valley. Jonathan breathed heavily. Will lions emerge from the valley of Jazreel to walk in the streets? Will comets fall down from the skies?

The lonely stars looked on.

The Philistines were not far away.

Ever-Present Hand of God

Kunjumol, Epiphany MTC, New York

The birds don't sow seeds
But they have enough to eat
The flowers don't weave clothes
But they are beautifully dressed
Our life is much more precious to God
So He will care for us much more
Even a hair cannot fall off
Without the creator's knowledge

When a famine occurred in Israel
God paved a way for the Israelites
To get their food from Egypt
The Lord redeemed the Israelites
From the slavery of Pharaoh
God guided them on their journey
By a pillar of cloud during the day
And a pillar of fire to give them light at night

God instantly divided the Red sea
For the Israelites to cross safely
He brought the waters back
And killed Pharaoh's army
When they pursued the Israelites
He turned the bitter water of Marah
To sweet water for the Israelites to drink
Amidst problems, He creates the solutions

Where no vegetation existed
God gave manna and meat
To the Israelites to eat
Where they did not find water
He provided water from a rock
To quench their thirst
No matter what the crisis is
His presence resolves the issue

In His faithfulness and compassion
He sustained the Israelites
In the desert for four decades
They lacked nothing at all
Their clothes and sandals
Never wore out for forty years
Nor did their feet become swollen
God will not abandon His people

God dried up the river Jordon
In front of the Israelites
For them to go across it safely
After they reached the opposite shore
Jordon flowed just as before
The mighty power of the Lord
Made the walls of Jericho fall
For nothing is impossible with Him

Hannah in deep anguish, cried bitterly
Prayed reverently to God for a baby
God knew her sorrow; answered her prayer
The boy born to her was named Samuel
She dedicated the boy for the Lord's service
He rose to be the judge and leader of the Israelites
God always listens to our sincere prayers
But He answers our prayers at the right time

Even though famine devastated the area
The raven carried food for Elijah
God can use the birds of the air
To bring us nutritious food
The generous widow in Zarephath
Always had enough flour and oil
Amidst all the calamities of life
His providence is enough for us

.

When the disobedient Jonah
Was thrown into the raging sea
To prevent him from drowning
God sent a big fish to swallow him
From the belly of the swimming fish
Jonah prayed humbly and repented
At the merciful Lord's command
The fish vomited Jonah alive on the shore.

God saved Daniel in the Lion's den
By closing the Lion's mouth
When Shadrach and his friends
Were thrown into the fiery furnace
He was with them in the fire
And delivered them without any harm
We have nothing to worry about
As we are secure in His palms

After seventy years of exile
God gathered the Israelites
Dispersed all over the nations
Back to their home land safely
Guiding them like a good shepherd
He helped them rebuilt the temple
They rebuilt the city and flourished
God never forsakes his flock.

IRS Reminds Taxpayers to Report Certain Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR) by June 30 of Each Year

Shaju Sam, Long Island MTC, Merrick, NY

Recently, the Internal Revenue Service reminded U.S. tax payers with either a financial interest in or signatory authority over a foreign bank or brokerage account valued over $10,000 at any time during a year must file their Form TD F 90-22.1, "Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts" with the U.S. Department of Treasury by June 30 of the following year.

With the globalization of economy, more and more people in U. S have foreign financial account. There is nothing improper about setting up or maintaining such accounts. Still, IRS officials are concerned that U.S. persons (a citizen or resident of the United States, a domestic partnership, a domestic corporation, or a domestic estate or trust) may overlook that their accounts are large enough to trigger reporting obligations. "There are responsibilities that go along with owning such foreign bank and financial accounts", said IRS Commission Doug Shulman. Foreign account owners must remember that they may have to repot their accounts to the U.S. Government, even if the accounts do not generate any taxable income. In this context it is advisable to remember that any income derived outside U.S. must also reported to U. S government when filing tax returns every year by those who are obligated to file tax returns under the U.S. laws. There are certain exemptions from paying taxes for such foreign income up to $60,000 in most cases. You should consult a Certified Public Account with respect to your obligations of reporting of your income accrued outside U.S. through any sources whatsoever when filing your annual tax return.

Since 2000, the number of Reports of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR) forms received by the Dept. Of Treasury has increased by nearly 85 percent, from 174,528 in 2000 to 322,414 in 2007. Despite this significant increase in filings, the concern remains about the degree of reporting compliance for those who are required to file. The FBAR is not an income tax return and should not be mailed with any income tax returns. The FBAR should be mailed to U. S. Department of Treasury P. Box 32621, Detroit, MI 48232-0621. Unlike with federal income tax returns, requests for an extension of time to file an FBAR are not granted. The 2007 FBAR form is due on June 30, 2008. *Civil and criminal penalties for non-compliance with the FBAR filing requirements are severe. Civil penalties for a non-willful violation may range up to $10,000 per violation. For willful violation, the penalty is greater of $100,000 or 50 per cent of the amount in the account at the time of the violation. Criminal penalties for failure to file may also apply.*

If a holder of foreign account was required to file FBARs for earlier years, however, he or she should file the delinquent FBAR reports and attach a statement explaining why the reports are filed late. No penalty will be assessed if the IRS determines that the late filings were due to reasonable cause. The account holder should keep copies of their statement for his or her own record. FBAR form is not available for electronic filing, but many income tax software packages can prepare a printed copy. FBAR forms and instructions are also available on the IRS Web site at www.irs.gov or by calling **1-800-829-3676**. ■

അമ്മമാരെ വന്ദനം!

ജി. പുത്തൻകുരിശ്

അമ്മമാരെ നിങ്ങൾക്കു വന്ദനം! വന്ദനം!
നന്മയിൻ പൂർണ്ണമാം ഭാവമെ വന്ദനം
നിങ്ങൾ തൻ സ്നഹേവും ത്യാഗവുമീദിനം
ഞങ്ങളോർക്കുന്നു സമമല്ലതൊന്നിനും

മാറോട് ചേർത്തുപിടിച്ചു നിറുകയിൽ ചൂ-
ടാറാതെ ചുംബനം നൽകിയും പുൽകിയും
കുഞ്ഞിന്റെ ഭാഷയിൽ നിങ്ങൾ ചൊരിയുന്നു
'ജ്ഞഞ്ഞ ജ്ഞഞ്ഞ' സ്നേഹപ്രകടനം.

എണ്ണതേച്ചു കുളിപ്പിച്ചും കളിപ്പിച്ചും അമ്മ
ഉണ്മയിൽ 'മുത്തിനെ' പൂശുന്നു പൗഡറും
ഏറ്റം മനോഹര വസ്ത്രമണിയിച്ചും തോളത്ത്
ഏറ്റി താരാട്ട് പാടിയുറക്കുന്ന മാതാവേ വന്ദനം!

കാലങ്ങൾ കടന്നുവളർന്നാലുമെത്ര
ജോലിതിരക്കിലും വിപത്തിലും ഞങ്ങൾ
ഏവരും ഒന്നായ് വിളിക്കുന്ന നാമമേ 'അമ്മേ'
എവട്ടെ ഞാൻ കൊരുത്തൊരിയോർമ്മയിൻ പൂക്കളെ!

(A mother's day tribute)

LIVING HOME

"A friend is one that knows you as you are, understands where you have been, accepts what you have become, and still, gently allow you to grow."

William Shakespeare

HOME & GARDEN TIPS

MRS. SHIRLEY CHACKALAMANNIL, NEW JERSEY MTC

Environmentally Conscious Out-door Living*

We all have heard the famous saying "a stitch in time saves nine" This is a precautionary principle relevant to our times in regard to the degradation of our environment. As we all know, we are facing a host of environmental problems that deserves our attention. These include global warming, along with water pollution and air pollution. As Christians we have an obligation to uphold the integrity of all of God's creations. "You made the heavens, even the highest heavens and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You gave life to everything and the multitudes of heaven worship you". Nehemiah 9:6. There are many proven ways to address the problem of environmental pollution and the havoc that it brings. This year our church celebrated "Earth-Day" along with people all around the world. Planting a few trees is a noble thing to do to help our environment but to facilitate the right environment for all the living things and the non-living things takes more than that. Unless we provide the right nourishment and proper environment, the trees we planted will not last for too long. So what we need is a paradigm shift in our thinking process. It is not at all easy because we live in a time and place where decency and civility of human beings are measured by the materialistic things they own. So it needs a series of conscious discretion on our part to change our way of living. There are many a step that we can take to save our planet but here we will concentrate on some simple choices in our daily living outside our home that can make a whole lot of difference to our environmental problems such as the "green house effect" that contributes to the global warming, and water and air pollution. And they are: ***fuel efficient transportation***, ***organic garden and lawn care***, and ***choice of out-door furniture***.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions: How do we humans contribute to the green house gas emissions? Burning fossil fuel like coal or oil, cutting or burning trees, production of synthetic materials etc, release heat-trapping gases in large quantities into the atmosphere. The heat that is trapped in the surface of the planet raises global temperatures which, in turn, give rise to the "greenhouse effect:" Carbon dioxide is the main greenhouse gas (it is not the only one). This excess amount of carbon dioxide let the energy from the sun pass through it by absorbing the longer wavelength radiation emitted from the sun and thus creates a warmer atmosphere "greenhouse" around the planet. In an ideal condition green house gases are very useful and without it the earth will be a much colder place and will be impossible to maintain life in this planet as we know it. The problem occurs when excessive amount of heat is being trapped because of the greater build up of these gases. The result of the greenhouse gas emissions are considered to be the major cause of the climate change which directly and indirectly has an impact on humans, vegetation and wild life.

How can we minimize the effect of global warming or at least not to add more to what has already been done to the environment?

Fuel Efficient Transportation

According to the Consumer Reports magazine, on an average, anyone over sixteen years of age spends at least an hour or more behind the wheel everyday. If we look at the statistics, the 10 years between 1995 and 2005 had been the hottest decade and it is largely blamed on the carbon dioxide emissions by big cars, light trucks and sports-utility vehicles (SUV) which became an essential part of the dynamics of a civilized culture during these 10 years.

If we do not change the way we consume gas, the earth's average temperature will increase which will bring changes in climate that include, record heat waves, frequent severe storms, drought and rising sea-levels. A mid -sized SUV produces 20% more air polluting carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon and 75% more nitrogen oxide (pollutant that causes acid rain), than a mid sized sedan. It is not necessarily what you drive that determines the pollution rate but how much fuel you are using. The more fuel we use the more climate changing carbon dioxide and other pollutants we send to the atmosphere. This means your commute distance will be the variable to decide if driving an SUV or a fuel efficient car will be appropriate for you and the environment. You could get away with a fuel guzzler if you are commuting only for a short distance everyday. In other words, "the less gas we burn, the better it is for the environment"

Lawn and Garden Care

U.S. Centers of Disease Control (CDC) found out that 148 toxic chemicals in our environment ultimately had settled down in our bones and blood. Out of the 148 toxic chemicals four of them top the list. They are pesticides, mercury, phthalates (chemicals that make plastic soft) and pyrethroids (a common farm and household insecticide)

Now a days a 'perfect lawn' is defined by maintaining it through the use of toxic chemicals and mutagens such as pesticides. Many of them are possible carcinogens and many of them linked to birth defects. According to U.S. Fish and Wildlife service one of the reasons why these chemicals has a greater toxicity to people is because home owners apply much more concentrated amounts on their garden and lawn than farmers do on their crops per acre. (During rain, the run off water carry these chemicals to streams and wetlands). Not only these chemicals in excess can be harmful to us but also it causes the death of fertile soil by killing the beneficial macro and micro organisms that helps the soil fertile. Hence it is a necessity for us to find alternatives to

maintain our garden and lawn. We could minimize the pesticide use by:

1) Having useful bugs alive such as lady bugs and praying mantis. They are beneficial bugs because they feed on aphids and mites that bother vegetables and flowers.
2) For weeds, use tools, rather than herbicides to remove them.
3) Rotating crops will be helpful because it will inhibit the pests from returning.
4) Plant easy care plants which are known to be disease and pest-resistant.
5) Try "companion planting". This is where you grow different plants together to benefit the entire garden. For example planting garlic close to roses will drive many of the pests away. Planting marigold along with tomatoes has the same effect. Plant ornamental grasses which attract lady bugs - good bugs- to have in the garden.
6) Try using organic fertilizers and environmentally safe pesticides. The following company sells quality organic lawn and garden products. "Extremely Green" (www.extremelygreen.com), Miracle-gro organic choice(www.miraclegro-organics.com),
7) Use heirloom seeds that are disease resistant to your area. National Sustainable Agricultural Information Service, http://attra.ncat.org, provides a state- by- state listing of organic and heirloom seed companies.

Outdoor Furniture

Once upon a time six billion acres of rainforest covered the globe. Now we are left with 2.5 billion, according to the National Wildlife Federation. Deforestation of forest and unsustainable logging poses serious treat to global diversity and contributes immensely to the green house gas emissions. United States is the largest consumer of outdoor furniture made out of tropical words. One way to minimize deforestation is by buying furniture made out of sustainable grown wood or from other materials that do not contribute to environmental havoc. For example, furniture made out of recycled plastic.

Atlantic Plastic Patio Furniture Company makes furniture out of high quality recycled plastic (www.plastic-patio-furniture.com). Companies by the name of By the Yard www.bytheyard.net and Tailwind furniture (Www.tailwindfurniture.com) also makes fine out-door furniture out of used recycled plastic.

If you prefer to have furniture made out of wood, the company, Modern Outdoor (www.modernoutdoor.com) have high end collection of patio furniture made out of Ipe, a tropical wood grown in sustainable managed forest. This particular wood is known to be three times as tough as teak and hence requires no protection with chemicals.

patiofurnitureusa.com has furniture made out of eucalyptus trees grown and managed by the principle dictated by the Forest Stewardship Council.

In the next issue, Messenger Magazine will focus on "Decency in Etiquette-for Our Times"

*Thanks to the faculty and the graduate students of Environmental Studies at Rutgers University for sharing their knowledge about "conservative ecology" with us.

Changes

By Sheryl Jacob [Grade 5], New Jersey Marthoma Church

Lots of changes occurred in 2007…
To me, it felt dramatic like '9/11' !!

My best friend moved and my grandfather passed away
It seemed like something was happening everyday

So we spent our summer in India with my cousins for a change
And somehow a mosquito gave my dad a disease so strange!

To add to the list, we got ourselves a new place to call 'HOME'
"A new school, too?" I thought with a groan

Got so scared on my very first day
I asked God for help along the way

It felt like I was the only one new
Was hoping to make a friend or two

Students were together, KG through 3rd grade
So in this 4th grade, friendship groups were already made

My prayers got answered when I realized "my presents"
Those special gifts that God has given me as talents

My kind and helpful nature, my outgoing personality too,
Made kids in my class see me as a friend that's true

The teachers were as warm as can be
Being myself is finally how they ALL accepted me

So remember to use your talents wisely and be meek
For it's God's Grace that gives us strength when we are weak

School is done; I'm already missing my friends,
And I can't wait until summer ends.

But guess what? I'm starting all over in a new school
Now, I'm so used to changes and I know 5th grade will be
JUST COOL.

The Golden Tongue

Sincie Chacko, Detroit MTC

Born in the April of 1918,
Not many of us knew,
That Philipose Mar Chrysostom,
Would be one of the few.

As he went on with life,
He graduated college,
But never looked back,
Because there was much more to accomplish.

Twenty-six years into his life,
He became an ordained minister,
Which was another step toward,
Becoming a great spiritual leader.

As a prolific orator,
He used his Golden Tongue,
To preach to many,
Even the old and the young.

When he preaches,
He uses humorous tales,
Which everyone loves,
Honors, and hails.

From visiting the Second Vatican Council,
To uplifting those in need of basic essentials,
Thirumeni has done extraordinary things,
To help the lives of fortuneless people.

Not stopping there,
He continued his ministry,
And retrieved the position,
Of longest served thirumeni.

Out of ninety years,
Not one has been wasted,
And Chrysostom Valiya Thirumeni,
Will continue to be blessed for years ahead.

Who is Jesus

Alison John, 5th Grade, Detroit MTC

There is nothing that God can't do,
This is something everyone knew,
He did something we can't
He made every plant,
But He did more,
He sent His son to the Earth,
For something that is worth,
Jesus is the only way,
We can go to heaven and stay,

God sent His son,
So Jesus could do what should be done,
In order to enter the home,
And not just stay on the earth and roam,
The only reason we have health,
And some wealth,
Is because of His son,
His only one.

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യേശുവും സ്ത്രീകളും

മറിയാമ്മ ജയിംസ്, ഡാളസ് സെഹിയോൻ

ലൂക്കോസ് രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്ന മഹതികൾ

പന്തിരുവരോടൊപ്പം ചില സ്ത്രീകൾ അവനെ അനുഗമിച്ചിരുന്നു എന്ന് വേദപുസ്തകം സാക്ഷിക്കുന്നു. തന്നെയുമല്ല വിവിധ രീതിയിലുള്ള ശുശ്രൂഷ അവർ ചെയ്തുപോന്നു. അതിനുള്ള കാരണമെന്താണ്? മതപരമായും സാമൂഹ്യമായും പാരതന്ത്ര്യം അനുഭവിച്ചിരുന്ന അവർ യേശുവിൽ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം നല്കുന്ന ഒരു ഗുരുവിനെ കാണുന്നു. കൂടാതെ അവരുടെ പാപങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നും ഉള്ള വിടുതലും യേശുവിൽ കൂടെ ലഭ്യമാകുന്നു. ഇവ രണ്ടും കൂടെ ആയപ്പോൾ അന്ന് നിലവിലുണ്ടായിരുന്ന പാരമ്പര്യങ്ങളെ അതിജീവിച്ച് അവർ യേശുവിനെ അനുഗമിച്ചു.

പ്രാധാന്യമർഹിക്കുന്ന മറ്റൊരുകാര്യം പല തുറകളിൽപ്പെട്ട സ്ത്രീകൾ യേശുവിനെ അനുഗമിച്ചിരുന്നു എന്നതാണ്. മഗ്ദലക്കാരത്തി മറിയ, ഹെരോദാവിന്റെ കാര്യവിചാരകനായ കൂസയുടെ ഭാര്യ യോഹന്ന, ശുശന്ന തുടങ്ങിയവർ അതിനുദാഹരമാണ്. ഇവർ സമൂഹത്തിലെ പലതട്ടുകളിലുള്ളവരായിരുന്നു. യോഹന്നയെപ്പോലെ സമൂഹത്തിൽ ഉന്നതസ്ഥാനം വഹിച്ചിരുന്നവരും എന്നാൽ തീരെ താഴ്ന്ന രീതിയിൽ ജീവിച്ചിരുന്നവരും ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഇവരെയെല്ലാം ഉൾക്കൊണ്ടു എന്നതായിരുന്നു യേശുവിന്റെ പ്രത്യേകത.

മഗ്ദലക്കാരത്തി മറിയ

ഏഴ് ഭൂതങ്ങൾ പുറത്താക്കപ്പെട്ട മറിയ എന്ന വിശേഷണമാണ് ഇവിടെ മഗ്ദലക്കാരത്തി മറിയയ്ക്ക് കൊടുത്തിരിക്കുന്നത്. എല്ലാ സുവിശേഷകന്മാരും രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്ന ഒരു നാമമാണ് ഇത്. പല രീതിയിൽ മഗ്ദലക്കാരത്തി മറിയ സുവിശേഷങ്ങളിലെ ഒരു പ്രധാന കഥാപാത്രമാണ്. പുനരുത്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ ആദ്യ സാക്ഷി എന്ന നിലയിലും ഇവർ പ്രാധാന്യം അർഹിക്കുന്നു.

യോഹന്ന

ഈ പേരിന്റെ അർത്ഥം 'യഹോവ കരുണ കാണിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു' എന്നാണ്. ഹെരോദാവിന്റെ കാര്യവിചാരകനായ കൂസയുടെ ഭാര്യ യോഹന്ന എന്ന ഒരു കാര്യം മാത്രമേ കുടുംബപശ്ചാത്തലമായി രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിട്ടുള്ളു. ഇവൾ സമൂഹത്തിൽ ഉന്നതസ്ഥാനം അലങ്കരിച്ചിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ ലൂക്കോസ് 8:3-ൽ 'ഹെരോദാവിന്റെ കാര്യവിചാരകനായ കൂസയുടെ ഭാര്യ യോഹന്നയും, ശൂശന്നയും തങ്ങളുടെ വസ്തുവക കൊണ്ട് ശുശ്രൂഷ ചെയ്തുപോന്ന മറ്റുപല സ്ത്രീകളും ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു' എന്ന് കാണുന്നു. എന്നാൽ എന്തെങ്കിലം ശാരീരികവ്യഥ അനുഭവിച്ചിരുന്ന സ്ത്രീയാണോ യോഹന്ന എന്ന് പറയുന്നില്ല. എങ്കിലും ഈ മാന്യസ്ത്രീ കർത്താവിനെ അനുഗമിച്ചിരുന്നു. കാരണം വ്യക്തമല്ല എങ്കിലും കർത്താവിനേയും ശിഷ്യന്മാരേയും തന്റെ വസ്തുവകകൊണ്ട് ശുശ്രൂഷിച്ചിരുന്നു. കർത്താവിൽ നിന്ന് എന്തെങ്കിലും 'നന്മ' അവൾ അനുഭവിച്ചിരുന്നിരിക്കാം; അതിന്റെ നന്ദി സൂചകമായിട്ടാകാം യോഹന്നയുടെ ഈ രീതിയിലുള്ള പ്രതികരണം. ലൂക്കോ.23:55,56-ൽ 'ഗലീലയിൽ നിന്ന് അവനോടുകൂടെ പോന്ന സ്ത്രീകളും പിന്നാലെ ചെന്നു കല്ലറയും അവന്റെ ശരീരം വെച്ച വിധവും കണ്ടിട്ടു മടങ്ങിപ്പോയി സുഗന്ധവർഗ്ഗവും പരിമളതൈലവും ഒരുക്കി' എന്നു കാണാം. ഇവിടെ പരാമർശിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന സ്ത്രീകളുടെ കൂട്ടത്തിലും യോഹന്ന ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കാം. തന്നെയുമല്ല ഉയർത്തെഴുന്നേറ്റ കർത്താവ് ആദ്യം പ്രത്യക്ഷനാകുന്ന സ്ത്രീകളുടെ കൂട്ടത്തിലും യോഹന്ന ഉണ്ട് (ലൂക്കോ. 24:1-10).

കർത്താവിന്റെ പക്കൽ നിന്ന് 'രക്ഷ' അനുഭവിച്ച ഈ സ്ത്രീ നന്ദി പ്രകടിപ്പിച്ച വഴി യേശു അംഗീകരിക്കുന്നു. തന്റെ ഉയർത്തെഴുന്നേല്പിന്റെ ആദ്യസാക്ഷിയാക്കി അതിലൂടെ കർത്താവ് അവളുടെ ജീവിതം ധന്യമാക്കി.

ശൂശന്ന

ലൂക്കോസ് 8:2,3 വാക്യങ്ങളിലല്ലാതെ മറ്റെങ്ങും പരാമർശമില്ല. കർത്താവിനെ അനുഗമിച്ച കൂട്ടത്തിൽ ഈ സ്ത്രീയും ഉൾപ്പെടുന്നു. നന്ദി സൂചകമായി അവൾ യേശുവിനെ അനുഗമിച്ചു. യേശുവിനും ശിഷ്യന്മാർക്കും ശുശ്രൂഷ ചെയ്തു.

ശൂശന്ന എന്ന വാക്കിന്റെ അർത്ഥം 'ഒരു വെളുത്ത ലില്ലി' എന്നാണ്. 'ശൂശാന'ച്ചെടി, പൂവ് എന്നൊക്കെ പരാമർശമുണ്ട്.

ഉപസംഹാരം

തന്നെ അനുഗമിച്ച സ്ത്രീകൾക്ക് ഔദ്യോഗിക പദവിയാതൊന്നുമില്ലായിരുന്നു. അവർ സ്വമേധയാ ചെയ്ത ശുശ്രൂഷകൾ, തന്റേയും 12 ശിഷ്യന്മാരുടേയും പ്രയോജനത്തിനായിരുന്നു എന്ന് യേശു അംഗീകരിക്കുന്നു. ലൂക്കോസ് ഉപയോഗിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന 'ശുശ്രൂഷ' എന്ന വാക്ക് പുതിയ നിയമത്തിൽ പല രീതിയിൽ ഉപയോഗിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതാണ്. Diakonos എന്ന ഗ്രീക്കു പദം 'മിനിസ്റ്റർ', 'ഡീക്കൻ' എന്നീ രീതികളിലൊക്കെ ഉപയോഗിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇവിടെ തന്നെയും ശിഷ്യന്മാരേയും ശുശ്രൂഷിച്ച ഈ സ്ത്രീകളെപ്പറ്റി പറയുമ്പോഴും ഈ പദം തന്നെയാണ് ഉപയോഗിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്.

ചുരുക്കത്തിൽ യേശുവിന് പുരുഷന്മാരുടെ അടുത്ത സുഹൃദ്വലയം ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നതുപോലെ സ്ത്രീകളുടെ സുഹൃദ്സംഘവും ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഔദ്യോഗികമായി അവർ ശിഷ്യഗണത്തിൽ ഇല്ലായിരുന്നു, എങ്കിലും യേശു അവർക്ക് അവരുടെ പാപങ്ങളിൽ നിന്ന് മോചനം കൊടുത്ത് അവരെ സ്നേഹിച്ച് അംഗീകരിച്ചു. തന്നെയുമല്ല പുനരുത്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ ആദ്യസാക്ഷികളായതും ക്രിസ്തു ഉയർത്തെഴുന്നേറ്റിരിക്കുന്നു എന്ന ദൂത് ശിഷ്യന്മാരെ അറിയിച്ചതും സ്ത്രീകളാണ്.

എന്നാൽ എന്തുകൊണ്ട് ഇവരെ ശിഷ്യന്മാരായിട്ടും അപ്പൊസ്തലരായിട്ടും സുവിശേഷകർ രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുന്നില്ല? അങ്ങനെ ഒരംഗീകാരം ലഭിച്ചിട്ടില്ല എന്ന കാരണത്താൽ സ്ത്രീകളെ ഇന്നും സഭകൾ ഒറ്റപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. സ്ത്രീകളെ യേശു ദർശിച്ച കണ്ണുകളാൽ ദർശിക്കുവാൻ സഭക്കും സമൂഹത്തിനും സാധിക്കേണ്ടതാണ്.

DIOCESAN/PARISH NEWS

DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY MEETING

The Diocesan Assembly meeting was held at Long Island Mar Thoma Church, Merrick, NY from June 13 -14, 2008. The Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa presided over the meeting. Diocesan Secretary Rev. Biju S. Cherian, Diocesan Treasurer Mr. T. A. Mathew from Houston were also present. Out of 140 Assembly members, 112 members were present which constituted the quorum for the meeting under the Sabha Constitution. Rev. Manoj M. Zachariah and Diocesan Council member Mr. Lal Varghese, Dallas served as Recording Secretaries.

Rev. Biju P. Simon, Youth Chaplain, New York region, and Rev. Jaisen M. Thomas, Youth Chaplain, Dallas region led the worship service. Rev. Skariah John, Youth Chaplain, Houston region led the devotional talk based on 1 Corinthians 3:4. Achen emphasized the notions that we are: God's fellow workers, and our body is the temple of God, and we are stewards and servants of God.

Rev. Biju S. Cherian, Diocesan Secretary welcomed all members to the Diocesan Assembly Meeting and expressed gratitude to the previous Assembly Members, and Council Members, Diocesan Treasurer Mr. T. A. Mathew, Diocesan Secretaries, Rev. Dr. K. A. Abraham and Rev. Joseph Oommen for their dedicated services rendered to the Diocese for the past three years.

Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos expressed gratitude to God Almighty for empowering him to serve the Diocese, and stated that it is a privilege and honor to address the newly constituted Diocesan Assembly. Thirumeni reminded that we live in a world with poverty on one side and surplus on the other side. The mission of the Church as a transforming community becomes meaningful in this context. Thirumeni reminded all to renew the call and commitment to be the agents of transformation in this part of the world by rededicating themselves to the will of God and encouraged everyone to continue the faith journey of the Church.

The Assembly unanimously approved the appointment of Rev. Biju S. Cherian as Diocesan Secretary with effect from April 22, 2008. The Assembly also expressed condolences on the demise of His Grace Thomas Mar Makarios, Diocesan Bishop of the Orthodox Church for Europe and Canada and also Rev. C. P. Wilson, former Vicar of Philadelphia Mar Thoma Church and observed one minute silence as respect to both of them.

Rev. Biju S. Cherian, Diocesan Secretary presented the Annual Report and Audited Statement of Accounts for the year 2007. After deliberations the Diocesan Assembly unanimously approved the annual accounts for the year 2007 with a total income of $2,980,990.17 and a total expense of $2,907,761.40 with an income over expense of $73,228.74. Mr. T. A. Mathew, Diocesan Treasurer presented the annual budget for the year 2008. After delibera-

tions, the Assembly approved the budget for the year 2008 for the amount of $4,408,520.00 as income and expense

Diocesan Directory Release: *Coorilos Thirumeni releasing the revised Diocesan Directory - 2008 (Fourth Edition) by giving a copy to Rev. M. P. Yohannan on Friday, June 13, 2008, during the Diocesan Assembly Meeting at Long Island Mar Thoma Church, New York. Pictured with Thirumeni and Rev. M. P. Yohannan are Rev. Biju S. Cherian (Diocesan Secretary), Mr. T. A. Mathew (Convener-Diocesan Directory Publication Committee) and Mr. Mathew Verghese (Committee Member, St. Mark's Mar Thoma Church, Tampa, Florida)*

for the amount of $4,281,041.00 with a balance income over expense of $127,479.00.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos released the Diocesan Directory by receiving a copy from Mr. T. A. Mathew and handing over the same to Rev. M. P. Yohannan, former clergy trustee of our Church. The copy of the directory is available for purchase for $10 per copy from the Assembly Members of the individual parishes.

The Assembly also approved the request of the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch to host the 2010 family conference by passing the resolution proposed by Diocesan Council Member Mr. Lal Varghese, MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch and seconded by Diocesan Council Member Mr. Thomas Easo of St. Paul's Mar Thoma Church, Dallas. The Assembly also approved the resolutions appointing the external auditors, authorizing the Diocesan Council for spending expenses for the first five months of 2009 not exceeding 5/12 of the expenses incurred in 2008.

On the second day of the meeting, the Assembly elected Mr. Chacko Mathew from Long Island Mar Thoma Church as the new Diocesan Treasurer and Rev. Biju S. Cherian was unanimously elected as Diocesan Secretary. The Assembly also elected six council members and eight council members were declared as unanimously elected. They are Mr. Varughese P. Varughese (Staten Island MTC, NY), Mr. Abraham C. Thadathel (Salem MTC, NY), Mr. Gigi Tom (St. James MTC, NY), Mr. Ashley George (St Peter's MTC, NJ), Dr. Mathew T. Thomas (Mar Thoma Church of Greater Washington), Mr. Eipe Varghese (Chicago MTC), Mrs. Annamma Mathew (MTC of Dallas, Farmers Branch, TX), Mrs. Aswathi Mathew (MTC of Dallas, Farmers Branch, TX), Mrs. Elizabeth John (MTC of Dallas, Farmers Branch, TX), Ms. Betty Vattakunnel (Houston Trinity, Houston), Mr. Mathew Koshy (Trinity MTC, Edmonton), Mr. Samuel T. Thomas (St. Mathews MTC, Toronto), Dr. George Mathew (St. John's MTC, UK).

The booklet containing the annual report and annual accounts for the year 2007, the budget for the year 2008, the reports of all organizations of the Diocese, list of the newly elected Assembly Members including all clergy, and list of all parishes and congregations with number of families along with the details of contributions from individual parishes and congregations is available with the Assembly members of each parish including the Vicars of each parishes.

For questions relating to the annual report, annual accounts, budget and any other matters pertaining to the Diocese please feel free to contact the Assembly members and or the Council Members of your parish or your Vicars or directly at the Diocesan office by calling (516) 377-3311 or at e-mail at marthoma@aol.com.

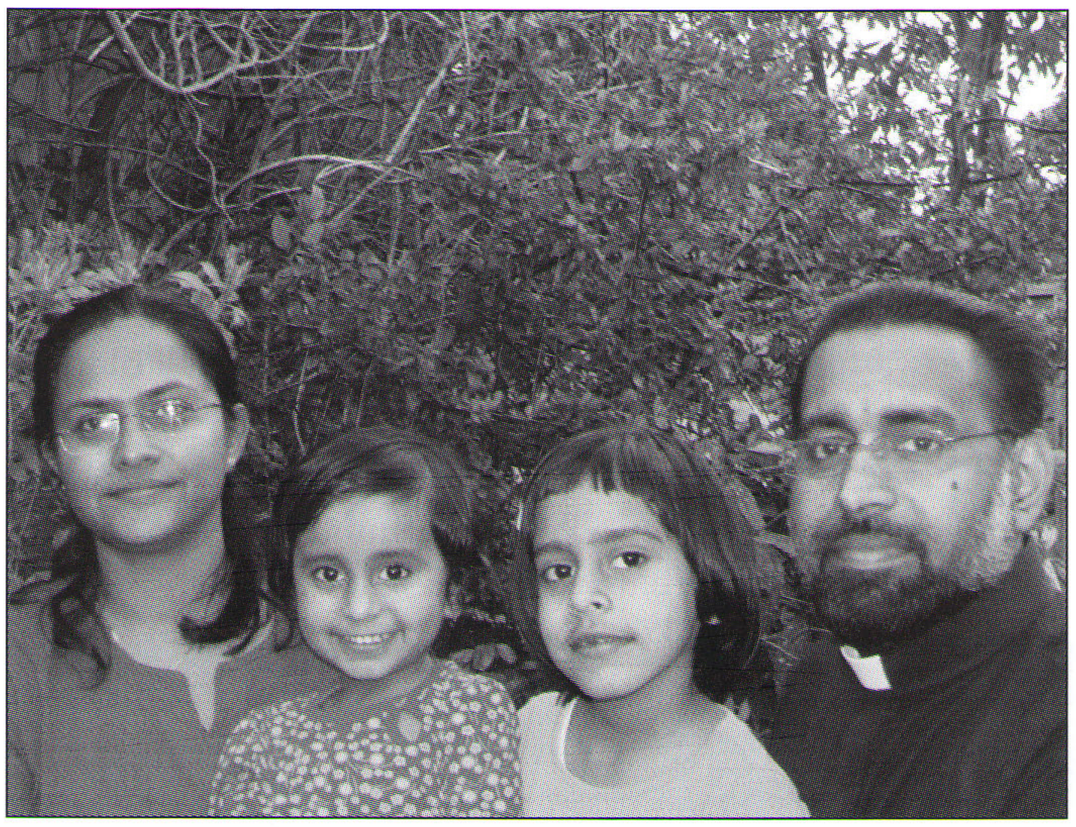
Rev. Biju S. Cheiran, Diocesan Secretary

Diocesan Council (2005-2008) Members with Coorilos Thirumeni and Biju Achen

L to R (back): Thomas Easo, Mathew Verghese, Lal Varghese, Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos, Jason M. Thomas, Rev. T. S. Philip, T. A. Mathew, Rev. Alex P. John.

L to R (front): John C. Thomas, Kunjumol Cherian, Leelamma Thomas, Sara Philip, Cherian Philip, Rev. Biju S. Cherian.

REV. ABRAHAM MATHEW: St. Peter's East Area MTC, UK & St. Thomas MTC Bristol, UK



Mother Parish: Uthimoodu Mar Thoma Church

Education: B.A. St. Thomas, Kozhenchery; M.A. Agra College, Agra, U.P.

BD: United Theological College, Bangalore.

Year of Consecration: 2000

Positions held Before ordination: Youth chaplain–South Trvancore region; Student chaplain–Thiruvananthapuram; Asst. Secretary, Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam.

Parishes served: Vicar, Immanuel Mar Thoma Church Shoranur; Vicar, Mar Thoma Church, Malappuram; Vice president, Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam, Kkunnakulam-Malabar Diocese; Vicar, Mar Thoma Church, Jaipur, Rajasthan and Missionary, Rajasthan Mission.

Other responsibility: Full time student of Mission at Bristol University.

Wife: Elizabeth Abraham

Native Place: Bangalore/Hebbal Mar Thoma Church

Children: Arpitha (7 years); Namitha (3 years).

REV. BIJU PULIKOTTIL SIMON:

North East Region Youth Chaplain

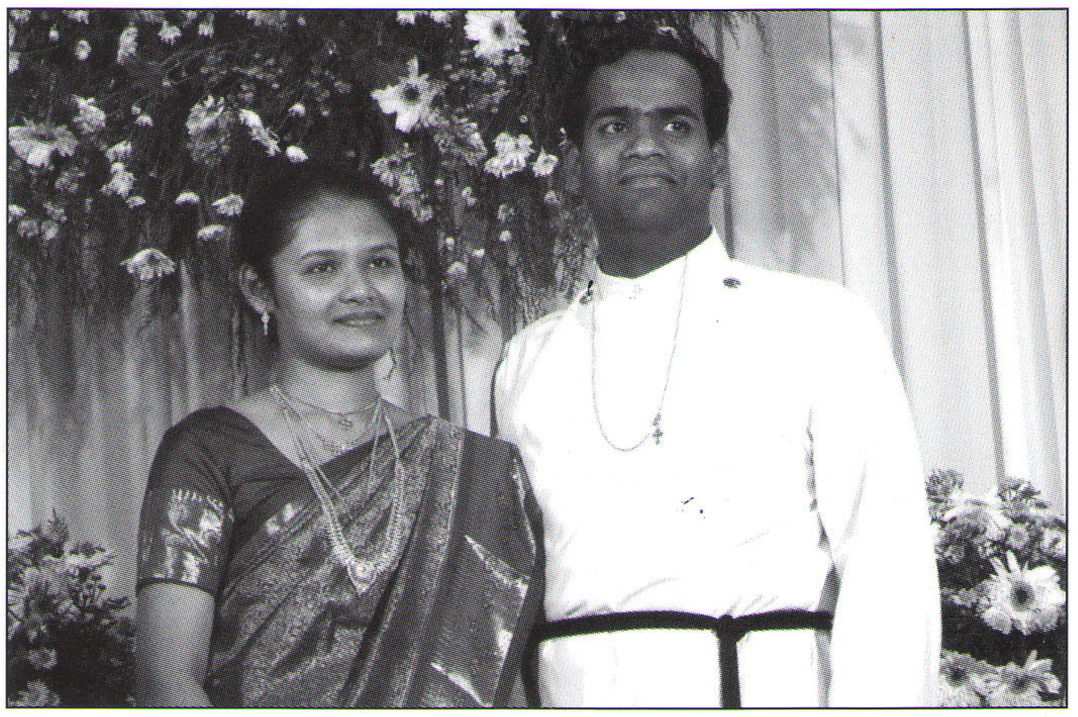
Mother Parish: St. Paul's Mar Thoma Church, Dallas, TX

Education: M.Div., B.S.

Parishes served: Kannur, Thalaserry

Date of ordination: May 5, 2007

Wife: Mereen Zachariah

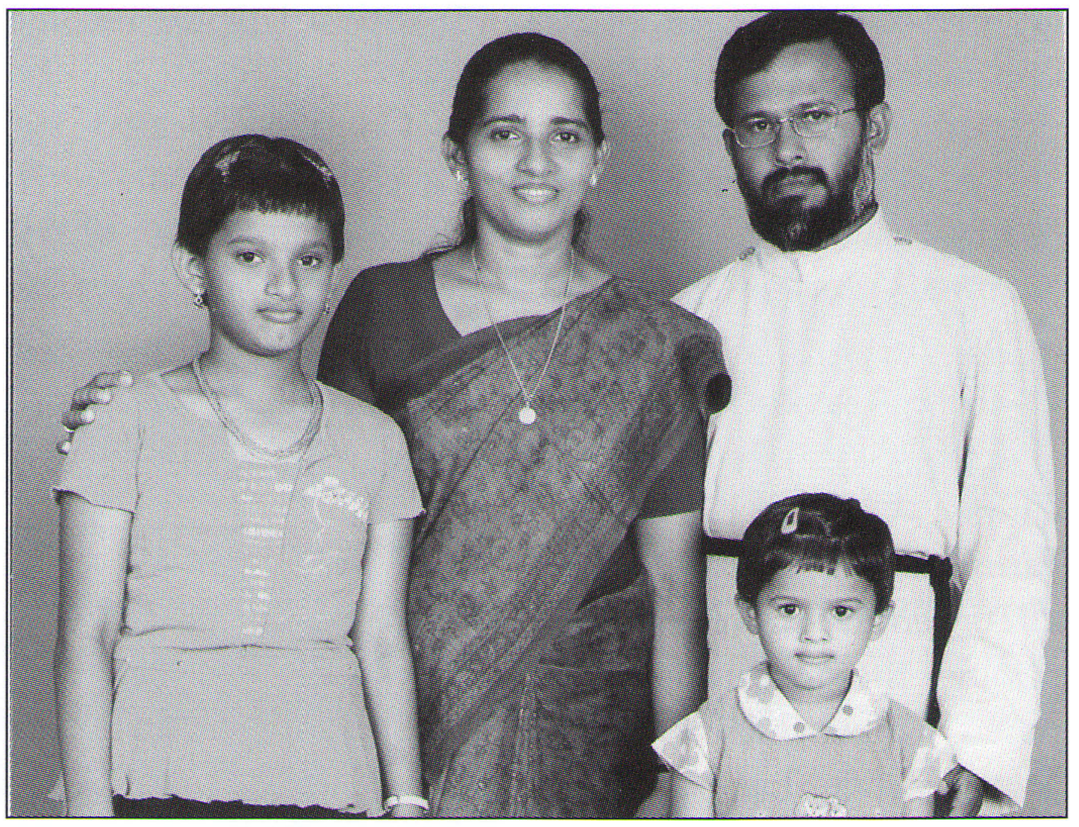


Education: M.Phil., M.A.

194 Bregman Ave, New Hyde Park, NY 11040
Tel: (Parsonage): **516-437-0425**
E-Mail: bsimonachen@gmail.com

REV. GEORGE M KURUVILLA:

Bethel MTC, Philadelphia



Mother Parish: Manarcadu, Kottayam (Nazareth MTC, Thalappady)

Education: CMS College, Kottayam (B. A. Economics)

BD: MT Seminary, Kottayam

Year of Consecration: 1994

Parishes Served: Asst Vicar, MT Valiyapally, Chengannur; Vicar, Bethany MTC, Venmoney; St. Thomas MTC, Venmoney; St. George Salem MTC, Cheruvalloor; Vicar, MT Church, Jodhpur, Bikaner-Rajasthan; MT Church, Vikroli, Mumbai; Vicar, MT Christ Church, Vattakottal, Kumbanad; Bethel MTC, Paingalod, and Chaplain, Fellowship Hospital, Kumbanadu.

Wife: Sheeba George M.Sc.

Native Place: Kidangannoor

Children: Jyothis Anne George (10), 4th grade; Lydia Ann George (4), K.G.

Telephone: **215-725-9774**.

REV. JAISEN A. THOMAS:
Dallas Area Youth Chaplain

Mother Parish: Mar Thoma Church of Greater Washington. Grew up in Long Island, NY.
Presently: Richmond, Virginia.

B.S. Psychology – Virginia Commonwealth University

BD Education: Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam

Year of Consecration: August 2006

Churches Served: Ebenezer Mar Thoma Church, Othera – Assistant Vicar

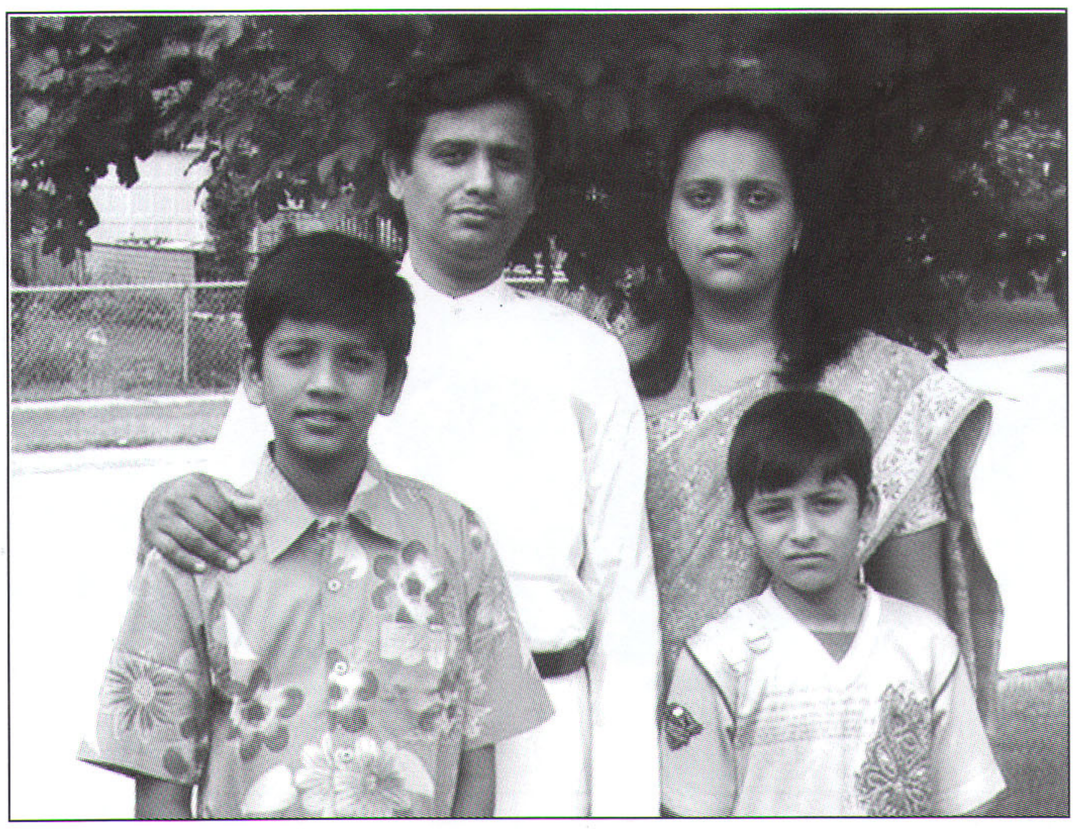
Wife: Sherin Ann Varghese

Native Place: Muscat, Oman [Pathanapuram, Kerala]

Education: M.B.B.S.

Telephone: (R) **972-495-5393**; (M) **214-604-6678**

REV. VARGHESE MATHEW: Bethel MTC Frankfort, IL & Youth Chaplain, Chicago Area



Mother Parish: Mar Thoma Syrian Church, Kalyan

Education: B.Com.; B.D.; DCPC;

Parishes served: Anaprampal & Pandenkerry, Arabi Arohanam & Kolithuttu, Manipal & Karkala Students Chaplain & Kudremukh Cong. & Nagra Mission; Vishranthvadi & Aurangabad; Karikattoor & Manamaruthy; Anchal Jerusalem & Vilakupara; Mathra (Punalur) & Vattomon Mission

Date of ordination: June 15, 1990 (Deacon) & July 06, 1990 (Kassesa)

Other Responsibility: Manager Immanuel MT School Vishrantvadi Pune; Local Manager ITC and Rubber Estate Anchal.

Wife: Bini Varghese

Children: Ashish Mathew Varghese (11 Yrs.); Anand Mathew Varghese (7 Yrs.)

509 E. Lincoln St., Mt. Prospect, IL 60056
Telephone: **1-847-749-3288**
E-Mail: rejikalyan@yahoo.com

SCHOLARSHIP GLORY FOR YOUNG SINGER

Kevin John s/o Mr. John M. and Saro in Barnet, London has been selected for a scholarship as a chorister at famous St. Pauls school in London. Kevin, aged 8 years is one of just four in the UK to receive such a prestigious award. Kevin is an active Sunday school child in St. Peters Mar Thoma Church, East London. He is the grand son of Mr. C. K. John and Mrs. Susamma John, Thazhemannil House, Thonniamala, Pathanamthitta. Congratulations.

Rev. Abraham Mathew, Vicar

MTC DALLAS, FARMERS BRANCH, YOUTH FELLOWSHIP RETREAT

The Youth Fellowship of the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch hosted their annual three-day retreat from June 20-22, 2008 at the Stonefort encampment in Tyler, Texas that was attended by approximately 140 youths from the parish. The apt theme of Transforming Unbelief: More than meets the I, based on the Gospel according to St. Mark 9:24, "I do believe; help my unbelief..." was expounded in the context of contemporary faith experience. Rev. Vinoy Daniel, Vicar, MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch led an interactive session addressing the doubts and issues of youth in relation to a foundation of faith and witness. The main talks led by the Southwest Region Youth Chaplain, Rev. Jaisen A. Thomas, analytically delved into the depth of faith that is inherent and indivisible in personal, community and Church relationship. The attendees were divided into small groups wherein further critical reflections and discussion led to more practical suggestions for faith witness. At the campsite, rope courses and games activities were organized for a time of fellowship and fun. Daily devotionals, dedication service and praise and worship sessions all provided a conducive environment for the spiritual upliftment and growth of our youth. The three-day retreat ended with Holy Communion service on Sunday. May God strengthen them to be ambassadors of faith and witness.

Rev. Jaisen A. Thomas, Dallas Area Youth Chaplain

The 26th Mar Thoma Family Conference UK & Europe

(Hosted by St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Bristol)

Dates: **8th, 9th and 10th August, 2008**

Venue: **High Leigh Conference Centre, Huddesdon**

Theme: **"Called; to heal....."** (2 Chronicles 7:14)

Leaders: **Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa** (*North America – Europe Diocese*)
Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mathew (*Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam*)
Rev. Dr. John Perumbalath (*Vicar, All Saints Church, Northfleet, Kent*
Director, Urban project, Rochester Diocese)

Sessions will be in Malayalam and English for the age group 30 years and above. There will be separate sessions for senior youth, youth, junior youth and children. There will be crèche facilities for the pre-school and below.

Pray.....Participate.....reflect.....renew

Rev. Abraham Mathew
President

Mr. Zachariah Abraham
General Convener.

ORLANDO MAR THOMA CONGREGATION, FLORIDA

First Communicants with Coorilos Thirumeni and Jose Achen.

This Congregation is one of the newest Congregations in this Diocese and it was formed on Feb 11th 2007 with a Holy Communion Service.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilose Episcopa, our Diocesan Bishop visited the Orlando Mar Thoma Congregation for the first time on Sunday 4th November 2007.

Thirumeni celebrated the Holy Communion at the Episcopal Church of Resurrection, Longwood. Four children received the First Communion during the occasion. This was a memorable event in the life of these children, parents and the Congregation. A large number of people from Orlando and nearby places attended the service and the dinner afterwards.

Thomas Mathew (Jeemon), Secretary

MR. CHERIAN K. CHERIAN HONORED!!

Rev. T. Johnson, Vicar, St. Mark's MTC, Tampa, FL, honoring Mr. Cherian K. Cherian by awarding him with a plaque.

Mr. Cherian K. Cherian, a member of St. Mark's Mar Thoma Church, Tampa, Florida, has been honored with the 2007 Kerala Sahitya Academy award for his ***"Thiranjedutha Kavithakal"***. The announcement of this prestigious award was made by M. Mukundan, president of the Sahitya Academy at Thirssur (Kerala) on April 22, 2008. The award comprises of Rs. 20,000.00 cash award, a Plaque and a 'Prasamsi Pathram', was presented to him in May of 2008. ***"Thiranjedutha Kavithakal"*** is an anthology of Mr. Cherian's selected poems that was first published in 2004 by Kerala Kavitha and Prabhat Book House.

Mr. Cherian began writing Malayalam poems from 1961 while he was working in Delhi at the Udyog Bhavan, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India. He has written over 300 poems, 40 short stories and a number of features and articles in major Malayalam publications like Mathrubhoomi, Kalakaumidi and Bhashaposhini. He received his initial inspiration in writing from his father late T. P. Cherian, who in addition to being a high school head master was author of children's books, and was known during his days for his Bala Sahitya Krithikal.

Mr. Cherian blossomed as a poet in the early 1960's during his days at Delhi where he was an active member of the renowned Delhi Kerala Club Sahithee Sakhyam. Among his contemporaries at the Sakhyam were literary figures like O. V. Vijayan, Sugathakumari, VKN, O. M. Anujan, Kakkanadan, and M. P. Narayana Pillai. The turning point in Mr. Cherian's life as a poet came about when late N. V. Krishna Warier published his poem ***"Thuyilunarthal"*** in the Mathrubhoomi weekly. In 1984, the Mahatma Gandhi University selected Mr. Cherian's collection of poems, ***"Kusanum, Levanum, Kuchelanum"*** as a textbook for BA degree program. Another well-known work of Mr. Cherian is ***"Palazhi Madhanam"*** published in 1990.

Mr. Cherian is also the recipient of a number of awards including the Viswa Deepa Award by Late Puthncavu Mathen Tharakan. In 1996, the Mar Thoma Church recognized Mr. Cherian's contributions to Malayalam Literature by awarding the **'Sahitya Award'**, which was presented, to him by the Late Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitan at the Sabha Prathindhi Mandalam.

Mr. Cherian hails from Kutticattu family in Kottayam. He is married to Aniamma and they have three children, Babloo, Kavita and Baba, and four grand children. They have been residents of New York since 1973, and were active members of the Mar Thoma Parishes there, most recently the Long Island Mar Thoma Church. He had also served our diocese as diocesan council member in the early 90's. They moved to Tampa, Florida in 2005 and are currently members of the St. Mark's Mar Thoma Church, Tampa, Florida.

A public meeting was organized on Sunday, June 22, 2008 in which Mr. Cherian was honored by St. Mark's Mar Thoma Church for his achievement.

IMMIGRATION

Justice is being served,

to the Asian Community

Lal Varghese

Attorney at Law

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

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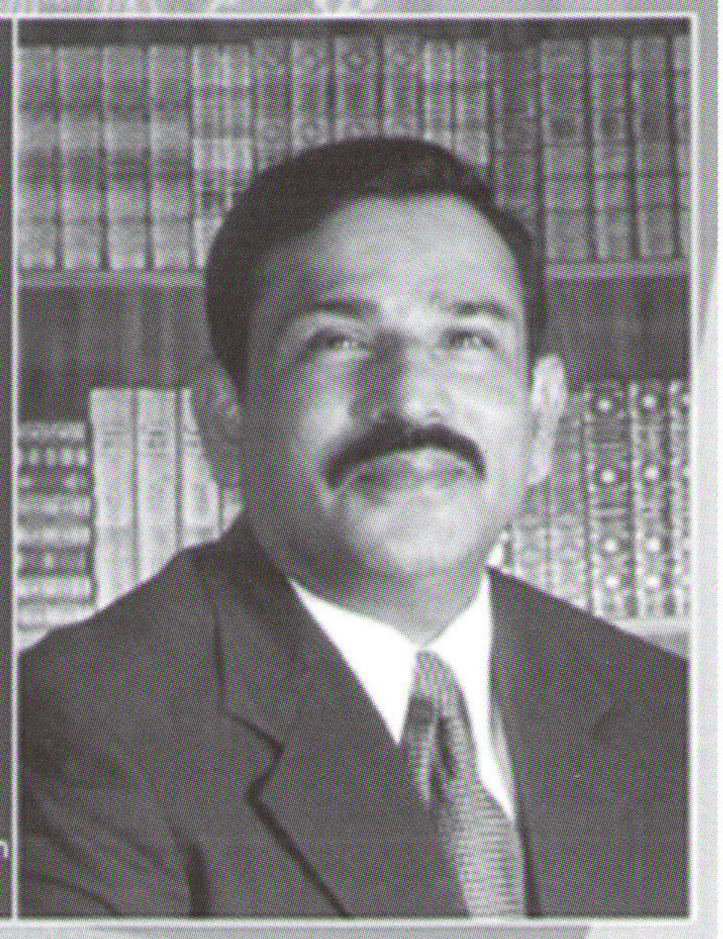

(972) 788 - 0777 (Main), (972) 788-1555 (Direct)
Fax (972) 556-1109, E-Mail: attylal@aol.com
www.indiaimmigrationusa.com

Law Offices of Lal Varghese, PLLC
1111 Kinwest Parkway, Suite 120,
Las Colinas, Irving, Texas 75063-3409

SHILPI STUDIOS.COM

MATRIMONIAL

Marthomite parents invite marriage proposal for their daughter 27 years old, 5'2", God fearing. family oriented, US citizen with degree in computer science and MBA, currently working as Data Manager in a renowned hospital. We are looking for a God fearing and family oriented Marthomite boy (27 to 30) residing in USA. Persons on H1, L1, Student visa are also welcome. If interested, please contact with details and recent picture at mvarghese08@gmail.com

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Proposals invited for a Mar Thomite girl aged 25,164 cm, educated in Trivandrum, Delhi, Bangalore, Toronto, now pursuing her M Pharm (pharmaceutics) final year in Delhi University, parents Mar Thoma Clergy, now in New Delhi, settled in Kochi, from equally qualified and God-fearing Mar Thoma boys. Phone- 011-29255933 Email: tsthazhayil@hotmail.com

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Marthomite parents invite marriage proposal for 24-year-old daughter in final year of MD program in the United States. She was brought up and educated in the US with strong moral, spiritual, and family values. Seeking a professionally qualified boy with compatible qualities, interests, qualifications and background. Marthomite, CSI or Jacobite, age 24-28 preferred. If interested please contact us with details and recent picture. Email: kerala310@yahoo.com

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Marthomite parents invite proposal for their son 29 years 5'10" tall Medical doctor doing residency from parents of Godfearing professionally qualified girls with good family background. Please respond with recent photograph and biodata to: revijose@gmail.com

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Parents settled in USA invite proposals from christian families for their son, 31 years old, graduate from a well-known law school, currently working for an international management consulting company. Please forward inquiries to: GMC1225@hotmail.com

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Marthomite parents invite marriage proposals for their daughter, who was born in the U.S. on August 15, 1978. She is a M.D., who finished residency in July of 2007. She is God fearing, affectionate and very family oriented. She is beautiful, fair and 5' 7" tall. We are looking for a suitable God fearing gentleman. If interested, please respond with a recent photograph and bio-data to: luke_muttathu@yahoo.com

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Marthomite parents invite marriage proposals for their daughter 29 years old, 5'1", Pharm.D. (Doctor of Pharmacy), born and raised in U.S.A., God fearing, and family oriented. We are looking for God fearing boys with good christian family background. Please respond with a recent photograph and bio-data to: matrimonial1295@hotmail.com

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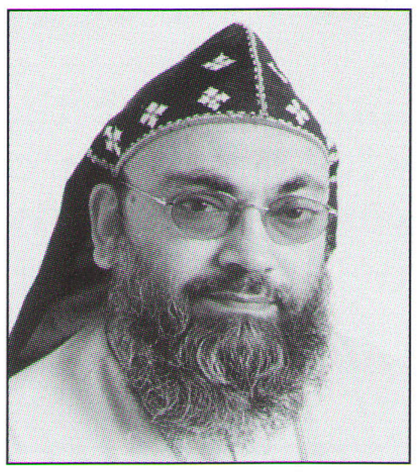
Marthomite parents settled in USA invite proposals for their daughter, born and raised in India outside Kerala, 24 yrs 5' 2" US citizen, God-fearing and family oriented, Registered Nurse, BSN from US University. We are looking for professionally qualified God-fearing boy with good Christian family background. If interested please respond with a recent photograph and bio-data to jacobcoal@yahoo.com

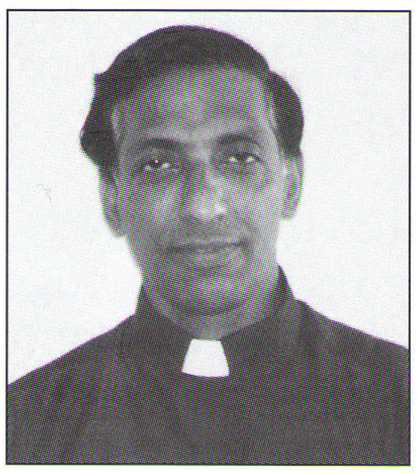
DIOCESAN COUNCIL MEMBERS

Rev. Biju S. Cherian, Secretary



Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos
Episcopa
Diocesan Bishop

Chacko Mathew, Treasurer



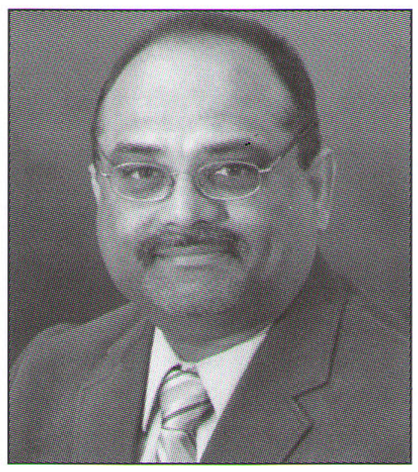
Rev. P. J. Varghese, NY

Varughese P. Varughese, NY

Abraham C. Thadathel, NY

Gigi Tom, NY

Ashley George, NJ



Dr. Mathew T. Thomas, D.C.

Eipe Varghese, IL

Annamma Mathew, TX

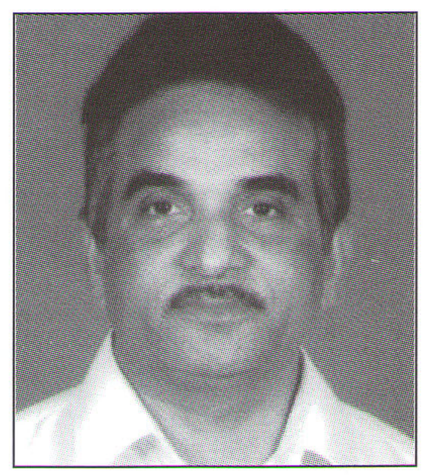
Aswathi Mathew, TX

Elizabeth John, TX

Betty Vattakunnel, TX

Mathew Koshy, Alberta, Canada

Samuel T. Thomas, ON, Canada



Dr. George Mathew, UK

DEEPU JOSEPH, an active member of the Sehion Mar Thoma Church, Dallas, was called to eternity on June 12, 2008. He was born on October 17, 1968 in Alapuzha, Kerala to K. J. Joseph and Daisy Joseph of the Kollamala family. He completed his studies at Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Faridabad, Rourkerla and Thrissur. After completing his studies in mechanical engineering in 1990, he taught as a guest lecturer at Government Engineering College, Thrissur, his Alma Mater. He completed his master's degree in Management Information Systems at Texas Tech University, Lubbock. During his career, he worked at Open Systems Group, Keane, Inc., American Airlines, Verizon and as lastly as Managing Consultant at IBM, Dallas. He had a gregarious personality with a zest for life, music and the Gospel. Above all, he had a zealous love for the Lord Jesus Christ. In 1995, he married Rebecca, daughter of Thomas Jacob and Susan Thomas Jacob of the Pariyarathu family, Chennai. He has three children: Ruth, Joshua and Jacob. He is also survived by his sister Dr. Deepa Elizabeth Mathew (England) and brother Dilip George Joseph (Kollam). His life was touched by illness in June 2007 and he went through a year of treatments and negative diagnoses. It was a journey that would have shaken anyone with a lesser faith but he had built his foundation on the Rock—our Lord Jesus Christ. He has merely joined the cloud of witnesses after having run his race well and with endurance. In his own words—'Despite what the doctors said, I shall not fade away by the Grace of God. My strength shall come from the Lord God of Hosts and I shall come roaring back behind the strength of my older brother, the Lion of Judah who is everything to me'. Memorial and funeral services were held at the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch on June 20th and 21st and he was laid to rest on June 21st at Flower Mound Cemetery, Flower Mound, Texas.

1968 – 2008

Rev. James Thomas, Vicar

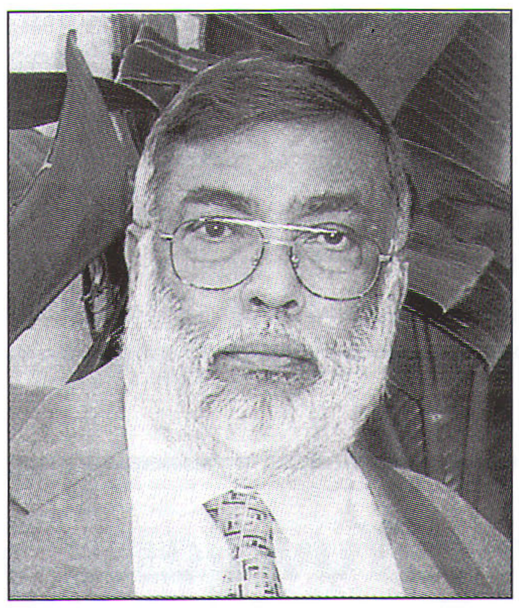
MARIAMMA KUNJACHAN was born on August 5, 1923 in Kattanam, Kerala to the (late) Mr. Cheriyan and Mrs. Annamma Cheriyan. Mrs. Kunjachan is the second of four children. Mrs. Kunjachan was married to the (late) Mr. Philipose Kunjachan in 1940 and settled in Cheppad. She was a loving housewife and dedicated her life to the family and community. She had strong faith in God and used every opportunity to share the Gospel with others.

Mrs. Kunjachan first came to the United States in 1984 and returned. After her husband's death in 1990 she came back and stayed with her daughter Mrs. Ponnamma Kurian. She was a member of the The Mar Thoma Church Staten Island.

1923 – 2008

For the last three years she was in the Clove Lake HCRC. She is survived by her four daughters, Mrs. Aleyamma Mathew; Mrs. Ponnamma Kurian; Mrs. Kunjamma Thomas; and Mrs. Babykutty Varghese. She has fourteen grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

B. K. JOHN (Babychen) was born on January 25, 1942 in Kottayam, Kerala. He was the third son of the seven children of the (late) K. J. Eapen and Mariamma Eapen, Kannimattam House, Kottayam. After his studies he worked at Rourkela Steel Plant from 1962 to 1974.



1942 – 2008

He was married to Valsamma John in 1968. They migrated to the United States in 1974. He worked as an inspector of the New York City Board of Education.

He was an active member of the The Mar Thoma Congregation of Greater New York. Later, he was one of the founding members of the The Mar Thoma Church Staten Island and lately Tabor Mar Thoma Church, Staten Island. He served these parishes in various capacities as Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Assembly Member and was very active in all the activities of the church and a very generous donor.

Babychen will be always remembered for his love and kindness. He was a very compassionate person always willing to help others. His radiant smile, sense of humor and artistic talents as a cartoonist, photographer, and a brilliant craftsman "India Clock" maker and gardener will always linger in the minds of those who knew him. He was actively involved with FOKANA, the Kerala Samajam and Malayalee Association of Staten Island.

He is survived by his wife, Valsamma; two daughters, Vinu and Viju; son, Vinny, and three grandchildren.

THE MAR THOMA CHURCH STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK

EPISCOPAL VISIT/ANNUAL CONVENTION/PARISH DAY

Coorilos Thirumeni giving the Parish Day Message.

Our Diocesan Bishop the Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa has visited our parish during 26th through 29th June, 2008. During his visit he met with all organizations of the Church and reviewed their activities and encouraged them to be witnesses in the community where we are living. Thirumeni has conducted house visits as well. The presence of Thirumeni throughout the Annual Parish Convention was a special blessing for our Parish. After the Holy Communion Service on 29th June, 2008 Thirumeni inaugurated the Fund Raising Raffle. He has congratulated all members of the Parish for their selfless participation in the smooth running of the Parish.

Coorilos Thirumeni inaugurating the Fund Raising Raffle by giving the first ticket to Vicar, Rev. Sabu Thomas at the Parish Day function.

Retired Professor David Abraham of the Mar Thoma Christian College, Chengannur was the guest speaker of our Annual Parish Convention during 26th through 29th June, 2008. With simple but deep thoughts he has revived the participants in knowing the **Identity, Entity** and **Destiny** of each believer. On the final day, quoting 1 Peter 1:17 & 22, he reminded us to learn to **Live, Learn** and **Love** in our day to day living.

Rev. Sabu Thomas, Vicar

X Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam National Conference

The Vicar and members of the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch Yuvajana Sakhyam warmly welcome you to the 10th Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam Conference of the Diocese of North America and Europe . The Conference will be held from August 22 to 24, 2008 at Ramada DFW airport South hotel in Irving, Texas. We request your prayerful participation and support to make this event a great success.

***THEME:* Dare to be Different**

***DATE:* August 22-24, 2008**

***VENUE:* Ramada DFW Airport South**

4440 W. Airport Freeway • Irving, TX 75062 • Telephone: (972) 399-1010

***CONFERENCE LEADERS:* His Lordship, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos**

Rev. Biju S. Cherian, Diocesan Secretary • **Prof. David Abraham,** Christian College, Chengannur

For more information please contact:

Rev. Vinoy Daniel, *Vicar:* **(972) 939-0699**

Mr. James Abraham, *Convener:* **(972) 494-0732**

NATIVE AMERICAN MISSION IN OKLAHOMA

VBS for children of the Choctaw Native Americans in Oklahoma was held June 2–6, 2008. Rev. Jaisen A. Thomas, Youth Chaplain (Dallas), Rev. Mathew Skariah, Youth Chaplain (Philadelphia), and Mr. O. C. Abraham were the volunteer team leaders for this year's summer mission trip. Approximately thirty-five Native American children attended this year's VBS. The theme of the VBS was 'Beach Blast'. Rev. Jaisen A. Thomas and Rev. Mathew Skariah led the main sessions and talked mainly about 'faith' in relationship with God and 'forgiveness' in our relationship with our brethren. Crafts, games, and a video presentation about affirming our faith added color to the VBS. The team from the MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch was led by the Mission Coordinator, Mr. Abraham Mathew.

The Native American children along with several adults attended the VBS held at Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch from July 3–5, 2008, and they also attended the Holy Communion service held in Malayalam on July 6. They were all presented with Bibles after the Holy Communion service by Rev. Vinoy Daniel, Vicar of MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch. For those who could not come to Dallas, Bibles were handed over to the team to be presented to them. The Native American members who attended the Malayalam Holy Communion service said it was really a touching experience in their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ to worship Him along with other fellow believers.

Abraham Mathew, Mission Coordinator
MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch

TRINITY MAR THOMA CHURCH, HOUSTON, TEXAS

FIRST COMMUNICANTS WITH COORILOS THIRUMENI AND M. J. THOMASKUTTY ACHEN

Editorial

According to United States Department of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics, US ranks number one in the world, in reported cases of rapes, robbery, and violent theft. These numbers and percentages are calculated based on population density. It is ironic that the richest Christian nation has to deal with such shameful facts. A number of cities around the world are listed as "worse cities in regards to crime", in the same report and comparison data is provided. One report stated that in New York State more than 90% of people doing time for a drug offense are non-whites. There are more blacks and Hispanics locked up in prisons than those attending the state university system. These numbers are staggering and on the rise. Growing nations such as India, China, and African continents face similar problems although the statistics are often held back due to political and social pressures.

We are moving along a culture that is slowly growing thin by eroding family values and fear of God. History reveals that human civilization evolved with the development of a few single towns which later became metropolis – Babylon, Nineveh and Tarsis. At later points these city states gave birth to the earliest nations – Assyria, Egypt, Israel, Chaldea, etc. All along the history of these nations, God was given the utmost ownership and the prophets and "men of God" oversaw the actions and dealings of the citizens. Punishment was inevitable in cases of disobedience and criminal actions, and the wrath of the Lord fell on the whole nation. The current situation of mounting evils points to a world that is disintegrating and breaking apart. Hopeless future attracts youths to evil behaviors and actions out of frustration. In Deuteronomy it is mentioned "Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

A good percentage of the current residents of the United States are "strangers" to this land in many ways. While the primary residents of the land welcomed strangers, the so called strangers started building fences, cutting off interpersonal and community relations. That probably created insecurity which led to defensive and offensive acts. As we hear in the song "the oxen knows its owner's grassland, the donkey knows its master's properties," but humans are lost and in search of peace. While struggling for prosperity, we lost the vision and many of us are wandering in the wilderness. "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels" (Proverbs 1: 5). Are we listening to the tunes of time? Are we seeking the wise counsel? As stated in the Book, "For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them" (Proverbs 1:32). Let us not turn away, and let us not gather for vain.

Messenger committee welcomes our Valiya Metropolitan and our Metropolitan to this diocese with the warmest of feelings. Let us pray for the continued growth of the Mar Thoma Church which has always adhered to its motto of worship and mission and helped multitudes in spiritual and social needs.

Messenger praises the activities of our youth fellowship wing, which is pioneering the Mexico Mission project and other mission projects within and outside the US. Congratulations to Rev. Biju S. Cherian, who is appointed as Bishop's/Diocesan secretary, as of April 2008. Wishing Achen and family our whole hearted support and prayers. Congratulations to the Diocesan Yuvajana sakhyam and its organizers for turning the platinum jubilee year into an year of celebrations and goodwill.

I take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to the Achens who have left the US after their 3 year tenure and also welcome the new Vicars and the Youth Chaplains.

Eapen Daniel

" Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labour in vain".

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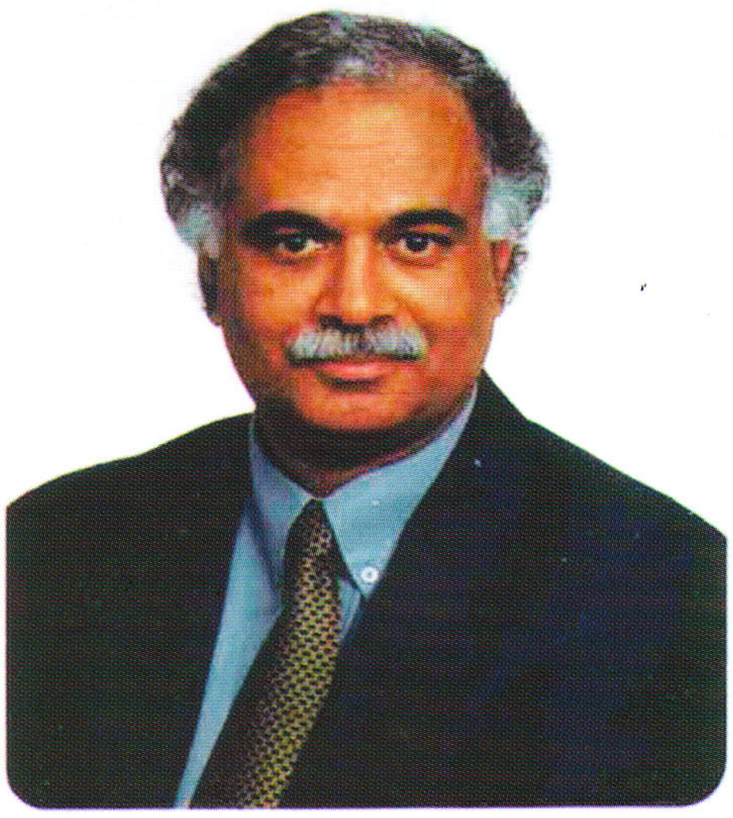

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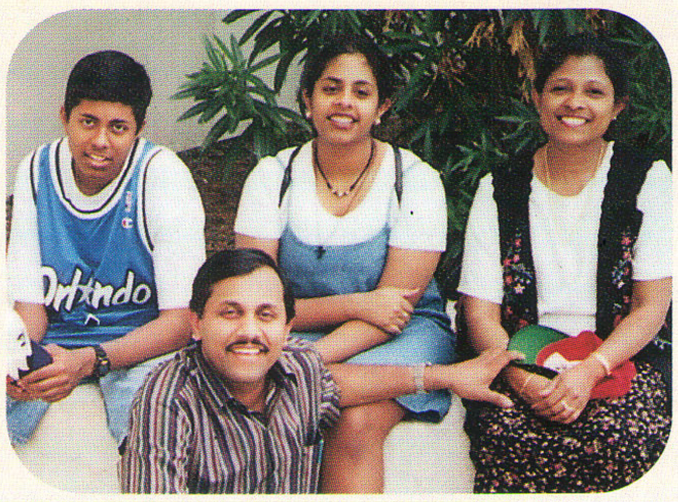

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