



MAR THOMA

# MESSENGER

A PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

October 2009



**"Church's Outreach Ministry,  
Global Vision"**

**Diaspora  
Issue**



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## EDITORIAL BOARD

**Diocesan Secretary**  
**Rev. Vinoy Daniel**  
516-377-3311  
Fax: 516-377-3322  
marthoma@aol.com

### Associate Editors:

**Rev. Jaisen Thomas** [Dallas]  
(972) 495-5393  
revjathomas@yahoo.com

**Lal Varghese, Esq.** [Dallas]  
(972) 874-7909 attylal@aol.com

**Dr. P. V. Cherian** [Ann Arbor, MI]  
(734) 429-2808  
pvcherian@yahoo.com

**Shirley Chackalamannil** [NJ]  
(908) 832-5611  
schackalamannil@comcast.net

### Chief Editor

**Eapen Daniel**, Philadelphia  
215-364-5459  
eapen4@yahoo.com or  
eapen4@hotmail.com

**Elias Abraham** [Baltimore]  
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nancygm@rogers.com

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## MANAGING COMMITTEE

**Rev. Mathew K. Punnoose** (UK)  
(011-44) 208-859-5111  
revkovoov@yahoo.com

**Chacko Mathew** (NY)  
*Diocesan Treasurer*  
(516) 364-1854  
mathewc@hpd.nyc.gov

### Manager

**James T. Philip** (NY)  
(718) 761-1295  
(718) 761-1723 (Fax)  
jtphilip@hotmail.com

**T. A. Mathew** (Houston)  
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tamathew@hotmail.com

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*Manager*  
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susanjl@sympatico.ca

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(845) 268-3532  
gigitomelr@aol.com

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(718) 987-5108  
koshyp@verizon.net

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annamathew254@yahoo.com

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(832) 488-0238  
bijusmathew@yahoo.com

**Samuel T. Thomas** (Canada)  
(905) 279-1241  
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## ADVISORY BOARD

**Rev. C. K. Koshy** [Dallas]  
(972) 226-0976  
pallathachen@yahoo.com

**Dr. Suresh Samuel** [UK]  
(44) 208-205-5992  
Sureshshamini@aol.com

**Benny Mathew** [NY]  
(914) 378-8028  
bennymathew@optonline.net

**Sunny Abraham** [Philadelphia]  
(610) 876-8011  
sunny.abraham@comcast.net

**Zachariah Koshy** [Houston]  
(281) 437-4020  
punnuran@earthlink.net

**George Philip** [Washington, D.C.]  
(301) 549-2421

### Websites:

**Diocese of North America**  
www.marthomanae.com

**Mar Thoma Church**  
www.marthomasyranchurch.org

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Cover: 20th Year of Episcopal Consecration of  
Mar Athanasius, Mar Theodosius and Mar Coorilos

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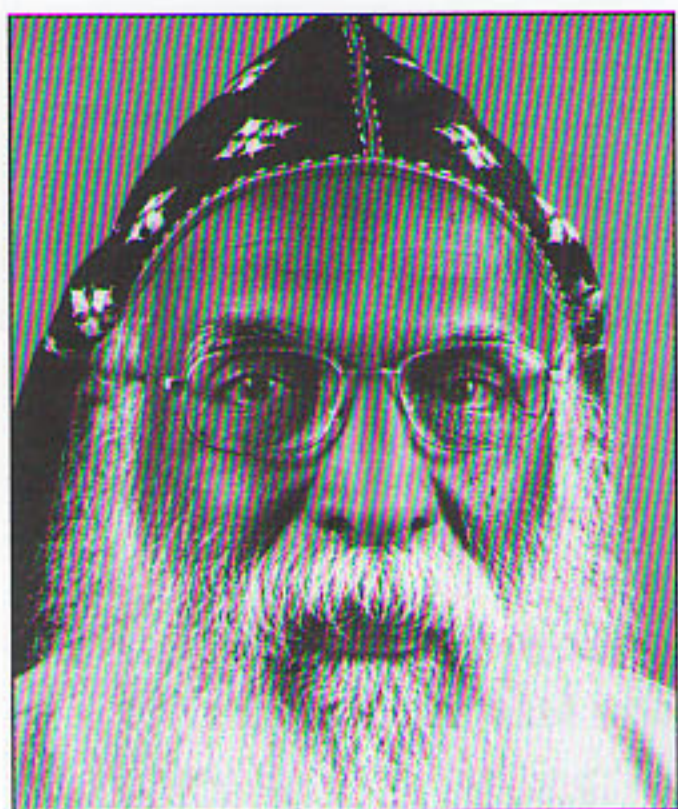
### Mailing Addresses:

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

**Eapen Daniel**  
165 Springflower Court  
Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

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

# Message from the Metropolitan



Dearly beloved in the Lord,

The golden month of Onam has just passed. Keralites did not get the Monsoon as expected and the Northern Kerala suffered much loss from the floods. Under the supervision of the Kunnampulam-Malabar Diocese Episcopa, through CARD, the Mar Thoma Church was able to give financial aid from our relief fund to the people of this area. Now, during the period of North Eastern Monsoon, Kerala people are under panic owing to the sudden changes in the climatic conditions. The hurricanes that formed in the Pacific already caused much destruction in China, Japan, and Taiwan. Our parishes in India and abroad must be vigilant to collect more money in order to increase our relief fund in this context. Let us not forget that we should have sufficient funds to extend our hands of support and care in the true Christian spirit at the time of crucial catastrophe.

Another misfortune that our people face today is the threat of H1N1 flu. This rare sickness is becoming the cause of many deaths in our land. With a world that is brought closer by information technology and easier transportation methods, no place is fully safeguarded against possible outbreaks or other security threats.

The field of education is still in a very unstable state. The political parties and their student wings must deviate from their selfish interests. They should strive to be a part of the purification process, rather than becoming instruments of destruction and loss of values.

About the Mandalam meeting, I hope and pray that the representatives should behave with a sense of respect and humility. The members of the Mandalam must always hold high regard for the vision of the Church. They should involve with greater sense of dignity and discipline. They should use this platform to submit real blue prints which may heighten the Christian vocation of our Church.

Onam celebrations have just ended. Our hearts get into the beautiful experience of the real Onam through the lines of the poet who wrote:

The flowers of mango trees when the dew drops fall,  
The ripe fruits' smile when Summer soars,  
The blessed boat races in the rain dipped days,  
All together, we have in Onam's ringing tones.

Haven't we lost today the sweetness and taste of the songs of Onam, which we, in yester years, sang in true brotherhood and love? On the first Sunday of September, we meditated our true master, Jesus, who did rule over the evil spirits. His teaching method was very convincing. He used to elicit answers from the person who asked Him questions. And the person, after answering, will return with satisfaction and faith. Jesus never prepared texted answers earlier. Everything turns out through dialogs and conversations. This happens to be the relishing beauty of the gospel. The Sevika Sanghom Day is celebrated in September. The Church should be ready to give responsible positions to women. God created man and woman with different talents. Understanding and acknowledging this truth, the Church should be prepared to give women deserving posts. We have to remember that we do not get our rights by force, but we get them by the grace of God. It is time we deeply think of God's blessings and how we can remain selfless without having the greed to attain power and position.

On September 20th, we meditated on the political responsibilities of the people of God. September 27th is the Senior Citizen Sunday. Let them share their wisdom and experience with the young on that day. On 27th, we also celebrate the formation of the Church of South India. Let us pray for the elimination of all the problems that exist in that Church. The Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists' Association Day is observed in early October. The week long programs must enable the parishes to equip themselves for the visions of the gospel and to make those visions reach the populace.

"There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure, rather than lovers of God- having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them." (2 Timo. 3:1-5).

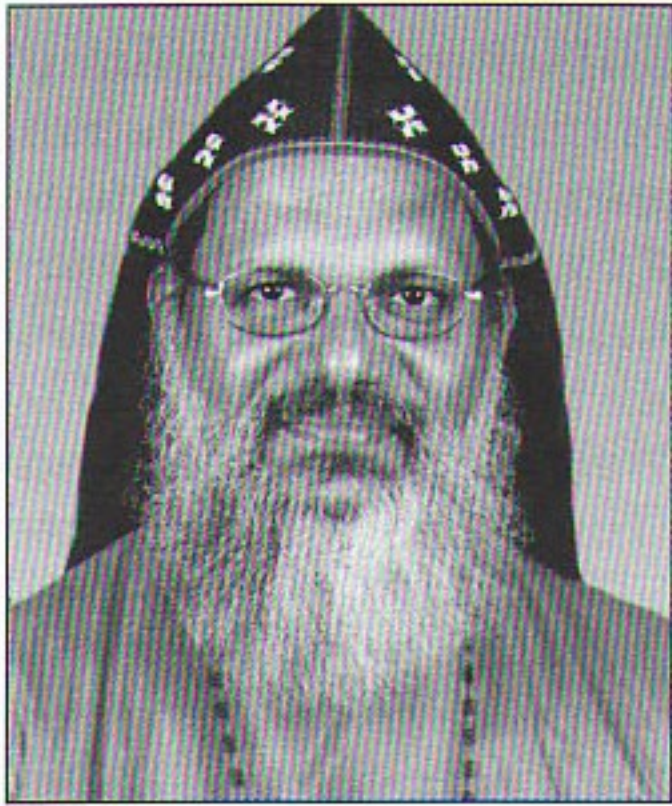
"Remain in what you have learned and have become convinced of" (2 Timo.3:14).

Grace be with you all. Grace be with you all.

Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan

Translated and Reprinted from Sabha Tharaka

# Message from the Diocesan Bishop



Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings to all of you in the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

This October issue of the Mar Thoma Messenger comes to your hand after the meeting of our Sabha Mandalam. By the Grace of God, all the meetings went smoothly and the Sabha Mandalam could transact all the items in the agenda. The official information of the decisions will come to you through a circular kalpana of our Metropolitan. A good number of our representatives from this Diocese attended the Mandalam meetings. They might have given individual reports in their respective parishes.

Our Metropolitan in the Presidential Address touched upon issues such as: Human Rights, Mission and Ministry of the Church, our Ecumenical Relations, Economic Recession and Human Responsibilities, Politics of Everyday Life,

Social Responsibilities of the Church, Ecological concerns, and witness of the laity in Gospel communications. I urge all our members in the Diocese to read it when it appears in our Sabha Tharaka, our official publication of the Church that is to reach each family. May I ask every member of the Church to subscribe and read it regularly.

The study theme of the Sabha Mandalam is 'Paradigm Shift in Mission: A Historical Appraisal of the Mission of the Church'. This is a study booklet prepared by six scholars. This was presented at the Sabha Mandalam. This is a theme chosen for a yearlong study in our parishes and organizations. All our Aghens and lay leaders are requested to make use of it in our various study sessions. This study is more relevant in the context of the centenary celebrations of the World Missions Conference of Edinburg in 1910. May the year 2010 be a year of mission for our Diocese as well. Let us remember that Jesus Christ came to us as the message and messenger from God. We, the ambassadors of Christ in the world are also called to be the message and messenger.

The topic selected for this Mar Thoma Messenger is: Church's Outreach Ministry, Global Vision. This is very significant for us. Our Church has its roots in Kerala and we trace our origin to the coming of the Apostle to India around 52 AD. Through the centuries God has made us a diaspora community to establish churches in different continents. Today, Mar Thoma Church is a Global Church. What we need today is a Global Vision. May the Holy Spirit empower us to catch the vision and carry out the ministry.

Church is a called out community; called out by God to be God's people in the world and to be a blessing to the entire inhabited world. Many a times we forget this truth and become parochial and introverts in establishing ourselves in places where God has placed us. These are required to some extent when we realize that we are immigrant groups here, but this is not to insulate ourselves from the rest of the world. We need to root ourselves wherever God has placed us and grow in God's grace with a global vision so that we will be a blessing to the generations. The ministry of the Church is to be carried out not in isolation, but with ecumenical living and with a team spirit.

The New Testament symbols we have about the Church are light, salt, and leaven. All these have significance only when they get related to the things around them. The Church is not to be a light under a bushel, but a city on a hilltop. How are we going to be the real church, instead of an institution? Being the Church is a process. This is to enter into a constant dialogue with the neighborhood. Shall we, in all our local churches, try to grow and reach out with the God-given ministry? I wish our Kaisthana Samithi and Edavaka Sanghom of each parish takes this dimension seriously and find out a very relevant and meaningful neighborhood ministry for each parish. Can we read the signs of the time?

The Diocese of North America and Europe had its existence here for about 40 years now. The first immigrants from our Church came here much earlier than that. It will be good to find out the percentage of our members who are locally born and brought up. We have children and grandchildren who have local citizenship. How can they ignore the various immigrant groups and the natives of the country? Jesus Christ said, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven". Mar Thoma Church has the uniqueness of reaching out to the less fortunate, despised and the marginalized. The Spirit of the Lord has taken us to cater to the needs of the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, stranger, imprisoned, and the like as we read in Mat. 25: 21-46. The Church can be the Church only by a regular and meaningful interaction with them. I am glad that the Youth Fellowship

members of our Diocese in certain areas are very enthusiastic in reaching out to the native people with this outreach ministry. We can certainly discover new paradigms of mission by this proven engagement and it can raise signs and symbols of the Kingdom of God in our living world.

Church is basically a missionary community. Its mission is found by relating herself with other communities. The community of fishermen in Mexico is one among them. It is an attempt of our Diocese to reach out to a community that thirsts for development. The Mexico Mission of our Diocese needs more attention these days as it requires sustainable participatory development. I confess that I was not able to concentrate this year as much as I wanted, as my concentration was on visiting the parishes of the Diocese. Yet, I could go over to the field to understand the situation. It is the world that sets the agenda for mission when we respond to the world situation in the spirit of Christ. The subcommittees that were formed did a good job in visiting the field, meeting the people, and identifying the needs. There are certain matters that need our immediate attention:

1. We need personnel to live and work there. The local people speak Spanish and therefore the persons working there should be conversational with both English and Spanish.
2. We need members among us who will fund, the mission work regularly with their might. This is to be an ongoing ministry.
3. We require a good capital fund for the Infrastructure Development. This can be a one-time commitment.
4. There are to be sponsors who will regularly support the education of the children growing up there.
5. Trainers are necessary to bring the people to grow as self-supporting people.
6. We are ministering to a community and therefore the community has to learn the fundamental values that will sustain them in their community living. This has to come through spiritual nourishment. Our desire is to be like that of St. Paul who said: I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you....Galatians 4:19.

We are at the threshold of a new year. It has its challenges and possibilities. We need to prioritize our agendas. When we live in a world of consumerism and in a culture of competition, Church has a different angle of functioning by committing, caring, sharing, and participating with the people to move through the way of the cross of Christ. Church will thus become a dynamic and creative presence in the world always finding new dimensions of witness. Here we need new ways of seeking, new commitment and new interpretation of our mission as we enter into a new year. This would require a reconstruction of our mission activities in 2010 to be the witness of the risen and living Lord Jesus Christ.

May God bless us all.

Yours in Christ's Ministry,  
s/d  
The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius  
Diocesan Bishop

### DIOCESAN EPISCOPA'S ITINERARY

#### October 2009

Date	Place/Program
1-3	New York/National Sevika Sanghom Conference
4	St. James MTC, NY/MT Congregation Albany
8-9	New York/National Yuvajana Sakhyam Conference
10	St. Louis/MT Congregation St. Louis, Missouri
11	Kansas/MT Congregation Kansas City, Kansas
15-18	Edmonton/Trinity MTC, Calgary, Canada
22-25	Houston/Immanuel MTC/MT Congregation Austin
26	Diocesan Council
27	Dallas/Family Conference Committee
28-31	Dallas/MTC of Dallas, Farmers Branch

#### November 2009

1	Dallas/MTC of Dallas, Farmers Branch
5-8	North Carolina/MT Congregation North Carolina

9	Minneapolis/MT Congregation, Minneapolis, MN
10-11	NCCC Conference
12-15	Los Angeles/MTC of Los Angeles, CA
19-22	Florida/South Florida MTC/Jacksonville MTC
26	Oklahoma/MTC of Oklahoma
27	Broken Bow, Camp Folsom
28-29	St. Paul's MTC Dallas/New York

#### December 2009

2-6	CharalKunnu, Kerala/Annual Clergy Conference
7-13	Tiruvalla & Quilon
18-20	Europe
24-25	San Fransisco/MTC San Francisco, CA
26-27	Horeb MTC, Colorado/MT Congregation Pheonix, AZ

# Twenty Years in Episcopacy of the Mar Thoma Church

Compiled by: Lal Varghese, Esq., MTC of Dallas, Farmers Branch

## Introduction

A Church, believed to be found by St. Thomas, the Apostle of Jesus Christ in A. D. 52 in Kerala has grown as a global Church today. Presently the Mar Thoma Church has 1137 parishes and congregations around the world and 774 active priests and 132 retired priests living and serving in different parts of the world. The total membership of the Church is about 900,000 living around the world. The Church has at present ten Bishops and twelve (12) dioceses. In its mission statement, it is stated that—*'The Church should be the repository of the divine doctrines revealed by Jesus Christ and proclaimed by His Apostles. It should maintain these doctrines in their purity and to promote the spiritual life of its members through the administration of sacraments and by the ministry of the Word of God. The mission of the Church is to make disciples of all nations by the proclamation of the Gospel to the world.'*

the Episcopal Church in the USA and the Anglican Churches in Australia and Canada, as well as with the Uniting Church in Australia. In India, the Joint Council of the Church of North India, the Church of South India and the Mar Thoma Church has been renamed as the Communion of Churches in India (CCI) in 2000 as a further step towards visible unity. The Mar Thoma Church is fully involved in the ecumenical movement and stands for active cooperation with other Churches, as for example for the re-building of the Nilackal Church in Kerala, a place where it is believed that St. Thomas established one of the Churches in A. D. 52.

Mar Thoma Church has always been blessed with leaders with vision and faith who led the Church from time to time with prayerful diligence and selfless commitments. Rt. Rev. Geevarghese Mar Athanasius, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius and Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim



*Mar Athanasius, Mar Theodosius and Mar Coorilos with Most Rev. Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitan and other Thirumenis after consecration.*

As fire exists by burning, a Church exists by its mission and Mar Thoma Church is truly a missionary Church and has expanded its missionary activities to Mexico and among Native Americans under the Diocese of North America & Europe. As part of the Navathy celebrations the Diocese has built about 60 houses in the 'Colonia Mar Thoma' in Mexico for the resettlement of the fishermen of the islands in Mexico.

As stated by World Council of Churches, while retaining many of the traditional characteristics of the ancient Eastern Church, the Mar Thoma Church keeps very close relations with Christian Churches in other parts of the world. It is in full communion with the Churches of the Anglican Communion and maintains special relations with

Mar Coorilos, three of our Bishops will be completing twenty years as Episcopos of the Mar Thoma Church on December 9, 2009. They were consecrated as Episcopos of the Mar Thoma Church on December 9, 1989 at Thiruvalla by Most Rev. Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Metropolitan. The Diocesan Council, Diocesan Assembly, various Sub Committees of the Diocese, the Editorial Board, the Managing Committee and Advisory Board and promoters of the Mar Thoma Messenger along with the clergy and laity of this Diocese pray that God may continue to keep our beloved Thirumenis in His providence to continue their faith journey and lead our Church into the future so that God's name will be glorified. ■

# MAR ATHANASIOS, MAR THEODOSIUS, AND MAR COORILLOS CONSECRATION CEREMONY PICTURES



Rev. George Jacob (Mar Theodosius) is being blessed by the celebrant during consecration.



Mar Theodosius elevated while seated in the chair by Achens as part of consecration ceremony.



Mar Coorilos, Mar Theodosius, and Mar Athanasios during consecration ceremony.



Alexander Mar Thoma giving kiss of peace to Mar Theodosius during consecration.



Rev. C. I. George, Rev. George Jacob, and Rev. Euyakim I. Cheeran before consecration.



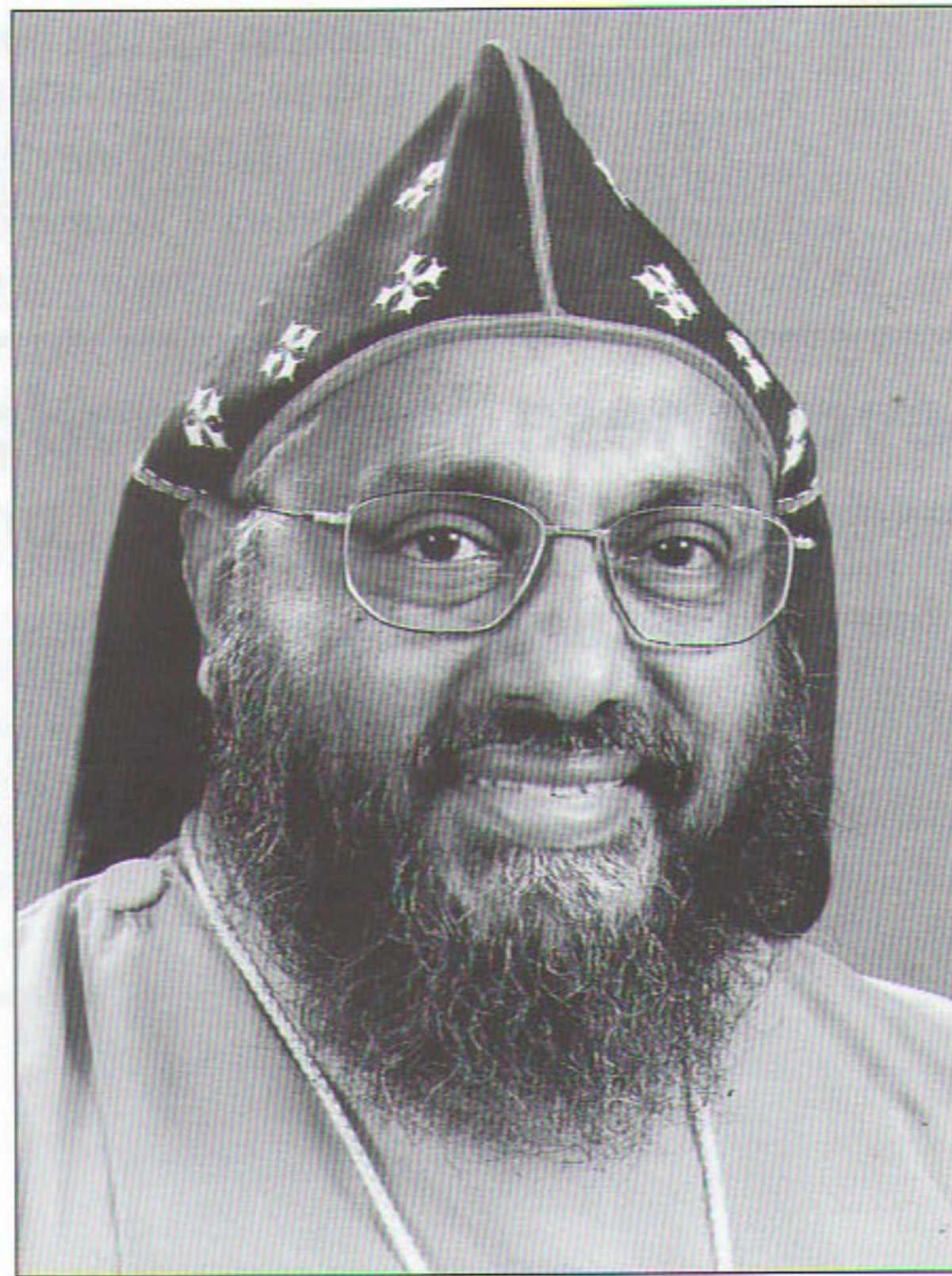
Mar Coorilos, Mar Athanasios, and Mar Theodosius after consecration with Episcopal staff.



# Rt. Rev. Geevarghese Mar Athanasius Episcopa

## Ranni-Nilackal Diocese

Rt. Rev. Geevarghese Mar Athanasius Episcopa (Rev. C. I. George) belongs to Chirayilkandathil family in Nedumpram, Thiruvalla. He was born on April 26, 1944 to C. I. Idiculla and Achiyamma. After graduation from Mar Thoma College, Tiruvalla, Thirumeni obtained his bachelor's degree in theology from Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, MP, India. Thirumeni was ordained as a Deacon on May 3, 1969 and was ordained as a priest (Kassissa) on June 14, 1969. Thirumeni served as Vicar of many Parishes including Mumbai, Kottayam, and Madras. Later, Thirumeni was ordained as Ramban on November 4, 1989, and consecrated as Episcopa on December 9, 1989 along with Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius and Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos. From 1975 to 1976 Thirumeni was at Toronto, Canada



for higher studies in theology. Thirumeni served as Diocesan Bishop of Bombay-Delhi Diocese, Diocese of Kottayam-Kochi, and presently in charge of Ranni-Nilackal Diocese since 2001. Mar Athanasius served as Vice President of the Governing Board of Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur and as President of the National Missionary Society.

While serving as the Diocesan Episcopa of the Mumbai-Delhi Diocese, the work on the diocesan center at Navi Mumbai was started in 1990 and the Mathews Mar Athanasius Memorial Center at New Delhi was initiated and completed. Thirumeni also took the leadership for the purchase of 16 acres of land at Khamshet, Lonavala for the Western India Zonal Youth Center, as part of the program for the 25th anniversary celebration of the Western India Youth Conference. Thirumeni took keen interest in completing the Diocesan headquarters at Delhi, while serving as Diocesan Episcopa.

Later when Thirumeni was serving as Diocesan Episcopa of the Kottayam-Kochi diocese, 'Ashraya' an old age home for the economically backward people, was started at Mallapally. Thirumeni also took the leadership for construction of Vazhakulam Greater Cochin Center. It was Thirumeni's able leadership, which provided the pathway for the proposed extension of the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary at Kottayam by purchasing 15 acres of land at Karukachal near Kottayam. The Industrial Training Institute for tribal children 'Girideepthi' at Trikkakara was also developed during Thirumeni's tenure as Diocesan

Bishop of Kottayam-Kochi Diocese. It was Thirumeni's initiative and leadership that led to the acquisition of sixty cents of land for Kottayam—Kochi diocese for the development of a retreat center at Munnar in Kerala.

After serving at Kottayam-Kochi diocese Thirumeni took charge of Ranni-Nilackal diocese in 2001. The extension of the 'Navjeeva Kendram De-Addiction Center' at Malayalapur in Pathanamthitta was undertaken as a memorial to Rev. George K. Daniel, who was called to eternity while serving as its Director. Considering the need for a home for those adults with mental retardation 'Kripa Bhavan' was started by Thirumeni in Vayalathala. Finding the need for the improvement of Thavalapara, a backward place in the Pathanamthitta District, a hostel for accommodating 100

children was started with the help of the Sharjah Mar Thoma Church. Arrangements are being undertaken for the purchase of over 1 acre of land at Ittiyapara junction in Ranni to hold annual diocesan convention for the Ranni-Nilackal Diocese. The Kurudamannil K. C. Abraham Memorial Guest House is completed and pending its dedication at 'Prathyassa Bhavan' at Anjukuzhi, Ranni. It was during Thirumeni's tenure that new buildings for the Women's Hostel under the Diocesan Sevika Sanghom, at Pathanamthitta and 'Deepam Balika Bhavan' at Mekozhur were developed. Thirumeni also took initiative to start the old age home 'Pratheeksha Bhavan' in Malayalapur. Feeling the need, Thirumeni took initiative to build several homes for homeless families under the home for the homeless project undertaken by Ranni-Nilackal diocese. 'Ashraya' at Kollam, a program for rehabilitation of street children, was started while Thirumeni was serving as President of the Sunday School Samajam. Thirumeni also took leadership in starting the M.B.A. course at Mar Thoma College for Management and Technology at Perumbavoor and also undertaken the renovation of Kallissery Kadavil Malika, while serving as president of Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association.

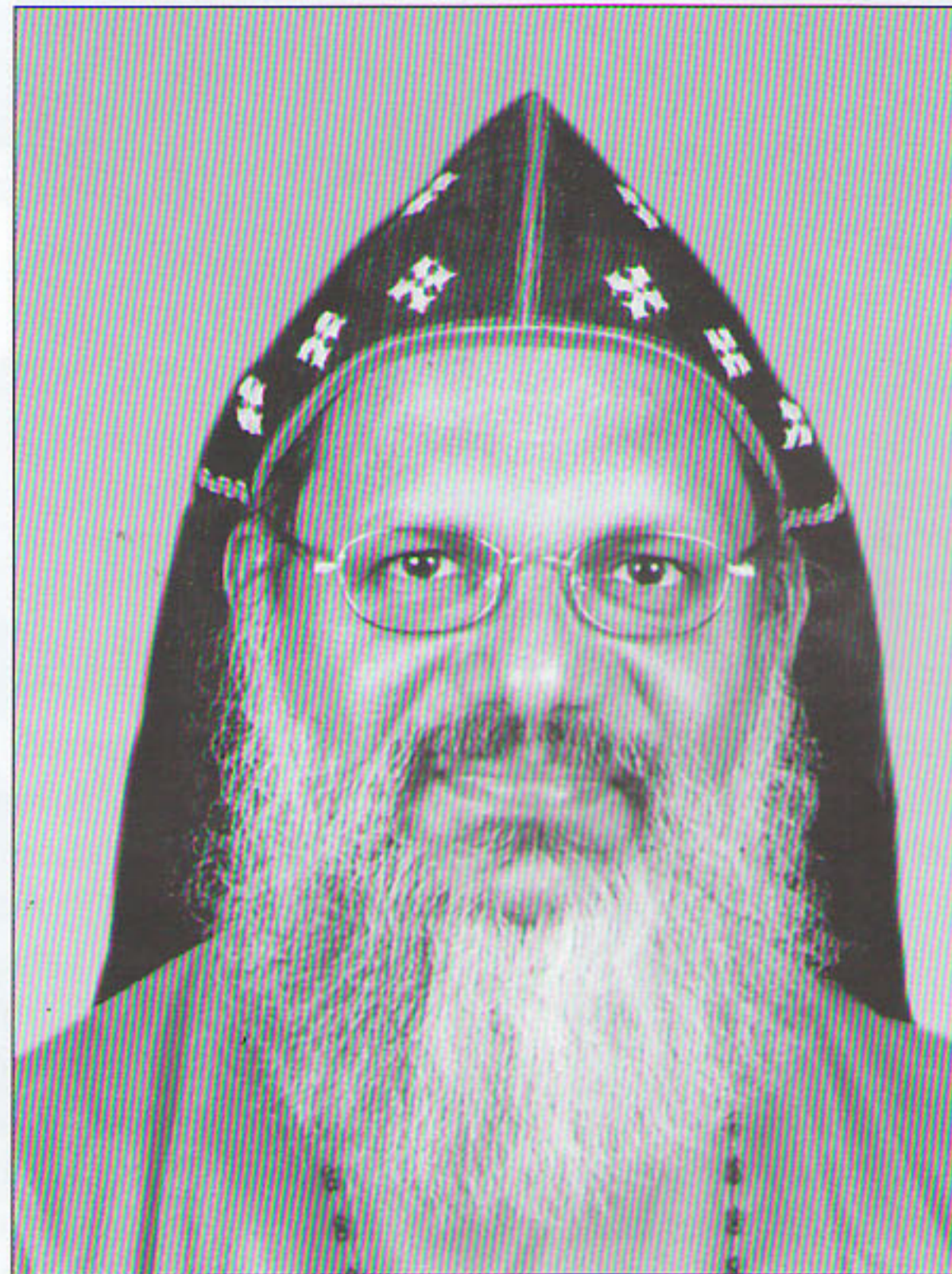
While serving as the Diocesan Bishop of Delhi-Bombay and Kottayam-Kochi and Ranni-Nilackal dioceses, Thirumeni also served as the president of National Missionary Society (NMS), chairman of Titus IInd Teacher's Training College at Tiruvalla, chairman of the Governing Board of the Mar Thoma Vaideeka Seminary at Kottayam, president of Sunday School Samajam, president

of the Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association (MTEA), chairman of the Vaideeka Selection Committee, chairman of Sabha Directory, manager of Women's College, Perumbavoor, president of Annual Clergy Conference, manager of Mar Thoma College, Thiruvalla, chairman of 'Sabha Tharaka', the official publication of the Mar Thoma Church, chairman of Steering Committee, chairman of Service Commission, chairman of Development Department, chairman of Cherukole I.T.C, and member of Education and Ecumenical Commission, WCC.

Presently while serving second term as the Diocesan Episcopa of the Ranni-Nilackal diocese, Thirumeni is also serving as the president of Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelistic Association (MTVEA), manager of the St. Thomas College at Kozhencherry, chairman of the Juhannon Mar Thoma & Mathews Mar Athanasius Memorial Holistic Center at Ayroor, and also as member of the Nilackal Ecumenical Trust. Thirumeni is a well known orator and has in depth knowledge of the Bible. ■

## Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa Diocese of North America & Europe

Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa (Rev. George Jacob) was born on February 19, 1949 at Ashtamudi, Kerala to Dr. K. J. Chacko and Mary Chacko of Ashtamudi Kizhakkechakkalayil. Mar Theodosius studied at Baselious College, Kottayam and Mar Thoma College Thiruvalla. After completing his bachelor's degree in Science, he joined Leonard Theological College in Jabalpur, MP, India and took BD Degree in 1972. Thirumeni was ordained as Deacon on June 24, 1972, and as Kassissa on February 24, 1973. In 1980 Thirumeni took Master's Degree in Comparative Religions from Visva Bharathi University and Doctorate from McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada in 1986. Thirumeni's dissertation for his Ph.D. '*Change and Continuity in the Religious Life of Ezhavas in the South Travancore*' is an expression of his academic discipline. From



1973 onwards he was in charge of several parishes including Mumbai, Calcutta, Toronto and Nanthancode and he served as director of Thomas Mar Athanasius Orientation Centre, Manganam. He was ordained as a Ramban on November 4, 1989 and as Episcopa on December 9, 1989. Upon consecration as Episcopa he was given charge of Kunnamkulam-Madras Diocese. Thereafter he served as Episcopa of Trivandrum-Quilon diocese and of Chennai-Bangalore and Malaysia-Singapore & Australia Dioceses. Presently, Thirumeni is serving as Episcopa of the Diocese of North America and Europe from January 2009. Mar Theodosius is a scholar and his books on Reform Movements in Kerala and their Impact on socio-economic and religious life of the people have made a mark in academic circles.

During his tenure as Diocesan Bishop in Kunnamkulam-Madras diocese, the new diocesan center at Kakkodi, Kozhikode, 'Dhyanashram' at Kottoopuram, the acquisi-

tion of land at Badiaduka near Kasargode where the Mar Thoma College of Special Education situates now, the Sholayar project in Attapadi where a rehabilitation center 'Darshana' is being developed, are the outcome of Thirumeni's farsightedness. Thirumeni initiated the formation of Karnataka Mission Board and took efforts in translation of worship books into Kannada. Thirumeni started new mission fields and many new parishes were formed in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. The 'Land for the Landless Project', a brainchild of Mar Theodosius, has become a beacon of hope for many poor villagers of South Travancore. The 'Snehatheeram' project for the AIDS & HIV patients at Manajalumoodu in Tamil Nadu is a true testimony of Thirumeni's concern for the less privileged. Thirumeni also gave equal importance to the

youth and student's ministry and both gained momentum during Thirumeni's tenure in the dioceses wherever he served. Mar Theodosius served as the vice chairman of the 'Ecumenical Christian Center' in Bangalore for couple of years.

Thirumeni completed 60 years of age on February 19, 2009 in the faith journey of the church as a servant of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Diocese of North America & Europe in honor of the 60th birthday of Theodosius Thirumeni republished the Festschrift volume '*In search of Christian Identity*'. Thirumeni's life has been an inspiration to many and his messages are deep in Biblical knowledge and reflect the love of Jesus Christ. He is a scholar and also a theologian. His Lordship is also well known for his firm and decisive administrative actions that are carried out with utmost simplicity and discipline. Mar Theodosius took charge of the Diocese of North America and Europe at a time when significant changes are taking place around the world. The

world is witnessing unprecedented economic, political and health related predicaments. Continuing ethnic conflicts and struggle for existence and identity, religious disharmony, social discrimination and increasing poverty are the needs of the century to be addressed on a global basis. Amidst this environment of uncertainties, there is always a hope and we pray that Thirumeni will be able to lead and guide this diocese to find our Christian identity to offer peace and hope to all.

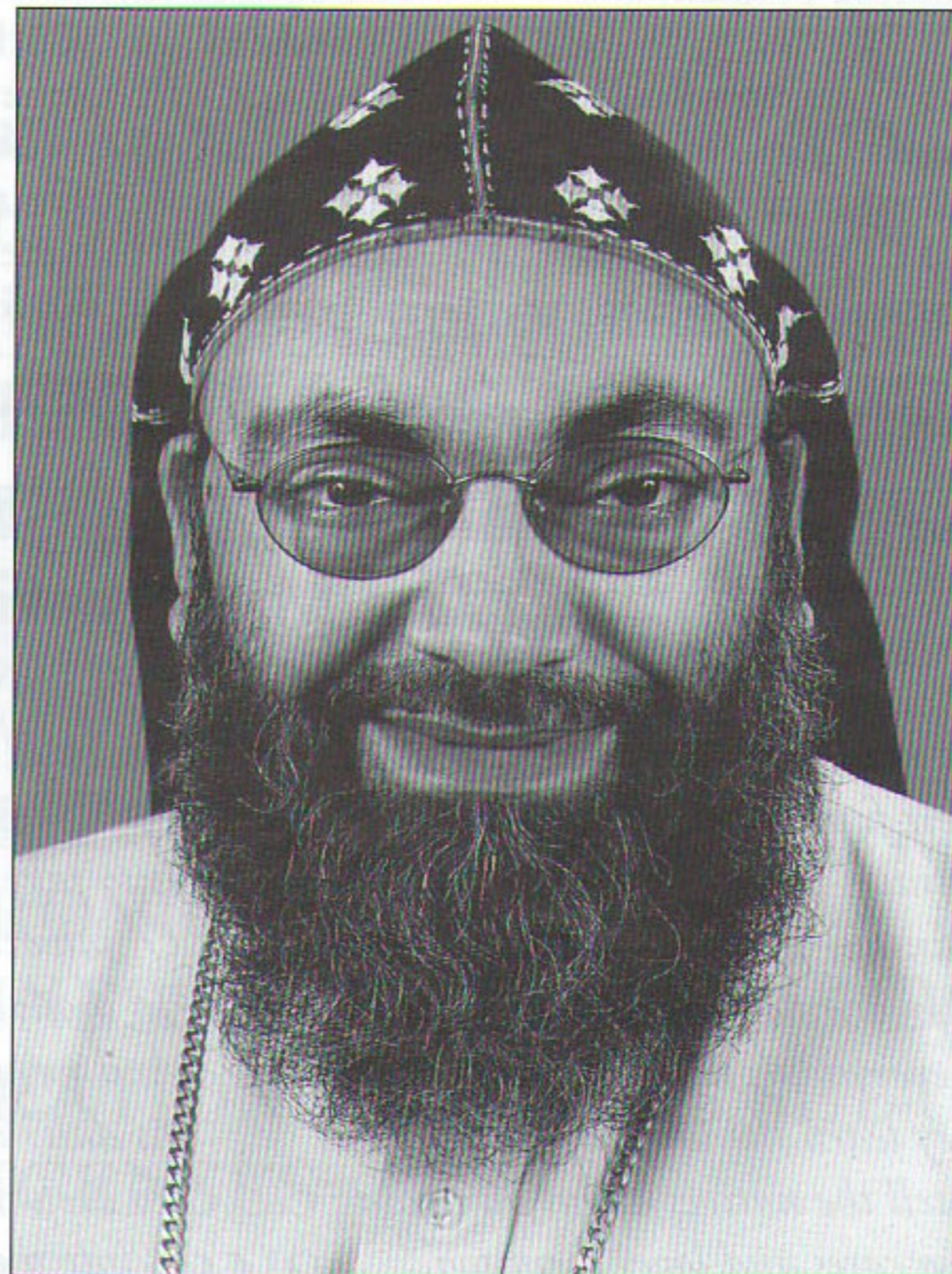
In Theodosius Thirumeni's own words, revitalization of local congregation depends upon the importance of Christian living in the life of the worshipping congregation. Our Lord's Prayer, 'Thy Kingdom come', will be fulfilled only with the revitalization of local congregations and it is necessary for the renewed life of the church. According to Thirumeni, violence distorts a person, breaks his/her relationship with God and with fellow beings and with nature itself. Reconciliation, on the other hand brings peace and hope to the whole world by manifesting the love of God with our fellow beings. By quoting Sri Narayana Guru, Thirumeni wrote: 'Whatever be his religion, man should be good and peace is the wholeness of the person and that of the

community.' According to Thirumeni, peace is achieved where life is honored and affirmed. Thirumeni had the privilege to attend the Lambeth Conference representing Mar Thoma Church, which was held at University of Kent, Canterbury, England from July 16 to August 3, 2008, which was attended by 650 Bishops and Archbishops from around the world representing different churches. The conference focused the need for churches to be together in mission by being inclusive and open and at the same time to be the bridges between different churches.

Thirumeni's participation and contribution to international, national and local interfaith conferences such as Church Missionary Society, London, World Council of Churches, Geneva, ASSISCA, NCCI, ECC in Bangalore, JMM Study Center in Trivandrum, TMAM Orientation and Research Center at Kottayam are commendable. He has written several articles including the books: *Religious Life of the Ezhavas in Kerala-Change and Continuity*, *Sree Narayana Guru: Pravachaka Sankalpathinte Keraliya Avishkaram*, *Sree Narayana Guru: Darsangalil*, *Sabhayude Jeeva Dayaka Sushrusha*, and *Sabha Douthyam: Darsanam, Avishkaram*. ■

## Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa Kottayam-Kochi Diocese

Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa (Rev. Euyakim I. Cheeran) was born on Nov. 25, 1951 at Kunnamkulam to Cheeranveetil Itty Many Ittyachenkunju and Saramma. After completing his bachelor's degree from Sacred Heart College, Thevara, Cochin and master's degree in science from Christ College, Iringalakuda, Trissur, Thirumeni joined Mar Thoma Theological Seminary at Kottayam for theological education. After completing his theological studies, Thirumeni was ordained as a Deacon on April 29, 1978 and as a Kassissa on May 16, 1978. Later he served as priest at Mar Thoma parishes at Jalahali, Asst. Vicar, Kottayam, Jerusalem, Palarivattom, Mumbai-Colaba, Staten Island, NY, Grater Washington, Philadelphia Bethel, Baltimore and Florida. On November 4, 1989, he was ordained as a Ramban and on December 9, 1989, he was consecrated as Episcopa. Thirumeni served as Diocesan Episcopa at Adoor-Mavelikara Diocese (1990-1997), Ranni-Nilackel Diocese (1997-2001) and also at Diocese of North America & Europe (2001-2008). Presently Thirumeni is serving as Diocesan Episcopa of Kottayam-Kochi Diocese of the Mar



Thoma Church from January 2009. He is also serving as the president of Mar Thoma Sunday School Samajam, Chairman of the Vaideeka Selection Committee, manager of Mar Thoma Schools Board. Thirumeni was also the first President of the 'Dayara and Sanyaasini Samooham' of the Mar Thoma Church.

Coorilos Thirumeni who is often described as a 'man of prayers' and is no exception to such a glowing array of Church leaders we have since its formation. The impact of family characteristics that are correlated with Coorilos Thirumeni's visionary stewardship have created a great impact in the life and vision of this great shepherd of the Mar Thoma Church, whose ancestry traces its history back to Antioch. In 1846, the Patriarch of Antioch sent Yuyakim Mar Kurilos, Metropolitan of Antioch to

Malanakara to resolve disputes between two prominent denominations of the Syrian Church. The Bishop's brother, Gabriel Malkudisa, accompanied Mar Kurilos and later married a girl from Kovoov Chalakupuzhy family in Thiruvalla, Kerala and settled at Thiruvalla. Gabriel's son, Malk, married from the Kandathil family and had six chil-

dren—three boys and three girls. Malk's older son Yuyakim who was a celebrant Jacobite priest had served many parishes around Thiruvalla. Fr. Yuyakim was affectionately called 'Habib Achen and Achen inherited the Kasa, Pilasa, Incense burner, the ring, and couple of other sacramental items of Bishop Kurilos who came from Antioch. Coorilos Thirumeni is the grand son of second son of Malk, Mr. C. M. Mathen. Coorilos Thirumeni later inherited the sacrament items from Habib Achen and Thirumeni proudly preserves these items as blessed and holy possessions.

A person of deep devotional life and missionary zeal who is always guided by the conviction that Christian creed and Christian vision have in them a life and richness that can transfigure the complexities of human life. Thirumeni's Biblical reflection has challenged people especially the youths in their spirituality and out look has motivated them in starting local mission.

It was Thirumeni's missionary outlook that has led to the establishment of 'Asha Bhavan' in Pathanapuram, Kerala for the physically handicapped, 'Deepthi Balika Bhavan' in Pallipadu, Kerala for the daughters of the fishermen folks, 'Jyothis' in Mavelikkara, Kerala for the mentally challenged children, 'Deepam Balika Bhavan' in Mekozhur, Kerala, for the tribal and dalit children, 'Half Way' home at Ranny, a rehabilitation center for the mentally challenged people. Thirumeni also guided the Dioceses in beginning the Mission fields like—Satyawadi Mission Field in Tamil Nadu, Gadgeshwar Mission Field in Andhra Pradesh, and Kalahandi Mission Field in Orissa.

Being the Diocesan Episcopa of the Kottayam-Kochi, presently Thirumeni is involved in 'Sneha Sanketham' a project for the mentally challenged children to be started at the mission field Mathaipara in Idukki District. 'Sneha Sparsham' is another project aimed at improving the living

condition of the poor with a three fold ministry—undertaking heart surgery for the children diagnosed with heart disease in the camps held for that purpose and the surgery is being done in collaboration with the St. Gregorios Hospital, Parumala, Kerala; undertaking cataract surgery for the poor people who cannot afford a costly surgery which is done in collaboration with St. Thomas Mission Hospital of the Mar Thoma Church at Kattanam, Kerala; helping children from poor families to obtain higher education. 'Chethana' a better home training institute, being run at Kottayam for training women for an overall development of the family and society.

During Coorilos Thirumeni's tenure as Diocesan Bishop of North America & Europe Diocese, for the first time in the history of the Church, mission activities in Mexico and among Native Americans began. The Diocese built about 60 houses in the land purchased in Mexico and named it as 'Colonia Mar Thoma' and donated those houses to the homeless fishermen in Mexico as part of 'Navathy' celebrations. During Thirumeni's tenure from 2001 to 2008, the number of parishes and congregations had grown to 61 parishes and 24 congregations. It was Thirumeni's able leadership that helped the diocese to build about 1000 houses for needy families as part of the Navathy celebrations by collecting more than 1 million dollars from this diocese for the Navathy project. It was during Thirumeni's tenure that five youths from this diocese entered into the ordained ministry of the Mar Thoma Church. Four youths are presently studying at the Seminary to become ordained priests. Thirumeni challenged the Marthomites in our diocese to adhere to strong faith and lead a life that is pleasing to Lord and also be dedicated to provide help to the under privileged and marginalized in the society. ■

## The Missionaries

Cinu Ann Mathew (Grade 4) New Jersey MTC



*The missionaries leave their home  
Their family, friends and all  
To travel far across the seas  
In answer to God's call  
To preach the Gospel Christ command  
To every soul, the world around  
They learn the language of the land  
To tell the natives about our Lord  
Who cares and loves them too  
The natives in those foreign lands  
About the idols they all go  
But idols neither hear nor speak  
The bible tells us so in Exodus 20:3*

*You shall have no other Gods before me  
So the mission of our people here  
Is to take the holy word  
Of salvation from the living God  
To those who never heard  
And we at home can do our part  
As daily we do pray to God  
To keep them free from harm  
While they are far away  
As they teach his words  
And support them with our pledges  
As his work they gladly do*



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# The Mar Thoma Church and its Diaspora Communities around the World

Abraham Mattackal, Los Angeles

**W**hen a small number of four or five Mar Thoma families joined together in the early '70s to sing praises to God and pray together along with a few other Kerala families of other Christian denominations, in a small apartment in Queens, New York, none of them could have thought even in their wildest imagination that they were in fact laying the foundation stone of a large edifice called the The Mar Thoma Church—Diocese of North America and Europe! Later on, when requested for the approval of their Sunday worship services as a Congregation, the then Mar Thoma Metropolitan Dr. Yuhanon Mar Thoma, had not only denied their request initially but also advised them to join the local American Churches as members and participate in their services regularly. Looking back, I truly believe that Thirumeni gave the right advice at that time to safeguard our own interests as no one could have foreseen an influx of Christian immigrants from Kerala to the North American continent in the late '70s and early '80s. Today we have close to eighty parishes and congregations with a membership of about 30,000 spread across the continents of North America, Europe and Africa.

The word Diaspora is a Greek word used to designate the dispersal of the Jews at the time of the destruction of the first temple in 586 B.C. and their forced exile to Babylonia. The Diaspora became a permanent feature of Jewish life. By A.D. 70 Jewish communities existed in Babylonia, Syria, Egypt, Asia Minor, Greece and Rome. In our case, with the advancement of English education in the erstwhile states of Travancore and Cochin by the end of the 19th century, there was a movement of large number of educated men from the rural areas of Travancore and Cochin to the great cities of Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and Delhi in search of jobs. It was part of this wave that swept beyond the Indian borders to the shores of British Malaya. After the end of World War 1, more Malayalees including some Marthomites left for Malaya and took up jobs there. In the 1920s, it has been estimated that there were about 70 Syrian Christians in Malaya and Singapore. Although divine services were held in Malayalam from as early as 1926, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church was formally established only in 1936 with the posting of Rev. T. N. Koshy. Theirs is the oldest Mar Thoma Diaspora community established outside India.

Currently the Mar Thoma Church in Malaysia has sixteen parishes of varying sizes, consisting of 2000 members, dispersed within Peninsular Malaysia with a concentration of members in the main parishes of Kuala Lumpur, Klang, Johore Bahru, Kluang, Banting and Seremban. The Pandamaram Mission is an outreach program of the Mar



Thoma Church in Malaysia. The Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association of Malaysia (the precursor of the present Mission Board) was also inaugurated in 1955 and the first Mission field of the Church outside of India with a full time evangelist was operational at Pandamaran near Klang in 1960.

Our early settlers in Singapore too started regular worship services from 1936 on under the leadership of Very Rev. T. N. Koshy. They constructed a church building in 1953 and also purchased a piece of land in 1954 in the same vicinity to start an English Secondary School for over-aged and under-privileged students in Singapore. With a view to helping the educational needs of the local populace, our community established the St. Thomas Secondary School in 1955. With the establishment of a Mar Thoma Syrian Church and a Mar Thoma Church educational institution along the reserve road off St. Michael's Road, the then Municipal Council appropriately named this reserve road as "The Mar Thoma Road." The school became a government aided school in 1972-73 and was relocated to larger premises in Telok Blangah in 1982. The school, however, was closed at the end of 2000 and with the closure, the community was once again, without a place of worship. In 2004, the Mar Thoma Church in Singapore has constructed a beautiful church building by spending 9 million Singapore dollars at 29 Jalan Kell, Singapore. Currently the parish has a membership of 231 families a majority of whom include third and fourth generation Marthomites as in the case of our parishes in Malaysia too.

As a result of the discussions between Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus and Bishop John Reid of the Anglican Church in Sydney, Australia after the 7th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Canberra in 1991, it was agreed by both leaders that a Mar Thoma priest would be appointed by the Anglican Church in Sydney. This was proposed to be a joint mission to serve both an Anglican parish as well as Mar Thoma congregations in Sydney and Melbourne. The arrangement was that the Mar Thoma achen would stay in the rectory of the Holy Trinity Anglican Church at Erskineville and part of his expenses too would be borne by the Anglican Church. The Synod approved the Mar Thoma Congregations in Sydney and Melbourne in 1991 and appointed Rev. Dr. Abraham Kuruvilla as the first Mar Thoma priest in Australia. In November 1998, the Mar Thoma Congregation was recognized as a full-pledged parish. Today we have six parishes/congregations in Australia—Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra, Adelaide and Perth. Our Parish in Melbourne has about 180 families and the one in Sydney has 170 families. Rev. Blysu Varghese and Rev. Bobby Philip serve as current vicars in Sydney and Melbourne respectively. Mar

Thoma achen are now appointed directly by the Mar Thoma Church. During a recent visit with a couple of other families to Australia, we could attend one Sunday service in Bethel Mar Thoma Church, Sydney and enjoy the hospitality extended to us by Blysu Varghese achen in their own new parsonage. We also have two Mar Thoma parishes in the neighboring country New Zealand—one in Auckland and the other in Wellington.

Some of our larger parishes exist in Middle Eastern countries like the ones in Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Doha Qatar, Dubai, Kuwait, Sharjah, Muscat etc. We also have parishes/congregations in Southern Africa, Switzerland, Germany, U.K. and Ireland. The Marthomites in Southern Africa numbering about 200 families, are scattered in various provinces of Southern Africa and also in neighboring countries like Botswana, Swaziland, and the mountain Kingdom of Lesotho. With the establishment of a Mar Thoma Centre in Pretoria and the appointment of their first Vicar Rev. Varghese Jacob in March 2000, the Mar Thoma Church began to take roots in African soil as well.

A few of us in the Sabha Council and the Diocesan Assembly of 1999-2000 requested the then Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Zacharias Mar Theophilus to set apart the Sunday before Thanksgiving in November every year as “**Diaspora Sunday**” to honor the sacrifices and commitment of our early settlers in the midst of enormous struggles and difficulties they faced while settling down in this ‘foreign’ land. **Thirumeni approved our request and from the year 2000 on, Diaspora Sunday is celebrated throughout our parishes in North America and Europe in November.** Why in November one may ask: because that is when we celebrate Thanksgiving (on the last Thursday in November)—the most typical national holiday and the second most important holiday in the U.S. after Christmas. 388 years had elapsed since the Pilgrims first celebrated Thanksgiving at Plymouth, Massachusetts. What did these English settlers have to be thankful for? The Pilgrims landed at Plymouth at the worst time of the year—in December of 1620 after a voyage that had been nine weeks of unending horror, huddled between the decks of a merchant ship called ‘Mayflower’. When they finally landed at the new and unknown land, they were terrified of what was to come. They had reason to be. The fierce winter of New England was taking its tolls. Nearly half of them died in the next few months. Yet, the pilgrims did not lose hope or faith in their God. With the onset of Spring, they planted corn and sweet potatoes and in summer they had a rich harvest. The native Indians in the area called the Wampanoag, who lived in the area for 12000 years, turned out to be friendly and helpful. The settlement was going to survive. And in the fall, in a victory over awesome odds and a feeling of homesickness for the land they grew up and left

behind, they had a harvest festival. It’s their triumph we all celebrate. As we celebrate Thanksgiving and Diaspora Sunday, we are celebrating God’s goodness, faithfulness and steadfast love. “What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits towards me, I will take up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.” Psalm 116:12-13.

In Deuteronomy, 6:20 we read “When your son asks you in time to come what is the meaning of testimonies, statutes and ordinances which the Lord our God has commanded you, then you shall say to your son, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and the Lord showed signs and wonders, great and grievous against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household before our eyes. And He brought us out from there that he might bring us in and give us the land which He swore to give it to our Fathers.’” As Joshua asked the children of Israel to tell their children and their grandchildren the significance of the 12 stones set up at Gilgal on the Eastern border of Jericho (Joshua 4:21), we too should tell our children and our grandchildren the significance of Diaspora Sunday. And this celebration should not be limited to the North American Diocese. **In order to honor the great sacrifices made by our Mar Thoma early settlers all across the world to establish themselves as a Mar Thoma Community and for the growth of the Mar Thoma Church as a global church, the Diaspora Sunday should be added on to our Church calendar to be celebrated throughout our Mar Thoma parishes in India and abroad on the third Sunday in November, every year. It’s our hope and prayer that the Synod will take appropriate action in this regard.**

It’s common to hear people say ‘Let’s forget the past and look to the future.’ But we cannot ignore our past as our past is intertwined with our present. The Jewish people always talked of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God who brought them out of the land of Egypt. The more they looked at their past the more they were convinced of God’s faithfulness and promise. Diaspora Sunday celebrations is a time to look back. The past is not for brooding over but to provide strength and confidence. There is no limit to what God requires from us or to what God can accomplish in us and through us. Rabindra Nath Tagore discovered this truth which he celebrates in Gitanjali.

*“I thought my voyage had come to its end  
at the last limit of my power,  
that the path before me was closed,  
that provisions were exhausted  
But I find that Thy will knows no end in me  
And when old words die out in my tongue  
New melodies break forth from my heart  
And where old tracks are lost  
New country is revealed with its wonders” ■*

**“Success often rises out of the ashes of failure.”**

# Mar Thoma Metropolitan's Presidential Address to Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam-2009

Most respected Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan, Rt. Rev. Joshua Mar Ignatius, who has so graciously accepted our invitation to give the opening devotional address before the start of the official proceedings of the Mandalam, fellow Episcopas, honorable Clergy, Sabha Council and Mandalam Members, my loving greetings to you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I heartily welcome you all to the 2009 Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam.

This being the 52nd Mandalam meeting that I am attending, I praise God for His abundant Grace in enabling me to deliver the presidential address. I am thankful to God for showering His Grace on me to get the necessary medical help to overcome the physical impediments I suffered, since the last Mandalam. The joint efforts of the doctors at the Vellore hospital helped me to recover my health gradually. "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures for ever." (Psalm 136:1). "Those who look to Him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; He saved him out all his troubles." (Psalm 34:5, 6). The earnest prayers of the members of the Church also helped me to experience His Grace. I express my deepest gratitude to everyone for their sincere prayers. I glorify God for giving me the strength to carry out most of my responsibilities despite my physical impediments. The encouragement that I received from non-Christian communities, other Christian denominations, and our members has been a source of Grace thus far. I would encourage and welcome the members of the Mandalam as partners to take on responsible positions in the ecumenical fields and other roles that our church has inherited from our patriarchs.

The past year has been an eventful one. The global economic crisis is threatening all nations of the world. High level discussions on various topics are taking place globally to find a solution to this predicament. The world at large is engaged in serious discussions regarding global warming. Climate changes are causing havoc in different regions of the world bringing about death and devastation. The recent torrential rain and floods in parts of Wyanad and Malapuram in Kerala, the havoc caused by the unprecedented inundation in the costal areas from Mumbai to Kanyakumari are just warning signs and symbols of global warming. The uncertain monsoon rains, on going drinking water shortage in various part of Kerala even in the monsoon month of *Karikkidakam* (July/August), outbreak of epidemics, are all upsetting the rhythm of human life. Global Energy crisis, clean fresh water issues, food shortage, pollution, under utilization of farm lands, environmental impacts due to unfair international trade practices, etc. are all topical issues. While the health department is engaged in providing medical care to those affected by outbreaks of fever, initiatives to eradicate the fever causing mosquitoes are scarce. In my opinion, prevention is better than the cure and therefore, the church, society and government should seriously pay attention for the prevention of communicable diseases before anyone gets sick. We are bitterly suffering from the unethical business development plans practiced by

industrialized nations. An uncaring society, without any care and concern for the poor and needy, was the hallmark of the twentieth century. Although, our government continued to promote the slogan, "India is shining", and the administration which was in power made significant advancements in scientific fields and national defense, it is a sad reality that there is no change in our outlook and we remain as an uncaring society. I am concerned that the tendency to gain positions of power even using unscrupulous means has also crept into the church administration; we should consider what St. Paul tells of people seeking positions in the Church; they need to be good witnesses within the church and without. (I Tim. 3:1-7). Because of the environmental and settlement problems in Vyanad, Vattavad and in the high range, many underprivileged and poor people are going through much pain and suffering. In my opinion, it is the responsibility of the Church and the government to keep out people who own homes and land from the negotiating table, and give total cast-iron support to these poor people who have been misguided and misled by those who are pretending to be champions of their cause. How far is our commitment to provide those poor people a just, peaceful, and dignified life? Although the population of India has crossed over a billion mark now, an independent India should seriously consider the fact there is no difference in the total number of people who were there at the time of independence and the number of people who are poor today.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands." (Psalm 19: 1). We should see it as a vision for changing the attitude of mind in the context of biblical thinking. Although all world philosophies and religions declare the principles of brotherhood and ethics, but what is the reality? Terrorism is on the increase in the name of religions and popular sciences. Young people, particularly highly qualified and unemployed people are burning and destroying themselves after becoming prey to wrong and misguided propaganda. I doubt whether we are giving sufficient attention to create a path towards tolerance and collaboration in the society. It is our moral duty to raise our voice to safeguard the right of others when we give emphasis for our own rights.

We should never forget that we are appointed by God to share the core values of the Gospel to each and every corner of the world. The hallmark of the Mar Thoma Church once was lay missionary work. The emphasis of the Church was for sharing the Gospel values, rooted in the reformation principles, with others. However, we should search our conscience to find out whether we are distancing ourselves from the Gospel values by conforming to the world. "Do not conform any more to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Rom 12:2).

When we examine the revival history of our Church, we can see many luminaries who did evangelical work along with their professional commitments. Punchamannil Mammen Upadesi always taught the core values of reformation principles. The independence enjoyed by the Malankara Church, a church not



under the reign of foreign powers, a freedom obtained through Christ, a church anchored firmly on the foundations of the core values of the scripture, a national church, and such deep visionary faith motifs gave enforcement to thousands of people to stand firmly on the path of the gospel. Sadhu Kochukunju Upadesi stood firm on the path of reformation and gave emphasis to the social awareness of the Gospel. When South Travancore was suffering from smallpox and cholera epidemics Sadhu Kochukunju Upadesi went to take care of them with members of the Voluntary Evangelical Association; this supreme sacrificial model of his life is memorable. In this we see a supreme model of sharing human resources much more than sending money for relief operations. His mind was challenged and pained when he saw the pain and sufferings of beggars searching for morsels of food at the Maramon convention, out of this emerged the Mandiram establishments. It is very hopeful and helpful to remember that this way the Church has gained a social awareness and a compulsion for responding to such social deprivations and needs. I see the Mexican mission work by the young people of the Diocese of North America and Europe as a continuation of this compulsion and work. I pray that this enthusiasm and vigor would never cool or slow down in the years to come.

We are entering into a new period in our ecumenical relationships. Our discussions with the Old Catholic Church in Europe have reached fruition. The Old Catholic Church is the historical continuation of the 'Church of Utrecht' established in Netherlands in the 8th century. This Church has entered into inter communal relationship with the Anglican Church and other Churches over the years and also is a member of the WCC as well as a 'Special Confession Family'. Since 2006, Mar Thoma Church is also a 'Special Confession Family' member of WCC. I hope that you remember my reference to this in my last presidential address indicating that searching for the possibilities of working together and building the relationship with this ancient Church is the result and fulfilment of the prayers of Abraham Mar Thoma Metropolitan. A delegation of this Church visited us this year and gave assurances of support for our worshipping communities in Europe. I also want to share with you the good news that one of our achen is pursuing his doctoral studies in Germany with the scholarship funds offered by them.

It is indeed very hopeful to see the democratic will of our people through the result of the recent Loka Sabha election, which took place in the backdrop of a global economic crisis. Our people realized the need for a stable government in the centre in the midst of all conflicts, crisis, and multiple promises of a united political opposition. Indian people have demonstrated their mature and responsible attitude towards a democratic system. I sincerely wish that our political leaders would be able to respond to the expectations of our people. When economic meltdown crashed the foreign banking sector, the report that the nationalized Indian banks in India gave economic stability to our business sector is encouraging and hopeful for our economic system. I congratulate the efforts of the government of India in improving our relationships with the neighborer countries.

Is not the judgement of Delhi high court apparently encouraging homosexuality by giving legal acceptance to practices against

natural laws and to acts incompatible with cultural norms? Although we need to respect the human rights of people subjected to these sexual deviations, it is not acceptable to give legal validity for such deviations against nature. Government should make clear decisions under this circumstance. It is important to remind the government that they should not forget their moral and legal obligations in safeguarding the spiritual values of the country.

Greater partnership is needed in ecumenical fields. Economic difficulties are seriously affecting this sector. The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) is holding its conference at Kuala Lumpur next year. We should search for new opportunities for joint efforts with Asian Churches. We need to seek partnership with WCC and also for developing a rethinking on problems confronting the world. We are indebted to work for maintaining and sustaining the fellowship of the 'Anglican Communion.' When we stand within the 'Community,' we should accept what we can, but declare what is unacceptable; it is our Christian duty to work together without malice, but with respect.

Let us hope that political polarization of neighborer South Asian counties would lead to the paths of reconciliation and peace. Although, the terrorist activities in India, particularly the tragic situation created by the Explosions in Bombay on 26 November 2008 paralysed the national conscience, the subsequent actions of the government of India have helped to calm the nerves and establish peace. Let us not forget the genocides and political unrest in Sri Lanka and other South Asian countries. As a result millions of people have been displaced from their homes and forced to live in unfamiliar situations and places where they are subjected to human right violations, dehumanizing deprivations, and sufferings, this is indeed a painful reality. The conscience of the world should be aroused to provide relief and resettlement to these displaced people and to establish peace among them. On behalf of the church, I express my solidarity to these people who are going through pain and suffering

The government of Kerala, which was elected with a clear mandate to work for the welfare of the people, have wasted their time in their power struggles through divisive policies. Although all political parties conducted processions of their leaders before the election from Kasargod by spending millions of Rupees, the election result was the hallmark of the conscience of the people of Kerala. It is to be hoped that the leadership would appreciate the reality of the current situation and acquire wisdom, humility and an attitude of sacrifice to return to constructive activities from now onwards, which would provide adequate welfare for the people.

Our educational sector had never been in such a deplorable state. Instead of teaching value-based knowledge through text books, preparing value-denying and faith-destroying text books with the intention of deliberately destroying the inherent faith values of the students in grade 7th and 8th are objectionable. We should never forget the history and heritage of Adi Shankaracharya of Kerala who not only lit the lamp of faith in God in Kerala but also helped to stabilize the awareness of God and faith throughout India. The influence of Buddhist religion diminished under the onslaught of Shankara's philosophy and Christianity remained as a minority religion over the centuries through the familial inheritance of faith and nurture. This is the inheritance of the

churches in Kerala. It is certain that rekindling time-lapsed political ideologies would not generate ungodly impulses/changes in the hearts of people. Efforts to legalize homosexuality and the move of the Kerala government to reduce churches and parishes by denying its core values and roots to the status of mere state-registered organizations of grouping its members on the basis of the report of Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer's commission require our vigil and protests.

As dictated by the Indian constitution minority communities of the country have the right to admit students and appoint teachers to their educational institutions, similarly the constitution has provided rights for health care establishments. The builders of the constitution have given rights for minorities for their existence and safeguards, which are for subsequent generations as well. The present generation has no right to mortgage it for immediate, quick, profits. It would be a criminal act towards future generations if we were to surrender these minority rights to current threats and pressures.

It is hoped that the Kerala government and trade union organizations would provide co-operation for completing, within the allotted time, various expansion projects proposed and designed with the help of the central government.

Our Church, in comparative terms, had a year of peaceful and worry-free working environment in our Church administration and its official institutions. There is a need to highlight certain remarkable facts that had happened during this period in our education sector for which we can be proud of. Our Sathna Christhukula Mission High School obtained 100% first class for the ISC & ICSE curricula. When we look at the last ten years' history of this school it also provided two IAS and three IFS students to the society. School principal, Rev. C. A. Varghese, and other teachers deserve our congratulations. The excellent work of the St. Thomas school at Ranchi in the state of Jharkhand should be appreciated. Teachers of this school continuously receive appreciations and recognition for their excellence from both Bihar and Jharkhand governments. A first batch student from the Perumbavoor College of Science and Technology obtained 3rd rank; it is an excellent achievement in the short history of this institution. Five students from the Ayoor College of Science and Technology obtained ranks from the university; previous year two students obtained first ranks. We may mark out this college as a symbol of value-based education. In the current financial year we have permission from the government and associated Nursing Council to start a 'College of Nursing' at Kattanam. This college started functioning on 31st December 2008. A substantial monetary investment is required to provide various facilities and infrastructure for this college. Government has promised to give permission for admitting more students when we find suitable hostel accommodation. In affiliation with Indira Gandhi Open University at Delhi we have started BScMLT, BSc Ophthalmology, and other courses. We also have possibility of starting postgraduate courses in above disciplines. There is increasing possibility to start a Pharmacy College. Because of the scarcity of students for admission to dental colleges, the feasibility of starting the approved 'Dental College' is limited at present. Two-third of the building constructed for the 'Old Age Care

Centre' at the 'Kumbanad Fellowship Hospital' is used for the care of the elderly people; the other third is used as a hostel for the Nursing School; when Nursing school students get their own designated hostel, this section of the Old Age Care Centre will be reverted to its original purpose. The excellent work of the nursing school gives greater expectations and encouragement. For the above expansion Rs 2.8 crores were borrowed from the Federal bank at an initial interest rate of 8%, which was escalated to 13%. We continue to pay interest and part of the capital with great difficulty during this period. Income was limited due to ineffective operations of the project. However, because of the awareness of the financial losses due to the enormous financial liability to the bank, it was decided to re-pay the loan in full; with the advice of the Sabha Council money was raised for this through special donations and interest free loans. After deducting the discount given by the bank, Rs 3.6 crores were paid to pay off the liability. I am sincerely thankful to all those who made financial and other contributions to make it possible.

I am glad that our official organizations have had their annual general body meetings, approved their budget, and started functioning in the New Year. I pray that they succeed in their efforts to meet the objectives and hopes raised at the respective general body meetings.

As I pointed out in my last year's presidential address, Sabha constitution requires a review and rethinking. I remind you of this need once again. In order to make the mission of the Church more organized and disciplined, to have issue-focused studies and to obtain pragmatic advice, it is necessary to have a timely review to find out whether changes in the structure and function of the Mandalam is needed. There was no time in the report year for this review due to various limitations. This year's Mandalam is different for its seamless continuity, after many years, in not having the special Mandalam within the regular proceeding of the ordinary Mandalam as there are no motions under the Clause 390. Members of the Mandalam should be more focused in not wasting time on matters of no important consequences and matters outside the remit of the Mandalam, but to provide action-oriented suggestions for the forward march and progress of the Church. You may be denying the right of others to make a comment in a gathering of over 1000 members when one is bent on making advice or comment on every subject or making a comment for the sheer sake of making a comment, this is worth serious consideration. As per last year's instruction of the Mandalam, a report about the Episcopal election will be presented to the members when we discuss the motion relating to this subject later on. This much needed agenda requires pragmatic instructions of the Mandalam, all of them are most welcome.

Each nation and culture has symbols representing noble visions. A deep-rooted vision is behind every symbol. The authenticity of Indian culture is clearly expressed through three symbols.

The first one is Lotus: It is not just a symbol of a political party; Lotus is the Indian national flower, which is also depicted on the crest of our church by our forefathers. Lotus grows out of ugly and unattractive mud with its roots deeply entrenched to gather energizing vital sap. However, when its head rises above the water, and when sunlight kisses on its cheeky buds, it responds most

touchingly by opening itself to share its color and beauty. Although it is growing from the mud, there is not a trace of mud in its flowers. God has delegated the Church to conduct the mission of God's kingdom in this world, hence without getting stained by the world, church should be able to shine and witness. As Lotus opens up and faces the sun, Church should be able to open up at the loving touch of Christ who is the Lord of the Church and justice's sun to become honest truthful unstained pure children of God to show the sheer beauty of holiness.

Another Symbol of India is peacock. Peacock is the national bird of India. Peacock, which struts slowly during peaceful moments, raises its feathers to flutter and dance with unashamed joy and pomposity when wind and cloud covers the skies, when lightning and thunder threatens the skyline. Like this, in the face of difficulties, without becoming diffident and weak, without fear, the faith community should be able to work dutifully and joyfully under the grace of God. Christ's love gives courage to face fear. Sharing that love with others is the supreme purpose of depicting the Cross on the Crest of the Mar Thoma Church. There is no symbol greater than the Cross until now in the history. "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (Rom 1:18).

The third symbol is sandalwood. Sharing its fragrance even to the axe which is used for cutting it down and mutilating is symbolic of the Indian culture. "Love your enemies, do good to those who

hate you." (Luk 6:27). Jesus who said this offered the world the fragrant love of God's heart through the wounds that he received on the Cross. All these three realities are summed up in the hallmark of our Church, the light. That is indeed the everlasting Indian culture, the cultural light of India. The Church is called to shine like a light on a stand.

The God who gave us the spirit of power, love and conscience expects us to lighten the God's grace within us. In this calling we share the oil of God's grace; it is then the Church is able to offer the light in all its measures and styles to the world in the way God desires. I pray that under the grace in Holy Spirit, based on the Word of Life, may we shine as beacons for the redemption of the world by becoming blessed partners of God's kingdom and may we become a blessing, for which may God empower us.

"May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing His will, and He works in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Heb. 13:20-21). ■

Translated from Malayalam by:

**Prof. Dr. Zac Varghese, London, UK**

### DIOCESAN VALEDICTORIAN AWARD—2009

The Diocese of North America & Europe honored the students who were recognized as valedictorians in their respective high schools for the graduating class of 2009. These students and parents are members of Mar Thoma parishes or congregations who attend worship services and actively involves in parish activities. The valedictorian awards

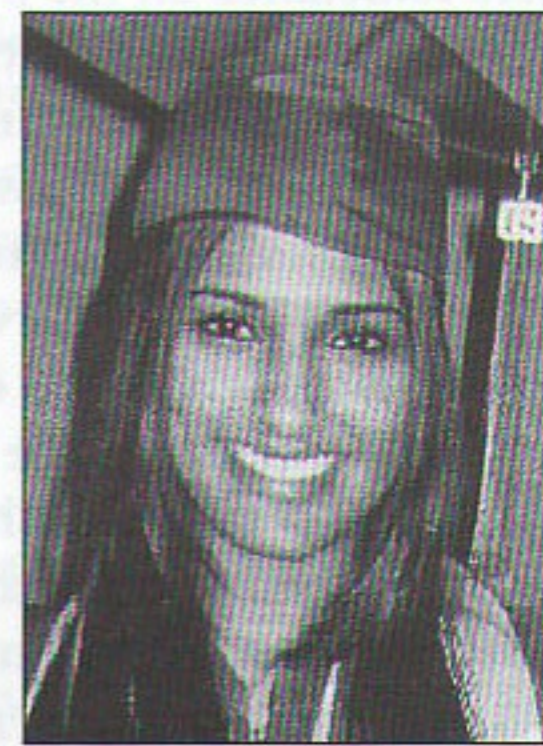
were presented by Rt. Rev. Dr. Abraham Mar Paulose during the 2009 Mar Thoma Family Conference at Houston, Texas as part of the valedictorian recognition ceremony.

**Aswathi Mathew**

**Diocesan Valedictorian Committee Coordinator**

### CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES TO OUR 2009 VALEDICTORIANS:

**Edwin, Jeena, Jisha, Paul and Sara**



<p><b>Edwin David</b> Son of Mr. Thomas David &amp; Mrs. Sarasu David <b>Detroit Mar Thoma Church</b></p>	<p><b>Jeena Jacob</b> Daughter of Mr. Jacob Varughese &amp; Mrs. Mary Jacob <b>MTC of Dallas, Farmers Branch</b></p>	<p><b>Jisha Thomas</b> Daughter of Mr. Thomas Oonnoony &amp; Mrs. Sheelamma Thomas <b>Long Island Mar Thoma Church</b></p>	<p><b>Paul George</b> Son of Mr. Raju George &amp; Mrs. Annie Raju <b>St. Thomas MTC, New York</b></p>	<p><b>Sara Varughese</b> Daughter of Mr. Babu Varughese &amp; Mrs. Sicely Varughese <b>South Florida MTC, FL</b></p>
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# Strengthening the Family Values

Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa

(Summary of the talk [Second part] made at the Family Conference held in Houston from July 2-5, 2009)

## Talents & Stewardship

Marriage is considered to be a gateway of setting up of the family and carrying out responsibilities for the good of the members within and outside of it. Another area that is to be considered is the field of God given talents and gifts. There is an exhortation that is given to the wedded couple towards the end of the marriage service before the final benediction. It says: 'Remember that you are stewards of God in wealth, time and talents. Therefore set apart a portion of your income for the needy and the poor and for the mission of the Church.'

We seldom remember the fact that our time, talents and wealth are also meant for others. This feeling becomes strong when we realize that in the society in which we live, everything is paid for.

This Western culture has also crept into the East; whereby no one extends a service unless it goes with some sort of payment. Voluntary service is slowly dying out. St. Paul writing to the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 12) speaks of the various gifts given to humankind. He says: 'There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.' Now to each one, the manifestations of the Holy Spirit is given for the common good.

Parents understand that children need their time, talents, and money. But we do not understand that an orphan is to be accepted as our own child. (Acceptance is a better word than adoption) Married couples understand that their time, talents, and money are to be shared with one's life-partner. How about the widows in society who need financial support (Acts 6:1) when bread winners are gone? Is there reluctance on the part of the parents to give extras for the differently abled in the family? Most of the elderly are worried these days about their old age. We know that they are to be respected and well taken care of. This was the system in our home-land (tradition).

Human care and service with a human touch is getting lost, although there are exceptions among us in this land. But is it a fact that while Grandparents are needed for baby sitting, our children feel helpless to take care of their parents when they become like children because of old age? What is the model we have given to our children through our own lives? 'We are helpless' is not a good answer. Every Christian is called to give hope in a hopeless situation. God's grace is sufficient to strengthen humans to attempt the impossible. It was stated by many members of this Diocese, that the Diocese should pioneer in this field to sort out this difficult situation. What are the solutions we are proposing? Is it a viable one? Will we cooperate to attempt the impossible?



We live in a global world and I believe that everyone is aware of the process of globalization. In spirit, globalization is the process of transformation of the local and regional phenomena into a global one. In that sense, it can be described as a process by which the people of the world are unified into a simple society and together function for the common good. It is possible through the unity of economic, technological, socio-cultural and political forces.

Certainly, globalization has provided new opportunities for the enhancement of life for many. Modern system of communications has converted the world into a global village. But now this has drifted to the position where globalization refers only to economic factors. It attempts now to integrate the national economies into the international economy through trade, foreign direct investment, capital flow, migration and the spread of technology. A good number of people in the beginning hoped that globalization of knowledge, exchange of ideas and movement of the people will foster a better living environment for all people of the world. But this did not happen. Hence, we need to be aware of the dangers and possibilities inherent in the process of globalization. The poor and the marginalized do not find protection and security under it. The gap between the poor and the rich has widened. The attention is more focused on globalization of market and liberalization of trade.

It assumes the fascination of the people to gain profits. It paved the way for greater greed and manipulations to achieve monetary end. Take for example, the case of an average family among us. People work for 10-12 hours a day. The earnings generally go to pay mortgages, insurance premiums, taxes and household consumption needs. Those who manage to save some portion of income either invest in stocks, mutual funds or real estate.

Now with the economic meltdown, the sweat of such people has turned to nothing. It appears our income is always inadequate! Knowledge, science and technology are not simply human achievements, but God's gifts, meant for creating a world order. But humans are trying to use them recklessly thereby creating an unsustainable world order. Mahatma Gandhi once said that there is enough in the World for men's needs, but not for men's greed.

The future of the world is not in building a greed-based economy. It is high time that the people change their life-style from accumulation of wealth and money to a life-style where we would take only what is needed and shares the rest with the needy and less privileged. There is an urgent need for an alternative form of development that would prevent marginalization and meet the basic needs of the poor people.

Sharing, caring and supporting with a spirit of service are Christian virtues based on the great virtue: Love. 1 Cor. 12:31; 13:1-13. Gal. 5:22. People in America (6% of world's population) melt, burn, or eat over 50% of the world's consumable resources each year.

An Indian philosopher said: "In caring there is a commitment to its well being and flourishing, a joy in its perfection and sorrow in its stresses and strains, a kind of knowing which maybe called knowing-with." When it is said that we could become aware of the presence of God in Nature it is through this experience of caring of things that we acquire a sense of the divine presence. It is not a mere intellectual understanding of things but grasping this complex unit of love, understanding, and service, which is caring, and sharing.

Jesus is the embodiment of God's great love. (John 3:16) He has called us to follow Him. St. Paul tells us to have the same mind of Jesus (Phil. 2) St. John reminds us that it is in abiding in Christ that we bear much fruit for the glory of God and for the manifestation of God's love in the world. Since there are a multitude forms of caring, we have multitude ways of knowing God.

## Sin and Salvation

Sin called by any other name is still sin. There are several definitions for sin. This is not an attempt to state them one after another. One short definition says "sin is missing the mark."

God has created human beings with a definite purpose. Missing that purpose is sin. See the Genesis story. It comes as an irresponsible action and disobedience.

Psalmist says: 14:2, 3 "The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there's no one who does good, not even one."

When a teacher of the law came to Jesus, calling him "Good teacher," Jesus turned and asked him "why do you call me good?" God alone is good.

We have all fallen short of the glory of God. We sin if we say we are sinless and we deceive ourselves. (1 John 1:8) Jesus Christ is our Savior. He has opened the way of salvation through His death on the cross. 1 John 1:7 says—"The blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin."

## Sin as Alienation

God has given us a life in relationships. We have relationship with God and we have relationship with one another. Breaking the God given relationship is sin. St. Paul uses the word reconciliation when he speaks of salvation in Christ Jesus. 2 Cor. 5:18,19—All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

We have relationship with one another. This is more experienced in the family circle. Luke 15:11-32 tells us the parable of the Father and two sons. In vs. 24 the Father tells

the elder son that the younger son was away from home and hence was dead. Alienation from relationship is sin. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ says that one should not call the other person a fool (5:22) and the one getting angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.

## Salvation as Humanization

Dr. M. M. Thomas said: "The mission of salvation and the task of humanization are integrally related to each other even if they cannot be considered identical." Humans live in interpersonal relationships. All relationships carry with it the baggage of God-given responsibilities. Caring and sharing are Christian virtues. Love is manifested in life and deeds. When we say that we love God, it becomes true only where we love our fellow being as well. (1 John 3:17 & 4:20b) The parables of Jesus remind us of the need to share our resources and to care for the Lazarus' who is on our doorstep (Luke 16:19-21).

We live in a world that is divided between the world of rich and poor. Mother Teresa said: "The poor are beautiful. Professor Mohammed Yunus, Nobel Laureate, said that poverty is not created by the poor in the world; the poor are there not because of their fate. Humans are responsible for the existence of poverty. Therefore, humans can eradicate poverty from the face of world, if they have a will to do it.

Greed and acquisitiveness are isolated as the source of bondage. The existence of poverty reminds us of the sinful nature of humans. It is a violation of human rights and an unjust order. The primary concern is not eradication of poverty, but the struggle against 'Mammon,' that evil force which creates poverty. It is this evil force in us that organizes itself within each person and among persons to make material wealth anti-human, anti-religious, and oppressive.

Jesus came to liberate humans from all powers that dehumanize them. Hence the liberating power of the Risen Lord is for all and it has to be shared, so that all can experience it. This is the Good News. (Gal. 5:1)

The commandment given by God is summarized in saying that one is to love God with all their might, heart and mind and to love one's neighbor as oneself (Luke 10:27).

Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan to explain who the neighbor is (Luke 10:29-37). But how do you understand the commandment: Loving as one's self? This is a hard nut to crack. Jesus demonstrated it by his death on the cross. And in saying: I give you a new commandment, love each other as I have loved you (John 15:12). This is the question of understanding other's needs.

The great love in the Kingdom of God helps us to have the subjective experience in the life of personal relationships. It can be described in the words of Jesus, "You are no longer two, but one." (Matt. 19:6) The 'me-ness' of the self is transformed into the 'we-ness' of the life together. This is the spirit of community life and the culmination of it is the salvation experience in God and in the Kingdom of God where communion relationships are real. In the Kingdom we have no marriage relationship, but only communion (Matt. 22: 30). ■

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# Church's Outreach Ministry—Global Vision from a Trinitarian Perspective

Rev. John Philip Attatharayil, Kerala

The Church claims that it is the only institution which exists for its non-members. The Church should exist both for its members and non-members. But in practice the Church exists mostly for its members. There are a lot of outreach programs in the Church without having sufficient understanding of its biblical and theological basis. What is the theological basis of the Church's outreach ministry? Is it done due to the historical necessity of increasing membership or simply for social compulsions towards the Church? If the Church conducts its outreach ministry purely on the basis of historical necessities and compulsions, the Church is like any other institution and it is no longer to be called "the Church".

Then what is the Church? The Church is defined as the body of Christ. As Christ is a 'man for others' the Church, the body of Christ, should be a community for others. This article delineates the biblical and theological insights for Church's outreach ministry.

## Global Scenario

In order to get a global vision we need to have the grasp of the global scenario. We are living in an age of abundance of wealth though the poverty is increasing day by day. Even though religious resurgence is happening, materialism, consumerism and individualism are the life-style of our age. Poverty in the midst of accumulation of wealth is a challenging reality of our time.

Globalization had promised a lot. But it hopelessly creates poverty, unemployment and exclusion, often on a continental basis. The world system of globalization ends finally in hegemony and arrogance. The growing inequalities endanger life of a large section of our society. But in effect Neo-liberalism has not produced a 'New World Order' of care and concern of the 'other'.

The interactions have developed to a new phase due to global dealings of economics, the world-wide interdependence of political systems and events and the expansion of electronic communication systems.<sup>1</sup> Today communication, travel, and research bring these traditions together as never before.<sup>2</sup> Globalization is opening up new ways of thinking that are relevant to all religions.<sup>3</sup> The migrated people establish strong communities in the West.<sup>4</sup> The present day Western Christianity lives in an intense pluralistic context. The religious pluralistic context of the East also intensifies today. Hence religious pluralism is a living reality in the present world. But communities live in their ethnic identities.

On the one hand religious pluralism enhances greater recognition and cooperation among religions and on the



other hand there is a threat-feeling. Resurgence of religious fundamentalism is emerged globally. The increasing poverty in the midst of abundance and fundamentalism of the religions are threat to the very existence of the 'other'.

The period of the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty first century is increasingly being called post-modern. Post-modernity does not appreciate absolutes, fixed certainties, or foundations. Pluralism is a characteristic of it.<sup>5</sup> It takes delight in pluralism and divergence over identity, unity, etc. The post-modern spirit cherishes differences and particularities and resists all attempts at uniformization. The recognition of the plurality of cultures, ideologies and religious traditions in society is a principal feature of postmodernity.<sup>6</sup> The outreach ministry is being challenged by the postmodern trends. In order to get clarity in Church's ministry, we need a biblical understanding of outreach ministry.

## Biblical Foundation of Outreach Ministry

The Biblical narratives is centered on God's call. It is a call to be a special or unique being in the midst of sin and alienation. At the same time the biblical characters are called to be a blessing to the people outside their clan or tribe. Though Abraham was called for a separate identity, he should be a blessing to nations. In early Jewish community Yahweh seems to appear as an artisan God and considers Yahweh as the God of the whole world and the Lord of history who is interested not only in His own people but who had also the welfare of all the nations of the world at large.<sup>7</sup>

Jews slowly turned to exclusivistic understanding. They believed that God has chosen them as a separate 'holy nation' among the people of the world. The tradition of Deuteronomy attached singular claims for Israel to the singular claims made for Yahweh.<sup>8</sup> They thought that God has a special favor towards the Jews and claim they are superior to all people. Through this approach, knowingly or unknowingly, they made God 'partial'.<sup>9</sup>

During the exile, the Jews came into contact with people of other religious traditions and practices. Thomas Manickam comments, "Some of the more orthodox types became more antipathetic towards the Gentiles. But the more liberal among them grew in understanding and sympathy."<sup>10</sup> Thus a tendency towards a universalizing perspective instead of the ethnic stance came into forefront. Due to this Judaism became a universalizing religion, willing to allow non-Israelites to Jewish practices and to hold to Jewish beliefs.<sup>11</sup>

In Amos 9:7, pluralism is voiced as a critique of reductive mono-ideology. Walter Brueggemann comments, "pluriform Yahwism may be seen as a healthy restitution of

Israel's life in the world that affirms that there are facets of Yahweh's life not subject to Israel definition and facets of the life of the world not to be placed under Israel's mono-ideological umbrella.<sup>12</sup> Yahweh is the liberator of different nations and this is an expression of pluriform Yahwism.

Prophetic books, in general, transcends the parochial Jewish consciousness and announce God's salvation to all nations (Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11). The book of Jonah enlightened the Jews that God loves and saves people of other faiths as opposed to the existing narrow religious consciousness colored by nationalism. The Exilic and post-Exilic books deal with God's universal plan and the place of different communities in it.

## A Community for Others

Jesus did not negate His Jewish identity. He participated in the Jewish religious life though He criticized the bad intentions of the religious leaders. Jesus accepted what is good in the Jewish religion and criticized the evil practices.

Jesus' attitude to people outside Jewish community was open and creative, though there are some strange events which have some specific functions.<sup>13</sup> His ministry provides opportunities for gentiles to enter into the reign of God. Kingdom of God is not parochial but wider to include all human communities.

Christianity originated and developed in the midst of diverse faiths like Jewish and Gentile religious faiths. It was deeply influenced by Jewish religion in its faith and practice. Therefore the primitive Christian community functioned as a small community within Jewish community. But they believed they had a distinctive message of supreme importance. Christianity identifies and differentiates from Judaism in the primitive period.<sup>14</sup>

The New Testament contains the testimonies of the first community of Jesus.<sup>15</sup> In Acts 17:26, Paul acknowledges different God-understandings of human community. His dialogue with the Athenians was one of inclusivism. The unknown God of the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17:22-31) attests to the Apostle's attitude to openness to the Gentiles in terms of their religiosity:

The speech in the Areopagus offers a contribution of unquestionable importance for the Christian understanding of the religion. First of all, the text makes it possible to comprehend the positive value of human religious experience. The "search" for God is already a gift of God. God reveals Himself by being sought. Such seeking is not situated at the level of philosophy, but connotes an experience of faith.<sup>16</sup>

The experience of Paul in Athens was in line with Peter's vision of God in Acts 10: 1-11, 18. The Petrine vision shows no partiality derives the idea that a religious community including Christianity cannot declare the customs of other religions blasphemous and unclean.<sup>17</sup> The creative attitude propagated by Jesus and the new visions correct the New Testament Christianity to be inclusive in their approach to people outside the Church.

The New Testament writers affirmed the universal salvific will of God in Jesus Christ and the universality of the Church. In order to propagate the message of God's love, the Church has started outreach ministry. Though the beginning of the Church as a small minority community, it entered into new cultures and new situations. It had been spread in the Palestinian Judaism and later on in the Gentile world. The Church spread in the Greco-Roman within a short span of time. The Apostles were called not only to shepherding the little flock, but also to go unto the world. As God the Father sent the Son and the Holy Spirit into the world, the believers are sent into the world. The Christian outreach ministry is framed in trinitarian perspective.

## Trinitarian Perspective of Reaching the 'Other'

In order to encounter new environment, the Church clarified its theological foundations. The distinctiveness of the doctrine of the Trinity shows Christian faith in God as distinctive among many other faith understandings. The trinitarian God is 'one in essence but three in persons'. The persons are real and distinctive but mutually permeating. The trinitarian theology affirms the uniqueness of 'Other' as a person and mutual interaction of different persons. This can be used for understanding different communities and ministries. ■

(Continued on next (January) Issue)

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# Humble Yourself Before the Lord (Micah 6:8)

Rev. Dr. Philip Varghese

**M**icah (means Who is like Jehovah?) was a contemporary of Isaiah in the Southern Kingdom of Judah and Amos and Hosea in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He was from the village of Moresheth which was twenty five miles south west of Jerusalem. He prophesied during the last half of the eighth century B.C. Although Micah was from Judah a great part of his prophecy had to do with the northern kingdom when it was attacked by Assyria. Micah pronounced judgment on the cities of Israel and Judah, their capitals Samaria and Jerusalem. The urban problems they faced were very much like ours. Micah condemned violence, corruption, robbery, covetousness, gross materialism, spiritual bankruptcy and illicit sex. Micah gave three messages each beginning with the words "Hear" (1:1, 3:1 and 6:1)

The first message was addressed to all the people. The second was addressed to the leaders of Israel. The third was a personal word of pleading to Israel to repent and return to God.

## The 'Me' era

Our era is called the 'me' era where 'I', 'me' 'mine' etc., take prominence. Our slogan is 'Glory to man in the highest for he is the master of all things.' We are a people of pride.

William Barclay says "Pride is in a sense the only sin. Pride is the ground in which all other sins grow, and the parent from which all other sins come."

What are the things that make us proud or arrogant? Our wealth, health, job, skill, education, beauty, family background, parents, children, position or status in society, political or religious influence, etc.

## Pride comes from an immature mind

We have heard that 'little knowledge is a dangerous thing.' In our teenage and younger years we usually become arrogant and proud of our new found little knowledge, degrees, jobs, etc. When I was in primary school there was a lesson in Hindi taken from the life of Mahatma Gandhi. One day Gandhiji was traveling in a train on his way to address a meeting. In his compartment there was a young student returning from college on vacation. He got down at the same station where Gandhiji had to go. As they got out of the train the young student was looking for a 'coolie' to carry his little suitcase. Even though he shouted 'coolie', 'coolie' nobody came to carry his bag. But his pride did not allow him to carry it by himself. Seeing his plight Gandhiji volunteered to carry it. Not recognizing who his fellow traveler was the young man gave the suitcase to Gandhiji. On the way a crowd came to welcome Gandhiji with garlands and shouting slogans. Then only did the young fellow realize who it was and felt ashamed of his false pride and sought pardon from Gandhiji.



## Pride is sin against God

It is rebellion against God. It is the craving to take the place of God. The serpent said to the woman "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). One of the oldest legends is that the Devil was originally an angel of light, Lucifer. He was thrown out of heaven because of his pride. He tried to set his throne above the throne of God. Often we have a feeling that we know better than God and scheme or manipulate things according to our will.

## Pride comes from the feeling that a person is indispensable

It is setting of too high a value on oneself. One may think that without him/her the whole world will collapse. It is true that we all contribute our share in this world. Some may be for good and others for our peril. But our life is only for a short span of time and we all have enjoyed the fruits of the labor of the past generations. The future generations also will contribute their share. So When we think of the vast social, scientific, cultural, literary, political, economic and religious fields an individual's share of contribution, however great it may seem, is only small. If a person involves in all the activities of the church he/she cannot discharge his/her duties in the house. A mother/father has to do his/her part in the house. If they neglect their duties as parents their children will be ruined. The greater a man's achievement, the more he must see that there is still much to do. It is also true that the things which matter are the very things money will never buy.

## Pride Distorts our vision

Adolf Hitler and the Nazis stood for the superiority of the Aryan race. Hitler declared that the Germans were the 'master race', creators of all civilization and the only race fit to rule the world. "My mission is to destroy and exterminate" he declared. The feeling of superiority often excludes other people from our circle. Gospel is all inclusive. Jesus Christ came for the salvation of the whole mankind not for a particular race or nation.

## Pride Damages our relationships

The result of pride is the alienation of the person from others. In Christ there is no rich or poor, Jew or Gentile, Black or White, literate or illiterate. But we often form groups according to our jobs, financial status, etc. The society in Judah and Israel was changing from rural to urban. Wealthy people were buying small family farms and developing huge land holdings. This was a problem for the poor. Micah pleaded for social justice and a concern for the poor. It is good for God's people to remember the past and thank God for all that He has done for them. We must learn from the past and avoid repeating the same mistake.

## **Pride Destroys our character**

Pride leads to moral decay. Often for the sake of companionship people use alcohol and other liquors and fall into dangerous traps. The membership of many clubs and societies lead us away from Christ. For the sake of so called 'status' we often sacrifice our moral and ethical values.

## **Pride Denounces all goodness**

Pride destroys our innocence. It forces us to use any means to achieve what we want. Ahab was a wicked king. He wanted to attach the vineyard of Naboth to his property and make it a vegetable garden. When Naboth refused to part with his ancestral property, Jezebel the proud and wicked queen, with the consent of Ahab, plotted against Naboth and got him stoned to death falsely accusing him of cursing God and the king (1 Kings 21:1-14).

## **Pride Devalues other people**

The natural result of pride is contempt of other people. It ignores the fact that every individual has worth and dignity. It leads one to mistreat fellow human beings. There is no sin quite unchristian as contempt. For Hitler the Slavs were a sub human people fit only to be slaves. We can see a race for superiority in every walk of life.

## **Pride Disturbs our peace of mind**

Haman was not happy with the conduct of Mordecai. The king had given Haman a position of honor higher than the other nobles. All the royal officials at the king's gate were supposed to kneel down and honor him. But Mordecai did not do that. It disturbed Haman's peace of mind. So he plotted for the destruction of Mordecai and the whole Jewish community (Esther 3:1-6;5:9-13). Often we waste most of our time by thinking and plotting ill of others at the cost of our peace of mind.

## **The pride of Israel**

Why did God choose Abraham? "I have chosen him in order that he may command his sons and his descendants to obey me and to do what is right and just. If they do I will do everything for him that I have promised." (Gen. 18:19) What did God demand of Israel? "Worship the Lord and do all that He commands. Love Him, serve Him with all your heart..... The Lord your God is supreme over all gods and over all powers. He does not show partiality..... He makes sure that orphans and widows are treated fairly, he loves the foreigners who live with our people. So then show love for those foreigners because you were once foreigners in Egypt" (Deut. 10:12-19). They were chosen to be a light to other nations. To show others how to live a godly life—to be a model. What God wanted was obedience and mercy. Spiritual pride and arrogance are more dangerous than any other pride. Many so called Christians think that they are holier than others. Their righteousness is like the righteousness of the Pharisees. They think that by prayer, fasting and charity they can inherit the Kingdom of God.

The Pharisees were big on rules and little on godliness; big on externals and little on internals; big on appearance but little on reality. On the outside they appeared righteous to men but

inwardly they were full of dead bones...full of hypocrisy. The Pharisaic form of 'checklist godliness' was being practiced by the people of Micah's time. You can sacrifice year old calves. You can bring any amount of oil. But the important thing is loving your neighbor along with it. What God wants is obedience (1 Sam. 15:22). Jesus says that what all you have done to the least of my brethren you have done it for me (Mt. 25:31-46). The ones who call Him 'Lord', 'Lord' and do not do His Father's will are called 'Evildoers' (Mt. 7:21-23).

## **We have to become a People of Humility**

Those who have been to the Holy Land must have visited 'The Church of Nativity' in Bethlehem built on the spot where, they say, Jesus was born. This church's front door is known as the 'Door of Humility' It is a small rectangular entrance. The reason for replacing the old high door was primarily to prevent carts being driven in by looters and to force even the most important visitor to bend as he/she entered the Holy place. The best example of humility is Jesus Christ.

St. Paul in Philippians chapter 2 speaks about the self-emptying of Jesus Christ. Jesus tells his disciples that the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mk. 10:45).

## **Humility is the noblest of virtues**

Humility is a virtue which is the hardest to come by. It is a sign of maturity. Humility comes when we feel and acknowledge that we are only creatures of God. The spirit of humility is very rare in our day of strong-willed, 'proud-as-a-peacock' attitude. We are familiar with the songs of Virgin Mary and Hannah "He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble" (Luke 1:51-52, 1 Samuel 2:7).

## **Humility is regarding others greater than oneself**

Jesus showed His humility by washing the feet of His disciples. In Jerusalem it was the custom for the host to provide a slave at the door of his house to wash the feet and hands of the dinner guests as they arrived, because, the roads were either filled with dust or muddy. The servant knelt with a pitcher of water, a pan and a towel and washed the feet as each guest entered the house. Shoes and sandals were left at the door. If the home could not afford a slave, one of the early arriving guests graciously took upon himself the role of the house servant. What is interesting is that none of the disciples had volunteered for that lowly task. So the room was filled with proud hearts and dirty heels. Interestingly, these disciples were willing to fight for the throne not for a towel. Stop permitting selfishness and conceit to control you. Replace them with humility of mind. It is difficult to cultivate a servant's heart when you are trying to survive in a chaotic society dominated by selfish pursuits.

## **Humility is one of the fruits of the spirit**

Someone has said that the three basic ingredients of humility are giving, forgiving and forgetting. What God demands is the practical application of Micah 6:8. Love God and love your

*(Continued on page 26)*

# Out Reach: Need and Inspirations

Rev. Alex Peter

Some days before I read a beautiful but very agonizing poem by an unknown author where a brooding person by complaining to this world about his existence says.....

*I was hungry,  
And you formed a humanitarian group  
to discuss my hunger.  
I was naked,  
And you crept off quietly to your chapel  
and prayed for me.  
I was sick,  
And you knelt and thanked God for your health.  
Yet still when you are so Holy, Sainly & Peaceful.....  
I am still so Hungry, Lowly & Wretched.....*



Today we are living in a world where the disharmony, contradictions and differences between its inhabitants is increasing very speedily. Some are living very "Holy, Sainly & Peaceful" life and most of the others are forced to live very "Lowly & Wretched" life. So what is the solution? And how can this disharmony and contradiction be resolved to form a harmonious, just and peaceful world? In order to find the answer of these questions first of all we must know about the intention of God behind creating this world? And the search of the answer for this question gives us the answer for the very basic question of this discussion i.e. "What is the need of outreach?"

## Why Outreach: Need

Let's start this section with the same previous question—"What did God intend by creating this world?" Answer is very simple. God intended to create a very just, peaceful and harmonious space of living; where every form of life must become complimentary and empowering to the other forms of life in its existence and growth. And secondly every form of life must become procreators with God in "His" creation. But today this world itself has become the most dangerous place of living for its most of inhabitants. Who has to be blamed for all these? Surely the culprits are none other than we human beings. So in this scenario the "Outreach" means to go out to touch and restore all those who are out of a just, peaceful and harmonious world, God has envisioned. Hence outreach has two dimensions:

1. **It's a Repentance**—where we accept ours & our forefather's misdoings and start correction in every means.
2. **It's a Partaking**—in God's divine vision of creating a "Divinely World"

Surely the aim is very mesmerizing at the same time very agonizing and difficult one. Why? It's mesmerizing because it envisions a beautiful ending. But it is also very difficult and agonizing because repentance, change and corrections are always painful. Hence the process doesn't seem very easy one. That's why if the foundations and the forces of inspiration are not very strong enough then process of outreach will fail at its outset itself or doesn't reach its goal. So the next goal of this article is to search for the foundations of outreach.

## Inspirations for Outreach: Foundations

It's a proven fact that instead of force, inspiration is the correct way of accomplishing a job; i.e. why our God himself is an "Inspiring God" instead of an "Enforcing God". So the participation in the outreach also must not be by force instead through inspiration only. Hence what must be the inspirations for outreaching? There are basically two inspirations:

1. **Sensitivity:** Sensitivity is a quality through which one can recognize, understand & measure very minute changes not only in him but also what is around him. This recognition, understanding and measurement of change can happen if we are aware of ourselves and what is around us.

*Here arises the next question—what does it mean by awareness?*

*Awareness means "to know".* In today's world we are somewhat sensitive about ourselves as we know ourselves partially. But we are not at all sensitive to others because we do not know them. Hence in order to know others we must enter a relationship with them. So when we have a relation with others then only we can be sensitive to others and then only we can have an urge to outreach and touch them. So following must be the process:

## Relationship—Knowledge—Awareness—Sensitivity—Outreach

This is what Jesus has done—He entered into a relationship with this world, He came to know this world in order to become aware of this world's needs & changes, and out of this sensitivity He decided to extended His hands and outreach to the world. But all this can happen if there is love. Because the first stage of this entire process i.e. Genuine Relationship can happen only by Love. i.e. why our Lord gave us only two commandments—Love God & Love your

neighbors as yourself. So in order to be part of God's outreach vision the first and foremost thing needed is to be sensitive to God and others as God is sensitive to us and others.

**2. Courage:** this second foundation emerges from the point where we have stopped in last section. In last section we have stopped with recognition that—in order to be sensitive we need a relationship. But in order to establish a relationship we need courage. So what does it mean by the word "Courage"?

*Courage means having ability to overcome fear when facing danger.*

Today we have a lot of fears about so many things in our lives. But the most prominent one is the fear of other human beings. Mostly the other human beings are considered dangerous by us for our existence. And this fear always restricts us to spread our hands and touch them. But Genesis 1:27 says every human being is created in the image of God. Hence we all equally share all the Goodness of God. But at the same time as we are born and brought up in this world, we all have the same inclination towards sin also. So we all are equals, at the same time different. But we are not complete. So in order to reach this completeness, along with God we need others also to complement us. Similarly others also need us for this same purpose. The other human beings are not opposites and dangerous to us instead they are complimentary and fulfilling to us. Hence

as they are needed for our existence we are also a must for their existence. So we must have courage to enter into a relationship with every other human being. This is what Christ has also done. Lepers, prostitutes, tax collectors, sinners, baggers, demon possessed and all others who are considered dangerous by the world, become His close associates as He has the courage to enter in to a relationship with them. He complements all of them and becomes a fulfilling force in their life journey. We are also called to become complementary to others in this outreach ministry by having courage to enter into any relationship.

**Conclusion:** There is a very touching scene during the crucifixion of Christ. At the bottom of Cross, along with so many others we find Jesus' mother Mary along with his most beloved disciple John. Both have their own deep personal pain of losing Jesus. But to them Jesus told "Woman now onwards he will be your son; and Man! Now onwards she will be your mother". What is the meaning of this exhortation? Jesus is telling them—"It is true that you have your own pains and sorrows. But you are not called to waste yourself in these sorrows. Instead spread your hands and reach out to each other and be an out reaching supportive community."

*Someone asked Him "How much do you love me".  
By spreading his arms on the Cross he said "This much"  
And died! ■*

## **Humble Yourself Before the Lord** *(Cont'd from page 24)*

neighbor. You can be a religious person without having an intimate relationship with God. Then you are a hypocrite. You must become a force for good in a world of evil—a person of authenticity in a world of hypocrisy. Micah and other prophets told the people exactly what the Lord wanted each of them to do. It emphasized moral and ethical conduct, not religious ceremonies.

*C.H. Spurgeon said "The saint in public is a devil in private"*

*Kahlil Gibran wrote:*

*"I too am visited by angels and devils, but I get rid of them  
When it is an angel, I pray an old prayer, and he is bored.  
When it is a devil, I commit an old sin and he passes away."*

As members of the Mar Thoma church, and as members of the Voluntary Evangelists' Association, we have a great responsibility. God has given us the opportunity to come to this land. He has blessed us abundantly. I am reminded of the words of Mordecai to Esther. "Don't imagine that you are safer than any other Jew just because you are in the royal palace. If you keep quiet, at a time like this, help will come from heaven to the Jews and they will be saved, but you will die and your father's family will come to an end" (Esther 4:13-14).

When we build palatial houses which are occupied only for a month or so in a year there are millions of fellow human beings who sleep on pavements without any shelter over their

heads to protect them from heat or cold. I have seen people who spend lakhs of rupees for the maintenance of courtyards, dog cages etc. without any concern for the poor.

We often try to compare ourselves with our rich neighbors or friends. There is an unhealthy competition to possess more than what our neighbors have. We spend and waste thousands of dollars on food and luxury. Can we practice tithing strictly and help the poor? I am sure that if all the Marthomites here in the U.S.A., Canada and Europe tithe, we can do wonders in our society back in India.

## **We should abandon the race for luxury or superiority**

When we go to church we have our permanent seats and our little circle of friends. We try to avoid certain persons. How can we have fellowship without relationship? As the number of families increases and our financial position improves there is breakdown in fellowship due to false pride. We should abandon the race for expensive houses, cars, furniture, costumes, swimming pools, etc. A life of modesty and simplicity is that is wanted.

God has given us enough warnings and time to repent. It is our duty to repent and turn to God and be humble. Be humble before being humiliated. Those that is humble has no need to tremble or stumble. Stop praying to God to change others until we pray to God to change ourselves first. ■

# A Missionary Organization called "JESUSPOLITIK"

Melissa Davis

**W**hen you're called overseas, it's because God has given you specific gifts that will minister to people in the place where He's called you. A call to overseas missions isn't necessarily a lifetime call. It is first a call to obedience, responding to what a loving God is asking you to do.

Another factor that we often overlook is the people that we'll meet while being obedient to the call of God. How many people have met their future spouse, future employers and gotten the skills they've needed to open doors for them later in life while overseas obeying the call of God to go on a missions trip? Besides helping people in another culture, there are also the changes that take place in you while you're there that prepare you for your best future.

The way I first got overseas was through a study abroad program with Chiang Mai University. I was 19. I'd been leading an International Justice Mission student chapter at Messiah College, when Dr. Michael Leming offered the opportunity to study abroad through "Spring Semester in Thailand." I studied at Chiang Mai University and interned at an International Justice Mission aftercare center for victims of human rights abuse.

While at IJM's New Life Center, the Lord spoke to me about His healing and restorative power. Many of the girls at the aftercare center were rescued out of prostitution, bonded labor situations and abandonment. Though they had been through obvious sufferings; it amazed me that there was no hardness in their hearts whatsoever.

Where I'd expected to see brokenness, there was fulfillment and overcoming. These girls loved without abandon! Everyday they'd greet me with smiles and we'd walk around talking together.

When talking with one of the girls, she said she was able to have love because Jesus was there with her in her suffering even before she knew Him. He saw all the hurt she endured, made a way to rescue her out of it and understood her entirely. It was from a standpoint of being loved, that she could love others. Her faith in Jesus didn't waver. She knew what it meant to be saved, because she'd been saved from something.

She later went on to seminary with the plan to go back to her own hill tribe and warn them about the brothel keepers that comb the villages looking for young girls to coerce into prostitution situations.

In addition to time I spent there, I edited the English script for a radio project in the Lahu language. This project, funded through UNESCO, provides education in the area of HIV/AIDS, human trafficking and drugs. It broadcasted throughout northern Thailand, southwest China, and parts of northeast India.

I was given the opportunity to participate and present at a workshop on human trafficking, held with senior leaders of the Myanmar Council of Churches, International Justice



Mission, United Nations Inter-Agency Project to Combat Trafficking in Women and Children and NGOs in Thailand. This opened doors for me to edit the English script for Heifer International Mekong Region Program's Training and Education Program, as well as do the voice-over for the promotional video of their work in the Yunnan Province of China.

The following year, I began laying out the groundwork for JESUSpolitik, a 501c3 charity the Lord used me to start.

JESUSpolitik is an international organization that helps indigenous missionaries overseas to reach their own people. We connect them to other human rights and social service organizations as well as missions groups who are reaching out to the same people. Stateside, we offer creative ways that anyone can immediately get involved using their talents and resources to directly help needy people being reached across the world by JESUSpolitik projects.

We believe that no matter what your interest, talent, or resources are - you can do something to help people. Even if you don't think you've been given very much to work with, you can do something to help people. We'll show you how.

On JESUSpolitik.com's "Do Something" page, you'll find lists of talents and interests with simple, direct ways to use them to change a person's future from bad to good. Read activism stories of people that are getting involved. Get inspired by testimonies of how the Lord utilizes our faithfulness to glorify Him with what we've been given.

God has put it in the heart of people to want to do good in the face of evil, to want to help those taken advantage of, hurt, abused and oppressed. We'll help you do that.

When I was a university student we'd learn human rights issues, we'd want to do something about it— and then be given little means of doing so beyond writing a letter, praying or donating money. While those are all good things, people need a way to make a tangible difference. If people aren't given a realistic way to do take action, they eventually lose the desire to do anything.

JESUSpolitik stirs hope in people. The Lord gave us our talents for a reason. There are ways to use every resource we have, big or small, to help people. Justice is within our means. We give people hope that they CAN help other people and that there IS something that they can do.

Two of our projects are the "Love Maputo Project" in Maputo, Mozambique and the "Hope for India Project" in Andhra Pradesh, India. I guarantee there is something you can do to get involved.

The Love Maputo Project is the collaboration of 2 organizations—Masana and Kunhymela House. Project workers are reaching 350 children a year—making a definite difference in a country where more than half of its populous is under 18. Workers bring children off the streets, provide

*(Continued on page 29)*

# Mission Then and Mission Now

## God's perspective on Global Mission from the Old and New Testament

Dr. T. M. John, New Jersey

**T**he Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization states that the biblical authority for missions begins with God's call to Abraham to leave his country and kinsmen. (Genesis 12:1-3). The blessing of Abraham was for his descendants and for all the peoples of the world. The placement of Jews in the midst of other nations was for the proclamation of the living God, the Creator of the universe, who blessed them.

As we examine the Old Testament we see the missionary nature of God and the Old Testament history reveals the missionary purpose of God in all His dealings with the prophets, priests and kings.

Noah's generation didn't know God but God graciously allowed 120 years for Noah's generation to turn to God. They all perished in their wickedness except Noah and his family. Abraham's nephew Lot made the wrong choice to live in the wicked city of Sodom/Gomorrah, but God was giving them a chance to turn to the God of Lot. He was unable to influence the people in that city in turning their hearts to God. As Abraham moved around and pitched tents, he worshiped God and in effect declared to the nations about God the creator of the World.

The perfect example of the missionary heart of God is seen in the story of Jonah, the first cross-cultural missionary. Jonah evidently didn't recognize the heart of God, His compassion for the people of Nineveh. He was frustrated with God's love and compassion for the people outside the boundaries of Israel. God expected the Israelites to represent Him regardless of where they lived. Even during the captivity of Israelites, God raised up individuals who upheld their belief in Jehovah. The rulers recognized the God of the Israelites as being the true God and Creator of the universe. Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the God of Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego. King Darius acknowledged the God of Daniel when he found out that Daniel wasn't harmed by the lions though he threw him in the lion's den. Esther was instrumental in the deliverance of Jews from destruction.

In the fullness of time God appeared in the flesh, the God-man Jesus Christ as missionary as well as the mediator between God and man. He doesn't wish that anyone should perish, but all should come to repentance. His last word to us is our mandate "All authority has been given to me Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matt. 28:18-20.

**EVANGELISM:** The term Evangelism comes from the Greek 'EVANGELION' which means "Good News" and translated as Gospel. The one who goes with the good news is 'APOSTOLOS.' Today we call them missionaries. According to the Lord's command, the disciples gathered together in the upper room. The Holy Spirit came upon them and they began to speak and



those who heard them understood the message in their own tongue. They believed in Jesus and were baptized and as they went back to their own countries began to spread the good news they had received. After the destruction of the Temple most of the Christian population dispersed. Christianity continued to spread in the Roman empire. The disciples of Jesus went to preach the Gospel in different places, however accurate records of when and where they went are not available. However, strong traditions prevail that Peter went to Rome and was martyred there. Paul evangelized Asia Minor. He established seven churches. He visited

Rome as a prisoner, released and re-arrested later and was martyred. Thomas went to India. And established churches. Tradition and folklore associate him with a king named Gondaphoras at a place called Taxilla. Archaeological excavations have proved Gondaphoras as a historical person who ruled Taxilla.

Thomas went to the Malabar coast and established churches there. He was later martyred in Madras. The Malankara church remained dormant for several centuries until the Protestant missionaries came to Malabar with reformation ideas and thus paved the way for reformation in the Malankara Church.

Meanwhile the Church flourished in Europe, Africa and Asia-Minor. The church spread from Syria and Mesopotamia into Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan and China. Nestorian church was responsible for the spread of the Gospel in the latter countries. Second century saw the rise of great leaders like Polycarp of Smyrna, and Ignatius of Antioch. Other famous leaders were Clement of Rome and Justin Martyr. Origen and Tertullian were great teachers in the third century. With conversion of Emperor Constantine Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

**MODERN MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS AROUND THE GLOBE:** The spirit of urgency and enthusiasm to win souls for Christ can be seen in the words of C. T. Studd, an Englishman, Cricket Champion and Missionary to China, India and Africa who said "Some wish to live within the sound of Church bell, I want to run a Rescue Shop within a yard of hell." William Carey (1761-1831) is considered the father of modern evangelical Christian missions. Carey was influenced by reading the biography of David Brainerd a missionary to the American Indians in New Jersey and Delaware, as well as the journals of the Explorer James Cook. Carey was deeply challenged to propagate the Gospel throughout the world. He worked relentlessly, learned several languages, translated the Bible in to Bengali and Sanskrit and several other Indian languages. William Carey established Serampore College. His contributions to the kingdom of God and to society are numerous to mention. His motto in life was "Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God. Though he is dead, his life still speaks and inspires millions to be involved in the propagation of the Gospel.

**OTHER MISSIONARIES TO THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT AND BEYOND:** Time and space doesn't allow other missionaries to be included in this article. Yet, would like to mention the heroic work done by some of them in India and the Far East. Hudson Taylor was the first missionary to China who founded China Inland Mission. Adoniram Judson, first American Missionary to India, later spent the rest of his life in Burma (Myanmar). Henry Martin went to India as a chaplain for the East India Company. During his 305 day voyage he learned Urdu and Bengali. Although he had only a short span of life he completed the translation of Bible into Urdu, Arabic and Persian. He died in 1812 at the age of 31.

Among those who worked in South India are, Thomas Ragland and Thomas Walker of Tinnevely. Thomas Walker supported the ministry of Amy Carmichael in Dohnavur. Walker is remembered in Kerala among the Syrian Christians as the co-founder of the great Maramon Convention. He died in 1912 after serving Christ for 27 years. Thomas Walker was a close friend of Bishop Abraham Mar Thoma.

John G. Paton was missionary to the New Hebrides Islands of the South Pacific. Under constant threat of death Paton preached the Gospel and established His church. In 1899 John Paton was allowed to see the results of his grueling labor for the Lord. Twenty five out of thirty islands in the New Hebrides had churches and missionaries. The entire island of Aniwa professed their faith in Christ and had their own translation of the New Testament.

James Chalmers went to Papua, New Guinea the largest island in the world. It is located on the north of Australia. Papua was known as an island inhabited by cannibals. He fearlessly spent his entire life for the proclamation of the Gospel. His ministry is summed in the following statement: "His fearlessness won the respect of the cannibals; his compassion, their loyalty and friendship."

**EVANGELISM TODAY:** In the 1700s and 1800s one could go anywhere in the world to do missionary work, Today things have changed and we should look in to other ways of doing missionary work. In our own life time countries that were completely closed are forced open. In the fifties and sixties Tibet, Afghanistan, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan were closed countries. Today they are open and their citizens are all over the world for purposes of education and other reasons. Some of them are refugees. Walk into a University campus and see the different faces. Think of it as the "world at your door step." Many of them are here for a few years to study, then go back to their own countries.

**FRIENDSHIP/LIFE STYLE EVANGELISM:** It costs little or nothing to be friendly. Befriend people irrespective of cast creed or ethnicity. Invite them to your home, serve a meal or tea, enquire if they need any help. Overseas students in this country really need help in the first few days or weeks of their being at college campuses.

Help them without any strings attached. In due course they might ask you about your faith or culture. We must be prepared to answer any one who asks the reason of the hope we have in Christ Jesus. Evangelism can be verbal or non-verbal. People observe your demeanor, work ethic, moral behavior etc., and may even ask you why you are different from other people. Here is the golden opportunity you have to witness for Christ.

**TENT MAKERS:** With proper credentials you can go to any country and be gainfully employed. Even the so called "closed" countries are open for professionals. You can be an effective witness for Jesus Christ paid by the host country. This principle can be applied in our local situation also. Many churches are dying and no pastor is available to work voluntarily. Those who have knowledge and training in dividing the word of truth could give some of their time and talent to building His Church.

**CONCLUSION:** The failure of one generation to evangelize can lead to the demise of the church as seen in Alexandria—North Africa and Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Dr Frank Laubach, a great educator a few decades ago came up with a formula "each one teach one." It was a great success. Many people learned to read and write as a result of the experiment. Bishop Abraham Mar Thoma taught that every believing member of the Mar Thoma Church ought to be an Evangelist. This idea gave rise to the formation of the Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelistic Association. We don't have to leave the country, the world is at your door step. Each one take the responsibility to reach one for Christ.

In this technologically advanced era there are other ways of communicating the Gospel. Our young people are so proficient in the modern technology of computers especially with social networking. Put to use your expertise in texting, twitter, facebook, YouTube, e-mail or any other means, to use them for communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ whereby we will be fulfilling the command to Go, Preach the Gospel. ■

## **A Missionary Organization called "JESUSPOLITIK"** (Cont'd from page 27)

education, and teach income-earning skills so they don't have to turn to prostitution, drug running or theft to survive. Project workers feed and clothe the children, offer medical care, and introduce them to Jesus Christ. Children are reunited with family or placed in a safe home so they get appropriate care.

The Hope for India Project: Project workers conduct medical camps, providing needy people with check-ups, medicine, counseling, HIV/AIDS education and prayer. An orphanage is operated for children whose parents died of HIV/AIDS, as well as for physically handicapped children. Widows are also being helped by this project,

with home visits, food, clothing, blankets, medicines and hygiene products. The Gospel is shared as well. Workers have established 7 congregations in Andhra Pradesh state. 90% of their evangelistic work is done throughout Hindu and tribal peoples.

You can start where you are with what you've got and then reach further, using your current resources for God. This puts you in a response mode for when/if the Lord calls you to go to another country or culture. Even if it's short term, you never know the long term plans that He has for you and your future. Many times the little acts of obedience bring the big changes in our lives and in our world. ■

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# LIVING HOME

*“In the final analysis it is not what you do for your children but what you have taught them to do for themselves that will make them successful human beings”*

Ann Landers

## HOME & GARDEN TIPS

MRS. SHIRLEY CHACKALAMANNIL, NEW JERSEY MTC

### Etiquettes for disciplining our children\*

Children do not come with their own owner's manual. So all parents learn how to guide and discipline their children as they go along. Many times we learn the right way of parenting by making mistakes in our parenting style. Learning how to discipline effectively your child is an important skill that all parents need to learn. According to the Ephesians 6:4, there is a right way and a wrong way to discipline our children. Apostle Paul says "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." All children are different and have different temperaments associated with different developmental levels. So the methods of discipline that works do vary from one child to another. So the method of discipline can be left for the parents' discretion but it is the style of discipline that bring forth results whether it is positive or negative. So it is quite necessary that we ought to know the basics for the style of disciplining our children. Since this is an area that needs expert advice both from Christian perspective and psychological perspective, the following tips for style of parenting is provided by Dr. Shibu Kuncheria\* (Specializing in Child Psychiatry and Adolescent Medicine)

#### Types of Parenting

**1. Permissive:** In this case parents show much love and affection to their children. There is no discipline hence no known boundaries where children can discern right from wrong. In this scenario, in most cases parents are fearful that their children will not love them if they discipline them. In this style of parenting we usually see a role reversal, where a child will take of the role of a parent and the parents will do what the child demands. Here the parent loses the respect as well as his/her God given authority as a parent. There is good chance that this child will have problems with authority figures.

**2. Neglectful:** In our Indian community this style of parenting is rarely seen. Here there is neither love nor discipline. Hence there is no consequence for the child's misbehavior. The child will grow up to be defiant to all authorities and will have difficulty in adapting to the norm of the society where everyone's civilized existence depends on each other's courtesy and decency.

**3. Authoritarian:** In this scenario, the parents will be expecting a lot from their child by laying down many laws and demands without showing much love and affection. These parents may have good intention and may say that he/she do these things because of the care and concern for the child. Here the parent is very critical without reasoning. In this predicament the child grows up in a fearful environment. This kind of environment inhibits the child to be creative and hence lack self esteem. This kind of parenting does not bring the best in a child.

**4. Authoritative:** When parents are authoritative, the discipline and love are in perfect balance. Here the child will learn to be his/her own person with good self esteem and creativity. A child who grows up in this kind of environment seldom loses self identity and less prone to subject themselves to peer pressure. This will be an environment where there is boundaries and consequences for crossing the boundaries. Child will learn to respect others because he/she was nurtured, and disciplined with love and respect. Here the discipline was done with love and reasoning.

Several researches have been done in this field and the results shows that children of authoritative parents grow up be individuals with good self-esteem, morals and ethics. To repeat again, the most important style of parenting is where the parent is the example of good character and integrity. When it comes to parenting the common cliché "character is not taught, but caught" makes sense. Remember that discipline does not mean punishment; it has to do more with "teaching". Teaching our children how

to honor God, how to discern right from wrong, how to respect the rights of others and at the same time making themselves feel secure, confident and self disciplined. At different stages of a child's life, the style of discipline varies even though the goal of Christian parenting remains the same.

#### The early years (from infancy to age 6)

This age is known as the "years of imprinting" Babies comes with a clean slate and much of the imprinting is done during these years on an emotional basis. These are the years where they crave for attention and affection. Through this attention and affection they learn about love. This is the time to pamper your child without spoiling them. This is the time of "stranger anxiety phase and separation anxiety phase". At this stage children are more aware of their environment and their dependence on their parents. Hence a loving parent will do everything that he/she can do to instill in them a sense of security. At this age the kids can be very ego-centric and so this is the time to teach them the concept of sharing and caring. From the preschool years onwards he/she begins to identify with the same sex parent, so it is necessary for fathers to be around boys and mothers to be around girls. The bond that you will have your child at this time will help him/her to come to you for support and advice in the later stages of his/her life.

#### Age 6-12

These are the "impressionable years" of a child's life. This is a very curious time of a child's life and we should expect a lot of questions starting with "but why?" They will have watchful eyes on others including parents and this is the time parents should not follow the old saying "do as I say, don't do as I do". So we the parents should make every effort to obey the rules and laws ourselves. At this phase of their life they start developing empathy and altruism (mostly by seeing how other family members behave). So affirm this positive behavior with words of encouragement. Our conversations should be void of any malice towards others including no gossips about others. We should shelter them from seeing vulgarity and violence in TV, video games, Internet as well as from wrong friends. We should keep in mind that these are the impressionable years and what they see, what they hear and who they hang out with will help form their morals and character. This is the time to teach them that life is not just "play and fun" but opportunities for service to God and others. We could start teaching this concept by giving them chores to do around the house which will allow them to feel that they are valuable members in the family as well as in society.

#### The adolescent years

The Biblical principle, "teach your children the way that they should go and when they are old, they will not divert from it" is applicable at this phase of their life. These are the years of "coaching". It is important that a parent ought to be a coach rather than a dictator at this phase. As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, if you foster a good relationship with your child early on his/her life, these years could be less troublesome for both the parents and the child. This is the time when they leave their childish interests and behavior and are learning to be adults. So our behavior and mode of parenting has to change accordingly. Be there for them at all times and expect that this is a phase of their life where they are neither children nor adults. So this time can be confusing for them as well for us. But our owner's manual, the Bible" will be our guide.

\*Dr. Kuncheria is a child, adolescent and adult psychiatrist. He is board certified as a diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. He is also board certified in child and adolescent psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology

**Next Issue of Living Home will focus on the theme: "The manners and matters of communication"**

# ക്രിസ്തീയ കുടുംബം ഒരു ദൈവിക പദ്ധതി

വെരി. റവ. ഏബ്രഹാം ശാമുവേൽ

## ആമുഖം

ഈ കാലഘട്ടത്തിലെ ആദ്ധ്യാത്മിക മൂല്യബോധങ്ങളിലുണ്ടായിട്ടുള്ള തകർച്ചയേയും ധാർമ്മിക ബോധത്തിലെ മൂല്യച്യുതിയേയും കുറിച്ച് ചിന്തിക്കാത്തവരും വിലയിരുത്താത്തവരും കുറവാണ്. കാരണം ഒരിക്കലും നഷ്ടപ്പെടുവാൻ പാടില്ലാത്ത ചില മൂല്യങ്ങളുണ്ടെന്നുള്ള സങ്കല്പങ്ങളും ധാരണകളും എല്ലാവരിലും രൂഢമൂലമായുണ്ട്. വ്യക്തികളുടേയും സമൂഹത്തിന്റേയും ധാർമ്മികാധപതനത്തിന്റെ മൂലകാരണങ്ങൾ തേടിയുള്ള യാത്രയിൽ നാം ചെന്നെത്തുന്നത് കുടുംബങ്ങളിലാണ്. ബിഷപ്പ് ഫുൾട്ടൻ ഷീൻ പറഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ള വാക്കുകളിൽ ഈ സത്യം അന്തർലീനമാണ്. 'ഒരു സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ അടിത്തറ കുടുംബമാണ്, ആ അടിത്തറ തകർന്നാൽ സമൂഹം നശോന്മുഖമാകും.' പ്രവചന സ്വാഭാവമുള്ള വാക്കുകൾ ഇന്ന് അന്തർലീനമായിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. കുടുംബത്തിലെ ഉലച്ചിലുകൾ സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ ആകമാന സ്വഭാവത്തെ പ്രതികൂലമായി ബാധിക്കും.



കുടുംബത്തിന് ദൈവീകാംശം നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ട അവസ്ഥ ഇന്ന് വന്നു ഭവിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ദൈവിക പദ്ധതിയിൽ പെട്ട കുടുംബം യോജിക്കപ്പെടുന്നത് ദൈവത്തോലാണ്. ഈ ബന്ധത്തിന്റെ കാലാവധി മരണത്തോളവുമാണ്. മരണത്തിനല്ലാതെ ഈ ബന്ധത്തെ വേർപിരിക്കുവാൻ ആർക്കും കഴിയില്ല എന്ന അടിസ്ഥാന പ്രമാണങ്ങൾ വേറൊരു പോയിരിക്കുന്നു. സെക്കുലർ സ്റ്റേറ്റുകളുടെ ആഭിർഭാവത്തോടെ വിവാഹം മതപരവും വിശ്വാസപരവും എന്ന ചിന്ത മാറി എങ്ങനെയും നടത്തപ്പെടാവുന്ന ഒന്നായി മാറി. നിയമത്തിന്റെ അംഗീകാരത്തിനും, ആനുകൂല്യത്തിനുമായി മതപരമായ വിവാഹത്തേക്കാൾ സ്റ്റേറ്റിന്റെ നിയമപ്രകാരം നടത്തപ്പെടുന്നതാണ് എളുപ്പം എന്നു വന്നു. ദേവാലങ്ങളിൽ വച്ച് വിവാഹം നടന്നാലും ദേശീയ നിയമപ്രകാരം രജിസ്റ്റർ ചെയ്യണമെന്ന വ്യവസ്ഥ മിക്കവാറും രാജ്യങ്ങളിൽ നിയമമായി. ഇപ്പോൾ ഇന്ത്യയിലും അത് നിർബന്ധമാക്കി. വിവാഹം സെക്കുലറാകുക വഴി ഒരുപരിധി പരെ അതിലെ ദൈവിക പരിവേഷം നഷ്ടപ്പെടുകയാണ്.

മാനവ ചരിത്രത്തോളം തന്നെ പഴക്കമുള്ളതാണ് കുടുംബം എന്ന സ്ഥാപനം. എല്ലാ സംസ്കാരങ്ങളും അതതിന്റെ സംഭാവനകൾ ഈ സ്ഥാപനത്തിന് നൽകിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. എല്ലാ മതവിഭാഗങ്ങളും ഈ ചെറിയ ഘടകത്തിന്റെ സവിശേഷതകളെപ്പറ്റിയും പവിത്രതയെപ്പറ്റിയും അതിലെ ദൈവികതയെപ്പറ്റിയും ഗൗരവത്തോടെ സംസാരിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

## കുടുംബവും വേദപുസ്തകാടിസ്ഥാനവും

വേദപുസ്തക വീക്ഷണത്തിൽ ദൈവത്തിന്റെ പരിപാവനമായ രക്ഷാകര പദ്ധതിയുടെ ഭാഗമായാണ് കുടുംബവും വിവാഹവും കാണപ്പെടുന്നത്. ലോകത്തിലെ ആദ്യ കുടുംബത്തിന്റെ സ്ഥാപനം ദൈവത്താൽ ഏദനിൽ വെച്ച് നിർവ്വഹിക്കപ്പെടുന്നതായി ഉല്പത്തിപുസ്തകത്തിൽ പ്രതിപാദിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. കുടുംബം ദൈവസ്വരൂപത്തിലും സാദൃശ്യത്തിലും സൃഷ്ടിക്കപ്പെട്ട മനുഷ്യരാൽ(സ്ത്രീപുരുഷന്മാർ) നയിക്കപ്പെടുന്നതാണ്. ദൈവം അതിലെ കേന്ദ്രബിന്ദുവും. സ്ത്രീപുരുഷ ബന്ധം കേവലം വൈകാരികം എന്നതിനേക്കാൾ ദൈവീകമായതും വിശുദ്ധമായതുമാണ്. ആദ്യവിവാഹം മുതൽ എല്ലാ വിവാഹ ബന്ധത്തിന്റെയും കാർമ്മികത്വം നിർവ്വഹിക്കപ്പെടുന്നത് ദൈവത്തോലാണ്. എവിടെയെല്ലാം വിവാഹത്തിലൂടെ സ്ത്രീപുരുഷന്മാർ കുടുംബ ജീവിതത്തിലേക്ക് പ്രവേശിക്കുന്നുവോ അവിടെയെല്ലാം പരിശുദ്ധാത്മ പ്രവർത്തനം ഉണ്ട്. പവിത്രമായ, ദൈവീകമായ, അനിവാര്യമായ ഈ സ്ഥാപനത്തിന്റെ മൂല്യങ്ങൾക്ക് ഇന്നത്തെ സമൂഹത്തിൽ ഉടവ് സംഭവിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു എന്ന് ഒരു ദുഃഖ സത്യമാണ്.

## സമകാലിക സമൂഹവും

കുടുംബ സങ്കല്പങ്ങളിലെ വ്യതിയാനവും സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ വ്യതിയാനത്തിൽ കുടുംബമൂല്യങ്ങൾക്കും സങ്കല്പങ്ങൾക്കും അവസ്ഥാന്തരമുണ്ടായി. കാർഷിക സംസ്കാരത്തിൽ നിന്നും വ്യവസായ യുഗത്തിലേക്കു നീങ്ങിയപ്പോൾ കുട്ടുകുടുംബ വ്യവസ്ഥിതിക്കു മാറ്റമുണ്ടായി. പിന്നീട് അണുകുടുംബത്തിന്റെ ആഭിർഭാവമായി. അതും കാലഹരണപ്പെടലിന്റെ വക്കിലെത്തുമ്പോൾ സൈബർ കുടുംബങ്ങൾ എന്ന സ്ഥിതി വിശേഷത്തിലേക്ക് സാമൂഹ്യ ക്രമങ്ങൾ മാറി. തത്ഫലമായി കുടുംബത്തെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള സങ്കല്പങ്ങളും വിശ്വാസങ്ങളും മാറി. വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന്റെ ലഭ്യത വലിയ വികാസത്തിലേക്ക് സമൂഹത്തെ നയിച്ചു. ഭൗതിക വളർച്ചക്കുള്ള ഉപാധിയായി മാത്രം വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം മാറ്റപ്പെട്ടപ്പോൾ കുടുംബവും കേവലം ഭൗതികമായ ആവശ്യങ്ങൾ നിറവേറ്റപ്പെടേണ്ട ഒരിടം മാത്രമായി തരംതാണു പോയി.

വ്യക്തിസ്വാതന്ത്ര്യവും സ്ത്രീപുരുഷ സമത്വവാദവും കുടുംബ ബന്ധങ്ങളിലെ തകർച്ചയ്ക്ക് ഒരുപരിധി വരെ കാരണമാണ്. വ്യക്തിത്വത്തെ അംഗീകരിക്കുക, പരസ്പര ധാരണയിൽ ജീവിക്കുക എന്നിവയ്ക്ക് മുകൾപ്പറഞ്ഞ കാരണങ്ങൾ വിലങ്ങുതടിയാകാറുണ്ട്. എതിരാളികളോടു മത്സരിക്കുന്ന മനോഭാവം വളർത്തിയെടുക്കുന്ന വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം കുടുംബത്തിന്റെ ഘടനയിലും, സ്വഭാവത്തിലും കാര്യമായ വ്യതിയാനം വരുത്തിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. സഹകരണത്തിന്റേയും പാരസ്പര്യത്തിന്റേയും പാഠങ്ങൾ കൈമോശം വരുന്നു. ജോലിയും പ്രമോഷനും ഒക്കെ മേൽക്കോയ്മയ്ക്കും അപകർഷതയ്ക്കും കാരണമാകുന്നതു തന്നെ പരസ്പരാംഗീകാരത്തിലെ അഭാവമാണ്. ഭർത്താവിന്റെ ഉയർച്ചയിൽ മനസുതുറന്ന് സന്തോഷിക്കാൻ കഴിയാതെ ഭാര്യയും, ഭാര്യയുടെ വളർച്ചയിൽ അസഹ്യപ്പെടുന്ന ഭർത്താവും കുടുംബ ബന്ധങ്ങളിലെ പുഴുക്കുത്താണ്. പാരസ്പര്യത്തിന്റെ ഇഴകൾ ചേർത്ത് നെയ്യേണ്ടതാണ് കുടുംബം.

പാശ്ചാത്യ സംസ്കാരം ഏറ്റവും വിലമതിക്കുന്ന മൂല്യമാണ് വ്യക്തി സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം. സ്ത്രീകളെ അടിച്ചമർത്തിയിരുന്ന കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ നിന്ന് മോചനം ആവശ്യമായിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ കുടുംബ ബന്ധങ്ങൾ നിലനില്ക്കാനാവശ്യമായ പാരസ്പര്യം കൂടി സാധ്യമല്ലാത്ത വിധത്തിൽ വ്യക്തി സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം അതിരൂലംഘിച്ചുകൂടാ. ഭാര്യ ഭർത്താവിന് കീഴ്പ്പെട്ടിരിക്കട്ടെ എന്ന് പൗലോസ് അപ്പോസ്തോലൻ പറയുന്നു. ആ കീഴ്പ്പെടൽ സമർപ്പിക്കുക എന്ന അർത്ഥത്തിലാണ്(submit). കുടുംബത്തിനായി ചിലതൊക്കെ ത്യജിക്കുവാൻ ഭാര്യഭർത്താക്കന്മാർക്ക് സാധിക്കുമ്പോൾ മാത്രമേ അത് സന്തോഷമായിത്തീരുകയുള്ളൂ.

## കുടുംബവും ചില വീക്ഷണവൈകല്യങ്ങളും

1960-കൾ ലൈംഗികവിപ്ലവത്തിന്റെ കാലഘട്ടമായാണ് പാശ്ചാത്യ ലോകം കണക്കാക്കുന്നത്. വ്യക്തിസ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം അമിതമായപ്പോൾ ലൈംഗികതയിലെ സദാചാരമൂല്യങ്ങൾ നഷ്ടപ്പെടുവാനിടയായി. ലൈംഗികാസ്വാദനം വിനോദോപാധികളെപ്പോലെ ലാഘവമായി കണക്കാക്കിയപ്പോൾ 'നീലപ്പടങ്ങൾ'(blue pills)സാധാരണമായി. അതുവഴി യുവജനങ്ങളിൽ ലൈംഗികതയെക്കുറിച്ച് വികലമായ കാഴ്ചപ്പാടുണ്ടായി. കുടുംബ ജീവിതത്തിൽ പ്രായോഗികമാക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന ഇത്തരം ചിത്രങ്ങൾ പരസ്പര ധാരണകളേയും ബഹുമാനത്തേയും നശിപ്പിച്ചു കളയും. തത്ഫലമായി ബന്ധങ്ങൾ ശിഥിലമാകും.

ലൈംഗികതയിലുള്ള അജ്ഞത കുടുംബപ്രശ്നങ്ങൾക്ക് കാരണമാകുന്നതുപോലെ, അതിരുകവിഞ്ഞ ഭാവനകളും പരിപാവനമായ കുടുംബ ബന്ധത്തെ ലൈംഗികതയുടെ തലത്തിലേക്ക് തരം താഴ്ത്തുകയും, ദോഷകരമായി ബാധിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യും.

ഭൗതിക വളർച്ച കുടുംബ ജീവിതത്തിൽ ആവശ്യമാണെന്നിരിക്കെ കുടുംബ ജീവിത വിജയത്തിന് അതു മാത്രമാണ് മാർഗ്ഗം എന്നു ചിന്തിക്കുന്നത് അപകടമാണ്. വിജയങ്ങളുടെ അളവുകോൽ അതാകരുത്. സാമ്പത്തിക വളർച്ചയില്ലെങ്കിൽ ഇപ്പോൾ ആത്മീയരെപ്പോലും സമൂഹം അംഗീകരിക്കില്ല. ഇന്നത്തെ വിവാഹ ബന്ധങ്ങൾ ഭൗതികമായ നേട്ടങ്ങളെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കി കെട്ടിപ്പടുക്കുവാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നു എന്നത് ഒരു വസ്തുതയാണ്. സാമ്പത്തിക ഭദ്രതയ്ക്ക് കൂടുതൽ മുൻതൂക്കം നൽകുന്നത് ഇന്നത്തെ പ്രവണതയാണ്. കുടുംബബന്ധങ്ങളുടെ പ്രാരംഭ ആലോചനകളിൽപ്പോലും എന്തു ലഭിക്കും, എന്തു കൊടുക്കും എന്നതിന് പ്രസക്തിയേറുകയാണ്. ഭൗതിക നേട്ടങ്ങളേക്കാൾ ദൈവത്തിനും, ദൈവീകമൂല്യങ്ങൾക്കും മുൻഗണന കൊടുക്കുന്ന കുടുംബങ്ങൾ ഇന്നു വിരളമാണ്.

കുടുംബത്തെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള ആധുനിക സങ്കല്പങ്ങളിൽ ഇന്ന് മാതാപിതാക്കൾക്ക് സ്ഥാനമില്ലാതെയായി വരുന്നു. അവഗണിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന മാതാപിതാക്കൾ വർദ്ധിച്ചു വരുന്നു. മാതാപിതാക്കൾ വൃദ്ധസദനങ്ങളിൽ അടയ്ക്കപ്പെടുന്നു. വൃദ്ധജനങ്ങളോടുള്ള അവഗണന സമൂഹത്തിലെ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളിലൊന്നായി മാറിയിരിക്കുന്നു. അവഗണനയുടെ നിഴലിൽക്കഴിയുന്ന അനാരോഗ്യകരമായ പ്രതികരണങ്ങൾ കുടുംബത്തിൽ പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ സൃഷ്ടിക്കുന്നു. കരുതലിന്റേയും ശുശ്രൂഷയുടെയും നന്മകൾ അവർക്കു നൽകുക വഴി കൂടുതൽ കരുതുവാനും സ്നേഹിക്കുവാനും കുട്ടികൾ പഠിക്കുന്നതിനുള്ള സാഹചര്യങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടാകും.

ഇതുകൊണ്ടുമാത്രം കുടുംബപ്രശ്നങ്ങളുടെ പട്ടിക അവസാനിക്കുന്നില്ല. ഇങ്ങനെ ധാരാളം പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ കണ്ടെത്തുവാൻ കഴിയും. അതിനിടയിൽ കുടുംബജീവിതം അർത്ഥവത്താക്കുന്നതിന് സഹായകരമായ സംഗതികളെക്കുറിച്ച് പ്രതിപാദിക്കുന്നു. നമ്മുടെ കുടുംബങ്ങളിൽ സുരക്ഷിതത്വത്തിനായി ചില കൈമതിലുകൾ അനിവാര്യമാണ്. ഈ കൈമതിലുകൾ പൊളിഞ്ഞുകിടക്കുന്നതാണ് പലപ്പോഴും അപകടങ്ങൾക്ക് കാരണമാകുന്നത്.

**1. കുടുംബ പ്രാർത്ഥന/കുടുംബാരാധന**  
ഒന്നിച്ചു പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്ന കുടുംബം ഒന്നിച്ചു പാർക്കുന്നു (A Paapoo PraPs togetHer staPs togetHer എന്നു പറയാറുണ്ട്. കുടുംബപ്രാർത്ഥന നമ്മുടെ ഭവനങ്ങളുടെ മുഖമുദ്രയായിരുന്നു. നമ്മുടെ ഭവനങ്ങൾ കുറഞ്ഞത് രണ്ടു തവണയെങ്കിലും കുടുംബാരാധന നടത്തുന്നവയായിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ സാഹചര്യങ്ങളുടെ സമ്മർദ്ദം മൂലവും മറ്റും അവയൊക്കെയും കുറഞ്ഞുപോകുന്നു. ചിലപ്പോൾ അന്യം നിന്നു പോകുന്നു:- കുടുംബപ്രാർത്ഥന ക്രമമായുള്ള കുടുംബങ്ങൾ നിശ്ചയമായും തകർച്ചയിൽ നിന്ന് ഒഴിവാക്കപ്പെടും എന്നതിൽ സംശയമില്ല.

**2. ശിക്ഷണ ജീവിതം**  
ശിക്ഷണം ഇഷ്ടപ്പെടാത്ത മനുഷ്യരാണ് അധികവും. Paapoo PraPs togetHer എന്ന ഒരു ശിക്ഷയല്ല (Paapoo PraPs togetHer) മറിച്ച്

ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ക്രമങ്ങളെ പാലിക്കലാണത്. ശിക്ഷണമില്ലാത്ത ജീവിതം താറുമാറാകുമെന്നതിൽ സംശയമില്ല. തിരുവചനാനുസരണം - കുടുംബ നാഥൻ - കുടുംബത്തിന്റെ പുരോഹിതൻ ന്യായാധിപൻ - ഗുരു എന്നീ ചുമതലകളുള്ളയാളാണ്. മക്കളെ അച്ചടക്കത്തിൽ വളർത്തുന്നവർ ദുഃഖിക്കേണ്ടി വരില്ല. മക്കൾക്ക് ശിക്ഷണത്തിന്റെ എല്ലാ നന്മകളും നൽകണം. പുരോഹിതനായ ഏലിയുടെയും മക്കളുടെയും ചരിത്രം (1 ശമു. 2:24) ഒരു ദുരന്തത്തിലാണ് അവസാനിക്കുന്നത്. 'നിങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ച് കേൾക്കുന്ന ഈ കേൾവി നന്നല്ല' എന്ന് ഏലിപുരോഹിതൻ മക്കളോടു പറയുന്നു. ദൈവം അവരെക്കുറിച്ച് പറയുന്നത് 'അവന്റെ പുത്രന്മാർ ദൈവദൂഷണം പറയുന്ന അകൃത്യം അവൻ അറിഞ്ഞിട്ടും അവരെ ശാസിച്ചമർത്താത്തതുകൊണ്ട് അവരുടെ മേൽ ശിക്ഷവരുത്തും' മക്കളെ ശിക്ഷണത്തിൽ വളർത്താത്തതിന് വിലകൊടുക്കേണ്ടി വരുന്ന മറ്റൊരുദാഹരണം, ദാവീദ് അദോനിയാവിന്റെ ചെയ്തികളെപ്പറ്റി ചോദിക്കാതിരുന്നതാണ് (1 രാജ. 1:6). ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ദാനമായ തലമുറയെ ശിക്ഷണ ബോധത്തിൽ വളർത്തിക്കൊണ്ടു വരേണ്ടത് മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ ഉത്തരവാദിത്തമാണ്.

**മാതൃകാജീവിതം**  
മാതാപിതാക്കളിൽ മാതൃകാജീവിതം ഇല്ലാത്തത് കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളുടെ ദിശാബോധത്തെ പ്രതികൂലമായി ബാധിക്കും. മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ ജീവിതമൂല്യങ്ങളും, മാതൃകകളും കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളെ സ്വാധീനിക്കേണ്ടതാണ്. പതിനാറുകാരനായ ഒരു വിദ്യാർത്ഥി ഒരു പത്രാധിപർക്കയച്ച കത്തിലെ ചില വാചകങ്ങൾ ഇതായിരുന്നു, 'ഇളം തലമുറയുടെ സ്ഭാവദൂഷ്യങ്ങളെയും അപമര്യാദകളെയും മുതിർന്ന തലമുറക്കാർ അപലപിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നത് ലജ്ജാവഹമാണ്. ഇവരല്ലേ ഞങ്ങളെ കരുപ്പിടിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. ഞങ്ങളിൽ എന്തെങ്കിലും കുറവുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ അതിനേറിയ കുറ്റം ഉത്തരവാദി അവരുടെ വികലമായ ശില്പകൗശലമാണെന്നവർക്ക് അറിഞ്ഞുകൂടാ എന്നോ? നല്ല മാതൃകയ്ക്കു വേണ്ടി ഞങ്ങൾ അവരിലേക്കു നോക്കുന്നു. മാതൃകാപരമായ ജീവിതം അനുഭവങ്ങളുടെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ കാട്ടിത്തരേണ്ടവരാണല്ലോ അവർ എന്നാൽ നിർഭാഗ്യമെന്നു പറയട്ടെ നല്ലമാതൃകകൾ ഞങ്ങൾ എങ്ങും കാണുന്നില്ല.....മുതിർന്നവർ തങ്ങളുടെ ജീവിതരീതി വ്യത്യാസപ്പെടുത്തട്ടേ അപ്പോൾ ഞങ്ങൾ അവരെ അനുഗമിക്കും.'  
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**കുടുംബാന്തരീക്ഷം**  
കുടുംബത്തിന്റെ ഊഷ്മമാപിനി (Paapoo PraPs togetHer) സ്നേഹമായിരിക്കണം. സുരക്ഷിതത്വം, സംതൃപ്തി ഇവ ഭവനത്തിൽ ലഭിക്കേണ്ടതാണ്. ആവശ്യമായ പ്രോത്സാഹനം മക്കൾക്ക് സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെ ഈ അന്തരീക്ഷത്തിൽ ലഭ്യമാകണം. മക്കളെ കഴിവുകളുടെ വെളിച്ചത്തിൽ താരതമ്യപ്പെടുത്തുകയും, അളക്കുകയും ചെയ്യരുത്. പഠനത്തിലെ മത്സരബോധം കുട്ടികളിലെ വിദ്വേഷത്തെ വളർത്തുന്നതാകാതിരിക്കാൻ പ്രത്യേകം ശ്രദ്ധിക്കേണ്ടതാണ്. സ്നേഹിക്കുവാനും, ക്ഷമിക്കുവാനും, കരുതുവാനും കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾ കുടുംബത്തിൽ നിന്നും പഠിച്ചു തുടങ്ങട്ടെ.

ദൈവത്തോടൊന്നിച്ച് കുടുംബജീവിതത്തിന്റെ സന്തോഷം പങ്കിടുവാനും പങ്കുവയ്ക്കുവാനും നമുക്ക് ഇടയാകട്ടെ.

# Everyman's Ministry

John Lowrey

If you were to look at his picture on the wall of our office you would never think of him as a super hero that would transform the lives and ministries of thousands upon thousands of people. Yet, on that wall hangs a picture of Logan Papworth, the man that began a Christian literature flow from the bookshelves of the United States to the hands of desperately seeking believers all across the world. With one simple act of faithful obedience, he sent that first package of Christian literature to a missionary friend in India. From that first package more than 50 years ago, God has developed **Christian Resources International (CRI)** into a ministry that is now shipping hundreds of thousands of pounds each year. Christians in some 160 countries around the globe have been blessed by the materials sent to them by CRI.

After all that time and millions of books later, CRI is still everyman's ministry. It is profound enough to change the lives of countless people and simple enough that the youngest child can be a part of it. Anyone with a Bible or book, a dollar to help ship it, and a willing heart can be an invaluable part of God's process. Men, women and children throughout the United States have joined the challenge to share their extra Bibles, books and other Christian materials. They have championed the cause to put the Word of God into the hands of anyone anywhere that needs a Bible but cannot acquire one; and we still do it free of charge to the recipient.

I have been involved with CRI in many capacities over the last 25 years. I have never once seen the Lord fail to continue the supply of materials to the warehouse at CRI. He accomplishes His faithfulness through the hands of countless individuals that mail or carry in resources every day. A church van filled with Bibles and books from their library, a husband and wife with the truck of their car loaded with resources from their own bookshelves, a home school mom sharing materials that she has finished with, over and over again they come and pour out their offering before the Lord for redistribution to those that could never own such treasure in any other way.

My current title at CRI is Director of Missions. That means I get to plan and lead the short term ministry trips overseas. I have the privilege of taking people to the places where the Bibles and books have gone to see first hand the difference that they make in lives and ministries. In Mexico, I met a man who had traveled for 800 miles in hopes of getting some books to help in his study of God's Word. I do not know how he ever heard that we would be in that town with books, but he heard and he came. Another man in the Philippines traveled 8 hours from another island over dangerous seas to get to the island on which we were teaching. He then traveled another 4 hours by bus to get to the right city. All this trouble and risk because he heard that we might have a study Bible to give away. With no assurance that he would go away with anything at all, he came over that distance by faith, hoping that there might be something for him. Another minister



wrote to us and told of how he had gotten hold of one of the little "Our Daily Bread" devotional booklets that had been a part of a CRI shipment. He said he had used it month after month for a year as his only resource for his entire church's ministry. He was inquiring to see if it was possible to get "just one more". It was unbelievable to think that he had stretched this one resource so far for so long. Even more unimaginable is that before he got that he had nothing at all with which to work. In Micronesia we worked with Pastors and priests who had to share their Bibles with not only their own village but with one or more villages around

them and some Priests that had no Bibles at all. The multitude of stories repeat themselves over and over and over again from Haiti, Russia, Honduras, Nepal, India, Africa, Asia, Central and South America, and many other nations from the ends of the earth. It is no coincidence that this is exactly where the Lord told us to go.

I have been blessed to see the miracle of God's supply on this side of the ocean and the miracle of God's provision on the other side. There are great rewards in doing this kind of work for the Lord. Some of the greatest are the enormous smiles on the faces of those that, for the first time in their lives, hold their own copy of God's Word in their own hands. An equally moving reward are the tears that flow down the cheeks of speechless Pastors that clutch their new Bibles and books to their chest like long lost loved ones as they try to imagine how these resources will enhance their ministry for the Lord.

There are many things that I love about CRI. I love the fact that it was all started by a simple man with no particular talent or plan, just a faithfulness to follow the Lord's leading. I love the fact that it is indeed everyman's ministry. Everyman with a willing heart can be a part of meeting a need. Everyman with a need can be a part as he receives with thanksgiving what the Lord provides. I love the fact that it is all done by faith with a day by day dependence on God. I love the extended family of CRI that includes a world full of folks that are tied together through their dollars, their Bibles and books, and their need for resources.

The need will not stop until the Lord returns. Jesus said we would always have the poor among us. Those that are poor in finance as well as those that are poor in resources need our help. Please become part of the CRI family. Take up the challenge and help champion the cause. Find out much more about how you can get involved at [www.cribooks.org](http://www.cribooks.org) and become part of the many in this everyman's ministry. ■

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Author Bio: John Lowrey is currently the Director of Missions for Christian Resources International. He holds a BA in Psychology and Sociology and a MA in Biblical Exposition. He was ordained on the mission field of Mexico. John is also the founder and President of Teens Involved Ministries, a ministry with a passion for helping teens to discover missions. He is on the board of directors for three additional ministry organizations. He is a youth chaplain in his home town and is a regular speaker for mission work and Christian nonprofit organizations. John Lowrey is also regularly involved with teaching and preaching on many mission fields world wide.

## Setting the Captives Free: Prison Ministry

Priya Abraham

Matthew 9:11-13 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

July 2009 the Marthoma Church along with Prison Fellowship Ministry and several local churches participated in the first Prison Ministry Outreach of the Northeast Region. Among those who were present included: Mrs. Nirmala Abraham, Sherry George, Adarsh Abraham, Binu Daniel, and Priya Abraham. For the past few years Prison Fellowship Ministry (PFM) in New York has been conducting this 'Hope Festival' at Rikers Island in Queens. This was a three day event where a group of trained individuals went to visit the different prison facilities. There were speakers present, testimonies given, gospel music, and small group sessions. Several correctional officers were present on site and the facility was well secured. Our group was blessed to minister to the adolescent males ages sixteen to twenty-one.

With over two million prisoners in the U.S., prison ministry needs lots of support, prayers, and participation. If anyone is interested in participating please contact: [prison@marthomamission.com](mailto:prison@marthomamission.com) or the local representatives of [prisonfellowship.org](http://prisonfellowship.org) in your area. There are training sessions to prepare participants for prison bible studies and mentorships. There is also an organization called Angel Tree ([angeltree.org](http://angeltree.org)) that mentors and provides Christmas presents for children and families of prisoners, which our church and youth are beginning to participate in. Below is an eloquent account from one of our participants.

### Sherry George (St. Johns MTC, NY)

"I think heaven will be like someone lifting me out of the flames."

You can take one look at the young man's face as he speaks and see that ache for somebody to hear him, save him, but more than that, find him worthy. The other volunteer and I urge him to continue. Vladel voiced that statement as if it were a confession... something one would say out loud just to echo what he hears his insides speaking. It was something the young man, actually just a boy of 18 years of age, speaks out loud unsure of whether it is worthy to be heard. He hesitates for a second and then goes on. "It is like this life here on earth is a living hell." I look at Vladel; his eyes speak volumes of pain he didn't seem to know how to speak aloud. My heart broke for my young friend.

I was with another volunteer, Olivia, speaking to three young men incarcerated for weeks and months. Their release dates and court dates varied... but each had months left to go. We had been speaking to them about everything from their faith in God to their concept of hope.

We spoke to the young men of a Jesus who saves us unworthy sinners, of a God who loves enough to make us worthy, of a sure hope, and the young men began to pour out their pain.

They spoke of their split homes, parents that left them, of police that are out to get them, of people disappointing them, and of nobody really caring for them. Everyone, they felt, was out to blame them and convict them. Their words poured out, as if having held back for their whole lives to speak of that pain.

When Rich, one of the three, spoke of his pain, he swore his life's disappointments were nothing like even the other two can understand. His own mother left him. His pain mixed with anger on his face as he spoke.

As three spoke of brokenness, we spoke of a God who heals.

"But I have a felony. They say it will never be off of my record." Vladel looks at his hands as he says the words. He speaks the word 'felony' as if it is a curse, a guilty stain that renders him worthless. Vladel's eyes shoot up, and he looks us in our eyes as we tell him of a forgiving and faithful God who sees through our past and sees us through.

The three speak of seeking; they had been seeking all along. Two were born to Christian families but never felt they knew God. They attend church at the jail now and find a sense of comfort there.

Our other young friend of the three, Qwami, was the first inmate I was drawn to when the large group of young men had been brought there. He had been sitting alone, staring off into nothing. Thoughts were reeling in his head, but I could see him with eyes fixed ahead trying not to look at the other inmates as he sat alone. When we had joined the inmates for the visit, Olivia pointed to him, the same one I had noticed, and said why don't we join him?

This young man had told us he was born to Muslim parents, and he felt ever the outsider in our little group at first. But slowly, he readily opened up, speaking of his dreams and hopes for his future. He spoke of wanting to finish high school. He spoke of "maybe college, no definitely college." He spoke of his dreams for stunt car racing among other future career plans. The conversation was easy for he soon found out we cared for him. He also spoke of his past and his pain; he spoke of his need. His first prayer request, as we bowed our heads before the singing and message session, was for an open mind. I praised God for my young brother's words and his life.

Rich, who had been the most guarded and angry of the three, broke as we prayed for them. He left his head bowed as he let words reach him. As much as I loved him in his brokenness, I knew our Lord loved him more. He was the first of the crowd to run up for altar call after the afternoon message, racing up for more of our Lord, setting his eyes on the only refuge.

That afternoon we prayed for our three friends and for their siblings they worry about at home; we prayed for their life situations and their relationship with the Father who loves them so. I praise God now for the blessing of allowing us to get to know and love these young men, incarcerated and dejected. I pray for them now and their fellow inmates who have a hope in the midst of their trials and loneliness, in spite of their past and their situations. I pray for them and praise our God who loves them so completely. ■

# Faith Stories—Native American Mission

George Thomas, MarThoma Church of Oklahoma

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

Hebrews 10:23-25 have been the guiding verses for our Youth Fellowship for the past few years. Recently, however, these verses have taken on a whole new dimension. The family of the fellowship has expanded to now include our new Choctaw Friends and youths, particularly with the McGee Chapel in Broken Bow.



The past two years (2008 and 2009) have focused on the theme of Evangelism. Both the McGee Chapel and the Mar Thoma Church of Oklahoma have felt the need to become a true church and to begin to open our doors to the neighbors. There were three major events we conducted to help do this. It started with two Community Carnivals one was in Broken Bow in March 2008 and another in Oklahoma City in May 2008. Both were one day events and joint projects. We had carnival type games, rides, good food, and fellowship. Finally, we conducted a 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament in Coalgate in April 2009. Many Choctaw and Mar Thoma youths participated in the event, along with several youths from the surrounding neighborhood. All three of these events were very successful and provided good fellowship.

The importance of the Faith Stories came from a Youth Lock In held in August of 2008 at McGee Chapel. We all learned the importance of understanding our own experiences with God and being able to relate them to other people around us. We learned that through our words and actions, we can tell others about our faith stories and hope the experiences can inspire them as well. We also made prayer journals between our youths that taught us to pray for each person on a daily basis. Though we are separated by a long distance, we can still be bonded by prayer. Our most recent rallies held in December 2008 and February, March, August 2009 helped to expand the Evangelism discussion. During these events, our youths led in worship, Bible study, and small group discussions. We got a chance to help expand



our faith stories with each other and to share the common joy we have in Christ. The discussions that we had have ranged from talking about God in our schools, to our friends, to narrate how we live our lives at home and to our future endeavors in college and with the work life. We find that in many cases both our youths face the same trials and temptations in our schools and the world around us. It is in these times, we have realized that our faith stories become even more important. They are our living testimony for the greatness and love of our God and our encouragement for each other. As the rallies have progressed, we realized the importance of encouraging each other in our faith walks and that our different communities are truly bonded with each other. One such faith story that was shared between our youths is below:

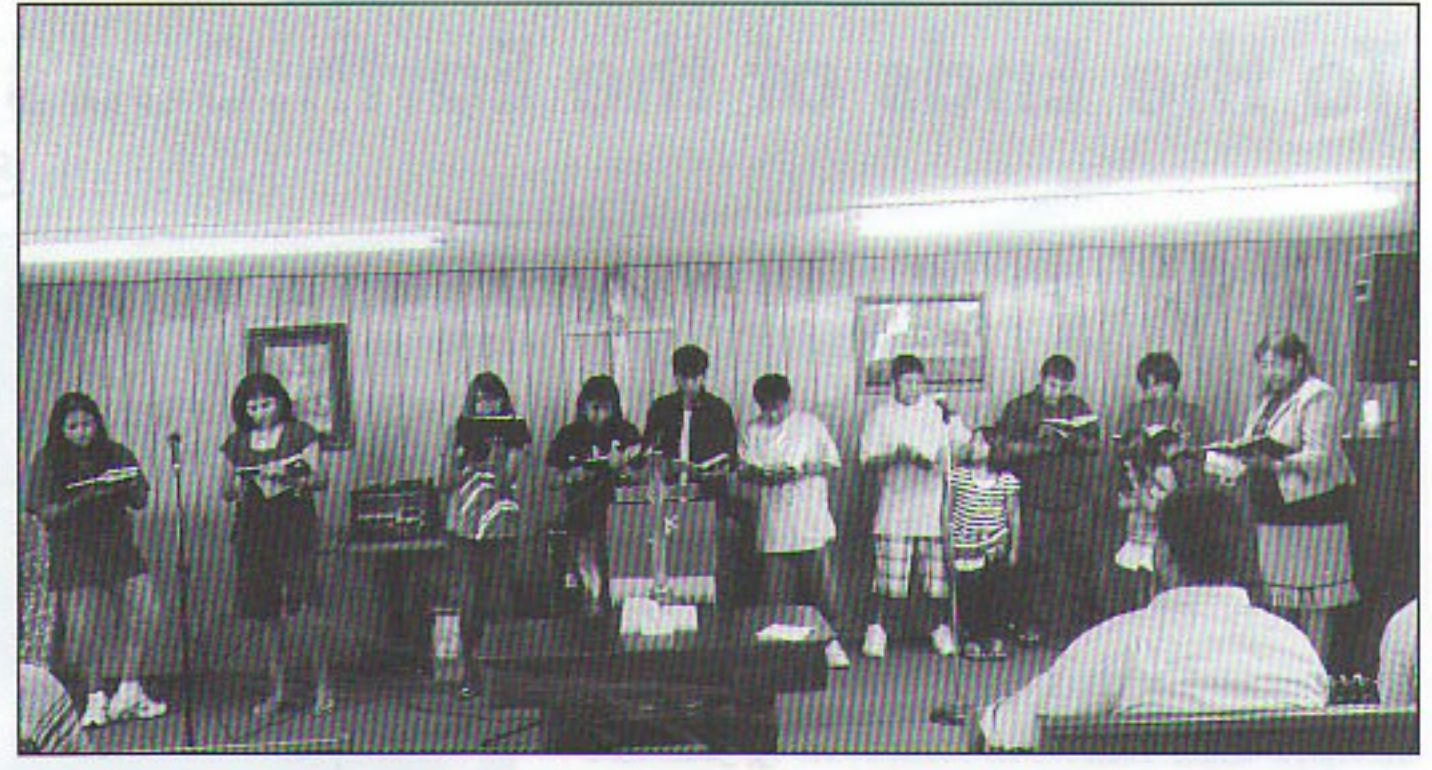
“McGee Chapel is a small church, with about 25-30 members who are mostly older or younger attending worship on Sunday. Our Wednesday night youth group is mixed, including Choctaws with their school friends from elementary to high school. This group regularly averages about 15-20. Not all of them attend our church on Sunday, so on Sunday we may only have from 5-10 youths. Those not present on Sunday may attend another church or may not go to church at all. As a youth leader at McGee, I am often faced with the constraints of time, money, and lack of adult supervision in trying to reach the youths both in our church and in the neighborhood. When the Mar Thoma youths participate, our youth eagerly anticipate the activities that they bring. I eagerly welcome the youthful insight of the Mar Thoma members who are considerably closer in age to our youth than I am and who willingly share their ideas with me.”

The third weekend of September (Sept 18-20) took our relationship to a new level. A combined group of youths from the Youth Fellowship, Sunday school kids, Yuvajana Sakhyam, and Sevika Sanghom members from our church came to Camp Israel Folsom where one of the youth ministers of the Choctaw Church was staying with their family. They had poor living conditions, but in the past year our diocese has taken on the responsibility of helping the Choctaw Church build a home for this family and for the Choctaw Church to use in the future. During this weekend, our group merged with volunteers from the Choctaw Church and we helped them to build this home. Half of our



group spent the day doing a massive clean of the camp grounds, the worship hall and fellowship hall. The other half worked in the home putting up drywall. In addition, the Oklahoma Church raised about \$700 and purchased 30 new leather bound devotional bibles for the Choctaw kids and youths of the McGee Chapel. This weekend truly bonded us in ways we could not imagine.

2009 came with one more blessing. One of our youths from the Mar Thoma Church of Oklahoma actually spent two months in Broken Bow (January and February). During this time, he helped to conduct weekly bible study and worship programs with the youths and became very bonded with them. This helped to foster incredible growth between the two traditions and helped to inspire us to become more



active in each other's lives. Both the Mar Thoma Church of Oklahoma and the Choctaw Presbytery now endeavor to conduct monthly programs that continue to foster our relationship with each other.

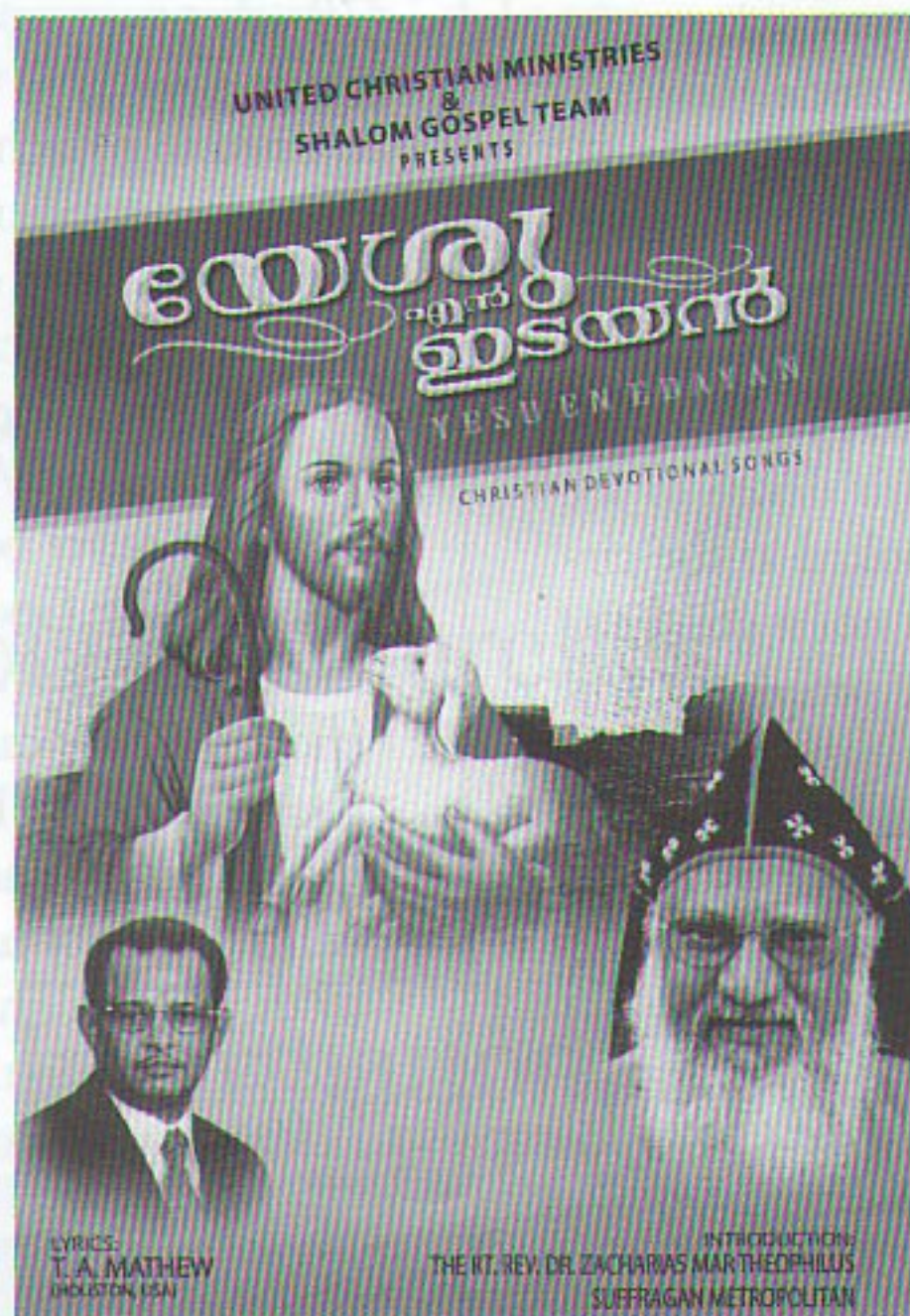
It is amazing how in just a span of a few years, both our worshipping communities desire to share more and more of our bonds and traditions with each other. It is our hope that as we progress in the coming years, our communities will continue to unite together. As it says in the above verse from Hebrews, we must not fall into the trap of the world, but continue to encourage one another towards love, good deeds, and towards meeting together...all the more now as we see the Day approaching. ■

## YESU EN EDAYAN - CHRISTIAN DEVOTIONAL SONGS/CD

*"Write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths..."* – Deut. 31:19.

In the book of Deuteronomy, the Lord told Moses to compose songs to be taught to the children of Israel so that they can praise the Lord by singing. Likewise, in 2008 during a difficult period in his life, the Lord inspired Mr. T. A. Mathew (Mathukutty) to compose songs. The result is the birth of a CD titled 'Yesu En Edayan' containing songs of praise to God. According to Mr. T. A. Mathew, this CD is a celebration of the triumph of God's mercy and healing showered upon him during his sick days. The CD begins with a moving introduction by Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Suffragan Metropolitan.

The CD contains traditional Christian songs in addition to the five songs written by Mathukutty. Through the first song 'Yesu En Edayan', Mathukutty testifies that Jesus is the only hope and security in this world. The second song 'Yehovaye Nam Vilikumbol', assures us that He will answer our prayers and comforts us when we seek Him. The third song 'Yesuve Nee Nadathiya Vazhikal', reminds us that when we recollect the ways our Lord had led us, there is nothing other than praise to be given to God. The ninth song 'Karthene Sthuthi', tells us to glorify and praise God at all times like the Psalmist. The final song written by Mathukutty



titled 'Natha Nin Savidhe', is a prayer to God that when we seek Him, He does not leave us alone but fills us with His hope.

The proceeds from the sale of this CD will be donated to "Karuthal" (Cancer care and counseling centre) and "HELP" (Higher Education Loan Project) began by Zacharias Thirumeni in the Chengannur-Mavelikara Diocese. Mr. Subi Pallickal is the producer of the CD, which was recorded at the Department of Sacred Music and Communications studio at Thiruvalla. Mr. Y. Jose, Pallippad provided music and orchestration. Well known singers including K. G. Markose, Binoy Chacko, Thomas George, Rinila, and Jisa gave life to the songs through their melodious voices.

Mr. T. A. Mathew is one of the founding members of Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston. This diocese is richly blessed by

Mr. T. A. Mathew's sacrificial services as Diocesan Council member, Diocesan Sunday School Secretary, Diocesan Treasurer (2005-2008), Navathy coordinator for USA. Mr. T.A. Mathew is presently serving as Managing Committee member of the Mar Thoma Messenger, the official publication of our Diocese and also as Sabha Tharaka Promoter and Coordinator for U. S. A., and Canada. Mr. T.A. Mathew may be contacted at Tel: (713) 455-7469 or at his e-mail: tamathew@hotmail.com. May God bless you.

Rev. V. T. John, Niles, IL

# To the Ends of the Earth: God's Dream to Reach the Unreachable

Nishanth & Sharon Thomas

**W**e came to know about Gospel for Asia (GFA) 5 years ago. One of the things that struck us most about this ministry is the testimony of the founders of GFA and full-time staff workers. To this day, they still live a simple and humble lifestyle to ensure every extra dollar goes to the unreached mission fields in India and surrounding nations, a region also known as the 10/40 window. Seeing how GFA is genuinely passionate to share the Gospel, we were motivated to partner with this ministry as volunteer spokespersons so that the Gospel will reach the most unreached.

Our time with GFA has been a great blessing. God has given us the grace to speak in churches, music festivals, conferences, and other events. One of the most recent events we went to represent GFA was at CreationFest 2009 at Mount Union, Pennsylvania this past June. We volunteered with 5 other brothers and sisters in Christ and, by the grace of God, distributed 1,000 free books and acquired more than 12 missionary sponsorships.

Two billion people living in the 10/40 window still have not heard the Gospel and in India (our homeland) alone there are 500,000 villages that have no Gospel witness. 80,000 people die daily without ever hearing the Gospel. How can we be at peace and remain satisfied when these 80,000 are those whom Christ died for?

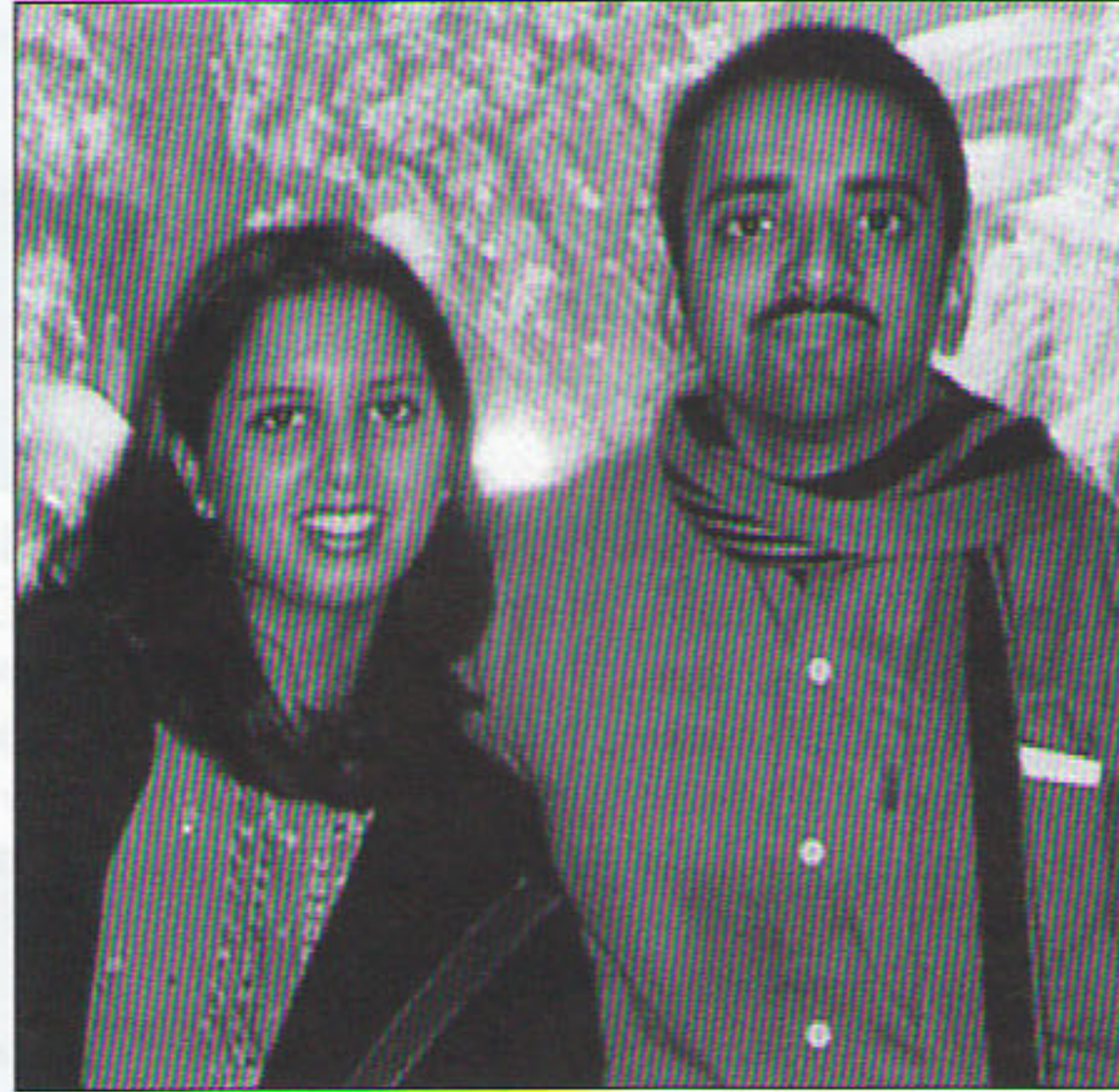
The eastern region of India has been a challenging place to preach the Gospel. One day, GFA leaders in that region were approached by 22 Dalit leaders proclaiming their desire to see their people become Christians. Our leaders looked at the circumstances and told them, "You realize that it's not a good situation. There won't be any social benefit for the people. It will actually be more difficult for the (Dalit) people initially. There will be persecution. They'll lose what you and I know as their affirmative action rights. They're going to lose the right to use certain wells. There will be all kinds of problems for them."

Despite that answer, the Dalit leaders said, "We understand all of that, but our people need to leave Hinduism. Buddhism is empty. Our people need to become Christians." "How many people are you talking about?" our leaders asked.

"Two million" was the reply.

Now one of our greatest problems in that region is we have more requests for missionaries than we are able to send. We pray that as you read this, you feel our urgency and concern. Tens of millions of people are open for the Gospel, but resources are lacking.

These Dalit people are destitute and slaves of the corrupt caste system, which has subjugated them as "subhuman", even invaluable compared to animals. One effective outreach that GFA has to the Dalit community is Bridge of Hope (BOH). BOH is a child sponsorship program that benefits the children from Dalit communities and their families. Through BOH-



sponsorship, Dalit children receive an education and hear about the love of Jesus Christ for them. The impact of this outreach is phenomenal; in many cases, the children start witnessing to their own families and villagers. This opens the door for GFA missionaries to explain the Gospel, while offering to pray for their healing/problems. Many Dalits thus come to the Lord by seeing God's power! In this context, it is worth remembering that many of these believers among the Dalit Community gave up their lives in Orissa and watched their persecutors destroy their families and homes. Nevertheless, they remain faithful to God and still worship God in spite of

Hindu Radicals threatening their lives to this day. In the state of Tripura alone, which was very resilient to preaching of the Gospel, 50 BOH centers were planted and in less than eleven months 37 new churches planted among people whom, prior to that time, we could not get in to share the Gospel.

Today, GFA supports more than 16,500 native missionaries, who have planted more than 30,000 churches in India, and 10 other surrounding nations of the 10/40 window. GFA has 67 Bible Colleges, with nearly 10,000 first time believers being trained to preach the gospel. By God's grace, through the efforts of the missionaries and the support of believers around the world, millions of people are receiving Jesus Christ and their lives are being transformed.

Just imagine the great joy we would experience in heaven when we meet ALL the people who became saved—including those we never before met in our earthly life, but were indirectly impacted by God working through us; even better, imagine the inexplicable joy when they express their gratitude for our obedience to God's call to share the Gospel, which eventually led to their salvation: "Because of you, someone was sent to preach the Gospel to us, and we came to know of the love of Jesus Christ which brought us here." And to top it all off, Jesus will then say to us, "Well done good and faithful servants!" There can be no greater joy than this. There are 3 specific things that you can do: i) Pray for the lost world ii) Simplify our lives to focus on the Kingdom of God and give more for spreading of the gospel 3) If God prompts in your heart, sponsor children or missionaries. ■

Comments/Queries: Please email [thomasn@nyack.edu](mailto:thomasn@nyack.edu). Nishanth and Sharon Thomas are Volunteer Spokespersons for Gospel for Asia (GFA). To learn more about GFA, please visit [www.gfa.org](http://www.gfa.org), where you can also request our free publications *Revolutions in World Missions* (book) and *Sent!* (magazine). In answer to a frequently asked question, all funds sent to GFA are dedicated one hundred percent to the mission field with the approval of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) and has indeed received the rare The Independent Charities Seal of Excellence based on stringent criteria of the Independent Charities in America. This seal is given to less than 0.2% of the 1 million charities in the U.S.





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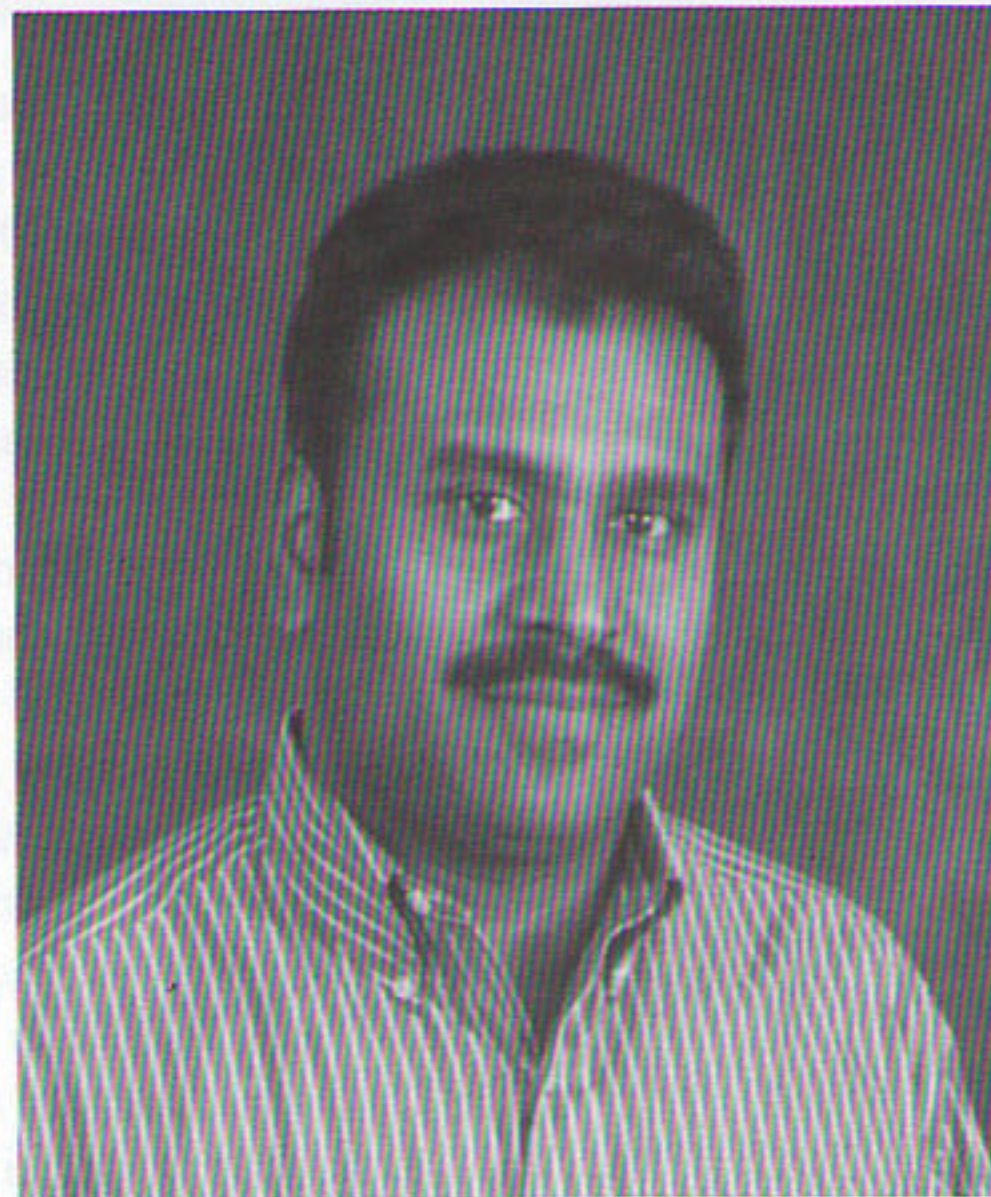
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# DIOCESAN/PARISH NEWS

## XXX NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE-2009



*Theodosius Thirumeni Lighting the Lamp at the inaugural session.*

By God's Grace, the XXX National Mar Thoma Youth Conference took place in Seattle, WA, during the last weekend of July. Commencing on July 23rd, delegates were blessed by the hard work of the hosting youth family of Mar Thoma Church of Greater Seattle under the leadership of Rev. Binu Varghese & former Vicar, Rev. Roy Thomas.

This year's conference theme was **"Bring the Reign"** inspired by Paul's exhortation to the Romans for them to "...reign in life through ... Jesus Christ."

This National Youth Conference was also our Theodosius Thirumeni's first since becoming Diocesan Episcopa. We were blessed to have Abraham Mar Paulos Thirumeni as well at the conference. Paulos Thirumeni served as one of the main speakers for the conference; he delivered messages geared toward helping the youth become better stewards of this world. Both Bishops are excellent orators and interact extremely well with the youth of this Diocese. They both participated in a town hall meeting in which questions from delegates were answered. Our new Diocesan Secretary, Rev. Vinoy Daniel was also present and helped in leading one of the Bible Studies.

One of the main speakers for the conference was Mr. Tenny Thomas. Raised in the Indian Orthodox Church, Tenny has a heart for mission work among the youth of this generation. He is very passionate about unity in the church and his main talks involved a lot of interaction and insight into God's word.



*Participants keenly attending the meeting.*

This year we were blessed to have Rev. Shibi Abraham (Southwest B Region) and Rev. Roy Thomas (Southeast A) attending the conference for the first time as youth chaplains. Rev. Regi Zachariah (Vicar, Horeb MTC) assisted in leading the tracks along with Rev. Biju P. Simon (North East) and Rev. Jaisen Thomas (Southwest A) and geared toward helping the delegates grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior. Ms. Elizabeth Thampy of the Northwest Region assisted in leading the **'Perseverance'** track session. The remaining four tracks included **'Campus Life,' 'Witness,' 'Human Sexuality,'** and **'Faith & Pop Culture.'**

The University of Puget Sound provided lodging for all the delegates and was an ideal location to assist the hosting parish with all their needs. The youth fellowship of Seattle MTC did an outstanding job of making everyone feel welcome and at home. They also were able to incorporate various mission activities into the program of the 4-day conference; including writing letters to those in need, collecting funds for mission work abroad as well as helping with administration of a bone marrow drive.

Prayer and unity in Christ played a vital role in the success of this conference. We cannot thank our Father in Heaven enough for being so faithful to us in this generation for the generations to come.

**Adarsh Abraham, Diocesan Youth Fellowship Secretary**

### CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES TO MR. MATHEWS ABRAHAM OF CHICAGO MAR THOMA CHURCH

Mr. Mathews Abraham is elected as the Consumer Protection Commissioner of City of Desplaines, Chicago, U.S.A. He is the brother of Rev. M. A. Philip (Pullad) and an active member of Chicago Mar Thoma Church. He is the owner of Holyland Pilgrimage Tours & Travels and the Award Winner of Israel Ministry of Tourism for the year 2007.



## ST. JAMES MAR THOMA CHURCH, NEW YORK

### St. James Mar Thoma Church of Rockland honors the Mayor of Hillburn and the Ramapo Police Department

On Sunday, July 19, 2009, a felicitation meeting was held at St. James Mar Thoma Church to congratulate the newly elected Mayor of the Village of Hillburn, the Hon. Bernard L. Jackson. The Ramapo Police Department was also recognized at the meeting for their selfless and dedicated service to the community and particularly the church.

The meeting was presided by Rev. Mathew Varughese and commenced with an opening prayer by Mr. P. D. Joshua. The Secretary, Mr. Abraham Mathew welcomed Mayor Jackson, Officer, John Youngman and Officer, George Damsen. Rev. Mathew Varughese in his presidential



address congratulated the Mayor on his election and thanked him and the Village administration for their assistance at all times. Achen also thanked the Police Department for their invaluable service. The Treasurer, Mr. George T.

Karakal presented a donation to the Ramapo PBA. The Vice-President, Mr. Kuruvilla Cherian also expressed his deep gratitude to the Mayor and the Ramapo Police Department.

The Mayor in his speech praised the church for their notable role in community development and being an important part of the Village of Hillburn. Officer George Damsen expressed his delight at the invitation and remarked he was glad to see a church full of worshippers. They both in turn assured the parishioners of their full support and assistance.

**Rev. Mathew Varughese, Vicar**



*First communicants with Theodosius Thirumeni and Mathew Varghese Achen.*

## ST. THOMAS MAR THOMA CHURCH, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA



*First Communicants with Theodosius Thirumeni and M.P. Yohannan Achen*  
Our Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa visited our parish on Sunday, 20th September 2009 and celebrated Holy Communion.

A special service also was held for the first communicants. Ten children, along with their parents, participated in the first communion service. Two of the senior members over 75 years old were honored with "ponnaada" by Thirumeni. A new website for the St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church [www.indianamarthoma.org](http://www.indianamarthoma.org) was inaugurated by Thirumeni. A few web pages were shown at that time. After



*Committee Members with Theodosius Thirumeni and M.P. Yohannan Achen*  
the Holy Communion service a meeting was arranged to felicitate our beloved Thirumeni followed by a fellowship dinner. About 130 people attended the service. Thirumeni met with the executive committee members and shared some concerns about the growing parish. We are thankful to the Diocese and our beloved Thirumeni for all the support and guidance.

**Rev. M.P. Yohannan, Vicar  
Vinod Abraham, Secretary**

# Mar Thoma Sabha Mandalam Meeting-2009

The Malankara Mar Thoma Sabha Mandalam was conducted from Thursday September 3rd through Saturday September 5th of 2009 at the Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan Memorial Auditorium in Thiruvalla. His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan presided. Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Valiya Metropolitan, Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Suffragan Metropolitan and other bishops were present. The Mandalam members were seated in groups according to their diocese. The members of our diocese were seated close to the podium.

The Mandalam meeting started by singing a song, "Sannidhyam Aakenam Karthathi Karthave" and followed by the short order of worship in Malayalam. Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignatheos, guest speaker from the Catholic Church, did the devotional based on St. Luke's Gospel Chapter 16, verse 21. His emphasis was how as a church we could serve the less privileged and the downtrodden in our place of living. He challenged the Marthomites and other Christians in our communities to do the work of Jesus Christ in action and not just preaching alone. At the close of the devotion Rt. Rev. Dr. Abraham Mar Paulos concluded with prayer.

Rev. K. S. Mathew, the Sabha Secretary, welcomed the Mandalam representatives. The quorum was declared by the Sabha Secretary, which was 1028 out of 1432 members, which is 71.9% present. The Recording Secretaries were appointed.

The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma gave the presidential address. He thanked God Almighty in enabling him to give the 52nd Sabha Mandalam presidential address. He touched topics such as world economy, the destruction of world peace, the natural destructive forces of earthquakes, fires, floods and hurricanes. He also mentioned the role of the Mar Thoma Church in the world ecumenism. He spoke about how the educational system is drifting away from the creator. He also mentioned that our church constitution needs a fresh study in doing needful changes. He concluded by saying that our national fathers have used a lotus flower, peacock and sandalwood as symbols and treasures of our homeland and explained why they were used as symbols. Everyone present congratulated Thirumeni in giving us an eloquent, meaningful and timely presidential address. It was also written in the minutes of the meeting to keep this as a document in the church museum. Thereafter a book written by Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Suffragan Metropolitan was released.

Soon after lunch the question answer session was conducted. There were 47 major questions and many other sub-questions answered. There were a few questions asked by our members present. The meeting was closed at 6:30pm on the first day with prayer.

On the second day on September 4th at 8:00 a.m. there was Holy Communion Service at St. Thomas Church conducted by His Grace Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos. Thereafter the names of 13 people were read for condolence and the assembly observed a moment of silence for respect. The retired clergy were honored by giving them a plaque.



*Diocesan Bishop and Sabha Mandalam members from our Diocese meeting the Mar Thoma Metropolitan after the Mandalam meeting at Poolatheen, Thiruvalla.*

At 11:00am the Mandalam meeting started in the auditorium and the following decisions were taken in the Assembly:

1. The budgeted and over budgeted expenditures were read and passed after discussion.
2. The report and accounts from April of 2008 to March of 2009 were discussed after being distributed to the Mandalam members and passed.
3. The accounts and budget for all the organizations were discussed and passed.
4. The names of the auditors for 2009 to 2010 were presented and passed.
5. It was reported that the debts of the Kumbanad Mission Hospital and Nursing school were already paid.
6. Decided to reconstruct the C.S.S. Book store by borrowing funds from the church funds.
7. The quarters for Sabha Secretary, Vicar General and guest rooms to be constructed for retired homeless clergy and an apartment submitted by the council.
8. The plan and estimate for Hermitage Home at Kozhenchery was accepted and passed for construction.
9. The Sabha Council is authorized to purchase a property in Thiruvalla for the future use of our Sabha.
10. Mandalam requested the Mar Thoma Metropolitan in consultation with the Sabha Council to study about the central government's direct tax code bill and request the government to exempt the church from such taxes.
11. Decided to start a corporate fund system to be studied by the Sabha Council and establish it to meet the financial crises of the church as and when it is demanded.
12. Mandalam requested a resolution to be sent to the Kerala Government to provide land and quarters to the less privileged.
13. The Mandalam requested the Episcopal Synod and Sabha Council to elect new bishops before the end of

this Mandalam period in 2011. The new Episcopal Nomination Committee to be elected before 2010 Maramon Convention.

14. A Bible study was conducted by Rev. Cherian Thomas on the subject matter of Christian witnessing; the duty of the Mar Thoma Church.

The meeting concluded after reading the minutes with prayer and benediction by the Metropolitan, Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma.

Among the 95 members from our diocese, our Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, our council members Mrs. Kusumam Titus and Dr. P. John Lincoln and 12 other members attended the meeting. I

request all other members to kindly attend the future Mandalam meetings.

By 2:00pm on the third day on September 5th the Mandalam and Council members had a meeting with the Mar Thoma Metropolitan, Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma and our Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius at Poolatheen, and discussed many relevant points of concern. The Metropolitan, in the presence of our Diocesan Bishop, told us that the meeting of all the Mandalam members of this diocese can be conducted at a common venue such as at the Family Conference or as needed on an yearly basis.

**Dr. P. John Lincoln**

## YUVAJANA SAKHYAM SOUTH WEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE AND KALAMELA



*Trinity Mar Thoma Church Yuvajana Sakhyam Members with the overall championship trophies during the Southwest Region Yuvajana Sakhyam Conference and Kalamela held at Trinity Parish on Saturday, September 5, 2009.*

Yuvajana Sakhyam South West Regional Conference and Kalamela was hosted by Trinity Mar Thomas Church, Houston on September 5th Saturday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. The theme of the conference was Christian Attitude towards Religious Fundamentalism. The conference began with the worship service lead by Trinity Mar Thoma church followed by a welcome speech by Rev. M. J. Thomaskutty. Rev. A. P. Noble, vicar of St Paul's Mar Thoma church gave the presidential address and Rev. Minoy Kuruvilla was the main speaker. About 125 members from Dallas and Houston churches participated in the conference.

The regional Kalamela was conducted in the afternoon and six churches from South West Region participated in the Kalamela. Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston, won the ever rolling trophy with most points by winning first



*Leaders of the Kalamela.*

place for Group Song and Elocution, second place for Bible Quiz, and third place for Female Solo.

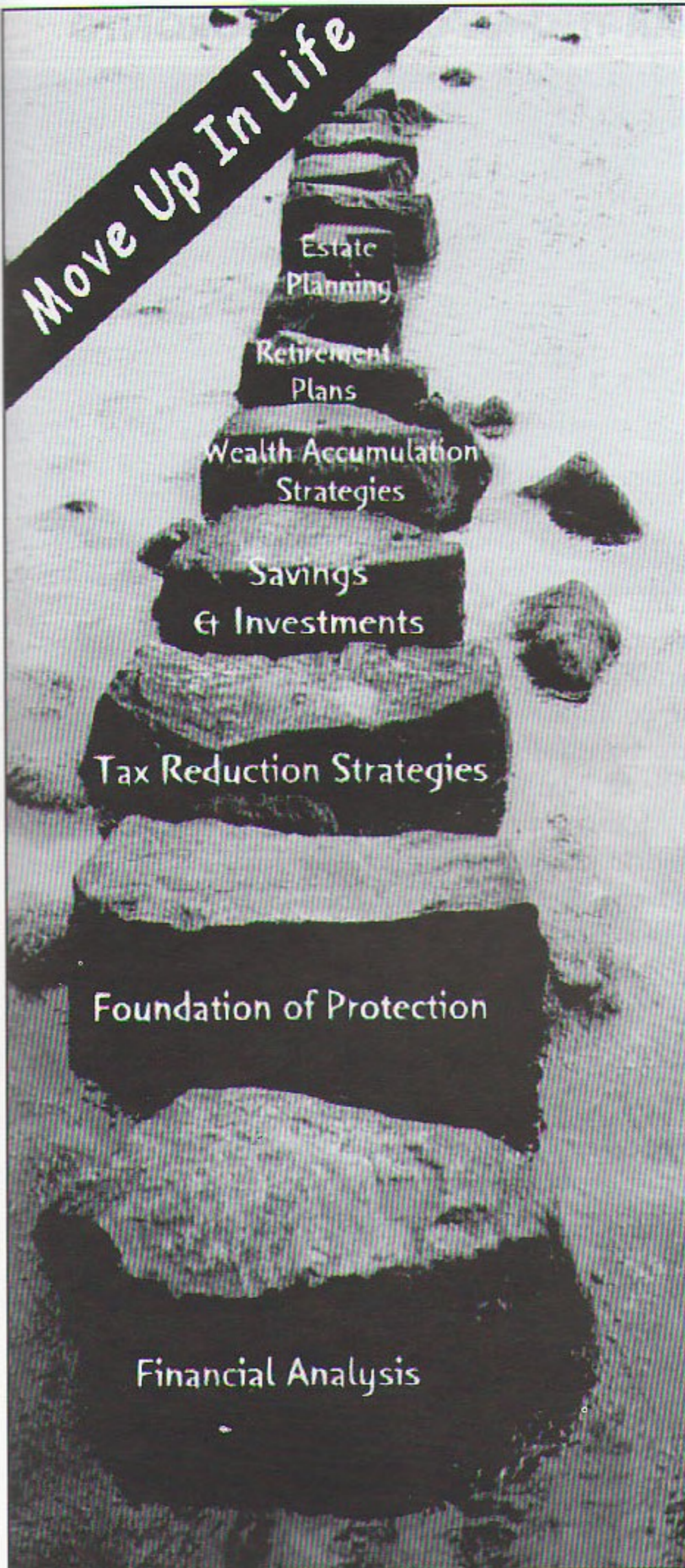
**Joseph George, YS Secretary, Trinity MTC, Houston**

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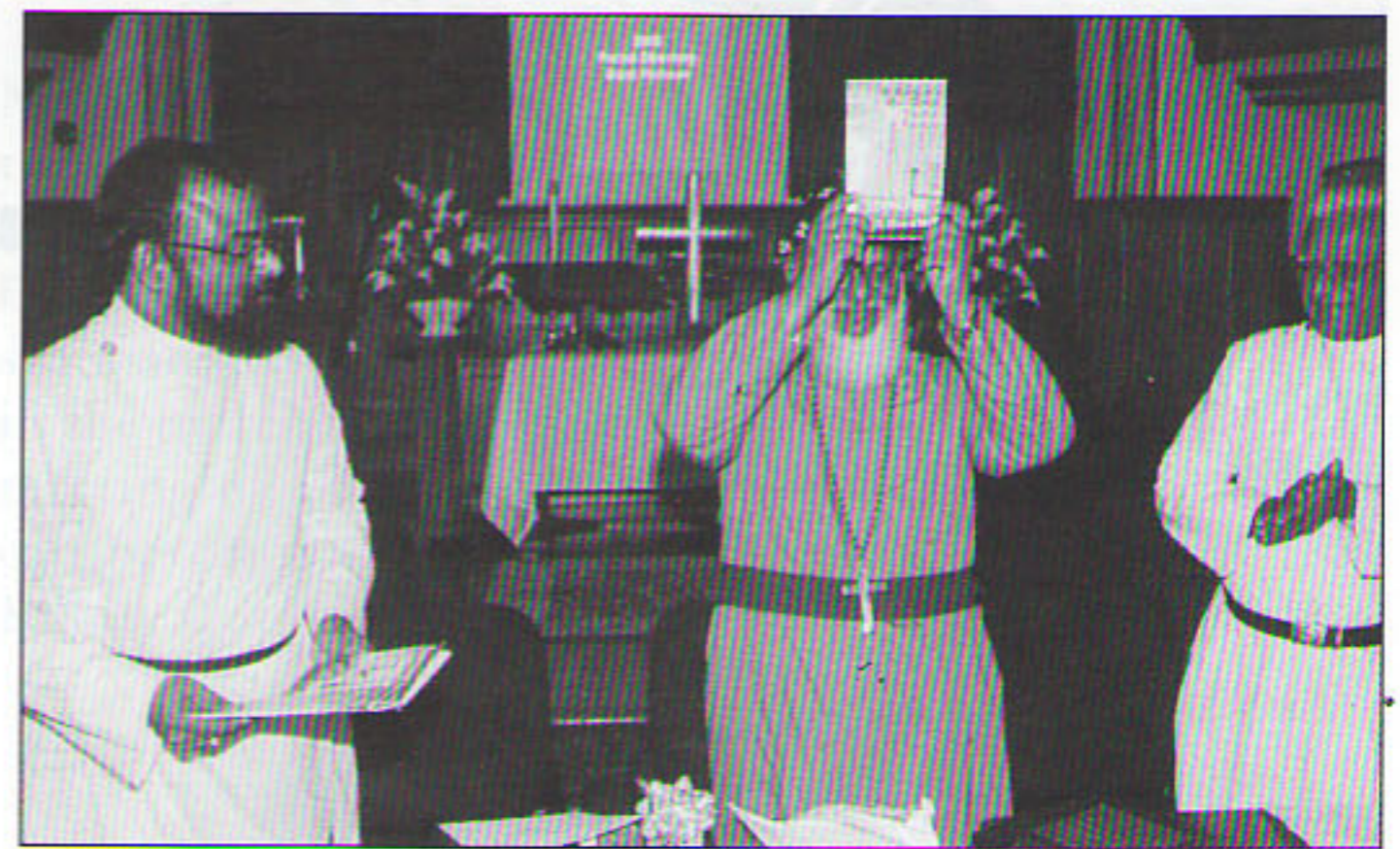
## DIOCESAN BISHOP'S VISIT TO ST. MATHEW'S MAR THOMA CHURCH, TORONTO



*Theodosius Thirumeni cutting the cake.*

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, Diocesan Bishop of North America and Europe visited St. Mathew's Mar Thoma Church, Toronto, Canada from June 20th to 23rd, 2009. It was Thirumeni's first visit as the Diocesan Bishop to the parish.

On Sunday, June 21st, Thirumeni conducted the Holy Communion service. It was followed by a reception meeting in honor of Thirumeni's first visit to the parish as the Diocesan Episcopa and Parish Day was also celebrated. Rev. Alex P. John, our Vicar, welcomed everyone to the meeting. This meeting was attended by Very Rev. A. C. Kurian and Rev. Manoj M. Zacharia. A plaque was presented to Thirumeni to commemorate 20 years of his consecration as a Bishop of the Mar Thoma Church. The Senior and Junior



Thirumeni receiving the plaque to commemorate his 20th year of Episcopacy. Choirs and Youth Fellowship presented songs. Thirumeni released the Fourth Edition of the parish directory. Later, in an informal meeting, Thirumeni met with the Executive and Building committee members and discussed various activities of the parish. It was a joyous occasion for all the members of the St. Mathew's Mar Thoma Church.

On Monday, June 22nd, Thirumeni visited the office of the Canadian Council of Churches in Toronto and met with Rev. Dr. Karen A. Hamilton—General Secretary of Canadian Council of Churches. He also had a meeting with Rt. Rev. Dr. Colin R. Johnson, the Anglican Bishop of Toronto.

The Episcopal visit was a blessing to all the members of the parish.

**Eappen Cherian, Parish Secretary**

## TRINITY MAR THOMA CHURCH, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA



Our parish held the Diocesan Regional Convention on September 24-26, 2009. As per the Diocesan Council decision, Very Rev. Abraham Samuel was the speaker. Achen delivered inspirational and challenging messages during the convention. On Saturday Valsa Kochamma, wife of Abraham Achen, led the Sevika Sanghom one-day retreat. Holy Communion service was celebrated on Sunday. Along with the final day of the Convention, our Parish celebrated Parish Day. Vicar, Rev. Reji John presided over the meeting and Very Rev. Abraham Samuel was the chief guest. Rev. K. J. Mathew of St. Thomas MTC Calgary was our honorary guest. Vice president Dr. T. K. Idiculla welcomed everyone



Very Rev. Abraham Samuel Speaking at the Diocesan Regional Convention. to the meeting and vote of thanks was given by secretary, Sajan Thomas. Under the able leadership of Vicar Rev. Reji John and Jenny Kochamma, this event was a blessing and memorable one to those who attended.

Our church held its annual Choir Festival on October 10, 2009. Those who attended the festival enjoyed an afternoon filled with music. Four choirs graced the event, including St. Thomas MTC, Calgary. The occasion was a blessed opportunity to sing glory to God. The musical event was concluded with a dinner, hosted by parishioners. Mrs. Annie Idiculla serve as the choir leader.

**Mathew Koshy, Diocesan Council Member**



## MTC DALLAS, FARMERS BRANCH YOUTH FELLOWSHIP RETREAT



The Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch Youth Fellowship, was blessed and honored through the grace of GOD to host the youth retreat from July 17-19, 2009. This year's retreat was held in the Lakeview Methodist Camp Site, located in Palestine, Texas. The theme for this year's retreat was "**Born Identity**" based on Romans 12:2, "*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good and pleasing will.*" Dallas Area Youth Chaplain, Rev. Jaisen A. Thomas, as well as MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch Vicar Rev. Minoy N. Kuruvilla, led various sessions. The youth retreat conveners were Jasmin Andrews and Siljo Kuruvila. The Youth fellowship officers Manish John (VP), Cyril Mathew (Secretary), Shani Joseph (Joint-Secretary), and Jane Chandy (Treasurer) also helped in the successful planning and execution of the retreat. Youth fellowship advisors Alex Philip and Sam John gave their valuable leadership in all stages of the retreat. Main speaker Pastor Byron Williams

spoke on various life-changing truths found in the scriptures. About 130 youths attended this year's retreat with the assistance of chaperones. This three-day retreat was filled with amazing praise and worship, spiritually motivated small group discussions, intellectual gender breakout sessions, enjoyable group activities, and an all around unity among our youth fellowship. About 78 youths rededicated their lives to Christ during the dedication time. This retreat was remarkable in the fact that through the grace of God, many youths were able to seek their identity in Christ alone and live a life that continues to honor and glorify His name. We as the youth realized to open our hearts to God and allow His Son to place His fingerprint on our lives. This was such a blessed and remarkable experience felt by all of the youths in this parish, and we will continue to represent the name of Jesus through our unity and love. **Our Identity Is In Christ!**

**Jasmin Andrews & Siljo Kuruvila, Conveners**

## MTC DALLAS FARMERS BRANCH FAMILY RETREAT 2009



The 7th annual family retreat of MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch was held from October 9-11, 2009 at Timberline Baptist Camp and Conference Center at Lindale, Texas. Rev. Varghese Mathew P., Vicar of Oklahoma Mar Thoma Church was the main speaker. The theme for the retreat was '**Modern Trends & Stress in Family**'. Rev. Varghese

Mathew reminded that family is a divinely created institution to fulfill the God's mission in this world. Both parents and children are gift from God and between the members of the family there should exist a relationship based on sacrificial love 'Agape' through which the meaning of intimacy in the family relationship can be discovered. Stress in the family can

make us panic or make us pray. Panic makes us to reach for lifeboat, but not the Lord. We should be able to reach Lord at all times, when trials and tribulations face our family life.

Rev. Minoy N. Kuruvilla, Vicar of MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch gave the leadership for the conference. Convener Mr. Thomas Thaimuriyil and Joint Convener, Mr. Philip Thomas also provided their leadership in arranging the conference in an enjoyable way to the attendees. In addition to the speeches and classes based on the theme, 'Vallam Kali' (canoe race) added attraction to this year's retreat. The Kerala style 'Thattu Kada' by the side of the lake during the time of the boat race was another interesting item. The talent night show included 'Chiriyarang', magic show, 'Pradesika Vartha'

in Malayalam (regional news bulletin) and skits by adults and children. Separate sessions were held for children who attended the retreat. The sing along sessions led by the Choir added more flavor to the retreat. There was campfire also by the side of the picturesque lake and the participants joined in the 'Aksharaslokam'. Rev. Jaison A. Thomas, Dallas, area youth chaplain also participated in the Saturday afternoon programs. Rev. Minoy N. Kuruvilla led the dedication on Saturday night, which was a time for rededication as a family. The retreat concluded with Holy Communion service on Sunday morning, led by Rev. Minoy N. Kuruvilla and assisted by Rev. P. V. Thomas.

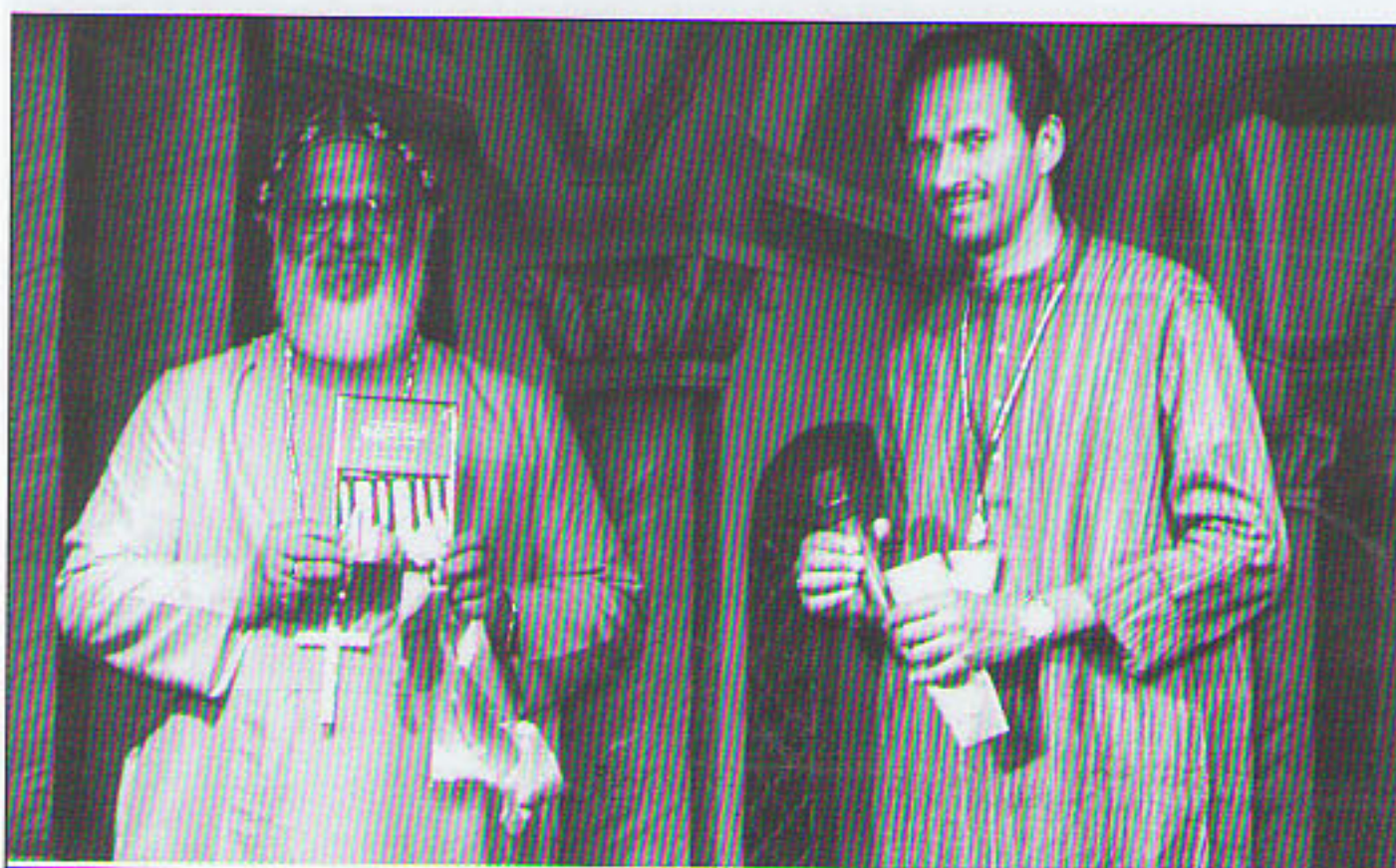
**Thomas Thaimuriyil, Convener**

### MTC DALLAS FARMERS BRANCH HONORED ITS SENIORS WITH "PONNAADA"



MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch Honoring seniors 70 years and above by giving them 'Ponnaada' with Minoy Achen.

### RELEASE OF MUSICAL ALBUM 'SUVISESHA DOOTHUMAI'



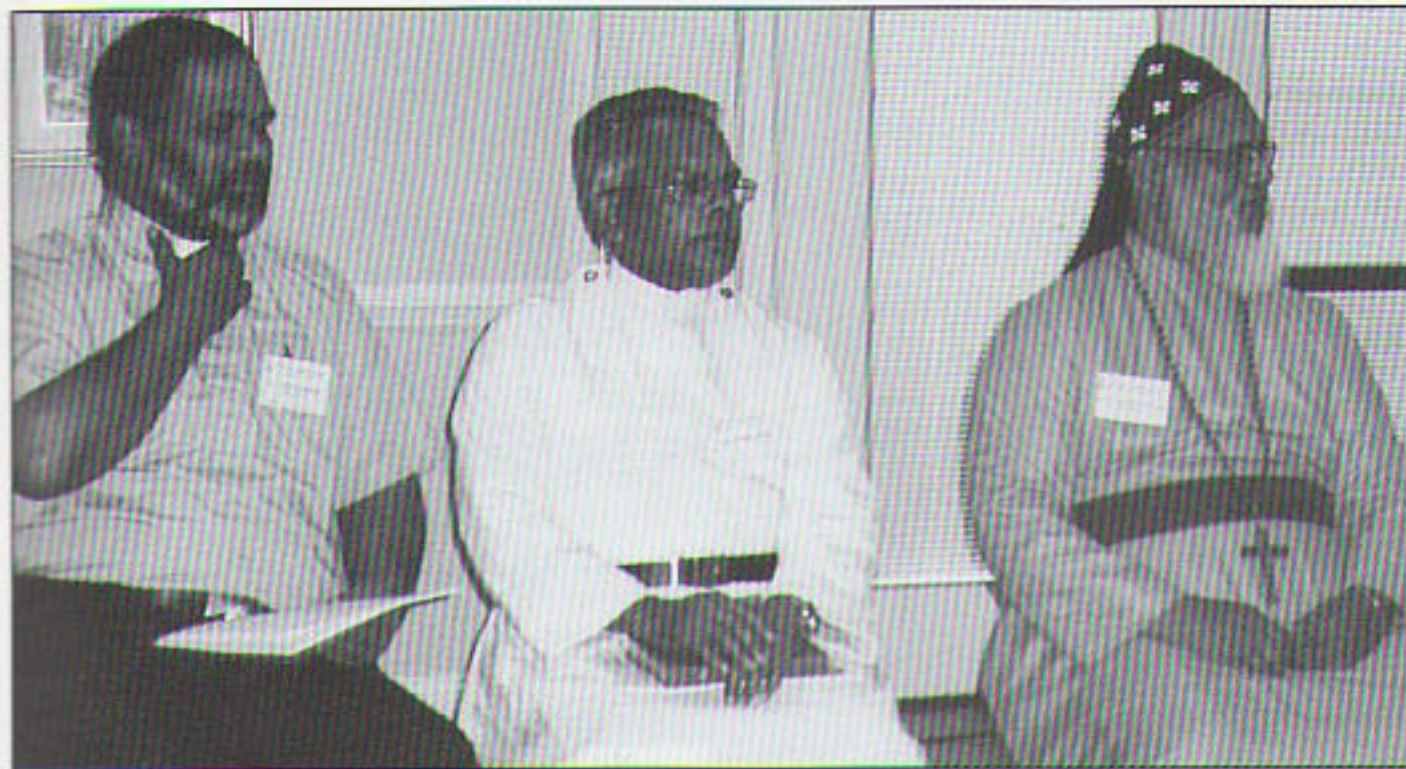
Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa released a music album titled 'Suvisesha Doothumai' (DVD and CD dual pack), produced by George Varghese (Jayan) of Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch, during the 2009 Mar Thoma Family Conference held at Houston. The album consists of songs composed by Jayan and messages by Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Suffragan

Metropolitan and Dr. George Cherian (Navajeevodayam Tiruvalla). In the DVD, the songs are presented through different types of visual story episodes. The music CD consists of 14 songs and is enclosed with the DVD. In addition to Jayan, famous singers Kester, Elizabeth Raju, Sujatha gave their melodious voice to the lyrics of which music was also by Jayan. Both the DVD and CD was recorded at DSMC Hi-Definition Studio at Thiruvalla. Rev. Sajan P. Mathew, former director of DSMC gave narration and made creative contribution to this musical album. The proceeds from this album will be used for the various mission works in India undertaken by the Mar Thoma Church.

Jayan is a talented composer and singer who has published seven music albums so far. The proceeds from Jayan's albums were donated to various charity works. Personal Experiences and meditation on the Word of God are the sources of all Jayan's compositions. Jayan can be contacted at his e-mail jayn7@hotmail.com or at his telephone number (972) 691-1482.

**Lal Varghese Esq., Dallas**

## THE MAR THOMA VOLUNTARY EVANGELISTS ASSOCIATION 6TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE-2009



*Leaders of the Conference (L to R): Samuel Santhosham Achen, Philip Varghese Achen and Theodosius Thirumeni.*

The Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists Association of the Diocese of North America and Europe held its 6th National Edavaka Mission Conference from July 31st to August 2nd, 2009 at the National Christian Conference Center, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania hosted by the Eastern Zone of the MTVEA. The theme was **“Walk humbly with your God”** (Micah 6:8). In this conference over 60 members from various Mar Thoma Churches in North America participated.

Rev. George M. Kuruvilla, Vice President of the Eastern Zone, welcomed the guest speakers and participants. Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, the Diocesan Bishop gave the inaugural address focusing on the need for renewal and reformation in our lives from inside out rather than dwelling on the outwardly religious rituals, comfort and pleasures of our lives. Thirumeni reminded us to be right with God by practicing justice and fairness to fellow human beings, showing mercy to the poor and suffering amidst us and walking humbly with your God. He also exhorted us to be like the prophet, Micah, in understanding today's problems which common people cannot see and proclaiming the heartbeats of God to the world, thus helping in evangelization.

Rev. Dr. Philip Varghese, former principal of St. Thomas College Kozhencherry, was one of the main speakers. Contrasting “pride” and “humility”, he stressed that pride is the parent of all sins, the ground on which other sins grow and putting self on the cross of Jesus will make us humble in our daily walk with God.

Rev. Samuel Santhosham, Diocesan Vice President (MTVEA), gave a personal testimony focusing on how he was saved and nurtured by the Mar Thoma Church that was instrumental in his commitment to become an Achen in our church. He enlightened us on the outreach missionary and charitable activities of the Mar Thoma Church. He emphasized how our missionary activities are thriving in Karnataka.

Rev. Vinoy Daniel, the Diocesan Secretary took Bible Study classes based on Jesus' washing his disciples' feet as an act of selfless love, incarnation, reversal of role and an act of forgiveness. He also challenged the participants for a revitalization of the Edavaka Mission (Ref: 2 Corinthians 3:1-11).

Mrs. Nirmala Abraham and Mrs. Neena Panackal from Philadelphia Mar Thoma Church gave a presentation on the values and challenges of Family Life in the Mar Thoma families in the US, followed by a lively discussion.

Rev. Johnson George, Western Zone Vice president, led a talk on Mission Awareness and involvement. Rev. Philip Varghese, vicar of Philadelphia Mar Thoma Church led the intercessory prayer and witnessing. Apart from daily worship services a special worship service was held on Sunday, August 2, 2009, led by Rev. Vinoy Daniel, Rev. Dr. Philip Varghese and Rev. Johnson George.

There was sing along of both Malayalam and English hymns and revival songs and a special concert by the Youth Fellowship of Philadelphia. There was ample time for relaxation with games and recreation. Everyone enjoyed the talent night coordinated by Mr. Roy C. Thomas.



*Participants with Leaders of the Conference.*

Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius graced the retreat by conducting the Holy Communion on Saturday, August 1, 2009.

The organizers including Rev. George M. Kuruvilla, Vice President of Eastern Zone, Mr. Varghese K. Joseph, Secretary; Mr. K. Varghese, lay Vice president; Mr. Yohannan K. Jacob, Treasurer; Mr. Roy. C. Thomas, regional secretary of North-East; Dr. Alex T. Thomas, regional secretary of South-East; Mrs. Sally Thomas, Zonal Representative of South-East deserve special appreciation in providing an excellent menu and accommodation. On the concluding day the secretary gave vote of thanks and we all left with renewed minds and a new determination to proclaim the word of God like Micah the prophet, and to walk humbly with God in our daily lives.

**Dr. Alex T. Thomas, South-East regional Secretary  
Varghese K. Joseph, Diocesan Secretary MTVEA**

**ST. ANDREWS MAR THOMA CHURCH, NEW YORK**



*First communicants with Theodosius Thirumeni and Benchamen Achen.*

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa visited St. Andrews Mar Thoma Church, New York, on



*St. Andrews Mar Thoma Church Renovation—Ground Breaking Ceremony by Rev. Benchamen George*

September 27, 2009 and celebrated Holy Communion service and six Children received their first communion.

**Rev. Benchamen George**

**THE MAR THOMA CHURCH OF NEW JERSEY, RANDOLPH, NJ**



Studio Go was the theme for 2009 Vacation Bible School held at the Mar Thoma Church of New Jersey Sunday School. Participants are pictured at the finale.

## EPISCOPAL VISIT TO U.K. REGION

### Tabor Mar Thoma Church, Manchester

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa visited the Tabor Mar Thoma Church, Manchester, U.K. for the first time as the Diocesan Bishop of North America and Europe on Friday 21st August 2009 at 6:00 pm. He celebrated the Holy Communion Service in Malayalam and gave a powerful and meaningful message. Thirumeni informed the parish that the new Vicar Rev. Varghese Mathew is processing his visa and is expected to join the parish in September.

After the Holy Communion Service, the Parish arranged a felicitation meeting and extended a warm welcome to our beloved Thirumeni. After the meeting, Thirumeni met the Executive Committee Members and discussed the future plans and needs of the Parish. About 100 people including children attended the Service and Felicitation meeting. All members participated in the fellowship dinner arranged by the Parish.

**Rev. Jose Varughese, Vicar-in-charge**

### Dublin, Belfast & Cork

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, the Diocesan Bishop visited Ireland from 17th to 20 August 2009. Members of the Mar Thoma parish Dublin welcomed Thirumeni at International Airport Dublin on 17th August.

### Nazareth MTC Dublin

During the visit of Thirumeni, he met the parish committee members, encouraged them to be registered under Charity in Ireland, and instructed the members to keep the tempo of growth as a model community. He inaugurated three major projects of the parish. i) Marriage aid for Dalit girls in Indian mission fields (organized by the Sevika Sanghom); ii) Marriage aid for girls of Navajeevan Mumbai. (Organized by Young couple's fellowship); and iii) Distribution of Suviseshadoodhan for all members as part of Mission Awareness project of the Edavaka Mission.

### Belfast

During the visit of Thirumeni, Holy Qurbana was celebrated at Belfast Bible College. The following projects were inaugurated. i) Medical aid for the evangelists. Expected to support those who are

sick in backward districts of Kerala; ii) Marriage aid for girls of Navajeevan Mumbai (Yuvajana Sakhyam); and iii) My share for mission Project of Sunday school. (Distribution of Copper coin box to all families).

### Cork

Thirumeni visited Cork, Cultural capital of Ireland on 18th August. Holy Qurbana was celebrated at St. Ann's Church Shandon. This is a fast growing congregation in Ireland.

### Visit to Archbishop John Neill (The Church of Ireland)

Thirumeni visited The Archbishop at His home on 19th August and presented a memento to him. This visit strengthened the ties between both the churches. Archbishop promised all the support for processing a Visa for a new Achen for Dublin Parish.

Wherever Thirumeni visited, Lordship made a tremendous impact on faithful community, to be loyal to the Church, adhere to the faith and practice of the church. We are all grateful to our Thirumeni for the support and encouragement.

**Rev. Mathew Philip, Vicar**

### Hermon Mar Thoma Church, Midlands, Birmingham, U.K.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa visited the Hermon Mar Thoma Church, Midlands (Birmingham) on 22nd August 2009. This was Thirumeni's first visit to the parish as the Diocesan Episcopa.

The Holy Communion service began at 4:00 pm. led by Thirumeni. Rev. Abraham Mathew who is now vicar-in-charge of the parish assisted Thirumeni. The Choir dedication service was held in between the worship.

Thirumeni gave a very meaningful message about being ignited for the Lord and igniting others for the Lord. After the Holy Communion service the Choir and the Sunday school sang special songs. This was followed by a community dinner for all those attending. During this time Thirumeni interacted with all the members of the parish. It was indeed a blessed experience for all who attended the worship and a memorable event for the parish.

**Rev. Abraham Mathew, Vicar**

## Matrimonial

Strong committed Christian boy, 28 years 5' 10", fair and handsome, computer engineer, working in management position in Johannesburg, for a company with headquarters in Chicago, IL (position transferable full-time to Chicago) looking for suitable bride with professional qualification. Boy's parents are doctor & education specialist. Seeking a committed Christian girl, fair, slim, tall and good looking. Contact: drroy@sainet.co.za

Parents of Pharm.D. Marthomite girl 25 years, 5' 3", fair, US citizen and employed in a reputed organization seeks alliance from God fearing and professionally qualified boys (preferably MDs/Engineers or Ph.D.'s). Interested parties please respond with a brief profile to Geevarghese.sam@gmail.com

Mar Thoma parents settled in USA, invite marriage proposal for their US born son, 31 years, 5' 6", BS in Information Technology and currently working in Arizona. We are seeking proposal from IT professional, BS nurse or Pharmacist. Interested parties please call 248-854-1221.

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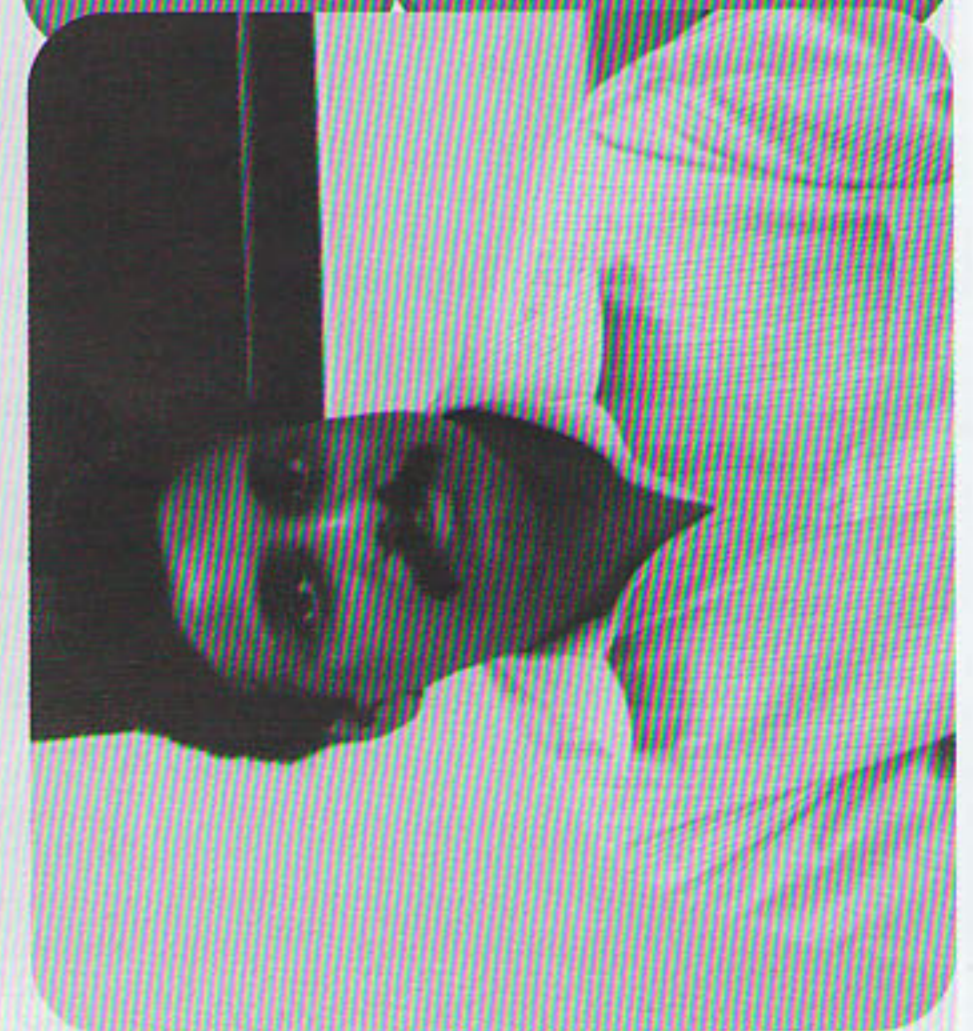
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*Youth Session at the conference.*

By the grace of God, the 27th Mar Thoma Family Conference UK & Europe took place from Friday 14th to Sunday 16th August 2009, hosted by St. John's Mar Thoma Church, UK, under the guidance of the vicar Rev. Jose Varughese.

We were very privileged to have our Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa preside over the conference. Also, we were blessed to have Mr. P. C. Mathew (National Director for Urban India Ministries, Bangalore) to lead the youth sessions and representatives from the East London branch of the Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) to lead children's ministry. Achens and lay leaders from the various parishes also provided leadership.

The venue for the 3 days was High Leigh Conference Centre in Hoddesdon, a beautiful centre that has housed the Mar Thoma UK & Europe conference for many years. Over 250 people attended the conference, approximately 60 of which were youths. There was representation from all the parishes in UK & Europe making it a wonderful time to renew and strengthen old friendships and to form bonds with our brothers and sisters all over the country.

In an age where families are drifting apart, violence is on the increase and with the hit of the worst financial recession; it is easy to sink into despair and confusion. The theme chosen for this year's conference was one very relevant to the current world situation. It reflected our lifeline amidst all the troubles and calamities we may be facing at such a time – *"God's Design Triumphs Over World Disorders. Thy word is lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path"* (Psalm 119:105).

Following Thirumeni's official inauguration of the Conference and key note address on Friday evening, the Sunday School and youth members of St John's presented the theme through a skit, a song and a choreography. They

depicted God's perfect design in the creation and what we as man have done to it. The choreography narrated our faith and trust in God through good and bad times. The evening was rounded off with the talent night with participation from all parishes.

During the conference, the adults were presented with the theme through three in-depth Bible studies by Thirumeni. These were focused as: 1) *God's design revealed through Creation, Noah's Ark, Election and Messianic Hope*; 2) *God's design revealed through the cross of Christ*; and 3) *God's design triumphs over world disorders. Church as the body of Christ has a ministry*. Thirumeni's article "Unchanging word in a changing world" was also distributed to all during the conference and it was one of the topics discussed during the group sessions.

Mr. P. C. Mathew lead the youths in three sessions entitled: 1) *Affirming God's design amidst world disorder*; 2) *Applying God's design in spite of world disorder*; and 3) *Announcing God's design to a world that longs for order*. He also gave a devotional talk to the adult group entitled *"How do I preserve my home amongst all the changes in the world?"* He advised to preserve by listening and obeying, by loving, by learning His word and by leaving behind a



*Sports and Recreation time at the conference.*

legacy. Mr. P. C. Mathew also gave a talk to the adults which revolved around how to keep strong relationships within our families.

All sessions were made enjoyable and lively with singing of various old and new songs in English and Malayalam. There were two music groups—the adult group lead by Mr. Abraham K. Thomas and the youth group lead by Mr. Shaun A. K. Thomas. During the free time, sports were organized which encouraged young and old to come together and have fun. Morning and Evening Worship and Devotions were lead by different Parishes. Rev. Mathew K. Punnoose and Members of St. James Mar Thoma Church, London; Rev. Abraham Mathew and Members of St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Bristol and all Kochammas. Mr. P. C. Mathew, Rev. T. C. Thomas and Rev. Mathew Philip took the Devotions. The Testimony Sessions were lead by Mr. Mathew Abraham and Dr. Prince.

Holy Communion service was celebrated on Sunday 16th August. The conference was brought to a close with a summary of actions to be taken back to our individual parishes. Before the closing prayer and benediction by Thirumeni, the responsibility for next year's Mar Thoma Family Conference was handed over to the Achen and committee members of St. James Mar Thoma Church, the hosting parish for 2010 conference.

This year's conference was a great blessing and a time for unifying fellowship between all those who attended. The hard work of the Convenor Mr. David Philip, the Co-convenors Mr. Isaac George and Mr. Shaun Thomas and all the volunteers is acknowledged and they are congratulated for organizing a smooth running and spiritually enriching 3 days.

**Sheena Thomas, Diocesan Assembly member  
St John's MTC, UK**

## OBITUARY

**CHACKO MATHEW (Aniyan)** of Long Island Mar Thoma Church was born on February 20, 1952 to the late Mr. Mochuplamoottil Ouseph Mathew and Mariamma Mathew in Eraviperoor, Kerala. His family moved to Panamannu, Nilambur in 1957. He married Mariamma Chacko (Leelamma), on August 22, 1974.



1952–2009

Chacko immigrated to the United States in 1976 and lived in Philadelphia for several years. After moving to New York, he started working for the M.T.A. while raising his family. He was an integral member of the Long Island Mar

Thoma Church from its beginning. His genuineness and humility resonated through his words, actions and service to the church.

He was a dedicated son, husband, father, grandfather, uncle and friend. Without fail, Chacko put everyone's needs before his own.

He is survived by his wife Leelamma, son Anil and daughter-in-law Jessie, daughter Anisha and son-in-law Subi, grandchildren Ethan, Jonah, Isaac and Jacob, only brother Kunjumon and mother Mariamma. Words cannot express how great of a man he was; he will be deeply missed.

Home Going Service was conducted by Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa, Diocesan Bishop; Rev. Vinoy Daniel, Diocesan/Bishop's Secretary; Rev. Santhosh Thomas, Vicar, Long Island Mar Thoma Church; Rev. P. J. Varghese, Vicar, Epiphany MTC; Rev. Jacob Varghese, Vicar, St. John's MTC; Rev. Varghese Mathew, Vicar, Tabor & Salem Mar Thoma Churches; Rev. Biju P. Simon, Youth Chaplain, NE Region; on Tuesday, October 6,

2009, and was attended by many friends and family from far and near. He was laid to rest at All Saints Cemetery, 855 Middle Neck Road, Great Neck, New York.

**MARIAMMA GEORGE** of Ascension Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia, was a devoted wife and mother, and true woman of faith. Although she never received any salary for her efforts, she was one of the hardest working women we knew. She raised four beautiful children and nurtured a home. She conveyed the Word of God in developing her family and living her daily life. For those of us who remain, Mariamma has truly created a legacy to uphold, of unconditional love, faith, family and joy. She fulfilled all of her hopes and dreams through her family here on earth, and looked forward to meeting her Maker.



1923–2009

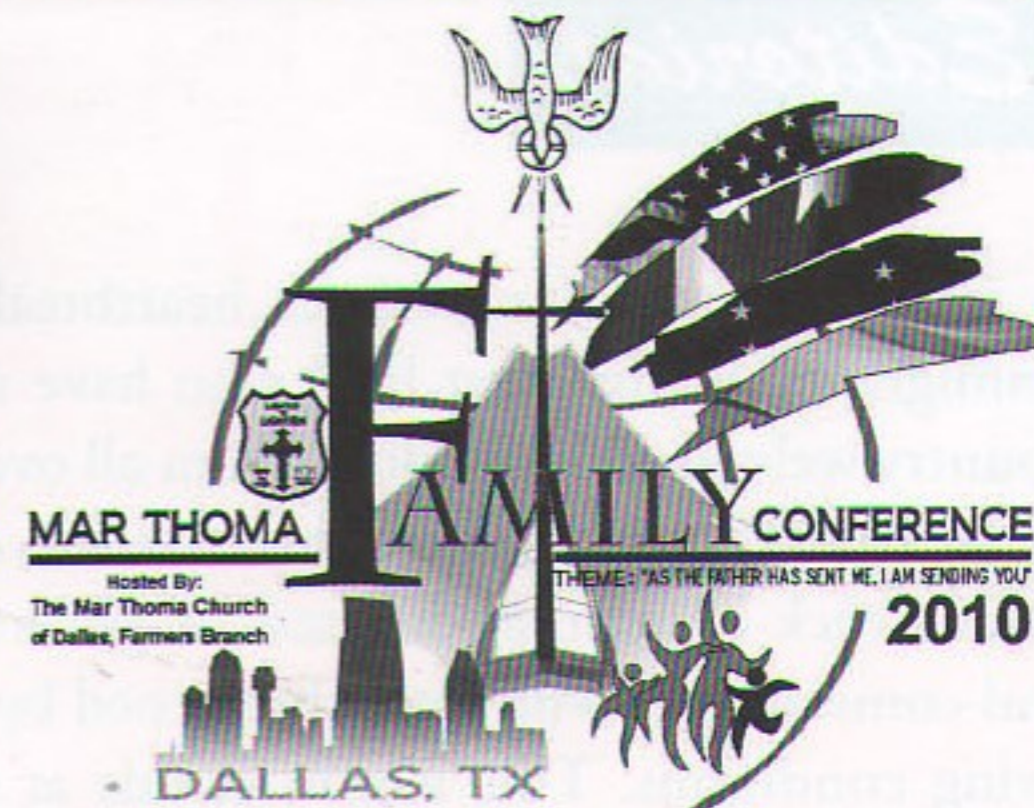
Mrs. Mariamma George was born on March 20, 1923 in Vayalathala, Kerala, India. She had six brothers, and is survived by two; Mr. Mathai Mathai and Mr. Yohannan Mathai. She was married in 1943 in Vayalathala to the late Mr. V. M. George Challackal House. They had four daughters: Thankamma, Susy, Lizy and Sally. After her husband passed away in 1992, she has immigrated to the U.S. in 1999.

She is survived by her children: Mrs. Anna Varghese (Thankamma) and her husband Mr. K. Varghese (Ponnachen); Mrs. Aleyamma Mathew (Susy), husband Mr. M. A. Mathew (Rajan); Mrs. Mariamma Philipose (Lizy) and her husband Mr. Philipose Thomas (Babykutty); Mrs. Sally Mathew and her husband. Thomas Mathew (Aniyankunju). She is also survived by her 11 grandchildren.



# XXVIII MAR THOMA FAMILY CONFERENCE

DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE



Date:

**July 1-4, 2010**

Venue:

**Hyatt Regency Hotel, DFW Airport**

Theme:

**As the Father has sent me,  
I am sending you. John 20: 21**

Hosted By:

**The Mar Thoma Church of Dallas,  
Farmers Branch, Texas**

Special sessions for youth,  
young families and children

\*

Inspiring and thought provoking messages

\*

Thrilling musical experience by the Dallas choir  
and Praise and Worship teams

\*

Testimony and Witnessing

\*

Talent night and entertainment events

\*

Sightseeing Tours

## OUR LEADERS



**His Grace The Most Rev. Dr. Philipose  
Mar Chrysostom Valiya Metropolitan**



**Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese  
Mar Theodosius Episcopa**



**Rev. Dr. Sham P. Thomas  
(UTC Bangalore)**

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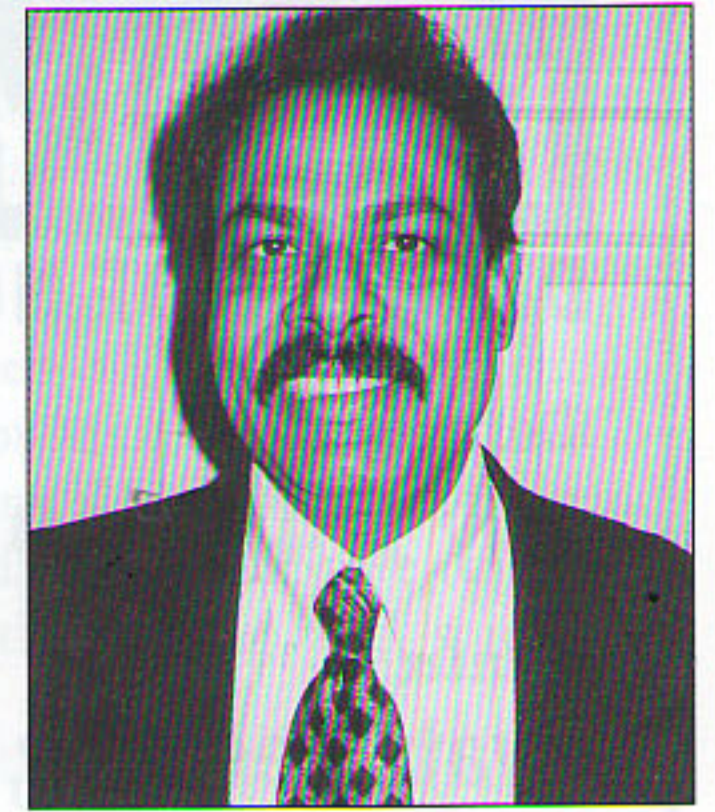


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It is amazing, and sometimes heartbreaking, to observe the paths crossed by many immigrants of this great land who have migrated to America for various reasons. This country welcomed individuals from all over the globe; those who were born and brought up in village settings where there was no electricity or running water, war-torn nations, areas struck by natural disasters or poverty, small nations with iron-clad rulers, people and communities who were threatened by genocide, and those who seek better jobs and living conditions. This nation stands at the apex of Diaspora communities, gathered from all parts of the world and from all walks of life. Did this happen by chance, or for some divine, but unseen prophetic fulfillment? Last month, I met an Indian couple whose 3 American-born children has moved out to three different nations: Scotland, Australia, and Kuwait. The husband is originally from a remote village in Gujarat, and the wife is from Kerala. They met at a famous Medical College in north India during the final years of medical school, and got married after finishing Medical school. They started medical practice in Calcutta and later migrated to USA. All three children attended universities outside of North America and met their partners at those schools. Children who were exposed to different cultures, religions, and listened to multiple languages while growing up now face the same situation for their own. What do all these mean to “individual identity”? How does it impact on community involvement and social outlook? Is this a growing issue that requires more attention? In the case of many Keralites who have migrated to USA, who were used to eating rice and curries placed on a Banana leaf and used a hand made leaf-spoon to scoop rice soup, now use forks, spoons and napkins. We drive luxury cars and live in houses that are only dreamt by many in other nations. We enjoy the comforts of most modern technology in our daily lives. Did this change our attitudes? Did this move give us a false sense of security or a bit of false pride? I do not want to forget those Marthomites who are still responsive to the calls of the society and the needy. Our diocese extended substantial help towards the Navathy (home for homeless) project and some of the individuals who worked behind the scenes require appreciation. Let us not lose the momentum!



This issue of Mar Thoma Messenger is focused on church's outreach ministry. John Mark once stated, “a church with a well-balanced missionary program—balanced geographically between ‘home’ or local community ministries, and ‘overseas’ or foreign missions, and also between the various components of mission, justice, mercy and evangelism—is a healthy church”. Mar Thoma Church has its roots set in mission works and outreach, but as we grew bigger and better, did our mission zeal fade a bit? Did we lose the original vision? If we did, it is no one but us, the members are to be blamed. Some of the reasons may be the statements above; false sense of security and unwilling self-righteousness. In the rush to maintain better standards of living, we tend to forget the real meaning of life that many has searched for; in nature, doctrines and philosophy, and amongst different religions. This diocese, situated within the territories of very blessed nations, have a lot of potential, a lot of Godly responsibilities, and a whole lot of pending actions that can only be rekindled with the co-operation and efforts of its individuals and families. We can make positive waves in this part of the globe, and in the world at large, simply by making changes in our attitude, and largely by listening to God's call. The initiation may be at parish level or at local community level, but it requires our talents and time, deployed with a divine strategy. Let us join hands and work together as a Diaspora community that will embrace freedom and justice for all and to provide basic human needs to those around us. “Though I scatter them among the peoples, yet in distant lands they will remember me. They and their children will survive, and they will return” (Zechariah 10:9).

*“A good man is not a perfect man; a good man is an honest man, faithful, and unhesitatingly responsive to the voice of God in his life,”* (John Fischer).

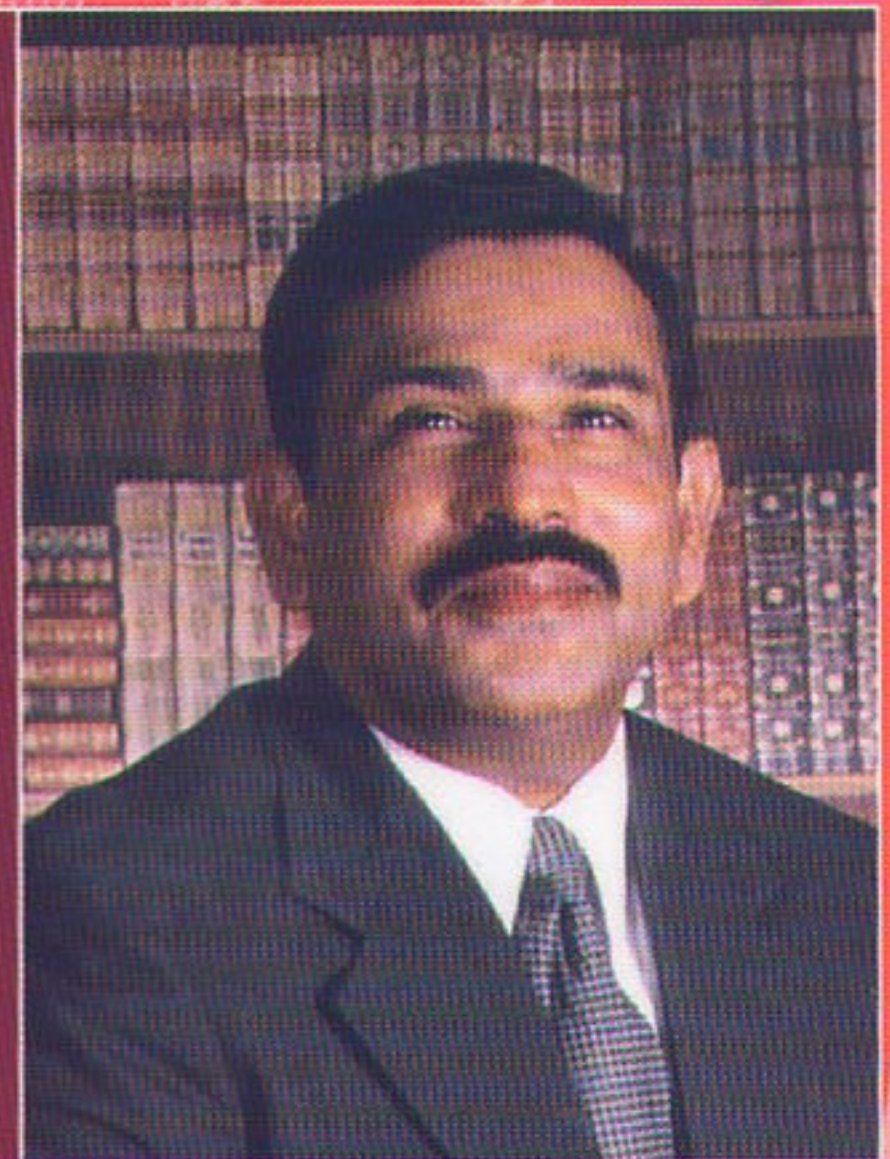
Eapen Daniel

**Justice  
is being  
served,  
to the  
Asian  
Community**

**Lal Varghese**

.....  
Attorney at Law

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**Law Offices of Lal Varghese, PLLC**  
1111 Kinwest Parkway, Suite 120,  
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