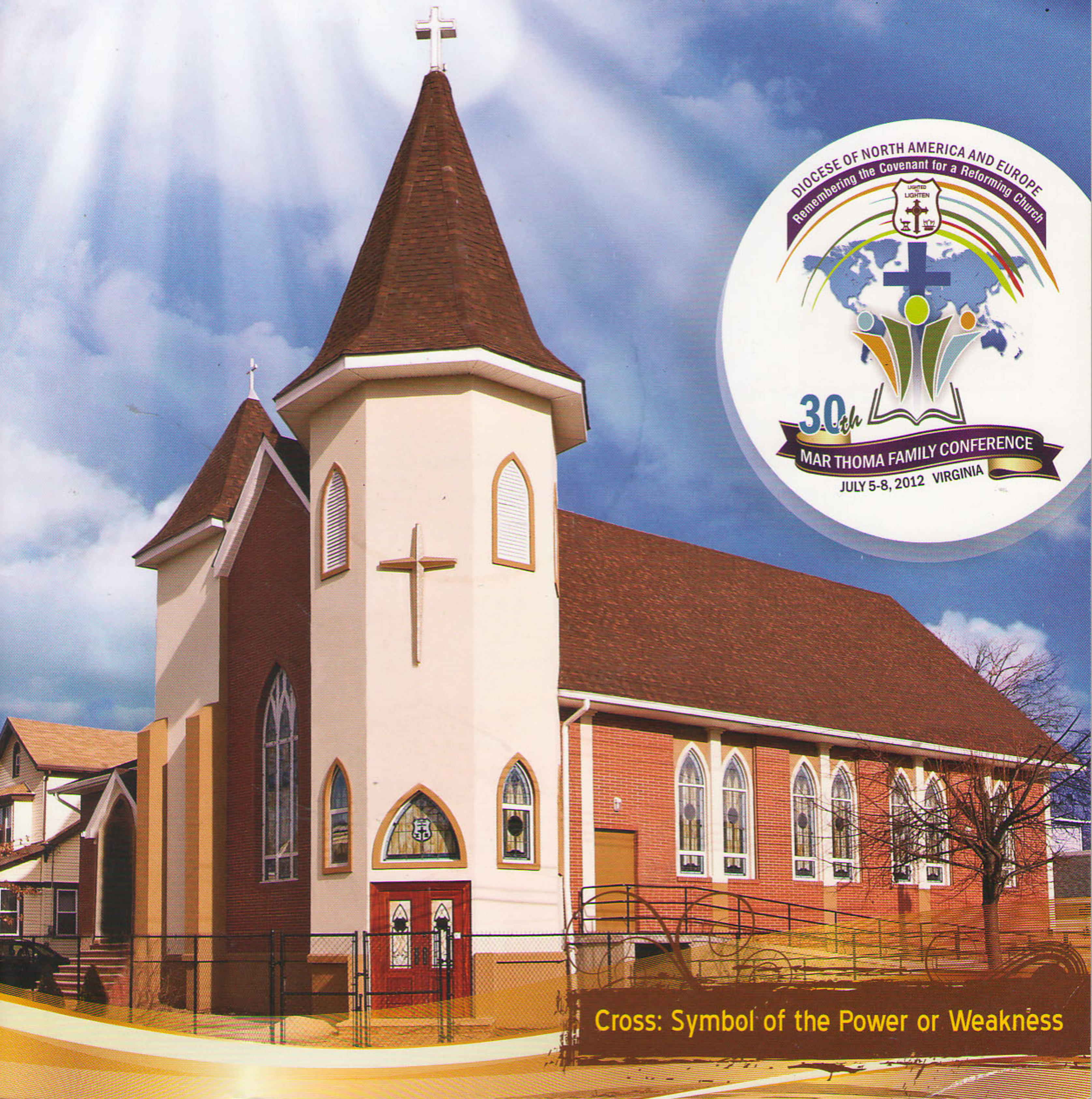




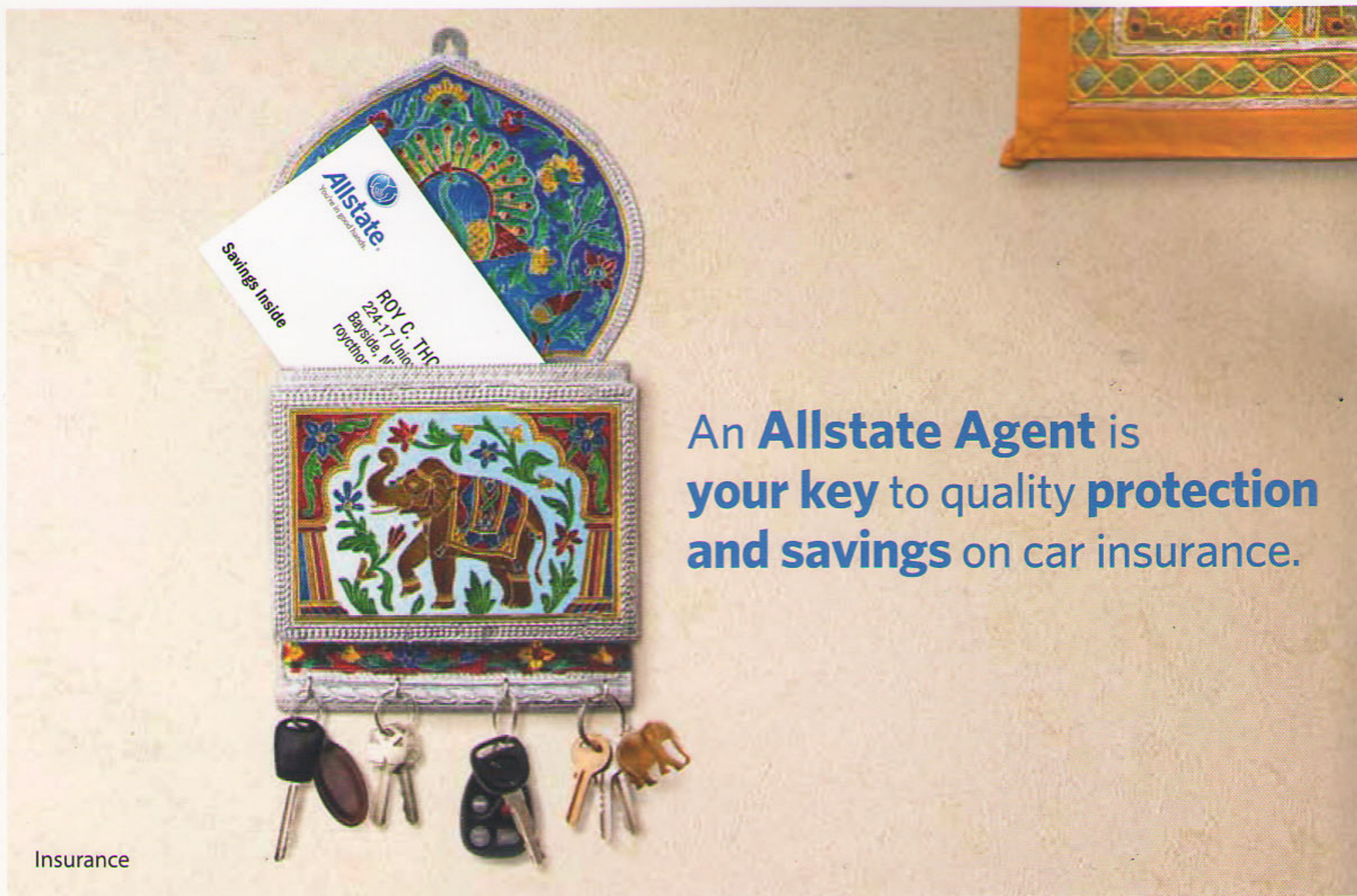
# MAR THOMA MESSENGER

A PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

April 2012



Cross: Symbol of the Power or Weakness



An **Allstate Agent** is  
**your key** to quality **protection**  
and **savings** on car insurance.

Insurance



**Call me and see how much you can save.**

I can help you get the protection that's personalized for you and your family's needs along with the savings you deserve. Safe drivers can save 45% or more on car insurance. And our multiple-policy discount lets you save even more.

Dollar for dollar, nobody protects you like Allstate.

**ROY C. THOMAS, LUTCF**

**Tel: (718) 464-8500**

**Fax: (718) 464-4230**

224-17 Union Turnpike  
Bayside, NY 11364  
royctho@allstate.com

**Call me today for a free quote.**

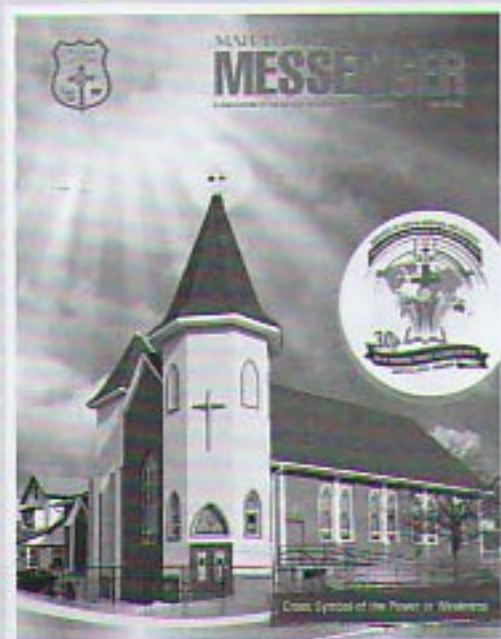


**Allstate**

You're in good hands.

Auto Home Life Retirement

**April 2012**



The official publication of the Diocese of North America & Europe (For private circulation only)

**Vol. XXXI No.2**

**EDITORIAL BOARD**

Patron: Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius

Diocesan Secretary:

**Rev. K E Geevarghese** (Manager)  
516-377-3311 marthomadiocese@gmail.com

Chief Editor

**Dr. Eapen Daniel**  
215-364-5459 eapen44@gmail.com

Editorial Board Members:

**Rev Sabu. C Mathew**, UK  
44-161-233-2199 revsabumathew@yahoo.com

**Dr. Nancy George Maliacal**, Canada  
905-799-2123 nancygmal@rogers.com

**Lal Varghese Esq.**, Dallas  
972-788-1555 attylal@aol.com

**Prof. Elias Abraham**, Baltimore  
410-418-8018 elias.abraham49@gmail.com

**Georgy Varughese**, Florida  
954-240-7010 varughese61@aol.com

**Koshy P Koshy**, New York  
718-987-5108 koshy@verizon.net

**MANAGING COMMITTEE**

Patron: Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius

Manager: **Rev K E Geevarghese**  
516-377-3311 marthomadiocese@gmail.com

**Chacko Mathew** (Diocesan Treasurer)  
516-364-1854 sunnysusan2@gmail.com

**T A Mathew**, Houston (Advertisement)  
713-436-2207 tamathew@hotmail.com

**Susan Johnson**, Canada (Subscription Canada & Europe) 905-821-4385 susanj1@sympatico.ca

**Gigi Tom**, New York (Subscription-USA)  
845-282-2500 gigitomelr@aol.com

**Thomas Mammen**, California  
562-431-6469 tvammen@msn.com

**Mary Varughese**, Chicago  
847-687-0475 mohan\_aswati@wowway.com

Diocese of North America & Europe  
[www.marthomanae.org](http://www.marthomanae.org)

Malankara Marthoma Syrian Church  
[www.marthoma.in](http://www.marthoma.in)

# Index

02	Message from the Metropolitan
03	Message from the Diocesan Episcopa
05	Editorial
06	Cross: Symbol of Power or Weakness - Rev. Eapen Abraham
09	Remembering the Covenant for a New Reforming Church - Rev. Dr. M. C. Thomas
11	The Storey of a Journeying People - Dr. Zac Varghese
13	Book Review- Heritage and Development in the Mission of the Church - Prof. Dr. M. O. Koshy
15	Random Reflections on the Broken Body of Christ – Rev. Oommen V. Varkey
17	The Liberating Power of the Cross - Dr. M. M. Thomas
20	A Reflection on the Importance of Sunday School Teaching - Rev. K. C. Varughese
23	Exploring the Resurrection Faith of Mary Magdalene and Thomas in the Fourth Gospel-Christopher P. Daniel
25	The Choices of Martha and Mary - Mrs. Sairah Joseph
29	No Person Need to Stay the Way He/She is – Rev. Joseph Daniel
32	Maramon Convention 2012 - Selected Messages
35	Matrimonial
36	Crossword Puzzle
37	പരമബലിയുടെ കുരിശുമരത്തിൽ പരമരക്ഷയുടെ പതാകയുയർത്തൽ. Shaji George
40	മാർത്തോമ്മാസഭാ മിഷൻ ഫീൽഡുകളിലൂടെ (ഭാഗം 2) Thomas Koshy and Mariamma Thomas
42	Mission Corner
43	Reformation in the Malankara Church, Relevance and Challenges - Mrs. Susan Johnson & Mr. George C. George
47	Youth Corner
51	Parish News
53	Episcopal Visits

Subscription Rates		2 Years	5 Years	Life
	USA	\$ 20.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 300.00
	Canada	\$ 25.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 300.00
	UK	£ 10.00	£ 25.00	£ 150.00

Advertisement Rates		Four Issues	One Issue
	Back Cover / Color	\$ 2000.00	\$ 525.00
	Front / Back Inside / Color	\$ 1500.00	\$ 400.00
	Inside Full page / BW	\$ 500.00	\$ 150.00

Mailing Address

**Mar Thoma Messenger** - Sinai Mar Thoma Center, 2320, Merrick Avenue, Merrick, NY 11566  
**Eapen Daniel** - (Chief Editor) 165, Springflower Court, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

Cover Photo:  
Newly built St. Johns Mar Thoma Church, New York

**Disclaimer:** Articles published in the Mar Thoma Messenger is solely the views of the authors. Messenger or the Diocese of North America & Europe / PrintCall do not endorse the contents or views expressed in the articles and is not responsible or liable for the contents or views in any form, nor shall endorse any advertisement or the products or services offered or involved.

Design, Print & Direct Mailing:  
PrintCall - San Francisco, CA | 209.408.6838 | [www.PrintCall.com](http://www.PrintCall.com) | info@printcall.com

# Message from the Metropolitan



Dearly beloved in the Lord,

Many have prayerfully listened to the Word at the Maramon Convention. The topic chosen for the 2012 Maramon Convention was, 'Rise, let us go!' (Matthew 26:46). When Jesus was struggling in mind his three disciples were sleeping. He woke them up and said to them these words. To those persons and the Church that are engaged in the deep slumber of sin, what Jesus asks even today is this- 'Awake, arise, or ever be fallen.' We should come to him with remorse and sorrow. We have to confess our sins before him. Then we will be able to enjoy Resurrection. This is what makes up our faith, hope, and experience. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me" (Matthew 5:11). Let us march forward, holding the hand of Jesus who is able to reconstruct what the world destroys. The sermons were very powerful and inspirational. The speakers – both within and from outside, were messengers of reconciliation in the present day chaos and confusion where social relationships are severely shattered and broken off. Thanks to all those who have endured diligently in making the convention a glorious Gospel event.

During the Lenten season, we have engaged in earnest efforts to find out and own promises for future life, through faith oriented meditations. The ministry of reconciliation is the mission of the Church. The reconciliation ministry is highly necessary in all areas of human life. We remember how Jesus saved a home from insult and shame when he attended a wedding ceremony at Cana in Galilee. He led them to happiness and prosperity from confusion and sorrow, turning water into wine. He is ever capable of helping each family even now. The Snehakaram Project started by our Church in 2010 aims at providing help to those persons who are not able to undergo treatment in fatal diseases such as cancer, kidney complaints, heart, HIV, AIDS, complaints of liver, and pancreas. We took a decision to collect one million Dollar for this purpose, depositing it as a corpus fund, the interest of which be utilized for the treatment of deserving patients. But we are not able to collect this amount completely. I want to remind every parish that they should not take up projects similar to Snehakaram project. Instead, they have to try to make this major project a great success, thereby paving way to be of help to many deserving helpless ones in our society.

The Mar Thoma Church likes to pay respect to the memory of one of the most glorious sons of the State of Kerala, namely Dr. Sukumar Azhikodu. He was a great friend of our Church. Respected by all, Dr. Azhikodu remained a great personality in Kerala's social, cultural, political, literary, and intellectual areas. When I visited him in the hospital, though very weak, he talked of the love and respect given to him by the Mar Thoma Church. Dr. Azhikodu also referred with great feelings about the visit of Valiya Metropolitan to the hospital. I am sure that his life and writings will continue to enlighten the thoughts and paths of many in the days to come.

The unexpected death of one of the illustrious priests of our Church, namely Rev. M. V. George, saddened the hearts of all people. He led a very pious and courageous Christian life. He was unselfish in all areas of Christian activities. Let us pray for the solace of the bereaving family of George Achen.

On February 8th, 2012, I have completed 37 years of Episcopacy within the Mar Thoma Church. The then Metropolitan, the great Yuhanon Mar Thoma, gave me an advice the day before my consecration. "Be ready to enter into the maddening circumstances of life. Storm and waves will ever be there. But remaining firm on the ground, and knowing God's goodness, move forward in life." The one who called out is faithful. He is that He is. The one that led till today will lead on. You must pray for the grace to be strengthened by the One who strengthens.

Grace be with you all  
**Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan**

# Message from the Diocesan Episcopa



Dearly beloved in Christ,

The first week in April 2012 is the Holy Week, and we will be meditating on the cross and the crucified. The theme selected for this issue of the messenger is, Cross - Symbol of Power or Weakness. What is power? What is weakness? The meaning for these terms depends on the context in which you define it. I want to focus my attention on the crucified, as we derive the symbolic meaning of the Cross. When St. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, he said "For the word of cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18). Yes, Jesus Christ is the power and wisdom of God.

"Are you the King of the Jews?" asked Pontius Pilate, when Jesus was brought to his court by the religious leaders and the council of the religious community (Jn. 18:33). When Governor Pilate asked again; "So you are a king?" (Jn. 18:37), Jesus answered saying "... For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth". A King in the secular world is one that rules with power and authority. Jesus was different. When the wise men came to find the newly born King of the Jews, (Mt. 2:2) they found Jesus not in the palace of the Herod but in a manger in Bethlehem, wrapped in swaddling clothes.

'Son of David' is a common title that was used for Jesus Christ along with 'Son of Man' and 'Son of God'. Who is King David? When King Saul failed to lead people by following God's standard for Kingship (I Sam 15), God anointed David as successor through the prophet Samuel. King David reigned as the ideal King of God's people (1005-965 BCE). He united Israel and Judah as a nation who owed allegiance to the crown, maintained a court of justice and established a standing army. King David captured Jerusalem and made it the religious and political centre of Israel. He received the promise of a royal messiah in his line. Therefore, Jesus who came in the line of David was called, son of David. However, the places where this title for Jesus was used were not places where Jesus used any sort of power or authority. For example, in Matthew 15 we see the narrative of a Canaanite woman calling Jesus 'son of David' when she was asking Jesus to heal her demon-possessed daughter. Here, Jesus appears as a healer who showed mercy to a gentile and to her weak and sick daughter. So the 'son of David' is not one who establishes His Kingdom by power or fighting wars but one who liberates by His act of kindness to people. He stands as the Messiah who transforms the love of power into the power of love.

'Lord Jesus' is another title that is frequently used in the Bible and Christian circles. The word refers to one who has power and authority like a King or owner of slaves. In the New Testament, Jesus is portrayed as Lord (Kurios), not as one who exercises authority but as a servant who washes the feet of His disciples. John 13 says that Jesus taught them the lesson on who is the Lord and blessed (Jn. 13:12-17). "You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example that you also should do as I have done to you". Jesus incarnated to vulnerable situations of human life as a servant and made himself approachable to all who wanted healing, justice and peace. The nature of the Kingly rule, as one interested in the welfare of the people was revealed in the words and actions of Jesus. 'God with us' was the message that Jesus brought through His life and ministry and rightly He was called Immanuel. He revealed the Almighty God as the gracious and merciful one. This became more meaningful to the people who were marginalized, considered outcasts and excluded by the Jewish community in Jesus' days. The eschatological hope for the new age for which, these people were looking for in the Messiah became the 'now' experience in the ministry of Jesus. He announced that the Kingdom of God has come near (Mk. 1:14-15).

Jesus entered Jerusalem as 'King of Kings' and 'Lord of Lords'. The people shouted Hosanna, meaning 'save us now' (Mt. 21:1-16). Here Jesus enters the city not as a military conqueror but as a peaceful King, who is humble and meek. The real goal of kingship that Jesus revealed throughout His life and work is 'life-giving' in all its sense. He was not a death-bringing warrior but a life-giving healer. He said, 'I have come that you may have life and have it abundantly' (Jn. 10:10-16). So, instead of exercising power, he imparted power to the weak and the ostracized. This was demonstrated while Jesus healed the soldier (slave of the high priest) whose ear was cut down by the sword of Peter, in the garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26:51-53). Jesus said, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who takes the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?" It was His willful choice to be the meek, as His own beatitude says, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Mt. 5:5).

Jesus is the King who ruled from the Cross. Was it glory or weakness? Pilate was stunned at the silence of Jesus while the chief priests and elders accused Him repeatedly. As a suffering servant, described in Isaiah 53, Jesus withstood all accusation, affliction and physical torture. He was like a sheep before its shearers. Jesus is a King with a difference. The one who suffers as a servant is the King. While the soldiers mocked Him saying, Hail King of Jews and placed a crown of thorns and an inscription on the Cross, Jesus was not trying to destroy the mockers, but gave His life for their redemption. He was the king who ruled from the Cross instead of a throne. When the high priest and the Sanhedrin contested, opposed and rejected the mission of Jesus with power and weapons of iron, the Roman governor declared that in Jesus, king of the Jews, he does not find any guile and the Centurion declared on the top of the mount Calvary, "He is truly the son of God". Jesus the King of Kings ruled from the Cross. He rose from the dead in all His glory.

So, what is the authority that the resurrected Jesus is speaking on when He commissions His disciples as found in Matthew 28:18-20? "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore... to the close of the age". Jesus revealed His authority in His life-enhancing mission, with preference for the weak and oppressed. This authority is not a crusade for domination and power. His servant-king image beckons the church to follow the footsteps of Jesus. He invites us to liberate the oppressed and the fragmented, and to transform the structures of the world with the values of the Kingdom of God.

May the Church be an Easter community where Jesus is Lord and all will minister for the growth of God's Kingdom, on the way of the Cross!

Yours in Christ

**Mar Theodosius**

[www.martheodosius.com](http://www.martheodosius.com)

## **Diocesan Bishop's Itinerary**

Please visit the Diocesan website at

**[www.marthomanae.org](http://www.marthomanae.org)**

for the detailed itinerary of Diocesan Bishop

Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa.



In one of my editorials, I wrote about simplifying life in modern culture. Vernon Howard stated; "You have succeeded in life when all you really want is only what you really need". Especially in the western hemisphere, by gradually sliding into busy life style, many people have turned into machines. Everyone is always in a hurry, dashing from one place to another. Each member of the family works multiple jobs, owns separate cars, television sets, mobile phones, and separate bank accounts. Internet and media dependency is a norm for the young and the old and most cannot even think of a life without similar modern gadgets. Most surveys suggest that the majority of over the 2 billion people who go to the Internet daily are between the ages of 14 to 25. Ironically, many parents are unaware of the details on how their children are spending long hours on the internet. This dependency is seriously deforming the essential base structures of one's faith, social interaction, personality development, family relations, and other manifestations of accepted human behaviors.

The so called individuals 'who appears to have everything' seem to be stressed about many things. To the most part, we have made our lives more complex for no special reasons. According to Confucius "Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated". This is spreading to even village life back in Kerala. On my last visit to Kerala in June 2011, I wanted to meet and greet an old acquaintance. First, when I called, he was getting ready to go with the driver to get his 'new and expensive' car repaired in a faraway place, since he did not trust the local mechanic. The next time I called, he was on his way to pick up special floor tiles for his big house that was under construction. I tried to set up a meeting one more time after a week, and he asked me to meet him at a big hotel where many rich people gather to 'unwind' in the evening. I got the hint and decided not to see him.

Even after acquiring all the wealth and comfort, if one feels EMPTY, what good is that? What happened to our eternally rich (but materially poor) lives, when a family sat together and enjoyed each other's company? In our spiritual lives, if we are inflicted by vainglory, our faith and life satisfaction will subside, which will lead to depression and needless anxiety. It is a proven fact that, globally, the use of tranquilizers and anti-depression medications is on the rise. People tend to travel far and wide in search of peace and mental satisfaction. Many are ready to try different religious faiths, just to overcome persistent life struggles. But, according to studies, all these running around are resulting from stressful minds and worldly greed. In Luke 12:15 Jesus stated: "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions"-a true caveat for modern men!

I have received a few emails concerning the facilities in the convention area at the 'Maramon Convention'. (I did forward excerpts to the MTEA authorities in Thiruvalla and the Metropolitan). The common issue was concerning the seating under the 'pandal'. Those who cannot afford to sit on paid chairs have to sit on the wet ground with much discomfort, since there is no longer any dry and clean gravel bed as in the past. It was also stated that the restroom facilities are very poor in and around the pandal, especially for ladies. The heat and humidity combined with the dust make it harder for the elderly and senior attendees to come and stay under the pandal. I hope that MTEA and our Church Council will look into these matters and take necessary actions to provide essential facilities for the ordinary attendees of the convention. MTEA committee can think of providing chairs throughout the convention pandal, make special walkways/ or driveways to reduce dust, provide commercial fans that are strategically placed outside the pandal to provide better air circulation, and also provide temporary and clean toilet facilities. This convention has become our Church's trademark; it should progress based on the lifestyles of our members. On a positive note, many of the members of the Diocese of North America and Europe are thankful to MTEA for providing live streaming videos of convention sermons and songs. Downloaded copies are made available at parish and organizational levels for many to view.

As a growing Diocese, the Mar Thoma Diocese of North America & Europe needs the prayer and support of all its parishes and members, to be effective and fruitful. No organization will prosper and reach its goals if the supporting system is weakened. It is not desirable for a parish or a family to just opt out and not participate in selected responsibilities or activities of the diocese or the parish. Our democratic way of functioning can resolve issues based on common interest, but not based on personal interest. I hope and pray that each parish, congregation, family and member will wholeheartedly support all aspects of this worshipping and witnessing Church which our forefathers envisioned and established with much struggle and hardships.

The Messenger family extends our sincere gratitude to the Achens who are being transferred back to India after the completion of their three-year term in this Diocese. We are thankful to the services rendered by each of them towards enriching our parish and family lives in various aspects of our faith and practice. We offer our sincere prayers for their continued fruitful ministry.

**Dr. Eapen Daniel**

# CROSS: Symbol of Power or Weakness?

Rev. Eapen Abraham, UK



In the Christian faith, nothing is more powerful than weakness. On the contrary, we live in a world where every individual and organisation – continuously hunger and strive for more power and more strength. Our children adore story characters with super-human strength, and as we increase in age we begin to admire and patronise athletic sportsmen, successful businessmen and powerful politicians. We have a worldly perception of what power is. But Christianity is full of apparent contradictions. Many of those who are first shall be last, and the last first. We live by dying; we gain by losing. It is also the case that we derive power from weakness.

In 1 Corinthians 18-25, Paul sheds light on humanity's limited understanding of the works of God. While anticipating a mighty savior, many people watched the whole event unfold as a sign of weakness and powerlessness. The cross of Christ had dashed their hopes for the promised Messiah. How could this be – the Chosen One, who was supposed to save the generations, at the mercy of human hands? Is there a point in following someone who had just been humiliated, tortured and left to die by way of the most heinous and shocking of all punishments? Logically, the answer is no, end of story. And so, we see that the cross became a stumbling block, a literal scandal and utter foolishness to the masses, even to this day. Jesus became the Lord of weakness. This weakness was an insult to the religious who trust in the power of morality, and it was stupid to pagans who lean on intellectual knowledge and political maneuvering for power. The weakness of the Cross is ridiculous, off-putting and offensive, so that to talk of the Cross being powerful is not the way to do Christian public relations.

## What is Power and what is Weakness?

Power today is often centered on a person's abilities. It is seen as what we can achieve with our influence, wealth and position. We often boast in what we have accomplished, while on the flip side, we tend to cover our weaknesses, deficiencies and inadequacies. Weakness is often associated with lacking strength and may be a quality that is regarded as a disadvantage or fault.

We read that a 'power struggle' was reflected within the church at Corinth. Corinth was a cosmopolitan city-state within the Roman Empire during the first century AD known for its strategic position, economic powers and great cultural and religious diversity. It was the seat of government for southern Greece and noted for its wealth. The city embodied the pinnacle of Greco-Roman societal ideals. One author writes, "philosophers stressed human autonomy and ethicists called for individual initiative. Consequently, people began to focus on themselves and in particular on cultivating their self-worth. For many, self-appreciation became the goal and self-glorification the reward. (Savage Timothy, Power Through Weakness, Cambridge University Press, 1996, Pg 16). It was not this backdrop that the Apostle Paul manifested to the Christian Church at Corinth. Many of Paul's opponents within the church measured his ministry against their societal ideals, and questioned Paul's role and power among them. Even though Paul's weakness and humility opposed what the Corinthians valued, Paul did not hesitate nor back down in speaking, teaching and modeling his life in stark contrast to the norms of power in their society.

## Weakness of Power is the Paradox of the Cross

One of the greatest paradoxes to be found in the Word of God is in Paul's second letter to the Church at Corinth. It reads, "... For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet

he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you." 2 Corinthians 13:1-4 (NIV).

Note in particular the central clauses of verse four: "...He was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you." How startling and mind boggling are the words of Paul. Here is an assertion of Christ's weakness. Before we tackle this paradox, one thing needs clarification at the outset. That is, God's weakness is stronger than the greatest strength of man. You remember how Paul put it in the first chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians: "We preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength" (23-24). Thus, when we discuss the weakness of our Lord, we are not talking about weakness in the sense of man. So what was this weakness and what did it consist of? Paul tells us "He was crucified through weakness." This weakness is what led Him to Calvary.

Jesus' weakness was not born out of an inability to cope with the situation. We know this because He boldly told the officials who came to arrest him, "Do not get big-headed, do not think that you really have power over My life, do not think you are in control because no man takes My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to pick it again. So do not think you are in charge." Jesus' weakness was not the weakness of impotence. As paradoxical as it may seem, inherent in Jesus' weakness was power. His weakness was powerful because it was the weakness of devotion to the will of God. Jesus was strong enough to go to the cross that the purposes of God might be held inviolable. It was the weakness of love, long-suffering, and the weakness of consecration.

So turning back to 2 Corinthians 13, we read again, "he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power." But that is not where the 4th verse ends. This verse not only says He was crucified through weakness; it also claims that we are weak in Him. This is interesting and implies that Christ in us is not simply theoretical. As His graces, His virtues, His character manifest in us, we experience Christ in us. If He is in us, then the same weakness that led Him to Calvary is exhibited in us. The Cross



of Christ represents both death and life. It combines both weakness and power. It is the perfect and ultimate paradox summed up in God's love for us and is the essence of the divine paradox. Christianity without paradoxes is flat, weak and ultimately very uninteresting.

### Through his weakness Jesus has overcome the power of the world

When Paul says, 'Christ the power of God', he is not referring to a muscle power of Christ, a power can do anything, but to the power of his weakness seen in crucifixion. This is fully evident in the life of Christ. After Judas betrayed Him and He was arrested, how did Jesus handle the situation? Did he call fire down from heaven? Did He call in legions of angels? No. He simply let them take Him away. Why? Why would the very incarnation of omnipotence simply allow Him to be taken away? It was because He understood the power of weakness. Jesus stands for the weakness of power which is ultimately victorious over the arbitrary and reckless power of the world. Jesus' power of weakness liberates us from our stereo-typed perception of power and prevents us from becoming slaves to reckless power.

When he was scourged, whipped, beaten, and crucified, He did not complain. He didn't tell the perpetrators of these injustices that he was innocent, or that he was being treated unfairly. Why is this? There is no spiritual force greater than weakness, particularly when it is taken on voluntarily, with the knowledge that God is sovereign over all that we suffer and that He will rectify all wrongs. God chose the weak to shame the wise (1 Cor. 1:27). Shame was an important word in Paul's day. Our culture today is all about money and fame, but in the first century everything revolved around honor and shame. Certain actions produce honor, which you wanted to get as much as you could, and others produced shame, which you wanted to avoid at all costs. An utterly radical element of the Kingdom of God is that God turns everything upside down. In weakness is strength. In dependence is power. In dying to ourselves is eternal life. Earthly power, worldly strength, visual beauty has nothing to do with honor in the Kingdom of God. In fact, all those things can be an obstacle to true honor. That's why God may sometimes break us to help us learn to depend on him. Cross is the power of weakness, it is the dependence to God. In our Weakness, we cannot live alone, we need to relay on something, where we need to relay? The answer is the Cross of Christ.

### Jesus' living power is revealed in our weakness

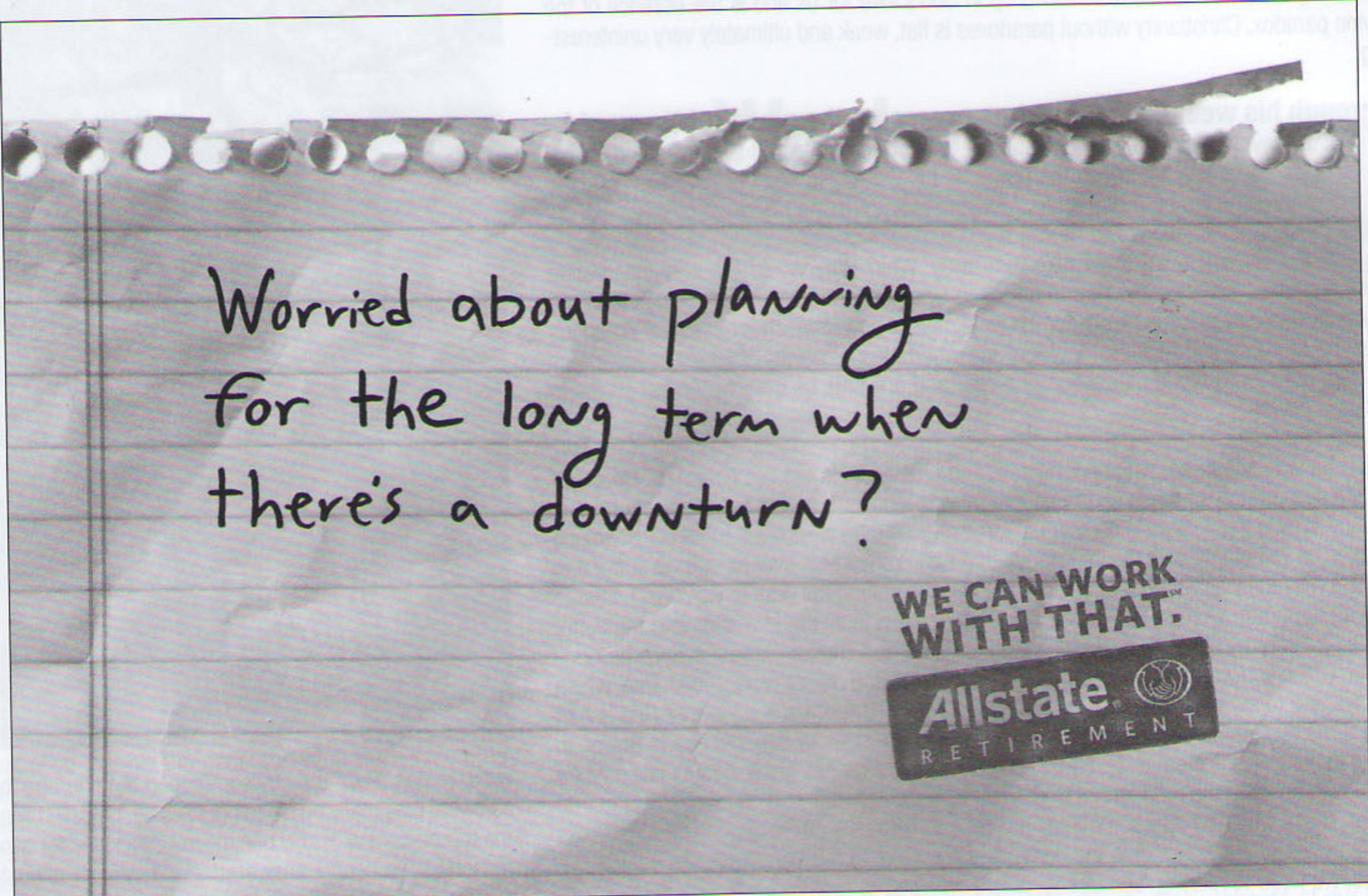
The message of the Cross is the power of God for those who believe. This power can be experienced in the midst of human weakness. It is a power wrapped up and experienced in love. God's answer to our prayers is not necessarily to remove difficulties or weakness, but instead, for us to experience His power and love in the midst of such things (2Cor.12:9). It is one of the most comforting, reassuring, and steadying experiences we can have in life: God's transcendent power and intimate love in the midst of our fragile weakness. God's grace is enough for us! His power comes to perfection in weakness. This is why Paul gladly embraced his weakness, and proclaimed, 'when I am weak, then I am strong'. Human power and control have to be knocked out of the way altogether in order for the power of God to shine through as He desires and intends. This is the beauty and power of this life in Christ. A young boy once decided to study judo, despite the fact that he had lost his left arm in a devastating car accident. The boy began lessons with an old Japanese judo master near his home. The boy was learning well, so he couldn't understand why, after three months of training the master had taught him only one move. "Sensei," (Teacher in Japanese) the boy finally said, "Shouldn't I be learning more moves?" "This is the only move you know, but this is the only move you'll ever need to know," the sensei replied. Not quite understanding, but believing in his teacher, the boy kept training. Several months later, the sensei took the boy to his first tournament. Surprising himself, the boy easily won his first two matches. The third match proved to be more difficult, but after some time, his opponent became impatient and charged; the boy deftly used his one move to win the match. Still amazed by his success, the boy was now in the finals competition. This time, his opponent was bigger, stronger, and more experienced. For a while, the boy appeared to be over matched and seemed to be not doing so well. Concerned that the boy might get hurt, the referee called a time-out. He was about to stop the match when the sensei intervened. "No," the sensei insisted, "Let him continue." Soon after the match resumed, his opponent made a critical mistake: he dropped his guard. Instantly, the boy used his move to pin him. The boy had won the match and the tournament. He was the champion. On the way home, the boy and sensei reviewed every move in each and



every match. Then the boy summoned the courage to ask what was really on his mind. "Sensei, how did I win the tournament with only one move?" "You won for two reasons," the sensei answered. "First, you've almost mastered one of the most difficult throws in all of judo. And second, the only known defense for that move is for your opponent to grab your left arm." The boy's biggest weakness had become his biggest strength. Here his weakness became strength. This is how God uses our weaknesses to accomplish great feats in history. The Greek poet Homer who wrote 'The Iliad' and 'The Odyssey', two of the greatest classics of world literature, was blind! Beethoven composed his 5th symphony when he was almost deaf! Albert Einstein, the great scientist of the twentieth century had learning disability in his childhood. He could not talk until he was three and could not read until he was eight. Cross can lead us to a glorious victory. Never question the strength and power of God to work through our challenges and frailties. God is strong enough to lead his people to victory following the cross. During this Lenten season, we need to look at the cross as power of weakness. He breaks us to depend on the cross. Let us consider the cross as a symbol of the power of weakness.

#### Bibliography

1. Case-Winters, Anna. *God's Power: traditional understanding and contemporary challenges*, West Minister/John Knox Press, 1990.
2. Savage, Timothy. *Power Through Weakness*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.
3. Mealleringham, Deane. *The Weakness of God & The Power of Man*. New Creation Publication Inc, Adelaide, South Australia.



Worried about planning  
for the long term when  
there's a downturn?


WE CAN WORK  
WITH THAT.  
**Allstate**  
RETIREMENT



You're not alone.  
We can take a look at your current situation and help you find a strategy to get you back on track. Call me today to schedule a complimentary retirement review.

Anil Mathew  
972-203-9800

4321 N Beltline Rd  
Mesquite, TX 75150  
Email: [AnilMathew@Allstate.com](mailto:AnilMathew@Allstate.com)

 **Allstate**  
You're in good hands.  
Auto Home Life Retirement

# Remembering the Covenant for a Reforming Church

(Continued from Jan 2012 issue)



Rev. Dr. M. C. Thomas, Kottayam

## Introduction

The theme for this year's Family conference, "Remembering the Covenant for a Reforming Church," was biblically grounded which was taken from Joshua 24:25. The text generally deals with the reporting of the covenant making at Shechem under Joshua's leadership. In the first part of my article I was attempting to introduce our theme by focusing more likely on the essential *raison d'être* of the theme. Remembering the covenant is importantly indispensable for the faith community who's self and actions are deeply grounded in the covenant relation between God and the community of faith. Remembering the covenant is not a one-time action for a believing community. We need to reckon it as a temporal because the act of remembering the covenant must be continued in the life and witness of the faith community for its re-formation and the corresponding reconstitution of the self. Israel, over their historical journey, had been seriously taken this act of renewing their covenant with Yahweh which subsequently helped them to revisit their identity as the people of God as well as to reformulate their social witness and covenantal living relevantly in their social space.

## Remembering Contains Keeping the Continuity

In this second part of the article, I will concentrate more on the given text (Joshua 24) and the covenant making at Shechem. Joshua 24 must be studied along with Ch. 23 because both chapters are closely connected and both revisit their past. In Ch. 23 Joshua is in his old age and Ch. 24 locates the ceremony at Shechem, the ancient sanctuary. The social location of the covenant renewal ceremony seems to be historically important. The reason is that the selection of Shechem for the covenant renewal ceremony was not accidental but intentional. Because Shechem was a place of great historical significance and it had very rich covenantal traditions. It has deep historical roots connecting their present history back to the tradition of the ancestors, particularly Abraham through whom Israel received a distinctive identity and a definite blueprint for their future mission and responsibilities. Therefore, the covenant making at Shechem, for them, was not something unusual but it could be taken as an act which locates them in their history as well as position them in continuity with great traditions that decisively constituted their self as the people of God in the history. Moreover, importantly, the site of Shechem consequently received such a significant place in their spiritual life because at Shechem they had re-affirmed their allegiance to Yahweh, the God of their fathers and the God of exodus. For that matter itself, the sacred place Shechem continued to be very important for them because they continued the practice of remembering their covenant with Yahweh at this place. Or, in other words, the ceremony of covenant making at Shechem was not a dormant or worthless event occurred once for all in their history, rather that practice remained unchanged and alive in their history which kept on revisiting and reconstituting their identity over the generations.

## Remembering through Re-telling

Remembering, in the Hebrew understanding seems to be a distinctive act which essentially means honoring a covenant (e.g., Eze. 23:27). It appears to be like a subversive action challenging their usual practice of 'forgetting' God and His providence. Moreover, Israel has constantly been invoked to keep live their memory which involved more than a cognitive exercise. Rather, remembering appears as intimately personal and relational which makes their covenantal relationship more refreshing and life-giving. Moreover, remembering comes only from a grateful, obedient and devoted life who takes seriously the consequences of the impact of one's action in God's heart and upon others.

Moreover, at this solemn ceremony of covenant making, Joshua revisited their past history which was colored by God's gift of the land and its allotment to the Israelite Tribes



(Josh. 23) which was further supported by God's victories over the enemies for the sake of Israel (Josh 24). In revisiting their past through the narrations of past events particularly God's covenanting with them at Mount Sinai, Joshua was helping them to re-member their past history and events. Moreover, remembering the covenant through the re-telling of their history has an important function which demands their unconditional allegiance and commitment to Yahweh, the God of their fathers. Therefore, at Shechem, Joshua was asking the exclusive allegiance of the people of Israel to Yahweh over against any such kind of allegiance to the other gods of the nations. It was strongly intended that the constitution of their self must be on the ground of their allegiance to Yahweh who had been guiding them through their historical journey.

## Remembering through the Texted-ness

As it is given in these two chapters, their allegiance to Yahweh has multiple expressions. In Josh. 23, it is written that the commitment of Israel should be manifested in their obedience to the Law of Yahweh or the Word of God. Or, in other words, the loyalty must be expressed in the *texted-ness* of the community. The Word of God is the ground on which their self and responsibility are located. Importantly, remembering the covenant is inevitably linked with the nature of the textual aspects of the believing community whose fundamental texture was marked by their reading and re-reading of the Word of God. In this regard, remembering the covenant invite the community of faith to re-visit and re-affirm their word-dependency and textual orientation. As we know, in all reformative attempts in the history of the people of God, the re-formation of the community of faith was fundamentally rooted in the *texted* orientation of the believing community. The reading and re-reading of the Word of God

is indispensable for remembering the covenant relationship of the community of faith.

### **Remembering Requires Meaningful Practices**

Whereas Josh. 24 describes yet another expression of the allegiance to Yahweh which must be manifested in faithfully "serving" Yahweh. "Serving" Yahweh has the meaning of worshipping Him but it need not necessarily be confined within the worshipping practice alone. Rather, "serving" has the larger meaning of one's selfless service and action. It proclaims their relationship with Yahweh which was based on what Yahweh has done in the past for them. Therefore, the redemptive activities of Yahweh as revealed in their historical process are the ground on which they gathered for worship before Yahweh. Joshua thus demands attitudes and actions from them which are beyond the normal, expected attitudes and actions of others. He demands the same type of response to God that God has already shown to men, that of total loyalty and dedication. Just as God has been deeply attentive and devoted to His people in their living, they must also express their devotion and loyalty to God in their life as well as in their devotion to other people.

Accordingly, Joshua demands from the people to revisit their relation with Yahweh. Because, they will always have to face other claims of lordships from outside and Joshua warned them that they have to deny and denigrate such claims of lordship and sovereignty. If they have not entered into a proper relation with Yahweh, then Joshua asked them to enter into such a covenantal relationship with Him. Moreover, the intimate covenantal relation with God must be manifested in their practices because the deeper and proper relation with God includes an attitude of reverence and devotion in response to what God had done wonderfully in their history for them. Furthermore, as noted above, it must be expressed in engaging themselves in meaningful and alternative social practices both in the micro and macro levels. Such practices must be the manifestations of fulfilling their covenantal obligations in their self-less service for the vulnerable ones in their midst. In other words, the covenanting with God calls for re-locating and re-forming their practices that cultivate and support meaningful covenanting with others, especially with the marginal ones in the society.

### **Remembering Requires Right Choice**

Moreover, at Shechem, Joshua placed before them a big challenge asking them to decide the options in their life. As a result, the people of Israel are forced to make a choice. Maybe their neighbors might not have confronted such claims of choice. But, as a community who had been called and redeemed by God and also as a community who had been entered into a special and covenantal relation with Him, they were more obliged to fulfill added responsibilities in their life. It means that seemingly more privileges demand more responsibilities toward others. What the challenge presented before them was the nature of their choice which must be the standard of their spirituality. Or in other words, it must be the choice that would determine their identity, their beliefs and practices as well as their commitments, devotions and their preferences. Joshua had already taken a decision that he and his family would definitely serve Yahweh. He doesn't make a demand and claim which he cannot practice or which he has not been practicing.

### **Remembering Demands Discipleship**

Here, comes the last point concerning the genuineness and veracity of Joshua as a leader for the people and also as an obedient servant of the Lord. He extended a challenge before the people asking their options and preferences. He asked the people to decide whom they will serve in the future. But very affirmatively he proclaims that he and his family will definitely serve the Lord. It indicates his genuineness because he set himself an example before the people. Therefore, his challenge was not to accept and acknowledge his leadership and recognition rather it was an invitation to re-visit their devotions and commitments. In this regard, it was a call for genuine discipleship in their journey of faith, which was definitely an address inviting them to listen, obey and trust in the Lord God who is the holy and jealous God who demands unlimited and unconditional devotion from His people.

### **Concluding Reflections**

Remembering the covenant for a re-forming church is an inevitable and continuing process to realize fully our identity as the people of God redeemed through Jesus Christ.

Fundamentally the action of remembering is to revisit our identity as who we are and also it demands to keep alive our self-reflexivity. The church being the body of Jesus Christ needs invariable and incessant re-formation to make its life and witness more meaningful in the world. To be a re-forming church means to keep on remembering its roots and routes which was essentially grounded in its covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ. In this regard, reforming requires remembering which demands the church to be self-reflexive in its witness and actions.

Moreover, the remembering is an active and dynamic process which challenges the textures of the church, the covenant community. It is deepened and sharpened by enriching the texturedness of the Church as a community grounded in the Word of God, actively involved in reading and re-reading the Scripture to make its witness more effective and biblical in the world. Moreover, remembering as an action emerges out of our intimacy with the Lord further invites from us meaningful practices. Such practices must be manifested in and through meaningful covenanting not only with the Lord but also with the vulnerable who are not able to repay with rewards. Such practices must be the differentiating marks of the re-forming church that creates liturgical space for meaningful sacramental actions. These sacramental actions are formative acts which constitute our identity. Importantly, each and every sacramental action of the reforming church proclaims its covenantal character as a living embodied organism embracing disembodiments through its cross-bearing and sacrificial actions. Furthermore, remembering the covenant requires from us to revisit our commitments and loyalties particularly in the context of emerging claims of pseudo lordships asking our devotion and loyalties.

## **MAR THOMA MERIT AWARD 2012**

The Diocese of North America & Europe is inviting nominations for the 2012 Mar Thoma Merit Awards. Students who graduate as high school class valedictorians or have exceptional qualifications (see appropriate forms for criteria from your Vicar); who are members of Mar Thoma parishes or congregations; who attend worship services and participate in parish activities are eligible for this award. The awards will be presented during the 30th Mar Thoma Family Conference to be held in Virginia, USA from July 5- 8, 2012. The completed form along with attachments should be mailed, e-mailed or faxed to Mrs. Checha John (convenor), 25 Gladwin Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10309 (718) 227-6684 or email: [cj0405@aol.com](mailto:cj0405@aol.com) on or before June 17th, 2012.

If you have any questions please contact  
**Rev. K. E. Geevarghese** (Diocesan Secretary)  
(516) 377-3311 email: [marthomadiocese@gmail.com](mailto:marthomadiocese@gmail.com)

# The Story of a Journeying People



Dr. Zac Varghese, London, UK



**F**uture historians of the Mar Thoma Church will undoubtedly look back on the last half of the twentieth century and the first decade of the 21st century as a great period in the transformation of the Mar Thoma Church into a global Church. Our Metropolitan, Joseph Mar Thoma, in his September letter in the Tharaka has described how our people reached Malaysia 100 years ago and how they established a worshipping community there 75 years ago. They were the pioneers who left their mark in evolving a Church from the Malabar Coast to a world-wide Church; it was indeed the beginning of an amazing story of a journeying people. Bringing people to God and bringing people to brotherhood with one another through witnessing is our mission. This knowledge of dispersion and scattering to various parts of the world may indeed be a purpose driven journey; this may help us answer the question, why we are placed in various corners of this world.

Within a span of just over 100 years, the mission field of the Church has extended beyond the traditional boundaries of India to Malaysia, Singapore, Europe, Middle East, North America, Australia, Africa, New Zealand and Mexico. In this process, the Mar Thoma Diaspora communities in all the above regions contributed much to the elevation of the Mar Thoma Church into a world-wide Communion. This is entirely to thank God for the amazing opportunities that He has provided to our Diaspora community and the blessing this community in turn has brought to our Church through witnessing in the global scene. We must remain grateful to God for giving us various opportunities to transcend our ethnic 'Pampa Valley culture' and self-centered concerns to formulate a global vision for our Church; it is indeed important to retain the story telling traditions of our people through the medium of the 'Messenger' and retain our history in the collective memory of our world-wide Church. Although we have grown individually and can be very proud of our individual achievements, we do not have any real collective feeling for Mar Thoma Diaspora communities in various regions of the world for authentic witness. Arundathi Roy in 'God of Small Things' wrote: "Though they couldn't see the river from the house any more, like a seashell always has a sea-sense, the Ayemenm house still had a river sense, a rushing, rolling, fish-swimming sense." I wonder whether Mar Thoma Diaspora Christians have been able to maintain their 'Mar Thoma-sense', if not stories relating to our migration and settlement would help them to maintain that important 'Mar Thoma-sense' which they may be able to hand over to subsequent generations.

The Mar Thoma Church really has no public face; no corporate identity as national Churches outside India except in the council chambers of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and other Asian ecumenical bodies. This became very clear to me during our conversations with the 'Churches Together in England' whilst becoming a member of the national council of Churches in the United Kingdom. While doing this work and negotiating with government agencies about obtaining visas for our clergy I realized the need to operate faithfully within the constitution of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar and also the difficulties of satisfying the strict demands for complying with national immigration laws. The present constitution was written many years ago before the Mar Thoma Church became a world-wide communion operating under the laws and regulations of other nation states. This creates tension at many levels and hence there is an urgent need to look into this to accommodate national sensitivities. Church in India should only have authority over faith and order and ecclesiastical issues; on temporal matters, people living in Europe and other countries should be subjected to the laws of these countries; it is incumbent upon

them to do so as citizens of these countries. The claim of supremacy of the constitution of the Mar Thoma Church over the temporal issues of Diaspora parishes needs urgent attention at the level of Mandalam, Sabha Council and the Episcopal Synod. Our Metropolitan should be congratulated in appreciating this need and appointing a commission for revising the constitution.

By the grace of God the global witness of the Diaspora community is based on their faithfulness and loyalty to the mother Church, fidelity to the gospels and an ecumenical vision. The emphasis of the Church is to render the Biblical teaching relevant to the needs and conditions of man in a given time and place. This is indeed the basis of the witness of the Diaspora Mar Thoma Christians. They believe that they have been sent for a God-directed purpose. This feeling of 'being sent' is very important to establish a spiritual dimension to their lives in places where they live. Therefore, their election as a Diaspora community is clear and unequivocal, which is to proclaim the Gospel by their lived out experiences in communities where they live, and to pass on their rich traditions and heritage to future generations. The basic thought guiding them in various Diaspora regions is that they are not just economic migrants in these countries; they are sent there for a Divine purpose and they are an integral part of every aspect of witnessing including koinonia (fellowship), kerygma (preaching) and diakonia (service). They are not observers or bystanders; they are partners in a mission with a Christian lifestyle for serving their adopted countries and communities with Bible-centered work ethics.

We proudly cherish that almost all Diaspora congregations and parishes evolved out of the commitments and loyalties of the lay people to the mother Church; it also should be remembered that clergy from the mother church only came to the scene at a later stage of their lives in these countries. Wherever the Mar Thoma Christians emigrated to, they carried with them their great heritage- the tradition of Christian life and worship. In their countries of adoption, they organized themselves as prayer groups and congregations and then sought pastoral help from their mother Church in Kerala to create parishes and dioceses. It always has been a lay-centered initiative. The great thing about the Jewish community is that they never forget their

common beginning. We should never be afraid of telling our children about our small beginnings, beginnings filled with our struggles, struggles that we all had to face in our earlier years in our adopted towns and cities of various countries. These are our personal stories and these are our stories as a community. These are our Psalms, our songs, our folklore; we wrote it with our lives. Why should we be afraid of telling them? Recalling these stories is a way of thanking God for keeping us together as a community with His amazing blessings. These stories will become vibrant and meaningful when we find time and space to place Jesus-the Christ at the centre of our own stories; we should never ever forget His hidden hands which carried us and supporting us now. The moment we forget our common beginning we forget our roots and our identity, then we long for guided tours in search of our roots and identity.

In the story of the prodigal son, the elder brother is the personification of corridors of power, corridors of jealousy, corridors of narrow-minded attitudes and corridors of anger and rage. On the other hand the father in this great story represents expanses of an abundant and amazing grace. What it boils down to is simply this: the venerable father over compensates the prodigal nature of his son's mistakes with his prodigious and aggressive forgiveness. This expression of undeserved kindness towards the younger son is the "outward sign of an inward grace." Whoever or wherever we are, our spiritual journey can only start at the foot of the Cross and this is the mother of all our common beginnings. Therefore, the remembrance of our common beginnings would help us to become 'outward signs of an inward grace' and this will certainly help us to transform the societies in which we live. This is indeed the global witnessing of the Mar Thoma Diaspora and the basis for celebrating 'Diaspora Sunday' on the fourth Sunday in every November in the Diocese of North America and Europe. This idea is also honored by dedicating regularly the October issue of 'the Mar Thoma Messenger' as a 'Diaspora Issue.' The dormant idea here is to elevate 'Messenger' into an international publication to support and nurture our Diaspora communities. Rarely any previous generation of Marthomites since reformation time has seen such extensive involvement of laity in the mission and the ministry of the Church. Throughout the development and growth of Mar Thoma Diaspora we have witnessed the spontaneous development of lay-ministry and pastoral care by exceptional individuals and small groups. The contribution of late Very Rev. T. N. Koshy in building the Malaysia/Singapore Diaspora community was exceptional in this context. I salute all those who contributed to the development of our communities over the last hundred or more years. In general, these developments have been achieved with mutual respect among laity, bishops and clergy.

There is an urgent need to sustain and nurture this mutual dependency and respect between laity and clergy. Laity has much to contribute since their experience within the family, professional, secular and religious life is the very attitudes and convictions necessary for the growth and witness of the Global Church. However, there is a degree of neglect in providing pastoral care to Diaspora communities; existing models are not totally adequate. Therefore, we need to develop voluntary 'Pastoral Care Teams (PCTs)' in each and every parish to provide a partnership in mission with clergy. Lay people need to wake up and assume their God-given responsibility in building our communities by caring for the spiritual needs of the present and future generations. Many mainline churches including the Roman Catholics are beginning to realize that the Church in the 21st century would be a lay-centered Church. Therefore, a change in strategy is needed for moving away from the assumption that faith-related matters to be left entirely to professionals, clergy or professional missionaries. It is time to turn away from that view to the realization that in the communities that we now live in, we are missionaries of Christ. Part of our Christian responsibility is to 'bear witness' and to 'walk our faith' in the world or to become the fifth gospel in the process for the world to read. There are many different ways of doing this depending on our gifts and temperament, the people we are with, the circumstance of the occasion and so on. The Diaspora mission is a great missionary enterprise of the Mar Thoma Church because they are a significant and identifiable 'Mar Thoma global family' in the emerging global village.

The commonly available model of pastoral ministry from local and immigrant Churches is more concerned with caring for the sheep that are safe inside the fold than with searching for the lost. The end result of this is the development of ghetto parishes for

looking after the interest of the same ethnic groups. Each of the four gospel ends with Christ's command to spread the Good News to the ends of the world. Mission is at the very heart of our identity as Diaspora Mar Thoma Christians. There is a sharing of Christian faith through the contact of everyday life - in the family, among neighbors and among people we work with. Laity is our greatest strength, but many of them need to be helped to gain greater confidence about sharing their faith and providing pastoral care.

Pope Benedict XVI during his recent visit to London expressed his deep concern about aggressive secularism, and Christians being pushed out of the 'Public Square.' He used his keynote address to protest at "the increasing marginalization of religion in public life." Holy Father was not thinking about secularism in the context of religious tolerance and wider ecumenism as it was conceived by the founding fathers of the Indian constitution. Therefore, this begs the following questions: is this the result of Christians becoming spiritually leaner? Is this because we are no longer depending on God's grace to live out the Gospel where God has placed us? Today the public square is dominated by the media moguls and there is less and less time given for religious discussions. In the Western culture, Christianity has become increasingly privatized and transformed from a social cultural force into various privatized rituals for Sunday worship and new expressions of faith. As a result its effectiveness as a socio-political voice has been silenced in the public square. Christians are forced out of the public square by ideological secularism, principled secularism, post-modern secularism, and multiple discourses. We need to understand this challenge and tackle this for reoccupying our rightful place in the public space for proclaiming kingdom values. I am not arguing for TV evangelism or more screening of Holy Communion; these exuberances are destroying our credibility. We need more reasoned articulation and apologetics to stand up to the propagators of atheism and post-modernity. We should be involved in transforming secularism into sacredness by establishing the kingdom values.

We must reach into the past and tap its energy for the present and the future; this is one of the strengths of the Mar Thoma Church. Science, technology, and other forces have produced a global matrix of culture and a global consciousness, a consciousness that is open to traditions other than our own and to traditions of the whole of humanity. In this evolution, there are no giants who have faced this situation before and on whose shoulders we can stand or skirts under which we can hide. However, we can still learn from the past and those giants of our Church who emerged at various times to solve various problems confronting our Church and our community. For the first time in history each person can become heir to the spiritual heritage of mankind, can evoke a sense of belonging to the whole human race and can cultivate an emphatic consciousness towards other traditions. Diaspora communities are an ideal launching pad for such a realization as we experienced during three FOCUS semi-

nars at Santhigiri from 1999 to 2003. I often sensed the spiritual wisdom of the past becoming alive in the present through our real stories of our Diaspora existence. It is important to retell our heart-rending stories to give us strength to face problems that we are confronting today. This story telling tradition is at the heart of Judeo-Christian culture and we should never ever forget this and its importance for nurturing younger generations. As a Diaspora Mar Thoma Christian, I also have a "moon-view" of the Mar Thoma Church and a 'Mar Thoma-sense' which helped me to write about the emerging global matrix of culture, global consciousness and witnessing. Our foremost need is to value our own traditions, without setting up artificial barriers against those whose background and experiences are different. We also need to find a frame work to find delight in the faith of others, wider-ecumenism, without feeling threatened by it. Integration without losing our identity, 'Mar Thoma-sense', is a theme that we should take forward to the next fifty years of our life and mission in this world. Religious intolerance and persecution is widespread today, causing serious violation of human rights, often leading to conflicts, terrorism, and massive global human suffering. We must particularly be concerned about Coptic and Arab Christians and pray for their survival. Our faith and traditions can and must be a positive force for justice, harmony, peace and reconciliation in areas where we live and work. Jesus Christ has bound us to one another by a cord of love, his life, death and resurrection, so that what concerns one concerns all; we are all in it together. Sri Aurobindo's thoughts in this context are particularly relevant, for he wrote: "Nothing can be saved unless everything is saved. There can be no paradise so long as a single man is in hell." "We cannot transform anything unless we transform everything. Otherwise we remain alone in our little hole of light. What good is one man's transformation, if rest of the humanity goes on dying and dying?"

"Heaven in its rapture dreams of perfect earth,  
Earth in its sorrow dreams of perfect heaven....  
They are kept from their oneness by enchanted fears."

This fear can only be removed by proclaiming the heartwarming assurance of 'fear not' from our Lord and our God. Finally, our best Christian witness lies in our love for Christ and in the quality of our Christian lifestyle.

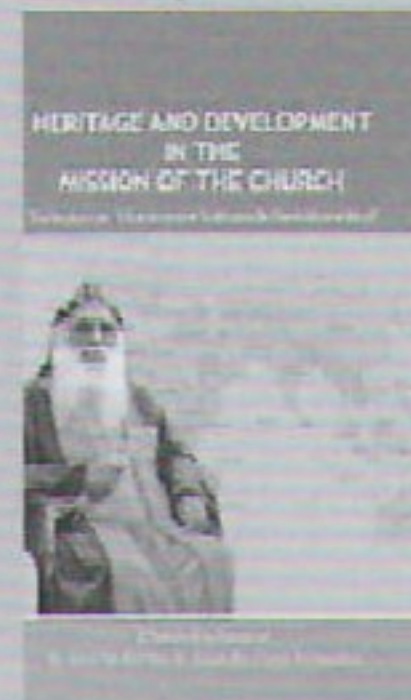
The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, our Metropolitan and others emphasized various aspects of mission in their Golden Jubilee messages to the Mar Thoma community in London on 14th April 2007. Each of us must give thanks for the goodness we have experienced from God and seek to share that goodness with others. This is our mission, should we decide to accept, it is not an impossible mission, for everything is possible for God.

What should we do now? Should we stand and stare, admire all the things we have done, mourn about the lost opportunities or go forward for more and more spiritually-oriented Diasporic experiences. "By the rivers of the Babylon we sat down; there we wept when we remembered Zion." When those Israelites sat down they also hung their harps and they could not sing. We started this journey together and we are bound to find obstacles or comfortable wayside inns or other issues which may distract us from our pilgrimage. It is up to all of us to stay together, pray together and keep the dynamic nature of our fellowship to reach out and find the true potentials of our spiritual journey. We should not forget that it was in the course of a journey from Egypt to Canaan that a Jewish nation was born; it was in the dispersion of the members of our Church that the Mar Thoma Church has become a global Church. Noble laureate, John R. Mott, used to say, "Take your stumbling blocks, and turn them to stepping stones." Let us hope that the Mar Thoma Diaspora communities will help the people in different parts of the world to a better life in Christ. Let us remain grateful to all our past and present members, our lay leaders, our clergy and our bishops for their help and continued support for the spiritual needs of the members of the Mar Thoma Diaspora. Psalmist helps us here to raise a question for us: "How can I repay the Lord for all His gifts to me?" (Psalms 116:12). Therefore, let us offer thanks to Almighty God for the global witness of the Marthomites and for His abundant blessings on the Mar Thoma communities throughout the world. I offer my thanks and praise to our Lord and our God for our Church, our Diaspora communities, and our ecumenical partners everywhere.

## Book Review

# HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Author: Dr. Alexander, P.J. (Ed.)



'Festschrift' is a German word, which means "celebration writing" or "celebration publication". It is a collection of essays or learned papers contributed by a number of people in recognition of the meritorious service of a person on the occasion of attaining a certain age or the pinnacle of his career. 'Heritage and Development in the Mission of the Church' is a Festschrift

published in honor of His Grace The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan on the completion of his eightieth birthday. His Grace is the twenty-first Mar Thoma Metropolitan of the Apostolic See of St. Thomas and the fifth Metropolitan from the renowned Palakunnathu family. Eminent scholars, Bishops and Clergymen have contributed articles on the theme of the work mentioned above. The work is a collection of seventy papers out of which eleven are in Malayalam. The papers are classified into two divisions. There is a pictorial section portraying certain memorable events in the life of the Metropolitan during the ten years from 2000.

The first part of the volume comprises of fifteen papers giving an account of the life of the Metropolitan. The contributors are his longtime associates or friends who worked with him closely. They recall their intimate association and fellowship with the Metropolitan and his influence on their lives. The contributors admire the Metropolitan's profound knowledge of the Scripture, Church history, national and world affairs, which distinguish him to be an outstanding leader of the Church and the Christian world. Many authors have made a successful attempt at understanding the theme of the Festschrift in the right perspective. Some contributors made an in-depth study of the identity and global witness of the Mar Thoma Diaspora. An interesting interview with His Grace at the end of the volume reveals the Metropolitan's faith, vision and in depth knowledge of the Church history. The Festschrift is a well-edited work, which deserves serious reading with mental concentration. This volume is a new and welcome addition to a plethora of books on the Church history of Kerala.

Prof. Dr. M. O. Koshy (former Pro-Vice Chancellor)

# CMS based Websites for Mar Thoma Churches!

## Portal Features

- Link to member and church accounting database
- Shows member Info, accounts and dues
- Photo gallery and video gallery (with password protection)
- Member search directory
- Display with photo and other details
- Controllable privacy settings
- Monthly newsletter (online flip-read & pdf download tool)
- Seperate email & access for organizations
- Online donation tools
- Quick reply / prayer request forms

## PrintCall's Business Package!

Graphic Designing | Web Designing | Printing | Online Marketing | Direct Mailing

For more details Contact

**Thomas Mathew Tharakan**, Art Director

(Member, San Francisco Mar Thoma Church)

**209.408.6838**

[tom@printcall.com](mailto:tom@printcall.com)

**Manoj Jacob**, Business Co-ordinator

**209.624.3641**

[manoj@printcall.com](mailto:manoj@printcall.com)



# Random Reflections on the Broken Body of Christ

Rev. Oommen V. Varkey, Epiphany Mar Thoma Church, New York



**W**hen I write this reflection on the imagery of the broken body of Christ I have one vivid memory in my mind of something that happened years ago. When I was studying in the Seminary, Dr. Kosuke Koyama, a famous Asian theologian came to our Seminary one evening and spoke to us. He spoke to us on the imagery of the broken body of Christ based on first Corinthians Chapter 11. During the time of his talk he dramatically took bread in his hand and broke it into two pieces. He held the two pieces in his hands. Then he asked us, can you say what happened when I broke this bread? After a great moment of silence, he said in a soft voice 'when I broke the bread into two pieces a new space is created between the two pieces of bread'. Then he read the portion: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is (broken) for you..." (1 Cor. 11:23, 24). On the last night with his disciples, Jesus broke the bread and he created a space between one piece of bread and another. What does this imagery remind us? Through his crucifixion Jesus created a new space. This new space is created at the cost of the life of Christ on the cross. This is not an ordinary space like our living room, our kitchen or our market. This special space is charged with and is the manifestation of the suffering love of Christ. This is the space in which Church is built. This sacred space is created through the broken body of Christ. This broken Christ – the torn and mutilated Christ – is the one who heals the broken world. The New Testament does not speak about a beautiful, unbroken, un-mutilated Christ. In our contemporary context, we are always tempted to speak more positively about the unbroken Christ – a powerful conquering Christ. Christian theology, under the influence of the Greek philosophical mind and Latin administrative mind, has become largely a theology of the unbroken Christ. The theological meaning of the brokenness in the depth of the work and person of Jesus Christ has been ignored. Both philosophical and administrative minds are attracted to the concept of 'Perfection' and they dislike 'brokenness'. A strong western civilization and 'weak' Christ cannot be reconciled harmoniously. A strong nation can think about a strong Christ only. In fact Christ's 'foolish' death on the cross is more life giving than all the 'wise' human devices for giving meaning to life!

Whenever I celebrate the Holy Qurbana this memory of the broken Christ comes to my mind. If we carefully read the words of institution of Holy Qurbana, we realize this dimension more vividly. "He took the bread in his holy hands (Mt.26:26). This dramatic scene occurred a few hours before the arrest of Jesus. Jesus knew that his physical body was going to be tortured and crucified. That meal was a symbolic pre-figuration of Christ's crucifixion. What did Jesus do at the meal? He took the bread in his hand, and then he didn't say this is my body. First he broke the bread and only then did he pronounce this is my body. What does it mean? Only broken bread represents the body of Christ. After this action he instructed his disciples do this in remembrance of me. What Jesus is actually asking us to do is continue this breaking process in the ministry of the Church. The moment of breaking the bread became the most sacred moment for the Christian church. In the Last supper holiness and brokenness are brought together and made into one. This unity of holiness and brokenness is called sacramental. Jesus became the Lord by being crucified. In fact his whole life was sacramental. In Him the holiness of God is expressed through the brokenness of Jesus Christ. Only broken Christ can save the world, not the powerful Christ. He is broken to embrace sinners and outcasts. As he is broken he allows his identity to be bound up with the identity of vulnerable and the least. Christ's 'weak' activity at the periphery is more creative than 'strong' activity at the human centre.

Here we have to ask one question. How can broken Christ heal the broken world? Really the word broken is a negative word. It is commonly used in such a way as broken



family, broken human relationship, broken heart, etc. But when we speak about the broken Christ we are speaking about creation, construction, integration, reconciliation and healing. Only the suffering love of Christ can heal our wounds. The glory of God is revealed when the broken Christ embraces the broken world. This is the characteristic and mystery of Christian faith. It involves radical self-denial. Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said "God is with us and help us not by the virtue of his omnipotence but by the virtue of his weakness and suffering. Only suffering God can help us". Centuries back Prophet Isaiah realized this fact "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). According to Johannine tradition Christ appeared before disciples who were behind closed doors. Jesus appeared before them, showed his broken body and said "as the father has sent me, I am sending you." The words as the father has sent me are very important. Jesus says, in fulfilling my father's will in this world I received these wounds in my body. I am also sending you the same

way. I have nothing more to offer to you than these mark of wounds, but do not be afraid (John 20: 19-29). Jesus demands three things from the disciples: 1. You should open the closed doors. There is no mission behind closed doors. 2. You should go into the world which you fear now. This is the world that I have won. So do not be afraid. 3. Continue the mission which my father entrusted me. Christian spirituality and mission are deeply rooted in the imagery of the broken body of Christ. Our basic affirmation is that Christ was broken to heal, to integrate the broken world. The poor, Tribals, Dalits and many women have been constituted by their history of oppression. These bodies have been the locus of oppression. The mission of the Church should effect a change in the body as the locus of oppression to a reality which can manifest divine life. At the same time this also challenges the life style of the affluent communities. These communities have over-emphasized their bodily existence through the comforts and luxuries that affluence can provide. Economic obesity has become dangerous to spiritual health. Indeed such emphasis has distorted their bodily existence, since they have promoted only consumer meaning and value for themselves and others. It is equally the responsibility of the Church to enable all bodies' existence to actualize its full potential of manifesting divine presence and purpose. The Church is the theological space where untouchable bodies are transformed into divine agents.

Confrontation and embrace are the two images that are very important when we think of the relationship between broken Christ and a broken world. One of the aims of confrontation is to expose the truth. In order to reveal the falsehood of false prophets, one way or other, the true prophets must confront them. Truth may make itself clear by confrontation. The story of Elijah gives a classic image of confrontation. On Mount Carmel, Elijah confronts the prophets Baal (1 King 18: 16-46). The Lord responds to the request of Elijah. Elijah kills them. The truth has been established and false prophets have been eliminated. Confrontation did work. However, we all know that it was overkill. And it raises the question of whether we should adopt such a way of killing. After Elijah destroyed the prophets of the Baal, Jezebel confronts Elijah and vows to kill him. Elijah was afraid and rose and ran for his life. God comes to Elijah in a soft murmuring sound – a voice which is not confrontational but carefully pastoral. Prophet Elijah became confrontational in his action. Confrontation is linear. The image of the broken Christ is not linear. It is more circular or embracing. Christ has revealed to us a new embracing pattern through his brokenness. It is the Christ's broken body that comes to mind again and again to seek the healing of the broken relationship. The confrontational or linear approach never comes back and that which cannot come back cannot really suffer. We have to remember how often progressive western linear mentality has been responsible for overkills in the history of humankind. Jesus Christ's words and actions are far more educational than confrontational. If he confronts, he confronts through inner persuasion. He speaks to us from within. This confrontation is to be understood in the light of the theology of the Cross. Famous Asian theologian, C. S. Song points out that "confrontation through inner persuasion is the spirit of community building. Militarism is run by the spirit of efficiency. It confronts the opponents with naked force. Community building cannot be achieved by such efficient confrontation. So it must be guided by patient spirituality which is ready to accept inefficiency as it deals with human beings not as a target. The concept of inner suffering is inseparable". Moltmann in his book *Crucified God* defines the love of God revealed through Jesus Christ as embracing us who are 'not worthy to be embraced'.

In the light of the above discussion on the imagery of broken Christ we can articulate four important challenges for our Christian life as we live in this world.

a) We as the followers of the broken Christ – who took the risk for the salvation of humanity – are called for creation and not for destruction; for giving life and not for the death; for solidarity not for condemnation. Christ has done justice, and loved kindness and walked humbly with God and became a broken Christ. Justice is not a sociological but Christological concept. The justice of Christ embraces unjust humanity on the Cross, and doing so creates a new possibility for justice in the world.

b) The broken body of Christ tells us that we do not have the last word on the world and our destiny. What we say and do is subject to the word of the Cross. If we have the last word, then we are followers of the theology of glory. Today mighty global markets claim the possession of the last word and destiny of the people. On the issue

of economic justice the Christian faith is but should not be neutral. It does not and should not conform to the economy's claim to be omnipotent, because its allegiance is to the broken Christ as the only Lord of the world. It does not leave economic trade to follow its own laws because it is based on God's commandments. God has the full and last word about us and the world. This is the core of Christian theology. In our worship and ministry, we do not attempt to complete the circle with our words. The circle is left broken by the presence of broken Christ.

c) The imagery of the broken Christ makes us aware of the presence of many gods. Some gods – gods of wealth, consumer capital, market, luxury, war, guns and missiles – are very fascinating. Today, world trade in agricultural products – especially cereals, meat and dairy products – is controlled by no more than twenty groups of transnational corporations located in United States and Europe. "Give us this day our daily bread, O Monsanto, Cargill, Swift, Anglo, ADM, Nestlé, Danone, Syngenta, and Bunge!" These gods are fascinating because they claim to give us more comfort and security more directly and quickly than can the crucified Christ. Their magic is direct and quick. The God of the theology of the Cross is a hidden God, who refuses to be grasped by us directly and quickly. Theology of the Cross involves extremely inefficient and painful process before it speaks about the possibility of the salvation of humanity.

d) Theology of the broken Christ gives us a criterion by which we can make a distinction between true God and false gods, and true prophets and false prophets. 'He saved others; he cannot save himself' (Mt. 27: 39-42). This broken Christ who saved others did not save himself, revealing the fundamental character of true God. False Gods save themselves; they do not save others. How does Christ embrace us?

In his book *Crucified God* Jurgen Moltmann quotes the experience of Elie Wiesel a person who survived Hitler's concentration camp. Two Jewish men and a youth were hanged to death in front of the whole camp. The two men died quickly. But the death throes of the young man lasted for an half an hour. Someone asked from behind Where is God? Where is He? The young man was still struggling hard with acute horrible pain and this question was repeated where is God now? Suddenly a voice echoed in Wiesel's mind, "Where is he? He is here. He is hanging there in the gallows". Moltmann is saying that "faith alone can answer such situation. God is hanging here on the gallows". This is the meaning of Cross. Cross is not to explain why we have to suffer. It tells us where God is suffering with us.

#### References:

1. *Jurgen Moltmann, Crucified God*
2. *Kosuke Koyama: Mount Fuji and Mount Sinai*
3. *C. S. Song, Third- Eye Theology*
4. *Raquel A. St. Clair, Call and consequences*
5. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison*
6. *Ched Myers and Elaine Enns, Ambassadors of Reconciliation*

# The Liberating Power of the Cross



Dr. M. M. Thomas, Mar Thoma Church of San Francisco



**“T**he message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Cori. 1:18, NKJV)

Historically, cross has been referred to as a shameful instrument of punishment leading to death. Slaves, criminals and other worse social outcasts were executed by hanging on the cross. By his death on the Cross, Jesus gave a new meaning to that “old rugged Cross.” It has become a source of hope and power for the believer. On the other hand, the Cross has no power or meaning for the non-believer. It is foolishness to them. That is why Apostle Paul said, “I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” (1 Cori. 2:2, NKJV) Again in 1 Cor. 1:23 St. Paul said, “But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (NKJV) The Cross of Jesus Christ has that great attracting power, the power to save the sinner and to transform people’s lives. It gives hope to the hopeless and opens the way to the glorious kingdom of God. This has been the essence of Paul’s preaching and ministry, and the central theme of the whole Bible. God gave His Son, Jesus Christ as a ransom for our sins. Apostle Paul emphasized this point throughout his epistles. He had nothing else to glory in, except the Cross of Jesus Christ. In his epistle to the Galatians St. Paul wrote “But God forbid that I should boast except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.” (Gal.6:14, NKJV) J C. Ryle explained the exact meaning of Paul’s statement:

*“Jesus Christ crucified was the joy and delight, the comfort and the peace, the hope and the confidence, the foundation and the resting-place, the ark and the refuge, the food and the medicine of Paul’s soul. He did not think of what he had done himself and suffered himself. He did not meditate on his own righteousness. He loved to think of what Christ had done, and Christ had suffered, --of the death of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the atonement of Christ, the blood of Christ, the finished work of Christ. In this he did glory. This was the sun of his soul.” (1)*

Only the power of the Cross enabled Paul to state with such absolute conviction about the glorious power of the Cross enabled Paul to state with such absolute conviction about the saving power of the Cross. The vision of Jesus Christ’s Cross enabled him to look forward to that glorious day to be with his savior, Jesus Christ in the heavenly realms. When Paul thought of this blessed state, he completely ignored all the sublunary things. For him, the world was dead--all material things and all worldly positions. Do we have the same conviction the Apostle had about the power of the Cross? How does the power of the Cross impact us today? This brief article will deal with few aspects of the Cross that can impact us today.

We also read in Isaiah 53 about the punishment Jesus meets at the Cross:

“Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.” (Is.53:4-5, NKJV)

By His death on the Cross, Christ redeemed us from our sins. The power of the Cross empowers us to “Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that the body

of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” (Rom.6:6 NKJV) In order to experience the real power of the Cross, we need to reckon Christ’s death as our own. Then only the death of the old sinful man becomes real and we have victory over sin. Romans 8:1 say, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.” (NKJV) Again in Romans 6:22 Apostle Paul states that the end result is that “you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.” (NKJV)

Power of Christ’s Cross liberates humans from the grips of Satan. In Colossians 2:15 Paul says, “Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.” (NKJV). The Cross dealt an ultimate doom of Satan and his followers, the fallen angels. Again in Hebrews 2:14 Paul says, “He himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” (NKJV) Jesus defeated Satan and his forces on the Cross and liberated man from his own sin and guilt. This is what He meant when He said on the Cross, “It is finished.”

The power of the Cross liberated us from death. In 2 Timothy 1:10, Paul wrote, “...our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” In 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16 Paul reassures the believer that death has no power over them, and that all who have died in Christ will be resurrected on His second coming and those who are alive will be caught up with the Lord to meet Him in the clouds. This is the ultimate hope of the believer and this is accomplished by our Lord’s death on the Cross and His subsequent resurrection on the third day.

Finally, the power of the Cross should enable us to be partakers in the suffering of the people around us. The Cross should be our message to others - one of compassion and love. We cannot be true followers of Christ if we ignore the plight of the poor and less privileged in our society. It is a Christian responsibility to share our God-given resources with the less fortunate. In Matthew 25 45-46 Jesus emphasized this point: “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it

# Relocating To DALLAS?



Design: www.PrintCall.com | 209.408.6838

## You May Have Several Reasons to Move to Dallas!

- Plenty of sunshine throughout the year and mild winters with an average of just three days of snow a year!
- Relatively stable housing and employment markets!
- Relatively low cost of living!
- Friendlier people!
- Above all, no state income tax!



**Contact me**

- ▶ To buy a home within your budget, or to sell your home for the highest price, at a reasonable commission
- ▶ For any assistance with your income taxes

### SOM THOMAS

Realtor, Chartered Accountant

Office: (972) 539-1492 | Cell: (469) 363-8569 | Email: somctexas@yahoo.com

*Make your transition to Dallas a smoother one*

(A member of The Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch, Texas)

to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me. And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (NKJV) This is a very powerful verse. It should give some introspection to us--to examine where we are in our Christian responsibilities. The power of the Cross should empower us to be changing agents -- catalysts of social transformation. Then only our prayer, "Thy kingdom come," has meaning in our lives. So let us love this Cross, and never be ashamed of it. Let us hold it high and "proclaim the day of God's salvation" to everyone around us. As followers of Jesus Christ and being partakers in His suffering, we ought to remind ourselves what Prophet Isaiah said about the purpose of Jesus' coming to the world:

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because He has anointed me  
To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."  
(Is.61:1; Luke 4:18, NKJV)

Jesus entrusted us the great task of lending a hand to the poor and needy. So let us champion the cause of the less privileged--both poor in spirit and poor in worldly comforts.

1. J.C .Ryle: *The Cross of Christ. "Helmingham Series," www.biblebb.com*

# CONGRATULATIONS

## SHIJO BENJAMIN WON THE HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AWARD 2011



Widener University, one of the nation's premier universities for civic engagement and applied leadership, in partnership with WCAU-TV NBC 10 announced Master Shijo Benjamin of Franklinville as one among the three specially acknowledged from the 69 winners of Widener university high School Leadership Award. Shijo is a junior in the Delsea Regional High school, Franklinville, NJ, a student volunteer in the school and regularly volunteering for past 3 years in John F Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Washington Township, also volunteered in an Institute for mentally disabled Children in India during last summer. Shijo, a well-known marathon runner of the school athletic team, received many other awards such as American President's Education Award for academic excellence, Renaissance People's Choice award, and accepted as a member of National Honor Society this year and received outstanding student award at the middle school graduation. Shijo is also talented young musician, learned music from a professional music school, plays piano, keyboard and Clarinet, and organized many musical events. Shijo, a member of the Christos Mar Thoma Church of Philadelphia is the son of Mr. Benjamin George and Sobha Benjamin.

Shijo, a well-known marathon runner of the school athletic team, received many other awards such as American President's Education Award for academic excellence, Renaissance People's Choice award, and accepted as a member of National Honor Society this year and received outstanding student award at the middle school graduation. Shijo is also talented young musician, learned music from a professional music school, plays piano, keyboard and Clarinet, and organized many musical events. Shijo, a member of the Christos Mar Thoma Church of Philadelphia is the son of Mr. Benjamin George and Sobha Benjamin.

**Rev. Roy Geevarghese, Vicar**

## "Snehagni" CD released in Florida

Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa released Snehagni, a CD consisting of twelve Christian spiritual songs during the council meeting held at South Florida Mar Thoma Church. The songs are written by Mr. George and Marykutty Thomas of Cooper City, Florida. Rt. Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Valia Metropolitan provided detailed introductory remarks and appreciation for this CD. Renowned singers such as K.G. Markose, Rimi Tommy, Unni Raja, Delemma, Jijo Cheriyl, Kester, Subha, M.G. Suresh, Ajith Krishnan, Siji & Sini etc., are the vocalists for this CD. Jijo Cheriyl and Saji Mukkarnath provided the music composition. For the past several years the couple had experienced major health problems, but God miraculously healed and made them stronger. The proceeds from the sale of the first CD are earmarked for the mentally challenged children in Kerala through Thirumeni's projects. Mr. George Thomas and family were founder members of the Trinity Mar Thoma Church in Houston, who later moved to Florida and continue to provide effective leadership in South Florida Mar Thoma Church.

Georgy Varughese, Florida

### Submission of Materials

Please submit your materials in word format with photos if any in jpeg format (min 300dpi) without editing / cropping.

For Malayalam article materials in word format with 'MLTT / MLW' / Manorama font

Please submit to  
**Chief Editor: Dr. Eapen Daniel**  
**Email: eapen44@gmail.com**

Please submit materials by  
May 20th for July issue and  
by August 20th for October issue.

# A Reflection on the Importance of Sunday School Teaching

Rev. K. C. Varughese, Carmel MTC, Boston



## Christian education today:

The vast majority of Christian believers remain largely unexposed to Christian learning unless they go to a seminary. Our high school age Church members move easily and quickly into the complex world of computers, foreign languages, DNA, Calculus and many more intricate fields of study. But most of us are unable to make a theologically sound, Biblically based and historically relevant commentary on the Biblical texts. Many of the responses to such questions remain at the literalist level. Furthermore, there is a disassociation of our scripture study from our everyday life. One of the major thrusts of reformations initiated by the Mar Thoma Church and now followed by all the other Churches was study of the Word of God. Today, the Sunday school is the main avenue where we start a religious education. Here, we reflect on the life and challenges of a Sunday school teacher. Though we also need a serious consideration of the content and the text of the Sunday school text, that matter is beyond the purview of this particular exploration. No doubt, we all make serious efforts towards imparting a Christian education to our children, but often, what we generally end up with is parental lectures, competition driven Sunday School and shallow family devotions. In this context, the Church must take seriously its responsibility to fully train believers in their faith - in the whole counsel of God.

## Two schools of teaching

### The individual family household

This is the most basic, core teaching institution. It can never be replaced by any other forum - including the Sunday school. New Testament references emphasizing the central role of the family in this regard are numerous; Eph. 6:1-4 and Col. 3: 20-21 being just two of them. These references parallel one of the most important admonitions in the Torah, Duet. 6: 4-9. This passage is known as "Shema Israel", and it occupies a central position in the Jewish tradition of religious learning.

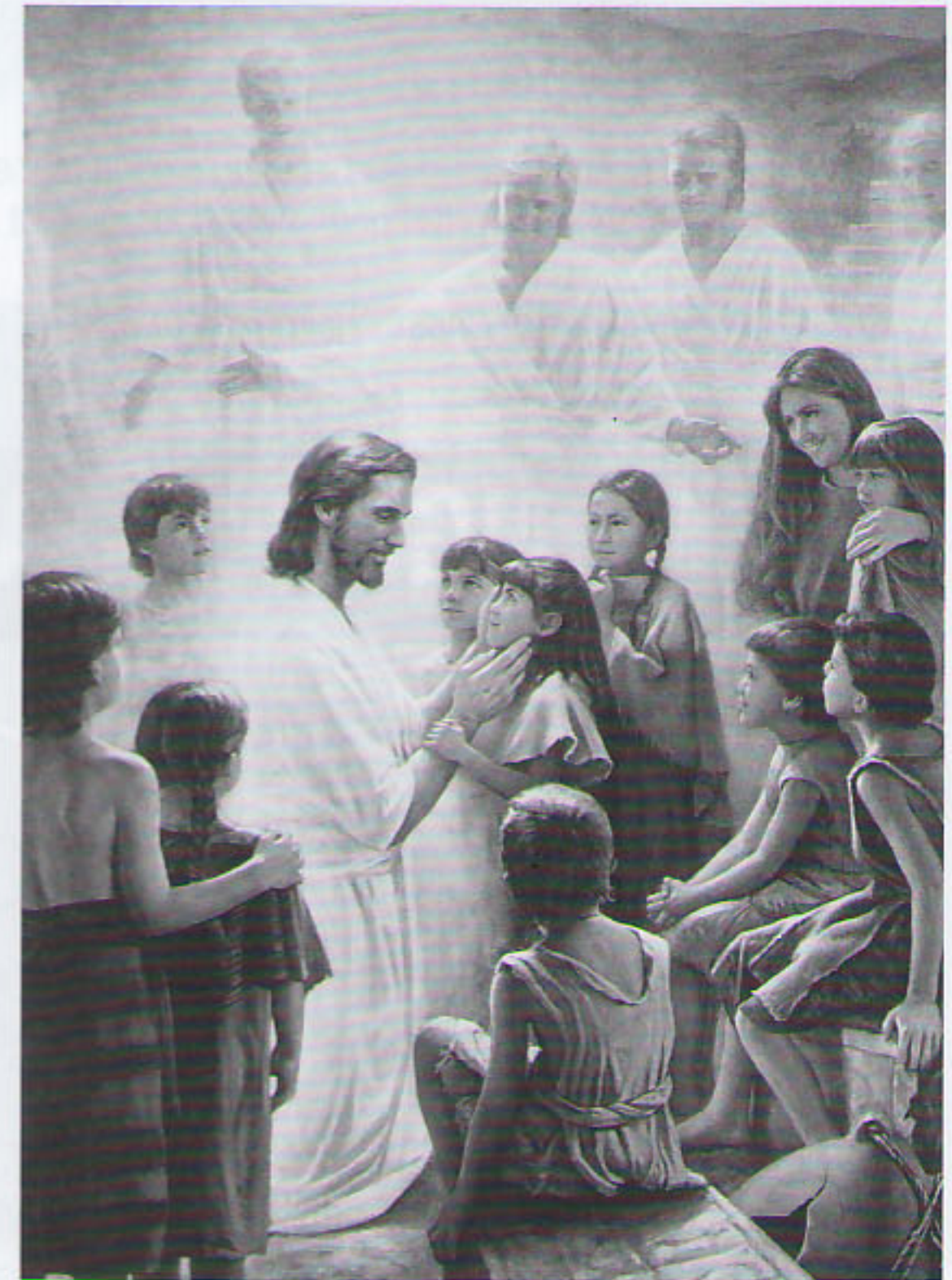
### Household of God, the family of families, the local Church

The New Testament Church was largely composed of small groups with a clear, concerted teaching mission. There was preaching (kerygma) and teaching (didache). The Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus) expound on the importance of teaching in the churches. In the present day, the Sunday school is the avenue that we largely use to impart religious education in the local parish.

## Preparing to be a teacher

### Think about the importance of your work

According to scripture, every Christian is a teacher. Matt 28:20. Sunday school teachers take that responsibility seriously and perform it in perhaps its most basic sense. This feeling of responsibility makes the Sunday school teacher think about the importance, challenges and rewards of their chosen form of ministry. St Paul reminds us in 2 Cor. 15:58 that our efforts for the Lord are not in vain - "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain". There is the sacrifice of time, money and recreation involved in this call. Teachers need to be dependable in their vocation (possible problems; absenteeism, habitually late in Sunday school and in other assemblies, failing to arrange for substitutes in time). Teachers should attend assemblies of the Church regularly (Heb. 10:24-25). They should encourage one another. A teacher needs to be faithful to one self. In the process of teaching others, one is teaching the self as well. (Rom 2; 21). Also, if one is not learning new things in the process of teaching, one does not teach at all. Students keenly observe the behavioral patterns and body



language of a teacher in public places.

### Emotional stability

Be confident and firm in your teaching. At the same time, be courteous, kind and considerate, self-controlled and not soon to anger. Do not be irritable, impatient and aggressive. A teacher should be ready to accept his or her own mistakes because no one is perfect. Be self-confident; one's talents may be different without being inferior. Ask someone in whom you have full confidence to sit in your class and ask for appraisals. Listen to honest appraisals, not flattery. Do not be afraid to admit that you do not know the answer to a particular question posed by a student. Such honesty builds respect.

### Preparation, planning and delivering the lesson

A teacher must like and love his/her students. Always remember, it is difficult to teach somebody whom you do not love or like. That involves praying for the students and wishing them all the best in their future. Class settings are important; at the same time, integrity of the teacher in the class is more important. Please make sure that you see all the students and the students see you when you lead the class (eye contact). Lecturing

and participation go together in the class, but make sure to not lose control of the class. The so called text book is only a tool. Avoid trying to teach or read directly from the text. Preparing class notes is essential in teaching Sunday school classes. Perhaps this may be the most difficult part as well. The presence of a text book is not meant to undermine the relevance of Bible, which is the basic text. The student should be encouraged to read the Biblical portion and the teacher should read the Biblical portion along with the text book. Prepare notes in a sequence to accommodate the intent of the lesson. Work out a pattern so that the class may slowly progress to the expected intentions. If a teacher who is not well prepared and a student who has not done the reading of the Biblical portion meet in class, the resulting session is unlikely to be very useful. Keep with the important themes. There is sometimes a tendency to highlight the story and ignore the theological and biblical intentions of the study. Similarly, there is a conflict between the pictorial presentation and the theological intention of the study. For example, in the story of Zaccheus, there is no problem in describing lucidly his hiding behind the sycamore tree leaves, but it should not eclipse the intentions behind the story. There needs to be a thread that culminates in communicating the fact that Jesus has come to love the unlovable. The hated tax collector gets a new identity as the son of Abraham. The teacher should consciously study and analyze the psychological and emotional abilities of the group that he/she is handling. Listening and ability to comprehend may vary according to age. A first grader may be interested in the story of Jonah's disobedient voyage and about the big fish that swallowed him. But a teenager may be intellectually sound enough to grasp the idea of the love of God that yearned for the redemption of the people of Nineveh.

### Conclusion

Always remember that we are not merely imparting knowledge, but we are making a person. We are engaged in training people to develop a Christ-centered life. They should be trained to face the realities of life, pain or pleasure with courage and grace. These realities confront them when they step outside the Church building. Last, learning is a lifelong process. It is initiated in the Sunday school and all students should understand that they still have a long way to go.

## Sevika Sanghom - Western Region



The Western Region Sevika Sanghom conference was held on March 10th, 2012 at the Seattle MTC. The theme of the conference was 'Abide in me and be fruitful'. The main speaker was Rev. Thomas John who reminded us that through prayer, meditation and worship we can have a fruitful relationship with God. The meeting was attended by Rev. Binu Varghese, Rev. Thomas John, Rev. Regi Zachariah, Rev. T.K. Viji and members from the Los Angeles MTC, St. Andrews MTC (LA) San Francisco MTC and Seattle MTC. It was a blessed time of worship, singing, prayer, self-evaluation and discussion for the members. The members also decided to get involved in mission work by contributing to the Manna project of the Mexico Mission.

**Rev. Binu Varghese** (President- Western Region)

**Mrs. Anita Sujit** (Secretary-Western Region)

# Brother's Keeper

Poem by: **Thomas Lathara** St. Thomas, MTC, Chicago

On this sultry summer morning  
Sun was out early and strong  
Sweltering multitude disgorged  
From the bowels of suburban train  
On to the dusty platform  
Off stepped from the train a frail trio  
A sick tall man with a festering wound  
Oozing blood and pus from his leg;  
A woman and teenage boy – half carrying him,  
Half dragging him up the incline to the street above  
to catch a rickshaw to the free clinic.  
They asked none for help  
And none volunteered a helping hand.  
Glancing at this tragic tableau of misery,  
I wanted to help them carry the man.

After all, am I not my brother's keeper?  
But I was busy, I hurried to office.

The stranger was happy to see me,  
A relatable face in an alien land  
Hers was a smile of relief and hope –  
Hope for a helping hand, a listening ear,  
That could grasp her language  
in the confusing crowded space.  
The wan smile on her face  
Was a veneer that wrapped a plethora of fears  
Deep in my soul, I wanted to help.

After all, am I not my brother's keeper?  
But I was busy and hurried on.

The man sat motionless in the church,  
His eyes lost in a faraway place.  
Friendly greetings and warm reunion hugs  
Swirled around him but none embraced him  
As he sat alone, like a broken tree trunk  
Half submerged in a flowing stream.  
Who know what broken dreams he nursed?  
Or what urgent need burned in his mind?  
I wanted to touch him and lighten his load.

After all, am I not my brother's keeper?  
But I was busy with a million things to do.

Then my life's moorings snapped  
At a moment most unexpected  
Ship of life floated adrift  
Rocking precipitously in the stormy raging sea  
The carefully crafted vessel of life  
Built over decades of relentless work  
Shattered in a moment to million pieces  
Panic set in and I cried out to Lord in pain.

Now, *He was* busy ...  
Tending to those who I was given to attend  
But didn't.



WHAT IS THE SIGN OF A GOOD DECISION?\*

## It's letting our whole life insurance look after you – as you look after her.

Securing your family's future and laying the foundation early on is the sign of a good decision. MassMutual offers whole life insurance that can provide customized flexibility based on your needs and protection for a lifetime as long as the policy is in force. Enjoy the many benefits of:

- Guaranteed death benefits ▪ Guaranteed increased cash value every year
- Guaranteed fixed premium ▪ Chance to earn dividends<sup>1</sup>

A mutually owned company with over 160 years of experience providing innovative insurance products and financial services, MassMutual serves the needs of individuals, families, and business owners. Make sure your next decision is a good one. MassMutual.

We'll help you get there.®

**Talk to your local MassMutual Representative today.**

**Spectrum**  
Spectrum Financial Group  
A member of the MassMutual Financial Group



Shiju Abraham, BCS  
Financial Services Professional  
5080 Spectrum Drive, Suite 902W  
Addison, TX 75001  
**972-455-4371**  
sabraham@financialguide.com  
www.sfgtexas.com

LIFE INSURANCE+ RETIREMENT/401(K) P LAN SERVICES+ DISABI LITY INCOME INSURANCE+LONG TERM CARE INSURANCE+ ANNUITIES

MassMutual Financial Group refers to Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (MassMutual), its affiliated companies and sales representatives. Insurance products issued by MassMutual, Springfield, MA 01111, and its subsidiaries, C.M. Life Insurance and MML Bay State Life Insurance companies, Enfield, CT 06082. <sup>1</sup> Dividends are not guaranteed. CRN201303-146603



# Exploring the Resurrection Faith of Mary Magdalene and Thomas in the Fourth Gospel

Christopher P. Daniel, M. T. Seminary, Kottayam



## Introduction

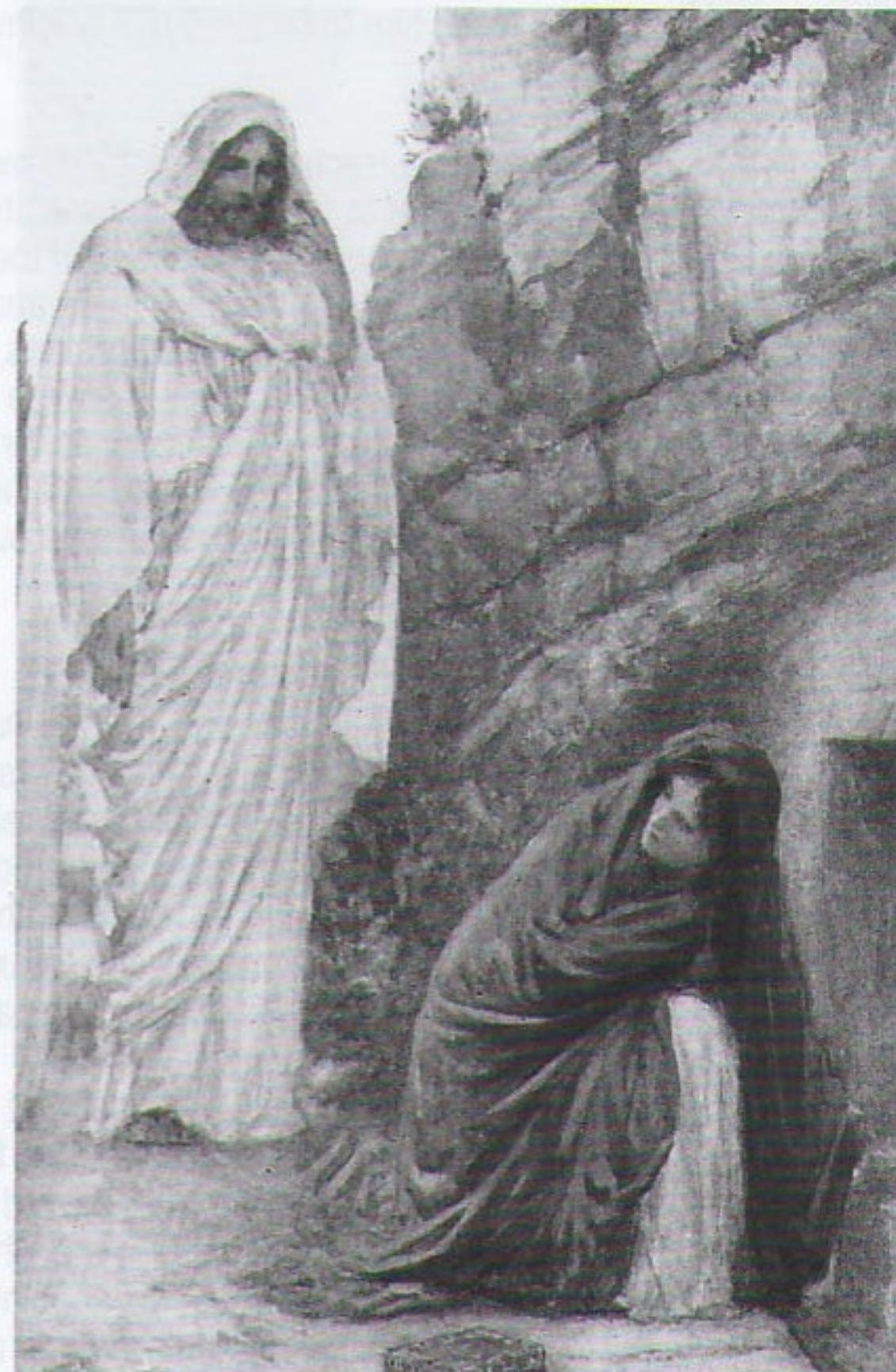
Mary Magdalene and Thomas are two very significant characters in the Gospel According to St. John (the Fourth Gospel), especially when considering their witness and testimony to the resurrected Christ. Although Mary Magdalene (hereafter referred to as Mary) and Thomas appear in separate episodes in John 20 (vv. 1-18 and vv. 24-29, respectively), these episodes are certainly related. After carefully reading and studying these passages, it becomes clear that Mary and Thomas operate in what is known as a "narrative partnership" in that they both encounter the risen Christ, revealing a type of discipleship based on a genuine resurrection faith. ( D. A. Lee, "Partnership in Easter Faith: The Role of Mary Magdalene and Thomas in John 20," JSNT 58 (1995): 37-49).

## Background Information about Mary Magdalene and Thomas:

Mary Magdalene is probably one of the most popular characters in the New Testament. Yet, it is surprising how little is known or told about her. She is sometimes wrongly identified as the "sinner" who anointed Jesus (Luke 7:36-50). She is at times also confused with Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus (John 12:1-8) and is also mistaken for the unnamed woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8:11). It should be noted that nowhere in the New Testament is she referred to as a sinner or a prostitute. All that is really known about her is that she is associated with a town in Galilee called Magdala and that she may have been healed of demon possession (Luke 8:2; Mark 16:9). Although identification of other women accompanying Jesus differs somewhat in the Gospels, all four Gospels are unanimous in placing Mary Magdalene at the Cross and also as a witness to the resurrection. According to various biblical accounts, we know that Thomas was listed as one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus as is mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts (Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13). Although such a list of disciples is not mentioned in the Fourth Gospel, Thomas is confirmed to be one of them. It is also apparent that he was known as Didymus which means "twin," but whether he had a twin sibling is not accounted for in any of the Gospels. It should be noted that it is only in the Fourth Gospel that Thomas speaks (John 11:16; 20:24-29), and it is for what Thomas says that he is known for, especially in regard to his original unbelief and resulting profession of faith.

## The Resurrection Appearances in John 20

It is in John 20 that the resurrected Jesus reveals Himself – first to Mary Magdalene, then to His disciples, and finally to Thomas. When comparing Jesus' resurrection appearances to both Mary and Thomas, it is evident that both accounts share the five-stage pattern common to all resurrection appearances: 1) the sorrow of the disciple(s) at the loss of Jesus; 2) Jesus' sudden appearance; 3) Jesus' greeting; 4) the recognition and faith response by the disciple(s); and 5) the message for the sake of others. Each encounter begins with a precise setting of the time and place. Mary visits the tomb of Jesus "on the first day of the week, while it was still dark" (John 20:1a). On the evening of the same day, "the first day of the week" (John 20:19a), the story centering on Thomas begins, although his actual meeting with the risen Jesus is located "a week later" (John 20:26a). Both events then are specifically related to the "first day of the week." First of all, both Mary and Thomas display a sense of eagerness to see and touch the risen Jesus. For Mary, this eager motivation overcomes all fear and inconvenience, and at the first available moment (20:1a), she rushes to the tomb to be near the final resting place of Jesus. However, she finds the tomb to be empty, and it is the resulting frustration, rather than grief over Jesus' death, which causes her to weep (20:13). Similarly, frustration is obvious in Thomas' outburst (20:25b), causing him to return to the group of disciples, most probably in the hope that the risen Jesus will reappear and



that he might see and touch Him (20:25). Although both Mary and Thomas are open to belief in the risen Jesus when he actually appears to them, what the narratives make clear is that they long to see the Jesus whom they knew and experienced before. For both, this is the visible and sensible presence of the earthly Jesus, indicated by Mary's initial failure to recognize Him (20:14-15) and her physical clinging to Him (20:17), and by Thomas thinking that seeing and touching Jesus will provide him with proof that this is the Jesus he had known (20:25). Mary's clinging to Jesus' body (20:17) not only indicates her limited understanding of the transformation in Jesus, but also implies her belief that Jesus is, in one sense or another, no longer among the dead. Jesus, by resisting Mary's physical clinging to Him, both reveals something about His status as the risen Lord and acknowledges the readiness of her faith to be moved on to a whole new plane. Although it is through hearing Him call her name that she first recognizes Him, what Mary testifies to is that she has "seen the Lord." In the Fourth Gospel, whoever "sees" the exalted Jesus simultaneously receives the Spirit and the promised clarity of

all that Jesus has taught (19:30; 20:8, 19-22; cf. 16:13-14, 22, 25). Thus, she is able to proclaim, boldly and without reservation, her faith in Jesus' resurrection (20:18a) and in all that he has told her (20:18b). Thomas, on the other hand, demands to see and physically touch Jesus as the condition for him to believe. In a complete reversal of His reaction to Mary, the risen Jesus positively invites Thomas to touch His hands and side (20:27). What is being acknowledged by Jesus Himself is that, unlike Mary, Thomas has not yet reached the stage where his faith transcends the need for physical signs (cf. 20:29). But when Thomas finally meets the risen Lord, the so-called "scales fall from his eyes" and he professes the Gospel's most profound confession of faith: "my Lord and my God" (20:28). The parallel structure of these two episodes is evident as the disciples' first misunderstanding is corrected with a further teaching from the risen Jesus (20:17, 29). In both cases, this begins with a personal revelation whose inner details are finely tuned to each one's personality and relationship with Jesus. For instance, it is only when the risen Jesus calls Mary by name that she recognizes Him and responds (20:16b, 17). In a similar way, Thomas comes to resurrection faith not because he actually sees and touches Jesus' wounds but because of the way Jesus both humors him and challenges his unbelief (20:27). This causes him to become overwhelmed with joyful confusion and humble recognition (20:28).

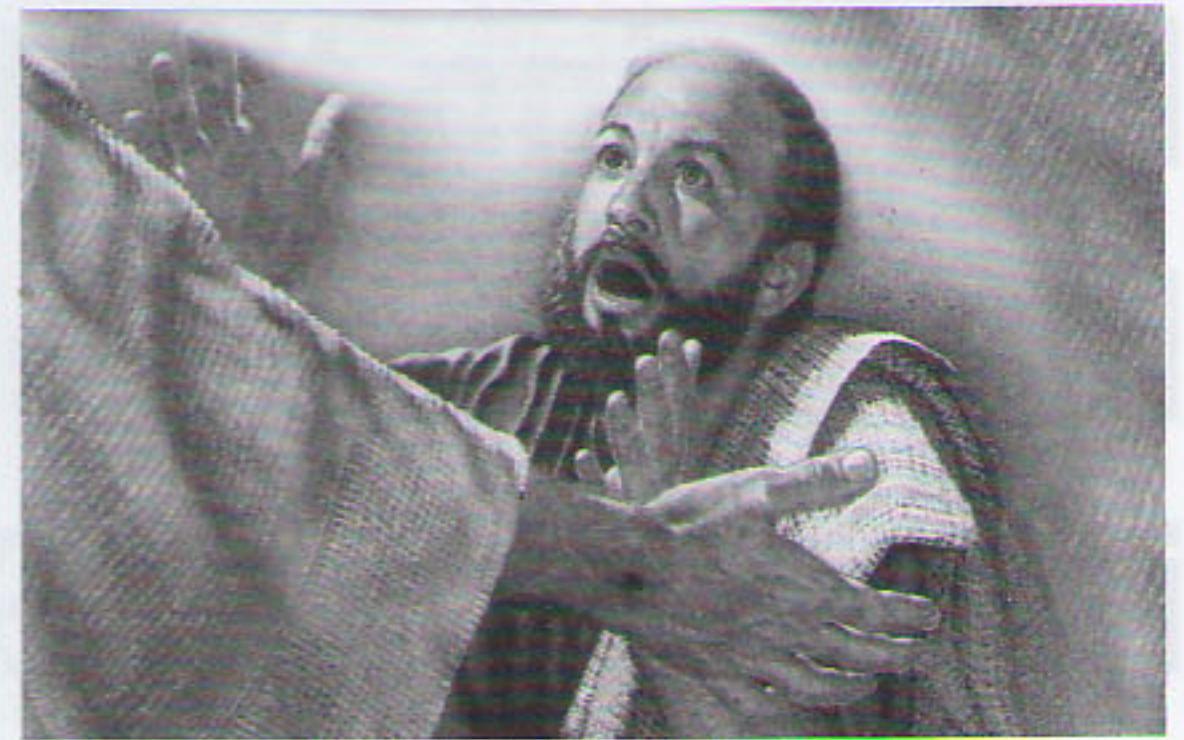
The final element of these two resurrection appearances moves beyond the experience of the two individuals (20:17b, 29b) to the future community. For Mary, this is centered on her being commissioned to announce the message of the risen Lord to the rest of the disciples (20:17b). In doing so, she becomes, for them and for all future believers, the first witness to Jesus' resurrection (20:18). In both stories, the character who receives Jesus' teaching about resurrection faith becomes a source of encouragement for those whom physical seeing, hearing, and/or touching will no longer be possible. As in the case of Thomas, he is gently chided with the lesson that his personal faith is not more blessed than that of future believers who will require no such signs of Jesus' physical presence in order to believe (20:29).

### The Resurrection Faith of Mary and Thomas

It is clear that the stories of Mary Magdalene and Thomas have several parallel features. In addition to the characteristics and structure typical of resurrection appearances, they exhibit common Johannine techniques of drawing the reader into the experience of individual characters who struggle with the challenge to move beyond the limits of their present understanding to a full resurrection faith. Finally, the key Johannine connection between hearing, seeing, and believing, is expanded to include the sense of touch, which is then taken in both stories to a level that truly surpasses all sensory experience.

The analysis of the parallel narratives points to the fact that it is only after they negotiate the steps of Johannine misunderstanding and correction that both Mary and Thomas come to a full resurrection faith. Their moving from the old categories of physical presence to a whole new perception of spiritual reality is brought about gradually and within the context of their meeting the risen Jesus at an appointed time on their respective faith journeys. As the risen Lord, Jesus has entered into a new mode of being which enables His relationship with His disciples to be transformed into something infinitely deeper through the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is what Mary and Thomas desire but, at first, mistakenly seek through mere physical contact. Only through the intervention of the risen Jesus do they come to understand that, from the moment of Jesus' exaltation, "it is the Spirit which gives life" (6:63; cf. 3:6) and makes possible the ongoing process of the risen Jesus with the community (14:26; 15:26; 16:7-11, 13-15). The experience of Mary (20:11-18) points towards the appearance of a new relationship with the risen Jesus through the Spirit (20:19-23), while Thomas' profound confession of faith derives from that same Spirit (20:24-29).

While there is a similar literary pattern in the two journeys, whereby each moves from a position of purely earthly awareness to full resurrection faith, there is a difference in the readiness of Mary and Thomas to receive this new understanding. Both of them require correction and further teaching by Jesus in order to grasp the message of the resurrection and, for both, this teaching centers not only on what they see and hear but also uniquely on the question of touching Jesus' resurrected body. However, the reaction of the risen Jesus to each of them is completely opposite. What this says about the two is that they are at different stages of faith development. Where the word of the risen Jesus is sufficient for the conversion of Mary Magdalene, Thomas needs physical proof before he is able to come to faith. Between the two mentioned episodes, John has placed the account of Jesus' appearance and the bestowal of the gift of the Spirit



to the assembled disciples (20:19-23). This incident unites the two stories by confirming Mary Magdalene's experience and commission and by opening the way for Thomas' encounter and confession of faith. Although the disciples respond immediately to Mary's news of Jesus' appearance (20:1-2), Thomas questions the same confession of faith when it is given to him by the group of disciples. What crowns the individual professions of belief is the Gospel's linking them to those entire still to come, with the promise "blessed are those who believe without seeing" (20:29). Thus, the point at which the two disciples have arrived on their faith journey is continuous with, yet is also the starting-point for all future believers. Individually and communally, the relationship is one of spiritual bonding with the risen Jesus and with one another, built upon the new family established at Golgotha (19:26b-27) and acknowledged now by the risen Jesus in referring to them as sisters and brothers (20:17c) of His and of one another, sharing the same Father and the same God (20:17d).

### Conclusion

Mary Magdalene and Thomas are both models of a discipleship based on resurrection faith. Although both Mary and Thomas are portrayed as Jesus' disciples throughout his ministry, it is through resurrection faith that their discipleship is made whole and brought to fullness. This is because they have come to a new understanding about Jesus and about their relationship to Him. They come to the realization that Jesus was not a mere miracle worker, preacher, teacher, or religious leader. They come to realize that Jesus is indeed the Son of God that Jesus is truly their Lord and their God. This realization enables them to transcend the boundaries of human sensory understanding in order to embrace the spiritual dimension of faith. This is the type of faith that we are also called to embrace. We are to be open to the promptings of the Spirit which will enable us to look beyond our senses, our reasoning, and our knowledge, so that our understanding of Jesus is transformed and so that we, too, will be transformed. It is this transformation that will give us the strength and motivation to live as Jesus' disciples in this world. Let us remember that it is because of the faith of people like Mary Magdalene and Thomas that we can profess that Jesus is our Lord and God. However, a simple profession from our part will not suffice. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we need to dedicate ourselves for Christ's service and proclaim His gospel message with fervor each and every moment of our lives.

*Editor's Note: Christopher is the B. D. final year student at Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam, and is a member of MTC Dallas, Farmer's Branch.*

# The Choices of Martha and Mary

Theme talk presented at the National Sevika Sanghom conference, Chicago 2011

Mrs. Sairah Joseph, Philadelphia



**C**hoices consist of the mental process of judging the merits of multiple options and selecting one. The choices we make have ramifications on our lives and to those connected to us in many ways, directly and indirectly. Even though God allows us to make our own choices, there will be consequences to it. The choices that we make in life are determined by the quality of our relationship with God. The choices of the two sisters Martha and Mary, at times, describes the conflict between the choices of the active part and the contemplative part of our personality. We all want to choose to worship like Mary, but the Martha inside us keeps bossing us around. As only God can help us to make the right choice and bring a transformation in us, we have to always keep our lives centered on Him. In John: 12:1-3 we see that, Jesus brought a transformation in Martha and Mary and helped them to choose what is right. Luke 10 records the story of Mary and Martha, which is a call to discipleship. Most of us have heard more than a dozen of sermons on this scripture portion which makes us look down on Martha for her choice and applaud Mary for sitting at Jesus' feet and listening. This clearly shows the willingness of Jesus to consider women as worthy students. To Jewish people, home is regarded as family sanctuary and they are very discerning about inviting people to their homes. Hospitality was taken very seriously those days. When Jesus and His disciples visited their home in Bethany, they needed a place to stay and wanted food to eat. Luke:10:38-42, is not just a women's passage, as Martha and Mary represents both the men and women of today's world and also the two aspects of our personality. In other words, Martha and Mary nature can be identified within us and also in the people around us. Let us be willing to learn from the choices made by Martha and Mary, to revive the friendship between the doing and being part of our own personalities and bring a transformation within us and make the right choice.

## The choice of Martha

Martha chose to welcome her Lord which was a good choice. But she got distracted by her work and chose to doubt and complain, which was a wrong choice. Martha the eldest sister of Mary and Lazarus lived in the house which she owned in Bethany. As Martha was interested in spiritual things, she wanted to honor Jesus by welcoming Him into her home. She was a very hospitable woman and was bold enough to face the consequences of the scandal and hard work she had to face while entertaining Jesus and His disciples in a short notice. Martha is a symbol of action oriented people. She represents the "doing" or the "active" aspect of our own lives. Martha made a good choice by welcoming Jesus into her home. Martha chose that was "good" than that was "better". But sometime after her good choice, she got lost in the swirl of activity and failed to make the most of opportunity which was right at her front door. We have to remember always that "Good is the enemy of the Best". Martha opened her home to Jesus but not her heart. In her eagerness to serve Jesus she almost missed the opportunity to know Jesus. Martha got distracted by her godly desire to serve. She was irritated and felt left alone as Mary wasn't helping her, as feeding a crowd on such a short notice was not easy on those days, when there were no ovens, refrigerators, fast food stores etc. She might have also felt jealous, of the attention Mary was getting from Jesus and might have been stewing for quite a while before she got up her courage to complain to Jesus. In Luke: 10:40 Martha said, "Lord don't you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone." Then she said, "Tell her then to help me." Martha was trying to control both Mary and Jesus. The first part of her complaint was directed to Jesus himself which was a doubt and the second part was a command. In her vexed state of mind, she included Jesus in her rebuke and asked Him to release Mary from her meditative role to help out with the practical duties. While her bristly, abrasive approach is hardly the best model for us to follow, there are several important lessons, we can learn from her gutsy encounter with Christ. Martha teaches us to take our doubts directly to our Lord, as doubt leads to unbelief and distractions. Martha is always remembered for her impatience and excessive concern for mundane things. Even though she had a lot of good qualities in her, Jesus didn't consider her service as Best. Mar-



tha's choice represents "work or duty or service". When we think of the life and character of Martha, one of the noblest acts she did is that, she opened her home to Jesus and was willing to entertain Him. Martha represents action oriented people, who allow them to be distracted overmuch with their love of duties and obligations. Like Martha, we too love Jesus and really want to serve Him and open ourselves to service. But we struggle with weariness, resentment and feeling of inadequacies and get bogged down with little things that don't mean much in ministry. Martha needed a course correction, when she was caught up with less important things. Sometimes we too need that. Service is a vital part of any Christian life, but we must never forget that why we serve is as important as how we serve. The motives of our heart really make a difference. "God is more pleased with the quiet attention of a sincere servant than the noisy service of a sour one". What matters more than the type of service is the heart behind the service.

## The issues that Martha represent

Jesus cut through the exterior of what Martha was saying and got to the heart of the matter. In Luke 10:41. Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things." Jesus addressed Martha, very personally, saying her name twice purposefully. In the repetition of her name there is an affectionate reproof. Martha had lost her serene centre and lost touch with her own self. By calling her name twice, Jesus was recalling her to herself and was leading her to self realization. Jesus diagnosed her real problem, "many things" and recognized that what she was upset about was not the reality. He wanted Martha to see that her choices had led to her emotional state of being upset and worried. Before Jesus said anything about Mary, He first led Martha into the depths of her own heart. Jesus had no medical degree but knew the human heart and soul. Jesus spoke the truth to a woman caught up in chronic worry. Jesus

# Professional Accounting & Tax Services

110 Jericho Turnpike, Suite 102 Floral Park, NY 11001  
Tel. (516) 352-8755 • Fax (516) 352-8757 • E-Fax 815-301-2757  
E-mail : shajusam.ea@gmail.com



## Shaju Sam, EA, MS (Tax)

Licensed to Practice Before the IRS

Member American Institute of Certified Public Accountants

Member National Association of Enrolled Agents

Member National Association of Tax Professionals



- ☑ **Individuals**
- ☑ **Corporations**
- ☑ **Partnerships**
- ☑ **Limited Liability Companies**
- ☑ **Sales Tax and Payroll Services**
- ☑ **Financial Planning**
- ☑ **Formation of Business Entities**
- ☑ **IRS and State Audit Representation**

Designed & Printed by St. Albans Digital Printing Inc. - (718) 528-5100

## RAMAN ABROL, CPA

1130 Rt. 46W, Suite 9 • Parsippany, NJ 07054

Tel. (973) 331-5178

Fax (973) 718-4666

didn't criticize Martha's activities. He appreciated her warm hearted practical management of the house hold. He was just warning her for her worries and anxieties for many things. Her focus was to be on Jesus, not on what needed to be done and not on Mary. Martha needed a reminder, a course correction from Jesus, an opportunity to refocus. We too need a course correction, an opportunity to refocus, like Martha. Jesus is speaking lovingly to you and me even today as he did to Martha that day. Often when we are angry and anxious we are not aware of what is really making us angry and we get upset for no or wrong reasons and we use something else than the real problem as an excuse. Here Martha was trying to shift the blame and responsibility on Mary and was doubting and worrying.

### **The choice of Mary**

Mary the youngest child of the family was more spiritual and meditative. She was willing and humble enough to learn from Jesus by sitting at His feet silently. Mary was disciplined enough to choose that "the better part" which was to sit patiently at her Lord's feet and to listen to Him and show "Devotion to her Lord" and thus made the choice that was Right and Better. Mary is always remembered for her spiritual desire and discernment. Mary is an example of a particular type of piety, that many of us admire but most of us cannot imitate fully in our lives like the nuns and monks. In Luke 10:42b, we find Jesus saying as "Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her". Here Jesus was referring to the spiritual favor Mary had received. The 'Better Part' which is the right choice, is to sit down calmly and reflect on Jesus and to center our lives to God. The Word of God will stay with us forever and no one can take it away from us. The deposit made by sitting at Jesus' feet will always be there in our spiritual bank account. Mary knew the difference between work and worship. Mary chose to sit at the feet of Jesus. She got approval by Jesus, for she is told that, she chose the better part. Jesus' affirmation of Mary's choice sends a message to Martha to make the same choice. Mary teaches us the importance of sitting silently, listening and centering our lives to God. Mary's choice represents "worship or devotion or spirituality". When we think of Life and character of Mary, we can see that, she was a woman who cultivated deep spiritual inner thoughts and was busier internally than externally. The inner world charmed her more. Like Mary we too long to sit at our Lord's feet, but the daily demands of the busy world just won't leave us alone. We have to sit at His feet and listen to His word and develop an intimacy with Him.

### **The one thing needed: The better choice**

Jesus suggested, in Luke 10:41, that only "one thing" was needed. The context in this verse points to a spiritual call. By "one thing", Jesus might be referring to 'one spiritual goal', 'Kingdom of God' or to a 'simple dish' - rather than to the multiple dishes Martha had been preparing to honor Him, by doing additional task to prepare a multi course meal. Jews usually ate by dipping pieces of bread in the broth or soup bowl placed on the middle of the table. Here probably Jesus meant both. Jesus was reminding Martha, that in her effort to set a table worthy of Son of God, she really missed the real banquet. "One thing" is not doing good works alone but listening to the Lord and having a Christ centered life. Mary, sister of Martha, exemplified "the one thing" Jesus expects from us, an attitude of worship and meditation, giving priority to listening with an open mind and heart to Jesus' words. Jesus teaches us, that worship should come before work. We have to remember that there should be a time for worship or spirituality and a time for work or service. Jesus kindly lets us know that we are not to compare ourselves to others in order to prove our worth, but we are to set our aim on Him. He compared where Martha's heart was at that moment to where it needed to be. He never compares us with others as the world does. He wants us to experience peace and joy in our service and never comes to burden us. As we exchange the "many things" that make us anxious, Jesus gives us the "one thing" that calms our heart, "Himself" as He is the "Prince of peace", "the bread of life," "the living water", "the only dish" we all need.

### **Making the right choice**

The choices of Martha and Mary teach us that, the areas of work and worship or duty and devotion or service and spirituality have to be balanced in our lives. Being balanced is not staying in a static state but being in a state of dynamic equilibrium, where work becomes worship and worship becomes work. It is finding a right rhythm in our lives between spirituality and service. Jesus is the most balanced individual the world has ever known. If we want to live a balanced life, we must concentrate on our supreme example Jesus. On some days one side of our life, the doing or the being part, may take predominance for a while than the other. One day we may spend several hours in Bible study and prayer and the other day more on the service side. Sometimes both sides may be in a stagnant state. Planning ahead consciously will help us to maintain a rhythm between both. The imbalance will show in our attitudes, energy levels and in the way we interact with other people. Let us, allow the Mary in us to walk in Martha's side and the Martha

in us to walk in Mary's side. In John: 12: 1-3, we see a complete transformation in Martha and Mary where the bold one becomes meek and the mild one courageous. Here Martha is still serving the Lord with a more attentive heart. Rather than complaining, she is serving peacefully, in Lord's presence. Busy Martha has become a more focused Martha. Martha is no longer distracted and resentful but full of faith and trust that comes only from spending time at Jesus' feet. Mary broke open an expensive jar of perfume and poured on Jesus' head showing her love through her extravagant, deep and full surrender. The house was filled with the smell of the perfume. Her beautiful service followed after she experienced personal love, grace, forgiveness and healing through Jesus. Her loving service was preparing the master for burial and the end of His sojourn on earth. Contemplative Mary has become a more active Mary. Mary puts into action what she had learned in worship. She steps forward to serve both beautifully and sacrificially. It is impossible to be in the presence of Jesus and not to be changed. The choice He had offered to these two very different sisters and the transformation they both experienced is exactly what He offers to each one of us as well. "Give yourself fully to God" writes Mother Theresa in the book "Life in the spirit," "He will use you to accomplish great things on the condition that you believe much more in His love than in your own weakness".

The application of the lessons learned, from the choices of Martha and Mary can lead us to useful insights. As Martha represents work and Mary worship, we must be flexible and realize that at different times the same person may identify with any one of these sisters or even with both at the same time or none. Are we distracted like Martha, by the things that are good within themselves or are we disciplined like Mary to choose what is better? These questions are not just for women. The truth is that most of us are somewhere in the middle, sometimes one part predominates, sometimes both parts are stagnant and sometimes we find them in others around us. In Aristotle's words "A golden mean neither too cold nor too hot". Let us maintain a balance in our outlook as both extremes are dangerous". Many of the Martha's around us do not know or have time or opportunity to become Mary, as they are so busy and stressed with their work, family, kids, duties, illnesses etc and many of the Mary around us do not have the push, inspiration or guidance to become Martha. Most of them are not aware or bold enough to be active in service for the Lord. Are we willing to give a chance for every Martha we know, the time and opportunity to be a Mary and Mary to be a Martha? We have to realize that, just as God gives us the freedom of choice, we have to be willing to give it to others too. We have to draw closer to the Lord, by deepening our devotion, strengthening our service and doing both with less stress and more joy. According to Joanna Weaver, we have to be "Mary like Marthas or Marthas who walk on Mary's side and Martha like Marys or have a Mary heart in this Martha world", by giving equal importance to spirituality and service, by placing worship before work and bringing a healthy rhythm and balance between both. Let us not settle for good things by ignoring the more valuable and better spiritual truths. Let us ask God to forgive us for being too busy to listen to Him and ask Him to help us to listen with unclogged ears and a focused attentive mind to what he wants to teach us each day. Let us make the right choice in our lives, by choosing to bring the right rhythm and balance to our service and spirituality or our work and worship.

## We know the lay and law of the Land

For real estate and legal solutions in Kerala,  
get our expert advice and assistance.

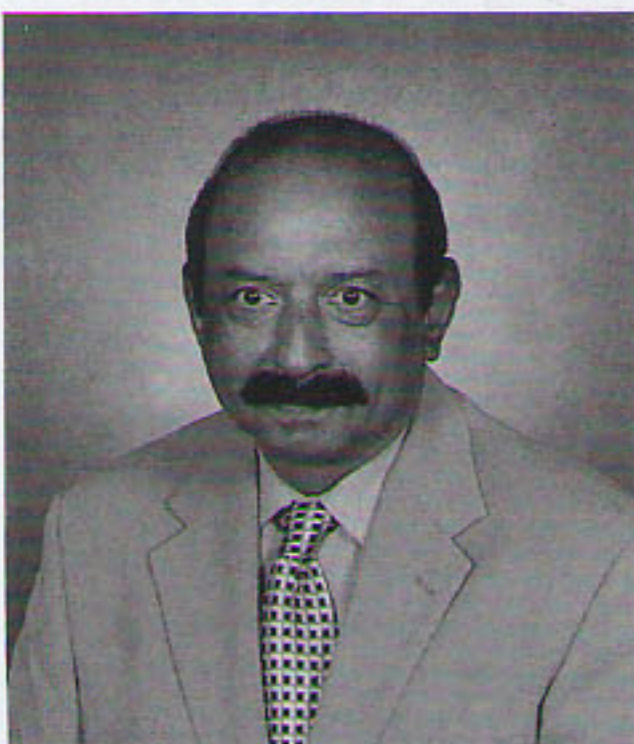


### Real Estate Solutions

- Building and Construction
- Advice on sale or purchase of immovable property
- Will construct villas at clients' site according to clients' plan or will provide a plan to suit clients' need and budget.
- Guaranteed work with quality and convenience in mind.

### Legal Solutions

- Conduct of the legal cases, in case of any dispute involving clients' property
- Recovery Solutions
- Corporate Services / Solution
- Civil, Criminal, Taxation and Consumer Cases
- Documentation Services



### P.S. Cherian

"A member of the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas,  
Farmers Branch, Texas"

Regd Office:

India: Palmko Building, Ground Floor,  
Puthenthope P.O, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala 695586  
Tel: +91 471-6522134, Mob: +91 9249297317

U.S.A: 1917 Arbor Creek Dr., Carrollton, TX 75010, USA.  
Tel: 972-4922032, 214-2748468

Website: [www.globalsolutionsindia.org](http://www.globalsolutionsindia.org) | Email: [info@globalsolutionsindia.org](mailto:info@globalsolutionsindia.org)



**Global  
Solutions**  
India

# No Person Need to Stay the Way He/She is

(St. John 19: 26 -27)

Rev. Joseph Daniel, University of Bern, Switzerland



**T**here is no obligation in the world like the obligation of being trusted. It is impossible to fail or let down someone who trusts you. Jesus put all his trust in caring for his mother Mary on his disciple John. Jesus said to her, "Mother there is your son" and said to his disciple, "there is your mother." (St. John 19: 26 -27). It is a rare moment which shows Jesus Christ's concern for His own mother Mary in the Bible. This incident embodies Jesus' obligation to His mother and Mary represents motherhood that seeks concern and care from her children.

## Great Obligation and Trust

In fact, every day in our life our loved ones trust us. Jesus knew that His mother Mary trusts Him. On the Cross thus Jesus appears to us as a proverbial figure of human trust and commitment to human family relations. Mary appears to us as the representative of motherhood who seeks her children's kindness and love in this narration of St. John. George H. Tavard's book "Thousand faces of the Virgin Mary," suggests that, those who bear the name of Mary are the small dwelling places of Holy Mary. In the same way, we are also small dwelling places of Jesus Christ – full human and full divine as well as the small dwelling places of Mary, the representative of human motherhood and holiness. We need to show forth His nature of trust and family obligations in our lives as well. It is interesting to note that this verse is recorded only in St. John's gospel. In the same gospel, chapter 2 we get the impression that Jesus was somewhat indifferent to His mother, when she shared the shortage of wine at the wedding house at Cana in Galilee, although Jesus did not intend it in that conversation with His mother (St. John 2: 3 -4). Generally from the Gospels we get the notion that, Jesus was not sincere to his family commitments, when we use our modern standard of evaluation. A wandering preacher, He hardly had any time to talk with His mother and relatives on weekends; He hardly had any time for family entertainment and outings. However, Jesus' priority is to the building up of His kingdom – His larger family. Concurrently, this action of Jesus on the Cross testifies that Jesus took His family obligations seriously and tried to fulfill it even at the most painful time – time on the Cross.

## Sin Disrupts Family Relations and Creates Pain and Agony

Mary had a life of patience and love. Yet, waves of pain and agonies roared in her life from her teenage till her death. Jesus also had to face severe life experiences.

In both cases, they suffered. They never rejected God's will. Obedience to God's will pushes them away from the world and sin. Obedience to God's will invites them to disobey the human and worldly powers. Mary sensed her predicament even at the temple when Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms and praised God, (St. Luke 2: 28 -35). A sword pierced into her heart, (vs. 35). A family's obedience to God's will encouraged them to resist the sinful world and its sinful leaders, who incessantly undermine God's work and God's will. Disobedience to Sin and the world eventually led the mother and the Child to the Cross – one at the feet of the Cross and another at the top of the Cross. Sin disrupts a family. However, the cross for Mary and Jesus is the result of their obedience to God and disobedience to Sin. It has resulted in emotional, physical, spiritual and social pain. Sin has the potential to disrupt family relations and the ability to cause pain and agony. The pressures on family relationships are felt today more visibly in the current world than before. Obsessive preoccupations with worldly possessions propelled by materialism; universalistic belief of salvation to all and the lack of the sense of eternal punishment; the new avatar of Epicureanism – Hedonism: human's chief goal is pleasure; rejection of the concept of the authority of the church, religion and state, under the guise of modern liberal ideology; lack of belief in the absolute truth and atheism are some of the philosophical threats that disrupts modern family relations. Stress and strain of the modern career oriented life pattern affect the family relations. Above all, hyper individualism and its inalienable result of unwillingness to take responsibility for others have made the modern family more vulnerable to sin than before in history. Their motto is "Am I my brother's keeper?" Jesus' words on the Cross remind our obligations to our family in the midst of our broken home experiences.

## The Cross: Icon of Love and Trust

The effect of Jesus' words on the Cross is binary – trust on his disciple, and entrusting the responsibility. The trust of Jesus on His disciple John enabled Him to put the responsibility of His mother on him. Life for Jesus should be the road to holiness, upward and the onward way and in which he was in need of trusted disciples to share their shoulder to continue His obligation towards the building up of a larger family – family of families. The whole handing over of His responsibility of His mother to His disciple has taken place at Golgotha. Golgotha is the icon of God's love for human beings and the Cross is the ultimate symbol of love. Love is the basis of all relationships. Mary was requested to accept Jesus' disciple as her son and John was requested to take the responsibility for His mother Mary with love, at the feet of the Cross. Thus Jesus redefines the meaning of the family of families, which unites under the Cross. The new family under the Cross comprises of persons who belong to different biological family lineage. Jesus put all His trust in His

mother Mary and in His disciple John. Jesus has entrusted His task to the new family of God, which includes His mother and His disciple. Jesus has entrusted His work to our hands today to be fulfilled under the shadow of the Cross. In this process of fulfilling our life tasks, Jesus has provided two proverbial figures – Virgin Mary and St. John. Mary is the proverbial figure of human motherhood. We honor Mary, not only because she is 'Theotokos', the mother of God, but because she is 'Panagia', All-Holy. Among all God's creatures, Mary is the supreme example of 'synergy' or cooperation between the purpose of God and the free will of Human beings. God, who always respects human liberty, did not wish to become incarnate without the free consent of Mary - the mother of God. God Waited for Mary's voluntary response: "I am the Lord's servant; may it be to me as you have said" (Luke 1:38). Mary could have refused God's will; she was not merely passive, but an active participant in God's mystery. That is the reason why among the saints a special position belongs to the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom we consider the most exalted among God's creatures, 'more honorable than the cherubim and incomparably more glorious than the seraphim'(Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom). St. John is the proverbial figure of love. So love is the basis for the new family. Our task is to follow Jesus' words and His footsteps. All personal relationships are founded on trust and love. Jesus trusts on His disciple to carryout Jesus' obligation on His mother. Jesus trusts us – His church. Jesus is no longer in this world in human nature and therefore the plain truth is that if Jesus wants a task done, He has to get a person to do it for Him. In the most literal sense, we have to be hands to do His work, feet to run upon His everyday

jobs, and a voice to speak for Him. Jesus has entrusted the same task of loving, trusting and taking care of our parents on our hands, even in the most difficult situations like the Golgotha experiences. If Jesus is right, life becomes a pilgrimage to eternity, and every act of doing our obligations and responsibilities to our family and to the family of families – the Church is a milestone in it. To Jesus Christ a person who was giving a cup of water to the thirsty, the person who was feeding the hungry, the person who was doing the will of God, and the person respecting the family relations and obligations was the person dealing with eternal relationship. It is a pilgrimage of our life to God. The Holy Qurbana reminds us of this truth when we celebrate it every Sunday at the altar - the 'throne of God' in the 'Madbaha', the symbol of Golgotha, where supreme manifestation of love and trust took place and a new family of Mary and John were born. The two were no longer as they thought they would be before the Cross of grace that transformed their lives drastically.

## Ecumenical Fellowship Dinner



The Diocese of North America and Europe of the Mar Thoma Church organized an ecumenical Fellowship Dinner with the help of the Mar Thoma Parishes in the South East Region. This was held at the Radisson Hotel, Philadelphia, on the evening of Friday, January 20, 2012. There were about 290 participants including the Bishops, Clergy and Lay members of various Church denominations. This Ecumenical gathering, the third of its kind, was more appropriate and meaningful as it was held on the Week of prayer for Christian Unity. Rev. Roy Geevarghese and Rev. Alexander Varghese led the worship service with Rev. Dr. Joe Joseph Kuruvilla saying the opening prayer. Rev. K. E. Geevarghese, the Diocesan Secretary welcomed the gathering by saying 'ecumenism is a call for greater unity; not only among the Christian denominations, but also a wider unity that is to be seen in the whole inhabited earth'.

a talk on Ecumenism to the gathered Assembly. Rev. Dr. Paul Rajasekharan, the Dean of Studies, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia who was present with his wife Rev. Esther Rajasekharan spoke about the relevance of Ecumenical relationship for an emigrant community like the Mar Thoma Church. He talked about the pros and cons of being citizens of India and citizens of USA. While touching the different aspects of community living in this land, he emphasized the need to sing a 'new song in the new land'. He said as the roots go deeper, the shoots become stronger. Bishop Charles E Bennisson, the presiding Bishop of Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania, spoke to the gathering by expressing his joy in being present and said that he is touched by the love, warmth and spirit of hospitality of the Mar Thoma Members in organizing the Ecumenical Dinner.

The Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, gave the presidential address with the following words on Ecumenism.

(1) Ecumenism is a gift of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. This ecumenical gathering enables us to praise God together. (2) This fellowship helps us to have a conversation together. So that there will be more listening and sharing of thoughts. The very presence of the people speaks louder than words. (3) There is always a need for all the church denominations to go outside the walls of her administrative and institutional network and to tap the vitality that can be found when the church denominations live and minister together. (4) Though everybody knows about ecumenism, there is a need to look up and listen to the Godhead who is the symbol of unity. (5) Ecumenism that is needed today is to be relevant, intelligible, understandable and credible for us and our younger/growing generation. The youth in the community are citizens of the country. As they grow, they are thinking more and more seriously about how to deepen their unity, to manifest and to give more and more visibility to the gift of God: Church and Ecumenism

The Diocesan Bishop congratulated the Most Rev. Zachariahs Mar Nicolavas on his elevation as the Metropolitan of the Northeast American Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. He also recalled the relationship between the Episcopal Church in USA and the Mar Thoma Church by acknowledging the presence of Rt. Rev. Charles E. Bennisson. Bishop Mar Theodosius welcomed the Rev. Dr. Paul Rajasekharan to give

The most Rev. Zacharias Mar Nicolavas thanked the Mar Thoma Diocese for the words of felicitation and spoke on the process of continuity and change, visible in the immigrant community and succeeding generation in the land of USA. He said that differences are to be ironed out for a greater unity, which will also be relevant and meaningful for the growing generation. Rev. Fr. Jose Daniel, the Chairman of the Ecumenical Fellowship brought greetings from all the Christian denominations in Philadelphia and said that Mar Thoma Church is an integral part in the Ecumenical Fellowship that regularly meets for the last 25 years. The meeting was made more blessed by the various songs sung by the choir members. Mr. Shaji Mathai, the Convener of the meeting expressed his gratitude for the support of everyone present at the Dinner fellowship and asked the Diocesan Bishop to present gift to the honored guests. Mr. Chacko Mathew the Diocesan Treasurer expressed thanks to all the leaders, delegates and conveners of the fellowship meeting. The fellowship meeting lasted for about two and a half hours by sharing a sumptuous Dinner, which concluded with prayer and benediction. Ms. Shobita Shaji was the Emcee. Rev. Roy Geevarghese was the Chairman of the committee and Shaji Mathai was the Convener. The Diocese is grateful to the members of the parishes in Philadelphia region in organizing a memorable event.

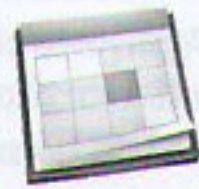
**Rev. K. E. Geevarghese** (Diocesan Secretary)



*Welcome to*

# 30<sup>th</sup> MARTHOMA FAMILY CONFERENCE

**DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE**



**July 5-8, 2012**



**NCC, Leesburg - Virginia**

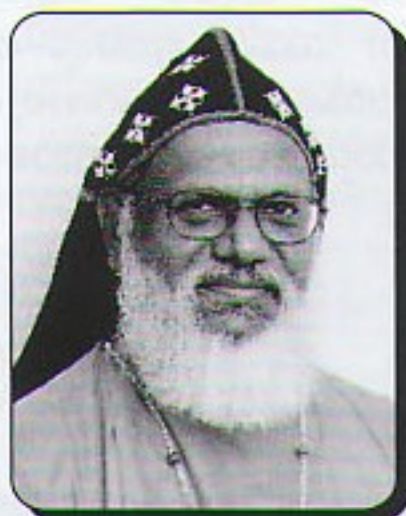


Remembering the Covenant for a Reforming Church (Joshua 24: 24)

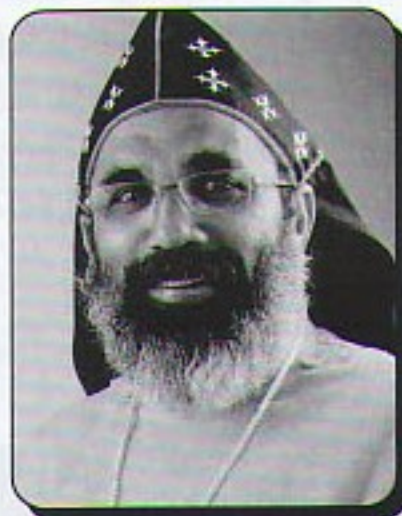


Jointly hosted by The Diocese & Parishes in South East Region

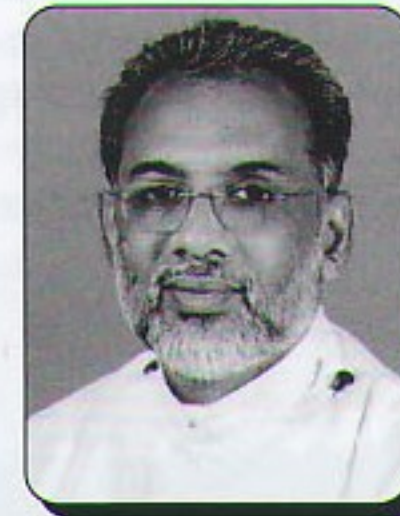
— LEADERS —



**Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese  
Mar Theodosius**  
(Diocesan Episcopa, North America & Europe)



**Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas  
Mar Theethos**  
(Diocesan Episcopa, Mumbai)



**Rev. Dr. M. C. Thomas**  
(Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam)

# www.mtfc2012.org

Make Your Like

[www.facebook.com/mtfc2012](http://www.facebook.com/mtfc2012)

For more details contact,  
Sinai Mar Thoma Center, NY **(516) 377-3311**

# മോചന വാതിൽ തുറക്കുന്ന ദൈവത്തെ സ്വജീവിതത്തിൽ പകർത്തുക:

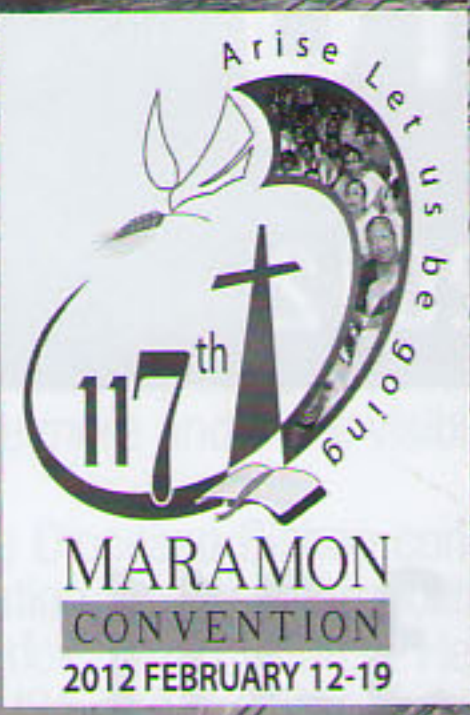
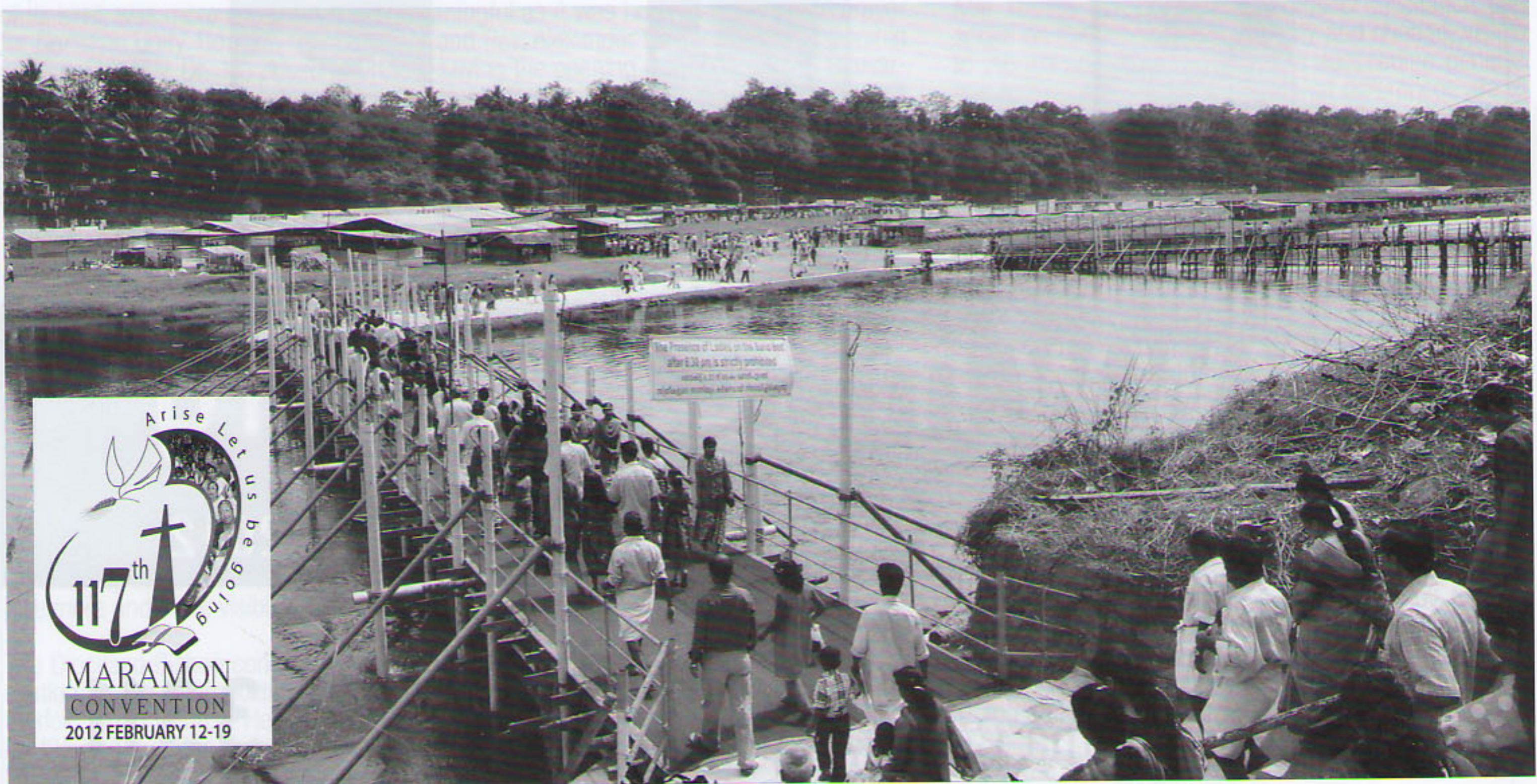


ശ്രീഗോറിയോസ് മാർ സ്തേഫാനോസ്

അപ്പോ: 12:1-12 ഹെരോദാ രാജാവിന്റെ നിർദ്ദേശപ്രകാരം തടവറയിലാകുന്ന പത്രോസിനുള്ളായ അനുഭവമാണ്. യോഹന്നാന്റെ സഹോദരനായ യാക്കോബിനെ കൊന്നതിനു പിന്നാലെയാണ് ഹെരോദാവ് പത്രോസിനെ തടവറയിലാക്കിയത്. എന്നാൽ കർത്താവിന്റെ ദൂതൻ രാത്രി കാരാഗൃഹത്തിൽ പ്രത്യക്ഷപ്പെട്ട് പത്രോസിനെ വിലാപ്തരത്ത് തട്ടിയുണർത്തി. വസ്ത്രം പുതച്ച് എന്റെ പിന്നാലെ വരികയെന്നു പറഞ്ഞു. കാവൽക്കാരിതൊന്നും അറിയാതെ ഉറക്കത്തിലായി. പട്ടുകൾ ഓരോന്നായി തുറന്നു. സ്വപ്നത്തിലെപ്പോലെ പത്രോസ് നടക്കുകയാണ്. ഒടുവിൽ പട്ടണത്തിന്റെ ഇരുമ്പുവാതിലും അവർക്കു മുമ്പിൽ തുറക്കപ്പെട്ടു. പത്രോസ് പുറത്തുകടന്നതോടെ ദൂതൻ അപ്രത്യക്ഷനായി. ഹെരോദാവിന്റെ കയ്യിൽ നിന്നു രക്ഷപെട്ട പത്രോസ് യോഹന്നാന്റെ അമ്മ മറിയയുടെ വീട്ടിൽ അഭയം തേടി. ഇങ്ങനെയാണ് പത്രോസും തടവിലാകുന്നത്. ഗത്ഥസമനയിൽ ഇതേ അനുഭവത്തിലൂടെയാണ് യേശു കടന്നുപോകുന്നത്. ഉണർന്നിരുന്നു പ്രാർഥിപ്പാൻ പറഞ്ഞ പത്രോസും യോഹന്നാനും ഉറങ്ങുകയാണ്. ശീമോനേ ഒരു നാഴികപോലും ഉണർന്നിരുന്നു പ്രാർഥിപ്പാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞില്ലേയെന്നു യേശു പത്രോസിനോട് ചോദിക്കുന്നു. പത്രോസിൽ നിന്നെങ്കിലും യേശു അത് ആഗ്രഹിച്ചു. ദൈവത്തിന്റെ പുത്രനായ ക്രിസ്തുവെന്ന് യേശുവിനെ സാക്ഷിച്ചതിലൂടെ പത്രോസേ നീ പറയാകുന്നു അതിന്മേൽ ഞാനെന്റെ സഭയെ പണിയുമെന്നു കർത്താവിനെക്കൊണ്ടു പറയിയ്ക്കാൻ തക്ക പ്രാഗൽഭ്യം കാട്ടിയ വ്യക്തിയാണ് നിർണായക ഘട്ടത്തിൽ ഉറങ്ങിപ്പോകുന്നത്. സ്വർഗരാജ്യത്തിന്റെ താക്കോൽ ദൈവം പത്രോസിന് കൈമാറുകയാണ്. നീ ഇവിടെ കെട്ടുന്നതെല്ലാം സ്വർഗത്തിൽ കെട്ടും. നീ അഴിക്കുന്നത് സ്വർഗത്തിലും അഴിയപ്പെടും. ഭാവി പ്രതീക്ഷ അസ്ഥിമിച്ച് ജീവിതം തീർന്നുവെന്ന് തോന്നുന്ന കാരാഗൃഹത്തിന്റെ അനുഭവത്തിൽ നിരാശയുടെ ഉറക്കത്തിലാണ് പത്രോസ്. പ്രതിസന്ധികൾക്കു നടുവിൽ മനസിനെ ഭരിക്കേണ്ട ചിന്ത കർത്താവിനോടു കൂടെ ഇനിയും ജീവിതമുണ്ടെന്നും കർത്താവിന്റെ ഉദ്ധേശം എന്നിൽ സാധ്യമാകണമെന്നുമാണ്. പുറത്തുള്ളപ്പൊട്ടും ഒറ്റപ്പെട്ടും പോകുന്ന ജീവിത സാഹചര്യത്തിൽ ക്രിസ്തുവിനോടൊപ്പം എഴുന്നേൽക്കണം. ആന്ധകാരമയമായ അനുഭവത്തിൽ വെളിച്ചം മേകുന്നവനാണ് ജീവിക്കുന്ന ക്രിസ്തു. ചുറ്റുവരിയുന്ന ഇരുട്ടിന് എത്ര കാഠിന്യമേറിയാലും ദൈവദൂതൻ കാരാഗൃഹത്തിന്റെ അന്ധകാരത്തിലേക്കിറങ്ങി വരും. ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ വെളിച്ചം അവിടെ പരക്കും. വ്യഭിചാരക്കുറ്റത്തിൽ പിടിച്ചവളെ കല്ലെറിഞ്ഞു കൊല്ലണമെന്നു പറഞ്ഞവർക്കു മുന്നിൽ യേശു കാലുകൊണ്ട് നിലത്തെഴുതുകയാണ്. നിങ്ങളിൽ ആരെങ്കിലും പാപം ചെയ്യാത്തവരുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ ആദ്യം അവളെ കല്ലെറിയട്ടെയെന്നാണ് നാഥന്റെ മറുപടി. ഓരോരുത്തരും സ്ഥലംവിട്ടപ്പോൾ ഞാനും നിന്നെ കുറ്റംവിധിക്കുന്നില്ല. പോവുക

## MARAMON CONVENTION 2012 SELECTED MESSAGES

ഇനിയും പാപം ചെയ്യരുതെന്ന് യേശു പറയുന്നു. പുതിയ പ്രകാശംനൽകുകയായിരുന്നു ക്രിസ്തു. ശിമയെന്റെ വീട്ടിൽ വിരുന്നിനിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ പട്ടണത്തിലെ പാപിനിയായ സ്ത്രീ യേശുവിന്റെ പിന്നിൽ നിന്നു. കണ്ണീർകൊണ്ട് കാൽ കഴുകി മുടികൊണ്ടു തുടച്ച് തൈലം പുശി. ഇവൻ പ്രവാചകനെങ്കിൽ ഇവനെ തൊട്ട ഇവൾ ആരെന്നറിയേണ്ട എന്ന് സംശയിച്ച ശിമയെന്റെ മനസ് വായിച്ച് യേശു സ്ത്രീയോട് പോക, നിന്റെ വിശ്വാസം നിന്നെ രക്ഷിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നുവെന്നാണ് പറയുന്നത്. പത്രോസിന്റെ കാരാഗൃഹം വിശ്വാസത്തിന്റെ ആഴം വെളിപ്പെടുത്തുകയാണ്. ഗത്ഥസമന ലോകം ഒരിക്കലും കണ്ടിട്ടില്ലാത്ത ഉയിർപ്പിലൂടെ നിത്യപ്രത്യാശയുടെയും പത്രോസിന്റെ തടവറ വിശ്വാസപോരാട്ടത്തിന്റെയും നാഴികകല്ലുകളായി മാറി. കുരിശ് യേശുവിന്റെ അവസാനമാണെന്നു കരുതി യഹൂദർ ആഘോഷിച്ച ദിവസമാണ് ദുഃഖവെള്ളി. എന്നാൽ ഉയിർപ്പിന്റെ ദിനത്തിലൂടെ ദൈവം യേശുവിനെ അതിമഹത്വത്തിലേക്കു കരകയറ്റി. എന്തുകൊണ്ട് നാം എഴുന്നേൽക്കണം? ക്രിസ്തുവിനോടു കൂടെ പോയാൽ അവൻ നമ്മെ എന്തെങ്ങിടത്ത് എത്തിക്കും. ലോകം കേട്ടതിൽ വെച്ചേറ്റവും കഠിനമായ നിലവിളി നിലവിളിച്ച് പ്രാണനെ വിട്ട ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റേതായിരുന്നു. എന്റെ ആത്മാവിനെ സുരക്ഷിത കരങ്ങളിലേൽപ്പിച്ച് ക്രിസ്തു ജീവനെ വെടിഞ്ഞു. അവനറിയാം മഹത്വത്തിന്റെ നാളിലേക്ക് തന്നെ പിതാവ് വീണ്ടെടുക്കുമെന്ന്. ഈ പ്രത്യാശ നമുക്കും വേണം. കാരാഗൃഹത്തിൽ ദൈവദൂതൻ പത്രോസിനെ തൊട്ടുവെളിച്ചപ്പോൾ എല്ലാ ചങ്ങലകളും അഴിഞ്ഞു. കാരാഗൃഹത്തിന്റെ വാതിലുകൾ തുറന്നു. എന്തെങ്ങ സ്ഥാനത്തെത്തിച്ച ദൂതൻ അപ്രത്യക്ഷമാകുന്നു. ആരുമില്ലാത്തവർക്ക് യേശുവിന്റെ സാന്നിധ്യമുണ്ട്. അസാധ്യമെന്നു തോന്നുന്നതിനെ സാധ്യമാക്കുന്ന കർത്താവിനോട് കൂടെ എഴുന്നേൽക്കാം, പോക. എന്തെങ്ങിടത്ത് നാം എത്തും—തീർച്ച. വെല്ലുവിളികൾ നിറഞ്ഞ ഭയാനക സാഹചര്യങ്ങൾ നിറഞ്ഞതാണ് ജീവിതം. വിശ്വാസസ്ഥിരതയോടെ അഭിമുഖീകരിക്കാൻ സാധ്യമാകണം.



# ക്രിസ്തീയ സാക്ഷ്യത്തിലേക്കു പ്രവേശിക്കുക:

റവ.മാർട്ടിൻ അൽഫോൻസ്



ക്രിസ്തീയ സാക്ഷ്യത്തിലേക്കു പ്രവേശിക്കാൻ സഭയ്ക്കുള്ള ആഹ്വാനമാണ് എഴുന്നേൽക്ക നാം പോക എന്നതിന്റെ അർത്ഥമെന്ന് റവ.മാർട്ടിൻ അൽഫോൻസ്. മയക്കത്തിലിരുന്ന ശിഷ്യരോടാണ് യേശു ഇതു പറയുന്നത്. ലോകം ഉറങ്ങുമ്പോൾ ഇതു സ്വതന്ത്രമാകുന്നുവെന്നു 1947 ഓഗസ്റ്റ് 15 ന് നെഹ്രു പറഞ്ഞതും രണ്ടായിരം വർഷം മുമ്പ് യേശുപറഞ്ഞതുമായി സാമ്യമുണ്ട്. ശിഷ്യന്മാരെ ധൈര്യപ്പെടുത്താനും ഒറ്റുകാർ അടുത്തുണ്ടെന്നു മുന്നറിയിപ്പു നൽകാനുമാണ് ഇതു പറഞ്ഞതെങ്കിലും യേശുവിന്റെ ഹൃദയം കലങ്ങിയിരുന്നു. ശിഷ്യന്മാർക്കു പാനപാത്രം നൽകിയ ക്രിസ്തു കഴിയുമെങ്കിൽ ഇതു നീക്കണമേയെന്ന് പിതാവോ ദൈവത്തോടു യാചിക്കുമ്പോൾ വെല്ലുവിളികളിൽ നിന്ന് ഒഴിയാൻ ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്ന കേവലമനുഷ്യനായി മാറുന്നു. പ്രാർത്ഥനയിലൂടെ സംഭരിച്ച ധൈര്യത്തിലൂടെ യേശു ഇതിനെ മറികടക്കുന്നു. താൻ അനുഭവിക്കാൻ പോകുന്ന വേദനകളിൽ പങ്കാളികളാകാനാണ് ക്രിസ്തു സഭയെയും ശിഷ്യസമൂഹത്തെയും വിളിക്കുന്നത്. ശിഷ്യന്മാർ തള്ളിപ്പറയുമെന്നും ക്രൂശിക്കപ്പെടുമെന്നും ചരിത്രത്തെ നിയന്ത്രിക്കുന്നവന് അറിയാമായിരുന്നു. ഒറ്റുകാരും തള്ളിപ്പറയലുകാരും ഉറങ്ങിപ്പോകുന്നവരുമാണെങ്കിലും അവർ തെറ്റ് തിരിച്ചറിഞ്ഞ് തന്നിലേക്കു വരണമെന്ന് യേശു ആഗ്രഹിച്ചു. ക്രൂശിക്കപ്പെടുന്നതിനു മുമ്പ് ന്യായം വിധിക്കപ്പെടാനായി പലയിടത്തേക്കും അവനെ പന്തുതട്ടുന്നപോലെ കൊണ്ടുപോകുന്നുണ്ട്. ഭൂമുഖത്തെ തന്റെ അവസാനയാത്രയിൽ ഒപ്പം ചേരുമ്പോൾ ആ പീഡനത്തിനും വേദനകൾക്കും നമ്മൾ പങ്കാളികളാണ്. യേശുവിനെ ന്യായംവിധിച്ചവരെല്ലാം കള്ളസാക്ഷ്യത്തിനായി കൈകോർത്തു. ആരും നീതിക്കുവേണ്ടി വാദിച്ചില്ല. അധർമ്മികനായ മഹാപുരോഹിതന്റെ ചോദ്യങ്ങൾക്ക് ക്രിസ്തു മൗനം പാലിച്ചപ്പോൾ നീ ദൈവപുത്രനോ എന്നായി ചോദ്യം. മൗനം ലംഘിച്ച് ക്രിസ്തു ഇതിനു അതെയെന്നു മറുപടി നൽകുന്നു. നീതിബോധമില്ലാത്തവന്റെ ചോദ്യങ്ങൾക്ക് യേശുവിനു മറുപടിയില്ല. എന്നാൽ ദൈവപുത്രനെന്ന ആത്യന്തിക സത്യത്തെ വെളിപ്പെടുത്താൻ കിട്ടിയ അവസരത്തിൽ യേശു നിശബ്ദത ഭഞ്ജിക്കുന്നു. മതാധികാരത്തിന്റെ രാക്ഷസശക്തികൾ എളിയവരെ പീഡിപ്പിക്കുമ്പോൾ ആദ്യം മൗനം ആചരിച്ചാലും പിന്നീട് ശബ്ദം ഉയർത്തണം. ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ സ്നേഹത്തിൽ സത്യം സംസാരിക്കുക. ദൈവം അനുവദിക്കാതെ ഒരു ഹേരോദാവിനും നമ്മുടെ മേൽ അധികാരമില്ല. രാജാവിന്റെ അധർമ്മിക ജീവിതത്തെ ചോദ്യം ചെയ്ത സ്നാപകന്റെ തലവെട്ടിയ ഹേരോദാവിന്റെ ചോദ്യങ്ങൾക്കും യേശു മറുപടി നൽകുന്നില്ല. മൗനം അധൈര്യമല്ല മറിച്ച് ധർമ്മിക ശക്തിയുടെ പ്രതിഫലനമാണ്. വിവേകത്തിന്റെ ലക്ഷണമാണ്. കുരിശിൽ കിടക്കുമ്പോഴും ഇവരോടു ക്ഷമിക്കണമേയെന്നതാണ് യേശുവിന്റെ പ്രാർത്ഥന. ശത്രുവിനെ സ്നേഹിക്കാനും ശപിക്കുന്നവരെ അനുഗ്രഹിക്കാനും കൂടിയുള്ള യാത്രയിലേക്കുള്ള ക്ഷണമാണ് എഴുന്നേൽക്ക നാം പോക എന്ന ജീവിത സന്ദേശത്തിലൂടെ യേശു പ്രതിഫലിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. ക്രൂശിലെ മരണത്തിലേക്കുള്ള യാത്ര അവസാനിക്കുന്നില്ല. ക്രൂശിൽ ആ ജീവിതം അവസാനിച്ചിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ വൻദുരന്തമായി മാറുമായിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ തിന്മകൾക്കു മീതെയുള്ള ഉയിർപ്പിലൂടെ യേശു അജയ്യനായി മാറുന്നു.



മാതൃക അവൻ വരച്ചുകാട്ടുന്നു. ലോകത്തിന്റെ വ്യതിയാനം കുരിശിലൂടെ വെളിപ്പെടുകയാണ്. മഹാത്മാഗാന്ധി സാക്ഷ്യപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതുപോലെ ക്രിസ്തു സ്നേഹമാണ്. ജീവിക്കുന്ന ഇതിഹാസമായ നെൽസൺ മണ്ടേലയെ അറിയാമെങ്കിലും ഓർമ്മയുടെ വിദൂരതയിലായതിനാൽ ഗാന്ധിയെ മറക്കുന്ന ഇന്ത്യക്കാരാണ്. ക്രിസ്തുവിനെ അറിഞ്ഞാൽ ഇവരെ യെല്ലാം തിരിച്ചറിയാനാവും. സ്നേഹത്തിലൂടെ മലയാളികളുടെ നന്മയുടെ ഊഷ്മളത തിരിച്ചറിയുന്നുവെന്ന് പുറംവാന പറഞ്ഞു. ഇത് മഹാത്മജിയുടെയും മദർ തെരേസയുടെയും നാടാണ്. സാധാരണക്കാരായ നമുക്ക് മഹാത്മായോ മദറോ ആകാൻ പറ്റില്ലെങ്കിലും അപ്പോസ്തോലിക പാരമ്പര്യത്തിന്റെയും പിൻഗാമികളാകാനാവും.

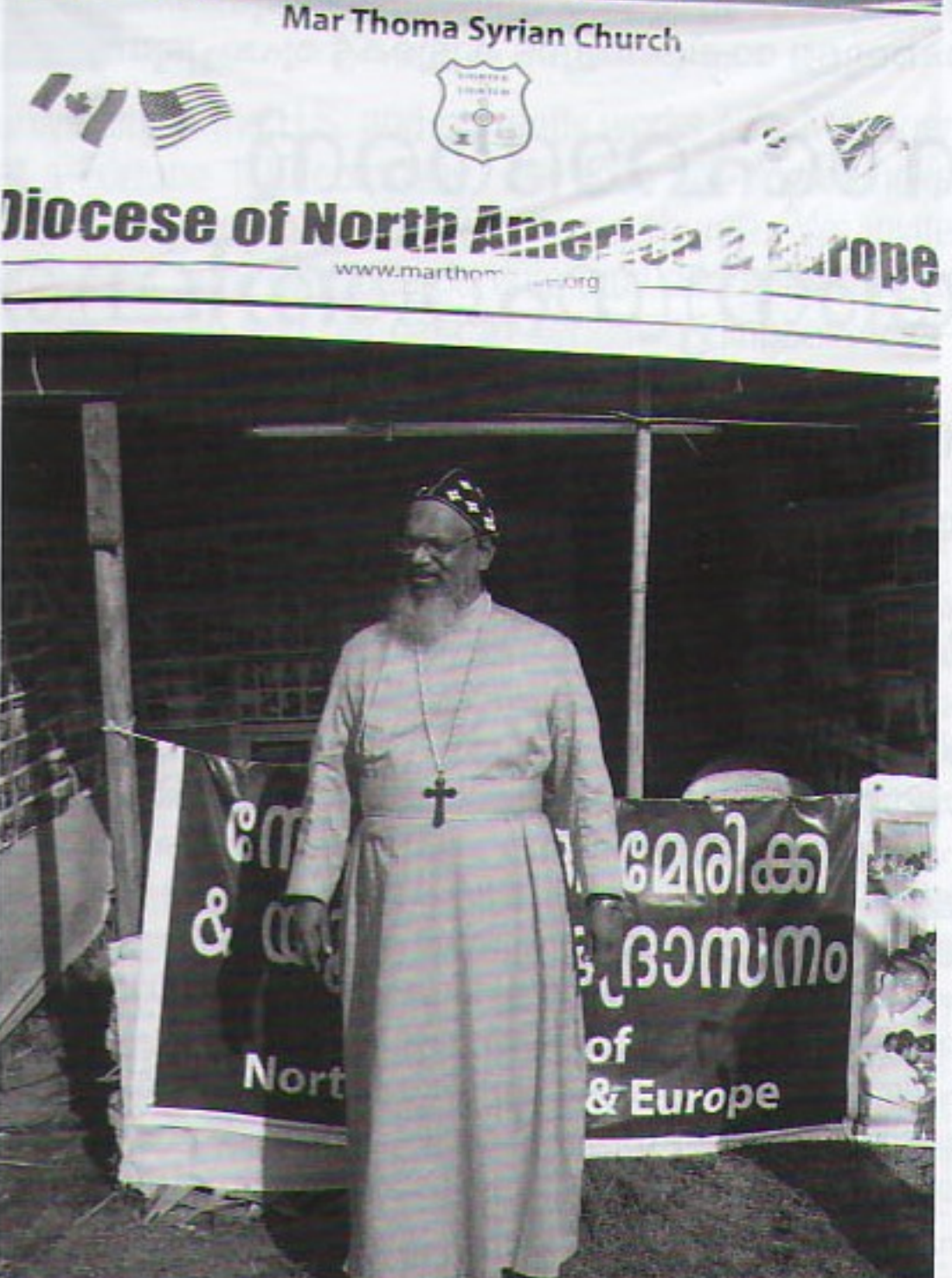
മനുഷ്യരാശിയുടെ രക്ഷാ ചരിത്രം രചിക്കപ്പെട്ട രാത്രിയാണ് ഗർഭസമനയിലേത്. സൃഷ്ടി പറ്റിയ പാപ വികലതകളിൽ നിന്നു നമ്മെ മോചിപ്പിക്കാനായി ദൈവം ആ രാത്രി ചരിത്രത്തിൽ ഇടപെടുന്നു. ഗർഭസമനയിലെ ഭീതിത രാത്രി നമ്മുടെ ജീവിതത്തെയും ശക്തിപ്പെടുത്താനുള്ള ആഹ്വാനമാണ്. വർണ്ണവിവേചനത്തിന്റെ കാലത്ത് പല വർഗ്ഗക്കാരെയും വ്യത്യസ്ത ലക്ഷ്യത്തോടെ സൃഷ്ടിച്ചുവെന്നു പറയുന്നു. വെളുത്തി രുന്നാൽ അവസരം കൂടുതൽ ലഭിക്കുമെന്ന് ഇതു പഠിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. കറുത്തവർ വിറകുവെട്ടികളും വെള്ളംകോരുകാരുമാണെന്ന് വെളുത്തവർ വിശ്വസിച്ചു. ബ്രിട്ടീഷ് അർക്കാശിൽ കുന്തംപിടിച്ച മനുഷ്യരുപമുണ്ട്. ഇതു കറുത്തവരുടെ ഇടയിൽ വിനിമയം ചെയ്യുന്നു. സാത്താന്റെ പ്രതിരൂപമായും ഇതിനെ കാണുന്നവരുണ്ട്. തേനീച്ചയെ ദൈവവും പുമ്പാറ്റയെ സാത്താനും സൃഷ്ടിച്ചുവെന്ന് വെള്ളക്കാർ കിടയിൽ വിശ്വാസമുണ്ട്. വെളുത്തവരെ മാത്രമാണ് ദൈവം സൃഷ്ടിച്ചതെന്ന ആ മനോഭാവമാണ് മഹാത്മാ

# ഭൂമിയെ സംരക്ഷിക്കാൻ ലോകത്തിലെ സഭകൾ ഒന്നിക്കണം:

ബിഷപ്പ് മാലു സി പുറംവാന



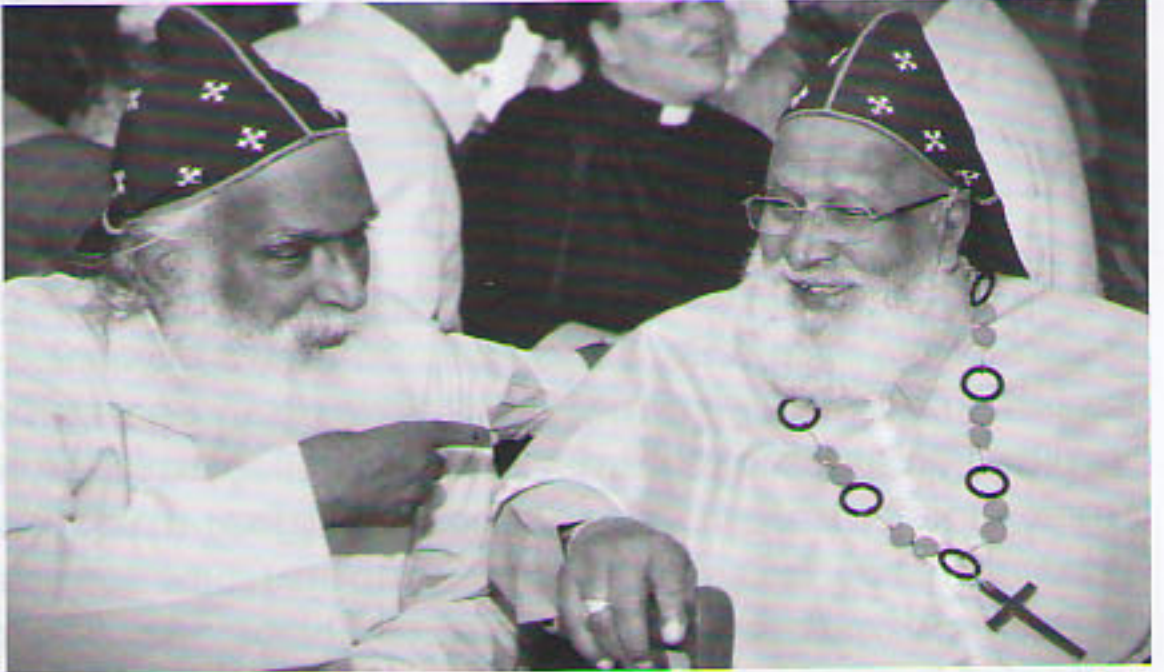
ഉറങ്ങുന്ന സഹജീവികളെക്കൂടി വിളിച്ചുണർത്തി നമ്മുടെ ഭാഗ്യയേം നിർണയിക്കുന്ന ഈ കാലത്ത് ഗർഭസമനയിൽ കർത്താവ് കാട്ടിയ ധൈര്യം നമുക്കും പ്രദർശിപ്പിക്കാൻ കഴിയണം. ബ്രസീലിലെ സഭയുമായി ഭാരത സഭ ബന്ധം സ്ഥാപിച്ചാൽ വ്യവസായ രാഷ്ട്രീയ നേതൃത്തെ സ്വാധീനിച്ച് ഭൂമിയുടെ രക്ഷയ്ക്കായി കൈകോർക്കാനാവുമെന്നും ആഫ്രിക്കൻ സഭ ഇത്തരമൊരു പരിസ്ഥിതി രക്ഷാദൗത്യത്തിനായി ഭാരത സഭയിലേക്കും പ്രത്യേകിച്ചും മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭയിലേക്കും ഉറ്റുനോക്കുകയാണെന്നും പുറംവാന പറഞ്ഞു. ഇതെനിക്കു ആത്മീയ ഉണർവിന്റെയും വളർച്ചയുടെയും സമയം. എഴുന്നേൽക്ക നാം പോക എന്നു യേശുപറയുന്നു. ഈ അവസ്ഥയിൽ മുമ്പോട്ടു പോകാനാവില്ല. വിവേചനത്തിൽ നിന്നു നാം പുറത്തുകടന്നേ മതിയാകൂ. എന്നാൽ അനിശ്ചിതം. എന്നാൽ കർത്താവിന് എങ്ങോട്ടെന്നു നിശ്ചയമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. വഴിയും സത്യവുമെന്നു നിശ്ചയമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ആസന്നമായ അപകടത്തിനു മുന്നോടിയായി ഇതു പറയുന്നു. രാത്രിക്ക് അന്ത്യഅന്താഘത്തിനിടയിൽ വ്യാപരിക്കപ്പെട്ട സ്നേഹം പ്രധാനം. കർത്താവിന്റെ ഓർമ്മ അനുസ്മരിക്കപ്പെടും വിധം ശാശ്വതവൽക്കരിക്കപ്പെട്ട നിമിഷം. ദൈവ-മനുഷ്യബന്ധം പുനസ്ഥാപിക്കാൻ മരണം അനിവാര്യം. കൃപയുടെയും പാപമോചനത്തിന്റെയും പ്രവാഹമായി അന്ത്യഅന്താഘം മാറുകയാണ്. കൂട്ടായ്മയുടെ അവിഭാജ്യ ഘടകമായി പരസ്പര സ്നേഹം മാറുകയാണ്. വരാനിരിക്കുന്ന കാലത്തിലേക്കും ദൗത്യം അഭംഗ്യം തുടരുന്നതിനു ഈ കൂട്ടായ്മ സുപ്രധാനമായി മാറുന്നു. ഗർഭസമനയിലേത് ഉത്കണ്ഠയും ഭയവും നിറഞ്ഞ രാത്രിയുടേതാണ്. മനുഷ്യന്റെ മരണവേദനയുമായി കർത്താവ് താദാത്മ്യപ്പെടുന്ന നിമിഷമാണിത്.



Tirumeni in front of Maramon Diocesan Stall



ഗാന്ധിയെ ദക്ഷിണാഫ്രിക്കയിൽ ട്രെയിനിൽ നിന്നു ചവുട്ടി പുറത്താക്കിയത്. ഗാന്ധിജിയെ തന്നതിന് ദക്ഷിണാഫ്രിക്ക എന്നും ഇന്ത്യയോട് കടപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. മഹാത്മാഗാന്ധിയിലൂടെ ഇന്ത്യ ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് വലിയ സംഭാവന നൽകി. ഡർബനിലെ ഗാന്ധി സ്മാരകമുണ്ട്. 27 വർഷം നെൽസൺ മണ്ടേലയെ തടവിലായതും വർണവിവേചനം അവസാനിച്ചതിലും ഗാന്ധിയുടെ സ്വാധീനമുണ്ട്. നമ്മൾ ആരാ യാലും ദൈവത്തിന്റെ സാന്നിധ്യമാണ് മനുഷ്യനെ അനന്യനാക്കുന്നത്. സ്നേഹമാണ് അതിന്റെ ഭാഷ. ഏതു പ്രതികൂലത്തിലും സ്നേഹം പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കാൻ കഴിയണം. മനുഷ്യൻ പൂർണ്ണത കൈവരിക്കുന്നത് സ്നേഹത്തിൽ ദൈവത്തെ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുമ്പോഴാണ്. സ്നേഹമില്ലെങ്കിൽ മനുഷ്യരില്ല. വ്യക്തി എന്നതിന് സുലു ഭാഷയിൽ ഉമുൺടു എന്നു പറയാറുണ്ട്. സ്നേഹദാരുണിനും ഇതേ വാക്കുതന്നെ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നു. സ്നേഹമില്ലെങ്കിൽ ഇയാൾ മനുഷ്യനേയല്ല എന്നു പറയും. വ്യക്തി വ്യക്തിയാകുന്നത് അപരനു സ്നേഹം നൽകു വേണ്ടാണ്. സ്നേഹം കൈമാറുന്നതിനു ആഫ്രിക്കക്കാർക്കിടയിൽ ആചാരമുണ്ട്. മരണമുണ്ടാ യാൽ ഓരോ കുടുംബവും ചെറിയ തുകകൾ നൽകും. സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ പിന്തുണ വാഗ്ദാനം ചെയ്യുകയാണ് ഇതിനു പിന്നിൽ. സ്നേഹത്തെ ക്രൈസ്തവവിശ്വാസത്തിന്റെ മൂലക്കല്ലാക്കിയ സംഭവമാണ് കാൽവറിയുടേത്. സമൂഹം വികലമാക്കിയ സ്നേഹസമ്പരത്തെ വീണ്ടെടുക്കുകയാണ് കർത്താവ്. ഗൗരവമേറിയ ആ രാത്രി മനുഷ്യരാശിക്കു നൽകുന്ന ശാശ്വത സന്ദേശമാണ് എഴുന്നേൽക്ക നാം പോക. ഒറ്റിക്കൊടുത്ത രാത്രിയിൽ കർത്താവു കാട്ടിയ ധൈര്യം ലോകത്തിന്റെ അതിരുകളോളം പോകാൻ നമ്മെ ശക്തികരിക്കുന്നു. പ്രാദേശികമായി കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യാവുന്നതല്ല. രാഷ്ട്രത്തിനല്ല, ആഗോളമായി കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യേണ്ടതാണ്. മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭയുടെ ഈ ബൗദ്ധിക ദുരക്കാഴ്ചയുടെ മികവ് ലോകത്തിന് എങ്ങനെ രക്ഷാകരമായി പ്രയോജനപ്പെടുത്താനാവുമെന്ന് അന്വേഷിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ബ്രസീലിയൻ സഭ നോമ്പുകാലത്ത് ഒരു പ്രശ്നം ഏറ്റെടുത്തു പഠിക്കാറുണ്ട്. അഴിമതിയാകാം, ബാലവേലയാകാം, പ്രശ്നം പഠിച്ച് പരിഹാരവും നിർദ്ദേശിക്കും. ഭൂമിയിലെ ജീവന്റെ ഭാവി എന്നതായിരുന്നു അവസാന പഠനം. ഈ പ്രശ്നം തന്നെയാണ് മാർ ക്രിസോസ്റ്റവും പങ്കുവെക്കുന്നത്. ഭക്ഷ്യസുരക്ഷയും പഠനവിഷയമായി. ലോകത്തിന്റെ ഇത്തരം ആശങ്കകൾ ഭാരത സഭയും ഗൗരവമായെടുക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ആഗോള തലത്തിൽ സഭ ഇതിനെപ്പറ്റിയും ചിന്തിക്കണം. സഭയിലെ ബുദ്ധിജീവികൾ വിഷയം തിരഞ്ഞെടുത്താലുടൻ പഠനം സജീവമാക്കും. പ്രാദേശിക സഭകൾ പരിഹാരം നിർദ്ദേശിച്ച് പ്രചരണം നടത്തും. കൊള്ളയടിക്കുന്ന പാൽചാതുർ ഒരു കൈയ്യിൽ ബൈബിളും മറുകൈ പോക്കറ്റിലും താഴ്ത്തിയാണ് വന്നത്. പൗരസ്ത്യ രാജ്യങ്ങൾ പുതിയ ലോകക്രമത്തിൽ വികസനത്തിന്റെ മുൻനിരയിലേക്കു വരുമ്പോൾ പാൽചാതുരുടെ തെറ്റ് ആവർത്തിക്കുമോ? പുതിയ ലോക ക്രമം മൂല്യം സൃഷ്ടിക്കണം. ജനതയുടെ വിമോചനത്തിലേക്ക് ലോകത്തെ നയിക്കാനാവുമോ? ഇന്ത്യൻ സഭയുമായി ഇതുവരെ ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടിരുന്നതിൽ ഖേദമുണ്ട്. സർക്കാർ തലത്തിൽ ബ്രിക്ക് പോലുള്ള രാഷ്ട്രങ്ങളുടെ കൂട്ടുകെട്ട് രൂപപ്പെടുന്നു.



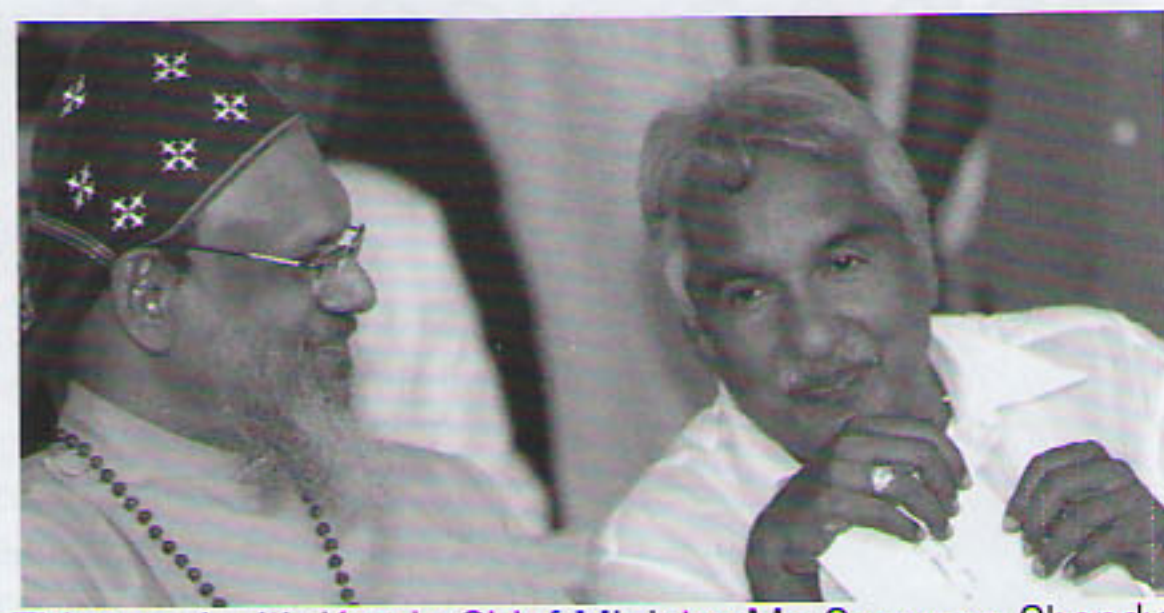
നിന്ന് മോചനം തേടിയായിരുന്നുവെങ്കിലും ഒടുവിൽ അടിമത്തമായി. എല്ലാ നന്മയുടെയും ഉള്ളിൽ തിന്മയുടെ സാധ്യതയുണ്ടെന്ന് ഇതിൽ നിന്നു മനസിലാക്കാം. തിന്മയ്ക്കുള്ളിൽ നന്മയ്ക്കും ഇടമുണ്ട്. എവിടെയും തിന്മയുടെ സാന്നിധ്യമുണ്ട്. ഓരോ മനുഷ്യനിലും തിന്മയുണ്ട്. ക്രിസ്തുവല്ലാതെ തിന്മയില്ലാത്ത ഒരുവനുമില്ല. എന്നാൽ തിന്മമൂലം രക്ഷയുടെ അനുഭവത്തിൽ നിന്ന് നാം എവിടെയെല്ലാം അന്യമായിരിക്കുന്നുവെന്ന് തിരിച്ചറിഞ്ഞ് തിരികെ വരാനുള്ള അവസരമാണ് മാരാമൺ. നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ട ആട്, ദ്രവ്യം, മകൻ എന്നീ മൂന്ന് ഉപമകൾ ലൂക്കോസിന്റെ സുവിശേഷത്തിലുണ്ട്. മൂന്നും തിരികെ കിട്ടിയവയാണെങ്കിലും ഇവയെ നഷ്ടങ്ങളെന്നു പറയാനാണ് നാം ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നത്. എന്നാൽ തിരികെ ലഭിച്ചതിന്റെ ആഘോഷം പങ്കുവെക്കാനാണ് ക്രിസ്തു ഈ ഉപമകൾ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നത്. കഴിഞ്ഞ വർഷത്തെ കൺവൻഷനിൽ നിന്നു ലഭിച്ച ഗൃഹപാഠങ്ങൾ ജീവിതത്തിൽ എത്രപേർ പ്രാവർത്തികമാക്കി? ഗൃഹപാഠം ചെയ്യാൻ മറന്നുപോയി എന്നു പറയാൻ മറന്നുപോകാത്ത കുട്ടിയെപ്പോലെ എല്ലാ വർഷവും ഇവിടെ വന്ന് കേട്ടുമടങ്ങുന്നതിൽ കാര്യമില്ല. കൺവൻഷനിൽ പങ്കെടുത്ത നിങ്ങളിലൂടെ ലോകത്തിനുണ്ടായ അനുഗ്രഹം എന്താണെന്നു ചിന്തിക്കണം. ശിഷ്യന്മാരോടുപ്രാർഥിക്കാൻ ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടിട്ടാണ് യേശു ഗത്സമനയിലേക്കു പോകുന്നത്. ദൈവത്തിനു നമ്മുടെ സഹായം ചില സന്ദർഭത്തിൽ ആവശ്യമാണ്. ദൈവം നമുക്കു തരുന്ന അനുഗ്രഹത്തെ കുഴിച്ചിടുകല്ലു വളർത്തിയെടുക്കുകയാണ് നമ്മുടെ ദൗത്യം. ഓരോ കൺവൻഷൻ കഴിയുമ്പോഴും ലോകത്തിന് കൂടുതലായി എന്തു നൽകാമെന്നതാവണം ചിന്ത. പാപം ചെയ്യുന്നവരാണ് നമ്മൾ. പാപക്ഷമ ലഭിക്കാതെ സ്വർഗത്തിൽ പോകാനാവില്ല. അപ്പോൾ പാപം ചെയ്യാതെ സ്വർഗത്തിൽ പോകാനാവില്ലേ എന്തു ചിന്തിച്ചാലും തെറ്റല്ല. ദൈവം പ്രത്യേകിച്ചും പാപികളോടു ചേർന്നു നിൽക്കുന്നതിനു മടിച്ചില്ലാത്തവനാണ്. നല്ല

# സഹോദരന്റെ അനുഗ്രഹത്തിലൂടെ പുതിയ ലോകം:



ഡോ. ഫിലിപ്പോസ് മാർ ക്രിസോസ്റ്റം വലിയ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്ത

ദൈവസ്നേഹത്തിലും കൃപയിലും മനുഷ്യർ സഹോദരങ്ങളായി ഒന്നിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന പുതിയ ലോകം സൃഷ്ടിക്കാനുള്ള യാത്രയ്ക്കായി ഓരോരുത്തരും എഴുന്നേറ്റു പോകേണ്ടതെന്ന് ഡോ. ഫിലിപ്പോസ് മാർ ക്രിസോസ്റ്റം വലിയ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്ത. സഹോദരന്റെ അനുഗ്രഹത്തിനായി ജീവിക്കുന്നതിലൂടെ മാത്രമേ ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ ജീവിതലക്ഷ്യം പൂർത്തീകരിക്കുന്നവരായി മാറാനാവൂയെന്നും മാർ ക്രിസോസ്റ്റം പറഞ്ഞു. ഒരു വീട്ടിൽ അടുത്തടുത്ത ക്ലാസുകളിൽ പഠിക്കുന്ന ആൺകുട്ടിയും പെൺകുട്ടിയുമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഇടയ്ക്ക് ഒരാൾ തോറ്റതോടെ ഇരുവരും ഒരു ക്ലാസിലായി. ഒരു ദിവസം പശുവിനെപ്പറ്റി ഉപന്യാസമെഴുതാൻ സാർ ഇരുവർക്കും ഗൃഹപാഠം നൽകി. മിടുക്കിയായ പെൺകുട്ടിയുടെ ഉത്തരം ആൺകുട്ടി പകർത്തിയെഴുതി. സാർ ഇതു കണ്ടുപിടിച്ച് ചോദ്യം ചെയ്തപ്പോൾ ആൺകുട്ടിയുടെ മറുപടി: സാറേ ഞങ്ങളുടെ വീട്ടിൽ ഒരു പശുമാത്രം, പിന്നെയെങ്ങനെ പകർത്തിയെഴുതാനാവും? എഴുന്നേൽക്കാ പോകാ എന്നു കേൾക്കുമ്പോൾ കഴിഞ്ഞ ദിവസം പലരും ചെയ്തതുപോലെ ഇടയ്ക്ക് എഴുന്നേറ്റുപോകയല്ല വേണ്ടത്. യേശു ജീവിതയാത്രയുടെ അവസാനത്തിൽ പെസഹാ പെരുനാൾ ആചരിക്കാൻ ഗത്സമനയിൽ കൂടിയപ്പോൾ നൽകുന്ന ഉപദേശമാണ് എഴുന്നേൽക്കാ പോക. മിസ്രയീമിലെ അടിമത്വത്തിൽ നിന്ന് യിസ്രായേൽ ജനത തിരികെ വാഗ്ദത്ത ഭൂമിയിലേക്കു വന്നതിന്റെ പെരുനാളാണിത്. സത്യത്തിൽ യൗസേഫാണ് ആദ്യ യിസ്രായേലുരായ സഹോദരങ്ങളെ മിസ്രയീമിലേക്ക് കൊണ്ടുവരുന്നത്. അത് പട്ടിണിയിൽ



Thirumeni with Kerala Chief Minister Mr. Oommen Chandy



Thirumeni's Birthday celebration at Maramon Diocesan Stall

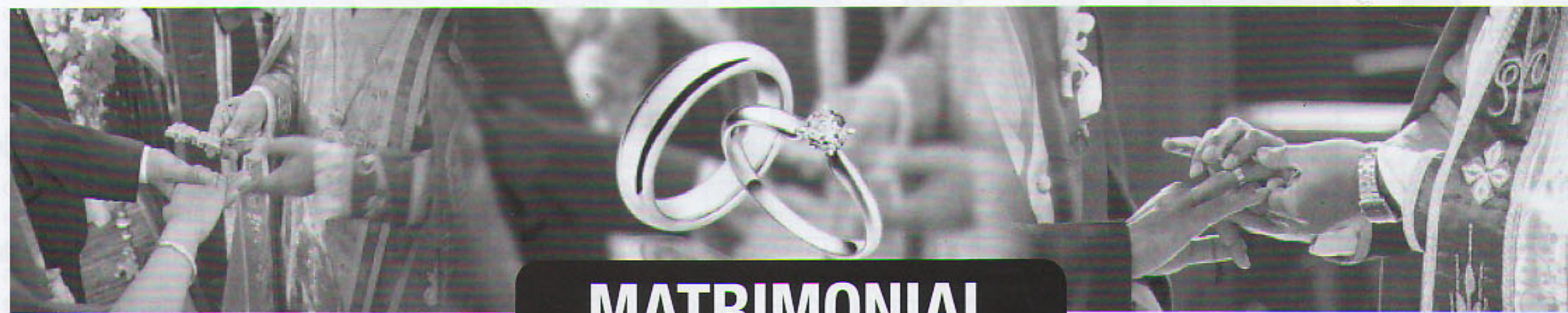
ശമര്യക്കാരനെ അവഗണിച്ച് കടന്നുപോയതിന്റെ പേരിൽ ലേവ്യനെയും പുരോഹിതനെയും കുറ്റപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിലാണ് ഏവർക്കും താൽപ്പര്യം. ദൈവത്തിനു സ്വീകാര്യനല്ലാത്ത ഒരു മനുഷ്യനും ലോകത്തില്ല. കഴുമരം കാത്തിരിക്കുന്നവനെയും വിശുദ്ധരെയും ഒരുപോലെ സ്നേഹിക്കുന്ന ദൈവം മുടിയനായ പുത്രനെപ്പോലും ചേർത്തുപിടിക്കുന്ന പിതാവിന്റെ മനസ്സുള്ളവനാണ്. നിന്റെ സഹോദരനെവിടെ? നീ എവിടെ? എന്നതായിരുന്നു കഴിഞ്ഞ വർഷത്തെ ചിന്ത. ഇരിക്കുന്നിടത്തു നിന്ന് എഴുന്നേൽക്കുന്നത് പല ലക്ഷ്യത്തോടെയാണ്. അതു കൊല്ലാനാവാം, നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ട മുടിയൻ പുത്രനെ തിരികെ സ്വീകരിക്കാനാവാം. അടിമത്വം വിട്ടെഴുന്നേറ്റ് പോയതിന്റെ ഓർമ്മപ്പെടുത്തലായ പെസഹ ആചരിക്കുന്നതിനിടയാണ് യേശു ഗൽസമനയുടെ പൂർണ്ണതയിലേക്കു എഴുന്നേറ്റുപോകാൻ ആഹ്വാനം നൽകുന്നത്. ആയിരിക്കുന്ന സ്ഥാനത്തു നിന്ന് ആയിരിക്കേണ്ട സ്ഥാനത്തേക്കുള്ള പ്രയാണത്തിനാണ് എഴുന്നേൽക്കേണ്ടതും പോകേണ്ടതും. അല്ലാതെ പ്രസംഗത്തിനിടയിൽ എഴുന്നേറ്റു പോകുന്നതിനല്ല. പാനപാത്രം നീക്കേണമേയെന്നു പറയുമ്പോൾ പിതാവ് യേശുവിന്റെ മനസിൽ മറുപടി പറയുന്നു. ശിശുവിന്റെ ഭാരം അമ്മയ്ക്ക് പുപോലെയാണ്. അതുപോലെ മനുഷ്യ വംശത്തിനു വേണ്ടിയുള്ള ഈ കഷ്ടത ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ ആഹ്ലാദമാണ്. സൃഷ്ടിച്ചതിൽ ഒരുത്തൻപോലും നഷ്ടപ്പെടുത്തുന്ന ലക്ഷ്യത്തിലേക്കു നയിക്കപ്പെടാനാണ് യേശു ശിഷ്യന്മാരോട് ഗത്സമനയിൽ പ്രാർഥിക്കാൻ ആവശ്യപ്പെടുന്നത്. എല്ലാം വെട്ടി പിടിച്ചെടുക്കാമെന്ന് കരുതിയ പത്രോസ് വാളെടുത്തപ്പോൾ പട്ടാളക്കാരന്റെ ചെവി മുറിയുന്നു. ഇതല്ല ക്രിസ്തുമാർഗമെന്ന് ദൈവം പത്രോസിനെ തിരുത്തുകയാണ്. വീടില്ലാത്തവന് വീട് നൽകുകയോ രോഗിക്ക് സഹായം ചെയ്യുകയോ ചെയ്യാതെ അവന്റെ വീട് പിടിച്ചെടുക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നവരാണ് പലരും. ദാഹിക്കുന്നവന് വെള്ളം വേണം. മക്കളില്ലാത്തവർക്ക്



അഭയം വേണം. യേശു ക്രിസ്തുവിൽ ജീവിതം കെട്ടിപ്പടുക്കുവാനുള്ള ശ്രമമാണ് ഇന്നിന്റെ ആവശ്യം. നിങ്ങളുടെ ജീവൻ ഇന്ന് ആരുടെ കൈകളിലാണെന്ന് ഓരോരുത്തരും ചിന്തിക്കണം. എഴുന്നേറ്റ് സഹോദരന്റെ അനുഗ്രഹത്തിനായി ജീവിക്കാൻ പഠിപ്പിക്കണം. തിരുഹിതം പോലെ ദൈവസ്നേഹത്തിലും കൃപയിലും ഒന്നിക്കപ്പെട്ട ലോകം സൃഷ്ടിക്കാൻ ഇടയാക്കാൻ ഓരോരുത്തരും ഉപയോഗിക്കപ്പെടണം.

Articles reprinted with permission from [www.manoramaonline.com](http://www.manoramaonline.com)

Maramon Convention Photos from:  
**Rev. John Geevarghese** (System Manager, Sabha Office)  
**Emlin M. Abraham** (Seethathodu - Pathanamthitta)  
**Varghese Philip** (MTEA Office, Tiruvalla)



# MATRIMONIAL

- ✱ Marthomite parents settled in New Jersey, invite marriage proposals for their US born son, 29 years old, 5'6", and family oriented with Christian values. He is a graduate in finance, currently working for an Asset Management firm in Connecticut. We invite proposals from the parents of Christ centered, family oriented Marthomite girls. Please respond with a recent photograph & bio-data by e-mail [thuthikadathil@yahoo.com](mailto:thuthikadathil@yahoo.com) or call 201-723-2786.
- ✱ Proposals invited for Marthoma girl, 34 yrs, 5'2", engineer - software professional working in UK for the last 5 years. She is God fearing, smart, cherishes traditional values yet is modern. Seeking family oriented boy from Marthoma/Jacobite/CSI/Orthodox families, should be God fearing, loving, broad minded with a modern outlook. Should be professionally qualified and preferably have exposure outside Kerala. If interested, please respond with details to [reply543@gmail.com](mailto:reply543@gmail.com)
- ✱ Marthomite parents settled in NJ invite proposals for their son, 31 years, 5'8", M.D., born and raised in USA doing fellowship. He is a strong Christian and family oriented man; Looking for a God fearing and family oriented woman in the same field. Interested parents please contact with details and recent photos to [sammy2050@aim.com](mailto:sammy2050@aim.com) or call 201-692-7753 or 201-400-4834
- ✱ Marthomite parents settled in NJ invite proposals for their daughter, 28 years, 5'3", M.D. born and raised in USA doing third year residency in New York City. She is a strong Christian and family oriented woman looking for a God fearing and family oriented man in the same field or other professionally qualified fields. Interested parents please contact with details and recent photos to [sammy2050@aim.com](mailto:sammy2050@aim.com) or call 201-692-7753 or 201-400-4834
- ✱ Marthomite parents settled in the U.S. invite proposals for their son. He is 27 years old, 5'11 tall (180cms) and completed his Masters in Engineering from a prestigious

- university in the U.S. and currently works as a Manager at a Fortune 100 company. He does not drink/smoke and is very active in the Mar Thoma church. We invite proposals from Christian parents (any denomination) to send a photo and bio data to [keralaweddingbells@yahoo.com](mailto:keralaweddingbells@yahoo.com)
- ✱ CSI Syrian Christian parents invite proposal for their son, 25/5'10", BS in Electrical Engineering, US citizen working as an Engineer of One of the largest Power Plants and doing MBA, from parents of God fearing, respected family, good looking qualified girls preferably Doctors/qualified chartered accountants/CPA/Pharmacist (USA)/Engineers of CSI, Mar Thoma, Jacobite & Orthodox Contact with full details to [jvpennell73@gmail.com](mailto:jvpennell73@gmail.com)
- ✱ Marthomite parents settled in the U.S. invite proposals for their son. He is 27 years old, 5'11 tall (180cms) and completed his Masters in Engineering from an Ivy League University in the U.S. He currently works as a Senior Manager at a top financial services company. He does not drink/smoke and is very active in the Marthoma church. We invite proposals from Christian parents (any denomination) to send a photo and bio-data to [weddingbells32451@gmail.com](mailto:weddingbells32451@gmail.com)

# Bible Crossword Puzzle (The Book of Deuteronomy. Chapters 1-15, NIV Bible)

		1.		2.									3.
									4.				
	5.	6.						7.					
								8.					
9.	10.		11.										
							12.						
											13.		
				14.	15.								
	16.									17.			
			18.			19.							
												20.	
						21.			22.				
			23.										
	24.												

**Across:**

- 01. "For the Lord our God is a \_\_\_\_\_ God, He will not abandon you".
- 05. "You must follow and \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord your God, keep his commands and obey him".
- 07. \_\_\_\_\_ your father and mother so that you may live long.
- 09. The Lord your God has \_\_\_\_\_ over your journey through the desert.
- 14. Remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you, the \_\_\_\_\_ to produce wealth.
- 16. Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, followed the Lord \_\_\_\_\_.
- 18. "You shall not \_\_\_\_\_ the name of the Lord your God".
- 21. Write the commandments that the Lord has given you on the \_\_\_\_\_ of your houses and on your gates.
- 23. "The Lord has chosen you to be his \_\_\_\_\_ possession.
- 24. "You saw with your own eyes the \_\_\_\_\_ signs and wonders with which the Lord brought you out of Egypt.

**Down:**

- 02. "I am setting before you a \_\_\_\_\_ if you disobey commands of the Lord your God.
- 03. "Do not show \_\_\_\_\_ in judging: hear both small and great alike.
- 04. Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it \_\_\_\_\_.
- 06. "You must not \_\_\_\_\_ the life with the meat".
- 08. You shall not commit \_\_\_\_\_.
- 10. "\_\_\_\_\_ and take to heart that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below.
- 11. The pig has a split hoof but does not chew the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 12. You may eat any clean bird but do not eat the white \_\_\_\_\_.
- 13. "Man does not live on bread alone but on every \_\_\_\_\_ that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
- 15. "If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them you will be \_\_\_\_\_ more than any other people.
- 17. Do not covet the gold or silver on the images of other gods or you will be \_\_\_\_\_ by it.
- 18. The tribe of Levi is to \_\_\_\_\_ before the Lord and pronounce his blessing.
- 19. Moses said "Break down their altars, smash their sacred \_\_\_\_\_, cut down their Asherah Poles".
- 20. "Love the Lord your God and serve Him with all your \_\_\_\_\_ & with all your soul.

**October 2011 Issue  
Winners**

- Achamma Chacko, Trinity MTC, Houston
- Aleyamma Mathew, MTC Dallas Famers Br
- Aleyamma Ninan, St.Thomas MTC, NY
- Elizabeth George, Canadian MTC Toronto
- George C G, Ascension MTC, PA
- Gracy P Vattakunnel, Trinity MTC, Houston
- Kunjumma Thomas, Trinity MTC, Houston
- Maria Mathews, Ascension MTC, PA
- Maria Stephen, St. Marks MTC Tampa FL
- Mariamamma John, Sehion MTC, Dallas
- Omana Rajee, MTC Staten Island, NY
- Paul Isaac, Carmel MTC, Boston
- Santosh Skariah, RGV-MTC, Edinburg, TX
- Saramma Chacko, Epiphany MTC NY
- Shaila Mathew, MTC Dallas Famers Br
- Shaji David, MTC Dallas Famers Br
- Sicily Skariah, MTC Dallas Famers Br
- Thomas GeeVarghese, Bethel MTC, PA
- Tony Eappen, Trinity MTC, Houston



**January 2012 Issue  
Winners**

- Aleyamma Mathew, MTC Dallas Famers Br
- Allan Jiji, Pheonix MTC, Arizona
- Alvin Jiji, Pheonix MTC, Arizona
- Gracy P Vattakunnel, Trinity MTC, Houston
- Kunjumma Thomas, Trinity MTC, Houston
- Maria Stephen, St. Marks MTC Tampa FL
- Omana Rajee, MTC Staten Island, NY
- Paul Isaac, Carmel MTC, Boston
- Reji Mathew, MTC Staten Island, NY
- Sara Philip, Detroit MTC, MI
- Saramma Chacko, Epiphany MTC NY

Prepared by:

**Mr. Philip Manuel & Mrs. Laila Anie Philip**  
Carmel MTC Boston

**Deadline for Answers: May 15, 2012**

Mail to:

Philip Manuel, 23 Lake Street, Billerica, MA 01821-  
Phone: 978-663-3203

By email (pdf format only): [varampath23@msn.com](mailto:varampath23@msn.com)

Please include name, name of Parish and phone number

# പരമബലിയുടെ കുരിശുമരത്തിൽ പരമരക്ഷയുടെ പതാകയുയർത്തൽ



ഷാജി ജോർജ്ജ്, തിരുവല്ല

സ്നേഹം എന്തെന്ന് മനുഷ്യനെ പഠിപ്പിക്കുവാൻ ദൈവം ഉപയോഗിച്ച പഠനോപകരണമാണ് കുരിശ്. പഠനോപകരണങ്ങൾ ഒരിക്കലും അതിലേക്കുമാത്രമായി ശ്രദ്ധ തിരിക്കുവാനുദ്ദേശിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതല്ല; അവ ശ്രദ്ധതേടുന്നത് അവയിലൂടെ രൂപപ്പെടുത്താൻ ഉദ്ദേശിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന ആശയങ്ങളിലേക്കും ധാരണകളിലേക്കും പാഠ്യപദ്ധതി ഉദ്ദേശ്യങ്ങളിലേക്കുമാണ്. കുരിശ് നമ്മുടെ ശ്രദ്ധയെ ക്ഷണിക്കുന്നത് കുരിശിൽ യാഗമായി തീർന്നവന്റെ ബലിയിലേക്കാണ്, ആ ബലി ആവശ്യമാക്കിത്തീർത്ത മനുഷ്യന്റെ പാപത്തിലേക്കാണ്, ദൈവപുത്രന്റെയാഗത്തിലൂടെ നേടിത്തന്ന രക്ഷയുടെ നിസ്തുല്യതയിലേക്കാണ്. ഫപാപം ഹരിച്ചു പാരിന്നു വിണ്ണേറുവാൻപാത കാണിക്കും, കുരിശേ, ജയിക്കുക ഹ എന്നു മഹാകവി ജി. ശങ്കരക്കുറുപ്പ് പാടിയത് കുരിശിന്റെ നിസ്തുല്യതയെ പ്രഘോഷിച്ചുകൊണ്ടാണ്. പാമ്പുകൾക്ക് മാളം ഈ ഭൂമി നിഷേധിച്ചിട്ടില്ല, പറവകൾക്ക് ആകാശം നിഷേധിച്ചിട്ടില്ല, കുറുനരി കൾക്ക് കൂട് ഈ ഭൂമി നിഷേധിച്ചിട്ടില്ല. എന്നാൽ എല്ലാം സൃഷ്ടിച്ചവന്റെ പുത്രന് ജനിക്കാൻ ഒരിടം ജോസഫും മറിയയും തേടിയെങ്കിലും വഴിമ്പലത്തിൽ സ്ഥലം കിട്ടാതെപോയി. ആകാശവും ഭൂമിയും അവൻ അറിഞ്ഞുനൽകിയത് ആകാശത്തിനും ഭൂമിയ്ക്കും മദ്ധ്യേ നില കൊള്ളുന്ന കുരിശാണ്. ഈ കുരിശ് ബലഹീനതയുടെ അടയാളമാണോ? ശക്തിയുടെ പ്രതീകമാണോ? എന്ന ചോദ്യത്തിന്റെ ഉത്തരം നാം കാണേണ്ടത് യേശു കുരിശിൽ മരിച്ചപ്പോൾ പടർന്നുപിടിച്ച അന്ധകാരത്തിന്റെ നിഴലുകളിലല്ല, മൂന്നാം ദിവസം അരിമത്യയിലെ യോസഫിന്റെ കല്ലറയെ അനാഥമാക്കി ഉയിർത്തെഴുന്നേറ്റവൻ ലോകത്തിനു സമ്മാനിച്ച ഉയിർപ്പിന്റെ പ്രഭാവത്തിലാണ്. ശിഷ്യർ ഉയിർപ്പിന്റെ സാക്ഷികളായി മാറിയപ്പോൾ, ഉയിർപ്പിന്റെ വെളിച്ചം ഉള്ളിലുള്ള വരായി അവർ പ്രഘോഷിച്ചത് ബലഹീനതയുടെയും ശാപത്തിന്റെയും അടയാളമായ കുരിശിനെക്കുറിച്ചല്ല, ശക്തിയുടെ അടയാളമായ ക്രൂശിക്കപ്പെട്ട ക്രിസ്തുവിനെക്കുറിച്ചാണ്. ദമസ്കോസിന്റെ പടിവാതിൽക്കൽ വെച്ച് ശൗൽ തന്റെ രക്ഷകനെ കണ്ടെത്തി കഴിഞ്ഞപ്പോൾ ന്യായപ്രമാണം മുഴുവൻ ഹൃദിസ്ഥമാക്കിയിരുന്ന ശൗൽ ശാപത്തിന്റെ ചിഹ്നമായി താൻ കണ്ട കുരിശിനെ രക്ഷയുടെ ചിഹ്നമായി തിരിച്ചറിയുകയായിരുന്നു. 1 കൊരിന്ത്യർ 1:18 ൽ അപ്പോസ്തലനായ വിശുദ്ധ പൗലോസ് താൻ തിരിച്ചറിഞ്ഞ സത്യം ഇങ്ങനെ പ്രസ്താവിച്ചു. ഫക്രൂശിന്റെ വചനം നശിച്ചുപോകുന്നവർക്ക് ഭോഷത്വവും രക്ഷിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന നമുക്കോ ദൈവശക്തിയുംആകുന്നു. മരത്തിൻമേൽ തൂങ്ങുന്നവൻ എല്ലാം ശപിക്കപ്പെട്ടവൻത്വം എന്നു വിശ്വസിച്ച സമൂഹത്തോട് പൗലോസ് അഭിമാനപൂർവ്വം പ്രഘോഷിച്ചു. യഹൂദന്മാർ അടയാളം ചോദിക്കുകയും യവനന്മാർ ജ്ഞാനം അന്വേഷിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു; ഞങ്ങളോ, ക്രൂശിക്കപ്പെട്ട ക്രിസ്തുവിനെ പ്രസംഗിക്കുന്നു. യഹൂദന്മാർക്ക് ഇടർച്ചയും ജാതികൾക്ക് ഭോഷത്വമെങ്കിലും യഹൂദന്മാരാകട്ടെ യവനന്മാരാകട്ടെ വിളിക്കപ്പെട്ട ഏവർക്കും ദൈവശക്തിയും ദൈവജ്ഞാനവുമായ ക്രിസ്തുവിനെ തന്നെ. 1 കൊരിന്ത്യർ 1:22-24.

1. ആർക്കാണ് കുരിശ് ബലഹീനതയുടെ അടയാളമായിത്തോന്നുന്നത്? സ്നേഹം ബലഹീനതയായി തോന്നുന്നവർക്ക് കുരിശ് ബലഹീനതയുടെ അടയാളമാണ്. എന്നാൽ ഒരു കാര്യം നാം ഓർക്കുക സ്നേഹിക്കുന്നവർക്കും സ്നേഹിക്കപ്പെടുന്നവർക്കും ബലഹീനതകളുണ്ടാകാം, എന്നാൽ സ്നേഹം ബലഹീന മല്ല; ഏറ്റവും അജ്ഞമായ ആത്മ ചൈതന്യമാണ് സ്നേഹം. ലോകത്തിൽ ഏറ്റവും ശക്തമായതെന്ത്? എന്ന ചോദ്യവുമായി ഒരു ഗുരുവിനെ സമീപിച്ച ശിഷ്യന്മാർക്ക് ഗുരു ഒരു മറുപടി നൽകിയതിങ്ങനെയാണ്. ഇരുമ്പ് ശക്തമാണ്; എന്നാൽ അഗ്നി അതിനെ ഉരുകും അഗ്നി ശക്തമാണ്; എന്നാൽ വെള്ളം അതിനെ കെടുത്തും വെള്ളം ശക്തമാണ്; എന്നാൽ മോലങ്ങളിൽ അത് അവസാനിക്കും. മോലങ്ങൾ ശക്തമാണ്; എന്നാൽ കാറ്റ് അതിനെ അകലേക്ക് കൊണ്ടുപോകും. കാറ്റ് ശക്തമാണ്, എന്നാൽ മലകൾ അതിനെ തടയും. മലകൾ ശക്തമാണ്; എന്നാൽ മനുഷ്യൻ അവയെ കീഴടക്കും. മനുഷ്യൻ ശക്തനാണ്; എന്നാൽ മരണം അവനെ കീഴടക്കും മരണം ശക്തമാണ്;

എന്നാൽ സ്നേഹം മരണത്തെയും അതിജീവിക്കുന്നു.

വാളെടുത്തവർ, സ്വന്തം വാളിനാൽ അന്യരെ വെട്ടിനൂറു ക്കിയവർ, അവസാനം വാളാൽ വെട്ടിനൂറുക്കപ്പെട്ട്. വാളെടുത്തവൻ എല്ലാം വാളാൽ നശിക്കും എന്ന ക്രിസ്തു വചനം അമ്പർത്ഥമാക്കിയ എത്രയോ ഉദാഹരണങ്ങൾ ചരിത്രത്തിൽ വീണുകിടക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ സ്നേഹത്തെ ആയുധമാക്കിയവർ ശത്രുക്കളെ ഇല്ലാതാക്കിയത്, ശത്രുസംഹാരം നടത്തിയല്ല, ശത്രുക്കളുടെ തലകൾ അരിഞ്ഞുവീഴ്ത്തിയിട്ടല്ല, സ്നേഹംകൊണ്ട് ശത്രുക്കളെ മിത്രങ്ങളാക്കിയാണ്. ചണ്ഡാലഭിക്ഷുകിയിൽ മഹാകവി കുമാരനാശാൻ സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെ ശക്തിയെക്കുറിച്ച് കുറിച്ചുവെച്ച വാക്കുകൾ മരണമില്ലാത്തവയാണ്.

- സ്നേഹത്തിൽ നിന്നുദിക്കുന്നു-ലോകം സ്നേഹത്താൽ മുക്തി തേടുന്നു.
- സ്നേഹം താൻ ശക്തി ജഗത്തിൻ-സ്വയം സ്നേഹം താനാനന്ദമാർക്കും;
- സ്നേഹംതാൻ ജീവിതം ശ്രീമാൻ-സ്നേഹ വ്യാഹതി തന്നെ മരണം.
- സ്നേഹം നരകത്തിൻ ദീപിൽ-സ്വർഗ്ഗ ഗേഹം പണിയും പടുതാം.

സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെ ശക്തി തിരിച്ചറിഞ്ഞ മലയാളത്തിന്റെ സ്നേഹഗായകനാണ്, മരണമില്ലാത്ത കവിയായ കുമാരനാശാൻ. നരകത്തിന്റെ ദീപിൽ സ്വർഗ്ഗം പണിയുവാൻ ലോകത്തിനു നിംശയം കാട്ടിക്കൊടുക്കുന്നത് ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ കുരിശാണ്. ശാപത്തിന്റെ ചിഹ്നത്തെ രക്ഷയുടെ കൊടിയടയാളമാക്കിയത്, നരകവാസികളെ സ്വർഗ്ഗവാസികളാക്കുന്നത് കുരിശിൽ വെളിപ്പെട്ട ദൈവസ്നേഹമാണ്.

2. ത്യാഗം ബലഹീനതയായി കാണുന്നവർക്ക് കുരിശ് ബലഹീനതയുടെ അടയാളമാണ്; എന്നാൽ പരമമായ ത്യാഗമാണ് പരമമായ വിജയം എന്ന് ചരിത്രം ഉദ്ഘോഷിക്കുന്നു. സമുദ്രത്തിൽ നിന്ന് നീരാവിയായി ഉയർന്ന് ആകാശവീഥികളിലൂടെ നീന്തിത്തുടിക്കുന്ന മഴമേലങ്ങൾ സ്വയം തൃജിക്കുമ്പോൾ അവ മേലങ്ങളുടെ സ്വരൂപം ഉപേക്ഷിക്കും; എന്നാൽ അവ ഭൂമിയിലേക്കു സ്നേഹമഴയായി പെയ്തിറങ്ങും; ഭൂമിയെ താരും തളിരുമണിയിക്കും, ദാഹജലം നൽകി ജീവനെ നിലനിർത്തും. സ്വയം ബലിയായി നൽകിയ ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ ചോരത്തുള്ളികൾ കുരിശിലൂടെ ഒഴുകിയിറങ്ങിയപ്പോൾ, ആ ചോരത്തുള്ളികൾ മാനവരാശിയെ മരണത്തിൽ നിന്നും ജീവനിലേക്ക് നയിക്കുന്ന അമൃ തിന്ദുക്കളായി മാറുകയായിരുന്നു. ഒരു നാട് വരണ്ടുണങ്ങിയപ്പോൾ ഗ്രാമവാസികളെല്ലാം അവരുടെ ഗ്രാമത്തിലെ സമാദരണീയനായ ഗുരുവിന്റെ അടുക്കൽ എത്തി സങ്കടമുണർത്തിച്ചു. മഴയ്ക്കുവേണ്ടി പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കാനായി അദ്ദേഹം ആ ഗ്രാമത്തിലെ കുന്നിൻ മുകളിലേക്ക് കയറിപ്പോയി. ആകാശത്തിലേക്ക് കരങ്ങൾ ഉയർത്തി, ഹൃദയമുരുകി അദ്ദേഹം കരഞ്ഞുപ്രാർത്ഥിച്ചു. പ്രാർത്ഥനയുടെ തീവ്രതയിൽ അദ്ദേഹം ഒരു മഴമേലമായി ആകാശവിതാനത്തിലേക്ക് ഉയർന്നു. ഒരു അനർഘനിമിഷത്തിൽ ആ മഴമേലം മഴയായി പെയ്യുവാൻ തുടങ്ങി. ഗ്രാമവാസികളെല്ലാം മഴകൊള്ളാൻ വീടുവിട്ടിറങ്ങി. എല്ലാവരും സന്തോഷംകൊണ്ട് മതിമറന്ന് മഴയെ ഉത്സവമാക്കിമാറ്റി. എന്നാൽ അവിടെയെങ്ങും ഗുരു

# Evergreen Lifestyle. Evergreen Inspiration.



## LIVINA FEATURES

Coming up at Mookkannoor a mere 15 kms. from Angamaly • Unpolluted and natural surroundings • Easy access to important towns nearby • Proximity to educational institutions, Tourist spots, Hospitals and sanctum sanctorums • 5-8m. wide internal roads, Children's play area • Health club - Recreation area • Jogging track • Beautifully landscaped common area • Volleyball & Badminton court • Common car parking area • Swimming pool • Gazebo & Lawn

*Livina*  
 More to Life,  
 with Nature.  
 Mookkannur, Angamaly  
 Available in **Silver, Gold** and **Platinum** Ranges

Marketed in USA/CANADA by:

**Global Solutions (India)**

972 492 2032

214 274 8468

E-mail: [info@globalsolutionsindia.org](mailto:info@globalsolutionsindia.org)



DEODATE BUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS PRIVATE LIMITED.,  
 VII/203 Valiyaveetil Buildings, Chirakkakam, Varapuzha P.O.,  
 Ernakulam - 683 517, Kerala, South India.  
 PH: +91 484 2512403, +91 98470 30687, +91 98476 49077  
 E-mail : [deodatebuilders@gmail.com](mailto:deodatebuilders@gmail.com), [www.deodatebuilders.com](http://www.deodatebuilders.com)



വിനെ കാണാതെ വന്നപ്പോൾ ഗുരുവിനെ പലരും അന്വേഷിച്ചു. ഗുരു കൂന്ന് കയറിപ്പോയത് കണ്ടവരുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. പിന്നെ എന്തു സംഭവിച്ചുവെന്ന് അവർക്കറിയില്ലായിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ ഒരു അമ്മ തന്റെ കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളോടു പറഞ്ഞു. നിങ്ങൾ നനയുന്ന ഈ മഴയുണ്ടല്ലോ, അത് നമ്മുടെ ഗുരുവിന്റെ സ്നേഹമാണ്, ഗുരുവിന്റെ ത്യാഗമാണ്, ഗുരുവിന്റെ കാരുണ്യമാണ്. പേർഷ്യൻ സാഹിത്യത്തിലെ അനശ്വരനായ സൂഫി കവിയായ ജലാലുദ്ദീൻ റൂമി എഴുതിയ ഒരു കവിത ഇങ്ങനെയാണ്. ഫആത്മീയ മാർഗം ശരീരത്തെ തകർത്തിട്ട് പിന്നീടതിനെ ആരോഗ്യത്തിൽ പുനഃസ്ഥാപിക്കുന്നു. നിധി എടുക്കുവാനായി വീട് പൊളിച്ചുകളഞ്ഞിട്ട് ആ നിധികൊണ്ടു കൂടുതൽ മനോഹരമായ ഒരു സൗധം നിർമ്മിക്കുന്നതുപോലെഹ കുരിശിന്റെ വെളിച്ചത്തിൽ ഈ കവിത വായിച്ചുനോക്കുക. ഉൾകണ്ണുകൾക്കൊണ്ട് ഇങ്ങനെ വായിച്ചെടുക്കാം-യേശു തന്റെ ശരീരം, കുരിശുകൊണ്ടു തകർക്കാനായി, എതിരാളികളുടെ കരങ്ങളിൽ ഏൽപ്പിച്ചതരക്ഷയുടെ നിധി കണ്ടെത്തി ലോകത്തിനു സമ്മാനിക്കാനാണ്. ആ നിധികൊണ്ട് സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെ ഒരു ദൈവരാജ്യം പണിയാനാണ്. ഈ സന്ദേശമാണ് കുരിശ് സമ്മാനിക്കുന്നത്.

3. അടയാളങ്ങൾ തെരഞ്ഞുകൊണ്ടിരുന്ന യഹൂദന്മാർക്കു കുരിശ് ബലഹീനതയുടെയും ഇടർച്ചയുടെയും അനുഭവമാണ്. എന്നാൽ കുരിശിൽ വെളിപ്പെട്ട ദൈവസ്നേഹവും രക്ഷയും തിരിച്ചറിയുന്നവർക്കും അനുഭവിക്കുന്നവർക്കും കുരിശ് ശക്തമായ ദൂതിന്റെ ശക്തമായ അടയാളമാണ്. യഹൂദന്മാർഅടയാളം അന്വേഷിക്കുന്ന സ്വഭാവക്കാരാണ്. അപ്പോൾ ശാസ്ത്രീമാരിലും പരിശുദ്ധരിലും ചിലർ അവനോട്: ഗുരോ, നീ ഒരു അടയാളം ചെയ്തു കാണാൻ ഞങ്ങൾ ഇച്ഛിക്കുന്നു എന്നു പറഞ്ഞു. (മത്താ.13:38). എന്നാൽ അടയാളം കാണാൻ ഇച്ഛിച്ചവരോടു യേശു പറയുന്ന മറുപടി ദോഷവും വ്യഭിചാരവുമുള്ളതലമുറ അടയാളം തിരയുന്നു. (മത്തായി. 12:39) യേശു കുരിശിൽ കിടക്കുമ്പോൾ, കുരിശിൽ നിന്നും ഇറങ്ങിവന്ന് ഒരു അടയാളം കാട്ടുവാൻ, പലരും വെല്ലുവിളിച്ചതാണ്. എന്നാൽ യേശു തന്റെ ഇഹലോകവാസക്കാലത്തു ചെയ്ത ഏറ്റവും വലിയ അത്ഭുതം കുരിശിൽ കിടന്ന വേദനയുടെ പാരമ്യത്തിൽ എത്തിയപ്പോഴും താൻ ദൈവപുത്രനാണെന്നും ശക്തിമാനാണെന്നും തെളിയിക്കാൻ കുരിശിൽ നിന്നും ഇറങ്ങിവന്നില്ല എന്നതാണ്, എല്ലാറ്റിനും അധികാരവും കഴിവുമുള്ളപ്പോൾ പോലും സ്വന്തം രക്ഷയ്ക്കുവേണ്ടി ആ അധികാരം ഉപയോഗിച്ചില്ല എന്നതാണ് ലോകചരിത്രത്തിലെ ഏറ്റവും വലിയ അത്ഭുതവും അടയാളവും. കുരിശിൽ നിന്നും യേശു ഇറങ്ങിവന്നിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ സ്വന്തം രക്ഷ സാധ്യമാകുമായിരുന്നു, എന്നാൽ ലോകം രക്ഷിക്കപ്പെടുമായിരുന്നില്ല. രക്ഷയ്ക്കുവേണ്ടിയുള്ള ഒറ്റമൂലി ദൈവം പാകപ്പെടുത്തിയത് ആ കുരിശിൽ ചൊരിഞ്ഞ പുത്രന്റെ രക്തംകൊണ്ടാണ്. കുരിശ് ശക്തിയുടെ അടയാളമായി മാറിയത് ഇങ്ങനെയാണ്.

4. ജ്ഞാനം അന്വേഷിക്കുന്ന യവനന്മാർക്ക് കുരിശ് ഭോഷതയുടെ അടയാളമായി തോന്നിയിരിക്കാം. എന്നാൽ ലോകത്തെ രക്ഷിക്കുന്നത് ജ്ഞാനമല്ല, ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ കാൽവരിയിലെ ബലിയാണ് എന്നു തിരിച്ചറിയാൻ കഴിയുന്നവർക്ക് കുരിശ് ശക്തിയുടെ അടയാളമായി മാറും. യെഹൂദന്മാർ അടയാളം ചോദിക്കുകയും യവനന്മാർ ജ്ഞാനം അന്വേഷിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു; ഞങ്ങളോ ക്രൂശിക്കപ്പെട്ട ക്രിസ്തുവിനെയും.

വിനെ പ്രസംഗിക്കുന്നു. യെഹൂദന്മാർക്ക് ഇടർച്ചയും ജാതികൾക്കു ഭോഷതയുമെങ്കിലും യെഹൂദന്മാരാകട്ടെ യവനന്മാരാകട്ടെ വിളിക്കപ്പെട്ട ഏവർക്കും ദൈവശക്തിയും ദൈവജ്ഞാനവുമായ ക്രിസ്തുവിനെ തന്നെ. ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ഭോഷതാ മനുഷ്യനെക്കാൾ ജ്ഞാനമേറിയതും ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ബലഹീനത മനുഷ്യനെക്കാൾ ബലമേറിയതും ആകുന്നു. (1 കൊരി.1: 22-25) ലോകത്തിന്റെ പാപത്തിനു പരിഹാരം തേടി ഒരാൾ കുരിശിൽ മരിക്കുക എന്നത് ശുദ്ധഭോഷതയായിട്ടാണ് യവനന്മാർ കരുതുന്നത്. എന്നാൽ യഹൂദന്മാരെയോ യവനന്മാരെയോ തൃപ്തിപ്പെടുത്താനും ബോധ്യപ്പെടുത്താനും വേണ്ടി സുവിശേഷത്തിന്റെ സന്ദേശത്തെ മായിച്ചുകളവാൻ വി. പൗലോസ് തയ്യാറല്ല. ഞങ്ങളോ ക്രൂശിക്കപ്പെട്ട ക്രിസ്തുവിനെ പ്രസംഗിക്കുന്നു എന്നു പൗലോസ് അപ്പോസ്തലൻ പറയുന്നത് അർത്ഥശക്തമായിട്ടില്ലാത്തവിധമാണ്. മാറ്റമില്ലാത്ത ഈ സത്യം. നമുക്കു ശക്തി പകരുന്നത് യേശു ക്രൂശിക്കപ്പെട്ടത് എനിക്കുവേണ്ടിയാണ്, നമുക്കുവേണ്ടിയാണ് എന്ന അവബോധം നമ്മുടെ വിശ്വാസമായി രൂപപ്പെടുമ്പോഴാണ്. അമേരിക്കയുടെ പതിനാറാമത്തെ പ്രസിഡന്റും ക്രൂശിക്കപ്പെട്ട ക്രിസ്തുവിനെ രക്ഷിതാവായി ഉൾക്കൊണ്ട മനുഷ്യസ്നേഹിയും അടിമകളുടെ വിമോചനത്തിനും സാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിനും വേണ്ടി പോരാടി തന്റെ ജീവിതത്തെ ബലിയായി അർപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്ത ഏബ്രഹാം ലിങ്കന്റെ മൃതശരീരം വഹിച്ചുകൊണ്ടുള്ള വിലാപയാത്രയിൽ പങ്കെടുത്ത ഒരു നീഗ്രോ തന്റെ കുഞ്ഞിനോട് പറഞ്ഞു നോക്കുക, ആ മനുഷ്യൻ മരിച്ചത് നമുക്കുവേണ്ടിയാണ്. ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ ക്രൂശിലേക്ക് നോക്കിക്കൊണ്ട് നമ്മുടെ പാപത്തിന്റെ മാതൃകവിഷത്തെ ഇല്ലാതാക്കുവാൻ നമുക്കുവേണ്ടി യാഗമായിത്തീർന്നവന്റെ സ്നേഹത്തെ നാം തിരിച്ചറിയുമെങ്കിൽ, ആ സ്നേഹത്തിൽ നാം ആയിത്തീരുന്നവെങ്കിൽ, ക്രിസ്തുവിൽ പുതുസൃഷ്ടികളായി മാറുമെങ്കിൽ കുരിശിന്റെ ശക്തി നമ്മെ സമൂഹത്തിനായി നൂറുകൊടുക്കുന്ന നന്മകളാക്കി മാറ്റിത്തീർക്കും. അതു തന്നെയാണ് ഉയിർപ്പിന്റെ അനുഭവം. പാപിയുടെ കുരിശുരത്തിൽ ക്രിസ്തു പരമരക്ഷയുടെ കൊടിയുയർത്തിയതുപോലെ കർത്താവിന്റെ സാക്ഷികളായി നമ്മുടെ ജീവിതമാകുന്ന കൊടിമരങ്ങളിൽ നമ്മുടെ സാക്ഷ്യത്തിന്റെ പതാകകൾ ഉയർന്നു പറക്കട്ടെ. അപ്പോൾ കുരിശിന്റെ ശക്തി ലോകം തിരിച്ചറിയും.



### U K Youth Fest 2012 - Rejoice in the Lord always!

As in the recent past years, our Youth Fest was conducted year with the usual sheer grandeur. This year the event was held on 18th Feb 2012 at the Barking Eastbury School. We had a turnout of approximately 400 people. The attendees were comprised of our own church members and other sister parish members. Among our many distinguished guests, we were fortunate to have representatives from our supporting charities, Christian Aid and Samaritans purse at the event. We had brilliant support from our sister parishes and our own youths who took on this special opportunity to showcase their talents by singing and/or playing as an important contribution via drama and/or dance. The night included mesmerising music, dances and thought provoking skits. In many ways God graciously blessed this year's Youth Fest 2012. We were so pleased on the way the evening went and we would like to thank our Sponsors and donors for their gracious support and donations to make the evening a grand success! As before, the main objective of this event was to raise funds for different charities in UK and India. For example, in UK, our youth have partnered with and made donations to Christian Aid and Samaritans Purse. All that remains is to thank everybody who was involved in organizing, running, and attending this event. Thank you to everyone who was there and made the night so brilliant.

# മാർത്തോമ്മാസഭാ മിഷൻ ഫീൽഡുകളിലൂടെ (ഭാഗം 2)



തോമസ് കോശി & മറിയമ്മ തോമസ്, ഹ്യൂസ്റ്റൺ

## റായൽപാട്

മൂന്നര ഏക്കർ സ്ഥലവും ഒരു പള്ളിക്കെട്ടിടവും ഓഫീസ് മുറികളും സുവിശേഷകന്മാർ താമസിക്കുവാനുള്ള വീടും സ്വന്തമായിട്ടുണ്ട്. സുവിശേഷകൻ ആനന്ദ് കുമാറും, ബീനയും ഇവിടെ താമസിച്ചു പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നു. ഇവരുടെ വിവാഹം കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ട് 5 വർഷം കഴിഞ്ഞെങ്കിലും കുട്ടികൾ ഇല്ലാത്തതിനാൽ മാനസികഭാരം ഉണ്ട്. പ്രത്യേകമായ പ്രാർത്ഥന അപേക്ഷിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഞായറാഴ്ചത്തെ ആരാധനയിൽ 120-ഓളം പേർ സംബന്ധിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് ചുറ്റുപാടുമുള്ള വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾക്ക് സൗജന്യ ട്യൂഷൻക്ലാസുകൾ നൽകുന്നുണ്ട്. ഒരു തയ്യൽസ്കൂളും നടക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. വി. ബി. എസ്. ആണ്ടുതോറും നടത്താറുണ്ട്. ബി. ജെ. പി.യുടെ എതിർപ്പു കാര്യമായുണ്ട്. റായൽപാട് കർണ്ണാടകയുടെയും ആന്ധ്രയുടെയും അതിർത്തിയിലുള്ള ഒരു ടൗണാണ്. ക്രിസ്തീയ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളുടെ വികസനത്തിനു സാധ്യതയുള്ള സ്ഥലമാണ്. ഒരു അച്ചൻ സ്ഥിരമായി താമസിച്ചു പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നത് വളരെ പ്രയോജനകരമായിരിക്കുമെന്ന് കെ. എൻ. എസ്. നേതൃത്വത്തിനു തോന്നുന്നതിനാൽ, താല്പര്യം ഡയോസിസിനെ അറിയിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്.

## ഗൗനപ്പള്ളി

സുവിശേഷകൻ ദേവദാസ് കുടുംബമായി താമസിച്ചു പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നു. 27 കുടുംബങ്ങൾ ആരാധനയ്ക്കായി കടന്നുവരുന്നുണ്ട്. 18 പേർ അന്വേഷകരായും. വെള്ളിയാഴ്ചതോറും ഉപവാസ പ്രാർത്ഥനയും നടത്താറുണ്ട്. പള്ളിയ്ക്കുള്ളിൽ ഇലക്ട്രിക് കണക്ഷൻ കിട്ടിയിട്ടില്ല. സുവിശേഷകൻ ചുറ്റുമുള്ള ഗ്രാമങ്ങൾ സന്ദർശിച്ച് സുവിശേഷം അറിയിക്കുന്നു. ഗ്രാമവാസികൾ ഒരു ടെയ്ലറിംഗ്സ്കൂൾ ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടു കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. ഒരു ടീച്ചറിനു 2,000-രൂപയിൽ കുറയാതെ മാസശമ്പളം നൽകണം. സുവിശേഷ വിരോധികളുടെ എതിർപ്പ് ഉണ്ട്. അവർ ഒരിക്കൽ ദേവദാസിന്റെ കൈയിൽ നിന്നും ഒരു വലിയ കഷണം ദശ കടിച്ചു മുറിച്ചെടുത്തതിന്റെ പാട് ഇന്നും അവശേഷിക്കുന്നു.

## മുരുഗുമല

ഇതൊരു മലഞ്ചരിവാണ്. ഹിന്ദുക്കളുടെയും, മുസ്ലീങ്ങളുടെയും, ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളുടെയും ആരാധനാലയങ്ങൾ അടുത്തടുത്തായി സ്ഥിതി ചെയ്യുന്നു. എല്ലാ കുട്ടരും തമ്മിൽ സൗഹാർദ്ദതയിലാണ്. നമ്മുടെ പള്ളിയുടെ മുമ്പിൽ കൂടി കടന്നുപോകുന്ന ഹിന്ദുക്കളും, മുസ്ലീങ്ങളും, പള്ളിക്കു നേരെ തിരിഞ്ഞുനിന്ന് പ്രാർത്ഥിച്ചതിനു ശേഷമാണ് അവരവരുടെ ആലയങ്ങളിലേക്കു പോകുന്നത്. സുവിശേഷകൻ ജോൺ മാറപ്പാ കുടുംബമായി ഇവിടെ താമസിച്ചു പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നു. 16 കുടുംബങ്ങളും ചില അന്വേഷകരും ആരാധനയിൽ സംബന്ധിക്കാറുണ്ട്. സഭയ്ക്കും, യൂത്ത് ലീഗും, സേവികാ സംഘവും ക്രമമായി നടക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്നു സുവിശേഷകൻ പറഞ്ഞു. ഈ ദിവസങ്ങളിൽ സുവിശേഷകൻ ഗ്രാമങ്ങൾ സന്ദർശിച്ച് തന്റെ ശുശ്രൂഷ നിർവ്വഹിക്കുന്നു.



## മദനപ്പള്ളി

ഇവിടെ ഒരു ചെറിയ ആരാധനാകൂട്ടം ഉണ്ട്. ഒരു സുവിശേഷകൻ കുടുംബമായി വാടക വീട്ടിൽ താമസിക്കുന്നു. അവിടെയാണ് ഞായറാഴ്ച ആരാധന കൂടുന്നത്. ഒരു ആരാധനാ സ്ഥലത്തിനായി അവിടുത്തെ ആളുകൾ വളരെ നാളായി അപേക്ഷിച്ചു കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയാണ്. സ്ഥലത്തിനു വലിയ വിലയാണ്. സെപ്റ്റംബറിൽ ഒരു ചെറിയ പള്ളിക്കെട്ടിടത്തിനും സുവിശേഷകന് താമസിക്കാൻ ഒരു വീടിനും ആവശ്യമായ സ്ഥലം 9 ലക്ഷത്തിൽപരം രൂപയ്ക്കു വാങ്ങി. ഇനിയും കെട്ടിടങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടാകണം. ദൈവം തക്കസമയത്ത് അവയും നൽകിത്തരുമെന്ന് അവർ വിശ്വസിക്കുന്നു. കർണ്ണാടക ആന്ധ്രാ അതിർത്തിയിലുള്ള ഒരു ചെറിയ പട്ടണം ആണ് ഇത്. വികസന സാധ്യതയുള്ള സ്ഥലമാണ്.

## ക്യാലനൂർ

ഈ വിശ്വാസ സമൂഹത്തിൽപെട്ട എല്ലാവരും തന്നെ കുലിപ്പണിക്കാരാണ്. മദ്യപാനത്തിനും മറ്റു പല ദുഷ്പ്രവണതകൾക്കും അടിമകളായി ജീവിച്ചിരുന്നവരാണ് മിക്കപേരും. ഇവരെ വിശ്വാസത്തിൽ സ്ഥിരപ്പെടുത്തി നിലനിർത്തുവാൻ ശരിയായ പത്മോപദേശവും ക്രിസ്തീയ കൂട്ടായ്മയും ആവശ്യമാണ്. ഇവരുടെ ആത്മീയ കാര്യങ്ങൾക്കൊപ്പം ഭൗതിക കാര്യങ്ങളിലും സുവിശേഷകർ ശ്രദ്ധിക്കേണ്ടതായുണ്ട്. പ്രത്യേകിച്ചു കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളുടെ ക്രിസ്തു കേന്ദ്രീകൃതമായ വളർച്ച. വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം, തൊഴിൽ പരിശീലനം മുതലായവക്കും ക്രമീകരണങ്ങളുണ്ടാകണം. പള്ളിയോടു ചേർന്നു ഒന്നോ രണ്ടോ ബാത്ത്റൂം ഉണ്ടാക്കിയാൽ നന്നായിരിക്കും. ഒരു പള്ളിക്കെട്ടിടവും, അച്ചനു താമസിക്കാനുള്ള വീടും, ഹോസ്റ്റലും, സ്കൂളായി ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന ഒരു കെട്ടിടവും ഉണ്ടെങ്കിലും, ഒന്നും ശരിയായ അവസ്ഥയിലല്ല. എല്ലാ കെട്ടിടങ്ങൾക്കും കാര്യമായ പുതുക്കിപ്പണി ആവശ്യമാണ്. 4-ാം ക്ലാസു വരെയുള്ള ഒരു ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് മീഡിയം സ്കൂൾ ഉണ്ട്. 145 കുട്ടികൾ ഇവിടെ പഠിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ഈ കുട്ടികൾക്കു ഇരിക്കുവാൻ? ബഞ്ചോ? വച്ച് എഴുതുവാൻ ഡസ്കോ ഇല്ല. താഴെ, നിലത്തിരുന്നാണ് എഴുതുന്നതും പഠിക്കുന്നതും. ഒരു ബഞ്ചും ഡസ്കും കൂടിയുള്ള സെറ്റിനു 18,000-രൂപ വിലയാകും. അത്തരം 40 സെറ്റു അത്യാവശ്യമായി ഉടനെതന്നെ ഉണ്ടാകണം. മെയിൻ റോഡിൽ നിന്നും സ്കൂൾ വരെ എത്തുന്ന റോഡ് ഏകദേശം 800 അടികാണും. മെറ്റലോ, ടാറോ, കോൺക്രീറ്റോ ചെയ്ത തല്ല. മഴയുള്ളപ്പോൾ ചള്ളയും വെയിലുള്ളപ്പോൾ പൊടിയുമായി കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളുടെ ആരോഗ്യത്തെ ബാധിക്കത്തക്കവിധം മോശമാണ്. ഈ കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളിൽ പലർക്കും ചെരിപ്പ് ഇല്ല. 15 ആൺകുട്ടികൾ ബോയ്സ് ഹോസ്റ്റലിൽ താമസിച്ചു പഠിക്കുന്നു. മൈദക്കുരിൽ രണ്ട് ആരാധനാ കേന്ദ്രങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ട്. 6 ഇടങ്ങളിൽ സ്വന്തമായ ആരാധനാ സ്ഥലങ്ങളുണ്ട്. 7 സുവിശേഷകർ ഇപ്പോൾ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

## ഗുജലപ്പള്ളി

ഇവിടെ മൂന്നാം ക്ലാസു വരെയുള്ള ഒരു സ്കൂൾ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. റവ. ജിജി മാത്യു കുടുംബമായി ഇവിടെ താമസിച്ചു പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നു. ഇതിനോടു ചേർന്ന് മൂന്നു മിഷൻ ഫീൽഡുകൾ കൂടിയുണ്ട്. 12-ാം തീയതി ഉച്ച കഴിഞ്ഞ് ഞങ്ങളെ പൊള്ളാച്ചി മിഷന്റെ

ആസ്ഥാനമായ നല്ലൂരിലേക്കു കൂട്ടി കൊണ്ടു പോകുവാനായി വാഹനവുമായി സുവിശേഷകൻ ജോൺ മാത്യു വന്നു. നാലര മണിയോടു കൂടെ അവിടെയെത്തി. പൊള്ളാച്ചിയിലെ മിഷൻ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്കു തുടക്കം മുതലേ വേണ്ട ഉത്തേജനവും കൈത്താങ്ങലും ഒക്കെ നൽകുന്ന ഒരു കുടുംബമാണ് ഡോ. റ്റി. പി. ജോസഫ് സാറിന്റേത്. ഇവിടെ 13 കുട്ടികൾ താമസിക്കുന്ന ഒരു ബോയ്സ് ഹോസ്റ്റലും പള്ളിയും സുവിശേഷകനു താമസിക്കാനുള്ള വീടും ഒരു ഗസ്റ്റ് ഹൗസുമുണ്ട്. പൊള്ളാച്ചി മാർത്തോമ്മാ മിഷൻ ആരംഭിച്ചത് 1983 - ലാണ്.

**പുതുപ്പാളയം**

പൊള്ളാച്ചിയിൽ നിന്നും 16 കിലോമീറ്റർ അകലെയുള്ള ഒരു ഗ്രാമമാണ് പുതുപ്പാളയം. 1996 - ൽ ഇവിടെ മിഷൻ പ്രവർത്തനം ആരംഭിച്ചു. ആരംഭത്തിൽ വളരെയധികം പ്രതിസന്ധികൾ നേരിടേണ്ടി വന്നു. എങ്കിലും വളരെ ഫലകരമായ ശുശ്രൂഷ ചുരുങ്ങിയ കാലം കൊണ്ടു നിർവ്വഹിപ്പാൻ കർത്താവു സഹായിച്ചു. വളരെയധികം പ്രാർത്ഥനയോടെയാണ് ഈ ഗ്രാമം തെരഞ്ഞെടുത്തതും സുവിശേഷകരെ നിയമിച്ചതും. എന്നാൽ ആരംഭത്തിൽ വളരെയധികം പ്രതിസന്ധികളെ നേരിടേണ്ടി വന്നു. സുവിശേഷകർക്കു താമസിക്കുവാൻ ഒരു വീടു കണ്ടെത്തുവാൻ വളരെ ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടേണ്ടി വന്നു. അവസാനം സഹായിയായി വന്ന യുവാവ് തന്റെ മാതാപിതാക്കൾ താമസിച്ചിരുന്ന വീട് സുവിശേഷകർക്കായി വിട്ടു കൊടുക്കുകയും, അവർ സമീപത്തുള്ള ഒരു ഷെഡിലേക്കു താമസം മാറ്റുകയും ചെയ്തു. ആദ്യം നിരക്ഷരരും സമൂഹത്തിൽ താഴെക്കിടയിലുള്ളവർക്കുമായി സാക്ഷരതാ ക്ലാസും കുട്ടികൾക്കായി സൗജന്യ ട്യൂഷനും, ലഘുസമ്പാദ്യത്തെപ്പറ്റിയും ആരോഗ്യത്തെപ്പറ്റിയും ഉള്ള ബോധവൽക്കരണ പരിപാടികളും ആരംഭിച്ചു. ഇതിലൂടെ ഗ്രാമീണരുമായി നല്ല സൗഹൃദം സ്ഥാപിക്കുവാനും അവരുമായി സുവിശേഷം പങ്കുവയ്ക്കുവാനും കർത്താവു സഹായിച്ചു.

**കോഴിക്കുട്ടെ**

ആർ. എസ്. എസിന്റെ ശക്തികേന്ദ്രമാണ്. വലിയ എതിർപ്പുണ്ടെങ്കിലും വിശ്വാസികൾ സ്ഥിരതയോടും ധൈര്യത്തോടും കർത്താവിനായി നിലകൊള്ളുന്നു. 50 - ൽ അധികം വിശ്വാസികൾ ആരാധനയ്ക്കു സംബന്ധിക്കാറുണ്ട്. 30 - ഓളം അനേകരും. ആരാധനയ്ക്കായി കൂടിവരുന്ന കെട്ടിടം വളരെ ശോചനീയമായ നിലയിലാണ്. മേൽക്കൂര ഓല മേഞ്ഞതാണ്. മഴ പെയ്താൽ കൂരയിലെ വെള്ളം മുഴുവൻ അകത്തു തറയിൽ വീഴും. ചാണകം മെഴുകിയതാണ് തറ. അമൃത്രാജ് ആണ് ഇവിടുത്തെ ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ സുവിശേഷകൻ. എതിർപ്പ് ഉണ്ടെങ്കിലും വളർച്ചയുള്ള സ്ഥലം. അത്യാവശ്യമായി സ്വന്തമായി സ്ഥലവും പള്ളിക്കെട്ടിടവും സുവിശേഷകന് താമസിക്കുവാനുള്ള വീടും ഉണ്ടാകേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു. സാധുക്കളായ ഇവിടുത്തെ വിശ്വാസികൾ തങ്ങളുടെ വരുമാനത്തിന്റെ ഒരു ഭാഗം സുവിശേഷ വേലയ്ക്കു കൊടുക്കുന്നവരാണ്. വേദപുസ്തകം ഉള്ളവർ പരസ്യമായി അതും കയ്യിൽ ഏന്തി ആരാധനയ്ക്കു വരുന്നതിൽ അഭിമാനം കൊള്ളുന്നു.

**സേത്തുമടൈ**

സുവിശേഷകൻ വൈ. സേവ്യർ കുടുംബമായി ഇവിടെ താമസിച്ചു ഈ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്കു നേതൃത്വം നൽകുന്നു. സ്വന്തമായി പള്ളിക്കെട്ടിടവും സുവിശേഷകനു താമസിക്കുവാനുള്ള വീടുമുണ്ട്. 56 വിശ്വാസികളും 60 - ഓളം അനേകരുമുണ്ട്. നല്ല നിലയിൽ പ്രവർത്തനം ഉള്ളതും വളർന്നു കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നതുമായ ഒരു കോൺഗ്രിഗേഷൻ. ഒരു ബാലവാടിയും, ടെയ്ലറിംഗ് സ്കൂളും, ട്യൂഷൻ സെന്ററും ഇവിടെ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നു. പ്ലസ് 2 പാസായ ഒരു പെൺകുട്ടി തുടർന്നു പഠിക്കാനായി സാമ്പത്തിക സഹായം ആവശ്യപ്പെടുന്നു. ബി. ഫാമിനു പോകാനാണ് താല്പര്യമെന്നു പറഞ്ഞു. ഇവിടെ നിന്നും 9 കിലോമീറ്റർ അകലെയുള്ള ?സരളപ്പതി? ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ കുറേ വിശ്വാസികൾ ഉണ്ട്. അവർ ഞായറാഴ്ച ആരാധനയ്ക്കായി സേത്തുമടൈലാണ് വരുന്നത്. രണ്ടു ബസുകൾ കയറിയിറങ്ങിയാണ് അവർ സേത്തുമടൈ - ൽ എത്തുന്നത്. സരളപ്പതിയിൽ ഒരു ദേവാലയം ഉണ്ടാകുന്നതു അവിടെയുള്ളവർക്ക് സഹായകമാകും. ചുറ്റുപാടുമുള്ള പ്രവർത്തനത്തിനും കൂടുതൽ സഹായകമാകും.

**ആനമലൈ**

സുവിശേഷകൻ ജയിംസ് തോമസ് കുടുംബമായി ഇവിടെ താമസിച്ചു, ഇവിടെയും ചുറ്റുമുള്ള ഗ്രാമങ്ങളിലും സുവിശേഷ പ്രവർത്തനം നടത്തുന്നു. സുവിശേഷകന്റെ ഭവനത്തിലാണ് ഞായറാഴ്ച ആരാധനയ്ക്കു കൂടുന്നത്. 15 വിശ്വാസികളും അത്രത്തോളം അനേകരുമുണ്ട്. ഒരു പള്ളിക്കെട്ടിടം അത്യാവശ്യമായി ഉണ്ടാകേണ്ടതായുണ്ട്. ജോസഫ് - മറിയ വൃദ്ധവൃത്തികൾ പൊള്ളാച്ചി മിഷന്റെ ആദ്യവിശ്വാസികളുടെ കൂട്ടത്തിൽ ഉൾപ്പെടുന്നവരാണ്. സേത്തുമടൈ - ലെ കോൺഗ്രിഗേഷന്റെ ആരംഭത്തിനും വളർച്ചയ്ക്കും വിലപ്പെട്ട സംഭാവനകൾ നൽകിയവരാണ് ഇവർ. പിന്നീട് ഇവർ ആനമലൈ - ലേക്കു താമസം മാറ്റി. ഇവർ രണ്ടുപേരും ഇപ്പോൾ രോഗാവസ്ഥയിലാണ്. ഒരുലോറിയിൽ ക്ലീനറായി പ്രവർത്തിക്കുമ്പോൾ ഉണ്ടായ ഒരു അപകടത്തിൽ ജോസഫിന്റെ രണ്ടു കണ്ണുകളുടെയും കാഴ്ച നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടു. പരസഹായം കൂടാതെ ഒന്നും ചെയ്യാൻ കഴിയാത്ത അദ്ദേഹം ഭവനത്തിൽ തന്നെ കഴിയുകയാണ്. ഓരോ ദിവസം കഴിയുന്നതോറും വിശ്വാസത്തിൽ കൂടുതൽ കൂടുതൽ ഉറയ്ക്കുകയും ആത്മീയ സന്തോഷത്തിൽ വർദ്ധിച്ചു വരികയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. തന്റെ

ഹൃദയത്തിന്റെ കണ്ണുകൾ കൊണ്ടു യേശുവിനെ കാണുന്നു എന്നു പറയുകയും തന്റെ അടുക്കൽ വരുന്ന എല്ലാവരോടും യേശുവിന്റെ സ്നേഹം പങ്കുവയ്ക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. യേശുവിന്റെ ചരിത്രം ഗാനങ്ങൾ ആക്കി അതിമനോഹരമായി അദ്ദേഹം പാടും. ദൈവം അതിനു പ്രത്യേക വരം പ്രിയ ജോസഫിനു നൽകിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. രോഗം മൂലം പ്രിയ അമ്മയുടെയും കാൽ വിരലുകൾ മുറിച്ചു മാറ്റിയതാണ്. കാലുകൾ ശരിയ്ക്ക് ഉന്നി നിലക്കുവാനും നടക്കുവാനും പ്രയാസം ആണെങ്കിലും കുടുംബ സന്ധാരണത്തിനായി ഈ മാതാവ് ഇപ്പോഴും കുലിപ്പണിക്കു പോകുന്നുണ്ട്. ഇവരുടെ ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ വേറെ വിശ്വാസികൾ ഇല്ലെങ്കിലും ഈ ദമ്പതികളുടെ സാക്ഷ്യം മൂലം അനേകർ യേശുവിനെ മനസിലാക്കുവാൻ ഇടയായിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഇവർക്കു വൈദ്യസഹായവും ആവശ്യമാണ്. പ്രത്യേകമായ പ്രാർത്ഥന അപേക്ഷിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്.

**കുളത്തിപ്പുത്തൂർ**

പൊള്ളാച്ചി - പറമ്പിക്കുളം റൂട്ടിൽ ആനമലൈ - ൽ നിന്നും 8 കിലോമീറ്റർ ദൂരത്തിലാണ് കുളത്തിപ്പുത്തൂർ എന്ന ഗ്രാമം സ്ഥിതി ചെയ്യുന്നത്. ഈ ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ റോഡിന്റെ ഒരു വശത്തു സമ്പന്നരും മറുവശത്ത് പാവപ്പെട്ടവരും താമസിക്കുന്നു. സമ്പന്നർ ഉയർന്ന ജാതിക്കാരും ദരിദ്രർ താണജാതിക്കാരുമാണ്. സാമൂഹ്യ വികസനമോ യാത്രാ സൗകര്യങ്ങളോ പരിമിതമാണ്. പാവപ്പെട്ടവരായ, ഇവിടുത്തെ ആളുകൾ എല്ലാവരും കുലിപ്പണിക്കാരാണ്. അവർക്കു ലഭിക്കുന്ന വേതനത്തിന്റെ നല്ല ഭാഗവും മദ്യപാനത്തിനായി ചെലവാക്കുന്നു. ഭാര്യയും ഭർത്താവും ഒരുമിച്ചിരുന്നു മദ്യപിക്കുന്ന കുടുംബങ്ങളാണ് മിക്കതും. നന്നായി ജീവിക്കണം എന്നോ, നല്ല രീതിയിൽ വസ്ത്രധാരണം ചെയ്യണം എന്നോ കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളെ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം ചെയ്യിക്കണം എന്നോ ഉള്ള ചിന്ത ഇവർക്കില്ല. ഇങ്ങനെയുള്ള ഒരു സമൂഹത്തിലാണ് നമ്മുടെ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ നടക്കുന്നത്. വിശ്വാസികളായി ഒരു കുടുംബം മാത്രമേ ഉള്ളൂ. 5 കുടുംബങ്ങൾ അനേകരായി ഉണ്ട്. പ്രാർത്ഥനാ കൂട്ടങ്ങളും, സഭയ്ക്കു സ്കൂളും, വി. ബി. എസും, ട്യൂഷൻ ക്ലാസും ഒക്കെ ഇവിടെ നടത്തുന്നുണ്ട്.

ഇവിടുത്തെ വിശ്വാസഭവനം വീരൻ എന്ന ആളിന്റേതാണ്. സുവിശേഷകൻ ജയിംസ് തോമസ് ആണ് ഇവിടെയും പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നത്. ഇടുമൽപെട്ട സുവിശേഷകൻ പ്രിൻസി. കെ. ജോയി ഇവിടെ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നു. ആരാധനാ സ്ഥലവും സുവിശേഷകനു താമസിക്കുവാനുള്ള വീടും ഉണ്ടാകേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു.

**കരുവാക്കുളം**

ഈ സ്ഥലം ഒരു വലിയ മലയുടെ താഴ്വാരമാണ്. ഒരു ക്യാമ്പ് സെന്റർ ആക്കണമെന്നുള്ള താല്പര്യത്തോടെ അഭിവന്ദ്യ തിയോഡോഷ്യസ് തിരുമേനി, മിഷനുവേണ്ടി വാങ്ങിയതാണ് ഇവിടെയുള്ള 8 ഏക്കർ സ്ഥലം. നവതി പ്രോജക്ടിൽ ഉൾപ്പെട്ട 15 വീടുകൾ ഇവിടെയുണ്ട്. കെ. എസ്. സതീഷാണ് ഇവിടുത്തെ സുവിശേഷകൻ. ആരാധനയും കൂട്ടായ്മ യോഗങ്ങളും ക്രമമായി നടക്കുന്നു. ഒരു ബാലവാടിയും, ട്യൂഷൻ സെന്ററും പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

**മയിലാടുംപാറ**

സുവിശേഷകൻ സി. ജി. അനീഷ് ദാസ്. നല്ല ചുറു ചുറുക്കുള്ള ചെറുപ്പക്കാരൻ. 11 കുടുംബങ്ങൾ വിശ്വാസികളായി ഇവിടെയുണ്ട്. 20 - ഓളം അനേകരും. സുവിശേഷകന്റെ ഭവനത്തിൽ വച്ചാണ് ഞായറാഴ്ച ആരാധന നടക്കുന്നത്. നല്ല വികസന സാധ്യത ഉള്ള സ്ഥലമാണ്. 2 ട്യൂഷൻ സെന്ററും, ഒരു ടെയ്ലറിംഗ് സ്കൂളും, ഒരു യൂത്ത് സെന്ററും, ഒരു ലൈബ്രറിയും ഇവിടെ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നു. എല്ലാത്തിനും കേന്ദ്രം സുവിശേഷകന്റെ വാടക വീടാണ്. സ്വന്തമായി ഒരു സ്ഥലവും പള്ളിക്കെട്ടിടവും സുവിശേഷകനു താമ



സിക്കുവാൻ വീടും മറ്റു പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്കു ആവശ്യമായ സ്ഥലവും ഉടൻ തന്നെ ഉണ്ടാകേണ്ടതായിരിക്കുന്നു. 24 മണിക്കൂറും ശ്രദ്ധ ആവശ്യമുള്ള തളർവാതം ബാധിച്ച തമിഴൻ എന്ന 8 വയസുകാരൻ ഒരു വിശ്വാസിയുടെ ഭവനത്തിൽ ഉണ്ട്. പാവപ്പെട്ടവരാണ്.

**പുറവിപ്പാളയം**

ഉയർന്ന ജാതി ഹിന്ദുക്കൾ കൂടുതലായുള്ള ഗ്രാമം. താഴ്ന്ന ജാതി ആളുകൾക്ക്, സ്വതന്ത്രമായി പോക്കുവരവിനു നിയന്ത്രണം ഉള്ള സ്ഥലം. സ്വന്തമായി ഒരു പള്ളിക്കെട്ടിടം വയ്ക്കുവാനായി ഗ്രാമത്തിനു പുറത്ത് ഒരു ഏക്കർ സ്ഥലം വാങ്ങിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഇപ്പോൾ ആരാധനയ്ക്കു കൂട്ടുന്നത് സുവിശേഷകന്റെ ഭവനത്തിലാണ്. 31 വിശ്വാസികൾ സ്ഥിരമായി ആരാധനയിൽ സംബന്ധിക്കുന്നു. 12 അന്വേഷകരും കടന്നുവരുന്നുണ്ട്. സുവിശേഷകന്റെ ഭവനത്തിൽ വച്ച് ഒരു ട്യൂഷൻക്ലാസ് നടത്തുന്നുണ്ട്. ജോൺ മാത്യു ആണ് ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ സുവിശേഷകൻ.

**കോട്ടൂർ**

സുവിശേഷകൻ ഏബ്രഹാം മാത്യു. സ്വന്തം പള്ളിക്കെട്ടിടം ഉണ്ട്. 16 കുടുംബങ്ങൾ ആരാധനയ്ക്കു ക്രമമായി വരുന്നുണ്ട്. 10 പേർ അന്വേഷകരായുമുണ്ട്. ഒരു ട്യൂഷൻക്ലാസ് നടക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

**അമ്മൈഗാണ്ടനൂർ**

സ്വന്തമായി ആരാധനാ സ്ഥലമോ സുവിശേഷകനു താമസിക്കുവാൻ വീടോ ഇല്ല. വിശ്വാസികൾ 27, അന്വേഷകർ 20.

**ശുലേശ്വരംപട്ടി**

സുവിശേഷകൻ - സുനിൽ കെ. തോമസ്. സ്വന്തമായി സുവിശേഷകനു താമസിക്കുവാൻ വീടും, പള്ളിക്കെട്ടിടവുമുണ്ട്. 58 വിശ്വാസികളും ചുരുക്കം അന്വേഷകരും ആരാധനയ്ക്കായി വരുന്നുണ്ട്. സുവിശേഷകന്റെ വീടിന്റെ സ്ഥിതി വളരെ മോശമാണ്. റിപ്പയറിംഗ് ചെയ്തെടുക്കുവാൻ 30,000-രൂപ ചെലവാകും. ഇവിടെ ഒരു ബാലവാടി ആരംഭിക്കേണ്ടതു അത്യാവശ്യമായിരിക്കുന്നു. ട്യൂഷൻക്ലാസ് നടക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. കൊളുമാം, വാൽപ്പാറൈ, ദമ്മംപതി മുതലായവയും പൊള്ളാച്ചി മിഷന്റെ ഫീൽഡുകളാണ്. സമയപരിമിതി മൂലം സന്ദർശിക്കുവാൻ സാധിച്ചിട്ടില്ല. എയ്ഡ്സ് ബാധിതരുടെയും കുടുംബത്തിലുള്ളവരുടെയും ശുശ്രൂഷയ്ക്കും, അവരുടെ കുട്ടികളുടെ പരിപോഷണത്തിനും, വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിനും, എയ്ഡ്സിനെ പറ്റിയുള്ള ബോധവൽക്കരണത്തിനുമായി അൻപിൻകരം എന്ന ഒരു പ്രോജക്ട് കുരുവാക്കുളത്ത് ആരംഭിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. പൊള്ളാച്ചി മിഷനിലെ വിശ്വാസികളിൽ ഏറിയ പങ്കും സാമ്പത്തികമായി വളരെ ദുരിതം അനുഭവിക്കുന്നവരാണ്. നിത്യവൃത്തിക്കു വകയില്ലാത്ത പലരെയും കണ്ടു. ഒരു ആടിനെയോ പശുക്കിടാവിനെയോ വാങ്ങി തന്നാൽ അതിനെ വളർത്തി ഉപജീവനം കഴിച്ചുകൊള്ളാമെന്നു പലരും പറഞ്ഞു. ഇവരുടെ കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾക്കു ആവശ്യത്തിനു ഭക്ഷണമോ വസ്ത്രമോ നൽകാൻ മാതാപിതാക്കൾക്കു കഴിയുന്നില്ല. പല കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളെയും സ്കൂളിൽ വിടാതെ കുലി വേലയ്ക്കായി പറഞ്ഞു വിടുന്നു. പലരും രോഗികളും ക്ഷീണിതരുമാണ്. വലിയ കട ബാധയുള്ളവരും, ജീമാരാൽ ചൂഷണം അനുഭവിക്കുന്നവരുമുണ്ട്. അനേകരുടെയും ജീവിതാനുഭവങ്ങൾ ഹൃദയസ്पर्ശിയും ഹൃദയഭേദകവുമാണ്. ഈ പാവപ്പെട്ട ജനങ്ങളുടെ ആത്മീയ ഉന്നമനത്തോടൊപ്പം ഭൗമിക ഉന്നമനത്തിനു വേണ്ടിയും എന്തെങ്കിലും ഒക്കെ ചെയ്യേണ്ടത് സാമ്പത്തിക ന? അനുഭവിക്കുന്ന ക്രൈസ്തവരായ നാം ഓരോരുത്തരുടെയും കടമയാണ്. ആത്മാർത്ഥമായി ഇവർക്കു വേണ്ടി പ്രാർത്ഥിപ്പാനും കൈ തുറന്നു സഹായിപ്പാനും ദൈവം ഉൾപ്രേരണ നൽകട്ടെയെന്ന് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നു.

**Mission Corner**

**A visit to 'Colonia Mar Thoma', Mexico**



A group consisted of Mr. John Kuruville, Mrs. Mary Kuruville, Mrs. Kunjamma George and Rev. Zachariah John representing the Sunday school and Edavaka Mission of the Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston, visited Colonia Mar Thoma, Mexico, with Mr. P.T Abraham on 14th December 2011. The team assembled at the chapel and had a meeting together with the kids and the parents. The children sang beautifully Malayalam, English and Spanish songs. Jessenia and Griselda, two kids of Colonia family, read in Spanish the Christmas narrations from the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke. Rev. Zachariah John gave the Christmas message, which was translated to Spanish by Caran, a young lady. After prayer and benediction, Christmas gifts were distributed to all, including 56 kids (23 boys and 33girls). A delicious lunch was also served.

The Diocese is continuing the construction of kitchen and toilets for the homes in Mar Thoma Colonia. So far bathrooms and kitchens have been constructed for 18 houses. The work is in progress for the remaining 22 houses. Electric wiring is done for the houses and electric connection is expected at any point of time. The house No. 101 of Martin, Susanna and their daughters Angela and Careena now stands as a model home in the campus. Now there are 38 families living in the Campus. Food distribution is done on a regular basis through the Manna program initiated and supported by the Diocese. Due to water logging in the Campus, as was seen in the previous years, efforts are now made to raise roads by putting more soil. There is a pond to collect rainwater. This is to be deepened and the side walls are to be reinforced. Signs of improvement are quite evident. Now more emphasis is to be given for religious instruction and to train the inmates in a Christian discipline and practices.

Rev. Zachariah John, Trinity MTC, Houston

# Reformation in the Malankara Church, Relevance and Challenges

(An article based on the study book for the 2011 Prathinidhi Mandalam)

Mrs. Susan Johnson & Mr. George C. George, St. Mathew's Mar Thoma Church Toronto

## Chapter 3

### Reformation and Witnessing

As the Malankara Syrian Christian Church (Mar Thoma Church) celebrates its 175th year of reformation, it has become necessary to re-examine its witnessing because the social environment in which we are commemorating this event is much different from the reformation period. While acknowledging the customs, traditions, habits and practices stressed during the reformation period, it has become imperative to come up with new interpretations and texts fitting for the current socio economic environment. The tenets of reformation were manifested through worship, word of God (Scripture) and witnessing. In this chapter, an attempt is being made to re-examine and re-think Reformation and witnessing. The church is a called-out community for the completion and fulfillment of the Kingdom of God. The mission and ministry of the church are marked by its witnessing. Witnessing is the expression of the church's being, self, and identity. To re-examine church's witnessing means to identify the existence of the church in a changing social environment. The Church has a duty to continue to find greater meaning for the factors that were stressed during reformation and make historical observations. It is an undisputable historical truth that reformation gave an opportunity for the church to evaluate its witnessing. Some of the reformation emphases are highlighted in this chapter.

### The importance of Bible (Scripture) in Witnessing

The Bible, containing the canonized old and new Testament laws is the faith-based textbook of God's people which was formed during different periods under different circumstances. The Bible has many references to God's calling and man's transformation in response to that calling. With the calling of Abraham and the commission of Moses, the formation of the distinctive faith characteristics of "Israel" begins (Genesis 12: 1-2, Exodus 3:1-10). While the faith journey of Israel is illustrated in the Old Testament, the writers of the new testament give a different viewpoint of this faith through the "Christ event" and the institution of Christian discipleship. In the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles provides us with imagery for Christian witnessing. The desire to be witnesses from Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth gives us an understanding about witnessing engagement (Acts 1:8). True witnessing takes shape and form only through engagement with contemporary society. Witnessing should not be carried out along the lines of separation between Jew and gentile, slave and master, male and female or any other dualism. During witnessing, the "self" formed during a given time-space in a society is addressed. The apostles closely watched the communities they served and transformed them through Christ to become diverse personalities for the kingdom of God (Acts 6:1-5). They discovered new mission fields and transformed people to follow the life style of Jesus Christ. Therefore we can call the apostles the "early reformationists" of the Christian Church. The church can only reveal its witnessing by carefully observing the formation of personalities and by recognizing the fundamental nature and activities of the time and space created by these personalities. The divine witnessing mission of the church is to identify the "self" transformed through the reading and interpretation of the scripture and bring forth them to the changing social surroundings. True witnessing is the result of the encounter between the text formed self and the structures, discourses and sacramental practices.

### Theological explanation for witnessing

Reformation begins when the church's perception about God, man and the world changes from time to time. In this context, the reformation in the Malankara church was the result of serious theological shift in the understanding of the Scripture. The traditional world tried to define the relationship of man and universe with the support of natural laws. The church developed certain faith traditions to support this. However when Science tried to define man and universe they realized that traditional faith practices are not rational. This school of thought "not to accept anything that is not rational" was so powerful that it would shatter the foundation of the Church. As a result of explanations provided through modern scientific rationality, the church leaders and members became aware of the evil practices that crept in the church and were convinced that a reformation is needed to remove those practices. Worship and sacramental rituals became learning processes that enlightened the mind. This enlightenment paved the

way to eradicate the evil that found its way into church and society. The renewed reading of the Bible helped to correct the evil in the liturgical text and the structure of the church through Reformation. However, Reformation cannot be just interpreted as a means to eradicate evil or just a cleansing process. The Reformation process has helped to formulate a new vision about God, man and the universe. Reformation also helped to encapsulate the new knowledge about the incarnation of God made possible through Christ.

Reformation questioned the fundamentals of Greek philosophy that portrayed God as supernatural and metaphysical as well as the foundations of modern views on God and emphasized the eastern apostolic traditional view. The knowledge of this new divine experience led to the reorganizing of the Liturgy which eventually led to the reorganization of human personalities. The knowledge that the church has a role in transforming the world, man and the entire creation is the epistemology (knowledge and wisdom) of Reformation. Today, the Church needs to seriously evaluate the modern thoughts about God, man and world. This is how the church should discover the contemporary application of the "witnessing" started by Reformation. Witnessing does not mean ignoring existing faith traditions and replacing it with a new one. The church needs to recognize the roles played by language, practices, interpretations and traditions in shaping the church's witnessing. While retaining the apostolic and eastern vision and traditions, the church should continue its originality in witnessing by listening to the viewpoints of modern society.

### The sacramental dimension of witnessing

The witnessing formulated by the church through reformation was fundamentally sacramental. While the western reformation movement questioned the hierarchical relationships and the teachings based on that rather than the sacraments, the Malankara church leaders addressed both during the reformation. The knowledge that witnessing has a sacramental dimension is a distinctive mark in the history of reformation. Sacraments are occasions for experiencing God's grace and sacramental rituals are practices and arrangements that organize the church according to God's Word. This is done through the usage of signs and symbols in sacraments. The church dedicates itself through sacraments. We need to remember that sacramental witnessing has a role in shaping the church as a community of the kingdom of God. The theology of the church and biblical interpretations are expressed to the world through the administration of sacraments. Through sacraments a witnessing role is performed as the church is being dedicated, renewed, and sanctified for the world. The church should realize that sacraments are important to strengthen the fellowship of the church and preparing it for witnessing. The sacramental dimension of witnessing of the church which starts in the holy baptism is renewed every day through the Holy Communion. All church members are made participants in the witnessing process when they partake in the holy sacraments,

thus making the reformation alive in history.

### **Witnessing – Proclamation of the Word and Living by the Word**

The reformation helped the believers to read the Bible with new depth and meaning. The reading and interpretation of the scripture led to the conviction that personal transformation and the commission is essential to proclaim the "Word". The Biblical truths that were learned through the interpretation and proclamation of the Word gave insights to live by the truth. As written in Mathew 28: 16-20, the reformed church realized that they have been called out with the commission to "go and make disciples of all nations. It was this conviction that made them keep the Word close to their heart, reflect on it, instruct others and transform their lives according to the word. The proclamation of the Word during the reformation period gave them strength to question fallacious faith practices and faith experiences. The manifestation of a life transformed through "word" is witnessing. The reformed church felt a greater need to have a self and personal repentance ("Manasandaram"). The dedication to live for Christ and to be a witness compelled one and all for regular devotion on the Word, active participation in worship and the need for reviving family prayers.

### **Witnessing and Reformation based Institutions**

In the post reformation era, the church carried out its witnessing mainly through certain organizations and institutions. To understand this, it is important to re-examine the significance of some of the missionary endeavors and institutions started by the church. Reformation made certain careful changes within the church structure. It enabled the church to see Biblical truths more gravely and created a consciousness for proclaiming the salvation through Christ to the entire world as a called out community. Reformation made us understand that the gospel is applicable to both the church members as well as for world and it led to the formation of the Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association. With the formation of the Evangelistic Association a structure was formed for the church to come together to learn the gospel. Although the Mar Thoma Church lost all its material possessions through the Royal Court Judgment, the reformationists believed and reiterated that proclamation of the gospel is their primary mission. Instead of changing their stand for material things and temporary gains, the church was willing to endure some loss and focused on witnessing. Here we get a clear background of reformation within the church. Later on, the Maramon convention was started as a platform for public witnessing. The primary focus of the convention was to evangelize the world. The intention to involve all the members of the church in its structural organization led to the formation of the Sunday School Samajam, Suvishesha Sevika Sangham, Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelist's Association, Yuvajana Sakhyam, etc. Many renaissance-reformation movements formed during this period in Kerala drew ideological inspiration from India's freedom struggle movements.

Just like the citizens of a country have a duty to participate in nation building, the members of the church also felt the need to get actively involved in building the kingdom of God. It is worth noting that during this period well educated men, women and laity partnered with the mission activities of the church. It is during this time that the church initiated a plan to start a Theological Seminary and build one. The main focus of the church at this time was in the areas of education, evangelization, corporate citizenship and participation in nation building. With this goal in mind, the church started opening more mission fields, hospitals and schools in rural areas and started the Ashram movement. To a certain extent, these movements helped the church to maintain its distinct identity in witnessing and mission. In the post independence era, the church focused more on entering into ecumenical relationships. More parishes were formed within as well as outside Kerala and the church also affirmed relations with other Christian denominations. Relationships were made from the local ecumenical level (e.g. KCC) to the world ecumenical level (e.g. WCC). In addition to this, to show the church's service to the poor in the society many development institutions like CARD, MCRD, etc., were formed. Even though all these organizations were sufficient to meet the basic needs then, now it is time to re-examine their objectives and mode of operation. It is necessary to have a meaningful re-evaluation of "witnessing" in the light of newly created identities by the reformation institutions and organizations.

### **Witnessing and financial arrangements**

The most transparent manifestation of reformation witnessing was evident in our outlook on wealth. The church undertook some clear views about wealth and distribution of wealth based on the Bible. By acknowledging the Lordship of Christ in all our resources, the church recognized that we are just stewards for God.

As part of the reformation process within the community, the church felt the need to initiate certain structural changes in the financial transactions and distribution of wealth. The church held a unique position in the community when it maintained the vision that one needs to take part in the kingdom work activities by firmly believing that riches become a blessing only by sharing it. The notion that the "under privileged" in the society also need to participate in this wealth sharing process became an apostolic witnessing. The church's stand that only voluntary donation and no compulsory collection should be undertaken is a reflection of its outstanding vision about wealth. The church's teaching that giving for the mission of the church should not be considered as a charitable donation but a joy and the way the church handled its fiscal activities led to the restructuring of the society at large. Majority of the parishes and organizations of the church were formed by the generous sharing of resources by its members. Let us remember with gratitude those who donated their land and resources for the mission of the church during this period.

### **Witnessing and new local Parishes**

As a result of the reformation, many parishes were formed outside Kerala and India. These included Diaspora communities in Malaysia, Singapore, North America, Europe, and the Persian Gulf. As a result of the evangelistic work, many churches were built for those who became Christians from other faiths. Similarly, the church's witnessing role was revealed through the creation of parishes in immigrant communities. This has helped the formation of churches in diverse cultures and languages. However, it is important to carefully examine, if the church took any measures to facilitate necessary changes to the structural systems and language related discourses needed for the full participation of its the members in its witnessing.

### **Witnessing in a changing social environment**

The Church's witnessing has traversed through a traditional-agricultural world to an industrialized modern world and reached today's technological education and virtual reality era. There has been a significant shift in human knowledge and wisdom (Epistemology) which led to inevitable changes in the formation of the "self. It is therefore necessary for the church to study the structural factors that lead to the formation of "self" and its potential and influence on people. The customs and practices of the reformation era cannot be re-established in today's social setting. The operation of the church's educational institutions and hospitals need to be re-evaluated in today's changing social environment. Witnessing through the church's organizations should not be comparable to market norms, but it should also accommodate the underprivileged and weak of our society. Witnessing should be built on new structures, systems, relations, and practices. Just like reformation transformed institutions, organizations and dealings on the basis of Biblical truths, these days church should pay attention to the faith related issues and create room for careful study. This is possible only with the study of the Word, practicing sacramental rituals and witnessing in a changing society.

# DIOCESAN COUNCIL



The Diocesan Council had its first meeting for 2012 on Saturday, January 21 at the Christos Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia. The meeting considered the Annual Accounts of 2011 and reviewed the activities of the Sub-committee and evaluated the progress of the regional committees on the various Development programs of the Diocese. The Council thanked the parishes of the South East regions in organizing the Ecumenical Dinner on January 20 and proposed to have such a gathering in January 2013 at Houston. The meeting also assessed the progress of the arrangements for the National Family Conference at the National Conference Centre, Virginia. The council authorized the office bearers to organize reception meetings for the newly consecrated Bishops of the Church as they visit USA in 2012.

The Diocesan Council felicitated the Diocesan Bishop for completing three years of his leadership in the Diocese and celebrated his birthday at the luncheon fellowship organized by the Christos Mar Thoma Parish. As the Bishop will be away for the Maramon Convention on his birthday, the members of the Council found the occasion to share the joy in cutting a birthday cake. The Diocesan Treasurer thanked the Christos Mar Thoma parish for making all the arrangements for the Council meeting. Mr. Zachariah Mulamootil is nominated as a member to the Diocesan Council. He is representing the Eastern Canada Centre and a member of St. Mathew's Mar Thoma Church, Toronto.

**Rev. K. E. Geevarghese**, Diocesan Secretary



**Mar Theodosius at newly consecrated Perungalam Retreat Centre**



**Zachariah Mulamootil**  
appointed to the  
Diocesan Council

## OBITUARY

### ALEYAMMA MATHEWS (Chinnammachi)



Aleyamma Mathews was born on Dec 5th 1920 to Late Mr. M.. I. John and Aleyamma John at Mannil House, Chelakombu, Kerala, India. She was the 5th of eight children including four sisters and three brothers. She is survived by three

of her siblings, M. J. John, Saramma Chacko and Gracey Thomas, all in Kerala. Chinnamma was a loving daughter, sister, wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Her smile always comforted those around her. She prayed for each one of them after reading their names every day and night. Ammachi's life was faithful and dedicated to our Lord Jesus Christ. Her mission in life was to witness the love of Jesus to every person she met and her dedicated prayer life was the source of her strength and joy. Ammachi was married to late K. V. Mathews (Unnichayan). Ammachi moved to United States in August 1981 to join her husband. She is survived by four children: two daughters, Mrs. Santhamma George and Mrs. Leelu Jacob and two sons, Mr. Rajan Mathew and Mr. Shaji Mathew, and eight grand children, and five great grand children. After 59 years of married life, her husband Mr. K. V. Mathews preceded her to his eternal abode on August 1, 2007 and he was laid to rest in Dallas, Texas. She is one of the founding members of the Edavaka Mission of the MTC Dallas, FB. She was very active in Sevika Sanghom and prayer group of the parish, her prayers comforted several people. She was very zealous about attending parish Bible study and area prayer meetings. A thanksgiving service was held on January 28, 2012 at Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch.

**Rev. Minoy N. Kuruvilla**, Vicar

# Holy Land Tours

## 2012

Apr 15 - 28, 2012 : Jordan/Israel & Egypt \*  
 Sept 9 - 22, 2012 : Jordan/Israel & Egypt \*  
 Nov 18 - 01 Dec, 2012 : Jordan/Israel & Egypt \*

Special rates ex Canada/Chicago

\* Egypt and Nile Dinner Cruise is optional

### Tour Prices cover:

Airfare/Taxes/Entrance Fees/Tips  
 5 Star Hotels  
 Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner  
 Services of Govt.- approved/qualified Guides

ISRAEL ONLY - any time  
 (6 Nights/7 Days)  
 Small Groups of 4 plus



"... and a cloud took him out of their sight" Luke 24:51

Put your feet where Jesus walked...  
 View the sites where History speaks...  
 Feel the living touch of Jesus...  
**it is an experience !**



(Journey of St. Paul  
 & The Seven Churches)

Contact:  
**George Chacko**  
 Pennsylvania Tel: 610-321-0998



**CAREWAYS**  
 TRAVEL & TOURS

465 Knoll Road, New Milford, NJ 07646

**P.T. Chacko**  
**Tel : 201- 483 7151 / 201- 483 7152**

E-mail: careways73@verizon.net  
 Website: www.Bestholylandtours.com

# TURKEY, GREECE

Sep 09 - 22, 2012



# Young Adults speaking out on the relevance of Cross in the North American Context of the Mar Thoma Church

Co-authored by **Mr. Marvin Mathew, Ms. Rena Titus, Mr. Roshan Varghese**  
 Edited by **Rev. Biju P. Simon, Youth Chaplain, NY**

## Introduction

Jesus said "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (St. Mark 8: 34). Reflections on the Cross become irrelevant when we do not take the present day context and realities into account. As the Mar Thoma Church community in the North American context we are blessed to have multigenerational, multi-linguistic, and multicultural views being shared and respected in our churches. In this article New York area Youths are offering their perspectives and views on three current issues based on the theme CROSS. The topics include Occupying Movements in the US, Domestic Violence, and upcoming US Presidential election. All these young adults were born and brought up in the US. Let this humble effort equip our faith community in the North American context for a relevant mission and witnessing, where God has placed our Church in this time of History.

## Cross: Occupying movements in the US

**Mr. Marvin Mathew, St. Thomas MTC, NY**

He is a college junior studying Government and is involved in a number of initiatives which he helped create including the Rockland Roundtable Initiative-a group working in community solutions and development in Rockland, New York. He aspires to practice law and someday run for office to help make society a better place for everyone who lives in it, regardless of their zip code.

Occupy Wall Street (OWS) is a grassroots movement in response to the severe income inequality in America. Income inequality in our country is representative of several key figures such as the recent finding of the U.S. Census Bureau Study, "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage: 2010," which found that 49.9 million Americans were uninsured in 2010, or 16.3 percent of the population. The same Census Bureau report "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage: 2010" reported 46.2 million Americans below the poverty line in 2010, or 15.1 percent of the population.

Occupy Wall Street protests 'Wall Street Institutions' because they feel that unfair business practices by large financial institutions such as banks and large companies caused the surge in Mortgage Foreclosures - the highest jump in 5 years (1 Million Americans lost their home in 2010 alone). OWS began as a small protest on Wall Street and was figured to last just a few days if not a few weeks, but it has gone on to become a much larger movement thriving today.

Fueled by the hope for protecting the American Dream, Occupy Wall Street is led by the average citizen. It truly is a movement, which spread to a variety of different states. Hector R. Cordero-Guzman, Ph.D. of the School of Public Affairs at CUNY Baruch College surveyed participants and found that "92.1% of the sample has some college, a college degree, or a graduate degree. 50.4% were employed full-time and an additional 20.4% were employed part-time and 71.5% of the sample earns less than \$50,000 per year putting making them a member of the middle class." This shows us that OWS is not a protest by the poorest and least educated, but, a fight for fairness and opportunity by hardworking and educated people.

As the Bible reads in Mathew 5:6: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. The participants and supporters of OWS can be considered these people referenced in Mathew- a people that just want a fair society where

irresponsible business practices are changed- where darkness and fraud illuminated. Many people say that at the heart of this movement is the chance to succeed or an opportunity to live the American dream. The son of immigrants, my family and many Mar Thoma families I know have enjoyed this dream. Many of our brothers and sisters that come to America today come in search of this dream. Occupy Wall Street fights scandal in what is a just system and seeks to restore values.

Sharing opportunity and helping society improve itself not only proves that we are ready to succeed but that we are willing to love our neighbors as ourselves and empower them to succeed as well.

## Cross: Our Community Response to Domestic Violence

**Ms. Reena Titus, St. John's MTC, NY**

She holds an LMSW degree and is working presently in the New York City; Part of her job involves finding resources for the Victims of Domestic Violence; She was instrumental in organizing a service project for victims of Domestic violence at the Young Women's conference at the North East Region Youth Fellowship.

Domestic violence is a subject that we do not often hear about in the Malayalee community; however it is a prevalent issue that affects many of us, more than we would believe. We live in a society that tells us one way of life, while balancing the values and ideals of our own Indian culture. The balancing act that results can sometimes leave us in a difficult place. This article hopes to present some information on the topic, as well as pose the question of how we as a faith community can respond to some conflicting ideals.

Domestic violence is a pattern of purposeful and coercive behavior that is aimed at gaining power and control. This type of violence is manifested through physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal, emotional and psychological abuse, threats and intimidation.

Statistics show that on average more than three women a day are murdered by their husbands or significant other in the United States. Women who have experienced domestic violence are 80% more likely to have a stroke, 70% more likely to have heart disease, 60% more likely to have asthma and 70% more likely to drink heavily than women who have not experienced intimate partner violence (cited from Futures Without Violence). It has been my experience growing up as a Malayalee youth in America that problems within the family are never spoken of outside of the family. Our silence actually perpetuates the abuse.

Our actions and responses do not fall on blind eyes. Physical, verbal, emotional and psychological abuse is

observed by our children. This in turn affects how they relate with one another and their future marital relationships. What we must understand is that victims of domestic violence are not just the adult, or more often, the female in the relationship. Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, and anyone can be directly affected by it.

Victims often feel isolated because of the abuse, and in a community such as ours, speaking out about it is not an option. Consequently, these victims bear their burden in silence. So what can we do for these sisters and brothers to whom we have a responsibility as a community of believers?

What I admire about our community is the sense of community. I am reminded of the time when my father underwent heart surgery, walking into the waiting room to see it filled with members of my church, in addition to close family. We lend support to one another in so many difficult circumstances; this too needs to be one of those instances. The church is the body of Christ. We are the church. We should be able to provide a safe, judgment-free and supportive environment for victims and abusers alike to come forward. This type of violence alone is a terrible burden to bear, and to feel that there is no respite or hope can only further the damage. It is our responsibility to our brothers and sisters to carry one another's burdens, as Christ carried our burdens.

## **Cross: 2012 US Presidential Election**

**Mr. Roshan Varghese, Epiphany Mar Thoma Church, NY**

He is in his first year of Medical School. He has served as a lay leader for the church and as Youth Fellowship secretary. His article discusses the need, importance and relevance of just & peaceful US presidential election.

The process of presidential election marked an important time for the American people to choose a great leader to lead the country. The Presidential Election of 1789 was the first uncontested presidential election of the United States of America with General Washington as the only candidate for President. This was followed by the eventful Revolution of 1800, where there were different political parties and a peaceful transition of power from one party to another occurred. This election of the President and Vice President of the United States is an indirect vote in which citizens cast ballots for the candidate. Presidential election occurs on quadrennial years on Election Day, the Tuesday between November 2 and 8. Although party ideologies may differ from one another, citizens vote on which party can run their country in the best manner possible.

In the midst of an economic crisis and turmoil, it is more important now than ever to elect the right individual for President in 2012. The United States Presidential election of 2012 is to be held on Tuesday, November 6, 2012. The Democratic Party's declared candidate is Barack Obama, the incumbent President of the United States, and the Republican Party's candidates are former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich of Georgia, U.S. Representative Ron Paul of Texas, former Governor Mitt Romney of Massachusetts, and former Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania. Due to the different faces candidates put on for different scenarios, it has become increasingly hard to choose which candidate can best serve our country.

As a Marthomite Christian and a citizen of United States, it is very important for me to pick the right candidate to lead this country in a difficult time. When I reflect upon what makes a good leader, my mind always goes to Jesus Christ and the cross. In the New Testament the reference to the "cross of Christ" is made three times (1 Corinthians 1:17; Galatians 6:12; Philippians 3:18).

When we reflect upon the meaning of cross, certain characteristics become evident! The cross of Christ is a cross of love. As seen in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." The cross symbolizes the manifestation of God's love for lost humanity. When choosing a leader for the country, it is important to look for a leader who loves the country and its people the way our Father loves us. The cross is an emblem of the unfathomable love of God, and likewise that of His beloved Son.

The cross of Christ is a cross of sacrifice. Paul reminds us Christ's love, and the expression of that love, "and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God," Ephesians 5:2. Christ gave his life to save humanity. The President should be an individual who is willing to give up his or

her own self ambition, pride, popularity and be willing to make sacrifice for the greater good of the people.

The cross of Christ is a cross of peace. Jesus was able to implement a plan of reconciliation in which there can be peace with the Father. Jesus accomplished this "by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." By his death, the sin that separated us from our Father was removed and broken down and peace was restored. The cross serves as a bridge for us to be able to be with our Father, through His Son. Peace was provided for both segments of humanity, so that "in Christ" no longer is there Jew or Greek; Christians become "one" in him (Ephesians 2:13-18; Galatians 3:28). As a President, he should be able to overlook the differences of political party and be able to work together to unify this country and help it grow toward a bright future.

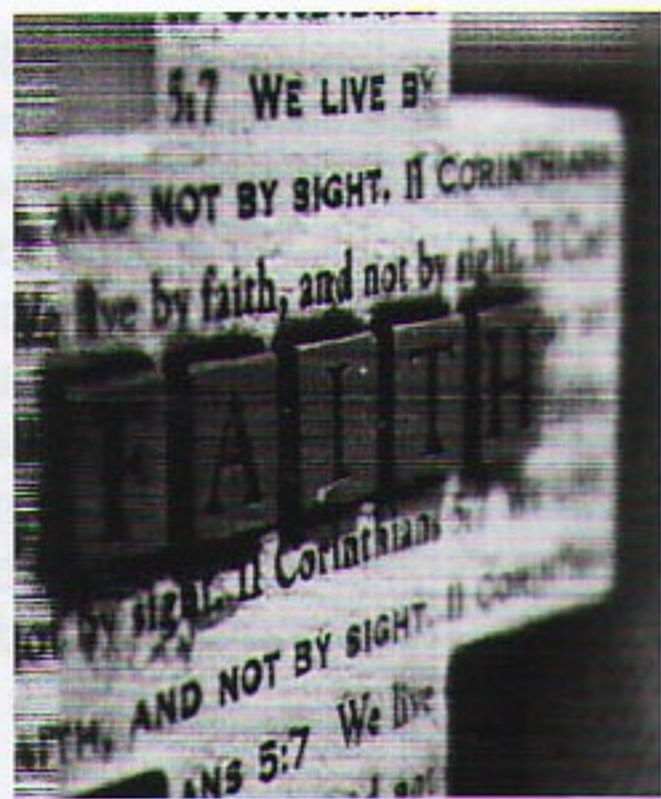
The cross of Christ is a cross of joy. It is very difficult to think of "joy" and the "cross" at the same time, but there it is—in all its majesty. The Savior's joy over the potential salvation of the human family eclipsed the shame of the cross! The President should be able to take what we have at the current moment and transform it to a joyous occasion for the future.

In an interview with Ayn Rand – an outspoken critic of Christianity, the founder of Objectivism and the author of "Atlas Shrugged" – he was asked about the cross and here is what she said:

"Now you want me to speak about the cross. What is correct is that I do regard the cross as the symbol of the sacrifice of the ideal to the non-ideal. Isn't that what it does mean? Christ, in terms of Christian philosophy, is the human ideal. He personifies that which men should strive to emulate. Yet, according to Christian mythology, he died on the cross not for his own sins but for the sins of the non-ideal people. In other words, a man of perfect virtues was sacrificed for men who are vicious and who are expected or supposed to accept that sacrifice. If I were a Christian, nothing would make me more indignant than that: the notion of sacrifice the ideal to the non-ideal, or virtue to vice. And it is in the name of that symbol that men are asked to sacrifice themselves for their inferiors. That is precisely how the symbolism is used." As we look upon the 2012 Presidential Election, let us remember the theme about the cross and the Christian philosophy in order to pick a leader not just for the present, but for the future.

### **Conclusion**

Cross is the centrality of our salvation. In order for the meaning of the Cross to be relevant in our context we need to embrace the love of God in this world. This article is an attempt to understand three present day issues in the context of the Cross. These reflections of our Young adults assure that we are a faith community that takes the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ seriously. In Philippians 2:8, 9 Apostle Paul reminds the faithful about Jesus Christ, "...he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death- even death on a cross, therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name..." When we bear the cross in our lives God will raise us as instruments for His glory and Kingdom. May God enable us to be true followers of Jesus Christ! Amen.



# Witness to the Truth & Stand Up For Our Faith



**Riya Ann Thomas** (Grade 8, Carmel MTC, Boston)

Today, we are faced with many issues and conflicts that call on us to stand up for our faith in Christ. Often times, we're afraid of what others will think of us, if we speak up. "How will they look at me? Will they see me as some sort of religious fanatic?" "Will they still be my friends?" And yet, to be a follower of Christ means that we are to be witnesses to the truth. It means that we must take an active stance in living a model Christian life.

In 2 Timothy 1: 8, Paul says, "So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord." In other words, do not be ashamed to speak up; do not be afraid to be a witness for Christ. The English philosopher, Edmund Burke once said: "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." The people in our world are constantly searching for the truth offered only by Christ and the Bible. But they are looking for it in all the wrong places. They have grown used to believing that what society shows us in TV shows, movies, and magazines, is what will truly make them happy. Our people have come to believe that what is popular in society is perfectly fine for them as well. The common justification is "Everyone else is doing it, so why can't I?"

And so, now more than ever, we all need to be living witnesses of our faith to others. We need to bring them the truth of Christ, with love. It takes courage to be a witness but the courage we need comes from God. We should be like the Apostles, who, in Luke 17: 5 went to Jesus and said "Increase our faith". We too must go directly to Him for the help we need in challenging times. And so, let us ask the Lord, for the strength that we need to stand up for what is right; to be witnesses for the truth at all times because we never know when that opportunity will arise. Let us take up the challenge that St. Paul invites us when he says: "Do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord."

## NEW YEAR REVIVAL 2012, Dallas

Rev. Jaisen Thomas, Youth Chaplain, Dallas

### Introduction

Throughout the past years, our Diocese has experienced significant demographical and generational growth representing a new dynamic for relevant contextual ministries. As such, the linguistic need of the younger generation to creatively discern the ministry of the Word is essential for spiritual sustenance and renewal of the community. Towards that end, under the guidance of the Youth Chaplain, Rev. Jaisen A. Thomas "New Year Revival 2012", a three-day English Convention and several workshops were conducted and coordinated by the youth and young families of the Dallas, Texas area Mar Thoma Churches on December 30, 2011 – January 1, 2012.

### Theme

The theme of the New Year Revival Convention this year was, Tear Down the Walls: Released, Renewed, Restored based on the passage from Ezekiel 36:26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, Diocesan Bishop gave the Inaugural Address on "tearing down walls" and building a deeper relationship with Christ, church and the world. Thirumeni also ended the evening session with the final benediction.

### Ministry of the Word

Rev. Gordon, an ordained Priest and renowned convention preacher who serves as Senior Pastor to the St. Luke's Community United Methodist Church in Dallas was the invited main speaker for the convention. His dynamic approach and biblically grounded messages were inspirational and effective.

The Revival Convention meetings took place in the evenings on Friday and Sunday (December 30th and January 1st) at the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch, Texas. Each evening there were praise and worship sessions, intercessory Prayers, sermons and Creative multimedia presentations.

a. Altar Call: On the second and final day of the convention an opportunity was provided for all who wanted to either dedicate or rededicate their lives to come forward as the clergy prayed for them. b. Prayer Room: After the prayer and benediction all were invited to share in some time of fellowship and refreshments. However, any and all who needed prayer were directed to a "Prayer Room" where Prayer Team members would spend time with them in prayer. c. Resource Bookmarks: A two-sided resource bookmark was produced and distributed to all participants on the second day of the revival meeting. One side depicted spiritual new year resolutions that would aid in Christian growth, the other side provided topical Bible verses, spiritual tips and contact information for professional resource persons in the area of counseling.

### Workshops

On Saturday, December 31st, from 10am to 4:30pm a series of four workshops were held that addressed the needs and problems many face. The youth and young families along with the clergy gave leadership to these sessions, which were conducted free of charge. The one-hour workshops offered were, Who goes first? Balancing God and School, What's going on? Discerning God's will in your life, I.S.T.! Face it! We're all late! – A Time Management Workshop; Exodus: A Crisis Awareness Seminar. The crisis awareness seminar was special session, led by Ms. Ellen Magnis, Chief of External Affairs, Dallas Children's Advocacy Center that was open to all and focused on different areas of concern in the family, particularly relating to various forms of abuse. All sessions were conducted twice so that more people could participate at a time that was convenient for them.

### Mission Focus

In understanding the need to share God's blessings, the offertory collected is to be completely donated towards mission. As a result, almost 5,000 dollars were collected of which 1,000 will be given to a poor Choctaw Native American family in Oklahoma in order to cover their expenses during this winter. The remainder will be given to the Elanthoor Balika Bhavan Mission of the Sevika Sangam in Kerala, India.

### Conclusion

The New Year Revival 2012 was a true blessing and empowering occasion to witness the providence of God in the lives of so many within our community. The revival was also an experience of renewed unity as many from different denominations attended the meetings with renewed vigor and zeal. I pray that the Word of God continue to move amongst the people so that we may continue to be revived and revive for the glory of God Almighty!

## Midwest Mar Thoma Regional Youth Conference



The 25th Mar Thoma Midwest Regional Conference was conducted in Gull Lake Ministries Conference Centre, MI from Dec 26th –29th 2011. The theme of the Conference was “Won by One” based on Ephesians 2:13. 172 youths of the different parishes of the Midwest Region participated in the conference. The Main speaker of the conference was Pastor Dwight Yoo of Presbyterian Church of America from Philadelphia. There were 5 main talks. The talks were centered on God’s Love and closed with the call to be the Missionaries of God’s Kingdom. The dedication and commissioning service was on 28th December 2011. Vicars of the different parishes – Rev. Sabu Thomas (St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Chicago); Rev. Roy P. Thomas (Mar Thoma Church, Chicago); Rev. Abraham Thomas (Detroit Mar Thoma Church) were present throughout. They along with main speaker prayed for and blessed the participants and it was really an awesome experience to everybody.

Besides the main talks there were 2 track sessions – (i) The “Biblical Understanding of the Conflict Resolution” and (ii) The “Issues of being Single”. The whole experience became more valuable when our Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius joined us on 28th night. Thirumeni spent time with our youths talking and listening to them and later on led the Holy Communion service on 29th and gave the closing message. We as region are really thankful to God for enabling us to conduct one more conference. St. Thomas Mar Thoma Parish, Chicago hosted this 25th regional Conference. For 2012 youth fellowship of Chicago Mar Thoma Parish committed themselves to host the next Conference.

**Rev. Alex Peter, Chicago**

## XV Diocesan Youth Leadership Conference

Hosted by St. Mark’s Mar Thoma Youth Fellowship, Tampa

St. Mark’s Mar Thoma Youth Fellowship was blessed and privileged to host the 15th Annual Diocesan Leadership Conference of North America & Europe from January 5th to 8th at the Centerpointe Community Church, Tampa. His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa provided the leadership for the conference. Rev. K. E. Geevarghese (Diocesan Secretary), Rev. Dr. Joe Joseph Kuruvilla (Youth Chap-



lain of Southeast Region), Rev. Alex Peter (Youth Chaplain of Midwest Region), Rev. Shibi Abraham (Youth Chaplain of Southwest B Region) and Rev. Jaisen A. Thomas (Youth Chaplain of Southwest A region) were the speakers and leaders of the conference. The theme for the conference was “Deal or No Deal” – Choices of Christian Leadership based on Joshua 24:15. The main thrust of the theme was geared towards the fundamental Biblical understanding that serving Christ is a direct decision on whether to serve or not. The Conference was inaugurated by Thirumeni at the St. Mark’s Mar Thoma Church, Tampa, Florida. The main events consisted of praise & worship, Bible study (including small groups), track sessions, messages given by guest speakers, devotions and reflections.

During the track sessions the delegates are divided into 5 groups and allowed them to attend each track session at a time. The rotation of groups for each track session provided an intermittent level of understanding for the following topics: counseling, hermeneutics, mission/evangelism, worship and Christian ethics. Thirumeni conducted a town hall meeting in which delegates were allowed to participate in a question/response dialogue regarding the Mar Thoma Church and the diocesan programs. The conference was concluded on Sunday, January 8th with the celebration of the Holy Qurbana at the St. Mark’s Mar Thoma Church, Tampa.

**Rohan Abraham, Conference Secretary**

## XIII Western Regional Youth Fellowship Conference (July 19-22)

The San Francisco Marthoma Youth Fellowship will be hosting the XIII Western Regional Conference. This year’s conference will be held from July 19-22 at Alliance Redwood in Occidental, CA. The main speaker will be Jojy Koshy from St. Paul Mar Thoma Church in Dallas, Texas. With this year’s theme, Rooted, we want to come back to the basics and emphasize the importance of being grounded in Christ. We will learn how to be planted firmly, grow spiritually, and effectively transform the world by sharing the fruit we bear. Join us as we spend the weekend amongst the beautiful Redwoods exploring His word, enjoying His presence, building strong relationships and learning what it means to be Rooted.

For any questions please contact,  
Anita Chandy & Sharon Mathew at: [sfconveners@googlegroups.com](mailto:sfconveners@googlegroups.com)  
Website: [www.rooted.marthomasf.org](http://www.rooted.marthomasf.org)

### Themes for next 2 issues of Messenger (2012)

**July:**

Pastor and pastoral care in the context  
of the new generation marthomites

**October:**

Living on a foreign land- faith, challenges and possibilities

## PARISH NEWS

### Immanuel MTC, Houston



Our parish convention was held from October 27th to 29th, 2011 at our church. Rev. Minoy Kuruvilla, Vicar of Dallas Mar Thoma Church, Farmers Branch was the main speaker. It was a blessed occasion with spiritually inspired and thought provoking messages which enabled our members to renew and revive their Christian life. On October 30th, I.M.T.C. celebrated its 17th parish day. Rev. Dr. Roy Varghese, Vicar of St. Thomas C.S.I. Church was the main guest. Ever since the formation of I.M.T.C. parish, we were very active in mission and charity works. In 2011, we have adopted one of the mission fields in Kalahandi, Orissa state in India and donated \$7500.00 towards this genuine project. This mission project is handled by Rt. Rev. Geevarghese Mar Athanasius Episcopa of Ranni-Nilackal Diocese. Our Edavaka Mission conducted a year end Retreat from December 29th to 31st, 2011 for the spiritual nourishment of our members on the road to 2012. Rev. K.E. Geevarghese, Diocesan Secretary was the main speaker. On January 14, 2012, sions and witnessing based on the theme "I am not ashamed of the Gospel". The felicitation meeting for the Achens who are transferring from South West Region also held in this conference. Rev. A.T. Thomas served as the conference chairman and Mr. Reji Varughese served as the conference convener. The conference was truly a spiritual experience for those who attended.

Rajan Daniel, Secretary

### Trinity MTC, Houston



#### Angel Tree Ministry

For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you: 'you shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land' (Deuteronomy 15:11). Angel Tree Mission project is a project undertaken by our diocese. We help our brothers and sisters in need. After coming here from India, God has blessed us abundantly and hence it becomes our obligation to help our brothers and sisters in need around us. This year Trinity Mar Thoma Church Sunday School decided to take this project under its wings as part of its humanitarian projects. Under the leadership of Mrs. Mariamma Thomas, our Sunday school was able to sponsor hundred and thirty-six children. On Saturday,

Dec 17, 2011, our Sunday school held a get-together with the Angel Tree Mission sponsored kids. Altogether we had approximately sixty-six children who came with their families. Trinity Mar Thoma Sunday School children and their parents and teachers welcomed the children with songs, activities and fellowship. Overall, we had a gathering of hundred people in our Sunday school, which included Angel Tree mission project kids and their families and members of our Sunday school and their families. We began the program with a few Christmas songs sung by our Sunday school children. After the short worship service, Rev Zachariah John spoke to the families about the real meaning of Christmas and Trinity Mar Thoma Church's purpose in being part of the Angel Tree Mission. The mission project kids sang songs along with our Sunday school children during the worship service. Then, different coordinators of the program gave out gifts to the children attending the event. After the gift distribution, the children were invited to have lunch along with the Sunday school children. Angel Tree Mission project gave our Sunday school students an opportunity to provide for others. The importance of sharing with others and the meaning of setting apart some time for the needy and the marginalized was evident in the Angel Tree Ministry. The importance of Jesus Christ our savior, who spent time with the sick and sinful, in our life and his willingness to redeem each one of them, who was willing to accept him, gave us the opportunity to spend time for others.

Mrs. Mariamma Thomas Mr. Blesson Isaac

### Christos MTC, Philadelphia



Christos Mar Thoma Church in Philadelphia is in the planning stages of its next phase of Church Building project. Mr. P. T. Mathews (Convenor) and Mr. Thomas Varughese (Co-convenor) are working with a broad committee under the leadership of our current Vicar Rev. Roy Geevarghese to accomplish the plans. As a part of fundraising, a "Raffle" will be held in 2012. The ticket sale inauguration was held in January.

### Orlando Congregation Received Parish Status

Orlando congregation, which started functioning since past 5 years received official approval from the Episcopal Synod as a parish of the Mar Thoma Church with the name "Orlando Mar Thoma Church, Florida". Recently, the parish purchased a church building in Oviedo, Orlando. They are in the process of renovation of the building and plan to have the church dedication to be held soon. Rev. John Kuruvilla, vicar, the executive committee and the members deserve appreciations for their commitment and hard work for these achievements. Now there are five parishes/congregation in Florida. South Florida Mar Thoma Church in Davie, St. Luke Mar Thoma Church in Coral Springs, St. Mark Mar Thoma Church in Tampa, Orlando Mar Thoma Church, Orlando and Jacksonville Mar Thoma Congregation.

Georgy Varghese, Diocesan Council Member

## Phoenix MT Congregation Parish Directory Publication



Phoenix Mar Thoma Congregation published the member's directory. After the Holy Communion Service on 26th February 2012, Secretary Mr. Rajesh Mathew requested the Vicar to publish the directory. Rev. Regi Zacharia, Vicar published the directory by giving away the first copy to the Senior Sevika Sanghom members in the presence of the whole Congregation of about 40 families. Achen thanked the Secretary for his sincere efforts in publishing this directory. Secretary Mr. Rajesh Mathew thanked all members for their timely co-operation and those who specially worked behind it and financially supported this ever first printed book form of the members directory of the Congregation.

Rev. Regi Zacharia, Vicar                      Rajesh Mathew, Secretary

## St. James MTC, UK

### 30th UK & Europe Mar Thoma Family Conference



The committee members of the 30th UK & Europe Family Conference met the Diocesan Bishop. With Thirumeni's guidance, the team discussed and finalized the theme of the conference. The theme of the conference is Ecclesia: Life, Identity & Challenges. Some of our members had a very rare opportunity, to celebrate our Thirumeni's birthday. The cake was specially prepared for the occasion by one of our member, Mrs. Bindu Annie Jacob. "Family get-together meeting" is one of the initiatives by our dear Achen Rev. Sajeev Thomas. This is a yearly meeting organized by each prayer group. This is a platform where we make an effort to meet all members living in the respective area. This year, our Thirumeni attended the East area family get-together

## Los Angeles MTC joined "Operation Blue Christmas" with Glendora Police Department



Mar Thoma Church of Los Angeles, as a part of their Local Mission Outreach joined hands with the Glendora Police Department in spreading Christmas cheer through Operation Blue Christmas a program providing assistance to some of the local needy families during the holiday season. A check for this purpose was presented to the city police department by Rev. Thomas John, the parish vicar. Police chief Robert Castro and city council member Karen Davis were the honored guests at a special function held at the church on November 27th. "Every day our officers come in contact with people in the community who are struggling during these difficult economic times" said the police chief. Accepting the generous gift from the vicar, the chief and the council member thanked the members of the parish for being a good neighbor sensitive to the needs of the community where the church is located. The chief also mentioned that the gift from the church was the largest that they had received this year from local businesses and other organizations for this purpose. The city council at a special meeting on January 18th honored the parish with a special Recognition Award for partnering with them for such a noble cause. Representing the parish, Mr. Jacob A. Mathew accepted the award.

## "Love your neighbor" –An Outreach program by Immanuel Mar Thoma Church, Virginia's Youth Fellowship and Yuvajanasakhyam



'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' - Matthew 25: 45. In the parable of the Good Samaritan we learn about compassion. It is fulfilling to reach out with love to satisfy the needs of the unfortunate fellow humans around us. This is exactly what the Youth Fellowship of Immanuel Mar Thoma Church, Virginia set out to do on January 7th, 2012. Immanuel Mar Thoma Church, Virginia the second parish established in Washington DC area under Dio-



Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

John 11: 25-26 (NIV)

case of North America and Europe of Mar Thoma Church and the first Mar Thoma parish in the state of Virginia, partnered with KAGW (Kerala Association of Greater Washington) to prepare meals for the homeless and poor at DC Central Kitchen on January 7th, 2012. Thirteen members from the parish Youth Fellowship and Yuvajanasakhyam participated in this program. They were joined by members from neighbouring churches and other organizations to serve food for 4500 homeless and less privileged individuals in the Washington DC area. The team of volunteers gathered around 7:00 AM and Rev. Roy Geevarghese, Vicar of Immanuel Mar Thoma Church, Virginia led them in prayer. The group then travelled to the location (DC Central Kitchen) and was greeted by other volunteers and staff of the DC Central Kitchen. It was a blessed experience for each of the young members of the Youth Fellowship who got a first-hand experience of serving the poor and catering to basic human needs.

## Emmanuel MTC, Lubbock



Emmanuel MTC Church, Lubbock occasion of the celebration of the 60th Birth day of the Vicar John N. Abraham with His Grace Rev. Richard A. Schempp and Rev. Cannon Edson Way

## Episcopal Visit

### St. John's MTC, Hounslow, UK



The Diocesan Episcopa visited the St. John's Mar Thoma Church, Hounslow from February 1st to 5th 2012. His Lordship arrived Tuesday morning and was received by the Vicar, Rev Eapen Abraham from airport. On Wednesday Thirumeni met Mr. Anish Babukutty from Ireland who created the English order of service into an iPad, which assures to be a useful product in the future. Thursday evening Thirumeni had a discussion with the COMPE (Council of Mar Thoma Parishes in Europe) Secretary Mr. P. M. Mathew. On Friday Thirumeni and Vicar met Rev. Canon Melvyn Barnsley (Rector of St. Andrews & St. George Church, Stevenage) and Rev. Duncan Campbell (Rural Dean of Stevenage) and attended the prayer meeting at Stevenage Area. Saturday 4th morning His Lordship had a breakfast session with 16 first communicants' children and their family followed by an interactive session with them. On Sunday, February 05th, His Lordship celebrated the Holy Communion service. A special

dedication service for 16 First Communicants was also held at that time. Despite the weather conditions and heavy snow on Saturday night the church was packed by members due to God's abundant blessing which all of us felt in our hearts. The first communicants were gifted the certificates and special cards prepared by the Diocesan office along with a Holy Bible by Thirumeni, he also congratulated the parents for preparing their children for first communion. During the Holy Communion Service Thirumeni gave message on the topic "What should be the ministry of the church in a fragmented world?" based on the Gospel Mark 2: 1-11. He stated Gods concern is life in totality and quoted 'We should transform ourselves from hostility to hospitality which will lead us to eternal life'. After the message, Thirumeni conducted the Dedication service for first communicants. After the service in his closing remarks His Lordship was happy about the charity program which the Parish commenced under the name CHARIS and extended his happiness for the Musical Evening program conducted on February 25th 2012 dedicated to "Sadhu Kochoonju Upadeshi" and agreed his presence as the Chief Guest for the Program. After the photo session with the first communicants and their families, the program ended with a fellowship lunch.

Mr. Alexander Renjith Joseph, Secretary

## Atlanta MTC



Episcopal Visit of Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Diocesan Episcopa to Atlanta Mar Thoma Church for 2012 was held from January 14th to 15th. Members of the Atlanta Mar Thoma Church were blessed to have the Diocesan Bishop in the parish for two days. During the visit, Thirumeni has participated in various programs arranged by the parish and met the parishioners. On January 14th Saturday evening Thirumeni participated in the Edavaka Mission Anniversary and inaugurated the 2012 Edavaka Mission programs. On January 15th Sunday our respected Thirumeni celebrated the Holy Communion, which was a blessing to all the members. As a part of the 10th year anniversary celebration of our parish, Thirumeni published the newly revised parish photo directory and also inaugurated the website of our Regional Youth conference which is being hosted by the Atlanta Mar Thoma Church. After the Kaimuth service, Thirumeni joined for the Fellowship lunch with the parishioners. Thirumeni also met both the 2011 and 2012 Executive Committee Members together and gave them directions for the future growth of the church and spiritual nourishment of the parishioners.

Rev. Jai Varghese, Vicar

## Ebenezer Mar Thoma Church, NY

The Ebenezer Mar Thoma Church bought a place of worship, first of its kind after 25 years of their existence in New York as a worshipping community. As per the request made by the members of the Parish, the Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius visited the new place and conducted a divine service on Sunday, January 22, 2012. The Diocesan Bishop congratulated the Parish and informed them that they can use the present place of worship for worship services and that the formal consecration of the place would take place on March 31, 2012 subject to the permission of the Metropolitan of the Church. During the sermon Mar Theodosius reminded the people that it is unity Sunday and the message was based on St. John 17, the High Priestly prayer



of Jesus. Thirumeni stated that the glory of the Lord, the worshipping congregation enjoys, during the worship is a glory that is to be shown around particularly as the parish is moving to a new place of worship. After the worship there was Kaimuth service and the members gathered found time for a coffee fellowship. Rev. Benchamen George assisted the Bishop and expressed his joy for Ebenezer Mar Thoma Church in acquiring a new place for future worship.

Rev. Benchamen George, Vicar

## Jacksonville MT Congregation



Diocesan Episcopa visited Jacksonville Mar Thoma Congregation on December 23 and 24, 2011. There was a meeting of the executive committee members afterwards to discuss the administration of the Congregation and to outline the future plans. During the fellowship dinner His Lordship took time to interact with the gathered community. On December 24th at 9:00 am, there was a Holy Communion Service. There were 6 first communicants who received Holy Qurbana along with the parishioners and friends. The Christmas Carol service was held after the Holy Communion. The choir and Sunday School Students made the Christmas Celebration memorable. The Bishop encouraged the members to work on relevant projects for homeless in the society. The Congregation is grateful for the leadership, guidance and support of the Diocesan Episcopa.

Rev. Jose P. Abraham, Vicar

## St. Thomas MTC, Chicago

The Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius visited the St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Chicago from Jan 28th to 29th 2012. During his visit, he met with the youths, young adults and first communicants and their families on Jan 28th (Saturday) evening. These sessions were interactive in nature and gave Thirumeni opportunity to respond to their concerns and questions about the Church and its mission. Earlier in the day, Thirumeni celebrated a baptism and a house warming services for parish members.



On Sunday, Jan 29th Thirumeni celebrated the Holy Communion service. A special dedication service for 8 First Communicants was also held at that time. Mar Theodosius gave a message on the topic of "Gospel of Repentance" based on Mark 1:15. Thirumeni said "Call to repentance is a call to absolute surrender to the purpose of God and to live in that awareness". Thirumeni also expressed the need for repentance by the individual, repentance by the family and repentance by the community. Thirumeni also shared about the great commission from Mark 24:47: "The Commission is to give the message of repentance to the world". After the message, Thirumeni conducted the Dedication service for first communicants. Rev. Alex Peter, Youth Chaplain of the Midwest region also attended the service. After the Holy Communion service, Mr. Varghese P. Varghese, Diocesan Council member addressed the congregation and invited the parish to the 30th National Family Conference to be held at Virginia in July 2012. There was a public meeting immediately after the Holy Communion Service. After a photo session with the first communicants and their families, Thirumeni met with the executive committee to discuss parish concerns. The program ended with a fellowship lunch.

Mr. Mathew Varghese, Secretary

## Chattanooga MT Congregation



The members of the Mar Thoma Congregation in Chattanooga came together for a Holy Qurbana Service during the visit by our Diocesan Bishop on January 15, 2012. Thirumeni celebrated Holy Qurbana and spoke on the beatitudes of Jesus as found in Mathew 5. There was one first communicant whose dedication service took place during the Holy Qurbana. There was a fellowship meal in which all participated and that gave an occasion for interaction. Rev. Jai Varghese assisted the Bishop in his visit and the celebration of the sacrament.

Rev. Jai Varghese, Vicar

## Los Angeles MTC, California

The Diocesan Episcopa visited the parish on January 2 and 3, 2012. Rev. Thomas John accompanied him to meet the members of the South Area Prayer Fellowship of the Parish. It gave an opportunity for all members of the prayer group to assemble together and to express their concerns regarding their progress in having worship services in the local area. The members expressed their difficulty in regularly going to the





Mar Thoma Parish at Glendora and therefore expressed their desire to form a parish in South Area. The members pointed out the need to have regular Sunday School classes for children and also study classes for the youth. The Sevika Sangham members of the parish met the Bishop and briefed him on the planning of National Sevika Sangham Conference scheduled for October 2012. The theme is chosen as 'Abide in me and be Fruitful' based on John 15:5. The Kaisthana Samithi of the Los Angeles Mar Thoma parish met the Diocesan Bishop at Glendora. The members expressed their concern and evaluated the financial position of the Parish. The Vicar Rev. Thomas John was present and he briefed the committee on the progress of the National Sevika Sangham Conference. The parish committee thanked the Diocesan Episcopa for the visit to the Parish.

Rev. Thomas John, Vicar

## San Francisco MTC, California



Our Diocesan Bishop visited the parish from December 31, 2011 to January 2, 2012. On December 31st, Thirumeni met with the Youth League leaders and discussed the upcoming Regional and National Youth conferences along with other activities of the Youth within the Church. Thirumeni encouraged the Youth to conduct the 2012 Regional Youth conference and also to take up the National Leadership conference in 2014. Later in the evening Thirumeni celebrated the Holy Communion Service along with vicar Rev. Viji T. Kurikesu, at the Church in Livermore. The Watch Night Service started with songs by the congregation, followed by Praise and Worship by the Youth of San Francisco Mar Thoma Church. Choir sang the traditional welcome song for the Thirumeni. Thirumeni gave an inspiring speech for the New Year exhorting our generation to understand the difference between needs and wants. At the dawn of New Year 2012, candles were lighted from the Altar and passed on to everybody in the congregation. Congregation sang the song "Ennayolam Thunachhone..." After the Communion Service, Thirumeni invited all the members of San Francisco Church to the upcoming Family Conference in Virginia. He also gave away prizes to the grand winners of the Crossword Puzzles conducted through the church website and newsletter. After the benediction and Kaimuthu, there was a fellowship at the Social Hall where Thirumeni could interact with the members of the Parish. New Year cake was distributed. On January 1, 2012 evening, Thirumeni along with Rev. Viji T. Kurikesu, celebrated Holy communion Service at the Sacramento Friend's Community Church. Members of our Church from Sacramento-Yuba City area attended the service.

Rev. Viji T. Kurikesu, Vicar

## St. Andrews MTC, NY



On Sunday January 22nd our Diocesan Bishop celebrated the Holy Qurbana service assisted by Vicar Rev. Benchemen George. Thanks giving prayers were offered for those who came to celebrate their Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries. The diocesan Bishop expressed his thanks to Rev. Benchamen George who is completing his term in the parish during whose tenure the place of worship was extended and a parsonage was bought. The parishioners were invited to participate in the 2012 National Family Conference where their own former Vicar and now the Bishop of Bombay Rt. Rev. Thomas Mar Theethos will give leadership. There was a luncheon fellowship, which enabled the members to have a time of fellowship and interaction with the Diocesan Bishop.

Rev. Benchemen George, Vicar

## St. Mark's MTC, Tampa, Florida



The Episcopal Visit to St. Mark's Mar Thoma Church, Tampa coincided with the National Leadership Conference of the Diocese for 2012. 85 delegates from different parishes of the Diocese assembled together with the Parish members for the inauguration of the Conference on the evening of January 5, 2012. The praise and worship team of the Parish Youth Fellowship prepared the gathered assembly for an opening worship led by the Parish. Thirumeni gave the keynote address based on Joshua 24: 15 reminding the challenge gave by Joshua to the settled community in the Promised Land. Bishop Theodosius highlighted the challenges faced by the Mar Thoma Community in North America. He exhorted the members to recognize the modern challenges of the Nation and to respond to it in Christian love by making a choice to serve the Lord. After the inaugural session the parishioners received the delegates in their homes for the night. The weekend was a revival for the entire parish, which is now served and led by the Vicar Rev. John Kuruvilla. The Holy Qurbana for the parishioners and delegates was conducted at the Church on January 8 where 12 teenagers participated in the Qurbana for the first time. The Diocesan Bishop along with 6 clergy who were present celebrated the Qurbana. Speaking from Acts 6, Mar Theodosius reminded the delegates of the Conference and parishioners how St. Stephen chose to serve the Lord and the people and faced martyrdom. There was a concluding session of the Conference after the worship service where the delegates thanked the parish for accommodating all of them in the homes and supporting all the programs of the Conference. The parish was invited to register for the National Family Conference at Virginia in July 2012. There was fellowship lunch for all the partici-

pants. The Diocesan Bishop took time to interact with parishioners and delegates of the Conference.

Rev. John Kuruvilla, Vicar

## The MTC of Oklahoma



Our Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius visited the parish from Dec 16-18, 2011. Thirumeni gave leadership in Sandhya Namaskaram on 16th Friday evening. On 17th Saturday at 10 am Tirumeni conducted and solemnized the marriage of Mr. Sancho S. Thomas, a member of this parish with Nissy Abraham at our church. Saturday evening Thirumeni attended the Ecumenical Christmas Carol Service conducted by the four Episcopal Indian churches here in Oklahoma City such as Mar Thoma Church of Oklahoma, St. Thomas Malankara Orthodox Church, St. George Syrian Orthodox Church, and Holy Family Syro Malabar Catholic Church. Tirumeni gave a blessed Christmas Message and the groups from various denominations sang Christmas Carols. The youth also presented a skit. On Sunday Dec 18th Thirumeni celebrated the Holy Communion Service along with Vicar Rev. Varughese Mathew P and Rev. Samuel M. Samuel. After the service there was a fellowship lunch where Tirumeni could interact with the parishioners. Thirumeni spend time with Youth Fellowship members, appreciated their leadership in the Native American mission at Chacktow community at Broken Bow. Tirumeni exhorted them to discuss and decide to conduct a leadership conference, if possible in 2013. It was also announced that the 2012 National Youth Fellowship Conference will be in Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston in the month of August.

Rev. Varughese Mathew P., Vicar

## MTC of South Florida:



Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Thirumeni visited the South Florida parish on December 24 and 25, 2011. Thirumeni was the chief guest of the Christmas Carol Service which was held on the Christmas Eve. The carol service started with a procession of the choir had melodious carols by the parish choir and variety entertainments programs by the Sunday School students and Youth Fellowship. Thirumeni gave a very challenging Christmas message. Through the birth of Jesus Christ, God presented the most precious gift to the entire world to redeem the oppressed, marginalized and the downtrodden. He challenged the Christian community to develop an attitude of love and sharing and be advocates of the weak in the community. The participants of the House-To- House Caroling presented one song during this program. The Carol Service was followed by fellowship dinner at the Community Hall.

During the Holy Communion Service on the Christmas day, 16 youths from the parish received Holy Communion first time in their life. After prayers and oath, Thirumeni presented them with Bible to each participants and distributed certificates. A lighted candle was given to all first communicants to remind them the words of Jesus that they are called to be the light of the world. Following the Worship service, the Parish Day was celebrated. Rev. Jose P. Abraham, vicar welcomed respected Thirumeni and the participants to the meeting. A brief report consisting of the parish history and the current activities was presented by Mr. Kuruvilla Eapen, Secretary. Thirumeni delivered the key note address. Mr. Georgy Varughese, Diocesan Council member made a brief presentation regarding the upcoming Mar Thoma Family Conference 2012 which will be held in Virginia July 5-8. A registration campaign was held and few members registered for the conference. The parish was appreciated for getting the best parish award in 2010 and also updating the remittance to the Sabha and Diocese in 2011.

Georgy Varughese, Florida, Diocesan Council Member



Houston Immanuel Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam, presented a fund raising program 'RHYTHM' for charity work.



St Jmaes UK Website Inauguration



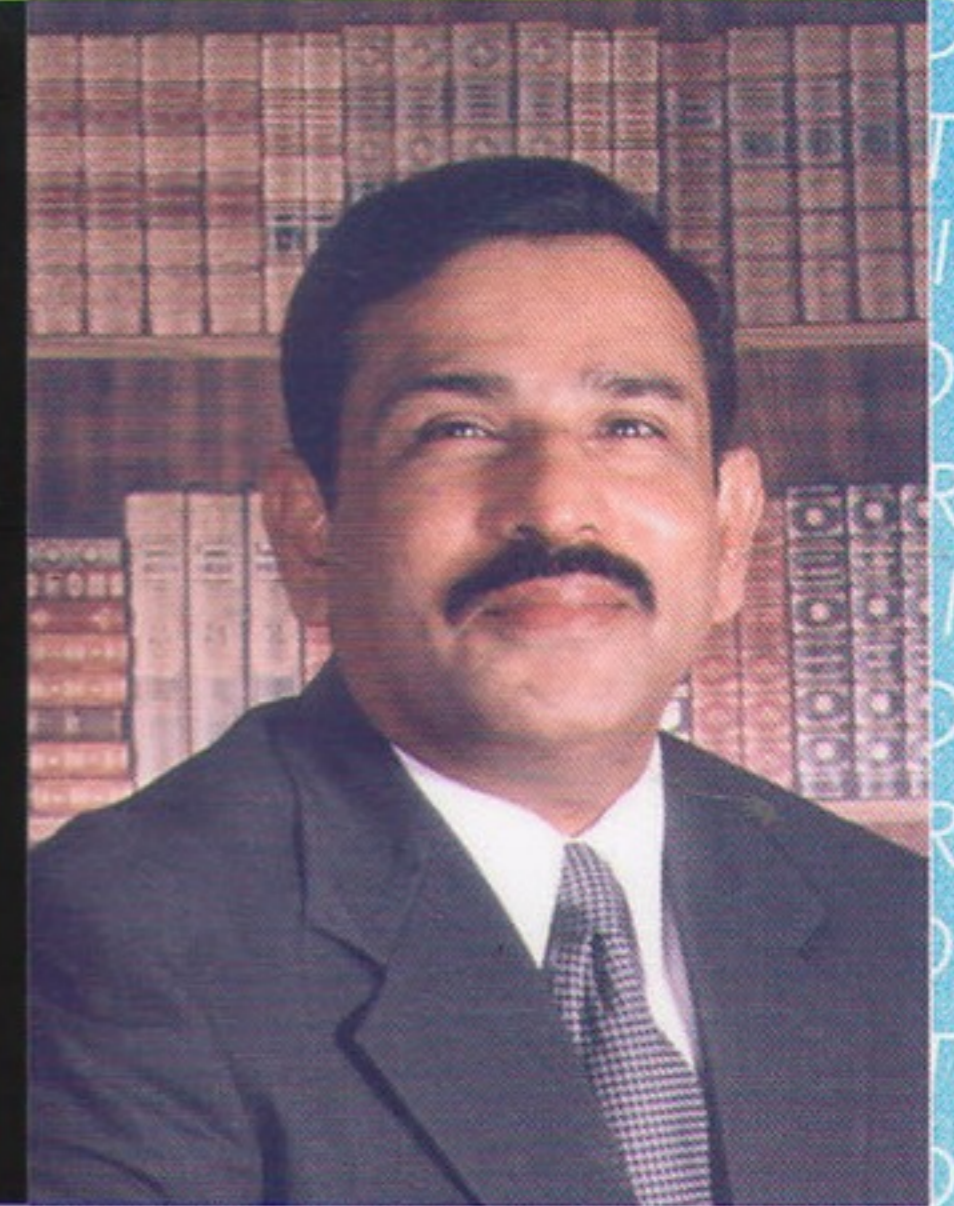
Visit to Bishop Beckwith of Episcopal Church

Justice  
is being  
served,  
to the  
Asian  
Community

**Lal Varghese**

Attorney at Law

U.S. Immigration  
H1-B Visa  
Fiance Visa  
Work Permit  
Green Cards  
Student Visas  
Visitor Visas  
K-1, K-3 Visas  
R1 Visas, Etc.



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

Law Offices of Lal Varghese, PLLC  
1111 Kinwest Parkway, Suite 120,  
Las Colinas, Irving, Texas 75063-3416

Standard Prsr  
US Postage  
PAID  
Stockton, CA  
Permit #637

Mar Thoma Messenger  
Sinai Mar Thoma Center  
2320 S Merrick Ave  
Merrick, NY 11566

Address Service Requested



Malayalam IPTV

ഇപ്പോൾ വളരെ ലളിതമായി install ചെയ്യാവുന്ന Ruku Box Free ആയി ലഭിക്കുന്നു.

സ്വപ്ന സുന്ദരമായ നമ്മുടെ ഭക്തജന്മിയും അഭരണിക്കായിലും കാനഡയിലും നടക്കുന്ന സഭാപരമായും രാഷ്ട്രീയപരമായും ബന്ധമുള്ള വാർത്തകളും, പ്രസംഗ പരമ്പരകൾ, യുവജനങ്ങളുടെ പ്രത്യേക പരിപാടികൾ, വിനോദ-വിജ്ഞാന പരിപാടികൾ നമ്മൾ താല്പര്യപ്പെടുന്ന അഭരണിക്കയിൽ നിന്നും പ്രക്ഷേപണം ചെയ്യുന്ന പ്രത്യേക പരിപാടികളും മലയാളം ഐ.പി. ടിവിയിൽ. അഭരണിക്കയിലുള്ള മലയാളി കമ്മ്യൂണിറ്റി യുടെ ന്യൂസ് എല്ലാ ദിവസവും വൈകിട്ട്.

Other Available Channels



www.malayalamiptv.net  
1-855-478-8872 / 732-648-0576

www.FreeIPTVbox.com

Malayalam IPTV USA, 255 Old New Brumwick Road  
Piscataway, NJ 08854.

Design: www.PrintCall.com