

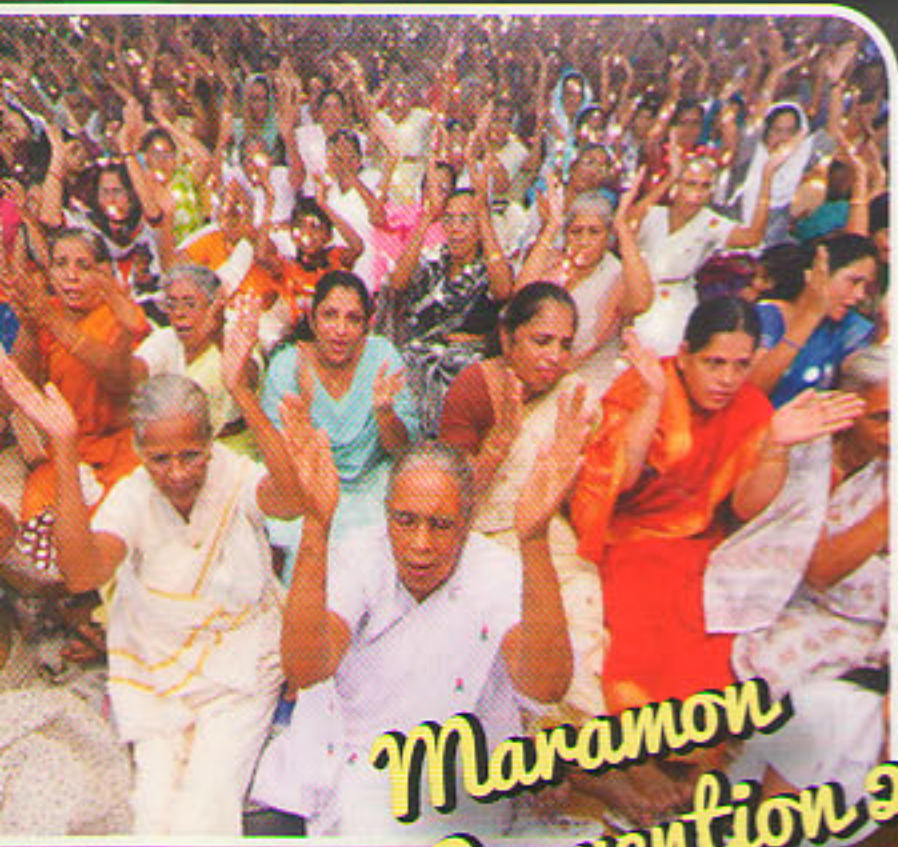
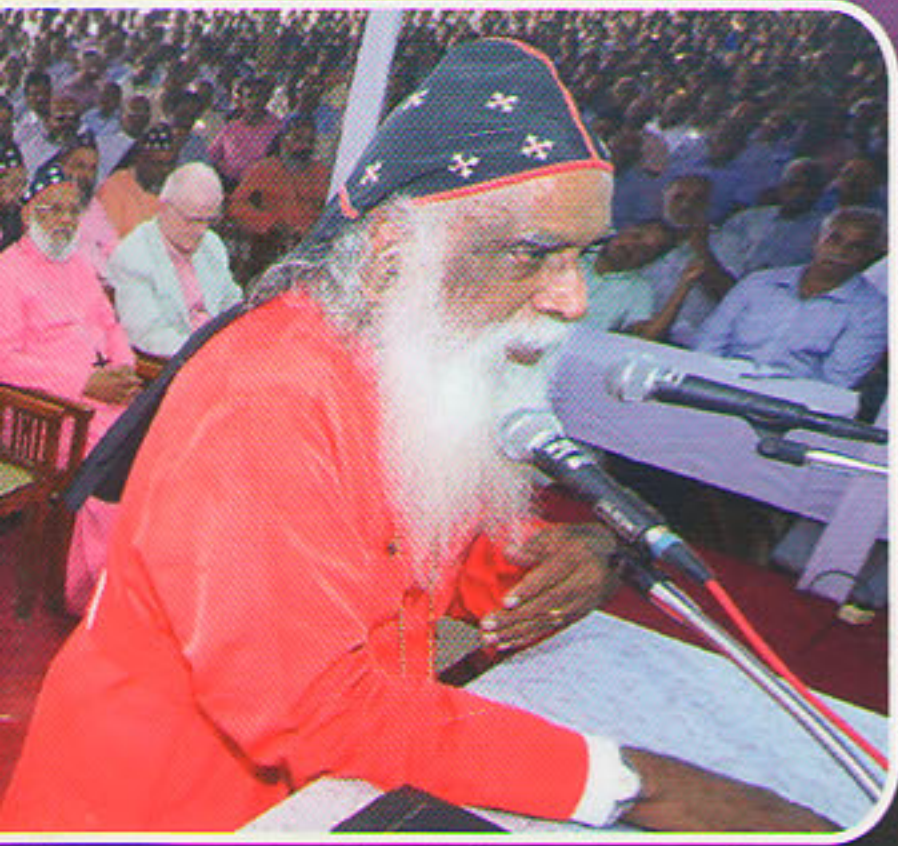


MAR THOMA

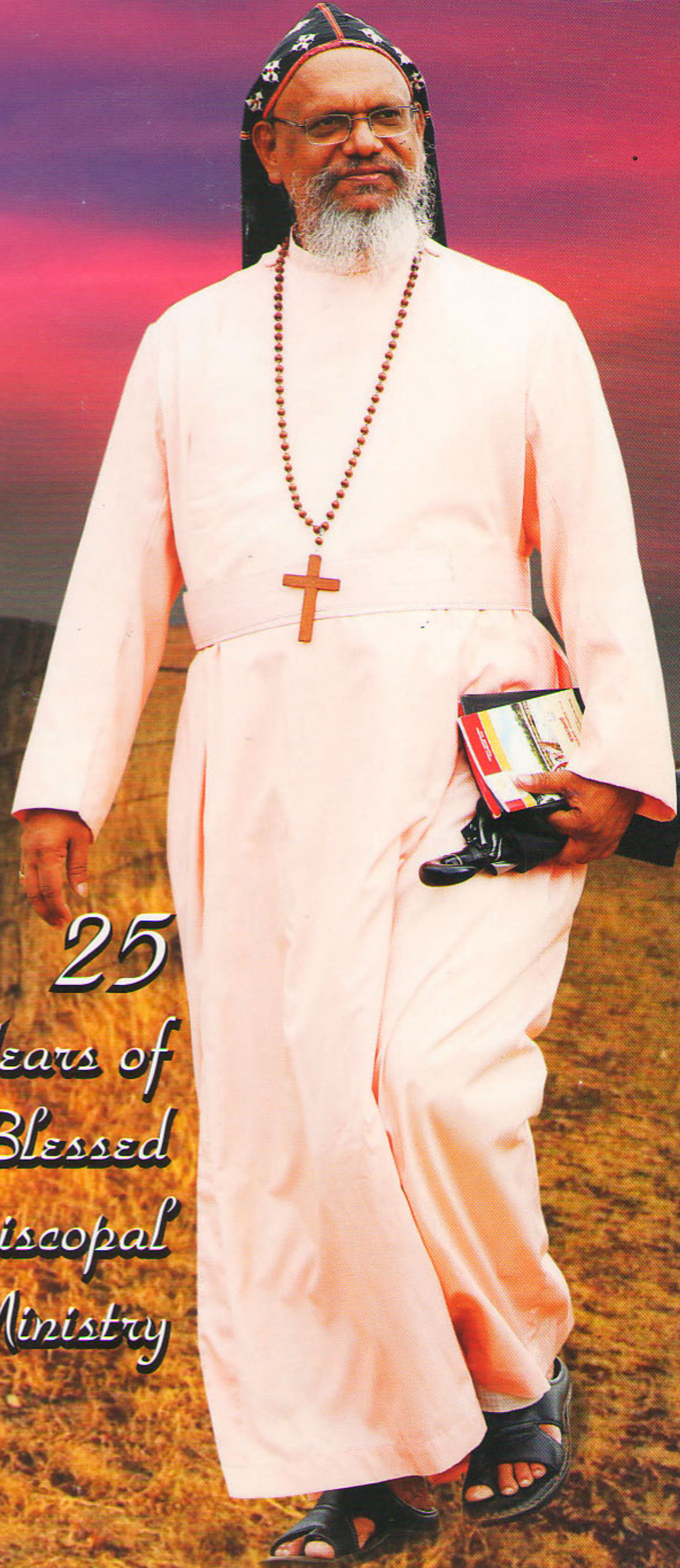
# MESSENGER

A PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

APRIL 2014



*Maramon  
Convention 2014*



*25  
Years of  
Blessed  
Episcopal  
Ministry*

**Beyond the Diaspora**



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

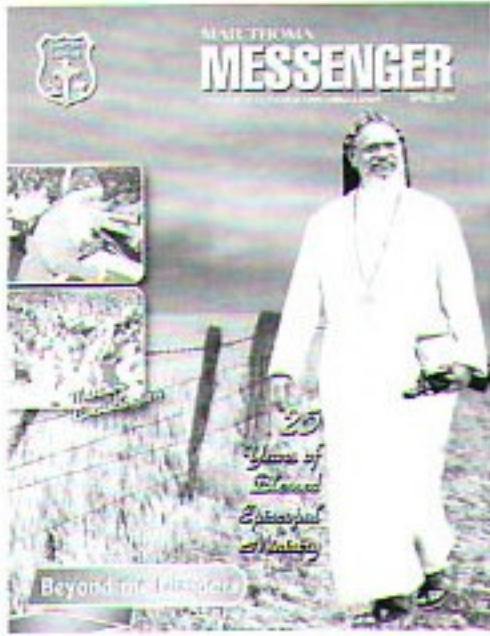
**Call me today for a free quote.**



**Allstate**<sup>®</sup>

You're in good hands.

Auto Home Life Retirement



A Publication of the Diocese of North America & Europe (For private circulation only)

**Vol. XXXIII 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 mtmessenger1@gmail.com

**EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS:**

**Dr. Nancy George Maliacal**, Canada  
905-799-2123 nancygmali@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)  
905-821-4385 susanj1@sympatico.ca

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

**Thomas Mammen**, California  
562-431-6469 tvmammen@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 Mar Thoma Syrian Church  
[www.marthoma.in](http://www.marthoma.in)

07	'WOUNDED HEALER' – A PARADIGM FOR MARKED COMMUNITY
10	COUNTER IMAGINATIONS AND PRACTICES FACILITATING THE QUEST FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE
12	MAR THEODOSIUS: MISSION IMPRINTS IN THE MINISTERIAL JOURNEY
16	THE QUEUE - A SYMBOL OF EMERGING CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA
19	ROLE OF THE YOUTH CHAPLAINS IN THE FAITH FORMATION OF THE YOUTHS AND YOUNG ADULTS: CONTEXTUAL & RELEVANT MODELS OF YOUTH MINISTRY
23	BEYOND THE DIASPORA
26	YOUTH WITH THE CREATOR
28	MARAMON CONVENTION MISSION & MINISTRY
32	MINISTRY AS THE CHURCH MOVES BEYOND THE DIASPORA
35	PRAYER - WEAPON AGAINST TROUBLES AND FEARS
37	OBITUARY
38	മാരാമൺ കൺവൻഷൻ സന്ദേശം
41	BIBLE CROSSWORD PUZZLE
42	EPISCOPAL VISITS
45	PARISH NEWS
48	MATRIMONIAL
48	GENERAL NEWS
51	DIOCESAN NEWS
52	BON VOYAGE AND THANK YOU...!

Subscription Rates	2 Years	5 Years	Life
USA	\$ 25.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 300.00
Canada	\$ 25.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 300.00
UK	€ 12.00	€ 30.00	€ 180.00

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	\$ 700.00	\$ 200.00

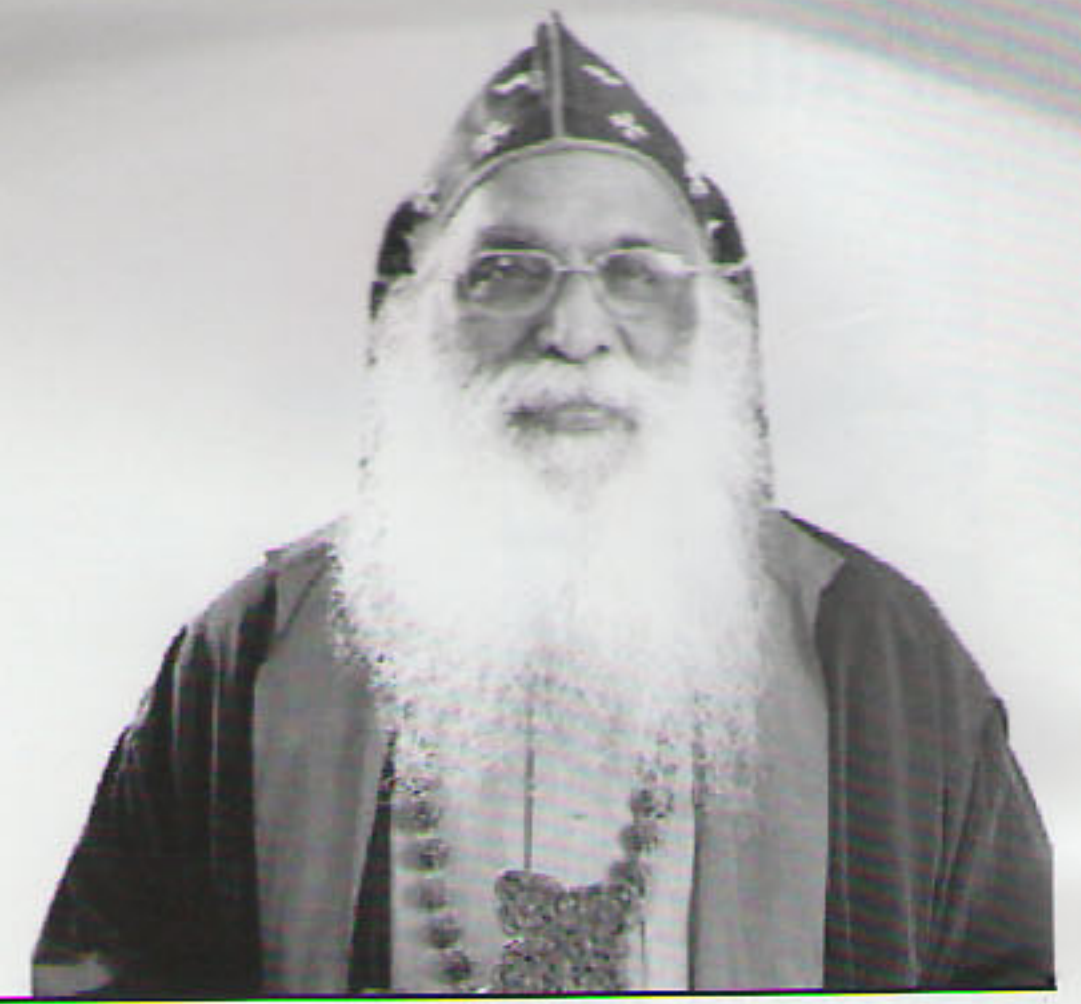
**Mailing Address**

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

Theme: Beyond the Diaspora  
Cover: Episcopal Silver Jubilee

**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 | 1-855-609-CALL | [www.PrintCall.com](http://www.PrintCall.com) | info@printcall.com



# Message from the Metropolitan

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

The great Maramon Convention is over. God's grace embraced this 119th convention throughout. Let us praise our heavenly Father for His grace that enveloped the convention from the start to the end. The challenges of discipleship and witnessing that were raised through the messages must remain in the hearts of thousands who listened, making a lasting influence in them. We have to pray for a true transformation of the Church, the society, and the individual, as a positive effect of the convention. Nature was kind enough to give us solace with cooling breezes during the evenings and the nights. The Maramon area where the convention took place was blessed with a heavy rain immediately after the close of the convention.

The 'Snehakaram' project is on its way. The amount we collected for the project (50 Million Rupees) is put in a fixed deposit. The interest accumulated will be included in the next budget and will be utilized for the objectives that were announced when we began the collection. The applications for medical treatment will be scrutinized by a team of expert doctors and the neediest and deserving help, will be selected. We need an amount of 2.5 Million Rupees more, to accomplish our target for distribution to 100 persons as announced. It is desirable that some more persons should come forward to deposit the amounts as Endowment Funds. The elections to the Mandalam and Assemblies have already started. Every parish member has the responsibility to send the representative who is devoted to the Church. Some candidates come to these positions only to become Kaisthana Samithy members for three years. This is not a good trend. The representatives must try to uphold the ideals that are associated with these positions. India is also going to the polls. The people of the nation will certainly assess the merits of each candidate contesting the Parliament election. We should pray to God for giving the voters of India wisdom and knowledge to vote for the deserving candidates. Global peace is highly relevant in these days. The nations of our planet must take earnest effort in keeping the peace of the earth we live. It is high time that the Churches in Kerala also wind up differences of opinion and move in Christ's love and peace. Another Diocese of the Mar Thoma Church came into existence on December 1st, 2013. Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa is appointed as the Diocesan Bishop. Our Church also participated in a lively manner in the meeting conducted by the WCC. The seventeen-member delegation was led by Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Suffragan Metropolitan. It is an honor for us to have got the recognition by WCC as Mar Thoma Confessional Family. By special invitation, I could also participate in the meeting of the World Council of Churches. The animation department of our Church successfully presented a program based on a theme namely 'The part of media in protecting justice and peace.' This 90 minute program received wide appreciation from all corners including the BBC.

It is well known that Kerala is a state that is a role model in upholding human rights. But now this state has become a playground for human right violations. Many political parties are giving leadership in such movements. This is quite unfortunate. Justice Alexander Thomas, a member of the Salem Mar Thoma Church, was appointed as judge in the Kerala High Court. Very Rev. K. G. Pothen was appointed as the principal of our Theological Seminary at Kottayam. I congratulate them and may God give them blessings to do well in their new positions.

By the grace of God, I completed 40 years as Episcopa. I remember at this point Easaw Mar Themothius Thirumeni. Both of us together entered into the Episcopal position. The loss of Thirumeni had made me very lonely. But God was merciful and protected me giving me courage and health. I take this opportunity to praise God for His blessings on me. It became possible only because of the prayers of the members of the Church and I express my love and gratitude to each of you.

We have entered into the Great Lenten period. The prayer of the Church is, 'Oh God! Transform the world by Your Grace.' The reconciliation derived through the act of the Holy Spirit will remain and will sustain us ever. The Churches observe March 7th as the World Prayer Day. Our meditations in the Sundays after March 7th are based on the topics such as, Cleansing Christ, Forgiving Christ, Accepting Christ, and Redeeming Christ. The Lenten period is intended for meditating Christ who prepares himself for the Cross. When he healed the blind who shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me!", there occurred peace and reconciliation. Jesus makes the blind man enter into the ministry of reconciliation and healing. He follows Jesus, completely surrendering his life for Jesus. The right healing and the sign of reconciliation can be observed here. We must also undergo this redeeming experience in these Lenten days. "Brothers, therefore, I urge you, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God- this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is- his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:1,2).

Grace be with you all

**Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan**

*(Taken and translated from Malankara Sabha Tharaka:  
November/ December 2013/ Jan/ Feb/ March 2014 Issues).*

# Message from the Diocesan Episcopa



Dearly beloved in Christ,

The Diocese of North America and Europe is having its Diocesan Assembly during the first weekend of April 2014. This affirms that the church is not only Episcopal but also democratic in its nature and administration. The newly elected Assembly members from the parishes and organizations will represent their parishes or the various organizations. They are chosen by God through God's people. I welcome them to be part of the administrative set up of the Diocese. This is a privilege and a responsibility. Let us together have the joy of being instruments in the hands of God for the furtherance of God's kingdom and being channels of blessings to the people in the larger society.

In some parishes, there were elections with competitive spirit. The election of the members to the Diocesan Council is also by ballot. While we become candidates and express our willingness to serve, the Bible reminds us that we should consider others better than ourselves (Phil 2: 3b). When God chooses one through the people in the church, it is to be a humbling experience to acknowledge that the call is for a servant ministry (John 13: 4, 5) and to expend life for the furtherance of God's kingdom. There are people who evade being elected and/or shouldering responsibilities. God wants everyone and every talent to carry out His ministry in the world. Everyone should be willing to devote one's life, talent and time for the continuation of Christ's ministry in the world. There are people who consider the privilege of being elected to a position of power and authority. Let us be mindful of the fact that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The authority of Jesus Christ is seen in His death and resurrection, an act of obedience to the divine plan of God. Discerning the will of God and obeying Him is the mark of a 'servant of God'. There are also those who are unwilling to move from the positions of administrative bodies. Church is the community of believers. As a member of the church, every person has the role of enabling the other to bring out his or her talents for the glory of God. The purpose of meeting together as a corporate body is to exhort and encourage one another (Hebrew 10: 19-25). Things are achieved not by our might but by the grace of God. While electing new members, let us pray for God's grace to strengthen the elected members and the ministry given to them.

The Assembly meeting is organized in April 2014 by the members of the Diocesan Council with the help of the members of the Philadelphia Mar Thoma Church. The Diocesan Secretary Rev. K. E. Geevarghese and the Diocesan Treasurer Mr. Chacko Mathew along with the members of the Diocesan Council, who served for the last three years, are bringing the Diocesan Report & Accounts for the consideration of the Diocesan Assembly. I appreciate their selfless service, hard work, earnest efforts and systematic work. The Diocesan Council as a team worked at the local level and the national level to organize various events of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of our Diocese. The details are given in the Annual Report. The new members elected in April to the Diocesan Council will continue the mission and ministry, God has given to the Diocese. The Annual Budget for 2014 is the link that marks that continuity. The new council will have old members as well as new ones. Those who were in the council earlier may say, "This is how we used to do it!". The new members may say, "This is how we do it!". Both have to ask the question, "How do we carry all the valuable experiences and appropriate it to the current context and work towards progress?". Let us remember that Church is the body of Christ and the Holy Spirit is given to us to discern God's will. Being obedient to God is very important while we pool our resources together and minister in unity.

Our bishops, Geevarghese Mar Athanasius, Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos along with me have entered into the 25th year of the Episcopal ministry. This is a time to thank God and express our loyalty to the church. For me, this is a humbling experience when I remember that God by His grace chose me from a remote village. The church, represented by the members, supported and cooperated in my Episcopal ministry. Everyone, within the church and outside, loved and cared for me at all times and in all places. The present ministry in the diocese of North America and Europe is a challenging one. With my experience of the last five years, I wrote the book, "Churching the Diaspora, Discipling the Families". It will be good if the theme of my book becomes an ongoing discussion among us. The family and the church are important in the life of a Christian, and they both are intertwined and have a mutual relationship that is to be taken seriously in our pilgrimage towards the Kingdom of God. The Diocesan Council has decided to publish a book entitled, 'Beyond the Diaspora'. This is the first of its kind in our Church and will be a valuable document to

understand the nature of our church which is global and has the roots deep in the soil where the third and fourth generations of our Diaspora community have become citizens and netizens.

'Going Green' is one of the projects we have planned for 2014. The details of this program are made known to all through the circulars from the Diocesan Office. In the month of February, I read that the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister (India) is celebrating her 66th birthday by planting 6,600,000 seedlings throughout the State. The Slogan is, "A Green Tree Today, A Greener Future Tomorrow". Think about the difference we can make when more than 8000 families in our diocese decide to plant at least one tree per family in 2014? When God asked Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden 'to keep it and dress it', God wanted the earth to remain habitable and humans to respect all the organic and inorganic things. Psalms 24 reminds us that the earth and all its fullness belong to God. That is also a warning that humans have no right to exploit it. We need clean air, clean water and a habitable earth to have life and have it in its fullness. Let us commit to play our part while God is counting on us.

Thirteen (13) of our Achens are getting transferred from our Diocese by the end of April, and more number of our Achens are coming to different places by May 2014. We express our gratitude to all who served us and wish them well in the new places where they are called to serve. We welcome very heartily the new Achens. As we believe in the priesthood of all believers, let us renew our commitment to serve the Lord and His world with humility and love. God bless us all.

God bless us all

**Mar Theodosius +**

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

## PRAYERFUL BIRTHDAY WISHES



**Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar  
Theodosius Episcopa**  
Feb. 19th



**Rt. Rev. Dr. Mathews Mar  
Makarios Episcopa**  
Feb. 25th



**Rt. Rev. Gregorios Mar  
Stephanos Episcopa**  
March 16th



(Journey of St. Paul  
& The Seven Churches)

Put your feet where Apostles walked.....  
View the sites where History speaks.....  
Feel the living touch of Jesus.....

**Australia**  
& **NEW ZEALAND**  
(Sydney/Canberra/Melbourne) & NZ  
Besides tour, visit Malayalee Churches &  
meet friends & relations  
**November 04-18, 2014**

# Turkey &

# Rome or Greece

From: JFK - NY, Washington DC  
Chicago, Houston & LA

May 18 - 30, 2014  
Sep 06 - 18, 2014  
Sep 06 - 18, 2014

Turkey & Greece  
Turkey & Greece  
Turkey & Rome

Christian Tour : 7 Days in Turkey + 4 Days in Rome or Greece  
connected with the 7 Churches mentioned in Revelations and St. Paul's Journey

Visit South East Asia

Hong Kong-Malaysia-Bali (Indonesia)-Singapore  
**Sep 20 - 02 Oct, 2014**

Triangle Tour (5 Days): Delhi/Agra/Jaipur

# HOLY LAND TOURS 2014

May 11 - 20, 2014  
Sep 02 - 14, 2014  
Nov 09 - 18, 2014

Jordan/Israel  
Jordan/Israel & Egypt\*  
Jordan & Israel

Tour Prices Cover:  
Airfare/Taxes/Entrance Fees  
5 Star Hotels  
Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner  
Service of Gov. approved Guides

Enjoy Kerala's Tourist Spots  
with Children  
.....10 Days Package.....



465 Knoll Road, New Milford, NJ 07646

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

E-mail: careways73@verizon.net  
www.bestholylantours.com

\*Egypt and Nile Dinner-Cruise-optional

# 'Wounded Healer' – A Paradigm for Marked Community

Rev. Jameson. K (Research student, St. Patrick's College, National University of Ireland, Dublin)



What differentiates the Church from the world? Is it's doctrines, rituals, authority or structures? In the present aggressive secularized and techno revolutionized world, distinctiveness of the Church is manifested by the its expressions. The Church is a community which expresses the mark of Christ – that is cross. The Church with its prophetic mission exists with this mark. According to Plotinus 'the prophets were not mere 'men and women of God' who were engaged on a 'flight of the alone towards the alone'. On the contrary they were keen observers of the socio-political scene at home as well as abroad. . They taught that unconditional surrender is to be given to no human power but to Yahweh, the 'Lord of History'. They affirmed that the history of the chosen people is in the hands of God and God is the designer of history. As a prophetic community, we the Church are entrusted with the prophetic mission and to move forward with the mark of the cross.

## Book of Isaiah: A literary overview

The book of Isaiah is the most quoted book in the Old Testament. This book is an authentic library containing material from Isaiah himself, as well as from his disciples, and many others wrote in his name. It contains much later proto-apocalyptic material from the book of Kings. According to biblical scholars, this book is divided into three parts. They identified it as First Isaiah within chapters: 1 to 39, a contemporary of kings Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah who lived in the 8th Century BCE (740- 687), Second Isaiah within Chapters. 40 and 55, a contemporary of King Cyrus the Great of Persia (560-530 BCE) and Third Isaiah within chs.56 and 66 who appeared in Jerusalem probably around 520 BCE, at the time of prophets Haggai and Zechariah The arguments for identifying these Isaiah' are historical, literary and theological. First Isaiah lived before the exile and announced its coming when he proclaimed his woes. Second Isaiah lived during the exile probably in Babylon and there is not a single woe in his book. His oracle has been called the 'book of consolation'. The third Isaiah seems to have lived in Jerusalem after the exiles had come back to the home land and were grappling with economic and social problems. The second Isaiah who is a disciple of first Isaiah gives a new twist to the teaching of His master. He is the prophet of universal salvation. According to him Cyrus is the anointed one 'Messiah' of Yahweh. Who is anointed as king to subdue nations and kings? Yahweh calls Cyrus his shepherds (roeh) which is synonym for king just like Messiah. (Isa.44: 28). All three represent an almost identical theology of history, according to which Yahweh is the Lord of history who is guiding the history not only of Israel but of all the nations. Isaiah's idea of the transcendent God whom he calls the Holy one of Israel is taken up by the Second Isaiah ( cf. Isa. 40:25, 41:14, 16, 20; 43: 14; 48:17; 49:7) as well as by the Third Isaiah (Ch. Isa. 60:9,14)

## Message of Second Isaiah

The message of second Isaiah can be summed up in two Hebrew words, 'niham' meaning

'to comfort' or 'to console' (Isa.40:1: 51:3, 12: 52:9) and 'riham', meaning 'to have compassion' or 'to love intensely' (Isa.54:8) the second Isaiah is known as the prophet of God's love and his book is called 'the book of the consolation of Israel'. The writings of second Isaiah stand out by their absence of threats or woes. Only twice does Yahweh warn Israel, once for her stubbornness (Isa 48:4) and secondly for her sins (Isa. 43:24) in the midst of terrible exilic experience the prophet gives the assurance of hope and dawn for a new era in their life. He brings fresh dreams for a shattered community. During the exilic period the people of Israel experienced much suffering because of the socio-political situation of being exiled. In Babylon, they were not allowed to remember Zion (Ps.137:1-3). They lost their identity and even dreams .They went through hopeless situations in their life. But a hopeful vision is that, Israel as a community though presently in exile but will soon to be returned to Jerusalem. It is closely tied to the world conquering mission of Cyrus, the ruler of Persia. While Cyrus conquers the world, the Israel by peacefully teaching justice interprets his success as the saving actions of Yahweh.

The opening lines (53:13-15) serve as a kind of announcement of the main theme of exaltation. This text, the opening words proclaim, is ultimately a hymn of victory, even though much of the text depicts humiliation and suffering. The main portion of the text (53:1-12) is then divided into a portrait of the servant's innocent, salvific suffering (53:1-9) and God's affirmative response of exaltation (53:10-12). The divine reward is repeatedly and explicitly portrayed as a consequence of the vicarious suffering. The exaltation is clearly a consequence of and reward for the humiliation and death. Here the humble and the persecuted one is vindicated by God because he has carried out God's will. There are two points we can perceive in this passage. First, the suffering of the righteous and of the innocent (53:4) and second is the bearing of others' sins. This passage announces in particular the imminence of deliverance and the time of messianic blessing which this servant will realize. (52:7-10)

## He was wounded for our transgressions:

Throughout the text there are many words to describe suffering. Sorrow, (53:3, 4), grief, afflicted (4-7), bruised (5-10), stricken (4-8), despised (3), wounded, (5), chastisement (5), stripes (5), marred appearance (52:14), cut off (53:8), and death (53: 12). The suffering that the prophet was describing was a real and vivid vision. During the exile when this song of suffering may have been written Israel interpreted suffering as God's punishment for sin. In the midst of the suf-



ferings, the servant of Yahweh carries out the mission to the nation and to the people of Israel. The servant's mission is to make known the justice of Yahweh and Yahweh's saving power. The mission of the servant provokes violence against him. (He was despised and rejected...Isa.53.3- 6) The reason for this violence can be explained by the historical context of Isaiah 40 to 55 in the context of Babylonian exile. The violence suffered by the servant would have been a natural result of the historic mission of the Servant. But the servant expresses the assurance that he will be vindicated by Yahweh (Isa.50:7-8). In this passage the poet puts in Yahweh's mouth the assurance of that vindication but only after the servant's death. It is a form of resurrection. The nation that is dead will be raised to new life, but this new life will find its meaning in the mission provoked innocent death it has experienced. The nature of this suffering is primarily, the result of an unjust curse; he does not deserve death, he is unjustly condemned. Secondly, the product of being misunderstood by those for whom he wishes to do well. Thirdly, the suffering of violence itself, when one undergoes the punishment of torture, disfigurement, and shameful burial among criminals. Here servant is aware of carrying out a mission on God's behalf. He is conscious of being the mediator between God and His people. He is supported by God, who set him, and that is why the servant will preserve to the very end despite this torture and testing. God was willing to be identified with the suffering servants in order to liberate the people of Israel. This divine commitment represents Yahweh's desire to have solidarity with the suffering people of the world, with those whose existence is marred by pain beyond recognition. In fact God takes the initiative in this situation and 'goes before' those who suffer. God went before suffering people in the person of Jesus the Christ. The second Isaiah was telling the Israel something new as he prepares themselves for their mission. (52:13-15) The pains, afflictions and grief that the suffering servant would experience were part of God's plan to liberate others (both nations and individuals). For the new nations, the new revelation – that God suffers along with those who suffer- would create a way out of the dead and suffering caused by war, destruction, brokenness, and a refugee experience in exile and lead into wholeness (shalom), healing and hope. The servant song as a whole, and the fourth song in particular reflect in quite a strict sense up to resurrection not as personal life after death but as national life that derives its power from 'death with a mission'.

**Solace in distress:** This passage is good news to the suffering people. The hope of the suffering servant proclaims that there is something beyond suffering. (53:11-12). Isaiah remains hopeful because he knows that his saviour is alive, that he is loved by God. For the suffering people, faith is a powerful living force. God can use every circumstance to call someone to a given mission. (Moses' call and leadership i.e.; burning bush experience). Suffering is not the goal of our existence. If the suffering servant endures suffering it is for the happiness of not only his people but for all the people of the world. One must perceive justice both in good and in the struggle against evil. We have to understand that a calling to social transformation may bring opposition and violent death. We have to admit this as a reality in our mission voyage. Persecution and alienation are part and parcel of this life. Sometimes it may be an act of life affirming value when we stand against the evil powers of the world. Resurrection does not cancel death but draws it into an ongoing victorious struggle for life. The suffering and hope are two simple words that explain the deepest and most complex realities of human existence. They have been the theme of every great religious teacher and prophets throughout the history. The dual themes of 'suffering and hope' calls special relevance for the people of the world today. Christians have often seen in the suffering servant a prefiguration of Jesus the Christ. Jesus not only accepts but also lives in solidarity with the suffering of the world in order to give hope to all people. This identification raises above all the basic theological question. "Where is Jesus the Christ in the peoples' suffering and hope? Although there are no immediate answers to the above questions we need to raise such questions constantly in order to create a new community. We who are the embodiment of Jesus the Christ need to move from isolation to solidarity to create a corporate solidarity in the world. True hope is hope in the midst of adversity, and yet anchored in God's coming triumph over his rebellious world. (Beker J Christiaan)

### Wounded World and Wounded Church

In the present circumstances, our world is brutally wounded in all levels. We face a lot of problems such as terrorism, extreme nationalism, moral degradation, nuclear threats, divisions in the name of 'isms', pollution, corruption, injustice, cruelty, over dependence of machines, gap between rich and poor, extreme poverty so on. Locally and globally we live with intense fear and pain. People expect an alternative system, a concrete change in all spheres of life. Today Church is also a wounded community. In the name of doctrines, rituals, traditions and practices very often the church all over the world is divided.

There are two types of wounds: wounds which are caused by self and by others. We face problems and pains caused by internal and external forces. Without identifying the wounds of the church we cannot survive. What all are the wounds of the Church? 1. When we affirm the catholicity of the Church we are divided in the name of doctrines, denomination, caste, class, language, gender, and culture, so on. We have divided among ourselves and keep an exclusive attitude for protecting our own interests. 2. The urge for power, position, money, church politics, lack of vision ... cause wounds in us. 3. Gap between our words and action caused us irrelevant in the society. We comfortably ignore the social realities of the present era. 4. In the name of conversion she is persecuted brutally by the religious fanatics and extreme nationalists. 5. Church moves according to the ripples of the world – compromising attitude of the church, tendency to move alike world and infiltration of worldly values in the life of the Church are some of the examples. The suffering servant in Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12 can be related to the Dalits in India, aboriginals in Australia, Minjung in Korea, Christian minorities in Syria, Pakistan, Sudan and other Muslim dominated countries and all the oppressed and marginalized communities of the whole world. Do we have hope in the midst of such suffering? What hope do we offer to the voiceless, marginalized and exploited people around us? What we have to offer to the estranged people in Syria, alienated people in in Pakistan, Tamilians in Sri Lanka, Tibetans in China, victimized Palestinians, voiceless minority in and around the world and victims of the Politicization of religions and communalization of politics? What hopes can this text arouse in our suffering people? What commitments can it bring to a life of suffering so that people will remain faithful to God?

**Responsibility of the Church:** In this wounded world we the wounded church is called out and sent out with the role of Suffering servant as in the Second Isaiah. I would like to call Church as a 'Wounded Healer'. Because the church which follows the footprints of the 'Great Wounded Healer' or 'Healed Healer'- Jesus Christ. In this wounded world, with our wounds are we moving with the world or moving away from the world? Our responsibility must be contextual and meaningful. Existence of the church should give new direction to the wounded world. The mission of the church is dual in nature- God centred and world centred. The style of our mission is same as the suffering servant of Isaiah or the Jesus Christ of Nazareth showed us. Comfort in the midst of pain, peace in the midst of war, hope in the midst of futility, resurrection in the midst of death... etc must be style of the Church. We are an alternative community with the wounds of Christ. We must be a hopeful community to give hope to others. An alternative set up is possible through experiencing and sharing the wounds of Christ. Another world is possible with our hopeful and meaningful interventions in the world. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's statement that, 'the Church is the Church only when it exists for others'. The traditional marks of the true Church were devoted service to society with a missionary spirit. The world provides agenda for mis-

sion and God expects our participation.

## Twofold responsibility of the 'Wounded Healer'

### 1. Participate and share the wounds of Christ

Commitment to God and to His mission demands four social dimensions such as a) Participation in the struggle for economic justice against the exploitation of people by the people. b) Being part of the struggle for human dignity against political oppression of human beings c) Stand in the struggle for solidarity against the alienation of person from person. d) Partaking in the struggle of hope against despair in personal life. In the process of participating and sharing the wounds of Christ (salvific venture) we must relate these four dimensions to each other. There is no economic justice without political freedom, no political freedom without economic justice. There is no social justice without solidarity, no solidarity without social justice.

a) Solidarity with the poor and oppressed - We must rediscover Christ in the realities of the society, among the poor and the oppressed. Church should act as an agent of change in the world. As Jon Sobrino points out 'Liberative Evangelization' should be the hall mark of the Church. Participation in the wounds of Christ means it has strong conviction and will to do what Christ has done for us. For Paul suffering is participation in the love of Christ, which is the power of God. The cross of Christ is the proof of God's solidarity love. "The God that sweats in the streets" (Julia Esquivel). When we are with the crucified people we share the wounds of Christ.

b) Stand against the evil structures of the society - Unjust structures are often the consequence of wrong or misdirected goals and principles. When we stand against the exploitative structures of the world strong resistance we must face. We may alienate from the centre and persecute badly. Evil Power may influence, tempt, provoke, and destroy us. But fearless attitude with hopeful future must be our driving force. Here suffering for others is a manifestation of divine love. Without resistance we cannot stand for Christ. Resistance means an active participation in the struggles for the rights of the people for social justice and peace.

### 2. Heal the world with the wounds of Christ.

a) We are to be artisans of peace and reconciliation. Like Francis of Assisi, where there is hatred and discord we are called out to sow love and forgiveness. b) We are called to be persons of dialogue- listening, receiving and giving- this can become our way of life. c) We are called to be persons of hope, rekindling the members of love which others try to extinguish. Wounded Healer is the proof of God's solidarity of love. That is his personal loving solidarity with us in our pain. In the words of Jon Sobrino the primary Christian duty is to take down the crucified people from the cross. We have to show mercy towards crucified people. He calls the church and the world to 'awaken from the sleep of inhumanity' and to face both the reality that 'this world is one gigantic cross for millions of innocent people' and the truth that somehow we are in part responsible.

The ministry of the Church is not to avoid or run away from the wounds but to embrace it and heal with the power of the wounded Christ. We are made 'whole' or healed through the pain of Christ. Our responsibility is to provide holistic healing to the suffering world through the suffering Christ. The suffering church can heal the wounds of the world through its own wounds, the model being Jesus Christ. Only the wounded church can identify itself with the wounded world. The hurt and guilt can be faced energetically, aggressively or violently. But the real servant has done it rather silently, peacefully, with no violence, with not even an outcry. The participation of the Christian community in the struggle against poverty and oppression is a sign of the call of Jesus Christ to liberation. The 'Wounded Healer' is the symbol of suffering service. Christ's passion and mission belong together. We see this clearly in Jesús, who is the suffering servant par excellence, but we need to remember that the servant's mission to bring light to the nations is also to be fulfilled by the Church. (Act. 13:47) For the Church, therefore, as for the saviour, suffering and service go together. More than this it is not just that suffering belongs to service, but that suffering is indispensable to fruitful or effective service. This is the inescapable implication of the words of Jesus. (Jn. 12:23-26, 32-33) We the Church is called to take journey from being a persecutor to become a martyr. To live for Jesus is the real death. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus we are redeemed. Jesus' death was not a 'spiritual suicide'. We receive fullness of life here on earth when we believe and live with him. This is an ongoing process. The Suffering servant, Jesus is the ideal martyr. He calls us to die every day so that we will be resurrected every day for others. Modern Martyr is the one who dies every day and resurrects every day. Let us introspect... Do we suffer from wounds of the world? Do we heal the wounds of others with our wounds?

## James E. Winkler, United Methodist Agency Head, elected NCC General Secretary/President

James E. Winkler, general secretary of the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society, has been elected General Secretary/President of the National Council of Churches by the NCC Governing Board met in Chicago. Winkler will succeed Peg Birk, who has served as Transitional General Secretary of the Council since July 2012. The office of General Secretary/President, formerly General Secretary, is the leading staff position in the NCC. "With Peg Birk's superb guidance, the Council has been through an intense period of planning and reorganization to focus our mission priorities and maintain our fiscal health during a challenging time," said Kathryn Lohre, NCC President. Winkler has served as general secretary of the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS); the international public policy and social justice agency of The United Methodist Church since November, 2000.



As the chief executive of the board, Jim has led a staff of 22 who seek the implementation of the Church's Social Principles through education, witness, and advocacy. The board carries out a wide-ranging ministry of peace and justice throughout the world with offices in Washington and New York. Winkler has re-energized the work of the board around a three-part vision: to help United Methodists link mercy and justice; to connect the work of the board with local churches and annual conferences around the globe; and to be the premier denominational advocacy agency on Capitol Hill. He has led delegations to the Middle East, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq and Germany seeking peaceful solutions to global conflict and traveled throughout the world to support the justice work of the United Methodist in Africa, Asia and Europe. Winkler has preached and led workshops and training events in Russia, Nigeria, and the Philippines, and has been a frequent spokesperson for the justice work of The United Methodist Church to the national and international media.

The NCC General Secretary/President will serve as the executive leader of the Council with overall responsibility for personnel, deploying resources to achieve the priorities of the NCC, organizational and board development, fund-raising, vision-setting, long-range planning, financial management, external relationships and thought leadership. The former office of NCC President has been renamed Chair of the National Council of Churches Governing Board under a reorganization that has taken place over the past two years.

# Counter Imaginations and Practices Facilitating the Quest for Justice and Peace

Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7:60

Rev. Bobby Mathew, E. J. Institute, Kompady, Tiruvalla

## Introduction

The Acts of the Apostles record the sacrificial life of the disciples of Jesus and the early community of believers and the advance they made in witnessing. The pattern provided by the Early Church which went a long way ahead in their life of testimony overcoming all crises and trials with a view to imitating Christ is something which the believers in Christ can follow in any age. The book of Acts has presented very evidently the Apostles' participation in the proclamation of the gospel by confronting and rising above the challenges put forward by the Roman imperialism and the Jewish religious authorities. A study of Acts enables us to understand that the very first generation of early Christian community was a diverse community. It was a community of those who came from Jewish religion and those from Greek religion. Among the Jewish Christians themselves there were those from Palestine Judaism (of those who lived in Palestine) and Diaspora Judaism (of those who lived scattered outside). Thus as the Early Church was a diverse community it was necessary for it to listen to as well as to respond to their polyphony. It is in this context that we must analyze Stephen's life and testimony.

## 1. Determination and Dedication of Stephen

The first fifteen verses of the 6th chapter of Acts present Stephen as one among those selected for the ministries of the early Church. From the details here we can understand that Stephen tried his best to go forward in his testimony with full conviction in the wide range of his ministry and interfering with the current social problems.

### a. Involvement in justice issues

"The Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food" (Acts 6:1). The early Church took up the mission of solving this issue, which arose among those Christians who spoke Hebrew and those who spoke Greek. There was a reason for the increase in the number of widows those days. It was a male dominated society where there was enough possibility for women to be deserted. It was also usual in those days for the Jews who lived outside Palestine to return so that they may spend their last days there. The death of such men also were behind the increase in the number of widows. For these people who returned from other places there were special synagogues. The Jewish religious system made special arrangements for the maintenance of these widows. Interest was taken in providing them with food, accommodation and finance. This interest which the Jewish religion expressed in caring for their widows spread in the early Christian Church too.

The first issue that came up in the early Church was also about this. The Jewish Christians who spoke Hebrew were the ones who were in control of the funds for widows. In such a situation there was a possibility of the Greek speaking Jewish widows to be rejected. The early Church took this issue seriously and tried to solve it. It is worthy of notice that here the decision was taken with a favorable stand for those for whom justice was rejected. The seven representatives for the ministration among the widows were selected from among the Greek speaking Jews and the decision taken assured full protection to the widows. Among those selected to protect justice and to resolve peacefully the issues that rose in the early Church, Stephen was right in the forefront.

### b. Spirituality of resistance.

Stephen's spirituality was a spirituality of resistance. Along with the ministry for widows Stephen joined in various other ministries. "And Stephen full of faith and power, did great

wonders and miracles among the people" (Acts 6:8). The Bible records that a Church called Libertines entered in to arguments with Stephen. A Roman General called Pompey overpowered the Jews and took a group of people as slaves to Rome. Sometime later when Palestine came under Roman control and authority these slaves were liberated and when they returned special synagogues were made for them and they worshipped there. They were known as the synagogues of freed men, the Libertines. Stephen could refute the arguments of these groups. "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke" (Acts 6:10). So they tried to present false witnesses against Stephen and to bring him under trial as Stephen very strongly refuted through the proclamation of the Word the claims of those who opposed him. It is evident that his trial was such that refused justice to him. The book of Deuteronomy has given the directions for the conduct of a trial: "And the judges shall make a thorough inquiry. If the witness is a false witness, having testified falsely against another, then you shall do to the false witness just as the false witness had meant to do to the other, so you shall purge the evil from your midst" (Deuteronomy 19:18-19). The Roman law of those days prescribed rigorous punishment for false witnessing. On charge of speaking against the Holy Place and the Law Stephen was brought before the judges. The scripture has given us a picture of Stephen who resists the accusations against him, when anybody in his place would have faltered. The commitment to the ministry he has taken up, the willingness to imitate Christ-experience and determination are the qualities Stephen reflects here.

## 2. Discourses of Stephen

Of the discourses given in the New Testament Stephen's is very long. (Acts 7:1-53) As we study this long speech we recognize Stephen's zeal in spreading Christian faith.

### a) Discourses revealing the marginality

It is evident that Stephen's discourse reveals the identity of a marginal minority community. The early Church was a minority as well as a marginal community. The Roman administration questioned the identity of the Christian Church. The early Church as a newer movement was viewed with suspicion. The believers in Christianity had to face rejection, persecution and

alienation. The leaders of Jewish religion also spread many scandals against the Church. Those who refused to accept the Roman emperor as Lord were branded as unpatriotic revolutionaries and those who did not worship the gods and their idols as atheists. The words of Jesus "this is my flesh" . . . "this is my blood" were misinterpreted to spread the scandal that Christians were cannibals. In the context of Christians being considered as those with a defective and subdued identity, Stephen makes the attempt to define and to interpret the identity of a minority community.

He tries to show that there is no discontinuity but continuity in the history from Abraham to Jesus by re reading and reinterpreting history. Thus he gets ready to reconstruct the subjectivity and the identity of a minority and marginal community. If the identity of a community is rejected it is as good as a rejecting justice to it. Therefore Stephen's discourse before the council reinterprets the sense of identity of the Christian Church when it was wrongly interpreted.

#### **b) Discourse confronting dominant hegemonic discourses**

Through his discourses Stephen tried to refute the discourses of Roman Imperialism and Jewish leadership. Under Roman rule Jewish religion received many favors. They had the freedom for synagogue worship and the performance of many other religious rites and self-rule as well. Exploiting the special privileges they had from the Roman rulers, the Jews got the opportunity to harass the Christians. They believed that they were holy and all others were outside holiness. Stephen's main contention was that they lost all spiritual power by institutionalizing and idolizing the Torah and the temple. "And they made a calf in those days and offered sacrifice to the idol and rejoiced in the works of their own hands." (Acts 7:41) "Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human hands" (Acts 7:48). According to Richard Horsely: "Stephen here articulates a position that identifies with the Mosaic-exodus covenant that of the free working of the Holy Spirit and prophetic challenge to the establishment, over against the Solomonic tradition of the Temple establishment, which is viewed as virtually illegitimate and not really sanctioned by God." A study of Jesus' temple criticism enables us to see that the systems used for temple exploitation, corruption and the amassing of wealth are criticized and those who are rejected for these are held close and included. Stephen's criticism of those who are reluctant to keep the Law is also strong. "You stiff necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit" (Acts 7:51). "Who have received the Law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it." (Acts 7:53) These words of Stephen which point to the Jewish leaders' ignoring the practical importance of the Law resembles the words of Jesus: "The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it, but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. For they say, and do not. . . .they bind heavy burdens. . . and lay them on men's shoulders. . . . and enlarge the borders of their garments." (Matthew 23:2-6) Thus we understand that Stephen's discourse was a counter to the dominant discourses of the powerful.

#### **c) Discourse affirming God's intervention for justice and peace.**

Furthermore, Stephen's discourse affirms God's intervention for the establishment of justice and peace. Here Stephen tries to maintain that whenever God's people were refused justice and peace God has intervened in history. By referring to the bondage in Egypt, the protection through Joseph, the rise of Moses the liberator, the God who hears the cry of the people, the prophets who foretold the coming of the one who was Just (Acts.7:6,7,18,19,34, 52). Stephen points to God's just intervention. These scripture portions make it evident that by persecuting and killing Jesus who was the fulfillment of the Law and prophecies, the Jews turned themselves into people who rejected God's just intervention. It is worthy of notice that Stephen vividly presents God's intervention right in front of the council which is to implement peace and justice. Here is a loud assurance that God the Giver of Life is the God who leads us to peace and justice.

### **3. Death of Stephen**

Stephen's martyrdom makes it clear that the factors which reject justice are very strong. It is by presenting false witnesses that he is condemned. The council has not the sanction to give capital punishment. The permission of the Roman Governor to carry out the verdict is not sought. It is the crowd itself who executes the judgment. The expressions 'gnashed their teeth', 'cried out with a loud voice' and 'ran up to him' show how cruelly they reacted against Stephen. The Greek word 'ormeeseen' used to suggest how they rushed towards him is the same used to describe the rushing of a troop of soldiers towards a common enemy. The fact that Stephen was cast out of the city and stoned shows that, he was refused all the justice that was due to him from the council. Stephen's response in this context is noteworthy.

#### **a. Counter imaginations of Stephen**

In the book of Acts we see Stephen pictured as one who responds with presence of mind even when he had to face rejection. What he sees in this context of the rejection of justice is a vision of God's just action in history. He sees Jesus who was crucified by the Roman administration and Jewish religious leadership standing at the right hand of God. "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. It is not a coward who laments saying "all around it is injustice, corruption and lack of peace" that we meet here. We see Stephen who experiences the presence of God even at that time. Real peace is not a state in which there is no problem. It is experiencing God even in a problem-ridden situation. The stormy sea; on the shore there are huge pieces of rock; there is a tree which has grown in the crevice of a rock; its branches are seen leaning to the waterside. A small bird which sits on top of the tree sings, even when the branches shake as the waves rise. Even when the circumstances are turbulent we must learn to experience the presence of God and see the signs of justice.

#### **b) Counter practices of Stephen**

The book of Acts has presented Stephen as one who expressed Jesus' style of functioning through his life. He responds to his enemies thus: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." These words echo Jesus' words on the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The life -style of Stephen who offers himself to the God of life is worthy to be imitated. He dies saying: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." What he tried to do was to express through his life the values of the kingdom of God and the pattern of life that were in Jesus. It is Stephen's martyrdom that is behind the conversion of Saul and Philip's preaching the gospel in Samaria.

#### **Conclusion**

We see in Stephen the intense zeal to go forward in his life of testimony imitating Christ. He tried to meet the challenges raised by the dominant powers and to bravely speak about God's intervention in history seeing the signs of justice in spite of the dominance of structures that refused justice. Stephen offers to us the best model of testimony by expressing through his life the pattern of Christ and also by courting martyrdom entrusting his life in to the hands of God of life.



# Mar Theodosius: Mission Imprints in the Ministerial Journey

Rev. K. E. Geevarghese



It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to write about Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Thirumeni during the Silver Jubilee of the consecration of His Lordship as a Bishop of the Mar Thoma Church. I have had a long and intimate association with Thirumeni as his secretary for 10 years, first in Thiruvananthapuram, then in Chennai and now in North America, where Thirumeni served as the Diocesan Bishop. I started my ministry with Thirumeni, immediately after my graduation from the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam and even before becoming a deacon of the Mar Thoma Church. As it was the formative period of my ministry, Thirumeni has immensely influenced my ministerial outlook and creative vision. This article is a very humble attempt to reflect through Thirumeni's life principles and manifold ministerial imprints as a Bishop of the church. This will highlight some of the contributions he has rendered to the Church and to society in the hope that it will inspire others to excel in their fields and make meaningful contributions to the whole inhabited earth. I have tried to showcase some of his ministerial achievements in Trivandrum -Kollam Diocese and Chennai - Bangalore Diocese too. Here I should admit in all humility that words and thoughts about Thirumeni's lofty ideals are beyond what I can spell through these pages.

The year 2014 is a memorable and significant year for Theodosius Thirumeni due to

various reasons. Thirumeni will reach a significant milestone in his life when he turns 65 years. He also completes 25 years of Episcopal ministry in the Mar Thoma Church in December 2014. Also, he will complete 5 years of Episcopal Ministry as the Diocesan Bishop in North America and Europe Diocese. A person is known by the life he lives and by the contributions he makes to the society. We have lots of things to learn from Mar Theodosius as a leader in the Church and Society. In the 65 years of his life thus far, he has served the church and society for 25 years as a Bishop and 40 years as an ordained minister. Through his life and ministry he has made history.

### Life Principles:

A dynamic person, young at heart, Thirumeni begins his day at 5 a.m. and ends it after 11 p.m., or whenever the day's work is done. It is not his habit to postpone anything for the next day. Worship and prayer feature prominently in Thirumeni's everyday life. Thirumeni is particular that all the people in the Aramana attend the chapel service. He is well-disciplined in all aspects of life and considers it a mark of Christian discipleship. His approach to day to day programmes, office and administrative matters, involvement in church activities and decision makings, pastoral care, maintenance of office, and Aramna, dietary patterns, dealings with staff and his involvement in public and community matters reveal his systematic and disciplined attitude to life and ministry.

### Simplicity and Accountability:

He is a simple and transparent person who believes in maintaining accountability to God, to the church and to the community around. He is very meticulous in documentation of assets (movable and immovable), accounting of money transaction, recording of events and activities and careful planning and preparation for everything he undertakes. This keen interest in planning and preparation is evident in his approach to programmes, whether they are big or small, liturgical or non-liturgical, ecclesiastical or non-ecclesiastical. Even before attending a small committee, Thirumeni will take time to study the concerned file. Proper logging and minuting of events and maintaining records receive high priority in Thirumeni's methodology. He prefers written communication than oral, particularly

in administrative matters. Therefore he insists that members of the clergy and laity send important matters in writing.

### **Observation and Reflection:**

Thirumeni is a keenly observant person and he reflects on all that he observes and gives suggestions or corrections whenever and wherever necessary. Many a time, his use of words is minimal, but his silence on some issues does not mean that he is unaware of them. Through his moderate speech he conveys mesmerizing thoughts. He travels a lot across time zones and weather zones and works tirelessly for long hours. Even in the midst of his busy schedule he finds time to study and reflect on the Word of God. His sermons and public speeches are relevant and always have a social dimension. He tries to address and intervene in various situations of human life through his talk and walk. He never believes in spirituality isolated from human concerns. Thirumeni's memory is exemplary. He never flatters anyone and does not expect praise from others. He is not afraid of any kind of criticism and at the same time is ready to accept positive suggestions about his life and ministry.

### **Love of Nature:**

Thirumeni is a lover of nature in general and of animals in particular. His hobbies include reading, writing, traveling, photography and gardening. His care and concern for nature reveals his relation to God's creation. People of his neighborhood and passersby are often surprised to see Thirumeni watering and tending the plants, feeding the pets and toiling in the soil. During his term at Thiruvananthapuram he had a very good kitchen terrace garden. It attracted so many people and the Kerala Government's horticulture society accepted it as a model terrace garden. It was also featured on a Malayalam TV channel, Asianet, in 2004. He encouraged his staff by working along with them. On many occasions, Thirumeni, with tools in his hands, accompanied the Aramana staff for campus cleaning and gardening. The pictures in the Face book page of the Diocese reveal the involvement of Mar Theodosius in kitchen gardening in North America too. He also tries to teach the community about the value of nature and the need for our participation in nurturing it. His sermons reveal his ecological concerns and passion for God's created order. In order to honor Thirumeni's passion for nature, the Diocese of North America and Europe has started a programme 'Going Green' as the Episcopal Jubilee project.

### **Use of Technology:**

Mar Theodosius keeps himself updated on recent technologies and developments. In the 1990s he got his office computerized and began using e-mails and Internet very enthusiastically. He has his own website ([www.martheodosius.com](http://www.martheodosius.com)) through which he can communicate on a wider range with the global community around. A blackberry has become part of his identity and through that keeps constant communication with the Diocesan Office in New York from any part of the world. Video conferencing, Face book page, meditation blog, online meditation, website for liturgical materials and prayer line are other examples of his initiatives in North America, using technological advancement for spiritual upliftment. He uses power point presentations during his sermons and other talks for effective communication. After each Episcopal Visit to parishes, Thirumeni asks the Aichens to send pictures and report of the events to update the website and Face book page. Also he posts points for each Sunday sermon in the Face book page and thus reaches a wider audience across the world. Thirumeni always tries to see the church as a whole. Though he spends time with the Diocese and its activities, his views are always in line with the growth of the entire church. He always challenges the clergy and laity to transcend traditional confines and step into the wider context of church and community. According to him disproportionate growth within the body of the church will not help it to perform its duties and responsibilities in a holistic way.

### **Imprints in Community Development:**

He is highly motivated and motivates others, especially the youth, in community related activities. His concern for the poor is highly commendable. He sees through their eyes their problems and concerns and develops strategies for their improvement. Here I would like to mention an incident which happened a few years ago. On a visit to Thevancodu Mar Thoma Church (in Kanyakumari District) he noticed a few Marthomites dwelling in temporary shelters made of plastic mat on the wayside. He himself found time to visit some of their dwellings to understand their pathetic situation. He talked to them and listened to their tearful complaints. Their pathetic pleas touched his heart and he felt the need to rehabilitate them. He mobilized funds to purchase land and constructed 20 houses for their rehabilitation. This was the beginning of the "Land for Landless Project" of the Thiruvananthapuram – Quilon Diocese at Anducodu and Vazhichal. Now this project

has grown to being a self-sustained community with all necessary infrastructure. This is just one example of Thirumeni's vision and mission. In the Chennai – Bangalore Diocese too, a similar programme was established at Kuruvakalam near Pollachy in Tamilnadu under his vision and guidance. He always responds to the needs and cries of the community around. The rehabilitation programmes for mental patients, dependents of prisoners, AIDS patients, Tsunami victims, estate workers, cashew laborers, orphans and children of single-parents spearheaded by Thirumeni are truly commendable. He was able to motivate people to mobilize resources for sustaining these programmes.

In the North American Diocese Thirumeni has visited places affected by natural calamities like hurricane and tornados and gave leadership to rehabilitate the victims. Also he takes part in the neighbourhood Mission programmes like 'market mission' and 'visiting rehab centers' arranged by individual parishes in North America and Europe. Decentralization of Diocesan activities and administration is another phase of development in the North American Diocese. This was very well reflected in the Diocesan Silver Jubilee programmes and in the formation of 'Regional Activity Committees' in all the 8 regions of the Diocese. Through this Thirumeni could revive the regions and gave a new spirit for its diversified activities.

### **Imprints in Educational Ministry:**

Thirumeni has a special interest in the education of poor children from rural areas. He always believes that by giving education to the younger generation we can change social conditions. The "Education Care Project" of the Thiruvananthapuram Diocese and of Balawadies and hostels in the mission fields of Chennai-Bangalore Diocese definitely witness this mission. In North America, Educational ministry is continued through Native American and Mexico Mission fields. Thirumeni reminds himself and others that life is God's gift. There is no meaning in it, he believes; if our life is not spent for others. He finds time to interact with Theological students and helps them in their ministerial formation. For a term Thirumeni served as the president of Vaideeka Selection Board. In North American Diocese, he encourages the younger generation to come forward for the ordained ministry of the Mar Thoma Church.

### **Imprints of Mission Engagements:**

He is a person with great missionary zeal gives much importance to the activities of the mission fields. The thrust is always on imparting to the un-reached the great love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. He believes in a holistic approach to Mission. A detailed survey is conducted in the Mission Fields to find out the socio-political and economic position of that particular community in order to chalk out programmes that will be appropriate for their needs. He constantly encourages people, the parishes and parish organizations to participate in mission activities through personal involvement and/or through sponsorship. He receives and spends funds for the programmes. Thorough follow-up, regular evaluation, appropriate decision making and proper communication with the sponsors make him a unique missionary. He always

# 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**

**RAMAN ABROL, CPA**  
1130 Rt. 46W, Suite 9 • Parsippany, NJ 07054  
Tel. (973) 331-5178 Fax (973) 718-4666

tries to take decisions through a local administrative body to ensure people's participation in programmes and decision making. To ensure continued support from sponsors he updates them with frequent reports from the fields and receives suggestions from their end. In the previous dioceses, along with evangelistic work, he promoted social welfare activities like housing scheme, toilet scheme, roofing of the roofless houses, marriage aid, education aid, health insurance, education kit distribution, help to differently abled people, AIDS patients' treatment & rehabilitation, medical camps and community Clinics. He also promotes awareness programmes like rain water harvesting, group farming, kitchen gardening, alcoholic de-addiction programmes and AIDS awareness Programmes. Establishing "Vayojana Mandiram" at Kattakada and Rehab center "Sneha Theeram" in South Travancore are some of the shining examples of Thirumeni's concern for the poor. He is convinced that community get-togethers and celebrations like national and religious festivals and anniversaries give a common platform for interaction and community building. To make a community self-sufficient, he encourages programmes like Mahila Samajam, Vikasana Samiti, Balavadies and Child development centre in the mission centres. His concern for the clergy and mission workers is noteworthy. He relates easily to their needs and is concerned for their welfare and for the health of their families. He never compromises on any work entrusted to them and expects some positive outcome from the proposed task. He considers ministry as an important part of the responsibility of stewardship.

In the North American Diocese, during Thirumeni's tenure, Mission programmes made tremendous progress in all the four wings, namely Mexico Mission, Native American Mission, Neighborhood Mission and India Mission. The first Mar Thoma worship place in Mexico was dedicated at the "Colonia Mar Thoma" in the Mexico Mission field under Thirumeni's leadership. This is truly a new imprint in the missionary journey of the Mar Thoma Church.

It was Thirumeni's initiative first time in the history of the Diocese of North America and Europe that the Neighborhood Ministry is begun in addition to Mexico Mission, Native American Mission and India Mission projects. Thirumeni has issued Kalpana to all parishes to adopt the neighborhoods in which they are situated and also to start mission projects hand in hand with the City and other faith based organization. Thirumeni always reminds people and parishes that this is the land where the generations of Marthomites are going to live. Their ministry and affiliation should be to this country and its people. Since the parishes are getting tax exemption status from the IRS, it is their added responsibility to give back to the community in which they are planted. Several parishes and parish organizations especially Youth Fellowship and Parish Mission are working with City, State and other faith based organizations to be part of the Neighborhood Ministry.

#### **Imprints in Ministry through Development:**

Thirumeni's initiatives as the president of the CARD and Development Department of the Mar Thoma Church and President of Krishi Vinjana Kendram (KVK) were indeed appreciable. In the words of Thirumeni, "Development is to build up a just, participatory and sustainable society. The transformation of the society is possible only through the pro-

cess of empowering the weak and the poor by nurturing dignity and self-reliance in individuals. Economic empowerment is equally important as measures for mental, moral and spiritual growth". As the president of the Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam, he has done commendable work to co-ordinate the youth activities both inside and outside Kerala. He has a special concern for the youth of the mission fields and started the publication of the Sakhyam calendar in Kannada, and also publication of Bible notes in Kannada for daily devotion.

#### **Conclusion**

During the five years of his ministry as the Diocesan Episcopa of the North America and Europe Diocese, Mar Theodosius has made visible and remarkable changes in the overall growth of the Diocese. Through his systematic planning and personal supervision, he has impacted all areas of ministry especially parish ministry, youth ministry and mission engagements. He travels to every nook and corner of the Diocese, irrespective of the number of Marthomites there. He is always available to the people of this Diocese, to stand with them and guide them as a great shepherd. He made new strides in the mission of the church through his direct involvements and initiatives. He is truly a Bishop with great Vision! As Thirumeni celebrates the silver jubilee of Episcopal consecration, it is my prayer to the Lord Almighty to continue to guide and bless him. May the Lord strengthen him to shoulder all the responsibilities which God entrusts with him to bring glory to God, blessings to people and witness the Kingdom of God. I wish and pray that God may continue to keep Thirumeni in the faith journey for years to come in His vineyard.

At this juncture what is our responsibility? As a response to his leadership we have to take up the challenge to give momentum for the further growth and development of his initiatives. What we need is people participation at local level. Let the clergy community and Laity together take up that challenge for the glory of God and extension of His Kingdom.

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE FOLLOWING NATIVE AMERICAN MISSION PROGRAMMES**

### **OKLAHOMA MISSION**

Bible Camp /Vacation Bible School  
Dates: Sunday, June 1 - to Friday,  
June 6, BROKEN BOW, OK

**Tour of mission:** Directing and providing leadership for Camp and Vacation Bible school for Native American children. This ministry involves, teaching Vacation Bible School and music, giving devotional messages, leadership training, teaching arts & crafts, helping with participate in sports & games, operating audio/visual aids, cooking. About 200 students - ages ranging from 5-18 years, and approximately 50 adults are expected to participate in the above two mission programs. This is an opportunity to engage in evangelism, visitation, witnessing in the community, sharing faith and love in Christ, and learning about Choctaw Native Americans and their struggles. Volunteers are expected to pay only their travel expenses. Food and lodging will be provided free of charge. Dead line for Registration is April 30, 2014.

Rev. Jasen Thomas, Convener  
Tel. 214 604 6678 E-mail: revjathomas@yahoo.com

### **ALABAMA MISSION**

Vacation Bible School, Mount Vernon, Alabama.  
Dates: Saturday, June 7- to  
Saturday, June 14, 2014

Mr. O. C. Abraham, Coordinator  
Tel: 302 239 7119 E mail: ocnirmala@aol.com



# The Queue - A Symbol of Emerging Christianity in China

(A PRESENT DAY JUSTICE EXPERIENCE)

Rev. Dr. M. Mani Chacko, General Secretary, The Bible Society of India



## Introduction:

It was under the leadership of the General Secretary of the United Bible Societies Mr Michael Perreau that I along with the General Secretaries/ Leaders from Norway, Brazil, Cuba, Lebanon, Japan, Hong Kong and China visited China from September 7-15, 2013. Mr Kua Wee Seng, Coordinator, United Bible Societies China Partnership organized the visit. We were guests of SARA (State Administration For Religious Affairs), a functioning department under the State Council which oversees religious affairs and issues for the People's Republic of China. It is closely connected with the United Front work Department and is charged with overseeing the operations of China's five officially sanctioned religious organizations: the Buddhist Association of China, Chinese Taoist Association, Islamic Association of China, Three Self Patriotic Movement and Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association. The State Administration for Religious Affairs exercises control over religious appointments, the selection of clergy, and the interpretation of religious doctrine. The SARA also works to ensure that the registered religious organizations support and carry out the policy priorities of the Communist Party of China. The staff of SARA took care of us very well and was with us throughout our visit to various provinces in China. The visit was a very inspiring experience to witness the emergence of Christianity in China. In this short article, I would like to briefly describe and reflect on my experiences in China with regards to the Church and Christianity in China.

One of the powerful images which have made an impact on me of the growth of Christianity in China is the Queue we witnessed on Sunday, the 8th September 2013 when we went for the Sunday Worship in a City Church. We witnessed a long queue outside the Church, well organized patiently waiting for the first Service to be over and then to get into the Church for the next Worship Service. This was an exciting and meaningful sight to all of us from different parts of the world. All of us remarked to each other that we see queues in other places like in front of a Cinema Hall or in front of Government Offices but

not in front of a Church waiting in a line to get into the Church building to take part in Worship. On inquiry, our hosts told us that this is a regular scene on Sundays in front of most City Churches mainly because there are not enough Churches in the cities on par with the growing number of Christians in China. So they come to these city churches in large numbers for worship. We were told that in most of the Churches there are 4-5 Worship Services on a Sunday. Another fact which attracted our attention was, while the worship goes on, it is simultaneously telecast live in a hall underneath the Church so that those who are not able to get a seat in the main Worship hall could still witness and be a part of the Worship and hear the Message. We were also told that there are several house church groups meeting in villages where they come together for Worship.

Christianity in China has a history going back to the Tang dynasty (8th century), and today is the fastest growing minority religion in China. Christianity in China comprises Protestants, Catholics, and a small number of Orthodox Christians. Although its lineage in China is not as ancient as the institutional religions of Taoism and Mahayana Buddhism, and the social system and ideology of Confucianism, Christianity has existed in China since at least the seventh century and has gained influence over the past 200 years. The growth has been particularly significant since the loosening of restrictions on religion by the People's Republic since the economic reform in the late 1970s. Religious practices are still often tightly controlled by government authorities. Chinese over age 18 in the PR Care permitted to be involved with officially sanctioned Christian meetings through the "China Christian Council", "Three-Self Patriotic Movement" or the "Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association". Many Chinese Christians also meet in "unregistered" church meetings. There are also many New religious movements in China which refer to themselves as Christianity, such as Mentuhui and Beili Wang, whose doctrines are derived from the Bible combined with Chinese folk religion. Their leaders often claim to be the new Savior. In the mid-1990s, Chinese government started to monitor these new religious movements, mostly citing them as cults and banning them officially, so their activities soon turned underground.

It is impossible to say how many Christians there are in China today, but no-one denies the numbers are exploding. The government says 25 million, 18 million Protestants and six million Catholics. Independent estimates all agree this is a vast underestimate. A conservative figure is much more than 60 million. One figure is up to 150 million.

There is a complexity in the structures of Chinese Christianity which is little understood in the West. To start with, Catholicism and Protestantism are designated by the state as two separate religions. Throughout the 20th Century, Christianity was associated with Western imperialism. After the Communist victory in 1949, the missionaries were expelled, but Christianity was permitted in state-sanctioned churches, so long as they gave their primary allegiance to the Communist Party. The officially sanctioned Catholic Patriotic Association appoints its own bishops and is not allowed to have any dealings with the Vatican, though Catholics are allowed to recognize the spiritual authority of the Pope. There is a larger Catholic underground church, supported by the Vatican. Inch by inch, the Vatican and the government have been moving towards accommodation. Most bishops are now recognized by both, with neither side admitting the greater sovereignty of the other. Yet in the past few months, the Chinese government has again turned tough, ordaining its bishops in the teeth of opposition from the Vatican which has in turn excommunicated one of them. The official Protestant Church is growing faster than Catholicism. In the past five years as per the report of the National Chinese Christian Council, there were 2.4 million more believers were baptized; 5195 churches were newly built or renovated; 2982 pastors and elders were ordained; 3 new seminaries were established; 4300 seminary students graduated; an average of 3.5 million copies of Bibles were distributed per year.

## **B. Theological Reflections.**

As a Pastor, an academician and a theologian, I was forced to indulge in an evaluation of my visit to China especially in the light of the official interactions with the leaders of the Church in China on the growth of Christianity in China. There are four challenges/ insights which I had picked up from this visit, which I think are applicable to the Church Universal. As an Indian, I think these challenges are very relevant to the Church in India as well.

### **A. The Interconnectedness between the State and the Church.**

This was the first challenge/insight which occurred to me. As it was pointed out earlier in this article, the SARA represents the State and their primary role is to protect the rights of the minority religions/groups. This was not possible during the early part of Chinese history. In 1966, China's Communist leader Mao Zedong launched what became known as the Cultural Revolution in order to reassert his authority over the Chinese government. Believing that current Communist leaders were taking the party, and China itself, in the wrong direction, Mao called on the nation's youth to purge the "impure" elements of Chinese society and revive the revolutionary spirit that had led to victory in the civil war 20 decades earlier and the formation of the People's Republic of China. The Cultural Revolution continued in various phases until Mao's death in 1976, and its tormented and violent legacy would resonate in Chinese politics and society for decades to come. But as a result of the opening up of China to the outside world after the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), the State plays a major role in safe guarding minority religious groups. This is very significant as Chinese Christianity is concerned. It is the hope that agencies like SARA would continue even in the future so that minority groups will be able to live a life experiencing safety and justice.

### **B. The Interconnectedness between the Local and the Global.**

This challenge dawned on me during our interaction with the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church in China. In 1957, the Chinese government established the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association, which rejects the authority of the Vatican and appoints its own bishops. To fully comprehend the complex nature of the Catholic Church in the country, one should look at the Chinese government and how it influences much of Chinese society. Many Westerners have argued that China is intolerant, undemocratic and dictatorial. Some call for the Vatican to take a tougher stance against Beijing and offer no compromises. Yet that will not resolve anything. There is a need to understand Chinese culture better to figure out how to resolve thorny issues. The Vatican has raised legitimate concerns over Beijing's hard line stance against some Catholic beliefs. Government officials refuse to allow Chinese Catholics to recognize the authority of the Pontiff. The Vatican insists that all its faithful in the nation enjoy the rights to "pray freely and remain loyal to the Pope" The Vatican asserts its rights to appoint its own bishops, and not let Chinese officials assume this responsibility, because it is a spiritual not a political act. Catholics abhor the one-child policy in which Chinese families are punished for having multiple children, while forced

and voluntary abortions have become commonplace.

China's government remains reluctant to smooth relations with the Vatican, even though there can be much room for compromise, but Beijing just lacks trust. It continues to fear that a stronger Catholic faith could encourage political dissent. Yet these fears are groundless, because Chinese Catholics focus on spiritual matters not politics. The Vatican has made a tremendous effort to improve ties with China's government, and Beijing should demonstrate the same good will or risk a long-term and unnecessary freeze in relations. All Chinese Catholics agree on essential spiritual matters. Whether they are Underground or Patriotic Catholics (priests, nuns or lay persons) they all love Pope Francis. They pray for the Pope to visit China. They have a genuine love for God. They believe that brighter days lie ahead for Chinese Catholics. In fact, the Catholic leadership sought the help of the United Bible Societies to negotiate with Pope Francis to find ways by which the relationship between the Vatican and Beijing could be restored thus the Church could flourish meeting the needs of the people. The Catholic Church leadership stressed the importance of the interconnectedness between the Local and the Global. This is a significant insight and challenge to the World Church.

### **C. The Interconnectedness between the Text and the Context.**

The two sermons I heard in two Protestant Churches were brilliant and relevant to the needs of the people. The Context was taken into consideration when the sermons were delivered. This relationship between the Text and the Context became more visible at the meeting of the China Christian Council recently in Beijing, an organization which was founded in 1980 under the leadership of Late Bishop T H Ting. China's top Christian authority is encouraging tailored and flexible sermons, as traditional ways of preaching may not answer the needs of rural believers migrating to cities. Along with other migrant workers, a large number of Christians have moved to cities from rural areas amid rapid urbanization according to Elder Fu Xianwei, Chairman of the National Committee of Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China, one of the two major Christian associations in the country. The trend has led to diversified demands from religious services in cities, especially during Sunday sermons, as parishioners come with different needs. China has seen an increase of 2.4 million baptized believers from 2008 to 2012. More than 1,000 pastors were ordained and more than 5,000 churches and meeting points were built in that time. Two important issues of the Context the Church in China has to address at the moment are the care for and of the Elderly and the issues of the Migrants. The elderly feel lonely and also difficulties in sustaining themselves as they are forced to live alone because their children have migrated to cities in search of jobs. On the other hand, the migrants to the Cities from villages face the issue of acceptance and hence feel very lonely and isolated. They are treated as "outcasts". So they come to church with different needs to find comfort and meaning. Therefore it is important the text needs to be interpreted to the Context.

**D. The Interconnectedness between Denominationalism and Post Denominationalism**

The Chinese Christian Council is the melding of denominations brought to China by missionaries, and is an attempt to cast off Western influences in favor of one Chinese church. It is a post-denominational movement. They strive to deemphasize denominational differences. In the early 19th century, Protestantism came to China. On the one hand, Chinese Christians appreciate that foreign missionaries introduced the gospel to China in spite of many difficulties; on the other hand, it is a pity that they brought numbers of denominations which initiated differences between churches in China based on western historical, social, cultural, political and economic backgrounds and contexts. From 1807 when the first Protestant missionary arrived in mainland China until 1922, "there are working in China over 130 different (foreign mission) boards and societies" ("Coordination and Cooperation in the Work of the Church", "The Chinese Church as Revealed in National Christian Conference", The Oriental Press, 1922, p.608.) and most of these had denominational affiliations in the land of their origin and tended to reproduce denominational markings in China. This situation lasted into the early 1950s when foreign missionaries withdrew from mainland China.

Denominations with western outlooks and thought patterns were copied on the mission field; even worse, in addition to some Chinese indigenous churches, denominational rivalries and mutual attacks became a hallmark of the churches. For instance, in the most simple thing, how to translate the word "God" into Chinese, there were two translations, one using "Shen" while the other used "Shangdi" to meet different inclinations among Christians. Even in the same denomination, mission agencies from different countries planted churches in China using different titles in the Chinese translation. In 1950, Chinese Christians initiated the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, and through the principles of self-governance, self-support and self-propagation of the gospel, an independent road to build Chinese churches was set up, which turned away from the old image of Christianity as a "foreign religion". The Three-Self Patriotic Movement was an inter-denominational movement, and the majority of Chinese Christians welcomed and threw themselves into it. During the process of promoting the Three-Self principle, Chinese Christians who belonged to different denominations found they had much more consensus on faith than differences. And the consensus was essential, while the differences were not. Were we to continue to preach a divided Christ? Were we to follow the old way of the denominational churches any longer? Church leaders and leading Christians asked themselves, and they came to feel that the time had come to break the walls of denominations. It resulted in the beginning of united worship in 1958. As Bishop K.H. Ting said, "we Chinese Christians have chosen the road of post-denominational unity, not because we are better than anyone else, but because we live in our particular historical situation", and all in all, "we can only say that this has been a result of the leading of the Holy Spirit, who has allowed us to bathe in the ocean of God's grace." (K.H. Ting, "Fourteen Points From Christians in the People's Republic of China to Christians Abroad", A New Beginning, Canada-China Program of the Canadian Council of Churches, 1983, p.113).

Advocated by Bishop K.H. Ting, the ministry of Reconstruction of Theological Thinking was initiated in 1998. It encourages preachers and theological teachers to reflect upon and sum up the spiritual experience in Chinese churches and explore the way of the development of Chinese churches. Ecclesiology is, of course, one of the main themes and has recently been discussed more and more. Leadership development continues to be a challenge of the Church in China to initiate such theological thinking and leadership. The

Rev. Dr Sam Kobia, the then General secretary of the World Council of Churches, visited China in 2006 and valued highly the post-denominational church through his own words:

When we think about Chinese Christians, we think about the future, because more and more Christians are realizing that if we are to live the prayer of Jesus Christ that all should be one, then we need to be post-denominational in character as a post-denominational church, you are in a class of your own, and we want to learn more from you (<http://www2.wcc-coe.org/pressreleasesen.nsf/index/pu-06-11.html>)

**Conclusion**

The above reflections give a rosy picture of the Chinese Christianity. However, when one thinks of the population of China, which is 1.4 billion, they are a small minority. Besides, there are many without any religious affiliations and who do not see the need for God or religion. When asked as to whether they belong to any faith, they would say "they belong to the Communist Party of China". The United Bible Societies China Partnership and the Amity Press Printing Company continue their efforts to make Bibles and Bible portions available in China. My Cup Overflows is produced by the United Bible Societies and printed and distributed by Henan Christian Council/Three-Self Patriotic Movement. It has the Gospel of Matthew in Today's Chinese Version and includes a testimony of a young lady named Shiloh. Like many young and educated Chinese, Shiloh was brought up to be an atheist. Currently a graduate student, she shares how she had once been confused by different world views, but later found the message of love in the Bible so compelling that she prayed to receive Jesus as her Lord and Saviour. Many recipients of the booklet said that they could identify with Shiloh's journey. Many were touched by the powerful testimony and later even approached church members to ask how they could receive Jesus into their lives.

God is indeed at work in China. It is estimated that China would become one of the largest Christian nations in the world in the next two decades. Let us pray that the door of freedom which has been opened will never be closed in China so that the Church would grow from strength to strength as an authentic witness to our Lord in the local and the global context.



Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.  
 Matthew 6:19-21

# Role of the Youth Chaplains in the Faith Formation of the Youths and Young Adults: Contextual & Relevant Models of Youth Ministry

Rev. Dennis Abraham, South East Region Youth Chaplain - Philadelphia



(Excerpts from the presentation at the 2014 Youth Chaplain's Conference at San Francisco)

## I. Introduction

Youth Ministry is a special type of ministry: it has its own dynamics. The ministers and the people who are being ministered to are changing. Thus, the approaches and methodology of Youth Ministry needs to be examined and tweaked from time to time, to relate to the younger generation.

## II. Purpose of Youth Ministry

The importance of Youth Ministry lies in encouraging and guiding the youth in their faith journey, and to relate to others in the same age group. It is also a platform, by which the younger generation is plugged into the church as the body of Christ, and to the society. It is like setting up a meeting point for youths and Christ. It also targets some of the most confused and complex members of society. The success of it depends on how much it is able to relate and respond to the needs of the youth.

## III. Theology of Youth Ministry

It is difficult to create a solid theory on how youth ministry can be done. Creating a theological framework for the youth ministry is vital for its impact, and helps us to frame the practice of youth ministry. With regards to faith, it is necessary that we place a higher priority on their identity as Christians than on their status as adolescents. Youths must be challenged to use the gifts and talents through the church. Therefore, ecclesiological inclusiveness (how to bridge the faith and the world). – or how to make the faith more practical. Culture is also very important, as it plays a prominent role in youths. Youths now spend more time in workplaces, schools, etc, than at home, church ...etc. They infuse modern culture, and are adapted to social networking, media, etc. Youth ministry must be aware of the culture, and adapt it in its outlook, without compromising Christ-like values. To an extent, this may require transforming the culture (Rom 12:2). This is cultural engagement. Preparing youths for discipleship and servant hood is vital. It is part of the great commission of Christ (Matthew 28: 19-20). As their faith is developed, they must be encouraged not only to live the faith, but bring this to the world.

## IV. Knowing our Youths

As clergy, youth chaplains, and even as a faith community, it is important that we know our youth and their needs.

*a. Culture/Technology:* The speed and access to information, new methods of communication, new thought patterns, new cultures and folklores, post-modern values, new uses of language (verbal & non-verbal) are a challenge for us, as we would need to learn these in order to communicate. Today, the main focus of youths is to identity and the search for it. It is a vital time as vocational choices are made. Their perception of life itself is shaped by the media, art, ...etc. There is an extensive and sophisticated 'youth markets', which include fashions for clothing, technology, etc.

*b. Millennial Generation Y:* Recently TIME magazine had an article, calling them "Millennials" or more popularly known as Generation Y. (those born after 1982). They are known by this term, it is understood that they are different from the earlier generation (Generation X). The following is the breakdown specifically:

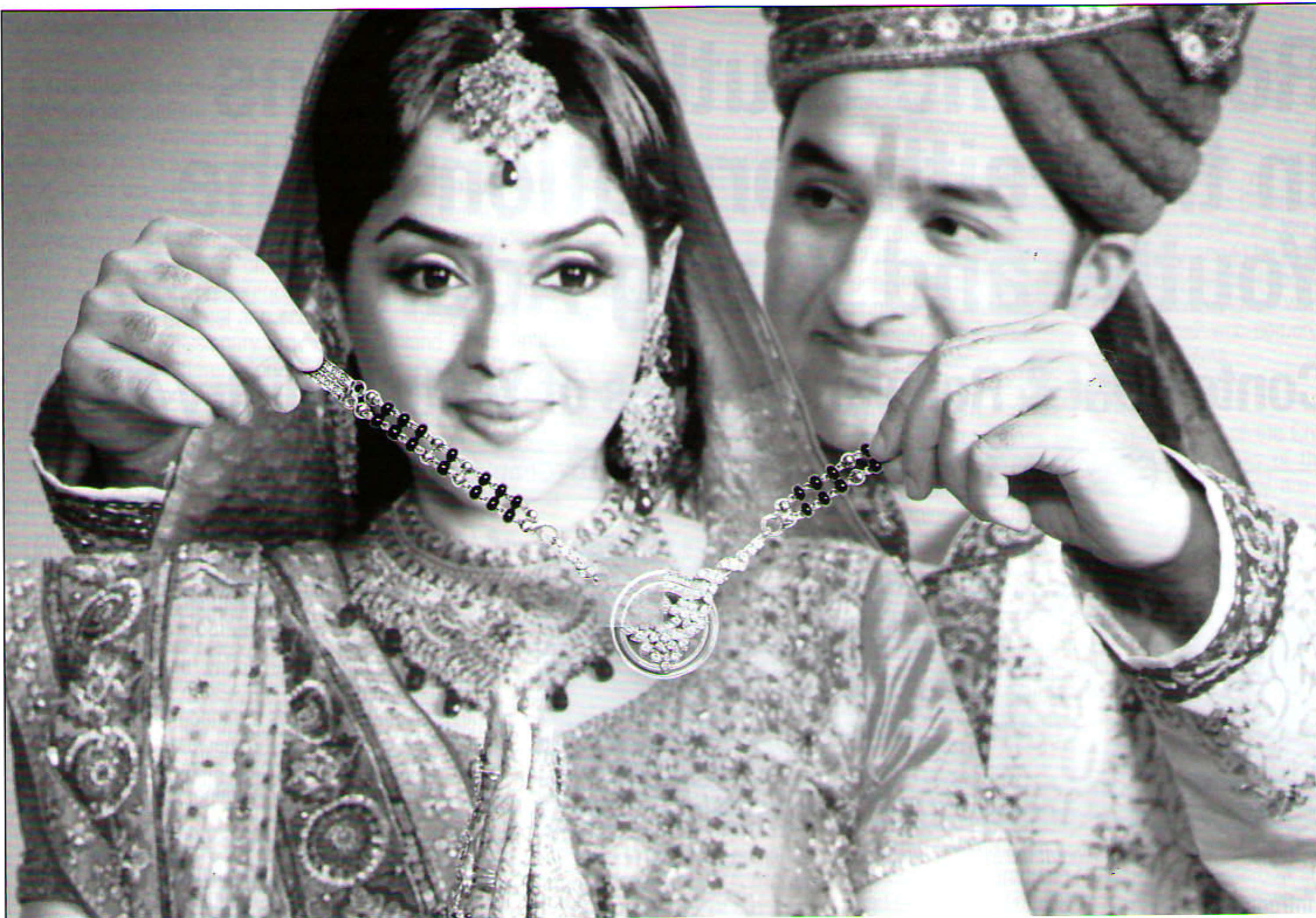
World War Generation (born 1901–24)  
Builder Generation (born 1925–45)  
Boomer Generation (born 1946–63)  
Generation X ( born 1964–81)  
Generation Y (born 1982 onwards).

They (Gen Y) have distinctly different behaviors, values and attitudes from previous generations as a response to the technological and economic implications of the Internet. Not to mention, there is a growing generation gap. A majority have computers and/or mobile devices, tablets, etc. On an average day, only approximately 1/3 of teens spend free time in evenings visiting friends. This becomes complex at the present time, as the world itself has become a global village, with the fusion of culture, language, values, etc. They are more civic-minded, and more liberal to social and cultural issues.

## *c. Religion/Faith*

The aspect of individual vs. corporate spirituality, me vs. us is important. More focus on individual interests poses a challenge in churches where community is central. Mike King outlines the general concept of faith in youths today:

1) God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the bible and by most world religions.



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

- 2) The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
- 3) God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
- 4) Good people go to heaven when they die.

*d. Identity/Occupational Quest:* we must identify the struggles of the youth we work with. This includes academic pressures, peer pressures, friendships, relationships, the struggle to fit in, work overload, admissions, results, financial difficulties, fear of failure, fear of inadequacy, physical health, addictions, temptations, guilt...etc.

*e. Physical changes:*

As opposed to the earlier sections, where developments are unexpected and changing constantly, a more stable and expected development is physically. Teens begin puberty on average at ages of 10 ½ (females) and 11 ½ (males). It is not a single process, but a series of linked physical changes. Each gender develops physically, sexually, emotionally, mentally, etc. With regards to mental development, it is important to note that there is a significant leap in their intellectual capacity and thought patterns. Things understood and taken for granted at childhood change at the onset of puberty. They have an "imaginary audience," which means that they will generally be concerned about what others are thinking about them.

## V. Faith Formation – Stages

Youth ministry's effectiveness and transformational potential is linked to how well we monitor and understand life's natural growth processes. Just as teens develop physically, faith itself has development stages. Therefore, it is vital that Youth Ministry considers/caters to a wide range of youth of various ages, backgrounds, lifestyles, and experiences. Faith development is something that cannot be taken for granted. We all have distinct interpretations of what faith is, based on our knowledge, experience, and conception of reality. But faith is something that changes, matures, and develops throughout one's life. We may unconsciously feel that faith is something that is fixed and unchanging or, is faith something active. Faith has a recognizable pattern of development. It follows a particular process to reach a mature state. An individual's understanding of faith therefore, is reflected through their emotional, cognitive, and moral interpretations and responses. Thus, as faith matures and develops it goes through a particular process, in which perspectives on ultimate meaning (in life) and values change during one's life.

## VI. Relating to the Youth

Understanding the youth we minister to can help us to tweak our ministry to relate to the developmental differences among them. Attention to the dynamics of peer influence can help us to be more effective. To an extent, a study of the surroundings, suburbs, cities, schools/colleges, and even parishes that youths attend is vital. This sociological method can help us to track the needs and movements among the youth population in their respective communities. We can't adopt a plan that fits all, as youths have increasingly diverse interest groups (sports, music, art, pop culture, etc). Our interest is in how to best accomplish this task with young people. But at the same time, personal relationships and ministry is required to achieve its full effect. A lot of homework and research work is necessary. If we seek to move into their world humbly, hungry to learn, and eager to serve, we will find that we can build new relationships while discovering fresh insights about those we want to reach. We must learn to be non-judgmental. At first meet, we should always remember that is about them, not us. Sometimes a conversation will help us to progress from making contact to building a relationship. Common experiences and shared confidences help build relationships of mutual trust. It's about meeting them, where they are—whether it's colleges, work, homes, restaurants, coffee shops, etc.

Being enablers:- We need do what it takes to nurture youths in order that they grow into the fullness of life in Jesus Christ. We promote fun, games, and fellowship, but this should be along with spiritual discipline,- personal prayer, bible study, fasting, meditation, and service. Significant life changes take place when we are engaged by that which is most important to us and integrate what we've learned into the natural patterns of our lives. We need to motivate them to do things, but just be fans, or cheerleaders, or bystanders or sidelined. They must be put in the playing field. We must enable them to be leaders, mentors, and role-models.

## VII. Identifying the 'Missing' Generation

Our main objective is to be a "living reminder of Christ" to our Youth (concept by Henry Nouwen). Our focus is to win the youth, to bring the gospel to them, in a way they can

understand, and enable them to bridge faith and life, which is a constant struggle. In a sense, we can say that this is an 'incarnational' ministry. Programs are necessary, but reaching out to the lost is vital. This includes those who are active in the parishes / youth fellowship.

## VIII. Ministering to those who are Dispassionate/Indifferent

Our ministry is to the faith community, and we may find ourselves in situations where we minister to those who are indifferent towards youth ministry, church, or faith in general. But we also have the responsibility to cater to them. Dietrich Bonhoeffer addresses this issue in his book *Spiritual Care*. He characterizes people in this category into three modes:

- 1) There are people who receive such fulfillment through vocation and family that they lack nothing. They are satisfied, content, fortunate, and attend church.
- 2) Educated/culture folk who are above ecclesiastical things. They feel that they can never find a real way into the church
- 3) Callous, discontented, disappointed, anger against the church and stand against it.

When we are called to minister in such situations, we should always enter into the conversation by establishing a relationship and building rapport. We must remember that the youths' educational ideal includes modest objectivity, and recognition of one's own limits. By such gauges, he/she will measure us. Bonhoeffer says, "The quiet service of love is a spiritual care." The youth must know that we are there for them. Keeping in touch with them, and understanding their likes/dislikes will help us to minister to them.

## IX. To establish a relationship/rapport

Find ways to relate / connect to the youth: Social media, Sports, Music, Arts, Technology, Entertainment, Current trends. Let them to be aware that you are available to talk at any time, and that what they say is confidential. But at the same time, there is accountability. Be open, and meet them where they are

## X. To Provide Extended Pastoral Support & Counselling

Those in loss and bereavement – Making career choices – Those preparing for marriage – Those in marriage Struggling with spiritual life – Struggling with prejudice and discrimination – Relationships and sexuality

## XI. Some suggestions for ministry of Vicars & Youth Chaplains

Make systematic house visits. To keep in mind: Reflect self-awareness, Right goal and right expectations, Sufficient trust, Accurate timing, Accurate pacing empathy, Respect the youth, Relational follow through, Clear communication, Authentic representation of God and scripture

Refer cases of youths to outside specialist if it is outside the scope of your ministry (example: the need for female mentors, psychologists, counsellors, psychiatrists, social workers, medical professionals, ...etc)

Try to find ways to initially RELATING with the families. - all members of the family should be acknowledged during the visit

BE a part of the world of our youths.

OBSERVE what they are missing spiritually, and feed them accordingly.

Be DISCIPLINED in our schedule, timing. At the end of the day, reflect on your ministry, your conversations, and update your calendar accordingly, especially when important dates are given to you.

Get youths CONNECTED to the worshipping community, the worship, and to other youths, even if they are studying or working far away. They ultimately need to be CONNECTED to the story of God.

IDENTIFY potential ministry candidates.

REMEMBER that ministry is not only to youth, but also their families.

FIND the missing generation.

TRAIN the youth about the tradition, cultures, and way of our church.

TRAIN youths to be THEOLOGICAL.

INSPIRE them to seek and inquire about their faith more; teach faith basics, apologetics.

If a youth is working/ staying far away, find out if they are attending churches, fellowships, bible studies. If it is a place with high concentration of our youths, you can conduct bible studies in the campuses or at the least visit them. You can connect them with our local aches or youth chaplains.

The ART of LISTENING & the ART of BEING THERE.

A self-appraisal from time to time is necessary.

To be simply put, BE YOURSELF!

### Conclusion

The future of Youth Ministry will be determined largely by the choices and timing of decisions that we make today. As vicars and youth chaplains, and even as a faith community, we need to build the younger generation. In the parishes, we must promote a transformative culture. We need to bring a movement within the parishes, while being faithful to our call.

# A New Year - A New Beginning!

Aswathi Varughese,  
St Thomas MTC, Lombard, IL



Jeremiah 29:11-13: For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plan to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart

Candles flicker in the hushed, reverent sanctum  
Kaleidoscope of images whirl heavenward  
Moments frozen in time  
Embellished with hopes & fears  
Some frayed like the pages of a well read book  
Some intense with unshed tears of pain...  
Final seconds till midnight ushers in the new year....  
Tentative fingers of light brilliant with the morning dew  
Veiling the blessings of the coming year  
Failures and dreams of yesteryear fade to nothingness

I hear His voice in the stillness of my heart  
My child...my child  
In awe I whisper My LORD My SAVIOR....  
I feel His arms hold me close  
I see His feet that bled for me  
My salty tears drench His wounds  
My heart echoes His hope for me.....

The shackles of the past bind me no more  
His peace envelopes my soul  
My Savior lives...He walks with me and talks with me...  
My existence reverberates with His glory.....  
Do you not hear His voice?  
Do you not feel His love?  
Do you not see the thorns on his brow?  
.....and I stand in amazement as His promise unfolds....  
We are His and He is mine.....  
In humble adoration.....  
I submit to His Holy will....

## Recognition

Gifty Silas, MTC, Oklahoma  
(9th grade student achieved a 100% score in 2013 Diocesan Exam)



### Trinity

In the Darkness a light shines  
In the brightness a life is born  
In the life peace and joy rest  
As the peace and joy grow  
Heaven is born

In the Heaven angels sing  
Songs of love and joy  
In the heaven a father smiles  
Thinking of a child sitting on his right hand

On the right hand a child shines  
Thinking of the world beneath him  
In the world people rejoice  
Thinking of the child shining above

In the realm of paradise a guide rests  
Leading the world in the right path  
In the realm of the world singing starts  
Rejoicing of the Father, Child, and the Guide

# Beyond the Diaspora

Lal Varghese, Esq., Dallas



To think about 'Beyond Diaspora' is to forget about the present, which is not yet stabilized, and still trying to figure out what to do under the present circumstances of the Diaspora Marthomites. Actually, there are no studies or research conducted by the church in to the issues of Diaspora Marthomites and it is a still gray area to begin with. It is a reality that Diaspora Marthomites are all over the world and they have established parishes in few countries and they are bring provided with Achens from India and in very limited cases priests born and brought up in a Diaspora context also. But the question is how far the facilities provided to the Diaspora Marthomites and their generations by the church enable them to continue their loyalty to the church and at the same time continue in the faith and practices of the church. Without defining or studying the issues of Diaspora Marthomites facing now, it is futile to think about the concept 'Beyond Diaspora'. Let me try to define the issues faced by the Diaspora Marthomites and how we can move together and then look 'Beyond the Diaspora' and in to the future of the Diaspora Mathomites with special emphasis to Diocese of North America and Europe.

In an article co-authored by Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, Rev. K. E. Geevarghese, and Dr. Mathew T. Thomas, 'Where Do We Go From Here?' appeared in Mar Thoma Messenger, January 2014 issue (Page 27) has discussed about the ways how we can bring back the younger generation who left our church in this Diocese. It is noteworthy to mention here the important things need to be done on an urgent basis to stop the exodus of younger generation from our church as stated in the article.

- 1) Preserving timeless traditions while adapting to changes;
- 2) Easing tensions between the earlier and new generations;
- 3) Initiating adequate counseling facilities for new generations;
- 4) Enhancing communication between the parent church, diocese and parishes;
- 5) Negating identity crisis from within and without by educating our community and community around us what we are and who we are;
- 6) Identifying mission in the neighborhood;

I believe the above issues can be categorized into mainly three fold and relating or involving at least four distinct groups of people or entity. The main issues are between the earlier immigrants and the parent church, issues between the earlier immigrants and subsequent generations, and issues between us as Diaspora Marthomites/parishes and the community around us. The four groups of people or entity involved in these issues are the earlier immigrants, parent church, subsequent generations and the community around us. Hence, when we think about 'Beyond Diaspora', we should be thinking about bridging the gap between these four groups of peoples or entity by sorting out the issues between them and finding the ways to address them in meaningful ways so that each group can live without any conflicts with the other group.

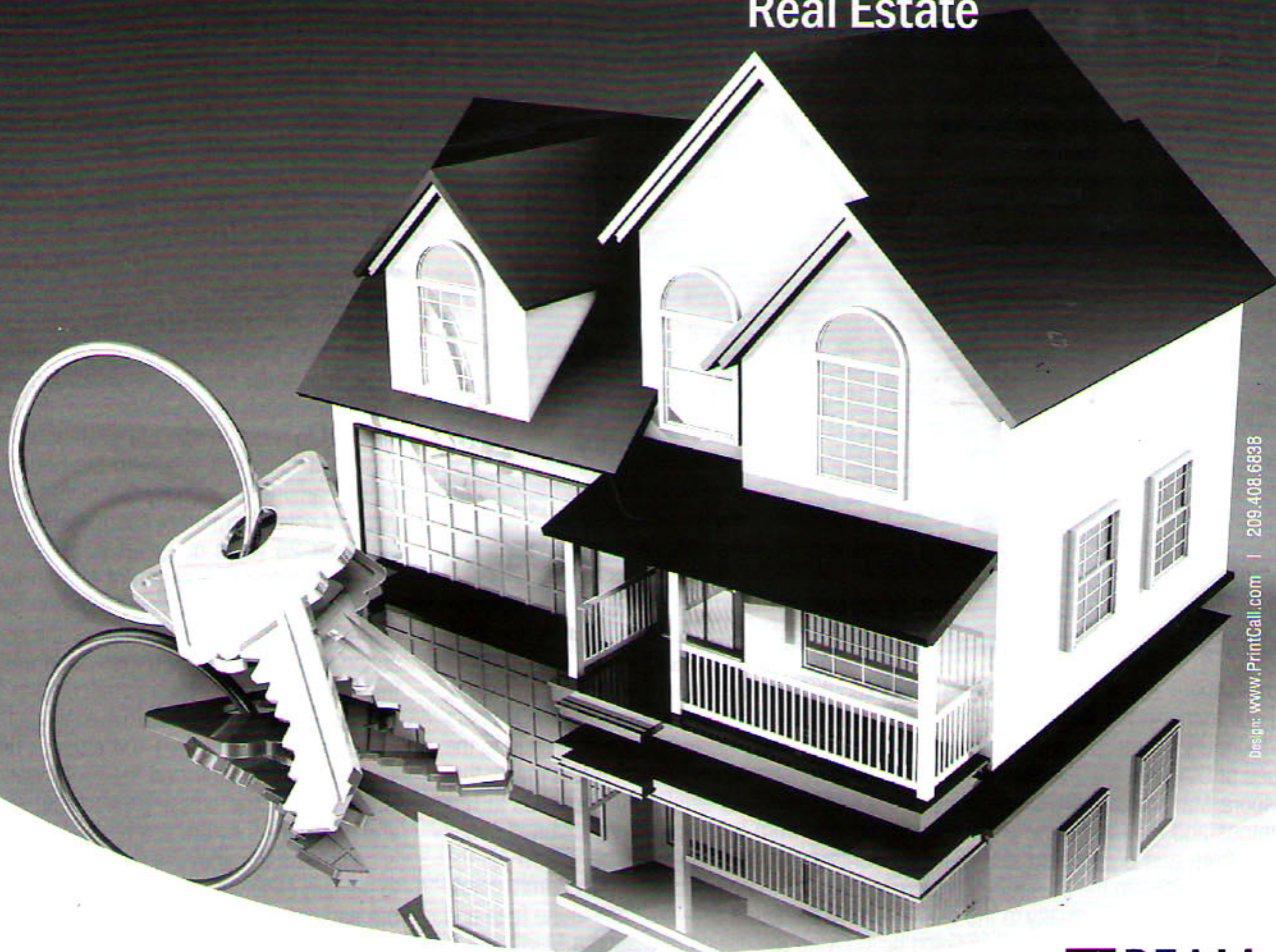
The issues between the earlier immigrants and the parent church are alienating sev-

eral of our first immigrants from the church. It is to be noted that they are the one who struggled hard to establish parishes here, even though the parent church was against establishing parishes in this Diocese. The earlier immigrants when sought the permission to establish the parishes here, the parent church directed to them to join the local churches. But they kept their faith and loyalty to the church and established parishes and finally the diocese. Now after 40 years of establishment of congregations and parishes and after 25 years of establishing diocese here, the earlier immigrants and parent church still find it difficult to accommodate each other by understanding the needs and means to address the same. This resulted in tension between the earlier immigrants and the parent church, which is reflected in the parishes on a daily basis. One of the main issues that led to the misunderstanding is that the earlier immigrants believe that they established the congregations and parishes without the blessings from the parent church, and now once they are established, the parent church is controlling the affairs without giving any importance to the laity especially those earlier immigrants. Most of the earlier immigrants think that the parent church is using them and the parishes as a source of income for the church to be spent in India for building structures, without doing anything effectively for them or their generations. They also believe that they are not given any adequate representations in the different central bodies of the parent church. The parent church and the earlier immigrants must engage in meaningful studies and conversations each other and sort out their differences or misunderstandings and how they can move together in to the future.

The issues between the earlier immigrants and subsequent generations are mainly based on the culture they lived or living. The parents lived in an entirely different culture especially in their motherland in India and still struggling to adapt to the culture in which they are living. The subsequent generations either grown up here or born and raised here do not have any loyalty or understanding or affinity towards the culture of their parents. This distinct attitude of each group resulted in a cultural conflict between the two, which led majority of the subsequent generation to walk out of the doors our parishes. The earlier immigrants believe that the parent church is not doing anything to stop the exodus of subsequent generation from our parishes. They blame it on the ill-equipped Achens sent from India to minister the parishes here, the lengthy monotonous liturgy repeated every Sundays, language of worship and sermon etc. The earlier immigrants thought that if young people from this Diocese come forward to the fold of ordained ministry, it might solve the problems. Even though we have ten youths from this Diocese ministering in the parishes



# Real Estate



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!

## You may also have several other reasons to relocate within Dallas

- Accommodate a bigger family!
- Downsize due to a smaller family!
- Move to a better school district for your children!
- Proximity to your workplace!
- Better neighborhood etc!



### Contact me

► To buy a home within your budget, or to sell your home for the highest price, at a reasonable commission

## SOM THOMAS

Realtor, Chartered Accountant

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

Make your transition to Dallas or relocation within Dallas a smoother one by working with a professional

as Vicars or as Youth Chaplains, the expectations of the earlier immigrants and the subsequent generations are not completely met yet.

According to many second and third generation Marthomites, our reputation as Marthomites is that of uncompassionate culture warriors, quick to shout about gays or abortion or political candidates, but slow to show grace and mercy in our everyday lives. And these ungraceful acts of the earlier generation have far more power to damage our reputation and influence among our own generations, than anything, which can damage us from outside. In the above article, it is written: 'At one of the events attended by local community members, who are living in an 18 year old Mar Thoma parish's neighborhood, we learned that the people living around the church did not know that our church was a Christian church.' How we can be a true witnessing community to our generations and also the community in which we are living? The concept of missions beyond the diasporas refers to the notion that diasporic believers are not only called to reach their own generations and peoples but are also to be involved in cross-cultural missionary labors. Many Americans are not aware of the fact that there are a large number of followers of Jesus who are migrating to the West from majority world countries, with some understanding themselves to be on mission in their new homelands.

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life recently released an important report on the religious affiliations of migrants in United States. Of the 43 million foreign-born people living in the United States as of 2010, an estimated 32 million (74%) are Christians. The U.S leads all other countries as a destination for international migrants overall. This is an opportunity for us to reach the unreached who have migrated into our neighborhoods. Many of the world's unreached peoples have migrated to the West, offering the Church to do wonderful Great Commission opportunities to respond in love, service, and sharing the faith. Many of the strangers next door are the keys to unlocking doors into the lostness of people you and I will never be able to meet. It seems that our parishes lost this opportunity or not yet fully used it.

The concept of missions beyond the diasporas refers to the notion that diasporic believers are not only called to reach their own peoples but are also to be involved in cross-cultural missionary labors. Many Americans are not aware of the fact that there are a large number of followers of Jesus who are migrating to the West from around the world countries, with some understanding themselves to be on mission in their new homelands. I believe this is the great calling of the Diaspora Marthomites in this Diocese to reach to our own generations and also to reach out to the communities and neighborhoods in which we are living and our parishes are established. Reaching out should be our focus and mission in the next 25 years of our existence in this Diocese as Mar Thoma Christians. It is encouraging to note that our Diocese is actively involved in Mexico Mission, Native American Mission and Neighborhood Mission. But it seems that parishes and its members are inclined to deeply involve in these missional activities of the Diocese. This is equally true with our subsequent generations also, since only a very few percentage of our younger generations are actively involved in the above missions.

As stated above, out of the 43 million foreign-born people living in the United States as of 2010, an estimated 32 million (74%) are Christians. What about the Christians who were born and brought up here? According to studies conducted the attendance of mainland denominational churches in United States are declining rapidly. As a Diasporic community, it is the responsibility of the Mar Thoma parishes to reach out to the community in which we live and be the witnesses of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are trying to remain within our own cultural boundary, neither go out of it or let others to enter in to it. We live and work in a multicultural society on a daily basis and interact with people of different cultures and religion from around the world, who have migrated here like us. But look at our parishes, do we allow Christian believers from other cultures to attend our services? We need to cross the cultural boundary to be the true witnesses of our Lord and that is what really expected from a Diasporic community like us.

The Institute of Faith and Life of the Catholic Church, an organization based in California published a study material titled 'Ministry in Multicultural, National/Ethnic Parishes' by Ken Johnson Montragon, a candidate for D. Min., sheds light how to minister to the multicultural, national and ethnic people. Our Church had never done any such studies and it is high time that we need to address the issue of ministering to our own subsequent generations and also to the multicultural, national and ethnic Christians by conducting our own research studies. In the above study, it is stated that in an effort to foster ministry that is responsive to the new cultural landscape of immigrants from various cultures

forming about 20% of Catholic Churches (not counting their children), they have articulated pastoral ministry that entails by providing ministry and services in the language of the people and also to be attentive to the needs of the younger generation, among whom the challenge of maturing in the midst of two cultures – neither of which are entirely their own – can make it difficult for them to feel at home in the church.

Culture creates a shared identity and establishes boundaries of a human group by defining behavior patterns that allow individuals to feel confident when relating to other members of the group. It is both learned and in a constant process of being created as it is passed from generation to generation. As manifestation of culture, language cuts across all levels of the elements of culture. Each group must develop a cultural competency and also a language that is understandable each other, which will enable them to interact with the other group comfortably and confidently. The cultural heritage, the language and culture of the ancestor's of the earlier immigrants do not find any place in the subsequent generations. They are living in between two cultures – one of their parents and the other one of the society in which they are living, which is often described as a melting pot of different cultures.

In order to keep their Christian identity, the younger generation is struggling hard in the society they are living. At the same time, they are being faced with the cultural conflicts from their own parents. There should be earnest efforts for cultural transition and cultural assimilation for the two distinctive groups in our parishes, namely the earlier immigrants and the subsequent generations. Melvin L. Varghese, Ph.D in his research study titled 'The Relationship Between Religious Support and Acculturative Stress in Second Generation Asian American Christians', published in August 2011, points out the conflict between this cultural transition and cultural assimilation and the consequent stress occurring in second generation Asian Christians. His study concluded that religious support plays a prominent part in reducing the acculturative stress among second generation Asian Christians. Hence, the role of our parishes and diocese and its people play a significant part, when we think about 'Beyond Diaspora' and how to integrate and assimilate and transition in to the culture of our subsequent generations.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding;  
In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct your paths."

Proverbs 3:5-6

# Youth with the Creator

Christo Mathew, MTC Dallas, FB



Praise the Lord for Youth Sunday, and I honestly believe that this is the second most important Sunday of the year, behind Easter, because there is nothing more important in our church than the youths. We are the future and as such we have a responsibility of not only maintaining this church, but also maintaining a pure relationship with God. Before we get into greater detail about Youth with the Creator, let us define what it means to be a youth. We as a youth should admit, that we are a bunch of confused individuals, who can't completely understand why life happens. This a time in which we question our faith, our abilities, our actions, our future, and the way we express ourselves. Me, myself, and I: we as a youth are constantly focusing on ourselves in a greater detail. We want to dress in a certain way, talk in a certain way, act in a certain way: we are focused on ourselves because we want to establish an identity. So when I say "Youth with the Creator", we are not dealing with ourselves anymore, yet with another individual. A person who does not care how we dress or talk, and already know our every single characteristic. This person does not deserve to be with us, yet because he loves us, he is willing to forgo our quirks and qualities, and just wants to understand the quality of our hearts.

So let us begin diving into the topic and refer to the Bible about the subject - Ecclesiastes 12 and we are mainly going to focus on this chapter. Verse 1 reads, "Remember your Creator in the DAYS OF YOUR YOUTH, BEFORE the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them." Repeat: "Remember your creator in the days of your YOUTH, before the days of trouble come, and the years approach when you will say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'" When first reading this I thought, even the Bible is saying being an adult is going to be terrible, because evil days are coming, there will be no more joy, and troubles await. I'm 18 years old. I just started college, and I'm having fun every day. But since my parents are listening, what I mean to say is that I'm having fun studying every day. But going back to verse 1, the first part says REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR IN THE DAYS OF YOUR YOUTH, and to be completely honest, and other youth can agree with me as well, that this is the last thing I'm doing ever since classes have started. It is so hard to find time with God, in the midst of studying, or working, or spending time with friends. Yet in verse 2 and onwards it says that we should be seeking and focusing on God in every part of the day and in every situation we face. God needs to be the focus in every moment of our life, and every action that we take should GLORIFY GOD. As youth, we are in a stage in our lives, in which we know that God is number one in our lives, but we don't treat Him that way. We have a tendency to believe that God is not as cool, or not as interesting, as we want him to be. We think the Bible is boring, sermons are boring, or the service is meaningless. People often treat church like medicine, expecting it to bring

healing, yet the side effects may be overwhelming. Some side effects of attending church include: trouble concentrating, lack of appetite, and drowsiness. Is it because of the church, or is it because of you as the individual?

Now that we understand that we need to FOCUS on God in order to be with him, the youth, and their families as well, need to start developing a relationship. We define relationship as the connection between TWO or more people. If YOU are one of the persons in this connection, then who's the other? The answer should be obvious. No, it is not your significant other, your best friend, the person sitting next you, the person you're probably texting right now, or the person you're going to see after church. The correct answer, and who should be your main partner, is Jesus Christ. YOU build your relationship with JESUS CHRIST first before YOU build up anything else. During this stage in a youth's life, the friends we make have a big impact on our character, and how we grow as people. Our friends influence us in certain ways that it affects our decision-making, and how we want others to perceive us. Now, to make things clear, I AM NO RELATIONSHIP EXPERT, but I do know that any good relationship, especially friendship requires Communication, Balance, and Faithfulness.

Let's start with communication and see what the Bible says on how to talk to God. We have learned our whole lives that prayer is the main way in communicating with our Father, and there is still no better way. Youth are constantly facing pressure and anxiety all around them. There is pressure to succeed, live up to expectations, and social pressures to do things that you might not be willing to do. Who are you going to call when things get out of hand, or until you reached your tipping point? You are going to rely on your best friend, whom we've already established is Jesus Christ. Philippians 4:6 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Don't just pray to God when you have that big test coming up, or when you have an important interview on the way. TALK to Jesus, who is supposed to be your FRIEND, about everyday things, THANK him for being with you for all the good moments you had in the day, because part of Glorifying God is praising his name, and remembering everything he has done for you!

Now for the second part of a good relationship is balance. When I mean balance, I mean time management, which is a struggle for everyone. Just to see how much we balance time with God. Ask yourselves this; how many of you log on to Facebook everyday? Now think about those times, and remember if you read the Bible and prayed as many times as you went on Facebook. People young and old alike, have some

time to see what's online, instead of being in line with God. How can you build up a relationship without spending time with someone? We hear this verse all the time, Matthew 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and everything will be given to you." All the fun and all the joy that you could have received doing other things, you can receive with God, and you get even more with eternal life by accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior. I'm not saying spend your whole days praying and reading the Bible. If you look earlier in Ecclesiastes 3, it reads that "There's a time for everything". Time for fun, for laughter, for rest, God is blessing us with time to live our lives. Just balance your life spending meaningful time with God on a daily basis. Now the biggest aspect of a true relationship is faithfulness. What does it mean to be faithful to someone? From Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 10 verses 7 he states that, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." So we are faithful with the word of Christ. So what does Christ say? Jesus says in Mark 16:15 "Go into the entire world and preach the Good news to all creation." Youth can truly show their faithfulness to God, not only by believing, but also through actions that spread His word. This is the biggest thing youth can do for their relationship with God. The youth of this church need to WAKE UP, and understand that they have the biggest responsibility in representing God on earth. The youth of our own church are so full of different talents and abilities, yet what are we doing with them to "work for the Lord"? 2nd Timothy 1: 6 reminds us to "fan into flame" what God has given us, supporting the motto of "Lighted to Lighten." So we know what the qualities of a good friendship are: communication, balance, and faithfulness. The Bible shows us a good example of what a good relationship looks like, and it involves one man that was after God's own heart. Of course, I am talking about David and his friendship with Jonathan. Once David killed the Giant Goliath, David and Jonathan instantly began a companionship, despite King Saul's growing hatred toward David. Though they were of different classes, David being a shepherd boy, and Jonathan being a king's son, they did not allow that to be barrier in their relationship. When Saul was planning to kill David out of his jealousy, Jonathan risked his life trying to find David, and warning him about his father's plans. Jesus, like Jonathan, went underneath himself to save us from sin. Jesus seeks out for us, and pleads with the father to save our lives. We have to be like David, not taking Jesus' loyalty for us in vain, yet we have to Stand Up for Jesus, and show him the proper respect that a KING deserves, a king who will lower himself to be a friend for us.

Now, though this is Youth Sunday, not everyone in this congregation can claim that they are under the age of 35, but it doesn't hurt to think that way and when I say this I mean parents. PARENTS have a great responsibility in bringing their children to God. Parents, you need to show how Jesus has worked in your life, and prove to them that Jesus can make an impact in your children's life. "The youth also need to understand that even if you are 12 or 35, you have your parents because this is God's way of teaching you basic principles on how to live your life. Honor your mother and father, and you will prosper. In the June 2013 edition of Our Daily Bread, there's a story by Dennis Fisher about a Billboard on the highway that reads, "GOD IS AN IMAGINARY FRIEND- CHOSE REALITY. IT WILL BE BETTER FOR ALL OF US." The author continues to say that the Billboard is comparing "Christians to children who have make-believe friends." He starts listing evidence showing human qualities of God, saying that he's a designer of the universe, a judge who lays down the law, an artist who is praised by music, and a human through the presence of Jesus Christ. Then there's a verse from James 2:23, which reads that "Abraham believed

God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. And he was called the friend of God". The author, Dennis Fisher, then says that God gave his Son to be an eternal friend, and states John 15:15, "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." Friends know each other's business. You know that Jesus laid down his life on that cross because he loved us that much, "Greater love has no other than this that one lay down his life for his friends." Jesus considered us as his friends; the least we can do is show back the same love for him, giving up our lives for Jesus Christ. Allow him to come into your hearts so that your friendship, your true relationship with God, can grow.

To conclude lets go back to Ecclesiastes 12. With verse 13, it reads, "Now all has been heard, here's the conclusion of the matter, fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind." Fearing God is not being weary of God, but like all that was discussed today, it is to embrace God, praise and glorify his name. Youth need to accept Jesus' friendship, follow him, and share in his good news to friends, strangers, and even other members of our own church. Every single youth member sitting in this congregation has an opportunity to engage in Godly work, whether by singing, teaching, being athletic, or even speaking. Yet before going out to the community, spend time focusing on God, communicating with our Heavenly Father, balancing time with Him, and being faithful. Build your own foundation with the Creator and make an impact by helping to build a network of believers for Jesus Christ. There's a poem at the end of that Daily Bread story I read that says, "I've found a Friend, O SUCH a Friend! He loved me here I knew Him; He drew me with the cords of love, and thus He bound me to Him." Establish a life with Jesus, and watch your life change for the better.

*Editor's Note: Christo Mathew, son of Mathew M. Chacko and Mrs. Molly Mathew, Lewisville, Texas and is a member of the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch. He is an active member of the Youth Fellowship and attends Southern Methodist University, Dallas. This article is an extract of the sermon made on the Youth Fellowship Sunday at MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch.*

## Western Region Sevika sangham conference



The western region sevika sangham conference was hosted by Horeb marthoma Church, Los Angeles on 15th March 2014 from 9.00 am to 3.30 pm. The conference began with the worship service led by Los Angeles marthoma Church followed by the welcome speech by Mrs. Thankamma Mammen. Rev Larry Varghese, vicar of Horeb MTC, led the devotion based on Genesis ch.12. Rev Mathew John, vicar of Seattle MTC, delivered the presidential address. The main talk, based on the topic "Out.. there. The Lord is there.

Yahweh Shammah" was led by Rev V.G. Varghese, vicar of Phoenix Marthoma Church. The motivational speech was led by Mrs. Jaya Thomas Kochamma based on 1 Sam. 25:35. Mrs. Alice K Mathew thanked Rev Thomas John and Rev T.K Viji for their valuable services in the region and Rev Thomas John delivered the farewell reply. Mrs. Anita Sujith gave away the vote of thanks. Members from Los Angeles MTC, Horeb MTC, LA, St. Andrews MTC, LA, Sanfrancisco MTC, Phoenix MTC, and Seattle MTC participated and it was a great blessing and new spiritual experience to all who participated.

*Saramma Titus, Regional secretary.*

# Maramon Convention Mission & Ministry



Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius

Maramon Convention has an integral part in defining the identity, mission and ministry of the Mar Thoma Church. St. Thomas Christians of Kerala who derive their origin to the coming of the apostle St. Thomas to Kerala in AD. 52 have evolved special characteristics through the reformation period without losing the fundamental characteristics. The open Bible with the Old Testament and New Testament has become the special mark of the Reformed St. Thomas Community now known as the Mar Thoma Church. The Church is particular that its faith and practices are to be biblical. Hence the study of the Holy Bible is important. Maramon Convention preaches the Word of God to the people. This article is an attempt to look at the identity, mission and ministry of the Mar Thoma Church through the characteristics of the Maramon Convention.

## Some Original Matters

The 119th session of the Maramon Convention that took place from February 9th to 16th, 2014 has the origin to the fellowship meeting of the laymen and clergy at the 'Kadavil Malika' at Kallisserry, Kerala on September 5, 1888 chaired by the Late Rev. K.T Thomas. It was a prayer fellowship where one clergy and 11 lay members gathered together for prayer and decided to form a society for the preaching of the Gospel. This gave birth to the formation of Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association. Maramon Convention had a humble beginning in 1895.

The believers with much prayer decided to choose the river bed of Pampa River near Maramon where more than 1, 00,000 believers can now gather together to listen to the Word of God. The entire area is thatched with coconut leaves supported by 364 pillars. The parishes in and around Maramon and Kozhencherry gather together to prepare this Pandal every year. The preparation of the sand bed and the pandal will take about a month and it gets the voluntary support of lay members of the church both young and old, led by the clergy.

## Open Convention

One peculiar thing about the Maramon Pandal is that it has no walls and the sides are not covered. For me, it symbolises the New Heaven and New Earth (New Church), we read in the Book of Revelations. Every Parish where the worshipping community gathers for prayer and worship as their worshipping place has walls and at times a compound with boundary walls and an outer gate. This gives the impression that the church is a closed community. Hence the Maramon Convention for the last 119 years is challenging the Christians to grow with a vision of the New Church without walls and penetrate into the outer society, welcoming all sorts of people to the House of Worship where the presence of God is specially felt. It will catch the attention of all people when they see on the opening day and on the closing sessions of the Maramon Convention, that the people are out flowing the Pandal, even standing on the hot sun or some others moving to the shades on the Pampa river bed on either side to listen to the Word of God and the exhortations given by the church leaders. The lesson to the church is that the symbol of Maramon Convention should not be left alone for a onetime event every year, but as a guideline and model for every parish to open its walls and doors to accommodate all people wanting to listen to the Word of God.

## Maramon as an Ecumenical Gathering

Every year the morning session on Wednesday is set apart as an 'ecumenical gathering' initiated by the Mar Thoma Church. The Church dignitaries of all Christian denominations love to gather together not only to share their views on ecumenism but also to be inspired by the Word of God preached over there. Archbishop Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan is one of the ecumenical leaders from Chaldean Syrian Church who regularly spend a few days in Maramon. It started from 1964, when our Late Easow Mar Timotheos Episcopa, who was a classmate at Leonard Theological Seminary, Jabalpur, invited him to attend the Maramon Convention. For the last 50 years, Bishop Mar Aprem regularly comes to Mara-

mon. The Most.Rev. Joseph Mar Koorilos Valiya Metropolitan of the Independent Syrian Church of Malabar (Thozhiyoor) is another who attends the convention for a couple of days every year. Major Archbishop of Trivandrum and the present Cardinal Most Rev Basileios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos, now CBCI President, India comes and speaks at Maramon regularly. All these years, the political leaders of the State, irrespective of their religious background, make it a point to attend the convention messages, including the Chief Minister of Kerala. It is to be noted that the convention arrangements are done in consultation with and support of the local government. In the premises where the convention takes place, there is no police attending to the Law and Order even when thousands of people gather regularly for 8 days of the Maramon Convention. The clergy and the lay members of the church help the people to maintain the discipline.

This year the ecumenical gathering was addressed by the Moderator of the Church of South India, the Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Govada Dyvasirvadham. He said that "Church should be celebrating diversity and at the same time maintaining unity as we find in the early church when the apostles filled with Holy Spirit dispersed to different parts of the world for preaching the gospel and at the same time maintaining unity. God's love revealed in Jesus Christ is to be the binding force for all the ecumenical movements. God belongs to all people irrespective of race, creed or nation. As Jesus Christ incarnated to the human world and taught the value of Servant Ministry and gave preference to the exploited and marginalized, the church should also incarnate to human situations for which ecumenical movement is a media."

## Maramon Convention and the Fight against Social Evils

Every year the Maramon Convention sets apart the afternoon of Wednesday to preach on the necessity of fighting against social evils. It is with biblical and theological reflections that these topics are dealt with and preached to the public by Christian leaders at the Convention. Church believes in community formation and community living and therefore disintegration of the society is evil. Family is a design of God and therefore disintegration of the families is a social evil. God given personality is a divine gift and the personal development is through strengthening of relationships. Therefore, breaking relationships is sin. Body is the temple of God and therefore destroying it by any means including addictions is an evil. The Bible says that only those who are pure in heart are the blessed ones who can see God. Self-Discipline is an important aspect of the fight against social evils. Jesus Christ

was disciplining the disciples as He took them along with Him during His public ministry. The prayer habit and the guidance of the Holy Spirit with a community living enabled the early church for a disciplined life and to respond to the social problems. In the early years of the Maramon Convention, there were many kinds of people, coming to the Pampa river bed asking for alms. This enabled the church to respond to it by starting Hospitals, Mandirams, de-addiction centres, Institutions for physically and mentally challenged people, Awareness programmes, Rehabilitation programmes, Empowering programmes and the like. It was the Most. Rev. Kuriakose Mar Ivanios Metropolitan of the Knanaya Church who spoke this year at the session. He said that "alcohol, drugs, corruption, injustice, and luxurious living are different areas where the Christian church should respond to fight against social evils. Life is important and therefore exploitation of it by social forces is to be seen as injustice. When the church sees Christ in the persons lying on the gutters, the church will rise to the occasion to fight against prevalent injustice and to impart more life to those for whom life is denied. Neutrality is no Christian action.

### Ministry to the Various Organizations

It is noteworthy that the various organizations of the church like Sevika Sangham, Sunday School, Yuvajana Sakhyam (Youth Fellowship), Young Family Fellowship, Voluntary Evangelist's Association (Edavaka Mission), Baskiomas Fellowship and Senior Citizen's Fellowship sprang up in the church for spiritual nurturing and Christian action after the commencement of the Maramon Convention. The hearing of the Gospel gave a felt need to penetrate into all sections of the members of the church with the power of the Gospel, opening an opportunity for the people to organize for the regular study of the Bible and prayer. Such study sessions helped them to respond to the needs of the members of the church and that of outside with christian love, to care and serve.

Every year Maramon convention has different forums and meetings during the 8 day sessions, including Bible Study Classes for Children, Men and Women. Children who are going for the classes in the school gather together in good number at 7 am for their Bible classes at the pandal (kutti pandal). They learn new songs, hear good stories and learn the Holy Bible. Children are eager to learn the Bible verses, by heart every day.

The separate Bible classes for men and women in the morning help the people who have to attend their office, come regularly to study the Holy Bible at 7 am. They bring their Bible, take notes and ask questions to clarify their doubts. This year the Bible Classes for men were taken by Bishop Dulip D. Chikera and for women by Rev. Dr. Sham P. Thomas.

The Yuvajana Sakhyam members gather together at 4.30 pm for three days to hear about the Christian reflections on contemporary topics from bishops, clergy and laity who are exponents in the field. This is well attended. The sessions for young families are for three days where family concerns and issues are dealt with experts in such fields. The meeting for the Baskiomas is only one session during the week.

Speaking on the opening day, the president of the Evangelistic Association said that "the meetings of the Maramon Convention are for 'transforming oneself' in the light of the Gospel. Whatever pains the heart of God should remain as our pain. We are here not to evaluate the effect or the impact of the convention, but to have a self-examination, to turn to God and dedicate ourselves fully and unconditionally. The Word of God will transform and empower us for the Mission and Ministry.

### Mission to Reach Out

Maramon Convention has inspired the members of the church to take the Gospel to different parts of India. Motivated by the command of the Lord to Preach the Gospel to the whole world, groups of the members of the Mar Thoma Church came for prayer and to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They prayed for clarity as to the place where the Spirit is leading them to preach the Gospel by going in groups from Kerala. Once they were convinced, they committed themselves to go as missionaries with a sense of sacrifice without counting the cost and setting any conditions. They consulted the leaders of the church and with their prayers, blessings and support, started from their homes, not knowing when they can return. They had to walk miles and miles through uncharted ways and cross the rivers as there were no proper transportations in those days to reach from place to place. Yet they dared to move on with determination. They went to places that were unseen, to people who have different languages, culture, manner and religious background. The love of God revealed in Jesus Christ enabled them to love such people and to incarnate in their life situations. Thus the Gospel was preached in Karwar, Ankola, Hoskote, Sihora, Satna, Tibetan Border, Nepal and such other places. Initially it was the Evangelistic As-

sociation who came up to support these mission centers. Now there are 62 mission fields, reaching out to 2600 villages. Then with the various organizations of the church and the various dioceses showing interest to give the gospel to the outside communities, more mission centres came into being in India. On certain places the missionaries received warm welcome and Christian communities started forming worshipping groups. In other places the Gospel was not only preached but the people were cared and served with Christian love by starting Medical clinics, Schools and Caring Centers for Mother & Child etc. The Maramon Convention is now a forum where missionaries from various mission fields gather together for homecoming, greater fellowship, and to renew their mission enthusiasm. The present Metropolitan of the church The Most Rev Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan said at the inaugural meeting, quoting from 2 Peter 1: 10, that one should be more eager to make one's calling and election sure, by making it a daily experience

Mar Thoma Church has now parishes and congregations in different language areas where the missionaries have gone to preach the Gospel in word and deed. Now a day, these believers are also eager to come and attend the meetings of the Maramon Convention. They are welcomed at the various spaces set apart by the Evangelistic Association, the various organizations of the church and also in the spaces for the Diocesan stalls. The need of the hour is for the church to be more inclusive in integrating them by catering to their language, food, accommodation and fellowship. Songs and Prayers can be introduced in different languages. Sign boards can be set; messages can be highlighted through electronic media in different languages and alike. More conscious efforts are to be made and put it into practice to cater to the needs felt by the people attending the Maramon Convention. People are important. The reformed and reforming church like the Mar Thoma Church will always have the need to respond to the challenges and changes of the day, not forgetting that the People of God constitute the church – The Body of Christ.

### Maramon Convention – Festival of the 'Word'

Maramon Convention is a Festival of 'Word' with 45 bible study and devotional sessions, intercessory prayers (from Monday to Saturday), dedication service for the junior and senior children (on Friday and Saturday), Worship services (on Sunday) at the pandal and Holy Qurbana services in 3 of the churches nearby. It extends from Sunday to Sunday, usually on the second week of February every year.

In 2014, we had three main speakers apart from the Bishops of the Church. Bishop Dulip D. Chikera (Sri Lanka) is a Bishop of Colombo of the Anglican Church. He is giving active leadership in World Council of Churches and is now concentrating on the Asian sector. He is a theologian and is best known for the Bible exposition. Rev. Peter Maiden (England) is working in the Operation Mobilization for the last 40 years as a Director. He is also the Chairman of the committee for the world renowned Keswick convention. Rev. Vyani Naibola (South Africa) is the General Secretary of the

Why Spent Money for a Second Kitchen!  
Just Pay for a **Powerful Vent Hood**

**TGS** **TOP**

**Granites & Stones Inc.**

**Contact: George 832-969-0157**

topgranite1@yahoo.com , topgranite1@hotmail.com



*Fabrication & installation of Granite Counter Tops  
Tubs around, Tiles, Ceramic, Travertine, Marble & etc.*

**Now We Serve**

**Dallas Area**

**Call: 214-604-4862**



**Wood Flooring, Laminate,  
Remodeling, Room Additions  
Cabinets, Carpet & etc.**

**Factory  
Direct  
Blinds  
Shutters  
Solar Screens**

*Buy Today & Have Installed Tomorrow !!!*

Methodist Church of South Africa. He is an ecumenical leader and has attended the recent General Assembly of World Council of Churches in Korea.

Following are the some of the highlights of the messages.

1. What is it that God is talking to the World today?

We should understand that through the hearing of the Word of God. We should know God, obey him, experience him and proclaim Him – The Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostum Valiya Metropolitan

2. We should leave all divisions of sectarian groups and should grow as one nation and one people by the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, power working in us as we listen to the messages of the year – The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan

3. In a consumerist world, a culture of voluntary renunciation is necessary with the spirit of Abraham, who was willing to sacrifice even his son to accomplish the will of God. Harmony in the world will prevail only when people are willing to take up suffering and respect the needs of others as greater than one's own need. Complete commitment is necessary to continue one's spiritual journey in the Kingdom of God – The Most Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Suffragan Metropolitan

4. Taking the exemplary life of Daniel in the Bible, a devotee of God should deepen one's spiritual life. A saint will always be a set apart person different from others who puts up his trust in Christ. He will announce to the world that a different world is possible when the worldly pressures challenge the religious life. – The Rt. Rev. Geevarghese Mar Athanasius Episcopa

5. True witness of Christ is to serve the world. A disciple of Christ will always pioneer to go forward than others. His life will be according to the clarion call he receives through the life of Prayer. Each member should set his foot only by knowing the will of God. – The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa

6. When the church gets reformed there will be transformation of the larger society. For establishing the Kingdom of God, we need the participation of the people. This is possible only by renouncing our pride, considering others as greater and struggling to lead with humility. Peace, Justice and Mercy will adorn a person made righteous by God. – The Rt. Rev. Joseph Mar Barnabas Episcopa

7. The pain of the other person is to be my pain. The question we need to raise is what can I do in the given context to respond to the needs of the world, filled with the love of God revealed in Christ. Nehemiah is an example – The Rt. Rev. Thomas Mar Timotheos Episcopa

8. How can we lead a God centered life in a distorted world? The Book of Revelation calls one to have hope in a hope negating world. The apostle John felt the presence of God in his loneliness at Patmos and learned the value of keeping relationship with the members of the faith community. He inspired them with the message that God in Christ renews us, cleanses us and wipes away all tears. – The Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos Episcopa

9. We should see God in our living context and in the neighbourhood. We should hear God's voice through others and things happening in the world. The church has the responsibility to lead the marginalized to the center of Christian life particularly the last, least and lost. – The Rt. Rev. Dr. Abraham Mar Paulos Episcopa

10. The Justice in the world is possible only when God's justice is established. To understand that one should look into the crucified Christ who is also the Judge of the world. Christian life becomes meaningful where this is properly recognized. The Church is called to answer to the problems of the world around us. The Maramon Convention is meant to empower the people for it and to give hope. – The Most. Rev. Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos

11. To be a disciple of Christ means to deny one's self and take up the Cross. The disciples are called to commit themselves, to spend their lives for others by renouncing one's own needs in order to share life for the better life of the fellow beings. The crisis of the Church today is that we do not have true disciples of Christ. – The Rev. Vyani Naibola

12. It was the agenda of Jesus Christ to confront the life realities of the people during His public ministry. He was calm when the sea was rough while the disciples were afraid of

the forces of nature. Jesus Christ is present in the boat where people are afraid of sin, disease, death and the like. Christ is one who is prepared to meet the sinner even before he repents. Christ died on the cross to give freedom from all bondages. What is needed is to put our faith in Him – The Rev. Peter Maiden

13. No one needs to be hesitant or feel ashamed to preach the Gospel. Be obedient, when God calls you for new ventures. You are not helpless. God has given us the Holy Spirit to empower us. The God given talents are to be used for the good of others. Christian life is to grow by studying the Holy Word and the living context with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. 'Never Give Up Hope' – The Bishop Dulip D. Chikera. The messages of Maramon Convention are for the transformation of the world. Those who continuously attend the meetings, get an opportunity to study the Word of God deeply and systematically, to pray for the various needs of the people around the world, to get committed to liberate people from the clutches of social evils, to preach the Gospel to the people who haven't heard it before and to get spiritually uplifted in various worshipping communities around the world.

### Maramon: A Festival of Songs

The Department of Sacred Music and Communications of the Church (DSMC) selects 101 persons, both male and female, from about 80 parishes in Kerala to constitute the Convention Choir. In 2014, they selected 16 new songs and published 2, 40,000 song books carrying 101 selected songs. 25,000 transliterated copies are printed for the english speaking community. There are about 50,000 CD's with the new songs going everywhere in the world (including North America & Europe) reaching to the hands of almost everyone in the diaspora community. This brings the members of the Mar Thoma community together. At the same time, it reminds that the Church is a global community. Every year, the Maramon Convention begins with the Choir, leading the assembled members with the song 'Varika Paraparane.....' ('Come Lord Jesus to bless the assembly....'). The 8 days of devotional meetings and spiritual fellowship come to a close when the Choir leads the people to sing a song written by Vidvankutty achen (Rev. Jesdoss Joseph 1835 - 1887), 'Sthuthippin Sthuthippin Yesudevane.....' ('Praise Him Praise Him.....'). The whole assembly of people stands as this song is sung with a gratitude to God Almighty for the blessings received through the Convention. The congregation disperses only by shouting 'Mara Natha', meaning, 'Lord Jesus Come Soon' thereby expressing themselves that, as children of God, they continue the spiritual journey and look forward to the day when the faithful will be gathered in the Kingdom of God when Jesus Christ comes again.

### Conclusion

Maramon Convention thus defines the identity, mission and ministry of the Mar Thoma Church. It helps the people to know God, hear Him and go out into the world with the power of the Holy Spirit to translate the 'Word' into 'Deed' for the ministry of the total transformation of the whole world. The prayer of the Church is: "Thy Kingdom Come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."



# Ministry as the Church Moves beyond the Diaspora

Rev. Dr. M. J. Joseph



As I write this brief article, the book entitled, *In Search of Christian Identity*, published (2008) in Theodosius Episcopos' honor on his 60th birthday, is before me which portrays bishop's pastoral, prophetic and interfaith concerns in a plural world. As a Diaspora community in the western hemisphere, our church is provided with many open doors and unfamiliar roads that can take us to new and enchanting places of Christian stewardship. With the support of the worshipping community, our church leadership has paved its way to new areas of mission and charity that provide involvement for our younger generation as well. Together, we will continue our journey through times, in the fulfillment of Christian responsibilities in multicultural environments.

## Creative possibility of the Mar Thoma Church

The Mar Thoma Church is recognized as a "special family" of the Churches in the 10th assembly of the WCC at Busan. It is because of the "diaspora character" of the Church. It has an identity of its own which has something to contribute to the worldwide communion of churches and the global community at large. The necessity is laid upon the Church to speak more of its being and becoming in the midst of a plural world. The Mar Thoma identity that we have preserved has to get enlarged to attain new focus and vision. The search is significant since the era of consolidation in religion is gone and there emerged the period of convergence in mission. The lay movement of the Church has initiated and contributed a lot to the evolution of diaspora Churches in the global scenario. I am glad that the frozen credit of the Church has begun to become liquid cash through the mission of the Churches. The parent Church should rejoice at the new happening in the Christian map of the world particularly of the Syrian Christians. To discover, to appreciate, to affirm and to promote THE UNITIVE PRESENCE OF GOD in history and the rich diversity in God's order of creation is not a gospel at variance with deposit of faith but a fresh discovery of the faith community under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is possible only if we are prepared to give up certain traditional understanding and myths in the mission of the Church and to look critically and creatively some of the trends we have inherited from the past. "Preserving the timeless while adapting to the Time" (Zac Varghese) is a call to make wise judgment on the signs of the times as the whole world is in the search for a common future whether in religion or science. In such an engagement, "losing and opening of doors" is indeed an activity of the Holy Spirit, as we read in Acts 16:6-8 for greater credibility and visibility. The basic challenge is to discover new avenues for greater relevance in history. One should know that irrelevance is a sinful situation prevailing in the Church as we do not take the guidance of the Holy Spirit seriously.

A few years ago, I read an article written by a Catholic priest on the self-hood of the Syrian churches in Kerala. The conservative and the liberal character of the Mar Thoma Church have been qualified by the writer through the words of Isaac to Jacob. "The voice of the Mar Thoma Church is Protestant, but the hands are the hands of the Syrian Church". For the author, the Mar Thoma Church has a dual identity. Yes, it is her strength. As a bridge Church, the identity of the parent Church must be understood and interpreted in mission categories and Eucharistic living. In November 1998, the Mar Thoma Church gave a reception to the members of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) General Committee at Tiruvalla. While felicitating the hosts, Dr. Feliciano Carino, then General Secretary CCA described the Mar Thoma Church as "a strange Church". Church historians like Dr. Kaj Baago has earlier described Mar Thoma identity in the following words: "The Mar Thoma Church is a strange combination of Catholicism and Protestantism, of conservatism and radicalism, of traditionalism in worship and revivalism in preaching"... All the churches I know a little about the tension between tradition and reformation, between Catholicism and Protestantism. But I know of no other Church in the world where the tension is greater than in the Mar Thoma Church... However, in this tension rather the ability to comprehend the Orthodox tradition and the Protestant message has the importance of the Mar Thoma Church and its significance for the future of India".

I am sure this intrinsic tension between its cultural ethos and spirituality should enable the Church to rise above the traditional boundaries in a borderless world. The prophetic words of Jesus uttered in Jn. 12:24 sums up the whole truth for a resurrection experience in each Diaspora context. "... A grain of wheat remains no more than a single grain unless it is dropped into the ground and dies. If it does die, then it produces many grains." This is the call of the hour. Each parish in the Diaspora context will have to make an authentic search to find out how it should keep its umbilical chord intact. The relation between the text and the context is to be explored. The Mar Thoma identity is to be enlarged through pedagogy of encounter. "Every frontier, if it is closed, the living thing dies" (Moltmann). For a long time the churches have built walls with bricks. Now the time has come to build bridges with the same bricks in a borderless world.

## In search of new mission paradigms

How can a Marthomite born and brought up in the US or Arabian or Malaysian context remain as a living

witness of Christ with his or her sense of accommodation and adaptability?. "We need to remind ourselves of the mission strategy of St. Paul as recorded in 1 Cor.9:19-21. The missionary stance of St. Paul in relation to the Jews, to the Gentiles and to the weak enables us to reconstruct the "slavery motif" in Paul's self-understanding as the apostle of Christ to the Gentiles. It provides adequate models for understanding the theological task in the pluralistic context of the world. The missionary maxims of St. Paul are relevant to any context of multiplicity. The "incarnational principle" is expressed in two ways: (i) the idea of accommodation and (ii) the concept of service and humility. The missionary maxims-accommodation, service and humility- are clearly set forth in Rom.12:14-21. To show "active charity" to one's enemies (Rom.12:20) and to outsiders (Col.4:5) is the true test of humility and freedom.

Accommodation is so dynamic that it can challenge the cherished ideas and values of the "outsider" (1Cor.10:31-33). We should bear in mind that St. Paul did not change his cultural affiliation even after becoming a Christian. Within the limits of the freedom granted in the gospel, Paul was among the Jews "as a Jew in order to win" them. He did not disown his religious and cultural heritage. In fact he made use of it in the service of the gospel. He makes it clear that the preservation of one's peculiar nationality/heritage is integral to God's purpose for the community at large. "The interests of truth did not require him to unlearn all that he had been taught" (F. Prat). The freedom of the gospel does not destroy one's indigenous values, but transforms them by the power of the gospel.

The Mar Thoma Community living in a global scenario has to get rooted in each cultural soil through a great vision for the contemporary society. By identifying himself with different cultural and social groups, Paul thinks that he has "become all things to all people". The phrase "all things to all people" simply means that he was sensitive to the challenge of each cultural group". H. Chadwick, in his article, "All things to all men" (NT Studies, Vol.1, 1954-55, pp.261-275) says that Paul shows tremendous capacity to adjust himself to the needs of his hearers without sacrificing the essentials of the gospel. He had an astonishing elasticity of mind, and flexibility in dealing with situations requiring delicate and ingenious treatment which appears much greater than is usually supposed. Paul's slavery motif is the key to his accommodation. Paul wants to make it clear that there is nothing in his own peculiarities and practices that could erect a barrier between Christ and the community. This is what is needed when we speak about crossing the borders of diaspora. Paul Tillich has rightly reflected the mind of Paul when he wrote: "But there are two kinds of stumbling blocks: One is genuine... There is always a genuine decision against the gospel for whom it is a stumbling block... What we have to do is to overcome the wrong stumbling block in order to bring people face to face with the right stumbling block and enable them to make a genuine decision. For Paul, the norm of adaptation was the *envomos Christou*. (Law of Christ). The law of Christ which is nothing but the golden rule of all religions - love.

### **The golden rule of all religions**

The mission of the Church is to create a community of communities in the context of religious and cultural multiplicity in the world. This is possible only through a re-interpretation of the traditional attributes of the Churches - one holy, catholic and apostolic. In the new theological paradigm as Prof. A. P. Nirmal proposed, we should speak of not oneness, but plurality of churches, not holiness, but justiceness of churches, not catholicity but contextuality of churches, and not apostolicity, but priesthood of churches. This means that in our search for identity and integration, there should be openness to discover new paradigm for relationship in God's world. The holy books and the people of differing faiths speak of a unitive understanding of religious texts and they invoke in us search for the Ultimate which has relevance for the whole humanity. The people of God are commissioned whether at home or elsewhere to serve all peoples of God with the divine objective of sharing the fullness of life with all. Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn.10:10). For this, we need to initiate a theological search of all the Holy Scriptures for an ethical mandate. In the context of the multiplicity of religious faiths, two questions emerge: (i) how can people of different living faiths understand each other and each others' faith in the common areas of life in which they live together? (ii) How can we learn and draw together from the religious resources of differing faiths and religious traditions so that they can contribute each in its own way or together towards the building of a common tomorrow? If we are committed to celebrate humanity with sincerity and truth, we need to look outward in the same direction. This is possible if we celebrate the glory of love in our relationship with God and nature. "Love does not consist in gazing at each other, but in looking outward in the same direction" (De Saint Exupery). There should be a conscious effort in the Diaspora communities to search for the buckle

that binds and the hyphen that joins the terrestrial and the celestial. The concept of a *Vasudaivakudumbakam* (The world as one family) becomes a reality only when there is an inner constraint to pursue the things that make for peace and reconciliation. It is love which is the golden rule of all religions. Ours is a world of pluralism. The humans have to live in the midst of flora and fauna. Diversity is the order of creation. In an orchestra one should not expect everyone to play the same note. Harmony does not come automatically. It is to be created. A return to the center, whether in religion or culture, constitutes the making of a relationship. A study of the Holy books of all religions of the world reveals that there are several factors that bind people together. It is the spirituality of religions which is the voice of the Spirit or the cry of the soul from the cave of the heart.

To respond to the call of the Risen Christ requires boldness on our part. We need to affirm without a ray of doubt, as Dr. Kaj Baago, the Church historian puts it, "if God is the Lord of the universe, he will work through every culture and religion". Raimon Panikkar is prophetic when he said, "if the Church wishes to live, it should not be afraid of assimilating elements that come from other religious traditions whose existence it can today no longer ignore". These words of wisdom help us to search for the golden rule of different religions. A movement from a pure missiological understanding of Church to a theological perspective which alone will generate conceptual tools for mission beyond the Diaspora context. "We need to leaven the world with a vision of co-Operative common wealth of love, justice, righteousness and peace" which human kind has within its power to bring about (Dr. Mathai Zachariah)

### **In Search of social amity - need of the hour**

All the religions of the world which are deeply rooted in creed, code and cult are showing symptoms of moral cancer that has spread deep into the soul of humanity. In such a global context of degeneration of religious faiths and cobwebs of hypocrisy and superstition, we need to stand for the regeneration of religious faiths beyond the written texts and to affirm with one voice the rich religious tradition of the Seers of India - satya, ahimsa, tyaga and seva. In the religious images of Christianity one may notice several faces. They are Jewish face, Roman face, Greek face, Colonial face, Commercial face (Swami Sachidananda Bharathi). These five faces have to be re-interpreted in the global scenario of the Diaspora context. Remember that the New Humanity in Christ rooted in love transcends the boundaries of various types of divisions in the community. The New humanity in Christ is not the gift of Christians to others, but it is God's gift to the whole humanity. Peace on earth is God's gift for all. The basic question is this: How do we weave communities of hope in the midst of caste, racial, class discrimination, patriarchy, economic exploitation, communalism, climate crisis, and several other issues facing the world today? The mission of the Church is to affirm that the promise of New Humanity in Christ as the transforming and judging presence of God. It integrates with the pastoral with the prophetic strands

of religion. A Christian approach to other people is well stated in the vision of Isaiah chapter 19: "On that day there will be a high way from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians will come into Egypt, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians." This must happen in Jerusalem, New York, Ayodhya and other places where people live. Let us therefore hold our heads high and say, "Satyam meva jayathe". It speaks of one's obedience to God. It is a kind of defence. Defence is to be made with "gentleness and reverence" (RSV), "gentleness and respect" (TV), "courtesy and respect" (NEB) (1 Pet.3:15-16). Every liberating act is a defence of faith. We need to remember that we are "birds of the same nest", as we read in the Vedas. "Born on the same planet, covered by the same skies, gazing at the same stars, and breathing the same air, we need to live together as brothers and sisters for the glory of God. The call of the hour is to build a culture of peace and reconciliation and speak the language of the gospel-compassion and forgiveness in the context of threats and intimidation. The identity of the Church is meant to create identities for the least, the last and the lost and for all.

**Conclusion**

The Mar Thoma Church has to look for the enlargement of its identity in the global context. Let us heed to the words of the prophet Isaiah, "Enlarge the place of your tent. Lengthen your cords and strengthen you stakes" (Is.54:2). We should not forget the fact that "the great diversity of theological thought forms, Church life, liturgy and Church government is the result of the encounter of the Christian faith with cultural traditions- a fact is not always recognized or admitted" (Emilio Castro). New identities shall be created only through a total commitment to the reality of the Kingdom of God in our midst. Nobody on earth can ignore its presence. In reality, God's accommodation in Jesus Christ is a process of inviting the world into the being and becoming of the divine possibility. The borders of God's Kingdom are wide open and people from all the nations of the world shall bring their glory and honor into it. But it was quite mandatory that nothing unclean shall enter it nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood (Rev.21:26, 27). It is to this pilgrimage that the gospel makes an appeal to the Mar Thoma Diaspora. "We are transformed by love and transformed in proportion to the purity of love for God and for other people" (Thomas A' Kempis).



From Maramon Convention

**Visit to the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury**



The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius visited UK from December 13 to 16, 2013 to visit the newly formed All Saints Mar Thoma Church, Peterborough and the St. John's Mar Thoma Church, Hounslow. After attending the Christmas Carol Services at Peterborough and Hounslow, Mar Theodosius found



time to visit the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury. As the Arch Bishop Justin Welby was away from the office, he was met with the Revd Canon Dr. Leslie Nathaniel (Secretary to the Archbishop of Canterbury on international ecumenical affairs), Revd Dr. Roger Paul (National ecumenical officer of the Church of England). Mar Theodosius was accompanied by Revd Dr. Thomas Philips, Revd Jose Punnamadom, Mr Abraham Mathews and Dr. Zac Varghese. The meeting was at the Church House, Westminster, at 2.30 PM. The meeting reviewed the historical relationship between the Church of England, various Anglican provinces and the Mar Thoma Church. It was pointed out that most of the present Diocesan bishops and parish priests of the Church of England are not aware of the concordat signed in 1937 and 1961 about the full Communion relationship between the two churches. A copy of the concordat signed in 1982 by the Metropolitan of the Mar Thoma Church and the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States was given to both Canon Leslie Nathaniel and Revd Roger Paul. They have agreed to trace the concordat signed in 1961 between the Mar Thoma Church and the Church of England from the Lambeth Palace archives. Further, it was agreed that they will try to inform all the diocesan bishops in the UK about our full communion relationship.

In addition, the following points were agreed:

- a) Both Canon Nathaniel and Rev Roger Paul will further look into how our clergy could get both Archbishops' permission to officiate under section 1 of the Overseas Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967 or under the provisions of the Concordat between the two Churches.
- b) Rev Dr. Roger Paul would contact the education department of the C-of-E to produce a protocol for facilitating school admission for the children of Mar Thoma parents.
- c) Canon Nathaniel would look into the possibility of arranging a personal meeting of Rt. Rev Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius with both the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York.
- d) It was felt that it was a very helpful meeting and that this group should meet again to review the progress

# Prayer - Weapon against Troubles and Fears

Paul J. Isaac, Carmel MTC, Boston



Philippians 4:6 says in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let requests be made known to God. My message today is about true value of prayer. Prayer is our mightiest weapon against our troubles and fears and the supreme call for all Christians today. It is a way of talking to God. The lives of each one of you may be ordered by the Lord in a beautiful way for his glory, if you will entrust him with your life. Only the one who made the brain & the heart can successfully guide them to a profitable end. An important part of praying is a willingness to be part of the answer. Most Christians pray to God and expect their requests to be always answered. Does this really work? There are 4 different prayers that we use.

1. Help Lord, I am in trouble prayers,
2. Forgive me, Lord, I blew it prayers,
3. Come on, Lord, you promised prayers
4. Give us Success, Lord Prayers.

Many great prophets and judges used the same prayers we use today. Elijah caused heavy rains through prayer to return the nation to its original state. Joshua through prayer, and guidance from God was able to tear down the wall of Jericho. These were accomplished through "Lord help me prayers".

God always hears our prayers. Sometimes it takes time to receive blessings. In 2 Corinthians 12:9 God said "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Despite God's answer, rewarding or not, we should still continue to pray to God. We all need to have a close relationship with God. Different prayers may communicate different needs. God does not care what you ask of him, but that you ask. It is imperative not to give up on prayer. James 4:2 says "You do not have", because you do not "ask"

God." To face life's many challenges and overcome each test, The Lord tells us to take the time to stop, To Pray, To Rest. Jesus was very busy with his teachings yet he made the time and went to a solitary place and prayed. (Mark 1:35)

Job prayed for many, many, days over and over, studiously, when God finally restored to him twice his belongings and healed him. The Power of Prayer- A personal experience of mine: As you all know my father was very, very sick after a surgery that went wrong. Our Achen, our church community, other church communities, friends, family and other people who did not even know him wept and prayed for him. God promised where 2 or 3 come together in his name, there shall he be with them. God showed his miracles and now my Dad is able to go to church, worship with us, and go to work. Praise the Lord! We must always pray for others first then for ourselves. Praising God is the foremost reason to pray. Despite all this, God will decide whether or not we get what we want. Little acts can lead to great love from God. True selflessness is needed for prayer, if we truly want God to bless us. We must pray wholeheartedly and repeatedly. This shows the importance of God in our lives. The way we pray however has equal importance to the way we act. God will always want us to pray to him whether he answers our prayers or not.

When you carry the Bible, Satan has a headache, when you open it, he collapses. When he sees you reading it he loses his strength & when you stand on the word of God, Satan can't hurt you as God loves you. A man was once asked, "What have you gained from prayer". He replied- "Nothing", however, let me tell you what I have lost: Anger, Anxiety, depression, insecurity, fear of old age & death.

To conclude let us submit our lives to His mighty hand and obey His commands. I want you to remember 4 letters ASAP- Always Say a Prayer. While there is great comfort in sharing our difficulties with a friend, we miss the greatest help if we fail to bring them to the Lord. Joseph Scriven said it so well in the heartfelt, Meaningful song "What a friend we have in Jesus"

*Note: Paul is the son of Dr. Willy Isaac & Dr. Maya Paulose, attending Grade 7 and also is a regular winner of the Messenger Bible Cross Word Puzzle since 2nd grade.*

*Received A+ for the 2013 Diocesan Exam for the 6th grade.*

*Also received gold medal and bronze medal for Malayalam and English solo for the NE Regional Competition held in 2013.*



# UNITED INDUSTRIES UNLIMITED

A GROUP OF ENVIRONMENTAL, CONSTRUCTION, SAFETY AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Foreign and domestic investment opportunities

26 Frances Street, Westbury, NY 11590

Services include

New construction permits and drawings  
Department of buildings violation removals  
Removal of Housing code violations

Environmental consulting  
Asbestos, mold, radon and  
Lead testing and abatement  
Air and project monitoring  
Soil testing and remediation  
Phase I site assessments

Construction management  
Site health and safety plan  
Site safety managers  
Scaffolding inspections  
40 hour OSHA certified safety professionals

Commercial and residential Real estate investments in us, Canada and UK  
Commercial and residential Real estate investments in Kerala, Bangalore, madras, Delhi and Mumbai

**Branches in New York, Dallas, Houston, Cochin and Mumbai**

*A minority and women owned business's entity*

Email: [unitedindustriesunlimited@gmail.com](mailto:unitedindustriesunlimited@gmail.com)

**Phone: 516 225 1502, 516 967 2763, 917 578 4679 and 917 578 2305**

# OBITUARY

## Mariamamma Koshy Dallas



Mariamamma Koshy was born on December 7, 1929 in Elavanthanathu, Kollad, Kottayam. She graduated with her B.Sc Nursing from Vellore CMC Nursing College. She worked in India as a sister tutor and then went to work for Aramco in Saudi Arabia, where she met her husband Mammen Koshy. They were married in 1963 and completed 50 years of married life in 2013. In 1969, she and her family immigrated to United States and settled down in Dallas. She worked at Parkland Memorial Hospital and later at VA Hospital in Dallas from where she retired in 1991. She is survived by her beloved husband Mammen Koshy (Thankachan), daughters: Nancy Joseph, Julie Koshy and Susan Philips, sons in law: Rejji Joseph and Abraham Philips, grand children: Hannah, Cassia, Zachary, Sydney and many nephews and nieces.

She was a humble and devout Christian who took great joy in giving her time and energy in serving others in her church. She was a loyal friend with a compassionate heart for others in need. She loved her family and friends deeply. She is greatly missed by her family, friends and parish members. She was one of the founding members of the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas. She was an active member of the parish and also served as Sunday School teacher and Secretary of parish Sevika Sangham. She was called to eternity on January 19, 2014. The memorial service was held at MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch on January 22, 2014 and she was laid to rest on January 23, 2014 at Rolling Oaks Memorial Center, Coppell, Texas.

*Rev. Jose C. Joseph, Vicar, MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch*

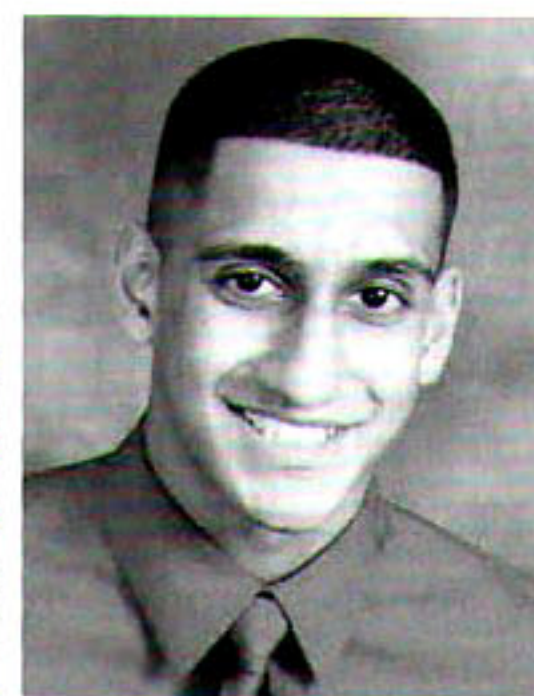
## Philip O. Thomas Philadelphia



Jan 16th 1947 – March 3rd 2014  
Philip Odikkandathil Thomas (Rajan) was born on Jan 16th 1947 in Ranni. Rajan migrated to USA in 1977 and ever since, he was well known in the Indian Community as a loving and caring individual who has helped hundreds in their financial and job related needs. He had a passion for helping even the strangers and enjoyed taking care of others, especially within the family. Before migrating to USA, Rajan has served the Indian Air Force for 10 years. Rajan is survived by his wife Aleyamma Thomas (Leelamma), 3 sons: Leno Thomas (wife Pamela), Leju Thomas (wife Stephanie), and Lebu Thomas (wife Linsey), 5 grandchildren, 2 brothers and 4 sisters. Rajan was one of the founding fathers of the Philadelphia Mar Thoma Church, Bethel Mar Thoma church, Philadelphia and also Malayalee Association of Philadelphia. He was an active member of Christos Mar Thoma Church in Philadelphia and supported this new church in commendable ways. He has left behind a lifetime of great memories and will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

*Mrs. Mariamma Abraham, Christos MTC, Philadelphia*

## Pravin M. Varughese Chicago



Pravin Mathew Varughese, born on July 29, 1994, was called to his Eternal Home on February 13, 2014. He was a sophomore at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale where he was studying criminal justice in hopes of becoming a police officer. Pravin was a devoted son and brother. His easy-going personality enabled him to have many friends.

Pravin went missing on February 13, 2014 and was found in the woods on February 18, 2014. Pravin was the one person you could count on to make you laugh, no matter how bad of a day you had. His jokes, the imitation of any accent possible, or just one of his crazy stories will have you laughing within minutes. We love and miss our Pravin so much, and we are looking forward to the day that we will see him again.

*Aswathi Mary Varughese, Chicago*

## Cherian Philip Philadelphia



Mr. Cherian Philip was born on April 10, 1939 to the late Mr. & Mrs. Philipose Idicheeria and Annamma Philipose (Itty), Nirappuvila Puthen Veedu, Mulavana, Kundara, Kerala, and passed away on March 11, 2014.

He was married to Mary Mathew (daughter of Paily Mathai, Naduvathu House, Kottapady, Kothamangalam, Kerala) for 47 years.

After his college education, Cherian joined the Indian Army and achieved the rank of Master Sergeant before retiring to civilian life in 1976. He immigrated to the US in 1977 and ever since, was active in the Malayalee community, helping the family and new comers in countless ways. He was one of the founding members of the Philadelphia Marthoma Church and later joined Ascension Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia, where he served in various positions. He was also an active member of Kerala Arts and Literary Association of America since its founding and served many years on the executive committee. Cherian is survived by his wife Mary, his children Stanley, Selin, and Sharon, daughter-in-law Emma, son-in-law Bruce, and 3 grandchildren. His close relatives and friends are truly blessed to have known such an amazing good-hearted man who will be greatly missed.

*Rev Antony T Varughese (Vicar)*

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God[a]; believe also in me. 2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going."

John: 14: 1-4

# മാരാമൺ കൺവൻഷൻ - സന്ദേശം

## മാരാമൺ കൺവൻഷൻ ഇരുളുകറ്റാൻ:

തോമസ് മാർ തിമോത്തിയോസ്

കുടുംബത്തിലും ദേശത്തും നമ്മു വരാനാണ് മാരാമൺ കൺവൻഷനെന്ന് സുവിശേഷ പ്രസംഗം സംഘം പ്രസിഡന്റ് തോമസ് മാർ തിമോത്തി യോസ്. ഉദ്ഘാടന സമ്മേളനത്തിൽ അധ്യക്ഷ പ്രസംഗം നടത്തുകയായിരുന്നു. 96-ാം വയസിലും മാർ ക്രിസോസ്റ്റം കൺവൻഷന്റെ അനുഗ്രഹമാണ്. ലോകത്ത് ഇരുളു പരക്കുമ്പോൾ മാരാമൺ കൺവൻഷന്റെ പ്രസക്തിയേറുകയാണ്. നമ്മുടെ തിന്മയും തിരിച്ചറിയാൻ കഴിയാതെ പോകുന്നു. സമാധാനം, നീതി, നമ്മു എന്നിവ കാണാനില്ല. പല സംഭവങ്ങളും നമ്മെ ഭയപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. നിന്റെ മനസ്സ് തകർക്കുന്നതെല്ലാം എന്നെയും അസ്വസ്ഥമാക്കണമെന്ന പീറ്റർ മെയ്ഡന്റെ ചിന്ത പ്രസക്തമാണ്. ഒരു വശത്ത് സമൃദ്ധിയും സാമ്പത്തിക ഭദ്രതയും ഏറുന്നു. കൺവൻഷനുകളുടെ എണ്ണം ഏറുന്നു. മറുവശത്ത് അഴിമതിയും പീഡനവും അധികാര ദുർവിനിയോഗവും നല്ല കാര്യങ്ങൾക്കായി ചെലവിടുന്ന പണം പാഴായി പോകുന്ന സ്ഥിതിയാണ്. തിന്മയെ ചെറുക്കാൻ മതങ്ങളും വൺമെന്റും എന്തു ചെയ്യുന്നു. നാം പലപ്പോഴും നിസംഭവം. എനിക്ക് എന്തു ചെയ്യാൻ കഴിയും എന്ന ചോദ്യമാണ് ഇവിടെ ഉയരേണ്ടത്. യെരൂശലേമിന്റെ വാതിലുകൾ വെന്തെറിഞ്ഞ കാലത്ത് നെഹമ്യാവ് ഈ ചോദ്യം ചോദിച്ചു. അകപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്ന അനർഥത്തിലേക്ക് പ്രവാചകൻ വിരൽ ചൂണ്ടി. നിന്ദാപാത്രമായിരിക്കാതെ യെരൂശലേം മതിലുകൾ പണിയുക എന്ന് നെഹമ്യാവ് പറഞ്ഞു. കൃത്യ നിർവഹണത്തിനിടെ പൊലീസ് ഓഫീസറെ മണൽ മാഫിയ ലോറി ഇടിപ്പിച്ചു കൊല്ലാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്ന കേരളീയ സാഹചര്യത്തിൽ നിന്നുവേണം നാം ഇതിനെ നോക്കേണ്ടത്. കള്ളത്തിനു കൂട്ടുനിന്നില്ലെങ്കിൽ കൊല്ലുന്ന ലോകം തകർന്ന മതിലുകളും തകർന്ന ജീവിതവും. ഞെക്കുണ്ണി മൊബൈലിനു പകരം തൊട്ടുണ്ണി മൊബൈലിലേക്കു മാറുന്ന ലോകം. എത്രയോ കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾ ചട്ടുകങ്ങൾക്ക് ഇരയാകുന്നു. ഈ സ്ഥിതി കണ്ട് ദുഃഖിതരാകരുത്. വചനം ശക്തി നൽകും. നാം തിരുത്തപ്പെടാനായി ഈ വേദിയിൽ വീണ്ടും കൂടിവന്നിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇംപാക്ടോ ഇഫക്ടോ അല്ല വചനത്തിന്റെ പ്രതിഫലനമാണു വേണ്ടത്. കർത്താവിന്റെ സ്പർശനത്തിലൂടെ രൂപാന്തരപ്പെട്ട് ദേശം അനുഗ്രഹപ്പെടാനാണ് ഈ വർഷത്തെ കൺവൻഷൻ.

## നീതിയുടെ പാത വെടിയരുത്

ജോസഫ് മാർത്തോമ്മാ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്ത

നീതിയുടെയും സമാധാനത്തിന്റെയും പാതകളിലൂടെ നടന്ന് ധന്യജീവിതം നയിക്കാൻ വിശ്വാസികൾക്കു കഴിയണമെന്ന് ഡോ. ജോസഫ് മാർത്തോമ്മാ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്ത. 119-ാമതു മാരാമൺ കൺവൻഷൻ ഉദ്ഘാടനം ചെയ്തു പ്രസവിക്കുകയായിരുന്നു മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്ത. പത്രോസ് ജീവിത സായാഹ്നത്തിൽ നൽകിയ ദൂതൃ പ്രസക്തമാണ്. വിളിയും തിരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പും അനുദിന ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ അനുഭവമായിരിപ്പാൻ

ശ്രമിക്കണം. എന്തിനു തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നു എന്നത് പ്രസക്തമാണ്- സ്വർഗാരോഹണ ശേഷം ഊർശ്ശേമിൽ കൂടിയ വിശ്വാസ സമൂഹത്തോടായിരുന്നു ഈ ചോദ്യം. തബര്യാസ് കടൽ തീരത്ത് കൂടിയ ഏഴുപേർ ഇനിയെന്ന് എന്ന് ആലോചിച്ചു. പലചിന്തകാരായിരുന്നു അവർ. വേണ്ടതിനും വേണ്ടാത്തതിനും അഭിപ്രായം പറയുന്ന പത്രോസ് പഴയ തൊഴിലായ മീൻപിടുത്തത്തിലേക്കു തിരിയാൻ ആഗ്രഹിച്ചു. നഥനിയേലും യാക്കോബും യോഹന്നാനും സ്ഥാപിത താൽപ്പര്യങ്ങളുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. യേശുവിന്റെ ഇടത്തും വലത്തും ഓരോ കസേര അവർപ്രതീക്ഷിച്ചു. സ്ഥാനമാനങ്ങൾക്കായി വടംവലിയും കടിപിടിയും കൂടുന്ന സമൂഹം ദൈവത്തിന്റെ മഹത്വത്തേക്കാൾ ഇതു പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കുന്നു. മഹത്വത്തിൽ വരുമ്പോൾ ഇരിക്കാൻ സ്ഥാനമാന ആത്മീയത ഇന്നു നടക്കുന്നു. റിപ്പോർട്ട് വായിക്കുമ്പോൾ പേരു വിട്ടുപോയാൽ പള്ളിയിൽ പ്രശ്നം. നിശബ്ദ സേവനമനുഷ്ഠിക്കുന്നവരും ഉണ്ട്. ഏഴു പേരുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ സൊസൈറ്റി രൂപീകരിക്കാമെന്ന നിയമം പോലും വന്നത് ക്രിസ്തു ശിഷ്യരുടെ ഈ സംമതിലൂടെയാണ്. മൽസ്യബന്ധനം കഴിഞ്ഞ് വെറുക്കെയോടെ വന്നവർ കർത്താവ് പറഞ്ഞിടത്തു വലയെറിഞ്ഞപ്പോൾ 153 വലിയമീൻകിട്ടി. പരിചയമുള്ള തൊഴിൽ മേഖല വിജയത്തിലേക്ക് നയിക്കില്ല. കർത്താവിന്റെ വാക്കിനു വലയെറിഞ്ഞാൽ പെരുത്ത മീൻകൂടം കിട്ടുമെന്ന് അവർ ഉറപ്പിച്ചു. ഈ കർത്താവിന്റെ സാക്ഷികളാകാൻ നാമും ക്ഷണിക്കപ്പെടുന്നു. എല്ലാവരെയും ശിഷ്യരാക്കണമെന്ന സാക്ഷ്യം നാം പലപ്പോഴും തെറ്റിദ്ധരിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. കാലുകൊണ്ടു പരീക്ഷയെഴുതിയ കൂട്ടി ഫൈനാൽസ് കോളജിൽ പഠിക്കാൻ ആഗ്രഹിച്ചു. പരിമിതിക്കു നടുവിലും ദൈവം ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നതെന്തെന്ന് അവനു തിരിച്ചറിയാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞു.

## അനുതാപമില്ലാത്ത പ്രാർഥന ദൈവം ഇഷ്ടപ്പെടുന്നില്ല

റവ. പീറ്റർ മെയ്ഡൻ

അനുതാപമില്ലാത്ത പ്രാർഥന ദൈവം ഇഷ്ടപ്പെടുന്നില്ലെന്നു റവ. പീറ്റർ മെയ്ഡൻ. മാരാമൺ കൺവൻഷൻ ഉദ്ഘാടന യോത്തിൽ മുഖ്യ സന്ദേശം നൽകുകയായിരുന്നു. രണ്ടു പേർ ദൈവാലയത്തിൽ പ്രാർഥിക്കാൻ പോയി. ഒരാൾ പരീശൻ. ആയാൾ ശിരസുയർത്തി നിൽക്കുന്നു. പരീശൻ അവനോടു തന്നെ പ്രാർഥിക്കുന്നു. അവനെപ്പറ്റി മാത്രം പ്രാർഥിക്കുന്നു. അവൻ അവനാൽ നിറയപ്പെടുന്നു. ഇതു പ്രാർഥനയല്ല. ദൈത്തോടുള്ള മനോഭാവമില്ലാത്തതൊന്നും പ്രാർഥനയല്ല. ഒരുതരത്തിലും അനുതാപമില്ല. ദൈവാലിനിവേശമില്ല. വിശുദ്ധിക്കായി യത്നമില്ല. അവൻ അവനിൽ തന്നെ സംതൃപ്തൻ. ഇത്തരം സ്വയംനീതീകരണത്തിനു മറുമറുന്നുണ്ട്. നമ്മെപ്പറ്റി മൗലികമായ തിരിച്ചറിവുണ്ടാവുക. പ്രവർത്തിച്ചുകൂട്ടിയ കാര്യങ്ങൾ അവൻ പറയുന്നു. സ്വയം വിചിന്തനത്തിന് അവൻ തയാറാകുന്നില്ല. അവർ വ്യർഥമായി എന്നെ ആരാധിക്കുന്നു. അവർ മനുഷ്യനിയമങ്ങൾ പാലിക്കുന്നു. ഈ പരീശൻ ദൈവവുമായി കരാറിലേർപ്പെടാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നു. ദൈവമേ നിനക്കായി ഉപവസിക്കാം, വസ്തു നൽകാം നീ എനിക്കായും ചിലതു ചെയ്യുക. അതിനാൽ നി എന്നെ സ്വീകരിക്കേണമെന്നിങ്ങനെയാണ് പ്രാർഥന. ജീവകാരുണ്യം ചെയ്യുന്നു, ഏറ്റവും നന്നായി ജീവിക്കാൻ

ശ്രമിക്കുന്നു. അതിനാൽ ദൈവമേ നീ ഇതെല്ലാം ചെയ്തു തരണമെന്ന് ആഹ്വാനം ചെയ്യുന്നു. നിയമം തെറ്റിക്കാത്തവനാണ് ഞാൻ. ഇതൊരുതരം ദുരഭിമാനമാണ്. പൗലോസിന്റെ ഹൃദയത്തെ ദൈവം തുറക്കുന്നു. ദൈവസമക്ഷം അവൻ തിരിച്ചറിയുന്നു. പരിശുദ്ധാത്മ വ്യാപാരത്താൽ അവൻ ചിലതു തിരിച്ചറിയാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നു. പൗലോസ് പറയുന്നു. ഞാൻ അരിഷ്ട മനുഷ്യൻ. ദൈവത്തിനു മാത്രം തന്നെ വിടുവിക്കാൻ കഴിയൂ എന്ന് പൗലോസ് തിരിച്ചറിയുന്നു. ആത്മീയ അലംഭാവം തിരിച്ചറിയുക. സ്വയം പ്രശംസിക്കുന്നതും താരതമ്യം ചെയ്യുന്നതും തെറ്റാണ്. സ്വയം നീതീകരണത്തിനുള്ള രണ്ടാമത്തെ മറുപടിയാണ് താരതമ്യം ഒഴിവാക്കുകയാണ്. ആരുമായാണ് നാം താരതമ്യം ചെയ്യുന്നത്. മനോഹരമായി തോന്നിക്കുന്ന ഭവനം മഞ്ഞുകാലത്ത് മനോഹാരിത നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടതായി തോന്നും. വിശുദ്ധിയുടെ പ്രതാപത്തെ കാണുക. ദൈവവിശുദ്ധിയുമായി താരതമ്യം ചെയ്താൽ നമ്മുടെ വിശുദ്ധി നമുക്കു ബോധ്യപ്പെടും. ചുങ്കപ്പിരിവുകാരൻ തല ഉയർത്തിയല്ല നിൽക്കുന്നത്. അവനു ആലയത്തിൽ സ്ഥാനമുണ്ട്. അവൻ - പക്ഷേ സന്ദേഹമുണ്ട്. ദേവാലയത്തിൽ നില്ക്കാൻ തനിക്ക് അവകാശമുണ്ടോയെന്ന സംശയം. അവൻ അപമാന ഭാരത്താൽ താഴേക്കു നോക്കുന്നു. അവൻ മാറത്തടിച്ചു. ഇത് യഥാർത്ഥ അനുതാപത്തിന്റെ ലക്ഷണം. കരുണയ്ക്കായി ദൈവത്തോടുള്ള നിലവിളി. അവൻ പാപിയെന്ന് തിരിച്ചറിയുന്നു. ദൈവത്തിന്റെ കരുണയുടെ കുറവ് അവൻ തിരിച്ചറിയുന്നു. ഈ ചുങ്കക്കാരൻ നീതീകരിക്കപ്പെട്ടവനായി തീരുന്നു. പരീശൻ അങ്ങനെയല്ല. എനിക്കു ദൈവത്തിന്റെ സന്നിധിയിൽ നീതിമാനായി തീരണം. പാപത്തിൽ നിന്നു പൂർണ്ണമായ ക്ഷമ എനിക്കു കിട്ടണം. ക്രിസ്തുവിലുള്ള വിശ്വാസത്താൽ മാത്രം ഇതു ലഭിക്കുന്നു. പരിത്യജിക്കപ്പെട്ടവരും ഉപയോഗ്യന്മാരും ദൈവസന്നിധിയിലേക്ക് കരുണ തേടി ഓടിയെത്തുന്നു. സുഖമുള്ളവർക്കു വൈദ്യൻ വേണ്ട. കുറവുള്ളവർ കരുണ തേടിയെടുത്തുന്നു. കൃഷ്ണരോദി ദൈവത്തെ തേടിയെത്തുന്നു. യേശുവേ എന്നെ സുഖമാക്കണേ എന്നു പ്രാർഥിക്കുന്നു. എനിക്കു മനസ്സുണ്ട്. നീ ശുദ്ധമാകുക. അവൻ ശുദ്ധനായി. ഒറ്റപ്പെടലിന്റെ ആഴം തിരിച്ചറിഞ്ഞവർക്കേ അതിന്റെ വേദന അറിയാനാവൂ. കൃഷ്ണരോദി കീറിയ വസ്ത്രം ധരിക്കണം. മുടി ഒതുക്കരുത്. എവിടെ പോയാലും അശുദ്ധൻ എന്നു വിളിച്ചുപറഞ്ഞ് പാളയത്തിനു പുറത്തെ ഏകാന്തതയിൽ ജീവിക്കണം. യേശുവിന്റെ കരതലം ഈ മനുഷ്യനെ സ്पर्ശിക്കുകയാണ്. തൊട്ടുകൂട്ടാത്തവനെ കർത്താവ് തൊടുന്നു. ഇതാണ് കർത്താവ്. അവിടുന്ന് ചുങ്കക്കാരന്റെയും പാപികളുടെയും സ്നേഹിതൻ. തന്നത്താൻ താഴ്ത്തുന്നവരെ ദൈവം ഉന്നതരാക്കും. ക്രിസ്തീയ ജീവിത പാരമ്പര്യം വ്യക്തമാക്കുന്നതാണ്. ദൈവരാജ്യത്തിൽ കടക്കണമെങ്കിൽ ശിശുവിനെപ്പോലെ ആയിരിക്കണം. കുഞ്ഞ് മേശയിൽ നിന്നു ചാടുന്നത് വലുപ്പമുണ്ട് എന്നു പിടിക്കുമെന്ന് ഉറപ്പുള്ളതിനാലാണ്. ഇതുതന്നെയാണ് വചനത്തിന്റെ ആഹ്വാനം. നിങ്ങളുടെ നല്ലപ്രവർത്തിയിൽ മാത്രം ആശ്രയിക്കരുത്. ക്രൂശിൽ നൽകപ്പെട്ട പുത്രനിൽ വിശ്വസിക്കുക.

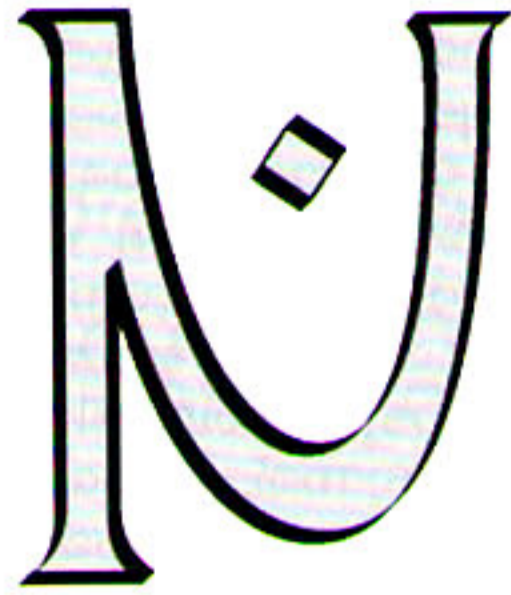
## ദൈവിക ഇടപെടൽ പ്രത്യാശ പകരും:

ഡോ. ഐസക് മാർ പീലക്സിനോസ്

ലോകം പ്രതിസന്ധി നേരിടുമ്പോൾ ദൈവിക ഇടപെടലുകളിലൂടെ പുതിയ ആകാശവും പുതിയ ഭൂമിയും രൂപപ്പെടുമെന്ന ദർശനം മനുഷ്യരാശിക്കു പ്രത്യാശ പകരുന്നുവെന്ന് ഡോ. ഐസക് മാർ പീലക്സിനോസ്. മാറാമൺ കൺവൻഷൻ തിങ്കൾ ഉച്ചകഴിഞ്ഞുള്ള യോഗത്തിൽ പ്രസംഗിക്കുകയായിരുന്നു. വെളിപാടു പുസ്തകം

ദർശനങ്ങളിലേക്കു വാതിൽതുറക്കുന്നു. യോഹന്നാൻ പത്മോസിൽ ആയിരുന്നപ്പോൾ ലഭിച്ച ദർശനമാണിത്. പഴയ നിയമത്തിലെ ദാനിയേലിന്റെ പുസ്തകവും വെളിപാട് സാഹിത്യമാണ്. മനുഷ്യന്റെ യാതനയുടെ മധ്യത്തിൽ ദൈവത്തിന്റെ നടത്തിപ്പ് വെളിപ്പെടുത്തുന്ന ദൈവിക ചിന്തയാണിത്. ബിസി ആറിർ ബാബിലോണിലെ നെബുഖദ്നസർ നടത്തിയ പീഡകൾ നേരിടേണ്ടി വന്ന ജനസമൂഹത്തിനുവേണ്ടി നൽകിയ ദർശനമാണ് ദാനിയൽ പ്രവചനം. മഹിമ തേടുവാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്ന മനുഷ്യൻ നരങ്ങളും സമുച്ചയങ്ങളും നിർമ്മിക്കുന്നു. ദൈവത്തോടുള്ള സ്ഥായിയായ ബന്ധത്തിലാണ് ജറുസലം നിർമ്മിക്കപ്പെടുന്നത്. ബാബേൽ പോറ്റി നിർമ്മിതി അഹന്തയുടെയും കഴിവിന്റെയും പ്രതീകമാണ്. അഹന്ത ആകാശത്തോളം മുട്ടുന്നു. ദൈവം ഇടപെട്ട അവരുടെ പ്രയത്നത്തെ തകർക്കുന്നു. എങ്കിലും 47 തോക്കു നിർമ്മാതാവ് ഇപ്രകാരമെഴുതി. മനുഷ്യ നന്മയ്ക്കായാണോ തിന്മയ്ക്കായാണോ എങ്കിലും 47 പ്രയോജനപ്പെട്ടത്. നിർമ്മിതി ജീവനെ നശിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനോ ജീവനെ രക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിനോ. തിന്മാൻ രൂപിതോന്നിപ്പിക്കുന്ന അത്യാഹ്വാനങ്ങൾ ക്രമം കെട്ട ജീവിതത്തിനു പ്രേരിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. തിരുത്തൽ ശക്തികൾ ഉയരുന്നുണ്ട്. പക്ഷേ സ്വാധീനം പോരാ. ദൈവം നമ്മോടു കൂടെ പണി ചെയ്യുന്ന ലോകമാണ് വരേണ്ടത്. യോഹന്നാൻ ദർശനത്തിൽ സിംഹാസനത്തിൽ നിന്നുള്ള മഹാശബ്ദം കേൾക്കുന്നു. മനുഷ്യനോടു കൂടെ കൂടാതെ ദൈവത്തെ കാണുന്നു. മഹദ്ദിയം ബാബിലോണും കുഞ്ഞാടിന്റെ ജറുസലേയും വെളിപാടിലുണ്ട്. ബാബിലോൺ അധപതനത്തിന്റെ നരമാണ്. ഇന്നു മനുഷ്യൻ ബാബിലോണുകൾ ഉയർത്താൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നു. കമ്പോള സംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെ, ആയുധ ശക്തിയുടെ, ജാതി വംശീയതകളുടെ ബാബിലോണുകൾ. ഇവിടേക്കു സ്വർം ഇറങ്ങിവരും. അറുക്കപ്പെട്ട കുഞ്ഞാടു സാന്നിധ്യം വെളിപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. സമാമന കൂടാരങ്ങളിലൂടെ ദൈവസാന്നിധ്യം പുറപ്പെടുവിക്കാൻ അനുഭവമായി. സ്വപ്നം ദർശനമായി മാറണം. ക്രിസ്തുവിനു വേണ്ടി ചെയ്യുന്ന ഓരോ കർമ്മങ്ങളിലൂടെ നാം ദൈവരാജ്യം കെട്ടുപണിയിൽ പങ്കാളികളാകുന്നു. രോക്ക് സാന്താനമായി ഇരിക്കുമ്പോൾ നമ്മിലൂടെ അവർ ക്രിസ്തു സാന്നിധ്യമറിയുന്നു. തള്ളപ്പെടുന്നവരെ സ്വീകരിപ്പാനും ആവശ്യങ്ങളിലിരിക്കുന്നവരെ സഹായിക്കുവാനും കഴിയണം. പുതുതാക്കുന്നവനാണു ദൈവം. പഴയതെ തള്ളി പുതുമയെ സ്വീകരിക്കുന്നതാണ് ലോകം. ശരീരത്തിൽ പുതിയ കോശങ്ങൾ ജനിക്കുംപോലെയോ ഓരോ തവണയും ഒഴുകുമാറുമ്പോൾ പുതിയ നദി ജനിക്കുന്നതുപോലെയുമാണിത്. ദൈവമഹത്വത്തിൽ നിറഞ്ഞു നിൽക്കുന്ന ലോകത്ത് ഇനി പുതിയ സൂര്യനും ചന്ദ്രനും സമുദ്രവും വേണ്ട. മരണം ഇല്ലാതാകും. കണ്ണിരില്ലാതാകും. ഇവിടെ വെളിച്ചങ്ങളായി എല്ലാവരും മാറുന്നു. യുഎൻ യൂത്ത് അസംബ്ലിയിൽ സംസാരിച്ച മലാല എന്ന പെൺകുട്ടി ഈ വെളിച്ചത്തിന്റെ പൊരുൾ ലോകത്തിനു കാട്ടിക്കൊടുത്തു. ലോകം സമാധാനത്തിലേക്കു വരുന്നു. വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിലൂടെ അജ്ഞതയുടെ അന്ധകാരം അകലുന്നു. ഒരു പെൺസിലും ഒരു അധ്യാപകനുമുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ ലോകത്തെ മാറ്റിമറിക്കാം. അനേകർ നമ്മുടെ പ്രവർത്തനഫലമായി വെളിച്ചത്തിലേക്കു വരുന്നു. നവജീവൻ സെന്ററിൽ അഞ്ചു വയസുകാരനായി വന്ന കുട്ടി ഇന്ന് സുവിശേഷകനായി സീഹോറയിൽ. സഹോദരനും അവനോടു കൂടെയുണ്ട്. ചുവന്ന തെരുവിൽ നിന്ന് ദൈവരാജ്യത്തിന്റെ വേലക്കാരായി മാറിയ ചെറുപ്പക്കാർ. ദൈവം പുതുതാക്കിയ ജീവിതം. ഇതിന് ശക്തി എവിടെ നിന്നു ലഭിക്കും. ആൽഫയും ഒമേയും ആദിയും അന്തവുമായ ദൈവം ജീവജല ഉറവിൽ നിന്നു സൗജന്യമായി നൽകുന്നു. ലോകത്തിന്റെ ദാഹശമനം യേശുവിലാണ്. സജീവ ബന്ധത്തിലൂടെ ദൈവത്തെ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കുക. മനുഷ്യരോടൊപ്പം കൂടാതെ ദൈവത്തോടൊപ്പമാകട്ടെ യാത്ര. പുതിയ മനുഷ്യനായി മാറി ദൈവത്തോടൊപ്പം പ്രവർത്തിച്ച് ജീവജലം നുകർന്ന് ഉണർവിലേക്കു വളരാം.





# NIDAL GROUP

Global Sources  
General Contracting

Arabian Global

Global Sources  
Engineering

Nidal Farms

IS4IS

Global Sources  
InfoTech

International solutions  
for  
Industrial Services

RK  
Interior Architecture

Nidal Real Estate

\* Global Sources  
[www.arabianglobalsources.com](http://www.arabianglobalsources.com)

Industrial Civil & Mechanical construction, fabrication of structural steel, Piping, Furnace / Reformer tubing & re-tubing, shutdown and plant revamp.

\* Schmidt + Clemens Saudi Arabia Ltd  
[www.schmidt-clemens.com](http://www.schmidt-clemens.com)

A J.V with Nidal Group. Manufacturers of Furnace Reformer Tubes.

\* International Solutions for Industrial Services (IS4IS)  
[www.is4is.com](http://www.is4is.com)

Chemical Trading Division representing Overseas Manufacturers, Providing range of Industrial Specialty Chemicals for Oil & Gas, Chemical, Petrochemical, Desalination & Mining Sectors

\* Global Sources InfoTech  
[www.globalsourcesinfotech.com](http://www.globalsourcesinfotech.com)

IT consulting including SAP implementation and training in Association with Blue Pencil South Africa.

\* [www.rachakayali.com](http://www.rachakayali.com)  
Interior designing Company.

\* Nidal Farms  
Organic Food Supplier.

- \* Offices in Jubail, Al-Khobar, Rabigh, Thuwal, Yanbu, Al-Khafji and India.
- \* 15,000m2 fabrication facility in Juyamah.
- \* 50,000m2 fabrication facility in Jubail.
- \* Group Employee strength of more than 2000 skilled personnel.
- \* Representing 10 companies from USA and Europe in Saudi Arabia including SUD-CHEMIE-Germany (Industrial Catalysts [www.sud-chemie.com](http://www.sud-chemie.com)), BluePencil-South Africa (SAP Training [www.bluepencil.co.za](http://www.bluepencil.co.za))

Schmidt + Clemens Saudi Arabia Ltd  
شيميت + كلينس العربية السعودية المحدودة



Nidal Group

GLOBAL SOURCES is an Integrated Management System compliant company having certifications of ISO 9001:2008, ISO 14001:2004, OHSAS 18001:2007

GLOBAL SOURCES has been Certified by ISO 29001:2010 in 2013 - The Only Certified Industrial Contractor in Saudi Arabia

### We Serve the following Companies :-

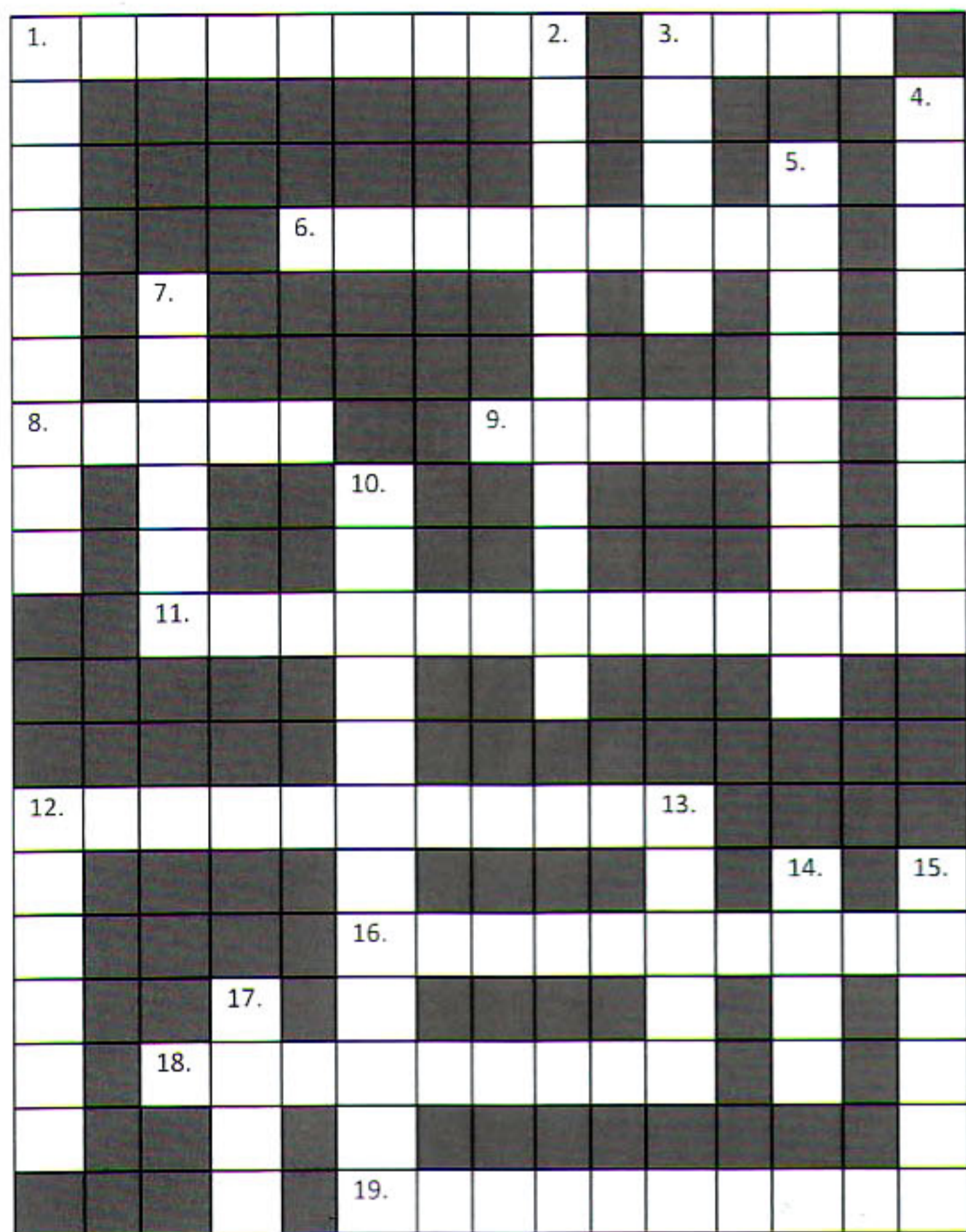
SAUDI ARAMCO, SABIC, SAUDI ELECTRICITY CO. (SEC), EQUATE ( Kuwait ) , KUWAIT NATIONAL PETROLEUM COMPANY SATORP/JERP, PETRORABIGH, SASREF, SAHARA, FARABI, ROYAL COMMISSION, SIPCHEM, S-CHEM / CHEVRON, MARAFIQ, MA'ADEN, BECHTEL, K.B.R., SHAW - STONE & WEBSTER, SAIPEM / SNAMPROGETTI, TECHNICAS REUNIDAS, SAMSUNG, DAELIM, BEMCO, TYSSENKURPP UHDE AND TEKFEEN.

P.O Box. 2705, Al jubail, 31951, Saudi Arabia, Tel: +966 3 344 5540 fax: +966 3 344 5541



Tharayilathu Puthen Bunglow | Venmoney | Alleppey Dist: | Kerala 689509 | india  
Tel +91 996 12 81775 | 95 446 52852 | [info@vensec.org](mailto:info@vensec.org) | [www.vensec.org](http://www.vensec.org)

# Bible Crossword Puzzle



**Chapters:**  
**NIV Bible-**  
**II Kings**

**Chapters 1-25**

Deadline for Answers:  
 May 15, 2014

Mail to:

**Philip Manuel,**  
 23 Lake Street,  
 Billerica, MA 01821  
 Phone: 978-663-3203  
 By Email (pdf format only):  
 Varampath23@msn.com  
 Please include your name,  
 name of Parish,  
 State and phone number.

Prepared by  
 Mr. Philip Manuel  
 & Mrs. Laila Anie Philip,  
 Carmel, MTC Boston

## Bible Cross Word Puzzle Winner List For January 2014

- |                        |                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 01 Santha Varghese     | Ascension MTC, PA           |
| 02 Hemant Antony       | Ascension MTC, PA           |
| 03 Susan Alex, Dr.     | Atlanta MTC, JK-TN          |
| 04 Paul Isaac          | Carmel MTC, Boston          |
| 05 Teji Thomas         | Chicago MTC, IL             |
| 06 Sneha Mathew        | Detroit MTC                 |
| 07 Sara Philip         | Emmanuel MTC, Houston       |
| 08 Saramma Chacko      | Ephany MTC, NY              |
| 09 Jejo Joji           | Hermon MTC, UK              |
| 10 Jeremy Abraham      | Horeb MTC, CO               |
| 11 Aleyamma Chacko     | Horeb MTC, LA               |
| 12 Thankamma Paul      | Horeb MTC, LA               |
| 13 Aleyamma Mathews    | MTC Dallas Farmers Br       |
| 14 Jency J Philip      | MTC Dallas Farmers Br       |
| 15 Mariamma Daniel     | MTC Dallas Farmers Br       |
| 16 Sicily Skariah      | MTC Dallas Farmers Br       |
| 17 Ajitha George       | MTC Dallas Farmers Br       |
| 18 Eipe Skariah        | MTC Dallas Farmers Br       |
| 19 Shaji David         | MTC Dallas Farmers Br       |
| 20 Shaila Mathew       | MTC Dallas Farmers Br       |
| 21 Sheila Chandy       | MTC San Francisco           |
| 22 Manu Sajan John     | MTC, Baltimore              |
| 23 Sosamma Thomas      | MTC, Greater Washington     |
| 24 Aleyamma Mathai     | New Jersey MTC, Randolph    |
| 25 Susan Mathews       | Philadelphia MTC, PA        |
| 26 Anamma Abraham      | Philadelphia MTC, PA        |
| 27 Fiona Thomas        | Phoenix MTC, AZ             |
| 28 Mercy Abraham       | Phoenix MTC, AZ             |
| 29 Allen Jiji          | Phoenix MTC, AZ             |
| 30 Alvin Jiji          | Phoenix MTC, AZ             |
| 31 Elsy Jacob          | Randolph MTC, NJ            |
| 32 Hannah Daniel       | Salem MTC, NY               |
| 33 Saramma Koshy       | Salem MTC, NY               |
| 34 Jolly Thomas        | Seattle MTC, WA             |
| 35 Omana T Titus       | Seattle MTC, WA             |
| 36 Mariamma John       | Sehion MTC, Dallas          |
| 37 Saramma Varkey      | Sehion MTC, Dallas          |
| 38 Marykutty Thomas    | South Florida MTC           |
| 39 George Thomas       | South Florida MTC           |
| 40 Abraham Mathew      | St. Luke MTC, FL            |
| 41 Annamma John        | St. Luke MTC, FL            |
| 42 Sheela Thomas       | St. Luke MTC, FL            |
| 43 Maria Stephen       | St. Mark's MTC, FL          |
| 44 Annamma I Varughese | St. Peter's, NJ             |
| 45 Aleyamma M Thomas   | St. Peter's, NJ             |
| 46 Monica Abraham      | St. Peter's, NJ             |
| 47 Annie Thomas        | St. Peter's, NJ             |
| 48 Lizy M Thomas       | St. Stephen's MTC, NJ       |
| 49 Aleyamma Ninan      | St. Thomas MTC, Yonkers, NY |
| 50 Mary V George       | St. James MTC, NY           |
| 51 Dilin Prince Oommen | St. Thomas MTC Delaware     |
| 52 Reji Mathew         | Staten Island MTC, NY       |
| 53 Omana Rajee         | Staten Island MTC, NY       |
| 54 Anitha John         | Staten Island MTC, NY       |
| 55 Achamma Chacko      | Trinity MTC, Houston        |
| 56 Kunjamma Thomas     | Trinity MTC, Houston        |
| 57 Gracy P Vattakunnel | Trinity MTC, Houston        |
| 58 Mariamma K Thomas   | Trinity MTC, Houston        |
| 59 Saramma Sleeba      | Trinity MTC, Houston        |

**ACROSS**

- 01. Jehu \_\_\_ Baal worship in Israel.
- 03. Elisha told the prophet " Tuck your cloak into your \_\_\_\_\_, take a flask of oil and anoint Jehu king over Israel'.
- 06. The water has remained \_\_\_ to this day according to the word Elisha had spoken.
- 08. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, invaded Judah during the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jehoiakim.
- 09. Jehu was the grandson of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 11. The Lord said to Jehu," Because you have done well in \_\_\_\_\_ what is right in my eyes, your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation'.
- \*12. \_\_\_\_\_ said," The word of the Lord is with him".
- 16. The Lord had warned Israel and Judah" Observe my commands and decrees in \_\_\_\_\_ with the entire Law that I commanded your fathers".
- 18. Judah went into \_\_\_\_\_ away from her land because of the atrocities committed against the Lord by her Kings.
- 19. Hephzibah's son did evil in the eyes of the Lord, following the \_\_\_\_\_ practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites.

**DOWN**

- 01. The Lord provided a \_\_\_\_\_ for Israel and they escaped from the power of Aram.
- 02. Jehu was acting \_\_\_\_\_ when he summoned all the ministers of Baal.
- 03. Manasseh had filled Jerusalem with innocent \_\_\_\_\_ and the Lord was not willing to forgive and Judah was punished.
- 04. Manasseh did much evil in the eyes of the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ him to anger by practicing sorcery and divinations, consulting mediums and spirits and even child sacrifice.
- 05. \_\_\_\_\_ was the name given to the son of Josiah.
- 07. Elijah and \_\_\_\_\_ struck the waters of the Jordan with Elijah's cloak and the water divided to the left and the right.
- 10. Hezekiah prayed," Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with \_\_\_\_\_ devotion.
- 12. \_\_\_\_\_ was eight years old when he became king and he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.
- 13. The company of prophets asked Elisha," Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you \_\_\_\_\_".
- 14. Elisha cursed Gehazi because he accepted a gift that Elisha had refused and when he left Elisha's presence, he was leprous as white as \_\_\_\_\_.
- 15. The Lord said," I will \_\_\_\_\_ Judah also from my presence as I have removed Israel, and I will reject Jerusalem."
- 17. Hezekiah held \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord and did not cease to follow him: he kept the commands the Lord had given Moses.

# Episcopal Visits

## New Jersey MTC, Randolph



The New Jersey Mar Thoma Church, Randolph was blessed with the visit of Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, on December 7 & 8, 2013. On Saturday the Parish Edavaka Mission arranged a neighborhood Mission program at the Market Street Centre at Morristown. (A Centre for Drug & Alcoholic Rehabilitation) at 11.00 AM. Thirumeni and six members visited there and supported their work. The Parish celebrated the 25th Episcopal Anniversary of the Diocesan Bishop and arranged the program at the parish in the evening 5.00 PM to 7.00 PM. Along with this celebration, the Parish honored 18 senior citizens above 70 Years of age by giving 'Ponnada' to them.

Variety entertainment programs from all organization were conducted. Thirumeni inaugurated the New Sound system for the Church. Fellowship dinner was provided for all. Thirumeni took time to interact with the people. Sunday at 9.30 AM Thirumeni celebrated the Holy Qurbana. Diocesan secretary Rev. K. E. Geevarghese and Diocesan Program manager Rev. Dr. Philip Varghese joined the service. Thirumeni conducted First Communion Service for 13 children and gave Holy Qurbana. After that there was a Special thanksgiving Service conducted for the Jubilarian Bishops Rt. Rev. Geevarghese Mar Athanasius, Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos and Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa. The service was led by Rev. K. E. Geevarghese. In the Public meeting, Thirumeni dedicated the 'Good Samaritan Fund Box' of the parish. The service ended after the Benediction and Kaimuthu. After the fellowship lunch, Thirumeni attended the Youth Fellowship Meeting in the Conference Hall. Executive Committee members and others met Thirumeni at the parsonage. It was a great day for the Parish.

*Rev. Jacob Varughese, Vicar*

## MTC, Kansas



The Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius visited the Mar Thoma Church of Kansas from Dec. 21 to 22, 2013. On Sunday, before the Holy Communion there was a joint Executive Committee meeting of 2013 and 2014. It gave an opportunity to share the Parish concerns with Thirumeni as well as to hear from Thirumeni about the ways and means to be considered for the future growth of the parish. On Sunday, December 22, 2013 the Holy Communion service (Malayalam) was led by Thirumeni. 30 people attended the service and 20

people received Holy Communion. In his message, Thirumeni highlighted the characteristics of the Biblical character Mary. His Lordship explained that Mary is known for single minded obedience. After the service Thirumeni addressed the Parish members. Diocesan activities were briefed. Vicar offered the words of thanks to Thirumeni for Thirumeni's leadership and guidance in upgrading the Congregation as a Parish. Also offered the greetings and prayers to Thirumeni on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee year of Episcopal Consecration. The meeting came to an end with Kaimuthu service. All joined Thirumeni for the group Photo session and the fellowship meal. The presence, message, leadership, fellowship and guidance received by the Parish from Thirumeni is unforgettable and motivating.

*Rev. Renu John, Vicar*

## St John's MTC, Hounslow, UK



The Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius visited the St John's Mar Thoma Church, Hounslow from December 13th to December 17th 2013. His Lordship arrived on Friday morning and was received by the Vicar, Rev. Jose Punamadam from the airport. Friday evening Thirumeni attended an ecumenical Carol Service at Southampton, an upcoming prayer group of the parish. Saturday morning His Lordship chaired the meeting of all the Vicars and representatives of each parish and congregation in the UK-Europe region, with a total of 40 members present. The main agenda for the meeting was the future development of the UK-Europe region as separate Diocese. Saturday evening Thirumeni attended the Carol Service of Peterborough congregation and declared the endorsement of the congregation to parish status with the name "All Saints Mar Thoma Church, Peterborough".

On Sunday, December 15th, His Lordship conducted the dedication of the newly built Mezzanine floor (balcony) at St John's Mar Thoma Church, followed by Holy Communion service. His Lordship gave the greetings and blessings for the Christmas Carol Service which followed after the communion service. During the Holy Communion Service and Carol Service, Thirumeni affirmed that "obedience comes by trusting God". We have to understand the needs of others, especially during Christmas time and "we should be always be loyal to the church". The Chief guest for the Carol Service was the newly consecrated Bishop Jonathan Goodall, the Bishop of Ebbsfleet of the Church of England. By God's grace, all the programs were well attended and fully enjoyed by all.

*Rev. Jose Punamadam, Vicar*

## St. Louis MTC

Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius visited the St. Louis MTC from December 20 to 21, 2013. On Friday evening there was a joint meeting of the Executive Committees for the year 2013 and 2014. It gave an opportunity to share the Parish concerns with Thirumeni. As response to all the needs raised, Thirumeni gave advises and action plans to be considered for the future growth. The 'Sabha Dinam' was observed during the Holy Communion service (English) on Saturday, December 21. 40 people attended the service and 30 people received Holy Communion. In the sermon the Biblical character Joseph (husband



of Mary) was highlighted. He is a character known for justice. After the service Thirumeni addressed the Parish members. Diocesan activities were briefed. Vicar offered the words of thanks to Thirumeni for all the guidance received in the formalities of upgrading the Congregation as a Parish. Also offered greetings and prayers to Thirumeni on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee year of Episcopal Consecration. Parish members were blessed by Thirumeni's Kaimuth. There was a photo session and the fellowship meal for all with Thirumeni. Also Thirumeni found time to visit two families on Saturday. The Episcopal visit was a blessing to the parish.

Rev. Renu John, Vicar

## Jacksonville Congregation



The Jacksonville Mar Thoma Congregation was blessed and honored by the annual visit of the Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa on December 28 - 29, 2013. This was the 3rd visit to Jacksonville since he took charge as the Diocesan Bishop of North-America and Europe Diocese in 2009. On December 29th Sunday at 10:00 AM, Thirumeni lead the celebration of the Holy Communion in Malayalam assisted by vicar Rev. John Mathew. Rev. Fr. Cyril Davie, vicar of St. Gregorios Orthodox Church was also present there. During the Holy Communion two youth members were dedicated and had their First Communion. After the service, a public function was arranged to celebrate Thirumen's Episcopal Jubilee. It was a special occasion for the Jacksonville Christian Community to praise and thank God for the life and leadership of our Thirumeni. Rev. John Mathew, Rev. Fr. Cyril Davie, Mrs. Annamma Mathew and secretary Mr. Alex Varghese spoke about Thirumeni's leadership and guidance. They offered felicitations and affirmed their continued prayers and support to his Lordship's Ministry. During the function, special program was arranged for the children to interact directly with Thirumeni and Thirumeni answered all their questions and encouraged the ecumenical community to be part of the "Community we live and be citizens of God".

Both Jacksonville Congregation and Orthodox Congregation gave plaques to Thirumeni to honor his Jubilee. Thirumeni also distributed the plaques and prizes to Sunday school children who passed the annual exams. Thirumeni also gave gifts to members who won prizes in the quiz competition organized in the congregation. The Service ended by 1:30 PM with Thirumeni's Kaimuthu. About 130 people attended the service and had a luncheon fellowship in the parish hall hosted by the parish. Everyone was in a festive mood as the Episcopal Visit fell on a Sunday and first communicants were blessed.

Rev. John Mathew, Vicar

## MTC Dallas, Carrollton



The Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius visited Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Carrollton on the 24th and 25th of December, 2013. On the 24th evening at 5:30 PM, Thirumeni was welcomed by the Vicar, Office-bearers and other parishioners. Thirumeni then met the 12 candidates with their parents who had been prepared to receive their First Communion. There was an informal discussion on the significance of the Sacraments and Thirumeni, clarified their doubts with regard to the faith and practices of the Mar Thoma Church, for an hour. The Christmas program began at 6:30 P M. Various organizations (Sunday School, Youth fellowship, Yuvajana Sakhyam, Sevika Sanghom, Senior citizens 'pookalam', Parish Mission, Prayer Groups) also presented songs and variety programs in addition to the carol singing by the Choir. Thirumeni delivered the Christmas message. On the 25th the Christmas celebration began with a special Christmas service led by the Vicar along with the Altar Boys and the covenant Girls. The Holy Communion in English was celebrated by Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa. Twelve candidates received their First Communion on this solemn occasion. There were guests and friends attending the service on the Christmas Day. Soon after the service the Secretary of the parish offered felicitations on behalf of the Parish as Thirumeni entered into the 25th year in the Episcopal ministry. Thirumeni in his address shared about the Grace of God experienced in his Shepherding ministry all through and particularly his vision and mission in the Diocese of North America & Europe. The Holy Baptism of the vicar's youngest daughter was also conducted on the same day immediately after the Holy Communion Service. The clergy from the Dallas Center and their families also joined with the parish members to witness this solemn occasion. After a brief photo session Thirumeni joined for lunch with the parish members. Thirumeni also shared his love and concern for the sick, by taking some time to visit and pray with them. May God continue to bless this Diocese by his lordships able leadership.

Rev. Sam Mathew, Vicar

## The Ottawa MTC, Canada



Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius visited the Ottawa Mar Thoma Church on Jan 12, 2014. Thirumeni celebrated Holy Communion service assisted by Parish Vicar Rev. Varghese K. Abraham and lay leaders Dr. Anil Varughese and Mr. John Kompithra. During the service three youngsters - Isaac Alex, Daniel Alex and Jacob Zachariah - received their first communion. Thirumeni greeted and welcomed



them to the Church by giving them a Holy Bible and a lighted candle, which represented that they are being spiritually lighted to lighten the world around them. During the sermon Thirumeni highlighted the significance of first communion and emphasized the role of family members and extended church family members in providing a nourishing environment for the communicants in their spiritual growth. After the service, Diocesan Assembly member Dr. John Zachariah and Secretary Mr. Reji Alex delivered speeches welcoming Thirumeni to the Church and thanking him for the visit. The service was attended by Rev. Patrick Stephens, the Assistant curate of St. Thomas Anglican Church where the service was held, members of the Ottawa MarThoma Church and members of the St. Thomas Orthodox Church Ottawa. Thirumeni and Achen also attended a fellowship dinner hosted by the first communicant's families.

## Horeb MTC, Los Angeles



Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius visited the Horeb MTC, Los Angeles on December 30th, 2013 to January 1st, 2014. On Dec. 30th, Thirumeni met with the 2013 & 2014 Executive Committees. Time was spent in prayer and then Thirumeni led a devotion based on Being Effective Spiritual Leaders. Thirumeni expressed his expectations for the church and addressed questions and concerns of the committee members. On Dec. 31st, Thirumeni met with the Sunday School children for an interactive session. The children were excited to ask questions and Thirumeni happily answered. It was an enjoyable time for the children, teachers, and parents. Thirumeni led the New Year's Eve Qurbana service and also the first communion service for Josiah Peedikayil, Aidan Arasasingham, and Noah Abraham. Thirumeni appreciated the church for purchasing a new 2013 Rav4 for the vicar's use and offered a prayer of thanksgiving to God. Thirumeni left on Jan 1st, 2014. Thirumeni's visit was a blessed time for all the Horeb members.

*Rev. Larry Philip, Vicar*

## National Youth Fellowship Leadership Conference 2014



## St. Marks MTC, Florida

The Diocesan Episcopa, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius visited the parish on January 19th, 2014 as part of official Episcopal visit. During his visit, 13 of our youngsters received the First Holy Communion. During the sermon, Thirumeni's message was based on pruning



and fruition and emphasized on the importance of pruning ourselves to the Christian faith in order to bear fruits. After the Holy Communion Service, Thirumeni presented the First Communicants with a certificate and a daily devotional book as a gift from the Church. The secretary, Mr. Binu Eapen welcomed Thirumeni to the church and on behalf of the Executive committee and the Church recognized Thirumeni's 25 years of Episcopacy and our Vicar Rev. John Kuruvilla and the Vice-president Mr. Kurien Koshy presented a plaque to Thirumeni to commemorate the occasion. The Church also recognized one of its own members Mr. Ashish Angail for his service in the US Army. Ashish joined the US Military as a private second class in 2006 and retired from Active Duty in 2012. His services included a deployment to Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi freedom. He is now pursuing a career in accounting while still serving as a member of the US Army reserves. During his tenure in the army, he was promoted multiple times and retired as a sergeant. A plaque honoring him for his services to our country was presented to him by our Thirumeni, along with our Achen Rev. John Kuruvilla and the Trustees, Mr. John V. Philipose and Mr. Mathew Varghese on behalf of the Church. Immediately after, a Town Hall style meeting was conducted where the congregation was given the opportunity to ask questions to Thirumeni. The meeting ended with the 'Kaimuthu' service and the congregation was served lunch provided by the parents of the first communicants. Binu Eapen, Secretary

## Diocesan Annual Assembly - 2014

The annual meeting of the Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of North America and Europe of the Mar Thoma Church will be held at the Philadelphia Mar Thoma Church, 1085 Camphill Rd., Fort Washington, PA 19034 on Friday, April 4, 2014, at 6:00 pm (EST) & on Saturday April 5, 2014 at 9:00 am (EST). The Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius will preside over the meeting. The annual report, annual accounts for 2013 and budget for 2014 will be presented for approval along with other agenda items for approval of the assembly. The election for the new Diocesan Council (2014-2017) will also take place during the assembly meeting. The prayerful participation of all the assembly members is requested.

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

# PARISH NEWS

## MTC Dallas, Farmers Branch - Mar Thoma Fest 2013



Mar Thoma Church of Dallas Farmers Branch celebrated the 14th annual Mar Thoma Fest on October 5, 2013. The theme for this year's Fest was "Charity for Humanity". This festival is an occasion for the members of the parish and other sister parishes to come together to raise funds for various mission projects of the parish. The funds raised through the fest are used for Snehatheeram HIV/ AIDS project at Manjalumoodu, MCRD, Thelliyoor, an institution for mentally challenged children and other local mission projects. This year's chief guest was Honorable Bill Glancy, mayor of City of Farmers Branch, the city where the parish is situated. The public meeting started with prayer by Rev. P. V. Thomas and concluded with prayer and benediction by our Vicar Rev. Jose C. Joseph Mathew. Various entertainment and cultural programs conducted by our members and outside groups included songs, dances and skits. Spiritual songs and hymns by Springs of Glory, CSI Congregation of Dallas and our Church Choir were melodious and thought provoking. There were various rides and pet zoo for children. Another attraction was booths and stalls by outside businesses and parish organizations. Our youth arranged basketball, badminton and chess games and collected funds through registration fees. The mission coordinator of the parish Mr. George Varghese presented a brief report of our mission activities and encouraged participants to support our mission projects. We were able to raise net proceeds of over \$22,000 through this year's fest celebration. We also collected usable clothes from members of the parish and distributed to MCRD and Snehatheeram residents in December. Mr. Philip Thomas, CPA, vice-president of the parish served as Mar Thoma Fest Convener.

*Prof. Philip Thomas, Convener*

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



This year the Carol Service was extra special as the parish received blessings from two Bishops. Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Thirumeni gave the greetings and blessings to the congregation and Bishop Jonathan Goodall, Bishop of Ebbsfleet was the Chief Guest for the

evening. The Carol Service was led by the parish Choir who performed a number of English and Malayalam carols with four parts harmony. The junior choir also performed a carol with the children leading musical instruments. Lessons were read by representatives of the various groups and organizations of the parish. In his presidential remarks, the Vicar, Rev. Jose Punamadam felicitated Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Thirumeni for completing 25 years since his consecration as a Bishop.



Mezzanine Floor (Balcony) Dedication Service at St. John's MTC, Hounslow, UK: The parish is blessed to construct a Mezzanine floor in view of accommodating more members in the parish. His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Thirumeni gave the leadership for the dedication service. The Vicar, Rev. Jose Punamadam assisted the service. All the members of the parish were part of this blessed occasion. Thirumeni congratulated the Vicar, Rev. Jose Punamadam and especially the convener Mr. P. M. Mathew for completing the project beautifully. Thirumeni wished the parish well and acknowledged the growth in attending members for services and further fellowship programs in the parish.

*Rev. Jose Punamadam, Vicar*

## Mar Theodosius Visits Market Street Mission in Morris Town, NJ



As part of the Neighborhood Mission of the Mar Thoma Church, The New Jersey Mar Thoma Church, Randolph had been helping in soup kitchens and distributing coats for the coatless in the winter time, distribute toiletry items for the needy in the area. For the past three years the parish has been visiting the Market Street Mission in Morris Town around Christmas time and hand over a small donation for their Mission. This is a Private Christian Institution engaged in the rehabilitation of Drug Addicts, Alcoholics and homeless people. Market Street Mission receives no government subsidy or grant, but is solely supported by Christian churches, fellowship groups and individuals. People come with donations not even mentioning their name or address. One can see people bringing in food items to be served at the Center, as Psalm 121 says, 'the help comes from the Lord'. Homeless people are given food and shelter for the night and a healthy breakfast in the morning and then they go out, the mission takes men who want to be rehabilitated for a period of three months. They are given counseling by qualified counselors. Attendance in the morning prayer and bible study is mandatory. No drugs or alcohol is allowed. Along with counseling they are introduced to Jesus Christ. Most of them accept Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. After three months of intensive counseling and teaching they are equipped to go out into the world and be productive members of society and effective witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ.

# *Make Your Life Less Taxing*

*Get the Right Advice at the Right Time.*

**Philip Thomas, MBA, CPA**

*Professor of Accounting  
Brookhaven College, FB, Texas*



---

*Certified Public Accountant since 1982*

*Member:*

*American Institute of CPAs*

*Texas Society of CPAs*

*Dallas Chapter of CPAs*

---

*Tax Laws Change Always & Successful Retirement Living Requires  
Professional Tax Planning*

**For more information contact:**

**972.394.1349**

Email: philipthomascpa@yahoo.com

*A member of the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch*

It was very encouraging for us as well as for the Market Street Mission that our Diocesan Bishop Mar Theodosius Tirumeni took time to visit the Market Street Mission. The young man who gave us a tour of the facility was a reformed and rehabilitated homeless person. His testimony touched all of us. Thirumeni found time to talk to this young man and to listen his marvelous testimony. We left with his words ringing in our ears. He said he has a simple message: "If the Lord can save and change me, He can change every one". This is a model for the parishes of the Mar Thoma Church in North America to do charity and also to reach out to the needy in the neighbourhood. Loving the Lord Jesus Christ means loving ones neighbour as Jesus Christ said through the parable of the Good Samaritan, "How can you love God without loving your friend"?

*Alex Mathew, Parish Secretary*

## Sinai MTC, North London - Visiting Those in Prison

"Sometimes our light goes out, but is blown again into instant flame by an encounter with another human being." - Albert Schweitzer. It's hard to imagine how visiting a prison could be an uplifting experience apart from it being a very personal one. It was while reading Nelson Mandela's book 'The Long Walk to Freedom' that brought the basic cells on Robben Island alive and managed to deliver just that - a very personal experience. For it was in this sparse environment that Nelson Mandela was incarcerated for 18 of the 27 years of his detention. To emerge from such confinement almost three decades later and to lead South Africa to its proudly multicultural modern state is testament to the power and drive of both the man and the human spirit.

### A day on the inside

Having joined this new parish just over 3 years ago, I was very keen that we establish a new way of engagement with a community who are normally forgotten behind bars in prison. My first encounter of visiting a prison was in 1995 after I was elected as a counselor and being given an official guided tour. People that are incarcerated, regardless of the circumstance, are typically lonely and hopefully searching for a meaning in their lives. I had no interaction with any prisoner during the visit, however it left a clear impression on my mind as to the meaning of being in prison and those of us on the outside being imprisoned in one's mind by virtue of our limitations. Moving around the prison grounds in "lockdown" mode made me think about my own freedom and the strict detention in which the prisoners live. We had entered a world with its own culture and rules, where order and chaos, fear and beauty, kindness and brutality, can exist all in the same moment.

### Visit by the Sinai Mission

"Come to me you who are blessed by my father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For...I was in prison and you came to visit me"(Matthew 25:34, 36). As a member of the Mar Thoma community I have been concerned for some time that we appear to be an exclusive club, very much an introvert community and insular from our surroundings and insensitive to others' needs or suffering. This is not to exclude the many mission outreach programs that go on in India, but those of us in the diaspora live, to some extent, a very secluded life and appear to associate only with likeminded people. The objective of the visit was to provide some joy to prisoners who normally have little cause for celebration, and perhaps to alleviate some of the stress and depression that typically accompany prolonged confinement.

I was keen that our visit was to the HMP Bovingdon, the prison I first visited as a Counselor. As a group we were not going to preach to the 'sinners', but rather to share time with them and by this approach, rather than thinking of the offence and passing another judgment on the



prisoners, we see people - people who need light. There was a slight trepidation in me as to how the inmates would see and react to us particularly as we were not the typical Anglo Saxon Church of England group. Moreover, as we had a mixed group of female and male members in a very male institution, reactions from prisoners could have been somewhat unpredictable.

The reception from the prisoners at our first encounter was overwhelmingly positive. Many of the prisoners knew hymns without the need for song books and in fact taught us a hymn 'Walk in the Light' on our first visit. The prison Vicar said that the prisoners had not encountered such a visitation before and they cheered us enthusiastically! There was an instant demand from the prisoners that we repeat these visits in future, and as a result we try to engage with the inmates at least twice a year. The inmates participated with us by reading the Bible and at end of the session came forward and shook hands in true generosity and spirit. "We are so happy, since we have never seen or experienced anything like this program whilst we have been in prison," said one prisoner. There were a few tears at the end and this really reinforced that one can be "blown again into instant flame by an encounter with another human being."

Some of the inmates fit the stereotypical image of a prisoner, but many appeared no different from people you may see on a city street and yet just beneath the surface a deep sadness was revealed, filled with the prisoners' un-lived hopes and dreams. Jesus said that it wasn't the healthy that needed a doctor, but rather the sick (Mark 2:17). In the same way, those in prison need to hear about the freedom found in Christ perhaps more than anyone else.

At the end of our day in prison, I left with many questions: What is inner freedom? Are criminals born or made? Can people change? Is there room for forgiveness in our society? I may never find the answers, but the experience has given me a unique insight into the complexity of human relations and the immense suffering we inflict on others and ourselves. Visiting prison was a glimpse into another world, where I met face-to-face with the very people our society wants to lock away and forget. Their faith and courage are inspiring to me, and I wonder if I would have the same resolve if faced with similar circumstances. Visiting prisoners is a simple yet highly effective way to let the persecuted know they are not alone and not forgotten. In this way we can minister to their needs, if not physically, then at least spiritually.

Meeting up with prisoners gives them the opportunity to confront their guilt, remorse, grief, and anger; it also opens up the possibilities of making positive choices, no matter how small. We can only make a contribution but for a very brief moment leaving through the heavy metal doors of the prison grounds remembering the words from Matthew 25:31-45, "And the King shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, In as much as ye have done [it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [it] unto me."

*Roy Abraham, London*



## MATRIMONIAL

Marthomite parents settled in the US invite marriage proposals for their daughter, 28 years old and 5 feet tall. She is brought up in the US and earned her double Masters in May of 2013. Currently working as a professional American Sign Language Interpreter. We welcome proposals from parents of grooms or grooms between the ages of 28 and 32 with professional backgrounds. If interested, please respond with details and recent photo to [jmathew19795@gmail.com](mailto:jmathew19795@gmail.com)

“Marthoma parents in NJ invite proposal for their daughter, 25 years, 5’6”, Doctor of Physical Therapy, family oriented, God fearing from professionally qualified God fearing, non-smoking, non-alcoholic boys with good Christian values. Interested parents may email with details and picture to [goldenoryx2329@yahoo.com](mailto:goldenoryx2329@yahoo.com)

Parents invite marriage proposals for their son, Mar Thoma, US born, MD, 28 years, 5’8” and fair. Seeking alliance from US born Christian girls, below 28 years, God fearing, and professionally qualified (MD preferred). Please respond with photographs and full details to [snka10126@gmail.com](mailto:snka10126@gmail.com)

Marthomite NRI parents from, Kollam District invite marriage proposals for their daughter, 25 years old, 167 cm with strong Christian values. She has completed her schooling from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and completed her graduation-B.D.S from S.R.M University, Chennai and currently working as Dental Surgeon in Kollam, Kerala since 2012. We invite proposals from the parents of Christ centered boys. Please respond by email to [thomaskoshy92@gmail.com](mailto:thomaskoshy92@gmail.com) or call at (215)671 1915. (M4marry id-3411787)

U.S. Marthomite family invite proposals for their son from any Christian denomination. He is 29 years old, 5’11” (180 cms) tall and graduated top rank with Masters degree in Engineering from prestigious university and works at a Fortune 100 company in management level. He's very active in Marthoma church and is looking for someone who has a strong relationship with Christ. If interested, please send information and photos to [tomk993238@gmail.com](mailto:tomk993238@gmail.com)

## GENERAL NEWS

### St. Thomas MTC, Chicago



On January 26th, Sunday school students came to church dressed in the colors of our Indian Flag. Children dressed as Mahatma Gandhi & Nehru led by 'Mother India' proudly holding aloft the Indian flag led the procession into church. The celebration commenced by singing 'We are one in the spirit'. There were informational presentations on the lives of Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru and how they incorporated Christian values in their lives. Ladoos – traditional Indian sweets were served as snacks to the students during Sunday school class. At the end of the short program, all Sunday school students led the congregation in singing the Indian National Anthem. It was a proud moment for our Motherland India and our STMTC to see and hear our young children sing the Jana-Gana-Mana  
Aswathi Varughese (STMTC Sunday School Superintendent)

## 65th Birthday Celebration of Mar Theodosius at Maramon



The Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa celebrated his 65th birthday in February 2014 at Maramon. A birthday celebration was arranged at Maramon Convention Stall on February 14, 2014 at 9 A. M. Mar Coorilos led the prayer during the occasion. Rev. Vinoy Daniel, former Diocesan Secretary, offered the felicitation. At the end of the celebration, Mar Theodosius cut a cake in the presence of Achens and laity present during the occasion. Diocese wishes Thirumeni all the best upon completing 65 years in his life and pray that God may keep Thirumeni in His providence to continue the faith journey.  
*Rev. K. E. Geevarghese, Diocesan Secretary*

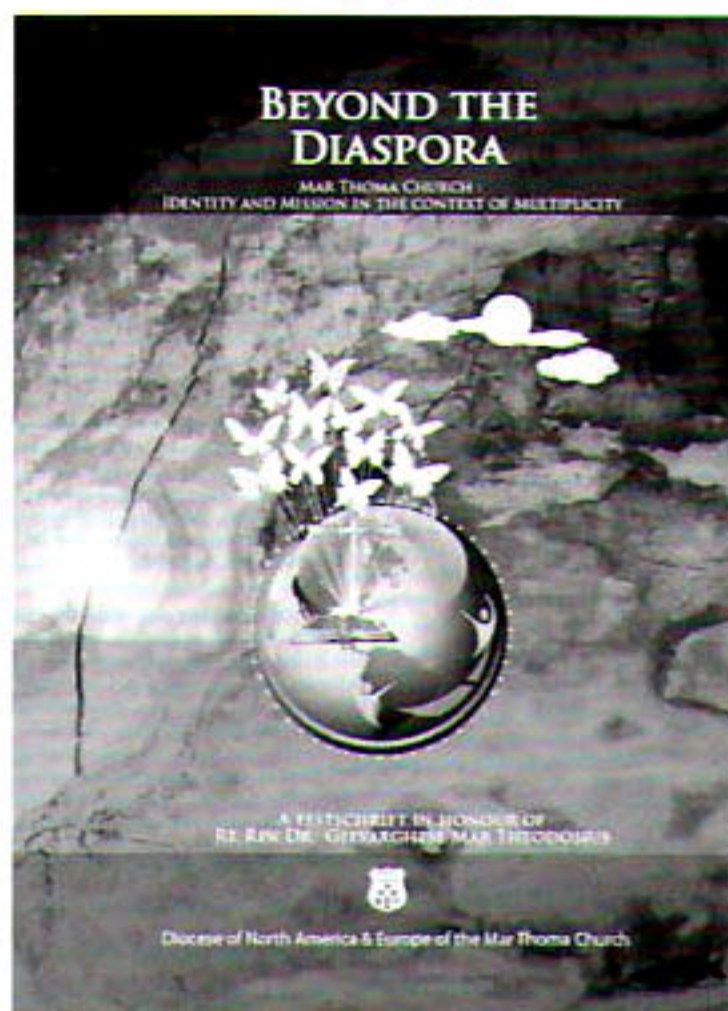
## Episcopal Silver Jubilee - Get together & Fellowship Dinner at Thiruvalla



The Diocese of North America and Europe has arranged a get together and fellowship dinner in connection with the episcopal silver jubilee of our three Bishops; Rt. Rev. Geevarghese Mar Athanasius, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius and Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos at 6.30 pm on Sunday February 16, 2014 at Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Auditorium, SCS Campus, Thiruvalla. The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan presided over the meeting. The Bishops of our church and leaders of Maramon convention blessed the occasion with their prayers and presence. The Kuttapuzha Jerusalem MTC choir sang melodious songs during the occasion. The opening prayer was led by Rt. Rev. Joseph Mar Barnabas Episcopa. The Sabha Secretary and senior Vicar General Very Rev. P. T. Thomas welcomed all to the meeting. The Suffragan Metropolitan, Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus, the Sabha Lay Trustee & Treasurer Adv. Varghese Mammen, Sabha Council Member Rev. Roy A. Thomas, Houston and the North America and Europe Diocesan Council Member Mr. Varghese P. Varghese gave felicitation messages. To mark the occasion there was a cake cutting also. Diocesan Treasurer Mr. Chacko Mathew expressed the vote of thanks on behalf of the Diocese. There was a fellowship dinner following the meeting. Around 300 people attended the program.  
*Rev. K. E. Geevarghese, Diocesan Secretary*

## Episcopal Silver Jubilee Celebration and Festschrift Volume Release

The Diocesan Council has arranged the Episcopal Silver Jubilee Celebration along with the Diocesan Assembly meeting at the Philadelphia Mar Thoma Church on Friday April 4, 2014 at 8 p. m. The Rev Dr J. Jayakiran Sebastian, a Presbyter of the Church of South India, and currently Dean and H. George Anderson Professor of Mission and Culture and Director of the Multicultural Mission Resource Center at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia will be the chief guest.



The Festschrift, "Beyond the Diaspora, Mar Thoma Church: Identity and Mission in the Context of Multiplicity" will be released on that occasion in honour of the Jubilarian Bishop. This book is a collection of essays and tributes written by a group of eminent people from different walks of life. The theme for this festschrift is a continuation of the two other books published earlier. The first one was released in conjunction with his Lordship's 60th birthday and was titled, "In search of Christian Identity in Global Community." The second book was authored by Mar Theodosius Thirumeni during the Silver Jubilee year of this Diocese and was titled, "Churching the Diaspora, Discipling the Families." All three books together will provide a vast perspective about the Mar Thoma Diaspora and its contextual viewpoints as it relates to the Mar Thoma Church's identity and vision.

The contents of this festschrift are divided into five parts. Part I includes messages and felicitations written by the Bishops of the Mar Thoma Church and sister churches. Part II consists of essays on the theme, "Beyond the Diaspora," written by eminent church leaders, theologians, ecologists, and experts in both the secular and theological fields. Part III contains personal reflections about Mar Theodosius written by those who have closely worked with him. Part IV comprises the titles of books and articles written by His Lordship for various occasions. These books provide a picture of Thirumeni's areas of interest in ministry and various social issues. Part V carries photographs that offer glimpses of Thirumeni's life and reminds us of the significant moments of his ministry. This festschrift contains articles in both English and Malayalam, and the contributing authors are acknowledged separately with gratitude for their labor of love.

## The Annual Clergy Conference - 2014

The Diocesan annual clergy conference will be held at the Philadelphia Mar Thoma Church, PA from April 3 - 4, 2014. The theme of the conference is 'Churching the Diaspora'. Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius and Rev. Dr. Joseph Daniel, Switzerland will be the main leaders of the conference. There will be separate sessions for main talks, Bible study, singing, group discussion, intercession and sharing. A special orientation program for video conferencing and use of IT technology in the parish ministry is also arranged. A farewell meeting for the Achens who are leaving the Diocese upon transfer in 2014 will be held along with the clergy meeting.

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

## Congratulations to Rev. Dr. Joseph Daniel, Switzerland

The University of Bern, Switzerland conferred the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) with "Insigni Magna Cum Laude" (highest possible great honor) to Rev. Joseph Daniel for his research subject "Historic Praxis of Ecumenism in the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church." Achen is a recipient of the New Delhi Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund Award for academic excellence in Master of Arts, university merit scholarship for academic excellence, C.P. Menon Memorial Award, and a gold medalist (first rank), from the Mahatma Gandhi University, India. Rev. Joseph Daniel holds two post graduate degrees one in History and the other one in theology with academic excellence. He also holds a diplom vertiefungstudium from the University of Bern, Switzerland.



He is the Vicar of the Mar Thoma Congregations in Switzerland and Germany. He was a member of the Singapore Government's Inter Religious Confidence Circle (IRCC), the general committee of the National Council of Churches in Singapore (NCCS), and the executive committee of the Fellowship of Indian Denominational Churches in Singapore and Malaysia (FIDC). Rev. Daniel was the chaplain to the late Metropolitan, Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma and had participated in the conferences conducted by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA). He presented papers at the Anglican-Old Catholic Theologian's Conferences and International conferences organized by the universities in Europe and United Kingdom. He was a recipient of the Christkatholische Kirche der Schweiz Scholarship for his research project at the University of Bern. Rev. Joseph Daniel is the son of Mrs. and Mr. Thomas Daniel, Karamvelimanniil (Challackal), Seethathodu, and is a member of the Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Kochukoikal. Achen authored a book "One Family Under Heaven" and has written several articles in journals and books. The Diocese of North America and Europe and the Mar Thoma Messenger congratulates Achen and pray that our Lord may continue to keep Achen in His providence to continue the faith journey of our Church.

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

## Regional Youth Meeting, NE



Mar Thoma youth fellowship North East region hosted the 1st regional retreat from 27-29 of December 2013 at the vacationist fathers retreat centre NJ. Our thirumeni Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius inaugurated the conference. The theme of the conference was 'Break Free'. 46 people attended the conference from the various parishes of the region. Rev. V. M. Mathew, Dr. shown Rajan, Dr. Betsy Mathew, Prijo Thomas and John. C. Thomas gave leadership to the conference.

*Rev. V. M. Mathew, Youth Chaplain, New York*

## Western Region MTVEA Conference



The 1st MTVEA conference of the western region, hosted by the Phoenix Mar Thoma Church of Arizona, was held at Sun Valley, Tempe, AZ. The theme of the conference based on "Discipleship." Enthusiastic participation of 50 families from all across the Western Region made this conference a truly blessed and spiritually satisfying experience for everyone. The conference commenced on Saturday, February 15th 2014 with a colorful inaugural program. A praise worship service led by Phoenix Mar Thoma Church Choir. Vice President Dr. Simon Thomas welcomed all the leaders, guests. After the inaugural address by the Rev. V.G. Varghese the conference was formally declared open. Present at the inaugural session were the main leaders of the conference Rev. V. G. Varghese, Rev. Thomas John, Rev. Larry Varghese and Rev. T. K. Viji.

The morning session started with singing by the praise and worship team. The main talk led by Rev. Thomas John, based on discipleship. The 2011-2014 report was presented by Mrs. Annamma Mathew, Regional Secretary MTVEA. During the Bible study and the various talks, speakers analyzed the theme, from all different theological angles and perspectives. In his bible study Mr. Kurian Varghese, Regional Vice- President MTVEA emphasized that God consider us as righteous through faith in Jesus Christ Group discussions that followed enabled participants to debate relevant questions and issues in a group setting and collectively find answers. The open forum or feedback session, presided over by Rev. Larry Varghese. The evening ceremony was brought to a close with the vote of thanks by Mr. Rajesh Mathew, Regional Secretary MTVEA. The conference was a blessed occasion for many families to come together in Christian fellowship, to reflect upon our faith and heritage, to share our common experiences, and through it all strengthen our relationship with God and each other. New office bearers for the 2014-2017 were also elected during the business meeting. The new committee took charge for the period 2014-2017: President - Rev. V. G. Varghese (Phx MTC), V-President - Mr. Kurien Varghese (SFO MTC, Secretary-Mr. Rajesh Mathew (Phx MTC), Trustee - Mr. Joshi John (Horeb MTC) and Auditor - Mrs. Annamma Mathew(Horeb MTC)

## Immanuel MTC, Houston - India Fest 2013



Immanuel Mar Thoma Church of Houston presented INDIA FEST 2013 on November 9, 2013 as a way of bringing the surrounding community together and sharing our rich culture, heritage, and faith with them. The festival, conduct-ed on the Church premises, offered family oriented fun for all ages. The festival featured live cultural performances, carnival rides, rock climbing, pony rides, face painting, beauty services, sale of Indian attires (saris, churidars, kurtas, etc.) along with a raffle at the end. The colorful stage showcased Indian music, Bollywood dances,

Zumba, and Chenda- melam to the delight of the audience. The various food booths offered a chance for participants to indulge in a variety of flavorful, delicious classic Indian cuisines and other ethnic dishes. This first ever attempt by the Immanuel parish was indeed a great success and inspired the community to come together in a spirit of celebration. An estimated 4,000 people were able to participate, share in some fun and excitement, and experience a sense of community. Half of all proceeds from this financially successful event have been earmarked to support deserving charities.

P.M. Jacob, Secretary

## South West Region MTVEA Conference



The Southwest Regional Conference of Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists Association, Sevika Sangam and Yuvajana Sakhyam was held at Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston on February 21 and 22, 2014. Trinity MTC hosted the Conference. Including all the Achens of this region, almost 325 people attended. The main theme of the Conference was "Christian Destination". Rev. K. E. Geevarghese, Diocesan and Bishop's Secretary), Rev. Saji Thomas (Sehion MTC, Dallas) and Mrs. Mariamma John (Immanuel MTC, Lubbock) were the main leaders. By the grace of God and the hard work of the Conference Committee the Conference became a memorable one for all those who attended. After the opening worship by Trinity MTC, Rev. Kochukoshy Abraham (Vicar, Trinity MTC) offered the welcome speech and Rev. John N. Abraham (Diocesan Vice President of MTEVA) inaugurated the Conference. Rev. O. C. Kurian (St. Pauls MTC) presided over the meeting. Rev. K. E. Geevrghese gave three talks on the main theme. Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch led the Saturday morning worship and Mrs. Mariamma John gave a devotional message. Rev. Shibi M. Abraham (Okhalahoma MTC) presided the morning session. In the afternoon session Rev. Saji Thomas gave a message on the main theme and Mr. Reji K. Varghese (Secretary, Region and Diocese MTEVA) led the witnessing session.

I have set the LORD always  
before me: because he is at my  
right hand, I shall not be moved.

Psalm 16:8

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Episcopal Silver Jubilee at Diocesan Center

Monday, December 9, 2013 was a significant day in the life of the Mar Thoma Church, as three of its Bishops (Mar Athanasius, Mar Theodosius and Mar Coorilos) entered in to the 25th year of Episcopacy on that day. It was a special occasion for the members of the Church to praise and thank God for the life and leadership of these Bishops. The Diocese of North America and Europe also celebrated the event to mark the occasion.



The Diocese organized a Holy Qurbana on Monday, December 9, 2013 at the Sinai Mar Thoma Chapel, Merrick at 8.30 A.M as a Thanks Giving service. The Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius celebrated the Holy Communion in English. The Achens and family members from North East region of the Diocese along with few members and friends from the neighborhood attended the program. The Diocesan Secretary Rev. K. E. Geevarghese welcomed all and congratulated the Diocesan Episcopa and other Jubilarian Bishops for the successful completion of two and a half decades of Episcopal ministry in the Church. He also remembered Theodosius Thirumeni's leadership and contributions in way of projects and programs in other dioceses, where he was the Diocesan Bishop previously. Achen Also prayed for God's blessings in the days to come. During the occasion, Rev. Dr. Philip Varghese and Mr. Varghese P. Varghese gave flowers to Thirumeni.



Also this was an occasion to hand over keys of newly purchased vehicle for the Diocese. Mr. Chacko Mathew, Diocesan Treasurer and Mr. Thomas Oommen, Accounts Manager handed over keys to Thirumeni. In his reply speech Thirumeni thanked God Almighty for his blessings and guidance all throughout his life, particularly in his ministry in the Church. Also thanked the members of the Church, parents, teachers and leaders for their love, care and guidance.



Mr. Chacko Mathew extended vote of thanks to Thirumeni and all participants of the program. There was a fellowship meal immediately after the events. As a token of sharing the joy, Thirumeni participated in cutting the cake. The Episcopal Consecration Silver Jubilee celebration was inaugurated on November 23, 2013 by the Mar Thoma Metropolitan, Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma, along with the Diocesan Silver Jubilee Grand Finale. In the evening there was a meeting of the Regional Activity Committee of the North East region at the Sinai Mar Thoma Center, New York.

## Ecumenical Luncheon Fellowship 2014

The fifth Ecumenical luncheon Fellowship of the Diocese of North America and Europe of the Mar Thoma Church since 2009 was held at the St. Mathew's Mar Thoma Church, Toronto on Saturday, January 11, 2014 at 10:30 a.m. This was an occasion to strengthen the ecumenical relationship between various church denominations in the neighborhood. The leadership of heads of ecumenical bodies, clergy and lay leaders from sister churches gave an ecumenical flavor to the gathering. The presence of Diocesan Council members from various regions of the Diocese made this occasion more significant.



The Diocesan Bishop of North America and Europe Diocese of the Mar Thoma Church Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius presided over the meeting. The youth fellowship members of St. Mathews Mar Thoma Church led the praise and worship.



The opening prayer was led by Rev. Dr. P. L. John Panicker, the Vicar of Canadian Mar Thoma Church. Rev. Varghese Abraham, Vicar of St. Mathews Mar Thoma Church welcomed the gathering. Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius gave presidential address in which he emphasized the significance of local and wider ecumenism in the contemporary context. Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton, Secretary, Can. Council of Churches gave key note address. Felicitation speeches were given by Archdeacon Bruce Myers from Anglican Church, Rev. John Mathew from United Church and Rev. Dr. P.K. Mathew representing the Kerala Christian Ecumenical Group.



Mr. Zachariah Mulamootil, the Diocesan Council member invited the dignitaries to receive the gifts arranged by the diocese. The Diocesan Treasurer Mr. Chacko Mathew expressed vote of thanks. Ms. Elizabeth Kochummen was the Emcee of the programme.  
Rev. K. E. Geevarghese, Diocesan Secretary

# Bon Voyage and Thank You...!



The Diocese of North America and Europe and Mar Thoma Messenger express their sincere gratitude and appreciation to Rev. K. E. Geevarghese and Dr. Reena Geevarghese for their services rendered to the Diocese and Mar Thoma Messenger for the past four years, especially for the past three years as Diocesan Secretary/Bishop's Secretary and Manager of Mar Thoma Messenger. Achen and Kochamma joined our Diocese in 2010 May as the Vicar of Ascension Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia. Later in May 2011 Achen joined the Diocese as the Diocesan Secretary and Bishop's Secretary. Achen served as Bishop's Secretary to Theodosius Thirumeni at Trivandrum – Kollam Diocese and also at Chennai – Bangalore Diocese before joining our Diocese. Achen's home parish is Salem MTC, Njakkanal, Kayamkulam. He was ordained as a priest of Mar Thoma Church on August 3, 1999. Achen served as the Vicar of Bethel MTC, Krishnarajapuram, Bangalore prior to serving as Vicar of Ascension MTC, Philadelphia. Achen's administrative ability, technological skills to communicate effectively with people of all levels, the organization skills in the administrative matters of the Diocese, and deep knowledge of the Bible and also presentation of Biblical thoughts through articles, speeches, Bible study classes, sermons etc. are praiseworthy. Achen has obtained his Master's degree in Old Testament (M.Th.) from UTC Bangalore. Achen is being transferred as Vicar of the Anaprampal Mar Thoma Church, Edathua, Kerala with effect from May 2014 as per the decision of the Episcopal Synod. We wish and pray that our Lord Jesus Christ may continue to provide all His grace and keep Achen and Kochamma in His providence in the continued faith journey of our church in the days to come.

*Dr. Eapen Daniel, Chief Editor*

## Special thanks to Mr. Chacko Mathew – Diocesan Treasurer



Special thanks to Mr. Chacko Mathew who had served the diocese for the last six years as treasurer and helped the growth of this Diocese with his diligence and care. As an individual who has valued spirituality and financial stewardship with clear understanding, he has successfully managed all financial matters with much care and loyalty. Messenger committee extends our sincere thanks to Chacko Mathew for all his support!

*Dr. Eapen Daniel, Chief Editor*

## Thank You...!

As a Diocese, we express our sincere gratitude to all the Diocesan Assembly members, Diocesan Council members, and Diocesan Treasurer Mr. Chacko Mathew for their prayers, support and the time and talents spent for the growth and development of the Diocese for the past three years. We also express our sincere thanks to all Achens and their families, who are leaving the Diocese upon transfer in 2014. We wish and pray that our Lord may keep them in His providence in the continued faith journey of our church. The Mar Thoma Messenger also expresses its gratitude to all Assembly members, Diocesan Council members and Achens and their families for their support for the continued growth of Mar Thoma Messenger.

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

## Thanks to the Out-Going Council



Messenger family is obliged to the out-going Diocesan Council, who had supported this publication whole-heartedly, especially in aspects of financial and subscription matters. This council, headed by our beloved and enthusiastic Diocesan Bishop Mar Theodosius, had worked hard to implement plans and programs that has changed our directions and helped our missions with brighter future. Each member had contributed to the steady growth of this diocese with heightened team spirit and strategic planning. Thanks to the members of this highly creative council for their valuable services!

*Dr. Eapen Daniel, Chief Editor*



Diocese of N. America & UK  
of Mar Thoma Church  
2320 Merrick Avenue,  
Merrick, NY 11566



U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
MANTECA, CA  
95337  
APR 12, 14  
AMOUNT

1000

00122

\$6.97  
00075944-10

RETURN TO SENDER

INSUFFICIENT ADDRESS  
ADRESSE INSUFFISANTE

REFUSED  
REFUSE

NOT KNOWN  
INCONNU

RETOUR À L'ENVOYEUR

GONE AWAY  
DEMENAGÉ

NO SUCH POST OFFICE  
BUREAU INEXISTANT

NOT CALLED FOR  
NON RECLAMÉ

Date:

15/5/14

April-14 MAR THEODOSIUS  
MR. GEORGE OOMMEN  
9 WILTON DR  
PEIERBOROUGH ENGLAND, PI  
UK

Watch

**Malankara Darshan TV**

Program by **Mar Thoma Church**

/ India every

:00 am EST and

the same Episode

evening at

10.30 p.m. EST.

**Royal Mail**

We were unable to deliver this item because

- addressee gone away
- address incomplete
- address inaccessible
- addressee unknown
- refused
- not called for
- no such address

date

initials

P3960/97/302543

Call for FREE M-Box: Toll Free 1-732-648-0576  
or Order Online @ [www.malayalamiptv.net](http://www.malayalamiptv.net)



16000ൽ കൂടുതൽ നോർത്ത് അമേരിക്കൻ മലയാളികൾ ആസ്വദിക്കുന്ന **The Best Quality Picture** നിങ്ങൾക്കും ആസ്വദിക്കാം...

**29 Malayalam Channels & Free 15 Hindi Channels**

Package Starting from \$19.99

**Malayalee... Malayalam... Malayalam IPTV!**

നാട്ടിൽ നിന്ന് ഞങ്ങളുടെ റിപ്പോർട്ടർമാർ - കോട്ടയം, കൊച്ചി, തിരുവനന്തപുരം, തിരുവല്ല, പത്തനംതിട്ട, കൊട്ടാരക്കര, തൃശൂർ, മോനിപ്പള്ളി, മാവേലിക്കര എന്നിവിടങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നും സമീപപ്രദേശങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നുമുള്ള വാർത്തകൾ റിപ്പോർട്ട് ചെയ്തു കൊണ്ടുള്ള പ്രത്യേക പരിപാടികൾ അമേരിക്കൻ മലയാളം ചാനലിലൂടെ സംപ്രേഷണം ചെയ്യുന്നു.

**Shalom TV-യിലെ ആസ്വാദകരായ ക്രിസ്തീയ പ്രസംഗ പരമ്പരകൾ ശ്രവിക്കൂ...**

അമേരിക്കയിലുള്ള നമ്മുടെ കമ്മ്യൂണിറ്റി വാർത്തകൾ പ്രക്ഷേപണം ചെയ്യണമെന്ന് ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നവർ ബന്ധപ്പെടുക - [www.malayalamiptv.net](http://www.malayalamiptv.net)