MAR THOMA MESSENGER

SEPTMBER 1989

A Publication of The Diocese of North America
THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL

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Mar Thoma Messenger

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Suffragan Metropolitan

Greetings and blessings to the members of the Mar Thoma Diocese of North America.

I am writing this letter from Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. The Youth of this Diocese are now here for the annual Youth Conference. Under the grace of God, centered on the word of God, drawing from the rich traditions of the past, relating it to the existential realities of today, challenged by the guidance of the Holy Spirit to new truths, we are being drawn closer to God and to each other so that together we may "Arise and Build" the broken city walls.

The Diocesan Assembly which met in July this year has decided to give special emphasis to the work among the youth. Plans to appoint part-time youth workers in Eastern, Western and Canada zones are afoot.

I am asking the Sevika Sanghom of the parishes to raise about ten thousand dollars this year to organize one Youth Center in each of the Zones. Aheens and parishioners should help the Sevika Sanghom in this effort. This I am sure will be a good start to strengthen, expand and vitalize the youth organizations of the Diocese.

Youth should be encouraged to shoulder greater responsibilities in the life of the parish. With the guidance and leadership of the older people the youth should be energized to identify the needs of the community and step into the gap. Frequency of English service should be increased.

The older parents from Kerala are a new factor in our parish life. We have to be concerned about them, help them to be re-habillitated, socially and religiously.

All the problems of the uprooted and migrated communities are with us. Are we going to allow the problems to drown us, or to swim across to the beautiful shore. The stress, tension and struggle in the race of keeping up with the Joneses is a serious threat to the families. We, as a Diocese have to address ourselves very seriously to this very real problem.

On all these matters I would like you to exercise your minds individually and as parishes and as special groups. I would very much appreciate your sharing your concerns, aspirations, plans and programs on these matters with me.

I shall be leaving for U. K. on the 24th and hope to be back at ADUR on September 5. May I use this opportunity to say A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL of you. You have drenched me to the bone with your love, consideration and hospitality. The sincere overflowing love of the children, the open uninhibiting fellowship of the youth, the respectful and understanding consideration of the adults, the loyal affectionate concern of the aheens, have all worked together to make my hectic travel schedule a pleasant
holiday, a nourishment in christian fellowship and a challenge to new responsibilities. Your continued prayers, I solicit. I do remember each parish once a month in my prayers.

I must put in special a word for Rev. Dr. P J. Philip who planned my itinerary and Dr. P. V. Cherian who attended to all minute details of my travel, stay, programmes and personal comforts.

May God bless you, guide you, strengthen and glorify His name in you and through you.

Yours in Christ's Service,

Waterloo, Ontario
August 19, 89.

The Rt. Rev. Philpooze Mar Chrysostom
Suffragan Metropolitan
THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA
THE MAR THOMA CHURCH
Assembly meeting-1989

It is a refreshing experience to escape from the daily schedule of our activities to reflect on the other varied aspects of life, to deviate into the social and religious realm of life, or to enjoy the beauty of the sunshine and of the flowers, or may be to free ourselves from the twist of the mind from the day's problems. Such was the occasion when forty two of the assembly members from the various walks of life, including representatives of the parish/congregation, and the vicars gathered together for the Diocesan assembly meeting of 1989. We came to discuss and decide upon the course of actions to be taken for the growth and development of the newest Diocese of the Mar Thoma Church in the most affluent part on earth, North America. North American Diocese consists of 17 parishes and 16 congregations in the United States and Canada (family membership of 2250) and the Mar Thoma Church in England, U.K. We wholeheartedly welcome the Mar Thoma Church in London in the Dioceses of North America.

The Diocesan Assembly met on July 11-13, 1989 at the New Jersey Mar Thoma Church, 272 Roseville Ave, Newark, New Jersey. It was a thrilling joy for all of us, that the Assembly sessions were presided over by our Diocesan Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Suffragan Metropolitan. Thirumeni came to United States 11 years after his last visit to North America, and for the first time as the Diocesan Bishop. In addition to attending the Diocesan Assembly, Thirumeni's itinerary included visits to parishes and congregations in the Diocese and he was the main leader for the Family Conference and the Youth Conference of North America.

The meeting commenced with opening worship lead by the Rev. John Mathew. Miss Anita George read the Word of God, 1 Cor. 13. The Rev. Winston Ching of the Episcopal Church gave the devotional address. On behalf of the Diocesan Assembly, Associate Secretary Dr. P. V. Cherian welcomed Thirumeni, the new vicars who have joined the Diocese and the members of the Assembly.

In his presidential address, The Rt. Rev. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Suffragan Metropolitan called upon the members to have a new vision for the next century. He mentioned the social evils such as corruption rampant in the so called consumer society around us. Thirumeni challenged members to be alert and get out of apathy. He emphasized the importance of the supremacy of Jesus Christ and His teachings to the present world. The need of the hour indeed is Jesus Christ and renewal through Him. He stressed the importance of the role of youths in the parish life. Thirumeni concluded his message by exhorting the members to see the assembly as a consultation, a fellowship and a commission.

The annual report for the year 1988 and the statement of accounts were presented by the Associate Secretary, and the Treasurer Mr. Varghese Simon, respectively. The record of our activities and the management of the financial matters appeared pleasing and satisfactory to all, as these were unanimously approved.

After two days of deliberations on the various items of the agenda other important decisions that affect the growth and development of the Diocese were taken. They include: The diocese is divided into two regions, Eastern and Western. All decisions taken by the former Zonal Assembly and approved by the Eopiscopal Synod will be binding on the Dioceses of North America. The Assembly decided to support a mission center in connection with the centenary celebration of the Mar Thoma Suvigesha Sanghom. Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Pondicherry in India were suggested and the Diocesan Council will study the various centers and will recommend one to the
Diocesan Bishop.

The various subcommittees of Sunday School, Youth league, Sevika Sanghom and Edavaka Mission presented their reports. After discussion of these the assembly reorganized the committees for each organization, at the regional level and at the Diocesan level for effective functioning.

Considering the need for community and social involvement, Thirumeni suggested that the Council should undertake projects of mission work such as Soup-kitchens, other out-reach programs, and day-care centers. The Council is authorized to study the feasibility of such programs.

Another important decision was to raise funds for the developmental projects of the Diocese through loans from members. Assembly decided to raise $500,000 through this effort and to repay the amount after 5 years. This loan will not bear interest for the first two years. However, interest will be paid from the third to the 5th year. Thus the lenders will lose only two years of interest on the amount they lend. While your lone will be a help to the Diocese for its varied projects, this will be way to support the growth of the Diocese in her mission.

The Assembly recorded appreciation to Rev. Dr. P. J. Philip who served as the Diocesan Secretary, for his valuable services. Rev. Jayan Thomas of the Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston, Texas was elected as the Diocesan Secretary. Other positions filled were, Mr. Rajan Thomas as the Convenor of the Western Area Development Committee, Dr. T. M. Thomas as the Convenor of the Eastern Area development Committee, Rev. Renji Varghese as the Convenor of the Youth Committee and Rev. M. C. George as a member of the Council. All decisions will become effective only after the approval by the Episcopal Synod.

This year's assembly meeting was spread over three days (two half days and one full day). This gave the opportunity to discuss the issues thoroughly and, not to rush for lack of time. Apart from serious discussions, we had fun and laughter occasionally, which awakened us when we were slumbering or were not paying keen attention.

The guidance and leadership of our Chrysostom Thirumeni led the assembly to be more aware of the needs of our Youth in this continent, the need for their participation in ministry and in the affairs of the church, and to have an awareness of the need for our commitment to serve the community. Thus at the final moments of the assembly sessions we have been able to generate a sense of belonging to each other, and a sense of belonging to Jesus Christ. I have no doubt in my mind that we have been gathered in North America as part of a fulfilment of the words of our Lord, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature". We have observed the first part of the command faithfully. Now what is left for us is to proclaim the good news through our dedication, commitment, concern and involvement in the furtherance of His Kingdom in U. S. A, Canada and United Kingdom and wherever God takes us and implants us. If the assembly sessions helped us to commit ourselves to the cause of Christ, our deliberations were indeed worthy.

Dr. Plammoottil V. Cherian
Associate Secretary,
Diocese of North America.
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കൊള്ളുക പ്രസാദ മികയ്ക്കാൻ

കേരള മന്ത്രാലയം അതിനാൽ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന് പ്രവർത്തനറിയിൽ പിന്നീട് എന്നാണ്. അതിന്റെ അവകാശമുള്ള വിവരങ്ങളും ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് അറിയപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുള്ള പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും ആണ്. പൊതുവായി വിവരിക്കുന്ന ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് അറിയാനുള്ള പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും ആണ്.
THE MAR THOMA YOUTH CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA 1989
TORONTO

The Youth Conference of North America - 1989 was hosted by the Toronto Mar Thoma Church, Toronto, Canada from Aug. 16 to 19, 1989. The conference was held at the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario.

Rev. M. J. Joseph was the president of the conference. Dr. Thomas Joseph was elected as senior Vice-President. Miss Annie Joseph as Secretary and Miss Olivy Paratholil as treasurer were elected. Working committee members consisted of Mr. James V. Abraham, Mr. Arun Thomas, Miss Leeza Mathew, Mr. Shibu John, Miss Anjama Thomas, Mr. Thomas Kalampukattu, Mr. Jacob Joseph, Mr. Sunu Thomas, Mr. Ajit Ninan, Mr. Chandy C. Kalampukattu and Mr. Roy Oommen.

The theme of the conference was "Let us arise and build" taken from Nehemiah 2:18. Our main leader was the Rt. Rev. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Suffragam Metropolitan. The main speaker for the conference was Rev. Dr. Robert C. Neville, the Dean of the Boston University School of Theology. The Bible studies were led by Rev. Geevarghese Mathew. Songs were led by Rev. George Issac with Linsky Abraham accompanying him on piano.

A preparatory leadership conference was held for youth leaders and resource people on August 15 and 16, 1989 at the Canadian Mar Thoma Church, Toronto.

The main talks given by Rev. Dr. Robert C. Neville, focused on many topics all dealing with the theme of "Let us arise and build". The two Bible studies given by Rev. Geevarghese Mathew were, let us arise and rebuild, and socio-economics justice as a pre-requisite for community building.

A total of 196 people participated in this year's conference. Participants from 22 different Mar Thoma Churches across North America attended. The 1989 conference was the second conference following the conference held in New York, apart from the family conference of North America.

The opening ceremony of this conference began with a worship service by the Toronto Mar Thoma youth group. Following a welcome given by Rev. M. J. Joseph, the Rt. Rev. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Suffragan Metropolitan gave the inaugural address. This was followed by a speech by Rev. Brian Prideaux, the ecumenical officer of the Anglican Church of Canada. The campfire was held after the opening ceremonies. Every evening, meetings for group leaders and resource people were held. Every morning was started and evening was concluded with group prayers.
The choir competition was held on August 17. The St. Peter's Mar Thoma Church placed third, with St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church second and Toronto Mar Thoma Church in first. In the volleyball tournament, the Chicago/ Washington/ Baltimore/ Boston/ Detroit group placed first with the Toronto "B" team placing second. The Canada/ U.S. game remained a tie. Along with volleyball, various other games and sports were played.

A role play was presented by the Philadelphia youth group on witnessing in the community. The business-meeting for 1989 youth conference of North America was held on August 17.

On August 18th afternoon, a panel discussion on the Christian understanding of freedom was held. There were four sub-topics. Miss Sushe Thomas from Kingston, Ontario, spoke on freedom in the family, Melvin Abraham from Houston, Texas spoke on freedom in the self, Suja Thomas from St. Thomas New York spoke on freedom in society, and Biju Mathew from St. Peter's, New Jersey spoke about freedom within the Mar Thoma Church. A formal dinner was held that same day, with Miss Anita George speaking on the mission trip to India along with John John, Chacko Abraham, Danny Thomas and Anisha Abraham. The dedication session and the wrap-up session were also held on Friday August 18, 1989.

On Saturday August 19, a Holy Communion service for all delegates was conducted by Rt Rev. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Suffragan Metropolitan. Immediately following the service the tenth anniversary celebration was held. Dr. T. M. Thomas along with Miss Elizabeth Mathew, Mr. O. C. Abraham, Mr. James V. Abraham gave the reflections. A tenth anniversary cake was donated by the Mar Thoma youth group of Toronto and was cut at this function by Thirumeni.

The vote of thanks was given by Dr. Thomas Joseph. The conference concluded with prayer and benediction by Thirumeni. The final lunch was a barbeque for all delegates.

As a whole the conference was a great success for all who attended.

Annie Joseph,
Secretary.
God Almighty has brought us to the United States of America, a land of freedom and opportunities. The Lord has blessed us with the freedom of worship in this country. The people of the Mar Thoma Church carried their rich heritage as they immigrated to North America. The growth and progress of our Church in the last decade has been unbelievable.

The role of the women in our Church may be divided into three main parts: the role as a wife, the role as a mother, and the role in the ministry. All adult female members of the Mar Thoma Church are the members of the Sevika Sanghom.

The Role as a Wife

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to live alone; I will make a suitable companion to help him" (Gen. 2:18). Thus, He formed a woman. The man, Adam, and the woman, Eve, were united in holy matrimony by God. Eve became the first housewife on earth.

Most of our women of the Mar Thoma Church in this country are employed. It is necessary for both the husband and the wife to work in order to make a comfortable living. After working eight hours a day, a housewife has many other household responsibilities in the home. The burden of cooking, cleaning, washing, taking care of the children etc., are usually a load on the shoulders of the woman in the house. Even though it is a difficult task, dependence in God and His bountiful grace are sufficient to carry on the daily activities.

The Role as a Mother

The first family on earth was founded by God. Adam and Eve became husband and wife. The couple was blessed with children. Eve was privileged to become the first mother on earth. The Lord entrusted the responsibility of bringing up children with the parents. This is not an easy task at all. The mother has a very significant role in raising her children. A mother spends more time with the children than the father. It is very important to take care of the physical, social, and spiritual development of the children. The proper development of the children requires divine wisdom, understanding, and patience on the mother’s part. Spending more time with the children will help us to understand them better and then to guide them accordingly. A mother needs to establish a good relationship with her children. This will enable the children to approach their mother for all their daily needs. A mother can always be a good friend, teacher, and counselor for her children.
It is important to raise a child in the fear and love of God. The Bible says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The seed of the Word of God needs to be planted in them when they are young. For example, the Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). A mother who is a believer in Christ can be a great influence on the lives of her children. The children may be directed through the right path with God's guidance. They will gradually learn to love God and have faith in Him.

The Role in the Ministry

The Savika Sangham, an organization of the Mar Thoma Church, was formed in 1919 by the Most Rev. Abraham Mar Thoma. Its motto is service and evangelism. Several mission fields and institutions are working under the Savika Sanghom in India.

Many of our parishes in North American Diocese have organized Savika Sanghom units and have started with a few activities. It is about time that the Mar Thoma women in North America make use of the opportunities offered to them. They can accomplish this by getting involved in services and bringing glory to God. We read in the Bible that God used an ordinary woman, Mary Magdalene, as the first evangelist to spread the gospel. Jesus Christ said, "Go unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature". This command was to all humanity including women. It does not mean that all women should go overseas and start preaching. One can be a witness for Christ right where she lives. The woman of Samaria who received Christ was able to win the whole city for Jesus Christ. According to the Bible, there were many missionary women in the first century.

In spite of the tight time schedule we have in this country, it is important to find time to witness for Christ. It is my hope and prayer that the woman of our Church will wake up and start working in the vineyard diligently and win souls for Jesus Christ.